

Science confirms Bible

Star of Bethlehem and date of Jesus' death identified

Many scientific facts known today have been recorded in the Bible long ago.¹ The star of Bethlehem guiding the wise men to Jesus and a lunar eclipse mentioned at his death are now also proven to have been real astronomical events by applying the Laws of Planetary Motion. The evidence has been enthusiastically endorsed among many by Frank T. Buzzard, Ph.D., NASA's Chief Engineer for both the Space Shuttle and the International Space Station.

According to the Biblical account in Matthew 2:1-12 all **nine qualities** found in the text **must be fulfilled** for any celestial phenomena **to be identified as the Biblical Star of Bethlehem.**²

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi³ from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been **born king of the Jews?** (1-3⁴) We **saw his star when it rose** (4)...'...King Herod...called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied,... Then Herod called the Magi secretly and **found out** from them the **exact time** (5-6) the star had appeared...they went on their way, and **the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped** (7-9) over the place where the child was. .*

(1-3) Whatever happened in the sky had to somehow symbolize three points, '**birth, kingship and Jews.**'

(4) Lit. '**rising in the east.**' All but polar stars and some celestial objects rise in the east due to the rotation of the Earth.

(5-6) The star appeared at an **exact time. Herod didn't know** when it appeared. He had to ask.

(7-9) It **endured over time.** The Magi saw it, travelled to Judea and saw it still. **It went ahead of them** as a further confirmation as they travelled the short journey **south from Jerusalem to Bethlehem where it stopped!**

The star of Bethlehem **could not have been a meteor**, a small fragment of material which enters Earth's atmosphere randomly at great speed glowing brightly for moments only as its outer layers vaporize. It would fail most of the nine tests. **Neither could it have been a comet**, an object such as a block of ice, which has a very large orbit about the Sun, lasting many years, easily tractable. Comets were regarded as omens of doom not of good tidings because they were ignoring the highly ordered movement of the heavens. Besides that there do not appear to have been any comets in 3 or 2 BC recoded by civilizations, notably the Chinese. Herod would not have needed to ask the Magi when such an obvious thing appeared. **The same excluding criteria applies to a nova**, an exploding star.

What is left? Biblical qualification 6—that Herod had to ask when the Star appeared is a powerful clue. Anyone can glance up and see planets and stars. But, apparently, one could look up at the Star without realizing it. Herod didn't know of it. It took magi to explain it. The Star must have been something in the normal night sky which was striking when explained. Since it could neither have been meteors, comets or novae that leaves only planets.

Jupiter is the largest planet of our solar system, known from ages-old to the present as the King Planet. It is the greatest god of Roman mythology, a "gas giant," approximately eleven times the size of Earth. It circles the Sun far beyond Earth, in an orbit of about twelve years duration. In ancient times, planets like Jupiter were considered "wandering stars." Jupiter when viewed from the Middle East did peculiar movements during the years 3 and 2 BC, when the great majority of ancient chronographers held that Christ was born. The celestial event also had to take place then because the latest evidence shows that Herod died in 1 BC.⁵ The movements of Jupiter satisfied all identifying characteristics of the Star described by Mathew. They can be exactly calculated today with the help of Johannes Kepler's (1571–1630) unchanging laws of planetary motion, still used by NASA, the European Space Agency and everyone else studying the stars today.

¹ www.raptureforums.com/BibleProphecy/101science.cfm

² Details at: bethlehemstar.net or purchase DVD: 'The Star of Bethlehem' produced by Steven McEveety, presented by FA. Larson.

³ According to Dan 2 some Magi from Babylon, east of Judea, were wise men, court astronomers and advisers to rulers. He was put in charge over them. See 'Who are these magi?' here: www.bethlehemstar.net/setting-the-stage/the-nine-points-of-christs-star/

⁴ Numbers 1-9 in brackets count the qualities needed for fulfilment. Later repetition of the numbers indicates they have been met.

⁵ See Mathew 2:16 and also 'Dating Christ's birth' here: www.bethlehemstar.net/setting-the-stage/why-are-we-hearing-this-now/

With the help of modern astronomy software⁶ it is possible to observe the movements of Jupiter from the Middle East that September of 3 BC. It is seen moving close in conjunction with the star Regulus (from a root which yields our word 'regal;' the star is called 'Sharu,' 'king' by the Babylonians and 'Rex', 'king,' by the Romans. At the beginning of the new Jewish year **the Planet of Kings met the Star of Kings and formally crowned him, thereby signifying kingship (2).**

Like all The planets, **Jupiter rises in the east (4).** It moves through the starry field eastward against the fixed stars as seen from Earth. But the wandering stars exhibit another, stranger motion. Periodically, they appear to reverse course and move backward through the other stars. This may seem odd, but the reason is simple enough: we watch the planets from a moving platform—Earth—hurtling around the Sun in its own orbit. When you pass a car on the freeway, it appears to go backward as it drops behind. For similar reasons, when the Earth in its orbit swings past another planet, that planet appears to move backward against the starry field. Astronomers call this optical effect retrograde motion.

In 3/2 BC, after Jupiter's retrograde wandering and its kingly encounter with Regulus, the former continued on its path through the star field. But then it entered retrograde. It headed back to Regulus three times. A triple pass conjunction like this is more rare. Over a period of months, the Planet of Kings danced out a halo above the Star of Kings. A coronation. It occurred within the constellation of Leo, The Lion. The Jewish nation is composed of twelve ancient tribes. Jewish prophecy found in Genesis 49:9-10 states that a particular tribe will bring forth the Messiah: the tribe of Judah. The symbol of Judah's tribe is the lion. **The triple conjunction began with the Jewish New Year and took place within Leo, showing a connection with the Jewish tribe of Judah and prophecies of the Jewish Messiah (3).**

Revelations 12:1-5 refers to a woman in labour, clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, a dragon bent on infanticide giving birth to a ruler of the nations, the Messiah in his role as King of Kings. The woman is Mary, the mother of Jesus. The dragon waiting to kill the child at birth is Herod used by Satan, who did that very thing. A continued study of the sky in September of 3 BC shows that as Jupiter was beginning the coronation of Regulus, another startling symbol rose in the sky. The constellation which rises in the east behind Leo is Virgo, The Virgin. When Jupiter and Regulus were first meeting, she rose clothed in the Sun. The moon was at her feet. It was a new moon, symbolically birthed at the feet of The Virgin. The sheer concentration of symbolism in the stars at this moment is remarkable. **These things could certainly lead to the conclusion that a Jewish king was conceived and would be born (1).**

Nine months later, in June of 2 BC, Jupiter continued the pageantry. By then Jupiter had finished crowning Regulus. **The Planet of Kings travelled on** through the star field toward another spectacular rendezvous, this time with Venus, the Mother Planet. This conjunction was so close and so bright that it is today displayed in hundreds of planetaria around the world. Jupiter appeared to join Venus. The planets could not be distinguished with the naked eye. It appeared that they sat one atop the other, like a figure eight. Each contributed its full brightness to what became the most brilliant star ever seen at the time. Jupiter completed this step of the starry dance as it was setting in the west over Jerusalem, from the perspective of someone facing toward Judea. That was the time when the wise men started their travel to Jerusalem which would have taken them about three months.⁷ **(7)**

Herod wanted to know two things: when the Star had appeared, and where this baby was. The Magi presumably described the timing of events starting in September of 3 BC and continuing through June of 2 BC **(5-6).** The key to the final mystery of how the star came to stop over Bethlehem is retrograde motion. An astronomer tracking the movement of planets through the star field watches not so much on the scale of minutes, but of days, weeks and months. On this scale of time, Jupiter did stop. **On December 25 of 2 BC** as it entered retrograde, Jupiter reached full stop in its travel through the fixed stars. **Magi viewing from Jerusalem would have seen it stopped in the sky above the little town of Bethlehem (8-9)** the city of Messiah's birth. When they visited him he was already an infant as the Greek word, 'paidion,' used in Matthew 2:11 indicates.

⁶ One can easily do this through programmes such as 'Starry Nights' or the free 'Stellarium.'

⁷ Confirmed by Mark Thompson, a fellow of the Royal Astronomical society www.telegraph.co.uk/topics/christmas/8211389/Star-of-Bethlehem-may-have-been-caused-by-movement-of-planet-Jupiter-scientist-claims.html

Should Christians not be against Astrology?

Astrology is, "...based on the theory that the movement of the celestial bodies...influence human affairs and determine the course of events."⁸ By contrast, the Bible refers to the **celestial objects as carrying signs from the Almighty**. But it prohibits worship of what we see above.⁹ Still, the Bible does make a surprising number of references to signs in the heavens. If we are interested in following the counsel of the Bible, we must hold a distinction in mind. **Astrology assumes that stars are causes of earthly events. The Bible assumes that they can be messages about earthly events.** Similarly, a thermometer can tell you if it's hot or cold, but it can't make you hot or cold. There is a big difference between a sign and an active agent. This is the difference between "astrology" and what the Bible holds forth.

The Book of Job is the oldest Biblical text, likely originating before the time of Abraham. It speaks of the stars and the constellations with respect. It states that God set them in place, referencing the same constellations we know today. Even considering ancient literature other than the Bible, it appears that the configurations of the constellations and what they represent may be older than the oldest surviving texts of any language.¹⁰

Since the birth of Christ was accurately announced in the sky what about his death?

Applying Kepler's laws of planetary motion, it can be shown that Jesus died on April 3, 33 AD at 6 pm according to today's Western calendar. This becomes clear when one considers the following clues:

- All four Gospels state that the crucifixion of Jesus was on a Friday, known as Preparation Day, before a Passover festival that was always held on the 14th day of the Jewish lunar month of Nisan in Spring. Preparation day is named that way since food and other things needed were prepared for the Sabbath on the following day where no work was allowed.¹¹
- As we have found out so far, Jesus was born in 3/2 BC. According to ancient non-Biblical historians he was condemned to death by Pontius Pilate the Roman procurator of Judea during the years 26 AD through 36 AD. The Gospel accounts declare that Jesus started his public ministry when he "was about 30 years old," during which three annual Passovers were recorded. Taken together, these puzzle pieces add to a crucifixion date in the early 30's, AD. During those years, Nisan 14 fell on a Friday, Preparation Day, twice: on April 7 of 30 AD and April 3 of 33 AD.¹² The crucifixion of Jesus took place on the latter date because:
 - Sejanus, a notorious anti-Semite, was put in charge by Tiberius Caesar to administer the Roman empire. He appointed Pilate as the Prefect of Judea who followed his benefactor's anti-Jewish policies as he governed that part of the empire. On October 18, 31 AD, however, Sejanus was executed because he wanted to plot his way to the throne. Tiberius began to root out Sejanus's appointees and allies, issuing countermands to Sejanus' orders, including his anti-Semitic policies. The new official line was to "let the Jews alone."¹³ Pilate lived in a lethal political context. If Jesus' "trial" happened after this date, Pilate's strange ambivalence toward Jesus and the Jewish leadership is not strange after all—at this moment of history, his prejudices could cost him his life. Knowing this context, we can also understand why Pilate would genuinely dread those Jews who demanded Christ's execution chanting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar" in John 19:12.
 - In Daniel 9:21-26 the angel Gabriel said, "...Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens', and sixty-two 'sevens'...After the sixty-two 'sevens', the Anointed One will be cut off..." Daniel received a prediction of Messiah's, meaning the Anointed One's, coming. He was also told the date of Messiah's death, when he would be "cut off." If the "sevens" are seven years the total will be 483 years after which Jesus will die. In other prophetic passages a year of 360 days is used. To convert to our modern system which uses the longer solar year, we must divide by the time it takes for Earth to orbit the Sun, which is 365.24 days. This yields 476 years on our calendar. The countdown starts "from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem." Nehemiah records such a decree, and he dates it as the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. On our calendar, that date is 444 BC. Counting 476 years from 444 BC, and remembering that there is no year numbered "zero" AD, we discover what Gabriel told Daniel: the Messiah would die in 33 AD.¹⁴
 - In Acts 2:14-22 speaking to contemporaries about Jesus, Peter quotes a prophecy of Joel saying, "**The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood...**" as been fulfilled and that his listeners know it—that they have seen the

⁸ The New Columbia Encyclopedia (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975) ISBN 0-231-03572-1

⁹ *Psa 19:1-4, (literally referring to the Messiah according to Rom 10:17-18, Act 2:14-22) Luk 21:25, Job 31:26-28, Deut 17:2-5*

¹⁰ Job 9:9, 38:31-32, Isaiah 40:26, Capt, The Glory of the Stars (Repr. Muskogee, Oklah.: Hoffman Print./ 1998) ISBN 0-934666-02-4

¹¹ Mat 26:72, Jer 17:22, Joh 13:1, Josephus, Antiquities, Book XVI, Chapter 6

¹² Josephus in Antiquities, Books XV and XVIII, Luke 3:23, Joh 2:23; 6:4; 13:1

¹³ Philo of Alexandria, De Virtutibus Prima Pars, Quod Est De Legatione Ad Gaium, XXIV, www.bethlehemstar.net/the-day-of-the-cross/pilate-and-sejanus/#

¹⁴ Rev 11:3-4, Neh 2:1-8, www.bethlehemstar.net/the-day-of-the-cross/daniels-prophecy/

signs themselves. The gospels and Ancient non-Biblical sources do recount that the sun was darkened on the day of the crucifixion from noon until 3 in the afternoon, probably as a result of volcanic eruption caused by the earthquake mentioned in the Gospels.¹⁵ The blood moon refers to a lunar eclipse in ancient literature and the Bible. When the moon is in the Earth's shadow it receives no direct light from the sun, but is lit only by the dim light refracted and reddened by the Earth's atmosphere.

The phases of a lunar eclipse always include a "blood moon." This matters, because with Kepler's equations we can determine exactly when historical eclipses occurred. Only one Passover lunar eclipse was visible from Jerusalem while Pilate was in office. It occurred on April 3, 33 AD, the Day of the Cross. When the moon rose that evening, it was blood red. But there is more which they could not see. Kepler's equations indicate that the moon rose already in eclipse, already bloody, fulfilling Joel's vision. Necessarily, this means that the eclipse commenced before moonrise. With software we can look below the horizon and see Earth's shadow begin the eclipse. When we do, we find that at 3 PM, as Jesus was breathing his last on the cross, the moon was going to blood. The sky at Christ's birth can be viewed as a kind of visual poetry, with the new moon symbolically "birthed" at the foot of Virgo, the virgin. To complete that celestial poem, on the night of Jesus' death the moon had returned to the foot of the virgin. But now it was a full moon. A life fully lived, blotted out in blood.

What does all this mean?

The movement of the heavenly bodies is regular, like a great clock, meaning that from the very instant at which God flung the universe into existence, he also knew the moment he would enter human history in the person of Jesus. From before the beginning of time God knew the very moment when Messiah would breath his last on the cross (Rev 13:8). He marked it in the stars as signs. A natural response when you see a sign is to want to know more, to seek the fuller message.

The fundamental meaning of these events is that God is there. Moreover the Bible tells us that he loves us and desires to have a personal relationship with us. We too are interested in God, yes, but ever since the first humans rebelled against him we all are much more interested in ourselves—this is the heart of what the Bible calls "sin." It also declares that spiritual death, separation from God, is the payment we receive for sin. He provided a way to come into this relationship, to overcome the problem of sin through the Messiah, the Christ. He will willingly accept the punishment for sin in our place as the final and perfect sacrifice on our behalf, foreshadowed in the animal sacrifices found throughout the Old Testament. To believe in such Good News we need to respond, decide and act by feeling and expressing regret about our old selfish ways.¹⁶

The following prayer is one way of talking to God. The exact words you use are not important. God looks at the heart: "God, I want to come into relationship with you. I know that I am not perfect, that I'm a sinner in your eyes. Thank you that you sent Jesus to die in my place, to take the punishment for my sinfulness. Come into my life, Lord. Begin making me the person you designed me to be. Amen."

If you have just prayed this prayer, please contact us right now, so that we can help you in your new relationship with God. Feel free to contact us too if you need more information or have questions about this most important matter.

¹⁵ Mark 15:33, www.bethlehemstar.net/the-day-of-the-cross/peters-argument/

¹⁶ Joh 3:16, Isa 53:6, Rom 6:23, Lev 16, Heb 9-10, Rom 10:9-11