

Star Of Bethlehem, Part 2: Identifying The Star

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But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son,
born of a woman, born under the law,

Ga 4:4 NIV

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

Rev 22:16 NASB1995

Ga 4:4 places the birth of Jesus Christ, and by association the Star, at a specific time while Rev 22:16 alludes to His location in the east before sunrise and appearing as a bright star. By the way, Christ is speaking of Himself in Rev 22:16 and if there is any doubt, notice that He is the root (origin) and descendant of David. Only the Jesus Christ Creator God and also man can make such a claim! Colossians chapter 1 Identifies Jesus Christ as the Creator of everything. Plus, we are reminded that Jesus and David are from the house of Judah, the lion.

Last week we examined what the Scriptures say about the Star and today we will discover the one physical star that explains every detail we know about the Star from Scripture. With only about an hour to explain this, I recommend my book which has the most detail. You may download it free of charge at this web address.

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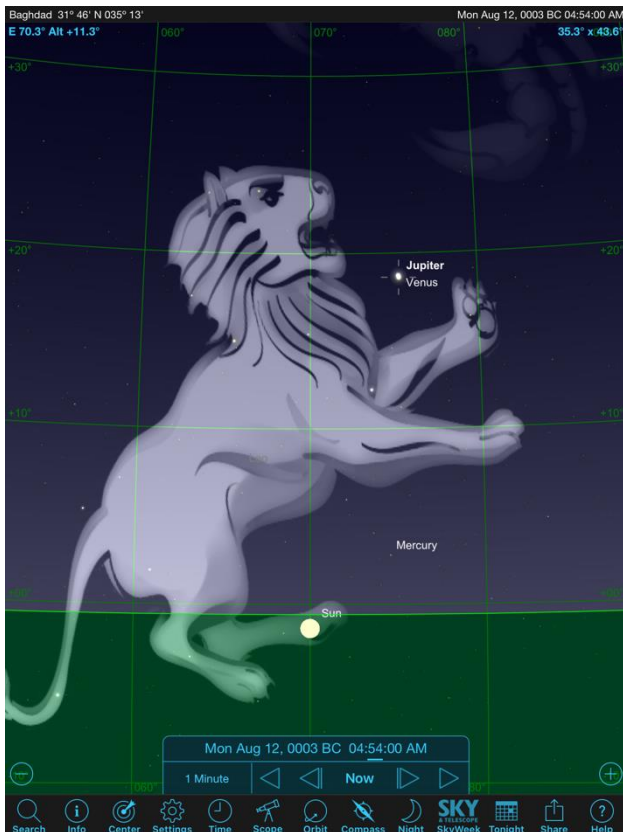
If you have difficulty, please email me baloghrick@gmail.com and request the link in a return email

“...we have seen His Star in the East...”

The Magi saw a very close passage of the two brightest planets in the morning sky on August 12, 3BC. Venus and Jupiter were so close that it was impossible to distinguish them individually. They appeared to be one very bright star with the naked eye. Located in the constellation Leo and visible as one star for only one morning. The day before and the day afterward both planets were visible separately and much dimmer to the naked eye. It is reasonable that King Herod was unaware of

the Star since it made only one appearance and only for a few hours before sunrise. Sky Safari Pro astronomical computer software allows us to see the sky at any time in the past or future.

Left: conjunction of Jupiter with Venus at sunrise on August 12, 3BC. Date and time are shown at the bottom.



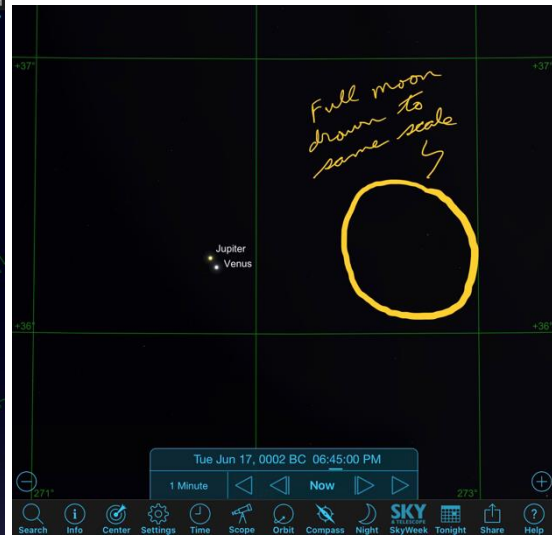
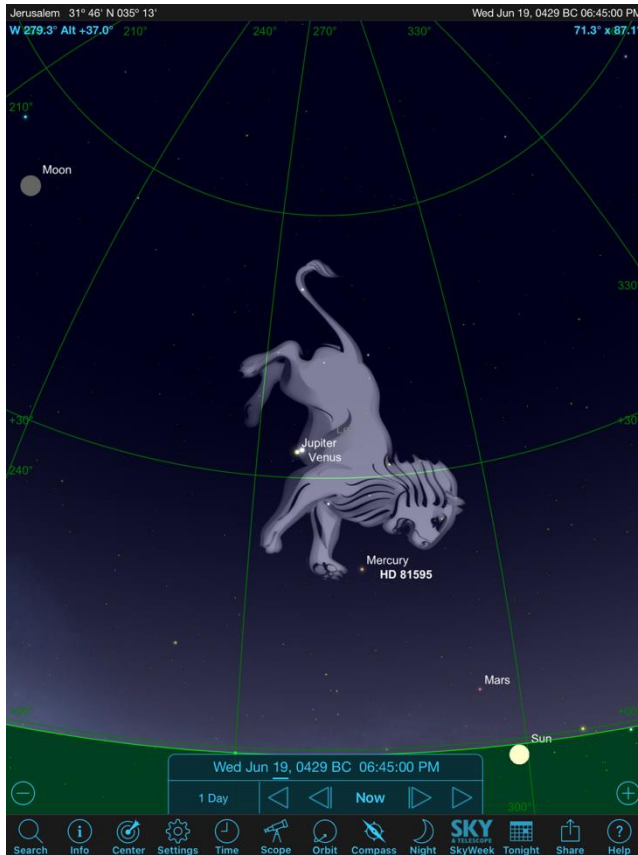
Above: magnified view of Jupiter and Venus on August 12, 3BC with approximate size of full moon drawn to scale.

Since Jupiter, Earth and Venus take different times to orbit the Sun once, Jupiter returns to the same location among the stars every 427 years while Venus passes Jupiter several

times during the year in all twelve constellations of the Zodiac, returning near to Jupiter in Leo every 427 years although not always at exactly the same separation each time. It is significant that Jupiter is closest to Venus only on August 12, 3BC out of the former ten 427-year cycles, going back to 4273BC. Since the second and third brightest celestial bodies in all the sky become as one to the naked eye, we can confidently proclaim that there has never been a brighter morning star in the constellation of Leo. As Christ proclaimed "...I am the...bright morning star."

"...and the Star, which they had seen in the East, went on before them..."

About ten months later an even closer conjunction of Jupiter with Venus occurred in Leo but now visible for about 3 hours after sunset in the northwest. Like the conjunction 10 months



earlier, Jupiter is closest to Venus on only one particular date, in this case June 17, 2 BC out of the former ten 427-year cycles, going back to 4273BC. So both conjunctions were the closest and therefore the brightest of all previous Jupiter/Venus conjunctions in Leo in their

respective 427-year cycles.

Left: Sky Safari pro reconstruction of the Star that led the Magi to Bethlehem on June 17, 2BC.

Above: magnified view of separation where it would appear as a single Star that evening. Compare with the similar illustration above.

Note that both conjunctions occurred before King Herod died, before January 10, 1BC. During the 10 months between the Jupiter/Venus conjunctions, Jupiter passed Regulus, the brightest star in Leo three times, a triple conjunction. A quote from *Babylonian Star-Lore, An Illustrated Guide to the Star-lore and constellations of Ancient Babylon*, 2008, by Gavin White, p. 139, relates to the circumstances quite well:

“If Jupiter retrogrades in the vicinity of the King Star [Regulus] and thus passes it twice, it is as if the stars are sending a very specific message to the king – “someone will rise up, kill the king and seize the thrown”. This prognostication

is clearly derived from the planet's behavior, which by approaching the King Star twice over indicates the usurpation of one king by another".

Watch the video of the complete 10-month series of all five conjunctions.

"...we have seen His Star in the East..."

Why did the Magi attribute this Star to the Messiah instead of someone else? Because

1. The Babylonian's obsession with keeping track of Jupiter and Venus. Archeological evidence in the form of cuneiform tablets verify that the Babylonians took great interest in predicting the locations of Jupiter and Venus, even to have invented calculus to do so. Using their method, I have calculated positions of Jupiter within one day of the positions derived from the SkySafari Pro software locations.
2. When the Angel Gabriel spoke prophecy of the Messiah's arrival in Dan 9:25, the Magi knew exactly what it meant. The Angel Gabriel told Daniel.

"So you are to know[h3045] and discern[H7919] that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

To know Strongs H3045 is yada meaning to know relationally and experientially. To discern Strongs H7919 is sakai meaning to act with insight, to be prudent, to give insight, to teach, to prosper, to consider, to ponder, to understand, to act prudently, to act with devotion. Gabriel is about to tell Daniel something that he is prepared to understand and act on. Although you and I may have no clue as to what is about to be said, I believe Daniel knew quite well.

An important question to ask is does "restore" in Daniel 9:25 refer to restoring the physical Jerusalem or to restoring the previous Jewish inhabitants? This word is Strongs H7725.

The word "restore" in Daniel 9:25 is used several times in Jeremiah 29 by the Lord where He refers to people returning to Jerusalem, "restoring" them to where they were – Jerusalem – before the exile in Jeremiah 29:10. So, it appears that restore refers to people returning back to Jerusalem.

The second part of the decree is "rebuild" which is translated from Strongs h1129 in Daniel 9:25 means to build, to construct and fits the actual reconstruction of Jerusalem; notice it is repeated near the end of this verse referring to what will be rebuilt, so the meaning of this word is clear.

In Ezra chapter 3 we learn that Zerubbabel organized the first return to Jerusalem for purposes of reconstruction. He met opposition many times from those living there and even the local governor in Ezra chapter 5 until he received a letter from King Darius to not meddle in the rebuilding efforts (Ezra 6). The Lord's hand was on their work even while waiting for the reply from King Darius, so the construction continued.

“[5] But the eye of their God was on the elders of the Jews, and they did not stop them until a report could come to Darius, and then a written reply be returned concerning it.” Ezra 5:5 (NASB)

The decree was made in “distressful “or “troublous” times Dan 9:25 “...even in times[h6256] of distress[h6695a]”. Let’s examine “troublous” in Daniel 9:25. It is Strongs 6695, a masculine noun referring to distress, anguish. It describes a condition of political, military, and religious oppression on God's people (Da 9:25). Both the decree in Ester and in Ezekiel would, without question, be described as troublous. After a first decree designed to exterminate all Jews everywhere was realized to be motivated by the personal hatred of Jews by Haman, a second decree giving the right of the Jews to defend themselves when attacked was given since once a decree is given it cannot be revoked. This second decree went out to the entire Babylonian empire “on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month (that is, the month Adar) of the 12th year of King Ahasuerus” (Esther 8:9, NASB) According to the Apologetics Study Bible (Holman Bible Publishers, 2007) King Ahasuerus reigned 486 to 465 B.C. (page 717). So, the 12th year of his reign would be 475 B.C. When the governor received the decree by Darius in Ezra 6:6-12 allowing Temple Work to continue, the year was 470 B.C according to the Sacred Calendar by Jim Liles. <https://www.thesacredcalendar.com/babylonian-captivity-book-of-daniel/>

In the conclusion of Diana Edelman’s monumental book, *The Origins of the ‘Second’ Temple: Persian Imperial Policy and The Rebuilding of Jerusalem*, 2005, she makes this statement:

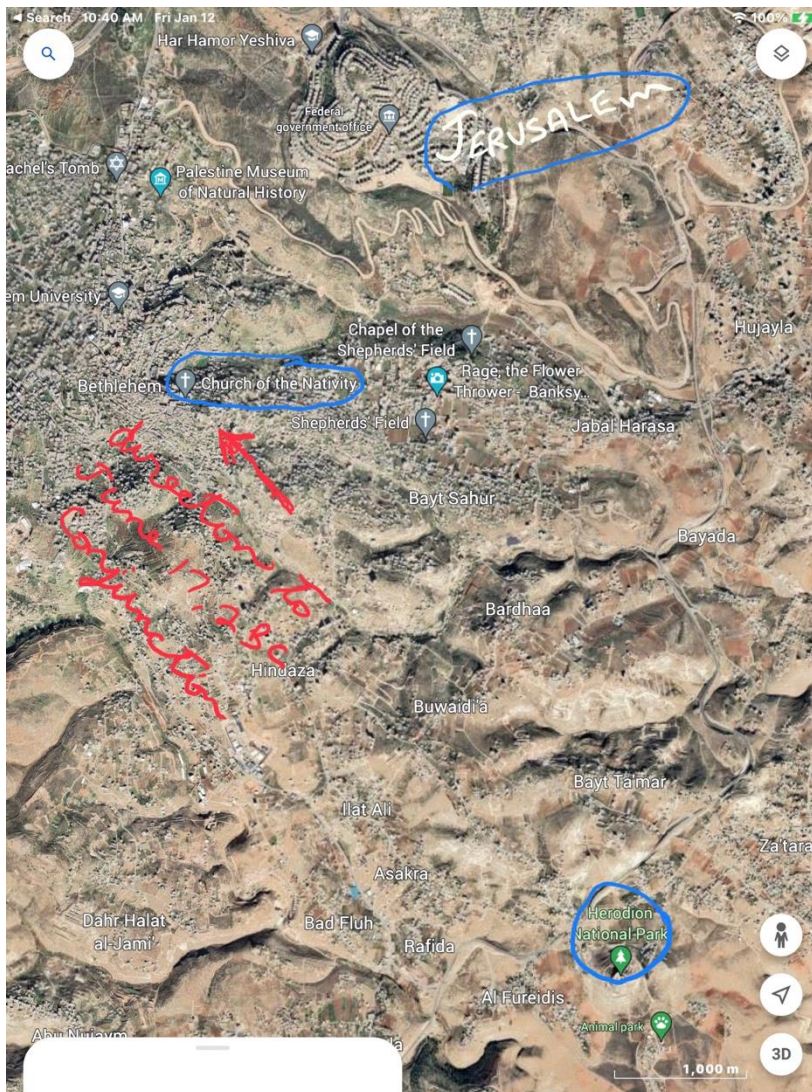
“The return under Zerubbabel and Yeshua would have taken place either at the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes I in 465 BCE, or at the end of the reign of his predecessor, Xerxes, (486–465 BCE). The latter is only mentioned in the biblical texts in Ezra 4.6 and in the book of Esther, under the name Ahasuerus”

In summary we have identified two different decrees by two different Kings. One dealing with rebuilding and the other with repopulating Jerusalem. Both were made during troublous times, and both occurred about 470 B.C. We will now assume that 7 weeks in Daniel 9:25 actually represents 7 consecutive sabbatical year periods and the 62 weeks represents the following 62 sabbatical year periods. When counting sabbatical years beginning with 472BC, the first one after the decree in Ester 3:7 in the year 475 B.C., the seventh sabbatical year falls on 430BC which happens to be when a 427-year cycle of Jupiter with Venus in Leo begins! Like all such cycles, they are almost identical with 5 total conjunctions, two Jupiter/Venus and three Jupiter/Regulus sandwiched in between. Lasting 427 years, it begins the next cycle exactly 62 sabbatical years later on 3BC! So, the 7 weeks and 62 weeks in Da 9:25 refer to two sabbatical years that are 427 years apart exactly timed to the heliacal rising of Jupiter with Venus in Leo! The Magi’s obsession with tracking Jupiter made this an obvious relationship of prophecy with conjunctions in the sky. The Magi were the perfect people to appreciate the astronomical significance of the Messiah’s coming

at the brightest of all heliacal risings of Jupiter with Venus on August 12, 3BC. Although the Magi living at the time of Daniel did not live long enough to see the 3BC conjunction, their future ancestors did, entering Jerusalem between August 12, 3BC and June 17, 2BC prepared with gifts and to worship Him.

“...the... star went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was”

The astronomical software tells us the direction to see the June 17, 2BC conjunction which makes no sense if they began their journey to Bethlehem from Jerusalem, as this Google Earth map shows. However, if they started from Herod’s Herodium palace they would follow the Star to Bethlehem.



Left: Google Earth map with landmarks circled in blue and direction to the June 17, 2BC conjunction. This is the direction the Magi would have been led by the Star. Notice that if they left from Jerusalem instead of the Herodium following that direction, they would never reach Bethlehem.

Recall that after Herod met with the Magi at a secret location, where Herod asked when the Magi saw the Star, Herod told them to leave. If the Magi followed the Star by way of dry stream gullies (called wadis) from the Herodium the last wadi before Bethlehem is the direction where Jupiter and Venus set below the horizon right above where the Church of the Nativity now stands. When climbing this last wadi watching the Star ahead of them, they would see it in the sky much longer than normal because while climbing a hill the horizon drops so objects in the sky appear to stand still. See my YouTube video for a video of this by searching YouTube for How the Star Led the Magi...by Balogh.

Conclusion

Why would the 7 and 62 weeks in Daniel 9:25 exactly match the 427 year Cycle of Jupiter? Why does this astronomical explanation account for all the attributes of the Star in scripture? The answer is both simple and profound: the same God is the Creator of the spiritual and the natural. Earth, Venus and Jupiter were initially placed in their specific orbital locations when they were created. The Star that announced His Birth and led the Magi to where He was located in Bethlehem ten months later was planned by the omniscient and omnipotent God of the Bible at the dawn of creation when He placed celestial objects at specific positions in their orbits. This was, by far, the grandest Birthday announcement ever made - authored by the Creator Himself - announcing the grandest gift ever given to mankind, for by receiving this gift the doors to heaven have been opened to all who accept it.