

The Glory of the Star of Bethlehem

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This article was condensed from www.scripturescholar.com/VenusStarofBethlehem.htm

Video 1: The Bible Reveals the Star of Bethlehem <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xHE9U3Pq4o>

Video 2: The Wise men follow the Star to Jesus— <https://youtu.be/tLjGUHRpwcQ>

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In this article, you will recognize the actual Star of Bethlehem story. It is not obscure or astrological, but revealed in the Bible, if you know how to find it. God used the sun, moon, and stars as signs to reveal and worship Jesus. God led the wise men with star pictures, marked by His star rising, and then by going before them to Jesus. God told the story of a star that led men to Jesus. A story a youth can understand, but which can increase the understanding of those already wise. God told the gospel briefly, but powerfully with those signs. In the last chapter of the Bible, Jesus identified the Bright Morning Star with Himself (Revelation 22:16). The wise men came because they saw “his star” rise. Therefore, the wise men came because they saw the Bright Morning Star rise.

Which star was the bright morning star? The Bible calls planets wandering stars (Jude 1:13). The first five planets are the brightest stars. Only Mercury and Venus are morning stars because being nearer the sun than the earth; one can only see them in the morning or evening. Venus, the brightest star in the sky, was the Star of Bethlehem. The Bible calls Venus by several names; another name is the daystar because, on occasion, one can see it throughout the day.¹ When visible, it is the first star you see in the evening or the last star still visible before dawn.

When did the wise men see his star in the east? The word “in the east” is not a geographical term, but an astronomical term² that means, “To rise in the east with the sun.”³ Most stars rise this way once per year. The planets or wandering stars rise with the sun with fixed periods usually slightly longer than a year; for instance, Venus rises with the sun once every 1.6 years. Since the wise men saw the second rising of Venus with the sun, they arrived in Bethlehem nearly 1.6 years after they first saw the sign. Hereafter when we say Venus rose, we are referring to it rising with the sun.

Only their creator could arrange the stars and time the orbits of the moon and planets to tell His story. A reason God made them was for signs (Genesis 1:14). A meaning for the word sign is a picture. The stars form pictures that we call constellations. The sign for Judah (the Jews) was a picture of a Lion. Leo is the constellation associated with Judah; Leo is Latin for lion.⁴ The sun lightened the sky, so only one picture was visible for the sign.

An astronomy program can allow one to view these pictures today.⁵ Just before dawn, on 24 August 2 B.C., Venus rose; the eastern horizon was busy with four of the five visible planets in the constellation of Leo. Venus marked a picture of the Lion of the tribe of Judah receiving the golden scepter of world rule. Venus continued visible as the daystar setting fifty minutes before

¹ 2 Peter 1:19 KJV and H. B. Curtis, “Venus Visible at Inferior Conjunction,” 1935, pp 15-19, <http://adsabs.harvard.edu/full/1936PA....44...18C> .

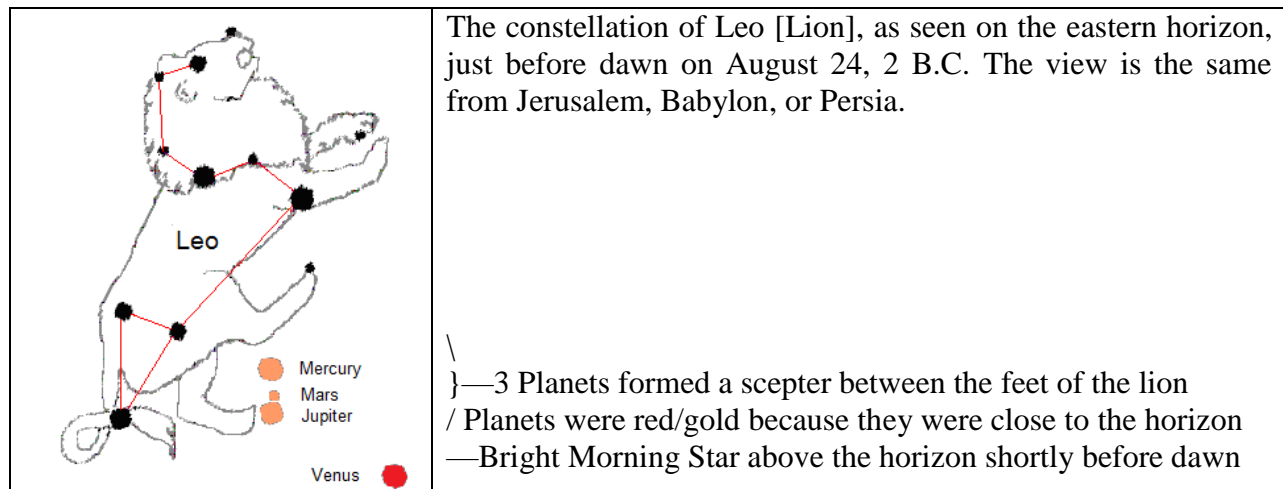
² Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 1979, p. 62.

³ Werner Keller, *The Bible As History*, 2nd Rev. Ed., 1980, p 364.

⁴ E.W. Bullinger, *The Witness of the Stars*, 1893, p. 163.

⁵ Cartes du Ciel (Sky Charts), www.astrosurf.com/astropc. This software is free.

sunset in the direction of Jerusalem. So it went before them pointing the way. The Maya and Babylonian civilizations linked Venus rising with the sun with important events, so they carefully tracked and calendared these risings.⁶



The words star and lion occur together in only one Bible passage. Balaam's prophecy, "Like a lion..., A star will come out of Jacob, a scepter will rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24:9-17). The Bible often links passages by using similar words or phrases. In this passage star is further linked to scepter by Hebrew poetry, so star and scepter have a related meaning. When Venus rose, it was in the constellation of Leo, and it marked a picture of a scepter formed by Mercury, Mars, and Jupiter. The Bible links a lion and scepter in another passage.⁷ This scepter, the vertical line of stars, fulfilled a prophecy given by Jacob, "Judah you are a lion ..., The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his (Genesis 49:9-10). This unique picture matched the prophecy of Jacob and revealed to the wise men the promised Jewish world ruler was soon to be born, so they decided to seek him. These stars were as low in the sky as possible while still visible, so they bowed before the King they were revealing. Like the sun or moon on the horizon, the atmosphere reddens their color near the horizon, so the color of the stars changed.

One finds kings in palaces, so the wise men went to the palace of King Herod the Great in Jerusalem, the capital of the Jews (from the word Judah). When the wise men asked about the king's sons, they realized none qualified. The wise men timed their arrival in Jerusalem near when the star would next rise so they could be sure the new king was born. One can infer Jesus was born between these risings because King Herod learned of the time since the last rising 1.6 years; he had all the boys of Bethlehem under two years of age killed.

Venus was obvious; why didn't many come to Jerusalem? Why haven't many astronomers today recognized it? The sign was brief, faint, and the Bible was necessary to interpret it. Six centuries earlier, Daniel chief of the wise men introduced the Bible to them. Only a few wise men connected the sign to prophecy and came seeking a king. The wise men understood the sign because they looked in both the sky and the Bible.

The wise men knew when the king was born, and the religious leaders in Jerusalem knew where. He would be born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem was 5.5 miles (10km) south, just off the main

⁶ *Dresden Codex* and *Venus tablet of Ammisaduqa*.

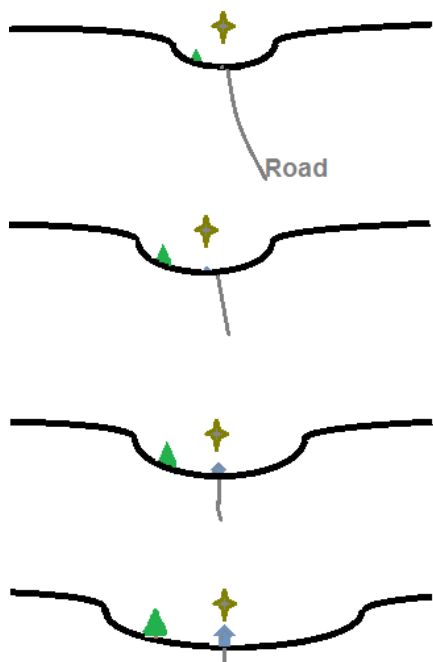
⁷ There are two passages; the second passage is Esther 14:11-13.

road. Sent by the king and trusting the Bible, the wise men went to Bethlehem. They asked but did not find the boy king.

Three months earlier, an angel told shepherds the Christ was born that night in Bethlehem; they went and saw the baby, and they announced abroad what they had seen. All Israel was looking for the Christ. So many people went to the cave but found no one. If they found a baby, King Herod would have executed Him. To avoid that, when the shepherds left, the holy family cleaned up and moved in the dark. Shepherds were known liars; they were not allowed to testify in court, so everyone assumed they made up the story. The holy family hid on their ancestral property on the ridge on the western outskirts of town.

When the wise men reached Bethlehem, the shepherds were gone; they went to Jerusalem to sell lambs to the Passover pilgrims. When the wise men asked, "Where is the newborn king?" no one knew, they relayed the shepherd's story. The wise men concluded the baby king was gone; we arrived too late. Their only hope was His star would soon rise with the sun.

Near the Bethlehem inn, on the eve of Passover, Monday, 27 March 1 A.D., they saw Venus rise with the sun, in the constellation of Aries. It pictures a slain lamb.⁸ They realized they saw another sign in the heavens. Bethlehem was a town of shepherds, any spotless male lambs born there were destined to be sacrificed, and Jesus' star pointed to a slain lamb in the heavens. That afternoon in Jerusalem, men would slay lambs for Passover. The wise men watched the bright morning star rise in the east and then as the daystar went before them to the west. Was it again pointing in the direction they needed to go?



The star remained after sunset, alone low in the western sky over a saddle in the ridge. Low so it could point to a house. Its apparent nearness beckoned, and as they moved, it waited. There was enough daylight so they could walk without stumbling (John 11:9). They had twenty-four minutes to follow the star west five hundred meters up the road to the notch. The Bible also calls Venus the dayspring, a star that rose with the sun, guided on the road of peace in the darkness (Luke 1:78-79). Stars always move, Venus descended, but its apparent position remained fixed as the wise men ascended following it. They saw it over the house in the notch where Jesus and Mary were. The motion of the wise men and the star canceled each other, so star stopped over Jesus' house. Then it disappeared, but how? An invisible cloud made Venus disappear because some humidity dimmed its light.

That evening as Passover started, the wise men visited Jesus and Mary. Joseph was not home because men were required to be in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast.

The wise men exceedingly rejoiced, because God helped them to complete a quest that almost failed, in a way only He could. Later that night, an angel warned Joseph, so the holy family fled to Egypt, the reverse of Israel fleeing from Egypt on Passover fourteen hundred years earlier.

The Bible joins these signs, Jesus the Lion of Judah and the slain but living Lamb on the throne of heaven (Revelation 5:5-6). Jesus connects these to the Bright Morning Star with the phrase the Root of David, which occurs only in that one other passage. The Lamb was slain but

⁸ E.W. Bullinger, *The Witness of the Stars*, 1893, Kregel, Grand Rapids, p. 106.

alive a resurrection picture. The signs the wise men saw succinctly tell the gospel. The promised divine Son, born to forever rule the nations, slain yet alive the Passover for God's household.

When was Jesus born? They brought the census records from Bethlehem to Rome. They examined them on three occasions, and after each time they celebrated of birth of Jesus on December 25. At the time of Jesus' birth, December 25 was the winter solstice, the longest night and shortest day of the year. The star of Bethlehem limited the birth of Jesus to either 2 or 1 B.C.

It turns out at both Jesus' birth and death, the sun was darkened, and the moon turned to blood. On Pentecost, the Apostle Peter reminded his audience of these signs they had seen Acts 2:20 quoting Joel 2:31 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.* In addition to the sun being darkened for three hours while Jesus was crucified, after sunset, the moon rose eclipsed, blood-red on the horizon, Friday, April 3, 33 A.D. A similar occurrence occurred at Jesus' birth. The sun darkened on the winter solstice, December 25, and on December 29, 1 B.C., the blood moon rose eclipsed at the horizon. For His birth and death, the sun and moon hid their light to bow to worship Him. This is the closest in time an eclipsed moon can be to a non-moonlit winter solstice midnight.

Shepherds only kept watch in the winter months during the lambing season, so sheep did not trample the newborn lambs in the pens where they normally spent the night.

Conclusion: The Star of Bethlehem, Venus, marked great signs in the sky. The Lion of the Jews received a golden scepter, to fulfill several prophecies of the coming Christ, the world ruler who would rule forever. The wise men saw the sign and understood it fulfilled those prophecies. The stars bowed in worship to announce His coming.

While they prepared to travel or journeyed, Jesus was born on the winter solstice, Christmas, 25 December 1 B.C. and the sun and the moon worshipped Jesus. They circumcised and named Jesus, on Sunday 1 January 1 A.D., which was the first day of the week, the first day, of the first month, of the first year.

The wise men arrived in Bethlehem, and another sign revealed the King was also a Lamb for a Passover sacrifice. The star guided them to Jesus' house, and they arrived in the evening of Passover. The blood of the Passover Lamb protected the family's house, so this Lamb protected God's house, His family. The most glorious star hid its glory again to reveal and worship its creator. The heavens declared the glory of God—by declaring His plan. Using technology, we can still observe the signs the wise men saw today. Every time we record the date, we recognize His glorious birth.

Afterword: Our Lady of Guadalupe links to this story. On the morning of the winter solstice, Juan Diego climbed a hill to the west to meet Mary, and he saw three wandering stars form a line marked by Venus rising with the sun for the last time. Like the wise men, let us come and worship the King. Merry Christmas!

For the fuller story, see www.scripturescholar.com/VenusStarofBethlehem.htm.