

The Star of Bethlehem Notes

This is a series of facts the Bible reveals about the Star of Bethlehem that any proposal on the Star of Bethlehem must be able to address as to how each of those bits of information were gleaned.

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What the magi knew about the child

1. How did the star signal the birth of a child?
2. How did the star signal the birth of a boy (not a girl) we saw "his" star at its rising?
3. How did the star signal that the birth was of a king?
4. How did the star signal the birth was of a king of the Jews?
5. Not ambiguous—the magi did not ask "if" a king was born—but where is he.
6. The magi "observed" "his" "star" at its rising. There was a person associated with the star.
7. The child could not be born before the star was first seen as it rose.
8. The child could not be born before the star appeared, but could be born after he was born. Herod killed the boys under two, not about two or between one and two.
9. A birth anytime after the star first rose was allowed.
10. The magi planned to worship this king.
11. God reserves worship for Himself alone, the magi were believers. So the magi came to worship God.
12. The magi brought specific gifts to this young boy.
13. The magi were familiar with and trusted the Bible because when they were told Bethlehem--they headed straight there.
14. Since the magi arrived immediately before the star's reappearance, they timed their arrival to the reappearance. The new rising of his star would terminate the period when the child could be born.
15. Something about what they saw, convinced them they were seeking God.
16. Because the story is recorded in the gospels, God fully expected the magi to see the star of Bethlehem and understand the star of Bethlehem.
17. The magi brought gold, frankincense and myrrh. Isaiah 60:6 says from Midian bearing Gold and frankincense, why did the magi also bring myrrh? All had approximately equal value by weight.

The Star

18. The star was too subtle to be observed as it rose by most.
19. The magi "saw" the star they did not calculate its rising and depend on their calculations.
20. His star was uniquely associated with the Messiah and Jesus.
21. It was the "same" star they saw in the east that they saw from Bethlehem—could not be two different objects.
22. The star rose in the east, therefore it was not a polar star.
23. The star appeared at a precise time, not over a period of weeks or months.
24. It disappeared for a time. The star was not continuously visible at night.
25. The star appeared a second time.
26. It was "one" star, (probably not two or more coming together).
27. The star's arrival was more than a year—or Herod would have killed boys less than one.
28. En anatole—heliacal rising mentioned twice so both were heliacal risings—no need to mention a second time if other than heliacal rising. Rather than "they had seen" "they saw" a heliacal rising that led ...

Herod

29. The magi "assumed" the current king of the Jews knew of the newborn king of the Jews.
30. The magi did not realize the current king would feel threatened by the newborn king.

31. Herod did not know of the star.
 32. The magi's explanation of the star was convincing.
 33. None of Herod's sons qualified—none was young enough.
 34. The Magi's arrival troubled King Herod and all of Jerusalem.
 35. Herod did not know when the star appeared.
 36. Why didn't Herod have the magi followed?
 37. Herod was in Jerusalem, he had many palaces, when Jerusalem was too cold he would likely be at a warmer palace. So the visit was not likely to have been in the winter.
 38. Herod killed several of his sons including one 5 days before he died.
 39. Herod was very sick in his last months--and he spent that time in his Jericho palace.
 40. The holy family fled to Egypt almost immediately after the magi visited.
 41. God led the magi with a dream to leave by another route, He could have led them with earlier dreams, but none is mentioned.
 42. From the East the star guided them west. What they saw in the east motivated them to go west.
 43. It was first visible as a heliacal rising. The magi thought it important to mention this (nearly all stars rise in the east. Therefore, its reappearance probably was a heliacal rising.
 44. The star guided them to the house where Jesus lived (not to Bethlehem). There were other boys in Bethlehem who qualified, so guiding to Bethlehem was not good enough.
 45. Jesus was at least 40 days old when the magi visited him.
 46. The star stopped over the house where Jesus was.
 47. Jesus was singled out by the star from the other boys of Bethlehem.
 48. The same star that led the magi to Jerusalem from the east, pointed out Jesus' house in Bethlehem.
 49. The magi rejoiced when they saw the star again—why?
 50. Joseph was not at home—was there a reason for this?
 51. Jesus identified himself as the bright morning star.
 52. The child was to be born between the risings.
 53. Birth was linked to the first appearing of a star.
 54. The star they first saw rose in the east, when stars reappear they would reappear in the east.
 55. Jerusalem would not be a good spot to view a helical rising because the Mt. of Olives would block the view of the star.
 56. Solar eclipse and comets were linked to a death and destruction.
 57. The constellation of Leo is associated with Judah and a lion.
 58. The fixed stars tell the same story year after year only a wandering star, comet, or new star could tell a new story.
 59. The first mention of star in the Bible is Numbers 24:17 a Star shall rise out of Israel.
 60. In Hebrew poetry this star (Num 17:24) is in poetic parallel with a scepter.
 61. The star and scepter are linked by Hebrew poetry.
 62. Two related prophecies mention a scepter (Num 17:24 & Gen 49:9-10).
 63. Babylon records did not mention special significance of any conjunctions at this time.
 64. Venus heliacally rises at 1.6 years (the longest rising not over 2 years).
 65. Venus is the brightest of the star like objects.
 66. The “bright morning star” is Venus.
 67. The sun was believed to be born when the length of the day started to increase.
- Astronomy**
68. Only the 5 wandering stars (planets) appear to have a birth. The fixed stars are unchanging.
 69. Wandering stars vary in brightness and so can appear to be born--most stars have a consistent brightness.
 70. Venus is the brightest wandering star.
 71. Venus is known as a morning star (Mercury was the other).
 72. Venus is known as an evening star (Mercury was the other).

73. If any object in the sky symbolized Jesus it would be the sun.
 74. If Jesus is symbolized by a star, it would be Venus, at its brightest is twice the brightness of any other star.
 75. Venus appears for the first time every 1.6 years. This is the longest period less than two years for any planet.
 76. There is a lot of missing information—but the appearance of the star told a story.
 77. The ancients did not know that Jupiter was larger than Venus.
 78. When it is dark, it is dangerous to travel on land to follow a star.
 79. Because stars move from east to west, the reasonable direction to follow a star would be in a westerly direction.
 80. Venus is the only (non-supernova) visible during the day. Venus is only visible during the day near the inferior conjunction, so near the time of a heliacal rising.
 81. Did the star play any other role in God's plan?
 82. Does the star reveal anything additional about God's play for Jesus?
 83. A star at its heliacal rising is not visible during the night and it is only visible briefly before the sun rises.
 84. A Forbush decrease can enhance atmospheric visibility, so space weather can affect terrestrial weather. Forbush decrease is when there are little or no cosmic rays striking the earth's atmosphere so the atmosphere does not form sites that collect dust to which water collects. It takes about four days for the atmosphere to clear during one of these events.
 85. Near the horizon due to attenuation, heavenly objects are much less visible.
 86. The Babylonian's and the Incas carefully watched Venus.
 87. Before WWII Venus could near its inferior conjunction be seen during the day.
 88. The Magi came to a house.
 89. The magi were not guided to the house by the people of Bethlehem.
 90. Joseph was not at home, but carpenters work when it is day not night.
- Matthew's purpose seems to be to show Jesus was the King of the Jews—he included this because a star supported that purpose. Matthew mainly supported his purpose from the scriptures.