

God's Witness in the Stars

The Heavens Declare — From Creation to the Bright and Morning Star

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Anchor Passages

Psalm 19:1 *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*

Psalm 19:2 *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*

Psalm 19:3 *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*

Psalm 19:4 *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,*

Genesis 1:14 *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:*

Psalm 147:4 *He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.*

Introduction: The Book Above Our Heads

Go outside on a clear night, away from the lights of town, and look up. What you see is the oldest book in the world. It was open before Moses wrote a word, before Abraham left Ur, before the Flood. Adam saw it. Enoch saw it. Noah saw it from the deck of the ark. Every generation since has seen the same pages, turning slowly with the seasons.

The Bible says this book *speaks*.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge” (Psalm 19:1-2). Not “the heavens are pretty.” Not “the heavens make us feel small.” The heavens *declare*. They *utter speech*. They *show knowledge*.

What do they say?

That is the question of this presentation. Most Christians have never been told that there is an answer — or that men of God have been searching it out for centuries. Here is some of what lies ahead:

- **The apostle Paul quoted a Greek poem about the constellations.** Standing before the philosophers of Athens, he cited a line from a famous astronomy poem that opens by saying the constellations were set in the sky as “signs.” Most Bible readers have read the quotation many times without knowing where it came from (Chapter 7).
- **Paul took Psalm 19’s words about the heavens and applied them to the preaching of the word of faith.** “Their sound went into all the earth” — the voice of the sky — is quoted in Romans 10 (Chapter 1).
- **The same Hebrew word that says the heavens “declare” God’s glory is the word God used when He told Abraham to “tell the stars.”** He was not only asking Abraham to count (Chapter 1).
- **The Bible names constellations.** Orion, the Pleiades, the Bear, and a word — *Mazzaroth* — that most scholars understand as the twelve signs along the sun’s path. One of the oldest books in scripture already treats them as long known (Chapter 2).

- **The knowledge of Adam could have reached Jacob through only a handful of lives.** Methuselah knew Adam for 243 years. Shem knew Methuselah for nearly a century. Abraham lived his whole life in Shem's lifetime (Chapter 3).
- **Read in order, the twelve signs tell one story:** a woman with a promised seed at the beginning, a Lion treading on a serpent at the end. It is the story of Genesis 3:15 (Chapter 5).
- **The Sphinx — a woman's head on a lion's body — may be the whole Mazzaroth in a single figure:** the first sign and the last, joined together. On one Egyptian temple ceiling a human-headed lion stands exactly where the Lion's band of the zodiac meets the next; this presentation checks Bullinger's drawing of it against a second, independent drawing (Chapter 5).
- **The man who wrote the classic book on the witness of the stars said the church is nowhere in them** — and scripture tells why: the mystery of this present administration was "hid in God" (Chapter 5).
- **Clay tablets, a bronze disc, an Egyptian temple ceiling, synagogue floors** — the record of the heavens is written across the ancient world (Chapter 7).
- **The sky itself has moved.** The pole star of Abraham's day was not our Polaris, and the sun no longer stands where it did on the first day of spring. Modern astronomy can turn the sky back and show us exactly what the magi saw (Chapter 8).
- **A prophet for hire saw "a Star out of Jacob."** He came from the east, and centuries later so did the magi (Chapter 9).
- **On the evening of September 11, 3 B.C.,** the first day of the seventh month, the sky over Jerusalem showed a woman clothed with the sun, with the new moon at her feet — the very picture of Revelation 12. That same week the king planet began to circle the king star in the constellation of the Lion, three times over (Chapter 10). You will see the charts for yourself.

Some of this is stated outright in scripture. Some of it is careful reasoning from scripture. Some of it is history and tradition that agrees with scripture but cannot carry the same weight. This presentation will always tell you which is which. There is no need to stretch anything. What can be shown is exciting enough.

How to Read This Presentation

Three kinds of statements appear in these pages, and each is labeled plainly where it matters:

- **Scripture says** — the Bible states it in so many words. The only question is what the words mean.
- **Careful reasoning** — a conclusion drawn from what scripture says, which many careful readers share but which scripture does not spell out.
- **History and tradition** — the record of ancient writers, astronomers and archaeology. It can agree with scripture and throw light on it, but it is never scripture.

A word of caution belongs at the very start, because scripture itself gives it. The heavens were made to *declare God's glory*, not to tell our fortunes. God forbids astrology — reading the stars to predict or govern men's lives — in the strongest terms (Deuteronomy 4:19; Isaiah 47:13-14; Jeremiah 10:2). Everything in this presentation is the opposite of astrology. Astrology looks at the stars to learn about *us*. The witness of the stars looks at them to learn about *Him* — and especially about the promised Seed, Jesus Christ.

Most of the pictures in this presentation were drawn for it; a few are old engravings, now in the public domain, credited where they appear. The star charts for 3–2 B.C. were computed with astronomical software from the positions of the stars and planets for those very dates, so that the reader can see what the ancient sky actually looked like.

In short: the heavens have been speaking since the beginning. This presentation listens — with scripture as the judge of everything we hear.

Chapter 1: Before There Was a Book

The first written scripture came through Moses, roughly twenty-five centuries after Adam. For all those centuries God's people lived without a Bible. Yet they were not without a word from God. God spoke to Adam, to Enoch, to Noah and to Abraham directly. And over their heads every night hung something He had made on the fourth day of creation and given a stated purpose.

Lights “for Signs”

Genesis 1:14 *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:*

Genesis 1:15 *And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.*

Genesis 1:16 *And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.*

God gave the lights four purposes. Look at each one.

“For signs.” The Hebrew word is *'oth* (pronounced “oat”). It means a mark or token that points to something beyond itself. Watch how scripture uses it:

- The rainbow: **“I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth” (Genesis 9:13).** “Token” is *'oth*.
- Circumcision was a “token” (*'oth*) of the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:11).
- The Passover blood: **“the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are” (Exodus 12:13).**
- The sabbath was “a sign” (*'oth*) between God and Israel (Exodus 31:13).

An *'oth* is never merely decoration. It is a sign that *means something* — something God attached to it. The old Hebrew scholar Gesenius connected the word with a root meaning “to mark.” When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, *'oth* in Genesis 1:14 became *semeion* — the same word the New Testament uses when **“there appeared a great wonder in heaven” (Revelation 12:1)**, and when Jesus said, **“there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars” (Luke 21:25).**

“For seasons.” This is not spring, summer, fall and winter. The Hebrew is *mo'adim*, “appointed times.” It is the very word God used for His feasts: **“Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts” (Leviticus 23:2).** “Feasts” is *mo'adim*. From the fourth day of creation, God set a clock in the sky by which His appointed times would be kept. Chapter 4 follows that thread.

“For days, and years.” The ordinary measuring of time — the sun marking the day, the sun's circuit marking the year.

Some Christian writers argue that “signs” in this verse means nothing more than time-markers. But Jeremiah uses the very same phrase, “the signs of heaven,” and tells Israel only not to be *afraid* of them:

Jeremiah 10:2 *Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.*

The heathen treated the signs of heaven as omens and trembled at them. God did not say the signs did not exist. He said His people were not to be dismayed by them as the heathen were. The signs are real. The error was fear and fortune-telling.

Scripture says that God made the lights to be signs, and that He has used — and will use — signs in the heavens (Matthew 2:2; Luke 21:25; Revelation 12:1). Whether the constellations as a whole carry a picture of God's plan is a further question, which later chapters take up.

“The Heavens Declare”

Psalms 19 is the fullest statement in scripture about the voice of the sky. Read the first six verses slowly.

Psalm 19:1 *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*

Psalm 19:2 *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.*

Psalm 19:3 *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*

Psalm 19:4 *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,*

Psalm 19:5 *Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*

Psalm 19:6 *His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*

Every line repays a closer look.

“Declare.” The Hebrew word is *saphar*. It means to count, and it also means to *recount* — to tell, to relate, to narrate. English does the same thing with the word “tell”: a bank teller counts; a storyteller narrates. E. W. Bullinger pointed out that *saphar* first appears in the Bible in a verse about the stars:

Genesis 15:5 *And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.*

“Tell the stars” is *saphar*. God took Abraham outside, pointed to the heavens, and said, *tell the stars*, “so shall thy seed be.” The heavens that Abraham was told to “tell” are the same heavens that “tell” (declare) the glory of God in Psalm 19. The promise of the seed and the voice of the sky meet in one Hebrew word.

“Sheweth his handywork.” The sky displays what God's hands have made. That much every believer grants.

“Day unto day uttereth speech.” “Uttereth” means *pours forth*, like water from a spring. Day after day, the heavens pour out speech.

“Night unto night sheweth knowledge.” Not merely beauty — *knowledge*. Something is being taught.

“There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.” Many readers take this verse to mean that the heavens' message reaches people of every language. Bullinger read the Hebrew more literally: “There is no speech and there are no words; their voice is not heard” — that is, the heavens speak *without* audible words. Either way, the point is the same: the heavens communicate, and no nation is left out.

“Their line is gone out through all the earth.” “Line” is the Hebrew *qav*, a measuring line. By a figure of speech (the measuring line put for the portion it measures out), it means their portion, their message, has gone out to the whole earth, “and their words to the end of the world.”

“In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.” The heavens are the sun’s tent. And then the sun is described in words that sound like far more than astronomy:

- **“as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber”** — scripture elsewhere calls the Messiah the bridegroom (Matthew 9:15; John 3:29);
- **“and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race”** — the victorious champion;
- **“his going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.”**

Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, gave the Messiah the sun’s own name: **“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings”** (Malachi 4:2). Zacharias, at the birth of John the Baptist, called Him **“the dayspring from on high”** (Luke 1:78) — the rising dawn. As this series understands it, the sun running its circuit through the heavens is a living picture, set in the sky, of the One who would come.

Paul and the Voice of the Heavens

Here is something most Bible readers pass over. In Romans 10, Paul is teaching that salvation comes by hearing the word of faith. He asks whether Israel has heard. Then he answers — by quoting Psalm 19:4:

Romans 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Romans 10:18 *But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.*

“Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” Those are the words of Psalm 19 about *the heavens*. (Paul quotes the Greek Old Testament, which has “sound,” where the Hebrew has “line.”) In the middle of his teaching on hearing the word, the apostle reached for the psalm about the voice of the sky.

It is fair to say that Paul may be using the psalm as a comparison — the message has gone as far as the heavens’ voice goes. But the comparison itself is telling. Paul could have chosen any verse about the spread of God’s word. He chose the one about the heavens.

God Named the Stars

Psalms 147:4 *He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.*

Isaiah 40:26 *Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.*

Scripture says that God numbered the stars and gave them their names. That is a direct statement. Whether any of His names have survived among men is a different question, and a harder one, which Chapters 5 and 7 answer honestly.

“At Sundry Times and in Divers Manners”

Hebrews 1:1 *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,*

Hebrews 1:2 *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

God did not speak in only one way. He spoke in dreams, in visions, by angels, by prophets, by signs, and finally and fully “by his Son.” Paul says creation itself shows **“his eternal power and Godhead” (Romans 1:20)** so plainly that men are without excuse. If the heavens were one of the “divers manners” in which God spoke before the written Word, they would be in good company.

But the heavens are never the last word. Psalm 19 itself turns, at verse 7, from the sky to the written Word:

Psalm 19:7 *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*

Psalm 19:8 *The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.*

Bullinger showed that both halves of Psalm 19 are built with the same careful structure — the heavens in the first half, the written Word in the second. God’s two witnesses stand side by side. The heavens declare His *glory*. The written Word converts the *soul*. **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17)**. Whatever the stars say, they say it in agreement with the Book, and the Book is the judge.

In short: Genesis 1:14 and Psalm 19 hold up under scrutiny. God made the lights “for signs”; the heavens “declare,” “utter speech” and “show knowledge” to every nation; God named the stars; and Paul applied the heavens’ voice to the hearing of the word. What the heavens declare must always agree with what is written.

Chapter 2: What the Bible Names in the Sky

Many Christians are surprised to learn that the Bible names individual stars and constellations. It does — and some of the names appear in what may be the oldest book in the Bible.

The Book of Job

Job lived “in the land of Uz” (Job 1:1). The book never mentions the law of Moses, the tabernacle, or Israel. Job offered sacrifices for his own family as head of the house (Job 1:5), the way the patriarchs did, and after his trial he lived another 140 years (Job 42:16) — a lifespan like those of Abraham’s era. For these reasons many Bible students place Job in the time of the patriarchs, before Moses. That is **careful reasoning**, not a direct statement, but it is widely held. If it is right, then the constellations were already named and familiar in Job’s day.

Twice in Job, God and Job speak of the heavens by name.

Job 9:7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.

Job 9:8 Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.

Job 9:9 Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.

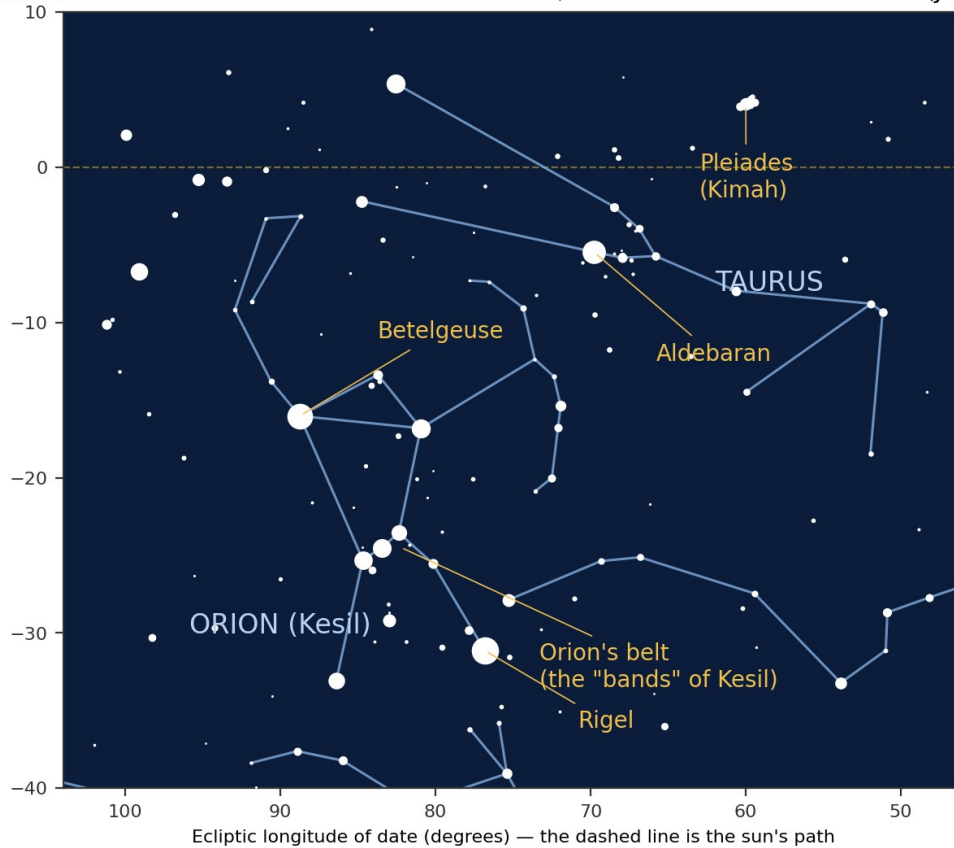
And in the great speech out of the whirlwind, God asks Job:

Job 38:31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

Job 38:32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

Job 38:33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" (Job 38:31)



The Pleiades (Kimah) and Orion (Kesil), with Taurus between them. Chart drawn for this presentation.

Here are the names:

- **Kimah — the Pleiades.** The Hebrew probably means “a heap” or “cluster.” It is the little cluster of stars (often called the Seven Sisters) in the shoulder of Taurus. “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?” — the Hebrew for “sweet influences” is uncertain; many translators render it “the chains” or “the cluster.” Either way, God asks whether Job can hold together what He holds together.
- **Kesil — Orion.** The Hebrew word *kesil* elsewhere means “fool” or “the ungodly.” “Loose the bands of Orion” pictures a mighty figure bound with cords. Jewish tradition connected Kesil with a rebellious giant bound in the sky.
- **'Ash (Job 9:9) and 'Ayish (Job 38:32) — “Arcturus with his sons.”** Most scholars now take this to be the Great Bear (the Big Dipper and its companions), which the Revised Version renders “the Bear with her train.” The modern star named Arcturus is a different star, nearby in the constellation Boötes.
- **“The chambers of the south”** — the constellations of the southern sky, which rise only briefly above the horizon for those who live in the north.
- **Mazzaroth.** This is the most important word of all. The King James margin and the Revised Version both render it “the twelve signs” — the twelve constellations along the sun’s yearly path, which later ages called the zodiac. “Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?” Each of the twelve comes into view in its own season of the year, and only God brings them forth.

Notice the question in verse 33: **“Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?” (Job 38:33)**. The heavens have *ordinances* — fixed laws — and a *dominion* over the earth. That echoes Genesis 1, where the lights were set **“to rule over the day and over the night” (Genesis 1:18)**.

The Crooked Serpent

Job 26:13 *By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.*

Many commentators, Bullinger among them, understand “the crooked serpent” here as the constellation Draco, the Dragon, which winds between the Great and Little Bears around the northern pole of the sky. The same phrase appears in Isaiah, of the enemy God will destroy: **“leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent” (Isaiah 27:1)**. The serpent is formed by God’s hand in the heavens — and in the end God slays him. That is **careful reasoning** from the wording, but it fits the rest of scripture closely.

The Prophets

Amos 5:8 *Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name:*

“The seven stars” is Kimah, the Pleiades; “Orion” is Kesil. The shepherd-prophet Amos, who watched the night sky over the hills of Tekoa, calls on Israel to seek the God who made them.

Isaiah 13:10 *For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.*

“Constellations” here is the plural of *Kesil* — “the Orions” — used for the great star-figures of the sky in general. Isaiah knew the sky was organized into constellations.

Mazzaloth: The Signs Worshipped

2 Kings 23:5 *And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.*

The word rendered “planets” is *mazzaloth*, which most scholars take to be the same word as Job’s *Mazzaroth* (the two differ by one letter). The King James margin gives “the twelve signs, or constellations.” Here the signs are not being “brought forth” by God. They are being *worshipped* by Judah — and good King Josiah put down the priests who burned incense to them. The same heavens that declare God’s glory had been turned into objects of worship. Chapter 6 tells that sad story.

Castor and Pollux

Acts 28:11 *And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.*

Luke records that the ship that carried Paul to Italy bore the sign of Castor and Pollux — the Twins, the two bright stars of the constellation Gemini, which Greek sailors regarded as their patrons. Luke does not approve of the superstition; he simply records the ship's figurehead. But it shows that the constellations were part of everyday life in the New Testament world.

The Sun, the Moon and the Stars

Scripture uses the heavenly bodies again and again as signs and figures:

- **Joseph's dream: "the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me" (Genesis 37:9).** Jacob understood the picture at once: "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee?" (37:10). The family of Israel is pictured as sun, moon and twelve stars (Joseph himself the twelfth).
- **The stars at creation: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7).**
- **The stars in battle: "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera" (Judges 5:20).**
- **The woman in heaven: "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Revelation 12:1) — sun, moon and twelve stars again.** Chapter 10 returns to this sign.

In short: scripture names the Pleiades, Orion, the Bear, the crooked serpent, the Twins and the Mazzaroth — the twelve signs. It treats them as long known, as ordered by God, and as liable to be corrupted into idolatry.

Chapter 3: Handed Down From Adam

If the heavens carried a witness before the written Word, someone had to know how to read it. Where did that knowledge come from, and how was it passed on for more than two thousand years without a Bible? Scripture does not give a chapter on the subject, but it gives a remarkable number of clues. They show men long before Moses who possessed real knowledge from God — and a family line short enough to carry it.

Adam Was Taught by God

Adam was not a cave man grunting at the stars. He was made in the image of God and spoken to by God from his first day. God brought the living creatures to him **“to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof” (Genesis 2:19)**. Adam’s first recorded work was *naming* — the same work God did when He **“calleth them all by their names” (Psalm 147:4)**.

Adam also received the first promise of the Redeemer, spoken in his hearing to the serpent:

Genesis 3:15 *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

Everything in this presentation grows from that one verse: a woman, her seed, a serpent, a bruised heel and a crushed head. Adam knew it. Eve knew it — when her first son was born she said, “I have gotten a man from the LORD” (Genesis 4:1), as though she hoped he was the promised one.

Abel, Seth and Enos

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” (Hebrews 11:4). Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). So Abel had *heard* — someone had taught him what God required, and he believed it. There was revealed truth before there was written truth.

In the days of Seth’s son Enos, **“then began men to call upon the name of the LORD” (Genesis 4:26)**. Whatever else this means, it tells us that the name of the LORD was known and used by the third generation of mankind.

Enoch Knew of the Second Coming

The most startling clue is Enoch, “the seventh from Adam.” Jude tells us what he preached:

Jude 14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

Jude 15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Think about that. More than three thousand years before Christ, a man who was born while Adam was still alive was prophesying the Lord’s coming “with ten thousands of his saints” to execute judgment.

Enoch knew not only of a coming Redeemer but of His coming in *judgment* — what the New Testament calls the second coming. **“Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him” (Genesis 5:24).**

Where did Enoch learn it? Scripture says only that he prophesied. But it is worth noticing that in Bullinger’s reading of the heavens, the last third of the signs pictures exactly this: Messiah coming to judge and to rule (Chapter 5).

Noah and Abraham Knew What Was Not Yet Written

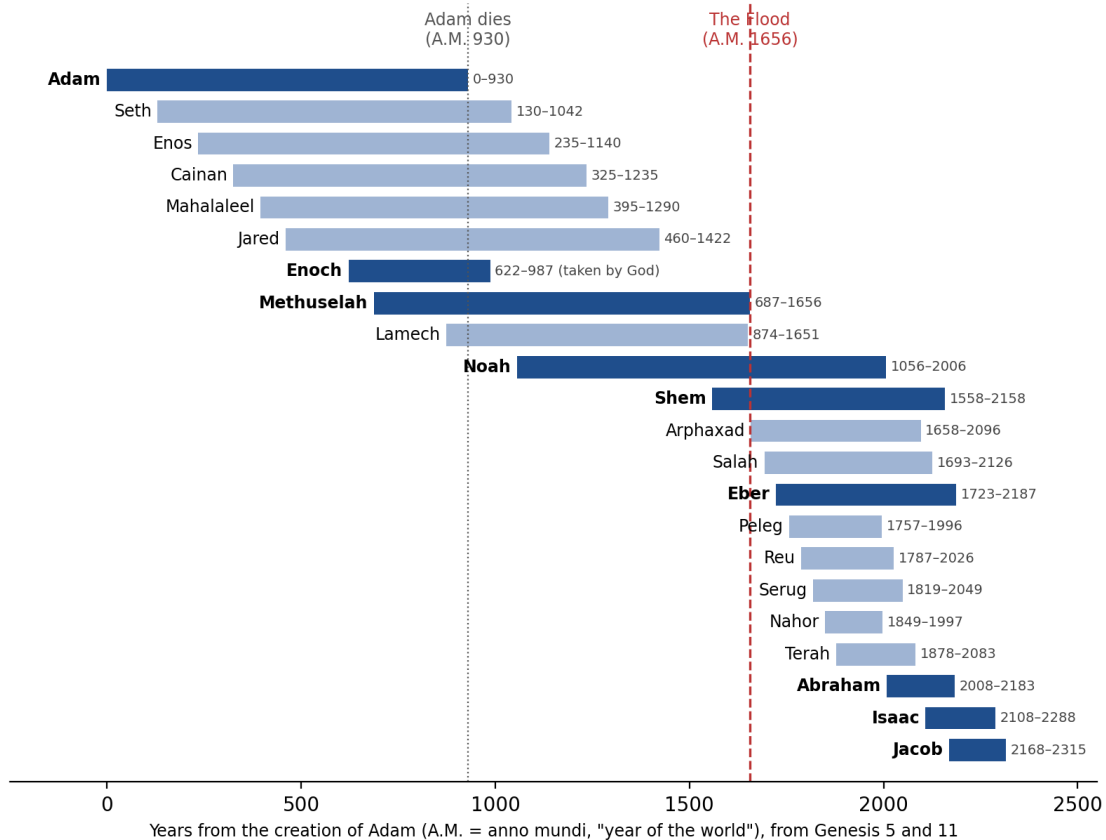
God told Noah to take clean beasts “by sevens” and unclean “by two” (Genesis 7:2). The law of clean and unclean would not be written down for another eight hundred years, yet Noah knew it. Peter calls Noah **“a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5)**. He had something to preach.

Of Abraham, God said: **“Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws” (Genesis 26:5)**. Commandments, statutes and laws — four centuries before Sinai. And it was Abraham whom God took outside at night and told to **“tell the stars” (Genesis 15:5)**.

Few Links in a Long Chain

Here is where the Bible’s own numbers become exciting. Genesis 5 and 11 give the age of each father when his son was born, and how long each man lived. Lay those lives side by side and a striking picture appears.

Many witnesses, few links: how the knowledge of Adam could reach Jacob through overlapping lives



The lives of the patriarchs from Adam to Jacob, from the figures of Genesis 5 and 11 (following this series' chronology, with Abraham born in the 2008th year of the world). Chart drawn for this presentation.

- **Methuselah knew Adam for 243 years.** Methuselah was born in the 687th year of the world; Adam died in the 930th.
- **Lamech, Noah's father, knew Adam for 56 years.**
- **Methuselah knew Noah for 600 years** and died in the very year of the Flood.
- **Shem, Noah's son, knew Methuselah for 98 years.**
- **Abraham lived his entire life within Shem's lifetime.** Shem outlived Abraham's birth by 150 years and lived until Isaac was fifty.
- **Eber, from whom the Hebrews take their name, outlived Abraham and knew Jacob for 19 years.**

So the knowledge Adam received from God could have passed from Adam to Methuselah, from Methuselah to Shem, and from Shem to Abraham — **three links spanning two thousand years**. And until Babel, **"the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech"** (Genesis 11:1), so nothing was lost in translation.

This is **careful reasoning** from the numbers scripture gives. Scripture does not say that Methuselah sat with Adam under the stars, or that Shem taught Abraham astronomy. But it shows that it was entirely possible — indeed natural — for what the first man knew to reach the father of the faithful almost first-hand.

Joseph, Jacob and the Twelve

When Joseph dreamed of the sun, moon and eleven stars bowing to him, his father needed no explanation (Genesis 37:10). The family already thought of itself in these pictures. And when Jacob lay dying, he blessed his twelve sons in word-pictures — a lion's whelp, a strong ass, a serpent by the way, a hind let loose, a ravening wolf (Genesis 49). Judah's lion, at least, matches one of the twelve signs exactly. Chapter 9 returns to it.

Moses and Daniel: Men Placed Among the Wise

Two men of God were trained in the greatest schools of the ancient world — schools where astronomy was a chief subject.

“Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22). The Egyptians were famous watchers of the stars; their calendar of thirty-six “decans” (groups of stars rising in turn through the year) is one of the oldest star-systems known.

Daniel was carried to Babylon, the home of the Chaldean astronomers. God gave him **“knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom” (Daniel 1:17)**, and the king found him **“ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm” (Daniel 1:20)**. Then:

Daniel 2:48 *Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.*

Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel **“master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers” (Daniel 5:11)**. The chief of the wise men of the east was a prophet of the true God — the prophet who recorded the seventy weeks leading to “Messiah the Prince” (Daniel 9:24-27). Five centuries later, “wise men from the east” came to Jerusalem asking, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews?” (Matthew 2:1-2). As this series understands it, it is very likely that what Daniel taught and wrote was remembered among the wise men of the east, and that it helped prepare them for “his star.” Chapter 9 follows this thread.

A later verse is sometimes brought in here. David's army included **“the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (1 Chronicles 12:32)**. Jewish tradition (the Targum on Chronicles) took this to mean that the men of Issachar were skilled in fixing the calendar by the new moons and seasons. That is **tradition**; the verse itself says only that they understood the times.

What the Ancient Writers Remembered

Outside the Bible, ancient Jewish writers preserved strong traditions that astronomy began with the godly line of Seth. These are **history and tradition**, not scripture, but they are striking.

Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century, wrote of Seth's descendants:

They also were the inventors of that peculiar sort of wisdom which is concerned with the heavenly bodies, and their order. And that their inventions might not be lost before they were sufficiently known, upon Adam's prediction that the world was to be destroyed at one time by the force of fire, and at another time by the violence and quantity of water, they made two pillars; the one of brick, the other of stone: they inscribed their discoveries on

them both... Now this remains in the land of Siriad to this day. (*Antiquities* 1.2.3, Whiston translation)

Josephus also said that God gave the early patriarchs their long lives partly so that they could complete their study of the heavens, since the great cycles of the stars could not be learned in a shorter span (*Antiquities* 1.3.9). And he recorded that Abraham, when he went down into Egypt, “communicated to them arithmetic, and delivered to them the science of astronomy; for before Abram came into Egypt they were unacquainted with those parts of learning” (*Antiquities* 1.8.2). He even quoted the Babylonian historian Berosus: “In the tenth generation after the flood, there was among the Chaldeans a man righteous and great, and skilful in the celestial science” — whom Josephus took to be Abraham (*Antiquities* 1.7.2).

The Book of Jubilees, a Jewish work from the second century B.C., says of Enoch that he “was the first among men that are born on earth who learnt writing and knowledge and wisdom and who wrote down the signs of heaven according to the order of their months in a book” (Jubilees 4:17). **The Book of Enoch** (1 Enoch), an older Jewish writing whose oldest fragments were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, contains a long “Book of the Heavenly Luminaries” (chapters 72–82) describing the courses of the sun, moon and stars as revealed to Enoch. Neither Jubilees nor 1 Enoch is scripture, and both contain much that is fanciful. But they show how firmly the Jewish people remembered that the knowledge of the heavens went back to the godly patriarchs before the Flood.

Jubilees also records the dark side. It says that after the Flood a man named Kainam, a grandson of Shem, found an inscription left by the fallen angels, teaching “the omens of the sun and moon and stars in all the signs of heaven” — and that he sinned by it (Jubilees 8:3). The same ancient memory that credits the godly line with the true knowledge of the heavens also blames the ungodly for its corruption.

In short: scripture shows men from Adam to Daniel possessing real knowledge from God long before it was written, and the lives in Genesis 5 and 11 overlap so closely that Adam’s knowledge could have reached Abraham through only three links. Ancient Jewish tradition remembered astronomy as a gift to the line of Seth, preserved through the Flood.

Chapter 4: Signs and Appointed Times

The second purpose God gave the lights was “for seasons” — *mo’adim*, appointed times. This is the least disputed part of the whole subject, and one of the richest. Every believer can agree that God hung a calendar in the sky. What is exciting is how much of His plan He timed by it.

The Moon Keeps God’s Calendar

■ **Psalm 104:19** *He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.*

The Hebrew month began with the new moon — the first thin crescent seen in the west just after sunset. The very word for “month,” *chodesh*, comes from the word for “new.” Israel was commanded to mark each new moon:

■ **Numbers 10:10** *Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God.*

■ **Psalm 81:3** *Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.*

The day itself began at sunset, as in creation: **“And the evening and the morning were the first day” (Genesis 1:5)**. So a new month began on the evening the new crescent appeared.

The Feasts Were Set by the Sky

Look at when God placed His appointed times:

- **Passover** — **“In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD’s passover” (Leviticus 23:5)**. The fourteenth day of a month that begins with the new crescent falls at the full moon. The Passover lamb was slain under a full moon.
- **The Feast of Unleavened Bread** began on the fifteenth (Leviticus 23:6).
- **The Feast of Trumpets** — **“In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets” (Leviticus 23:24)**. It fell at the new moon of the seventh month, called Tishri.
- **The Feast of Tabernacles** began on the fifteenth of the same seventh month (Leviticus 23:34) — another full moon.

Every one of these feasts was kept by watching the sun and moon. The lights of Genesis 1:14 did exactly what God made them for.

Two New Years

When God brought Israel out of Egypt He said of the month of the Exodus: **“This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you” (Exodus 12:2)**. That spring month (later called Nisan) became the first month of Israel’s sacred year.

But there are signs that before the Exodus the year began in the autumn, with the month later called Tishri. The Flood record counts months from a year that began in the autumn — the ark came to rest “**in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month**” (Genesis 8:4). Josephus says the older reckoning began in the autumn and that Moses made the spring month first for sacred purposes (*Antiquities* 1.3.3). *Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed* gathers the evidence that Tishri 1, the Feast of Trumpets, kept many of its “new year” features afterward, including the reckoning of the years of Judah’s kings. Jewish tradition to this day keeps Tishri 1 as the New Year (Rosh Hashanah) and as the anniversary of creation. That tradition is **history and tradition**, but it matters for Chapter 10.

Reading the Sun’s Place Among the Stars

The moon marked the months. The year was read by the stars — and here a question comes up that puzzles many readers. When we say “the sun is in Virgo,” how could anyone know? The stars behind the sun can never be seen. When the sun is up, its light hides every star; when the stars are out, the sun is gone.

The ancients answered that question in three simple ways, and anyone can use them today.

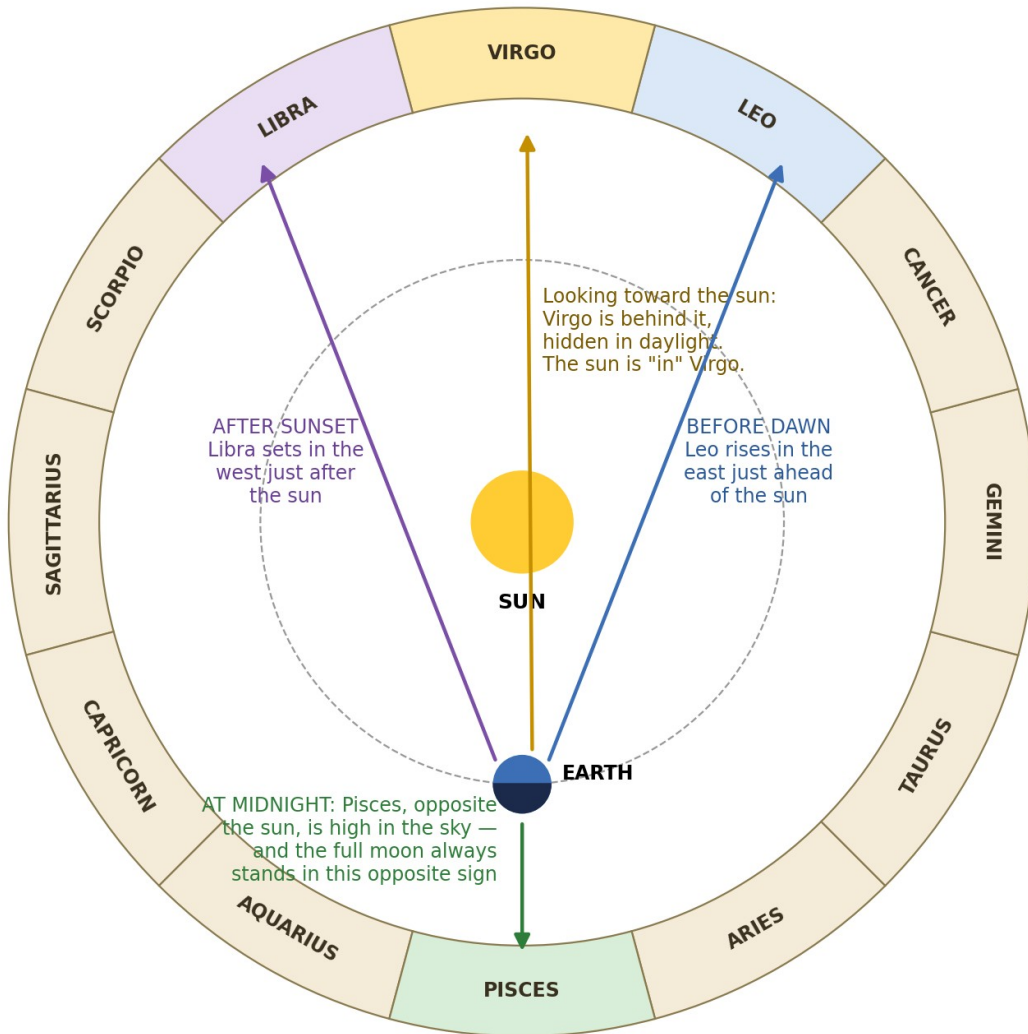
1. Watch the east before dawn. Go out about forty-five minutes to an hour before sunrise, while the sky is still dark enough to show the bright stars but the eastern horizon has begun to pale. Note which stars are the last to be seen rising before the dawn swallows them. The sun moves slowly eastward among the stars, about one degree a day — a whole sign in about a month. So week by week the sun’s glare moves on, and a star that has been hidden in it for weeks is glimpsed again, low in the east, rising just ahead of the sun. That first morning showing is called a star’s *heliacal rising*, “rising with the sun.” The sign seen rising just before dawn is the one the sun has just passed through. When the Lion is seen in the east before sunrise, the sun has moved on into the Virgin.

Whole calendars were kept this way. In Egypt, the first morning the brilliant star Sirius was seen again in the dawn, after weeks hidden in the sun’s glare, announced the new year and the coming flood of the Nile. The Greek poet Hesiod, about 700 B.C., told farmers to begin the harvest when the Pleiades rose before dawn, and to plough when they set.

2. Watch the west after sunset. The same thing works in reverse in the evening. The stars seen setting in the west just after the sun belong to the sign the sun is about to enter. Each evening they sink a little lower into the sun’s afterglow, until they are lost in it.

3. Look opposite the sun. The sign opposite the sun rises at sunset, stands highest at midnight, and sets at dawn. And the full moon always stands in the sign opposite the sun, because a full moon is simply the moon on the far side of the earth from the sun. One look at the full moon among the stars tells where the sun is: exactly half the circle away.

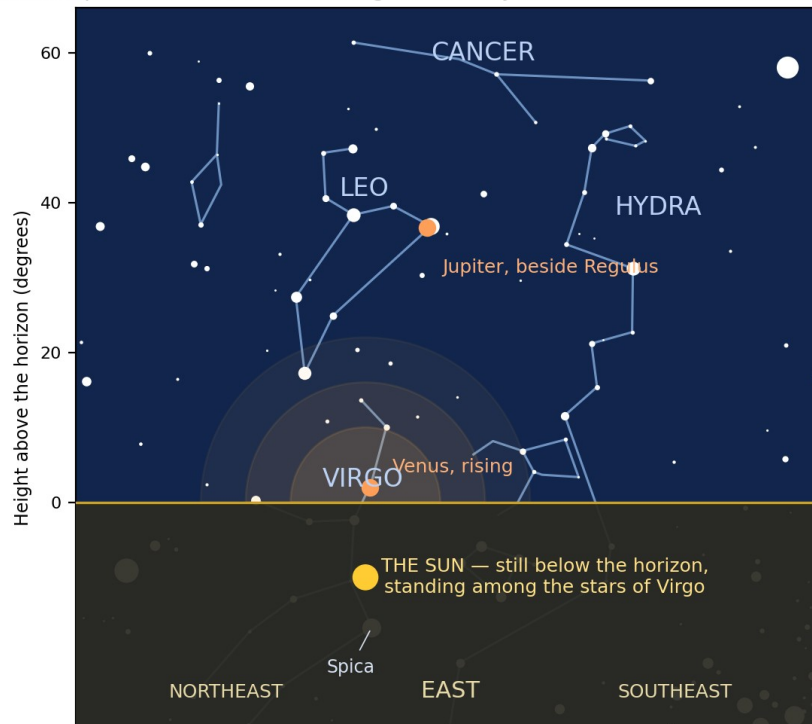
Why the sign "behind" the sun is known by the signs around it
(early autumn, when the sun is in Virgo; not to scale)



Why the sign "behind" the sun is known by the signs around it. Drawn for this presentation.

Here is the first of these at work, in the very season of Chapter 10. On the morning of September 15, 3 B.C., about forty-five minutes before sunrise, a watcher in Jerusalem looking east would have seen the Lion standing high, with the planet Jupiter right beside Regulus, the king star, and Venus just clearing the horizon. The sun itself was still below the horizon, among the stars of Virgo. No one saw the Virgin that morning — her stars were lost in the coming daylight — but anyone who knew the sky knew exactly where she was.

Before dawn, September 15, 3 B.C., looking east from Jerusalem (about 45 minutes before sunrise)



Before dawn, September 15, 3 B.C., looking east from Jerusalem. The Lion is high in the east with Jupiter beside Regulus; the sun, still below the horizon, stands in Virgo. Positions computed for this presentation.

Scripture seems to speak of this very order. God asked Job: **“Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?” (Job 38:32)**. Each sign “comes forth” in its own season — it returns to the dawn sky at its appointed time of year, and no man can hurry it. That reading is **careful reasoning**; the words “in his season” fit it well, but Job does not explain them.

Psalms 19 describes the path itself. The sun **“is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it” (Psalm 19:5-6)**. The Hebrew word for “circuit,” *tequphah*, is the same word used for the turn of the year (Exodus 34:22, “at the year’s end”). The sun runs one circuit through the twelve signs every year, and it can be followed by anyone willing to look up at dawn and dusk.

Knowing where the sun stands among the stars is no more astrology than reading a calendar. It is simply reading the clock God hung in the sky “for seasons.”

The Covenant Written in the Sky

God tied His promises to the faithfulness of the lights:

Jeremiah 33:20 *Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season;*

Jeremiah 33:21 *Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.*

Jeremiah 33:22 *As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.*

As long as day and night keep their appointed times, God's covenant with David's seed stands. And note the promise: **"As the host of heaven cannot be numbered... so will I multiply the seed of David" (Jeremiah 33:22)** — the stars and the promised seed together again, as with Abraham.

After the Flood God promised: **"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22)**. Every sunrise since has kept that promise.

Shadows of Christ

The appointed times were not ends in themselves. Paul wrote:

Colossians 2:16 *Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:*

Colossians 2:17 *Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

The feasts, new moons and sabbaths were shadows cast ahead of time by the Christ who was coming. **"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7)**. He was crucified at Passover, under the Passover full moon. He was raised from the dead, and forty days later He ascended to the right hand of God (Acts 1:3, 9). On the day of Pentecost, the feast fifty days after Passover, the holy spirit was poured out (Acts 2:1-4). As later chapters show, a strong case can be made that He was also *born* at an appointed time marked by the sky — on the Feast of Trumpets.

Because Christ is the body that cast those shadows, believers today are not under obligation to keep the feasts, new moons or sabbaths (Colossians 2:16). But we can look at the sky God made "for seasons" and see how exactly He kept His own appointments.

In short: the sun and moon were God's calendar, and the stars rising before dawn told the season — which is how the ancients knew the sun's place among the signs they could not see behind it. His appointed feasts were fixed by the new and full moons, His covenant with David is sealed by the steady order of day and night, and the appointed times were shadows of Christ, who kept them to the day.

Chapter 5: The Story in the Twelve

This chapter takes the reader on a guided tour of the twelve signs — the Mazzaroth — as E. W. Bullinger read them in *The Witness of the Stars* (1893), building on Frances Rolleston (1862) and Joseph Seiss (1882). Bullinger's book is not easy reading, and much of its force is lost in its thick layout. Here the tour is set out plainly: each sign, its three companion constellations, the scriptures it echoes, and — where it matters — an honest note on what can and cannot be verified.

This whole chapter is **careful reasoning and tradition**, not direct statement. Scripture names the Mazzaroth; it never lists the twelve or explains their pictures. What makes Bullinger's reading worth hearing is how closely the pictures, in their traditional order, follow the story that scripture tells from Genesis 3:15 to Revelation. Readers must judge that fit for themselves.

Where Does the Circle Begin?

A circle has no natural beginning. Astrologers today start with Aries, because in the centuries before Christ the sun stood in Aries on the first day of spring. But the first day of spring slowly moves through the signs over the ages (Chapter 8), so it cannot have marked the original beginning.

Bullinger argued that the only place the story can begin is **Virgo, the virgin**, and the only place it can end is **Leo, the lion** — because the story in the written Word begins with the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15) and ends with the Lion of the tribe of Judah triumphant (Revelation 5:5).

The Sphinx: The Mazzaroth in One Figure

Bullinger found a pointer to this beginning and end in the most famous figure of the ancient world — the Sphinx.

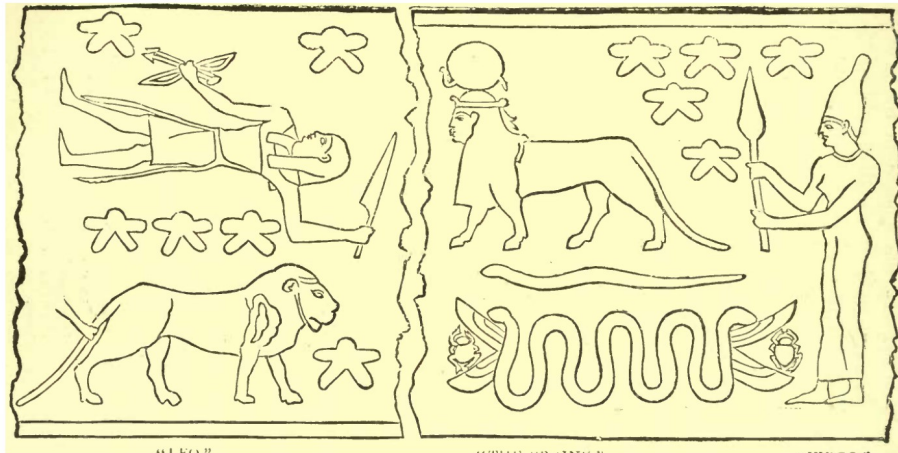
A sphinx is a lion's body with a human head. In the Greek form, the head is a woman's. Put together, it is **Virgo and Leo in one figure: the woman at the beginning, the lion at the end**. Read that way, the sphinx is the whole Mazzaroth in a single image — the first sign and the last joined into one, with everything between them understood.

The name agrees. "Sphinx" is a Greek word, usually traced to the verb *sphingō*, "to bind tightly, to hold together." Bullinger took it to mean *the joining* — the place where the two ends of the circle of the heavens are bound together. Ancient Greek legend made the sphinx a riddler who asked travelers a question they could not answer. To Bullinger, the "riddle of the Sphinx" was this: *where does the heavenly scroll begin and end?* And the Sphinx's own body gave the answer.

Bullinger also reported that on the zodiac of the temple at Esna in Egypt, a sphinx was placed between the signs of Virgo and Leo — exactly at the joining. He printed a drawing of it, traced, he said, from a drawing made on the spot in 1820 by an artist, Signor Bossi, for the astronomer Edward J. Cooper.

Checking Bullinger's drawing. For this edition, Bullinger's plate was set beside a second drawing of the same ceiling made by entirely different hands: the engraving published in 1809 by the scholars of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, in the great *Description de l'Égypte* (Antiquities, volume 1, plate 79). It shows the whole zodiac of the temple's portico ceiling, drawn about twenty years before Bossi's visit.

(1) Bullinger's plate (1893), traced from a drawing made at Esna in 1820:
the Lion on the left; on the right the figure he called "the Sphinx"



(2) The same end of the ceiling, engraved independently by Napoleon's expedition
(Description de l'Égypte, 1809). Upper band ends with the Lion; lower band begins with the human-headed lion over a serpent.



Two independent drawings of the same end of the Esna zodiac ceiling. Above: Bullinger's plate (1893), from Bossi's 1820 drawing. Below: the engraving of Napoleon's expedition (Description de l'Égypte, 1809), public domain.

The two drawings agree on what matters most:

- The zodiac on the portico ceiling runs in two long bands, which meet at this end of the ceiling.
- One band ends with the **Lion**.
- The other band begins, right at that meeting point, with a **lion that has a human head**, crowned with the sun's disc, walking above a long serpent. That is Bullinger's "Sphinx." It is really there, and it really stands at the joining of the Lion's band and the next.



The human-headed lion of the Esna ceiling, from the 1809 engraving (Description de l'Égypte), public domain.

Two things the drawings do *not* show should be said just as plainly:

- **Virgo herself is not clearly pictured beside the sphinx.** The figure next to it, over which Bullinger's caption prints the word "VIRGO," is a man wearing a tall crown in both drawings. The first woman in that band stands a little farther on, holding the scales of Libra.
- **Nothing on the ceiling says why the sphinx was put there.** The idea that it marks the place where the circle of the heavens begins and ends is Bullinger's reading of it.

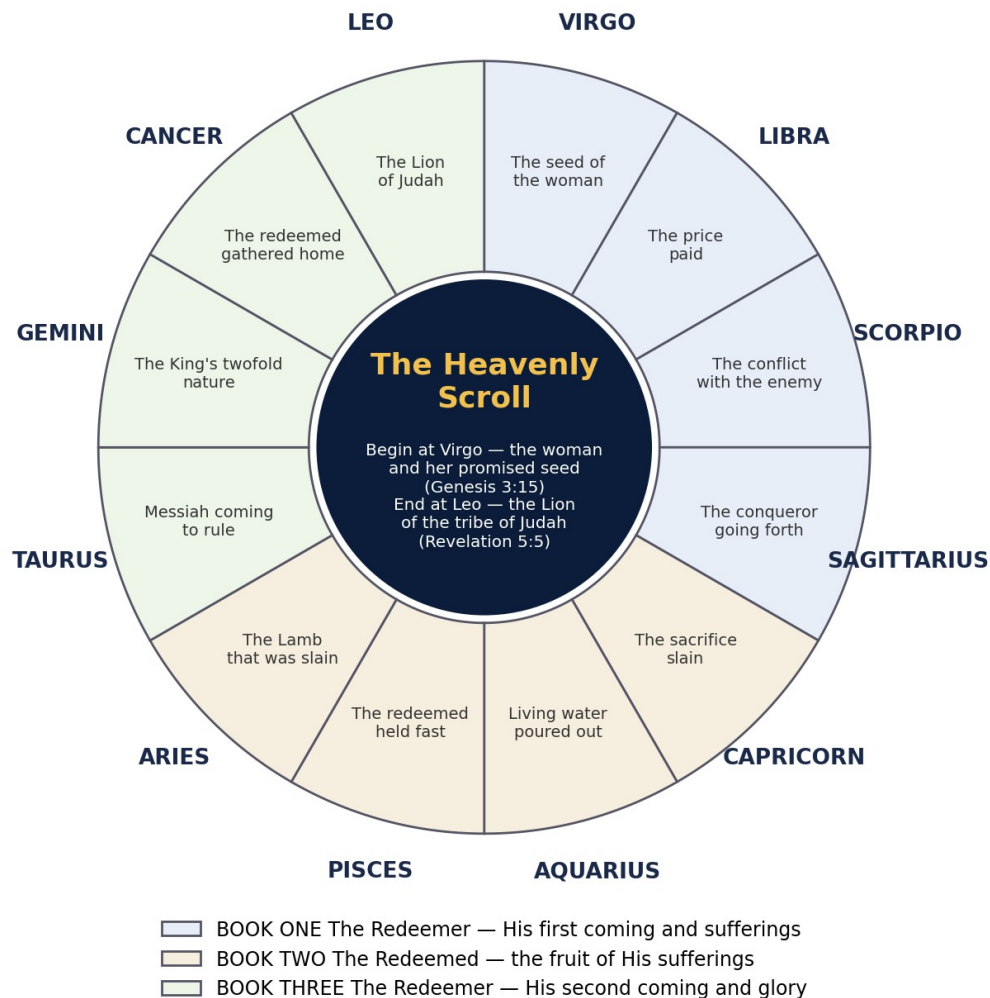
Several more things should be said plainly, so that this beautiful idea is held rightly:

- **The Great Sphinx at Giza has a man's head, not a woman's.** It was carved from the living rock around 2500 B.C., wears the royal headdress of a pharaoh, and faces due east toward the rising sun. The woman-headed sphinx belongs mainly to Greek art and legend. The faces of the Esna sphinx, in both drawings, are beardless, but neither drawing settles whether a man or a woman was meant.
- **The Esna temple is late.** Its surviving hall was built and decorated in the Roman period, in the first to third centuries A.D. — after the time of Christ. So even a sphinx that is really there tells us what Egyptians carved in the Roman age, not what the patriarchs knew. The ceiling was blackened with soot for centuries; a German-Egyptian team cleaned it and revealed it in full color between 2018 and 2023. The two drawings above were made long before the cleaning, by men standing under the stone itself. Photographs of the cleaned ceiling released so far feature other panels, so a color photograph of this one would be a welcome last check — but two independent drawings made on the spot already agree.
- **The meaning of the sphinx to the Egyptians** was royal power and guardianship. The Virgo-and-Leo reading is Bullinger's interpretation.

So the Sphinx as a picture of the Mazzaroth — the woman and the lion, the first and the last — is **tradition and interpretation**. It cannot be proven from Egyptian records. But it is a striking fact that the

ancient world's most famous riddle-figure joins exactly the two signs that begin and end the story — and that on at least one Egyptian ceiling a human-headed lion stands exactly where the Lion's band meets the next. Many who have studied the witness of the stars have seen in it a memory of that story.

The twelve signs read as one story (after E. W. Bullinger, *The Witness of the Stars*)



The twelve signs read as one story, beginning with Virgo and ending with Leo, in three "books" of four signs each. Drawn for this presentation after Bullinger's scheme.

The Story at a Glance

Here is the whole story on one page, for readers who want it in brief. If that is all you need, Chapter 6 picks up from here. If you want to see why each picture fits, and which parts are certain and which are not, read on: the tour below takes the signs one at a time, with each companion explained.

Book One — The Redeemer: His First Coming and His Sufferings

Sign and picture	What it tells	Companions
1. Virgo — the virgin, with branch and ear of grain	The promised seed of the woman	Coma, Centaurus, Boötes
2. Libra — the scales	The price paid for redemption	Crux, Lupus, Corona
3. Scorpio — the scorpion at the man's heel	The conflict: "thou shalt bruise his heel"	Serpens and Ophiuchus, Hercules
4. Sagittarius — the archer, bow drawn	The conqueror going forth	Lyra, Ara, Draco

Book Two — The Redeemed: The Fruit of His Sufferings

Sign and picture	What it tells	Companions
5. Capricornus — the falling goat that ends in a fish	The sacrifice, and life from it	Sagitta, Aquila, Delphinus
6. Aquarius — the man pouring out water	Living water poured out	Piscis Australis, Pegasus, Cygnus
7. Pisces — two fishes held by bands	The redeemed, blessed yet still bound	The Band, Andromeda, Cepheus
8. Aries — the ram, or lamb	The Lamb that was slain	Cassiopeia, Cetus, Perseus

Book Three — The Redeemer: His Second Coming and His Glory

Sign and picture	What it tells	Companions
9. Taurus — the charging bull	Messiah coming to rule and judge	Orion, Eridanus, Auriga
10. Gemini — the twins	The King's twofold nature	Lepus, Canis Major, Canis Minor
11. Cancer — the crab, with the Manger inside	The redeemed gathered home	Ursa Minor, Ursa Major, Argo
12. Leo — the lion over the serpent	The Lion of Judah triumphant	Hydra, Crater, Corvus

Twelve signs, thirty-six companions, forty-eight pictures — and one story, from the woman's promised seed to the Lion treading on the serpent.

Bullinger arranged the twelve signs into three "books" of four chapters each, and gave every sign three companion constellations, called *decans* (from a word meaning "a part"), making forty-eight constellations in all — the same number Ptolemy listed in the second century A.D.

Book One: The Redeemer — His First Coming and His Sufferings



Virgo as pictured in Urania's Mirror (London, 1824): the branch in one hand, and in the other the ear of grain marked by the star Spica. Public domain.

1. VIRGO, the virgin — the promised seed of the woman. Virgo is pictured as a woman holding a branch in one hand and an ear of grain in the other. Her brightest star is **Spica**, Latin for “ear of grain” — a meaning that is certain.

Scripture: **“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).** The Messiah is repeatedly called “the Branch”: **“I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign” (Jeremiah 23:5); “I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH” (Zechariah 3:8).** And the ear of grain recalls Jesus’ words about Himself: **“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24).**

Companions:

- **Coma** — in the ancient pictures, a woman holding a child. Bullinger took the name to mean “the desired,” and linked it with **“the desire of all nations shall come” (Haggai 2:7)**. The Arab astronomer Albumazar (Abu Ma’shar, ninth century A.D.) wrote that the Persians, Chaldeans and Egyptians pictured in this part of the sky “a young woman... nourishing an infant boy... by some nations called Ihesu” — Jesus. (Today the constellation is *Coma Berenices*, “Berenice’s Hair,” a name given in the third century B.C. in honor of an Egyptian queen.)
- **Centaurus** — a figure of two natures, part man and part horse, piercing a victim with a spear. Bullinger saw the Messiah of two natures, and the sacrifice.
- **Boötes** — a man striding forward, whose bright star is **Arcturus**. Bullinger: “He cometh.”

An honest note: “Spica” really does mean ear of grain. Bullinger’s “the desired” for Coma, however, comes from Rolleston’s Hebrew sound-alikes and cannot be verified from ancient sources. Albumazar’s description is real, but he was a Muslim astrologer of the ninth century reporting Persian traditions, and he wrote after Christianity was well known.

2. LIBRA, the scales — the price paid. The scales picture a price weighed. Man’s price falls short: **“None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him” (Psalm 49:7).** The price that balances is Christ’s: **“ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18-19).**

Companions: **Crux**, the Southern Cross; **Lupus**, the victim slain; **Corona**, the crown bestowed. Crux is a remarkable case. Because of the slow wobble of the earth (Chapter 8), the Southern Cross stood about sixteen degrees above the southern horizon at Jerusalem in Abraham’s day. By the time of Christ it rose only about six degrees — barely above the hills. In the centuries that followed it sank lower, until by around A.D. 1000 it no longer rose at Jerusalem at all. (These figures were computed for this presentation.) The Cross was fading from the sight of the land of Israel in the very age when the cross was raised there.

3. SCORPIO, the scorpion — the conflict. A scorpion strikes at the heel of a man — and the man’s foot is on it. Here is Genesis 3:15 in a picture: “thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Companions:

- **Serpens and Ophiuchus** — a man grasping and struggling with a great serpent, which reaches for the crown (Corona) above it. Ophiuchus’s foot is planted on the scorpion. **“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19).**
- **Hercules** — the mighty man, kneeling on one knee as if wounded, yet with his foot on the head of the dragon.

Ophiuchus is a surprise to many: the sun actually passes through it every year, between Scorpio and Sagittarius, though astrology ignores it (Chapter 8).

4. SAGITTARIUS, the archer — the conqueror going forth. A two-natured archer with his bow drawn: **“a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Revelation 6:2); “Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies” (Psalm 45:5).**

Companions: **Lyra**, the harp, with the brilliant star Vega — praise prepared for the conqueror; **Ara**, the altar, turned downward toward the lower regions — fire prepared for the enemy; and **Draco**, the dragon, winding around the pole — **“that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan” (Revelation 12:9),** cast down.

Book Two: The Redeemed — The Fruit of His Sufferings

5. CAPRICORNUS, the goat-fish — the sacrifice. A goat with its forelegs folded as if falling, whose body ends in the tail of a fish. The goat was Israel’s sin offering (Leviticus 16). The fish-tail, to Bullinger, pictured the life that comes from the death — the redeemed.

Companions: **Sagitta**, the arrow of God sent forth; **Aquila**, the eagle, pierced and falling; **Delphinus**, the dolphin, leaping up out of the water — the dead One rising again.

6. AQUARIUS, the water-bearer — living water poured out. A man pouring an endless stream from an urn into the mouth of a fish. “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink” (John 7:37). “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed” (Isaiah 44:3).

Companions: **Piscis Australis**, the southern fish, drinking in the stream — its bright star **Fomalhaut** is Arabic for “the mouth of the fish,” a meaning that is certain; **Pegasus**, the winged horse, the blessings coming swiftly; **Cygnus**, the swan, flying down the Milky Way — its stars form the **Northern Cross**.

7. PISCES, the fishes — the redeemed held fast. Two fishes, bound by long bands, one swimming upward toward the pole. Bullinger saw the people of God, blessed yet still bound in this age.

Companions: **the Band**, which holds the fishes and is fastened to the neck of **Cetus**, the sea monster; **Andromeda**, the chained woman — the redeemed in bondage; **Cepheus**, the king, their Redeemer coming to rule.

8. ARIES, the ram or lamb — the Lamb that was slain. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). “a Lamb as it had been slain” (Revelation 5:6).

Companions: **Cassiopeia**, the enthroned woman, set free; **Cetus**, the sea monster, bound; **Perseus**, the breaker, holding aloft the severed head of the enemy. “The breaker is come up before them... and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them” (Micah 2:13). The star in the enemy’s head that Perseus holds is **Algol**, from the Arabic *ra’s al-ghul*, “the head of the demon” — a meaning that is certain, and a striking one.

Book Three: The Redeemer — His Second Coming and His Glory

9. TAURUS, the bull — Messiah coming to rule and judge. A bull charging, horns lowered. In its shoulder is the cluster of the Pleiades (Kimah), and its eye is the red star **Aldebaran**, Arabic for “the follower.”

Companions:

- **Orion** — the mighty hunter, the most glorious constellation in the sky, light breaking forth. His foot is raised over the hare (Lepus). His bright blue star at that foot is **Rigel**, from the Arabic for “foot” — a meaning that is certain. Job named Orion (Kesil) and his “bands” (Job 38:31).
- **Eridanus**, the river — a stream of judgment flowing from before Orion’s foot.
- **Auriga**, the shepherd, holding a she-goat and her kids in his arms (its bright star **Capella** is Latin for “she-goat”). “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom” (Isaiah 40:11).

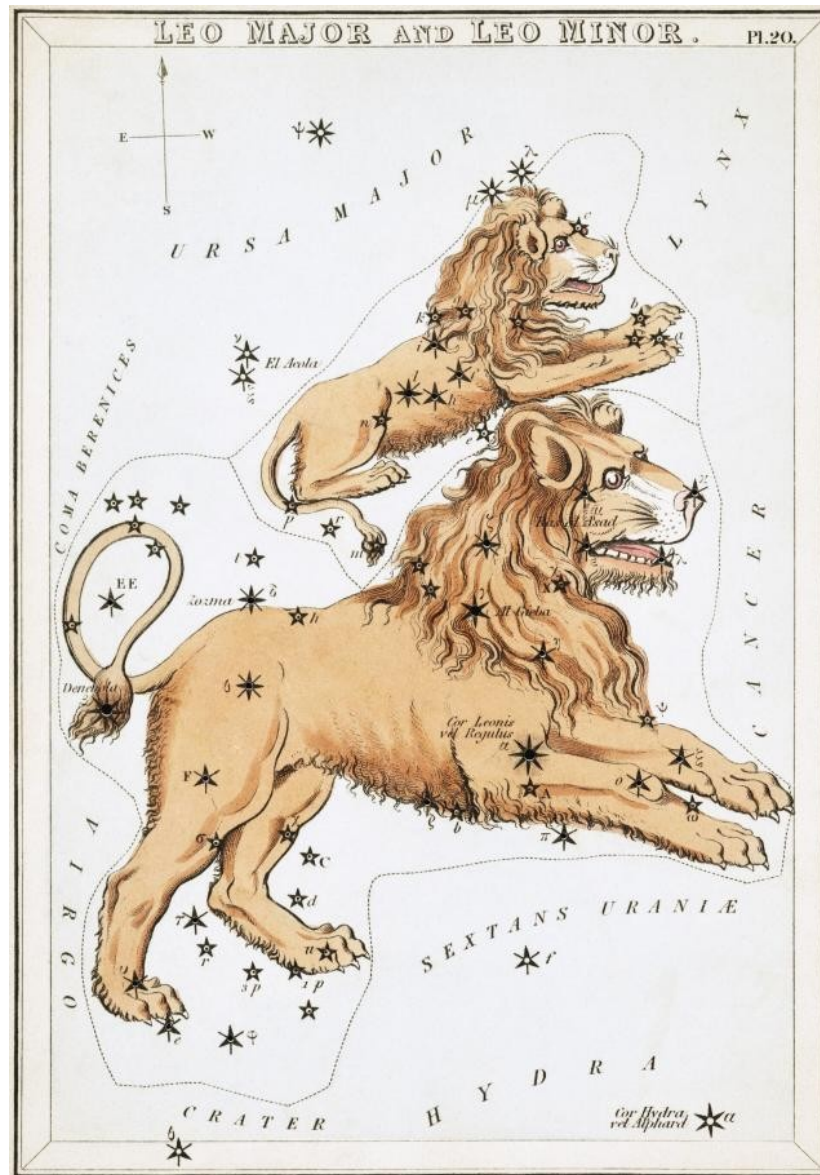
10. GEMINI, the twins — the King’s twofold nature. Two figures seated together, whose bright stars are Castor and Pollux (Acts 28:11). Bullinger saw the twofold character of the coming King — sufferer and ruler, Son of man and Son of God.

Companions: **Lepus**, the hare, the enemy under Orion’s foot; **Canis Major**, the great dog, with **Sirius**, the brightest star in the night sky (Bullinger: “the Prince”); **Canis Minor**, with **Procyon**, Greek for “before the dog.”

11. CANCER, the crab — the redeemed gathered home. The crab holds fast with its claws — the possessions of the Redeemer held securely. Inside Cancer lies a soft cluster of stars which the Greeks,

including the poet Aratus in the third century B.C., called **Phatne**, “**the Manger.**” On either side of it are two stars they called **the Asses** (Asellus Borealis and Asellus Australis, “the northern and southern donkeys”). These names are ancient and certain. A manger, with two beasts of burden beside it, in the sign that comes just before the Lion of Judah: “**and laid him in a manger**” (Luke 2:7). Bullinger also linked the two asses with Jacob’s blessing: “**Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens**” (Genesis 49:14).

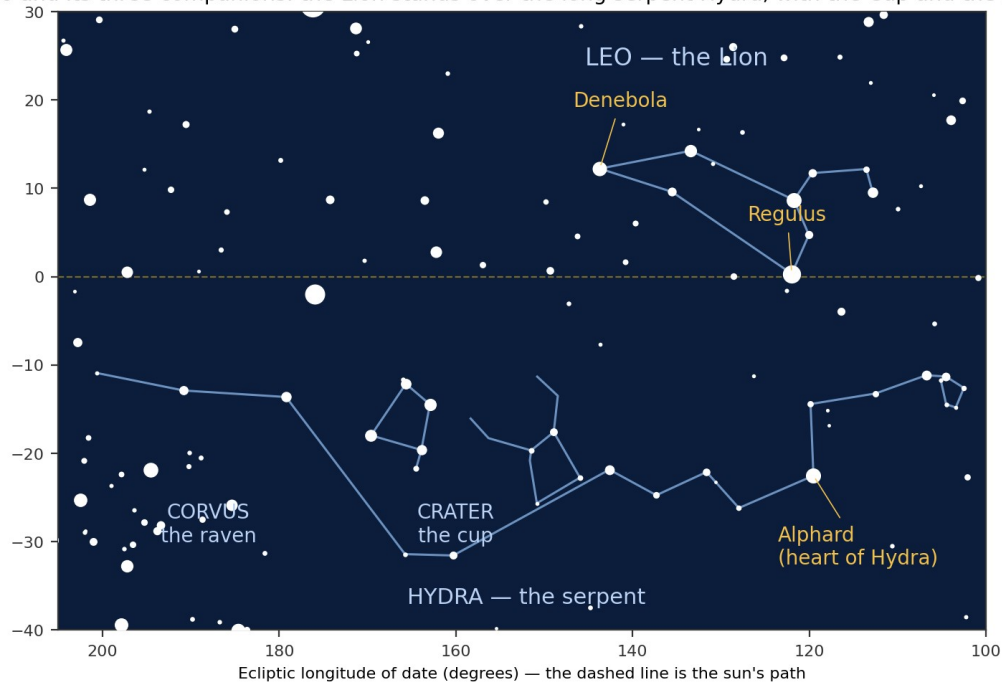
Companions: **Ursa Minor** and **Ursa Major**, the lesser and greater Bears, which Bullinger (following older writers) read as the lesser and greater sheepfolds — “**And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold... and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd**” (John 10:16); and **Argo**, the ship, the redeemed pilgrims safe at home.



Leo as pictured in Urania’s Mirror (London, 1824), with Hydra, the serpent, stretched beneath the Lion. Public domain.

12. LEO, the lion — the Lion of the tribe of Judah triumphant. The story ends where Jacob's blessing and John's vision meet. **"Judah is a lion's whelp... he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" (Genesis 49:9). "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed" (Revelation 5:5).** Leo's brightest star, **Regulus**, has been called "the king" for as long as records go back: *Sharru*, "the King," to the Babylonians; *Basiliskos*, "little king," to the Greeks; *Regulus*, "little king," in Latin.

Leo and its three companions: the Lion stands over the long serpent Hydra, with the Cup and the Raven



Leo and its companions: the Lion above the long serpent Hydra, with Crater the cup and Corvus the raven. Drawn for this presentation.

Companions — and here the story reaches its end:

- **Hydra**, the serpent — the longest constellation in the sky, stretching beneath Cancer, Leo and Virgo. The Lion's forefeet are drawn over it. Its brightest star, **Alphard**, is Arabic for "the solitary one." The serpent of Genesis 3 is crushed at last.
- **Crater**, the cup — set on the serpent's back. **"For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red... but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them" (Psalm 75:8).**
- **Corvus**, the raven — a bird of prey tearing at the serpent. **"Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God" (Revelation 19:17).**

The story that began with a woman and her promised seed ends with the Lion treading down the serpent. Genesis 3:15, from first to last, in the circle of the sky.

What Holds and What Does Not

Readers deserve to know which parts of this tour rest on solid ground.

Names whose meanings are certain, and which fit the story: Spica, “ear of grain”; Regulus, “the king” (in three ancient languages); Rigel, “foot”; Algol, “head of the demon”; Fomalhaut, “mouth of the fish”; Capella, “she-goat”; Phatne, “the manger,” with the two Asses; Arcturus (Greek for “guardian of the bear”); Aldebaran, “the follower.”

Meanings that cannot be verified, and should not be leaned on: many of the Hebrew-sounding meanings in Rolleston and Bullinger — for example Denebola as “the Judge who cometh” (it is Arabic for “the lion’s tail”), Zosma as “shining forth” (Greek for “girdle”), and Coma as “the desired.” The astronomer Danny Faulkner, himself a creationist, has shown that Rolleston built many of these from Hebrew words that merely sound like the star names, on the assumption that Hebrew was the first language of mankind — an assumption scripture does not make.

The pictures themselves — a virgin with an ear of grain, a scorpion at a man’s heel, a lion over a serpent — are very old, as the next chapters show. Their order around the sky is fixed by the sun’s path, not by anyone’s theory. That the sequence can be read, from Virgo to Leo, as the story of Genesis 3:15 through to Revelation is the heart of the matter, and it stands or falls on the pictures and the Word, not on disputed etymologies.

What the Stars Do Not Show

If the twelve signs tell the story of the promised seed from the woman to the Lion, a careful reader will ask: where in that story is the church — the one body of Jew and Gentile that Paul preached? The answer is that it is not there, and scripture tells us why.

The secret kept since the world began. Paul says the truth given to him for this present administration was a *mystery* — a sacred secret that God had never before made known:

Romans 16:25 *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,*

Romans 16:26 *But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:*

Ephesians 3:5 *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*

Ephesians 3:6 *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:*

Ephesians 3:9 *And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:*

Colossians 1:26 *Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:*

Notice where Paul says the secret was kept: **“hid in God.”** It was not written in the law, not spoken by the prophets — and so not drawn in the sky. If it had been pictured among the constellations since the days of Adam, it could not have been **“kept secret since the world began.”** That the mystery was hidden, **scripture says** directly. That it was therefore not written in the stars is **careful reasoning**, but it follows very closely from Paul’s words.

Bullinger said the same. The man whose tour this chapter follows saw this plainly. Writing of the signs of the second book, he said: “The Church is nowhere seen in these Signs, as she is nowhere revealed in the Old Testament.” And at Pisces he asked: “How, then, we ask, can ‘the Church,’ which was a subsequent revelation, be read into the previous prophecies, whether written in the Old Testament Scriptures, or made known in the Heavens?” (*The Witness of the Stars*, pages 86 and 94). So when this chapter speaks of “the redeemed” in Book Two, it means God’s people as the prophets foresaw them — not the one body of Ephesians 3:6.

The prophets saw two mountain peaks. Peter describes what the prophets were shown:

1 Peter 1:10 *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:*

1 Peter 1:11 *Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*

1 Peter 1:12 *Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.*

The prophets testified beforehand of two things: **“the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”** They searched to learn “what, or what manner of time” lay between, and it was not shown them. Now read again the titles of Bullinger’s first and third books: *The Redeemer — His First Coming and His Sufferings*, and *The Redeemer — His Second Coming and His Glory*. The sky tells the same two-part story the prophets told — sufferings, then glory. Book Two, which lies between them, speaks of the redeemed as the prophets did: **“he shall see his seed” (Isaiah 53:10)**. Like the prophets, the sky is silent about the secret that would one day fill the time between. This parallel is **careful reasoning**: Peter draws it for the prophets, not for the stars. But it fits exactly.

Hidden wisdom. Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

1 Corinthians 2:7 *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:*

1 Corinthians 2:8 *Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

The “princes of this world” who crucified the Lord of glory were the rulers of Acts 4:26-27 — Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the rulers of the people (compare Acts 13:27). (This series treats the passage fully in *But We Have the Mind of Christ*; Ephesians 3:10 adds that the unseen principalities did not know it either.) The sky could lead the magi to the King — **“we have seen his star in the east” (Matthew 2:2)** — but it could not show anyone the secret. Had God’s plan for this administration been written in the stars, those who studied the stars could have read it there. Paul says none of them knew it. That the wisdom was hidden and unknown, **scripture says**; that it was therefore not in the sky is our reasoning from Paul’s words, not his own statement.

An Empty Place in the North

Some Bible teachers have gone further and taught that there is a literal gap in the northern heavens that stands for the hidden mystery — a blank page in the sky’s book, left empty until the secret was revealed.

Scripture does not say that, and this presentation does not teach it. But the idea rests on a real verse and on real features of the sky, and both deserve an honest look.

The verse is Job 26:7:

Job 26:7 *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.*

The word for “empty place” is *tohu*, the same word translated “without form” in Genesis 1:2. In Job it describes God’s power over His creation: the northern heavens spread out over emptiness, the earth hung upon nothing. Most readers take “the north” here as the northern sky, set in parallel with the earth in the second half of the verse. Nothing in the verse, or in the chapter around it, speaks of a secret, a revelation or an administration.

What the northern sky actually shows is this:

- **The pole of the sky was empty.** The whole northern sky turns around one point, the celestial pole. Today the bright star Polaris sits almost on it. But the pole slowly moves (Chapter 8). By about 2000 B.C., in the age of the patriarchs, it had already drifted four degrees from the old pole star Thuban, and from roughly 1500 B.C. until about A.D. 1000 no star brighter than the fourth magnitude stood within five degrees of it. At the time of Christ the nearest bright star, Kochab, was about eight degrees away — sixteen times the width of the full moon — with only a few faint stars nearer. The ancients noticed. The Greek explorer Pytheas, about 320 B.C., described the pole as an empty spot with no star on it, as the astronomer Hipparchus reports. In the most literal sense, God had “stretched out the north” around an empty place. (These figures were computed for this presentation.)
- **Faint stretches were left without pictures.** Between the Great Bear, Cassiopeia, Perseus and Auriga lies a large region of faint stars that no ancient figure covered. It stayed blank on star maps until the Dutch mapmaker Petrus Plancius drew a giraffe there in 1613 — Camelopardalis — and Johannes Hevelius added the Lynx beside it later in the same century. The giraffe’s brightest star is only of the fourth magnitude. The stars were always there; the ancients simply drew no picture over them, most likely because they are so faint.
- **The Boötes Void.** In 1981 astronomers found an enormous region in the direction of the constellation Boötes, in the northern sky, holding about 60 galaxies where some 2,000 would be expected, across roughly 400 million light-years. It is sometimes offered as the “empty place” of Job 26:7. But it cannot be seen with the eye or any ordinary telescope; the stars of Boötes lie far in front of it; and it is only one of many such voids found in every direction, south as well as north.

The northern sky around the pole, about 1 B.C. Solid lines: the ancient figures.
Dashed: figures first drawn in the 1600s in the faint, unpictured stretches.



The northern sky around the pole about 1 B.C. The pole itself stood in an empty place, and the faint stretch where the giraffe was drawn in 1613 had no ancient figure. Computed for this presentation.



Camelopardalis, the giraffe first drawn by Plancius in 1613 in the faint region beside the pole, as pictured in Urania's Mirror (London, 1824). Public domain.

Weighing it. That the mystery was hidden in God, **scripture says**. That it was therefore not written in the stars is **careful reasoning** of a strong kind, and Bullinger himself held it. The starless pole and the unpictured stretches of the northern sky are **real features of the sky**, and Job 26:7 does speak of God stretching the north over an empty place — but scripture never ties that emptiness to the mystery. As an illustration — a blank page in the sky's book, fitting a secret kept "hid in God" — it may help a reader remember the truth. As proof, it would claim more than scripture says, and this presentation does not use it that way.

In short: read in order from the woman to the lion — the two ends the Sphinx joins in one figure — the twelve signs tell the story of the promised seed: His coming, His suffering, His people, and His triumph over the serpent. Some star names truly fit that story; others were stretched to fit, and this presentation lets those go. And the story the stars tell is the story the prophets told — the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow. The secret of this present administration was hidden in God, and it is not written in the sky.

Chapter 6: From Witness to Worship

If the heavens once carried a clear witness to the promised seed, why does the world today know the zodiac chiefly through horoscopes? Scripture tells us how good things given by God are corrupted, and the story of the heavens follows the same path.

How the Corruption Happened

Paul describes the downward slide of mankind:

Romans 1:21 *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

Romans 1:22 *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,*

Romans 1:23 *And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*

Romans 1:25 *Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*

Men “**knew God**” — they had the truth — but they did not glorify Him. Their hearts darkened, and they “**changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to... birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.**” The figures in the sky are exactly such images: a lion, a bull, a ram, a scorpion, fishes, birds. What had once pointed to the Creator became objects of worship in themselves. They “**worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator.**”

Moses warned Israel of this very danger:

Deuteronomy 4:19 *And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.*

Babel

Some writers, Bullinger among them, have seen the beginning of the corruption at Babel. The builders said, “**let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven**” (**Genesis 11:4**). In the King James Version the words “may reach” are printed in italics, meaning they were supplied by the translators. Bullinger suggested the phrase could be read “whose top *is* with the heavens” — that is, a tower with the heavens pictured on its top, as the temple-towers of Babylon later bore astronomical figures. That is **an interpretation**, not a certainty. What scripture does say is that Babel was an act of pride, and that from Babel mankind was scattered and its speech confused (**Genesis 11:7-9**). From Babylon came the astrologers who fill the later pages of the Old Testament.

Israel and the Host of Heaven

Israel fell into the same sin again and again.

- Stephen, in his great speech, said that in the wilderness **“God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven” (Acts 7:42)**, and that they carried **“the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them” (Acts 7:43)**.
- King Manasseh **“worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them” (2 Kings 21:3)**, and built altars for them in the courts of the temple.
- Women baked cakes **“to the queen of heaven” (Jeremiah 7:18)**.
- Ezekiel saw about twenty-five men at the door of the temple, **“with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east” (Ezekiel 8:16)**.
- Josiah **“took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun... and burned the chariots of the sun with fire” (2 Kings 23:11)**, and put down the priests who burned incense to the mazzaloth, the signs (2 Kings 23:5).

What God Forbids

Deuteronomy 18:10 *There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,*

Deuteronomy 18:11 *Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.*

Deuteronomy 18:12 *For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.*

“An observer of times” is one who reads omens and lucky or unlucky days. God called these practices an abomination. When Babylon fell, God mocked its star-readers:

Isaiah 47:13 *Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.*

Isaiah 47:14 *Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it.*

And when Nebuchadnezzar demanded that his wise men tell him his dream, Daniel answered:

Daniel 2:27 *Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;*

Daniel 2:28 *But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;*

The astrologers could not reveal it. “There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets.”

The Witness Versus Astrology

The difference between the witness of the heavens and astrology is not a small one. It is the difference between worship and idolatry.

The witness of the heavens	Astrology
Points to God the Creator	Treats the stars as powers in themselves
Tells of the promised seed and His work	Tells the fortunes of individual men
Is judged by the written Word	Replaces the Word with star-lore
Looks back to what God has done and forward to what He has promised	Tries to foresee or control the future by the sky
Leads to worship of God	Leads to fear, fatalism, or pride

“Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them” (Jeremiah 10:2). The believer looks up at the same sky the astrologer does — and gives thanks to its Maker.

In short: what God gave as a witness to His glory, men turned into objects of worship and tools of fortune-telling. Scripture condemns the corruption without ever denying that the heavens were made to declare God’s glory.

Chapter 7: The Record in Stone and Clay

The Bible is not the only ancient witness to the constellations. Clay tablets, boundary stones, coffin lids, temple ceilings, a bronze disc and synagogue floors all carry the record of the heavens. This chapter gathers what archaeology and ancient writing actually show — the discoveries that support the great age of the constellations, and the ones that do not hold up.

How Old Are the Constellations?

No one can point to the day the constellations were first named. But there is a clever clue in the sky itself.

The Greek constellations, handed down from Babylon, cover the whole sky *except* a round patch around the south pole of the heavens. Whoever first drew the constellations never saw that patch, because it never rose above their southern horizon. The size of the empty patch tells the latitude where they lived. And because the sky slowly shifts over the centuries (Chapter 8), the *position* of the empty patch tells roughly *when* they lived.

The English astronomer E. Walter Maunder worked this out in 1909, and others refined it later (Michael Ovenden in 1966, Archie Roy in the 1980s). Their answer: the constellation-makers lived at about 36 degrees north — the latitude of Mesopotamia and Syria — somewhere around 2800 to 2000 B.C. A more recent study by the astronomer Bradley Schaefer (2004) argued for a later date, around 1100 B.C., in Assyria. The experts disagree on the century, but they agree on the region: **the lands of the Bible, between the Flood and the time of the patriarchs or the judges**. This is **history and science**, and the numbers are estimates — but it places the origin of the constellations in the very part of the world where Noah's family settled after the Flood.

Mesopotamia: Clay Tablets and Boundary Stones

The oldest written star lists come from Babylon and Assyria.

- **Boundary stones** (called *kudurru*), set up by Babylonian kings from about 1400 to 1100 B.C., are carved with symbols that later appear in the zodiac — among them the scorpion and the goat-fish (the ancestor of Capricorn).
- **MUL.APIN** ("The Plough Star," named after its opening words) is a Babylonian star compendium written on two clay tablets. Most scholars date its compiling to about 1000 B.C. (Schaefer argued for earlier, around 1370 B.C.). The oldest surviving copy is dated 686 B.C. It lists sixty-six stars and constellations, and names the constellations along "the path of the moon" — the forerunners of the zodiac. Among them are the Bull of Heaven, the Great Twins, the Lion, the Scorpion, the Goat-Fish, and a figure called "**the Furrow**," pictured as a woman holding an ear of barley — our Virgo with her ear of grain.
- The Babylonians called Leo's brightest star **Sharru**, "**the King**." The king-star of the Lion was already the king-star more than a thousand years before Christ.
- By around the fifth century B.C., Babylonian astronomers had divided the sun's path into twelve equal signs — the zodiac as we know it.

A Bronze Disc From the Heart of Europe

In 1999, treasure hunters in Germany found a bronze disc about a foot across, inlaid with gold: a sun (or full moon), a crescent moon, and thirty-two stars — among them a tight cluster of seven that is almost certainly the Pleiades. It is called the **Nebra sky disc**, and it is dated to about 1600 B.C. It is the oldest known picture of the sky. Far from Babylon, men were already watching the “sweet influences of Pleiades” that God asked Job about.

Egypt: Decans, Coffins and a Temple Ceiling

The Egyptians divided the sky into thirty-six *decans* — star groups that rose one after another through the year, each marking about ten days. Tables of the decans were painted inside coffin lids by about 2100 B.C., and astronomical ceilings decorated royal tombs, such as the ceiling in the tomb of Senenmut (about 1470 B.C.).

The most famous Egyptian sky-map is the **Dendera zodiac**, a round relief from the ceiling of a chapel in the temple of Hathor at Dendera. It shows the twelve signs, the thirty-six decans and the planets, arranged around the north pole of the sky. French expeditioners cut it out of the ceiling and carried it to Paris in 1821; it is now in the Louvre.

Its age caused a famous argument in the 1800s. Some scholars, looking at where the signs were placed, claimed it was thousands of years old — the mathematician Joseph Fourier suggested 2500 B.C. Bullinger, writing in 1893, followed the older view and dated the Dendera and Esna zodiacs “nearly 4,000 B.C.” But the question has since been settled: the planets shown on the Dendera zodiac, and two eclipses marked on it, fix its date at about 50 B.C. (Sylvie Cauville and Éric Aubourg). **Bullinger’s date was wrong**, and this presentation does not repeat it. The Dendera zodiac is still a precious witness — it shows the zodiac as the Egyptians knew it just before the birth of Christ — but it is not a relic of the patriarchs.

The **Esna** temple ceiling, where Bullinger reported a sphinx between Virgo and Leo, is later still — Roman period. Two independent drawings of it, from 1809 and 1820, both show a human-headed lion at the place where the Lion’s band meets the next (Chapter 5). The ceiling was cleaned and revealed in full color by a German–Egyptian team, work completed in 2023.

Greece: Eudoxus, Aratus — and the Apostle Paul

About 366 B.C. the Greek astronomer Eudoxus described the constellations in a book now lost. Around 275 B.C., the poet **Aratus** put Eudoxus’s work into verse in a long poem called the *Phaenomena* (“Things Seen in the Sky”). It became one of the most widely read poems in the ancient world. Aratus came from Soli in Cilicia — the same province as Tarsus, where Paul was born (Acts 22:3).

Here is how the *Phaenomena* begins (in the 1921 Loeb translation by G. R. Mair):

From Zeus let us begin; him do we mortals never leave unnamed; full of Zeus are all the streets and all the market-places of men; full is the sea and the havens thereof; always we all have need of Zeus. For we are also his offspring... For himself it was who set the signs in heaven, and marked out the constellations, and for the year devised what stars chiefly should give to men right signs of the seasons.

Now read Paul, standing on Mars’ hill in Athens:

Acts 17:24 *God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;*

Acts 17:25 *Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;*

Acts 17:26 *And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;*

Acts 17:27 *That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:*

Acts 17:28 *For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.*

“As certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.” Paul was quoting Aratus — the fifth line of the great poem about the constellations. And look at what that poem goes on to say: God “set the signs in heaven, and marked out the constellations... right signs of the seasons.” It is Genesis 1:14 on the lips of a pagan poet. Paul did not endorse Zeus; he told the Athenians that the God they did not know was **“God that made the world and all things therein... Lord of heaven and earth”** (Acts 17:24), who **“hath determined the times before appointed”** (17:26). But he chose, as his point of contact, the poem about the signs in the sky. Most Bible readers have met that quotation many times without ever knowing where it came from.

Hipparchus and Ptolemy

About 130 B.C., the Greek astronomer **Hipparchus** compared his own star positions with observations made a century and a half earlier and found that the stars had all shifted in the same direction. He had discovered the slow wobble of the earth called *precession* (Chapter 8). He also made one of the first great star catalogues.

About A.D. 150, **Ptolemy** of Alexandria wrote the *Almagest*, the astronomy textbook of the next fourteen centuries. It lists **forty-eight constellations** and 1,022 stars — the twelve signs of the zodiac and thirty-six others. These are the same forty-eight that Bullinger read as twelve signs with three companions each.

The Magi and Josephus

Between Hipparchus and Ptolemy come two witnesses already met in these pages. **The magi** — star-watching wise men from the east — came to Jerusalem saying, “we have seen his star in the east” (Matthew 2:2), in about 2 B.C. by this presentation’s reckoning. And **Josephus**, writing in A.D. 93–94, recorded the Jewish tradition that Seth’s descendants were the first students of the heavens and preserved their knowledge on two pillars through the Flood (Chapter 3).

Zodiacs on Synagogue Floors

One of the great archaeological surprises of the twentieth century came from the floors of ancient synagogues in Israel. At **Hammat Tiberias** (fourth century A.D.), **Sepphoris** (fifth century) and **Beth Alpha** (sixth century), the main hall floors were laid with mosaic wheels of the twelve signs, labeled in Hebrew, with the sun at the center and the four seasons in the corners. The Hebrew labels include *Betulah*, “the virgin,” for Virgo; *Aryeh*, “the lion,” for Leo; and *Moznayim*, “the scales,” for Libra.

Why would Jewish worshipers put the zodiac on their synagogue floors, when the law forbade worshipping the host of heaven? Scholars still debate it. The most likely answer is that they saw the zodiac as the calendar of the year God ordered — the round of seasons and feasts — rather than as objects of worship. The Jewish Midrash (Numbers Rabbah 2:7) also preserves the tradition that each tribe of Israel carried a banner with its own emblem, Judah's being a lion. Scripture itself says only that **“every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house”** (Numbers 2:2) — it does not say what was on the standards. These are **history and tradition**, not scripture, but they show that the signs were part of Jewish life, not merely pagan.

Arabic Names and a Muslim Astrologer's Report

When Ptolemy's *Almagest* was translated into Arabic in the ninth century, Arab astronomers added many names of their own. When the book was later translated from Arabic into Latin, those names came into Europe — which is why so many of our star names (Aldebaran, Algol, Betelgeuse, Denebola, Rigel) are Arabic. Most of them are therefore *medieval* names, not ancient ones, even when their meanings are old.

In the same period the astrologer **Albumazar** (Abu Ma'shar, A.D. 787–886) wrote that in the first part of Virgo the Persians, Chaldeans and Egyptians pictured “a young woman... sitting on a throne, nourishing an infant boy... having a Hebrew name, by some nations called Ihesu” — that is, Jesus. Medieval Christian scholars noticed the passage, and Bullinger quoted it. It is a genuine report, but it comes nine centuries after Christ, from an astrologer, and cannot tell us how old the picture was.

The word **Regulus**, “little king,” was fixed in European use by Copernicus in 1543, translating Ptolemy's Greek name *Basiliskos*. Behind both stands the Babylonian *Sharru*, “the King.”

The Modern Writers

- **Frances Rolleston**, *Mazzaroth; or, the Constellations* (1862) — an English Christian scholar who spent decades collecting star names and proposed that the constellations were a revelation given to the first fathers of mankind.
- **Joseph A. Seiss**, *The Gospel in the Stars* (1882) — an American Lutheran pastor who popularized Rolleston's ideas in a series of lectures.
- **E. W. Bullinger**, *The Witness of the Stars* (1893) — the fullest and most careful of the three, the basis of Chapter 5.
- **Victor Paul Wierwille**, *Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed* (1982), and **Ernest L. Martin**, *The Birth of Christ Recalculated* (1978) and *The Star That Astonished the World* (1991) — who used modern astronomy to date the birth of Christ by the sky (Chapter 10).
- **The critics.** Astronomer **Danny Faulkner**, a creationist, has written the most careful Christian critique (“Is There a Gospel in the Stars?” in the *Journal of Creation*, 1998, and a longer study in the *Answers Research Journal*). He grants that God named the stars and set them for signs, but shows that many of Rolleston's star-name meanings were invented from Hebrew sound-alikes. The Christian Research Institute has also published a critique. Their fair points are included throughout this presentation.

The Record at a Glance

Date	Discovery or writing	What it shows
c. 2800–1100 B.C. (estimates)	Origin of the constellations, from the unmapped southern zone	Drawn at about 36° north, in the lands of the Bible
c. 2100 B.C.	Egyptian coffin-lid star tables	The 36 decans in use
c. 1600 B.C.	Nebra sky disc (Germany)	Sun, moon and the Pleiades
c. 1400–1100 B.C.	Babylonian boundary stones	Scorpion and goat-fish symbols
c. 1000 B.C. (copy 686 B.C.)	MUL.APIN	The Lion, the Scorpion, the Furrow with her ear of grain; “the King” star
c. 366 B.C.	Eudoxus	Constellations described in Greece
c. 275 B.C.	Aratus, <i>Phaenomena</i>	“Set the signs in heaven” — later quoted by Paul
c. 130 B.C.	Hipparchus	Discovers precession
c. 50 B.C.	Dendera zodiac	Twelve signs and 36 decans in Egypt
c. 2 B.C.	The magi	“We have seen his star”
c. A.D. 50	Paul in Athens	Quotes Aratus (Acts 17:28)
A.D. 93–94	Josephus, <i>Antiquities</i>	Seth’s pillars; Abraham teaches astronomy
c. A.D. 150	Ptolemy, <i>Almagest</i>	48 constellations
A.D. 300s–500s	Synagogue floor zodiacs	Hebrew-labeled signs: “the virgin,” “the lion”
A.D. 800s	Albumazar	Virgin nursing a child “called Ihesu”
1543	Copernicus	“Regulus”
1862–1893	Rolleston, Seiss, Bullinger	The gospel in the stars
1922–1930	International Astronomical Union	88 constellations with fixed boundaries
1978–1991	Martin; Wierwille	The sky of 3–2 B.C.

In short: the constellations were drawn in the lands of the Bible long before Christ; the woman with her ear of grain, the lion, the scorpion and “the King” star appear on Babylonian tablets; Paul quoted the great Greek poem about the constellations; and Jewish synagogues set the signs in their floors. Some older claims — especially Bullinger’s dates for the Egyptian zodiacs — have not held up, and are corrected here.

Chapter 8: Reading the Sky Today

Can we really know what the sky looked like two thousand years ago — on a particular evening, over a particular city? Yes, and with remarkable precision. This chapter explains how modern star charts work, how the sky itself has slowly changed since the days of Adam, and why that matters for everything else in this presentation.

Modern Star Charts

In 1922 the International Astronomical Union, the world body of astronomers, adopted an official list of **eighty-eight constellations**, and in 1930 it fixed their boundaries, dividing the whole sky like a map of countries. Forty-eight of the eighty-eight are Ptolemy's ancient constellations; the rest were added in modern times, mostly in the far southern sky that the ancients never saw, and in the faint gaps between the old figures.

Astronomers locate every star by two coordinates, much like latitude and longitude on earth. Using the laws of motion worked out since the 1600s, and centuries of careful observations, they can calculate where the sun, moon and planets were — or will be — at any moment, thousands of years into the past or future. Free planetarium programs such as *Stellarium* put this power on any home computer. The charts in Chapters 5 and 10 were computed this way for this presentation.

The Sky Has Moved: Precession

Here is something that surprises almost everyone. The earth spins like a top, and like a top it wobbles — very slowly. Its axis traces a great circle in the sky once every **25,800 years** or so. This wobble is called **precession**, and Hipparchus discovered it about 130 B.C. It has two effects that matter for this subject.

First, the pole star changes. Today the earth's axis points almost exactly at Polaris, the North Star. But it has not always done so.

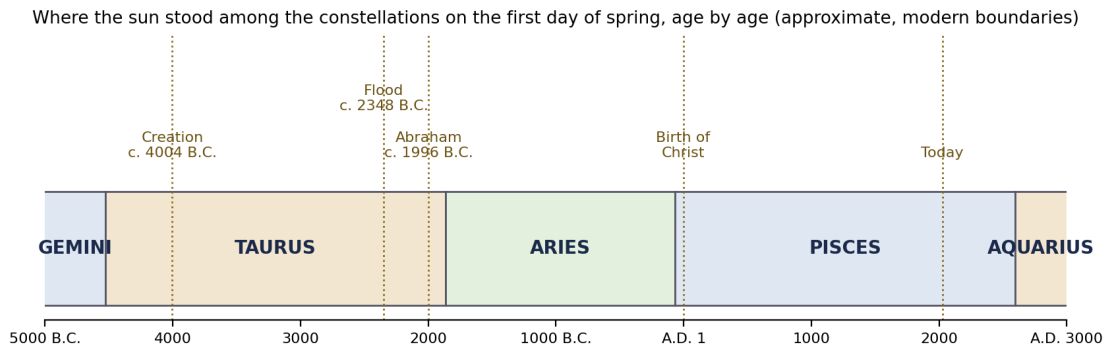
The slow wobble of the earth: the north pole of the sky traces this circle once every 25,800 years



The circle traced by the north pole of the sky. Thuban in Draco was the pole star about 2800 B.C.; Polaris is the pole star today; Vega will be the pole star about A.D. 14,000. Chart drawn for this presentation.

In the age of the pyramids, around 2800 B.C., the pole star was **Thuban**, in the tail of Draco the Dragon — the “crooked serpent” (Job 26:13). In Abraham’s day there was no bright pole star at all. Polaris has only been close to the pole for the last few centuries, and it will be closest around the year 2100. In about twelve thousand years the brilliant star Vega will be the pole star.

Second, the first day of spring moves through the signs. On the first day of spring (the vernal equinox), the sun stands in front of a particular constellation. Because of precession, that point creeps backward through the zodiac about one degree every seventy-two years — one whole sign in a little over two thousand years.



Where the sun stood among the constellations on the first day of spring, age by age. Chart drawn for this presentation (approximate, using modern constellation boundaries).

- From before the Flood until about 1865 B.C., the spring sun stood in **Taurus**.
- From then until about 67 B.C., it stood in **Aries** — which is why the Greek astronomers began the zodiac with Aries.
- Since the century before Christ, it has stood in **Pisces**, and it will not reach Aquarius for another five hundred years or so.

This is why Bullinger argued that Aries cannot have been the original beginning of the zodiac: the starting point that astrology uses was only right for a particular stretch of history. The sky's story must begin somewhere that does not move — and the only fixed beginning is the story itself.

Astrology Is Out of Step With the Sky

Precession has an embarrassing result for astrology. Astrologers' "signs" were fixed to the seasons about two thousand years ago and have never been adjusted. Since then the constellations have slipped almost a whole sign. A person "born under Leo" today was actually born when the sun stood in Cancer. And the sun also passes each year through **Ophiuchus**, the serpent-holder, for about eighteen days in late November and early December — a constellation astrology leaves out altogether. Astrology does not even describe the sky it claims to read.

The Stars Themselves Move — Very Slowly

The stars are not truly fixed. Each has its own slight motion across the sky. But the stars are so far away that the motion is tiny. Arcturus, one of the fastest-moving bright stars, has shifted by only about four degrees — seven or eight times the width of the full moon — since the days of Adam. Most stars have moved far less. The constellations Adam saw are, for all practical purposes, the constellations we see tonight. The pictures of the Mazzaroth have not been redrawn by time.

The Southern Cross Sinks

Precession also changes which stars can be seen from a given place. The Southern Cross (Crux), which cannot be seen from Jerusalem today, rose about sixteen degrees above Jerusalem's southern horizon in Abraham's time. By the time of Christ it rose only about six degrees — barely clearing the hills — and in the following centuries it sank until, by about A.D. 1000, it no longer rose there at all. (Some popular books say the Cross "disappeared at the crucifixion"; the calculation shows that it was fading slowly across those centuries, not at a single moment.)

Counting the Years Correctly

Two more cautions help anyone who checks these dates for themselves:

- **There is no year zero.** The year before A.D. 1 is 1 B.C. So 3 B.C. to A.D. 1 is three years, not four. Astronomers number 1 B.C. as “year 0” and 3 B.C. as “year -2,” which is why dates in astronomical programs can seem off by one.
- **Old dates use the Julian calendar.** Dates before 1582 are normally given in the calendar of Julius Caesar, which was in use in the time of Christ. All the dates in this presentation are Julian dates.

Try It Yourself

Anyone can check the sky of 3–2 B.C. at home. In a free planetarium program such as Stellarium:

1. Set your location to Jerusalem.
2. Set the date to September 11, 3 B.C. (entered as year -2), a few minutes after sunset, and look west.
3. Find the sun in Virgo and the thin new moon beneath it.
4. Then step forward, a few days at a time, and watch Jupiter approach Regulus in Leo.

Small differences between programs — a few minutes in the time of sunset or moonset — come from the uncertain slowing of the earth’s rotation over two thousand years. The positions of the sun, moon and planets among the stars are not in doubt.

In short: modern astronomy can turn the sky back to any night in history. The sky has slowly changed — the pole star, the starting point of spring, even which stars rise over Jerusalem — but the constellations themselves are the same ones Adam saw.

Chapter 9: A Star Out of Jacob

Two prophecies in the books of Moses join the lion, the sceptre and the star. Together they set the stage for the most famous star in the Bible.

Jacob's Blessing on Judah

As Jacob lay dying in Egypt, he spoke over each of his twelve sons. Over Judah he said:

Genesis 49:8 *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.*

Genesis 49:9 *Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?*

Genesis 49:10 *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

- **"Judah is a lion's whelp."** This is a *metaphor* — a figure of speech that speaks of one thing as though it were another. Judah is not *like* a lion; he *is* one. Hebrew has several words for "lion," and verse 9 moves through them: *gur*, a lion's whelp; *aryeh*, a grown lion; *labi*, an old lion. The whelp grows into the king of beasts, and no one dares rouse him.
- **"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah."** The sceptre is the ruler's staff (Hebrew *shebet*). Rule would belong to Judah's line.
- **"Nor a lawgiver from between his feet."** "From between his feet" is a Hebrew way of speaking of a man's descendants — those who come from his own body. Moses uses the same expression of a mother and **"her young one that cometh out from between her feet"** (Deuteronomy 28:57). The rule would stay in Judah's line.
- **"Until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."** The meaning of "Shiloh" is debated — "he whose it is," "the one sent," "the peace-bringer" — but from early times Jewish readers understood it as a name of the Messiah, the one to whom the rule belongs, and to whom the peoples would gather.

The New Testament names Him: **"it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda"** (Hebrews 7:14), and **"the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David"** (Revelation 5:5).

And in the sky, among the twelve signs, there is one lion — Leo — whose brightest star is "the King." Jacob's twelve sons and the twelve signs have often been paired, sign for sign; most of those pairings are guesswork. But Judah's lion matches Leo plainly, and that one match is enough to show how naturally the family of Israel thought in these pictures.

Balaam: A Prophet From the East

About two and a half centuries after Jacob, at the end of Israel's forty years in the wilderness, the king of Moab hired a famous soothsayer to curse Israel. His name was Balaam, the son of Beor, and he lived at **"Pethor of Mesopotamia"** (Deuteronomy 23:4), by the river Euphrates. Joshua calls him **"Balaam... the soothsayer"** (Joshua 13:22). He was, in other words, a diviner of the east — from the same Mesopotamian world where the star-lists of MUL.APIN would later be written.

Balaam could not curse. God put His own words in his mouth, and he could only bless. His first words tell where he came from:

Numbers 23:7 *And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.*

Twice he echoed Jacob's lion almost word for word:

Numbers 24:9 *He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.*

Then, in his last prophecy, Balaam looked far into the future:

Numbers 24:15 *And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:*

Numbers 24:16 *He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:*

Numbers 24:17 *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.*

"There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." "Sceptre" here is *shebet*, the very word Jacob used in Genesis 49:10. So in one prophecy we have Judah's lion, Judah's sceptre, and a Star. The coming ruler is called both.

Notice who spoke it. Not an Israelite prophet, but a star-reader from the east, whose eyes were opened by God. And notice his words: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh." He saw a Person, far off, rising like a star.

Wise Men From the East

Fourteen centuries later, star-watchers from the east came again.

Matthew 2:1 *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,*

Matthew 2:2 *Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*

The "wise men" were *magoi*, magi — a learned priestly class of Persia and Babylon, known for their study of the heavens. Where would such men have learned to expect a King of the Jews, and to watch the sky for His star? Scripture does not say, but it offers two strong clues:

- **Balaam's prophecy** came from their own part of the world, and spoke of a Star out of Jacob.
- **Daniel** had been made "**master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers**" (**Daniel 5:11**) in Babylon, and "**chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon**" (**Daniel 2:48**). His book, written in the east, foretold the time "**unto the Messiah the Prince**" (**Daniel 9:25**).

As this series understands it, the magi very likely inherited both. They knew that a King of the Jews was coming, they had a prophecy of His star, and they had a timetable from Daniel. So they watched.

The Greek of Matthew 2:2 has a small detail worth noticing. In verse 1 the wise men come “from the east” (a plural word, “the risings,” the eastern lands). In verse 2 they say “we have seen his star in the east” — a singular word that many translators render “**at its rising.**” The magi may be saying not only where they were when they saw it, but that they saw His star *rise*.

Then, after they left Herod:

Matthew 2:9 *When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.*

Matthew 2:10 *When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*

Matthew 2:11 *And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*

The star “went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.” Note too: *a house*, and *a young child* — not a stable and a newborn. The magi came some time after the birth. Chapter 10 considers what the star may have been.

The Bright and Morning Star

The Bible’s last word on the subject comes from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself:

Revelation 22:16 *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.*

The Root of David — the One from whom David came. The Offspring of David — the One who came from David. And “**the bright and morning star**” — the star that rises before dawn and announces the day. Peter uses the same picture: “**until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts**” (2 Peter 1:19), and to the faithful Christ promises, “**I will give him the morning star**” (Revelation 2:28).

Lion, Sceptre and Star — Jacob, Balaam and John all describe one Person.

In short: Jacob gave Judah the lion and the sceptre; Balaam, a star-reader from the east, joined the sceptre to a Star; wise men from the east came looking for His star; and Jesus Christ calls Himself the bright and morning star.

Chapter 10: The Sky of 3–2 B.C.

This is the chapter that *Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed* takes more than sixty pages to reach. Here it is in plain order, with charts computed for this presentation so that the reader can see the sky for himself.

When Was Jesus Born?

The Bible does not give the day or the year of the birth of Jesus Christ. It gives clues: **“in the days of Herod the king” (Matthew 2:1)**; a decree of Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1); shepherds in the fields by night (Luke 2:8); Herod’s order to kill the boys of Bethlehem **“from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men” (Matthew 2:16)**.

The usual date given for Herod’s death is 4 B.C. But the historian Josephus records an eclipse of the moon shortly before Herod died, and a long list of events between that eclipse and the following Passover. Ernest Martin and *Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed* showed that only the eclipse of **January 9, 1 B.C.** leaves room for all those events. If Herod died early in 1 B.C., the birth of Christ falls about 3 B.C. — the date this series follows in its other studies. At least sixteen early Christian writers also placed the birth after 4 B.C., most of them in 3 or 2 B.C. (E. W. Bullinger, by a different method, placed the birth in the autumn of 4 B.C. The two methods land within a year of each other.)

This is **careful reasoning** — a chain of historical and astronomical evidence. The sky itself now adds its testimony.

The Evening of September 11, 3 B.C.

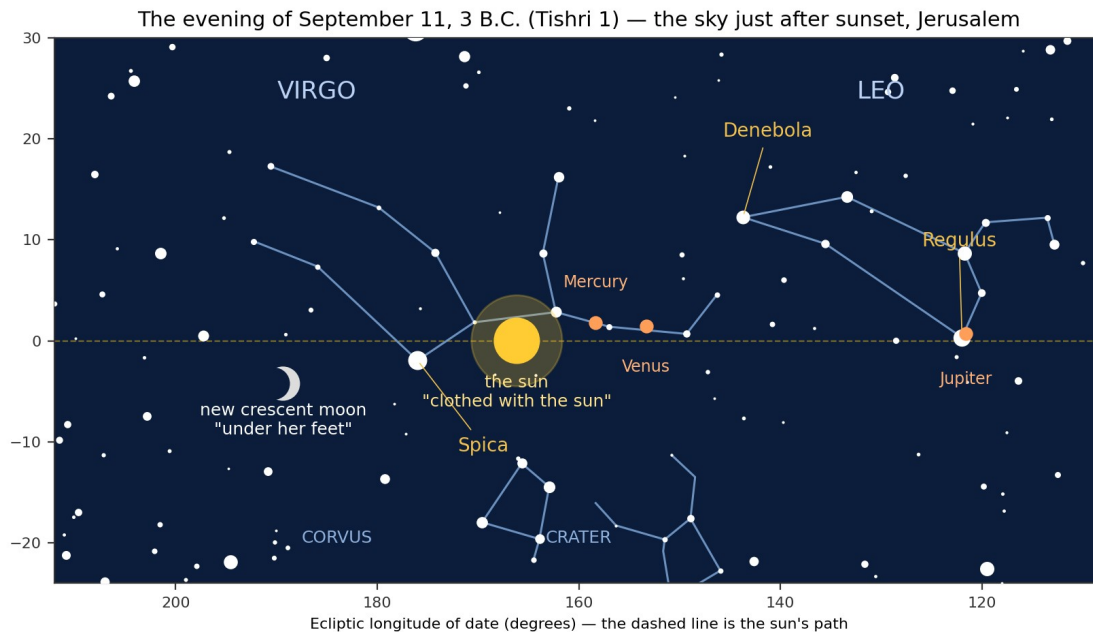
Revelation 12:1 *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:*

Revelation 12:2 *And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*

“Wonder” is the Greek *semeion* — a sign — the same word the Greek Old Testament uses for “signs” in Genesis 1:14. And this sign appeared **“in heaven.”**

Among the twelve signs, only one is a woman: Virgo. For about twenty days each year, from late August to mid-September, the sun passes through the body of Virgo — between her shoulders and her knees — and so “clothes” her with the sun. And once in each of those twenty-day periods, the moon passes beneath her feet. For the moon to be *under her feet* while the sun *clothes* her, the moon must be a thin crescent, just past new — and it can be seen only in the evening twilight, just after sunset.

In 3 B.C., according to *Promised Seed* and Martin, that happened on **one evening only: September 11.**



The sky of Revelation 12:1 on the evening of September 11, 3 B.C.: the sun in the body of Virgo, the new crescent moon at her feet, and in Leo, the planet Jupiter beside Regulus, the king star. Positions computed for this presentation.

The chart shows the sun “clothing” Virgo, with Spica, her ear of grain, just behind it, and the crescent moon beneath her feet. It shows something else as well: in Leo, beside Regulus, the planet Jupiter — only days from its first meeting with the king star.

A note on seeing. No one standing on the earth that evening could have seen Virgo’s stars around the sun; the sun’s own light hides every star near it (Chapter 4, “Reading the Sun’s Place Among the Stars”). What a watcher could see was the thin new crescent low in the west just after sunset — and, in the mornings of that same week, the Lion rising before dawn with Jupiter drawing near to Regulus (the dawn chart in Chapter 4). From these, anyone who knew the sky knew that the sun stood in the body of the Virgin, with the moon at her feet. The chart draws what was there, not what the eye could see. John is another matter: he saw the sign “in heaven” by revelation, not by looking out over the Judean hills.

Three more facts make that evening remarkable:

- **It was the new moon of the seventh month — Tishri 1, the Feast of Trumpets.** The first crescent after the new moon of September 9 was visible on the evening of September 11, and in the Hebrew reckoning the new month, and the new day, began at that sunset. **“In the seventh month, on the first day of the month... it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you” (Numbers 29:1).**
- **The birth would have been at night,** which agrees with the shepherds **“keeping watch over their flock by night” (Luke 2:8).** *Promised Seed* gives sunset that evening at 6:18 p.m. and moonset at 7:39 p.m. (The calculation made for this presentation gives a somewhat shorter window, the crescent setting roughly forty minutes after the sun; small differences like this come from how each calculation handles the horizon and the earth’s slowing rotation. Either way, September 11 was the first evening the new crescent could be seen.)

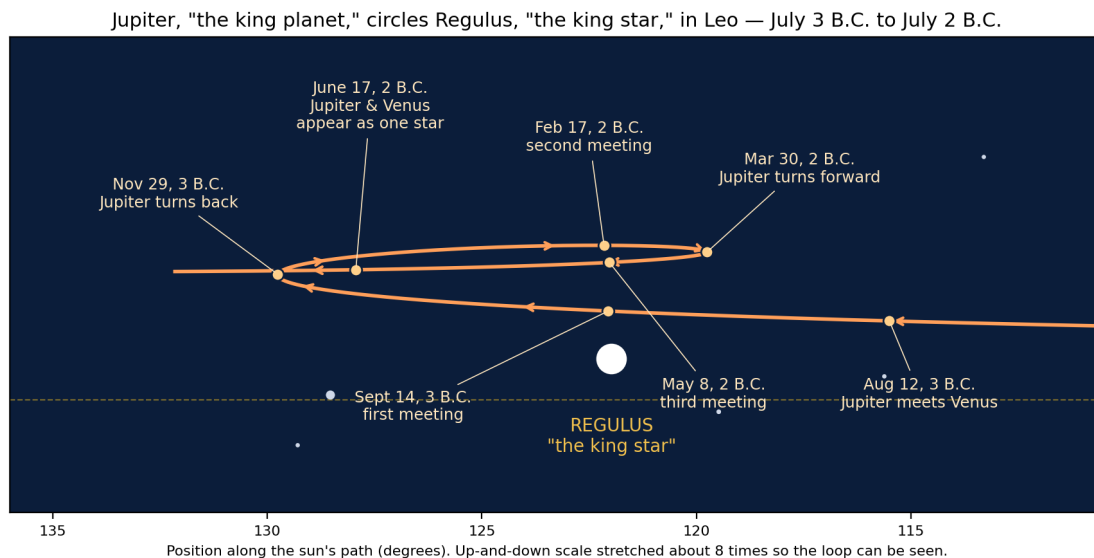
- **John saw this sign in a vision** long after the event (Revelation 12). *Promised Seed* reads the vision as recording, among other things, the very configuration of the sky on the night of the birth.

What about the crown of twelve stars? Two readings are offered. *Promised Seed* takes the crown to mean that Virgo stands at the head of the twelve signs — the first chapter of the heavenly scroll. Others point to what was actually above Virgo's head that evening: the stars of Leo, with the planets Mercury and Venus just before her head and Jupiter among Leo's stars (see the chart), and count these together as a crown. (Danny Faulkner has pointed out that Leo has far more than nine visible stars — Ptolemy catalogued twenty-seven — so any count of twelve requires choosing which stars to count.) Scripture does not tell us which is meant, and this presentation holds both loosely.

This reading of Revelation 12 is **careful reasoning** — a strong and beautiful fit, but not a direct statement. Some who accept the same sky events (for example Robert Newman and Rick Larson) take September 3 B.C. as the time of the *conception* rather than the birth, and place the birth the following June. This series follows the September birth, which agrees with its chronology and with the Feast of Trumpets.

The King Planet and the King Star

To the ancient world, the planet Jupiter was the king planet — the Babylonians named it after Marduk, the chief of their gods, and the Romans after Jupiter, the king of theirs. Regulus, the brightest star of Leo, was the king star (*Sharru*, "the King"). Leo was the sign of the lion — the lion of Judah (Genesis 49:9). Watch what happened next.



Jupiter's path around Regulus from July 3 B.C. to July 2 B.C., with its three meetings with the king star and its two meetings with Venus. Computed for this presentation.

- **August 12, 3 B.C.** — Jupiter and Venus came together in the morning sky, less than a tenth of a degree apart, near the border of Cancer and Leo. *Promised Seed* suggests the magi began their close watch of Jupiter here.
- **September 14, 3 B.C.** — three days after September 11, Jupiter passed Regulus, the king star: **the first meeting.**

- Then Jupiter did what planets seem to do each year: it slowed, stopped, and moved *backward* against the stars (astronomers call this *retrograde* motion, caused by the earth overtaking the slower outer planet).
- **February 17, 2 B.C.** — moving backward, Jupiter passed Regulus again: **the second meeting.**
- It stopped again, turned forward, and on **May 8, 2 B.C.** passed Regulus a **third time.**

The king planet circled the king star, in the constellation of the Lion of Judah, three times, beginning in the very week of the birth. Planets pass Regulus often, but a triple meeting of this kind is uncommon — it depends on Jupiter’s backward loop falling exactly on the star. To star-watchers who knew Balaam’s prophecy of the Star and the Sceptre, and Jacob’s prophecy of the lion of Judah, it would have been hard to miss the meaning: *a King is born among the Jews.*

Two Stars Become One: June 17, 2 B.C.

Six weeks after the third meeting, on the evening of **June 17, 2 B.C.**, Jupiter and Venus — the two brightest planets — came so close together in the western sky after sunset, near Regulus in Leo, that to the naked eye they merged into one brilliant star. The calculation made for this presentation puts them about half a minute of arc apart — far closer than the eye can separate. Such a close meeting of these two planets is very rare. As this series understands it, this may have been the sign that sent the magi on their way — looking west, toward Judea.

The Planets Gather: August 27, 2 B.C.

On August 27, 2 B.C., Jupiter, Mars and Mercury gathered within about two degrees of one another in Leo, with Venus nearby. *Promised Seed* treats this as a further sign, after which the magi set out. (The gathering was close to the sun, so it could have been seen only low in the dawn twilight.)

The Star That Stood Still: December, 2 B.C.

The magi reached Jerusalem, and Herod sent them to Bethlehem, about six miles to the south. Then **“the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was” (Matthew 2:9).**

Martin pointed out that in late December of 2 B.C., Jupiter reached one of its “stationary” points — the moment when a planet stops moving eastward among the stars before beginning its backward loop — in the constellation of Virgo. The calculation made for this presentation confirms that Jupiter stood essentially still among the stars from about December 20 into early January, stopping on about December 27–29. In the hours before dawn it stood high in the southern sky as seen from Jerusalem — the direction of Bethlehem. Martin noted that this fell on December 25, which was also during the Jewish Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah).

This is the most debated part of the whole account. A planet’s “standing still” is real, but it is a standing still *among the stars*, not a standing over a single house; and **“went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was”** sounds to many readers like something more local and more wonderful. The Birth of Jesus story in this series says simply that the star did something no ordinary star does. Both views honor the text. What is certain is that by the time the magi arrived the child was no longer a newborn in a manger but **“the young child”** in **“the house” (Matthew 2:11)**, and that Herod’s “two years old and under” fits a birth in 3 B.C. and a visit late in 2 B.C.

The Whole Timeline

Date (Julian)	In the sky	In the record
Aug 12, 3 B.C.	Jupiter and Venus meet in Leo (morning sky)	The magi may begin their watch
Sept 11, 3 B.C.	Sun in Virgo, new crescent at her feet; Tishri 1	Birth of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:1-5)
Sept 14, 3 B.C.	Jupiter meets Regulus — first meeting	
Nov–Dec, 3 B.C.	Jupiter turns back (retrograde)	
Feb 17, 2 B.C.	Jupiter meets Regulus — second meeting	
May 8, 2 B.C.	Jupiter meets Regulus — third meeting	
June 17, 2 B.C.	Jupiter and Venus appear as one star, in the west	The magi may set out westward
Aug 27, 2 B.C.	Jupiter, Mars and Mercury gather in Leo	
Dec 2 B.C.	Jupiter stands still in Virgo; high in the south before dawn	The magi find the young child in Bethlehem
Jan 9, 1 B.C.	Eclipse of the moon	Herod dies soon after

In short: on the evening Jesus Christ was born, by this series' reckoning, the sky showed the woman of Revelation 12 clothed with the sun and the new moon at her feet on the Feast of Trumpets. In the same week the king planet began to circle the king star in the sign of the Lion of Judah, three times over, and the months that followed brought the brightest "star" any watcher of that age had seen. The dates are careful reasoning; the sky itself is simply fact.

Chapter 11: The Woman, the Child and the Dragon

Revelation 12 is more than a picture of the sky on one evening. John saw it **“in heaven”** as a *sign*, and a sign points beyond itself. Having looked at the stars, we now look at the meaning.

Revelation 12:1 *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:*

Revelation 12:2 *And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*

Revelation 12:3 *And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*

Revelation 12:4 *And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*

Revelation 12:5 *And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*

Revelation 12:6 *And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.*

The Woman

Who is the woman “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars”? Scripture has already given us the pieces. Joseph dreamed of **“the sun and the moon and the eleven stars”** bowing to him (Genesis 37:9) — himself the twelfth — and his father understood it at once as the family of Israel. The woman crowned with twelve stars is best understood as **Israel**, the nation of the twelve tribes, of whom **“as concerning the flesh Christ came” (Romans 9:5)**. On the night of the birth itself, the woman in travail was Mary, the daughter of that nation. **“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman” (Galatians 4:4)**.

And in the heavens, the woman is Virgo — the sign that, in Bullinger’s reading, opens the whole story with the promise of the woman’s seed. The written vision and the sky’s picture point to the same promise: Genesis 3:15.

The Dragon

Revelation 12:9 *And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

The dragon is named outright: **“that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan.”** He is the serpent of Genesis 3, the enemy of the woman’s seed from the beginning. **“His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven”** — many understand these “stars” as the angels who followed him, for **“his angels were cast out with him” (12:9)**.

The sky has its serpents too. **Draco**, the dragon, coils around the pole of the heavens — in the days of the pyramids, its star Thuban was the pole star, the point around which all the heavens turned (Chapter 8). And **Hydra**, the great serpent, stretches more than a hundred degrees beneath Cancer, Leo and Virgo

— lying beneath the very woman of Revelation 12. As this series understands it, the heavens picture the enemy as well as the Redeemer, just as the written Word does.

“The dragon stood before the woman... for to devour her child as soon as it was born.” On earth, that attack came through Herod, who **“slew all the children that were in Bethlehem... from two years old and under” (Matthew 2:16)**. Herod carried it out; the adversary stood behind it. God delivered the child by warning Joseph in a dream (Matthew 2:13).

The Child

“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.” This is the language of the second psalm:

Psalm 2:7 *I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.*

Psalm 2:8 *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*

Psalm 2:9 *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

The child is the Son of God, the promised seed, the King — the Lion of Judah with the sceptre, the Star out of Jacob.

“And her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” In a single sentence John's vision passes from the birth to the throne. Between them lie the whole of the Gospels: His life, His death on the cross, His resurrection on the third day, and His ascension. **“He was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9)**. God **“raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:20)**. The cross, the resurrection and the ascension together are the victory over the dragon: **“that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14)**.

The Serpent Under Foot

The promise of Genesis 3:15 was that the serpent would bruise the heel of the woman's seed, and the seed would crush the serpent's head. The sky tells the same story from the woman in Virgo to the Lion in Leo, whose forefeet stand over Hydra. And Paul, writing to believers in this age of grace, carries the promise into our own day:

Romans 16:20 *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

In short: Revelation 12 shows the woman, the dragon and the child — Israel and her promised Son, the old serpent who tried to destroy Him, and the victory of the child caught up to God's throne. The sky pictures the same three: the virgin, the serpents, and the Lion.

Chapter 12: Signs Yet to Come

The heavens have not finished speaking. Scripture foretells signs in the sun, moon and stars still to come.

What Scripture Foretells

Jesus Christ Himself said:

Luke 21:25 *And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;*

Luke 21:26 *Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

Luke 21:27 *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

Luke 21:28 *And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

The prophet Joel, quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:19 *And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:*

Acts 2:20 *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:*

Matthew 24:29 *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:*

Matthew 24:30 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

And John saw, at the opening of the sixth seal:

Revelation 6:12 *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;*

Revelation 6:13 *And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.*

These signs belong to “**that great and notable day of the Lord.**” They are the heavens’ announcement of the coming of the Son of man in power and great glory — the Lion of Judah rising to rend His prey, as the last sign of the Mazzaroth pictures.

The Believer’s Hope Today

In the present age of grace, the believer’s hope is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His people:

1 Thessalonians 4:16 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:*

1 Thessalonians 4:17 *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

Paul told the Thessalonians that they were waiting for **“his Son from heaven... even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10)**, and that **“God hath not appointed us to wrath” (1 Thessalonians 5:9)**. As this series understands the administrations of scripture, the gathering together of believers comes before the day of wrath, whose signs Joel and Jesus described. Either way, the believer’s eyes are on the Lord, not on the sky: **“then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28)**.

A Warning Against Setting Dates

The same excitement that draws Christians to the witness of the stars has also led some astray. In recent years several popular teachers announced that particular arrangements of the planets — the “blood moons” of 2014–2015, and an alignment in Virgo on September 23, 2017, promoted as “the Revelation 12 sign” — marked the date of the Lord’s return. Those dates came and went. The astronomical events were real; the predictions were not. Christian astronomers, including Danny Faulkner of Answers in Genesis, pointed out at the time that arrangements like these recur and prove nothing about the day of the Lord’s coming.

Scripture closes the door on such date-setting:

Matthew 24:36 *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

The witness of the stars looks back to what God has done — the promise, the birth, the victory — and forward to what He has promised. It does not give us the calendar of the future. That belongs to the Father alone.

In short: the heavens will yet bear witness when the Son of man comes in power, but no arrangement of the stars reveals the day. The believer looks up — to the Lord, not to the horoscope.

Chapter 13: Weighing It All

A presentation like this owes its readers a plain accounting. Here is the whole subject, sorted by how firmly it stands.

What Scripture Says Directly

- God made the sun, moon and stars and set them **“for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years”** (Genesis 1:14).
- **“The heavens declare the glory of God”**; they **“utter speech”** and **“show knowledge,”** and their voice goes to every nation (Psalm 19:1-4).
- Paul applied the heavens’ voice to the hearing of the word (Romans 10:18).
- God **“tellecth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names”** (Psalm 147:4).
- Scripture names the Pleiades, Orion, the Bear, the Mazzaroth and the Twins (Job 9:9; 38:31-32; Amos 5:8; Acts 28:11).
- God’s appointed feasts were fixed by the sun and moon (Leviticus 23), and were shadows of Christ (Colossians 2:16-17).
- Balaam prophesied **“a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre”** (Numbers 24:17); Jacob gave Judah the lion and the sceptre (Genesis 49:9-10).
- The magi saw **“his star”** and followed it to the young child (Matthew 2).
- John saw **“a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet”** (Revelation 12:1).
- There will be **“signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars”** before the Son of man comes (Luke 21:25).
- God forbids worshipping the host of heaven and reading the stars for omens (Deuteronomy 4:19; 18:10-12; Isaiah 47:13-14).
- The mystery of this present administration was **“kept secret since the world began”** and **“hid in God”** (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:26); the prophets foretold **“the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow”** (1 Peter 1:11).
- God **“stretcheth out the north over the empty place”** (Job 26:7).

What Is Careful Reasoning

- That the heavens carried a witness to the promised seed *before* the written Word, which Adam and the patriarchs knew and passed on.
- That the twelve signs, read in order from Virgo to Leo, picture the story of Genesis 3:15 through to the Lion’s triumph.
- That the Sphinx, joining the woman and the lion, is a memory of where that story begins and ends.
- That the mystery, being hid in God, is not pictured in the stars — a conclusion Bullinger himself drew — and that the signs, like the prophets, tell of the sufferings and the glory but not of the secret between.
- That Job’s “in his season” (Job 38:32) refers to each sign’s return to the dawn sky at its appointed time.

- That Job's "crooked serpent" is Draco.
- That the knowledge of Adam reached Abraham through Methuselah and Shem (the overlapping lives are direct statement; the passing on of star-knowledge is inference).
- That the magi learned to expect the King and His star from Balaam and Daniel.
- That the sky of September 11, 3 B.C. is the sign John saw in Revelation 12, and that Jesus Christ was born that evening, on the Feast of Trumpets.
- That Jupiter's triple meeting with Regulus, and the meetings with Venus, were the signs the magi followed.

What History and Tradition Add

- The origin of the constellations in the lands of the Bible, in the centuries after the Flood (the unmapped southern zone).
- Babylonian star lists with the Lion, the Scorpion, the woman with her ear of grain, and "the King" star.
- Josephus's account of Seth's pillars, and of Abraham teaching astronomy in Egypt.
- Jubilees and 1 Enoch on Enoch and the heavens.
- The Greek poem Paul quoted, which says God "set the signs in heaven."
- The synagogue zodiacs and the tradition of the tribal banners.
- Albumazar's report of the virgin and child in Virgo.
- Two independent drawings of the Esna ceiling (1809 and 1820), both showing a human-headed lion where the Lion's band meets the next.
- The starless north pole reported by Pytheas and Hipparchus, and the faint northern stretches left without figures until the 1600s.

What Should Be Let Go

- **Most of the Hebrew-sounding star-name meanings** from Rolleston and those who followed her (Denebola "the Judge who cometh," Zosma "shining forth," Coma "the desired," and many more). Where a name's real meaning fits — Spica, Regulus, Rigel, Algol, the Manger — it is kept.
- **Bullinger's dating of the Dendera and Esna zodiacs to about 4000 B.C.** They date from about 50 B.C. and the Roman period.
- **The claim that the twelve tribes carried the twelve signs on their banners.** Scripture does not say what was on the banners.
- **The derivation of Regulus from the Hebrew *regel*, "foot"** (in *Promised Seed*). Regulus is Latin for "little king."
- **The claim that the Southern Cross "disappeared at the crucifixion."** It faded slowly over many centuries.
- **Any use of the stars to set dates for the Lord's return.**
- **Bullinger's label "Virgo" on the figure beside the Esna sphinx.** In both drawings that figure is a crowned man.
- **Any claim that a gap in the northern sky is a sign of the mystery.** The starless pole and the unpictured stretches are real, but scripture never ties them to the mystery. They may illustrate it; they do not prove it.

Nothing true is lost by letting these go. The case that remains is stronger for being honest.

In short: the heart of the subject rests on scripture's own words about the heavens, and much of the rest is careful reasoning supported by history. A few popular claims do not hold up, and the witness of the stars does not need them.

Chapter 14: The Bright and Morning Star

Where the Story Leads

Go back outside on a clear night. The same stars that Adam named, that Abraham was told to “tell,” that Job was asked about out of the whirlwind, that the magi watched from the east — they are still there, turning in their appointed order.

Every night they declare the glory of God. And for those who know the written Word, their voice says more. In the woman of Virgo we can see the promise of the seed of the woman. In the scales, the price paid. In the scorpion at the heel, the conflict. In the Lamb, the sacrifice. In the Lion over the serpent, the victory. It is the same story from Genesis to Revelation, told first in the sky and then in the Book.

And on one September evening two thousand years ago, the sky and the Book met. A woman clothed with the sun, the new moon at her feet, on the Feast of Trumpets. The king planet beginning its dance around the king star, in the sign of the Lion of Judah. A child born in Bethlehem, who would suffer, die, rise again, and ascend to the right hand of God — **“caught up unto God, and to his throne” (Revelation 12:5).**

The Main Takeaway

The heavens were made to point to Jesus Christ, and so was all of scripture. The stars are God’s first witness, never His last word. Peter, who saw the glory of Christ with his own eyes, said:

2 Peter 1:19 *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:*

“A more sure word of prophecy” — more sure than the voice from heaven, more sure than any sign in the sky. The written Word is the light that shines in a dark place, *until the day dawn, and the day star arise*. The One the heavens declare, the One the prophets foretold, the One the magi sought, is the One who says of Himself:

“I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star” (Revelation 22:16).

Look up, and give thanks to the One who made them all and called them all by their names. Then open the Book, and meet the Star.

Appendix 1: The Forty-Eight Constellations at a Glance

The twelve signs and their thirty-six companions, in the order and with the titles given by E. W. Bullinger in *The Witness of the Stars* (1893). The titles are Bullinger's interpretations (see Chapters 5 and 13).

Sign	Bullinger's title	Companion constellations
Book One — The Redeemer: His First Coming		
Virgo, the virgin	The promised seed of the woman	Coma (the woman and child); Centaurus (the two-natured one, the sin offering); Boötes (he cometh)
Libra, the scales	The price deficient balanced by the price that covers	Crux (the cross endured); Lupus (the victim slain); Corona (the crown bestowed)
Scorpio, the scorpion	The conflict — the enemy wounding, but trodden under foot	Serpens (the serpent struggling with the man); Ophiuchus (the man grasping the serpent); Hercules (the mighty man, his foot on the dragon's head)
Sagittarius, the archer	The two-natured conqueror going forth	Lyra (praise prepared); Ara (fire prepared for the enemy); Draco (the old serpent cast down)
Book Two — The Redeemed		
Capricornus, the goat-fish	The goat of atonement slain for the redeemed	Sagitta (the arrow of God); Aquila (the smitten one falling); Delphinus (the dead one rising)
Aquarius, the water-bearer	The living waters poured out	Piscis Australis (the blessings bestowed); Pegasus (the blessings quickly coming); Cygnus (the blesser surely returning)
Pisces, the fishes	The redeemed blessed though bound	The Band (binding the enemy); Andromeda (the redeemed in bondage); Cepheus (the king coming to rule)
Aries, the ram	The Lamb that was slain, prepared for victory	Cassiopeia (the captive delivered); Cetus (the enemy bound); Perseus (the breaker)
Book Three — The Redeemer: His Second Coming		
Taurus, the bull	Messiah coming to rule	Orion (light breaking forth); Eridanus (the river of judgment); Auriga (the shepherd — safety for the redeemed)
Gemini, the twins	The twofold nature of the King	Lepus (the enemy trodden under foot); Canis Major (the coming glorious Prince); Canis Minor (the exalted Redeemer)
Cancer, the crab	The redeemed possessions held fast	Ursa Minor (the lesser sheepfold); Ursa Major (the fold and the flock); Argo (the pilgrims safe at home)

Sign	Bullinger's title	Companion constellations
Leo, the lion	The Lion of the tribe of Judah aroused for the rending of the enemy	Hydra (the old serpent destroyed); Crater (the cup of divine wrath); Corvus (the birds of prey devouring)

Appendix 2: Star Names — Popular Meaning and Real Meaning

Many books on the witness of the stars give meanings for star names that cannot be verified. This table sets the popular meaning (as given by Bullinger, following Rolleston) beside the meaning found in the standard reference works on star names, such as R. H. Allen's *Star Names: Their Lore and Meaning* (1899). "Keep" means the real meaning fits the witness of the stars; "Let go" means the popular meaning should not be relied on.

Star (constellation)	Popular meaning (Bullinger)	Real meaning and origin	Verdict
Regulus (Leo)	"treading under foot"	Latin "little king"; Greek <i>Basiliskos</i> ; Babylonian <i>Sharru</i> , "the King"	Keep — as "the King"
Denebola (Leo)	"the Judge or Lord who cometh"	Arabic <i>dhanab al-asad</i> , "the lion's tail"	Let go
Algieba (Leo)	"the exaltation"	Arabic <i>al-jabha</i> , "the forehead"	Let go
Zosma (Leo)	"shining forth"	Greek, "the girdle"	Let go
Alphard (Hydra)	"the separated, put away"	Arabic <i>al-fard</i> , "the solitary one"	Close — keep with care
Spica (Virgo)	"an ear of corn"	Latin, "ear of grain"	Keep
"Al Zimach" (Spica)	"the branch" (Hebrew <i>tsemach</i>)	Arabic <i>as-simak</i> , a name of uncertain meaning, not the Hebrew word	Let go
Arcturus (Boötes)	"He cometh"	Greek, "guardian of the bear"	Let go
Antares (Scorpio)	"the wounding"	Greek, "rival of Ares (Mars)," for its red color	Let go
Vega (Lyra)	"He shall be exalted"	Arabic <i>al-waqi'</i> , "the swooping (eagle)"	Let go
Fomalhaut (Piscis Australis)	"the mouth of the fish"	Arabic <i>fam al-hut</i> , "the mouth of the fish"	Keep
Algol (Perseus)	"the evil spirit"	Arabic <i>ra's al-ghul</i> , "the head of the demon"	Keep
Aldebaran (Taurus)	"the leader or governor"	Arabic <i>al-dabaran</i> , "the follower"	Let go
Rigel (Orion)	"the foot that crusheth"	Arabic <i>rijl</i> , "foot"	Keep — as "foot"
Betelgeuse (Orion)	"the coming of the branch"	Arabic <i>yad al-jawza</i> , "the hand of al-Jawza" (a figure in Arab star-lore)	Let go
Capella (Auriga)	"a she-goat"	Latin, "little she-goat"	Keep
Sirius (Canis Major)	"the Prince"	Greek <i>seirios</i> , "scorching"	Let go
Procyon (Canis Minor)	"the exalted Redeemer"	Greek, "before the dog"	Let go
Thuban (Draco)	"the subtle"	Arabic <i>al-thu'ban</i> , "the serpent"	Keep — as "serpent"
Phatne and the Aselli (Cancer)	(not stressed by Bullinger)	Greek <i>Phatne</i> , "the manger," with the two "asses," named by Aratus	Keep

Appendix 3: How the Charts Were Made

The star charts in Chapters 2, 4, 5, 8 and 10 were computed for this presentation with standard astronomical software (the PyEphem library), using the same kinds of formulas that planetarium programs use for the sun, moon and planets. Star positions come from a modern catalogue of the brighter stars and were carried back to the date shown by allowing for precession. The charts are drawn along the sun's path (the ecliptic) as it lay on that date, with east to the left, as the sky appears to someone facing south.

The key results, checked by calculation:

- **September 11, 3 B.C., evening:** sun in the body of Virgo; the moon a thin crescent (about 4 percent lit), about 23 degrees east of the sun, beneath Virgo's feet. New moon had occurred on September 9, so September 11 was the first evening the crescent could be seen.
- **Jupiter and Regulus:** closest meetings on September 14, 3 B.C. (about a third of a degree apart), February 17, 2 B.C. (under one degree), and May 8–9, 2 B.C. (under one degree).
- **Jupiter and Venus:** August 12, 3 B.C. (less than a tenth of a degree apart), and the evening of June 17, 2 B.C. (about half a minute of arc — to the eye, one star).
- **Jupiter stationary:** late December, 2 B.C., in Virgo, essentially motionless among the stars from about December 20 into early January.
- **Dawn of September 15, 3 B.C., at Jerusalem:** with the sun ten degrees below the horizon (about 45 minutes before sunrise), Regulus and Jupiter stood about 37 degrees high in the east, Venus about 2 degrees high, and the sun among the stars of Virgo.
- **The north celestial pole:** about 4 degrees from Thuban in 2000 B.C.; from roughly 1500 B.C. to A.D. 1000 no star brighter than the fourth magnitude within 5 degrees; at the time of Christ the nearest bright star, Kochab, about 8 degrees away.
- **The Southern Cross at Jerusalem:** greatest height above the horizon about 16 degrees in 2000 B.C., about 6 degrees at the time of Christ, below the horizon by about A.D. 1000.

The old engravings are reproduced from public-domain copies: the Esna zodiac from the *Description de l'Égypte* (Paris, 1809), Bullinger's own Esna plate from *The Witness of the Stars* (1893), and the constellation cards of *Urania's Mirror* (London, 1824).

The times of sunset and moonset in these distant centuries can differ by some minutes from one calculation to another, because the earth's rotation has slowed by an amount that is known only approximately. The positions of the sun, moon and planets among the stars are not affected.

Appendix 4: A Short Glossary of Sky Words

Celestial pole — the point in the sky around which all the stars seem to turn. The north celestial pole is marked today by Polaris; in the time of Christ no bright star stood near it (Chapter 5).

Conjunction — a close meeting of two heavenly bodies as seen from earth, such as Jupiter and Regulus in 3–2 B.C. The two are not near each other in space; they only line up in our sky.

Constellation — a picture or pattern made from a group of stars. The ancients knew forty-eight; the modern official list has eighty-eight.

Decan — one of the three companion constellations belonging to each sign in Bullinger’s scheme (from a word meaning “a part”). In Egyptian astronomy the word also names thirty-six star groups used to tell the hours of the night.

Ecliptic — the yearly path of the sun among the stars. The planets and the moon always stay near it. The dashed line in the star charts of this presentation.

Equinox and solstice — the four turning points of the sun’s year: the two days of equal day and night (spring and autumn) and the longest and shortest days (summer and winter).

Heliacal rising — the first morning a star can be seen again rising in the east just before the sun, after weeks hidden in the sun’s glare (Chapter 4).

Magnitude — the measure of a star’s brightness. The *smaller* the number, the brighter the star. The brightest stars are of the first magnitude; the faintest seen by the eye on a dark night are about the sixth.

Mazzaroth — the Hebrew word in Job 38:32, understood by most scholars as the twelve signs along the sun’s path.

Precession — the slow wobble of the earth’s axis, taking about 25,800 years to complete. It moves the pole of the sky and the starting point of spring slowly among the stars (Chapter 8).

Sign (of the zodiac) — one of the twelve constellations along the sun’s path. In this presentation “sign” always means the star picture itself, not a horoscope sign.

Stationary point — a time when a planet seems to stand still among the stars before reversing its direction, as Jupiter did in December, 2 B.C. (Chapter 10).

Retrograde motion — the backward loop a planet seems to make among the stars as the earth passes it on the inside track. Jupiter’s loop around Regulus is an example.

Zodiac — the band of twelve constellations through which the sun, moon and planets move. The word is Greek; scripture’s word is Mazzaroth.

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