

## Significance of the 27 August 2016 Venus Jupiter Conjunction

A remarkable astronomical event will occur on 27 August 2016. The planets, Venus and Jupiter will merge into what will appear as a single star to the naked eye. It will only be visible as a single star in a very limited geographic area. Even so, when viewed from around the world, this will be the closest the two planets will ever come and be visible in the lifetimes of those living today. The last time the two planets were this close together in a conjunction was 26 June 1728, nearly 300 years ago. During that event, the conjunction was only sixteen degrees from the sun so it was not visible from anywhere on earth. The next opportunity for such an event will not be until 5 June 2107 when the conjunction will be only thirteen degrees from the sun, again not visible with the naked eye from anywhere on earth. There are no known naked eye photographs of Venus and Jupiter merged into a single star on record today.

Why is a merged conjunction of these two planets, appearing as a single star, so important? One important reason is that the 2016 conjunction will be a nearly identical mirror image to the star the Bible records that the wise men reported they had seen in the east (Matthew 2:2). This was the star that most likely motivated them to prepare for and leave their home in the east in order to be in Jerusalem in time to follow the most remarkable Venus Jupiter conjunction star in recorded history to Bethlehem (Matthew 2:9) on the day of the birth of Jesus Christ. Today, we call that remarkable appearance, the Christmas or the Bethlehem star.

In the paper, **Wise Men Still Seek Him –The Heavenly Signs for the Messiah’s Return** (available at [www.thechristmasstar.org](http://www.thechristmasstar.org)), the case is made that two Quartets of Venus Jupiter conjunctions appearing in the Constellation Leo, separated in time by two thousand years, form the stellar template of heavenly signs for the Messiah’s first and second comings. The first conjunction in the -3 to -1 BC Quartet of conjunctions that pointed to the Messiah’s first coming appeared on 12 August 3 BC. This is the conjunction gave the wise men the “heads up” that an important event was about to happen in Judah. The fourth and final conjunction in the 2014-16 Quartet of conjunctions for the Messiah’s return will appear on 27 August 2016. This event may well be the heavenly sign marking the “heads up” that begins the final countdown for the Messiah’s return. The remarkable similarities in parameters for these two conjunctions (**12 August 3 BC** and **27 August 2016**) include:

1. For the first conjunction in the “first” coming Quartet – Venus was the Morning Star (rising)
2. For the last conjunction in the “second” coming Quartet – Venus is the Evening Star (setting)
3. For both conjunctions, the separation distance between the planets when merged is about .07 degrees
4. For both conjunctions, the separation distance from the Sun is about 21 degrees
5. The 3 BC conjunction was visible for about an hour before sunrise around the world, but only as a single star in time zone GMT +2 (Israel)
6. The 2016 conjunction will be visible for about an hour after sunset around the world, but only as a single star in time zone GMT -4 (West Atlantic, South America)

As revealed in the Christmas Star, when the August 3 BC star appeared over Israel, the wise men were more than likely in Persia, about 750 miles east of Jerusalem. This means that the conjunction may not have appeared as a single star when they saw it before it merged. While it is clear that whatever they observed was not significant enough to motivate them to head out for Israel at the time, it clearly played a role in getting them to Jerusalem and to report what they had seen in the east (Ma 2:2), and then to follow the Christmas Star from Jerusalem to Bethlehem on the day of Jesus' birth (Ma 2:9).

Incredibly, the 27 August 2016 conjunction will give us (the wise men of today) an opportunity to see and photograph what the conjunction looked like when the planets merge into a single star, as it would have appeared over Israel, and how it appeared to the wise men when they were still in the east.

### **How and Where will it be seen?**

Venus will first be seen in the western sky, shortly after sunset (15-20 degrees above the horizon) around the world, on the evening of 27 August 2016. The planet will slowly descend to the horizon over the next 45 minutes to an hour. By about 30 minutes after sunset, Jupiter should begin to appear. When both planets can be seen together, they will be about one sixth of a degree apart. For most of the world, they should appear as two separate planets, but very close together (more than twice as close as the 30 June 2015 conjunction).

In one or possibly two time zones (GMT -4 and -5) the planets will appear to merge into a single star. The best places to see the conjunction as it appeared to the wise men will be from locations along the same latitude as Jerusalem and Susa (ancient capital of Persia). This will be along the 32<sup>nd</sup> parallel. In time zone GMT -4, the best location to see the planets when merged will be in **Hamilton, Bermuda** (I plan to be there to get photos). From this location, the star will look like it did when it appeared over Israel on 12 August 3 BC.

We need to keep in mind that the wise men were not in Israel when the star appeared. In order to see what the wise men may have seen, the planets need to be observed from a location about 750 miles from Bermuda. That location is **Charleston, SC**. From Charleston, there may be a chance to see the planets when they are still close enough to appear as a single star. Atmospheric conditions and the brightness of Venus will likely be factors in how the conjunction appears shortly after sunset. Good photos taken of the planets from anywhere along the east coast should give us a good idea of what the wise men may have observed as the star that gave them a "heads up" that an important event was about to happen in Judah.

Because the sun is still above the equator in late August, the planets can best be seen from locations south of Charleston, all the way to Miami along the east coast. This is because it stays lighter longer the further north one goes, so in places like Boston or Halifax, Nova Scotia it may be too light for Jupiter to be clearly seen before Venus settles below the horizon. It is important to remember that there are no known photos of Venus and Jupiter in a conjunction with this magnitude of separation, so any good photos received from this rare and special opportunity will be posted on the Christmas Star website. Your interest and support to help capture this amazing event on film will be greatly appreciated. This may be the heavenly sign that the world has been waiting for. Blessings.