

Prophecy Lesson 7 – Venus the Day Star December 20, 2020

Before addressing the ‘day star’ issue, I want to address an important sign the wise men did not observe in the fall of 3 BC, both because it appeared in daylight and because it wasn’t critical for their role in fulfilling Scripture. Many scholars and theologians believe that Jesus was born at about the time of the Jewish fall feast of Rosh Hashanah or the Feast of Trumpets, in September. In our Nativity story, if Jesus was born on June 17, 2 BC when the Christmas Star appeared, then his conception in Mary’s womb had to be nine months earlier, sometime in September 3 BC, about a month after the appearance of the ‘heads up’ star observed by the wise men on August 12, 3 BC. So the question is: Was Jesus conceived in the Fall or was he born in the Fall? In the summer of 2017, significant online excitement, interest and claims were being made about the ‘Sign of Revelation 12’, the sign of the woman, described in verses 1-2, clothed in the sun, crowned with 12 stars and with the moon at her feet and that Virgo would appear on September 27, 2017 as the heavenly sign pointing to Christ’s Second Coming. On the link below, the claim is refuted in the first part of the paper, but in the second part, starting on page 7, I make the case that Jesus was conceived when the Sun passed through the virgin’s (Virgo) womb (the Sun representing the Son as the light of the world) on 11 September 3 BC, the first day of Rosh Hashanah. Then Venus, having departed Leo in late August, entered Virgo and appeared in the virgin’s womb on 16-20 September as confirmation that the Christ child had become incarnate. The timing of this sign coincides perfectly with the Christmas Star Nativity timeline. The paper makes a strong case that the sign of Revelation 12 actually appeared in September 3 BC, not September 2017 and I believe its appearance was God’s confirmation, via a heavenly sign, that life begins at conception, not at birth. Enjoy the paper:

<http://thatwebhostguy.com/ChristmasStar/ABibleBasedChronology/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/TheSignofRevelation12.pdf>

Venus - the Day Star

“Then Herod called the wise men secretly and found out from them the exact time the star appeared... After they heard the king they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the young child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed” (Matthew 2: 7-9).

The passage above is the key to understanding the entire Nativity story timeline and the reason why I believe the wise men had to be in Jerusalem on the day of Jesus’ birth. After Jupiter passed Regulus for the second time in three months in February 2 BC as confirmation that the star they had seen in the east the previous August was the Christmas Star, the wise men headed out for Israel in early to mid spring (April) in order to arrive in Jerusalem before the birth of Christ, even though they believed Jesus had been born when the star appeared the previous August. Thus, in their secret meeting with Herod (in the passage above) before departing Jerusalem for Bethlehem, the king asked them when exactly the star appeared? The wise men told the king that it had appeared ten months earlier, the previous August. This makes perfect sense because about two months later, in August 2 BC, when the king realized he’d been mocked by the wise men (Ma 2:16), he would have determined that the Christ child must have been at least a year old by then and ordered the murder of all the children in the Bethlehem area under the age of 2 years.

The second part of the passage, mainly verse 8 is the focus of our lesson today. As I indicated previously, neither wise men nor royalty traveled at night unless in distress, so the wise men would have

made the 6 mile journey to Bethlehem from Jerusalem in daylight, on the day of Jesus' birth, in order to fulfill Scripture. Otherwise they would not have seen the same star they had seen in the east. After Venus departed Virgo as the morning star in September 3 BC, the planet passed behind the Sun and emerged as the evening star in early February 2 BC. By the time the wise men departed Persia in mid April, Venus was more than 30 degrees behind the Sun as the evening star and the separation between the two steadily increased into the summer to 45 degrees elongation, putting Venus about 3 hours behind the Sun. Thus, the wise men were able to follow and observe the Star (Venus) each evening on their entire journey from Persia to Jerusalem. I believe their excitement grew in the evenings as they drew near to Jerusalem because they realized, at least a week or more before their arrival, that Venus would merge with Jupiter again shortly after June 15th.

Here is the critical issue: Bethlehem lies S-SW of Jerusalem, so the wise men would have observed the southern sky in daylight during their two hour or so journey south to Bethlehem from Jerusalem. Venus only passes through the southern in daylight because its orbit never exceeds about 45 degrees from the Sun as viewed from Earth. So, on June 17, 2 BC, when the Sun passed through the southern sky at noon, Venus would have been in the Southeastern sky at about 9 AM in the morning and would have passed through the southern sky in daylight when the Sun was in the southwest sky between 3 and 4 PM in the afternoon. It is clear from Matthew 2:9 that after the wise men departed Herod and went on their way (travelling in daylight) they saw the star they had seen in the east ahead of them in daylight because Venus can be seen in daylight when the planet is more than about 25 degrees from the Sun. This means that Venus, the Christ star, was visible in the southern sky, directly ahead of the wise men, as they traveled from Jerusalem to Bethlehem in order for Scripture (Matthew 2:9) to be fulfilled.

Venus is the only celestial object other than the moon that can be observed in daylight. Astronomy references indicate that Venus can be observed in daylight when the separation from the Sun is greater than about 25 degrees. My experience, based on today's atmosphere and sky conditions is that Venus can be observed in daylight, but it is a challenge, although I don't believe it compares at all with how the wise men observed the planet in daylight 2,000 years ago – especially if they had sky conditions more like those in the Masada photo (lesson 1). Last Tuesday (Dec 15) on my morning walk, the sky was clear enough that I was able to observe Venus in the SE sky at 7:05 AM, about 13 minutes before sunrise, because I knew exactly where to look. Normally, haze and smoke (especially in CA) prevent Venus from being observed less than 20-30 minutes before sunrise. On June 21-22, 2015, a week before the 30 June 2015 Venus Jupiter conjunction, the Big Sur fire filled California's central valley and foothills with smoke. But, during those two days, my wife and I were hiking the Pacific Crest trail in the high Sierras (8500-9000') and we had wonderfully clear skies above the smoke and haze. During that hike, I was able to track Venus throughout the day from 9 AM to 4 PM in the afternoon, making at least one observation of the planet each hour. Fortunately, the crescent Moon was located about halfway between Venus and the Sun and it helped immensely as a reference. One doesn't walk outside, look up and see Venus in daylight in today's atmosphere. Even so, the description in Matthew 2:9 given by the wise men about seeing the star in daylight clearly implies that Venus could be seen much more easily in daylight in their time than what we can observe today.

The issue of observing Venus in daylight was a real challenge with respect to Scripture and the Christmas Star story - until I received a YouTube video from a naval aviator friend in 2014 that opened my eyes to what the wise men might have actually observed in daylight conditions on the day of Jesus' birth. The video is a cockpit camera recording of an aircraft making an approach and landing at the Queenstown airport on New Zealand's southern island (about as far south as one can get in the southern

hemisphere). The video shows Venus in daylight appearing more like what I believe the wise men might have seen when they observed the star on their way to Bethlehem on the day of Jesus' birth.

I shared and discussed this video with Christian astronomer, Dr. Danny Faulkner, to confirm that it was actually Venus on the video and not the moon or some other celestial object. Other celestial objects were ruled out immediately because Venus and the moon are the only celestial objects that can be observed in daylight. The analysis took into account the fact that what is observed in the southern hemisphere is a mirror image of what we observe in the northern hemisphere. The issue of the object being the moon was considered because video images tend to appear smaller on film than they do with the naked eye. It was determined that the object was located in the morning NE sky (same as the SE sky in the northern hemisphere). After the aircraft's flight path was determined and the part of the sky where the object was observed was evaluated, the moon was ruled out for two reasons. First, the size of the object, even if reduced in size by a camera lens, was too small to be the moon, especially a full moon. Secondly the object is completely round and full, like a full moon but much smaller. But, the moon is always a Crescent or waning Crescent moon (fourth phase) when observed in the SE sky (NE sky in the southern hemisphere) in the morning and this object is clearly is not a crescent moon. By this point, I'd concluded that the object must be Venus. Dr. Faulkner indicated that if the date when the video was taken was known, we could be certain that the object was Venus. The video first appeared on YouTube in early 2014, so I decided to use my Starry Night Pro software to see if I could determine when the video was taken – or when the aircraft made the approach to Queenstown, NZ. The video was taken early in the morning so Venus had to be the morning star – ahead of the Sun. So, starting in December 2013, I went backward in time viewing the Moon and Venus until I found the object that best fit with the video parameters. The object was Venus, and my conclusion is that the aircraft made its approach to the Queenstown airport in early Spring (southern hemisphere), on or about 22 September 2012 between 7-8 AM. On this date, Venus appeared in the NE sky, about 40 degrees ahead of the Sun about an hour after sunrise, exactly where it appears in the video clip.

Before you view the video on the link below, let me describe what you are about to see. As the clip begins, the aircraft is heading NW and Venus appears in the upper right part of the windscreen. The snow and shadows on the Southern Alps indicate it's an early morning approach during late winter or early spring. The aircraft then turns slightly north as Venus moves towards the center of the windscreen. The aircraft then makes a left turn to the west and Venus disappears from view. The plane heads west for several minutes before making a right turn back to the N-NE for the final approach. In the last part of the turn, Venus comes back into view and tracks across the windscreen as the plane enters the clouds. Venus disappears in the clouds when it is last observed about 10 degrees to the left of the aircraft nose. The plane descends through the clouds and makes its final approach – landing on runway 05. Heading NE – 050 degrees. This means that Venus was in the NE sky bearing about 040 degrees on this particular morning- exactly where the Starry Night Pro shows that it was.

<http://www.chonday.com/Videos/pilotnewzdaInd1>

I have a few more comments on this I will save until the next lesson. But, for the record I believe this view of Venus in daylight (Southern hemisphere- clear sky) is much closer to what Venus looked like to the wise men as they traveled from Jerusalem to Bethlehem on the afternoon of June 17th 2 BC. Even though the two planets were nearly in conjunction, Jupiter would not have been visible. Nevertheless, this was exactly the same star the wise men saw in the east 10 months earlier. I believe the joy the wise men felt when they saw the star included the realization that they would be visiting a newborn Christ child, not a ten month old toddler.