

Prophecy Lesson 10
December 21, 2020 Jupiter Saturn Conjunction
A Second Advent Heavenly Sign
December 26, 2020

In this lesson I'd like to share some thoughts about the Jupiter Saturn conjunction, how it appeared with respect to the Christmas star conjunction and why I believe the 21 December 2020 appearance may be a significant, if not major, heavenly sign with respect to Christ's Second Coming.

What You Saw

After reminding his disciples of the things the Father in heaven had hidden from the wise and prudent, "...Jesus turned to His disciples and said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see' (Luke 10:23). In spite of what you may have seen on December 21st, most of the world failed to observe the Jupiter Saturn conjunction with the eyes of the wise men who gazed upon the Christmas star. Please don't misunderstand, many people did see Jupiter and Saturn after it merged into a single star, but that wasn't the primary interest of most who observed it. Today, telescopes and cameras with zoom lenses necessarily made it irresistible for the vast majority of Jupiter Saturn conjunction watchers to capture, not what was observed with the naked eye, but rather, to get the best shot their available technology could record on film. As a result, I estimate that 99% of the conjunction photos made available for public consumption look like the photo below: Jupiter with four moons and a ringed Saturn (magnified many times). High tech photos like this can be quite impressive, whereas photos that merely capture what the naked eye observes are not.



After several hours online perusing stargazer and astronomy websites in search of a photo of the 21 December conjunction that best represents what the wise men would have witnessed in the 12 August 3 BC heads up Venus Jupiter conjunction (when the separation distance between the planets nearly matched that of the 21 December Jupiter Saturn conjunction), I finally found one on a NASA photo site taken in Mumbai, India, below.



For those who saw the 21 December conjunction, Jupiter appears in the Mumbai photo to be somewhat smaller than what you probably observed. This is because the photo is unmagnified, taken with a 35mm lens which captured a 50 degree by 25 degree field of view, whereas the field of view naturally observed by the naked eye is about 40 degrees by 20 degrees. Thus, the Mumbai photo needs to be magnified 1.5 to 2 times (to 60-70 mm) to more accurately reflect what the naked eye actually observed. My Starry night Pro software has a panoramic default setting of 100 degrees by 50 degrees, so star shots (like those attached to past lessons) require magnification to a 40x20 degree field of view to match what the naked eye observes. The point I'm making is that most photos taken of the night skies don't necessarily reflect what the naked eye sees or what the wise men may have observed. I learned this lesson the hard way during my Bermuda trip to observe and photograph the August 27, 2016 Venus Jupiter conjunction.

I should point out that what everyone actually observed in the evening sky on December 21st was Jupiter. Those who observed Jupiter closing on Saturn in the days preceding the conjunction clearly knew Saturn was there, but being more than six times brighter than Saturn, Jupiter's brilliance enveloped Saturn, making the dimmer planet essentially disappear in the night sky during the conjunction. Some may say they saw what looked like Saturn at the 2-3 o'clock position when

concentrating on the conjunction because they knew where Saturn was with respect to the brighter planet. But to a casual observer, the star they saw on December 21st was Jupiter. In today's polluted skies, light reflected by the planets is diffracted and refracted as it passes through Earth's atmosphere more than it was in the past, so it is possible for a conjunction, even with .1 degrees of separation between the planets, to appear more like an elongated or double star. But, I don't believe this was true in the ancient Middle Eastern skies observed by the wise men because those skies looked more like the night sky as it appeared over Masada (photo in lesson 2) than the sky we normally see today. The unimpeded brilliance of Venus to mask Jupiter and of Jupiter to mask Saturn in such skies would make such conjunctions readily appear as single stars, even when the separation distance between the planets is .15 to .2 degrees.

What one actually observes when two planets are joined in close conjunction is the brighter of the two because the dimmer planet disappears, being enveloped in the brighter planet's brilliance. I don't want to dwell on this but I have been asked, "Why do I interchange calling Venus the Christ Star and calling the Christmas star conjunction Venus or the Christ Star?" It's because when Venus is observed by itself in the heavens, it is the Christ or Messiah star (Rev 22:16) and, when the wise men saw Venus and Jupiter in the 12 August 3 BC and 17 June 2 BC conjunctions, they were observing Venus, the Christ star, since Jupiter was not visible even though they knew Jupiter was there. We only have to consider what Scripture says to understand this. Upon their arrival in Jerusalem after observing the 12 August 3 BC 'heads up' conjunction ten months earlier, the wise men proclaimed, "*Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east...*" They didn't report seeing a conjunction or Venus and Jupiter, they saw 'his star' – Venus. Upon departing Jerusalem for Bethlehem on the afternoon of June 17th, they were overjoyed upon seeing the same star they had seen in the east – 'his star' - Venus. When Venus appeared in the southern sky in daylight, the planets were in close conjunction, but Jupiter could not be seen in daylight nor was it seen for the remainder of the evening, being enveloped in the brilliance of Venus, while the conjunction was stationed in the western sky over Israel. Venus, the Christ star or 'his star' is what the wise men observed as the Christmas Star.

The importance, rarity and significance of the Jupiter Saturn conjunction we observed on December 21st is remarkable. What we saw was essentially the slow motion formation and a less brilliant version of the Christmas Star. Nothing like the December 21st conjunction has happened in nearly 800 years, and it will not happen again in our lifetimes or in the foreseeable future. When Jupiter next passes Saturn in October 2040, their closest separation will be greater than 1 degree, which is common. But, as special as the 21 December Jupiter Saturn conjunction was, nothing like the Christmas Star appearance on June 17, 2 BC has ever happened, before or since, and it never will again. That is how rare the Christmas Star conjunction was. The odds of this naturally occurring star appearing with exactly the right parameters, at exactly the right time and in precisely the right location to mark the birth of Jesus Christ are truly astronomical. One might say it was a miracle. But, nothing is impossible with God. He indelibly marked the date of His Son's birth in the heavens, even telling Daniel to "... *shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end...when knowledge shall increase*" (Dan 12:4). And now, in our time we, with

modern technology, can determine a precise First Advent chronology for Jesus Christ that is fully and completely supported by Scripture. The important dates are in bold:

September 03 BC - The Conception of Christ (marked by Virgo's appearance in the sign of Revelation 12) Rosh Hashanah/Feast of Trumpets

June 17, 02 BC - The birth of Christ (appearance of Venus as the Daystar and the Christmas Star over Israel- Ma 2: 8-11)

June 25, 02 BC - Christ is circumcised (Luke 2:21)

After July 27, 02 BC - Jesus presented to the Lord at the Temple in Jerusalem (Luke 2:22-24)

First year of Christ's life - June 17, 02 BC – June 16, 01 BC

Second year of Christ's life - June 17, 01 BC - June 16, 01 AD (no year zero)

Twelfth year of Christ's life - June 17, 11 AD – June 16, 12 AD - Jesus and his parents celebrate Passover in Jerusalem when he was 12 (Luke 41-42)

Thirtieth year of Christ's life - June 17, 29 AD – June 16, 30 AD - The beginning of Jesus' ministry during his thirtieth year (Luke 3:23)

Thirty third year of Christ's life - June 17, 32 AD – June 16, 33 AD

March 29, 33 AD - Palm Sunday, Christ's Triumphal entry to Jerusalem (Luke 19: 28-44)

April 2/3, 33 AD - Passover, Christ is Crucified (Matthew 27:34-50, Mark 15:24-37, Luke 23:26-46, John 19:17-30)

April 5, 33 AD - Christ's resurrection (Matthew 28:1-9, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-12, John 20:1-10)

May 15, 33 AD - Christ's ascension to Heaven (Acts 1:3, 9-10) Forty days after His resurrection. He returns to His place – Heaven (Hosea 5:15)

May 25, 33 AD - Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13) Fifty days after Christ's resurrection

Significantly, the one-time appearance of the Christmas Star to mark the birth of Christ has no parallel in history. This chronology, developed from the June 17, 2 BC Star appearance, not only fits with Scripture, but it is supported by the dates set forth in Daniel's Seventy week prophecy. Regarding the April 5th and May 15th 33 AD dates, everyone has a birth and a death date, but only Christ, the first fruits, has a Resurrection date. I've come to believe the dates for Christ's resurrection and ascension to Heaven play a critical role in the development and understanding of Christ's Second Advent chronology. These issues are addressed in more detail two lessons from now.

Heavenly Signs and Christ's Second Coming

In the 2014 Christmas Star DVD Postscript, I commented on and wondered, in view of the number and significance of the heavenly signs God used to announce Christ's First Advent, if it was possible that God will use heavenly signs to announce and/or prepare the world for Christ's Second Coming? Other than Genesis 1:14 where God revealed that "*the lights in the heavens are to divide the day from the night and for signs and for seasons and for days and years*" and Numbers 24:17, where Balaam prophesied that "*...a Star will rise out of Jacob...*", Scripture provides very little information about the heavenly signs for Christ's First Advent, except as revealed in Matthew's account of the wise men in Matthew 2, written after Christ's birth. There are no clear prophetic passages in Scripture identifying heavenly signs pointing to the Rapture or Christ's Second Coming. The heavenly signs prophesied in Scripture relating

to the end times are all linked to the Tribulation: *“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...”* (Matthew 24:29); *“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light. And the stars of heaven shall fall...”* (Mark 13:24-25); *“...and great signs there shall be from heaven...”* (Luke 21:11); the sixth seal, *“and lo, there was a great earthquake and the sun became black as sackcloth...and the moon became as blood”* (Revelation 6:12), which was opened during the tribulation, seems to confirm the Gospel references to the end time heavenly signs just described.

Although there are no heavenly signs specifically prophesied for Christ’s Second Advent in Scripture, Jesus reminds us at the very end of His Revelation, that He is *“...the bright morning star”* (Rev 22:16). This verse was recorded long after the wise men observed the Star, so I expressed the idea in the Christmas Star Postscript that if there was to be a heavenly sign or signs pointing to Christ’s return, then Venus, the Christ star, would likely be involved in the sign. It was in 2016, while I was preparing for the Bermuda trip to observe the 27 August Venus Jupiter conjunction when I realized that the pending conjunction might have prophetic significance. It would appear at a time when all the signs Christ prophesied for His return were appearing, converging and increasing in frequency and intensity. It would be the only major Venus Jupiter conjunction to appear in the 200 years between 1900 and 2100, and importantly, it would have nearly identical parameters to the 12 August 3 BC ‘heads up’ star observed by the wise men, except it would be the evening star, not the morning star. I also thought that if the 27 August 2016 conjunction truly was a ‘heads up’ sign for Christ’s Second Coming, there might be a second sign to confirm the August 2016 appearance like the 3-2 BC Jupiter Regulus triple conjunction did for the wise men.

It was only after receiving the email in November from Christian brother, Rich Withers, announcing the importance of the pending 21 December Jupiter Saturn conjunction, that I took the time to observe the conjunction on my Starry Night Pro and realize that it might actually be the confirmation sign for the August 2016 conjunction. As the conjunction developed throughout December, it also became clear why God would use a Jupiter Saturn conjunction instead of a Venus Jupiter conjunction for a Second Advent confirmation sign. In 2 BC, the audience for the Christmas star was the Jewish people. Only they among all the nations were looking for a Messiah and His sign even though most Jews missed it. A Venus Jupiter conjunction normally only makes a brief appearance in one or two time zones (the four time zones in the case of the Christmas Star included Israel) whereas the 21 December Jupiter Saturn conjunction was observed all around the world (in every time zone) for more than a day. For the First Advent, the message of a Savior was preached to the Jews. Today the message of Christ’s salvation and His pending return is preached around the world. Only through a Jupiter Saturn conjunction, because it was a slow motion, dimmer version of the Christmas Star, is it possible for such a heavenly sign be seen all around the world. Even so, as it was when the star appeared to the Jews for Christ’s first advent, most of the world either missed seeing or failed to understand the significance of the December 21, 2020 Jupiter Saturn conjunction. I’ll have more to share about the 27 August 2016 and 21 December 2020 conjunctions as heavenly signs pointing to Christ’s Second Coming in the next lesson.