

DOCTRINAL SECTION

CHAPTER D1

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

What was the star of Bethlehem? (Christians have also called it the Xmas star ever since shortly after the U.S. Civil War when they adopted the pagan holiday the Roman Catholic Church had “Christianized.”) When asked what the star was, most church-goers who have sat for years under the instruction of Bible-preaching theologians with either “full time” or “full gospel” ministries would answer something vague about planetary conjunctions, comets, or supernovas. The remaining few would disinterestedly shrug and say, “I don’t know.” Almost no one would answer with anything having to do with the Bible.

If you were sitting on your porch at night, or even during the day, and saw a comet or supernova would *you* decide while looking at the object that:

- 1) It was going to lead you on a journey to some indeterminate location so you could
- 2) Find a newborn king no one else knew about, and
- 3) Worship and present him with gifts, and
- 4) Try to convince some friends not only that the object means all of that but also that
- 5) They should accompany you on this journey?

Of course you wouldn’t. But in their Jeffersonian haste to replace the supernatural events in the Bible with natural ones, Christians don’t *think*.

So let’s check with the Bible. Any star, nova, comet, or planetary conjunction that dramatic would be a real attention-getter. But the Bible uses King Herod in **Mt 2:7** to show that the star attracted nobody’s attention but the wise men’s!

For all of the above reasons it is extremely unlikely that the star was a bright heavenly object.

The answer, as usual, is not to be found in the flatulence of modern science, but rather in God’s Authorized 1611 King James Bible: The star was an angel God sent to give instructions to the wise men. Just as we refer to athletes and actors as “stars”, the Bible refers to angels as stars. Read **Re 1:20** and then compare **Re 12:4** with **12:9**. For other examples read **Nu 24:17**; **Jb 38:7**; **Re 9:1,2; 22:16**.

Now that we know God uses *star* and *angel* interchangeably, carefully read **Mt 2** in order to see if the following agrees with Scripture:

- 1) An angel showed up back in the east and told the wise men to find the newborn King of the Jews and worship Him.
- 2) They were told to begin their search in Jerusalem.
- 3) And they were told to go to Jerusalem instead of Christ’s birthplace and present location, Bethlehem, because God wanted the events of Mt 2:7 to result in the fulfillment of prophecy in verses 16-18.
- 4) *God* sent the wise men to Jerusalem, and *King Herod* sent them to Bethlehem (v.8) to continue their search.
- 5) On the road again, this time heading south to Bethlehem, the wise men, probably beginning to worry that this journey was turning into a wild goose chase, saw, waiting for them on the side of the road, the same angel who had appeared to them back east. Greatly relieved, the wise men started pumping the angel’s hand and telling him how glad they were to see him. The angel then led them to the house Jesus had been living in for as long as two years (2:9-11).
- 6) To verify the age of the Child when He was visited by the wise men compare 2:7 with v.16. Also notice concerning the *birth* in **Lk 2** that the setting is a “manger” and Jesus is referred to not just with the general word “child” but with the specific word “babe.” But in Mt 2 the setting is a “house” and the word “child” is used exclusively. *The wise men never went to the manger.*

We agreed earlier that a *comet* probably would not cause any wise man to react the way the men in Mt 2 did. And we can also agree that any wise man who received information and instructions from God via an *angel* would carry out the instructions. So, to further support our thesis with Biblical consistency, let’s note the fact that the First Coming of Christ was a period of frequent angelic appearances:

- 1) Mary was told about two babies by an angel (**Lk 1:31,36**).
- 2) John the Baptist’s father was given instructions by an angel concerning John’s birth (**Lk 1:13**).
- 3) Joseph was given instructions by an angel concerning Christ (**Mt 1:20,21; 2:13,19**).
- 4) Some shepherds were told by an angel to go to Bethlehem to worship the Savior (**Lk 2:9**).
- 5) And the wise men were first instructed to go to Jerusalem, and were later led to the house in Bethlehem by a star, that is – an angel.

People used to know all of this. And on top of their Xmas trees they would put either a star or an angel.