

VOLUME 18

NUMBER 123

**THE
BIBLICAL
ASTRONOMER**

WINTER 2008



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(Continued from the back cover)

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Front Cover: The "3 Wise Men Coin." The coin pictures a mounted king Azes II who ruled Bactria (now Afghanistan). Athena appears on the other side. Historians believe Azes II sent his representative, Gaspar, to Jerusalem to find the King of the Jews. Gaspar's journey would have been financed with these coins. Azes reigned from 35 B.C. to A.D. 5. He was an explorer, traveler, and warrior; thus he is depicted on a horse on the obverse of the coin. The legend on that side is in Greek and says "The Great King of Kings Azes." On the reverse, Athena is pictured with shield and spear as the king's protector. Athena was the goddess of wisdom. The legend on that side is in Kharoshti (Indian) and reads the same as on the obverse.

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Volume 18, Number 123
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Editorial</i>	3
<i>In Memory of Dr. Bolton Davidheiser</i> Gerardus D. Bouw, Ph.D.	5
<i>The Star of Bethlehem II: Historical Perspectives</i> Gerardus D. Bouw, Ph. D.	10
<i>Panorama</i>	26

EDITORIAL

Another year has come and gone, and another volume begins. This January 11 marked the fortieth anniversary of Walter van der Kamp's first work, *The Heart of the Matter* which, although it bore a copyright of 1967, was not finished until that day in 1968, as attested to by the signature on his "Foreword." Walter's booklet marked the start of the modern geocentric movement, the like of which has not been seen since Tycho Brahe's work in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Between Brahe and Walter's seminal booklet, geocentrism's apologists were rife with scientific absurdities such as the flat earth and the small universe. Typically, they insisted that the sun was less than a thousand miles above the earth. It was totally beyond their ken to realize that at 1000 miles high, on the first day of summer, the entire polar region north of Spitzbergen, an island north of Russia, would still be in perpetual darkness and New Zealand's night would last about a month. This sounds as absurd now as it did back in the 1600s or 1830. January 26 marked both the tenth anniversary of Walter's death, and my 33rd spiritual birthday.

With the observation of Walter's death, we also lament the passing of another pioneer. Dr. Bolton Davidheiser, who passed away last August. One of the pioneers of the modern Creationist movement, Dr. Davidheiser at long last became a geocentrist. I shall miss his correspondence and his well thought-out questions. Over the years he contributed to the geocentric cause by, for instance, his investigation into the NASA missing day story. Dr. Davidheiser exposed the story for the fiction it is. In this issue we present a short article that Dr. Davidheiser wrote on the necessity of creationism to faith in the Scripture.

In this issue, we conclude the series of articles on the Star of Bethlehem. Although we covered the star in the previous issues, it still contributes to this issue's attempt to date the birth of Jesus. In researching this topic I was amazed at the overwhelming evidence that exists for the birth of Christ occurring in 2 B.C. I discovered that many of the problems attributed to the 2 B.C. date are actually not problems for it but for the 5 B.C. or earlier date. People who heard of the problems simply presumed that they applied to the 2 B.C. date, too.

Using the Internet, I found that many more resources are now available than were available the last time I wrote about the Star of Bethlehem ten years ago. My first article, written in 1980, used papers and books that referenced original materials in other languages. Now, many of these are posted on the World-Wide Web.

We close with "Panorama." We start with some material pertaining to the second article of the series on time. The linguistic aspect of a

theory about time must reflect how we perceive and think. In the course of the “Panorama” piece, we look at how people think and how they process the data and information they receive from their senses. In the course of considering that, I trace the path of thought that led to the discovery of the firmament.

That note is followed by one on the axis of evil. The axis of evil is a preferred direction in space, a direction that seems to draw the galaxies around us into it as if it were the vortex of a drain. It is considered evil for that reason and for its violation of the cosmic principle; that every place in the universe should appear as if it is in the center of the universe. The axis of evil is so vast that it can serve as a landmark to establish one’s place anywhere in the universe. It is the cosmological principle that is invoked against geocentricity, and it is also the foundation of the General Theory of Relativity.

Finally, we present a note that shows that nearby objects are not necessarily more advanced in age than very distant objects. Stellar and galactic evolutionary theories require that the further away one looks from earth, the younger, less evolved the galaxies should appear. Basically, this means that more distant objects should average bluer in color than nearby galaxies once their color is corrected for their redshift. The theory contradicts the evidence enough that astronomers cannot use the evidence in support of the evolutionary theories. This presents evidence for both a recent creation and for a geocentric cosmos.

Quotable Quote

In the Ptolemaic theory the apparent motion of the planet on the celestial sphere was taken as the planet’s real motion. Copernicus’ great contribution lay in pointing out that one can explain this observed motion by means of a **heliocentric theory** in which the planets revolve around the sun. Although Copernicus introduced the heliocentric theory of the solar system, he still found it necessary to introduce about 40 epicycles to account for the observations, but he considered this a great improvement since Ptolemaic theory contained more than 240 such epicycles.

—Motz & Duveen, 1966
Essentials of Astronomy, p. 135

The truth of a matter is not determined by how many people believe it.
—Anonymous

In Memory of Dr. BOLTON DAVIDHEISER 1912-2007

Every now and then we meet a man who is so upright in his deportment and so genteel of manner that the respect he inspired lives long after him. Dr. Bolton Davidheiser was such a man. On 16 August 2007 Dr. Bolton Davidheiser shed this mortal coil in exchange for life eternal. He was 95 years old at the time of his death. Dr. Davidheiser earned his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. Our heartfelt condolences are extended to his wife Joanna, and family.

Dr. Davidheiser is perhaps best known for his book, *Evolution and Christian Faith*, (1969). Other books written by him include *Science and the Bible* (1971), *To Be As God: The Goals of Modern Science* (1977), and *Creation, Time, and Dr. Hugh Ross* (1998). A second, expanded edition of the book against Hugh Ross, entitled, *Concerning the Ministry of Dr. Hugh Ross* was in preparation circa 2000 but apparently never made it into print. Your editor has a proof copy submitted by Dr. Davidheiser for critique. Over the following year or so, we corresponded about corrections and evaluations of the book.

I had the honor of meeting Bolton Davidheiser on 16 June 1996. He arranged for me to speak at the Baptist Community Bible Church on Alondra Boulevard in Norwalk, California where he attended. After the service, my wife, Beth, our children and I along with our host, Frank Gauna, and Dr. Davidheiser, were to go to an Arby's about a mile west of the church, on Alondra Blvd. Dr. Davidheiser was 83 at the time and on a bicycle. After a reasonable wait, Dr. Davidheiser did not arrive so Frank drove back to the church to look for him along the way. Dr. Davidheiser was nowhere to be found. Providentially, Frank found him on the wrong street (Pioneer). We eventually did get to talk for a while over a milkshake. All too soon it was time to depart as it was getting dark.

Dr. Davidheiser's Personal Testimony

“As a teenager I asked a Sunday school teacher, ‘Some people say Christ died for us. How could that be?’ The Sunday school teacher did not know either, and although I went to church regularly, it was not until many years later that I first learned from a radio evangelist about the gospel of salvation by grace through the atonement made by Christ upon the cross. Then I heard it again from another evangelist. With

this new understanding I really believed and received Christ as my personal Savior.

“But there was the evolution problem. I had a Ph.D. in zoology and was certain the fossil record and other evidences showed evolution to be a fact. Evolution and the doctrine of salvation by grace through the atonement cannot both be true. If evolution is true, we are improved animals instead of sinners fallen from a perfect creation. Then there would be no need for the Redeemer.

“Soon after that [at age 32—*ed.*] I was engaged in cancer research at the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health. Frequently I went into the stacks of the Welsh Medical Library and read articles on evolution by the evolutionists. It did not take long for me to find evolution was not the certainty I had thought it was, and I became a creationist. The notes I took were the start of my book, *Evolution and Christian Faith*, which went through a total of thirteen printings.

“I became an early member of the modern creationist movement and was a speaker at all the conferences as well as in churches and schools, and also was on radio and television.”¹

As a creationist, Bolton Davidheiser taught at Biola University in La Mirada, the town he lived in the rest of his life. While at Arby’s he spoke of his disappointment there, as the University went from a conservative, creationist-friendly school to a hostile, evolutionist, American Scientific Affiliation type institution. In 2002 he wrote the following to me in a letter:

I got a Ross letter recently stating that Kenneth Richard Samples is with him and is his vice president. Samples wrote anti-creationist books years ago and said that I preferred working at Disneyland to college teaching. Biola was going liberal and did not want me any more, but I had tenure, so I resigned and needed temporary employment.

In other words, the situation eventually became so bad that he could no longer teach at Biola.

As an officer of the Creation Research Society in the early 1960s, Dr. Davidheiser ran into another problem. As one of the four directors, he had to work with Seventh Day Adventists, a sect he deemed heretical. As a result, he was forced out of that office although he was still allowed to publish in the *Creation Research Society Quarterly*.

In one of our last exchange of letters we wrote about using email and the Internet for communicating ideas. He wrote back:

¹ Notes taken from the back cover of *Creation, Time, and Dr. Hugh Ross*.

How could anything of my writing get to the Internet? I don't even know how to read internet.

In the same letter, he wrote the following about the geocentric model of the universe:

If I were required to say whether I accept geocentricity, yes or no, I would say yes.

We present here a sample article written by Dr. Davidheiser which article is circulated on the Internet, albeit not as extensively as his article criticizing the idiocy of Hugh Ross.

Can Biblical Creation and Evolution Be Reconciled?

By Dr. Bolton Davidheiser

Prominent scientists and theologians insist that Biblical creation and evolution can be reconciled, and furthermore that reconciliation is desirable and important. Other scientists and theologians, a minority in our day, hold the opposite view. Many books and numerous articles have been written on the subject and so a resolution of the matter in few paragraphs may seem to be impossible. But perhaps not.

Those who seek a reconciliation seem always to base the whole issue on the first two chapters of Genesis in the Bible. Their contention is that if the creationists would only interpret these two chapters properly there would be no real difficulty and reconciliation would be accomplished.

However, one problem which does not involve interpretation is that the Bible gives the names of early men and the lengths of their lives, starting with Adam, the first created man. That Adam was a real individual and not merely a type of mankind is attested by the apostle Paul as important in Christian theology (Romans 5:14-21, I Corinthians 15:21-23). Also there are other New Testament references to Adam and the first three of his children as real persons.

The Biblical genealogies encompass a very brief period of time compared to the enormous extent of the ages needed to make evolution possible. One attempt to reconcile this disparity in time has been by postulating an indefinitely long interval between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. The English translation of the second verse is changed from "the earth was without form and void" to "the earth became without form and void." It is assumed that there was a creation previous to the one recorded in Genesis which was ruined and made chaotic through a rebel-

lion brought about by Satan. This change in translation is accepted by some Hebrew scholars, particularly those desiring to reconcile creation and evolution, but the majority seem to agree that it puts an unnatural strain on the Hebrew grammar in this verse.

Two Old Testament references are cited in support of this “gap theory,” also called the “ruin-reconstruction theory.” One is Isaiah 45:18, stating that God created the earth not in vain but formed it to be inhabited. “Not in vain” here is the same Hebrew word as “without form” in the Genesis text. But as also described in the Genesis account, it merely says that the earth at first was in an uninhabitable condition and does not mean that a former creation was destroyed.

The other is Jeremiah 4:23, “I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void....” In context the prophet is describing his vision of the condition of the land of Israel during the Babylonian captivity. It has nothing to do with the time of creation.

Adoption of the “gap theory” by creationists is merely a device to accommodate the Bible to the great age of the earth insisted upon by evolutionists. It grants them the one thing they must have—vast amounts of time. Moreover, in recent years various “scientific” evidences have been found for a young earth.

But the matter of this postulated gap in the Genesis record is refuted by several Biblical passages, particularly Genesis 1:31. At the end of the creation week God saw that everything which He had made was “very good.” But according to the “gap theory,” Satan, a created being, was already at this time very bad and had caused so much trouble that a previous creation had been ruined, making it necessary for God to perform another creation, the one recorded in the Bible, to take its place.

Also the order of events in creation is in contradiction to the accepted evolutionary sequence: green plants before the sun, whales before land animals, birds before “creeping things.”

Much is said about the “double revelation theory,” that we have two books from which to gain knowledge on this subject, meaning the Bible and the “book of nature,” and they must agree. But when Biblical statements appear to differ from scientific theories, those who put their confidences in the double revelation theory seem invariably to put their faith in the “book of nature.”

The Bible says that the Creator was our Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3, 10, 14; I Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2). John 1:1 and 3 expresses it, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” Verse 14 makes it clear that the Word is Christ. Some have blasphemously written, somewhat paraphrasing John, “In the be-

ginning was the word, and the word was hydrogen.” Rather similarly, as the Bible states that the first man, Adam, was made from the dust of the ground, some say they believe humanity was derived from the same materials as are found in the dust of the ground and add, “by way of long animal ancestry.” Then what about Eve, Adam’s wife, the first woman? It is stated in Scripture that she was formed from a portion of Adam’s side. The Hebrew word is generally translated “rib.” there is no possible evolutionary explanation for this.

An honest examination of the matter reveals that Biblical creation cannot be reconciled with evolution. In the end, those who say they can be reconciled are forced to resort to ridicule and name-calling, such as “literalist” and “lunatic fringe.”

But Here Is the Most Important Part

A basic Christian doctrine is salvation by grace through the atonement for sin made by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Eternal salvation is through receiving forgiveness for sins through the merits or the only sinless One by way of His taking the penalty for our sins upon Himself and dying in our place. But if evolution is true, we are improved animals instead of fallen man who introduced sin into the world by disobeying a direct command by God. It follows from this that there is no need for the Redeemer, no occasion for the Saviour. Thus the basic Christian doctrine, for which a multitude of martyrs have given their lives, is negated.

Many are not aware of this basic Christian doctrine. Ministers of many churches no longer teach it to their congregations. They are more interested in improving social conditions.

Evolutionists frequently use the words “creation” and “Creator” while the context shows they are referring to evolution. Some use the term “creation by evolution.” They point out that evolutionists can believe in God. True, but that is not enough. As James wrote (2:19), “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well. The devils also believe, and tremble.” Evolutionists also point out that they can be as virtuous and ethical as creationists can. True again, but that shows their ignorance of the basic Christian doctrine of salvation by grace and not by works. Judged on the basis of works, none of us can meet God’s standard. The only way to have one’s name written in the Book of life is to be redeemed through the sacrifice for us made by the only One who did not sin.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM II: Historical Perspectives¹

In the first part of this paper we examined the signs in the sky that surrounded the birth of Jesus, the Messiah of Israel and the Christ of the world. The signs involved all seven of the wandering stars; consisting of the five naked-eye planets (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn), and the two great lights of Genesis 1:16 (Sun and Moon), which also wander.² The signs dured from a conjunction of Saturn and Mercury on 19 March 3 B.C. through a total eclipse of the moon on 9 January A.D. 1. We concluded that the most likely date for the birth of Jesus was either 31 August or 28 September of 1 B.C.

In this, the second part of the paper, we shall attempt to derive the time of Jesus' birth from historical considerations. Though the Bible is widely regarded as a religious book, religion plays only a minor part in it. Religion deals with obligations. The Bible itself defines religion as: "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world."³ More than religion, the Bible is a history book. It relates the history of the earth and world, from their creation through their demise and on to new heavens and a new earth. Is it then any wonder that a chronology can be constructed from an uncritical examination of the words of God? Problems can arise, however, when we try to fit the chronology to secular calendars.

Daniel's Chronology

Unusual though the celestial pageantry leading up to the birth of Christ was, there is nothing about it that men would recognize as heralding the Savior of the world. So, what was it that led the wise men and many Jews to conclude that Christ's birth was at hand about 3 or 2 B. C.? There must have been additional factors that led to their recognition of the signs in heaven.

The Jews could see the time was at hand because of their scriptures. Balaam's prophecy of a star out of Jacob (Numbers 24:17) was one link in the chain of evidence. That prophecy could certainly have been known by the wise men, but it refers to a single star, which we now perceive as personified by Jesus, the bright and morning star

¹ Continued from G. Bouw, 2007. "The Star of Bethlehem I: Astronomical Perspectives," *B. A.*, 17(122):111.

² Scripture uses the word "star" to refer to any extraterrestrial body.

³ James 1:27—Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

(Revelation 22:16). Jacob's blessing upon Judah (Genesis 49:10⁴) further identifies the King of the Jews as arising from Judah, but again, that does not directly tie to the stars. Nevertheless, since at least the time of Jacob (see Genesis 37:9⁵), the tribes of Judah have been associated with the twelve constellations of the Zodiac. Particularly, Judah is associated with Leo, the lion. This is reflected in Jacob's blessing.⁶ The celestial pageantry did center on Leo, so this was a strong hint that the signs in heaven appertained to the King of the Jews.

More than that, however, it was a prophesy by Daniel that identified the time of the Messiah's birth. Daniel's chronology starts with the command issued by Artaxerxes in the twentieth year of his reign to Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2;⁷ Daniel 9:25⁸). Now Artaxerxes started his reign at least seven months after the autumn of 474 B.C. Bishop Ussher thus dates the command to 454 B.C.⁹ Daniel reported that 483 years (seven weeks and three score and two weeks equals 69 weeks times 7 makes 483) would pass from the command to rebuild Jerusalem until the going forth of the Messiah (Daniel 9:25). The reader should note that the decree to rebuild Jerusalem is not the same as the decree Cyrus issued to rebuild the temple. It makes the most sense that the decree to rebuild the city was shortly before Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2).

Since we are trying to ascertain the date of Christ's birth, it makes the most sense to avoid using a calendar based on his birth. The Bible's chronology dates from the creation. The calendar dating from the creation denoted the years by the Latin term, *Anno Mundi*, meaning, year of the world. Dates in that calendar are prefixed by A.M., just as this year is A.D. 2008, meaning year of our Lord 2008.

⁴ 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*.

⁵ Genesis 37:9—Joseph reports: "And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me."

⁶ 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?

⁷ Nehemiah 2:1—And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that wine was* before him: and I took up the wine, and gave *it* unto the king. Now I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence.

⁸ Daniel 9:25—Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

⁹ Ussher's 1658 work has been reprinted in recent years: Pierce, Larry and Marion, 2003. *The Annals of the World*, Revised and Updated, Master Books. The Pierces present recently recovered evidence that favors Ussher's dates. The evidence was overlooked by modern authorities.

Ussher's Dates

Let us see if we can compute the year of Jesus' birth from Bishop Ussher's historic chronology. Ussher usually dates an event with three calendars, the year of the world, the Julian calendar,¹⁰ and our standard calendar. According to Ussher the year 454 B.C. corresponded to A.M. 3550 and 4260 J.P. Adding 483 years to each calendar brings us to:

- A.D. 32 according to his year of the world reckoning,
- A.D. 29 according to his Julian calendar,
- A.D. 28 according to our standard calendar.

Here each date has been corrected for the lack of a year zero in our calendar.

Now, Ussher's A.M. calendar starts in the autumn whereas the others start in January. This will result in a one-year difference for events in the autumn of the year. The A.M. year number changes in September while the other calendars do not increment until January.

A year either way could be absorbed by an uncertainty in the time of year that Artaxerxes started to rule and specifically when he issued the order for Jerusalem to be rebuilt. We know from two sources, Thucydides and an Egyptian hieroglyph, that Artaxerxes started his rule in the autumn of 474 B.C., and we know that Nehemiah made his case before Artaxerxes and the queen in Nissan, the first month of spring of the Jewish calendar. Chronologists usually assume that the proclamation to rebuild Jerusalem was made the same month, Nissan, but although Nehemiah did request to be allowed to rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:5), the command to do so may not have been issued until the preparations were under way.

Clearly, without also knowing when the command to rebuild Jerusalem was issued, we cannot arrive at a consistent date for the going forth of the Messiah from Ussher's chronology. We shall return to Ussher's dating mismatch later, when we consider the date of the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar.

¹⁰ The Julian calendar was a revision of the Roman calendar undertaken by the Greek astronomer Sosigenes under the auspices of Julius Caesar. At the time, the Roman calendar was 90 days or a complete season out of phase. The Julian calendar introduced a leap year every fourth year. It went into effect in 45 B.C., which was the 709th year from the founding of Rome (709 *ad urbe condita*). The Julian calendar began 1 January 4713 B.C. It was designed to be independent of all other calendars.

Jewish Beliefs About the Birth of Christ

That the Jews were looking for the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy in the first century is clear from several reports of the time. Flavius Josephus, born Joseph Ben Matthias, the Jewish historian who lived in the last part of the first century, mentioned a conviction among the Jews that the prophecy of Daniel would have its fulfillment within the first century. Josephus stated that it was shown in the sacred writings that at about that time, one from Judea should become governor of the entire earth.

Scripture also tells of the expectation of the Jews for their king. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem was a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, where the people wanted to make Jesus king in fulfillment of that scripture (Matthew 21; Mark 11; John 12). Likely, they would not have dared to do so had the time not been right because there would have been terrible consequences if God was not in agreement with their proclamation. Their efforts came to naught because the time was not yet full in the Lord's way.

Though the Jews expected the fulfillment of the prophecies of Daniel 9:25 and Zechariah 9:9, they did not have an exact date. The Jews' views are, therefore, of little help in our attempts to date the birth of Christ.

Circumstances Surrounding Jesus' Birth

We know from scriptural references that Christ was born six months after his cousin, John the Baptist (Luke 1:26, 36). Also from Biblical references we can pin down the time of year of John's birth. John's father, Zacharias, was in the temple performing his priestly duties on the eighth week of the year when an angel visited him in a vision and informed him that his wife Elisabeth, who was barren and on in years, would soon bear a son. We know from Luke that Zacharias was responsible for the eighth of the 24 courses of the temple as instituted by David. Each of the 24 courses lasted a week and were repeated twice during the year. The eighth course served in June or July, depending on the start of the Hebrew year. Assuming a normal bearing time of nine months, Elisabeth gave birth to John sometime in March. This means Jesus' birth would have taken place the following September.

And what if Zacharias was serving his priestly course during his second time of the year, in December? This would mean that Elisabeth gave birth to John in September, and Jesus was born the following March. Many modern historians and theologians readily accept a

spring date for the birth of Christ because the angel appeared to shepherds while they were guarding their flocks in a field (Luke 2:8). Several of these historians assert that the *only* time shepherds were in the fields with the flocks was spring, which was lambing season. The lambs were an important part of the feast of the Passover. However, flocks of sheep were habitually kept in the fields, from early March until late October, and sometimes all year round. It does not seem reasonable that the shepherds would leave their lambing flocks unattended if the Passover was at hand, not even to see the Savior, Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11). In other words, the sheep provide us with no real clue as to the time of the Nativity.

So, which was it for Christ's birth, March or September? In Part I we saw that the celestial pageantry peaked in September, apparently endorsing that month. Later we shall see that Jesus' ministry had to start in late summer. Jesus, as a priest, under the law could not start a ministry before age 30. His enthusiasm to start his ministry when he was twelve (Luke 2:9) suggests that he would not at all delay even a day to start his ministry, let alone for six months to await the end of summer. These and other factors such as the four Passovers he celebrated during his ministry all point to his birth being near the beginning of the Jewish year, which generally started in September.

The Taxation

In the previous section we established the most likely month for the birth of Christ as September, but by no means do those considerations establish a year. Luke 2:1-3 gives two clues to the year:

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (*And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.*) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

The two clues are the decree from Augustus for the taxation and that Cyrenius was governor of Syria.

Modern critics of the Bible argue that there was no taxation in 2 B.C., that it should be a census. Now Rome held a taxation every 20 years. The last taxation before the birth of Christ occurred in eight B.C. and took two years to complete; the next happened in A.D. 14 after a mysterious one-year delay.

Every five years, however, there was a census. In the fifth year there was a registration renewal for Roman citizens. There was such a registration in 3 B.C., but although it took a year to conduct, it is highly

unlikely that Mary and Joseph were Roman citizens, so they would not have gone to Bethlehem for that registration.

We are left to conclude that the taxation mentioned by Luke was a special taxation. A most persuasive reason favoring that is the Greek word translated as “taxed” in Luke 1, *apographe*. *Apographe*’s root word means, to write off; to assess; that is, to tax. Modern versions translate it as census, but *apographe* is not the right word for census. It might be used for an enrollment in the sense of assessment that is for taxation, but not for census. Note how English versions render *apographe* prior to 1700:

- The Anglo-Saxon, dating from about A.D. 1000, says “to-mearcod,” to [be] marked, (i.e., not counted), which means to be assessed. Mearcod is also related to market, and in Germany, until recently the unit of currency was the mark.
- Wycliffe (ca. 1280) wrote, “discryued.” Our modern word, described, meaning having one’s property “scribed,” or assessed on record.
- Tyndale (ca. 1525) was the first to use “taxed.”
- The Geneva Bible also wrote, “taxed,” and adds a note, “That is, the inhabitants of euery citie shoulde haue their names taken, and their goods rated at a certaine valew, that the Emperour might vnderstand, howe rich euery countrey, citie, familie, and house was.”

The English word, *tax*, has in it the usual sense of “a contribution for the support of a government required of persons, groups, or businesses within the domain of that government.” In law, tax also means to assess, which is reflected in the root word of *apographe*, as well as in the Geneva Bible note. In short, *apographe* is never used to refer to a census.

Finally, note something commonly overlooked about Luke’s taxation; it was decreed by Caesar Augustus. All other taxations were automatic; scheduled either yearly or every twentieth year. As automatic, they did not depend on a declaration to get them started; a proclamation would suffice. The taxation Luke mentioned was thus a special taxation, decreed for a specific reason. And Augustus did indeed have a reason to decree a special taxation. The year 2 B.C. celebrated two major anniversaries in Augustus’ life. First, it was the silver jubilee of the Senate’s bestowal upon him of the titles *Augustus* (reverend) and *Princeps* (leader—as in *prince*) in 27 B.C. Second, it was also the tenth anniversary of his being declared *Pontifex Maximus*, the titular

head of all religions as the “bridge maker” to heaven.¹¹ In February of 2 B.C. Caesar Augustus wrote:

While I was administering my thirteenth consulship [2 B.C.] the Senate and the Equestrian Order and the entire Roman people gave me the title Father of my Country” (*Res Gestae* 35).

This award was given to Augustus on 5 February 2 B.C.; therefore, the registration of citizens of Rome approval must have taken place in 3 B.C. during the regular fifth-year registration. Orosius, in the fifth century, also said that Roman records of his time revealed that a registration occurred when Augustus was made “the First Citizen,” an apt description of his award, “Father of the Country.”

At the same time as the award, all the great nations gave an oath of obedience to Augustus. Josephus confirms that an oath of obedience to Augustus was required in Judea not long before the death of Herod.¹² The fifth century Armenian historian, Moses of Khorene, wrote of events that transpired during the reign of Abgar V:

In the second year of his reign [3-2 B.C.], the regions of Armenia were ordered to pay tribute to the Romans. The order was given by Emperor Augustus, as recorded in the gospel of Luke, to assess the whole world. The delegation carrying the order to Armenia brought statues of the Emperor Augustus to erect in every temple.

After all, Augustus could do that to temples since he was Pontifex Maximus, the ambassador of the gods to men. The fifth century historian Orosius tell us that his taxing was completed in 2 B.C.¹³

If the oath of allegiance and the taxation were done in temples, why was the Jewish taxation handled differently? In Judea people were sent to their home towns for their taxation. The difference lies in the mode of worship of the nation under taxation. The Jews had one temple for the entire nation. All the Jews congregated in one spot for a taxation was an invitation for trouble. From the governor’s perspective, it was bad enough that the observant Jews gathered there from all the surrounding nations twice a year. So for metastable Judea, it made

¹¹ *Pontifex* derives from the Latin, *pont-*, bridge and *-fex*, maker. His title thus amounts to the bridge maker to heaven. Yes, this is the same title claimed by the popes; they took the title and position from the Caesars.

¹² Josephus, *F. Antiquities* 17:41-45.

¹³ Orosius. *Adv. Pag.* VI 22.1, VI 22.5, VII 2.14.

sense that the gathering be by tribal family. And there surely would have been a bloody revolt if Augustus had insisted his graven image be placed in the temple. Why, moving additional troops into Judea to suppress the revolt would have cost Caesar more than he could possibly collect in Judea.

And then there was the matter of collecting the most money possible for Rome. People are more likely to give an honest assessment and pay an honest share if they give publicly in their house of worship—where their god is watching—or before the eyes of family members. Furthermore, the prideful will want to brag of their riches and so will tend to give above their true evaluation. The poor will also feel pressure to give the most they can. The way Rome collected the tax information and money in each nation assured the maximum tax collected by Rome.

What about the taxation? Was it merely a census, as most now claim, or a registration or assessment as some now claim; or was money collected as part of the assessment? As part of his Silver Jubilee, Augustus planned a yearlong party to celebrate the event. For that he needed money. So along with the oath of allegiance, a tax was assessed, perhaps not so much a tax on individuals as on families or temples who were responsible for collecting the money assessed. In any case, the oath was accompanied by at least an assessment accompanied by a collection of money.¹⁴

We have referred to this taxation as happening in 2 B.C., yet many others report 3 B.C. The year 3 B.C. was a regular registration for Roman citizens. It was they who voted on giving the title, “Father of the Country” to Caesar Augustus and of whom he wrote on 5 February 2 B.C. the quote printed on page 16. However, the oath of allegiance, assessment, and collection by the rest of the Empire, including the Jews, was timed to supply a source of money throughout 2 B.C. That is the taxation referred to in the Holy Bible; the one that places the birth of Christ in 2 B.C. and may have coincided with the fifth-year registration of citizens in 3 B.C. with its collection finishing for the entire world in 2 B.C.

Cyrenius

Skeptics object that Cyrenius was not governor of Syria in 2 B.C. There is weak evidence that he was, but the strongest evidence that he

¹⁴ It only makes sense that the money would be collected on the spot. There were no computers to distribute the assessment amount for a later taxation to the places of residence of the participants in the assessment.

was not is because Josephus does not mention it. In other words, there is no contrary evidence that Cyrenius was not governor of Syria when Scripture says he was. Since Luke is some thirty years closer to the event than was Josephus, there is no reason to doubt that Cyrenius was governor, at least for part of the year. Still, most insist that Sentius Saturnius, not Cyrenius was governor of Syria in 9-6 B.C. Yes, in 9-6 B.C. Cyrenius being governor of Syria is only a problem for those insisting on a 5 B.C. birth date for Jesus, not for a 2 B.C. date. Writing in the late second century, the Roman lawyer and Christian apologist, Tertullian wrote:

There was a tax raised in Judea by Sentius Saturnius, which might have satisfied their inquiry respecting the family and descent of Christ.¹⁵

The reason for the 9-6 B.C. dating of Saturnius' rule was that Josephus mentioned that Saturnius was succeeded by Quintilius Varus and there are coins and records dating Varus' reign from 6-4 B.C.

Complicating the matter, Josephus reports that Varus was governor in Syria at Herod's death. Ernest Martin has shown that Josephus was referring to the second time that Varus was governor of Syria.¹⁶ Varus started his second governorship late in the summer of 2 B.C. and remained until A.D. 1. That leaves a gap in the governorship from 4 B.C. until 2 B.C. that, according to Tertullian and Josephus was filled by Saturnius. (The 9-7 B.C. slot, previously filled by Saturnius to force-fit the 4 B.C. date for Herod's death, is now filled by Titius.)¹⁷

Writing around 150 AD, Justin Martyr mentions that Cyrenius¹⁸ was governor of Syria at the birth of Christ. Bishop James Ussher accounts for this as follows:

Cyrenius¹⁹ obtained the proconsulate of Cilicia. He could be sent into nearby Syria, either as censor, with an extraordinary power. He would still retain the proconsulship of Cilicia and Sextius Saturnius, the governor of Syria. We have often read in Josephus that Volumnius and Saturnius were both equally called governor of Syria, whereas only Volumnius, was the governor of Syria. ... So nothing is incorrect, in that Cyrenius may be said to

¹⁵ Tertullian, *Adv. Marcionem*, IV, 7.

¹⁶ Martin, Ernest L., 1980. *The Birth of Christ Recalculated*, (Pasadena: Foundation for Biblical Research), pp. 61-74.

¹⁷ Martin, p. 74.

¹⁸ Cyrenius is the Greek spelling of the Roman Sulpicius Quirinius.

¹⁹ For consistency, I have taken the liberty of changing the Latin name, Quirinius to the Greek name Cyrenius; the two names refer to the same man.

have succeeded to, or rather to have been added to, the office of administrating Caesar's affairs...

Luke would rather mention him than the governor Saturnius, because he would compare this taxing with another that was made ten years later by the same Cyrenius, after Archelaus was sent into banishment. He stated that, of the two taxings, this was the first taxing and this was the time of the birth of Christ.²⁰

In the first paragraph of the quote, Ussher points out that although Saturnius was governor of Syria, the taxation was under the jurisdiction of Cyrenius, who as such, also held the title, governor of Syria.

In the last paragraph, Ussher is referring to the two taxations Luke mentions in the Bible. The first is the one under consideration, the taxing of Luke 1:1 v.f. The second is the taxation Luke mentions in Acts 5:37.²¹

The Reign of Tiberius

Another scriptural record that points to the year 2 B.C. as the year of Jesus' birth is found in Luke. In Luke's third chapter we read that Jesus began his ministry in the fifteenth year of Tiberius' reign as Emperor of Rome (Luke 3:1) when Jesus was about thirty (Luke 3:23). Scholars debate whether Luke used the Roman method of reckoning Tiberius' fifteenth year, or whether he used the Syrian custom. The Romans dated the beginning of a ruler's reign from the date it actually happened. The Syrians counted from the start of the calendar year. Scholars do not know the answer to their question because they do not read the scriptures. In Scripture, a reign will start in a certain month and sometimes a specific day of the month rather than antedating the start of the reign to the first day of the calendar year. So, to find Christ's birth date, we need to find when Tiberius officially became emperor.

Tiberius' predecessor, Caesar Augustus died 19 August A.D. 14. Augustus had reigned for almost forty years, so the Senate was out of practice in appointing new emperors. Delayed by funeral formalities

²⁰ Ussher, *op. cit.*, 4000a entry, p. 777.

²¹ Acts 5:37— After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

According to Josephus, this taxing happened in the 37th year after the battle of Actium (31 B.C.). That year ended in A.D. 7, which was the regular 5-year taxing of Roman citizens. Josephus reported that this Judas demolished cities, and his followers were robbers and murderers of principal men. Cyrenius was governor of Syria at that time, too.

for Augustus and work on the transfer of power, the Senate did not convene to confirm Tiberius until 18 September, almost a month after Augustus died.²² The fifteenth year of Tiberius was thus from 18 September A.D. 28, through 17 September A.D. 29. Jesus turned thirty in early to mid-September of 29. Working backward 30 years puts us back in September of 2 B.C.²³ If we work from the commonly accepted dates, Tiberius' fifteenth year ranges from 19 August A.D. 28 through 18 August A.D. 29. The latter reckoning presents a one-month problem; the official one does not.

This brings us back to the matter of Daniel's chronology and Ussher's discrepancies at the end of the 483 years. The correct date is now seen to be the one reckoned by the Julian calendar. Ussher's problem stems from his conviction that the birth of Christ was in 5 B.C. and that 4 B.C. must correspond to A.D. 1. Since Jesus' ministry started in the autumn, the Anno Mundi calendar needs to have one year added to it, taking it from A.D. 32 to A.D. 33. This is four years off from the otherwise-derived date of A.D. 29. The four years is a problem for Ussher's insistence that the first year of the Christian era must be 4 B.C. The modern calendar discrepancy of one year (A.D. 28 instead of 29) is harder to solve. I have no solution at this time but suspect that it may not be calibrated to the missing 90 days of the change in calendars when the Julian Calendar was instituted. If the 90 days were mishandled, then the fall of the Jewish year in which the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem was issued, which apparently was the time of year that said commandment was issued, would mark the start of 453 B.C. But this is speculation, mind you. If correct, all dates reckoned by our calendar before 45 B.C. would be off by a season. Remember, too, that Julian dates reported before 45 B.C. did not have leap years.

The Bloody Moon

Since the Copernican Revolution, which stripped the Bible of its authority in matters "scientific," almost all scholars have placed the time of Jesus' birth prior to 4 B.C. Among those scholars we find Bishop Ussher. That Christ was born before 4 B.C. comes from Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) who assumed that the triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 7 B.C. (Figure 1 in Part I) was the Star of Bethle-

²² Most scholars date the first year of Tiberius' reign from 19 August A.D. 14 through 18 August 15, but technically, that is not the official, legal starting date and is thus in error.

²³ Switching between ordinal and cardinal numbers is tricky. Arithmetically, if Jesus was born in 2 B.C. his first year is from 2 B.C. to 1 B.C. His first birthday is celebrated in 1 B.C., at the end of his first year. His second birthday is then in A.D. 1, which is his age, 2, minus 1. Thus his thirtieth birthday is in 30 less 1 which gives A.D. 29.

hem. Stories of the two planets overlapping to become one brilliant star are sheer fiction. In none of the three conjunctions did the two planets come closer together than about two apparent lunar diameters. Even if they were so close together that they appeared as a single star, their combined brightness could not match that of Venus.

What promotes the error is the presence of a partial eclipse of the moon in March 4 B.C. As a result, most modern scholars believe that Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. What we know about Herod's death comes from the works of Flavius Josephus, who wrote that Herod died after a lunar eclipse and was buried before Passover. There were three lunar eclipses surrounding the candidate dates for Christ's birth. They are March 23 of 5 B.C. (total), March 13 of 4 B.C. (partial, after midnight) and January 10 of 1 B.C. (total, before midnight).

The day of the eclipse, after the executions of certain rebellious rabbis, Josephus reported that the moon that night was red with the blood of the murdered rabbis. The eclipse of March 13 of 4 B.C. was partial; only 40% of the moon passed through the earth's shadow. This could not have turned the moon blood red. Furthermore, at 29 days, there was not enough time between this eclipse and the passover for the full thirty-day ceremonial funeral of Herod's body at the Herodian. The March 23, 5 B.C. eclipse suffers from the same flaw.

The problem is that Josephus wrote that the eclipse of 4 B.C. was the eclipse with which Herod's death was associated. This is why most scholars have placed Herod's death in 4 B.C. Of course, Josephus, writing some 100 years after the birth of Christ, may have made an error, though this is unlikely.

There is an interesting twist to the story at this point. Copies of Josephus' writings prior to 1552 list 1 B.C. as the year of Herod's death. After that, it was changed to 4 B.C. It seems more than likely that the translator of today's works of Josephus, William "Wicked Will" Whiston, altered the date to conform to the belief of the Copernican Revolution's hero, Johannes Kepler, who promoted the 7 B.C. triple conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter referred to earlier in this paper.

Advocates of the March 4 B.C. eclipse claim that, because the elaborate funeral preparations took so much time, the Passover Josephus refers to is that of the following year (3 B.C.). This reasoning has a number of flaws. First, that would leave a full year for an interim ruler, who certainly would have left some record in history. Second, Archelaus was too ambitious and too impatient to delay his coronation for that great a length of time. Third, it was customary at that time that upon a king's death, the king's royal treasury was to be returned to Rome. Caesar's financial officer for Syrian affairs, one Sabinus, met Archelaus at the port city of Caesarea in order to secure the treasure of

the dead king. It is hard to believe that Sabinus would have waited 13 months to take charge of Herod's treasury, which in essence belonged to Rome.

Josephus wrote in detail about the circumstances surrounding Herod's funeral. Herod left explicit instructions regarding his funeral; it was to be the grandest funeral in all of human history. To make sure that the Jewish people would also be in mourning, Herod devised a wicked plan. Messengers were sent from Jericho to all parts of Herod's realm, bearing orders that all the elders of the cities and villages come to Jericho on pain of death. Since the northern cities of Herod's kingdom were some 130 miles away, it would have taken at least a week from



the day the order was issued to get them all to Jericho. Once they were there, they were locked up in the Hippodrome. Herod gave further orders that they were all to be put to death the day he died. This would ensure that the entire Jewish nation would be in mourning, albeit not for Herod. Fortunately, Josephus reports, the monstrous plan was not carried out. Before the news of Herod's death was announced, his sister, Salome, and her husband, Alexas, dispatched a messenger in Herod's name ordering the release of the elders.

As mentioned before, there was one lunar month, 29 days, between the eclipse of March 13, 4 B.C. and Passover. The public mourning period alone required thirty days. Furthermore, custom required the body to be borne to its final resting place on the shoulders of family members, on foot. Jewish custom was that the mourners walk barefoot. Members of the royal family were hardly used to bearing heavy burdens over rough roads in bare feet. The burial site, the Herodian, was some 25 miles from Jericho. The procession went in stages. This meant that in all likelihood, the distance the funeral cortege would have traveled averaged approximately 1 mile per day, with stopovers in each town so that the body could lie in state for a time to allow the residents time to pay their respects. At a rate of one mile a day, it would have taken 25 days to cover the distance from Jericho, where Herod died, to his grave site at the Herodian. Thus the thirty-day

mourning period was likely not exceeded. Besides, there was no love lost between Herod and his sons, nor between Herod and his Jewish subjects.

The only lunar eclipse that allows all the activities of Josephus' account to happen between it and Passover is that of January 10, 1 B.C. In that year, the date of Herod's death can be ascertained as 14 January. It allows about three months to the Passover. Thus we are free to accept the celestial signs that appeared in the years 3 and 2 B.C., instead of limiting our search to the years prior to 4 B.C. in which signs were inauspicious and pedestrian.

More on the Dating of Herod's Death

Herod died on January 14, 1 B.C. Tertullian (born about A.D. 160) stated that Augustus began to rule 41 years before the birth of Jesus and died 15 years after that event. Augustus died on August 19, A.D. 14, placing Jesus' birth at 2 B.C. Tertullian also wrote that Jesus was born 28 years after the death of Cleopatra in 30 B.C., which is consistent with a date of 2 B.C. Irenaeus, born about a century after Jesus, recorded that the Lord was born in the 41st year of the reign of Herod. Since Herod began his reign in the autumn of 43 B.C., this also appears to substantiate the birth in 2 B.C. Eusebius (A.D. 264-340), the "Father of Church History," ascribes it to the 42nd year of the reign of Herod and the 28th from the subjection of Egypt on the death of Anthony and Cleopatra. The 42nd year of Herod ran from the autumn of 2 B.C. to the autumn of 1 B.C. The subjugation of Egypt into the Roman Empire occurred in the autumn of 30 B.C. The 28th year extended from the autumn of 3 B.C. to the autumn of 2 B.C. The only time that meets both constraints is the autumn of 2 B.C.

Early Reported Dates for the Birth of Christ

So far we have restricted ourselves to consider modern chronologies of Jesus' birth. Our study would be incomplete without looking at the historical proposals for the birth date of Christ.

We saw that most modern commentators place the birth of Christ in 5 B.C. or earlier, even as early as 12 B.C. which is based on the assumption that the Star was an appearance of Halley's comet. All ancient authorities date the birth of Christ later than 5 B.C.

How do the modern estimates compare with historical ones? Below we present a breakdown by year of Christ's proposed birth year. Some of the early authorities held to a Jewish calendar, which begins

around mid-September and ends in September. Years quoted with hyphens in the literature have been rounded down.

4 B.C.

Sulpitius Severus (360—ca. 422)

Alogi (their name means, “without reason”) ca. 170

3 B.C.

Irenaeus (ca. 130—ca. 200)

Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150—ca. 213)

Orosius (385—420)

Cassiodorus Senator (ca. 485—ca. 585)

2 B.C.

Julius Africanus (his history of the world since creation was written in 221; he believed Jesus was born in the spring)

Hippolytus of Rome (170—236)

Hippolytus of Thebes (10th century, 1st fragment)

Jerome (ca. 347—420)

Origen (ca. 185—ca.254)

Photius of Constantinople

Zonares (12th century)

Eusebius of Caesarea (ca.263—ca.339)

Bar Hebraeus (1226—1286)

Chrysostom (347—407)

Basilides (early 2nd century)

Tertullian (ca. 160—235, opted for the spring of 2 B.C., at which time Saturnius instead of Cyrenius was governor of Syria)

Paschal Chronicle (7th century)

Chronicon Cyprianicum

Epiphanius (439—496)

Chronicle of Edessa, (ca. 550 Syrian historical treatise)

Hippolytus of Thebes (10th century, 2nd fragment)

1 B.C.

Dionysius Exiguus (ca. 470—ca. 554)

Furius Dionysius Folocalus, (editor of the *Chronograph* of 354)

A.D. 9

Alogi, according to Epiphanius (ca. 170)

Conclusion

In this issue and the previous one, we have searched to establish a date for the birth of Jesus, the Christ. The first article dealt with the astronomical aspects of the quest. We found that there was a series of close encounters, as seen from earth, involving all the planets, the sun, the moon, and Regulus, the brightest star in the constellation of Leo. The sequence started in the spring of 3 B.C. with a conjunction of Saturn and Mercury, followed a month later with a conjunction of Saturn and Venus. The main events started with the retrograde motion of Jupiter on 1 December 3 B.C., possibly corresponding to the conception of Jesus and his going into "Egypt" (westward) after his departure from the Father and ends on 25 December of 2 B.C. when Jupiter again starts its retrograde (westward) motion, the wise men visit Jesus, and the holy family flees to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath. The conjunctions end on 27 August of 2 B.C. with Mars approaching within about five minutes of arc of Jupiter (announcing the delivery of a sword, as per Matthew 10:34).²⁴ The 31st of August that year was the date of the new moon and was probably the start of the Jewish year that year. The next new moon was 28 September and there was nothing astronomical of note at that time. Finally, the total lunar eclipse of 9 January 1 B.C. was the eclipse of which Josephus wrote that the moon was red with the blood of Jewish martyrs killed earlier in the day for removing the Roman eagle from the front of the temple.

In this article we sought to establish the date of Jesus' birth from secular and scriptural sources. We found that the year that fits almost all of the evidence was September of 2 B.C. The same was derived from Daniel's statement that 483 years would pass from the command to rebuild Jerusalem until the appearing of the Messiah. We saw that the majority of early historians converged on 2 B.C.; that the best date for Herod's death was January 14, 1 B.C.; and that the date of Tiberius' reign fits the 2 B.C. if we use the official date for the start of his reign.

We discovered two problems in Ussher's chronology and were able to repair one of them. The consistent dates confirm the 2 B.C.

When it comes to the taxation mentioned by Luke and that Cyrenius was governor of Syria, we found that the 2 B.C. year fits the taxation as the fulfillment of an assessment and that the Cyrenius governorship is only a problem if one insists on 4 B.C. as the year of Herod's death.

The date of Jesus' birth is most likely 31 August of 2 B.C. or, a bit less likely, 28 September of 2 B.C.

²⁴ Matthew 10:34—Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

PANORAMA

Types of Thought

While still at university, I discovered by reading and observation that people think different ways, if they think much at all. I discovered that people fall into two major categories when it comes to thinking: those who feel, and those who think. Later in life, I added a third category; those who are word-oriented. Those who *feel* constitute roughly 80%. I've asked questions like "Do you think about things while you're doing the dishes or sitting still?" and they respond with a "No" and a questioning look on their faces as if they have just been introduced to a radically new concept. These characteristically say "I feel that..." as if they are blind and have to feel their way around.

Among those who *think*, (including among the 80% when they think), there are those who visualize and those who do not. Visualizers are characterized by the phrase "I see..." and the others by "I understand..." (Please, do not conclude that any particular individual is only capable of one of these methods; each of us is capable of all three. We tend to favor one over the others.) Visualizers tend to think formally; they are quite at home with formulae, formal presentations, formal logic, formal religions and formal services, formal you-name-it.

That leaves the third category, which is informal. I use the word in an obsolete sense, meaning the property of giving material form to, to arrange. The meaning is obsolete because human disciplines have now been formal for 200 years or more. Generally speaking, formal deals with essential constitution or structure, but it is not especially concerned with the content of the form. I am informal. That is why I am easily veered off track to introduce novel ideas and sidetracks. It frustrates the practitioners of the other two methods. But I try to inform, and I know there is energy in discovery so I try to inform people so that there is a way they can make the discovery themselves, and so receive that energy, too. At times that process obfuscates, asking them to make mental leaps they feel they cannot make.

As concerned with content, informal analysis generally works from the inside out. Thus, I recognized the firmament because I started with nothing, a null point, discovered it had no existence, and so God must exist. Then I worked out that the granularity of God was infinitesimal. As the granularity of the creation is not infinitesimal, I then found it in the Planck particles. These, then, became surface manifestations of a deeper medium.

Informal thought is word-oriented. It tries to find the right word to express the content of the form around it, which means that at times

one is at a loss for words, or one creates word-combinations to describe the content (as I just did with the word, *geocentricity*). It happens in thick darkness.

You may ask, why would I trust informal methods? At university I had problems learning several concepts, among them electro-magnetic theory. As time went by, I learned that the concepts that I could not learn were concepts that turned out to be wrong. They worked formally, but I could not formally comprehend them. After a couple of instances I accepted that it was not a flaw in my thinking that kept me from understanding but a flaw in the concept. One professional astronomer told me that he envied my ability to “visualize” (his word) the way I do, but that he would rather be able to formulate a theory. I agree with that. After all, if I didn’t understand the wrong concept, why was I not instantly able to correct it?

So, as you can see, there is no one “right” way to think. All methods (and there may be more, I just haven’t thought about it) complement each other. Now, would anyone like to work out an electro-magnetic theory in terms of density gradients in the firmament? (Longitudinal waves, anyone?)

The Axis of Evil: Evil to Whom?

Some seven years ago astronomers discovered that galaxies aligned in filaments that pointed to the earth. The phenomenon was dubbed, “The Fingers of God.” As our picture of the surrounding cosmos developed, extragalactic astronomers discovered a phenomenon that greatly disturbed them. In their desire to move the earth away from a special place in the cosmos, they dubbed the disturbing observation as “The Axis of Evil.” The universe, according to atheistic and agnostic science is supposed to be isotropic; everywhere the same, without landmarks that could identify where you are in the universe. Any sort of order hints of an organizing “force,” or even a Creator. Such a structure is the axis of evil.

Other evidences for an organizing force or Creator are:

1. The alignment of hot and cold spots in the cosmic microwave background, the 3K black body radiation.
2. The increase in the degree of polarization (where light waves wave up and down in the same plane) of light from galaxies depends on how near they are to the axis of evil.
3. The alignment of the axes of rotation of many spiral galaxies, that is, that their axes of rotation all point in the same direction.

4. Clusters of galaxies and even superclusters rotate as if they'd been created intact instead of developing in isolated islands of space as required by the Big Bang and even current inflationary models. The main problem is that the universe is not "old" enough for the evolutionary model to account for the rotation. Again, an organizing force that transcends the chaos of the big bang creation models.

For the past 200 years the episteme (foundational purpose) of science is the de-Godification of the universe. I use the upper case because all kinds of gods and their writings are acceptable to science except the Judeo-Christian God and his Bible. So it goes without saying that the Judeo-Christian God is the one that makes coherent and perfect sense whereas all the others are gods of straw. It follows that any organized evidence for a coherent God must be denied by modern science. Therefore the organized evidence presented above, which cannot (yet) be denied, is deemed evil.

Nearby Galaxies Look the Same As Distant Ones¹

Astronomers have found that a local class of galaxies are identical to ones far away. The class of galaxies are called Lyman break galaxies based on the appearance of the ultraviolet spectrum near the Lyman lines of hydrogen. The galaxies are quite active, said to be producing stars at "a prodigious rate." That means that the galaxies are much bluer than normal, which is interpreted as younger than normal in the evolutionary scheme of things. Alice Shapley of Princeton University hopes that the similarities between local and distant young galaxies do not derail the standard evolutionary model. "Just because some galaxies today have the same mass and size as others had in the distant past doesn't mean that they'll develop as the earlier ones did." However, mass and size are important starting values that determine the evolutionary track for stars and galaxies. The third important parameter is the fraction of helium and heavier elements that are present in the starting mix.

¹ Cowen, R., 2007. "Match Made in Heaven," *Science News*, **172**, Oct. 6.

CREDO

The Biblical Astronomer was founded in 1971 as the Tyconian Society. It is based on the premise that the only absolutely trustworthy information about the origin and purpose of all that exists and happens is given by God, our Creator and Redeemer, in his infallible, preserved word, the Holy Bible commonly called the King James Bible. All scientific endeavor which does not accept this revelation from on high without any reservations, literary, philosophical or whatever, we reject as already condemned in its unfounded first assumptions.

We believe that the creation was completed in six twenty-four hour days and that the world is not older than about six thousand years. We maintain that the Bible teaches us of an earth that neither rotates daily nor revolves yearly about the sun; that it is at rest with respect to the throne of him who called it into existence; and that hence it is absolutely at rest in the universe.

We affirm that no man is righteous and so all are in need of salvation, which is the free gift of God, given by the grace of God, and not to be obtained through any merit or works of our own. We affirm that salvation is available only through faith in the shed blood and finished work of our risen LORD and saviour, Jesus Christ.

Lastly, the reason why we deem a return to a geocentric astronomy a first apologetic necessity is that its rejection at the beginning of our Modern Age constitutes one very important, if not the most important, cause of the historical development of Bible criticism, now resulting in an increasingly anti-Christian world in which atheistic existentialism preaches a life that is really meaningless.

If you agree with the above, please consider becoming a member. Membership dues are \$20 per year. Members receive a 15% discount on all items offered for sale by the *Biblical Astronomer*.

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

– Isaiah 8:20

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