

# Whose Star Do You Follow?

“...behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.’”

Wise men from the East following a star announcing the birth of the Messiah has always been a mystery to many scholars. Some believe it was a nova or new star. Others claim it was a comet. Still others maintain it was the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. Some claim it was the close grouping of Jupiter, Saturn and Mars. Is there a biblical solution to this question?

To understand this mystery three questions must be answered.....

First question, how would the magi know anything about the birth of the Jewish messiah? This was not an ordinary star. It appeared and disappeared on at least two or more occasions. In Matthew 2:2 it is described as “His star.” This was His personally owned star. It moved from east to west. It moved from north to south. It came and literally hovered over the house in Bethlehem. Any literal star that will hover over one house in Bethlehem will destroy this entire planet. Our sun is a star. If our sun came and hovered over one house this planet would be history!

This was not a star as we know them. The Greek word for star means “radiance, brilliance.” Often God announced His presence through light. Moses experienced the burning bush. The children of Israel followed the pillar of fire by night through the desert. The fire consumed Elijah’s sacrifice. God manifested His presence among the disciples through flames of fire in Acts 2. The wise men experienced the shekinah glory.

Second question, how would these Babylonian wise men even know about a coming messiah? In 605 BC Daniel was taken into captivity to Babylon. Daniel had supernatural abilities to interpret dreams. King Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel the leader of the wise men. In the Old Testament only one prophecy gave a timetable for the first coming of the messiah. Daniel 9:24-27 spells out how many years would transpire before the messiah came. The Book of Daniel was not written in Israel. It was written in Babylon. Half of Daniel is not written in Hebrew which is the Jewish tongue but in Aramaic which is the Babylonian language.

These wise men had in their possession a Book written by one of their presidents, Daniel, which gave a timetable for the first coming of the messiah. They knew when to begin looking for this coming king. When they saw the unusual brilliance or radiance in the heavens they took it as a sign the messiah had finally been born.

Third question, how did they know to connect the coming of the messiah with a star? While Daniel gave a timetable for the coming of the messiah, he never connected His birth with a star. There is another Babylonian connection in Numbers 22-24. These three chapters are the story of Balaam. Balaam’s reputation was that whoever he blessed, God

blessed. Whoever he cursed, God cursed. Balak, the king of Moab, hired Balaam to curse the Jewish people. Four different times the king of Moab took Balaam to a high point that looked down upon the Jewish camp. Four different times he opened his mouth to curse the Jews. Four different times God took over his mouth and he ended up blessing the Jews instead! In these four blessings he issued several messianic prophecies. The relevant prophecy to the star is, "A Star will arise out of Jacob, a scepter shall rise out of Israel...." (Numbers 24:17). Balaam connected the coming of the Messiah with a star. According to Numbers 22:5 and Deuteronomy 23:3 Balaam was from..... Babylon! The Babylonians were known for keeping accurate historical records. This prophecy was made fourteen hundred years before the birth of Jesus.

From the Daniel connection and the Balaam connection when the magi saw this brilliance in the heavens they took it to be a sign. They traveled to Jerusalem with the question, "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews?"

Herod the Great hated Jesus. He killed the babies in Bethlehem attempting to end His life. The chief priests and scribes in Jerusalem were indifferent. They knew from Micah 5:2 Bethlehem was the place of the Messiah's birth. Yet they didn't even walk the six miles to Bethlehem to investigate. The wise men responded with worship. They traveled hundreds of miles from Babylon to Bethlehem to worship this Jewish messiah.

Some say He was just a good teacher, but good teachers don't claim to be God. Some say He was merely a good example, but good examples don't mingle with prostitutes and sinners. Some say He was a madman, but madmen don't speak the way He spoke. Some say He was a crazed fanatic, but crazed fanatics don't draw children to themselves or attract men of intellect like Paul or Luke to be their followers. Some say He was a religious phony, but phonies don't rise from the dead. Some say He was only a phantom, but phantoms can't give their flesh and blood to be crucified. Some say He was only a myth, but myths don't set the calendar for history. The apostle Thomas expressed it perfectly when he saw Jesus after the resurrection and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). What will you do with Jesus?