

## Reason 2: A Star Was Born

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According to the gospel writer Matthew, a light appearing in the sky over Bethlehem provided “physical” evidence for Mary’s claim. A group of witnesses, identified by the New Testament record as “magi” from the East, followed the “star” to the site of Jesus’ birth. According to the gospel writers, what they found was not just another baby. It was a baby whose birth and location were marked by a star in the sky. This was a baby who seemed to have not only the attention of wise men, but of the heavens as well.

**Edwin Yamauchi:** Well, there are hundreds of books and articles trying to explain that celestial star, Christmas star, astēr in the Greek, in terms of what we do understand astronomically.

Johannes Kepler, the famous astronomer, thought that it represented a conjunction of planets, and triple conjunction of the planets are relatively rare.

In a book which I coedited, an astronomer from the University of Vienna thought that the star was the planet Jupiter which was a very large visible object. My coeditor of this volume, *Chronos, Kairos, Christos* (honoring Jack Finegan), a scholar called Jerry Vardaman, suggested that it was Halley’s Comet, which would have been visible in 12 B.C.

Now comets are ordinarily baneful or negative phenomena, but in some cases they can be interpreted positively. When Julius Caesar died, a comet appeared and Augustus interpreted, as the symbol, the visible sign of the genius of Julius Caesar being deified.

Others have explained the star as the super nova. And we have some Chinese records that correspond to about this time. We really do not know for sure what this celestial phenomenon was. It certainly behaved in a supernatural way.

For hundreds of years the Old Testament had been speaking of “a

Star” and “a Scepter” that would come out of Israel (see Numbers 24:17). The same Old Testament predicted a ruler of Israel who would come out of Bethlehem and “whose goings forth have been from...everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

The New Testament record continues,

*Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, 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.” (Matthew 2:1–2 NKJV).*

**Luis Palau:** It’s always one of the mysteries to me about the three wise men that came from the East. And was this a new star that God purposely created so as to announce the birth of the Son, so as to lead these men to worship His Son in the form of a little baby in the arms of the Virgin Mary? Obviously the answer must be yes. Because not only was it a new star, the magi called it His star, which was prophesied in the Old Testament. But also the star went and literally stopped over the house where Mary and the baby were being cared for. So it was a unique revelation. It’s a mysterious revelation, whether it was a star, star as the ones we see in the firmament, or a particular small version of a massive star...is not explained to me in Scripture. But it’s always been since I was a boy, it’s always been totally acceptable to me that if God is God, and His Son could be born of a virgin, He can easily produce another star which guided the magi to the place where Jesus was. It had to be that way.