

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM DECODED

3rd Ed.

APPENDIX-B

By Larry Joyce

starofbethlehemdecoded.com

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APPENDIX SECTION XIX

JESUS AS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Here is what Jesus said near the beginning of His ministry, in the Sermon on the Mount, about those who follow His teachings and put them into practice:

[14](#) “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; [15](#) nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. [16](#) “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. (Matt 5:14-16; NASB)¹

As was stated in the text, and which bears repeating here, consider also what Jesus would then come to say sometime later about Himself:

[14](#) Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” (John 8:12; NASB)²

Likewise, the Apostle John, whom many believe to be “the disciple whom Jesus loved” that his Gospel speaks of (*i.e.*, the one whom Jesus had His closest personal friendship with),³ said this about Jesus in his Gospel:

[4](#) In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (John 1:4; KJV)⁴

The Apostle Paul would have this to say to the early church:

[14](#) Do all things without murmurings and disputings: [15](#) That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; (Philippians 2:14-15; KJV)⁵

This idea of the light of God penetrating even darkness which is otherwise impenetrable brings to mind other verses as well:

[8](#) If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*.

¹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/5.htm>

² <https://biblehub.com/nasb/john/8.htm>

³ John 13:21-30; John 18:15-18; John 19:26; John 21:7; John 21:20;
<https://www.allaboutjesuschrist.org/disciple-whom-jesus-loved-faq.htm>

⁴ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/1.htm>

⁵ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/philippians/2.htm>

- 9 If I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.
12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee*. (Psalm 139:8-12; KJV)⁶

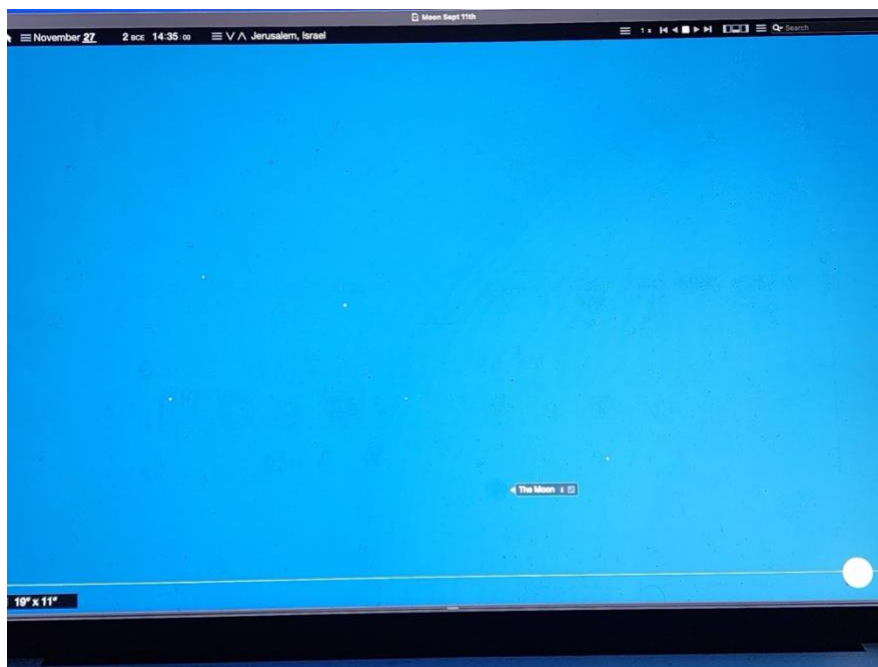
APPENDIX SECTION XX

ASCERTAINING THE START OF KISLEV IN 3760 (2 B.C.) BY THE SIGHTING OF THE NEW MOON

By the method of sanctifying the start of a Hebrew month which was developed by Hillel II about 350 years after Jesus was born, if one were to extrapolate that method back to around the time of Jesus's birth, one would conclude that sunset on December 25th marked the start of the 29th day of Kislev, as is shown on the following chart: <http://www.cgsf.org/dbeattie/calendar/?roman=2bc>; but as we have considered already, since that method could not yet have been available to the ancient Israelites 2,000 years ago, then only the original, eyewitness testimony method would have been available for determining the date on which a new month could be sanctified. And the computer program Starry Night points to the conclusion that the night when the Magi visited Jesus (December 25th on the Julian calendar) would have been the 28th of Kislev.

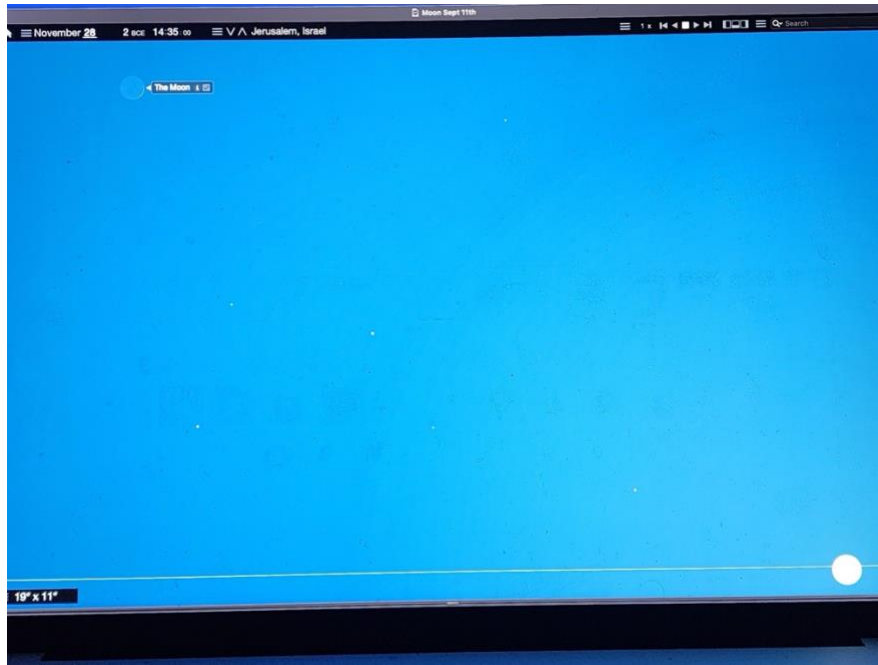
To state this as concisely as possible, at sunset on the night of November 27, 2 B.C., the moon was just over half a day old, and it would have set about fourteen minutes after the sun; it also would have been off-axis from the sun by about eight degrees. Putting all that together, in light of my own personal experience (as is discussed in detail previously in this Appendix; find: When Can The Crescent New Moon First Be Seen With The Unaided Eye?), I do not see how anyone could have seen the crescent new moon from Jerusalem on the evening of November 27th, and so it would have been deemed conclusive that it would have first become visible following sunset on November 28th that year, as is indicated by the moon's appearance on the two evenings on Starry Night:

⁶ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/139.htm>



The new moon (marked in the lower center) at sunset (lower right) on November 27, 2 B.C. as seen from Jerusalem.

The horizontal white line near the bottom of the screen depicts the horizon.
Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.



The crescent moon (marked in the upper left), one day after New Moon, at sunset on November 28, 2 B.C. (at the start of Kislev 1, 3760) as seen from Jerusalem.

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

So the first day of the month of Kislev in 3760 (2 B.C.) would have been observed during the daylight hours of November 29th. This means that the daylight hours of December 25th would have occurred on the 27th of Kislev, and that the 28th of Kislev would have begun at sunset on the evening of December 25th. Hanukkah, I should note, begins at the sunset which marks the start of the 25th of Kislev.⁷

APPENDIX SECTION XXI HOW JEWISH IS JESUS?

Note: for those readers who are coming to this section directly rather than from the text itself, the proper context in which to consider this section does include some important parts found in the actual text of the book. Therefore, if you do not read the complete text of this book, I advise you to use the “Find” function on your computer so that you can at least read the parts entitled “Ancient Jewish Refugees In India”, “When Were the Annunciation And the Conception Of Jesus?”, “Who Were the Magi? (The Basics) The Ancient Persian Class Of Priests, And a Possible Hebrew Connection”, and “Evidence From Jewish Culture: The Feast Of Hanukkah”. You might also wish to find "Appendix Section XIV The Debate Over When Elizabeth Became Pregnant" for a discussion about the possible blood-relative status between Moses and Jesus. It is not absolutely necessary to read those sections before reading this section, but to complete the thought about the Jewishness of Yeshua (Jesus), one should read those sections as well.

⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanukkah#Dates>

Also, at this point, please note three other things: First, for those who are unfamiliar with Jewish culture, let me point out that conservative Jews use a dash in place of the letter “o” out of respect for the Most High when using the word “G-d”, and it is for that reason that in this section specifically---a section which one would expect to be of special interest to Jewish readers--- that I shall follow that pattern, even where a quote from a Christian translation of the Bible does use the letter “o”. Second, since conservative Jews refrain from using the actual Name of G-d, which is the word “I”, followed by the first-person singular of the verb “to be”---i.e., “I _m”, then in place of the Name of G-d I shall frequently use the Hebrew term *Hashem* (*HaShem*, *Ha’Shem*), which means “the Name” in English. Third, since many who are gentiles will read this section out of curiosity, and to gain knowledge, I shall sometimes discuss things in this section in a way which does not assume that each reader will already be familiar with certain things which virtually every Jewish reader of this section will already know. That is why, to many Jews, some of the things which I explain herein will seem highly elementary. It is also why it is the case that, in referring to the numbering of years by the nomenclature “C.E./B.C.E.”, I also include the nomenclature most familiar to gentiles: “B.C./A.D.”, though this is a section whose primary audience may be Jewish.

All that being said, some might wonder, “How can anyone be Jewish and yet still believe that Jesus is the Messiah?” That is a good question. Everyone knows that Jesus is Jewish, but just exactly how Jewish is He? In order to consider that question very carefully and thoroughly, we shall look at a number of different aspects of that whole issue. That being said, let’s go test Jesus’s Yiddishkeit.⁸

A. What Does The Name “Jesus” Mean?

Let us start our inquiry with a look at the name “Jesus” itself. The name “Jesus” is derived from the Hebrew name “Jehoshua” (or “Yehoshua”). In Aramaic, His name is “Yeshua”. Aramaic is a language which is derived from Hebrew (and which is the language which Jesus, His family and friends, His apostles, and all those around Him spoke), In Greek, Yeshua is transliterated as “Iesous”, and then in Latin, that becomes “Iesus”, which in turn then finally becomes “Jesus” in English. As it turns out, though, if you take the name Jehoshua (Yehoshua) straight from Hebrew to English without first passing through Aramaic, Greek, and Latin, you get the name Joshua. So Joshua and Yeshua and Jesus are all actually the exact same name, just expressed differently in different languages. But then, just exactly what does the name Jesus (Joshua/Yeshua/Jehoshua) actually mean?

As it turns out, Jehoshua (Yehoshua) is based on the name of G-d, “J, -, -, -, -, h”, (or “Y, -, -, -, h”), and it means means “J- - - -h salvation”, or “J- - - -h deliverance” (“I _m salvation”, “I _m deliverance”).⁹ Throughout this section on His Jewishness, I shall refer to Jesus as Yeshua, for as I said, it is the name by which His family, friends, and His apostles knew Him, and is likewise the name by which He called Himself.

⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yiddishkeit>

⁹ <https://evenifministries.wordpress.com/2012/07/25/does-jesus-salvation/>

The word *Yeshua* (and its variations) appears 77 times in the Holy Scriptures (the Old Testament), being translated variously as “salvation” (or “save”, and “saving”), “deliverance”, “welfare” (or “prosperity”), “help” (and “helping”), “victory”, “health” (and “saving health”), and “security”.¹⁰ Here are just a few examples:

From the Book of Exodus (at the parting of the Red Sea) we find:

13 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation [*yeshuat*] of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. (Exodus 14:13; KJV)¹¹

From the Book of Isaiah:

7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation [*yeshua*]; that saith unto Zion, Thy G-d reigneth! (Isaiah 52:7; KJV)¹²

And again, from the Book of Isaiah:

18 Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation [*yeshua*], and thy gates Praise. (Isaiah 60:18; KJV)¹³

So the word *yeshua* (and its variations) can hardly be considered a stranger to the Holy Scriptures. For as we can see, *yeshua* and its variations are used commonly throughout the Old Testament as a word pertaining to the Lord G-d's salvation and deliverance. And like the name Joshua today, Yeshua was a common name 2,000 years ago.

B. The Jewish And Christian Views Of G-d

1. The Oneness Of G-d

Let us next compare the Christian view of G-d with the Jewish view of G-d. In the Holy Scriptures we find the following emphatic statement:

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our G-d *is* one LORD: (Deut. 6:4; KJV)¹⁴

Let's compare that to what we find about the nature of G-d in the New Testament:

¹⁰ https://biblehub.com/hebrew/strongs_3444.htm

¹¹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/exodus/14.htm>

¹² <https://biblehub.com/kjv/isaiah/52.htm>

¹³ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/isaiah/60.htm>

¹⁴ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/deuteronomy/6.htm>

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word [Yeshua], and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (1 John 5:7; KJV)¹⁵

Note: this is from I John ("First John"), the first epistle (*i.e.*, a letter of correspondence) of the Apostle John, near the end of the New Testament, and is not to be confused with the Gospel of John, which is the fourth book of the New Testament.

So on the face of things, we might wonder how it is that the view that the oneness of G-d is a union (a concept commonly known among most Christians as the Trinity) is a view which could possibly be reconciled with the Holy Scriptures concept of the oneness of G-d as expressed in Deuteronomy. In answer to that, I would first of all say that there is more to this picture than meets the eye.

You see, there are two types of "oneness". One form of oneness pertains to things which are singular in nature. For instance, we might say that there is one pencil lying on a table. But the other type of oneness is a oneness which consists of a union. For instance, the motto for the Seal of the United States is *E Pluribus Unum*, meaning, "Out of Many, One", a reference to the fact that the United States is indeed one nation, but that it is formed by the union of many parts (*i.e.*, the states).¹⁶

The word in Deuteronomy 6:4 (quoted above) which is translated "one" is the Hebrew word *echad* (pronunciation: <https://forvo.com/word/echad/>); this word and its variations carry more than one meaning in its uses in the Holy Scriptures, including the concept of being one specific thing or person (*i.e.*, a oneness that is a singularity),¹⁷ and yet by contrast, it can also embrace the idea of a oneness which consists of a unity, such as "alike", "altogether", "everyone", "one and the other", the "same one", "some", "together", "uniformly", "unison", and "united".¹⁸ Significantly, it is the same word that is used in Genesis to state that a husband and wife become one flesh:

24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one [*echad*] flesh. (Genesis 2:24; NASB)¹⁹

From this we can learn that, at a bare minimum, the admonition in Deuteronomy to recognize that the Lord is one G-d does not, by itself, operate to the exclusion of the meaning of "one" in the sense that the Lord G-d is a union, and therefore it can be at least possible to believe in the concept of such a union without necessarily contradicting what we find in Deuteronomy 6:4.

Now, I recognize of course that that by itself is not enough to establish that the oneness of

¹⁵ https://biblehub.com/kjv/1_john/5.htm

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_national_motto (Note: The motto for the United States itself as a whole is different from the motto of the United States: "In G-d We Trust". Ibid.)

¹⁷ For example, consider the use of the word "one" in the following verse: 15 Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah; (Exodus 1:15; NASB: <https://biblehub.com/nasb/exodus/1.htm>).

¹⁸ <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/259.htm>

¹⁹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/genesis/2.htm>

G-d of which the Old Testament speaks does necessarily mean in fact essentially the same thing as the Christian concept of the Trinity; but then, as we shall see, Deuteronomy 6:4 is not the only verse from the Holy Scriptures which has relevance to our inquiry.

With that in mind, let us look now at Genesis once again:

26 And G-d said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: (Gen. 1:26a; KJV)²⁰

What does this mean when it says that the Lord talked of “us” making man in “our” image, and after “our” likeness? To whom is the Most High speaking? To the angels? Of course not.

So before we move on, bear this in mind: Since the Lord G-d said, “Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness,” we can know that the Holy Scriptures can at least support the concept--at least the possibility---of the oneness of G-d being a unity instead of a singularity.

Now, although I myself am certainly no scholar of Hebrew (and in fact, I only know a few letters of the Hebrew alphabet, for that matter), I do remember speaking one day with someone I once knew who is a Messianic Jew (*i.e.*, a Jewish person who has come to believe that Yeshua is the Messiah). This fellow had been a cantor in his synagogue before he became a Christian. He told me that even the verb form in that verse is masculine plural (instead of singular). “How did we miss that?” he wondered aloud. To that, I myself would also add that even the form of the Hebrew word for G-d given in that verse is plural rather than singular: *Elohim* instead of *Eloah*.^{21,22}

Well, in response to that, one could perhaps argue that using words like “us” and “our” in that verse, and the plural form of the verb, is simply stylistic, and that we are reading too much into that verse if we say that the verse stands for the idea that the oneness of G-d is a union. And the same thing might also be said about the use of the word “us” in a passage from Isaiah:

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? (Isaiah 6:8a; KJV)²³

Here again, the use of the word “us” in this context is consistent with the idea that the oneness of G-d is a union; and yet here again also, one might argue that it is perhaps the case that this use of the word “us” is simply stylistic.

However, I submit that stylistic preferences cannot fairly be said to explain away certain other verses from the Holy Scriptures, the first of which, in fact, played a role in the story of the Star of Bethlehem (although not specifically on the point about the oneness of G-d):

2 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will

²⁰ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/genesis/1.htm>

²¹ <https://biblehub.com/lexicon/genesis/1-26.htm>

²² <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/430.htm>

²³ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/isaiah/6.htm>

come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins
are from of old,
from ancient times.” (Micah 5:2; NIV)²⁴

If in fact the oneness of G-d cannot consist of a union, and must instead consist only of a singularity, then here we would see a truly strange thing. For first of all, this verse does identify the one who is being spoken of as being the Messiah (“one who will be ruler over Israel”), and when He is born, He is being described as someone “whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

Now, how is it possible that His origins are “... from of old, from ancient times”, unless the Messiah is part of the oneness of G-d? That is to say, if the Messiah who is born is simply part of Creation, as is the case with we ourselves, then how could His goings forth possibly have been from of old, from ancient times? Does this verse not at least suggest that the Messiah, when He is born, has already been in existence (in spirit) since ancient times, and that in that respect, at least, He is not at all like we ourselves?

a. Does G-d Have A Son?

Of course, many will not accept that notion. “We Jews don’t believe that G-d has a son,” a Jewish fellow once told me. But is the belief that G-d does not have a son truly consistent with the Holy Scriptures? Here’s what King David had to say:

7 “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, ‘You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You. (Psalm 2:7; NASB)²⁵

Of whom was the Most High speaking when He said, “You are my Son”? King David? Not hardly. After all, the verse even goes on to say, “Today have I begotten You.” King David was hardly begotten by G-d Himself. This statement about G-d’s son, whom G-d has begotten, is instead a Messianic prophecy, *i.e.*, a statement about the Messiah, the one of whom we learn from the Prophet Micah that His goings forth have been from of old, from ancient times. To see this more clearly, let us look at all of Psalm 2:

1 Why are the nations in an uproar And the
peoples devising a vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth take their stand And the
rulers take counsel together
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
3 “Let us tear their fetters apart And cast
away their cords from us!”
4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord
scoffs at them.

²⁴ <https://biblehub.com/niv/micah/5.htm>

²⁵ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/psalms/2.htm>

5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying,

6 “But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”

7 “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

8 ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the *very* ends of the earth as Your possession.

9 ‘You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’” Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth.

10 Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling.

11 Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish *in* the way,

For His wrath may soon be kindled.

How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Psalm 2:1-12; NASB)²⁶

So from this we know that G-d has a Son, and that His Son is one who holds a scepter (a rod) of iron, and that the Most High shall establish His rulership over all the earth. This, of course, is Messiah, the Anointed of the Lord, the one in whom G-d’s people can take refuge.

The idea in the Holy Scriptures of the oneness of G-d with His Son, the Messiah, doesn’t stop there, however. The Book of Isaiah contains yet another passage relevant to this discussion:

6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; (Isaiah 9:6a; NASB)²⁷

That last part right there (*i.e.*, “the government will rest on His shoulders”) likewise identifies the child as the Messiah. The rest of that exact same verse then goes on to say,

And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty G-d, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6b; NASB)²⁸

Let us consider now the implications of what this passage says. It calls the Messiah who is born “Mighty G-d, Eternal Father”. But how can this possibly be, unless G-d really is in fact a union of the type which the Hebrew word *echad* in Deuteronomy 6:4 can entail (and which *echad* does in fact entail in describing the oneness of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2:24, as we saw above)? That is, how can it possibly be the case that the Messiah shall be called “Mighty G-d, Eternal Father” unless that newborn Messiah is part of that oneness of G-d? And lest there be any doubt as to whether Isaiah 9:6 speaks of the Messiah, consider the very next verse in that chapter as well:

²⁶ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/psalms/2.htm>

²⁷ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/isaiah/9.htm>

²⁸ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/isaiah/9.htm>

7 There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. (Isaiah 9:7; NASB)²⁹

So here we have the Prophet Isaiah speaking in terms which can be explained easily if we recognize that the oneness of G-d of which the Holy Scriptures speak (Deuteronomy 6:4) is a unity. In fact, without accepting the idea that the oneness of G-d is a unity, then how are we to explain the verses we just looked at---Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 9:6-7, and Micah 5:2---at all, for that matter?

The bottom line is this: near the beginning of this section we looked at the question of how it is that the point of view that G-d is a union could possibly be reconciled with the concept of G-d in the Holy Scriptures. What we find upon analysis, however, is that this question states the proposition precisely backwards. For the question we face isn't how it may be the case that the view that G-d is a union could possibly be reconciled with the Holy Scriptures; rather, the question instead would be the exact opposite: How in the world could the view of G-d in the Holy Scriptures possibly be properly understood unless we really do accept the idea (consistent with the word *echad* itself) that the view of the oneness of G-d in the Holy Scriptures is indeed a oneness which consists of a union?

If this still seems puzzling to you, bear in mind that you are not alone in that respect. People have pondered the mystery of the unity of G-d (*i.e.*, the Trinity, as it is commonly called) for ages, and have tried using different means to explain it. For instance, when St. Patrick was teaching about Yeshua in Ireland for the very first time 1500 years ago, the people whom he was teaching could not understand how there could be three persons in the G-dhead, and yet only one G-d instead of three. As it turns out, the way to illustrate this point lay at St. Patrick's feet. He reached down and plucked a shamrock and held it up to them while pointing out that there were three leaves present, yet only one shamrock. That is why you frequently see images of St. Patrick holding a shamrock.³⁰ That does not necessarily provide a perfect illustration of the Trinity, but it can certainly help one grasp the concept.

i. A Jewish Look At The Virgin Birth

Note: this particular subsection is a repeat of part of the text itself. Since it would be of interest to Jews who might read this material, and since some Jews within that category might not read the text itself, I reproduce that portion here, as follows.

Now, as I mentioned before, over the years there has been some debate as to whether the author of a certain New Testament passage (the Apostle Matthew) may have read too much into a prophecy by the Prophet Isaiah, in which the prophet had said that the Messiah would be born to a

²⁹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/isaiah/9.htm>

³⁰ Note: some people mistakenly believe that St. Patrick is associated with a four-leaf clover, but that is not the case, and any association of the Irish people with a four-leaf clover is only for the sake of representing the so-called "luck of the Irish".

virgin, and whether this would refer to a virgin in the ordinary sense (*i.e.*, a sexually mature woman who was not yet active sexually), or whether this would be a young, prepubescent girl. And I can't help but wonder if these signs in the heavens which we just considered help to resolve that debate for us. Let us look once again at what the Scriptures say to consider that issue in depth.

In the Gospel of Matthew, the Apostle Matthew wrote:

[22](#) Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: [23](#) “BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which translated means, “G-D WITH US.” (Matt. 1:22-23; NASB)³¹

The Old Testament verse, in turn, to which Matthew was referring to is this:

[14](#) “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14; NASB)³²

In the Book of Isaiah, the Hebrew word which is translated “virgin” is the word *almah* (or, *ha’almah*).³³ In the Gospel of Matthew, the Greek word which is translated “virgin” is the word *parthenos* (pronunciation: <https://www.synonyms.com/pronounce/parthenos>).³⁴ As for myself, I believe that Jesus had a virgin birth, for I am a Bible-believing Christian, and what Matthew is backed up the Apostle Luke; see Luke 1:26-35.³⁵

More to the point, however, for purposes of this discussion, I believe that the astronomical evidence pertaining to the Annunciation renders moot the question of whether the prophet Isaiah was referring to a virgin specifically or more simply instead to a young girl. For if the entrance of the planet Venus into the region of the head of Virgo is in fact intended to signify to us today the initiation of the production of estrogen within the brain³⁶ (a relatively recently discovered medical phenomenon known as estrogen rapid signaling³⁷) at the onset of puberty, then this might signal the very beginning of puberty for Mary.

This would mean not only that this is the point at which she would become capable of conceiving Yeshua (and would therefore be a virgin in the usual sense), but that also, at the same time, all of her friends, her family, her neighbors, and the rabbi and elders at her synagogue would still consider her to be a young girl in the sense of being prepubescent. For she would not yet have had her first monthly bleeding, so probably no one would have known that puberty had begun for

³¹ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/1.htm>

³² <https://biblehub.com/nasb/isaiah/7.htm>

³³ <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/5959.htm>

³⁴ <https://biblehub.com/greek/3933.htm>

³⁵ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/luke/1.htm>

³⁶ <https://www.healthline.com/health/womens-health/low-estrogen-symptoms#The-Brain-Giveth-and-Taketh-Away>

³⁷ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18253054/>

her, even though it really had. If such were the case, then from two different perspectives, she could have been considered both a virgin in the usual sense and, at the same time, a prepubescent girl (even if erroneously so, in this latter sense).

In addition, there is an excellent discussion of the Jewish legal ramifications of the fact that according to Matthew 1:18³⁸ and Luke 2:4-6,³⁹ Yeshua's mother Mary (which is actually the English version of the Hebrew name Miriam⁴⁰) was betrothed (espoused) at the time that she conceived and gave birth to Yeshua: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgmkOipSRWc>. Specifically, she was not simply a "virgin", but was instead a "virgin betrothed", the principal difference being that since she was a virgin betrothed, she was, in Jewish law, a virgin who was legally married to Joseph, the earthly father of Yeshua, whom the Bible says was of the House of David. (Matt. 1:1)⁴¹ As a matter of Jewish law, this in turn meant that her child, Yeshua, was legally entitled to the throne of King David; yet at the same time, since He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-38),⁴² He was also the Son of G-d.

2. G-d As Man

Another aspect of Christianity which many Jews cannot accept is the idea that someone---whether that be Yeshua, or anyone else---could be both G- d and man at the same time. That idea seems so far-fetched to some that they deem it to be an instant disqualifier when it comes to the proposition that Christianity could even possibly be an accurate, reliable statement about the nature of G-d.

This is, of course, entirely understandable. For on the face of things, the idea that anyone could be both G-d and man does indeed seem strange. But that may be the case simply because we have a tendency to allow our first impressions to lead us to believe that we supposedly needn't bother giving more careful, considered thought to many things, such as this, for example.

Consider this: Generally speaking, Judaism does not, as a spiritual matter, present any barrier to one from believing that each of us ourselves is both a spiritual being and a physical person simultaneously. Nor does Christianity present a barrier to that line of thought either, for that matter. In fact, as both the Apostles Peter and Paul said, our physical bodies are not the true substance of who and what we are, but rather that we ourselves---that is, our souls---simply dwell in tents of flesh (our bodies) while we are here on Earth.^{43,44}

Viewed from that perspective, would it really be the case that the spirit which dwells within a body---in this case, the body of Yeshua---could not possibly be the spirit of G-d Himself, if G-d were to choose to place His own spirit into the body of a man? After all, if the spirit which dwells

³⁸ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/1.htm>

³⁹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/luke/2.htm>

⁴⁰ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miriam_\(given_name\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miriam_(given_name))

⁴¹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/1.htm>

⁴² <https://biblehub.com/kjv/luke/1.htm>

⁴³ https://biblehub.com/niv/2_peter/1.htm

⁴⁴ https://biblehub.com/nasb_/2_corinthians/5.htm

within each of our bodies has to be a spirit of some kind or another, why would it be the case that the spirit dwelling within Yeshua's tent of flesh could not be the Spirit of G-d? This question should be especially considered in light of the discussion above which we have just had regarding the "oneness" of G-d being a unity rather than a singularity, so that one person of the G-dhead (the Father) can be in one place (heaven) while another person of the G-dhead (Yeshua) can be dwelling in a tent of flesh on Earth.

Also, consider all of that in light of a statement which Yeshua made about the true nature and substance of life:

6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:6; NASB)⁴⁵

In other words, the substance and nature of the things of the spirit is separate and distinct from the substance and nature of the things of the flesh. And the line of distinction between them remains intact; they do not intermingle. So Yeshua's body could be one thing (earthly), while His spirit could be another thing entirely (*i.e.*, heavenly); and as such, His spirit would be a completely different thing from His body, though it would dwell inside His body.

All in all then, the idea in Christianity that Yeshua is both G-d and man is not based on the idea that His body itself was G-d, but rather that He is a part of G-d in terms of the one and only way that He can be a part of G-d: in terms of His spirit.

C. What Did Yeshua Think Was The Relationship Between His Teachings And Judaism?

Some might think that the teachings of Yeshua are simply detached from the Old Testament, or perhaps even opposed to the Old Testament. Yeshua Himself, however, thought otherwise. For instance, in His most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, He said this:

17 Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 5:17-19; NASB)⁴⁶

Furthermore, when Yeshua was pressed by a Jewish lawyer as to what the greatest commandment was, the following exchange took place between Yeshua and the lawyer:

36 Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?
37 And he [Yeshua] said to him, You shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first

⁴⁵ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/john/3.htm>

⁴⁶ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/5.htm>

commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets. (Matt. 22:36-40; ESV)⁴⁷

In so saying, Yeshua was, of course, quoting from the Law of Moses, specifically, Deuteronomy 6:5⁴⁸ and Leviticus 19:18.⁴⁹

Yeshua also had this to say about how someone who was well-trained in the Holy Scriptures (a scribe, for example) could take all of the Old Testament writings and combine them with Yeshua's own teachings about the kingdom of heaven, and thereby get the best of both worlds:

⁵² And Jesus said to them, Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old. (Matthew 13:52; NASB)⁵⁰

In summation, He had this to say:

³⁹ You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; (John 5:39; NASB)⁵¹

Throughout His ministry, Yeshua also made a point of teaching in the synagogues, as is illustrated in the following examples from each of the four Gospels (*i.e.*, the four accounts of Yeshua's life and ministry here on earth: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).

From the Gospel of Matthew:

²³ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. (Matthew 4:23; KJV)⁵²

And again, from the Gospel of Matthew:

⁵⁴ And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works? (Matthew 13:54; KJV)⁵³

From the Gospel of Mark:

⁴⁷ <https://biblehub.com/esv/matthew/22.htm>

⁴⁸ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/deuteronomy/6.htm>

⁴⁹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/leviticus/19.htm>

⁵⁰ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/13.htm>

⁵¹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/john/5.htm>

⁵² <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/4.htm>

⁵³ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/13.htm>

1 And he entered again into the synagogue; (Mark 3:1; KJV)⁵⁴

From the Gospel of John:

59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. (John 6:59; KJV)⁵⁵

From the Gospel of Luke:

16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. 17 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. (Luke 4:16-17a; NASB)⁵⁶

Notice that the Apostle Luke says that Jesus going to the synagogue is something which was His custom.

It is also worth noting (as was mentioned in the main text of this book) something which happened during an event known as the Transfiguration, an event in which we considered a different point (the concept of overshadowing) in the text of this book. It was a time when Yeshua took His three closest apostles up on a mountain; and on that occasion, in a cloud of shining light, Yeshua revealed to them His true glory while He was accompanied by Moses and Elijah:

1 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. (Matthew 17:1-3; NIV)⁵⁷

In other words, far from teaching things which are designed to do away with or contradict the Law of Moses and the prophets, Yeshua instead taught things which are designed to be added onto the words of Moses and the prophets, and which are to be combined with them into one.

1. Yeshua Used The Holy Scriptures To Rebuke Satan

At the start of Yeshua's ministry, He was first baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist (Matt. 3:13-17).⁵⁸ The Scriptures then say that Yeshua was led by the Spirit of G-d out into the wilderness, where He fasted and prayed for 40 days, just as Moses had. At the end of that time, He was in His weakest state. And that, of course, is when Satan made a full-scale effort to tempt Yeshua, and to get Him to sin, in order to destroy G-d's plan. Here is the account of that:

⁵⁴ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/mark/3.htm>

⁵⁵ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/6.htm>

⁵⁶ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/luke/4.htm>

⁵⁷ <https://biblehub.com/niv/matthew/17.htm>

⁵⁸ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/3.htm>

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of G-d, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF G-D.'"

5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of G-d, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU'; and 'ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"

7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR G-D TO THE TEST.'"

8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; 9 and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR G-D, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" 11 Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and *began* to minister to Him. (Matt. 4:1-11; NASB)⁵⁹

⁵⁹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/3.htm>

The three things which Yeshua said to the devil to rebuke him are all taken straight from the Holy Scriptures, specifically, from the Book of Deuteronomy in the Law of Moses: Deuteronomy 8:3,⁶⁰ Deuteronomy 6:16,⁶¹ and Deuteronomy 6:13-14.⁶² Yeshua could have chosen to rebuke Satan in other ways, and with something which He could have made up on His own, right there on the spot. But He chose not to. Instead, as the Apostle Matthew here records in his Gospel, Yeshua relied upon the authority of the Holy Scriptures to rebuke Satan, thereby showing us the very great reverence for the Holy Scriptures generally, and for the Law of Moses specifically, which Yeshua had.

D. What Did The Apostles Think Was The Relationship Between The Teachings Of Yeshua And Judaism?

1. The Relationship Which The New Testament Establishes Between The Messiah And The Gentiles

a. In The New Testament, The Apostles Originally Would Not Preach About Yeshua To The Gentiles

The New Testament starts out with the four Gospels (by the Apostles Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). Immediately following that is a book commonly known as the Book of Acts; more fully, it is the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. It states what Yeshua's Apostles did to preach and spread the teachings of Yeshua in the decades immediately following His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. It may be thought of as being analogous to the two books of Chronicles (I Chronicles and II Chronicles) in the Holy Scriptures.

From the Book of Acts we learn some interesting things. First of all, for the first seven years of Christianity, Christianity wasn't even called Christianity (Acts 11:26b).⁶³ It was simply called the Way; and followers of Jesus weren't even called Christians, for they were simply called disciples of the Lord or Followers of the Way.⁶⁴ (Note: a disciple is a student who follows the teachings of someone.⁶⁵)

During those first seven years, there was no such thing as a gentile Christian; instead, all Christians up to that point were Jews (either from birth, or by conversion to Judaism), and these Jews had become believers that Yeshua is the Messiah. We see in Chapter 10 of the Book of Acts that the preaching of the Gospel to gentiles was first done by the Apostle Peter, following a sign which he received from G-d that it would be permissible to do so. In the very next chapter, Chapter 11, we see that when the other apostles and elders in Jerusalem heard of this, they were astounded, and they called upon Peter to justify such a radical thing as the preaching of the Gospel to the gentiles; when he convinced them that G-d was now permitting such a thing, they were pleasantly

⁶⁰ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/deuteronomy/8.htm>

⁶¹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/deuteronomy/6.htm>

⁶² <https://biblehub.com/nasb/deuteronomy/6.htm>

⁶³ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/11.htm>

⁶⁴ <https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Christians-Are-Called-Followers-Of-The-Way>

⁶⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disciple>

surprised (Acts 11:1-18).

The Book of Acts also records what happened later on, at a council in Jerusalem:

[12](#) The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders G-d had done among the Gentiles through them. [13](#) When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me. [14](#) Simon has described to us how G-d first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. [15](#) The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

[16](#) “ ‘After this I will return and rebuild

David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will

rebuild,

and I will restore it,

[17](#) that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the

Gentiles who bear my name,

says the Lord, who does these things’ —

[18](#) things known from long ago. (Acts 15:12-18; NIV)⁶⁶

Here the Apostle James was quoting from the Book of Amos in the Holy Scriptures: Amos 9:11-12.⁶⁷

b. The Prophecy At Yeshua’s Presentation

Just after Yeshua was born, when the time came for His presentation to the Lord (according to the Law of Moses), a holy man of G-d in the Temple prophesied that Yeshua would bring G-d’s light to the whole world:

[21](#) And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was *then* called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

[22](#) And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord [23](#) (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “EVERY *firstborn* MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD”), [24](#) and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, “A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS.”

[25](#) And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. [26](#) And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ [Messiah]. [27](#) And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, [28](#) then he took Him into his arms, and blessed G-d, and said,

⁶⁶ <https://biblehub.com/niv/acts/15.htm>

⁶⁷ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/amos/9.htm>

[29](#) “Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace,
According to Your word;

[30](#) For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

[31](#) Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

[32](#) A Light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory
of Your people Israel.” (Luke 2:21-32;

NASB)⁶⁸

2. The Relationship Which The Holy Scriptures Establish Between The Messiah And The Gentiles

As it turns out, this prophecy by Simeon over the infant Yeshua is entirely consistent with what the Prophet Isaiah had said hundreds of years earlier about the role which Israel and the future Messiah would have in bringing about the knowledge and justice of G-d to the gentiles:

[6](#) “I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, (Isaiah 42:6; NASB)⁶⁹

And again,

[6](#) He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations

So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:6;
NASB)⁷⁰

3. The Apostle Paul And His Relationship With Yeshua

a. The Conversion Of The Apostle Paul (Saul Of Tarsus)

In the Book of Acts we are introduced to a man named Saul of Tarsus. He was a member of the Pharisees, the ruling party of the Sanhedrin at the time of Jesus. He was a young man during the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry. He had hated Jesus then, and after Jesus’ earthly ministry, he hated Christians. As the Bible says,

[1](#) Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, [2](#) and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:1-2; NASB)⁷¹

⁶⁸ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/luke/2.htm>

⁶⁹ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/isaiah/42.htm>

⁷⁰ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/isaiah/49.htm>

⁷¹ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/9.htm>

In fact, the Book of Acts records that while the Sanhedrin was making the first known martyr for Jesus (a man named Stephen) by stoning him to death, Saul looked on with approval and held the cloaks of those who were stoning him. (Acts 7:1-8:3)⁷²

While on the road to Damascus, however, he had an encounter which changed his life. (Acts 9:1-19)⁷³ He was struck off his horse by a brilliant light. A voice from the light called out to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” Saul, in a daze, asked who it was who was speaking to him. The reply came: “I am Jesus, whom you persecute.” The men in his entourage could hear the voice, but they saw nothing out of the ordinary. Paul was struck blind on the spot, and he was given instructions to go into Damascus and await further instructions there. After three days a man named Ananias was told by the Lord to go to where he could find Saul. Ananias resisted at first:

13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” 15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; (Acts 9:13-15; NASB)⁷⁴

So Ananias went to see Saul, and Saul received his sight back. Saul received baptism, and soon he grew strong in the faith and bold in proclaiming the message that Yeshua is in fact the Messiah, much to the astonishment of those who had known him, and who also knew that he had come to Damascus to persecute believers in Yeshua. (Acts 9:17-22)⁷⁵ For some time Saul continued to meet skepticism among the new believers that he, of all people, could possibly now be one of them. (Acts 9:26-28)⁷⁶ Yet he continued to grow in the faith, and his name was soon changed to Paul (Acts 13:9),⁷⁷ which comes from the Latin word *paulus*, meaning “little”, “small”, or “humble”.^{78, 79}

b. The Preaching Of Paul About Yeshua

Throughout the Book of Acts we see that the Apostle Paul, following his conversion, had a habit of going first to the synagogue in the cities that he visited in order to preach about Yeshua. For instance, when he and his companions arrived in Salamis, he first went to the synagogue to preach about Yeshua there. (Acts 13:5)⁸⁰

⁷² <http://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/7.htm> ; see also, <http://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/8.htm>

⁷³ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/9.htm>

⁷⁴ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/9.htm>

⁷⁵ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/9.htm>

⁷⁶ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/9.htm>

⁷⁷ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/13.htm>

⁷⁸ <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/paulus>

⁷⁹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_\(given_name\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_(given_name))

⁸⁰ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/13.htm>

Later on, in Antioch, we again find the Apostle Paul preaching about Yeshua in the synagogue, and in fact, even at the invitation of the rabbi there; Paul then started preaching about Yeshua to the gentiles in that town only when some of the Jews there opposed his preaching and made it impossible for him to continue preaching in the synagogue, despite the fact that many members of the congregation were eager to hear his words. (Acts 13:14-52)⁸¹ Likewise, when Paul arrived in Iconium, he again went to the synagogue to preach, and before too long both Jews and Greeks in that town became believers in Yeshua. (Acts 14:1)⁸²

Perhaps the case that most clearly illustrates the point that the Apostle Paul focused his missionary efforts on his fellow Jews is found in the statements about his visit to the Greek town of Thessalonica. This is what the Book of Acts (which was written by the Apostle Luke) has to say about that visit:

1 Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and giving evidence that the Christ [Messiah] had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." 4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the G-d-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women. (Acts 17:1-4; NASB)⁸³ [Note: "Christ" is the English version of the Greek word *christos*, meaning "the anointed one",⁸⁴ which is likewise the very same meaning of the Hebrew word *Moshiach* (in English: "Messiah").]⁸⁵

Notice that in verse two it says that the Apostle Paul went to the synagogue "according to Paul's custom". Later on in the Book of Acts we again see that when the Apostle Paul arrived in the Greek town of Berea, the first thing he did was to go preach in the synagogue, and because of this, many Jews became believers in Yeshua, as did some of the Greeks in that town. (Acts 17:10-12)⁸⁶ We see him doing the same thing when he arrived in Athens (Acts 17:16-17),⁸⁷ and in the Greek town of Corinth, where the Bible says he preached about Yeshua every Sabbath day while he was there. (Acts 18:1-5)⁸⁸

All in all, the Apostle Paul summed up his preaching this way in his epistle (*i.e.*, a letter of correspondence) known as the Book of Romans (which was written to the new believers, Jew and gentile alike, in Rome),

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of G-d unto

⁸¹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/13.htm>

⁸² <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/14.htm>

⁸³ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/17.htm>

⁸⁴ <https://biblehub.com/greek/5547.htm>

⁸⁵ <https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus>

⁸⁶ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/17.htm>

⁸⁷ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/17.htm>

⁸⁸ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/18.htm>

salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (Romans 1:16; KJV)⁸⁹ (Note: “to the Greek” meaning to the gentiles generally).

The Apostle Paul also had this to say:

1 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? **2** Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of G-d. (Romans 3:1-2; NIV)⁹⁰

i. The Apostle Paul's View Of Branches And The Vine

To the Apostle Paul, Judaism was the true vine that produced the fruits of G-d's love: grace, mercy, justice, and even salvation itself. Those Jews who had rejected Yeshua, he contended, were branches that were being cut off from the true vine because of their unbelief, while gentiles who had come to accept Yeshua as Lord and Messiah were branches from a wild vine who were now being grafted into the true vine. Paul also reflected on how the rejection of Yeshua by Paul's own people, the Jews, not only created the possibility of salvation to the entire remainder of the world (because of Yeshua's atoning death by crucifixion, which came about when He was rejected by His own people), but also how the promulgation of the good news about Yeshua might somehow bring about a recognition among the Jews that they had been wrong originally, and might eventually cause the Jews to turn to Yeshua in the end, notwithstanding their initial rejection of Him.

He likewise admonished gentile believers to be humble about their new- found position on the true vine. He told them not to disrespect those Jews who have rejected Yeshua as the Messiah, and he reminds them that it is the root of the true vine (Judaism) which supports their own new position on the true vine, and that it is not instead their new position on the true vine which somehow supposedly could be the support for the root (Judaism). As he said,

11 Again I ask: Did they [his own people, the Jews] stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. **12** But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!

13 I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry **14** in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. **15** For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? **16** If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, **18** do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports

⁸⁹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/romans/1.htm>

⁹⁰ <https://biblehub.com/niv/romans/3.htm>

you. [19](#) You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in.” [20](#) Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. [21](#) For if G-d did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

[22](#) Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of G-d: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. [23](#) And if they [the Jews] do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for G-d is able to graft them in again. [24](#) After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

[25](#) I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, [26](#) and in this way all Israel will be saved. (Romans 11:11-26a; NIV)⁹¹

And this follows from what Paul had just said in the previous chapter:

[19](#) Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, “I will make you envious by those who are not a nation;
I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.”

[20](#) And Isaiah boldly says,
“I was found by those who did not seek me;
I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”

[21](#) But concerning Israel he says,
“All day long I have held out my hands
to a disobedient and obstinate people.” (Rom 10:19-21; NIV)⁹²

Note: the verses from Moses and Isaiah which the Apostle Paul quoted, as noted above, are from Deuteronomy 32:21b,⁹³ Isaiah 65:1a,⁹⁴ and Isaiah 65:2a.⁹⁵

c. The Apostle Paul’s Hall Of Fame

In the Book of Hebrews, a letter which Paul wrote specifically to his fellow Messianic (Christian) Jews, he devoted a substantial portion of the letter to reminding Messianic Jews that they have a long history of heroes of the faith to whom to look for inspiration. He reminds them of the purity of the faith of Adam (initially, at least), as well as the g-dly lives of Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac,

⁹¹ <http://biblehub.com/niv/romans/11.htm>

⁹² <https://biblehub.com/niv/romans/10.htm>

⁹³ <https://biblehub.com/niv/deuteronomy/32.htm>

⁹⁴ <https://biblehub.com/niv/isaiah/65.htm>

⁹⁵ <https://biblehub.com/niv/isaiah/65.htm>

Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Samson, David, Samuel, and some lesser-known figures as well (Barak and Jephthah), and he urged his readers to take courage from them and to follow their example. (Hebrews 11:1-40)⁹⁶

One thing in particular stands out from this statement by Paul: It is obvious that the Apostle Paul did not consider the faith of these heroes of the Holy Scriptures to be a different faith from a belief in Yeshua. Rather, Paul considered these heroes to be heroes of the very same faith which he himself was preaching (Christianity). That's not to say that these heroes actually knew about Yeshua specifically, of course, other than that generally speaking, they knew that someone who would be the Messiah would be coming someday. It's just that although they themselves could not know the full, detailed meaning of even their own prophetic utterances (as we can today), they were nonetheless looking ahead to the promise of what the Lord G-d has in store for His children. As the Apostle Paul said of them,

13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. (Heb. 11:13; NIV)⁹⁷

So the Apostle Paul considered Judaism and Christianity to be all one faith, not two separate faiths. In fact, Paul did not even bother to include any of the recent martyrs for Yeshua in his list, such as Stephen, who, as we saw above, was someone whose execution for preaching about Yeshua was something which Paul (Saul) himself had personally witnessed and approved of before becoming a believer in Yeshua. (Acts 7:57-60)⁹⁸

4. Are Christians Really Jews?

If all of this is really true, if the message about Yeshua really is a message about Judaism, one that is intended principally for Jews, and if gentiles who become believers in Yeshua are grafted into the vine of the faith in the one, true G-d---the G-d of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob---then are Christians really Jews? Here again we can find an answer from the Apostle Paul. In writing about the relationship which the new gentile believers in Yeshua had with G-d, he said this:

15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:15; NASB)⁹⁹

And again, he says,

6 Because you are sons, G-d has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Galatians 4:6; NASB)¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/hebrews/11.htm>

⁹⁷ <https://biblehub.com/niv/hebrews/11.htm>

⁹⁸ <https://biblehub.com/niv/acts/7.htm>

⁹⁹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/romans/8.htm>

¹⁰⁰ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/galatians/4.htm>

The word “Abba” in the verses above is of Aramaic origin;^{101, 102} it is a term of endearment meaning “daddy”.¹⁰³ So what the Apostle Paul was saying here is that even gentiles who come to believe in Yeshua can have the same close, personal relationship with G-d that a small child can have with the child’s own father. So in other words, yes, Christians (even gentile Christians) really are Jews, for gentile Christians have been successfully grafted into the vine of the faith in the one, true G-d---the G-d of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob---through the spirit of adoption.

5. A Summary Of The View Of The Apostles Concerning Yeshua And Judaism

From all of this we can see that the Apostles of Yeshua initially did not even preach about Yeshua to the gentiles at all, and felt that when the Apostle Peter started to do so, he had to give ample justification for doing so. Then, once it became known that the Lord G-d would permit preaching about Yeshua to the gentiles, doing so took second place to preaching about Yeshua to the Jews first. From this we can see that the early Apostles believed that the message that Yeshua is the Messiah is principally a message about Judaism, and that it is principally for Jews, while all others (*i.e.*, the gentiles) can rejoice in knowing that they are now also invited to come to know the One True G-d through His Son.

E. According To Christians, What Do The Elders In Heaven Think Is The Relationship Between Yeshua And Judaism?

In the final book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation (also known as the Apocalypse), the Apostle John was lifted up into heaven to see many things pertaining to the end of days. (Note: the Book of Revelation is filled with prophetic visions, many of which are hard to understand, just as certain sections of the Book of Ezekiel are in the Holy Scriptures.)

As it turns out, in the Book of Revelation the Apostle John says that at one point, the following event took place:

a. Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

b. Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, (Rev. 5:5-6a; NIV)¹⁰⁴

Traditionally, the symbol of the Tribe of Judah has been the lion.^{105, 106} So here we see Yeshua being identified by an elder in heaven as being the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and the Root of David,

¹⁰¹ <https://biblehub.com/lexicon/romans/8-15.htm>

¹⁰² <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/2.htm>

¹⁰³ <https://biblehub.com/greek/5.htm>

¹⁰⁴ <http://biblehub.com/niv/revelation/5.htm>

¹⁰⁵ <https://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/23496/what-are-the-symbols-of-the-12-tribes>

¹⁰⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion_of_Judah

two very Jewish designations for Yeshua. Yet then, when the Apostle John looks, he sees a lamb instead of a lion. For Yeshua, you see, is both. He is the lion who vindicates us and protects us, and yet He is also the lamb without spot or blemish, like the Passover lamb, who was slain for us, and by whose blood we are saved. So as can be seen in the New Testament, the very elders of heaven themselves refer to Yeshua in Jewish ways.

F. What Do Christians Today Think Is The Relationship Between Christianity And Judaism?

The reader will no doubt have noticed that I have spent considerable time establishing that from the perspective of the New Testament itself, Judaism and Christianity are not two different religions, but rather, that Christianity is that form of Judaism which teaches that Yeshua is the Moshiah (the Messiah),¹⁰⁷ whereas conventional Judaism teaches that He is not. The question which may arise in the minds of those who are not familiar with Christian culture then, is whether most Christians likewise feel the same way as I do.

The answer to that is, “No.” And this may be puzzling, but this answer is based on one simple fact: Most Christians spend virtually no time at all thinking about this issue, one way or the other. And the reason for that, in turn, is based on yet another simple fact: most Christians spend virtually no time at all reading the Bible.

Of course, with respect to Scripture readings, the same holds true for most Jewish households, which is a sad for both Christians and Jews; with respect to Christians specifically, as we can see from the above series of verses from the New Testament, if Christians did read the Bible on a regular basis, they would no doubt adopt the quite-obvious conclusion to be drawn from all those verses: that Christianity is a form of Judaism rather than a separate religion from Judaism, and that Christians really are Jews.

Nonetheless, even though most Christians do not recognize this (because their ignorance of the Word of G-d makes them oblivious to this), it is the case that there is a substantial minority of Christians (and in the Bible Belt specifically, probably even a majority of Christians) who do recognize and accept the idea that Christianity is a form of Judaism. This is most often found among evangelical Christians (*i.e.*, those who make a point of sharing the message about Yeshua with non-Christians, Jew or gentile) because evangelical Christians have a much, much greater tendency to read and study the Bible than non-evangelical Christians do. And so they generally tend to know quite a bit more about the Bible than their non-evangelical counterparts do. And it is this knowledge of what the Bible actually says which allows them to see that Christianity is a form of Judaism.

In summation then, even though the view that Christianity is a form of Judaism (rather than a separate religion from Judaism) is not commonly found among a majority of Christians, this is simply because most Christians spend little time actually studying the Bible.

¹⁰⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messiah_in_Judaism

G. Is It Even Possible For Yeshua To Be The Messiah If He Was Rejected By His Own People?

A Jewish fellow once asked me, “But how can Jesus be the Messiah if he was rejected by our own people?” He has a good point. Yeshua Himself said that the elders of His day spoke from the seat of Moses, and that therefore everyone should pay close attention to what they say (but just not follow their hypocritical example of not even following the Law themselves).¹⁰⁸ And since the Messiah is one who is sent to the Jewish people, one might think at first glance that of course He would have to be accepted by the elders. But in so saying, are we assuming too much here? Consider what the Holy Scriptures themselves have to say about the matter:

- 1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?
- 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.
- 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 53:1-3; KJV)¹⁰⁹

So here we find that among G-d’s own people themselves, the Messiah, when He shall come, shall have no beauty that anyone should desire him, that He shall be despised and rejected, that even His own people would hide their faces from Him, and that His own people would esteem Him not. The bottom line then, is this: at the beginning of this section we looked at the question of how it is that someone could be the Messiah if His own people rejected Him. But then, here again, we find yet another question that is stated precisely backwards. For the real question is not how it is that someone could be the Messiah if His own people *did* reject Him, but rather, how it is that someone could be the Messiah if His own people *did not* reject him. For in order to fulfill what the Holy Scriptures say of Him, how can He truly be the Messiah unless, in the words of the Prophet Isaiah, He is considered undesirable, despised, rejected, someone from whom His own people will hide their faces, someone whom His own people would not esteem?

Yet even so, although the Sanhedrin as a whole did not accept Yeshua (as the Scriptures themselves had foretold), it is the case nonetheless that there were at least a few among the Jewish rulers who came to believe in Yeshua, but kept quiet about it:

- 42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing *Him*, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of G-d. (John 12:42-43; NASB)¹¹⁰

One of them, a man named Nicodemus, even came to see Yeshua at night, apparently to

¹⁰⁸ Matt 23:1-7; <https://biblehub.com/esv/matthew/23.htm>

¹⁰⁹ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/isaiah/53.htm>

¹¹⁰ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/john/12.htm>

keep his belief in Yeshua a secret. (John 3:1-21)¹¹¹

1. Yeshua Demonstrated His Mastery Of The Holy Scriptures And The Things Of G-d Over That Of The Elders

The idea that the elders of Yeshua's day rejected Him must also be taken in context, in any event. That is to say, the Gospels record many instances in which the elders of Yeshua's day came to Him with questions about doctrinal matters in an attempt to trip Him up and embarrass Him publicly. In fact, it got to the point that as you read the Bible, it becomes apparent that the Pharisees and Sadducees had entered into a contest of sorts among themselves to see which one of their two groups could claim credit for having finally stumped Yeshua with one of their questions. But on each occasion He either gave them answers which were so profound, or returned their questions with questions which were so much more difficult for them to answer than their own questions,¹¹² that eventually they got sick and tired of being embarrassed by Him in front of all the people, and gave up.

For example, a pressing issue in Yeshua's day was the question of whether it would violate the Law of Moses to pay the temple tax to the Romans. The Pharisees came to Him and asked Him about this, apparently thinking that if He said yes, that it would be lawful to pay to Rome the temple tax, then the most devout Jews would then reject Him, but that if He said no, they could tell this to the Roman authorities, who might deem Him and His apostles to be a band of rebels, especially if the very large number of persons who were admirers of Yeshua suddenly stopped paying the tax in response to His statement; and the Romans might then have had Yeshua and his apostles arrested, something which would please the religious elders, who were quite jealous of His popularity.

However, in response to the Pharisees' question, Yeshua asked them whose image and inscription was on the coin that was used to pay the temple tax; and when they replied that it was Caesar's, He said,

Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to G-d the things that are G-d's. (Matt. 22:15-22; NASB)¹¹³

The Pharisees' plans were utterly foiled by this simple logic, and they were unsuccessful in their attempt to trap Yeshua in this way.

On another occasion, the elders confronted Yeshua with a woman who had been caught in adultery. They asked Him if she should be stoned to death, as the Law of Moses called for, or if she should be shown mercy, which is what He had been preaching all along, and which the Holy Scriptures also call for--
-in certain instances, at least:

6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of G-d rather than

¹¹¹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/john/3.htm>

¹¹² See, for example, Luke 20:1-8: <https://biblehub.com/nasb/luke/20.htm>

¹¹³ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/22.htm>

burnt offerings. (Hosea 6:6; NIV)¹¹⁴

They knew that if He said that she should be shown mercy, they could claim that He stood against the Law of Moses, but that if He said she should be stoned to death, He would undermine His own credibility among those who respected and followed Him because of His teachings on mercy.

Yeshua understood that they were just being hypocrites about the whole thing, however, and that the reason they had come to Him to pass judgment on this woman was not based on any respect for the Law of Moses, but was based instead only on a desire to trip Him up. For a long moment He said nothing at all, and when the elders finally insisted that He give them an answer, He gave one of His most famous replies:

He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. (John 8:7b; KJV)¹¹⁵

The Bible says that one by one, starting with the eldest among them, the elders then turned away, leaving the woman alone with Yeshua, at which point the following exchange took place:

[10](#) When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? [11](#) She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. (John 8:10-11; KJV)¹¹⁶

Then came the day when Yeshua turned the tables on the religious rulers, and went on offense. The Bible records this as follows:

[41](#) Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, [42](#) saying, “What do you think about the Christ [Messiah]? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” [43](#) He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, [44](#) “The Lord [the Lord G-d] said to my Lord [the Messiah], “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet””? [45](#) If then David calls him [the Messiah] Lord, how is he his son?” [46](#) And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions. (Matt. 22:41- 45; ESV)¹¹⁷

Here, of course, Yeshua did not mean that Messiah could not be David’s son in any sense whatsoever, but rather that if David called him Lord, then Messiah would have to be something more than that as well, *i.e.*, more than simply being David’s son.

¹¹⁴ <https://biblehub.com/niv/hosea/6.htm>

¹¹⁵ The entire account is given in John 8:1-11: <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/8.htm>

¹¹⁶ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/8.htm>

¹¹⁷ <https://biblehub.com/esv/matthew/22.htm>

a. How Jewish Is The Idea That There Is Life After Death?

One of the ways that Yeshua demonstrated His mastery of the things of G-d over that of the elders was in His discussion of the concept of life after death. The belief among Jews as to whether there is life after death has varied over the years, and some today might reject the idea that Yeshua can be the Messiah on the grounds that He taught about an afterlife, which some consider to be contrary to Judaism.

At the time of Yeshua, the ruling party of the Sanhedrin was a group known as the Pharisees, and they did believe in life after death. They also believed in angels and in miracles, and they accepted as part of the Holy Scriptures all of those books outside of the Law of Moses itself (the first five books of the Bible; the Pentateuch) which today (along with the Law of Moses) form the what is commonly called the Old Testament.

By contrast, members of the main minority party at the time, the Sadducees, did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, nor did they believe in angels or in miracles, neither did they accept any books except the Law of Moses as being part of the Holy Scriptures. With that in mind then, let us consider whether there is anything in Scripture itself which says whether there is life after death, or from which one may reasonably infer the correct answer one way or the other in order to resolve this dispute between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

On one of the occasions when the elders of Yeshua's day tried to trip Him up with their one of their questions (in fact, on the same day that Yeshua gave His famous "render to Caesar" answer to the Pharisees), the following scene took place:

[23](#) On that day *some* Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him, [24](#) asking, "Teacher, Moses said, 'IF A MAN DIES HAVING NO CHILDREN, HIS BROTHER AS NEXT OF KIN SHALL MARRY HIS WIFE, AND RAISE UP CHILDREN FOR HIS BROTHER.' [25](#)
"Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother; [26](#) so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. [27](#) "Last of all, the woman died. [28](#) "In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had *married* her." [29](#) But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of G-d. [30](#) "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. [31](#) "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by G-d: [32](#) '[HaShem] THE G-D OF ABRAHAM, AND THE G-D OF ISAAC, AND THE G-D OF JACOB'? He is not the G-d of the dead but of the living." [33](#) When the crowds heard *this*, they were astonished at His teaching. (Matt. 22:23-23; NASB)¹¹⁸

Now, for the longest time, I could not figure out the meaning of this passage. For years, in

¹¹⁸ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/22.htm>

fact, this had me puzzled, and I wrestled with it. Then one day I figured it out: If there were no life after death, the Most High G-d could not have said to Moses, “[HaShem] the G-d of Abraham, and the G-d of Isaac, and the G-d of Jacob.” Instead, He would have to have said, “I was the G-d of Abraham, and the G-d of Isaac, and the G-d of Jacob.” For if there were no afterlife, then when G-d spoke to Moses, the relationship of those three persons to G-d could only be thought of in the past tense (*i.e.*, I was the G-d of Abraham ...), and could not be thought of in the present tense (*i.e.*, [HaShem] the G-d of Abraham ...).

In fact, when you think about it, you realize that if there were no afterlife---*i.e.* if Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not presently in existence at least somewhere (presumably in heaven) at the time when G-d spoke to Moses-

--then the Most High Himself would have to have been taking His own Name in vain when He said to Moses, “[HaShem] the G-d of Abraham ...”; for then He would be using His Name in a sentence in which it could not possibly be the truth that He had, at that very moment when He was speaking to Moses, a present-tense relationship with those three people instead of a past-tense relationship with them. And so, astonishingly enough, this truly would have to have been an instance in which the Most High would have been taking His own Name in vain by saying, “[HaShem] the G-d of Abraham ...”

Yeshua’s insight into this matter demonstrates about as profound an understanding of the Holy Scriptures and the nature of G-d as one can have. No wonder the people were astonished at Yeshua’s teaching. For His teaching settled with Scripture, and by HaShem itself, a question which the Sadducees and Pharisees had argued about endlessly among themselves, yet without any clear resolution.

From the Holy Scriptures then, as Yeshua pointed out, we can infer that it is perfectly permissible for one who is Jewish to believe in life after death, and in fact, it is even proper to do so. And furthermore, it is perfectly amazing to learn this point from someone who was a carpenter, and the son of a carpenter, someone from a dirt-floor, mud-hut, tiny village far from Jerusalem, someone who had never spent even a single moment as a student of one of the many prestigious scholars within the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

All of this is very important to keep in mind then, when it comes to considering Yeshua’s rejection by the elders of His day. For even though He was rejected by them (as the Holy Scriptures themselves prophesied would happen), it must be kept in mind as well that He was simply rejected by a group of elders who could not even keep up with Him when it came to a knowledge of the things of G-d and the Holy Scriptures anyway, a group of elders whom Yeshua in fact ran circles around when it came to discussing the Holy Scriptures and the nature of G-d.

H. Is It Even Possible For Yeshua To Be The Messiah If He Is A Suffering Servant Instead Of A Powerful King?

Earlier we looked at the verses from the Book of Isaiah in which the Messiah is identified as

a powerful king (Isaiah 9:6-7).¹¹⁹ How then can anyone be the Messiah if He is executed like a common criminal?

1. The Suffering Servant Foreseen By The Prophet Isaiah

In answer to that, here again we look to the Book of Isaiah. We saw above that in the first three verses of Chapter 53, the Messiah is identified as someone who is rejected, a man of sorrows. That chapter then goes on to say,

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

(Isaiah 53:4-12; KJV)¹²⁰

The parallels to Yeshua's scourging (*i.e.*, whip lashing) at the pillar, followed immediately by His crucifixion, death, and burial, are striking. The Prophet Isaiah, as quoted above, said He openeth not His mouth (verse 7); Roman governor Pontius Pilate, upon questioning Yeshua, was astounded that Yeshua would give no answer to even one charge which was brought against him:

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And Jesus said to him, "*It is as you say.*" **12** And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He did not answer. **13**

¹¹⁹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/isaiah/9.htm>

¹²⁰ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/isaiah/53.htm>

Then Pilate said to Him, “Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?”
14 And He did not answer him with regard to even a *single* charge, so the governor was quite amazed. (Matt. 27:11- 14; NASB)¹²¹

The Apostle John also gives this account of that same scene in his Gospel:

9 and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 So Pilate said to Him, “You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?” (John 19:9-10; NASB)¹²²

In fact, this continued when Pilate, in an effort to get the whole affair off of his hands altogether, sent Yeshua over to King Herod Antipas (one of the sons of King Herod the Great):

7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. 9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. (Luke 23:7-19; KJV)¹²³

One might wonder why Yeshua would not speak to defend Himself. The answer may simply be that Yeshua knew that the Father had it in mind to save the Jewish people---and indeed, the people of the whole world---by making Yeshua a sacrifice for their sins. And so Yeshua submitted Himself to G-d's will by declining to give a defense, even in the face of death.

He was, as Isaiah had prophesied, taken from prison¹²⁴ (Isaiah 53:8) and from being condemned to death (verses 8-9).¹²⁵ He was put to death among thieves,¹²⁶ echoing the prophecy that He would make His grave with the wicked (verse 9), and He was buried in the tomb of a rich man (in fact, a member of the Sanhedrin, the governing Jewish council at the time),¹²⁷ echoing the prophecy that He would make His grave with the rich (verse 9). As it turns out, the death of the Moshiach (Messiah) is also prophesied in the Book of Daniel, which says that Moshiach will be “cut off” (Dan. 9:26).¹²⁸ The Hebrew word there which is translated “cut off” is *yikkareth*, from *kareth* (pronunciation: <https://www.howtopronounce.com/karath>); it means “cut off”, or “kill”.¹²⁹

¹²¹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/27.htm>

¹²² <https://biblehub.com/nasb/john/19.htm>

¹²³ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/luke/23.htm>

¹²⁴ Mark 15:1; <https://biblehub.com/kjv/mark/15.htm>

¹²⁵ Mark 15:15; <https://biblehub.com/kjv/mark/15.htm>

¹²⁶ Mark 15:27-28; <https://biblehub.com/kjv/mark/15.htm>

¹²⁷ Mark 15:42-46; <https://biblehub.com/nasb/mark/15.htm>

¹²⁸ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/daniel/9.htm>

¹²⁹ <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3772.htm>

2. The Suffering Servant Foreseen By King David

No less striking is the comparison which may be found between the Messianic prophecies of Psalm 22 with the crucifixion of Yeshua.^{130, 131} Specifically, compare Psalm 22 with the detailed description of Yeshua's crucifixion and death in the Gospels of Matthew¹³² and John.¹³³ Here are pertinent excerpts from Psalm 22:

My G-d, my G-d, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou* so far from helping me, *and from* the words of my roaring? (Psalm 22:1b; KJV)¹³⁴

All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. (Psalm 22:7-8; KJV)¹³⁵

Many bulls have compassed me: strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me *with* their mouths, *as* a ravening and a roaring lion. (Psalm 22:12-13; KJV)¹³⁶

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. (Psalm 22:14; KJV)¹³⁷

My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. (Psalm 22:15; KJV)¹³⁸

For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. (Psalm 22:16; KJV)¹³⁹

I may tell all my bones: they look *and* stare upon me. (Psalm 22:17; KJV)¹⁴⁰

They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. (Psalm

¹³⁰ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/22.htm>

¹³¹ Note: the Roman Catholic versions of the Bible have all 150 Psalms which can be found in the Protestant and Jewish versions of Scripture, though for some reason, the Catholic versions use a different numbering system for some of the Psalms, including Psalm 22, which is given in the Catholic versions as Psalm 23. In this writing itself, this psalm shall be referred to as Psalm 22; likewise please note that the Bible website to which I frequently direct the reader, <http://biblehub.com>, also uses the Protestant and Jewish numbering system for the Psalms even when it is giving the Roman Catholic Douay-Rheims version of the Bible.

¹³² Matt. 27:27-54; <http://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/27.htm>

¹³³ John 19:17-37; <http://biblehub.com/kjv/john/19.htm>

¹³⁴ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/22.htm>

¹³⁵ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/22.htm>

¹³⁶ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/22.htm>

¹³⁷ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/22.htm>

¹³⁸ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/22.htm>

¹³⁹ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/22.htm>

¹⁴⁰ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/22.htm>

22:18; KJV)¹⁴¹

With that in mind, compare what we have just seen from Psalm 22 to what the Apostle Matthew said about certain aspects of Yeshua's trial and crucifixion:

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. 28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. 29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! 30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. 31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify *him*. (Matt. 27:27-31; KJV)¹⁴²

Matthew goes on to say:

35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. 36 And sitting down they watched him there; 37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. (Matt. 27:35-37; KJV)¹⁴³

Matthew then adds:

39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, 40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of G-d, come down from the cross. 41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. 43 He trusted in G-d; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of G-d. (Matt. 27:39-43; KJV)¹⁴⁴

The Apostle John likewise had this to say:

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. 24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. (John 19:23-24; KJV)¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/22.htm>

¹⁴² <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/27.htm>

¹⁴³ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/27.htm>

¹⁴⁴ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/27.htm>

¹⁴⁵ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/19.htm>

John goes on to say:

28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. (John 19:28; KJV)¹⁴⁶

John further added:

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. 32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. 35 And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. 36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. 37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. (John 19:31-37; KJV)¹⁴⁷ [Note: the prophecy that not one of His bones would be broken is found in Psalm 34:20;¹⁴⁸ and the prophecy that the people would look on the one whom they had pierced is found in Zechariah 12:10.¹⁴⁹]

Significantly, this reference to blood and water flowing out of Yeshua when the soldier pierced His side is consistent with the idea that, as King David had said of Messiah,

My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me. (Psalm 22:14b; NASB)¹⁵⁰

Some say that the blood and water flowing forth indicates that Yeshua's heart literally tore open within Him. A discussion of this can be found on various websites, e.g., <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/john/19-34.htm>, <https://cbn.com/article/suffering/physicians-view-crucifixion-jesus-christ>, and <https://www.gotquestions.org/blood-water-Jesus.html>.

In light of all this, it is easy to see how it is that, as we saw above, King David uttered a prophecy of the suffering which Messiah would endure while undergoing G-d's judgment on the cross, "My G-d, my G-d, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1; KJV),¹⁵¹ which Yeshua Himself spoke roughly 1,000 years later:

¹⁴⁶ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/19.htm>

¹⁴⁷ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/19.htm>

¹⁴⁸ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/34.htm>

¹⁴⁹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/zechariah/12.htm>

¹⁵⁰ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/psalms/22.htm>

¹⁵¹ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/22.htm>

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My G-d, my G-d, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46; KJV)¹⁵²

a. Who Was Quoting Whom?

As an interesting side note to that verse, allow me to ask the following question: Was Yeshua really quoting King David when He said, “My G-d, my G-d, why hast thou forsaken me?” Or was it the case instead that King David was quoting Yeshua when he said that exact same thing 1,000 years before Yeshua was even born? Odd as that question may seem, there may nonetheless be something to this which does not immediately meet the eye.

From an earthly perspective, the second person to make a statement is always quoting the first person who made the statement, not the other way around. But from an eternal perspective (*i.e.*, when looked at from G-d’s point of view), can we look at this the same way as from an earthly point of view? Let us consider for a moment the perspective of an eternal G-d about the nature of time itself. On one of the occasions in which Yeshua was involved in a dispute with the elders, the following exchange took place:

56 “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.” 57 So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, [HaShem].” (John 8:56-58; NASB: <http://biblehub.com/nasb/john/8.htm>)

Notice that Yeshua did not say, “... before Abraham was born, I *was*.” That is how each of us would have worded it, if any of us had been alive before Abraham was born. But Yeshua said instead, “... before Abraham was born, [HaShem].”

In other words, He was identifying His relationship to the time before Abraham even came into existence as being something which was true in the *present* tense with respect to Himself: *i.e.*, not that Yeshua *existed* (past tense) before Abraham came into existence, but rather, that Yeshua was, at the very time when He spoke to the elders in the New Testament, *existing* (present tense) before Abraham even existed. And in fact, He was even so bold as to use HaShem itself to make His point on this matter emphatically; and if it were not so, then in fact He would even be taking the name of the Most High in vain by doing so. What is more, if this were not so, He would also appear to be blaspheming, for then He would be equating Himself with the Most High without any apparent identifiable basis for doing so.

At first glance, Yeshua’s statement may seem to state the impossible. For how can anyone be *existing* (present tense) at a time in the past rather than *having existed* at that prior point in time? Well, the reason we are having trouble with this, you see, is because we do not see things from G-d’s perspective of time.

¹⁵² <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/27.htm>

Let me share with you something which may help put this in perspective. I remember one occasion when I was flying over rural, western Arizona. I flew over a railroad track which had a very long freight train on it. To the people who were stopped along the roads while the train was going by, the part of the train which was directly in front of them is something which they were seeing in the present tense. The part which had already gone by was in the past tense. And the part which was yet to come would be in the future tense. But from my perspective up in the plane, I saw all three parts of the train at the same moment in time; and all three parts were in the present tense simultaneously.

This is likewise true from an astronomical perspective. For if you were in a position right now that is located 2,000 light years from Earth and had a sufficiently-powerful telescope, you could look back upon Earth and see a *live* image of the crucifixion and resurrection of Yeshua actually taking place right before your eyes (or, depending on how many light years you were from Earth, a live view of Moses leading the children of Israel through the Red Sea, or anything else, for that matter). And indeed, when one here on Earth looks through a telescope at a galaxy 100 million light years away, one is looking at that galaxy not as it appears right now (and in truth, no one really knows what it does in fact look like right now), but rather, you are looking at that galaxy *as it existed* 100 million years ago. And yet, by appearances, you are in fact looking at an actual, *live* image of it as it *existed* 100 million years ago (or, if you will, “as it is existing” 100 million years ago); for oddly enough, in a peculiar way, that really is what you are doing.

As Albert Einstein neared the end of his life, he wrote about the nature of time and said that the distinction between the past, the present, and the future is really nothing more than a stubbornly persistent illusion.¹⁵³ This seems to be consistent with what we encounter in both science and in Scripture.

Now, getting back to the point of our discussion, another thing to consider is whether a Messianic prophecy is to be considered a statement by the prophet who utters it or a statement by the Messiah. In that respect, consider what the Apostle Peter had to say in the Book of Acts concerning King David’s statement in Psalm 16 about G-d’s Holy One not undergoing bodily corruption. As Peter said,

25 “For David says of Him,
‘I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE;
FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.
26 ‘THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED;
MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE;
27 BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES, NOR
ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.
28 ‘YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE; YOU WILL
MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS
WITH YOUR PRESENCE. (Acts 2:25-28; NASB:
<http://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/2.htm> , quoting Psalm 16:8-11:

¹⁵³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlXvO64yRw4>

<http://biblehub.com/nasb/psalms/16.htm>)

At that point, the Apostle Peter continued, saying,

29 “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that G-D HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT *one* OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER
ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His
flesh SUFFER DECAY. 32 “This Jesus G-d raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. (Acts 2:29-32; NASB: <http://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/2.htm> .

So here we see the Apostle Peter point out that when King David, in a Messianic prophecy, spoke of G-d not abandoning a soul (“my soul”) to Hades (hell) or causing a body to undergo decay, King David was not referring to his own soul or his own body back in King David's time; for as Peter pointed out, King David's body was not resurrected, and was still among them in his tomb.

So as it turns out, this utterance of David, by the prompting of G-d's spirit, consisted of the words of the Messiah concerning G-d's dealings with He Himself personally, *i.e.*, with the soul and body of the Messiah. In other words, these words were not King David's own words about himself personally. But rather, King David was simply speaking the words which Messiah, who would come years later, would in time come to say concerning Himself (perhaps silently, or perhaps aloud). So King David was simply paralleling those words which would actually be, in truth, the utterance of the Messiah instead of David, even though from our earthly perspective, those words had not yet even been spoken at all. By analogy to a yodeler in the Alps, it is as though Yeshua is the yodeler giving out the cry, and yet the words of King David 1,000 years beforehand are in fact the echo of words which are yet to come (from our own earth-bound perspective, that is). That is indeed possible from G-d's perspective of time, though from our own perspective, of course, never.

When we consider whether this really is the case with respect to Psalm 22, let us consider what else that Psalm has to say. Just to give some examples, the one who speaks in that Psalm (King David) talks of all of his bones being out of joint (verse 14), of his hands and feet being pierced (verse 16), and of his enemies casting lots for his garments (verse 18). But did any of this happen to King David? Apparently not, no more so than the reference in Psalm 16 to a body which would not undergo decay could have been referring to the body of King David.

So then, these words in Psalm 22 are words of which King David himself is not the author; that is, these thoughts are not those of King David speaking about himself personally. Rather, this is an utterance inspired by the Holy Spirit (in Hebrew, the *Ruach HaKodesh*: http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Names_of_G-d/names_of_g-d.html). And so the words coming forth here from the mouth of David, like his words in Psalm 16, are instead words expressing the Messiah's own personal thoughts about He Himself, and not the thoughts instead of King David about King David personally.

By this I do not mean that King David was just acting like a recording device and simply saying

certain words which would be said 1,000 years in the future. Nor do I believe that he was acting like a parrot. Rather, I believe that the closest thing which we can envision with respect to this is that the thing which the Holy Spirit was doing to King David was analogous to what took place in the 2010 Leonardo DiCaprio movie *Inception*. In that science fiction movie, DiCaprio played the head of a team of industrial spies who found a way to implant a suggested thought into the mind of a powerful business tycoon, the result of which was that when the idea which DiCaprio's team wanted the tycoon to have did in fact come to mind within the tycoon's own thoughts, the tycoon thought that the idea was an original idea which he himself had come up with.

In like manner, I strongly suspect that if you had asked King David after he wrote Psalm 22 whether he had thought of those words himself, he would have said, "Yes," for that is how he would have felt about them. But since those words contain a Messianic prophecy, we must know that those words were given to him by the Holy Spirit, and that the origin of the words of Psalm 22 lies with Messiah (Yeshua) instead.

So then, with respect to Psalm 22 generally, and with respect to verse 1 specifically ("My G-d, my G-d, why hast thou forsaken me?"), King David is not in fact the author of these words, and these words are not a real reflection of his own, original thoughts. Therefore, when Yeshua said this as He hung on His cross, He was not quoting King David. Rather, 1,000 years before Yeshua was born here on earth, King David, by the power and inspiration of G-d's spirit, was quoting Yeshua, who is the true author of those words.

If all this still seems to be too much for you, consider the alternative: Are we now to believe that when King David spoke in Psalm 16 of not being forced to undergo corruption of his body that he was truly speaking words about he himself and his own body? That is what we would have to believe if we will not accept the idea that in saying the Messianic prophecies of Psalm 16, King David was, by the power of the Spirit of the Most High G-d, truly quoting the One who would actually be the author of those thoughts and speak those words (either out loud, or silently within His own thoughts) in years to come: *i.e.*, Messiah Himself. But as we have already seen, the Apostle Peter refutes that thought---something which one no doubt can see to be true just by the plain and simple logic of the matter concerning Messiah, whether one believes that Yeshua is the one who is the actual Messiah or not---because as the Apostle Peter pointed out, King David's body was still in his tomb 1,000 years after he had died. So King David certainly could not have been referring to his own body.

Look at it this way: Is the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy to be found in a part of the creation (specifically, King David), with the Messiah playing a secondary role (by supposedly quoting King David), or is the fulfillment of a Messianic prophecy to be found in Messiah Himself, with a part of His creation (*i.e.*, King David) playing the secondary role (by quoting Messiah)? Certainly one would expect Messianic prophecy to be fulfilled by Messiah Himself, and not by one of His creations.

The conclusion to be drawn from all this, then, is that in writing Psalm 16, King David was truly quoting Messiah, who was still many years to come in the future, no matter who Messiah might be. And likewise this was true with respect to Psalm 22.

Jesus Himself demonstrated how it is that the Holy Spirit can move seamlessly between one time and another. At one point in His ministry, He went through the town of Nazareth, where He had been raised. The Gospel of Luke says He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath, as was His custom. And when His turn came to read from the Scriptures, He was handed the Book of Isaiah. He unrolled it and read the following passage:

18 The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19; KJV)¹⁵⁴

The Bible says that at that point He handed the scroll back to the attendant and sat down. Such a thing was unheard of, however, for He had not yet finished reading the entire verse. Accordingly, all eyes on the synagogue were upon Him. The Gospel of Luke then continues, as follows:

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. (Luke 4:21; KJV)¹⁵⁵

The implication of all this is that He was telling them the portion of the verse which had just been quoting had been fulfilled in their ears, but not the entire verse, which says:

1 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,
because the Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,

2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
and the day of vengeance of our G-d, (Isaiah 61:1-2; NIV)¹⁵⁶

That final portion of verse 2, which talks about the day of vengeance of our G-d, had not yet been fulfilled, though all the parts before it had been fulfilled already by His earthly ministry. So since Jesus was going to proclaim to them that they had heard the fulfillment of Scripture in their ears, He could not continue reading past the point where He did in fact stop. For as I say, the final portion of that verse had not yet been fulfilled.

That being said, it is worth noting that this passage from Isaiah gives the reader no indication that in the process of giving to Isaiah this prophecy, the Lord was switching from one time frame to another. So let us keep this in mind as we consider the possibility that in Psalm 22, King David is quoting something which Messiah would say, though not for another thousand years to come.

¹⁵⁴ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/luke/4.htm>

¹⁵⁵ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/luke/4.htm>

¹⁵⁶ <https://biblehub.com/niv/isaiah/61.htm>

One thing which might help us understand this better would be to consider one of the writings of the late Christian author C.S. Lewis. In his fantasy series *The Chronicles of Narnia*, two of his characters have emerged from a pool of water into a quiet, peaceful place thick with trees which are scattered among various other pools of water. They find that by using different colored rings they can either leave this new area and return home to London or, if they are in London, they can return to this place in the woods.¹⁵⁷

They also surmise that the other colored rings are useful for doing the same sort of thing in the other pools, although those pools might not lead to and from London, but might lead to other places entirely. And they fancy that by using the various different rings and pools, they can pretty much come and go as they please between different places, places which are not necessarily linked either geographically or chronologically. One of these other worlds might exist within an era which exists long after the era of another world, or perhaps far in the past, long before the era of the first world.

Accordingly, they dubbed this wood in which they have found themselves The Wood Between The Worlds. And it tends to remind them of a crawl space between all the houses along a row of townhomes (“row houses”). For nothing actually takes place either in the crawl space between the townhomes or in this Wood Between The Worlds; but rather, all living takes place instead in the rooms which the crawl space connects: and also, in other words, within the worlds which the pools take us to.¹⁵⁸

From that perspective, the Holy Spirit, in like manner, seems to be able to pop in and out from one era of human history to another and then back again seamlessly, just as the children in Lewis’s tale could do. For the Wood Between The Worlds does not know the rigid boundaries of time and space which we ourselves operate within. And so likewise, within certain passages of the Bible, the Holy Spirit demonstrates the capacity to jump to and from different time frames quite freely, with no restriction. In fact, in certain ways, the Bible itself, as a whole, operates like the Wood Between The Worlds.

In any case, from our examination of Psalm 22 we can learn that Yeshua fulfilled the prophesies of Psalm 22, as noted above: that He would feel abandoned by G-d (Psalm 22:1;¹⁵⁹ Matt. 27:46¹⁶⁰), that He would be mocked and taunted over the fact that G-d did not seem to deliver Him (Psalm 22:7-8;¹⁶¹ Matt. 27:39-43¹⁶²), that He would be surrounded by strong enemies (Psalm 22:12-13;¹⁶³ Matt. 27:35-37¹⁶⁴), that He would be poured out like water, and that His heart would

¹⁵⁷ Series: Lewis, C.S. *The Chronicles Of Narnia*, bk.1, pg. 31. New York, NY. Harper Trophy, 1994.

¹⁵⁸ Lewis, pp. 37-38.

¹⁵⁹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb /psalms/22.htm>

¹⁶⁰ <https://biblehub.com/nasb /matthew/27.htm>

¹⁶¹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb /psalms/22.htm>

¹⁶² <https://biblehub.com/nasb /matthew/27.htm>

¹⁶³ <https://biblehub.com/nasb /psalms/22.htm>

¹⁶⁴ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/27.htm>

melt within Him like wax (Psalm 22:14;¹⁶⁵ John 19:34¹⁶⁶), that He would thirst (Psalm 22:15;¹⁶⁷ John 19:28¹⁶⁸), that He would be surrounded by gentiles (“dogs”, in the terminology of the time) and that they would pierce His hands and His feet (Psalm 22:16;¹⁶⁹ Matt. 27:35- 37¹⁷⁰), that He would feel the pain in every bone in His body, as one would expect during a crucifixion, while His enemies stared at Him in derision (Psalm 22:17;¹⁷¹ Mark 15:22-32¹⁷²), and that they would take His garments, and cast lots for them (Psalm 22:18;¹⁷³ John 19:23-24¹⁷⁴).

With that in mind, consider also how the sky turned to darkness (which was not an eclipse of the sun)¹⁷⁵ while He was on the cross (Matthew 27:45),¹⁷⁶ and the fact that when He died, the veil in the Holy of Holies in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, while rocks were cracked by a great earthquake. (Matthew 27:50-51).¹⁷⁷ It is no wonder then, that one of the Roman soldiers who watched all of these events cried out,

Truly this was the Son of G-d! (Matthew 27:54b; NASB)¹⁷⁸

Now, these verses in Isaiah and Psalm 22 have proven to be puzzling over the years to some rabbis. For one cannot easily reconcile the powerful king of Isaiah 9:6-7 with the suffering servant whom we find in Chapter 53 of the Book of Isaiah and in Psalm 22. In response to that, some rabbis over the years have speculated as to whether there would perhaps be two Messiahs instead of one, so that all of the Scriptures about the Messiah could be completely fulfilled.¹⁷⁹

The message to be taken from the New Testament, however, is that there is but one Messiah--Yeshua--who comes at two different times, and with two different missions: one mission for each separate occasion (to redeem the world from sin the first time, and then to establish His kingdom on earth the second time), and that at His Second Coming, Yeshua will then appear as the conquering king, (Revelation 19:11-16)¹⁸⁰ and then all of the prophecies concerning the Messiah will be completely fulfilled.

¹⁶⁵ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/psalms/22.htm>

¹⁶⁶ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/19.htm>

¹⁶⁷ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/psalms/22.htm>

¹⁶⁸ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/19.htm>

¹⁶⁹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/psalms/22.htm>

¹⁷⁰ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/27.htm>

¹⁷¹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/psalms/22.htm>

¹⁷² <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/27.htm>

¹⁷³ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/psalms/22.htm>

¹⁷⁴ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/19.htm>

¹⁷⁵ This was at Passover, when there is a full moon (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passover>), which is the exact opposite phase of the moon when there can be an eclipse of the sun, which must occur at new moon (i.e., two weeks before or two weeks after a full moon): https://www.ifa.hawaii.edu/users/iroussev/Lecture09_110f2011.pdf

¹⁷⁶ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/27.htm>

¹⁷⁷ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/27.htm>

¹⁷⁸ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/27.htm>

¹⁷⁹ <https://jewishroots.net/library/messianic/two-messiahs-2.html>

¹⁸⁰ <http://biblehub.com/kjv/revelation/19.htm>

So then, at the start of this section we looked at the question of how it is that anyone could be the Messiah if He was executed like a common criminal. But upon examination of the Holy Scriptures, we find instead that we are faced with the question of how it is that anyone could *possibly* be the Messiah unless He *actually would be* executed like a common criminal.

I. What Role Does Yeshua Play In G-d's Plan, Anyway?

The tale of the suffering Messiah carries a lot of emotional impact. But one might wonder why it is the Messiah would even have to suffer at all. And certain questions might arise: Why is Yeshua even necessary in G-d's plan? What does Yeshua do? What is His purpose? What role does He fulfill? And why all this suffering in the first place? The answers to those questions lie in comprehending two key attributes of G-d: justice, and mercy.

Satan has sinned. Man has sinned. Both are fallen away from G-d. Both could be justly punished by being sent to Hell for all of eternity. Or both could be given mercy instead and allowed into heaven. But could one be sent to one eternal fate while the other is sent to the opposite one? That is the question which we shall now consider.

When the Scriptures speak of G-d's justice and G-d's mercy, they seem to point to two irreconcilable traits. On the one hand we see in the Holy Scriptures the commands of the Law of Moses to put to death those who have committed great sin, and we see also see therein the prophecies that Israel and other nations would be judged and punished for their sins. Yet on the other hand, the Lord Himself speaks in the Holy Scriptures of the great need for us to show forth His mercy. As was previously noted, the Lord G-d Himself spoke on point about this through His prophet Hosea:

6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of G-d more than burnt offerings. (Hosea 6:6; KJV)¹⁸¹

To give just one example of G-d's desire for mercy, consider the contrast between G-d's judgment of sin generally all throughout the Holy Scriptures on the one hand and what He says more specifically on the other hand in the Book of Isaiah about how He wishes to treat us with loving kindness despite our sinful nature:

12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands. **13** Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off. (Isaiah 55:12-13; KJV)¹⁸²

Likewise, let us not forget the great mercy which the Lord extended to King David when he

¹⁸¹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/hosea/6.htm>

¹⁸² <https://biblehub.com/kjv/isaiah/55.htm>

tried to cover up his affair with Bathsheba by having her husband killed. (II Samuel, Chapters 11 and 12)¹⁸³ (Just as a side note, let us also consider how G-d turned something evil into something good: for out of this whole tragedy came the birth of David's son King Solomon (II Samuel 12:24),¹⁸⁴ who is, by the way, the person through whom Yeshua traces his own lineage back to King David (Matthew 1:6)¹⁸⁵.)

The thing is, if either man or Satan is given mercy but the other is not, then G-d Himself would be unjust. So all things being held equal then, in order for G-d to allow man into heaven and not send him to Hell, He would also have to allow Satan into heaven as well, instead of sending him to Hell. The thing is, if G-d could not be both things simultaneously (*i.e.*, both perfectly just and perfectly merciful), then G-d would be incapable of completely fulfilling His divine nature. And in that respect, He would be flawed.

Fortunately, G-d has decided that not all things would be held equal, after all. Instead, He decided to inject Himself into human history by the sacrifice of His Son. By doing so, the requirements of justice could be fully met through that sacrifice. Simultaneously though, He could also be perfectly merciful and allow all those who accept and rely on the atoning death of His Son as a substitute for their own punishment to enter into heaven.

Here's another way to look at this. The Apostle John points out that one night, one of the rulers of the Jews, a man named Nicodemus, paid a visit to Yeshua. In explaining the Lord G-d's plan of salvation to Nicodemus, Yeshua (whose favorite term for Himself was "the Son of man") said this:

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:14-15; KJV)¹⁸⁶

What Yeshua was referring to was a time during the Exodus when the Children of Israel had fallen into sin. As a punishment, the Lord G-d sent deadly serpents into the camp. The people repented, and they begged Moses to pray to G-d to show mercy. Moses did pray, and the Lord heard his prayer. He instructed Moses to make a serpent of brass and to lift it up on a pole. He furthermore told Moses that if any person who had been bitten by a serpent would look upon the pole, that person would live. And those who were bitten who did then go gaze upon the serpent did in fact live. (Numbers 21:1-9)¹⁸⁷

There are some lessons to be learned from this. Technically, the Lord could have simply taken away the punishment for sin by getting rid of the serpents. But taking away the punishment for sin would have run contrary to the concept of justice and the need to judge sin. So the Lord did something else instead: He provided a remedy for the punishment, a cure from its effects. And in

¹⁸³ https://biblehub.com/kjv/2_samuel/11.htm

¹⁸⁴ https://biblehub.com/kjv/2_samuel/12.htm

¹⁸⁵ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/1.htm>

¹⁸⁶ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/3.htm>

¹⁸⁷ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/numbers/21.htm>

order to obtain that cure, a person would have to go look upon the serpent. That act itself would constitute a public acknowledgement of the fact that the person had sinned, and of one's need for G-d's forgiveness, and for His provision for dealing with sin.

It would also constitute a step of faith, since the people, in going to look upon the serpent, would be publicly acknowledging their belief that the word which the Lord had spoken through Moses was indeed the truth, and that they agreed and understood that going to gaze upon the serpent would in fact save them from the effects of their sins. The thing is, by providing this remedy for sin, the Lord G-d had it both ways: He had the fulfillment of His requirements of justice, because the serpents remained within the camp to judge the people for their sins; simultaneously, however, the Lord G-d was able to extend mercy by making a way for the people to escape that same harmful penalty for their sins.

So what Yeshua was telling Nicodemus was that in order to provide a remedy for the forgiveness of sins without also cheating justice, the Lord G-d had ordained that Yeshua Himself would have to be lifted up on a pole, just as the brass serpent was, so that all those who would publicly acknowledge their sins and who would acknowledge that Yeshua's sacrifice is G-d's provision for saving them from their sins would in fact live. As the Apostle John went on to say in the very next verse (which is probably the most famous verse of the New Testament), Yeshua then said to Nicodemus,

16 For G-d so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16; KJV)¹⁸⁸

Consider likewise a statement which the Apostle Paul would come to make years later about Yeshua's atoning death for our sins:

21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of G-d in him. (II Corinthians 5:21; KJV)¹⁸⁹

In other words, although Yeshua knew no sin, when He was nailed upon the cross, the Lord G-d placed upon Him all of our sins. This is similar, in fact, to what the High Priest would do every year on Yom Kippur, when he would place the sins of the people on the scapegoat in order that those sins might be judged completely. (Leviticus 16:21-22)¹⁹⁰ And so we see in the New Testament that through Yeshua's death and resurrection, those who believe in Him might be washed of all sin and be made completely free of unrighteousness. In that respect then, Yeshua fulfills the roles of both the sacrificial goat and the scapegoat at Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16:1-34).¹⁹¹

Furthermore, in the Book of Hebrews---which, as we have seen, was written by the Apostle Paul specifically for his fellow Jewish Christians---Paul also added that Yeshua Himself is our great high priest:

¹⁸⁸ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/john/3.htm>

¹⁸⁹ https://biblehub.com/kjv/2_corinthians/5.htm

¹⁹⁰ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/leviticus/16.htm>

¹⁹¹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/leviticus/16.htm>

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of G-d, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16 Let us then approach G-d's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16; NIV)¹⁹²

One might ask though, just exactly what kind of sacrifice would be required. For if the people themselves could make up for their sins through their own sacrifice and offerings and suffering, then why would the sacrifice of Yeshua's life even be necessary? On that point, let us first note that Yeshua was crucified at Passover; and the Last Supper which He held with His Apostles on the night before He died (of which Leonardo da Vinci made a famous painting)¹⁹³ was a Passover Seder.^{194, 195} With that in mind, let us consider what the Lord G-d told Moses about what the Passover lamb had to be like:

5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, (Exodus 12:5a; KJV)¹⁹⁶

In addition, consider also what the Lord had said previously regarding all sacrifices generally:

21 And if there be *any* blemish therein, *as if it be* lame, or blind, *or have* any ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the LORD thy G-d. (Deuteronomy 15:21; KJV)¹⁹⁷

And again:

1 Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy G-d *any* bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, *or any* evil favouredness: for that *is* an abomination unto the LORD thy G-d. (Deuteronomy 17:1; KJV)¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² <https://biblehub.com/niv/hebrews/4.htm>

¹⁹³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Supper_\(Leonardo_da_Vinci\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Supper_(Leonardo_da_Vinci))

¹⁹⁴ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/26.htm>

¹⁹⁵ See Chapters 13 through 17 (inclusive) of the Gospel of John: <https://biblehub.com/nasb/john/13.htm>

¹⁹⁶ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/exodus/12.htm>

¹⁹⁷ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/deuteronomy/15.htm>

¹⁹⁸ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/deuteronomy/17.htm>

With respect to the sacrifice of Yeshua Himself, the Apostle Paul had this to say about Yeshua's role in the tabernacle in heaven in the Book of Hebrews:

11 But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to G-d, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living G-d? (Hebrews 9:11-14; NASB)¹⁹⁹

Consider it in this light: if the sacrifice for our sins were less than perfect, then the atonement for our sins would be less than perfect. But a less-than- perfect atonement will not suffice if we are to have our fellowship with G-d restored. For the Bible says that G-d is,

17 ... the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (James 1:17b; KJV)²⁰⁰

And again,

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that G-d is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (I John 1:5; KJV)²⁰¹

My point is this: If there is any shadow of sin left in us after we repent, we still cannot draw nigh unto G-d. Look at it this way: if you take a spotlight and turn it to face down the street, how close to that spotlight can a big, dark shadow come? Not very close at all, right? In fact, even if the shadow were barely a shadow at all, just a faint shade of gray, it still could not draw close to the spotlight, could it? And so it is with us and G-d. The Lord G-d is perfect, and He is perfect light. Therefore, in order to draw close unto G-d, we ourselves must likewise have no "shadow of turning"; we ourselves must be cleansed of every bit of shadow and darkness and sin and be perfect, just as He is.

But how is that possible ... to be perfect, that is? Well, it is just as we saw above, and which I shall now repeat here:

21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of G-d in him. (II Corinthians 5:21; KJV)²⁰²

So then, since Yeshua, being part of the G-dhead, is perfect, so also His sacrifice, and the cleansing which we receive from it, can be perfect; and Yeshua and His sacrifice are both are in fact

¹⁹⁹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/hebrews/9.htm>

²⁰⁰ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/james/1.htm>

²⁰¹ https://biblehub.com/kjv/1_john/1.htm

²⁰² https://biblehub.com/kjv/2_corinthians/5.htm

perfect.

All in all then, we find that in Yeshua, G-d's strict requirements for justice are met in full measure by Yeshua's suffering and death for us, as was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah. And thus, simultaneously, G-d is able to pour out His mercy in unending measure through Yeshua, for through His atoning death, all those who believe in Yeshua can receive the pardon of their sins.

So that is what Yeshua does. That is what all the suffering of the suffering servant Messiah accomplishes. You see, we ourselves can't have our cake and eat it, too. But G-d can do that, even though we cannot. That is to say, through the atoning death of His Son Yeshua, G-d can have the fulfillment of both perfect justice and perfect mercy simultaneously, and therefore forgive our sins and allow us into heaven, while at the same time keeping Satan out. Here again, as I said before, Yeshua had this to say about Himself and the Law:

17 Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. (Matt 5:17; NASB)²⁰³

How true it is, then, that in Yeshua is the perfect fulfillment of the Law. For through Yeshua, the Lord G-d has the fulfillment of both the justice of the Law and His mercy as well.

1. A Lesson From The Book Of Job About Our Righteousness Compared To The Lord G-d's

The Book of Job (pronunciation: <https://biblespeak.org/job-pronunciation/>) tells the story of a man named Job who was so righteous among men that G-d Himself bragged about what a g-dly man he was. Job then went through a time of severe tragedies in which he lost his great earthly wealth, many of his children, and even his good health, all of which tested his faith, to the point that he lamented even having been born at all. At the end of those trials Job wailed and mourned before G-d.

The Lord G-d heard him and gave him a lesson, telling him in no uncertain terms that Job must realize how insignificant he is on the one hand and how majestic, awesome, and powerful G-d is on the other hand. In so doing, He gave Job various lessons from nature itself, including a lesson from astronomy:

31 "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion's belt?

32 Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the Bear with its cubs?

33 Do you know the laws of the heavens?

Can you set up G-d's dominion over the earth? (Job 38:31-33; NIV)²⁰⁴

Suddenly, Job "gets it". He looks at himself and he looks at G-d, and suddenly he realizes

²⁰³ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/5.htm>

²⁰⁴ <https://biblehub.com/niv/job/38.htm>

the point which the Lord G-d is making. He then says,

5 My ears had heard of you
but now my eyes have seen you.

6 Therefore I despise myself
and repent in dust and ashes. (Job 42:5-6; NIV)²⁰⁵

Significantly, in the midst of all of Job's moaning and complaining about what had befallen him, the Bible says that Job did not sin. (Job 1:22),²⁰⁶ (Job 2:10)²⁰⁷ So here we have, on the one hand, Job at the beginning of the book, who is so righteous that the Lord G-d brags about him, and then at the end of the book, since Job did not sin in the midst of all this, we have Job once again who is still just as righteous at the end as he was at the beginning. But what a difference there is in Job himself! For as we just saw, Job acknowledges that prior to all of this he had heard of G-d, but now that G-d has shown him lessons from astronomy and other aspects of nature, Job is finally able to see the Lord G-d as He really is. And so it comes to pass that Job gets a glimpse of what his own righteousness---great though it may be among men---looks like compared to the Lord G-d's righteousness: It is nothing compared to G-d's righteousness, and now Job despises himself, and repents in dust and ashes.

a. Sunspots And The Righteousness Of Job

At this point allow me to interject yet another lesson from astronomy. Many years ago physicists developed an equation which shows that the more an object is heated up, the more it will tend to glow and emit light, and that if it becomes extremely hot, it will glow with fierce intensity. This left early modern researchers in astronomy deeply puzzled, because if that equation were true---and it certainly seemed to be, and in fact it is---then how could sunspots exist, for they always appear to be as pitch-black as coal at the center, though they are on the surface of the sun itself?

Finally, they figured it out. The surface temperature of the sun on the whole is about 11,000 degrees Fahrenheit. The temperature of sunspots, however, is about 8,000 degrees instead. So as it turns out, sunspots really are glowing themselves with fierce intensity. And thus, even if the rest of the disc of the sun were not present, you still could not look straight at them, for their brightness is in fact dazzling. The reason they appear black, however, is that by the time you have eliminated enough of the light coming from the sun as a whole to look at the sun itself safely, you have eliminated so much light that the glow of the sunspots is no longer visible at all; and thus, although they are glowing fiercely, they look like the absolute absence of light.

And so it is with respect to Job's righteousness (or our own) as compared to the Lord G-d's righteousness. Compared to all other persons, our righteousness might appear to be so dazzling that even the Lord G-d Himself might boast about it. But at the same time, as compared to His righteousness instead of the righteousness of other persons, our righteousness nonetheless looks

²⁰⁵ <https://biblehub.com/niv/job/42.htm>

²⁰⁶ <https://biblehub.com/niv/job/1.htm>

²⁰⁷ <https://biblehub.com/niv/job/2.htm>

like the total absence of righteousness, just as a sunspot looks like the total absence of light. So the next time you look at sunspots, or pictures of sunspots, think of Job, and of the moment when he finally came to realize what his righteousness looks like compared to the Lord G-d's.

2. A Lesson From The Book Of Isaiah About Our Righteousness Compared To The Lord G-d's

The Book of Isaiah also shows us the contrast between our righteousness as compared to the Lord G-d's. It says,

6 All of us have become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; (Isaiah 64:6; NIV)²⁰⁸

It is worth noting that the Hebrew word which is translated here as "filthy" is the word *iddah*, which more specifically means "menstruation".²⁰⁹ So in other words, the "filthy" rags which Isaiah talks about are not just filthy in a general sense, but in a rather specific sense instead. And I respectfully suggest that is entirely appropriate that the Holy Scriptures uses a word which means menstruation in this context. For the blood of the menstrual rag is the blood which was meant to bring forth new life, and a new birth. But it is blood which was shed in vain, for the seed did not take hold in the woman's womb.

And so it is with respect to a person who hears the words of Yeshua, yet does not accept them, and continues to try to become righteous by some means other than by faith in Yeshua. The seed of faith fails to take hold in the person's heart. And so with respect to such a person, the blood which Yeshua shed for that person is like the blood which flows from the womb of a woman who did not conceive as the seed passes without generating new life and a new birth.

3. A Lesson From A Fruit Tree About The Change That Yeshua Makes

Here is yet another way to look at it. When a fruit tree first starts to bud in springtime, for the most part the tree still just looks like its normal self. But it is often the case that a day then comes along very soon afterwards when virtually all the buds open on the same morning. And when they have done so, the difference in appearance of the tree can be striking just from one day to the next. In fact, if one didn't know better, one would say that this was a different tree than the one that was there the day before. But no, it is not a different tree. It is the exact same tree today; only now, it has flowered, and its appearance has been transformed dramatically.

So it is with the relationship between Christianity and Judaism. Christianity is Judaism explained in a new, more complete light. For once the one who fulfills the Law and the Prophets has come, the belief in the Lord G-d of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob takes on an appearance which makes it look truly different from the way it had looked before. But it is still the exact same tree, so to speak. It is still the exact same religion. But now it has grown into something it was always

²⁰⁸ <https://biblehub.com/niv/isaiah/64.htm>

²⁰⁹ <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/5713c.htm>

meant to be, right from the very beginning. For just as a caterpillar entering into a cocoon foretells the coming forth of a butterfly, and just as the buds of a fruit tree prophesy the coming forth of the blossom, so also did the Law and the prophets foretell the coming forth of the Messiah.

4. But How Can G-d Be A Loving G-d And Yet Also Send People To Hell?

(Note: This part is a reproduction of what is said on point in the text. It is repeated here for the sake of those who might be interested in reading this portion of the Appendix but who, for whatever reason, might not care to read the text itself.)

One of the greatest mysteries which people inquiring about Christianity face is the question of how G-d can be both a loving G-d and yet also, at the same time, be a G-d who sends people to Hell. On the face of things, that seems to be an irreconcilable contradiction in character traits, and so on that basis some people believe that the whole story about G-d, as told in the Bible, must be false. But as we have seen in the text of this book with respect to the Star of Bethlehem and its seemingly contradictory attributes, it is the case that how things might appear at first blush does not always tell the tale of what is or is not in fact the truth when all things are considered in their proper perspective. And so it is likewise with this seemingly contradictory character trait of G-d, with respect to both boundless love and eternal judgment.

To consider this, let us start with some basic attributes of G-d. For instance, G-d cannot make an object which is too heavy for Him to lift. (Or to put it perhaps more precisely, an object too heavy for G-d to lift cannot come into existence in the first place.) Likewise, G-d cannot be unjust. And G-d cannot be untrue to His Word.

These things may seem odd, but they are true nonetheless. For if G-d is all-powerful, one might wonder, "How can He not be able to bring into existence an object too heavy for Him to lift?" For that right there would seem to place a limit on a supposedly all-powerful G-d. And by the same token, how can it be the case that G-d can never be unjust, or untrue to His Word, even just once. For that likewise would seem to place a limit on Him.

Well, these things point to a key issue for our consideration: namely, even G-d Himself does not exist or operate in an unbounded, rules-free environment. Even G-d Himself cannot exist, and does not exist, in a universe in which the rules of logic are suspended; for instance, if G-d is above all, then nothing can be above G-d. And if G-d is in fact perfectly just all the time, then G-d cannot also simultaneously be less-than-perfectly just at some point in time. There is just no other way that things can work out, even if you are G-d.

With that in mind, consider the following illustration from the Bible. Most people are generally familiar with the story of Daniel in the lions' den, but at the same time, most people are likewise unfamiliar with some very important details of that tale. For those who may be completely unfamiliar with this story altogether, it is told in Chapter Six of the Book of Daniel.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/daniel/6.htm>

It pertains to a time late in the Babylonian captivity, when the Jewish people, for the most part, were away from their homeland, at a time when the Persians and Medes ruled over Babylon, which the Persians and Medes had captured and conquered. The Persian ruler was King Darius. He loved the Hebrew prophet Daniel, and he intended to appoint Daniel over his entire kingdom. But this made the other counselors of the king jealous, and they plotted together to get rid of Daniel.

Now, as it turns out, they knew that Daniel, who placed G-d above everything else in his life, prayed aloud to the Lord G-d of Israel from his home three times daily, every single day, and that everyone in the street could hear him pray. So Daniel's rivals used flattery to convince King Darius to sign a law declaring that for thirty days, no one could pray to anyone except King Darius. The conspirators knew that if Daniel abided by this law, they would have succeeded at breaking his otherwise indomitable spirit, and they could thereby shame him before the king, for the whole strength of his counsel was based on his unswerving devotion to G-d; on the other hand, if Daniel were not to abide by this new law, the punishment would be death by being thrown to the lions.

Apparently, none of this even dawned on King Darius when he was asked to sign the law, so he signed it, and he was horrified by what he had done when he found out what this plot was really all about. For under Persian law, even he, the king, could not undo what he had done. He was bound by it, just as the lowest slave in the kingdom was. So if Daniel did pray to the Lord G-d during those thirty days, then King Darius would be obligated by law to throw Daniel, his close friend and most cherished counselor, to the lions.

Daniel heard about this new law, yet he did as he had always done: he went into his house and prayed aloud to the Lord G-d with the window open, and everyone in the street heard it. When the king's wicked counselors told the king what Daniel had done, King Darius spent the remainder of the day trying to find some way to get Daniel out of trouble. But in the end, nothing could be done, and in pain and in grief he ordered Daniel to be thrown to the lions. Yet before Daniel was taken from his presence, he said this to Daniel:

"Your G-d whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you." (Dan. 6:16b; NASB)²¹¹

The Bible also records what happened next:

[18](#) Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him.

[19](#) Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. [20](#) When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living G-d, has your G-d, whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

[21](#) Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! [22](#) "My G-d sent His angel and

²¹¹ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/daniel/6.htm>

shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime." ²³ Then the king was very pleased and gave orders for Daniel to be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den and no injury whatever was found on him, because he had trusted in his G-d. (Dan. 6:18-23; NASB)²¹²

The Bible then says that King Darius had his wicked counselors, who had tricked him into signing the new law, thrown into the lions' den in Daniel's place, and that the lions leapt up and crushed them on their way down, before they had even gotten to the bottom of the den. (Dan. 6:24)²¹³ (shades of Haman, in years to come: Esther 7:9-10)²¹⁴

In like manner, the Lord G-d is bound by His very nature in His dealings with us. For anything that is less-than-perfectly righteous, or less-than- perfectly just, or less-than-perfectly true and uncorrupted, cannot exist in His presence. And being removed from G-d, our source of all light and life, constitutes darkness and death. That's just the way it is, and there's no changing that, not even for G-d Himself, just as there was no changing the law of Persia when King Darius wanted a different result from what the law provided. And with respect to G-d's righteousness and justice, logic itself will not permit such a thing: for something cannot be both in a shadow and yet also completely immersed in pure light simultaneously, and something cannot be both connected to our one, true source of life and yet also cut off from it simultaneously. So then, G-d does not first choose to allow some people into heaven and then choose, in some mean-spirited way, to send others to Hell; but rather, eternity in Hell is simply the natural, inevitable, unalterable consequence of sin without redemption. As the Bible says,

²³ For the wages of sin is death ... (Romans 6:23a; NASB)²¹⁵

As bleak as that may sound, it is fortunately the case that there is more to that verse than meets the eye right now. We shall be getting back to that verse to look at it more fully shortly.

All in all then, just as King Darius would have given anything to free Daniel from his sentence of death if he could, so also the Lord G-d would give anything to free us from our sentence of eternal damnation if He could. And that is how it is that G-d can be both boundlessly loving and yet also be someone who cannot accept us into His presence, where we might have eternal life, if we have any stain of sin on our souls. The difference between the Lord G-d and King Darius, then, lies in the fact that the Lord G-d did in fact find a way to free us from our punishment: the atoning, substitute death of His own Son as a payment, a ransom, for our indebtedness of sin.

Look at it this way: you find yourself standing on the platform of a train station in the downtown area of a very large city. A nuclear war has just started, and in one hour a large nuclear

²¹² <http://biblehub.com/nasb/daniel/6.htm>

²¹³ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/daniel/6.htm>

²¹⁴ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/esther/7.htm>

²¹⁵ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/romans/6.htm>

bomb will explode right over where you are standing. Now, in this scenario, it is your sin that got you into trouble: it is your sin that sent you down to that train platform at an hour such as that. And so as a penalty for your sin, you will die if you are still standing there when the bomb goes off. The thing is, though, there is a train sitting there at the station with its doors open. And there is a seat available on the train for you. And it has your name on it. So if you get onboard that train and take your seat before the doors close and the train pulls out of the station, when the bomb goes off, you will be 100 miles away. You will live, and you will be unharmed. On the other hand, if you refuse to take advantage of the deliverance which is just sitting there waiting for you at the train station, when the bomb goes off, you will perish.

For you, and for everyone else, the moment that you die is the moment that the doors of the train close and the train pulls out of the station. At that moment, you will either be on the train, or you won't be. And so ultimately, whether you live or die is based just on that one simple fact alone.

You see, just as our sins, in this analogy, send us down to the train station where the bomb will go off, it is our sins that send us to Hell. That being the case, we must then depend upon G-d to rescue us by providing for our escape. So in the end, whether or not you face the consequences of your sin won't be based just on the one fact that your sin got you down to that train platform in the first place; instead, it will also be equally based on whether you now make the decision to get onboard that train and take your seat before the doors close and the train leaves the station. For if you do not do so, then when the bomb comes, you will look up and see it blazing through the sky above you as it reenters earth's atmosphere just moments before it explodes. And there will be nothing you can do about it then. As the Apostle Paul said,

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, **3** how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? (Heb. 2:2-3a; NASB)²¹⁶

Come to know and understand then, these two things: 1.) because of your sin, you yourself, like each and every one of us (myself included), becomes slated for eternal darkness and death because of such sin; and, 2.) the Lord G- d has made a provision for us to escape that penalty, and that that provision is for us to believe in His Son Yeshua, and to look to Him and rely upon Him, just as the children of Israel did gaze upon the serpent during the Exodus, so that we may each take advantage of Yeshua's atoning death as the payment and ransom for our debt of sin.

With that in mind, here then is the further look into one of the above- quoted verses which I promised you:

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of G-d is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23; NASB)²¹⁷

Here again, death is not something which either might or might not follow as a consequence of sin. Rather, it is the wages of sin, so death will always automatically follow sin, come what may;

²¹⁶ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/hebrews/2.htm>

²¹⁷ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/romans/6.htm>

it is the exact price which is to be paid for sin each and every time, with no exceptions. Our sin occupies one side of a balance, and so death must be placed on the other side in order to set the balance to an equal level on both sides. Fortunately, as the second half of that verse points out, we can have the free gift of eternal life from G-d through Yeshua, for it is His death, and not our own, which will pay the price and which will be placed on the other side of the balance to level things out if we will believe in Him and accept His atoning sacrifice for us.

5. Understanding The Love Of G-d

It is with all this in mind that we can fully comprehend the love of G-d.
As the Apostle Paul said,

7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But G-d demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from G-d's wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were G-d's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! (Rom. 5:7-10; NIV)²¹⁸

In other words, when we consider the whole picture, we see that Yeshua didn't come to die for people who had somehow earned His love and the sacrifice of His life; rather, to the contrary, the exact opposite is true. For instead, the Father sent His Son to die for those who not only did not deserve G-d's sacrifice and love, but who also richly deserved the exact opposite: eternal darkness and death. And that is us ... you and I. We didn't deserve G-d's love; instead, we deserved His judgment and punishment. And yet incredibly, because of the death of Yeshua for us, He was able not only to withhold His judgment and His punishment from us, but He was also able to extend to us redeeming mercy, grace, and love.

If you wish to see an example of this in the Holy Scriptures, read II Samuel 11:1-12:24, wherein see that the Lord G-d not only did not give King David the punishment which he so richly deserved, but He also extended to him undeserved mercy and grace, and the end result was that King Solomon was then born to King David.²¹⁹ That being said, allow me to say again that it is through King Solomon that Yeshua traces his lineage back to King David: Matt. 1:6-16.²²⁰

For further reading, consider also the famous story which Yeshua told about the prodigal son: Luke 15:11-30.²²¹

Granted, sometimes G-d's love is difficult to comprehend, because sometimes He winds up doing the exact opposite of what you and I would do, for He is so merciful. But then, as the Holy Scriptures say,

²¹⁸ <https://biblehub.com/niv/romans/5.htm>

²¹⁹ https://biblehub.com/esv/2_samuel/11.htm

²²⁰ <https://biblehub.com/esv/matthew/1.htm>

²²¹ <https://biblehub.com/esv/luke/15.htm>

[11](#) For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
[12](#) as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.
[13](#) As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. (Psalm 103:11-13; ESV)²²²
And again,

[8](#) For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.
[9](#) For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9; ESV)²²³

6. But Isn't Christianity Just A Copycat Of Other Religions Instead Of A Fulfillment Of Judaism?

Some have argued that the tale of a suffering g-d who dies for the people and then comes back to life is nothing more than the exact same story told by other religions which have similar tales.²²⁴ If that is the case, then it is either the case on the one hand that Christianity, in substance, would really be no different from those other religions, and would be equally valid with them (and they, with Christianity), or it would be the case on the other hand that none of these religions (Christianity included) is a true account about G-d and our relationship to G-d, and that none of these accounts are real at all, and perhaps it would be the case that G-d does not even exist.

However, what if it is the case that Christianity really is not simply a copycat religion of the other religions, and that among these religions, Christianity alone not only states the true nature of G-d and our relationship to G-d, but also that the Bible accurately states historical facts about Yeshua: for example, the statements that He died and rose again? Those who take this position generally believe that G-d has revealed Himself in part to those who created those other religions, and that their own belief system simply reflects, in a rather distant fashion, the real religion, which is Christianity, which itself is the fulfillment of Judaism. This approach may be thought of as being similar to something which the Apostle Paul said about our relationship with G-d and His moral code:

[14](#) For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, [15](#) in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, [16](#) on the day when, according

²²² <https://biblehub.com/esv/psalms/103.htm>

²²³ <https://biblehub.com/esv/isaiah/55.htm>

²²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dying-and-rising_god

to my gospel, G-d will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus. (Romans 2:14-16; NASB)²²⁵

Granted, as I said, in those verses the Apostle Paul was writing about the inner knowledge which certain pagans have about G-d's moral code, even without their having heard of His Law directly, and Paul was not writing about the topic of G-d dying and then resurrecting in those verses specifically. Nonetheless, the idea that persons outside of Christianity who have religious beliefs and practices pertaining to a g-d who dies and is then resurrected may be thought of as being parallel to what Paul wrote about anyway, in that they do know something about the one, true G-d, a knowledge that is written in their hearts, though they don't see clearly the exact truth itself (*i.e.*, they have no actual, direct knowledge of Yeshua, His death and resurrection, or His message). The question then becomes, how do we determine which perspective accurately states the case: the one which essentially says that Christianity is nothing more than a copycat religion, or the one which takes the position that Christianity is a true account, both spiritually and historically?

In answer to that, consider this: There is one set of circumstances under which it can be shown that it is nearly certain that Christianity is just a copycat religion, and one set of circumstances under which it can be shown that that is not likely at all. The circumstances under which one would normally conclude that a religion which has a teaching about a g-d who dies and is resurrected is just a copycat religion would be where the persons who are the leaders of the religion knowingly take the idea of a g-d dying and then resurrecting from one religion and then place it into their own religion. This would be an example of what is known as syncretism.²²⁶ Alternatively, they could have drawn from life's experiences common to all of humanity to reflect a theme which others had noticed independently, this latter possibility being most likely to be seen where persons in unrelated cultures, which had no contact with each other, might have developed stories about a g-d dying and then resurrecting simply from their mutual observance of agricultural cycles, for instance.

On the other hand, the circumstances under which it would be logical to conclude that Christianity is in fact the one and only true religion, the one which accurately states the nature of G-d and our relationship to G-d, as well as the historical facts which are given, would be circumstances in which the persons who first put forth the religion would not even realize that this idea of G-d dying and then resurrecting was contained within their own teachings. In other words, in putting forth their religion as a true teaching about G-d and our relationship to Him, they would not themselves be creating the story of G-d dying and then resurrecting in order to make that idea part of their teachings; but rather, as G-d would later on develop His plan, it would come to light that this teaching had been there in their writings all along, having been placed there by G-d, though the founders of the religion, who had been oblivious to that fact at the beginning, and who had also been oblivious to the fact that they had simply been repeating to the world the words spoken by G-d Himself through they themselves, His prophets. These words themselves would eventually be shown to reveal the story of G-d dying and then resurrecting. Let us look to the Holy Scriptures, therefore, to see which scenario plays out most closely with respect to this issue.

²²⁵ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/romans/2.htm>

²²⁶ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syncretism>

First of all, in Genesis we see the famous near-sacrifice of Isaac by his father, Abraham. (Genesis 22:1-14)²²⁷ Here we see that when the Lord G-d put Abraham to the test, He did so by calling upon Abraham to sacrifice his only son, much as G-d Himself would do with Yeshua. And interestingly enough, as Abraham and Isaac walked toward the place where the sacrifice was to be, consider what Abraham said when Isaac asked his father where the lamb for the burnt offering was:

8 Abraham said, "G-d will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." (Gen. 22:8a; NASB)²²⁸

That is telling, and quite prophetic. For that is indeed what G-d did do at Calvary many centuries later, when He Himself provided the lamb---the perfect Passover lamb, Yeshua---for the sacrifice. Significantly, in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul, who had been quite the scholar of the Law of Moses and other Jewish writings when he became a Christian,^{229, 230} said that Abraham was of the opinion that G-d would raise his son Isaac up from the dead if Abraham had in fact killed him.²³¹

Moving on, about 1,000 years before Yeshua's earthly ministry, we see King David stating his famous Messianic prophecies in Psalm 22, as was noted above. And as we have also seen, we find King David prophesying separately in Psalm 16 about the resurrection of the Messiah:

10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol [hell; Hades];
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. (Psalm 16:10; NASB)²³²

Then, roughly 300 years after King David lived, we find the famous prophecies of Isaiah (which we considered in detail above) about the suffering and death of the Messiah, including the verses which point to the Messiah living yet again after having poured Himself out unto death: Isaiah 53:10- 12.²³³

Now, with all that in mind, let us first consider the time factor with respect to the revealing of the death of the Messiah and His resurrection. The development of such prophecies, as we have seen, stretches at least from the time of King David to the time of Isaiah, a period of about 300 years, and is also at least consistent with the near-sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, which was written of in the Book of Genesis hundreds of years before King David himself had lived. So not only do we have at least two different authors of the prophecies pertaining to the Messiah dying and then resurrecting (King David and Isaiah at least, and possibly Moses as well), but it is also obvious that, due to the time element involved, King David and Isaiah (and arguably Moses) certainly could not possibly have

²²⁷ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/genesis/22.htm>

²²⁸ <http://biblehub.com/nasb/genesis/22.htm>

²²⁹ Philippians 3:4-6; <http://biblehub.com/nasb/philippians/3.htm>

²³⁰ Acts 22:3; <http://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/22.htm>

²³¹ Hebrews 11:17-19; <http://biblehub.com/nasb/hebrews/11.htm>

²³² <http://biblehub.com/nasb/psalms/16.htm> ; the Apostle Peter quoted this shortly after Yeshua rose from the dead: Acts 2:22-28; <http://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/2.htm>

²³³ Isaiah 53:10-12: <http://biblehub.com/nasb/isaiah/53.htm>

gotten together themselves to make up a story about G-d dying and then resurrecting.

Second, from the time of Isaiah until the time of Yeshua, there quite obviously was no widespread belief among the rabbis that these prophecies of Isaiah and David were pointing to Messiah dying and then resurrecting. For it apparently took the Jewish elders by complete surprise when the striking parallels of the prophecies of King David and Isaiah to Yeshua's death and resurrection were brought to light right after Yeshua rose from the dead.

Accordingly, what we can take from all of this is that not only did Yeshua's apostles not simply concoct a story about Messiah dying and then resurrecting in order to fit into a popularly-held opinion about a suffering Messiah (for there was no such popularly-held opinion in ancient Israel in the first place), but it is also the case that this idea of G-d dying and then resurrecting is indeed present in the Holy Scriptures in hidden form, and this itself is a factor which testifies to the idea that this message was deliberately placed there in that way (*i.e.*, in hidden fashion). And so this, in turn, testifies that there is a G-d who placed that message there, a G-d who wanted to share this message with us in such a way that when we would discover it, we not only would not come to think of this message as being just a copycat version of other religions, but we would realize instead that since this message was apparently placed within the prophecies in distinctly hidden fashion, that G-d had deliberately planned it that way; and this in turn means that this message was placed there by someone who really does exist (G-d), and whose message in the Holy Scriptures really is the Truth.

All in all then, when we started this section we considered the question of whether the fact that other religions have teachings about a g-d who dies and then resurrects points us to the conclusion that Christianity is nothing more than a copycat religion. But upon analysis, we find instead that the exact opposite is the case: These other religions testify to a great truth which the pagans know about G-d in their hearts without ever having heard about Yeshua, just as they also know in their hearts about G-d's moral code without ever having heard the Law of Moses. In other words, the answer to the question as to whether Christianity is simply a copycat religion is, "No."

J. What Is The Role Of The Law Of Moses In Salvation?

Having looked at the role of Yeshua in salvation, let us now consider the role of the Law of Moses in salvation. A detailed look at what one expert in the Law, the Apostle Paul, had to say about that would be very lengthy, and so far off-topic from the nature of this book that it would have to be considered a separate work altogether, and not simply material for this Appendix.

That being said, if the reader wishes to read the majority of what Paul had to say on this topic, the reader is referred to Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome, known as the Book of Romans,²³⁴ and to his letter to the Christians in Galatia (a portion of central and southeast present-day Turkey), known as the Book of Galatians, particularly the first three chapters thereof;²³⁵ and these can be found at the website biblehub.com.²³⁶ Specifically, consider a portion of what Paul said in Chapter

²³⁴ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/romans/1.htm>

²³⁵ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/galatians/1.htm>

²³⁶ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/genesis/1.htm>

Three of the Book of Galatians:

[23](#) But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. [24](#) Therefore the Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. [25](#) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. [26](#) For you are all sons of G-d through faith in Christ Jesus. [27](#) For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. [28](#) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [29](#) And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise. (Gal. 3:23-29; NASB)²³⁷

So in other words, the Law of Moses had its role to play in leading to our salvation, a very important role, indeed. And the Law is indeed ordained by G- d and anointed by Him. But the whole time, the Law was never intended to be the completion of G-d's plan for us, and instead it was pointing toward the One who is the fulfillment of the Law, which is Yeshua Himself. And now that the One to whom the Law pointed has indeed come, it is time for us to recognize Him as being the fulfillment of the Law, and to accept Him as such.

1. The Analogous Roles Of Moses And Joshua

In parallel to what the Apostle Paul said, we can also see the relationship between the Law of Moses and Yeshua being played out in the relationship between Moses and Joshua. As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, the name Joshua, which is taken from the Hebrew name Jehoshua, is the same name as Jesus, which is likewise taken from the Hebrew name Jehoshua, albeit after passing first through Aramaic (Yeshua), then Greek (Iesous), and then Latin (Iesus) before finally becoming "Jesus" in English. And so, in parallel to what the Apostle Paul was saying about the Law being a tutor which brought us to Yeshua, who then in turn brings us into salvation, we likewise find in Scripture that Moses first brought G-d's people up to the Promised Land and gave them G-d's Law, but it was then Joshua (Yeshua) who actually brought them across the Jordan River and into the Promised Land itself.^{238, 239, 240, 241}

K. The Timing Of The Coming Of Messiah As Determined By The Book Of Daniel

(Note: for those who have not yet read the text of this book, this next portion is a repeat of what is said therein about this topic.)

If any of the Magi were indeed Jewish, would there be a particular time frame within which

²³⁷ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/galatians/3.htm>

²³⁸ Numbers 27:12-23; <https://biblehub.com/kjv/numbers/27.htm>

²³⁹ Deuteronomy 34:1-9; <https://biblehub.com/kjv/deuteronomy/34.htm>

²⁴⁰ Joshua 1:1-18; <https://biblehub.com/kjv/joshua/1.htm>

²⁴¹ Joshua 3:1-17; <https://biblehub.com/kjv/joshua/3.htm>

they would be expecting the birth of the King of the Jews? Could it be just any time? Could it be 2,000 years ago? Or should the members of their priestly class have expected the King before that? Or instead, 2,000 years after that (*i.e.*, around our time now)? Or perhaps 10,000 years into the future? Or perhaps even longer after that? As it turns out, there is in fact a time frame within which one could look for the coming of Messiah according to one of the major Hebrew prophets.

In Chapter Nine of the Book of Daniel, the prophet Daniel tells us of his visit by an angel who told him about the End Times. The message of the angel is expressed in terms of “weeks” (*i.e.*, weeks of years). This term refers to the fact that during the seventh year of each seven-year cycle (a “week of years”), the land was to be given a sabbatical from farm production. (See Leviticus 25:2-4.)²⁴² The land was left to lie fallow for one year in order to give it a rest and to allow the nutrients which had been taken from land by the harvesting of crops to be replenished, as well as to provide both the poor among them and the animals with the opportunity to eat of the things which sprang up naturally while the land was not being farmed. (Exodus 23:10-11,²⁴³ Leviticus 25:1-7,²⁴⁴ Leviticus 25:20-22.²⁴⁵) So a “week of years” is seven years.

With that in mind, consider the following verse from Chapter Nine of the Book of Daniel, which pertains to the message of an angel which was given to Daniel during the captivity in Babylon:

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. (Daniel 9:25; KJV)²⁴⁶

Seven weeks plus threescore (3 X 20) and two weeks is 69 weeks total (or in other words, 483 years). But before we do the math to figure this out, we should first determine what level of precision we are looking for in the fulfillment of this prophecy. For instance, if someone says that a particular event will take place three millennia from now, we wouldn’t necessarily be looking for that event to occur exactly 3,000 years from now (though of course, that might actually turn out to be the case).

Similarly, if someone says that a particular event will take place three centuries from now, we wouldn’t think that the event would necessarily have to take place precisely 300 years from now. In the present case, since Daniel was told by the angel to expect Messiah the Prince to arrive 69 weeks of years following the issuance of the decree to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, it would be fair to say we could expect to find the arrival of the Messiah some time during the 69th week of years, or in other words, sometime within the interval from the start of the 477th year to the end of the 483rd year following the proclamation to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Let’s now do the math on this, and see if the calculations show us something pertaining to

²⁴² <http://biblehub.com/nasb/leviticus/25.htm>

²⁴³ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/exodus/23.htm>

²⁴⁴ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/daniel/9.htm>

²⁴⁵ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/leviticus/25.htm>

²⁴⁶ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/daniel/9.htm>

the life of Yeshua. First of all, one scholarly fellow concluded from his research that the decree to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (which the angel mentioned to Daniel) was issued in the Hebrew year 3316 (445 B.C.E./B.C.).²⁴⁷ His conclusion as to the exact date itself may be the subject of some debate, but certainly, nobody has ever suggested that his conclusion was completely off base.

That being said, if the issuance of the decree to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem occurred in 3316 (445 B.C.E./B.C.), then 483 years from that year would be 3799 (39 C.E./A.D.), and we would look for Messiah the Prince starting any time beginning seven years prior to that, *i.e.*, beginning in 3792 (32 C.E./A.D.), the start of the 69th week of years since the decree to rebuild Jerusalem was issued. With that in mind, there are two things to consider. First, as Larson has so well pointed out in his video *The Star of Bethlehem*, the weight of the evidence points to the conclusion that Yeshua died and rose from the dead in 3793 (33 C.E./A.D.), which is within the proper time frame.

Second, if it is true that we could expect Messiah the Prince to come at any time from 3792 to 3799 (32 C.E./A.D. to 39 C.E./A.D.), then we must face the question, “If Yeshua of Nazareth is not Messiah the Prince, then who is?” Who else possibly could be the Messiah except Yeshua of Nazareth? Within that time span, there is absolutely nobody else who would come even remotely close to fitting the bill of being Messiah the Prince, whether as a suffering servant, or as a powerful king. No one.

Adding weight to that conclusion is another statement in Chapter 9 of the Book of Daniel. Specifically, the very next verse of that chapter (verse 26) points out that the city (Jerusalem) and the tabernacle shall be destroyed, and that this shall be done by the people of the prince that shall come after the Messiah has been killed (“cut off”). (Dan. 9:26)²⁴⁸

We know that Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by the people of the prince who came (*i.e.*, the Roman legions under Titus), and that this was done in the year 3796 (70 B.C.E./A.D.)²⁴⁹ And we know that this was done after Yeshua had been “cut off” (crucified), something which, as we have established, occurred in 3759 (33 C.E./A.D.). So here again, if Yeshua of Nazareth is not Messiah the Prince, then who is? Who possibly could be?

L. The New Covenant Foretold By The Prophet Jeremiah

The portion of the Bible which is specifically Christian (*i.e.*, the New Testament) is commonly thought of as being a new covenant.²⁵⁰ With this in mind, let us now consider a statement by the prophet Jeremiah:

31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: **32** Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring

²⁴⁷ <https://www.whatsaiththescriture.com/Text.Only/pdfs/The Coming Prince Text.pdf> (pg. 53)

²⁴⁸ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/daniel/9.htm>

²⁴⁹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_\(70_CE\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siege_of_Jerusalem_(70_CE))

²⁵⁰ https://www.actinternational.org/articles/useminary/what-the-new-covenant-means-for-us-how-jesus-changes-everything?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=22336356872&gbraid=0AAAAACrD6slj0fk8KoaQ1BpM4DwmA3hPN

them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: **33** But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jer. 31:31; KJV)²⁵¹

With that in mind, let us now consider whether there would be a particular time frame within which the Magi might expect the King of the Jews to be born. If the Magi were to assume that Messiah would come into His kingdom anywhere between age 20 and age 60, and if Messiah would have to arrive somewhere within the time frame of 3792 to 3799, then it would be safe to assume that He could be born any time from 3732 to 3779. And the year which we are considering here as the year of His birth, 3759 (2 B.C.E./B.C.) does fall within that time frame.

In considering all this, you may find it helpful to see the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6V46oomubdE> .

All in all then, at the beginning of this section we looked at the question of whether there would be a particular time frame within which the Magi might expect to see signs in the heavens of the birth of the King of the Jews. And the answer to that question is, “Yes.”

There is one further point to consider before we leave this section. We have already seen that some rabbis over the years have wondered whether there might be two Messiahs, one for each set of prophecies (suffering servant, and triumphant king). Now, I personally do not know any Jewish person these days who does believe that there will be two Messiahs. (And I myself, of course, am convinced that there is but one Messiah: Yeshua of Nazareth, who comes at two different times.) But at this point, I can’t help thinking to myself that if, among Jewish thought, it is at least plausible and acceptable by tradition that there could possibly be two Messiahs, then would it not be plausible that Yeshua of Nazareth would meet the criteria of fulfilling at least the prophecies about the suffering servant Messiah?

In fact, if the idea that there are two Messiahs is at least plausible at all in Jewish thought, how could one possibly *not* believe that Yeshua of Nazareth is at least that one, suffering servant Messiah, given the extent to which He fulfilled prophecies concerning the suffering Messiah, especially in light of the particular time frame within which He was born and lived out His life? And furthermore, if it may be permissible to wonder if perhaps Yeshua is the true suffering Messiah, then would it not also then be permissible to consider, in retrospect, whether perhaps there really is but one Messiah after all, and that Yeshua is that one?

M. What Did Yeshua Have To Say About The Role Of The Jewish People Themselves Specifically In Salvation?

If you are still left wondering what the relationship between Judaism and Christianity really is, you might wish to consider the words of Yeshua Himself. At one point, He and His Apostles were

²⁵¹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/jeremiah/31.htm>

heading back north to Galilee from Jerusalem. As they were doing so, they headed through the region known as Samaria; and there, Yeshua had a conversation with a Samaritan woman.

Samaria is an area which today would constitute much of the northern portion of the West Bank; Samaria became part of the Northern Kingdom when ten tribes of Israel split with the Tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levy, which remained in Jerusalem and throughout Judea following the death of King Solomon.²⁵²

For the most part, the Samaritans are persons who are members of the Tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, two of Joseph's sons (as well as---to a certain limited extent, at least---some who are of the Tribe of Levy).²⁵³ The Samaritans were left behind when the Babylonians captured Jerusalem and took the Jews themselves (*i.e.*, the descendants of Judah and Benjamin, and most of the descendants of Levy) as prisoners into Babylon. From that point on, the Samaritans began to develop their own branch of Judaism, and they also developed the claim that the proper place to worship the Lord G-d is in Mt. Gerizim in Samaria instead of in Jerusalem.

Since ancient times, there has been great striving between Samaritans and the descendants of Judah, Benjamin, and Levy as to who was practicing true Judaism, and 2,000 years ago, the two sides would have nothing to do with each other; nonetheless, leading Jewish religious authorities in modern Israel do now consider them to be followers of Judaism. In terms of numbers, the Samaritans used to be quite numerous; today, there are less than a thousand remaining.

Here's what happened when Yeshua and His Apostles came to Jacob's Well, which can be found today in the city of Nablus in the West Bank (which 2,000 years ago was known as the city of Sychar, in Samaria).²⁵⁴ Yeshua decided to rest at Jacob's Well while His Apostles went into town to buy food.

A Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. She was startled---perhaps doubly startled---when Yeshua asked her for a drink of water; for in the first place, men did not commonly converse with women who were strangers back in those days. And on top of that, she was a Samaritan during the period when, as I said, the Samaritans and the descendants of Judah, Benjamin, and Levy ("the Jews") would have nothing to do with each other, and Jesus' Galilean accent would no doubt have given Him away as being Jewish.

She and Yeshua then got into a discussion of whether one should worship the Lord G-d in Samaria (on Mt. Gerizim) or in Jerusalem. Yeshua told her that a day was coming when the true worship of G-d would not be done in any specific place, but would be done simply by worshiping G-d in spirit and in truth; and furthermore that He, Yeshua, is the Messiah. (John 4:20-26)²⁵⁵ During the midst of all that, Yeshua had this to say specifically:

22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we [Jews] worship what we do

²⁵² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaria>

²⁵³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaritans>

²⁵⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob%27s_Well

²⁵⁵ <https://biblehub.com/niv/john/4.htm>

know, for salvation is from the Jews. (John 4:22; NIV)²⁵⁶

So there you have it, right there. Thus, if you're still wondering whether Christianity and Judaism are linked, bear in mind that no less an authority on Christianity than Yeshua Himself bore witness: Salvation is from the Jews.

N. The Mass Conversion Of Jews To Christianity That Is Prophesied In The Bible

With all of this in mind, it should come as no surprise that there is a prophecy in the Bible about a mass conversion of Jews to Christianity. What might come as a total surprise, though, is that this prophecy is in the Old Testament.

"What?! No way! That's absurd!" you might find yourself saying. And indeed, if Christianity and Judaism are two different religions, well then of course, the whole idea of there being a prophecy of a mass conversion of Jews to Christianity appearing in the Old Testament would have to be absurd. But what if Christianity and Judaism are not in fact two different religions? What if in fact they are two different variations of one and the same religion, and what if the Old Testament and the New Testament are to be taken together and read as one?

If such is the case, then the idea of a prophecy of a coming mass conversion of Jews to Christianity appearing in the Old Testament would not be far-fetched at all. With that in mind, remember what Yeshua said, as was quoted earlier, about Him coming to fulfill the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17),²⁵⁷ and about combining His teachings about the Kingdom of Heaven with the Old Testament into one:

52 And Jesus said to them, Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old. (Matthew 13:52; NASB)²⁵⁸

Likewise, as was demonstrated in numerous ways above, both Yeshua and His Apostles deemed the message of Yeshua to be about Judaism and for the Jews, first and foremost.

"So where is this prophecy in the Old Testament about a mass conversion of Jews to Christianity?" you must be wondering. Well, it is found in the Book of Zechariah:

10 "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. (Zech. 12:10; NASB)²⁵⁹

Is this a coincidence, perhaps? Am I reading too much into this passage by saying that it

²⁵⁶ <https://biblehub.com/niv/john/4.htm>

²⁵⁷ <https://biblehub.com/esv/matthew/5.htm>

²⁵⁸ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/13.htm>

²⁵⁹ <https://biblehub.com/esv/john/19.htm>

foretells a mass conversion of Jews to Christianity? I think not. But judge for yourself, in light of all else which you have read here. And as you consider the question, consider also this: I do have at least one famous Jew to back me up on this, namely, the Apostle John. Regarding the crucifixion of Yeshua, and His being pierced in the side by a soldier who wanted to make certain that He was dead before taking Him down from the cross, John wrote (as was mentioned above),

31 Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. 35 He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. 36 For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken.” 37 And again another Scripture says, “They will look on him whom they have pierced.” (John 19:31-37; ESV)²⁶⁰

(Note: someone who was being crucified would have to push up on his legs in order to draw a breath. If his legs were broken, he would die of suffocation within minutes; so the soldiers broke the legs of those who were crucified with Jesus to make sure that they died quickly, and could then be taken down from the cross before sunset, which would mark the start of the Sabbath, one occurring on a major holy day, at that.)

Of course, here the Apostle John only quotes the very first part of the prophecy from Zechariah because on the day that Yeshua was crucified, only the very first portion of the prophecy was in fact fulfilled (*i.e.*, looking on Him whom they had pierced). But all the rest shall be fulfilled, *i.e.*, the realization of how great a mistake had been made by having Him pierced in His side, hands, and feet, and the mourning for Him that shall follow. So the fulfillment of the remainder of the prophecy from the Book of Zechariah has yet to come, though I certainly do think that it is coming soon. In the meantime, we can know that a Hebrew prophet of old, Zechariah, said so.

O. Hidden In Plain View

As you may recall, earlier on, in the section comparing the Christian and Jewish views of G-d, I mentioned that a Jewish believer in Yeshua whom I knew, a fellow who had been a cantor in his synagogue before becoming a Christian, had puzzled over how his fellow Jews could have missed the meaning of the fact that in Genesis, there is plain evidence that the oneness of the Lord G-d is a union instead of a singularity. Well actually, I certainly can understand his puzzlement, because the same thing holds true with respect to understanding the story of the Star of Bethlehem.

That is, for more than 2,000 years, people (principally Christians) have wondered how it is

²⁶⁰ <https://biblehub.com/esv/john/19.htm>

that anyone could possibly follow the Star from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, especially by starting out facing east (as Scripture implies), even though Bethlehem lies to the south-southwest of the Old City portion of Jerusalem.²⁶¹¹²⁹³ But figuring out the answer to that particular question did in fact turn out to be amazingly easy: namely, they followed the Star ... [drumroll, please] ... *by following the Star!*

For those of you who haven't read the text yet, I won't spoil it for you as to what I mean by that: *i.e.*, about the Magi following the Star by simply following the Star. I'll let you go ahead and read that part yourself. But as it turns out, the answer, plain as day, is really just that simple: they followed the Star just by following the Star. And yet, the way in which they did accomplish that has been hidden, albeit in plain view all the time, for 2,000 years.

Look at it this way: Have you ever misplaced your keys, or something else of value? Perhaps you went looking for it in numerous different places, and in maddening fashion you looked in several places a number of different times without finding your keys. And yet one time, when you went back to a place which you had already searched several times before, there they were, right in front of your eyes, right where they had been all along. And so it has been with the inability of the Jews to see that Yeshua is the Messiah, or the inability of Christians to see how it is that the Magi could have followed the Star. The answer to the question of whether He is the Messiah, or how the Magi followed the Star, has been there for us to see this whole time. It's just that this bit of knowledge has been hidden in plain view, like a misplaced set of keys.

So let no one get lost in thought, puzzling over how it is that virtually the whole Jewish people could possibly have looked at so much evidence and yet still have missed the fact that Yeshua is the Messiah. For sometimes the Lord G-d hides things in the hardest place of all for anyone to find them, for both Jew and gentile alike: right in front of our eyes.

P. The Sage Wisdom Of A Great Teacher Of The Law At The Time Of Yeshua

Shortly after Yeshua died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, His Apostles began preaching with great boldness that Yeshua is indeed the Messiah; thousands of Jews came to believe in Yeshua as a result of this. (Acts 6:7)²⁶² Within this time frame, the Sanhedrin---the ruling body of the Jews--- became angry with the Apostles for preaching about Yeshua. So they sent Temple guards to arrest Peter and John and bring them before them. (Acts 5:26)²⁶³ They then told Peter and John to stop preaching about Yeshua, but Peter countered by saying that he and the other apostles were required to obey G-d rather than men. (Acts 5:27-32)²⁶⁴

At that point, the members of the Sanhedrin became furious with them, and wanted to put them to death. (Acts 5:33)²⁶⁵ But one member of the Sanhedrin intervened; the Bible records what happened as follows:

²⁶¹ Matt. 2:9; <https://biblehub.com/kjv/matthew/2.htm>

²⁶² <https://biblehub.com/kjv/acts/6.htm>

²⁶³ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/5.htm>

²⁶⁴ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/5.htm>

²⁶⁵ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/5.htm>

34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council and gave orders to put the men outside for a short time. 35 And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you propose to do with these men. 36 “For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him. But he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. 37 “After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census and drew away *some* people after him; he too perished, and all those who followed him were scattered. 38 “So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown; 39 but if it is of G-d, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against G-d.” (Acts 5:34-39; NASB)²⁶⁶

When Christianity began, it started with a group of fishermen and other common folk for leaders. It started with about 500 people total (I Corinthians 5:6),²⁶⁷ and only about 120 of them were gathered together when the preaching about Yeshua started. (Acts 1:15)²⁶⁸ At the time, Christianity had no churches or synagogues, no universities or seminaries, no hospitals or other institutions. It owned no land. It possessed no army. It had the control of no government. For about 300 years, Christians were relentlessly and mercilessly persecuted by the Romans, who crucified them and threw them to the lions; and as we have just seen, the earliest Christians in Jerusalem were even despised and persecuted by their own rulers, the elders of the Jewish nation.

It is with that in mind that one should consider the sage advice of Gamaliel generally. And in so doing, one should then consider specifically whether his wisdom, in light of history, points to the conclusion that the ministry of Yeshua, and the spreading of His message from then until today, is indeed a work of the Lord G-d, one which would prosper, or a work of man, one which would fail, with its followers being scattered. So with the words of Gamaliel in mind, consider also the following passage from the Book of Isaiah:

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10-11; KJV)²⁶⁹

Q. Not By Might, Nor By Power

In addition to all else that is said herein regarding the possible role which Hanukkah may have had to play in determining the timing of the visit of the Magi (as noted in the text, and later on in this Appendix), there is one other aspect of Hanukkah to consider now as well. It is simply this: on

²⁶⁶ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/5.htm>

²⁶⁷ https://biblehub.com/kjv/1_corinthians/15.htm

²⁶⁸ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/1.htm>

²⁶⁹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/isaiah/55.htm>

Shabbat during Hanukkah (the first Shabbat, in a year in which Hanukkah may have two Shabbats), there is a Prophetic reading (the *haftarah*) which quotes from the Book of the Prophet Zechariah.²⁷⁰ An angel showed Zechariah a golden menorah accompanied by olive trees. When Zechariah said that he did not know the meaning of this vision, the angel said,

6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This *is* the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. (Zech. 4:6; KJV)²⁷¹

This verse, which was written around the year 3239-3242 (520-518 B.C.E./B.C.), is said by some rabbis to be a prophetic vision of the rededication of the Second Temple which would take place at Hanukkah almost four hundred years later.²⁷²

The reason I bring up this point at all is that the birth of Yeshua parallels the same thought which is expressed in that verse. For yes, it is true, first of all, that the Maccabees fought bravely and with great skill. But at the heart of it all, the reason for their triumph militarily, and also the reason for the miracle of one day's supply of oil lasting eight days, was not anchored in their might and power at war, but rather, by the move of G-d's spirit.

In like manner, within the confines of our own human thinking, we might perhaps think that the LORD G-d would bring in His Messiah with a great, conquering army. Yet according to what we see in both the Book of Isaiah in the Holy Scriptures, and the Gospels of the New Testament, that is not His manner of dealing with us; rather, He brings in His Messiah not as a conquering king, but rather as a newborn baby. And at that, this newborn does not enter into this world in a great palace, one that is warm and well-guarded, and providing for His every possible need. Rather, His Messiah is born in a stable when His parents are far from home. And once born, He is laid in a manger, from which the animals feed, for there is no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:6-7)²⁷³

What a complete and stark contrast this is with how any of us would plan things! For as I say, man, by his own thinking, would provide a conquering army and the sword in order to deliver G-d's people; but G-d instead chose to provide a helpless, newborn baby, one whom we must rely on (rather than relying on our own strength and devices) for deliverance from darkness and evil. A greater example of the principle of "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit" I simply cannot think of than this: G-d's provision for us is not an army, but rather, a gift of love, a newborn baby. Correct me if I am wrong, but in light of the prophecy of Zechariah and all the other writings of the Holy Scriptures, I really don't see how one could get more Jewish than that.

R. Is The Star Of Bethlehem Rooted In Judaism?

Now, having established as well as I can the basis for understanding the true relationship between Yeshua and Judaism, allow me to dwell on a point which may be as much of a surprise to

²⁷⁰ <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/transforming-hanukkah/>

²⁷¹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/zechariah/4.htm>

²⁷² <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/transforming-hanukkah/>

²⁷³ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/luke/2.htm>

the reader as any of the other points about Yeshua and Judaism which I have made. For it is a point which is virtually unknown even among Christians. You see, the story of the Star of Bethlehem does appear to have Jewish roots. I have dwelt on this point in the text of the book, and I shall go over it here again now because many who read this part of the Appendix might not have read the whole text itself.

The first five books of the Bible are commonly referred to collectively as the Pentateuch, or the Law of Moses.²⁷⁴ One of these books is the Book of Numbers, the fourth book of the Bible. It contains certain prophecies by a person named Balaam, including the following passage:

17 I see him, but not now; I
behold him, but not near;
A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter
shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through
the forehead of Moab,
And tear down all the sons of Sheth. (Num. 24:17; NASB)²⁷⁵

First of all, here we have a reference to a star coming forth from Jacob, the father of the Twelve Tribes of Israel,²⁷⁶ which would include, of course, the Tribe of Judah, which is the tribe of Jesus.²⁷⁷ We also see that the star refers to a ruler (which Messiah would be): for a scepter is a rod which is a symbol of authority.²⁷⁸ This verse also points out that the coming of this ruler is something which shall be foreseen ahead of time (“I see him, but not now;”).

This fits in perfectly with the Magi coming to understand that this Star would herald the coming of this ruler even before they could lay eyes on him personally, and quite possibly, even before his birth. It also fits the idea that, in beholding the Star, those who would foresee his coming would thereby be able to behold the ruler himself (at least indirectly, simply by beholding His Star), even though he might be far off (“I behold him, but not near;”). This would imply that those to whom this prophecy pertains would not be in Jerusalem, and perhaps not even in Israel itself, for according to this prophecy, the very ones who would foresee this event and understand what it meant would not be near to Him, and would then have to undertake a journey if they did wish to see him personally.

So the Magi may have concluded that this was a piece of the puzzle which pointed to them personally, a group of persons far away who could understand what this star meant. And such thoughts, if they did occur, would no doubt fill them with a sense that they were divinely obligated to go worship the newborn King of the Jews and proclaim Him to be King of the Jews, despite the danger, hardships, and cost.

²⁷⁴ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Pentateuch>

²⁷⁵ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/numbers/24.htm>

²⁷⁶ <https://www.biblestudy101.org/Lists/12tribes.html>

²⁷⁷ <https://www.jewishvoice.org/read/blog/who-are-tribes-judah>

²⁷⁸ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/scepter>

1. Who Holds The Scepter?

This prophecy from the Book of Numbers is not the only prophecy in the Bible which makes reference to a scepter for a ruler over Israel. For as Rick Larson has pointed out, in the Book of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, Jacob gave various prophecies over his sons as he lay on his death bed, and he gave this prophecy over his son Judah:

9 You are a lion's cub, Judah;
you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he
crouches and lies down,
like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?

10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the
ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it
belongs shall come
and the obedience of the nations shall be his. (Genesis 49:9- 10; NIV)²⁷⁹

Again, for emphasis, Jesus, King David, and King Solomon were all members of the Tribe of Judah.

As it turns out, this prophecy over Judah, in which Jacob calls Judah a lion, was then repeated by Balaam concerning all of the Children of Israel (Jacob) during the Exodus,²⁸⁰ just prior to Balaam's prophecy about the coming forth of a star from Jacob, as we can see here:

9 "He couches, he lies down as a lion,
And as a lion, who dares rouse him? Blessed is everyone who
blesses you, And cursed is everyone who curses you." (Num. 24:9;
NASB)²⁸¹

So all in all, we see that a star shall come forth from Israel (Jacob) signifying the arrival of a ruler, one who holds a scepter, that this ruler shall be from the tribe which is symbolized by a lion, the Tribe of Judah specifically, and that the obedience of the nations shall be His when He shall come. Any of the Magi who were Jewish would no doubt recognize this as being a prophecy about the coming forth of the Messiah.

The idea of the Messiah holding a scepter (a rod) is also given in yet another prophecy in the Old Testament:

1 Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together
Against the LORD and against His Anointed [Messiah], saying,

²⁷⁹ <https://biblehub.com/niv/genesis/49.htm>

²⁸⁰ https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1663/jewish/The-Exodus.htm

²⁸¹ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/numbers/24.htm>

3 “Let us tear their fetters apart And cast
away their cords from us!” 4 He who sits in
the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.
5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify
them in His fury, saying,
6 “But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion,
My holy mountain.”
7 “I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to
Me, ‘You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
8 ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,
And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.
9 ‘You shall break them with a rod of iron,
You shall shatter them like earthenware.” (Psalm 2:1-9; NASB)²⁸²

What a perfect prophecy of the Star of Bethlehem that verse is, especially for any of the Magi who may have been Jewish! Consider how perfectly this would fit with the experience which any Jewish Magi from Babylon (or other places to the east) would have had. For first of all, as I mentioned in the text of this book, when I was in the astronomy club in high school, any of us could have predicted the basic movements of the planets at least a few years in advance without even using any telescopes or other modern equipment, and without making reference to Kepler’s Laws of Motion.

By that I mean that even though the Magi did not have computer programs to show them exactly where the planets would be, they could know, just by carefully examining the recorded positions of the planets over the years, where to expect them to be at least a few years ahead of time. So even prior to the extremely close conjunction of Jupiter and Venus during Sivan in 3759 (June of 2 B.C.E./B.C.) they could have foreseen that event coming anyway (as the prophecy of Balaam indicated they would), even though they probably did not know ahead of time just exactly how close a conjunction that would be.

In other words, by their knowledge of astronomy, and with an assist from their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, they could “see” (*i.e.*, foresee) the coming of the King of the Jews, just as Balaam foretold, even though they could not do so “now” (*i.e.*, not at the time when they first discerned what the signs in the heavens were pointing to). And in that manner they could also thereby “behold” Him---in their minds’ eyes, at least---even though He was not near, and was instead still quite distant from them by many miles when they first discerned the meaning of these celestial signs, sometime around when He was born.

The prophecy then says that He (the Star) shall come forth from Jacob, *i.e.*, from all of Israel. This would be quite fitting for any Jewish Magi who were from Babylon, for as was noted in the text,

²⁸² <https://biblehub.com/nasb/psalms/2.htm>

the ancient Babylonians had considered the constellation Pisces to be the sign of the Jews. By that I mean this: the first of the two triple-conjunctions of Jupiter which we looked at in the text (*i.e.*, the triple-conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn) took place in Pisces. And as was also noted, Pisces is a constellation represented by two fish swimming off in opposite directions from one another, yet tied together by a cord. This is an apt representation of a people who were split apart, as the ancient Israelites had become from the time of King Solomon onward, with ten of the tribes forming the Kingdom of Israel (mostly in the north), while the tribes of Judah and Levy, who occupied Jerusalem, remained as a separate kingdom in the south, the Kingdom of Judah.

As to the ten tribes who formed the Kingdom of Israel, it is they, of course, who became scattered abroad by their enemies and became known as the Lost Tribes of Israel. And yet, all twelve tribes are still tied together nonetheless, for they are all children of Israel; and today's modern rabbinical council in Jerusalem, in fact, even recognizes that all those who can prove that they are descendants of any one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel are entitled, in most cases, to take advantage of the modern Israeli law which says they have the right to come to Israel and make it their home and apply for citizenship.^{283, 284}

So in other words, Babylonian Magi who were Jewish lived in a land in which the sign of the Jew (Pisces) was also a sign of Jacob (*i.e.*, all twelve tribes). And as I say, Pisces, as we have seen in the text, is where this triple-conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, signifying the coming forth of the king from the father, took place.

Now, as to whether the ancient Babylonians had this “united, yet divided” character of the Twelve Tribes in mind when they decided to call Pisces the sign of the Jew, I do not know. But the imagery of this constellation does fit the dual united/divided relationship of the Twelve Tribes to each other in any case, and that by itself is a sign for we ourselves today, if nothing else.

Then there is the part within this verse which says that a scepter shall arise from Israel. We have likewise already seen in the text of this book that in Jacob's prophecy over Judah, he said that the scepter shall not depart from Judah, whom he calls a lion's cub, until the Messiah comes; and Judah was, of course, one of the sons of Jacob (*i.e.*, Israel). So as the scepter arises in the hand of the Messiah, who is, of course, of the tribe of Judah (one of the sons of Jacob/Israel), the scepter thereby also arises from Israel. And the lion (Leo), which is the symbol of the tribe of Judah, is where the apparent merger of Jupiter and Venus took place, and where the three triple events of Jupiter, which we looked at in the text, took place.

So, if you were a Jewish Magus living in Babylon when the triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn took place, followed by the triple conjunction of Jupiter with the star Regulus (the king star, and the brightest star of the constellation Leo, the constellation of royalty), which was then followed by the triple conjunction of Jupiter with Venus, likewise in Leo, what would you make of all that, in light of this prophecy from the Book of Numbers? Would it not perhaps have an impact on your thinking

²⁸³ <https://shavei.org/lost-tribe-of-israel-returning-home/>

²⁸⁴ <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ask-the-expert-lost-tribes/>

regarding the coming of the Messiah, particularly in light of all the other things we have looked at in this book, and perhaps cause you to conclude that Jupiter was the Messiah's Star (when it went through these various events, at least), and that you should closely observe its movements if you wished to know when the King Himself would be born, and when one should go to pay homage to Him?

Apparently, the Apostle Matthew, whose Gospel contains the story of the Star of Bethlehem, was oblivious to all of this. For surely, if he had recalled this prophecy from the Book of Numbers, he undoubtedly would have mentioned it in his Gospel. As it turns out, though, the very fact that he overlooked this prophecy does help prevent damage to his credibility; for if he had mentioned this prophecy from the Book of Numbers, many might think that he was simply concocting his story about the Star to fit this Old Testament prophecy.

So the fact that he apparently forgot about this prophecy (assuming he ever did hear of it at all) has a silver lining. For we can now assess Matthew's account of the Star of Bethlehem on its own merits, and with actual support from the Book of Numbers, rather than having Matthew's account of this story be under a cloud of suspicion that Matthew's statements were all just made up to fit the prophecy from the Book of Numbers. Here is yet another example of something which is not said in Scripture being as important to our understanding the reliability of the Scriptures as those things which are said therein, just as we saw in Part Four of the text of this book.

S. Where Does This All Lead?

In this section I shall, for the most part, reiterate what I said at the conclusion of the text itself. Now, that being said, one might wonder, "What is the point of all this? Where does the entire story about Yeshua lead us?" Here is what Yeshua Himself had to say about that:

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. (John 14:23; NASB)²⁸⁵

And again, one time when Yeshua was praying He said:

22 "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; **23** I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me. (John 17:22-23; NASB)²⁸⁶

The author of that Gospel (the Apostle John) then went on to say this in one of his letters (epistles):

24 The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us. (1 John 3:24;

²⁸⁵ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/john/14.htm>

²⁸⁶ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/john/17.htm>

NASB)²⁸⁷

And likewise:

7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. (I John 1:7; NASB)²⁸⁸

This all harkens back to what the Lord G-d had told Moses during the Exodus:

45 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their G-d. 46 And they shall know that I *am* the LORD their G-d, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I *am* the LORD their G-d. (Exodus 29:45-46; KJV)²⁸⁹

The Prophet Isaiah had this to say as well:

15 For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. (Isaiah 57:15; KJV)²⁹⁰

Likewise, the Prophet Zechariah added this:

10 Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. (Zechariah 2:10; KJV)²⁹¹

King David added this thought, in his famous “The LORD is my shepherd” psalm:

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. (Psalm 23:6; KJV)²⁹²

Getting back to the Law of Moses, for a moment, the LORD had this to say:

12 And I will walk among you, and will be your G-d, and ye shall be my people. (Leviticus 26:12; KJV)²⁹³

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul would refer to that very Scripture:

For we are the temple of the living G-d; as G-d said,

²⁸⁷ https://biblehub.com/nasb/1_john/1.htm

²⁸⁸ https://biblehub.com/kjv/1_john/1.htm

²⁸⁹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/exodus/29.htm>

²⁹⁰ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/isaiah/57.htm>

²⁹¹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/zechariah/2.htm>

²⁹² <https://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/23.htm>

²⁹³ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/leviticus/26.htm>

“I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their G-d,
and they shall be my people. (II Corinthians 6:16b; ESV)²⁹⁴

In other words, all throughout the Bible, in both the Old and the New Testaments, we can see that the focus of the Lord G-d’s plan for us was for us to have fellowship with Him, and Him with us, first by the cleansing of our sins, and then by our acceptance of His atoning blood, so that the fellowship between us and the Lord G-d might then be restored. Having close fellowship with G-d is the way the Lord G-d wanted things to be from the very beginning, in fact, when the Lord G-d sought to walk with man in the garden in the cool of the evening. (Genesis 3:8-9)²⁹⁵ With that in mind, the words of the Prophet Isaiah bear repeating yet again:

12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.

13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off. (Isaiah 55:12-13; KJV)²⁹⁶

As it also says in the final book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation:

3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of G-d is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and G-d Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:3-4; NASB)²⁹⁷

This hope of restored fellowship with the Lord G-d doesn’t just end with our death here on Earth, fortunately. As Yeshua Himself said to the sister of Lazarus,

25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25; NASB)²⁹⁸

Is your own, personal answer to Yeshua’s question, “Yes”? Do you believe Him? Do you believe that everyone who believes in Him will never really die, because in Him they will receive eternal life after their earthly life? Do you believe that Yeshua is the one whom King David identified as the Son of G-d (Psalm 2:7),²⁹⁹ that He is Messiah the Prince (Daniel 9:25),³⁰⁰ the one whose

²⁹⁴ https://biblehub.com/kjv/2_corinthians/6.htm

²⁹⁵ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/genesis/3.htm>

²⁹⁶ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/isaiah/55.htm>

²⁹⁷ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/revelation/21.htm>

²⁹⁸ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/john/11.htm>

²⁹⁹ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/psalms/2.htm>

³⁰⁰ <https://biblehub.com/kjv/daniel/9.htm>

origins are from of old, from ancient times (Micah 5:2),³⁰¹ the one whom the Holy Scriptures call “The mighty G-d, The everlasting Father” (Isaiah 9:6b),³⁰² the one who is our Savior from our sins, in whom we can have eternal life?

If in fact your answer to that question is, “Yes,” the next question then becomes, “How do we take advantage of the Lord G-d’s offer to restore our fellowship with Him and His fellowship with us? How do we take advantage of the atoning death of Yeshua and receive eternal life?” In answer to that, Yeshua Himself had this to say in a message to the early Christians, which He sent through the Apostle John:

20 ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. (Revelation 3:20; NASB)³⁰³

The Apostle Paul had this to say as well:

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that G-d raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; (Romans 10:9; NASB)³⁰⁴

Putting it all together, then, it comes down to this: if you are now convinced Yeshua is the one whom the Bible says He is, and if you are prepared to accept His forgiveness of sin and recognize Him as the Messiah, the one who was promised of old, then do these two things. First, pray this prayer:

Lord Yeshua, I know that I have sinned. I know that You died for me to save me from my sins and that You rose from the dead so that I might have eternal life. I open the door of my heart to You and ask you to come in. I ask You to forgive me of all my sins, and to save me unto eternal life. I recognize You as my Lord and Savior. I thank You Lord, and praise You. Amen.

Second, tell people about this. Tell them that you came to believe in Yeshua and that you have accepted Him as your Lord, and that you recognize Him as being the Messiah. Here is what Yeshua Himself had to say about this part:

32 “Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. 33 “But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32-33; NASB)³⁰⁵

So proclaiming Yeshua publicly is a very, very important part about taking Yeshua up on His offer to cleanse us from all sin and give us the gift of eternal life. Therefore, start telling people about

³⁰¹ <https://biblehub.com/niv/micah/5.htm>

³⁰² <https://biblehub.com/kjv/isaiah/9.htm>

³⁰³ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/revelation/3.htm>

³⁰⁴ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/romans/9.htm>

³⁰⁵ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/matthew/10.htm>

this, and do so as soon as you can. Tell the whole world, in fact. It might not be easy to tell some of your friends or your family about this, and so they might not necessarily be the very first ones you tell this to. But do make a point of going public with this to some people you know, at least, and in very short order then also tell everyone else as well, including your family. That is very important.

You might need help with this, particularly if you are one of the ones to whom this section specifically is written: the Jews. Fortunately, back in the 1960s and '70s, a great movement got started among Jews who, like yourself, came to believe that Yeshua is the Messiah. As a consequence, large numbers of Jews have come to believe in Yeshua as the Messiah within about the past fifty years or so. And as one might expect, organizations of Jews who believe in Yeshua (who call themselves “Messianic Jews”) have sprung up. One of them, for instance, is “Jews for Jesus”. Their web site is: <http://jewsforjesus.org/?gclid=COaDmfiB2s8CFY-EaQodFm0BJg>. There is also Chosen People Ministries: <https://chosenpeople.com>, the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues: <http://iamcs.org>, and an older organization as well, the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America: <http://mjaa.org>, along with several other groups as well in the U.S.

There is also Kirt Schneider, who has his own web site and Facebook page: <http://discoveringthejewishjesus.com>, and likewise Sid Roth: <https://sidroth.org>. In Britain, there is the British Messianic Alliance: <http://www.theimja.org/category/british-messianic/>. I recommend that you contact some of them as soon as you can. You might also wish to start out locally, if there are fellow Messianic Jews in your vicinity. You can use Google Maps with the words “messianic”, “Jewish”, “congregation”, and the name of your town. You might find a Messianic congregation or two which holds regular services in your area. If you have any trouble finding one, the national organizations listed above should be able to help you with your desire to come to know Yeshua in a better and deeper way. And of course, you are always welcome to attend a gentile Christian church if you should wish to do so.

So here is my prayer for you: that you may come to know Him, and that you may come to know Him more and more each day in a rich and exciting way. And if you could contact me via my website to let me know the good news about your finding out who Yeshua really is, I would appreciate hearing from you very much. In closing then, I simply say, “Shalom!” And enjoy the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhnAbIF-f6s>.

APPENDIX SECTION XXII

THE BETHLEHEM DETOUR

As we saw in the text, the detour road east of Bethlehem branched off to the southwest from the east-west road at a heading of 212, and since Jupiter probably would have had an azimuth of at least 214 at that point, it is not likely that the Magi would have taken this detour road, if it did exist at all. Yet even if they did, it apparently would have caused them to have only a minor delay. The reason for this is that after only 0.61 miles, the road comes to a road which runs northwest-southeast. The path to the southeast could not possibly have been the proper path to take (with a heading of 111), and taking the path to the northwest (with a heading of 282) would have been the only logical choice

to make.



The main intersections of the Bethlehem Detour road. The east-west (horizontal) road to the town of Bethlehem (off the screen on the left) is shown in pale yellow. At the east end of the Bethlehem Detour road (near the right-center), the horizontal red line shows how the path to Bethlehem would have continued if the Magi had stayed on that road, and the red line running down and to the left shows the path they would have followed if they had gone off on the Bethlehem Detour.

Image from Google Earth Pro: <https://google-earth-pro.en.softonic.com/mac>
Photograph by the author.



Further along the Detour road, it comes to the next main intersection, and to continue heading west instead of plunging further south, the Magi would have to have gone up from here to the northwest (upper right), at a heading of about 282, as the red line shows. The azimuth of Jupiter at that point (shown by the middle line) would have been about 221; the heading of the road (shown by the third line) is 192.

Image from Google Earth Pro:<https://google-earth-pro.en.softonic.com/mac> Photograph by the author.

This path then would have come back to the east-west road leading to Bethlehem which they had just been on after another 1.00 miles, and at that point, it would have been obvious not to take that road back toward the east (with a heading of 107), but rather to resume taking that road to the west instead, toward Bethlehem, along a heading of about 292; for throughout this whole time, Jupiter's azimuth would have gone from a range of 214 to 221 to a range of 231 to 233.5. See the following illustration:



Heading up to the northwest then, their journey would have taken them to the point where they would have reached the intersection with the east-west (pale yellow) road to Bethlehem once more (near the center of the photo), where the road to the west had a heading of about 293 (the red line running up and to the left), while Jupiter, at the same time, would have had an azimuth of about 233 (the red line running down and to the left).

Image from Google Earth Pro: <https://google-earth-pro.en.softonic.com/mac> Photograph by the author.

In any case, the Bethlehem Detour route would have added 1.61 miles to their journey; but if they had in fact taken the Bethlehem Detour, all they would have to have done to make up for this and yet still reach Bethlehem by 6:30 A.M. would have been to have a rate of travel of anywhere from 2.20 to

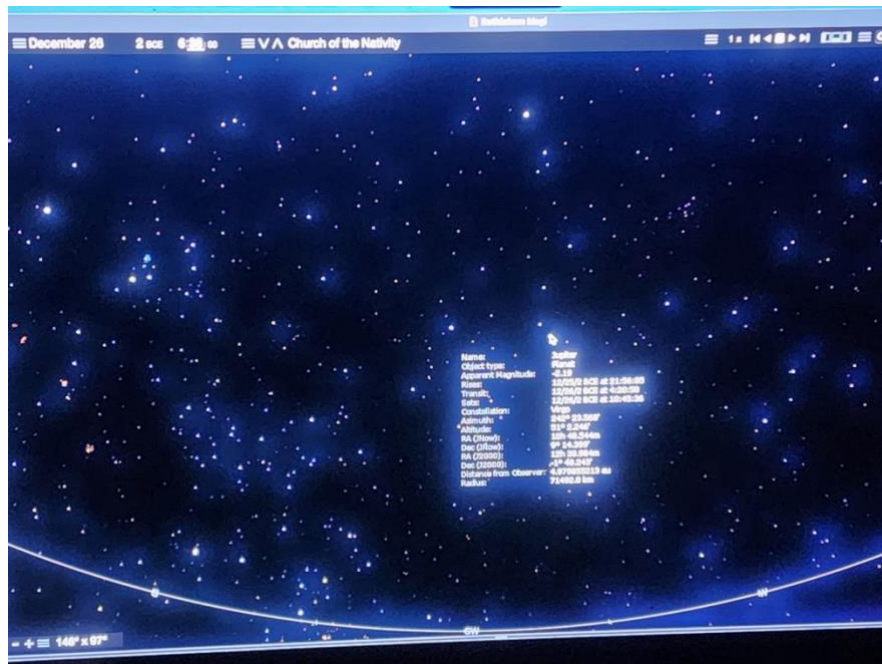
2.34 MPH (if they left Jerusalem at midnight) or perhaps up to 2.76 MPH (if they had left at 1:00 A.M.). The top end of this grouping (2.76 MPH) does seem a bit difficult to have achieved when one includes the time that would have been needed to stop to rest at times. But since, as I say, I believe that Jupiter's azimuth would have been past the heading of the detour road when they came to it, I think it is quite unlikely that they would have taken the detour road, anyway.

APPENDIX SECTION XXIII

THE SOUTHERN CROSS ON THE NIGHT THE MAGI VISITED JESUS

There is another sign for us to consider, one which would have been directly on the theoretical southern horizon when they arrived. At that one moment, however, they would not in fact have been able to see it. For to the south, as they would approach the place where Jesus was likely born (*i.e.*, at the present-day Church of the Nativity) there was a ridge. So the southern horizon would have been hidden by this ridge. And of course, as we have seen, the Bible says that when they came to Bethlehem, the Star stood over the place where Jesus was. So as I have pointed out, the house where Jesus was may well have been along that ridge.

Here's what that means with respect to the other sign in the heavens which I was talking about: As the Magi faced the house where Jesus was, if they had been able to see through the ridge while they were looking in His direction, here is what the southern horizon would have looked like:



View southwest from Bethlehem (with daylight removed) about the time when Jupiter would have faded from view in the morning twilight, showing Jupiter, with an azimuth of about 242 degrees. Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

Once again, this doesn't seem to mean all that much to you and I. But let me show you what this looks like when we view the constellations which were there from how the Magi could have perceived it:



View southwest from Bethlehem (with daylight removed) about the time Jupiter would have faded from view, showing the Southern Cross (Crux; near the bottom, halfway between the center and the left side) pointing toward Jupiter, which itself had an azimuth of about 242 degrees.

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

In other words, at the time when they would have been either at the bottom of the ridge or else outside of Jesus' house looking at the place where He lived, He Himself would have been hidden from their view, and likewise the Cross (Crux; the Southern Cross) would have been hidden from their view. Yet right in their line of sight, if you could have removed the structure of the house and the ridge, and removed the glow of daylight, they would have seen the Cross (at a heading angling from 199 to 203 degrees) anchored at the inn, and pointing to the Savior Himself---as represented by the Star, Jupiter---at a heading of about 242.³⁰⁶ So at any time that they would have been in front of the inn at around 6:30 on that morning, the Cross, presumably, may have been pointing---albeit in hidden fashion---to Jupiter, and possibly also to the house where Jesus and Mary could be found.

Consider how poetic that is. Do you recall what I mentioned above, about how the Magi rejoiced when they "saw" the Star, meaning in the sense of understanding the Star with their minds, and finally grasping the meaning of the Star, as they were looking up and beholding it simultaneously with their eyes? At that point they saw the Star in the physical sense, with their eyes, and they also saw it with the mind's eye, with their understanding. Well, in direct contrast to that, at this same moment, as they approached the house where Jesus was, they neither saw the Cross with their eyes physically, nor could they have seen it with the mind's eye, for they could not have known of the horrible crucifixion death which awaited Him.

Thus, they could not have perceived or understood the meaning of the Cross in any event,

³⁰⁶ Note: due to an ongoing phenomenon known as the precession of the earth's axis (<https://pwg.gsfc.nasa.gov/stargaze/Sprecess.htm>), it is the case that in our modern era, only the northern-most of the bright stars of the Southern Cross can be seen from the latitude of Bethlehem.

even though it was truly there. In summation, while it is the case that the one thing which they could see with their eyes physically in the house (Jesus in the bosom of Mary), is something which they could also see in the heavens with the mind's eye (the Star in the bosom of the virgin), it is also the case by contrast that one thing which they could not see physically with their eyes (the Southern Cross), they likewise could not have seen with the mind's eye, either.

And yet oddly enough, despite all of this, they apparently were preparing Him for His crucifixion and death, anyway. For let us keep in mind that in addition to bringing Jesus gold, they also brought Him frankincense and myrrh. Frankincense and myrrh are expensive resins.³⁰⁷ Frankincense, as we noted previously, was used in priestly functions as a symbol of the prayers of God's people; and significantly, together with myrrh, it was also used for burial purposes.³⁰⁸

Now, I know that some may object to this aspect of my presentation on the grounds that at the time when Jesus was born, Crux was not recognized as a constellation by itself, and was simply considered to be part of the constellation Centaurus. In fact, it was not until the mid-1400s A.D. that Crux was even described as a specific celestial formation; and it was not until 1679 A.D. that Crux was fully accepted as a separate and distinct constellation.³⁰⁹ But here again we have the same invalid objection as before, when we were considering the signs in the heavens about the Annunciation. For such an objection simply assumes that the Magi 2,000 years ago would have to have been the intended recipients of this sign instead of we ourselves today. So this type of objection would be no more valid in this context than it would be in the previous context about the celestial signs of the Annunciation.

It is also worth noting that as the night progressed, the cross (Crux) moved through the heavens in a way which continued to point to and follow the Star:

³⁰⁷ <https://www.auracacia.com/blog/why-are-some-essential-oils-more-expensive#:~:text=Rarity%20of%20the%20Plant&text=Several%20plants%2C%20such%20as%20frankincense,more%20rare%20and%20therefore%20intensive.>

³⁰⁸ <https://juliamartins.co.uk/the-medicine-behind-the-nativity-gifts-frankincense-and-myrrh-revisited>

³⁰⁹ <https://www.constellation-guide.com/constellation-list/crux-constellation/>



Crux (lower right, above the white horizon line) and Jupiter in Virgo as seen from Bethlehem at 2:00 A.M. on the morning of December 26, 2 B.C.

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.



Crux (lower edge of screen, just to the right of center) along with Jupiter in Virgo (upper center) as seen from Bethlehem at 4:00 A.M. on the morning of December 26, 2 B.C.

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.



Crux (along the bottom, between the center and the left edge) and Jupiter in Virgo (above) as seen from Bethlehem at 6:00 A.M. on the morning of December 26, 2 B.C.

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

Although this would happen only every 12 years or so (as Jupiter made its way in its orbit around the sun), there is nothing highly unusual about the astronomical aspects of this other than that; for based on the astronomy of the matter, one would expect a celestial formation in that position---which was configured at that angle, and pointing to where Jupiter was that night---to continue to point to the position where Jupiter was as the night progressed.

Even so, it is interesting to note nonetheless that this is how the heavens were arranged that night. For it leads one to wonder whether this too was a sign from God instead of just a coincidence, a sign which was planned by God ahead of time, from the very beginning of time (as I myself do in fact believe).

APPENDIX SECTION XXIV

DR. CALLAHAN'S COMPOSITE WORK

The Cover Of Dr. Callahan's Book, Showing Dr. Callahan's Composite Work



The cover of Dr. Callahan's book about the tilma.
Photograph by the author.

APPENDIX SECTION XXV

PROBATIVE VALUE

Probative value is a concept in the Law of Evidence. The Law of Evidence is probably the field of law in which logic plays its greatest role. The use of logic in the Law of Evidence is essentially the same as the use of logic in the hard sciences; the basic concepts are all the same, and they operate the same way in either field.

Something which is offered as evidence is said to have probative value if it will make it more likely that some alleged fact is true than would be the case if it were not allowed into evidence.³¹⁰ For instance, let us say that company ABC sues company XYZ, claiming that ABC is entitled to a \$10,000 bonus on a contract for delivering a particular set of goods to XYZ before noon on a given date. Company XYZ claims, however, that the goods were not delivered before noon on that date.

ABC seeks to have the delivery driver testify. The driver can recall that he did deliver the goods to XYZ on that date, but he cannot recall when. ABC thinks that the driver will make a good witness, and that he will convince the jury that he really did try in good faith to deliver the goods before noon; but since he cannot recall when it was that he actually did deliver the goods, he will not be allowed to testify at trial. For the fact that he did deliver the goods on the day in question, just

³¹⁰ <https://legaldictionary.net/probative-value/>

by itself, has no more tendency to prove that he did deliver the goods before noon than it has to prove that he actually delivered the goods at some time after noon. Consequently, his testimony that he did deliver the goods on the day in question, just by itself, is said to have no probative value with respect to whether he delivered the goods before noon or not, and so he will not be allowed to testify at all at trial.

Let us say that before trial, however, ABC learns that that same driver did make a delivery to a company in another town at 12:30 P.M. on that same day, and that it would have taken him at least an hour and a half to get from XYZ to where that 12:30 delivery was made; and the driver can also testify that he made that 12:30 delivery only after he had first made his delivery to ABC.

This would mean that he must have made the delivery to ABC before noon: *i.e.*, probably around 11:00 A.M. So now he can be allowed to testify that he made the delivery to XYZ on the day in question, because now his testimony that he did make the delivery to XYZ on that date---when taken together with his testimony that he did make the delivery to XYZ first, along with evidence that it would have taken him at least an hour and a half to get to the place where he made the 12:30 delivery---is said to have probative value; for all of these things, when taken together, have a tendency to prove, at least on the face of things, that it is more likely than not that ABC really did deliver the goods to XYZ before noon on that date.

The bottom line, for purposes of our discussion, is this: Does the fact that some particular fact is consistent with one explanation somehow mean that that explanation is more likely than an alternative, competing explanation? If so, then the existence of that fact can have some tendency to prove one point or another; but if not, then testimony about that fact has no probative value, in which case it would be irrational to consider it to be evidence of either one conclusion or another.

Such is the case with discussions about the similarity between what we see on the tilma of Juan Diego on the one hand and Aztec myths and images from Roman Catholicism on the other hand: If any of these similarities would have no more tendency to show that they were placed there by man as a matter of syncretism than they would have to show that God placed them there as a miraculous sign to the native people and to the Spanish conquistadors, then the fact that we see certain things on the tilma which do overlap with Aztec and Catholic imagery can have no probative value, just by itself, to show that the similarity in imagery between the two was placed there either by man on the one hand or by God on the other hand.

APPENDIX SECTION XXVI

ASCERTAINING THE SPOT ON EARTH BENEATH JUPITER AND VENUS AT THEIR CLOSEST APPROACH

The apparent position of a planet or the Moon against the background of stars at any given moment can appear to be just slightly different to observers located at different places. This is because an observer at one location on Earth will be looking at it from at least a slightly different angle against the background of stars than someone at another location. And so the exact time as to when two planets or the Moon would appear to be lined up together can vary, too.

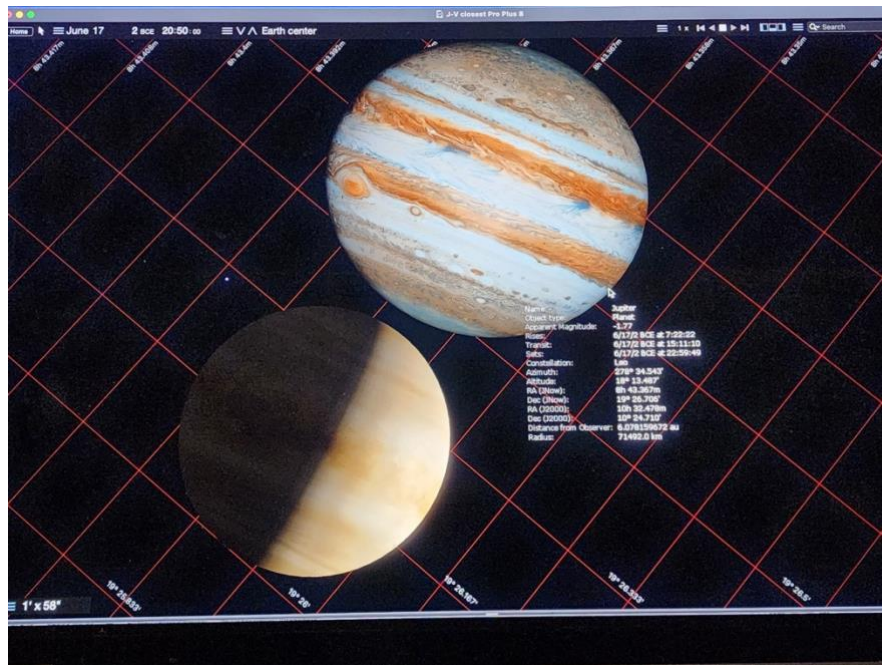
This problem is addressed by the astronomical community by accepting the idea that the positions of the planets is to be determined as seen from the center of Earth, as though one could look up through Earth from its center and into the heavens at the center of each of those planets. This eliminates the problem of having multiple apparent positions of a planet for any given moment.

Modern computer programs, such as Starry Night, allow one to visualize the planets as seen from the center of Earth. Of course, how the planets actually appear to an observer located along the surface of a given body, such as Earth, must still be determined from the perspective of the observer.

All things being held equal, one can then simply take note of the RA and Dec of that object and go to a spot on Earth at the latitude corresponding to the Dec, and along the line of longitude which has the same so-called sidereal time (a concept which we shall consider momentarily) as the RA of the object. That will be the spot from which the particular object will appear to be directly overhead at that moment, and this will correspond to the exact same view which one would have if one could look up at it from the center of the Earth.

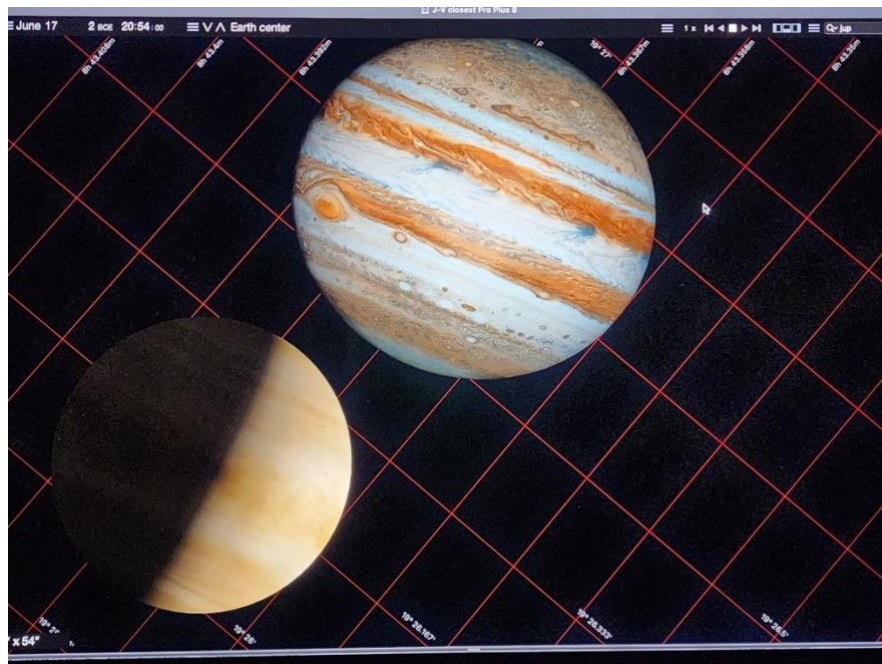
With respect to two different objects coming into conjunction, by comparison, virtually the only change which one would ordinarily have to make if one wanted to find the mid-point of their respective positions (again, all things being held equal) would be to choose a line of latitude corresponding to the average Dec. of the two objects at the time that they each have the same RA. The thing is, for planetary conjunctions, only rarely are all things held equal.

For instance, something which usually complicates this approach will be the fact that the exact moment that a planet appears to come closest to another planet or to a star will rarely be the same moment as the one in which the two are lined up in terms of their Right Ascension. That is because the east-west component of each planet's motion against the background of stars will only rarely be exactly parallel to the lines of Declination (and furthermore, the orbital planes of two planets will never be exactly parallel to each other, in any event). So two planets can reach their apparent closest point of approach during any given conjunction at a time other than the exact moment when they are lined up in terms of their Right Ascension; and in fact, this is commonly the case:



Jupiter and Venus at the apparent closest approach of Jupiter to the apparent center of brightness of Venus at 20:50:00 UTC on June 17, 2 B.C.

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.



Jupiter and Venus at the conjunction of Jupiter with the apparent center of brightness of Venus at 20:54:00 UTC on June 17, 2 B.C.

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

An additional factor must be brought into play here with respect to Venus. For although Jupiter appeared to be almost uniformly lit at that time as seen from Earth, Venus did not. Rather, since Venus is one of the so-called inner planets (*i.e.*, its orbit, like that of Mercury, lies closer to the

Sun than the orbit of Earth), it will appear to go through phases of illumination in much the same way that the Moon does. And at this point in time, as could be seen through a telescope (if one had been available), and as is illustrated in the photos above, Venus would look like a Half-Moon (at the time of the actual conjunction itself).

What this means is that the apparent center of brightness of Venus (which would be its apparent position as seen from Earth) would not match the true astronomical position of the planet as a whole (which would of course be based on the exact position of the center of the planet as a whole, rather than the center of just the illuminated part). So in ascertaining what the apparent positions of these two planets with respect to each other would be, one would have to calculate this using the center of brightness of each rather than the actual center itself of each.

For Jupiter, for the reason just given above, its apparent position (*i.e.*, the center of brightness) would be virtually the same as its true astronomical position, and so no meaningful correction would be needed for Jupiter with respect to its actual position as compared to its apparent center of brightness. But for Venus, one would have to calculate its apparent position on the basis of the location of the center of brightness of the planet rather than the location of the actual center of the planet itself.

In calculating what the position of each of these two planets was at that time, I shall use the same approach to rounding off numbers as I use in the text with respect to calculating how long it would have taken the Magi to travel between different intersections on their way down to Bethlehem; that is to say, rather than round off numbers at the beginning, I shall save all rounding off until the end so that the reader can know that the results are as reasonably reliable as I can make them.

Now, as we can see above, the apparent closest approach of Jupiter to the center of brightness of Venus took place at approximately 20:50:00 UTC.³¹¹ (Note: This was when the center of the sunlit portion of Venus---which is the only portion which would be visible---was most closely lined up with Jupiter.) So all things being held equal, this is when the planets would have appeared to come closest together and to have formed their greatest combined brightness.

Specifically, the apparent visual Declination of the center of brightness of Venus (as nearly as I can determine) was +19d 26.25m (+19d 26m 15s).³¹² In other words, in terms of the Declination of the apparent midpoint between the two planets, this would lie at the average Declination of the two positions (*i.e.*, the actual position of Jupiter, and the center of brightness of Venus): specifically, at +19d 26.478 minutes.³¹³ Stated another way, in terms of Declination, the apparent mid-point of the two would lie at +19 degrees 26 minutes 28.68 seconds;³¹⁴ and so it must follow that in terms of terrestrial coordinates, the apparent mid-point of the two would be over some point along the line

³¹¹ This would be from the proper astronomical perspective, which, as was discussed earlier, would be from the point of view of someone at the center of the Earth, if that person were to be able to see through the Earth and up into the heavens.

³¹² Delta T 598.4 for all observations on the night of June 17th, 2 B.C.

³¹³ 26.706 minutes (for Jupiter) + 26.25 minutes (for the center of brightness of Venus) = 52.956 minutes; then divided by 2 = 26.478 minutes

³¹⁴ 0.478 minutes X 60 seconds/minute = 28.68 seconds.

of Latitude 19 degrees 26 minutes 28.68 seconds North.

Moving on, at that moment, Jupiter had an RA of 8h 43.367m (8 hours 43 minutes 22.02 seconds), while the center of brightness of Venus had an RA of 8h 43.353m (8 hours 43 minutes 21.18 seconds). So in terms of Right Ascension, the midpoint between Jupiter and the apparent position of Venus would be at RA 8h 43.36m (8 hours 43 minutes 21.6 seconds). That being said, our project now turns to the task of determining the line of longitude for the mid-point between the two.

To find the line of longitude on Earth which corresponded to the RA of the mid-point between Jupiter and the center of brightness of Venus at their apparent closest approach, we would have to locate the line of longitude which, at that moment, had a sidereal time equal to that RA (8h 43.36m; *i.e.*, 8 hours 43 minutes 21.6 seconds). To find this line of longitude, let us now look at the concept of sidereal time.

A. Sidereal Time And Its Application Here

Sidereal time is an astronomical tool which is used for determining where in the heavens one should look for an object or, in the alternative, for determining whether an object is either above or below the horizon. All locations above any specific line of longitude on Earth will have the same sidereal time at any given moment, from the North Pole all the way to the South Pole, and with each passing second in time, the sidereal time of each line of longitude on Earth will then correspondingly change (specifically, it will increase) by one second.

A sidereal clock is different from an ordinary clock because a sidereal clock has only 23 hours, 56 minutes, and 4 seconds instead of 24 hours exactly. That is because a star with any given Right Ascension will come back to the same spot as it was on the previous night about 4 minutes earlier (more precisely, 3 minutes and 56 seconds earlier). Just to give one example, a star which had been directly on the meridian at Midnight on one night will be on the meridian at 11:56 P.M. the following night, and at 11:52 the night after that, etc. This is caused by Earth's orbit around the sun, which makes the heavens appear to progress at a rate of four minutes per day.

Four minutes might not seem like a lot, but if you stop and think about it, it does add up. There are, after all, seven days in a week, so in one week, the heavens have shifted by roughly half an hour (approximately 28 minutes, specifically). There are just over four weeks in a month, so the heavens will have shifted by about two hours per month. And since there are twelve months per year, in one year the heavens will have made one complete circuit of 24 hours, bringing the various constellations and stars back into the same position at the same time of night (or day) which they had been in during the previous year on that same day and time.

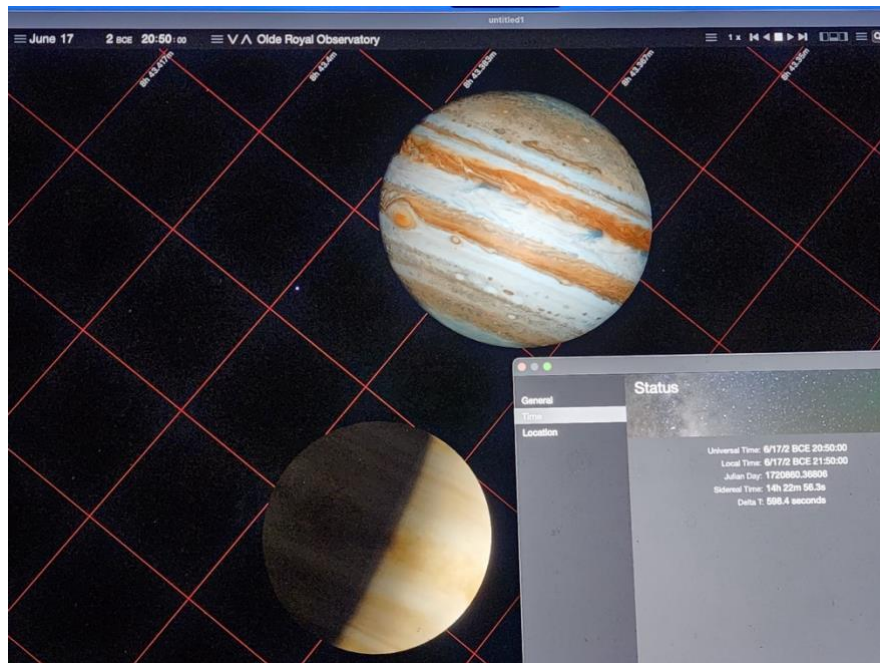
Now, the sidereal time for any given line of longitude at any particular moment is the same as the RA of the celestial objects on the meridian. For example, if the Right Ascension line of 6 hours 0 minutes and 0 seconds is on the meridian along a particular line of longitude on earth, then the sidereal time of any point on earth along that line of longitude will be 6 hours 0 minutes and 0 seconds. So if one is looking at that moment for an object that has an RA which is less than that (*e.g.*, 5 hours

0 minutes and 0 seconds), one would look to the west (to the right) of the meridian³¹⁵ (by 15 degrees, since there are 15 degrees of longitude in each hour of RA).

One would then look north or south along that line until one came to the Declination for the object, and that is where one would find the object. Similarly, if at that same moment one wished to find an object which had an RA which is greater than the RA at the meridian (e.g., 7 hours 0 minutes 0 seconds), one would look instead to the east (to the left) of the meridian (specifically, by 15 degrees),³¹⁶ and then search along that line until one came to the Declination of the object which one wants to find.

All that being said, we will need a starting point for this next leg of our inquiry, and we will need to determine what the sidereal time was there. Technically, one could start anywhere. But to standardize things, let us start with the Old Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England, which is where the universally standardized time of UTC (Universal Coordinated Time, otherwise known as “Zulu”) is based from, and which is the central reference point for all lines of longitude on earth: *i.e.*, the Observatory has a longitude of 0 degrees 0 minutes 0.0 seconds, East or West.

As we can see from Starry Night, at this particular moment in time (20:50:00 UTC), the sidereal time at the Observatory was 14 hours 22 minutes 56.3 seconds (14h 22.9383m):



The sidereal time of the Olde Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England at the apparent closest approach of Jupiter to the center of brightness of Venus (at 20:50:00 UTC) on June 17, 2 B.C. Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

³¹⁵ *i.e.*, to the right, from the perspective of someone in the northern hemisphere facing south, or to the left, from the perspective of someone south of the equator facing north

³¹⁶ *i.e.*, to the left, from the perspective of someone in the southern hemisphere facing north, or to the left, from the perspective of someone north of the equator facing south

So from this we find that the sidereal time of the Royal Observatory was greater than the RA of the apparent mid-point of Jupiter and Venus at that time.

Recall from our discussion above that sidereal time increases as one looks farther east, and conversely, it decreases as one looks farther west. So we can know from this that since the RA of the mid-point between Jupiter and Venus was less than the sidereal time of the Royal Observatory, the place on Earth beneath the apparent mid-point of the two planets would lie to west of the Observatory.

Thus, in order to determine the sidereal time of the line of longitude which would lie beneath the mid-point of these two planets, one would subtract the RA of the midpoint between the two planets from the sidereal time of the Observatory. So, 14 hours 22.9383 minutes (the sidereal time of the Observatory) minus 8 hours 43.36m (the RA of the mid-point between Jupiter and the apparent position of Venus) equals 5 hours 39.5783 minutes; this is how far west of the meridian at the Greenwich Observatory one would find the mid-point between Jupiter and Venus, in terms of Right Ascension.

Since this distance (expressed here in terms of RA), when expressed in terms of longitude, would be most simply calculated in terms of degrees of longitude themselves, and fractions thereof (rather than degrees, minutes, and seconds of longitude), we shall convert this figure to strictly hours of RA; for we can then simply multiply that figure by 15 (since there are 15 degrees of longitude per hour of RA) to get the distance of longitude (expressed as degrees and decimal fractions thereof) between the Greenwich Observatory and the longitude beneath Jupiter and Venus. Upon doing so, we find that the celestial location of the midpoint between the two planets, when expressed in terms of RA, is 5.6596 hours west of the meridian at that time as seen from the Greenwich Observatory.

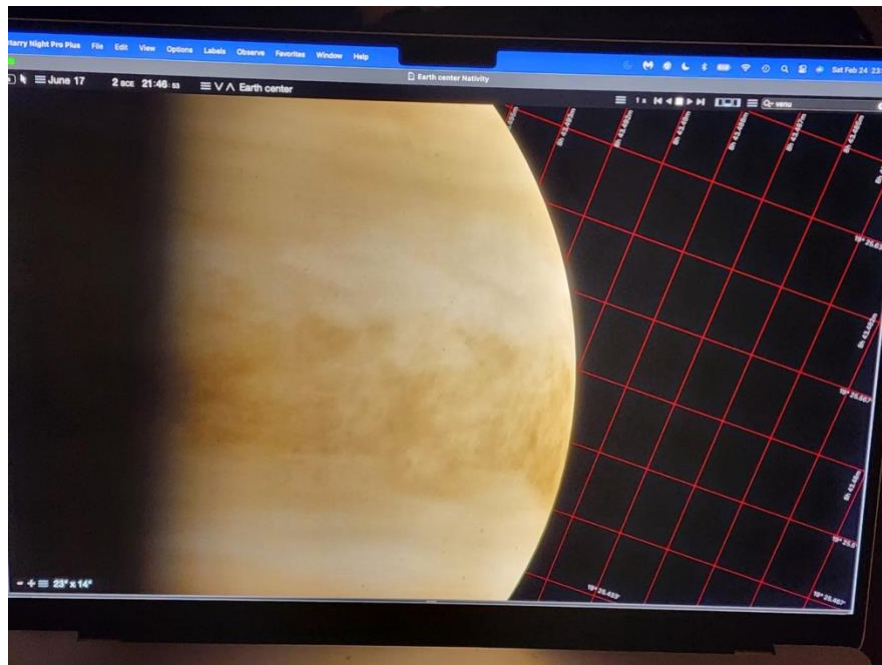
We can next find that 5.6596 hours of RA times 15 degrees of longitude per hour of RA constitutes 84.894 degrees of difference between the longitude of the Old Observatory and the longitude of the midpoint directly beneath the apparent positions of Jupiter and Venus at that moment. Since, as we have noted, the Old Observatory has a longitude of 0 degrees 0 minutes 0 seconds (east or west), and since we know that the line of longitude which runs beneath these two planets at this moment is to the west, we can know that the line of longitude directly beneath these two planets at that time would be 84.894 degrees West (*i.e.*, 84 degrees 53.6505 minutes West Longitude; in other words, 84 degrees 53 minutes 39.03 seconds West Longitude).

So putting this longitudinal position of the two planets together with their latitudinal positions, we find that at the spot on earth directly beneath the mid-point between Jupiter and the apparent position of Venus at the moment when these two planets would have appeared to be closest together, and with the greatest combined brightness, would be Latitude 19 degrees 26 minutes 28.68 seconds North, Longitude 84 degrees 53 minutes 39.03 seconds West. As the following photo shows, this is in the Caribbean Sea, about 230 miles west of the city of George Town in the Cayman Islands, about 175 miles southeast of Cancun, about 150 miles southeast the island of Cozumel, and about 175 miles south-southwest of the western tip of Cuba:

Image from Google Earth Pro: <https://google-earth-pro.en.softonic.com/mac>. Photograph by the author.

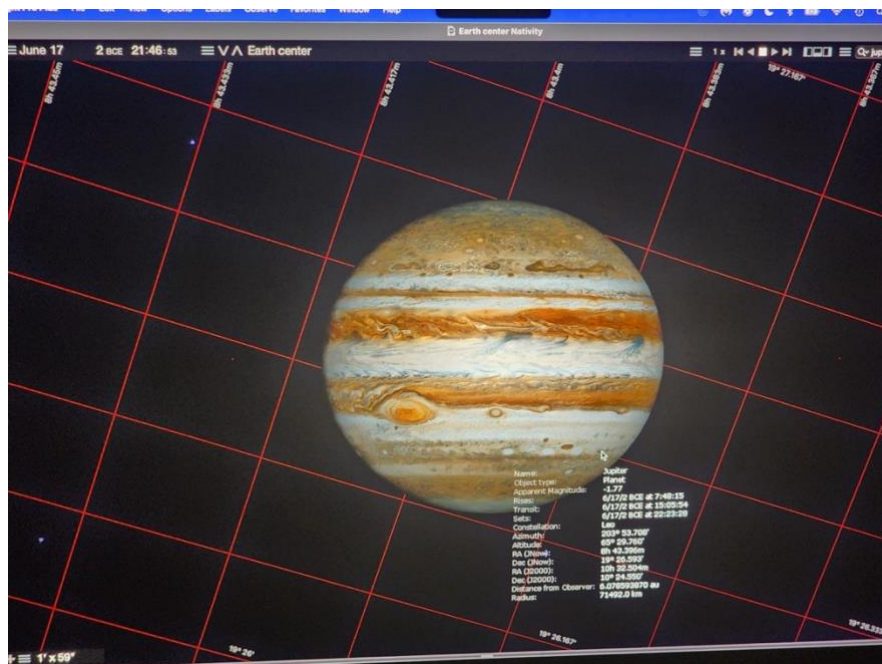
THE POSITIONS OF JUPITER AND VENUS WITH RESPECT TO THE CATHEDRAL

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Venus at 21:46:53 UTC on the night of June 17, 2 B.C., showing that the center of brightness of the planet would be at Right Ascension 8 hours 43.495 (43 minutes 29.7 seconds), Declination +19 degrees 25.483 (25 minutes 28.98 seconds).

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.



Jupiter at 21:46:53 UTC on the night of June 17, 2 B.C., showing that it would be at Right Ascension 8 hours 43.396 (43 minutes 23.76 seconds), Declination +19 degrees 26.593 minutes (26 minutes 35.58 seconds).

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

Note: The values of the RA and Dec of Jupiter do not have to be estimated, since they are the values based on the center of the planet as a whole, as is customarily the case. The values for Venus, however, are given according to my best estimates because, as I have noted, the center of brightness for Venus at this time, as seen from Earth, would be slightly off-center from Venus as a whole; and so, the apparent position of Venus to an observer on Earth would be likewise off-center from Venus as a whole. But I think that these photographs will give the reader a sufficient basis for concluding that my estimates of the values for Venus are reasonably well made.

With respect to the mid-point of their RAs, it would be 8 hours 43.4455 minutes, or in other words, 8 hours 43 minutes 26.73 seconds.³¹⁷ With respect to the mid-point of their Declinations, it would be +19 degrees 26.0305 minutes, or in other words +19 degrees 26 minutes 2.28 seconds.³¹⁸

With respect to the corresponding terrestrial coordinates, for reasons which we have already covered, the latitude which the mid-point would be over would thus have to be Latitude 19 degrees 26 minutes 2.28 seconds North. As to the longitude, as can be seen on Starry Night, at that moment the sidereal time of the Old Royal Observatory in Greenwich was 15h 19m 58.1s. Since this is still greater than the RA of the mid-point of Jupiter and Venus, we can know that the longitude directly beneath the mid-point would likewise lie to the west of Greenwich.

To find this, we will subtract the RA of the apparent mid-point from the sidereal time of Greenwich, which will give us the distance, in celestial terms, between the two: 15h 19m 58.1s (14h 79m 58.1s) minus 8h 43m 26.73s equals 6 hours 36 minutes 31.37 seconds. Expressed in decimal terms, this is 6.6087 hours of RA.³¹⁹ Since there are 15 degrees of longitude per hour of RA, this means that the distance between Greenwich and the midpoint in terms of terrestrial coordinates (longitude) is 99.1307 degrees,³²⁰ which is to say that the longitude of the mid-point at that moment was Longitude 99 degrees 7 minutes 50.55 seconds W.³²¹

One second later, at 21:46:54 UTC (3:46:54 P.M. in Mexico City) on June 17, 2 B.C., the celestial position of Jupiter and Venus would have been unchanged. With respect to the corresponding terrestrial coordinates, for reasons which we have already covered, we can know that if the celestial position is the same, then the latitude of the mid-point would thus have to be the same. As to the longitude, as can be seen on Starry Night, at that moment the sidereal time of the Old Royal Observatory in Greenwich increased by exactly one second (as would have to be the

³¹⁷ 43.495 minutes (Venus) – 43.396 minutes (Jupiter) = 0.099 minutes. And then, 0.099 minutes divided by 2 = 0.0495 minutes. 43.495m – 0.0495m = 43.4455m; and likewise, 43.396m + 0.0495m = 43.4455m; 0.4455m X 60 seconds/m = 26.73 seconds.

³¹⁸ 26.593 minutes - 25.483 minutes = 1.110 minutes; 1.110 minutes divided by 2 = 0.555 minutes; 26.593m – 0.555m = 26.038m; also, 25.483m + 0.555m = 26.038m. And then in turn, 0.038 minutes X 60 seconds/minute = 2.28 seconds

³¹⁹ 31.37 seconds divided by 60 seconds/minute = 0.5228 minutes. And then, 36.5228 minutes divided by 60 minutes/hour = 0.6087 hours.

³²⁰ 6.6087 hours RA X 15 degrees of Longitude/hours RA = 99.1307 degrees Longitude.

³²¹ 0.1307 degrees X 60 minutes/degree = 7.84 minutes; and then, 0.84 minutes X 60 seconds/minute = 50.55 seconds.

case) to 15h 19m 59.1s. Since this is still greater than the RA of the mid-point of Jupiter and Venus (as it would likewise have to be), we can know that the longitude directly beneath the mid-point would likewise lie to the west of Greenwich.

To find this, we will subtract the RA of the apparent midpoint from the sidereal time of Greenwich, which will give us the distance, in celestial terms, between the two: 15h 19m 59.1s (14h 79m 59.1s) minus 8h 43m 26.73s equals 6 hours 36 minutes 32.37 seconds. Expressed in decimal terms, altogether this yields 6.60899 hours of RA.³²² Since there are 15 degrees of longitude per hour of RA, this means that the distance between Greenwich and the midpoint in terms of terrestrial coordinates (longitude) is 99.134875 degrees,³²³ which is to say that the longitude of the apparent midpoint at that moment was Longitude 99 degrees 8 minutes 5.55 seconds W.³²⁴

APPENDIX SECTION XXVIII

THE MOON ON THE MERIDIAN AND THE TRUE SEPARATION OF JUPITER AND VENUS

The separation of Jupiter and Venus on the night that Jesus was born played out in more than one way. For as it turns out, the separation of the two planets is intertwined with the fact that first of all, on that night, the Moon was full, and second, the moment that the actual separation of Jupiter and Venus took place out in space is itself intertwined with the very first moment as to when the separation could have been observed from anywhere on Earth.

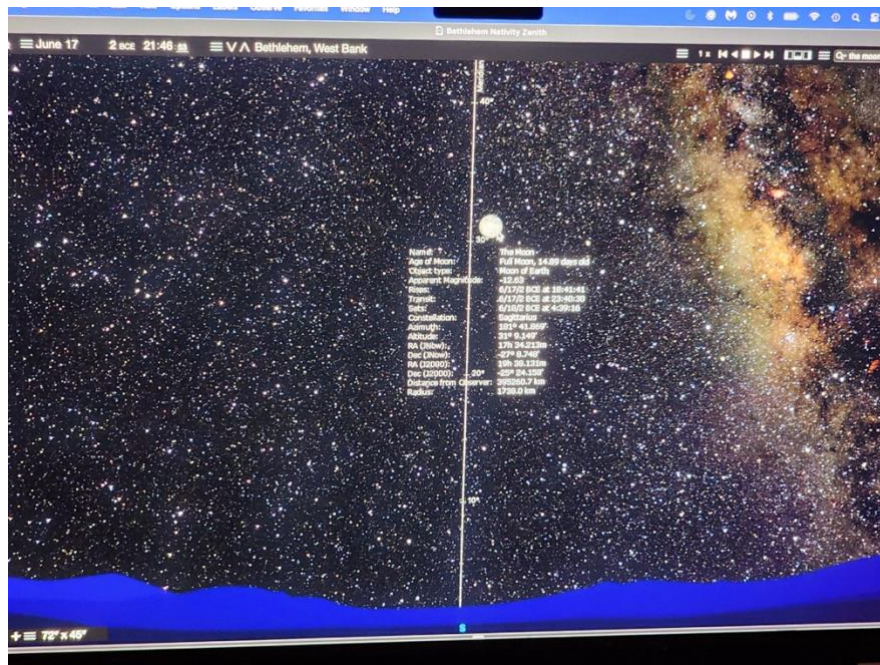
According to Starry Night Pro, the moon appeared close to the meridian as seen from Bethlehem at the same time that the separation of the two planets would have been discernable to the unaided eye³²⁵ in the skies over the future site of the cathedral. In fact, here we see that at that moment, 21:46:53 UTC, the Moon, as seen from the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, appeared at an azimuth (compass heading) of 181 degrees 41.869 minutes:

³²² 32.37 seconds divided by 60 seconds/minute = 0.5395 minutes. 36.5395 minutes divided by 60 minutes/hour = 0.60899 hours.

³²³ 6.60899 hours RA X 15 degrees of Longitude/hour RA = 99.134875 degrees of Longitude.

³²⁴ 0.134875 degrees X 60 minutes/degree = 8.0925 minutes; 0.0925 minutes X 60 seconds/minute = 5.55 seconds.

³²⁵ As was noted before, this would be evidenced by the dimming of the light from Jupiter and Venus combined as the two separated from each other, and only the light of Venus would then remain visible.



The moon as seen from the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem at the apparent time of Jesus' birth.

The vertical white line marks the meridian.

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

That's pretty close to being directly on the meridian, which would be 180 degrees exactly. And the Moon had already appeared to be centered on the meridian that night, as seen from Bethlehem, about 6 minutes and 45 seconds earlier, between 21:40:09 and 21:40:10.

Is that close enough to be some kind of sign from God, something which confirms that what we are seeing with respect to Jupiter, Venus, and the future presentation of the roses to Bishop Zumarraga by Juan Diego, was divinely orchestrated? Well, for some people, that might be close enough. But I am kind of picky, so let's examine this in further detail to see what we can find.

Let us take a close look again at what was going on in the heavens. As I mentioned before, at 21:46:53 to 21:46:54 UTC on that night in 2 B.C.---when the midpoint between Jupiter and Venus appeared to be directly over the main entrance to the cathedral, where Juan Diego would present the roses in his tilma to Bishop Zumarraga about 1500 years later---the separation between Jupiter and Venus, as seen from that site, would have appeared to open up to an angle of about 2 minutes of arc, which is the point at which the separation between the two planets would have first become discernable as seen from that location.³²⁶ But we must also keep in mind that the movements of planets take place far out in space. And so we must recognize that when we observe a celestial phenomenon, we see it only after the light coming from that object has reached our eyes here on Earth.

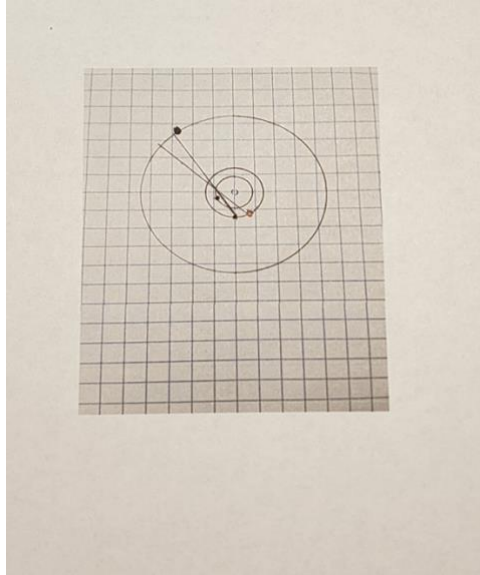
To get the complete picture will require the use of certain calculations which the reader

³²⁶ <http://www.rocketmime.com/astronomy/Telescope/MaximumMagnification.html>

might find tedious to use, so I have placed them in their own section in this Appendix. Therein find: ACCOUNTING FOR THE SPEED OF LIGHT IN ASCERTAINING PLANETARY POSITIONS. Suffice it to say for the moment that the actual opening up of the separation between Jupiter and Venus to an angle of about 2 minutes of arc as measured from the spot directly beneath the midpoint between the planets is something which would not in fact have taken place at 21:46:53 UTC. Instead, it would in fact have taken place 5 minutes, 26.5 seconds earlier, between 21:41:26 and 21:41:27. We just would not have been able to see this separation between the two planets (while viewing from the spot directly beneath their midpoint) opening up to an angle of 2 minutes until the image of the limb of Venus (traveling, of course, at the speed of light) would have appeared to separate from Jupiter, and would then reach the grounds of the cathedral at 21:46:53.

Now, as was mentioned above, according to Starry Night, the Moon would have appeared to be centered on the meridian as seen from the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem between 21:40:09 and 21:40:10. ... in other words, about 6 minutes and 44 seconds before the separation between Jupiter and Venus would have appeared to take place as seen from the grounds of the future cathedral. As to the one-second time interval of 21:41:26 to 21:41:27 which was just mentioned (when the actual separation of the two planets to two minutes of arc would in fact have taken place), that is a time which is even closer to 21:40:09 (when the Moon became centered on the meridian) than 21:46:53 is. Specifically, that's just 1 minute and 17 to 18 seconds of difference as opposed to 6 minutes and 44 seconds. But is that close enough? Or do we have to be even more precise than that in order to say that this is a piece of evidence which God has provided about His divine plan?

With that in mind, let us consider for a moment the fact that the question of just exactly when Venus and Jupiter would appear to separate would be dependent not only upon the position of those two planets with respect to Earth, but would also, of course, be dependent upon the position of the observer. For instance, with respect to objects which would appear to be close to the Sun or to the east (*i.e.*, to the left) of the Sun (such as was the case here), if an observer were positioned at a place up ahead of Earth in its orbit around the Sun, the observer would be able to look back and see the separation of the planets take place sooner than someone on Earth itself could see this take place, because from a place up ahead of Earth in its orbit, an observer looking back toward the objects would have a better angle for viewing this:



A partial view of the solar system as seen from above the North Pole of Earth, the Sun, Venus, and Jupiter at the time when Venus and Jupiter appeared to separate on June 17, 2 B.C. (*i.e.* at 21:46:53 UTC), as seen from the grounds of the future cathedral in Mexico City. The line of sight from Earth through the gap between Venus and Jupiter at that time is shown running from about the 6 o'clock position to the 11 o'clock position.

Also illustrated is a line of sight of how the separation between Jupiter and Venus would be viewed at that exact same moment from a position just slightly ahead of Earth in its orbit (moving counter- clockwise, from a position where Earth would be in about one month), running from about the 5 o'clock position to the 10 o'clock position.

The Sun is shown by the small circle in the center. Venus and its orbit are shown in the first circle outward from there. Earth and its orbit are illustrated in the next circle outward. Jupiter and its orbit are shown in the outermost circle. The motion of the planets in their orbits would be counter- clockwise.

Image not to scale; also, Mercury and Mars are not shown (though they would normally fit within this image).

Image and photograph by the author.

In like manner, an observer on Earth positioned at the lead point of our planet in its orbit, while looking back toward objects close to the Sun as they separated away from each other, would be able to see this separation take place just a tiny bit sooner than someone positioned on Earth directly beneath the planets would see this, because such a person would likewise be in a slightly better position forward to look back and see the separation take place.³²⁷ At this point in time, from that person's perspective, the planets would appear to be just then rising above the eastern horizon.

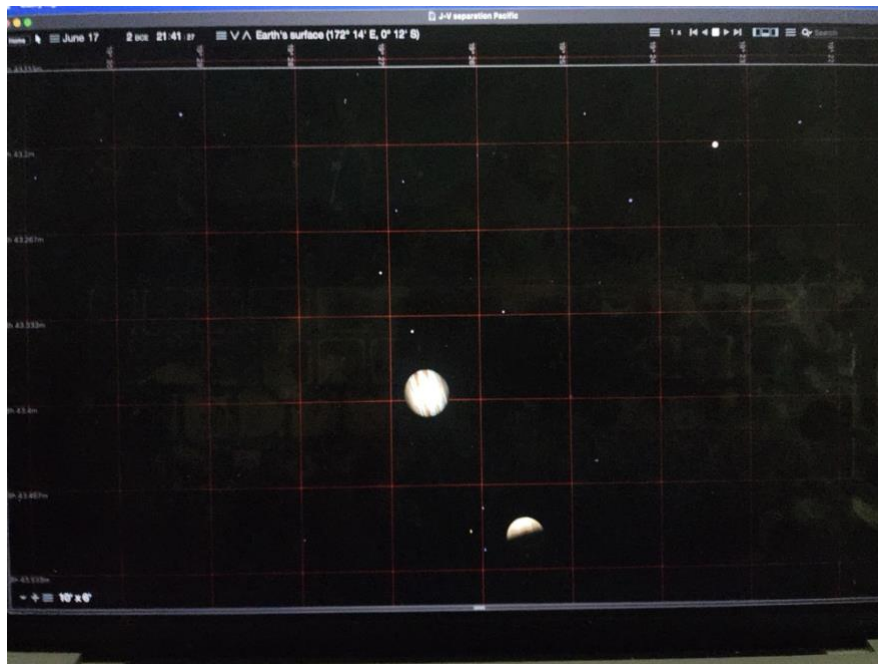
All things being held equal, the lead point of Earth would be at some point along a line of longitude 90 degrees west of a person who would be directly beneath their actual position. Now, as we have noted, the actual separation of Jupiter and Venus would have taken place about 5 minutes

³²⁷ Technically, this could be off just slightly due to the fact that the orbit of Venus does not lie precisely along the Ecliptic (*i.e.*, it does not lie directly above the Sun's equator). Instead, it lies at an angle of 3.395 degrees to the Ecliptic: <https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/planetary/factsheet/venusfact.html>. But this would not result in a significant difference for purposes of illustrating the point being made here.

and 26.5 seconds before the separation could have been observed from the site of the future cathedral. And at that time, these two planets would not yet actually be positioned above the future grounds of the cathedral. Instead, they would be positioned above a place to the east of that site. And so the lead point of Earth in its orbit around the sun at that time would in fact be at a point along the line of longitude 90 degrees west of that point there, rather than 90 degrees west of the future site of the cathedral itself.

Ascertaining the position of that place entails a bit of astronomical calculations, and so for that reason I have placed the process for doing so in a separate section in this Appendix; therein find ASCERTAINING THE LEAD POINT OF EARTH AT THE SEPARATION OF JUPITER AND VENUS. Suffice it to say for the moment that the lead point of Earth at this moment in time would be Longitude 172 degrees 13.61 minutes (13 minutes 36.6 seconds) East, Latitude 0 degrees 12.064 minutes (12 minutes 3.84 seconds) South.

We then come to the question of whether or not Jupiter and Venus, from even this position, still would not have appeared to have separated on the one hand, or perhaps on the other hand would be beyond the point where they would have appeared to separate, or whether they perhaps, as yet a third possibility, would appear to be right at the very moment of separation. To answer that, let us see what these planets would look like from near that particular spot³²⁸ at that moment in time, if one could look just below the horizon:

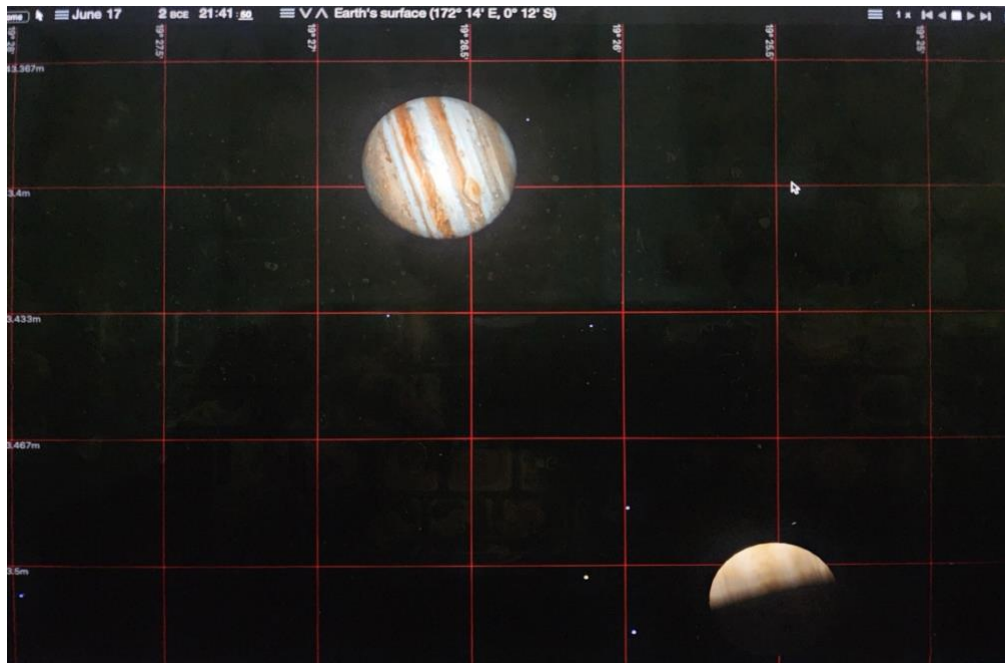


Jupiter and Venus at the time when their separation could have first been theoretically observable from near the

³²⁸ The precision of Starry Night being what it is, I am unable to set my position to the exact lead point of planet Earth.

lead point of planet Earth in its orbital motion around the sun (*i.e.*, as seen from the South Pacific). The horizontal white line near the top of the image represents the horizon. Jupiter and Venus would be below the horizon at this point, but the mid-point between them would rise 18 seconds later. Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

So here we can see that as viewed from near that particular spot, the separation between Jupiter and Venus is exactly the same as it would appear to be just over five minutes later as seen from the site of the future cathedral: *i.e.*, the separation would just be opening up to about 2 minutes of arc. As it turns out, the mid-point between them would rise 18 seconds later, and the spacing between them would be essentially the same; and five seconds after that, both planets would be above the horizon:



Jupiter and Venus 23 seconds after their separation could have first been observable from the lead point of planet Earth in its orbital motion around the sun (from the South Pacific)
Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

Is there a message from God for us in all of this?³²⁹ Personally, I do in fact believe that there is, in more than one way. First of all, as I have already pointed out, the imagery of Jupiter separating from Venus³³⁰ over the killing field of the ancient Aztecs, the very place where tens of thousands of Aztecs³³¹ --even children---were slaughtered like pigs in a particularly cruel and heinous manner, shows the triumph in the heavens above of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords over the Aztecs' pagan gods and their culture of death, a culture remarkably similar---and indeed, disturbingly similar---to our own culture of death, one which Pope John Paul II would come to warn us of and speak out against many

³²⁹ One would hope so, given the complexity of the operation.

³³⁰ This event was observable if for no other reason than by the dimming which was caused when Venus separated from Jupiter.

³³¹ probably over 100,000 Aztecs, including many infants and children

years later.³³² Second, the fact that the separation of the King (Jupiter) from the mother (Venus) took place over the location where the roses would one day pour forth from the tilma of Juan Diego and then lay at the feet of Mary---just as Jesus, in like manner, had come forth from the womb and lay at the feet of Mary---is a fact which also serves to illustrate God's endorsement of the idea that the event known as the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe is indeed a true historical fact.

Third, let us pause for a moment to consider the fact that although this actual separation of the two planets out in space could not be seen from the grounds of the cathedral right at that particular moment, it is the case that as they did in fact separate out in space to the point where the separation would become visible from the grounds of the cathedral a few minutes later, the apparent separation as seen from the lead point of Earth would have already become observable from that spot, *i.e.*, the point which would have had the very first possible chance of even seeing this event at all.

The significance of this lies in the fact that from that moment on, over the course of the next twelve hours, by the rotation of Earth around its axis and by the revolution of each planet (including Earth) around the Sun, the separation of Jupiter and Venus would become visible over the face of the entire inhabited surface of the Earth. I believe this is a message from God to show us that just as God Himself used the heavens above in this manner to spread a sign of the birth of His Son all across the face of the Earth (a message which we are just now finding today), so also should we ourselves spread this message across the entire face of the Earth. (See Acts 1:8)³³³

As for the moon being on the meridian, the trailing limb of the moon was just five seconds past the meridian (and 1 minute and 14 seconds after the moon was centered on the meridian), as seen from Bethlehem, at the time when the separation of Jupiter and Venus did in fact open up to about 2 minutes of arc as seen from the lead point of Earth, the point where the separation first could have become visible. So here we have two different astronomical events, each of which could signify the moment that the King was born, occurring at two slightly different times.

This then leads to the question of whether the celestial display which we see from the grounds of the cathedral is something which took place, on the one hand, at the actual moment of Jesus' birth, or whether this celestial display, on the other hand, is instead an illustration of His birth which had taken place just a few minutes beforehand, when the moon was on the meridian as seen from Bethlehem. With that in mind, I cannot help but wonder if perhaps the final segment of Mary's labor took place just as the Moon was centered on the meridian as seen from Bethlehem (at 21:40:13), and that one minute and fourteen to fifteen seconds later (the time interval we considered above), the King of Kings and Lord of Lords drew His first breath and uttered His first cry; and then, following this scenario, the testimony of His birth was proclaimed on Earth by the heavens themselves another 5 minutes and 27 seconds later in the skies over the site of the future cathedral

³³² <https://angelusnews.com/faith/what-todays-pandemic-reveals-about-st-pope-john-paul-iis-culture-of-death/>

³³³ "... and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8; NASB: <https://biblehub.com/nasb/acts/1.htm>)

by the manifestation of the separation of Jupiter and Venus.

I wish I knew the answer to this puzzle (*i.e.*, whether Jesus was born when the separation of Jupiter and Venus became visible from the site of the future cathedral, or whether it had actually taken place perhaps 5 minutes and 27 seconds earlier, as the moon moved past the meridian as seen from Bethlehem). But unfortunately, I do not. And I believe we shall simply have to leave the matter in God's hands, probably not to be solved until the Lord returns. But then, I don't think we really need to have this detail revealed. Suffice it to say---for now, at least---that on the night when Jesus was born, it is the case that in one way or another, the heavens declared the glory of God.³³⁴

APPENDIX SECTION XXIX

ACCOUNTING FOR THE SPEED OF LIGHT IN ASCERTAINING PLANETARY POSITIONS

Light travels at a speed of 186,282 miles per second (MPS).³³⁵ And so light from the Moon, for example, which is about 239,000 miles from Earth on average, takes just over a second and a quarter (1.28 seconds, on average) to reach Earth. In other words, if you had had a telescope powerful enough to see the Apollo astronauts walking around on the Moon in the late '60s and early '70s, you would have seen each of their movements taking place about one and a quarter seconds after each movement had in fact taken place.

In fact, I remember listening to the live conversations on television of the Apollo astronauts talking with Mission Control in Houston back when I was in high school as the astronauts actually were on the Moon, and the interval between what one side said and the other side's reply was unusually long, by just a little bit. That was due to the roughly one and a quarter second travel time for radio communication between Earth and the Moon, since radio waves themselves travel at the speed of light. Consequently, when Mission Control said something to the astronauts on the Moon, it would take about two and a half seconds longer than normal to hear the astronauts reply, because that is the round-trip time for radio signals from Earth to the Moon and then back to Earth again. (Note: If you view the Apollo missions on Youtube, you may be viewing a version which has this time delay edited out.)

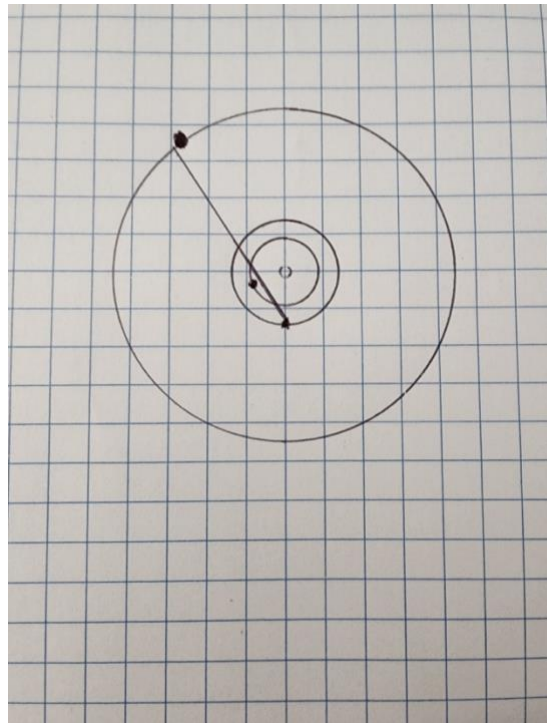
Likewise, the light we see at any given moment from the Sun, which is about 93 million miles away on average, actually left the Sun a little over eight minutes before we see it. So when astronomers who study the Sun look at sunspots and other things on the Sun, they actually see them as they appeared just over eight minutes beforehand. Normally, this eight minute delay makes no difference, fortunately. But that eight minute gap does in fact exist.

Now, how about Jupiter and Venus? What is the time lapse with them? Well, that depends on how far each one is from Earth at any given moment. And that, in turn, depends on where each one is in its orbit as seen from Earth.

³³⁴ <https://biblehub.com/esv/psalms/19.htm>

³³⁵ <https://www.space.com/15830-light-speed.html>

Here again we see an illustration of how the relative positions of the Sun, Earth, Venus, and Jupiter would have appeared at 21:46:53, the time when the angular separation between Jupiter and Venus may have first become discernable to the unaided eye from the future site of the cathedral:



A partial view of the solar system as seen from above the North Pole of Earth, the Sun, Venus, and Jupiter at the time when Venus and Jupiter appeared to separate on June 17, 2 B.C. (*i.e.* at 21:46:53 UTC), as seen from the grounds of the future cathedral in Mexico City.

The Sun is shown by the small circle in the center. Venus and its orbit are shown in the first circle outward from there. Earth and its orbit are illustrated in the next circle outward. Jupiter and its orbit are shown in the outermost circle. The motion of the planets in their orbits would be counter- clockwise. The line of sight from Earth through the gap between Venus and Jupiter at the time when those two planets appeared to separate is also shown.

Image not to scale; also, Mercury and Mars are not shown (though they would normally fit within this image).

Image and photograph by the author.

This illustration is very simplified. For instance, it is not to scale, and for simplicity's sake I have not included the orbit of Mercury (between the Sun and the orbit of Venus) and the orbit of Mars (between the orbits of Earth and Jupiter), since neither of those two planets factor into this, anyway.

But this illustration is good enough to suit our present purposes. The view is from above the north pole of Earth, the Sun, and planets, looking down.

Notice that Jupiter and Venus are not really close to each other. They just look that way from Earth. So the question of when the apparent separation between the two planets along a line from Earth would have begun to approach 2 minutes of arc would be dependent on the distance to the closer of these two planets to Earth. And that, as we can see here, would be Venus, which, at the time, was 0.654036369 Astronomical Units (AU) from Earth.

An AU is defined as the mean distance from Earth to the sun, which is 92,955,807 miles.³³⁶
So 92,955,807 miles times 0.654036369 AU =
60,796,478.5 miles. And since light does travel at a speed of 186,282 MPS, it would have taken light coming from Venus about 326.5 seconds³³⁷ (5 minutes 26.5 seconds) to reach Earth at that time.³³⁸

What this means is that, as mentioned in summary fashion in the text itself, the actual opening up of the separation between Jupiter and Venus to an angle of approximately 2 minutes of arc as measured from the spot directly beneath the midpoint between the planets would not in fact have taken place at 21:46:54 UTC. Instead, it would in fact have taken place 5 minutes, 26.5

³³⁶ <https://earthsky.org/space/what-is-the-astronomical-unit/>

³³⁷ more specifically, 326.36797 seconds

³³⁸ These distances are measured in the usual astronomical way, which measures from the center of one planet to the center of the other planet, and so technically, the calculated speed above would be from the center of Venus to the center of the earth, and not from the surface of each to the surface of the other. At first impression, one might conclude therefore that the calculated time for light to travel between the two would have to be off by a little bit, since light would not travel from the center of one planet to the center of the other, but rather from the surface of one to the surface of the other. However, first impressions can sometimes prove to be wrong. Allow me to explain.

Each planet has a radius of almost 4,000 miles (3,963 for earth; 3,760 for Venus), resulting in the surfaces of the two planets being almost 8,000 miles closer (specifically, 7,723 miles closer) at their minimum distance than the centers of each planet would be to each other. However, since the type of observation we are concerned with here (regarding an observer on Earth located directly beneath Venus and Jupiter) would most appropriately be made with respect to the distance from the limb of Venus (where the separation from Jupiter would become visible) to the surface of Earth directly beneath Venus, then the relevant distance between Venus and Earth would be less by only 3,963 miles (the radius of Earth alone) rather than being less by the distance from the center of Venus to the surface of Venus plus the distance from the center of Earth to the surface of Earth combined (7,723 miles). That is because light traveling from the limb of Venus would have virtually the same distance to go to get to the surface of Earth as light from the center of Venus would have to travel, though essentially no farther than that.

Be that as it may, however, this difference in distance would only result in a difference in time of about 0.02 seconds (3,963 miles divided by 186,282 miles per second equals 0.021 seconds), which we need not concern ourselves with, anyway. And in fact, even if we were to factor in the distance from the surface of Earth to its center, the difference then would still be only about 0.04 seconds, which again would be something that we need not be concerned with.

seconds earlier, between 21:41:27 and 21:41:28.³³⁹ We just would not have been able to see this separation between the two planets (while viewing from the spot directly beneath their midpoint) opening up to an angle of about 2 minutes until Earth's rotation would have carried the grounds of the cathedral to the point where it would appear to be beneath the midpoint of Venus and Jupiter at the time when they would have appeared to separate (at 21:46:53 UTC).

APPENDIX SECTION XXX

ASCERTAINING THE LEAD POINT OF EARTH AT THE SEPARATION OF JUPITER AND VENUS

In our attempt to discover the lead point of Earth at the separation of Jupiter and Venus, to find our starting point (the place to the east of the cathedral grounds), we must start with the longitude of the cathedral itself. According to Google Earth, this is 99 degrees 7.99 minutes (7 minutes 59.5 seconds) West. And the starting point would lie along a line of longitude which would correspond to 5 minutes and 26 seconds (326.5 seconds) of time to the east of that.

To find this span, we first divide 326.5 seconds by the number of seconds in one hour (*i.e.*, 60 seconds per minute times 60 minutes equals 3600 seconds), and this comes out to 0.0907. This is the decimal fraction of the span of longitude which Earth's rotation covers in one hour. We can then take this number and multiply it by 15, the number of degrees of longitude which Earth's rotation covers in one hour. This comes out to 1.36 degrees, which in turn comes out to 1 degree 21.6 minutes (1 degree 21 minutes 36 seconds). This is the longitudinal span which is to be subtracted from the longitude of the cathedral to find the longitude which the planets were in fact directly over at the time that the actual separation of the two actually did in fact take place out in space.

Since the cathedral has a longitude of 99 degrees 7.99 minutes (7 minutes 59.5 seconds) West, when we do subtract 1 degree 21.6 minutes (1 degree 21 minutes 36 seconds) from that, we come to Longitude 97 degrees 46.39 minutes (46 minutes 23.5 seconds) West; this is, then, the longitude of the place which the midpoint between the planets was over when the separation of Jupiter and Venus actually did in fact open up to about two minutes of arc (at 21:41:27) from the perspective of an observer directly beneath where those two planets actually were in fact at that time (even though the planets would not have appeared to be overhead).

This longitude, plus 90 degrees, would equal 187 degrees 46.39 minutes³⁴⁰1371 if the lines of longitude which are located west of the prime meridian (which runs through Greenwich, England) were numbered continuously from Greenwich. But of course, they are not. The continuous numbering ends precisely at 180 degrees West, and all lines of longitude west of there are then measured in terms of how far east of the prime meridian they are (which, correspondingly, goes up to 180 degrees East). So in order to find the line of longitude which we are looking for, we must now

³³⁹ Owing to Earth's rotation, the mid-point at that time would have been above a place to the east of the grounds of the cathedral.

³⁴⁰ 97 degrees 46.39 minutes + 90 degrees = 187 degrees 46.39 minutes

subtract 7 degrees

46.39 minutes from Longitude 180 East, which brings us to Longitude 172 degrees 13.61 minutes (13 minutes 36.6 seconds) East.

To find the point of Earth which would have the best view of seeing this separation take place then, we would next have to find the specific line of latitude along that line of longitude where one would have the earliest view of all. As it turns out, that point of latitude and longitude would mark the lead point of planet Earth in its orbit around the sun, which is the point from which one would have the best angle for looking back toward the separation of Jupiter and Venus.

The procedure for finding this line of latitude would vary according to which position Earth was at in its orbit at that moment. So for example, at any time from the June Solstice (*i.e.*, the northern hemisphere's Summer Solstice) to the December Solstice (*i.e.*, the northern hemisphere's Winter Solstice), this could be found by taking the angle of the tilt of Earth's axis (in modern times, approximately 23.5 degrees) and subtracting from it the number of degrees that the sun would be removed from the Equator right at that moment.

Thus, in modern times, at the June Solstice, 23.5 degrees (the tilt of Earth's axis) minus the number of degrees that the Sun would be removed from the Equator at that moment (23.5 degrees) equals 0 degrees. In other words, the latitude of the lead point of Earth at the June Solstice is the Equator itself.

Three months later, at the September Equinox (*i.e.*, the northern hemisphere's Autumnal Equinox), we find that 23.5 degrees (again, the tilt of Earth's axis) minus the number of degrees that the Sun is removed at that time from the Equator (0 degrees) equals 23.5 degrees; in other words, the latitude of Earth's lead point at that moment will be found at 23.5 degrees North Latitude (which corresponds to the Tropic of Cancer³⁴¹). And three months later, at the December Solstice (*i.e.*, the northern hemisphere's Winter Solstice), we find that 23.5 degrees minus the number of degrees that the Sun is removed from the Equator (23.5 degrees) equals 0 degrees, which again brings us back to the Equator as being the latitude of the lead point of Earth in its orbit.

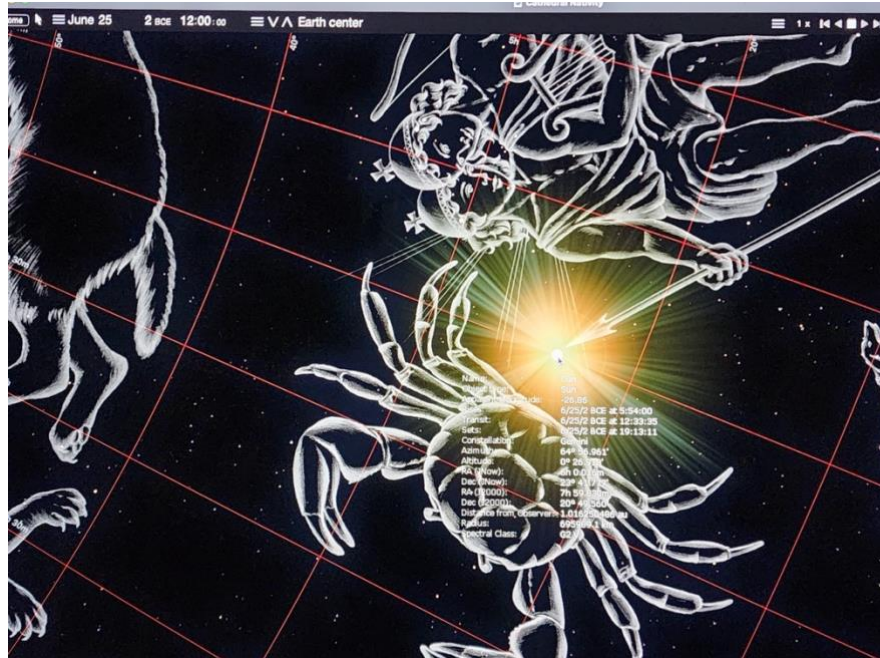
Correspondingly, at any time from the December Solstice to the June Solstice, the latitude of the lead point of Earth could be found by taking the negative of the tilt of Earth's axis (*i.e.*, -23.5 degrees) and then adding to it the number of degrees that the Sun would be removed from the Equator right at that moment. (This is the inverse of what we just did a moment ago, but then, at the solstices themselves, that makes no difference, for at the solstices it works out the same, either way.) Thus, we take the negative of the tilt of Earth's axis (-23.5 degrees) and add to that the number of degrees that the Sun is removed from the Equator (23.5 degrees), which equals 0 (*i.e.*, the Equator marks the line of latitude of the lead point of Earth at the December Solstice).

With that in mind, we next find that three months later, at the March Equinox (*i.e.*, the northern hemisphere's Vernal Equinox), the latitude of the lead point of Earth could be found by

³⁴¹ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tropic-of-Cancer>

again taking the negative of the tilt of Earth's axis (-23.5 degrees) and adding to it the number of degrees that the Sun is removed at that time from the Equator: *i.e.*, -23.5 degrees plus 0, which brings us to 23.5 degrees South Latitude (*i.e.*, the Tropic of Capricorn).³⁴² And from there, three months later, the whole cycle begins all over again.

According to my estimates, Jesus was born about seven and a half days before the June Solstice in 2 B.C. As can be seen on Starry Night, throughout that entire era, at the northern hemisphere's summer solstice, the Sun's Declination was almost +23 degrees 41.8 minutes, so Earth's axis was tilted at an approximate angle of 23 degrees 41.8 minutes (41 minutes 48 seconds) throughout that time. And so we will use -23 degrees 41.8 minutes as the negative of the tilt of Earth's axis throughout that whole era for our calculations:



The Sun's position at the northern hemisphere's summer solstice, June of 2 B.C., seven and a half days after the probable time of the birth of Jesus.

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

Next, we find (again, from Starry Night), that at the time when Jesus was probably born, the Sun was approximately 23 degrees 29.759 minutes north of the Celestial Equator (*i.e.*, Dec +23 degrees 29.759 minutes):

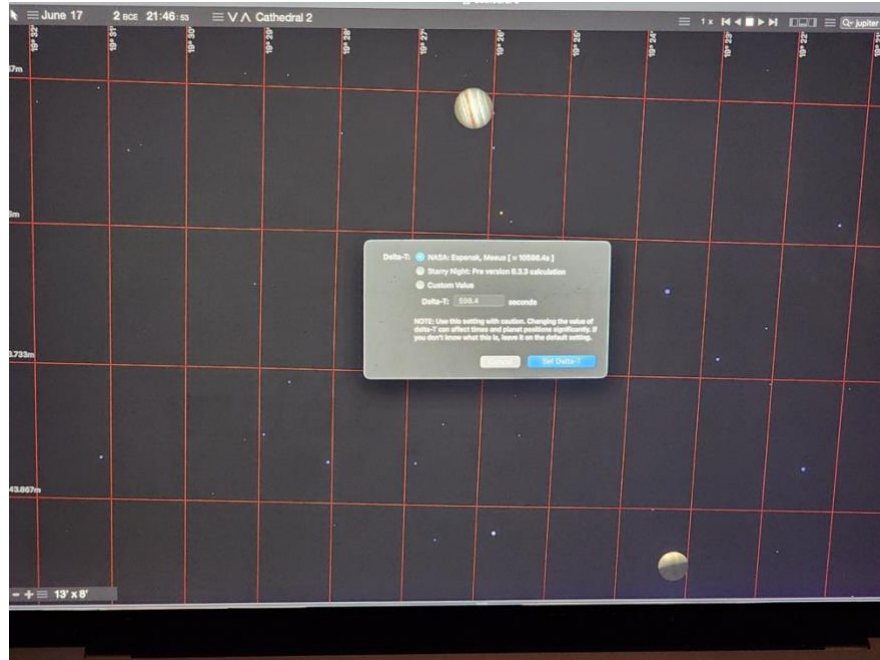
³⁴² <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tropic-of-Capricorn>

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

APPENDIX SECTION XXXI

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(TDT).³⁴³ Terrestrial Time itself is a way of keeping time in astronomy.³⁴⁴¹³⁷⁵ As it turns out, Delta T for that moment when the two planets appeared to separate on the version of Starry Night Pro 6 which I used originally is given as 598.4 seconds, whereas on the updated version which came out right after that (Pro Plus 7), and also on the current version (Pro Plus 8) it is given as 10,598.4 seconds, which is exactly 10,000.0 seconds different (*i.e.*, 2 hours, 46 minutes, 40.0 seconds different):



Jupiter and Venus showing a wider separation than two degrees with a Delta T of 10,598.4 (instead of 598.4), as determined by Maeus Espanak.

Images provided courtesy of Starry Night Education. Photograph by the author.

Having not been familiar with Terrestrial Time or Delta T beforehand, I delved into this whole subject as best I could. What I found is that values for Delta T prior to the mid-1600s A.D. are estimates. From that point forward until today, the use of what was then the recently-invented telescope has allowed astronomers to make exact measurements of the timing of events based upon actual observations of the heavens, and to then establish what the correct Delta T would be from that.

Consequently, even the very best of calculations for Delta T prior to that time may vary substantially from what Delta T really was at any given moment. Furthermore, for reasons which researchers apparently do not completely grasp, Delta T doesn't fluctuate in an even manner. This is because more than one factor can go into determining fluctuations in its value. For instance, here is a link to a graph which shows the various fluctuations in Delta T from 1657 to 2022: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ΔT_\(timekeeping\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ΔT_(timekeeping)).

³⁴³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ΔT>

³⁴⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrestrial_Time

The one truly important thing to grasp from this is that this graph shows that the fluctuations are neither uniform nor regular, for they do not follow a readily-apparent pattern. Yet, with that in mind, consider the equation which is used for estimating Delta T for years prior to 1657: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delta_T_\(timekeeping\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delta_T_(timekeeping)). (See “Calculation”.)

Notice that this equation does not account for the widely fluctuating values of Delta T which are shown by the graph which we just looked at in the link. Rather, the equation gives smooth, uniform variations in Delta T, which is different from what we would expect from the graph. What this means for us is that the valuations of Delta T for years prior to 1657 are hit and miss. Some of them will be accurate ... others, not so much. NASA’s web site bears this out.³⁴⁵

Of course, for that matter, is it perhaps the case that neither version of Starry Night is reliable? That is yet another option which we must consider. But before we go any farther and take the risk of jumping to conclusions, however, let us consider the need for caution in any given quest for truth.

A. Moses, The Apostle Peter, And Scientific Inquiry

1. Moses On How To Discern True Statements

In Chapter 18 of Deuteronomy Moses spoke to the children of Israel about the prophets who were to come, and said,

[21](#) “You may say in your heart, ‘How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?’ [22](#) “When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (Deut. 18:21-22; NASB)³⁴⁶

Now, a false prophet could be put to death,^{347, 348} so anyone among the ancient Israelites who believed that he had been given a message from God for the people would certainly have to think twice before saying anything, and would be well-advised to limit his words to that which he was certain the Lord had given him to say.

Here, of course, we are not dealing with an issue of anyone's testimony. Nonetheless, we can take from this a certain lesson from Scripture, anyway: Namely, we should check things out for ourselves personally when it comes to ascertaining truth, and not simply take someone's word for it that something is so, even if that person presents himself in the form of one who is in authority, such as (supposedly) a prophet.

³⁴⁵ <https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEhelp/deltaT.html>

³⁴⁶ <https://biblehub.com/nasb/deuteronomy/18.htm>

³⁴⁷ <https://www1.biu.ac.il/index.php?id=18554&pt=1&pid=14629&level=0&cPath=43,14206,14376,14629,18554>

³⁴⁸ Deut. 13:1-18: <https://biblehub.com/nasb/deuteronomy/13.htm>; Deut. 18:20: <https://biblehub.com/nasb/deuteronomy/18.htm>

2. The Apostle Peter On The Need For Certainty Concerning What Is Said

In the New Testament, we find that the Apostle Peter was equally concerned with what people say in the name of the Lord. And so he wrote,

[11](#) If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; (I Peter 4:11; KJV)³⁴⁹

In ancient times, among the gentiles, oracles were said to be prophets who were, in essence, the mouthpieces of the gods.³⁵⁰ So in other words, what the Apostle Peter was saying was that whenever anyone teaches a particular thing about God, the person should speak only when one can be as sure of the truth of that thing as if one knew that one was perfectly quoting something directly from the mouth of God. So here again we see an example from Scripture of the emphasis on accuracy when establishing what the truth is.

3. Scientific Protocol For Establishing A True Statement

And then there is (appropriately enough) scientific protocol. The author of any article submitted for peer review and publication must be able to show the editors that the author not only has gone so far as to state all reasonably- based conclusions which can be deduced from the study, but must also show that the author has gone absolutely no farther than that at all, and has made it clear that any unanswered questions which the study might fairly raise will simply have to await further study in order to be answered.

And so it is with respect to our consideration of the equipment issue which we face here as well. We must be bold enough to say all that one can reasonably rely upon; simultaneously, we must stop at the edge of the cliff and not fall off into oblivion by going one step farther than our support will allow.

That being said, let us consider the two possibilities we face: Either one of the sets of imagery is accurate and the other is not, or neither set is accurate.

B. Possible Reasons As To Why The Discrepancy Exists

With all that in mind, let us consider at least some possibilities as to why this discrepancy exists.

First, the Julian calendar, which was introduced on January 1, 45 B.C., had certain peculiarities to it which would have to be accounted for. To begin with, in order for Julius Caesar to bring his new calendar into line with the calendar which had been used previously, he added days onto the year 46 B.C., making it 445 days long. Second, the Julian calendar originally had no such date as February 29th; rather, in a leap year, according to traditional Julian calendar practice,

³⁴⁹ https://biblehub.com/kjv/1_peter/4.htm

³⁵⁰ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oracle>

February 23rd was simply repeated,³⁵¹ although there were those who repeated February 24th instead, which in some cases, as it turns out, was extended to 48 hours.³⁵²

Furthermore, under Caesar Augustus, leap days were omitted until 8 A.D. in order to make a correction in when it would be that leap years would be observed;¹³⁸⁴ and, as was pointed out in the text itself, in the proleptic Julian years, the actual date on which a particular calendar date was observed in the ancient Roman Empire might not have been the date which the normal calendar calculations might point to.³⁵³ It is also the case that every two years or so, an extra 27 or 28-day month (Mercedonius) was added to the other twelve months of the calendar, starting right after February 23rd.³⁵⁴

Any of these points (*i.e.*, the odd length of the first year of the Julian calendar, or the various peculiarities regarding leap year, or the addition of the month Mercedonius into a particular year's calendar) could have led to an erroneous interpretation in modern times of ancient observational data concerning which date it was on which an observation of a particular astronomical event (such as an eclipse or a conjunction) took place. For under this dating system, if a recorded date of an ancient event in a leap year is February 25th (on the Julian calendar), for example, one would have to consider whether perhaps the date (by our reckoning of the Julian calendar) would mark the event as having taken place on a different date instead; and this could affect our estimates of what the various positions of celestial objects may have been, thereby potentially affecting our estimates of what Delta T may have been at certain times.

Another plausible explanation (academically, at least) is that a gravitational body passing near to our solar system may have influenced the position of the moon or a planet just enough to alter its position temporarily, causing the timing of an event which the moon or planet was part of (*e.g.*, an eclipse, a conjunction, or an occultation) to be just slightly different from what would otherwise be expected, at least by enough to affect observations at certain times (such as at the time of eclipses or conjunctions), and thereby affecting our assessment today of where we would expect it to have been over a span of years long ago. The object (the moon or a planet) may have then settled back into its original orbital characteristics.

Third, there is perhaps some flaw in the computer program used in Starry Night.

With respect to a gravitational body, assessing the possibility of such a thing one way or the other could prove problematic. For if a gravitational body did pass near to our solar system, it might not have been a periodic object, and may instead have simply made one pass and then left our solar system permanently (or which, if periodic, may have had a long orbital path, which would give it a long orbital period, such that it might not return to the vicinity of the Earth and sun for thousands of years, or perhaps even longer).

³⁵¹ <https://www.britannica.com/science/Julian-calendar>

³⁵² <https://time.com/6588874/leap-year-day-february-29-calendar-date-history-origin/>

³⁵³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conversion_between_Julian_and_Gregorian_calendars

³⁵⁴ <https://time.com/6588874/leap-year-day-february-29-calendar-date-history-origin/>

In any event, if it had been a periodic object, its very existence might prove difficult to establish. As an article published in *Astronomy* magazine a few years back mentioned, researchers are aware that something somewhere out there probably is present (or at least, had been present at some point in time) in order to account for all the observational data, at least with respect to the effects seen on minor planetary bodies at the edge of the solar system; and the possibility of such has also been critically evaluated more recently in *Scientific American* in an article which postulates a slightly different explanation.^{355, 356} But although the phenomena discussed in those articles deal only with the effects seen on minor bodies (which would not directly affect the observations which we are concerned with here), they do serve to illustrate the point that if researchers have trouble tracking down even those objects which would remain in our solar system, then how much more difficult would it be to play the detective and account for an object which may have simply come and gone in one quick pass, one which may have affected the moon or one of the planets (and probably the minor bodies as well)?

As to the chance that it is a flaw in the computer program, I lack the expertise to comment on that, but I must note that the program seems to operate quite well overall. However, as I pointed out above, the computer program does seem to have at least one flaw in it (with respect to the use of celestial coordinates instead of ecliptic coordinates), and I cannot rule out the possibility of a computer flaw as the explanation here altogether.

Thus, I am left with playing a hunch, and I hate to do so in an inquiry of this nature. But I am stuck with doing so, and so I have no choice but to do so. That being said, I suspect that it is the peculiarities of the Julian calendar which constitute the most likely reason that we face this puzzle. For computer analysts and programmers may have been working with a set of data that seemed to point to one particular date in history on the Julian calendar when some recorded observation was made even though in fact the event which was observed actually did take place on a different date.

In that context let me note that perhaps significantly, *Starry Night* does not reflect the actual, true operation of the Julian calendar, and instead it uses the date February 29th (rather than repeating February 23rd) during all leap years on the Julian calendar; it furthermore does not omit leap days prior to 8 A.D. This leads me to wonder whether perhaps other researchers in astronomy may have made the same mistake.

That being said, I refer the reader back to the text for the discussion of my conclusion as to whether a particular set of data from *Starry Night* should be deemed reliable.

C. The Timings Which Could Be Affected By The Discrepancy

Of all the portions of this book which could be affected by the time discrepancy which we

³⁵⁵ Kruesi, Liz. "Top 10 space stories of 2016. 8: Planet Nine and our weird outer solar system." *Astronomy*, Vol. 45, No. 1, January 2017, pg. 21. Print.

³⁵⁶ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/planet-nine-could-be-a-mirage/> (Note: The central thesis of this article---that the "existence" of Planet Nine might be a mirage---would also be consistent with the possibility that a non-periodic gravitational object produced these various phenomena.)

are dealing with, I have found only two which we would need to consider. First and foremost, of course, is the timing and position of the events pertaining to Jupiter and Venus on the night when I believe that Jesus was born: specifically, first of all, their appearance, and the timing of their appearance, over the grounds of the future cathedral in Mexico City; and along with that we also face the question of whether they were above the horizon or not as seen from Babylon when they appeared to merge into one object a couple of hours beforehand.

Second would be the issue of whether the “blood moon” which Rick Larson mentioned would have been visible from Jerusalem or not, though as I mentioned, even if the residents of Jerusalem could not have seen the blood moon, the Jews from Parthia whom the Bible says were in Jerusalem on Pentecost would have been able to testify to the fact that they personally had seen it.

Any other issues pertaining to timing---e.g., the azimuth of Jupiter at each point along the way during the Magi’s journey down to Bethlehem, or the position of Jupiter when morning twilight would eliminate its glow from the sky, or the timing of various conjunctions, etc.---would be affected so little as to make no practical difference in the outcome.

D. The Overall Effect Of The Computer Discrepancy

Last, but not least, we come to the question of what the overall effect of the discrepancy between the different values for Delta T should mean for us. First, as I said above, it is plain from what we can learn from NASA's own web site (as well as others), that the values for Delta T which are given in the latest versions of Starry Night are not necessarily more reliable than the value for Delta T as shown on the original version of Starry Night which I used for my research (Starry Night Pro 6, version 6.3.9 pcEM).

This is confirmed by the fact that, as I mentioned, even the latest version of Starry Night itself has been made adjustable by its creators so that the user can put in different values for Delta T than what the computer programmers themselves have entered for it, regardless of whether their data came from NASA or not. And the fact that the newer value for Delta T should happen to be off from the original value by exactly 10,000.0 seconds---not one-tenth of a second either more, or less---is evidence right there that the computer programmers were not entering a value which nature itself, by coincidence, did require, but rather that the new value was a chosen value, one which was entered because they decided upon that value rather than one which science itself necessarily dictated.

Second, for reasons which I myself have not yet learned, when the Pro 6 version (which I originally used) was being developed, the creators of that version thought, for some reason or another, that the value of Delta T for the night when Jesus was born should be 598.4, which is the value that I have used for that one, particular night throughout this book. Quite obviously, they knew nothing during the time when they were developing it of the possible implications which that value would have regarding a possible connection with Our Lady of Guadalupe. So in using that value for Delta T, they were not trying to enter a value which would correspond in any way to something with

religious overtones. And since my original version of Starry Night came with that value preprogrammed into it, it is also the case that I myself was not making up out of thin air a value for Delta T which simply happened to suit my own purposes, for I simply took that value as part of Starry Night as I originally obtained it. And thus, my use of that value for Delta T, and their decision to enter it in the earlier programming, should be considered in that light.

Now, with all that in mind, the key thing here to keep in mind is that many of those who might criticize my work may be quick to jump on my adjustment to Delta T and say, "Yeah, he did make it come out right for him. But he changed a critical value in the equation in doing so!"

The thing to keep in mind in response to that is this: When I changed Delta T, I *reverted it back* to what it had been originally, as was determined by persons who had no reason to think that this would somehow affect any relationship between the placement of the planets in the heavens and the appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe. In other words, I am not the one who first came up with the value which I used. Rather, Simulation Curriculum, the company which developed and markets Starry Night, came up with that value long before I first started using it. So the idea of using 598.4 as the value for Delta T on the night when Jesus was born was their own idea in the first place. And as I said, the fact that their program allows the user to make changes to Delta T does itself right there indicate that they themselves do know that any newer value which they might have used for Delta T is not infallibly given.

What this means then for us is that in light of these circumstances, it is appropriate for us to look to other sources for evidence about the same topic in our quest to find out what the truth is, just as it was appropriate for us to look to other sources when we found ourselves at an impasse over whether the overlap of imagery on Juan Diego's tilma with certain Aztec legends and Roman Catholic art constitutes evidence that it was a man-made forgery on the one hand, or a divine message on the other hand.

If the other sources are deemed to be reliable, it would then be appropriate for us to incorporate what we can take from them into whatever else we know in order to arrive at our conclusions. So in such a case, looking to the Bible, for instance, as a source of historical (not scientific) information, we could use the information found there about the Star of Bethlehem to corroborate the use of a value of 598.4 for Delta T, a value which, as I have pointed out, is what Starry Night itself came up with on its own, anyway.

Third, paradoxically, this discrepancy, in a certain way, took a load off my mind. For if there were no issue as to whether the value of Delta T which I used for the night when Jesus was born (598.4) was reliable or not, there could be absolutely no rationally-based question in anyone's mind as to whether the heavens themselves were testifying to the truth of the story of the Star of Bethlehem, and to the role of Jesus' mother, and to the ecclesiastical authority of the bishop (archbishop) of Mexico City. For if there could be absolutely no question whatsoever as to the reliability of using 598.4 as the value for Delta T that night, then no one but an absolute lunatic could possibly conclude that all of these things, coming together in precisely the way they did, all happened this way coincidentally.

Now, I myself, like everyone else, know of times when I have seen very unusual coincidences. For instance, in my own practice as a pharmacist, there have been times when, in the course of checking a vial of tablets which a technician had filled, I have poured half a dozen of them out of the vial and into the cap to inspect them. And on rare occasion, I would note that coincidentally, all six of them---or maybe even ten out of ten---may have come out with just one particular side of the tablet facing up. But with respect to the series of events which we see on the night when Jesus was born, if the value of Delta T is incorrect, that would have to mean that all of the phenomena which we observe in the heavens above, and how they correlate to what we find on Earth, when using the value of Delta T which I have used, would have to be nothing more than one giant string of coincidences, the likes of which I have heard of nowhere else, and which I do not think anybody else has ever found or heard of, either.

Now, with all that in mind, I cannot help but think of Hebrews 11:6:

6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Heb. 11:6; NIV)³⁵⁷

You see, what must be kept in mind here, then, is that unless there would be at least some possibility for doubt (even a very small possibility) about the reliability of what we have seen, then there would be no room for faith at all in assessing whether this truly does testify to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and to the other points which I mentioned as well. For without that slight element of doubt---however slim it may be---a reasonable person could never rationally deny the implications of all these things which I have mentioned.

Fortunately, however, as it turns out, since there is some question (however slight) as to what the value of Delta T for that night should be, there is at least one very slim chance that what I have shared with you might not be reliable. And so faith can then indeed take hold in the heart of the reader and guide the reader into recognizing that it is unmistakably clear that Jesus Christ is Lord, that His Word---the Bible---is indeed the divinely-inspired Word of God, and that the story of the Star of Bethlehem is indeed true after all.

As for those who have already believed all of this, I believe that what I have written here can strengthen them in their faith. For not only does it enhance the overall reasons for holding to such faith, but it also shows them that our faith in Jesus is not simply something which seems true, or which simply sounds right, but is instead something which nature itself---as testified to so clearly in the heavens above---manifests as being objective truth, something which rational persons would find nearly impossible to deny, except on peril of losing all credibility (even with themselves) for having done so.

³⁵⁷ <https://biblehub.com/niv/hebrews/11.htm>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON ASTRONOMY

While I wish to emphasize the spiritual aspects of this book, let me also take this occasion to say add this: Get into astronomy! It will give you a lifetime of enrichment and entertainment, as well as a sense of wonder and awe. That being said, here is a link to the Astronomical League: <https://www.astroleague.org/>. In addition, in your search engine simply enter the name of your town and the phrase "astronomy club". You should be able to find something local that way. And if you wish to help preserve the majestic night skies for yourself and for future generations, consider DarkSky International as well: <https://darksky.org/>.

Also, there are several very large "star parties" every year across the U.S., consisting of amateur astronomers who get together to observe the heavens together with their telescopes at sites so dark that at some locations, the Milky Way actually casts a shadow! You may find workshops on making your own telescope, and you can establish friendships and renew old ones:

The Winter Star Party (Florida), sponsored by the Southern Cross Astronomical Society (SCAS): <https://www.scas.org/winter-star-party/>.

Stellafane Convention (Springfield, Vermont), sponsored by the Springfield Telescope Makers: <https://stellafane.org/convention/>.

Nightfall (southern California), sponsored by the Riverside Astronomical Society (RAS): <https://nightfallstarparty.com/introduction/>.

The Nebraska Star Party: <https://www.nebraskastarparty.org>.

The Okie-Tex Star Party, hosted by the Oklahoma City Astronomy Club: <http://www.okie-tex.com/>.

Here are some magazines for amateur astronomers:

Astronomy:

https://www.subscriptioncore.com/product/astronomy?utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Astronomy&utm_term=astronomy%20magazine&utm_content=Astronomy%20%20%20Subscribe%20-%20Exact

Sky and Telescope ("S & T"): <https://skyandtelescope.org/>.
