

DEEP IN THE BIBLE LAY THE ANSWERS TO AN ANCIENT PHENOMENON!

STAR

REVELATIONS OF THE

OF

SUPERNATURAL BEHIND

THE

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

KING

JEFFREY W. MARDIS



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Sword-In-Hand Publishing
Campbellsville, KY

Star of the King

Revelations of the Supernatural
Behind the Star of Bethlehem

by Jeffrey W. Mardis

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ISBN - 10: 0-9819056-2-5

ISBN - 13: 978-0-9819056-2-4

Greg Miller, Moriah Miller and Jen Miller – proofreaders

Published by:

Sword-In-Hand Publishing

5563 Bengal Road

Campbellsville, KY 42718

Web: www.swordinhandpub.com

E-mail: swordinhandpub@gmail.com

Printed in the United States of America

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“You can tell Mr Mardis puts alot of time in studying the scriptures and undoubtedly has an insightful and teaching gift from God. He walks you through from point A to point B...to better understand the Star of Bethlehem. You will pick up many nuggets from this book that is beneficial in studying scripture beyond the main topic.”

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“The thing I like about Jeffrey Mardis is he really goes into detail, fine detail. You want to know about the Christmas star? ...I mean, he goes past the surface level, he goes two or three layers deep... It’s really a marvelous book!”

– *Gary Stearman, Christain author & television host*

”...when you read something new and powerful like this, and you realize that I’ve had blinders on for a long time and here’s another aspect of the story of the Christmas Star that I literally never considered until I read this book.”

– *Bob Ulrich, Prophecy Watchers*

*“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold
wondrous things out of thy law.”*

Psalms 119:18

CONTENTS

13

1 - GOD OF NATURE

- Natural or Supernatural | 19
- The Ordinances of Nature | 21
- The Supernatural Manipulation of Nature | 24
- Satan and Nature | 27

33

2 - GOD OF WONDERS

- The Voice of God & the First Miracles | 34
- A Brief History of Signs & Wonders | 37
- Beyond the Reaches of Science | 47

53

3 - STAR OF WONDER

- The Star Appears | 54
- The Time Gap | 62
- The Heraldng Angel | 66

71

4 - CONNECTIONS TO THE STARS

- Stars & the Book of Revelation | 72
- Stars & the Book of Job | 74
- Stars & Heavenly Hosts | 75
- Counting Stars | 82
- Shining Stars | 84
- The Secret Names of Stars | 88
- Stars for Sale | 91
- A Brief History of Fallen Stars | 92

105

5 - THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

- An Appearance of Angels | 106
- The Angel that Speaks with God's Voice | 109
- Angel of the Elements | 114

121

6 - THE STAR IDENTIFIED

- The Angel that Paul Served | 123
- A Light Brighter than the Sun | 127
- The Transfiguration | 130
- The First & Last Star | 131
- Mysterious Appearances of God | 135
- Twelve Reasons to Believe | 142
- The Certainty of the Words | 148
- Legacy of the Wise Men | 150

Appendix | 161 Index | 163 Author | 174

P R E F A C E

Through the years many books have been written concerning the Star of Bethlehem, so why write another? The answer to that is simple. Christians are admonished by scripture to “*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*” (1Thess. 5:21) Proving a subject centers around *the details* of what God’s written word says about a subject. In order to discover those details, however, *Bible study* must come into play (2Tim. 2:15). When looking at the book descriptions presented by the majority of authors who have written on this subject, you will find that in many cases, in-depth Bible study has been replaced by a study of the stars. While these authors may use Matthew 2:1-11 as a *basis* for their books, their “studies” are not studies of the BIBLE, but studies in ASTRONOMY. This deprives the Christian of God’s full counsel. Don’t get me wrong, I’m all for using science to undergird scripture. But when science is consulted to the exclusion of scripture, then that’s when we

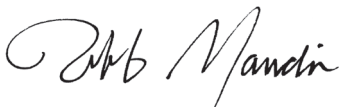
have a problem. The word of God should always come first. That's what this book is about – putting the *King James Bible* FIRST. First before science, before opinion, before anything else. Doing so will place the Christian on the road to sound doctrine.

Using only the words of God's Book, this book takes the study of Bethlehem's Star farther than simply its immediate context. It goes beyond Matthew 2:1-11, and shows the Christian how many other scriptures shed light on the subject, light otherwise unattainable through the reading of a handful of Bible verses, or by diverting the study to science alone. It is my prayer that this work will glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and edify those wanting to know more about the mystery behind the Star of Bethlehem:

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” Isaiah 8:20

“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” Titus 1:9

Even so, come, Lord Jesus (Rev. 22:20)

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jeffrey W. Mardis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "M".

Jeffrey W. Mardis

GOD OF NATURE



*“Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun
for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon
and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth
the sea when the waves thereof roar;
The LORD of hosts is his name”*

Jeremiah 31:35

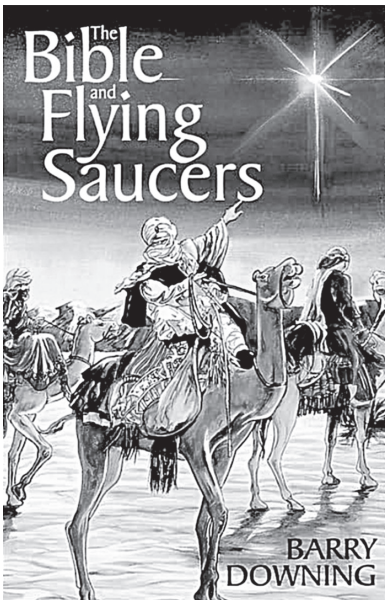
The Star of Bethlehem is one of the most widely known accounts in all of scripture. During the Christmas season billions of people around the world are exposed to the story, and reminded of the event through the imagery of Christmas cards, Christmas programs, nativity scenes, and the star atop the Christmas tree. Many books have been written on the subject. The vast majority of these

books, whether written by Christians or others, the internet retail giant Amazon.com, shows that 95% are based around the science of ASTRONOMY. Since the Bible narrative mentions a “*star*” this is understandable. But it also means that nearly every author has put all their eggs into one basket. Doing so has helped create the perception that the reality of the Star stands or falls solely on the proofs of science. Of these theories, the most popular are based on:

- 1.) The interactions and near-passings of planets with other planets, primarily Jupiter, Saturn or Venus (astronomy labels these events as planetary “conjunctions”).
- 2.) Stars, star constellations and other celestial phenomena like comets or supernovae.
- 3.) Outright denial of the Bible and unconventional theories (like UFO’s) have also been proposed.

Very few authors, if any, rely on scripture alone.

Today, the most popular study addressing the Star is a Christian documentary published in May, 2009. At the time of this writing, the video had garnered over 1,078 four-star and five-star reviews from Amazon.com customers (with the DVD’s popularity continuing to grow by the month). Titled *The Star of Bethlehem: Unlocking the Mystery of the World’s*



IMAGES/Internet

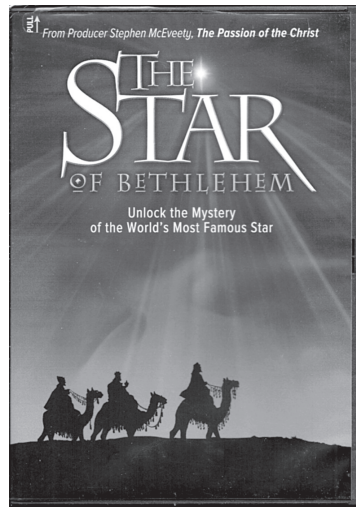


False theories on the Star of Bethlehem

The Bible & Flying Saucers (above, left), by Presbyterian minister Barry H. Downing, has been in circulation (off and on) since 1968. The author proposes that the UFO phenomena is “of God”, and “flying saucer” activity, even today, represents God’s angels at work. He further states that many miracles of the Bible were the work of such saucers. This includes the parting of the Red Sea, Ezekiel’s wheel, Elijah’s chariot, and the Star of Bethlehem. *Fortean Times* (above, right) is a magazine based around the early works of Charles Fort (1874-1932). It’s been in publication since 1973, and covers strange and unexplained phenomena from around the world. Note that the cover of the January, 2011 issue theorizes what the wise men “really saw” was a space ship from another planet.

Most Famous Star, this documentary uses computer software to backtrack the movement of the heavens, and concludes that a series of celestial events collectively contributed to the phenomena. This theory centers primarily around the planet JUPITER. The official website for the documentary states:

“JUPITER. The name of the greatest god of Roman mythology. And the name of the largest planet of our solar system. Jupiter has been known from ages-old to the present as the King Planet. ... SINCE HUMANS HAVE ASSIGNED KINGLY QUALITIES TO THIS GIANT wanderer for dozens of centuries, might it have something to do with our Star announcing the birth of a king? THAT WILL BE OUR WORKING THEORY. ... TO BE MATTHEW’S STAR, JUPITER as viewed from Earth would have to do peculiar things.”¹



IMAGE/Internet

The video then proceeds to track the planet as it produces a sequence of four “conjunctions” and two encounters with star constellations. First, a triple encounter with Regulus²

[1] Larson, Frederick A. “A Coronation.” . Frederick A. Larson, 2014. Web. May 2014. <<http://www.bethlehemstar.net/starry-dance/coronation/>>. Emphasis added.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Larson, Frederick A. “The Birth of a King.” . Frederick A. Larson, 2014. Web. May 2014. <<http://www.bethlehemstar.net/starry-dance/the-birth-of-a-king/>>.

and Leo³, then with Virgo⁴, and finally, the planet Venus⁵. This implies that the celestial journey of Jupiter signified the star of Bethlehem by its interaction with one star, two star constellations, and another planet. According to the video, all this agrees with the Bible. Maybe in a very general sense, but there are things left wanting. Because the Jupiter Theory, by far, seems to be the most popular explanation for the Star, it will be mentioned frequently throughout this book. This is not done to necessarily single-out or pick on *this* particular Christian position, many books propose similar theories. But the high praise and popularity of this video, I believe, helps demonstrate that people are looking in the wrong place for answers.

I can certainly see why Christians may view certain astronomical theories as being significant, after all, the “...heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.” (Psa. 19:1) That much we can agree upon. But because of scripture, I do not believe that any of these theories represent “*the star*” which lead the wise men to Bethlehem. The naked eye was all the ancients used to observe the heavens. They had no telescopes. Because of this, star and planetary movement was not immediately recognizable until the charts, measurements

[4] Larson, Frederick A. “The Birth of a King.” . Frederick A. Larson, 2014. Web. May 2014. <<http://www.bethlehemstar.net/starry-dance/the-birth-of-a-king/>>..

[5] Larson, Frederick A. “Westward Leading.” . Frederick A. Larson, 2014. Web. May 2014. <<http://www.bethlehemstar.net/starry-dance/westward-leading/>>..

and calculations of several days were compared. This helps illustrate that such space-based phenomena would have been too small, happened too slow, and been too far away to have the kind of meaningful impact that Matthew's account requires. Did celestial events happen around the time of Christ's birth? Yes, around that time. Were any of these events "*the star*" of Bethlehem? I don't think so. And I don't believe the scriptures support that position either. Yes, at the time, there were unique interactions between planets, stars and star constellations, but none were "*the star*".

Those who rely on nature alone to explain or interpret the Bible are many times tempted to down-play the Bible's details. Yet truth comes by "*every word of God*" (Prov. 30:5, Matt. 4:4). If theories of natural phenomena are not in accord with every word of God, regardless of the event in question, then those theories need to be thrown out. When Aaron's rod transformed into a serpent, it did not line up with science (Ex. 7:9-10). When Moses turned the waters to blood, it did not line up with science (Ex. 7:19-20). When Moses parted the Red Sea, it did not line up with science (Ex. 14:21-22). When Christ walked on the water, it did not line up with science (Mk. 6:48-49). So what. If your reality extends no further than your five sense (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching), then you're in for a real shock (Rom. 1:20, John 20:24-29, Heb. 11). This book aims to rely on scripture alone for our answers. By putting the details of God's words FIRST, we automatically align with

God, and eliminate any theory that doesn't fall in line with what He's already said – regardless if “science” agrees with the conclusion or not:

“...yea, LET GOD BE TRUE, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” Romans 3:4

God's words are more than sufficient in their ability to reveal truth. And I believe that there are many scriptural indicators that point to the solution of this mystery. By comparing scripture with scripture, this book will present the study on how the Bible-believing Christian can arrive at that answer. To follow this study no knowledge in astronomy is necessary. No knowledge in ancient Hebrew or Greek is necessary. All one needs is a *King James Bible* and a believing heart and mind. If you have *that*, you have all the tools necessary for a profitable and doctrinally-sound outcome (1 Thess. 2:13). This first chapter will launch our study, and begin with how God controls, interacts and regulates NATURE.

Natural or Supernatural

The primary window of time with which our study of the Star of Bethlehem is concerned, is between the time just after the birth of Christ (Luke 2:7), and the time just prior to Joseph, Mary and the Babe being warned to flee into Egypt

(Matt. 2:13). This is about a two-year time span (more on this later). Within this time the miraculous appearance of the Star occurs. A unique event in history which had never happened before or since. But before we delve into the details of the Star, a few other things need to first be ironed out. Things that are critical to understanding what happened on that night of all nights some 2,000-plus years ago.

The question that needs to be answered, before getting to the text directly, is the question of whether the Star of Bethlehem was (1) a natural phenomenon, or (2) a supernatural phenomenon. Did the Lord GUIDE A NATURAL EVENT to coincide with the birth of Christ and to represent the “star” (like a conjunction of planets), or did He USE MORE UNNATURAL MEANS which have nothing to do with astronomical studies (like signs and wonders)? The truth is, HE COULD HAVE DONE EITHER.

First, the Christian must realize that the words “natural event” are a misnomer. This is because scoffers like to say that if the Star of Bethlehem was a “naturally occurring” event, then God was not its source. The use of the word “natural” is usually a buzzword used by skeptics to imply “without God”, meaning that “nature accidentally did it” and God didn’t. The argument is that ancient peoples were too dumb to understand certain “natural events”, and therefore wrongly attributed such phenomena to “God”. Undoubtedly such things have happened among pagan peoples, but this has nothing to do with Matthew’s record

or the Star of Bethlehem. The Lord is the Author of nature (it didn't author itself), and most events in His creation, in one way or another, are a direct result of His actions. So, if the Star of Bethlehem resulted from a "natural" event (as many popular theories suggest), does that mean the Lord was any less involved? No. It simply means His actions can be scientifically verified. The scriptures testify:

"...the LORD HATH HIS WAY in the WHIRLWIND and in the STORM, and the CLOUDS are the dust of his feet." Nahum 1:3

"Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind FULFILLING HIS WORD." Psalm 148:8

All six of the different elements listed above are found in nature (fire, wind, rain, hail, snow, vapor). Admittedly, the scriptures show that God often uses these as a means of *"fulfilling His word"*. From man's perspective, this means that certain instances which outwardly appear to be meaningless ACCIDENTS OR COINCIDENCES OF NATURE, are actually PLANNED EVENTS OF GOD. Let's look at this a little closer.

The Ordinances of Nature

"[35] Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the SUN for a light by day, and the ORDINANCES OF THE MOON AND OF THE STARS for a light by night,

which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: [36] If THOSE ORDINANCES depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.” Jer. 31:35-36

Because God is the Creator of nature, He is the Author of its actions. That’s elementary. Here the scriptures demonstrate that PART of those actions include regulating the behavior of celestial bodies like the sun, moon and stars. The sun rises and sets in accord with its established ordinance. The moon waxes and wanes in accord with its established ordinance. The stars twinkle and shine in accord with their established ordinances. The seas wave and roar in accord with their established ordinances. For many, these ordinances are seen as occurring “naturally”, without God’s help, but the Lord does not need to intervene in these situations directly in order for their actions to be in accord with His Will. God’s pre-established laws have determined the timing and outcome of nature, without His direct minute-by-minute guidance. This guidance was instituted at the time of their creation. Modern man calls this guiding force the “laws of nature” (or sometimes blasphemously, “Mother Nature”). The Bible calls it “*the ordinances*” of God. This is how the sun, moon, stars, fire, wind, rain, hail, snow and vapor are constantly “*fulfilling his word*” no matter what it may appear to be doing “naturally”. This applies to all of nature:



IMAGE/Bigstockphoto.com

The ordered movement of the solar system

The Ordinances of God regulate all of nature. Part of these ordinances control the movement of the heavens. Science refers to these ordinances as “the laws of nature”, a misnomer which wrongly implies that all such movements are coincidental or accidental.

“Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast ESTABLISHED THE EARTH, and IT ABIDETH. THEY CONTINUE THIS DAY ACCORDING TO THINE ORDINANCES: for all are thy servants.”

Psalm 119:90-91

However, there are also times when the Lord intervenes in these guiding laws.

The Supernatural Manipulation of Nature

Storms are a daily occurrence on planet earth. Weather patterns are a result of the laws and ordinances of God:

“[23] And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. [24] And, behold, THERE AROSE A GREAT TEMPEST IN THE SEA, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. [25] And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. [26] And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and REBUKED THE WINDS AND SEA; and there was a great calm. [27] But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even THE WINDS AND THE SEA OBEY HIM!”

Matthew 8:23-27

Here we see a clear example of the Lord *intervening* in the ordinances which regulate severe weather events. Because of this, the outcome was altered. These verses show that the storm was powerful enough to drown everyone on the ship (“...*save us: we perish...*”), but this potential was averted (see also Mk. 4:37-38). Note that this everyday behavior of the wind and sea seemed to have a “natural” ending. But instead, its ending resulted from the Lord’s direct influence. The Lord simply SPOKE and nature obeyed. There was a collision between GOD’S VOICE and the ORDINANCES OF



IMAGE/Sweet Publishing, sweetpublishing.com

“Peace, be still.”

When Christ spoke and stopped the tempest on the Sea of Galilee, those in the boat with him, were probably the only ones that ever knew that the storm had not stopped on its own. (Matt. 8:23-27)

NATURE – and God won. If you had been standing on the seashore, and not in the boat with the disciples, you would have probably concluded that the storm ceased “naturally” –without God’s help–you would have been wrong!

Many other happenings can also have an outward appearance of resulting from nature, but are actually the result of God:

“[12] And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have

chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. [13] If I SHUT UP HEAVEN that there be NO RAIN, or if I COMMAND THE LOCUSTS to devour the land, or if I SEND PESTILENCE among my people; [14] If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:12-14

“For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I SEND MY four sore JUDGEMENTS upon Jerusalem, the SWORD, and the FAMINE, and the noisome BEAST, and the PESTILENCE, to cut off from it man and beast?” Ezekiel 14:21

Here God’s words show that drought, war, famine, disease, and animal and insect behavior, can be the means by which God sends judgment. And although these all have an appearance of occurring “naturally”, they do not happen by accident nor come to pass without purpose. Even simple things like spring showers are events associated with God’s mercy and not His judgment. The scriptures testify that He “...sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matt. 5:45)

The point is, many legitimate “acts of God” outwardly appear as “natural” events. This simply means, that sometimes when God intervenes, He intervenes within the

confines of His ordinances. When this is done such events can be explained “scientifically”. Because of this, most scientists conclude that “God is not involved”. They’re wrong. The truth is, sometimes the Lord **ALLOWS HIS ORDINANCES TO CONTROL NATURE**, and at other times He may **PERSONALLY INTERVENE AND CONTROL NATURE HIMSELF**. There’s no real way of knowing which is which. But it doesn’t matter, both instances are cases of God *“fulfilling his word”*. (Psa. 148:8)

Satan & Nature

Another thing we’ve not mentioned as yet is that the Adversary (Satan the Devil) can also control certain natural events. He is *“the prince of the power of the air”* (Eph. 2:2), so to exclude him from our discussion is to leave out part of the equation. In the book of Job, the Lord removes His protective hedge from Job and relinquishes Job into the hand of Satan (Job. 1:12). When this is done, Job’s animals, servants and family are immediately destroyed. Job is then smitten with boils. The Devil uses four means to bring about this destruction:

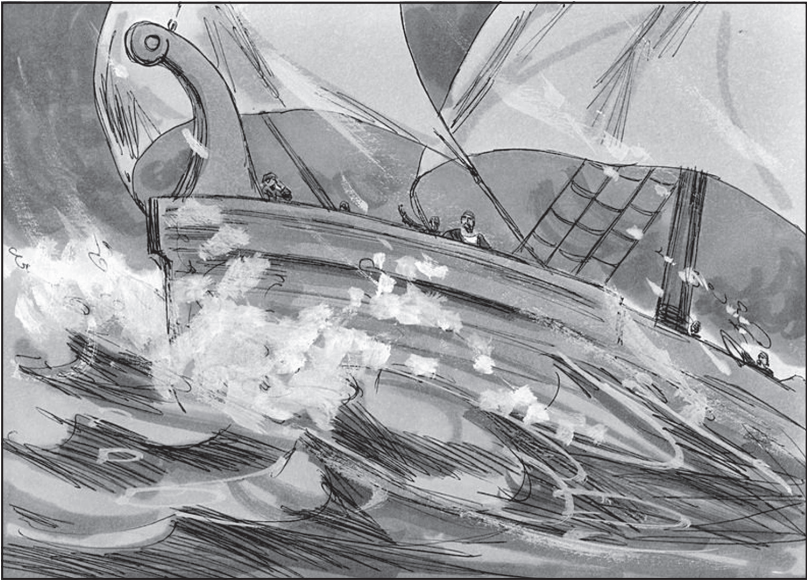
- 1.) Controlling people (Job 1:15 & 17)
- 2.) Controlling fire (Job 1:16)
- 3.) Controlling wind (Job 1:19)
- 4.) Controlling disease (Job 2:4-7)

While Satan is irrelevant to our study on the Star of Bethlehem, I still felt it important to add this to the

discussion. Satan is the king of counterfeit, and it's always important to understand the areas where he can mimic God. The manipulation of certain elements in nature (like wind and fire) is one of those areas.

For example, I believe that Satan being "*the prince of the power of the air*" (Eph. 2:2) is probably why the tempest arose while Christ and his disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee. Of course, there's always the possibility that God allowed His ordinances to bring the storm so "*that the works of God should be made manifest*" (John 9:3). But if the Devil is responsible, it explains a lot. Consider this – the context of the event shows that Christ and his disciples were on their way to the Gadarenes, the home of "*Legion*", the most devil-possessed man in all the Bible. During their trip a unique event occurs – NATURE RISES UP AGAINST THE LORD. It's entirely possible that, in an effort to protect a demoniac stronghold, Satan raises a storm to slay Jesus and his disciples, but the plot fails (see Matt. 8:23-34; Mk. 4:35-41 & 5:1-17 and Lk. 8:22-37).

A similar event also happens with the apostle Paul. In this example, we find the only reference in scripture where WEATHER PHENOMENA is given a name – EUROCLYDON (yu-ROK-ly-don, Acts 27:14). Was this another unannounced appearance of the Devil? Was "*Euroclydon*" a name given to "*the prince of the power of the air*"? Maybe. Was Satan trying to kill Paul? It's possible. Paul does make mention of Satan's hindrance on one occasion (1Thess. 2:18). Perhaps



IMAGE/Sweet Publishing, sweetpublishing.com

Paul encounters Euroclydon

The scriptures point to the possibility that “Euroclydon” was a tempest, conjured by the Devil, in an effort to kill Paul. (Acts 27:14)

he had this incident partially in mind when making the comment? But whether Satan was responsible for the storm on the Sea of Galilee or not, or whether he was responsible for Euroclydon or not, the Bible doesn’t explicitly say. But the Devil IS “*the prince of the power of the air*”, and after comparing scripture with scripture and having a look at its details, the potential is certainly there. Note this – had these combined events succeeded, they would have eliminated persons most central to Christianity – Jesus, Paul and the disciples. Would the Devil have an interest in doing that? Regardless, Satan DOES have the power to manipulate

nature. After the Lord lowers His hedge from Job, He says to the Devil; “...*all that he hath is in THY POWER...*” (Job 1:12) To ignore this fact, is to be “*ignorant of his devices*”, and ultimately, ignorant of scripture (2Cor. 2:11).

Chapter Summary

This chapter constitutes the first step in laying the groundwork for understanding the Star of Bethlehem. We’ve yet to explore the scriptural details of the Star, that will be covered thoroughly a little later in the book, but thus far, we’ve laid half our foundation. This first half helps us to understand that events which appear to be “natural”, like the appearing of a star, have the possibility of happening as a result of three influences:

1.) God’s Ordinances of Nature - Nature moves and behaves in accord with the laws and ordinances established by the Creator. These laws and ordinances constitute their “natural” behavior. These ordinances guide nature continually, and do not require God’s minute-by-minute oversight. This means that the Star of Bethlehem may have simply been the outcome of ordinances which the Lord established for planets or stars. Most all modern Christian theories regarding Bethlehem’s Star fall into this category.

2.) God Intervening in the Ordinances of Nature - Occasionally the Lord intervenes directly

with His established ordinances (like when Christ stopped the tempest on the Sea of Galilee).

3.) Satan Intervening in the Ordinances of Nature - Satan can also influence God's ordinances. Satan is known as "*the prince of the power of the air*" (Eph. 2:2), and can effect the behavior of wind, fire and other seemingly-natural events.

While points 2 and 3 represent supernatural influences upon nature, ALL THREE can outwardly appear as WORKS OF NATURE. Because of this, ALL THREE are scientifically verifiable. This means that both God and the Devil can influence an event, without that event having any obvious "supernatural" indicators. It also means that the use of science to "disprove" the actions of God (or the Devil) is pointless. This is because there are times when science will conclude that "nature did it", when, in fact, points 2 and 3 above show that that's not always the case. SCIENCE CAN BE MISLEADING:

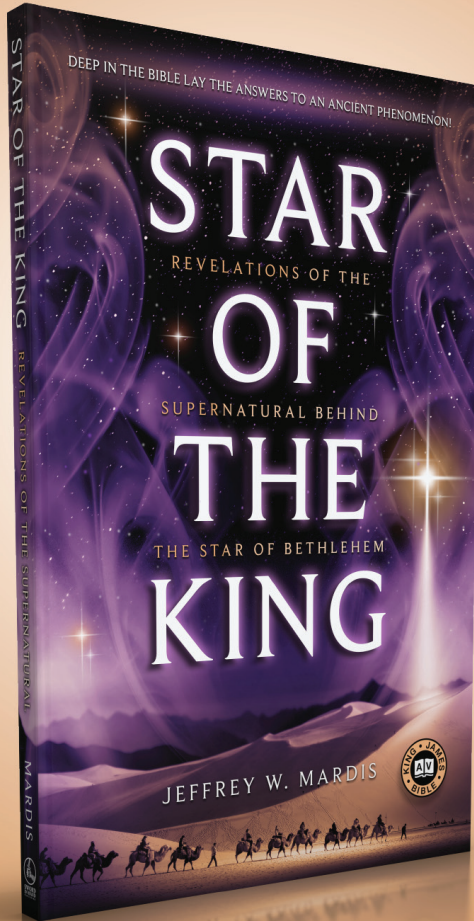
"[19] For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. [20] Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? [21] For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom

knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

1Corinthians 1:19-21

The next chapter will take the second step in laying the groundwork for our study. In that chapter the shoe will be on the other foot. Chapter 2 will look at what happens when God steps OUTSIDE of His established ordinances and goes against their “natural” behavior.





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