

# CSA News

The Creation Science Association for Mid-America

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" Psalm 118:8

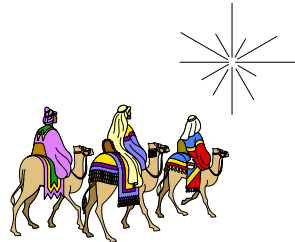
Volume 25 (1) Jan - Feb, 2008

## The Star of Bethlehem

### What Was It?

By J. Timothy Unruh

The word astronomy comes from the Greek *astron*, "a star," and *nomos*, "a law," hence, "star law." It signifies the laws, science, and study of the stars. There are about 6,500 stars in the whole of heaven visible to the acute human eye.



For two millennia there has endured a fascination with an account of a star that riveted the attention of a party of Wise Men and led them as one from Persia to an insignificant little village in the eastern Mediterranean where they worshipped a baby named Jesus. The account, as recorded in Matthew 2:1-16, is understood well enough in every detail except for one - the star. What was it? This mysterious star has captured the imagination of not only theologians, but scientists, philosophers, artists, and other creative thinkers, especially astronomers, up to the present day. Contrary to popular tradition the Wise Men did not come to a manger in a stable but to a house, and they arrived in Judea at least six months after Jesus was born. It was the shepherds who visited the manger, after the Glory of the Lord shone around them in the fields and announced His birth while the angels sang. The "sign" for the shepherds was the "Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12), while the *sign* to the Wise Men, or Magi, still in the east, was the "Star" (Matthew 2:2).

A number of theories have been proposed to explain the appearance of the enigmatic star. Each year at literally hundreds of planetariums around the country this profound question is tackled in programs that themselves have become a Christmas tradition. Even though combining science and religion is normally taboo, during the holiday season these shows invariably oblige public demand and attempt to give a plausible explanation for the Star of Bethlehem - scientifically. Ironically, most of the explanations offered up would hardly pass peer review in the real world of science. In spite of this, and in light of the facts of the verses in Matthew, the star was an actual object in the sky that appeared, moved, and hovered in a manner sufficient to lead the Magi to the precise location where the child Jesus dwelt. Most planetariums accommodate this image by offering a wealth of astronomical possibilities as to what type of celestial object the star might have been. Among these theories the more common include: a super nova, a bright meteor or a great comet, the planet Venus, an unusual planetary conjunction or alignment, a UFO, and so on. However, all of these attempts to explain this remarkable historic phenomenon from a purely mechanistic or naturalistic thesis have serious problems, always including the simple fact that such objects in the sky cannot lead in the manner required according to Matthew's account. At least, the astronomers

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2008

### Fun, Educational, Recreational, God-Honoring

The Lord willing, 2008 Creation Safaris will be announced in the Feb-Mar, 2008 CSA News, about mid-February, 2008.

For More Information on Safaris, get the Safari Detail Booklet on the Creation Safaris Page at [www.csama.org](http://www.csama.org), or, call or write: CSA, 22509 State Line Road, Cleveland, MO, 64734. (816) 618-3610, or [csahq@juno.com](mailto:csahq@juno.com).

### Evolution, Purpose Driven and the Great Harlot

In the last two issues we discussed how evolution has influenced the Church and how greed and seeking favor of the world began, some 1700 years ago, building The Great Harlot, which will assist Satan in destroying true Christianity, and how one movement, "The Purpose Driven Church" is playing a key role.

We received many responses, several calls, more than one personal visit, including a pastor and his wife, and many emails, the vast majority very favorable and in agreement... a few "hate mails," but none with any substance. We are not, at this time, going to devote more space to this report, but certainly much more needs to be said. Personally, I hope to offer a free, internet-enabled book on the subject. Meanwhile, below is a brief bibliography of the main sources I used:

- The Purpose Driven Life, Rick Warren
- The Purpose Driven Church, Rick Warren
- What You Need to Know About the Purpose Driven Church, Dr. Larry Spargimino, Ph.D., 2004, SW Radio Bible Church of the Air. 35 pages [Best brief treatment I have found.]
- Warren Smith, Deceived on Purpose: The New Age Implications of the Purpose Driven Church (Silverton, OR: Mountain Stream Press, 2004). [If you get only one book, get this one.]
- Who's Driving the Purpose Driven Church? Sundquist, James. Bible Belt Publishing, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. 2004.
- Redefining Christianity - Understanding the Purpose Driven Movement Pastor Bob DeWaay, 247 Pages, 21st Century Press
- The Truth War, John MacArthur, Thomas Nelson, May 2007  
MacArthur focuses on the broad war on truth and rightly includes modern movements other than, but similar to "Purpose Driven." He leaves no doubt where he stands on PDC.
- <http://purposejourney.blogspot.com/> A lengthy, thorough review of The Purpose Driven Life. ["On page 306 he (Warren) urges us to record our journey in a journal and to pass this on to others. Below is my journal on purpose, which I pass along to you, dear reader..."]
- <http://cicministry.org/commentary/issue80.htm> [Insightful, brief highlights from book Redefining Christianity, above.]

naturalistic explanation.

Finding all of these theories wanting, some show directors will cross a further threshold by abandoning the literal for the abstract, saying the star was not a physical object but merely some esoteric omen described by prophets of the day. Others will suggest that the star was some kind of “spiritual light”, outside the realm of science, being a matter of faith held by certain adherents, and said to be as subjective and inarguable as the First Amendment. Then a few will go even further yet and resort to astrology, saying that the star was an astrological sign. Explanations from all these perspectives abound. In the end none of these can adequately serve the details of Matthew’s account. Despairing the star’s incredulity, explanations are offered which withhold the key facts that inherently disprove their possibility. Hence, accompanying the Biblical heresy is the schizophrenia of trying to decide whether the planetarium shows should be entertainment or real science, a predicament that aggravates the already sticky problem of assuming science can explain all phenomena, resulting in pseudo scientific explanations.

In an attempt from a more “religious” perspective it has been suggested by some that the star was an angel, as evidenced by its apparent intelligent movement. However, even though there appears to be a close association between stars and angels in the Bible, Matthew did not describe the Bethlehem apparition as an angel - but a star. However intimately the two may be related, the fact that Matthew’s second chapter mentions both angels and the star at the nativity would tend to further indicate that the star was not an angel but its own distinct manifestation. Luke’s account seems to affirm this distinction.

If the account as revealed in Matthew’s gospel is literally true, as the Bible believing Christian holds, then the Star of Bethlehem seen by the wise men could not have been a natural phenomenon, nor an astrological or spiritual sign alone, or even an angel. The “natural phenomenon” notions are all fatally flawed by the unique geometry of its movement in the sky and its ability to stand over and mark a single objective geographic point, such as the house where the Christ child dwelt. Remember, since the stars “circle the earth” each 24 hours, they move at about 1000 mph, making them over a single house less than a second. They are also so distant that they could not be used to find a city, much less a house. This indicates that it was a literal visible supernatural sign given from on High and one that modern science, or any other extrabiblical discipline, will never be able to explain.

There remains yet one more avenue in our quest after the Star of Bethlehem that well deserves our attention. This one leads us to an entirely unique, but not new, understanding and conclusion consistent with the historical facts, and represents part of a recurrent theme that can be traced from one cover of the Bible to the other.

Our first clue is found in the Genesis record where God created the heaven and the earth. Light was present on the first day of creation, even though the sources of light in the physical heavens - the Sun, Moon and stars - were not created until the fourth day. We can see that the first light was not what we would call “natural.” It must have been that supernatural display of the glory of God which many times afterward accompanied His revelatory and redemptive activity. The encounter of Moses with God is exemplary. God revealed Himself to Moses in a “burning” bush by an unearthly supernatural light that did not consume the bush. Moses was apparently so attracted to the light that he asked

God to show him more of His glory. When Moses came down from the mountain his own face glowed from being in God’s presence. As Moses led the people out of Egypt this same light-glorie accompanied them in the wilderness and later in the Tabernacle. The ancient Hebrews called these appearances of God the *Shekinah*: the glory, radiance, presence or merely the “dwelling” of God with His people. This physical manifestation is also a reminder of the authority and superintendence of the omnipotent God over His creation. This same glory of God is mentioned many more times in the Psalms and the prophets. Subsequently, centuries passed during which the *Shekinah* remained absent from Israel - until the time of Christ.

Then it happened, like the missing piece of a cosmic jigsaw puzzle, a strange new light appeared in the East. Three gentile Persian astronomer-priests saw it in the sky, and they immediately recognized the overwhelming significance of this strange and wonderful aerial light. Somehow, perhaps through a vision or a dream, the Magi got the message that the King of the Jews, the Savior of mankind, was born. The intense wonderful light which accompanied God at creation; when He appeared to Moses and made his face shine; that hovered over the Exodus and filled the Tabernacle with an exceeding illumination; and that blinded the prophets of old; now returned after a hiatus of six centuries to herald the greatest event of all: the benevolent entry of His eternal Son into our time bound universe as the first and only God-man in human history. Throughout the Bible the *Shekinah* was an accompaniment that indicated the presence of the Lord and guided people as the Lord directed. Finally, we are told in Revelation 7:16 that we will have no need of the sun.

It seems fitting that the *Shekinah* would appear to herald the birth of God the Son and bring “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” The extraordinary supernatural light of the *Shekinah* glory of God is the only *theory* that completely fulfills all the data presented in Matthew 2:1-12. On this occasion particularly, this special light was a most appropriate manifestation of divine majesty.

An amazing Bible prophecy of a “Star out of Jacob” (Numbers 24:17) anticipated the nativity by over 1,400 years, and spoke of One who would one day hold the scepter of kingly rule over men of faith who had eyes to see. The same was announced by the Star of Bethlehem which was indeed “His Star” (Matthew 2:2). As we enter this “Holy Day” season we are reminded of what Peter long ago assured us, that in God’s written Word, available to all in the Holy Scriptures, “We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (II Peter 1:19). Jesus said: “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). The prophets of old spoke of a time yet future, even from our contemporary prospect, that all who enter into a personal relationship with the God of creation through the resurrected Jesus Christ have new life in the present, and will ultimately see the *Shekinah* glory continually. This is the identity and meaning of the Star of Bethlehem. Happy are the people to whom God has revealed Himself, to whom He has come, and unto whom He is the Lord. “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

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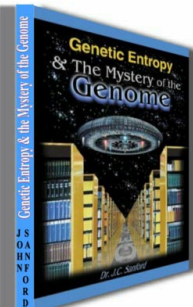
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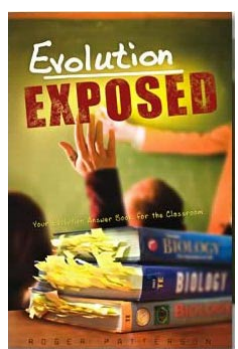
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*"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."* Are you doing all the Lord has called you to do in the war for the minds and hearts of our citizens... especially our youth? CSA is not a closed fraternity. Any born-again believer who is abiding in the words of Jesus, and has been gifted in research, computers, speaking, clerical activities, writing of articles or book reviews, etc., and who has heard a call to serve in an origins ministry should consider and pray about serving with us. Write or call for more information.

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**Fellowship & Book Table: 6:15PM - Meeting: 7:00PM Nursery Available: \$2.50 per child (Reservations required for nursery)**

**CSA Meeting - Tuesday, Jan 8, 2008**

*Inherently Wind*

*DVD By: David Menton, PhD*

**David Menton** holds a Ph.D. in cell biology, and is professor emeritus at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. "**Inherit the Wind**" was a play and movie shown to virtually every public school child in the US. The movie was typically shown as a joint presentation of the English and Science Departments. Many drama departments chose it for school plays. Purporting to be a documentary, it is a colossal series of lies designed to attack Christianity, from the first musical note to the closing curtain. A liberal New York columnist who was present at the trial, found the play so full of lies he walked out.

Dr. Menton studied the trial transcript and the play, and produced this video, "Inherently Wind." We are showing it now because it is a very important history study of the roles of government, "Education" and media in destroying the foundation of our country. Recently, the socialist Public Broadcasting System, hugely funded by tax dollars, produced an equally rank distortion of a more recent trial in Dover, Pa. "**NOVA: Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial.**" CSA is preparing a thorough review of this transparent propaganda piece for presentation at the March and April CSA meetings.

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**CSA Meeting - Tuesday, Feb 5, 2008**

*Darwin's Origin of Species...  
Science or Fantasy?*

**By George Schulte**

This presentation will be an in-depth review of a book written by George Schulte, MS geology. The book provides a chapter-by-chapter critique of Charles Darwin's infamous, and world-changing book, *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859. Before the book, especially during the 1600s, 1700s and early 1800s, most scientists and most other people in the western world accepted the biblical account of Creation and the Flood. During this period, some of the greatest scientists, nearly all Bible-believing, made breakthrough discoveries in the major fields of science... Newton, Faraday, Pascal, Boyle and hundreds of others. Darwin's book advanced the notion that all living things came into being by gradual, purely materialistic means, without God. The world, seemingly always eager to eliminate God, leapt at this idea. Schulte's book shows that Darwin provides no scientific evidence for his theory, and in fact, he pointed out, throughout his book, many *grave difficulties* with his own theory.

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