

# Biblical Astronomy

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Editor – Robert Scott Wadsworth <> P.O. Box 2272, Oregon City, OR 97045  
Phone (503) 655-7430 <> e-mail – starguy1@comcast.net <> Website – [www.biblicalastronomy.com](http://www.biblicalastronomy.com)

## NEW MOON REPORT

Nehemia Gordon from Jerusalem, Israel compiled the following New Moon Reports for the months of November and December 2009 and the beginnings of the Ninth and Tenth Biblical Months.

**November** – “On November 18, 2009 the new moon was sighted from Israel. The moon was first sighted from Jerusalem by Adam Kinghorn at 16:53 and by Devorah Gordon at 16:58.”

**December** – “On December 18, 2009 the new moon was sighted from Jerusalem by Devorah Gordon and Adam Kinghorn at 4:41pm.”

The next new moon is expected to be visible from Jerusalem near sunset on January 16, 2010 when the moon will be 1.41% illuminated and 11.53° above the horizon at 5 minutes past sunset.

## PARTIAL LUNAR ECLIPSE

There will be a partial lunar eclipse that will be visible from northern North America (only Alaska in the U.S.A.) and parts of Africa, Asia, Australia and Europe. The eclipse will be viewable in its entirety from Israel. The dark shadow cast by the earth will cover only about 4% of the moon's surface at its peak. This will be barely noticeable.

**Chart 509** shows the position of the moon in the constellation *Gemini* at the time of the eclipse. The main theme for the Sign *Gemini* is *Messiah's reign as Prince of Peace*. I do not believe this particular eclipse to be a great sign of any significance, even though this moon is also a blue moon.

A blue moon occurs when there are two full moons in the same month on the solar calendar. The first full moon occurred on December 2, and

this one occurs on December 31. Some get really carried away in their superstitions and urban legends on the meanings of blue moons. Blue moons do not occur in the Hebrew calendar since in a lunar/solar-based calendar you cannot have two full moons in the same month. It is only in solar-based calendar such as the popular Gregorian calendar that two full moons in the same month is possible. Blue moons have no meaning or significance in Biblical Astronomy. There is a lot of hype going around about the blue moons in 2012. It is all a bunch of phooey.

## THE CHRISTMAS CROSS

I recently read an article from the December 2009 issue of *Astronomy* titled *The Christmas Cross: a matter of life and death* by Stephen James O'Meara. I have enjoyed many of his articles on historical views of the constellations. This particular article concerns Julius Schiller's views on the constellations. Below are some excerpts from O'Meara's article. You can read the whole article online at [www.Astronomy.com/Omeara](http://www.Astronomy.com/Omeara). You will find the article in the archives under December 2009. I am not sure if you need to be a paid subscriber to *Astronomy* magazine to get access to this part of the *Astronomy* website.

“As Christmas nears, go outside around 8 p.m. and look for a large, striking crucifix of stars standing right above the west-northwest horizon. It is a sight to behold and a powerful symbol to ponder.”

“The Northern Cross is not one of today's constellations, although its form is arguably more recognized than its official figure. This certainly was the case in the 17th century when certain sects of skywatchers bestowed religious significance upon the star pattern. While to many these stars formed the outline of a celestial bird (including a

swan, horned owl, or ibis), others saw them as Christ's cross. German lawyer Julius Schiller (c. 1560-1627), for instance, transformed Cygnus into St. Helen holding the cross of Calvary (the stars of the Northern Cross) and depicted them as such in his 1627 star atlas *Coelum Stellatum Christianum* ("Christian Starry Heavens"). To-day's Northern Cross descended from these pious portrayals.

Actually, Schiller did more than glorify the stars of the cross. He gave Scripture names to all the constellations in the heavens, renaming the zodiacal constellations after the 12 apostles, the northern constellations after figures from the New Testament, and the southern constellations after figures from the Old Testament."

*My thoughts: Though the pictures and portrayals of the constellations that Schiller drew were very interesting, they were mostly from his personal point of view or theology and had little if anything to do with the meanings of the constellations as Yahweh intended when He named the stars. For the Biblical meaning of the constellation Cygnus see the June 2008 issue of Biblical Astronomy. Cygnus (the swan) is the feature constellation in that issue. Cygnus does not represent the death of Messiah such as the bird Aquila, but it represents his swift return. Nevertheless, the symbolism of certain configurations is in the eye of the beholder. And what comes to mind when Christians see a figure of a cross in a star configuration?*

**Chart 510** shows the Northern Cross from Julius Schiller's 1627 star atlas. Below are more excerpts from *The Christmas Cross*.

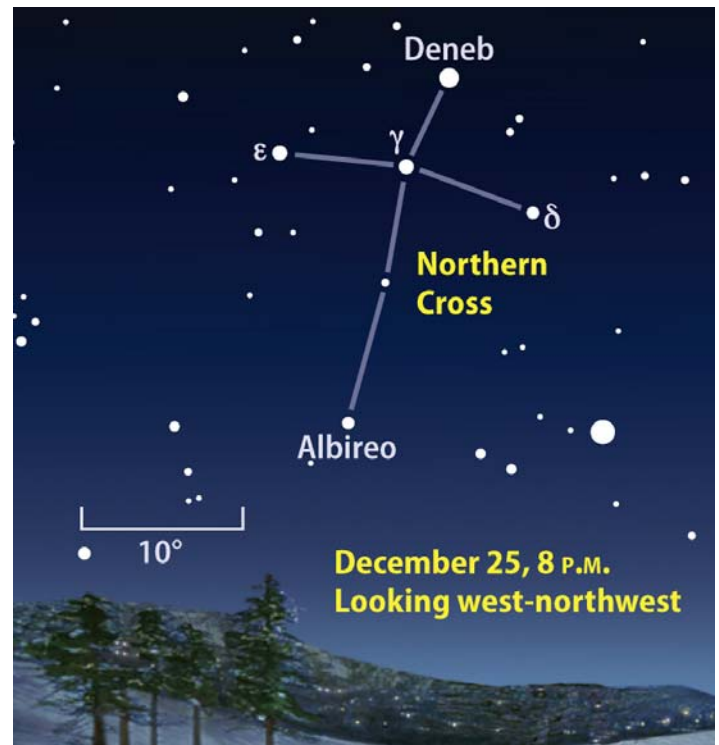
"With the Northern Cross standing at death's door as Christmas nears, is there anything rising in the eastern sky symbolic of hope or rebirth? In December 1987, Jack Horkheimer, Miami Space Transit Planetarium director and the host of TV's *Star Gazer*, came up with the answer. Yes!

While researching his Christmas show, Horkheimer recalled that the open star cluster M44, commonly known as the Beehive, originally was called the "Praesepe." This is Latin for "manger," in deference to the straw-filled manger in which the infant Jesus was born. Indeed, the word *praesepe* is derived from *praesepire* ("to enclose"), the root word of which is *presepio* ("nativity scene").

Curious, Horkheimer picked up a star wheel, dialed in December 25 at 8 p.m., and "noticed something which gave me a pleasant start." At this

date and time, M44 is directly opposite the Northern Cross, just rising (being born) in the eastern sky.

"How poetic," Horkheimer said in his Christmas show. "In all my years as a star gazer, I had never heard or read of this lovely coincidence. So, as you gaze up at the night sky this Christmas week at the setting Cross and the rising Manger, may the heavens themselves remind you of a wish that should know no religious boundaries and that is simply: Peace On Earth, Good Will Toward Men ... a hope for all mankind of all beliefs if we remind each other to keep looking up!"



Though the above is not biblically accurate according to the written word or the heavenly witness, it is of some interest. But of much greater interest are the actual events that took place in the heavens when the Magi came to find the Messiah, the King of Israel. As most of you know, I do not believe December 25 to be the date of the birth of Messiah. I believe that He was born on September 11, 3 B.C. (Julian Calendar). According to the scriptures, the Magi did not come to Jerusalem in search of Messiah until after he was born. Actually, it was one year and three months after he was born. I do believe that the Magi found Messiah with his mother in a house in Bethlehem on December 25, 2 B.C. in the very early morning hours between midnight and sunrise.

I do not have the space in a newsletter to give all the details, but I will refer you to some great



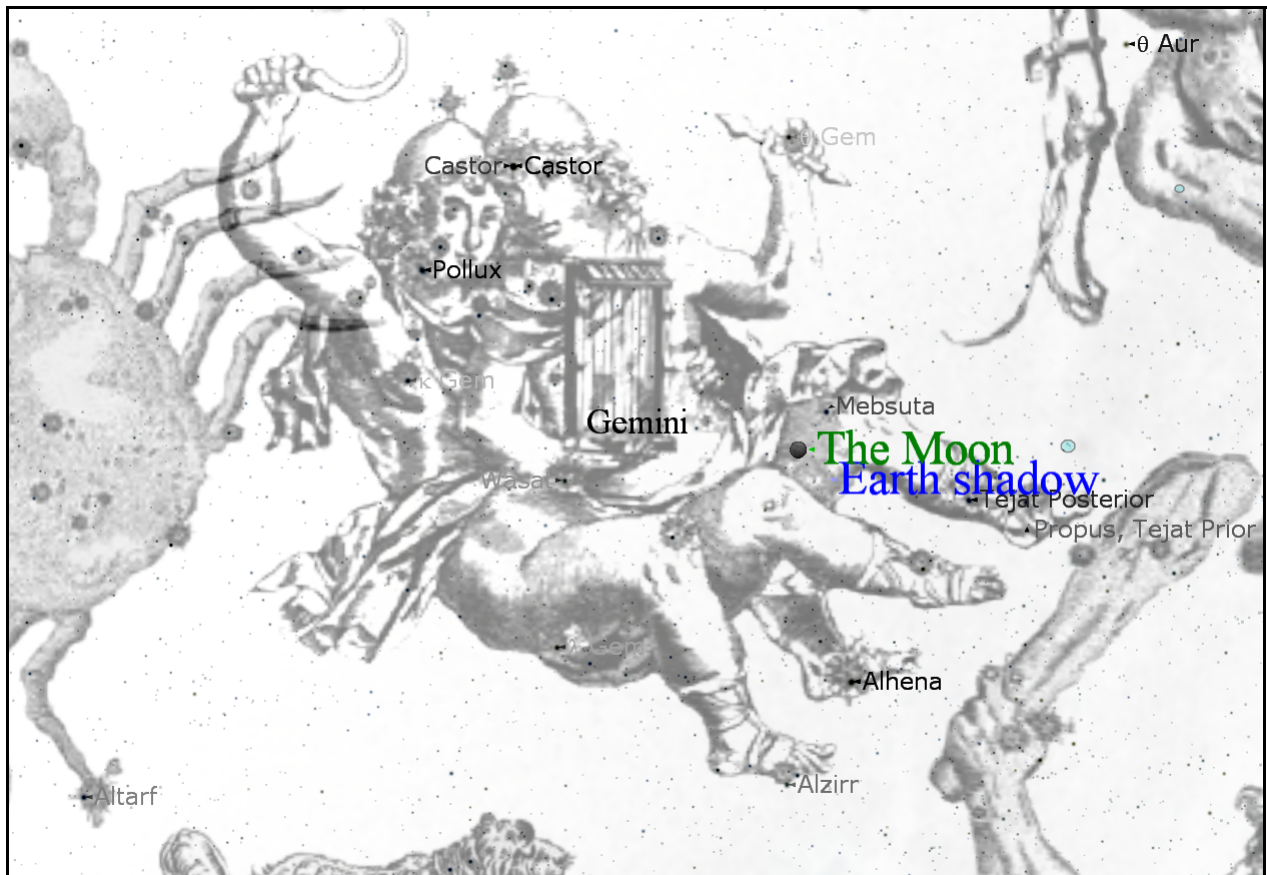


Chart 509 – Position of the moon in Gemini at the peak of the partial eclipse on December 31

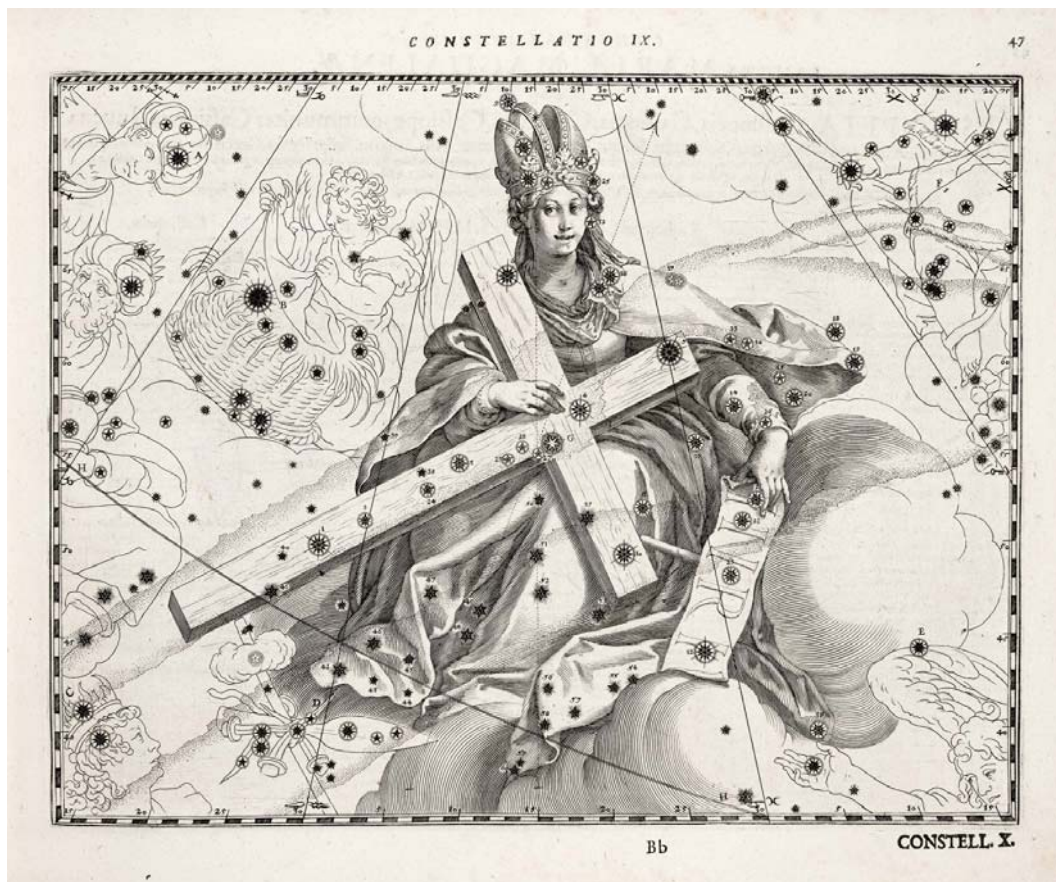
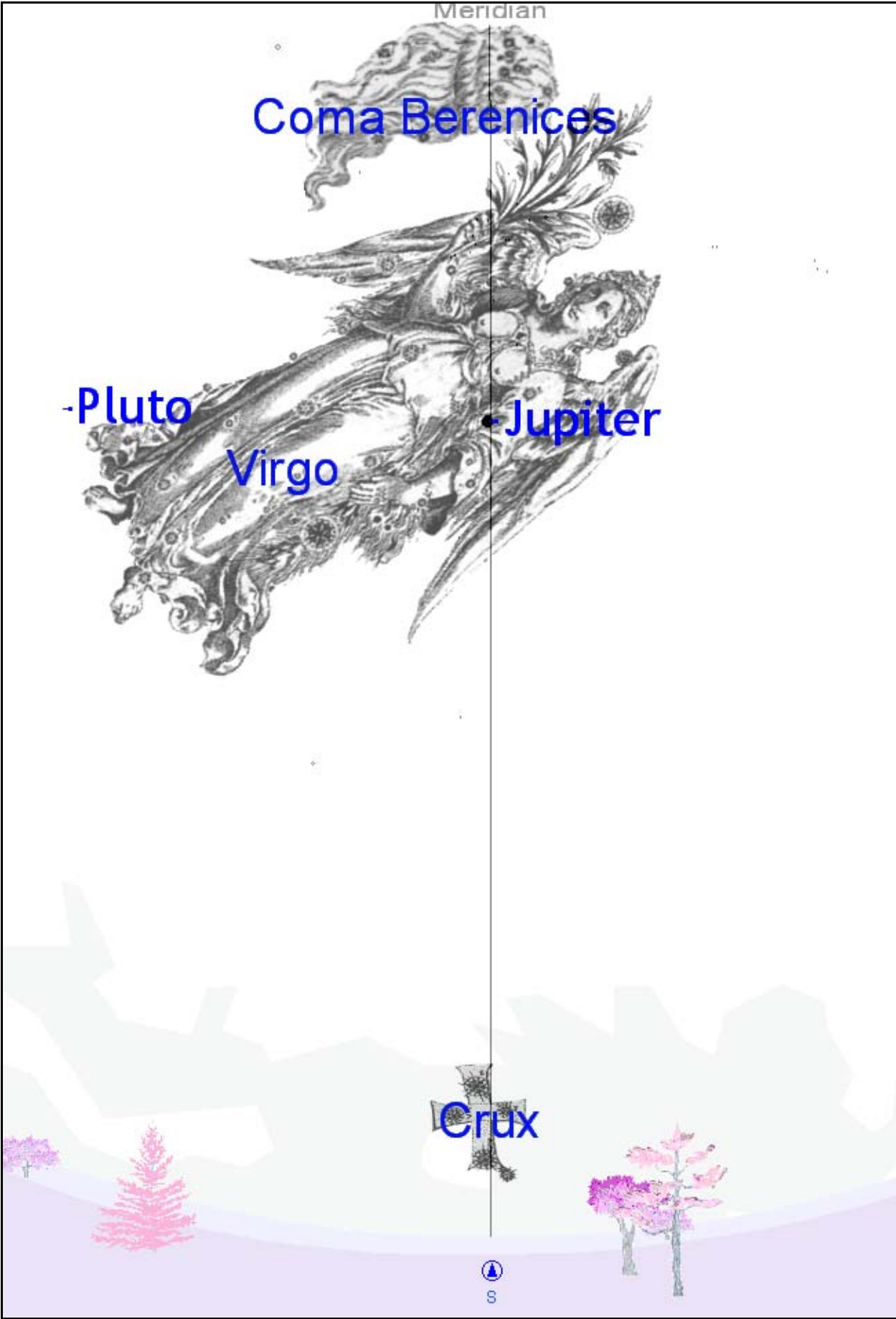


Chart 510 – The “Northern Cross” or Julius Schiller’s *Cygnus* from his 1627 star atlas



**Chart 511** – Zedek (*Jupiter*), His Star, as seen by the Magi on December 25, 2 B.C.

works on the subject of historical and astronomical factors surrounding the birth of Messiah. The best book that I have read on the subject is *The Star of Bethlehem: The Star that Astonished the World* by Ernest L. Martin. There is a free online version of the book at <http://www.askelm.com/star/index.asp> You can also purchase a hard copy of the book from **Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000 • Portland, OR 97298-0990 • Phone: 503-292-4352.**

Another work that will surely bless you is *Retelling The Christmas Story* by John Schoenheim. John's teaching sheds a whole new light on the record of Messiah's birth as written in Matthew. You can see a free video on this as well as get a free copy of the written work on this at: [www.truthortradition.com](http://www.truthortradition.com)

Just click on the search button in the upper right of the webpage and type in Retelling the Christmas Story. A list of other videos about the birth of Messiah will come up. You will also see Retelling the Christmas Story Pt. 1 and Pt. 2. Besides those two videos, all of the videos from Truth or Tradition are great. There are other videos that come up in the U-Tube list that are not from Truth or Tradition. I do not recommend those. It is written below the videos where they are from.

There was a great sign in the heavens when Messiah was born on September 11, 3 B.C. The woman was clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet (Rev. 12:1) On that date the sun was in the midst of *Bethulah (Virgo)* and in conjunction with her womb and the first crescent new moon marking the first day of Tishri was seen beneath her feet. Less than 12 hours later, *Zedek (Jupiter)* came into its first conjunction in a series of three with the star *Regulus* in *Arieh (Leo)*, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. *Jupiter* has been called since antiquity the King planet and *Regulus* the King star of the universe. Along with the great sign in *Bethulah*, this was portraying that the King of Judah who is also the King of the universe, had been born.

These were among other signs that the Magi saw that convinced them that the Promised Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15) had arrived. The Magi were from "the nations" to the east of Israel. In some traditions they were called kings. Since the fall of Adam, all of the nations desired the arrival of Messiah. The Magi were most likely descendents of students of the prophet Daniel. The king of Babylon put Daniel in charge of the Magi about 500 years previous to the birth of Jesus. Daniel knew

the true meaning of the stars and what they were made for. He taught this to his understudies, and this knowledge was passed down through the generations. They waited for centuries to see the signs in the heavens that told when the arrival of *The Desired of all nations* would be. *Comah*, a decan constellation in the Sign Virgo, represents *The Desired of all nations*.

Now the Magi arrived in Jerusalem approximately 1 year and 3 months after the birth of Messiah. After finding from Herod and the chief priests and scribes in Jerusalem that Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, they headed south. Bethlehem is about 6 miles south of Jerusalem.

The evening/morning of December 24/25 that year was the third day of Hanukkah. It was a time when all of the houses would have been lit up inside and out with many lights (lanterns, lamps, etc). There was no moon out at that time and a very thin waning crescent moon did not rise until 5:23 a.m. Besides the stars, the lights from the houses they passed on their way to Bethlehem may have aided the Magi in seeing their way. The third day of Hanukkah was also the traditional time that gifts were given to the children. The Magi and/or kings brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to give to the young child Yahshuah (Jesus), *the Desired of all nations*.

According to Matthew 2:9 the star that the Magi saw in the east, about 1.5 to 2 years previous to this date, when they first started observing the star, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. As they traveled south, they would have seen *Zedek (Jupiter)*, the star representing Messiah high in the sky as it rose from the east. It was about a three-hour journey by caravan from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. *Zedek* rose in the sky until it reached the meridian. When a planet or star reaches the meridian, it is at its highest point in the sky for the evening and it appears to be standing still. This is an optical illusion but nonetheless, it appears to stand still for several minutes.

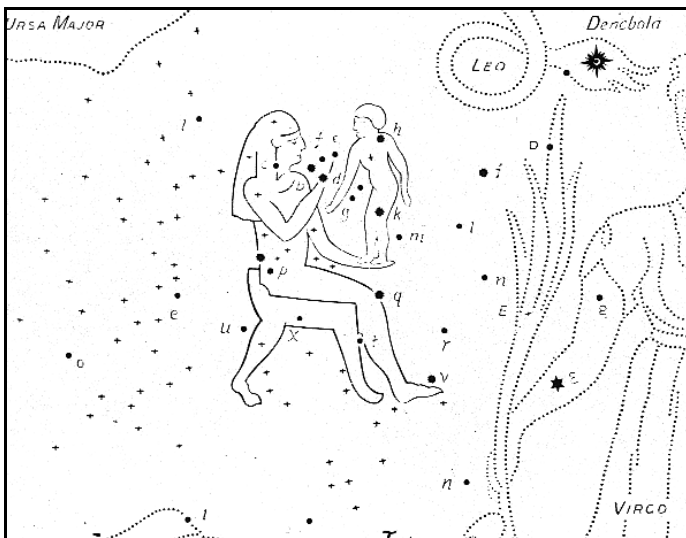
**Chart 511** shows the sky looking south from Jerusalem toward Bethlehem at 4:20 am on December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2 BC. This view is zoomed back to a 150° field of view in order to get a full view. The zenith, the point in the sky that is directly above the observer, is in Coma Berenices. At this time, the Southern Cross (*Crux*) was visible from Israel and is here at its highest point in the sky for the evening. The lower bright star in the cross, *Acrux*, is about 6



degrees above the horizon and the upper star in the cross, *Gacrux*, is about 12 degrees above the horizon.

This is the cross that represents the sacrifice of Messiah, the Southern Cross not the Northern Cross, which would end up bringing deliverance, atonement and forgiveness of sins not only to Israel, but also to all the nations. In direct conjunction to the *Crux* (same celestial longitude) is the planet *Zedek* (*Jupiter*) at its highest point in the sky for the evening. *Zedek* is also stationary in its retrograde motion against the background stars as well as stationary in its movement through the Meridian at this particular time and date ("it came and stood over where the young child was" – Matt. 2:9). Jupiter is in the constellation *Bethulah* (*Virgo*), which represents *the Promised Seed of the woman*.

In direct conjunction to Jupiter is the constellation *Comah*, *the Desired of all nations*. On this secular astronomy program *Coma* is seen as Berenices' hair, but in ancient zodiacs is the figure of the woman and child as seen below. Jupiter was in direct conjunction with the head of the child when it was at its highest point in the sky on December 25, 2 B.C.



This must have been some sight for the Magi. *Zedek*, His Star, was at its highest point in the sky and standing still over where the young child was, while at the same time, the Southern Cross, and *Comah*, *the Desire of all nations* were also standing or appearing to stand still over where the young child was.. And the Magi represented the nations who came to see and pay homage to the *Desired of all nations*. The picture of *Comah* in the heavens is what they also actually saw on Earth that day when they found the woman and child.

## ETA CARINAE UPDATE

The following article by Kelly Beatty on Eta Carinae is from the Sky and Telescope website. When this star goes supernova, it will most likely be bright enough to see in the daytime sky. See the June 1999, November 2002, August 2004 and August 2008 issues of Biblical Astronomy for more info on Eta Carinae as well as photos.

### A Rogue Star Going Wild?

"Attention, astronomers! Please keep a close eye on Eta Carinae! It's acting up again."

OK, that's not exactly how Dan Green worded the announcement in IAU *Circular* 9094 on November 11th, but the gist of his alert was crystal clear. On August 19th Kris Davidson and Andrea Mehner (University of Minnesota), along with John Martin (University of Illinois at Springfield) and others, used the Hubble's Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph (STIS) to show that one of the most massive and unstable stars known has surged in brightness over the past six months. Now at magnitude 5.1, it's fairly easy picking with the unaided eye for southern-sky observers. And there's every indication that more surprises are in the offing.

STIS, by the way, is now [back in action](#) after [failing in 2004](#) — and that's especially welcome in this case, since it's too bright to be imaged by Hubble's new Wide-Field Camera 3 (as Martin notes in a comment below).

When we last left this rogue star's [ongoing saga](#), researchers were debating whether an 1843 outburst that made Eta Carinae the night sky's second-brightest star resulted from a violent internal explosion or the radiation-driven escape of matter off its surface. And with the realization that Eta Carinae is actually a [binary star](#), there's no way to tell which half is causing trouble — or what will happen next.

With 90 to 100 times the Sun's mass and some 5,000,000 times its luminosity, Eta Carinae's two stars close to within 1 or 2 astronomical units of each other every 5½ years — most recently last January.

Now there's evidence that X-rays created as outflowing winds from these heavyweight suns crash together have strengthened and gained energy, "a possible indicator that the star is entering a new unstable phase of mass loss," according to Michael Corcoran (USRA).

This remarkable rogue star is probably in the last gasps of its brief but spectacular life. By some estimates Eta Carinae might take a few thousand years to blow itself to smithereens. But its mimicry of other *luminous blue variables* that have abruptly become supernovae — such as SN 2006jc, which flared in 2004 and [went kapow](#) two years later) has raised speculation that the end might come within our lifetimes or even in a few years! (Don't worry — it's at least 7,000 light-years away.)

So the deathwatch continues. Astronomers have mounted observing campaigns with the [Hubble Space Telescope](#) and at [La Plata Observatory](#) in Argentina. Observers also plan to [compare notes next January](#) during a meeting of the American Astronomical Society.

[YAHWEH bless you and keep you.](#)