

## Approximating the Birth of Christ

Approximating the Birth of Christ in 3 B.C.:<sup>1</sup>

- 1) Christ's birth relative to the birth of John the Baptist.
  - a) John was 6 mo. older than Jesus (Luke 1:36).
  - b) From John's conception to the birth of Christ was a period of 15 months.
  - c) John's father Zacharias performed his priestly service twice yearly: a week in late spring and a week in late fall.
  - d) He served in the course or division of Abijah, 8<sup>th</sup> course (Luke 1:5).
  - e) Zacharias served in the Spring of 4 BC
  - f) Abijah's week was May 19-26 during this year.
  - g) Elizabeth conceived sometime after this point.
  - h) John's conception & reasons for spring course:
    - i) General time for start of census was Aug-Oct 3 BC (15 months from John's conception in June/July 4 BC).
    - ii) The Fall course in 4 BC would have the census during the rainy season 15 months later, ~Dec. 3 BC.
  - i) Elizabeth gave birth to John some 9 months later in ~March/April 3 BC.
  - j) Based on this reckoning Jesus was born 6 months later in ~August/September 3 BC.
- 2) Astronomical significance of Revelation 12:1-5 (**Revelation 12:1-5** And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; <sup>2</sup> and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. <sup>3</sup> And another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads *were* seven diadems. <sup>4</sup> And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. <sup>5</sup> And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne).
  - a) The passage deals with the birth of Christ.
  - b) John indicates this is a great sign (i.e. very important sign).
  - c) It appeared in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Heaven (not the 1<sup>st</sup>, our atmosphere or the 3<sup>rd</sup> where God manifests himself).
  - d) The lights in the 2<sup>nd</sup> heaven were for signs, seasons, days, and years (Gen. 1:14-15).
  - e) Elements: a woman, sun, moon, and crown of 12 stars.

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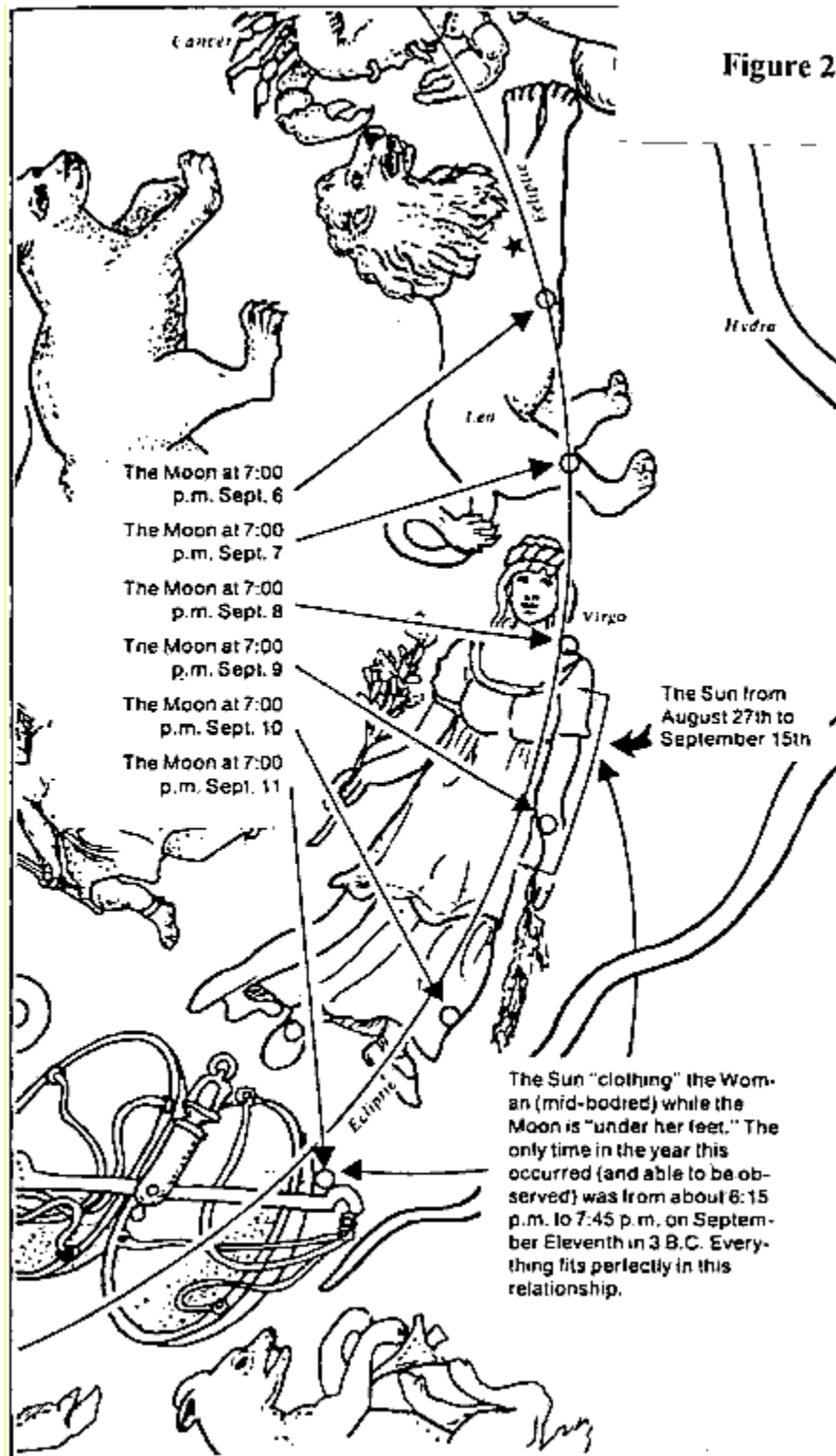
<sup>1</sup> Ernest L. Martin, *The Birth of Christ Recalculated*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Pasadena, CA: Foundation for Biblical Research, 1980), 139-147.

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- i) Woman= the constellation Virgo Latin for Virgin; the **only sign of a woman** on the ecliptic (ecliptic: the plane of the earth's orbit around the sun).
- ii) Sun= woman is said to be clothed with the Sun so the Sun is mid-bodied in Virgo **viewed from Earth**.
- iii) Moon= under the woman's feet
- iv) Crown of Stars= 12 visible stars that appear to be around Virgo's head.
- f) Elements of this great sign in the year of Christ's birth, 3 BC.
  - i) Virgo is positioned along the ecliptic (interestingly, she was overlapping into the constellation of Leo).
  - ii) The Sun entered the head position of Virgo ~Aug. 13<sup>th</sup> and exited her feet ~Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> as in Earth's orbit.
  - iii) However the Sun is aid to clothe the woman. That is the Sun will appear to be mid-bodied in relation to Virgo. It wouldn't be at her head or feet.
    - (1) This occurs over an approx. 20 day period each year.
    - (2) In 3 BC this occurred ~Aug 27<sup>th</sup>- Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>.
    - (3) In relation to the incarnation, Christ would have been born during this timeframe.
  - iv) Note that John specifies that the moon was "under" the woman's feet.
  - v) This refers to the position of the moon under Virgo's feet along the ecliptic.
  - vi) However the moon had to be in this exact location at the exact time that the Sun was mid-bodied to Virgo.
  - vii) In 3 BC both the Moon and the Sun were in this precise location in relation to Virgo for less than 2 hrs. when observed in Palestine or Patmos on Sept. 11.
  - viii) This precise alignment of the Virgo, the Sun, and the Moon began ~6:15PM – 7:45 PM.
  - ix) Sept. 11th is the only day of the entire year that this could have taken place.
  - x) It was at this point that the angel announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds under the night sky (Luke 2:8-11).
- 3) Further significance of Sept. 11, 3 BC.
  - a) Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> was the Jewish New Year (Tishri 1, aka "Rosh Hashanah").
  - b) This is known in Scripture as the Day of Trumpets due to blowing of trumpets during observance (Lev. 23:23-25, Num. 29:1-6).
  - c) The kings of Judah reckoned the Day of Trumpets as their inauguration day.
  - d) This certainly is a fitting date for the birth of the King of Kings.
  - e) Sundown on Sept. 11, 3 BC at 6:00 PM was the beginning of Rosh Hashanah.
  - f) The Day of Trumpets was acknowledged as the time for counting the years of kingly rule.

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- g) It was customary that the final ceremony in the coronation of kings was the blowing of trumpets (Solomon, 1Kings 1:34, Jehu, 2 Kings 9:13, Jehoash, 2 Kings 11:14, 21).



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