

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday	7:30 AM
<i>Speaker, Robert Emerson</i>	
Study Sunday	10:00 AM
Worship Sunday Morn	11:00 AM
Worship Sunday Eve	5:00 PM
<i>Singing every 2nd Sunday evening</i>	
Study Wednesday	7:00 PM

“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” —James 1:2-4



Preacher / bulletin editor: Kris Vilander, (256) 472-1065

E-mail: kris@haysmillchurchofchrist.org

Website: www.haysmillchurchofchrist.org



Servants during December:

Songleader: Stanley (6), Larry (13), David (20), Peter (27)

Reading: Stanley

Announcements: Robert

Table: Marty, David, Peter, Mike Mitchell

Wednesday Lesson: Stanley (2), Kris (9), Larry (16), Stanley (23), Kris (30)

Hays Mill church of Christ

21705 Hays Mill Road

Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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Another “Christmas” Star

By Kris Vilander

On Dec 21, 2020 (the same day as the Winter Solstice), Jupiter and Saturn will form a conjunction: they will appear only a tenth of a degree apart—approximately one fifth of the moon’s diameter. Any apparent meeting of objects in the night sky is called a conjunction, but this meeting between these two largest of our planets is known as the great conjunction, and occurs about once every 20 years—on this day, this year, however, they are so close as to appear to look as a double planet just after sunset. I am told that the last time they appeared this close was in 1623, only 14 years after Galileo invented his first telescope.

Interestingly, there are many today heralding this as a reoccurrence of the “Christmas” star—the star referred to in Matthew 2:1-12. But is it really?

The ancients believed the appearance of a new star (such as a supernova), or a comet, to portend some great event; often the birth or death of someone of importance. It was said that at the death of Julius Caesar, a comet appeared in the sky for seven days. We understand that the Jews had been waiting for Messiah, but they weren’t the only ones looking for His arrival: Suetonius, a Roman historian, recorded that, “An ancient and settled persuasion

prevailed throughout the East that the Fates had decreed some one to proceed from Judea who should attain universal empire,” (Barnes, Mt 2:2). Apparently Tacitus, Josephus, and Philo (all ancient historians, none Christ-followers) expressed the same expectation—so it is no surprise that the magi, or wise-men from the east, would have been looking for a sign of His coming. From the beginning, man has been intelligent; and these were men well-acquainted with astronomy: what could this sign have been... a supernova? A comet? Or perhaps a conjunction?

Several conjunctions occurred around the time of Jesus’ birth (approximately 5 to 4 BC from the date of the census in Lk 2:1,2, and that Herod was still reigning in Mt 2:1). Two were triple conjunctions: when a planet passes another planet or star, appears to reverse course and passes it again, then appears to resume its motion and passes it a third time. One began in 7 BC involving Jupiter and Saturn; the second with Jupiter and the star Regulus in 3 BC. But the one really impressive conjunction about that time was in 2 BC, and involved Jupiter and Venus. They appeared to move so close together as to merge into a single bright “star.” (Lisle, “What Was the

Christmas Star,” The New Answers Book 2, p180)

But none of these options fit the account given in the gospel!


Any one of these phenomenon would have been seen by everyone, and Herod would not have had to ask when it appeared, v7. Also, the magi could see the star while in the east up to two years before, v2 (compare v16); as well as while at Jerusalem, v9,10. Conjunctions are far more temporary—and the merging of Jupiter and Venus in 2 BC lasted only a single day: June 17. (Ibid, p181)

But more than that, you may recall that because of the spin of the earth, stars and planets (and other celestial objects) seem to rise in the east and set in the west; the only star that appears to remain stationary today is the “north star,” Polaris. Yet, the account clearly indicates that when they were in Jerusalem, the star not only “went on before them” to show the way to the Messiah, but at the last, it “came and stood over the place where the Child was”; not just the city, but the very house He was in! The fact is, there is no known natural phenomenon that can account for this kind of behavior! (Ibid, p181)

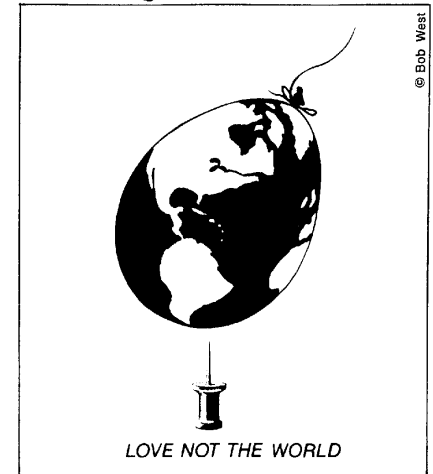
Many folks want to assign natural causes to Biblical events

for various reasons, such as the crossing of the Red Sea, Ex 14:21, or the feeding of the 5000, Jn 6:9. The same is true here: some might look at the coming conjunction as further proof of the accuracy of scripture, just as every turn of the archeologist’s spade confirms His word. Others might welcome it to illustrate to skeptics, “we are not so crazy after all; there is no need for miracles!” While the motives of the former are more pure than the latter, neither is correct. There is no way to be honest with this passage and explain it as a natural occurrence.

If the earth remains, the upcoming conjunction will be both unusual and interesting... but not another iteration of that which occurred about 2000 years ago over the town of Bethlehem. The

same God that performed the miracle of forming all the stars in the heavens during creation week, Gen 1:16, performed a miracle in leading the wise-men by a “star” to the infant Messiah—and He uses the gospel account that records the event to help lead the rest of mankind to Him, as well. 

Our Religious World



Remember in Prayer

Continue to remember **Joyce**; she has been diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer; and her daughter **Kelli Mae** has Covid-19. **David Harwell** is unable to communicate with his wife, **Chessie**, in the nursing home; and his daughter-in-law, **Linda**, is in Madison Hospital with pneumonia in both lungs.

Cindy Vilander’s test revealed a benign tumor; and although **Madelene Britnell** has been diagnosed with Covid-19, she is apparently doing well!

Please continue to pray for those that cannot meet with us: **Lois Adams, Carolyn Dennis, Tim and Dot Hice.** 