

## The Book of Daniel

### Appendix B

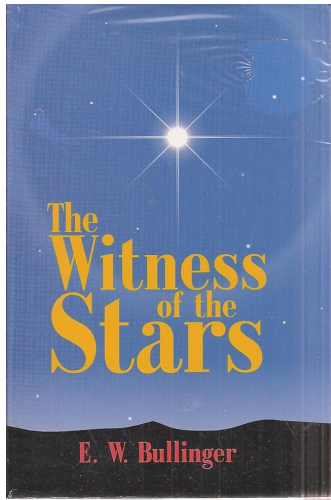
#### The Wise Men of Babylon

The introduction of Babylon's "wise men" to the world stage is nothing short of sensational. Their impact on science and astronomy is still seen today. However, any impact they have had is overshadowed by their brief appearance in Jerusalem over 2000 years ago.

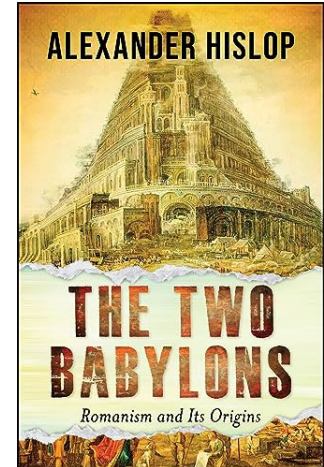
**History of the Wise Men:** The individual groups that make up the wise men in Scripture, during the Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires, are the *magicians, astrologers, sorcerers,* and the *Chaldeans* (Daniel 2:2). This is the scholarly group of people the king had at his disposal. It is clear from Daniel 2:12, 13 that Daniel and his three friends were part of this group known as the wise men. The wise men would become the advisers to the king on a broad range of subjects, including religion, science, philosophy, and politics.

The wise men were knowledgeable regarding the heavens. They understood the times and seasons. The Babylonians used a 360-day yearly calendar, as did the Chaldeans and the Sumerians before them. All this wisdom and knowledge of the Babylonian wise men was tainted by their heathen practices, worship of such heavenly bodies, naming such calendar days as SUN-day and MOON-day. They used divination and sorcery, moved from astronomy to astrology and corrupted the constellations of the Zodiac, making them a pagan form of divination, predicting one's personality, emotions or motivations, a form of fortune telling.

This however was not what God intended for the heavenly host He created. It was God that numbered the stars and called them by name: **"He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names."** (Ps 147:4). It was God who created the Mazzaroth, the Zodiac with its constellations like Pleiades and Orion: **"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst, thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?"** (Job 38:31-32). It was God who wrote His redeeming plan of a Lion from the Tribe of Judah, coming to crush the serpent's head, in the stars as a gospel witness before the times of pen and ink.



Books such as *Gospel in the Stars* by Joseph A. Seiss and *Witness of the Stars* by Dr. E. W. Bullinger bear witness to the great gospel story in the heavens that used to be, knowledge that was lost, corrupted since the time of the flood. This corruption spewed from the time of Nimrod and spread from the tower of Babel to the Sumerians, the Egyptians the Chaldeans, and a host of pagan people throughout the earth. These now forgotten heavenly truths were twisted, deformed, turning them into pagan practices as we see carried out by the wise



men of Babylon. Alexander Hislop's *Two Babylons* traces this type of paganism as it relates to the birth of pagan religious practices, all the "isms" of religion.

It is these wise men that Daniel and his three friends are associated with upon entering Babylon, the city of corruption, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. (Revelation 17:5).

**Daniel's Position:** As the Jews were taken off into Babylonian captivity, God was killing two birds with one stone. He was accomplishing his purposes regarding Israel, but also taking the wise in their own craftiness. God would place Daniel in such a place of power and influence over these wise men, that they would learn from him about the One true God they had all but forgotten.

Daniel's rise to power and influence takes place in Daniel chapter two, when King Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by a dream. None of the wise men, with all their wisdom, divination, magic, or any such "craft" could solve tell or answer for the meaning of the dream. Daniel however assured them, **"there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."** (Daniel 2:28) Daniel talks about the one true God of Heaven, who made and controls the skies, and not only knows the future, but is sovereign over it. He interprets the dream for Nebuchadnezzar, and the king falls prostrate before Daniel, saying, **"Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries."** (2:47)

By the end of Daniel chapter two, Daniel is made **"chief governor over all the wisemen of Babylon"** (Daniel 2:48). This prominent position in Babylon would be carried over

into the Medo-Persian empire, for Darius the Median “preferred” Daniel and sought to set him over all his realm (Daniel 6:3). Even during the reign of Cyrus, the Persian, Daniel maintained his position of influence (**Daniel 5:28**).

**Daniel’s Influence:** God having placed Daniel in a position of fame and influence over all the wise men of Babylon, he is able to teach them of the God of heaven and earth, the One whom they had not known. Daniel could begin to unravel their twisted knowledge of the heavenly bodies, teaching the wise men their intended purpose in communicating the gospel of a coming Redeemer. He could show them this Redeemer as he opened the Pentateuch and the prophets of Isaiah and Jeremiah.

While Daniel’s interpretation of the dream in chapter two gives no time indicators, it does prophesy of world empires to come; it gives the overall scope of the revelations that will follow. So, though there are no timetables given in the first revelation, there are time markers associated with future revelations. One such revelation is given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel in Daniel chapter nine:

**Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. (Daniel 9:25-26)**

Daniel is given the understanding of this revelation and to what it pertained. It is a revelation about a coming Messiah, one who would be “cut off, but not for himself.” This is the Redeemer, the One whom Daniel had communicated to the wise men, the One whom the stars had foretold through their gospel witness. But there was more, for this revelation had times associated with it. Daniel understood the times and could calculate them. And because of Daniel’s revelations and influence over them, so could all the “wise men.” Thus, these wise men of Babylon would know the exact timing of the coming of the Messiah, the Redeemer. They could calculate the time of “70 weeks” being 7 weeks + 62 weeks, or 483 years. Daniel understood by this revelation, along with passages in Isaiah and Jeremiah, that the 483 years would begin at the edict by one named Cyrus to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Daniel communicated all this information, along with a host of other details given throughout his writings and the prophets, to all the wise men

under his authority. This knowledge would be handed down from generation to generation, until the time for the coming Messiah was nigh at hand:

**Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. (Matthew 2:1-2)**

**The Wise Men from the East:** The wise men had the countdown from Daniel, and they knew what they were looking for in the skies. They understood the stars, the Word of God, could determine the time laid out by prophecy, and they had the faith to believe it all. And so, they came into the land of Jerusalem for they had seen His star in the east<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Studying the skies around the time of the birth of Jesus using NASA technology, Rick Larson discovered an extremely rare triple conjunction: The “king” star (Regulus) crossing the “king” planet (Jupiter) within the constellation of the lion (Leo), “king” of the animals. Three times: king, king, king. More than that, the constellation of the lion (which is called that in every language, as far back as records go) has an association with the kingly tribe of Judah- the *lion* of Judah. The message was all there.