

The Stars Speak (3)

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In the first two parts of this series we have looked at the suggestion that the signs of the Zodiac tell out the story of the gospel message of salvation in the heavens, so that everyone on earth can see. God's own 'visual aid' to remind us, every night, not only of the splendour of his handiwork, but of His plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. We have looked at Biblical quotations and also archeological evidence, which supports the Zodiac having played a part throughout early Jewish and Christian history.

We have seen that the signs of the Zodiac are grouped into three chapters, each covering a particular aspect of God's message. Each chapter comprises four consecutive Zodiac signs. Each sign is complemented by three decans, which are further constellations that help tell the story of each sign of the Zodiac. The stars have names which can be related to Biblical events and quotations, and these star names are the basis for the pictures of the various zodiac signs.

In chapter one we looked Virgo and saw the seed story promising the birth of Christ; in the scales of Libra we saw our lives in the balance and found wanting; in Scorpio we saw Christ sacrificing himself and overcoming the cross; and in Sagittarius we saw Christ returning in vengeance to destroy the evil one and reap the harvest of the earth.

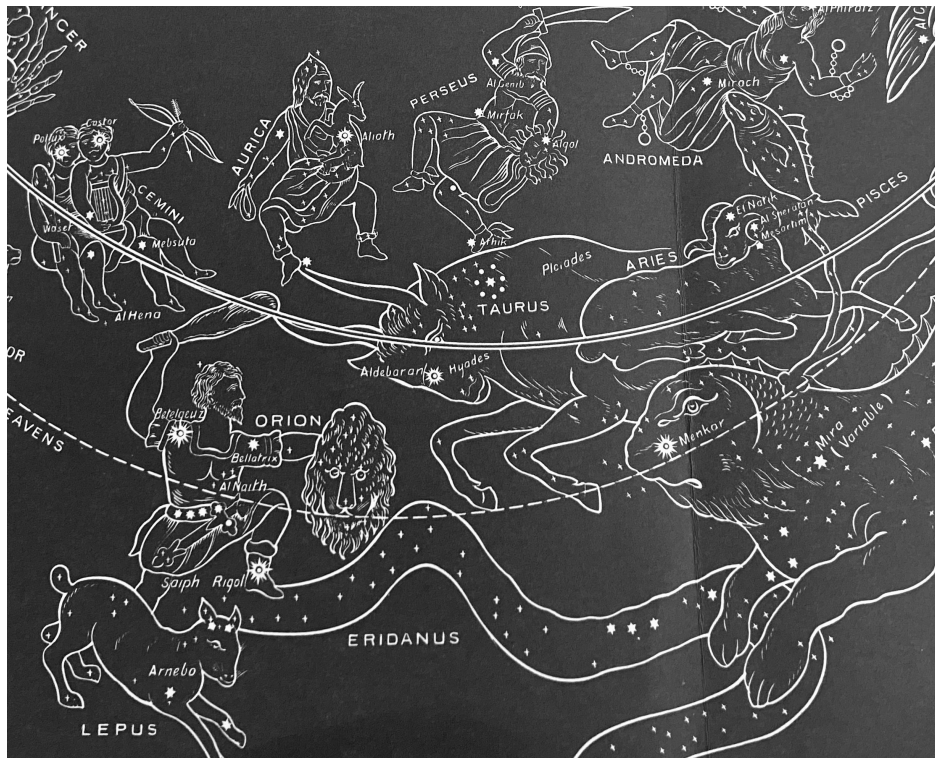
In the second chapter we saw in Capricorn that the only way to 'freedom' is through the atoning work of Christ, dying for us that we might live. In Aquarius, the Church having the Holy Spirit poured into it, to strengthen it and help it become established. In Pisces we saw the Church still held in the chains of sin and persecution, but then in Aries we saw the Holy Lamb of God, risen from the dead, returning to slay the enemy and claim the bride of Christ.

Now we reach the third and final book about the redeemer. Here we look into the future as we see the story in the stars telling us of the second coming of our Lord and the glory that follows.

The third book comprises Taurus, Gemini, Cancer and Leo and tells the yet to be fulfilled part of the story of redemption. The return of Christ, not as ‘the lamb of God’ as he came some two thousand years ago, but as the warrior king. He comes to save the redeemed and slay evil.

As previously, we are using Bullinger’s star chart, based on the Dendera Zodiac.

Taurus



We start the chapter with Taurus. Here we see a picture on the star chart of a bull stampeding through the heavens! Imagery of the Messiah coming to rule. He will come from heaven as a charging bull to trample the enemy who metaphorically holds us in chains, and he will set us free. He is determined and unstoppable!

The Hebrew word for bull is *shur*, which means “to return or to come back”. The brightest star is Aldebaran, which means “the follower”. There are two distinct star groups in Taurus: the Hyades and the Pleiades. Hyades means “congregated” while Pleiades comes from the Hebrew for “gathering” and the Greek “Pleistos” which means “the many”, “the excellent” or “the great”. Ancient Greeks called them “the clusterers”.

The Japanese name for the Pleiades is Subaru, and the earliest written record of this is in the 15th Century. The car company we know today as Subaru was incorporated on July 15,

1953, in Tokyo, Japan, when a ‘cluster’ of five small firms got together and looked at the stars for their name. Subaru still use the stars of Pleiades in their logo.

The Bible refers to the Pleiades as the seven stars,

seek him that maketh the seven stars [Pleiades] and Orion (Amos 5:8, KJV)

and they are mentioned by name when God asks Job,

Can you direct the movement of the stars — binding the cluster of the Pleiades or loosening the cords of Orion? (Job 38:31–32)

1st decan is Orion which means “heavens light” or the “light bringer”. We may think of a light breaking forth in the person of the Redeemer who said,

I am the light of the world (John 8:12).

He is pictured on the chart as a man bearing a warriors club and holding a shield bearing a lions head, as it says in Revelation,

Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David’s throne, has won the victory. (Rev 5:5)

Revelation also says of Lord Jesus,

His judgements are true and just. He has avenged the murder of his servants. (Rev 19:2)

Stars here are Betelgeuse [as used in Hitch hikers guide to the Galaxy] which means “the coming of the branch” and Rigol which is “the foot that crusheth”. Also the star Bellatrix — although it appears to have its roots in the Latin word *bella* (which means ‘war’), in Semitic languages it means “coming quickly”.

The second Decan is Eridanus, which is shown on the chart as a river. The brightest star in this constellation is Achernar, which means “the after part of the river.” Another star is Zourac meaning “flowing”. In Daniel we are shown a picture:

The ancient one sat down to Judge. He sat on a fiery throne with wheels of blazing fire, and a river of fire was pouring out, flowing from his presence. (Dan 9:7)

We can imagine God’s wrath breaking forth on his enemies, bringing a message of stern judgement.

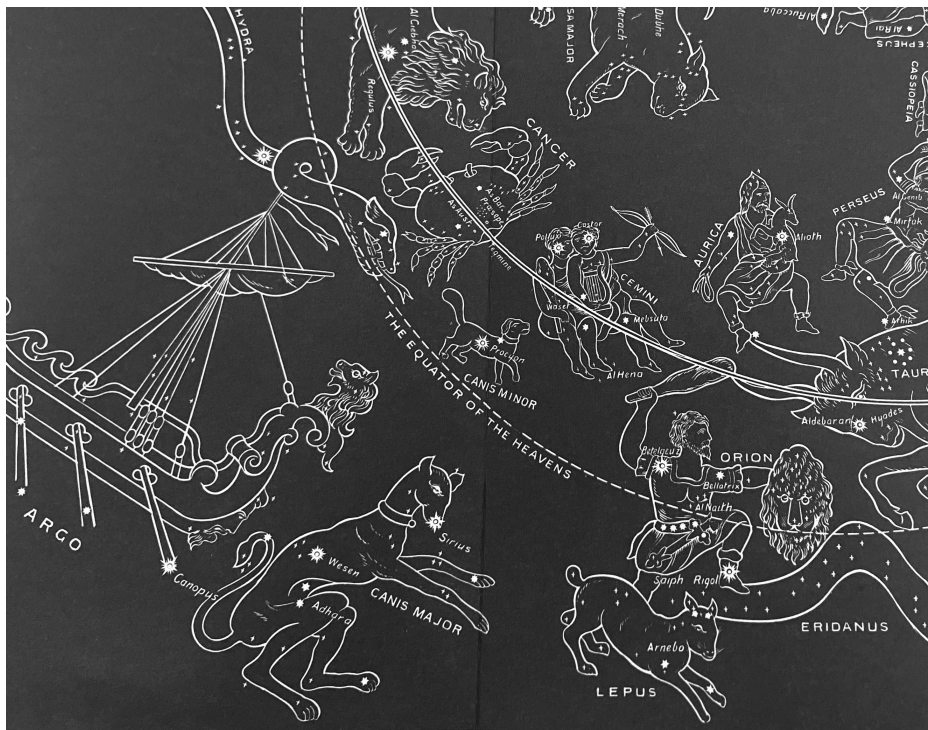
The 3rd Decan is called Auriga depicted as a shepherd, shown holding a kid in his arms. A shepherd guarding the flock as David did when he killed the bear and the lion to protect the flock in his care. Our Lord says,

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (John 10:11)

The brightest star in the goat is Aioth and means ‘she goat’. The star seen in the shepherds right arm is Menkilonon and means “chain of the goats” and another star is “Maaz” which means a “flock of goats”. So the herd is now safely bound to the shepherd, never more to leave them.

To summarise Taurus, we have the coming of our Lord Jesus, in the river of judgement, saving the flock who are never again to be lost.

Gemini



We come to Gemini, known today as ‘the heavenly twins’. The Hebrew name for this constellation is Thaumim, meaning “joined together”. One of the twins in Gemini carries a harp, the other a weapon. It is suggested that they represent the two missions of Christ, symbolising that Jesus came in peace the first time, riding on a donkey, and will come as a mighty warrior the second time. There are other two-fold applications: Christ as wounded and ruling; his

dual parentage of God and man; his suffering and glory; the uniting of Jews and Gentiles in glory.

As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth. (Hos 6:3)

The names of the stars make us think of Christ and show the two occasions of Christ's coming. The star in the left foot of one figure bears the name "Al Henah" which means "wounded" or "bruised."

He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. (Is 53:5, KJV)

For this is how God loved the world; He gave his one and only son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

The star in the right knee of the other figure bears the name Mebsuta, which means "to trample underfoot or tread down." Another star is called Waseth, which means "appointed". Also Apollo meaning "ruler of judge". We think here of the second coming of Christ:

Be strong and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you. (Is 35:4)

Two stars in the heads of each of the twins name them Castor and Pollux. They were used at the figurehead in the boat that Paul sailed on:

After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island — it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. (Acts 28:11, NIV)

This is the only time a boat is named in the Bible, and the writer considered it worth recording. Perhaps the name of the boat was a message to Paul to remind him that Christ was with him, whatever the boat journey held.

The first decan is Lepus. The chart shows a hare about to be trodden under foot. Orion's foot is raised above the hare's head ready to tread on him. In the old Middle East cultures, the victor would either walk on, or put his foot on, the defeated enemy, thus treading him underfoot. It was a sign of total victory. We have this thought of trampling in victory in Isaiah,

The LORD, the LORD Almighty, has a day of tumult and trampling and terror in the Valley of Vision. (Is 22:5)

The reference here is to Armageddon. And again in Malachi,

“On the day which I act, you will tread upon the wicked as if they were dust under your feet” says the Lord of Heavens Armies. (Mal 4:3)

In this constellation we have stars Arnebo, “the enemy of Him that cometh” and Sugia, which is “the deceiver”, depicting Lepus as the enemy.

The second decan is Canis Major or The Dog of Sirius. The brightest star here is Sirius, meaning “the prince.” Also the star Mirzam meaning “the prince or ruler”. Other stars [and there are 64 in this constellation] confirm the same story. There is Aschere, which in Hebrew means “who shall come”, and Abur, “the mighty”, Muliphen, which is Arabic and means “the leader or chief”. We can see within the names of these stars that they look forward to the return or the mighty prince, coming to rule.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. (Matt 25:31)

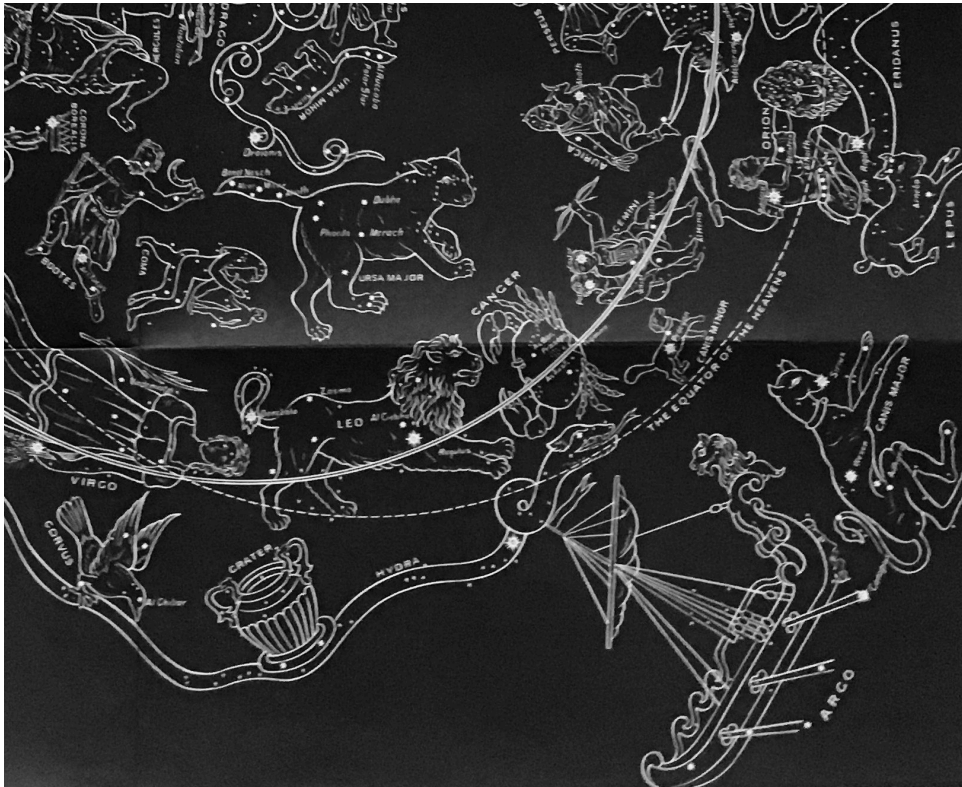
The third decan is Canis Minor which is the second dog. Stars here are Sebak, which means “conquering or victorious”. The brightest star here is Procyon meaning “redeemer”. Again here we are seeing the names of Jesus Christ within the stars, as the return of the conquering redeemer. As it says in Revelation,

They will make war on the Lamb and the Lamb will conquer them, for his is the Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful. (Rev 17:14)

These stars mark the beginning of the hottest part of the year for us in the Northern Hemisphere — hence the expression “the dog days of summer”.

In summary, Gemini tells the story of ‘the heavenly twins’. We have seen the suffering saviour in earlier chapters and now we see the Messiah’s return as a mighty conqueror, and his reign as prince of Peace. The enemy is trodden under foot by the glorified redeemer.

Cancer



We now come to the star sign Cancer. In Arabic this sign was “Khan Ker” which means “priest-prince”. The Crab — possessions held fast, like a crab holding on with its claws. This is how we see Cancer depicted today. However, in the oldest forms of the Zodiac it was not a crab, but a sheepfold. The “holding on” is about protection. We think of our Lord Jesus saying,

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. (John 10:11)

The brightest star is Acubene, which is related to the Hebrew word for “hiding place.” This picture is reinforced by the Praesepe cluster. Praesepe comes from Latin, means “a crib”, “a manger”, “a hive”, or “a fold for animals”. Another star is Tegmine, meaning “holding”.

So we come to the greater and lesser sheepfolds. As Jesus himself said,

I have other sheep too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice and there will be one flock. (John 10:16)

The word “fold” is very similar in Hebrew in sound (but not in spelling) to “bear”, which is why we have Ursa Major and Minor. Remember, it is the names of the stars that influence the pictures. It seems likely that when the story was told originally that the stars were named as

smaller and lesser sheepfolds, not bears. They would have been shown as sheepfolds on the earliest charts.

The first decan is Ursa Minor, the lesser bear, but should show a picture of the sheepfold. Stars here are Kochab meaning “waiting the coming”, Al Pherkadain, “the redeemed” and Al Said, “the assembled gathered together.”

Someday, O Israel, I will gather you; I will gather the remnant who are left. I will bring you together again like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture (Micah 2:12)

The second decan is Ursa Major, the great bear, the fold and the flock, the hope of Life Eternal. Stars here include Mizar, “guarded or enclosed place”. The chief star of all is Dubheh, “herd or flock”. Other stars mean, “the assembled”, “the protected”. These stars form part of The Plough or The Big Dipper.

The Greeks called Ursa Major and Minor “the stronghold of the saved”

The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. (Ps 9:9)

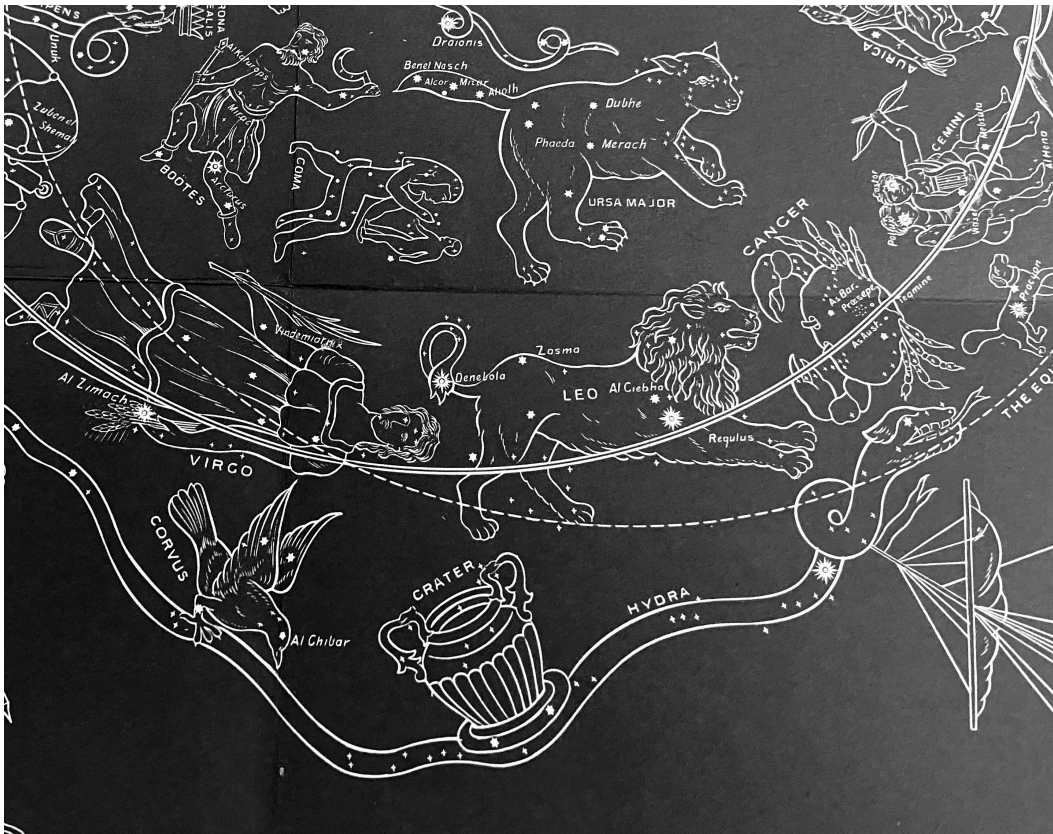
The third decan is Argo, the ship. Here we have stars Sephina, meaning “multitudinous good”, Asmidiska, “travellers released”, and Soheil, “what was desired”. It’s a picture of the redeemed pilgrims as travellers sailing into Port Paradise, *and so shall we ever be with the Lord*, finding holy rest and the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

He calmed the storm to a whisper and stilled the waves. What a blessing was that stillness as he brought them safely into harbour (Ps 107:29-30)

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the with trumpet call of God. First the believers who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. So encourage each other with these words. (1Thess 4:16)

The summary of Cancer is the reassurance that the redeemed will be held in safety as the final conflict takes place.

Leo



Finally, we end the last chapter with Leo, the lion, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, aroused for the final slaughter of the enemy. A picture of Christ's triumphant return. We see on the chart a picture of a lion, on the move and ready to pounce.

The brightest star in the constellation of Leo is Regulus, which means "king". The second brightest star is Denebola. means "tail of the lion".

The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from his descendants, until the coming of the one to whom it belongs, the one whom all nations will honour. (Gen 49:10)

The first decan is Hydra, which means "he is abhorred". The brightest star is Cor Hydra, which is translated "the heart of the abhorred one". There is also Michar al Sugia, meaning "the piercing of the deceived". Hydra is depicted as the serpent — that old serpent the devil, overcome.

See the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. (Rev 5:5)

He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. (Rev 20:2)

[For further interest Hydra is also the name that was used for the villainous organisation in the Avengers series!]

The second decan is Crater. We see on the chart an image of a cup, the cup of divine wrath poured out upon the world.

Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: This shall be the portion of their cup. (Ps 11:6, KJV)

The brightest star is Al Ches, which is Arabic and means ‘the cup’ ,

They too will drink the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will be tormented with burning sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. (Rev 14:10)

The third decan is Corvus, the raven shown on the chart and representing the birds of prey devouring the dead. Stars here are Chiba, from the Hebrew, meaning “accursed” and Michar al Gorab, translated from Arabic as “the raven tearing to pieces”.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair “come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great. (Rev 19:17-18)

A clear picture of the birds of the air feasting on the flesh of the defeated.

So we have the summary of Leo: the pouring out of divine wrath and the triumphant return of the Messiah to purge the world of evil by the slaying of hydra, the serpent, as his Kingdom is set up.

This third chapter shows Christ returning in glory to save the redeemed. He treads the enemy under foot, gathers his chosen to a place of safety whilst he unleashes six thousand years of divine wrath on the world and then rules in triumph. King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Lamb of the world and the Living Torah.

The final chapter to the Story in the Stars is yet to be fulfilled — perhaps in our lifetime, perhaps not. We don’t know when Christ will return, but we have this promise,

He will keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Cor 1:8)

And I can do no better than quote the words of Job 19:25, so famously set to music:

But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and he will stand upon the earth at last. And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God! I will see him for myself. Yes, I will see him with my own eyes. I am overwhelmed at the thought! (Job 19:25)

Concluding Thoughts

I have been asked during this study if I can prove that God wrote the story in the heavens at creation. I can't — but neither can I believe that any human could have woven the story of salvation so accurately in the stars, and linked it so closely to scripture. I also find it amazing that in the twenty first century the images created so long ago are still used by astronomers on modern star charts. As Job says,

He [God] does great things too marvellous to understand. (Job 9:10)

With this in mind, I would add one further piece of information. As you may be aware, the first telescope was invented in the 16th century and, without a telescope, the number of stars visible to the naked eye is about 9,000. The Talmud, completed at least 1,500 years ago records the most amazing information. There is a small section in Berakhot 32b in which Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish states that there are roughly 10^{18} stars in the universe (1,000,000,000,000,000,000). This has surprised some scientists as the actual figure is currently thought to be 10^{22} . This seems to be much nearer than anyone could guess, let alone that at this time when there was no convention for writing down this type of number! No other culture at the time had come up with anything like this number of stars.

The Talmud then goes on to talk about superclusters of 30 stars, grouped into bigger patterns of 30, and there are about 360 of these in the universe. We are told that this means that the Talmud appears to be consistent with the theory of the structure of the universe. There does not seem to be any way of them having known this, as much of this is relatively new information for us — a great deal of our knowledge has only come to light with the launch of the Hubble telescope in 1990.

These lines in the Talmud, which claims to be the written version of conscientious oral transmission of received tradition going back over centuries, are hard to understand in any other way than as just that. The information seems too detailed to be dismissed as a lucky guess.

Some people may not be easily convinced about the story in the stars. I am not a scientist, so my interest has come from the amazing imagery, the linking of the names of the stars to the passages in the bible and the telling of the amazing story of our Lord Jesus Christ in the pictures in the stars. For me, the stars tell the story simply, accurately and poetically. We live at a time when it is easy to elevate science above literature, poetry and imagery and yet our Lord Jesus taught relying heavily on parables, pictures and stories.

I hope that even if you are not convinced about the story in the stars, you will join me in being totally overwhelmed at the complexity and vastness of the universe and the amazing, awesome power of our God and his precious Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Without a doubt,

The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard. Yet their message has gone through the earth, and their words to all the world (Ps 19:1-4)