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Star of Bethlehem: Jeff Rense Interviews Ernest Martin

by Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., October 2001

Transcribed and Annotated by David Sielaff, March 2017

Read first the accompanying [Newsletter for March 2017](#)



This article is another portion of the 3-hour interview of Dr. Ernest L. Martin by radio host Jeff Rense in October 2001 just months before Dr. Martin's death in January 2002.¹ This part of the interview is a preview of Dr. Martin's book *The Star That Astonished the World: The Star of Bethlehem*.² The full interview has been online at the "[ASK Audio Presentations](#)" page for more than a decade. Again, I transcribed the text so people can read while listening to Dr. Martin's explanation about the people and events surrounding the Star of Bethlehem.

Editor's note: If you wish to listen to the interview while you read along in the article, click on the "**LISTEN**" links for each section below. As I wrote before, I initiated arrangements for this interview by telling Dr. Martin about *The Jeff Rense Show* in August or September 2001. He gave me permission to contact Mr. Rense, which I did by email. I told him about Dr. Martin's research and his desire to be interviewed on the subject. I gave him Dr. Martin's phone number and they arranged the interview.

I listened to the radio program the night of the live broadcast. After Dr. Martin's death I contacted Mr. Rense for permission to download the interview to the ASK website. The entire interview was in two parts: the first dealt with Dr. Martin's Temple research, the second part was Dr. Martin telling about his book *The Star That Astonished the World: the Star of Bethlehem*.

As you will read, Jeff Rense appreciated the information Dr. Martin presented. This Star portion was rebroadcast on *The Jeff Rense Show* 5 years in a row as part of a pre-recorded holiday program. In the text, the words in **[brackets]** are mine, as are all the footnotes. *DWS*

¹ The first part of the interview involved the correct location of the Temple in Jerusalem, transcribed in the article "[Gihon Temple Evidence: Jeff Rense Interview of Ernest Martin](#)" from January 2017.

² The entire book can be read free online at <http://www.askelm.com/star/index.asp>. Also on that page are complete readings of the book by two different speakers, one by Charlie Corder, and one by myself. Both recordings are in MP3 format. The 275 page softcover book can be purchased at <http://www.askelm.com/books/book003.asp> or at the [ASK Books Index](#) page.

The Star of Bethlehem part of the interview: [“LISTEN” [JRPart 8](#), begin at 9 minutes, 32 seconds].

Ernest Martin: I have a deep respect for the documents: the biblical documents but also the historical documents. Whereas I have found that when people say the historical documents are exaggerating what they say, I find that in most cases the exaggeration is because of our misinterpretation of history.

Jeff Rense: I have heard that before as well. Your other book we will talk about (there are a number of books that you will find all listed at Dr. Martin’s “[Books for Sale](#)” webpage. *The Star That Astonished the World*. I remember when this book was revised, I think you said in 1994?

Martin: Yes, that was when I brought out my final edition of it and Professor Jack Finegan who wrote the *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*.³ I now have his approbation on my information in his book, and he has given me special notice that he has changed his mind to the fact that Jesus was born in the year 3/2 BC rather than the normal 4, 5, 6 or 7 [BC] that most of us thought of before, and that the astronomical information that we find going on at the time was rather spectacular.

There was a celestial pageantry in the heavens leading with the stellar positions as well as the planetary, lunar, and solar, that really staggers the mind. When you read my book as to what was actually going on at the time, the people living there in that generation when Jesus was born, they were given a spectacular show that even Spielberg could not quite come up to it.

Rense: I’d like you to try and give us a minds-eye portrait of what the skies may have looked like. Again, the information in Dr. Martin’s book, *The Star That Astonished the World: The Star of Bethlehem*, is the bedrock for the holiday programming in over 600 planetariums in the United States and Europe. You probably have seen his shows, many of you who have been in planetariums around this time of year.

[“LISTEN” after commercial break, begin at [JRPart 9](#), begin at 37 seconds]

We are back with Dr. Ernest L. Martin. Tell me what the skies might have looked like just 2,000 years ago, and again this has all been reconstructed in various planetary programs, 600+ planetariums, you can see it this Christmas in a planetarium near you.⁴ Tell us what we looked at. Were we seeing comets?

Martin: In actual fact we would not see comets, or even novae, or any of the suggested spectacular displays like that. What we would see if we were back there at the time of the Magi, what inspired them to make the long journey from the East to Jerusalem, ...

Who Were the Magi?

Rense: By the way, Dr. Martin, who were the Magi exactly?

Martin: Magi, we translate them as the “Wise Men” and they were part of a professional class of astrologers, but they were interpreters to the Persian kings, the Parthian kings, in matters dealing with civil, governmental, financial, as well as astrological predictions and things like that. Daniel [the prophet] was considered as part of the magicians. It is a term that has a nefarious type of a meaning to us today because we usually associate it with magic and magicians. I do not mean the kind of magicians that you have in Las Vegas, I mean the type that conjure up evil things against humanity and so forth.

The ancient magicians, there were charlatans at the time, but these people represented a priestly class of which even Daniel was made a part of back in the 6th century [BC], but they were living, of course, in the 1st century BC. They were well respected by people in the world, in the Roman world as well as in the Parthian world. For Matthew to include their testimony about that star and what they did to present the Christ child with gifts, was really something that would have been looked upon as very authoritative, like we would say

³ Subtitled, “Principles of Time Reckoning in the Ancient World and Problems of Chronology in the Bible,” Revised edition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1964, 1998), 319–310.

⁴ This was true in 2001. Unfortunately it is no longer the case in the United States because many planetariums discontinued winter holiday shows due to secularization.

someone from Stanford University or the University of Chicago, or Harvard. They were looked upon as very important personalities. They were not charlatans at all. This is in my book where I explain these things, and it is important that we understand that principle because they [were] not people dealing with the religion or the magic of astrology that many people are involved in [today].

Rense: I understand. What did they look like, the stars above us back then?

Martin: Here is the thing I would like to explain first to set up that scene. Most of us before I went into this study some 25 years ago,⁵ I was as much a part of the normal scene as any, teaching in college and university, but what we find is that all us had accepted that Jesus was born in either 5, 6, or 7, perhaps 8 BC, somewhere in that period of time. If you look at the heavens, and they were pretty easy to construct back at that time [1st century BC], astronomers have done that, and it pretty easy to see. It is not difficult. Nothing of [importance] took place that would make anyone think something spectacular was occurring in the heavens.

The Eclipse of the Moon After King Herod's Death

So what I began to look at was, ... is the period of time in which Jesus was born? The main reason for selecting that earlier period, that is before 4 BC, ... is because Josephus, that same Jewish historian I have talked about,⁶ he mentions a lot about King Herod and his time. [Josephus] said that King Herod died just not long after, about 2 weeks after an eclipse of the moon, and just before a Jewish springtime Passover. Most people would think that would be pretty easy to date if you could get [refer to] an eclipse of the moon. The only thing is there are several eclipses of the moon that can occur, and they occur in cycles as well. You have to get the right eclipse.

Up to my research, that is up to 25 years ago, most of us who were historians dealing with astronomy, we would select the 13th of March eclipse. There was a partial eclipse of the moon, it is a lunar eclipse, not a solar which would always happen in the middle of the month, and we selected the eclipse of the 13th of March in 4 BC.

If that was the eclipse associated with Herod's death, then Herod would have died very near the first of April, somewhere in there, and this before a springtime Passover of the Jews so that seemed to fit pretty well. But then you look at what was happening in the heavens and nothing seemed to fit, nothing like Matthew was saying. But there was another eclipse. A Professor Filmer in England wrote for an Oxford University Press an article in 1966 in which he showed that it was not the eclipse of the moon in the 13th of March, 4 BC that was associated with Herod's death, but a more spectacular one and a full one, a total [eclipse] that took place around midnight on the 10th of January in 1 BC.

When I saw that, I began then to reconstruct the history of the period. If that is the case that Herod then died not long after that eclipse in January 1 BC, that meant that Jesus could have been born in 2 or 3 BC.

Rense: Right, that changes everything. Hold on Doctor, and we will pause and come right back, as we go back in history 2000 years plus a couple, and try to take a look at what the skies looked like and figure it all with Dr. Ernest L. Martin.

[Commercial break, go to [JRPart 10](#), begin at 30 seconds].

Certainly astronomers know how to reconstruct the heavens at that time. They have done it, it is no

⁵ That would be 2001 – 25 years = the year 1976. **Publication history:**

(1) Dr. Martin's first book on this subject was titled *The Birth of Christ Recalculated*, 1978.

(2) A second edition of this title was published in 1980.

(3) The book was retitled and published in 1991 as *The Star That Astonished the World: The Star of Bethlehem*.

(4) A 2nd and final edition was published in 1996.

Each new edition had significant changes from peer review. I put the book on the ASK website and corrected typos in 2003. The 1996 edition is free at <http://www.askelm.com/star/index.asp>, with two different complete MP3 audio readings of the book.

⁶ Dr. Martin is referring to the earlier section of the Rense interview when the subject was Dr. Martin's book, *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*. See footnote 1 above.

mystery. So you think that Herod perhaps died, at least someone else [Professor Filmer] postulated he may have died with a full lunar eclipse in January.

Martin: That is correct, 1 BC, and that is almost certainly the case. In actual fact, Josephus mentioned a number of events that took place between Herod's death and that Passover. In no way could you include all of those events in the period after the 13th of March 4 BC, but with the one in January 1 BC leading up to the springtime Passover, you have about 84 days and it just fits perfectly. Everything makes perfectly good sense from the historical record.

Rense: Josephus would shake your hand if he could.

Martin: I think he would. One of these days I hope to do that, but that is not going to be right now I don't think.

Rense: He did us a great service, this man.

Martin: You know, Professor [Benjamin] Mazar, the gentleman I was talking about that I worked with down in Jerusalem, he started out very skeptical as far as the writings as Josephus were concerned, but he told me personally, and we were great friends. He said every year my respect for Josephus grew and grew and grew. And now, just before his death about 3 years ago at 91 years of age, he said that his respect for Josephus as a historian was number 1 now, and I agree with him.

What we really need to do, Jeff, is to read what he [Josephus] says. The problem is that we have been using figures and numbers and architectural statements by Josephus and applying them to the wrong buildings. That is the problem.

As far as Herod was concerned, if he died in January, then that allows 2 BC or 3 BC for the birth of Jesus because Herod was alive when Jesus was born (Matthew chapter 2) because the Magi or the Wise Men gave their gifts. [They] wanted to give them to Herod and then he was certainly alive at the time. So Jesus could have been born in 2 to 3 BC.

The Placement of the Celestial Events

With that clue I then looked up what was happening in the heavens to get a little bit more information of why Matthew seemed to be very interested in the Star. When I really saw what was going on from August 3 BC to January of 1 BC, I tell you it was staggering to see the splendor that was actually happening in the heavens — I mean dealing with the sun, the moon, the chief planets, particularly Jupiter and Venus, within the background of the fixed stars. Even knowing a little bit about the astrological interpretations which were rampant in the time of Augustus Caesar in the 1st century [BC], people believed in those things much more than even we do today, and at the highest levels.

Rense: They also believed in animal entrails and all the rest of it.⁷

Martin: They did [that also]; I'm afraid they did. On the other hand, these Magi came a long distance to be able to give these gifts, and they were accepted by Herod as being legitimate. The point is, if we can see what was happening there in the heavens at that time, and you can see this in a planetarium show, even the novice (I mean most of us are not astronomers), but when you see what was actually occurring, particularly with the planet Jupiter as it came in contact with Venus. The 17th of June in 2 BC those two planets came together as viewed from the earth where they actually touched one another, a most unusual circumstance.

All of that took place in the constellation of Leo the Lion. We know that the sign of Judah in the astrological, biblical account is Leo the Lion, the "**Lion of the Tribe of Judah.**" And Christ is even called that.⁸ Jupiter the King Planet in that year came in contact with Regulus the King Star, which was also in Leo. Three different times it circled over it [meaning the star Regulus].

⁷ Such things were used for prophecies of the near future.

⁸ Revelation 5:5: "**And one of the elders said unto me, 'Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.'**"

Now I am giving you a type of non-professional manner of describing it, like a halo in a sense. I illustrate this in my book, that anyone living at the time would say something of royalty is being introduced into the world. At the time that the Magi came which was in 2 BC to Jerusalem, that planet Jupiter annually comes to what is called a progression and recession where by the motion of the earth around the sun and also Jupiter around [the sun], Jupiter tends [appears] to stand still in a certain section of the sky for a while. Remember how Matthew said the star, which could be a planet stood still over the city of Bethlehem. It is most remarkable. Astronomers would see, in ordinary lay person's language what was happening, Jupiter actually came mid-bodied to Virgo the Virgin at the Winter solstice in 2 BC. I mean right in the tummy area of her body as seen in the heavens.

Rense: And people used to look, and I have made this point before — people used to look at the heavens every night [and] they would marvel. The heavens to them were not a one-dimensional backdrop. They were a living organism.

Martin: You are so right. We have so many lights around us today, that even when you go out in the country you can hardly see the heavens anymore.

Rense: They were just an amazing panorama of drama, life, death, the whole thing. No TV, no computers, they looked upward and that night sky ...

Martin: ... and how majestic and spectacular. That 3 to 2 BC period, Jeff, you have to go to a planetarium to see it. I remember when I was with Mr. [John] Mosley, the Planetarium Director at Griffith Observatory⁹ in 1980 when we had accumulated all this information together, we did a trial run at the Planetarium where the planetarium staff was there. This was in the afternoon, not one of the regular shows, but it was reconstructed back to that period of time. Only the professionals were there. There were about 50 of us, historians and mostly astronomers. When the planetarium instrument began to point out what was happening in August of 3 BC and then progressively through that year into 2 BC, and etc., etc., down to 1 BC, it was just “oohs” and “aahs” all the time by this highly professional astronomical audience.

Rense: Fascinating, fascinating. Hold on right there. I can just imagine what it was like. Jaws slack, people agog at what they were seeing. This is amazing. A remarkable piece of detective work and science, and we will continue ... [Rense gives the ASK address]

[Commercial break, go to [JRPart 11](#), begin at 13 seconds]

Okay, let's go back to the planetarium with Dr. Martin and pick up the story. So you were watching the planetarium's amazing devices. I forget what was the name of them? What did they call them, do you remember?

Martin: It was the Zeiss instrument. That was the one we used down there. That has been around for about 50 years, various models of them, but they do have computer types now which are much more sophisticated in some ways than some old ones. However, whatever you use, you can still see a spectacular show even with the older Zeiss planetarium instruments.

Rense: So you saw all these celestial events which were clearly bizarre to the people back then [in the 1st century BC], and the timing was perfect.

⁹ See my short Commentary of December 2002, “[Griffith Planetarium and Dr. Martin's Star Book](#).” Astronomer John Mosley wrote a 1981 article, “[Common Errors in 'Star of Bethlehem' Planetarium Shows](#)” (International Planetarium Society) where Dr. Martin's work is cited. (In the article there is a link to a Griffith Planetarium website article titled “Star of Bethlehem,” but that link no longer works.) [Click here](#) for a brief 1-minute, 42-second summary of John Mosley's take on the Star and the date of King Herod's death. Mosley states that 3 or 2 BC may be a better timeframe for the Star, based on a 1 BC time death of King Herod, in line with Dr. Martin's research.

Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles, California, also was one of the premier planetariums in the world. Mosley has retired. Griffith unfortunately has ceased all holiday shows. The Griffith Observatory, [Samuel Oschin Planetarium](#) upgraded the projector, installed a Digistar 3 Laser Projection System, and erected a new seamless interior dome.

Martin: It was perfect. It was significant because most of the conjunctions, there were 8 major conjunctions, Jeff, of the planet Jupiter. I am saying the planet Jupiter is the Star, and a planet could be considered a star. The word in Greek is the same, although they are different today. It was the planet Jupiter. That was the planet that led the Wise Men to Jerusalem and then on down to Bethlehem.

That planet had 8 major conjunctions with other stars, particularly with Regulus the King Star and Venus, three conjunctions with Venus very close while they were in [the constellation of] Leo the Lion. This is why it is very important to realize that the positions of these stellar occasions make it very significant.

Even besides that, though, an ordinary person who would not know anything about astronomy and would look up into the sky, and particularly if they would have seen that 17th of June display in 2 BC, it would have been spectacular indeed, about 38 degrees above the southwestern horizon. That would have been seen by the naked eye as one gigantic star about twice as big as Jupiter would normally be. It would have been majestic indeed.

Rense: That would have done it.

Martin: It would have. From then on just following it from there, on down from the time the Magi went to Bethlehem. When they went to Bethlehem, that was not for the birth. The nativity [of Jesus] took place in 3 BC, I show in my book. But the Magi did not get to Jerusalem and down to Bethlehem until the winter solstice. They were very keen on the winter solstice, being of pagan origin themselves. In 2 BC at the winter solstice Jesus would have been 15 months old.

Rense: Okay, that was what my question was, almost ...

Martin: There is an early gospel called *The Gospel of the Egyptians* and it mentions, though that is not an inspired work, it does show some originality going back to the 3rd century AD. In there, Jesus is described as a little toddler at the time the Magi gave their gifts, and not as an infant at all.

Rense: What do we know about the actual history of the time in which Jesus was born? There are people, of course, out on the stump writing books and so forth who claim that Jesus did not exist. He was a composite figure of ancient historical myth that goes back to many societies and has been reenacted over and over again throughout the millennia. That draws a lot of ire and anger from people.

Martin: Yes.

Rense: With respect to your scholarship of the period and the recording of the events of those days, in those areas, in those times, how strong is the body of actual written knowledge to validate and give you clues in which you can construct your own version of when Christ was born.

Martin: I am more convinced today than I was 2 years ago, or 3 years ago, or 5 years ago, or when I first began. In fact, I am certain that the historical record, particularly those in the New Testament, are revealing absolute truth. I have no way, nor do you, or any of us, of demonstrating them in a pragmatic way in front of a person. We all know that; but there are many types of evidences, historical evidences, not concentrated in just one avenue, but in several, that overlap one another to such a consistency and also with such rapidity that there can be no question that there was a personality by the name of Jesus Christ, and that He lived and died at the time the New Testament said He did. I have no doubt whatsoever that is the case.

However, there have been many counterfeits out there as you might well imagine, even in the 1st century. People noted there were many stories coming out India, coming out of Parthia, and even in ancient Rome that seem to parallel some of the things associated with Jesus. ... It would take another program to mention many of these factors. On the other hand, the legitimate truth of Jesus being a viable individual and even theologically, I would accept the Bible to be without doubt.

Rense: What about the Roman records of the time, that Pilate and all the rest? They kept records.

Martin: Most of them have disappeared. We are very thankful to have that gentleman I have been talking about, Josephus. His records have come down and they are very good. On the other hand, the New Testament documents themselves are still very reliable. Notice the matter of Jesus saying that the Temple stones

would all be taken down. That was written, let's say, by Luke in 60 AD, or 70 AD [the year the Temple was destroyed], or let's say even after the war was over and that what he [Luke] was giving there is nothing more than, let's say the prophecy was uttered later, and it was not a prophecy, but someone made it up.¹⁰

Rense: Granted.

Martin: He would still have to be describing the situation that was there in 80 or 90 AD, or else anyone reading the document would say this man is a madman. Those documents were written between 60 AD and 100 AD, very contemporary so far as other historical documents were concerned.

Rense: That is like writing in our time about World War II.

Martin: Of course. There are still numerous people around, like me, I am 68 years of age [in 2001]. I know World War II very well. There would have been numerous people around. The New Testament was accepted as a divine book of 27 books, very early in the 2nd century. We know that for a fact. I would take it the documents were written earlier on and finally came together into a canon of books by around the beginning of the 2nd century [AD].

Other Books by Dr. Martin, Including “Temples”

Rense: You have another book, and Dr. Martin has a number of books, and you can see them on his website, again, if you are not online now and can't click on the link right below his name, just go to www.askelm.com. All you folks interested in this will not want to miss this website.

Look at the books by Dr. Ernest L. Martin. [*Secrets of Golgotha: The Forgotten History of Christ's Crucifixion*](#) is another book that is extraordinary, 475 pages. By the way, *The Star That Astonished the World* sold well over 30,000 copies now,¹¹ and I have a hunch that *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot* is going to equal that at least.

Martin: I hope so. The information in there certainly needs to get out to the world. I am thankful, Jeff, that you are one of the main people right at the first getting it out there. So my thanks go to you.

Rense: Sure. It is my pleasure. You need and deserve great recognition for all the years you have put into this. I think this book is a fitting and momentary crown to your work. Goodness knows what comes next. You have another book that has sold a lot of copies called [*101 Bible Secrets that Christians Do Not Know*](#).

Martin: Yes, that is a very popular one.

Rense: It is most commonly available right through PO Box 25000 ... How did you get that PO Box number?

Martin: I was very fortunate. It was the only number they did not issue at that Post Office, and I said I will take it.

Rense: Well, again it was meant to be. PO Box 25000, Portland, Oregon 97298. *Bible Secrets that Christians Do Not Know*, give us a couple of teasers on this one.

Martin: Well, for example I explain that when Moses went up to the Mount Sinai and the two tablets of stone were carved out, then God with His own hand wrote the 10 Commandments. If you will read very carefully you will find that those two stones were written on the front side and on the back side, not just the front side. And get this Jeff, it says as clear as anything in the Scripture in the Hebrew, of course, and in the English, that those stones were small enough, both of them could be held in one hand. Moses could hold them both in one hand. They were small slates no more than four or five inches wide, written on both sides.

¹⁰ Jesus' prophecy about the destruction of the city of Jerusalem is in Luke 19:41–44. His prophecy about the destruction of the Temple is in Matthew 24:1–2; Mark 13:1–2; Luke 21:5–6. Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in 70 AD.

¹¹ That includes all editions of the two titles of the book. See footnote 5 above.

Remember the Cecil B. DeMille's *Ten Commandments*. I can remember going to Universal Studio and seeing the rubber commandments that Charleston Heston brought down from the Mount. He had to carry these huge stones that obviously no human could possibly carry. The only thing is, those stones on which the Ten Commandments were written were just small tablets, smaller than a small book.

Rense: God was very efficient and He also had wonderfully economical handwriting.

Martin: Yes He did.

Rense: And never underestimate Chuck Heston's determination.

Martin: I understand that.

Rense: We just have about a minute left Dr. Martin, would you like to leave us with anything? We actually have about 30 seconds is all now.

Martin: I want to thank you again and your audience for listening to this. Please check into my website, www.askelm.com. We have lots of free stuff there for you. All the books are also mentioned. Our Post Office address once more is PO Box 25000, Portland, Oregon 97298. Thank you and good evening.

Rense: That has been a very interesting look at history through the eyes of truly a great scholar. He has done a lot of work on this. His work, the ramifications of which may be around for a long time to come.

Ernest L. Martin, October 2001 (d. January 2002)

Transcribed by David Sielaff, March 2017

The Remarkable Psalm 19

by David Sielaff

Dr. Martin's interview by Jeff Rense about the Star of Bethlehem, and Dr. Martin's book on the subject led me to consider again, how did the Magi know when the "**King of the Jews**" was to be born? Examining Psalm 19 will help us understand better.

Psalm 19 has two parts. There is significant interplay between the parts.

The first part tells of God's teaching through signs in the heavens. Those signs serve a purpose; they communicate information. God created "lights" in the "firmament" (KJV) or "expanse" or "atmosphere" as He says in Genesis 1:14–15:

"And God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven[s]¹² [1] to divide the day from the night; and [2] let them be for SIGNS, and for seasons, and for days, and years. And [3] let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven[s] to give light upon the earth: and it was so.'"

The Magi took note of the "**signs,**" understood them, and acted upon them by traveling to honor the newborn "**King of the Jews**"¹³ They gave three points of evidence to King Herod and his court officials:

"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*

They knew because they read the texts of Scripture, and properly understood the astronomical sign, particularly the sign of "**his star,**" all its actions, and the symbolism of what the star did and where it appeared and acted, particularly the prophetic meaning of Revelation 12:1 which was an astronomical "time stamp"

¹² "Heaven" is plural in Hebrew. The correct and consistent translation for "heaven" throughout should be "heavens," plural.

¹³ If you have not done so, read the [March 2017 Newsletter](#) on how the Old Testament texts were preserved during the Exile.

— an identifiable moment in time that they would have been able to predict through understanding the movement of **“the lights in the firmament”** (Genesis 1:14–15), advanced mathematics (for their time), and the significance of the signs from the Scriptures:

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.”

• *Revelation 12:1–2*

As Dr. Martin shows in *The Star That Astonished the World*, the time of that birth can be identified, down to a 2-hour period on September 11, 3 BC.

The second part of Psalm 19 tells of God teaching through divine revelation of the Word of God. That teaching relates directly to the teaching of the first part. Below, I use the analysis of Psalm 19 from Ethelbert W. Bullinger’s *The Witness of the Stars*.¹⁴ Psalm 19 has 14 verses. Here is Bullinger’s outline:

- A. verses 1–4. The Heavens.
 - B. 4–6. **“In them”** the Sun.
- A. 7–10. The Scriptures.
 - B. 11–14. **“In them”** Your Servant.

Bullinger claims correctly that a direct relationship exists between the information from heavenly signs and the informational writings of Scripture in the time of the author of Psalm 19, King David of Israel, the ancestor of Jesus Christ, another King of Israel and **“King of the Jews”** (Matthew 2:2), David’s greater son¹⁵:

“... the terms employed in A. and B. are astronomical, while in A. and B. they are literary. Thus the two parts are significantly connected and united. ... Each half consists of two portions which correspond one to the other, A. answering to A., and B. to B. Moreover, each half, as well as each corresponding member, consists of the same number of lines.”

• *Bullinger, Witness of the Stars, p. 3*

Bullinger points out that Psalm 19 is referenced by the apostle Paul,

“In Romans 1:19–20 it is declared that,

‘that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has shown it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.’

But how was God known? How were His ‘invisible things,’ i.e., His plans, His purposes, and His counsels, known since the creation of the world? We are told by the Holy Spirit in Romans 10:18. Having stated in v. 17 that ‘Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word (the thing spoken, sayings) of God’, He asks, ‘But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily.’

And we may ask, ‘How have they heard?’ The answer follows, ‘Their sound went into all the earth and their words (their teaching, message, instruction) unto the ends of the world.’ What words? What instruction? Whose message? Whose teaching? There is only one answer, and that is, THE HEAVENS! This is settled by the fact that the passage is quoted from Psalm 19, part of which is occupied with the Revelation of God written in the Heavens, and the part with the Revelation of God written in the Word. This is the simple explanation of this beautiful Psalm.”

• *Bullinger, Witness of the Stars, pp. 1–2*

¹⁴ Free and complete online at http://www.levendwater.org/books/witness/the_witness_of_the_stars_bullinger.pdf.

¹⁵ Matthew 1:1, 20, 9:27, 12:23, 15:22, 20:30–31, 21:9, 15, 22:42; Mark 10:47–48, 12:35; Luke 3:31, 18:38–39.

“The first is the Revelation of the Creator, EI, in His works,
while the second is the Revelation of the Covenant Jehovah [YHWH] in His Word.”

• Bullinger, Witness of the Stars, p. 2

Below, read Psalm 19 carefully. With the background I presented, the words will “unpack” great understanding for you. The translation is from the Concordant Literal Version:

[YHWH's Teachings by Celestial Signs]

[The Heavens]

- ¹ The heavens are recounting the glory of EI,
And the atmosphere is telling the work of His hands.
- ² Day after day is uttering a saying,
And night after night is disclosing knowledge.
- ³ There is no audible saying, and there are no words;
Their voice is unheard.

[Their Voice Going Forth]

- ⁴ **Yet into the entire earth** their voice goes forth,
And into the ends of the habitation their declarations.

[The Sun]

- For the sun, He has placed a tent in them,
⁵ So it is like a bridegroom going forth from his canopy;
It is elated like a master, to run its path.

[Their Voice Going Forth]

- ⁶ From the end of the heavens is **its going forth**,
And its circling around goes on to their ends,
So that there is nothing being **concealed** from its warm penetration.

[YHWH's Teachings by His Word]

- ⁷ The law of Yahweh is flawless, restoring the soul;
The testimony of Yahweh is faithful, making wise the simple;
- ⁸ The precepts of Yahweh are upright, rejoicing the heart;
The instruction of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes;
- ⁹ The fear of Yahweh is clean, standing unto the future;
The judgments of Yahweh are truth; they are righteous altogether:

[The Effect of God's Teachings by Revelation]

- ¹⁰ Coveted more than gold, and more than much glittering gold,
And sweeter than honey and drips of the combs.
 - ¹¹ Moreover, Your servant is being warned by them;
In the keeping of them is a great consequence.
 - ¹² Who can detect inadvertent errors?
From those **concealed** to me, hold me innocent.
 - ¹³ Moreover, keep back Your servant from arrogances;
Let them not rule over me.
- Then I shall be flawless,
And I will be innocent of great transgression.

*Teaching
in
the
Heavens*

*Teaching
in
the
Word
of
God*

[*His Voice Going Forth*]

¹⁴ **May the sayings of my mouth be acceptable
And the soliloquy of my heart be pleasing before You,
O Yahweh, my Rock and my Redeemer!**

Permanent A Davidic Psalm

• Psalm 19:1–14

David Sielaff

Additional Section:

Discussion of Dr. Martin's Background and Climate Change

Editor's Note: This section is the actual beginning of the entire Dr. Martin/Jeff Rense interview.

["LISTEN" [JRPart 1](#), begin at 16 seconds]

Jeff Rense: Tonight a remarkable program, you're going to want to stay for this one. In fact, it's going to be unforgettable for some of you, since the newest deadly round of death and dying has burst forth in and around Jerusalem and the occupied territories for these many weeks now. One theme, one concept, seems constantly in the news, the Temple Mount, and the contention for it by both Jew and Palestinian alike. What if the Temple site was wrong? What if the Temple was located somewhere else? This evening, a fascinating visit with Dr. Ernest Martin, archaeologist, theologian, and biblical scholar, whose work indicates just that.

It is well known that Herod, called the Great, vastly modified the geography of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. Herod made the mother city of the Jewish people into one of the most urbanized areas in the Roman Empire, so outstanding, in fact, did Jerusalem become under his rule, that it was favorably compared in structural and architectural majesty, grandeur, and prosperity with Rome itself, and other great cities of the Roman Empire. What Herod also did was to rebuild and increase the size of the Temple. Next to the [Temple] sanctuary he reconditioned the fortress formerly called the Baris and renamed it Fort Antonia after Mark Antony. To the west of the Temple Herod constructed his own palace and three major citadels in what was then called the upper city. In spite of these remarkable accomplishments that scholars recognize today, people are still not aware what the Jerusalem of Herod and Jesus was really like.

The book authored by my guest tonight, entitled *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*, will tell us much about that enigma. So let's welcome Dr. Ernest L. Martin to the program. Let me tell our listeners a little bit about you. He has taught history for 12 years in England.

Ernest Martin: Yes, 14 years in actual fact, and well over a year of my life in Israel, primarily in Jerusalem, aggregately over about 31 times that I have been down there ... but I stayed there several months at a time working with Professor Benjamin Mazar from the Hebrew University right on the south wall of what is called the "Temple Mount," but I am showing in my book that it is not the [Temple Mount]. It is called the Haram esh-Sharif and I worked there with Professor Mazar for five summers from 1969 to 1974. I do know the area very well, and of course, I go back quite frequently in my work in history and theology, biblical and Christian primarily, but also Jewish and Muslim. It involves that area of the world very much indeed, and of course, the whole attention of the world at this very moment is on that very site, so it is certainly contemporary as far as relevance is concerned.

Rense: I guess if there was ever a timeless city, that has to be it.

Martin: Indeed. There are so many enigmas with that city that all of us realize. The very name means "city of peace" and it probably has had more wars associated with that place than any other in history.

Rense: Imagine the carnage when you total it all up.

Martin: My goodness, yes. And we are still seeing the problems involved there to this very day. Most

of them are centered around religious beliefs. I am so thankful, and I know you are, that we live in these United States of America where we can practice our own religious beliefs, and we should be able to do that. There is not one of us, or two of us together, that will agree on everything, we know that. But when religious beliefs come down to very survival and people are at war with one another over them, this can be a great problem. It has happened in history and certainly is happening at the present time in Jerusalem.

Rense: It is ironic, isn't it, how religion, all great religions basically are saying essentially the same thing, the golden rule is universal.

Martin: Oh, it really is. Ethically and morally, and even socially we find that religion has its place and we would not want to do without it, but at the same time there are doctrinal beliefs that impinge upon land and areas of worth that people want to live in and people squabble over them, and finally get belligerent over them.

Rense: And eventually they kill over them.

Martin: Yes.

Rense: Dr. Martin, you have spent so much of your life there, you have had so many friends and colleagues, your reputation is truly international and deservedly so, I think what we need to do if we can, we've got plenty of time tonight, is go back and help many of our listeners understand really what Jerusalem was, who Herod was, what the Temple was, a lot of people don't have a good grasp or understand the term "Temple," and understand its location, but they really don't have a good historical bedrock. So without going into a Ph.D. mode here, I think what we ought to do is to tell people more about the Temple, Jerusalem, why it is so doggone important now.

Martin: Yes, I think that is a very important aspect, simply because most of us have imagined through our Sunday school teaching that the area at the time of Jesus and Herod was made up primarily of people herding donkeys and camels, and things of that nature, and that the city of Jerusalem was very much like some Middle Eastern City which you'd find out in the Sahara or in Central Arabia or something of that nature. We have got to realize, however, that was not the case. It was quite a civilized area. It was a modern part of the Roman Empire at the very time that the Empire was at its greatest under Augustus Caesar and Tiberius, and on down to Titus and Vespasian. That 1st century BC and also AD, was a time of great prosperity for Jerusalem.

Rense: Excuse me, in a way Jerusalem, and we don't think of it in this way, but Jerusalem was almost a sister city of Rome and any other great city, was the Roman Empire.

Martin: Absolutely. Some of the buildings there, including the Temple and this building I am going to be talking about, Fort Antonia, as well as Herod's palace up in the upper city, in the western part of the city were compared with the majesty of Egypt even with the great pyramids and many of the other buildings that we see still to this day in Rome, for example the Coliseum. The Coliseum was built in 79 AD, that is right in that period of time there, and we have to imagine that Jerusalem was very similar [to Rome]. It had amphitheaters there, it had a hippodrome which was a racetrack, Herod was quite a, what they call, a lover of Greek culture and architecture and he built a grand city that would have been one of the greatest majestic cities of the world at the time. And even we ourselves would be amazed at the splendor of that.

Now we can go there to this very day and go up to the Mount of Olives, look westward over the Kidron Valley, and you can see the remains of the Haram esh-Sharif, that rectangular building with the Wailing Wall on the western side over there. We see the Wailing Wall on television almost daily, and you see those gigantic stones that make up that 4-walled Haram. They are just awesome to look at, even from our 21st century perspective, you have to imagine a society that was quite sophisticated and wealthy and socially and religiously acceptable to our own friends today.

Rense: Culturally it was up to speed with everything that Rome had to offer.

Martin: Without a question.

Rense: How is it then that contemporary reflex analysis and opinion of Jerusalem comes back as you've said, basically a very simple agrarian, a kind of sedentary little town that did not matter much back then?

Martin: Yes, that is the normal impression and I think that has been promoted primarily by books about Jerusalem in the past century. When you go back to the last century and look at what Jerusalem was like, it was simply a very quaint Turkish Middle Eastern town, very dirty, very unkempt, very ... if you love the Middle Eastern spices, which by the way I do, you can get those all over the place, but animals could just wander practically anywhere.

Until the British came in 1918 and modernized the city, Jerusalem was indeed a very old looking, quaint appearing city of the Dark Ages.

Rense: Did it just erode over the millennia or was it ravaged and savaged by wars?

Martin: Both. It was savaged at various times by wars and then it went into decadence mainly because of neglect, particularly in the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries. There was very little done to the city. It was really a backwater of civilization.

Rense: The Dark Ages.

Martin: They could not really want to live there. In fact, up to the last part of the 19th century it was unsafe to even drink the water or the food in the area where it was grown.

Rense: It had regressed back to its original roots, almost. I just read the story recently that I put up on our website that points out unequivocally now that what triggered the so-called Dark Ages, really apparently was a celestial cosmic event, probably an impact on the planet that actually did turn the skies dark for a period of time, and did create an environment of what we call the Dark Ages.

Martin: I believe that to be true, and I think that occurred, no doubt, in the 6th century AD with ramifications, that is, other things happening, up until the time of the Muslim invasion of the Middle East and later. From about the middle of the 500s to the middle of the 700s, a 200 year period, this earth was subjected to some kind of force that dilapidated the whole thing. It brought on the Dark Ages, let's put it that way.¹⁶

Rense: In fact the tree rings that have been examined recently by British scientists show that very thing. Trees do not lie, and the record is there that something happened to change the world environment, its climate, for a long period of time. If you think about it, it does not take much to tip civilization as we know it backwards, it changed so radically. We now have real proof of that. We will be right back with Dr. Ernest Martin, as we continue to discuss and plumb his remarkable book. It truly is a landmark book, called *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*.

[Commercial break, "LISTEN" [JRPart 2](#), begin at 16 seconds] I am Jeff Rense with Dr. Ernest L. Martin. *The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot* is the book. It is a remarkable book, put together by one of the world's great scholars and archaeologists, not to mention theologians. We are talking a little bit about Jerusalem which went into severe decline during the Dark Ages, of course, and lasted for a long time. I guess the Crusades were the next great period in which Jerusalem became an icon of culture as it was then. Tell us about the Crusades a bit, Dr. Martin, and what they mean to Jerusalem.

Martin: They are a very important period of time simply because that is when the Jewish authorities gave up the original Temple site for the Temple being aspired to by the Christians and the Muslims. When the Crusades were over we find that the whole geography of Jerusalem had changed. In actual fact, as far as

¹⁶ God uses weather and climate for His own purposes as explained in Dr. Martin's article, "[Biblical Meteorology](#)" (original publication, 1977). The flood that killed all mankind except Noah and his family is one example. The unusual 7-year fat and 7-year lean cycle in Egypt during the life of Joseph, his brothers, and their father Jacob is another. So too are the draughts and famines by which God punished Israel. These punishments were first put forth by God through Moses to Israel in Deuteronomy 28:15-68. Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings chapter 8 reminded Israel of their responsibility to obey their Covenant vow with YHWH, and the punishments that would ensue for their disobedience and idolatry. They failed every time.

Jewish participation in the period from 1099 at the very beginning of the Crusades, when Jerusalem was taken by the European forces, there was not a Jew that lived in the city of Jerusalem or even got near for little over 50 years. When they went back they found a Jerusalem that was entirely different.

At that time, however, many of the European forces were literally illiterate because of the Dark Ages that had come along. When they came into this area of the Middle East they found a highly sophisticated Arabic culture that many of them inherited and they liked very much, and brought back temporarily a type of renaissance to Europe. Many of the beginnings of the universities in Europe started as a result of crusaders being in the Middle East, coming in contact with highly developed Arabic and Muslim culture, more or less ending the Dark Ages.

There was a time in the 1300s when the Black Death came along, and that put people back a long way, but then with the Protestant Reformation, we really inherited much from the Arabic people as a result of the Crusades. Jerusalem itself suffered tremendously after the Crusades were over. The Crusaders actually tore that city practically to smithereens, and the rock under the Dome of the Rock, they took chippings of it back to Europe that one Arabic commentator thought that there were more parts of the rock in Istanbul and throughout Europe, than there was left in Jerusalem.

Rense: That's another sad comment on history and what people do, not to mention the number of people who were slaughtered on both sides. How long did the Crusades last again, it was not just 10 or 20 years?

Martin: It could be stretched over a 200 year period.

Rense: It was a long time.

Martin: In Palestine itself in Jerusalem about 100 years. People taking [conquering] Jerusalem off and on. It was in European hands from 1099 up to 1187 when Saladin, the Kurdish Muslim conqueror came back and reestablished Muslim rule in the area. One more time the Europeans were able to take Jerusalem again, but then the battles that took place there, as you were saying, they just ravaged the countryside, and changed the city of Jerusalem from what it was earlier on into practically a devastation.

There were no walls around Jerusalem after the Crusades until Solomon the Magnificent, the Turkish ruler in 1538 built the present walls that we find around the Old City of Jerusalem.

Rense: Interesting. Without spending a whole lot of time, I do not want to gloss over the magnificence of Arabic civilization which existed when Europe was literally in the dark. The mathematicians, the philosophers, the writers, were absolutely unparalleled, in known culture at that time, the zenith of the Arabs was marvelous. One day I will do a program on that because it is a forgotten epoch in so-called Western history which needs more attention.

Martin: Jeff, I hope you will do that. You are absolutely right. Astronomy too was developed to a high degree of cultivation at that time.

Rense: They made the Europeans look like peasants.

Martin: That was the case. We Europeans — I am assuming we're all, I am and you are — we come from that area of the world, but we have learned so much from them during that classical period of time from about the 8th century AD on up to about the 13th [century].

Rense: They pulled Europe back up, I think. Let us tell it like it is. We will continue to do so with Dr. Ernest L. Martin in just a couple of minutes. We will take some calls later on tonight as well. We are going to trace the Temple and the Dome of the Rock and all the rest of it so you have a better understanding after tonight's program about what all the bloodshed, dying, and strife is really all about.

Ernest L. Martin, October 2001
Transcribed, David Sielaff, March 2017