

What did the Wise Men See?

Of course, the answer is, they saw a star, and Jesus, the King of the Jews. Recently there was a good example of modern attempts to discredit the Biblical record. It came up with apparently clever statements, yet really the attack was aimed at the Gospel itself. If the Bible is wrong in the one place, why accept it in another, particularly where something miraculous is involved? *The Chronicle* recently reported (23/12/95):

“Magi saw eclipse. London: The three Magi who travelled to Bethlehem to worship the new-born Jesus were attracted to Israel by a double eclipse of Jupiter and not, as the New Testament states, by a dazzling star, according to a US astronomer. Michael Moinar linked astronomical events at the time of Christ’s birth to astrological symbolism on Roman coins to help him formulate his claim, the New Scientist magazine said.”

So much the worse for the *New Scientist* magazine! It directly calls the New Testament wrong. The ancients understood clearly enough what an eclipse was, and what a star was. Luke 23:45 in fact uses the technical word for an eclipse (of the sun) when Jesus was crucified. Elsewhere the word means, “to fail”. In such an eclipse things don’t get brighter. The Magi were not the kind of people to mistake the two, because the stars were among their special interests. Four times over, the biblical account in Matthew 2 says “star”: *“We have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him”* (v.2); *“Herod secretly called the Wise Men and found out from them the exact time when the star appeared”* (v.7); *“After hearing the king, they started out. And there was the star they had seen in the east! It led them on until it came to a stop over the place where the Child was”* (v. 9) *“They were extremely happy to see the star.”* (v. 10). Anyhow, eclipses don’t last for weeks. How could an eclipse have led them right to the house where the Child was?