

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

1 CORINTHIANS 8

CORINTH



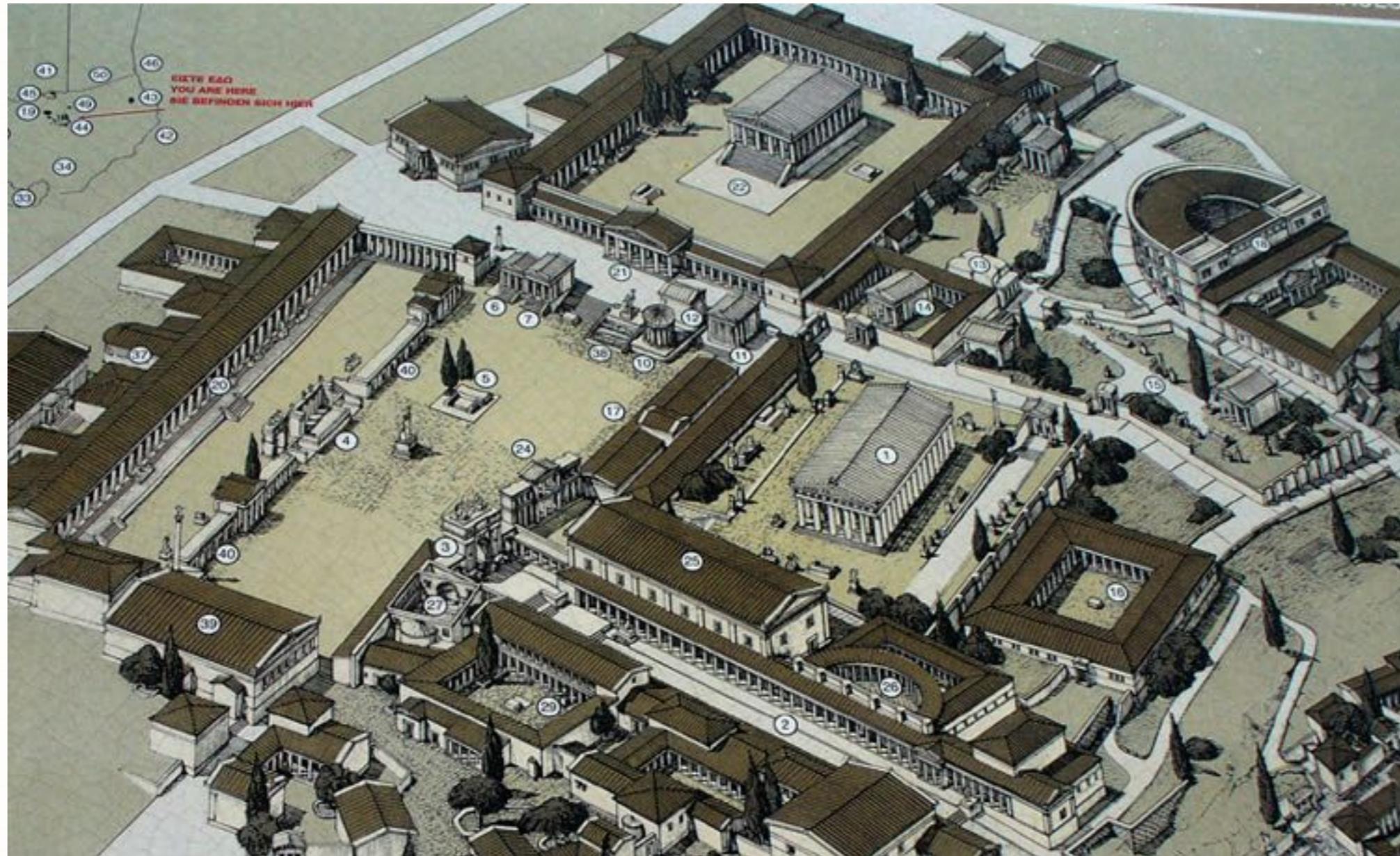
ANCIENT CORINTH



ANCIENT CORINTH



CORINTH



KNOWLEDGE OF GOD
LEADS TO A LOVE OF
GOD AND OTHERS

INTRODUCTION

- Paul addresses concern of theirs: What is his stance regarding the eating of meat that has been used in idol sacrifices?
- Paul takes a stance in agreement that yes, there is only one God and idols are imaginary.
- He then explains that there is nothing wrong with eating meat. It will not bring you closer to or further away from the Lord.

INTRODUCTION

- However, those Christians who are new to the faith have not yet learned to distinguish fully between what is proper for living under the lordship of Christ and what is not.
- They see certain Christians eating meat used for idol sacrifice and they are led to believe that, as a follower of Christ, they can continue to worship other idols.

**KNOWLEDGE OF GOD
SHOULD CREATE LOVE
IN HIS PEOPLE,
NOT PRIDE**

1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-6

MEAT AND IDOLS

- Paul revisits an issue within the Corinthian church: their pride.
- The Christians prided themselves on the knowledge they received. They were taking great joy in the freedom they now experienced as Christians.
- As such, they believed their freedom allowed them to act in any way they wanted. These particular “strong” Christians were not looking out for anyone but themselves.

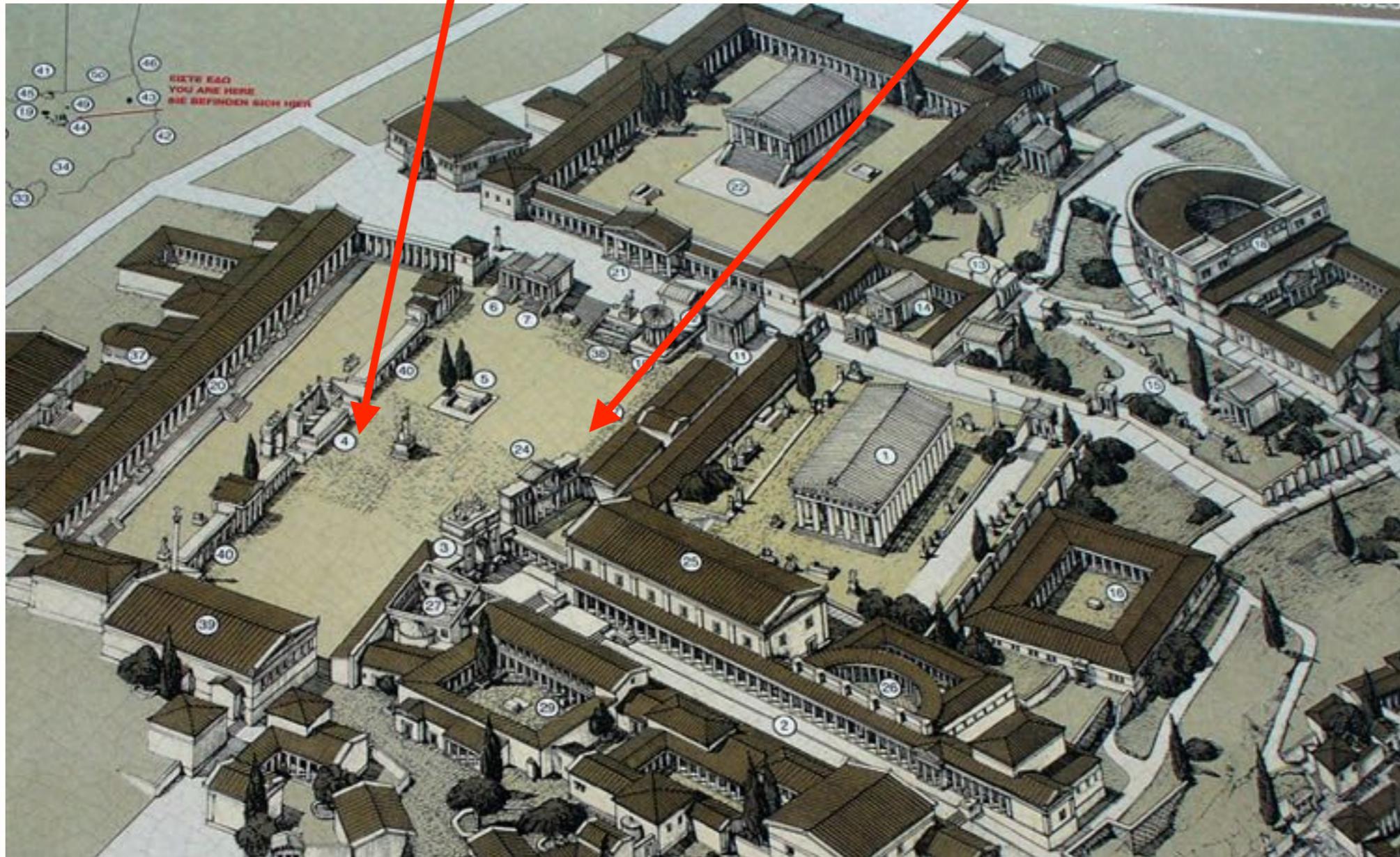
MEAT AND IDOLS

- Pagan sacrifices so infiltrated Roman society; it would be difficult for people in Corinth to completely avoid some form of contact with it.
- Meat offered during sacrifices to false gods would have been separated into three parts: one to be burned up, one to be given to the priest and one to be given to the individual who offered the sacrifice.
- The meat that was given to the priest that he did not use would often be taken to the meat market.

BEMA SEAT



BEMA SEAT & MARKET



MEAT AND IDOLS

- This meat would end up on the menu of pagan neighbor's dinners, at pagan festivals, and private events held at pagan temples.
- So believers were faced with a series of potential questions: Is meat sacrificed to idols spiritually contaminated?
- Even if a Christian has no issue with eating the meat, what about the effect his eating has on a Christian brother who has misgivings about it?

LOVE - KNOWLEDGE

- Paul quotes a phrase in verse 1 that is used by the Corinthians: “all of us possess knowledge.”
- This “knowledge” that Paul speaks about is the fact that idols are not real gods, they possess no power.
- However, this knowledge has led to arrogance in the Corinthian church.
- Knowledge of freedom without care for others can be dangerous.

PROPOSITIONS

- Verses 4–6 show Paul's stance a bit more clearly.
- Paul shows that there are no other gods but the one true God. Idols are nothing.
- Paul uses a creedal formula to bring in the nature of Christ's divinity (verse 6).
- He shows that idols are worthless and of no account and it is God, through Christ, who has made all things and for whom all things are made.

**BELIEVERS ARE CALLED
TO LAY DOWN
LIBERTIES FOR
THE SAKE OF OTHERS**

1 CORINTHIANS 8:7-13

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

- Those new to the faith, by example of the “stronger” Christians, are being led to believe that Christians can worship Christ and other gods.
- Paul tries to get these believers to see that food isn’t the issue. The issue is what is being done with the liberty found in Christ.
- These Corinthians are using their freedom to serve themselves and cause disunity, leading new Christians astray.

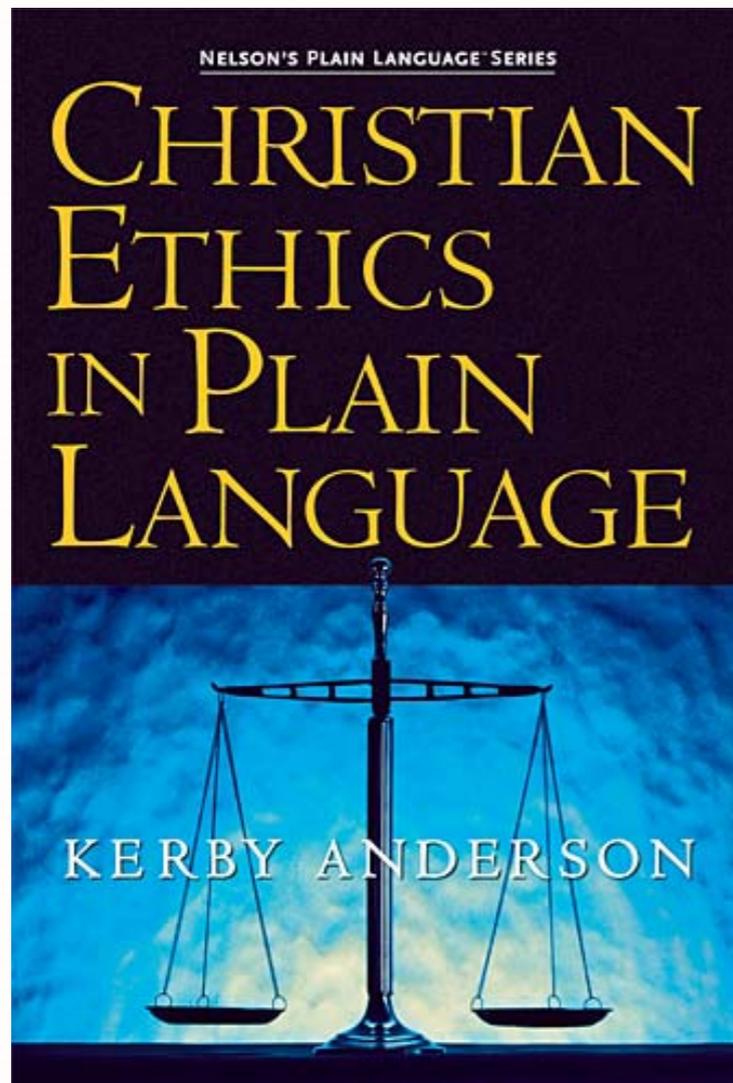
CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

- The Christian's new freedom exists in a new reality. And that reality is one centered on the community rather than the mere individual.
- Paul urges these believers to live in ways that build up the body of Christ.
- One commentator puts it this way: "It's not a question of what one can or can't do, but how to serve and live in a way that makes the gospel compelling."

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

- Christians are truly free only when they set aside their freedoms for others.
- Food, Paul says, does nothing for us in our relationship to God. It can't bring us to Him.
- Food isn't the issue. It's the problem of our head and heart not connecting with our actions.
- Don't let your desires come before serving and encouraging others along in their faith.

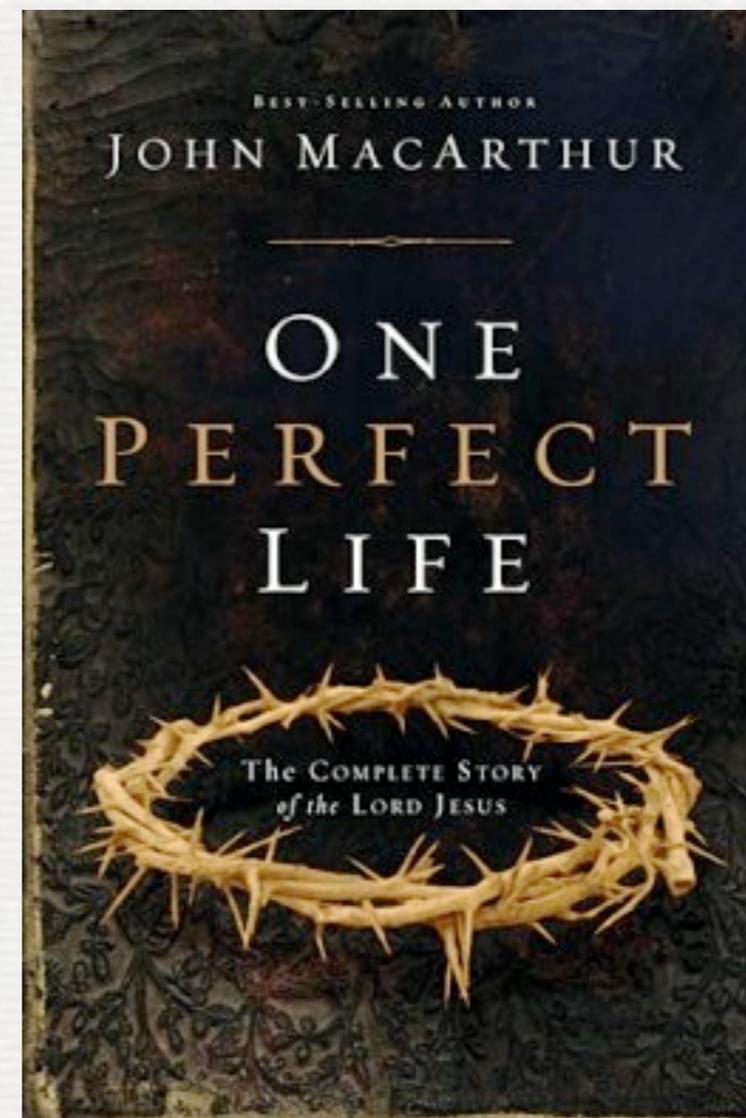
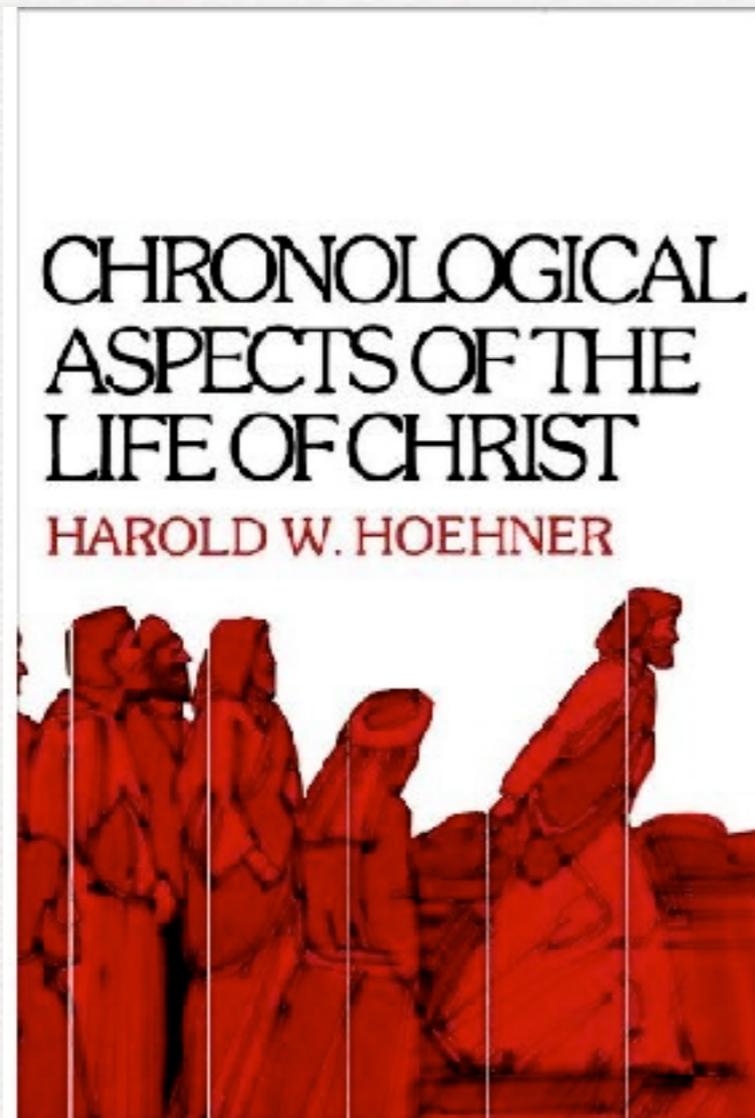
RESOURCES



A further discussion of Christian liberty based on Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 can be found in this book on Christian ethics.

CHRISTMAS QUESTIONS

BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY



YEAR JESUS WAS BORN

- Bible tells us Jesus was born before Herod the Great died.
- Josephus records an eclipse of the moon just before Herod died. This occurred March 12-13 in 4 B.C.
- From other details from Josephus, we can pinpoint Herod's death probably occurring between March 29 and April 4, 4 B.C.

YEAR JESUS WAS BORN

- Our modern calendar splits B.C. and A.D. - was not invented until A.D. 525.
- Pope John the First asked a monk named Dionysius to prepare a standardized calendar for the church.
- His calendar was incorrect by at least four years!
- Through various time indicators, we can establish that Jesus was born either late 5 B.C. or early 4 B.C.

DAY JESUS WAS BORN

- Was Jesus really born on December 25?
- The tradition is quite ancient.
- Hippolytus (2nd century A.D.) argued that this was Christ's birthday. John Chrysostom (4th century) argued that December 25 was the correct date.
- Churches in both the West and the East observe the December 25 date.

SHEPHERDS

- Why do many scholars dispute the December 25 date for the birth of Christ?
- Luke 2:8 - shepherds in the fields were keeping watch over their flock by night.
- Many scholars assume that the sheep would be under cover, at least at night.
- There are early Jewish sources that suggest that sheep around Bethlehem were outside year-round.

SHEPHERDS

- Why were the sheep in Bethlehem?
- These were sacrificial lambs that would be slaughtered at the Passover.
- The shepherds protecting lambs who would die on behalf of sinful men.
- “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

VISIT OF MAGI

- Were the Magi actually astrologers?
- Not all Magi were astrologers.
- Daniel was the chief of the Magi in Nebuchadnezzar's court.
- They might have been political or religious figures rather than astrologers.

VISIT OF MAGI

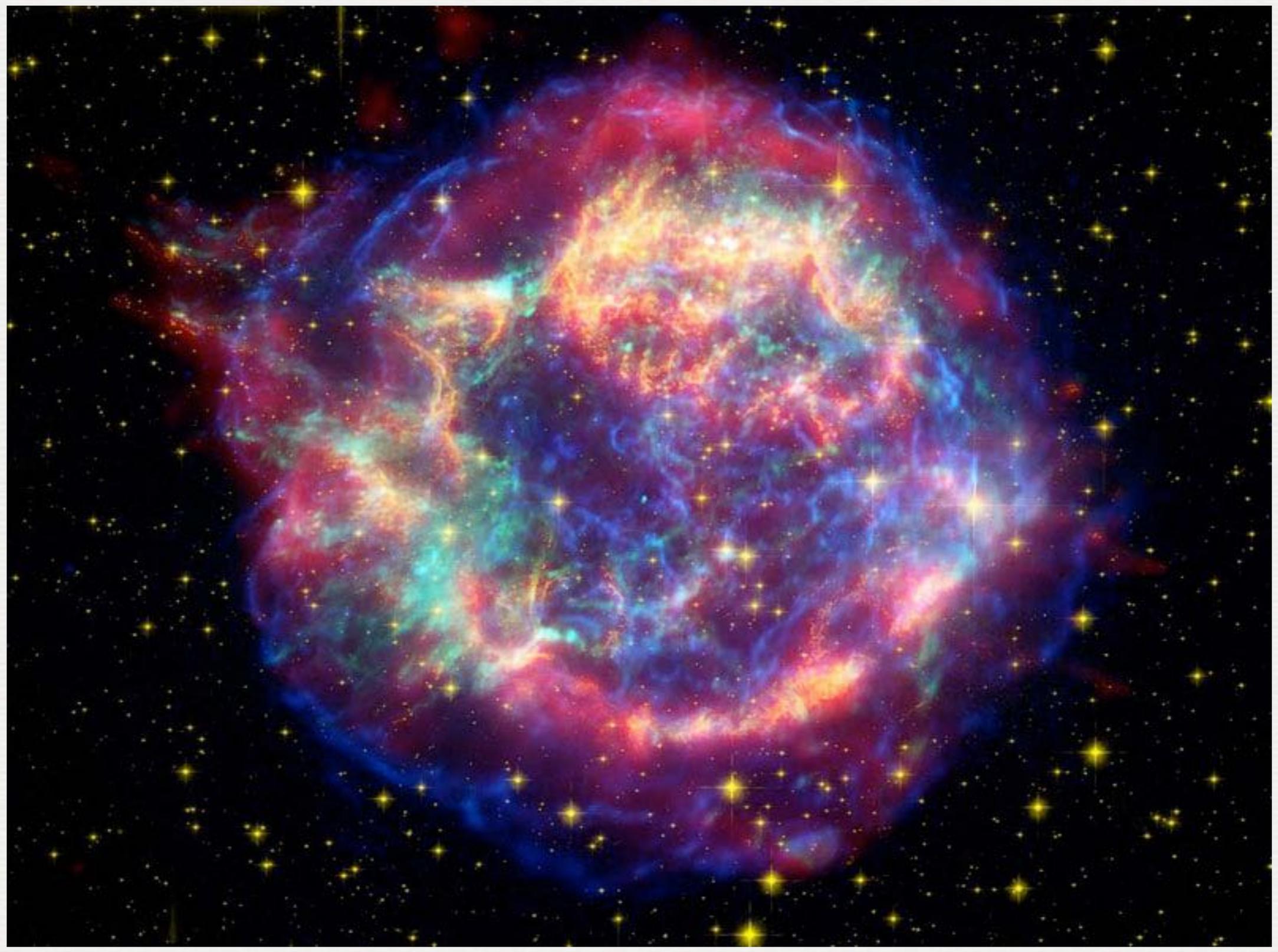
- How many Magi were there?
- The Bible doesn't say, other than there were three types of gifts (gold, frankincense, and myrrh).
- Both Augustine and Chrysostom say there were actually twelve Magi.
- The other tradition says that there were three. Given names: Melchior (Shem), Caspar (Ham), and Balthasar (Japheth).

VISIT OF MAGI

- Why were they following a star?
- They knew that Isaiah predicted that a star would appear when the Messiah was born.
- Most likely Daniel taught other Magi the prophecy of Isaiah when in Babylon.
- Not likely that this was a star - not constant, moved, stood over Bethlehem.

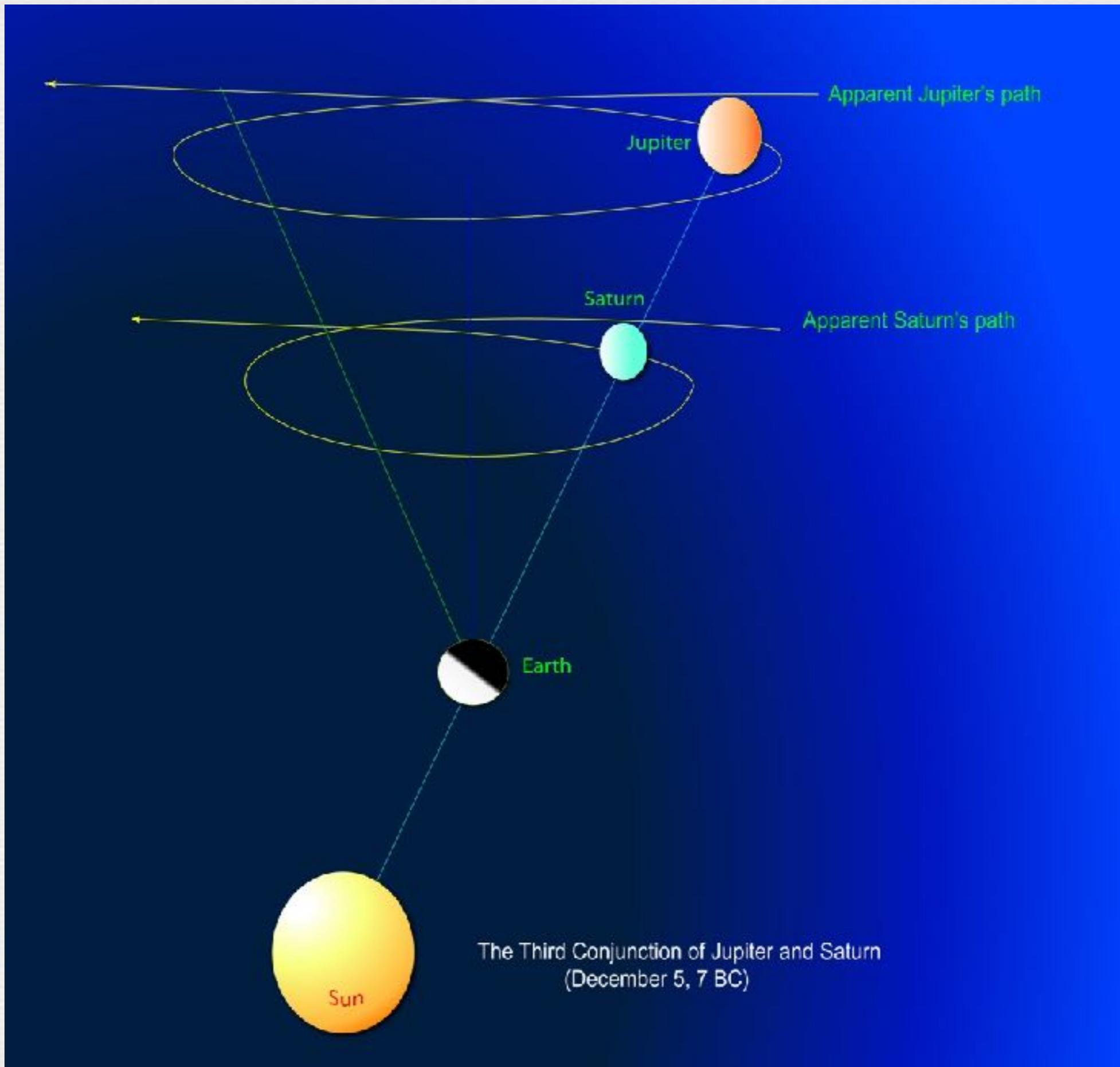
STAR OF BETHLEHEM

- Matthew quotes the Magi as telling Herod that they observed a new star rising in the East.
- This could be a new star (comet, nova, or supernova).
- A nova is a white dwarf star that explodes - much brighter.



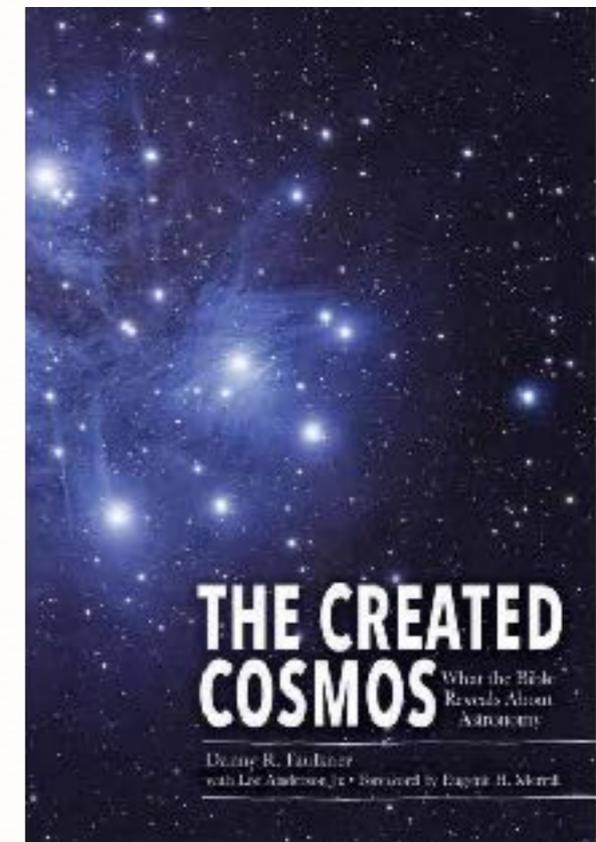
TRIPLE CONJUNCTION?

- Johannes Kepler calculated that a triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn occurred in 7 B.C. but did not believe it was the Star of Bethlehem.
- They may have left then and then saw a second triple conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars in 6 B.C.
- The first conjunction was seen in the constellation Pisces. Jupiter was associated with royalty, and Saturn was associated with Palestine.

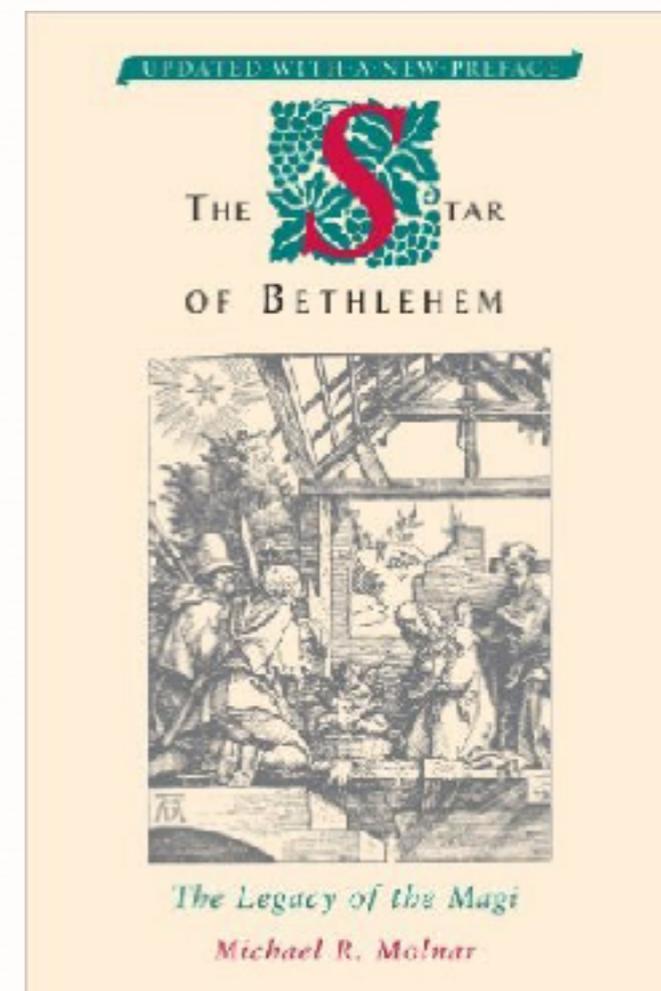
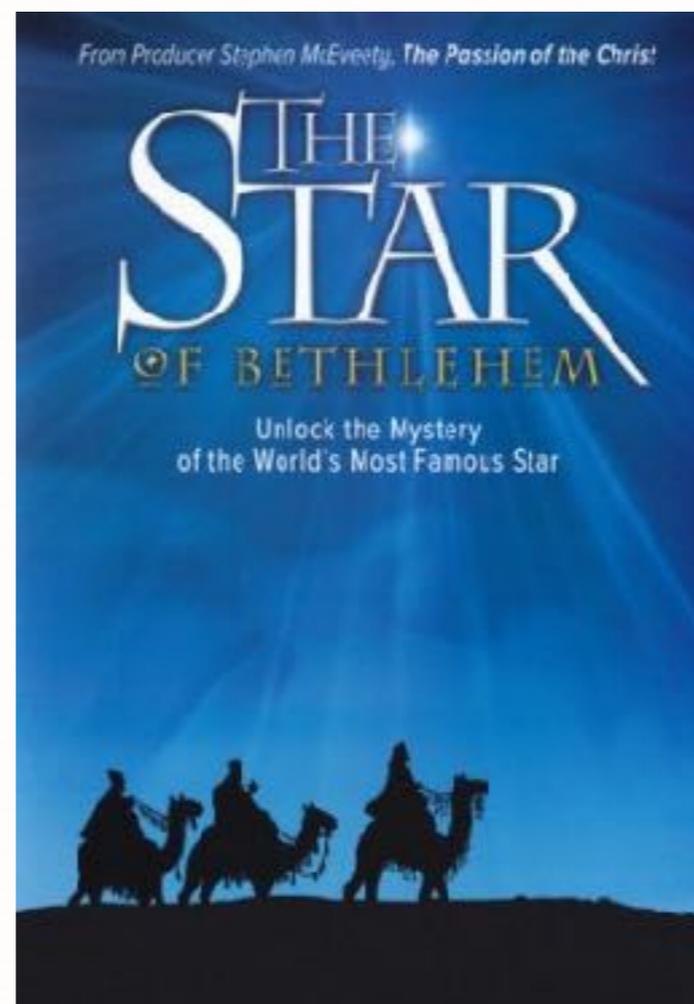
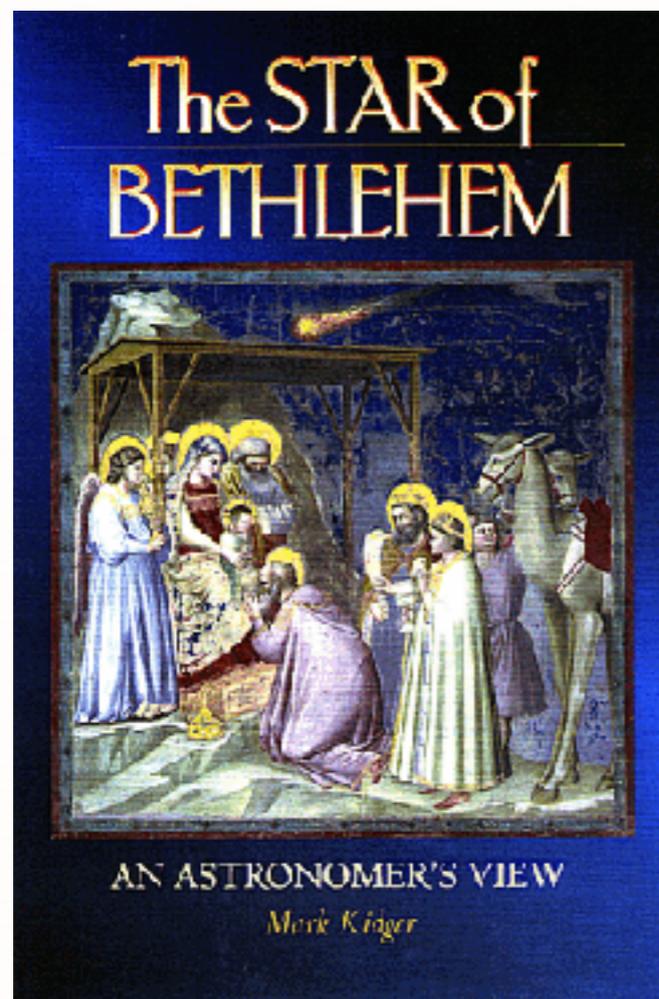


PROBLEMS

- One star: Jupiter and Saturn were never close enough to be confused as a single object.
- Does not move: It is difficult to see how this triple conjunction could have led the Magi to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem.
- Many authors look at various conjunctions and occultations to identify the Star of Bethlehem.



SOME OF THE BOOKS



SHEKINAH GLORY

- How has God manifested His presence in the Bible?
 - Moses and the burning bush
 - Israelites - cloud and a pillar of fire
 - Mount of Transfiguration
 - Saul on the road to Damascus

SHEKINAH GLORY

- The Shekinah Glory denotes the visible presence of God.
- The Lord often announces His presence with a bright light (Saul blinded).
- What better way to announce His coming and through a moving star that guides the Magi.

