

TWO GRAND PLANETARY ALIGNMENTS

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In Volume 3, issue Number 64, p. 23 (Spring 1993), of the *Biblical Astronomer* we looked at the planetary configurations and alignments at the time of creation. Gene Faulstich has made much of such an alignment. In this article we look at the best alignment in history, that of February 27, 1953 B.C.¹ There won't be another like that until Saturday, September 8, 2040 which itself will be the best for the next 4,000 years.

What's so special about 1953 B.C.?

The year 1953 B.C. is A.M. 2048, that is, 2048 years after the creation in 4001 B.C. Starting with the flood in the year A.M. 1656, and walking through the dates from Genesis 11:10 through 11:26 we find that Terah was 70 years old when he begat the first of his three sons listed in verse 26, namely, Abram, Nahor, and Haran. That year counts to A.M. 1948, a hundred years prior to the time of the great alignment. Now it might be supposed that Abram, being listed first, was the first born; but that is not necessarily the case. We are told in Genesis 12:4 that Abram was 75 years old when he departed out of Haran. The wording of that verse, coupled with verse 32 of Genesis 11 and verse 1 of Genesis 12, suggest that Abram departed only after the death of his father, Terah. Terah lived to be 205 years old and so died in A.M. 2083 (11:24 says that he was born A.M. 1878). If Abram was 75 then, he was born when Terah was 130, in A.M. 2008, 60 years after his oldest brother (Haran?).

This scenario is made more likely upon considering that Nahor married Milcah, his brother Haran's daughter. This suggests that Haran was old enough to be Nahor's father. Abram married his father's daughter, Sarai, who was born of a different mother. Now the command to Abram to depart for Canaan was given in Ur, as may be gleaned from the report that Abram was accompanied by his wife, father, and his

1. Some may have read of a grand alignment on Saturday, March 3rd of that year, but that one is heralded because it includes the moon. By that date the planets have dispersed from their closest gathering.

cousin, Lot, Haran's son (Genesis 11:31). They stopped in Haran where Terah died. So it seems that Abram and Lot may have been about the same age. Indeed, when Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, Lot was considered by his daughters to be too old to marry again. At the time, Abraham was approaching 100.

If these scenarios be true, then Abram was 40 years old at the time of the grand alignment. It is conceivable, though there is no proof, that God may have commanded Abram to depart from Ur at that time. This means that the family would have spent 35 years in Haran before departing upon Terah's death. Could it be that the first announcement of the Abrahamic covenant was heralded by this grand planetary alignment?

The Alignment of 2040

Now please indulge me with some speculation: and this is speculation. It seems that Jesus turned 30 in or shortly after the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1 and 3:23). Tiberius started his reign in August of A.D. 14. So Jesus turned 30 in A.D. 29. This also matches the determination of his birth date at late August or early September of 2 B.C.² If his ministry lasted three and a half years, then the best date for the crucifixion is A.D. 33. The 2,000th anniversary of the crucifixion will thus be in A.D. 2033. A.D. 2040 is seven years later. Could it be that the coronations of Revelation 20:4 will be heralded by this grand alignment? Mind you, this is purely speculative; but I've seen much wilder stuff bandied about by men getting rich from their sensationalization of the events of the Revelation. I, for one, would rather the Lord returned today than to wait another forty years or so.

The figures on the following pages show the alignments of 1953 B.C. and A.D. 2040 from two perspectives each: one is from above the plane of the planetary orbits, from the north ecliptic pole, and the second shows the alignment as seen from earth. In each of the latter cases the apparent size of the moon is shown for comparison to show how close the clustering is. The charts were produced by the program "Dance of the Planets," the highest-rated planetary position program for microcomputers.

2. G. Bouw, 1994. "On the Star of Bethlehem," in Bouw, ed., *The Geocentric Papers*, (Cleveland: Association for Biblical Astronomy), p. 79. See the back cover of this issue for ordering information.

Figure captions

Below: On 27 February, 1953 B.C., Saturn and Mercury passed to close to each other (as seen from earth) that they appeared as a single object. In this figure Venus, Saturn, Mercury and Mars are plotted with the apparent size of the moon for comparison. The moon itself was in another part of the sky, but the phase shown is correct for that day.

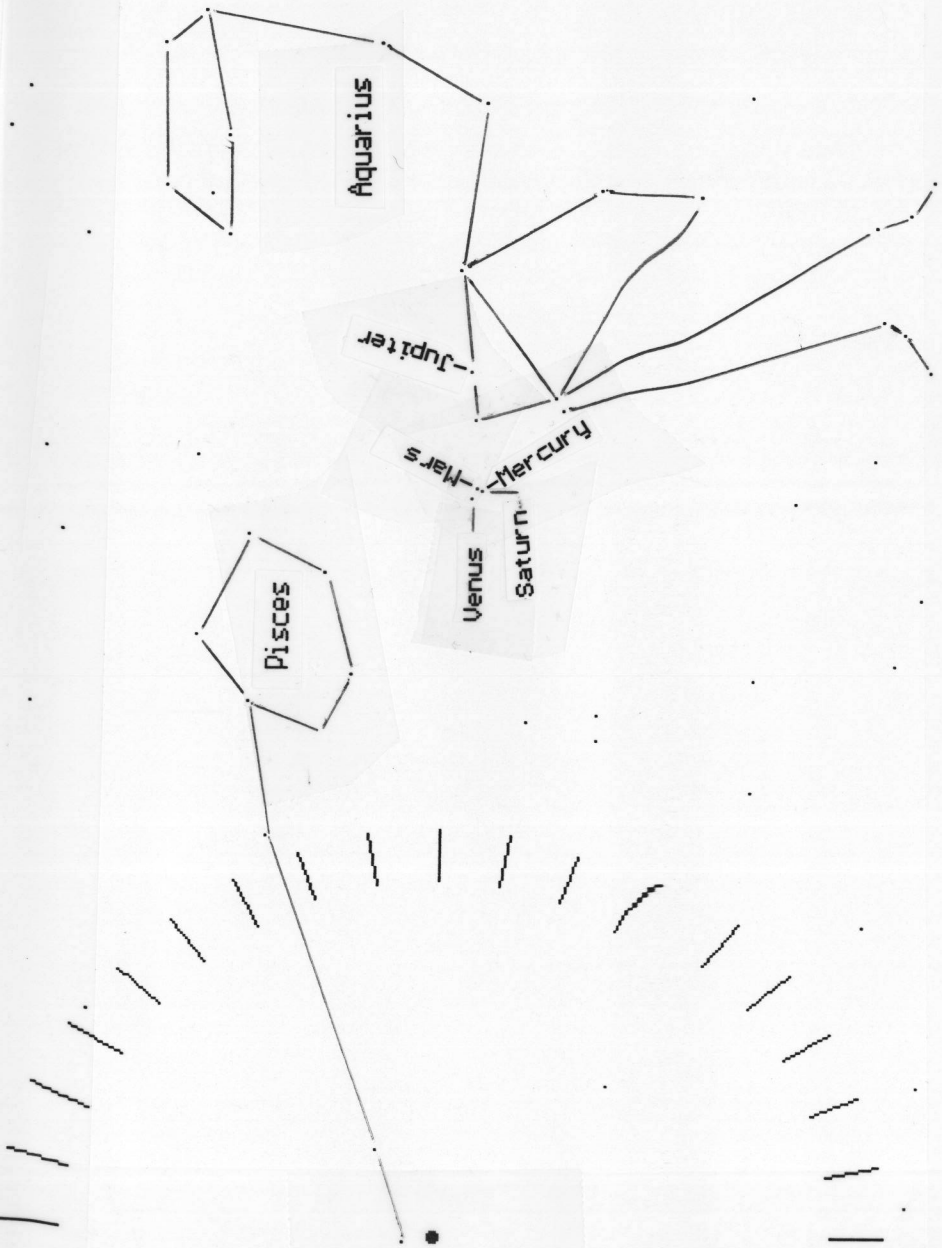
Page 8: The same time as above showing Jupiter, too. All five bright planets could fit in the bowl of the Big Dipper. The black dot at left is the sun and the rays surrounding it represent the area inside which the sun glare would be too bright to see the objects with the naked eye.

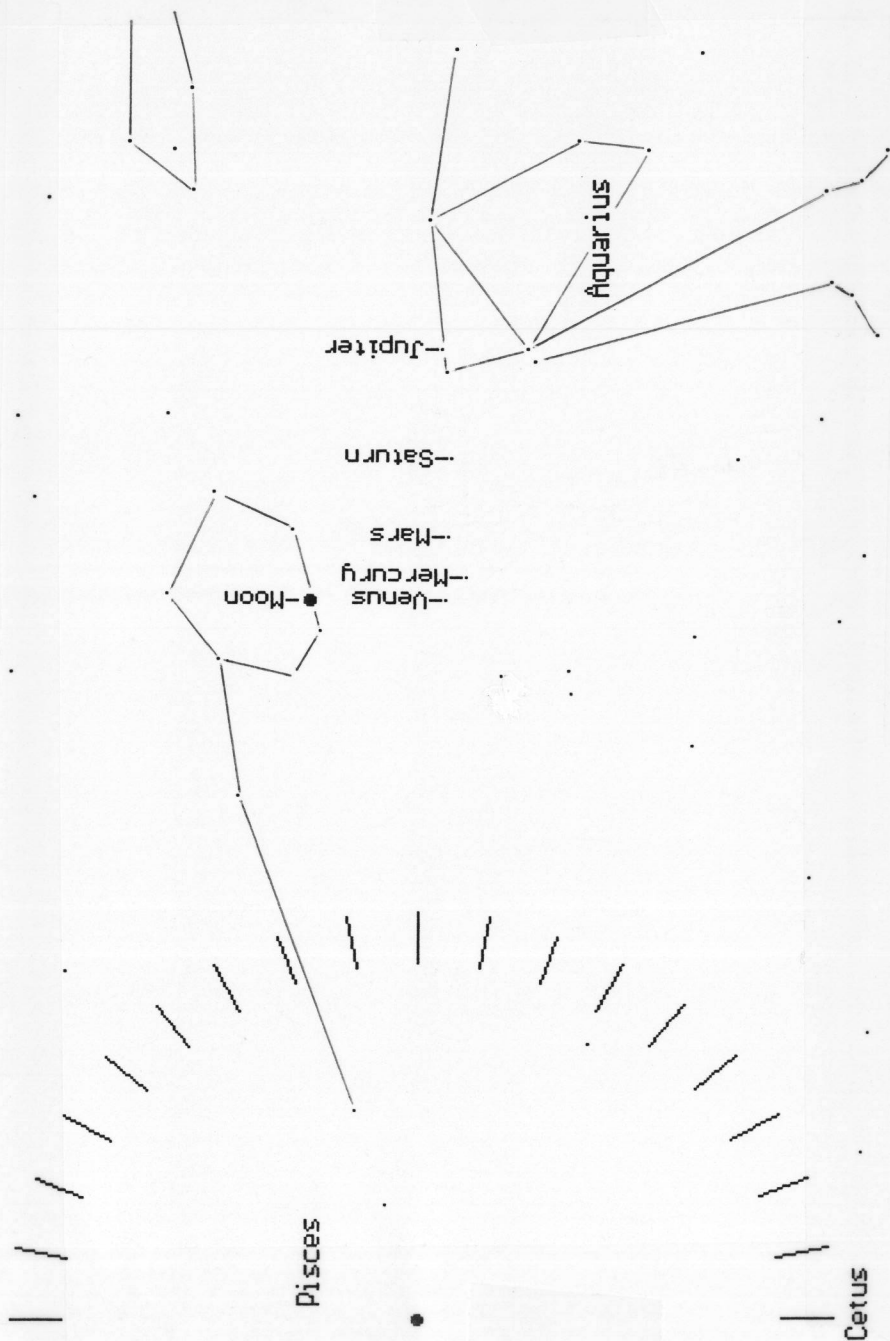
Page 9: The same view as above but on 3 March when they were joined by the moon. Note that they are not as close to each other as they were four days earlier.

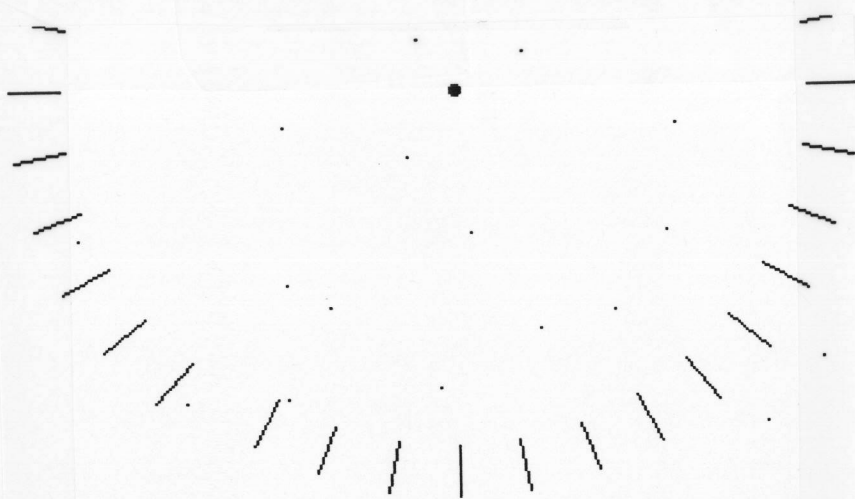
Page 10: The alignment of 9 September, 2040. The Big Dipper is shown at left for size comparison. This chart is to the same scale as those on pages 8 and 9.

Page 11: The two alignments as seen from the north ecliptic pole. The cross is the location of the sun. The top alignment is that of 1953 B.C. whereas the bottom is that of A.D. 2040.









--Jupiter
--Mercury

--Moon
--Saturn

--Venus

--Mars

Virgo

