

# THE BIBLE AND THE PLEIADES

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## **Introduction: the science of the Bible versus the science of man**

As a geocentrist, I come in contact with a great many skeptics. That should surprise no one. Some of them, when I explain the rationale for my stance, come to believe with me. Others lose a lot of their skepticism and hostility yet cannot quite bring themselves to believe in the geocentric model; and very many refuse to listen or consider the issues. To them, science has proven once and for all that the earth moves.

Now throughout history there have been many things that science has “proven once and for all,” at least in the mind of those who know a little science. As related in the book *Geocentricity*, the Right Reverend John Wilkins (1614-1672) argued that the Bible should not be taken literally in its scientific pronouncements because Psalm 19:6 says that the sun is hot. According to that Anglican Bishop, science has *proven* that the sun is not hot, that it was merely a mirror, reflecting the light from the lake of fire. Likewise, from before the

days of Wilkins, through the time of the mathematician Leonhard Euler (1707-1783), it was widely argued in Europe that the Bible should not be believed because it makes of the earth a special place. Although Euler himself did not believe it, back in those days popular science had “proven” that the sun, moon, planets, and stars were inhabited; so God had no reason to make of the earth a special place. Today Mormonism and Adventism still believe that.

In the above examples, people placed their faith in the pronouncements of “modern science” instead of in the words of the Scriptures; and in each case “modern science” was proven wrong. The “modern science” of yesteryear is today’s superstition (Acts 17:22). We have no reason to doubt that today’s “modern” science will look just as silly to the practitioners of “modern” science in A.D. 2200, should the Lord tarry. Those who place their faith in science when it contradicts the Bible, place their trust in a proven loser.

So it is that we take up the nature of stars as presented in the Holy Bible, the nature of the Pleiades star cluster in particular. The Bible has much to say about stars, and it sounds strange to our ears to hear that men once believed that the stars, and most particularly the sun, are inhabited. Had we questioned them as to why they seriously thought such we would have received reasons which on the surface seem reasonable. For example, some may have told us that prophets such as Emmanuel Swedenborg had talked with the inhabitants of these other worlds. Indeed, it was during one such séance with the inhabitants of the moon and Mars that Swedenborg was told how the solar system was created. That “revelation” is still the standard theory for the formation of the solar system. Back in those days LaPlace put the “revelation” in a pseudo-mathematical form and it came to be known as the *Nebular Hypothesis*. Asking the faithful of that ancient belief for a second reason, we might be told that the ancients believed the same. Is that any different than the von Daniken “ancient visitors from space” speculations?

Likewise, if we had asked Kepler how he could know so certainly that the earth rotates instead of the cosmos rotating about the earth once per day, he may have invoked the inhabitants of the moon to tell us. In an early science fiction story he wrote, Kepler proposed that the inhabitants of the moon could prove it by taking people to the moon along the shadow of an eclipse and could show them, from the moon, that the earth rotates. In recent history the same argument (but using astronauts instead of moon people) has been popularized by anti-

geocentric Creationists. The argument, of course, is equivalent to saying that because you can see all sides of the engine at the center of a carousel “rotating” as you ride on the carousel, that this proves that the engine rotates and the horses on the carousel stand still.

Now this notion that the sun, moon, and stars are inhabited is not at all new. Consider for a moment what Adamantius Origen wrote about the stars.

### **Origen’s view of the nature of the stars**

Although condemned as a heretic shortly after his death, and regarded as such for over a thousand years since, in the last couple of hundred years Origen has been reincarnated as the darling father of the critical bible. It is interesting to see how this man, who devoted his entire life to reconciling the unholy philosophies of Plato with the “philosophies” of God’s Holy Bible, viewed the stars.

We ought first to inquire after this point, whether it is allowable to suppose that [the stars] are living and rational beings; then, in the next place, whether their souls came into existence at the same time with their bodies, or seem to be anterior to them; and also whether, after the end of the world, we are to understand that they are to be released from their bodies; and whether, as we cease to live, so they also will cease from illuminating the world. ...We think then that they may be designated as living beings, for this reason, that they are said to receive the commandments from God, which is ordinarily the case only with rational beings. “I have given a commandment to all the stars.” (Isaiah 45:12<sup>1</sup>) ... And seeing that the stars move with such order and regularity, that their movements never appear to be at any time subject to derangement, would it not be the height of folly to say that so orderly an observance of method and plan could be carried out or accomplished by irrational beings? In the writings of Jeremiah, indeed the moon is called the queen of heaven.<sup>2</sup> Yet if the stars are living and rational

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 45:12 "I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded." The word "host," which Origen says is "stars," is never used for stars in the Bible. Hosts means the armies or company of heaven.

<sup>2</sup> The queen of heaven is mentioned several times in Jeremiah and the moon is mentioned twice (Jeremiah 8:2 and 31:35), but nowhere is there the least hint that the moon is the

beings, there will undoubtedly appear among them both an advance and a falling back ... Job appears to assert that not only may the stars be subject to sin, but even that they are actually not clean from contagion of it. "The stars also are not clean in thy sight." (Job 25:5.<sup>3</sup>)<sup>4</sup>

So we see that Origen believed not just that the stars are inhabited, but that the stars themselves are alive and that each has a soul. That notion is totally foreign to the Bible, as can be seen in the footnotes. Today, scientists may not (yet?) believe what Origen believed about the stars, but many believe a similar thing about the earth. The notion that the spirit of the earth, Gaia, will protect the earth is such a superstition. (By the way, Gaia is the name of the elephant upon whose back, according to Hindu mythology, rests the earth.) But belief in Gaia has not in the least helped the Hindus improve their lot in life, nor has their faith in Gaia helped them achieve harmony with the earth, let alone with their fellow man. Yet many "modern" scientists, politicians, and businessmen are looking to Gaia to save them from perils real and imagined. Is that really so different from anything Origen believed? They are all too superstitious (Acts 17:22).

Now in all fairness, angels are called stars in the Holy Bible. Revelation 1:20 says:

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Jesus is himself referred to as "the bright and morning star" in Revelation 22:16. Likewise a third of the angels are referred to as "the third part of the stars of heaven" in Revelation 12:4, but whenever an angel appears in earth, he has the appearance of a man—without wings (Genesis 19:1, 15; Hebrews 13:2; etc.). And John is very bold

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queen of heaven. The moon appears nowhere near the context of the queen of heaven there, or anywhere else in the Bible.

<sup>3</sup> Job 25:5 "Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight." Sin is not in the context.

<sup>4</sup> Menzies, Allen, 1990. *The Ante-Necene Fathers*, 4, (Grand Rapids Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co.), p. 263.

in Revelation 21:17 and 22:8-9 to equate angels with men. Angels are also associated with flames and spirits (Hebrews 1:7). So the teaching of the Bible about the nature of angels is not as simple as Origen thought it to be.

Rather than stars being living and rational beings as Origen believed, it is more Scriptural to think of the stars as types, and perhaps the abode of at least some of the angels. Perhaps the stars are the chains referred to in Jude 6 where we read: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Here "under darkness" would refer to the darkness of outer space. But I speculate, for other interpretations are possible, too. It seems then that though Origen built his speculation on a simplistic view of a basic Bible truth, he carried it too far. As for me, I am not prepared to write a treatise on the stars as found in the Holy Bible. Still, we will see many of these stellar elements in the facts and lore of the Pleiades. But first, a bit about that lovely jewel in the sky.

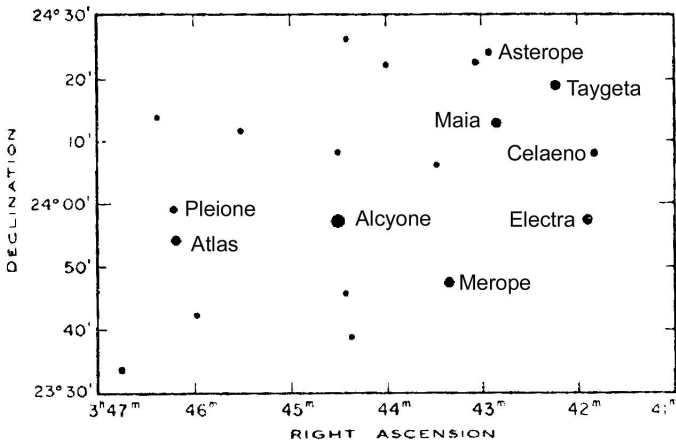
### **The Pleiades as a star cluster**

The Pleiades is what astronomers call an *open cluster* or a *galactic cluster* (the latter because they are confined to the plane of the galaxy, the Milky Way). Such a cluster's stars are grouped in random but decreasing number outwards from the cluster center. In the case of the Pleiades the outline of the brightest stars is that of a tiny dipper or cup. Classically the Pleiades are said to consist of seven stars, one of which is missing. Normal adults see six or seven stars; those with excellent vision see about 10. Children see 12 to 14 stars. There are about 200 stars in the core of the cluster which is about two degrees in diameter (four times the apparent diameter of the full moon), and when extending the area out to six degrees, one counts about 500 stars. The cluster is about 360 light years from earth and is some 30 light years in diameter. The entire cluster is slowly moving to the southwest. The number of stars in a given volume in the cluster is about three times what it is in the solar neighborhood.

Most of the brighter stars in the cluster, indeed all the brightest ones, are hot stars, white to bluish-white in color. They are embedded in a wispy nebulosity (clouds). This issue's cover shows a long-exposure photograph taken at Kitt Peak National Observatory. You can see the dust clouds, reminiscent of cirrus clouds, about the stars as

well as between them. I've enhanced the contrast to make the streaking more apparent. The mystery is why the wisps should go in all directions, apparently at random. (The mysterious forms at the edge of the circular photo are due to edge effects caused mostly by light reflection off the interior of the telescope tube, and partly by contact printing, since the exposure is not on film but on a glass plate.)

Figure 2 shows all the stars in the Pleiades region visible through a small telescope. It also shows the official modern names of the brightest stars of the Pleiades. The star names are not necessarily those assigned by the ancients, though the names conform to Greek legend. The Greek Pleiades were seven sisters named Alcyone, Sterope, Electra, Celaeno, Maia, Merope, and Taygeta. Atlas was their father and Pleione was their mother, but the stars bearing the parental names on Figure 1 were not given those until about four or five hundred years ago; Pleione by Michel Florent van Langren (Langrenus) of Antwerp, and Atlas by the Jesuit, Riccioli. The rest of the star names may not be all that much older.



**Figure 2:** The Pleiades

The seven brightest stars in the cluster are, in order from brightest to faintest, Alcyone (magnitude 2.96), Atlas (3.80), Electra (3.81), Maia (4.02), Merope (4.25), Taygeta (4.37), and Pleione (5.0-5.5, an irregular variable star of the P-Cygni class). Since Pleione is hard to see in the glare of Atlas, Celaeno (5.43) may be seen as the seventh instead of the eighth. The ninth brightest star is Asterope (or Sterope). It consists of two stars which are so close together that they

appear as one star of magnitude 5.85. Except for Alcyone, the names do not appear to be too ancient.

### **The Pleiades in the Holy Bible**

From time immemorial the Hebrews and the Christian Church have linked the constellations to the truths of scriptures. The Hebrews, for example, maintain that the constellation of Orion the hunter, which they call *Kesil*, (meaning fool), was usurped by Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-9) to immortalize himself in the sky. Indeed, most of the pagan accounts of the Pleiades even have Biblical overtones. Thus many ancients associate Taurus, the constellation in which the Pleiades is found, with the flood of Noah, and they associate the Pleiades with the ark. Related to that, some regard the Pleiades as doves. Of course, we know Noah sent a single dove from the ark (Gen. 8:8), not seven, but the connection is there nevertheless.

In the Bible the Pleiades, also called the “seven stars,” are mentioned seven times. In Hebrew they are called *Kimah* which means either a tablet, or a cup. A tablet is a flat ornament of precious metal worn about a person. It may be inscribed. Strong’s *Exhaustive Concordance* says “cluster” for the meaning (from his 3558), but the root word there means “store,” so the derivation is dubious. The Euphratean name for the Pleiades is *dimmena*, which means “foundation” or “faithful.” Since the letters *k* and *d* are regarded as interchangeable in the study of word origins, the Euphratean name’s meaning exactly matches Strong’s number 3559 instead of 3558. The meanings faithful, tablet, or cup can all apply to the Pleiades in the Bible.

As far as the Greek word, *pleiades*, is concerned, the derivation is said to be uncertain and, as we shall see, several homonyms are brought to bear on ascertaining the meaning of the name. My own research points to a meaning of “plenty,” “many,” or “greater.”

Below are all seven references to the Pleiades or seven stars in the Holy Bible:

**Job 9:9** Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.

**Job 38:31** Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

**Amos 5:8** Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The LORD is his name

**Revelation 1:16** And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

**Revelation 1:20** The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

**Revelation 2:1** Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks

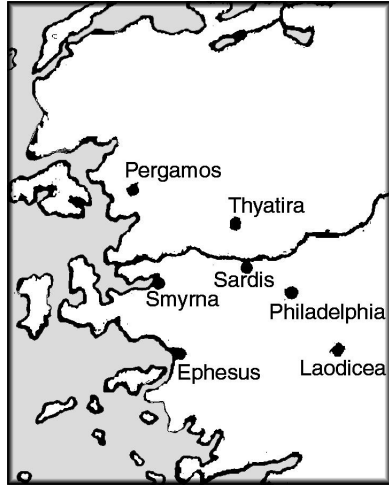
**Revelation 3:1** And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

From the above verses is clear that Biblically the Pleiades represent the spirits of seven churches. These churches correspond:

1. To seven churches in Asia Minor (now Turkey; see Figure 3), which existed at the time John wrote the Revelation at the end of the first century.
2. To the seven church ages into which the history of the Church can be divided. Ephesus, A.D. 33-200; Smyrna, 200-325; Pergamos, 325-500; Thyatira, 500-1000; Sardis 1000-1600; Philadelphia, 1600-1900; and Laodicea, 1900-present. Each of these ages is characterized by the spirit described for it in the second and third chapters of the Revelation.



3. To seven churches representing seven churches which will again exist in the future. This is suggested by the emphasis on works in the prophecies about the seven Asian churches. There is the offer of rewards for overcoming, for example, but according to 1 John 4:4 and 5:5, all Christians are overcomers by faith. In verses such as Rev. 2:7 eternal life is tied to “overcoming,” but



Christians already have eternal life, hidden in the Lord Jesus Christ, and don't need to eat from the tree of life to live eternally. For a Christian, that which is here rewarded with eternal life is nothing more than “reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1). Thus we look to a future fulfillment of these seven churches, probably in the time of the great tribulation or Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7).

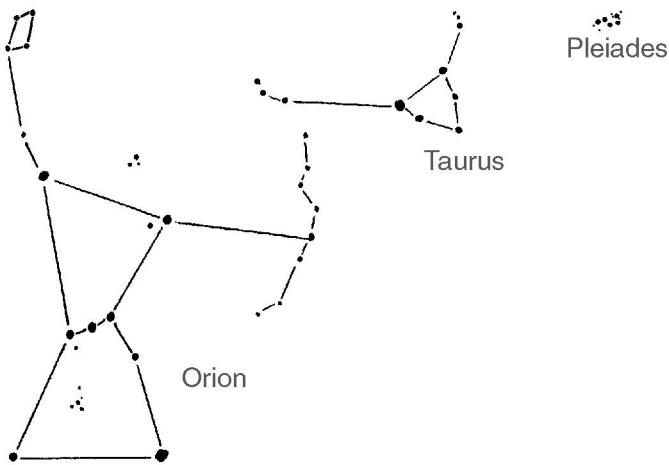
The Bible itself interprets the seven stars as the seven churches, the mysterious “sweet influences” referred to in Amos 5:8 are now clearly identifiable as the sweet influences of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as ministered by these seven angels. The sweet influences were proclaimed by the prophets in the Old Testament, the believer-priests in the current dispensation (1 Peter 2:9), and kings in the next dispensation (Rev. 1:5-6). Amos 5:8 is key, for it associates the Pleiades with the resurrection (turning the shadow of death into the morning—see Mat. 28), Orion with the darkness (occultism) that darkens even the day, and the Pleiades with the rain or start of the rainy season, a theme associated with them around the world.

Before we look at some of the pagan perversions of this biblical truth, we should take note of Revelation 2:5—“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” The threat is that the first of the seven,

Ephesus, may no longer shine in his place. We find that tales of a missing Pleiad are world-wide.

### The Pleiades as a constellation

Today the Pleiades are officially considered part of the constellation of Taurus the bull. Most people view the Pleiades as located on the shoulder of the bull, some on the neck, and others on the back. Hyginus placed them on the hindquarter while Pliny, Columella, Vitruvius, and Nicander placed them on the tail of the bull. Pliny is also reported to have made them out as a separate constellation. Eratosthenes, Homer, and Hesiod placed them above the bull and separate from it. Eudoxus and Aratos placed them near the knees of Perseus, a constellation to the north of them, and again separate from Taurus. The Jews and Arabians place the Pleiades as on the rump of Aries, the ram, which is the constellation to the east of them. The Hindus place them on the head of the bull. The rest of the ancient world seems to view the Pleiades as a separate constellation.



**Figure 4:** Orion, Taurus, and the Pleiades.  
(The horizontal scale is slightly exaggerated.)

### The Pleiades as virtuous maidens

In the West, the best-known tale of the Pleiades hails from

Greece. According to Greek legend, Orion met Pleione and her seven nymph daughters in Boeotia and pursued them through the woods for five years until Zeus translated them all, Pleione, her seven virtuous daughters, Orion, and even his dog into the heaven as the respective constellations (the constellation of the dog is Canis Major). Figure 4 shows the locations of the constellations Orion, Taurus the bull, and the Pleiades. All the daughters of Pleione became ancestresses of divine or heroic families. As for the missing Pleiad, various accounts say it is Electra mourning for Troy, or Merope in shame for marrying the mortal, king Sisyphus, and so settling for far less than her sisters who all married gods.

Despite the beclouding of the ancient Bible truth in the Greek tale, the biblical truth is still recognizable. According to the Jews, Orion is Nimrod, the founder of the Babylonian religious system, which for more than four thousand years has pursued all the children of the living God, even his Church to this very day. Their Father upholds the earth with the word of his power (Hebrews 1:3), and their mother is Jerusalem which is above (Galatians 4:26).

As the Church is a chaste virgin, washed by the blood of the lamb, we are not surprised that Hesiod should refer to the Pleiades as seven virgins. Likewise the rabbis call the Pleiades the *Succoth Renoth*, the booths of the maidens. The Syrian name for the asterism also means “booths.”

Even the queen of heaven gets into the act. The transformation of the virgin queen into a star was rather late as far as legends are concerned; yet, Ishtar, whose pagan holiday is Easter, reputedly became one of the Pleiades. This is, to the Christian at least, an obvious corruption of the figure of the church, the bride of Christ. Insofar as Jesus is the King of kings, and king of heaven in particular, his bride, the Church, is the “queen” of heaven. Nevertheless, the Holy Bible never refers to the Church as the queen of heaven, and all scriptural references to the queen of heaven are negative (see Jeremiah 44:17 v.f.).

### **The Missing Pleiad**

In the Bible, there is the threat to the angel of the church at Ephesus that his candlestick may be removed. According to the rest of the world, the star is gone. We have already seen the Greek account of the missing Pleiad. Tales of a missing star are found in other places in

Europe, in China, India, Japan, the Americas, Africa, and Australia. The Pirt-Kopan-noot tribe of Australia tell a tale of a missing Pleiad. According to their tradition, the Pleiades were a chieftess named Gneenggar and her six attendants. Waa, the crow (the star Canopus), fell in love with her. One day while the women were hunting grubs, Waa changed himself into a white grub and bored himself into a tree trunk to await his love who was sure to find him. When she stuck her bone hook into the hole he let her draw him out, turned into a giant, and carried her away. Since then only the six attendants remain. The Africans say that there are seven stars but that one, plain and not as beautiful as her sisters, hides herself for shame. (This suggests Pleione, the star that can be lost in Atlas's glare.)

### **The Pleiades as birds**

The association the Australian aborigines drew between the Pleiades and a bird is wide-spread. Many other peoples associate the Pleiades with birds. For example, Athenaeus, Hesiod, Pindor, Simonides, and Sicily call them the seven doves. In the Bible, doves are associated with spirits. The ancients associate Taurus with the Noaic flood and Pleiades with the ark, again tying the constellation to the dove and indirectly to the heavenly Jerusalem.

In the Coverdale Bible of 1535, the margin note to the reference in Job reads "these vii starres, the clock henne with her chicks" reflecting the then-common name for the Pleiades among the north-central and Western Europeans, namely hen and chickens (a reference to Jerusalem, Mat. 23:37). This is said to have come from Aben Razel and other Hebrew writers, who remarked on the similarity between the Greek word for Pleiades and the Greek word for chicken coop. The Japanese also saw the Pleiades as a hen and her chicks.

The Samoans know the Pleiades as the bird of paradise, the first hint of a link between the Pleiades and paradise.

### **The Pleiades as a grape cluster**

Not nearly as many peoples associate the Pleiades with a cluster of grapes, but there are some, and through them we are reminded of the "new wine" mentioned in connection with the birth of the Church in Acts 2:13. But before that, the birth of the nation of Israel is associated with a cluster of grapes. At the time Israel was to enter the

promised land, the spies brought back a cluster of grapes (Numbers 13:20-24). By their subsequent rebellion Israel forfeited that entry, and when they finally did enter the land some 39 years later, it was as a figure for a future fulfillment. This future fulfillment is the Millennial kingdom which follows the Tribulation and, as noted earlier, there are seven churches in Asia mentioned before the start of the Tribulation. Those seven churches are the vehicle, the ark, that shows the way of salvation throughout the Tribulation, the strait gate through which is reached the sabbath kingdom promised in the Old Testament.

### **The Pleiades as flames**

The Hindus regard the Pleiades as seven flames. Here, too, Biblical overtones are in evidence, for we saw earlier that the flame of fire is associated with spirits and angels. The association between Pleiad and flame manifests itself in that the appearance of the Pleiades in the evening sky of October-November initiates the festival of lamps celebrated throughout the Far East at that time of year. The seven flames also remind us of the seven lamps of the candlestick Moses made for the tabernacle (Ex. 25:31 v.f.). The candlestick is in the Holy of Holies and represents the Holy Ghost who indwells the Christian believer. Its seven lights represent the seven Spirits of God which constitute the Holy Ghost (Rev. 1:4; Isa. 11:1-2).

### **The Pleiades as the seat of immortality**

The brightest star in the Pleiades is called Alcyone. In Greek this word can mean the center or pivot, but another possible meaning is contained in the variant, *Halcyone*, which means heavenly. In Greek mythology, one has to cross the Alkyonic Lake in order to reach the spirit world. The word halcyone is also found among the natives of Mexico to refer to the bird of paradise. The name for the star Alcyone in Arabic is *Al Wasat*, which also means the central one according to the important Arab astronomer Ulug Begh. The Arab, Hafiz, reported that the Pleiades were the seal or seat of immortality, that is, of Paradise. This view was shared by the Berbers of Morocco, some of the Moors, and the Dyaks of Borneo.

To compound the influence, the Pleiades are associated with the feast of the dead on November 1 as celebrated by the Roman Catholic

Church in Europe, the Celtic Druids, and the natives of Peru. In Australia, the event sparked a three-day celebration in honor of the Pleiades.

The pervasiveness of the Pleiades as the spiritual center or seat of the universe led Wright, in 1750, to propose that the Pleiades are at the physical center of the universe. In 1846 this led to the suggestion by Maedler that the whole universe revolved around Alcyone.

Now the reason behind Maedler's speculation was that some years before, Sir William Herschel noted that stars seemed to be streaming past the sun away from the constellation Hercules. This he interpreted as due to the sun's motion towards that constellation. Today the motion is held caused by the sun's orbital motion about the center of the Milky Way, but the nature of the Milky Way wasn't known in the nineteenth century and so Maedler suggested the the center of the orbit lay in the opposite direction from the center of the Milky Way, around the Pleiades. This he did with no proof whatsoever that his conjecture was true, yet it was a popular idea in the nineteenth century and has resurfaced from time to time in the twentieth century.



### **The Pleiades and geocentricity**

Throughout the above accounts, those knowledgeable about the Bible will see the many veiled references pointing to the Church. The suggestion is that it is the Church, the true Bride of Christ, the one described in the Holy Bible and none other, which occasions that the earth is located at the center of the universe. It was for that Bride that Jesus Christ, God himself, came; and he shed his blood to redeem her. Her members, even those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are assured eternal life, even the resurrection from the dead. Finally, the Lord Jesus Christ will return for her and she will be his wife for ever. But until that day, she is the light of the world (flame), is indwelt by the Holy Ghost (who is the seven Spirits of God), who came upon her betrothed, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the form of a dove (Mat. 3:16). The gospel of grace she presents to the world, that eternal life and forgiveness of sins are the free gift of God to the sinner who will but believe it, embodies the sweet influences spoke of by the prophet Amos; for these influences are shed abroad by the seven Spirits of God.

When we look at the lore associated world-wide with the Pleiades we find there threads of all the elements connected with the Church in the Holy Bible. There can be little doubt that the original pattern, perhaps dating back to Adam who was the first astronomer among Jewish and early Christian writers, is at least in part preserved in the world's myths and tales of the Pleiades. We find then, in the Pleiades, a strong type of the Church of God.

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