

Comet 46P and the Pleiades: A Message to the Church?

By T.W. Tramm

SITUATED on the shoulder of the constellation Taurus, the Pleiades star cluster is comprised of an unknown multitude of stars that combine to appear as seven brilliant points of light.

Over the millennia, the Pleiades have inspired myth and folklore worldwide. Yet, this irradiant assembly of stars—the brightest in the nighttime sky—has a biblical significance revealed in appellation and in Scripture.

The Greek word Pleiades means “the congregation of the judge or ruler” and derives from the Hebrew word *kimah*, meaning “the heap or accumulation.”

The brightest star in Pleiades bears an Arabic name, *Al Cyone*, meaning “the center,” driving speculation that the Pleiades lie at the center of the universe and may also mark the metaphorical location of God’s throne.

The Syriac name for the Pleiades is *Succoth*, a word meaning “booth, shelter, or protective covering.” Succoth is the name of the place at which Jacob settled and built a dwelling after wrestling with the Angel of the Lord (Gen. 33:17). Succoth is also the name of the location at which the Israelites first camped after their liberation from Egypt (Ex. 12:37).

The Pleiades are mentioned multiple times in Scripture:

“He is the Maker of the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south” (Job 9:9).

“Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion’s belt? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons?” (Job 38:31, 32).

“He who made the Pleiades and Orion ... the LORD is his name” (Amos 5).

Notice that in each instance the nearby constellation Orion is mentioned alongside the Pleiades. According to E.W. Bullinger’s “Witness of the Stars,” Orion, the most brilliant of all the constellations, is a picture of the coming Redeemer and Light of the World, Jesus Christ.

The constellation that encompasses the Pleiades, Taurus, also pictures the coming Redeemer; though in this instance He is depicted as a bull, rushing forward with mighty energy and fierce wrath to pierce through His enemies.

Another mention of the Pleiades, by inference, is in Revelation where a glorified Jesus tells John that the “seven stars” in His hand represent the seven angels of the seven churches:

“The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches” (Rev. 1:20).

The context of the above verse leads one to believe that the seven angels are not the heavenly kind but, rather, human representatives that preside over the churches (see note below). The seven lampstands, a reference to the temple menorah, represent the congregation, or Church as a whole. Thus, the “Hanukkah menorah” associated primarily with Judaism is, in fact, a picture of the Church!

An interesting correlation between the heavenly Pleiades and the Church on earth is that the seven bright stars in the constellation Taurus correspond roughly to the layout and location of the “seven churches in the province of Asia” (Rev. 1:4), located near the Taurus Mountain Range in Turkey.

A MESSAGE-BEARING COMET?

Understanding the Pleiades star cluster to be a symbolic representation of the Church in heaven, it’s fascinating to consider the timing and path of this year’s Comet 46P: Initially discovered in the year of Israel’s rebirth (1948), Comet 46P is presently making its closest flyby to earth in 70 years, a timespan of profound eschatological significance, to spotlight the Pleiades.

That Comet 46P may have actually been ordained for this purpose—to call attention to this particular star cluster at this particular time—seems affirmed by a number of factors related to its appearance:

- 46P is the brightest comet of the year. Its pale greenish glow spread a diameter almost twice that of the full moon, thus garnering attention from even non star-gazers.
- 46P happens to make its fly by in December, one of the two most favorable months (January is the other) for viewing Taurus and the Pleiades.
- Owing to its timing and green color, 46P gained much attention in the media as the “Christmas Comet.”
- At the time 46P was closest to earth and most easily viewed (1pm GMT on December 16) it was in a picture-perfect location right alongside the Pleiades, just 3¼ degrees southeast.

Scripture says the nighttime sky and constellations speak to us:

“The heavens declare the glory of God ... night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words ... Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world” (Ps. 19:1-4).

Is the message being declared in the heavens today that now is a pivotal time for the Church?

NOTES:

1. The Greek word *aggelos* (Strong's #32) used in Revelation 1 means “messenger.” In speaking directly to the “messenger” of each church, Jesus says things like:

“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works” (Rev. 2:4-5).

“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer” (Rev. 2:10).

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth” (Rev. 3:15-16).

Since the above instructions do not apply to a heavenly angel but, rather, to a human prone to sin, it seems likely the angel/messenger title is meant in the sense of the primary human representative of each of the seven churches. See commentary on Revelation 1:20:

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/revelation/revelation-1/revelation-1-20.html>

2. Star/constellation names and meanings taken from E.W. Bullinger's “Witness of the Stars.”