

# Thy Will Be Done on Earth As It Is in Heaven

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This line from The Lord's Prayer presents an astounding messianic call for planetary transformation, bringing our fallen world into harmony with a complex divine order, through the reconciliation of all things. What should this prayer from Jesus mean for us today? How can we interpret the will of God? What does it mean to say the will of God is now done in heaven?



My approach to theology, and therefore to this central text from the Bible, starts by assuming the basic accuracy of modern science. Rather than the traditional Christian view of heaven as a place where good believers go to be with God after death, I would like to explore a different interpretation of heaven, as originally meaning the visible starry skies above. The scientific method tests hypotheses and deductions against evidence. Against a scientific approach, what Christ may have meant by his reference to heaven in the Lord's Prayer is far from simple. The way I approach this problem begins with the observation that the ancient world had highly developed astronomical frameworks sustained in oral culture. In thinking about heaven, we should ask what we can deduce from the surviving evidence about that lost ancient cosmic wisdom. The complex ancient worldviews have sadly been largely destroyed and forgotten, rather like an ancient forest burnt down by fire and leaving only a bare field. My hope is that we can rekindle some of the ancient vision by analyzing the underlying coherence of Biblical texts against a scientific astronomical framework to produce a terrestrial cosmology, not only producing factual information but also transforming our moral values.

Consider the idea that the will of God is revealed in the physical universe, in the wonderful order and beauty of the visible heavens as discovered by astronomy, both modern and ancient. The modern scientific view of the universe assumes that the same laws of physics that govern our lives here on earth also apply consistently throughout the cosmos. This scientific principle of the unity of all things emerged historically from the ancient principle 'as above so below', a philosophical teaching very close in meaning to our Biblical line 'on earth as in heaven'. In Christian cosmology, this sense of cosmic unity emerges powerfully in Colossians 1:20, with the idea that all things on earth and in heaven can be reconciled in Christ. Saint Paul similarly says at 2 Corinthians 5:18 that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, giving us the ministry of reconciliation. This reconciling purpose of faith in Christ calls us to see the perfection of the heavens as the model for how we should aim to live on earth, with Jesus Christ as the mediating point of connection between earth and heaven.

The logical principle of cosmic unity integrates religion and science through the idea that all is one, and is central to the prayer that the will of God should be done on earth as in heaven. We can begin to understand the meaning of this prayer by exploring what it means to say that Jesus Christ connects our fallen world to a transcendent eternal single reality.

A rational way into such theological ideas can be found through the ideas of the great scientist Sir Isaac Newton. Newton's discovery of the law of gravity united our mundane earthly reality with the orderly paths of the planets around the sun, and eventually with the movement of galaxies through Einstein's theory of relativity. The great power of God seen in the unchanging laws of physics may yet even unite us with the divine principle that Dante called the love that rules the stars.

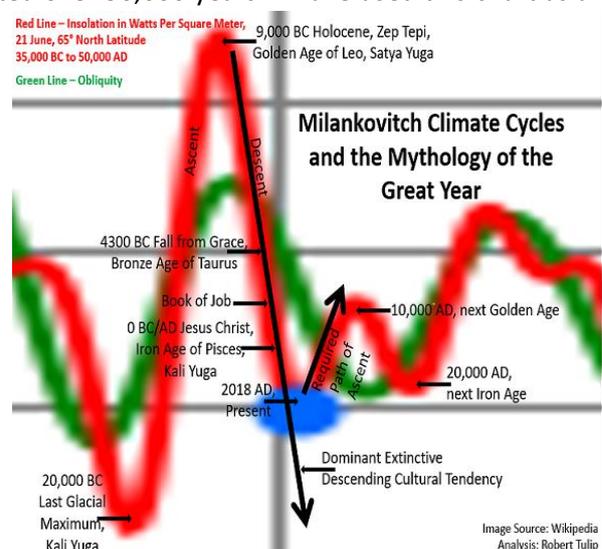
Newton is the central thinker of the modern scientific enlightenment. His reputation is reflected in the words of Alexander Pope – “Nature and nature's laws lay hid in night. God said, Let Newton be! and all was light!” The modern view of Newton does sometimes give honour to his faith in God, but generally overlooks his deeply religious philosophy, his belief that the reconciliation of all things is only possible through Jesus Christ. Newton’s ideas can help us to understand what the original Christian authors meant by saying the will of God in heaven should be done on earth, so that today we can reconcile faith and reason to create an integrated understanding of the meaning and nature of life.

Newton’s basic intellectual framework for the law of gravity came from a surprising source, his translation of a short ancient poem known as the Emerald Tablet of Thoth,<sup>1</sup> from the Greco-Egyptian school of thought known as Hermeticism. The teaching in the Emerald Tablet ‘as above so below’ became for Newton the inspiration for his scientific assumption that the same laws of physics govern the earth and the heavens, that all is one. The law of gravity displays the universal power and presence of God in the orderly elegance of consistent causal processes. Physical observation of how the law of gravity applies equally on earth and in the heavens became for Newton a starting point for enabling us to see the will of God. Modern scientific philosophy developed this theme, with the twin sources of wonder and awe described by the great philosopher Immanuel Kant, our observation of matter and our intuition of ethical principles. Kant called us to see how the will of God can be reflected in both the starry heavens above our heads and the moral law within our hearts.

Kant’s moral teaching is an ideal of how we might unify earth and heaven. The problem is that our world is fallen from grace into corruption and ignorance, full of chaos and suffering. As Paul said in Romans 8, we are in bondage to decay, and await the glorious liberty of the children of God. How can the orderly beauty of the natural cosmos possibly be reflected in our fallen ignorant hearts to help us achieve this glorious liberty promised by Paul? The first step, and forgive me for introducing some new ideas here, is to see how the cosmos is reflected in systemic cycles of our planet.

We all know the immediate cycles of the day and the year. Our lives need a daily and seasonal balance between activity and rest, light and dark. There are also much bigger slower natural cycles of light and dark that govern earth’s orbit. These are known as Milankovitch Cycles<sup>2</sup> after their discoverer, the Serbian astronomer Milutin Milankovitch. He combined celestial mechanics and earth sciences to show how orbital cycles drive the natural patterns of climate, illustrated here in this chart of the changing level of northern summer sunlight calculated over 50,000 years. I have used this chart as a template to show how various mythological ideas of the Golden Age and the fall, from Christianity, Hinduism, Greece and Egypt, map to the actual climate pattern.

This theme of how astronomy governs our planet helps to explore how we can find meaning in the teaching from Christ that we should pray for the will of God to be done on earth as in heaven, as a scientific vision of cosmic order. The planetary warming and cooling cycles discovered by Milankovitch include a period of just over 20,000 years known as the precession cycle, shown by the up and down path of the red line in the picture. The



<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerald\\_Tablet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerald_Tablet)

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milankovitch\\_cycles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milankovitch_cycles)

northern hemisphere pattern dominates the whole planet due to the shape of the continents. Together with even longer cycles, precession drives the advance and retreat of glaciers and the rise and fall of sea level. Human industry has of course sent this natural cycle haywire by emitting carbon dioxide, but it is important for us to understand the underlying natural pattern that would prevail if we had not disrupted it.

With this slow millennial pattern, astronomy has found that climate follows what we can call cosmic seasons. Each planetary cosmic season lasts more than 5,000 years, creating a rhythm like the annual seasons or the day and night, on a much longer timescale. Ancient astronomer-priests could not measure the climate effect of these cosmic seasons, but they most certainly could measure their main visible feature, the shifting position of the background stars against the seasons, known as precession of the equinox or the Great Year.

The remarkable fact about these cycles is their direct correlation with the big picture of Christian theology, the story of fall and redemption. The correlation between the cosmic season of fall over the last 6000 years and the Christian mythology of the fall from grace is shown by the change of northern summer light, which was high ten thousand years ago, matching summer, and is now going through a low period, like winter. In the Milankovitch cycle, the planet entered the cosmic season of fall in about 4000 BC, and then entered the cosmic season of winter in about 1200 AD. This cycle is due to the changing date in each year when earth is closest to the sun. This date, known as perihelion, is now at 3 January and advances by one day every 59 years. These slow planetary rhythms help to explain the saying in Psalm 90 and 2 Peter that a thousand years are as a day to God.

With these ideas the Bible calls us to integrate our vision of the meaning of eternity and history against the long-term patterns of nature. These natural cosmic seasons match the theory of time in the Bible, the big themes of fall and redemption. The chart shows the current shift from a descending to an ascending trajectory of planetary light, matching the Christian story of a shift from fall to redemption with the return of Christ as light of the world. My view is that this correlation between science and myth suggests the origins of this Biblical vision of time arose from a profound intuition, only partly conscious, of natural order as the governing framework of history.

This astronomical observation of a season of fall correlates with the traditional orthodox Christian belief held by a range of early Church Fathers<sup>3</sup> that the fall of man from grace into corruption happened around 5000 BC, and that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ should be expected after 6000 years. This model of time with a thousand years as a day was mapped by Church Fathers to the Seven Days of Creation in Genesis, with six thousand years of toil followed one Sabbath millennium of rest and recovery under the rule of Jesus Christ. Starting at 5500 BC, as believed in the early church,<sup>4</sup> would have placed the Second Coming at 500 AD. The Reformation dating of creation at 4004 BC implies a Second Coming in 1995 AD, on the 6000 year theory.

Leaving aside these old speculative theories of an exact date, my interest is to interpret this mythology against the underlying planetary climate cycle. The interesting fact shown in the Milankovitch graph is that the cycle is now slowly shifting direction over the third millennium AD, from descending to ascending. This scientific framework helps us to construct a vision of the thousand-year millennium of peace and restoration beginning around now. I seek to restore these old ideas as a way to counter what I call in the diagram the dominant extinctive descending cultural tendency. We need a comprehensive paradigm shift combining religion, science and politics to shake humanity awake as

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/revelation/related-topics/the-millennial-kingdom-in-the-early-church.html>

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sextus\\_Julius\\_Africanus#cite\\_note-7](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sextus_Julius_Africanus#cite_note-7)

we sleepwalk to oblivion. This dangerous trajectory is seen primarily in the psychological inability of our species to open a coherent discussion of the existential threat posed by climate change.

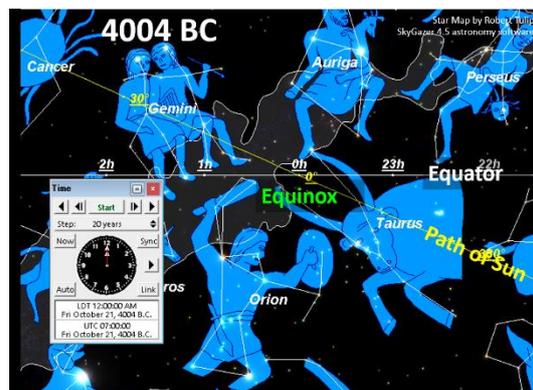
Christ taught in Matthew 24 that no one knows the time of the coming of the kingdom. My view is that this complex idea of the Kingdom of God can usefully be clarified in light of the orderly patterns of nature to see how the Christian vision matches to historic patterns. It is a legitimate study to imagine how the will of God in heaven is reflected in events on earth, understood in terms of how our planet is connected to the cosmos, seeing God through natural systems that enable human flourishing.

We can now construct a new systematic Christian theology based squarely on this astronomical framework. A paradigm shift incorporating astronomy, religion and politics is needed to imagine how human culture can change direction from the current path. We are now headed toward conflict and collapse mainly due to the risks of climate change, and instead must create a vision of a steadily improving future. My view is that this is only possible by building upon how this story has been imagined throughout history, primarily in the Christian tradition.

How did the authors of the Bible imagine the reconciliation of earth and heaven as proposed by Christ in The Lord's Prayer? To explain that, we need to understand the close integration between astronomy and religion in the ancient world. As priests studied the heavens, they observed the slow shift of the stars against the seasons, one degree every 71 years. This movement was definitely calculated more than a century before Christ, and was probably known in general terms for far longer, perhaps thousands of years stretching into prehistory. Proof of this antiquity of knowledge of precession is found in the fact that the Egyptians and others routinely tore down their stellar temples and rebuilt them on new foundations every few centuries to align with the shifting position of the stars.<sup>5</sup>

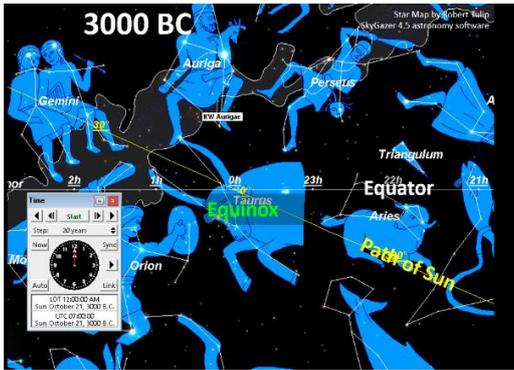
The implicit story here is that the ages referred to in the Bible actually are the astronomical periods known as zodiac ages, each 2000 year long, when the sun reaches the spring point in each successive constellation. This story is not found explicitly in ancient text, but my view is that is only because it conflicts with the orthodox Christian story of supernatural entities and miracles. This ancient political conflict caused the original astronomical story in the Gospels to be heavily suppressed. We should now ask if this astronomical framework was the 'teaching of the kingdom' that Jesus says in the Gospels will be shared with initiates, while the literal Gospel stories are told to the general public.<sup>6</sup> The astronomical story is shown in the following star maps tracing the movement of the celestial equator through the ages. My view is that we can use this astronomical timeline to see precisely why the Christian story involves the incarnation of Christ at the dawn of the Age of Pisces.

Beginning with the map of the equinox point in 4004 BC, chosen just because it is well known as a Reformation calculation of the Biblical date of creation, we see that the March equinox point was close to the Milky Way and entering the constellation of Taurus the Bull. In terms of the Biblical narrative this is the time of the fall from grace with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.



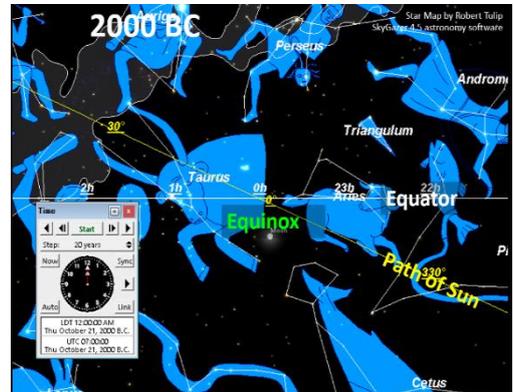
<sup>5</sup> *The Dawn of Astronomy: A Study of the Temple-Worship and Mythology of the Ancient Egyptians*, by Professor J. Norman Lockyer - See <http://adsabs.harvard.edu/full/1894PASP...6..126L>

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 13:11 [https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don\\_stewart/don\\_stewart\\_1345.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_1345.cfm) presents a conventional interpretation.



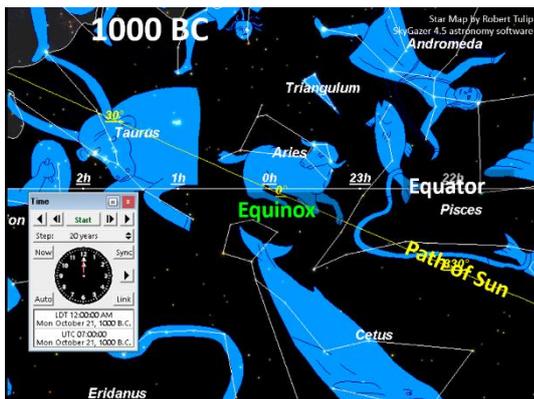
Moving ahead a thousand years to 3000 BC, the time of Noah in Biblical chronology, the equinox point has advanced to the bright star Aldebaran, known as the eye of the bull in Taurus.

In 2000 BC, traditionally the time of Abraham, the equinox point stands between the zodiac constellations of Taurus the Bull and Aries the Ram. Modern speculation associates this transition of zodiac



ages from Taurus to Aries with a range of Biblical texts, especially Abraham's sacrifice of the ram and the story of Moses and the rejection of the Golden Calf, as an earthly mirror of the observed slow movement of the heavenly ages.

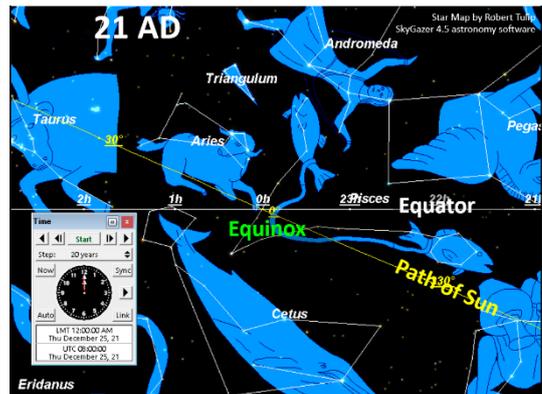
The equinox point is at the middle of the constellation of Aries



in 1000 BC.

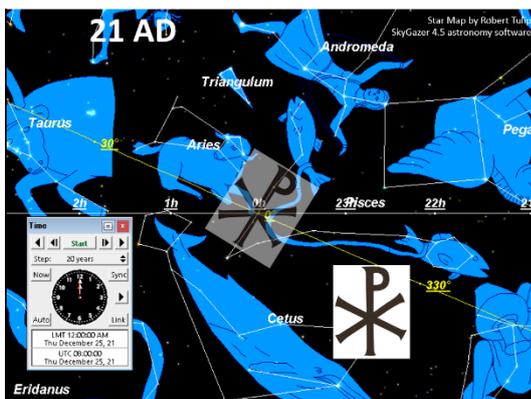
In exactly 21 AD, according to the SkyGazer astronomy software used here, at the point shown by this traditional depiction of the Ram's front hoof, the equinox point crossed the line of stars forming the first fish of the constellation Pisces. To my reading this movement of the stars provides a compelling simple and elegant explanation of the origins of Christian theology.

The Chi Rho Cross is a primary ancient Christian symbol with roots in the theology of the world soul in Plato's *Timaeus*<sup>7</sup> and usage on Greco-Egyptian coins dating from the third century BC.<sup>8</sup> My suggestion is that this map of the precession at the time of Christ reveals the origin and power of the Chi Rho symbol. The Chi is conventionally understood to represent the X formed by the path of the sun and the equator. It could also be that the Rho symbolises the



The Chi Rho Cross is a

vertical line of stars in the constellation of Pisces that the Chi crossed in 21 AD, thereby symbolising the moment of incarnation. The Christian view that Jesus connects our world to the heavens as the unique expression of the will of God matches exactly to this interpretation of the meaning of the chi rho cross. It shows how the incarnation of Christ mirrors this moment of cosmic harmony, understood as the turning point of time when the seasons matched the stars, and the heavenly will is done on earth.

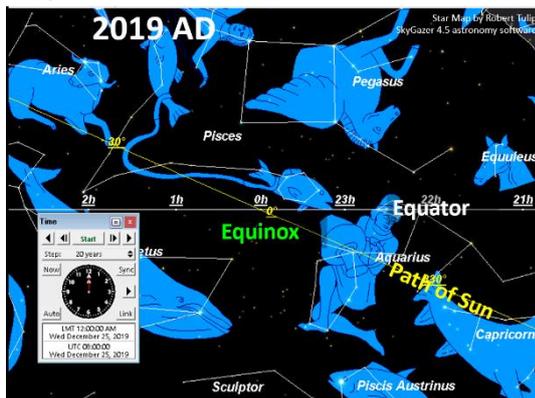
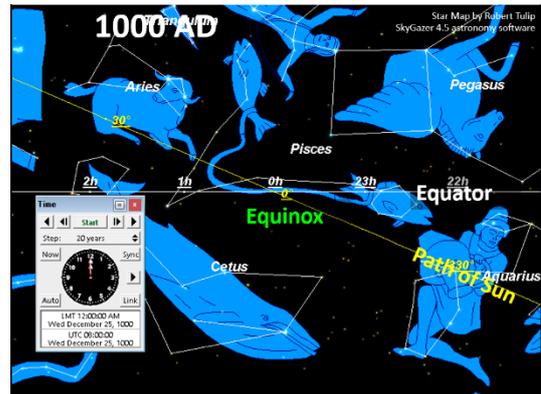


<sup>7</sup> <http://kahalahweh.net/Articles/chirho.htm>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/egypt/ptolemy\\_III/i.html](http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/greece/egypt/ptolemy_III/i.html)

Prophets such as Daniel could readily have predicted the timing of this movement of the spring point into Pisces just from the astronomy known at the time in the second century BC. It is therefore plausible that the prophecy of the timing of Christ in Daniel 9, conventionally 483 years after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem,<sup>9</sup> is grounded in this astronomical observation of precession of the equinox.

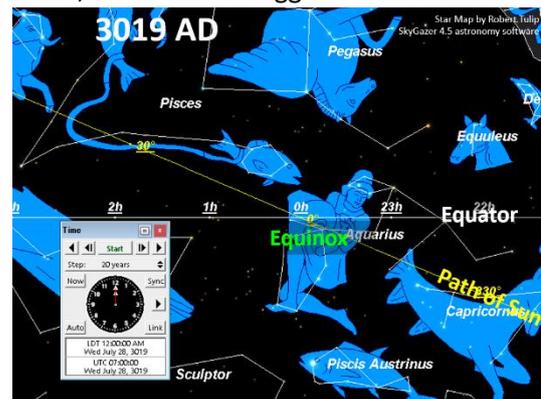
Moving on, here we see how by 1000 AD the spring point had precessed half way through the constellation of Pisces, and how by the present day, 2019, it sits next to the group of stars called the cirlet, ready to enter the constellation of Aquarius over the next centuries, beginning the Age of Aquarius. My view of this material is that the most coherent explanation of the Gospels arises from the assumption that their authors could fully see this slow stellar movement and calculate its



speed, while only presenting it in heavily veiled language due to the inability of the general public to understand it. The theory of time in the Bible by this hypothesis involves the idea that the first coming of Jesus of Nazareth described in the Gospels was as avatar of the Age of Pisces, and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is the Dawn of the Age of Aquarius.

Therefore, as we consider what Jesus meant in inviting us to pray that the will of God should be done on earth as it is in heaven, this material suggests that the natural

observable heavens above provide a coherent meaning for this prayer, inviting us to integrate our faith with our rational understanding. This framework could help us to look to the future with faith and hope and love, seeing that despite the turmoil and chaos of our world, the great God of love is within and among us, working for our salvation in ways that can be understood in the framework of natural science, seeing the meaning and purpose of the incarnation of Jesus Christ in entirely natural terms. As we look to the next thousand years of human life on planet earth, to the time in 3000 AD when the equinox will reach the water jug of Aquarius pouring out love to all, we can pray for this coming millennium as a sabbath day of rest and restoration, a time of love and peace, an age of building heaven on earth in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.



28 July 2019, Leura Uniting Church

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophecy\\_of\\_Seventy\\_Weeks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophecy_of_Seventy_Weeks)