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Saint John Coin Club

The first edition of the Saint John Coin Club's newsletter. Visit us at www.sjcoinclub.com

January in Review - New Home!

We have left the friendly confines of the Stone Church for the more accessible Howard Johnson Fort Howe, 10 Portland St., Saint John at Main Street. The meeting room is on the main level, just look for the sign or ask at the desk.

We had a good turnout for our first meeting in the new space. Jim Jennex tested us with a prepared coin related trivia challenge, which he's going to feature at each meeting – you don't want to miss this fun, or the prizes! Jim Butler followed the business portion with an excellent presentation on the Star of Bethlehem and its

relation to ancient coins. The notes from his very informative talk, with some photos, is presented in this edition of the newsletter.

If you have anything to contribute to a future edition, please forward it to the editor via email or at a meeting. We would certainly welcome it.

See you at our next meeting, February 18th, 2014 at 7pm!

show was a big hit and we look forward to even more success this year.

Contact Tom Craig for more information at ycart@rogers.com or 506-650-0669



Collectors' Show

It's coming time for our annual Collectors' Show, in conjunction with the Saint John Stamp Club, at the Howard Johnson Fort Howe. The date set is May 25th, 2014 from 9:30am to 3:30pm.

Eight foot tables are available at a cost of \$45 and the bourse categories are coins, stamps, sport cards, military, and misc collectables. There will be approximately 50 tables, available on a first-come, first-served basis. Last year's

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2

February 2014



Syria Antioch Silanus & Quadratus - Aries looking back at constellation

Star of Bethlehem - by Jim Butler

Like all human beings, we ask questions about ourselves and our world – When, where, how and why things happen to us and around us. We are like our ancient Neanderthal brothers who asked the same questions as us today. You and I collect coins and we ask the same question of our coins – When were they minted, where were they minted, how were they minted, and why were they minted.

I collect ancient coins because of my love of art, history and archaeology. I also like the variety and the hunt itself.

Regarding the creation of coinage, first there was the barter system – trading goods for other goods. Then people traded goods for metals such as manufacturing metals like iron and bronze, then, as they realized certain metals were scarcer than others, like gold and silver. Eventually there was a standardization of the values. A shekel was a weight used.

Greek coins started around 600 BCE of a standard weight and minting authority. Images on the coins were usually rulers and gods. When the Romans began minting coins they utilized the images on the coins for propaganda – emperors and wars. They often portrayed gods, places and events.

Dating of the coins is by rulers and emperor reigns. Also a city era, beginning with the founding date.

Next let's look at the questions surrounding Jesus, the when, where, how, and why he was born. How and why are theological questions, so I'm not going to address them, but where and when are questions we can search for an agreed answer.

Borrowing from “The Visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12, 16) of the New American Standard Bible, we take the following:

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, [a]magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the [b]Messiah was to be born. 5 They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written [c]by the prophet:

‘AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH,

ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH;

FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER

WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.”

7 Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them [d]the exact time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.” 9 After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11 After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they [e]fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way... 16 Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. Nonumy Autem

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Where? Bethlehem, according to the New Testament Matthew and Hebrew Scripture Matthew 2:6.

When? December 25th is not the date, but an effort to keep early Christians away from December pagan festivals. We are only told that Jesus' birth was:

1. during the reign of King Herod, which was 37 BCE to 4 BCE
2. during the appearance of a star which has tradi-

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Next Meeting: February 18th, 2014
Howard Johnson Fort Howe, Portland and
Main, Saint John, NB



tionally been portrayed as a comet

3. when some Magi, who were Zoroastrian priests of astrologers who studied the motions of the sun, moon and planets. They came from the west (Babylonia or Mesopotamia) following a star to the east. The star stopped or appeared to stop over Bethlehem.

4. that Herod orders the murder of children two years and under, since the Magi were following the star for up to two years – the time to travel from Babylonia or Mesopotamia.

5. we know from a Roman historian, Flavius Josephus that Herod died after an eclipse of the moon and was buried before the Passover.

Celestial events in ancient times (comets and other astrological events) marked important beginnings and endings. There are many ancient coins that show astrological events, or events which they considered astrological, such as the birth of Augustus.

From the information surrounding Herod, we know Jesus was born between 37 and 4 BCE. Also, there was a partial eclipse of the moon on the night of March 12-13, 6 BCE.
- con't page 4

December Social

by Tom Craig

The Saint John Coin Club held its annual "social gathering" on December 12, 2013. It was held at the Mediterranean Restaurant on Rothesay Avenue.

The members and their partners were invited. About 32 people were in attendance. A fine meal was had and lots of pleasant conversations throughout the evening.

Two prizes were drawn with Jim and Bonny Young winning the box of chocolates and Lou Delvallet and his wife Cathy winning the first prize of a Mint set from the R.C.M.

This event has grown in popularity each year. Each year a different venue is tried. We'll have to put on our thinking caps to find a wonderful venue for this year's event.

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Star theories: Astronomers have been offering scientific explanations for the Christmas star for centuries, dating back to the 1600s. Comets were short events and they usually associated them with disasters, such as the death of Cleopatra or Augustus Caesar, so a comet wouldn't last for two years.

Several ideas of planetary alignments have been proposed: a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 7 BCE by German astronomer Johannes Kepler; and a close conjunction of Jupiter and Venus on February 20, 6 BCE; and an amazing alignment of the sun, Jupiter, the moon, and Saturn all in Aries on April 17, 6 BCE.

A supernova, the death of a star that undergoes a tremendous explosion, is also a very short event.

Dr. Michael Molnar has proposed and answer, "The Star of Bethlehem: The Legacy of the Magi." Molnar is an astronomer at Rutgers University and a coin collector. He says the star of Bethlehem was the moon eclipsing the planet Jupiter.

Here's why: A group of first century coins from Antioch, the capital of the Roman province of Syria, imaged Aries, the ram of the zodiac, looking back at a star or a crescent and a star. Aries was a symbol of Judea and astrologers would have been looking at this event. The Magi were believed to be astrologers and would have been looking at this event.

Molnar used a computer program to scan the skies of nearly 2,000 years. According to him, on March 20, 6 BCE at sunset, the moon eclipsed the planet Jupiter and one month later, on April 17, the event occurred again, this time high in the sky at noon in the direction of Bethlehem, as viewed from Jerusalem. Molnar concluded that Jesus was born on or around March 20, 6 BCE.

Dr. Grant Mathews, Director of Notre Dame's Centre for Astrophysics, has his opinion, "the planetary alignment hypothesis is the most compelling and would fix the date of the birth of the Christ child to April 17, 6 BCE with the visit of the Magi some six months later."

Reasons for Mathews' choice of April 17, 6 BCE are:

1. The sun, Jupiter, moon and Saturn are in Aries; Venus in Pisces; Mars is Taurus. This align-

ment of five planets and the sun and moon is very rare.

2. Recent evidence based upon a coin minted in Antioch to commemorate this alignment suggests that the sun in Aries meant this alignment would be particularly significant for a person born in Judea.

3. Jupiter and the moon in the same sign meant a powerful leader would be born who would die at an appointed time.

4. Saturn together makes the ruler "more powerful."

5. Other "attending" planets, Venus and Mars, support the significance of this leader.

6. Jupiter was moving backward relative to the background sky and indeed would have stood in the east in Aries.

7. On the day after, Jupiter left Aries and became visible before sunrise, implying that this "star" would have literally been seen in the east.

