

## *THE COSMIC BEGINNING OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM*

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There is much discussion as to whether the new millennium began on January 1, 2000 or on January 1, 2001. Let us consider this question first of all from a psychological standpoint. Since January 1, 1000 all dates have been written with the year commencing with a "1" - up until December 31, 1999. Thereafter, for the next one thousand years, all dates are written with the year commencing with a "2". Psychologically this makes a difference to our conception of time; and on this account there is good reason - on a psychological level - to think of the new millennium having begun on January 1, 2000. What underlies this?

Those who are familiar with numerology will know that "1" is regarded as masculine and "2" as feminine in nature, where masculine and feminine are conceived of in numerology in a wider sense than as signifying simply man and woman. The number one "innovates, pioneers, leads" and the number two "receives, nurtures, follows". This is one of the reasons why the new millennium is brought into connection with the Divine Feminine and has even been referred to as the "Sophianic Millennium". (There are other deeper and more profound reasons than this.) Everyone, consciously or subconsciously, experiences a difference in writing the date - for example, the change from 1999 to 2000. The question arises: Is this something purely subjective, or is there an objective reality underlying the different quality of feeling in passing from 1999 to 2000?

In my Introductory Essay to the *Christian Star Calendar 1999* (new title: *Journal for Star Wisdom*) attention was drawn to the extraordinary fact that the 2000<sup>th</sup> return of the Sun to its position in the sidereal zodiac (16 degrees Sagittarius) at the birth of Jesus falls on January 1, 2000. This is also discussed in my books *The Sign of the Son of Man in the Heavens* and *The Christ Mystery*. The Great Jubilee, the 2000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Jesus, signifies the completion of two thousand years of Christianity and at the same time the start of a new era of Christianity. Against this background, there is an objective reality to the date January 1, 2000 as a turning point in time. Nevertheless, why do so many people maintain that the new millennium began on January 1, 2001?

The answer to this question, as we shall see, is that from one perspective - that of the historian - they are right. It has to do with the way in which the years of the Christian Era are counted historically. In the sixth century AD the monk and scholar Dionysius Exiguus introduced the Christian Era as a means of counting the years which has gained acceptance, by and large, throughout the entire world. Fundamental to the system he introduced is the division into BC ("before Christ") and AD ("anno Domini" = the year of the Lord). The first year AD is conceived of as "the first year of the Lord", which started on January 1 and finished on December 31, AD 1. In Dionysius' view, this was the first year of the life of Jesus, who he thought had been born on Christmas night, December 24/25, i.e. one week prior to January 1 AD 1. "The second year of the Lord", which commenced on January 1 and finished on December 31 AD 2, largely coincided, according to Dionysius, with the second year of the life of Jesus. Continuing the count further, it is easy to see that the year starting on January 1 and ending on December 31, 2000 is the 2000<sup>th</sup> year in the life of Jesus, in Dionysius' way of looking at things, which is the generally accepted convention. According to this perspective, the 2000<sup>th</sup> anniversary must be the Christian celebration

beginning on December 24/25, 2000 and lasting during the Holy Nights following this date (generally thirteen Holy Nights are counted from December 24/25 to January 5/6). Interestingly, Pope John Paul II in his papal bull *Incarnationis Mysterium* (“The Mystery of the Incarnation”) concerning the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 declared the Jubilee Year to begin on December 24/25, 1999 and to end on January 6, 2001.

To clarify this precisely: according to the generally accepted convention introduced by Dionysius Exiguus, the 2000<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary was on December 24/25, 2000, when - so it is believed - Jesus was two thousand years old (figuratively speaking). Since the Christmas festival is celebrated through thirteen Holy Nights until January 6, this 2000<sup>th</sup> anniversary lasted from December 24/25, 2000 to January 6, 2001. Clearly Pope John Paul II had in view not simply the 2000<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration (according to accepted convention) but the entire 2000<sup>th</sup> year of the life of Jesus, commencing on what was widely believed to be the 1999<sup>th</sup> birthday on December 24/25, 1999. The Great Jubilee Year specified in the papal bull thus comprised - in terms of popular belief - the 2000<sup>th</sup> year of Jesus’ life (December 24/25, 1999 to December 24, 2000) plus the celebration of the Christmas festival extending through thirteen Holy Nights commencing on the occasion of what was believed to be the 2000<sup>th</sup> birthday itself (December 24/25, 2000 to January 6, 2001). All of this presupposes the accuracy of the convention introduced by Dionysius Exiguus.

However, in light of the research presented in my book *Chronicle of the Living Christ*, the night of Jesus’ birth was not December 24/25 but December 6/7. Moreover, not only did Dionysius Exiguus get the date of birth wrong but also he was one year out in his estimation of the year in which the birth took place. To elucidate this, we need to consider the BC mode of reckoning introduced by Dionysius.

For Dionysius Exiguus the birth took place on December 24/25 of the year 1 BC. In his view Jesus was seven days old on December 31, 1 BC, i.e. he was exactly one week old by midnight at the conclusion of December 31. The eighth day of Jesus’ life, according to this perspective, began on January 1, AD 1. Note here that the date changes from December 31, 1 BC to January 1 AD 1. Going back one year prior to this the date change is from December 31, 2 BC to January 1, 1 BC. Thus the BC mode of reckoning, together with the AD count of years, reads: ...3 BC, 2 BC, 1 BC, AD 1, AD 2, AD 3... This is the convention used throughout the world by historians, albeit recently some historians have started to write BCE (“before the Christian Era”) and CE (“Christian Era”) instead of simply BC and AD.

However, already some time ago astronomers recognized that there is a flaw with the historian’s BC/AD convention. For this reason a new convention - the astronomers’ convention - was introduced. Astronomers write the above sequence of years: -2, -1, 0, +1, +2, +3... In other words, for astronomers the year AD 1 = +1, the year 1 BC = 0, the year 2 BC = -1, the year 3 BC = -2, etc. The astronomers’ convention enables mathematical calculations to be performed on dates, which the historians’ convention does not permit.

Having discussed the mathematical flaw in the BC/AD convention, let us now return to consider the date of birth of Jesus. Dionysius Exiguus placed the birth date on December 24/25, 1 BC (= year 0 astronomically). However, the actual date of birth, as described by Anne Catherine Emmerich, was on Saturday/Sunday of the twelfth day of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar, which equates with December 6/7, 2 BC (= year -1 astronomically).

Adding 2000 years to this, the 2000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth fell on December 6/7, 1999. In terms of the date, therefore, the 2000<sup>th</sup> anniversary was on December 6/7, 1999 (Anne Catherine Emmerich) and not on December 24/25, 2000 (Dionysius Exiguus). According to the research presented in *Chronicle of the Living Christ*, the dates based on Anne Catherine Emmerich's communications are reliable to a high degree of certainty. It is hardly possible that she could have arbitrarily thought out the dates in the Hebrew calendar to coincide with the weekdays and the lunar phases of that time. Indeed, the probability of her dates being mere coincidence is 1:435 billion!

Through Anne Catherine Emmerich, for the first time in history we know with a high degree of certainty the actual date of the birth of Jesus: December 6/7, 2 BC, which means that the historical convention introduced by Dionysius Exiguus is based on a false assumption and is therefore not accurate. However, purely by chance this historical convention turns out to be truly significant by virtue of a miraculous coincidence, as will be elucidated in the following.

As pointed out in the various sources mentioned above (see also Literature below), the recurrence of the date (after two thousand years) is not the real, higher sense of the birthday celebration. In other words, the 2000<sup>th</sup> recurrence of the date December 6/7 in 1999 does not really signify the 2000<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of Jesus in a higher sense. Taking account of the precession of the equinoxes, whereby the vernal point shifts retrograde through the zodiac at a rate of one degree in 72 years, a person should celebrate his or her birthday one day later upon approaching the age of 72, two days later after 144 years, three days later after 216 years, etc., in order for the birthday celebration to coincide with the return of the Sun to the same place in the sidereal zodiac as at birth, i.e. for the Sun to return to conjunction with the same fixed star as at birth. In *Chronicle of the Living Christ*, according to the birth horoscope, at the birth of Jesus of Nazareth on December 6/7, 2 BC the Sun was at 16 degrees Sagittarius in the sidereal zodiac, close to the center of the constellation of the Archer, near the star Nunki marking the shaft of the arrow, where the Archer's hand rests. Taking the precession of the equinoxes into consideration, the celebration of the birth of Jesus should take place not necessarily on the date December 6/7 but when the Sun returns to its position near the shaft of the arrow in the Archer (16 degrees Sagittarius). In our time the Sun returns to this same degree each year 26 days later than at the beginning of the Christian Era. That is, the Sun returns to 16 degrees Sagittarius now on January 1, owing to the shift through two thousand years caused by the precession of the equinoxes during this time. (2000 divided by 72 = 28, which becomes reduced to 26 when the change of calendar from the Julian calendar at the time of Christ to the modern Gregorian calendar is taken into account). In a cosmic sense, therefore, the 2000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Jesus fell on January 1, 2000. This is the miraculous coincidence referred to above: that January 1, 2000 coincided with the 2000<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Jesus! General agreement concerning the validity of this coincidence would depend upon acknowledging that the true (higher) significance of celebrating the birthday is the return of the Sun to the same place in the zodiacal constellation where it was located at birth. If this were to be generally accepted, and if Anne Catherine Emmerich's description of the birth of Jesus were to become widely acknowledged as being essentially true, at least with respect to her communication of the weekday (Saturday/Sunday) and the date in the Hebrew calendar (Kislev 12), then everyone would acknowledge January 1, 2000 as the 2000<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Jesus, thus validating the calendar introduced by Dionysius Exiguus, but validating it for a different reason than what he believed when he introduced it. This would bestow new meaning on our

conventional calendar, a meaning that Dionysius could not possibly have known! On this account - and, indeed, for the general edification of humanity - it would be significant if the whole world were to know of the occurrence of the (cosmic) 2000<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of Jesus on January 1, 2000, signifying the conclusion of two thousand years of Christianity and the start of a new Christian era. Moreover, since Pope John Paul II pronounced a Jubilee Year beginning on December 24/25, 1999, the remarkable fact is that the 2000<sup>th</sup> celebration of the birth of Jesus on January 1, 2000 came right at the beginning of the Jubilee Year, as it fell just one week after the start of this special year of celebration.

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As described in my book *The Christ Mystery* and also in the Introductory Essay to the *Christian Star Calendar 1999*, there the perspective was outlined that a new impulse would be sown in the etheric in early September 1999. The reality underlying this has to do with a new Christ Event of the order of magnitude of the Mystery of Golgotha, having, according to Rudolf Steiner “as fundamental significance for the evolution of humanity as the event of Palestine had at the beginning of our era”. This event was prophesied by Rudolf Steiner for the end of the twentieth century. In light of recent research into the life of Jesus Christ, with the discovery that His life lasted almost exactly 33 1/3 years, this research pointed to the early part of September 1999 as the date of fulfillment of Rudolf Steiner’s prophecy, since the time September 3-5/6, 1999 coincided with the completion of sixty cycles of 33 1/3 years since the birth of Jesus. (Note that the exact completion of the sixtieth cycle, according to the *Chronicle of the Living Christ*, was on September 6, 1999, universal time. The completion of the first cycle, which was the actual life of Jesus Christ, was the moment of the Resurrection; and this moment continues to resonate further with the completion of each subsequent cycle. Adjusting universal time to local time, the resonance of the Resurrection with the completion of the sixtieth cycle fell on September 6 in Europe and September 5 in America.) Various people who were aware of the research presented in *Chronicle of the Living Christ* met together over the first weekend in September 1999 to celebrate this important threshold in the evolution of Christianity (sixty cycles of Christ’s life on 33 1/3 years) as the most likely point in time of the new Christ Event referred to by Rudolf Steiner.

It is my conviction that a new impulse was indeed sown in the Earth’s etheric aura in early September 1999 and that this will emerge on a cosmic level nine months later, leading up to Pentecost 2000, coinciding closely with the Jupiter/Saturn conjunction at the end of sidereal Aries just two weeks before Pentecost 2000. And the special date January 1, 2000 — signifying the 2000th return of the Sun to its location in the sidereal zodiac at the birth of Jesus of Nazareth — falls near the middle of this 9-month period, indicating a time of quickening of the new Christ Impulse. The analogy here is with the embryonic period of nine months, where the quickening of the embryo, generally indicated by its movement takes place around halfway (it may be earlier or later). The Christ Event in the etheric — brought into connection above with the completion September 5/6, 1999 of the sixtieth cycle of Christ’s life of 33 1/3 years since the birth of Jesus — can be conceived of, in terms of this analogy, as a kind of “impregnation” of new etheric forces into the Earth’s etheric aura. In the wake of this impregnation, new life is growing and ripening within the Earth’s biosphere, and this will lead to a kind of “birth” around the time of the Jupiter/Saturn conjunction just prior to Pentecost 2000, when a new cosmic impulse will flow in and unite with the new life

now arising in the world of Mother Nature, analogous to the soul uniting with the body at the moment of the first breath.

The time ahead leading up to this birth, leading up to Pentecost 2000, promises to be an extraordinarily rich period in terms of the spiritual evolution of humanity. In this connection the Sophia Foundation of North America is planning a conference at Chartres Cathedral during the week leading up to the Jupiter/Saturn conjunction on May 28, 2000, followed by a two-week journey to sacred sites in Britain, culminating on the island of Iona at Pentecost 2000, to celebrate the beginning of this new era of Christianity, the Christianity of the next two thousand (actually 2400) years, dedicated to the Mysteries of the Divine Feminine.

What does the opening of these Mysteries signify? One consequence is a renewed and intensified possibility of what could be called "Nature mysticism", resulting in a new kind of communion with Mother Nature. This is something that numerous people have spoken of recently, indicating a shift in the world of Nature, confirming the occurrence of the Christ event in the etheric prophesied by Rudolf Steiner. For the occurrence of the event means that there is now a new spiritual presence weaving throughout Nature, signifying on a subjective level the experience of a paradisaical quality in Nature.

To summarize: it would appear that Mother Earth has been impregnated with new etheric forces by the Christ and is undergoing "birth pangs" leading towards a birth that will closely coincide with the inflow of a new cosmic impulse at the time of the Jupiter/Saturn conjunction at the end of May 2000. In terms of this analogy, this cosmic impulse from above, beginning some nine months after the impregnation of the Earth's etheric aura, will unite with the newly infused etheric life below. In relation to this, great changes are already taking place, and the year 2000, when taken together with the Christ Event in the etheric (September 1999) promises to be one of the most significant years in history. Likening the Christ Event of September 1999 to a Mystery of Golgotha in the etheric, the birth approaching around the time of the Jupiter/Saturn conjunction may be thought of as a kind of World Pentecost following on from the preceding Golgotha event. And as a significant point of transition in between, January 1, 2000 represents a time of quickening. Impregnation (early September 1999) — quickening (January 1, 2000 — birth (end of May/beginning of June 2000) are three key stages in the coming to birth of the new Christian era. Let us celebrate this 9-month process with Mother Earth at this time of upheaval and renewal!

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In conclusion, how may we better understand the new cosmic impulse associated with the approaching conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the year 2000? These two planets come into conjunction with one another approximately once every twenty years. Their meeting generally results in a social impulse of renewal ("Renaissance"), colored by the zodiacal background of the constellation in which they meet (in this case Aries, at the tail-end of the Ram). In light of the three steps outlined above (impregnation-quickening-birth), the "great conjunction" of Jupiter and Saturn on May 28, 2000 can be conceived of as denoting the beginning of the new millennium in a cosmic sense.

The next conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Aries will take place in about 800 years' time. Previously there was a threefold conjunction between Jupiter and Saturn in Aries in 1940/1941. Prior to that the previous "great conjunction" in Aries was in 1881. And we have to go back almost 800 years to the year 1087 for the one before that. (This 800-year rhythm is an important one historically.)

In the case of the Jupiter/Saturn conjunction in Aries, the impulse that comes through and unfolds ("waxes and wanes") during the ensuing twenty years has to do with innovation and leadership, Aries being the first sign in the circle of the twelve signs of the zodiac. Thus, looking back to the period following the Jupiter/Saturn conjunction in 1881, we see the development of the first power station by Thomas Edison, the founding of Standard Oil by J.D. Rockefeller, the building of the first sky scrapers, the building of the Tower Bridge (London) and the Eiffel Tower (Paris), the development of new technologies, particularly in industry, and politically the arising of a European confederation based on the "balance of power" of Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Austria-Hungary, underlying which, however, were great power struggles.

With regard to the threefold Jupiter/Saturn conjunction of 1940/1941, there ensued the standardizing of television transmission, the development of the atomic bomb, the building of the first computer, the spread of household electrical appliances, and politically World War II was necessitated as a response to Hitler's dictatorial aspirations, and then after World War II the Cold War began and the founding of Israel took place.

Therefore, by way of analogy with the previous two historical periods (each twenty years long) beginning in 1881 and 1940/1941, from the year 2000 onwards we can await innovations of a far-reaching nature and perhaps we can also expect some major power struggles.

With all of these considerations it is important to bear in mind the higher aspect of Aries: the Lamb (Christ), Who sacrificed Himself on Golgotha when the Sun was in the middle of Aries. The three steps outlined above (impregnation-quickening-birth) belong to the time of the passage of Jupiter and Saturn through Aries. This is the higher background and foundation for the future, having to do with a new Christ Sacrifice.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the year 2000 is not only the year of the Jupiter/Saturn conjunction, dominating the months of March, April, May, June, and July, but also later in the year—in the months of August, September, and October—the primary configuration is the opposition between Jupiter and Pluto, which was the dominant planetary configuration at the Mystery of Golgotha, and this should be borne in mind as the year 2000 unfolds.

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*Literature (books by Robert Powell referred to in the above article):*

*Chronicle of the Living Christ: Foundations of Cosmic Christianity*  
(Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1996)

*The Christ Mystery: Reflections on the Second Coming*  
(Fair Oaks, CA: Rudolf Steiner College Press, 1999)

*The Sign of the Son of Man in the Heavens: Sophia and the New Star Wisdom*  
(San Rafael, CA: Sophia Foundation Press, 2008)

### ***Further works by Robert Powell***

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*History of the Zodiac*. Sophia Academic Press: San Rafael, CA, 2007.

Book version of Robert Powell's PhD thesis on the history of the zodiac.

*Hermetic Astrology, Vol. I: Astrology and Reincarnation*. Sophia Foundation Press: San Rafael, CA, 2007.

*Hermetic Astrology, Vol. II: Astrological Biography*. Sophia Foundation Press: San Rafael, CA, 2007.

*The Sign of the Son of Man in the Heavens: Sophia and the New Star Wisdom*. Sophia Foundation Press: San Rafael, CA, 2008.

**Distributed by Starcrafts (formerly Astro Communications Services)**

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*The Zodiac: A Historical Survey*. ACS: San Diego, CA, 1984.

*History of the Planets*. ACS: San Diego, CA, 1989.

*History of the Houses*. ACS: San Diego, CA, 1997.

**Distributed by the American Federation of Astrologers (AFA)**

PO Box 22040, Tempe, AZ 85285

*The Sidereal Zodiac* (written together with Peter Treadgold), AFA: Tempe, AZ, 1985.

A history of the zodiac – sidereal, tropical, Hindu, astronomical – and a formal definition of the sidereal zodiac with the star Aldebaran (“the Bull’s Eye”) at 15° Taurus. A history of the zodiac—sidereal, tropical, Hindu, astronomical—and a formal definition of the sidereal zodiac with the star Aldebaran (“the Bull’s Eye”) at 15° Taurus. This is an abbreviated version of *History of the Zodiac* (see above).

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*The Christ Mystery: Reflections on the Second Coming*. Rudolf Steiner College Press: Fair Oaks, CA, 1999.

**The Sophia Foundation**

distributes many of the above books and also other works by Robert Powell.

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**Computer Program for Charts and Ephemerides**

With grateful acknowledgment to Peter Treadgold, who has written the computer program *Astrofire* (with research module, star catalog of over 4000 stars, and database of birth and

death charts of historical personalities) capable of printing out geocentric and heliocentric/hermetic sidereal charts and ephemerides throughout history. (The hermetic charts, based on the astronomical system of the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe, are referred to as Tychonic charts in the *Astrofire* program.)

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- work with planetary aspects with orbs of your choice

Included are eight house systems and a variety of chart formats. The program also includes an ephemeris program with a search facility. The geocentric/heliocentric sidereal ephemeris pages in the yearly *Journal for Star Wisdom* are produced by *Astrofire*. This program runs under Microsoft Windows. If you are interested in *Astrofire*, please contact the Sophia Foundation [www.sophiafoundation.org](http://www.sophiafoundation.org).