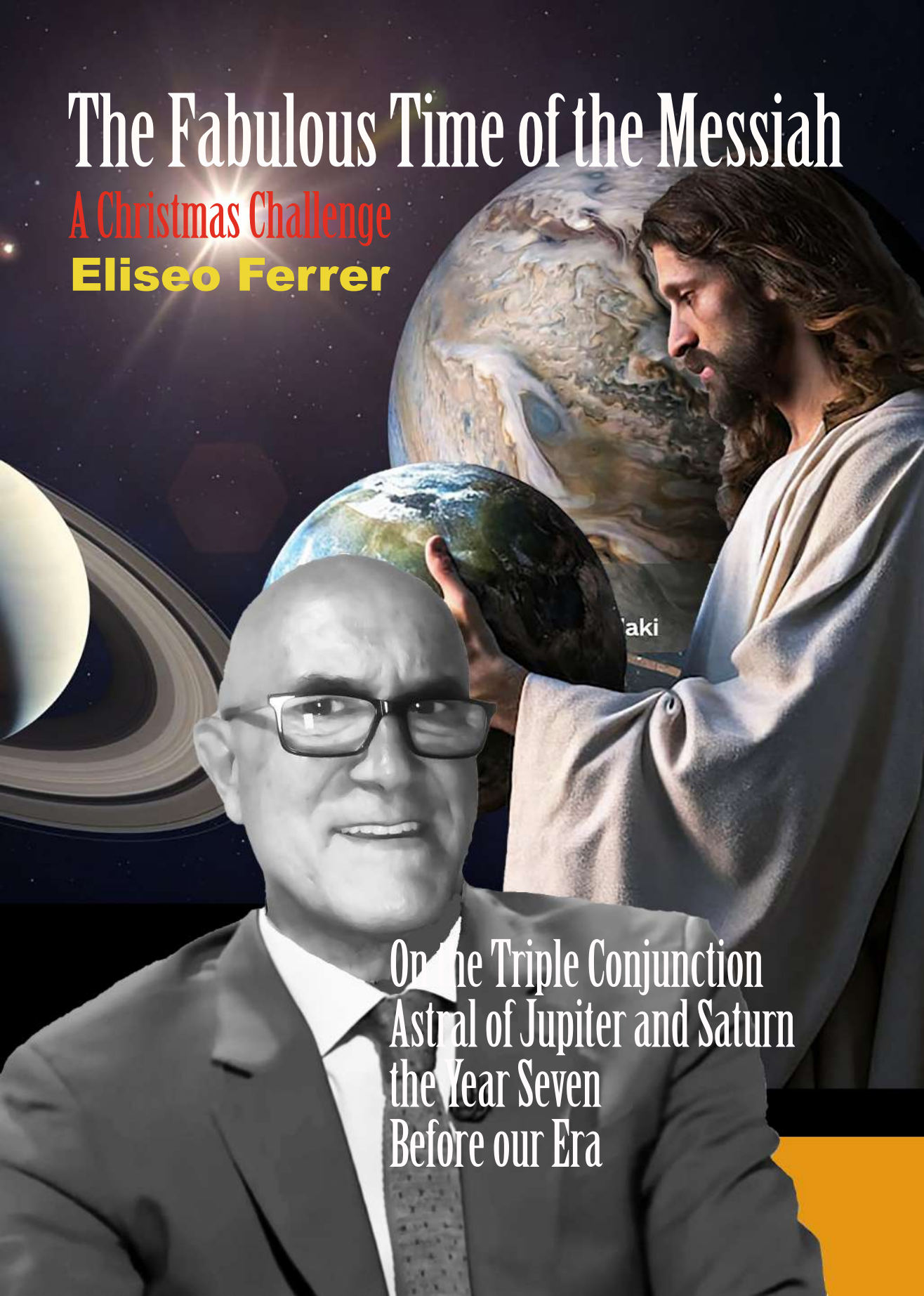


# The Fabulous Time of the Messiah

A Christmas Challenge

**Eliseo Ferrer**



On the Triple Conjunction  
Astral of Jupiter and Saturn  
the Year Seven  
Before our Era



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Eliseo Ferrer

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# The Fabulous Time of the Messiah



ON THE TRIPLE CONJUNCTION ASTRAL  
OF JUPITER AND SATURN  
THE YEAR SEVEN BEFORE OUR ERA

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## IT WAS NO COINCIDENCE THAT THE SON OF GOD WAS “BORN” IN BETHLEHEM IN THE FIRST YEAR OF OUR ERA.

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THE TRIPLE ASTRAL CONJUNCTION OF JUPITER AND SATURN,  
THE PROPHECY OF THE WEEKS OF DANIEL, MICAH,  
AND POPE JOHN I’S ANNO DOMINI

### THE FABULOUS TIME OF THE MESSIAH

As Carl G. Jung observed, through the symbolism of the fish Christ was part of a world of ideas seemingly foreign to the textuality of the Gospels: an originally Oriental and Greco-Roman world saturated with astrological beliefs of a kind we can scarcely imagine today. “Christ,” Jung wrote, “was placed at the beginning of the Age of Pisces. It is therefore by no means excluded that there were educated Christians who knew of the *coniunctio magna* of Saturn and Jupiter in Pisces in the year 7 before our era.”<sup>1</sup>

From the standpoint of the precession of the equinoxes, the aeons of Aries and Pisces overlapped during the first century; hence one should not be surprised that two of the most important mystery deities of the period—Attis and Christ—were characterized by the symbols of the shepherd, the ram, and the fish. “But Pisces was a double sign,” Jung continued. “On that sacred night [of transition], when around midnight (according to the ancient reckoning) the Sun entered Capricorn, Virgo stood on the eastern horizon, soon followed by the Serpent, contained in the constellation of Ophiuchus.” “And this astrological coincidence seems worth mentioning to me, as does the idea that the two fishes of the constellation stood in a mother–son relationship—a relationship of very special significance, since it pointed to an original unity of Pisces. In Babylonian and Indian astrology there is, in fact, only one fish. Later, that mother fish gave birth to a child, also a fish. This corresponded to the Phoenician Derketo-Atargatis, whose figure was half fish and who had a son named Ictis [*Ichthys* = fish].”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Carl G. Jung, *Aion. Contribución al simbolismo del sí mismo*. Barcelona, 2011. pp. 201, 202.

<sup>2</sup> Op. Cit. 202.

For Jung, the ecclesiastical interpretation of the fish symbol lacked all foundation. It was implausible that the term *Ichthys*—also a symbolic representation of the Old Testament hero Joshua—Jesus, son of Nun—had been a mere acrostic of *Iésous Khristós Theoú Yíos Sótér* (“Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior”). Instead, it was a symbolic designation carrying meanings far older and more complex. “The aforementioned acrostic,” Jung remarked, “gives rather the impression of having been artificially constructed in order to re-signify a term, *Ichthys*, that already existed and was widely diffused. The fish symbol already had, in ancient Asia, a rich prehistory—from Oannes, the Babylonian fish-god, and his fish-clad priests, to the sacred fish-eating rites in the cult of the Phoenician Derketo-Atargatis.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, interpretation of the fish symbol pointed fundamentally—despite Jung’s repeated cautions—to the astrological nature of the great change of era: the end of the Age of Aries (death of the lamb) and the beginning of the Age of Pisces (birth of the fish). “Although there is no demonstrable connection,” Jung cautions, “between the figure of Christ and the incipient astrological era of Pisces, it nevertheless seems to me that the coincidence between the fish symbolism attached to the Redeemer and the astrological symbol of the new aeon was significant enough at least to be duly noted. [...] By the precession of the equinoxes, the vernal point moved into it, and thus an era opened in which the ‘Fish’ served as a designation of God-made-man, who was born as a fish, sacrificed as a lamb, had fishermen as disciples, and wished to make them fishers of men. [...] From this source there derived, at least in part, the symbolism of certain Christian Gnostic circles.”<sup>4</sup>

Naturally, these notions—found in the *Pistis Sophia*,<sup>5</sup> where Jesus speaks of *heimarmenē* (fate), of the “sphere,” of “influences,” of the “squares” and “trigons” of the zodiac and their “quadrants”—do not appear in the canonical Gospels. But this does not mean they did not remain latent in the hidden background of triumphant Christianity. Much later, in the sixth century, the Church underscored this background by aligning, with remarkable precision, the calendar of the new Age of Pisces with the supposed birth of Jesus, thereby inaugurating the new aeon in which we still live—the “new heaven and new earth”—facilitated by the mediation and authority of the Roman institution, as the end of the world and the Second Coming were taking far longer than originally expected.

<sup>3</sup> Op. Cit. 136, 137.

<sup>4</sup> Op. Cit. 170, 171.

<sup>5</sup> Cita de Jung. p. 171. *Pistis Sophia*. 21 y ss.

In addition, according to Jung, among certain Jewish circles there existed the tradition and belief that the arrival of the Messiah, son of David, would occur when the planets Jupiter and Saturn came into conjunction. Pope John I, Dionysius Exiguus, and the temporal milestone established through the latter's work (*Anno Domini*) confirmed—as Kepler would later confirm with even greater precision—that in the year 7 BCE there had been a triple conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the sign of Pisces, symbol of Christianity and marker of the new era.

I speak of well-attested phenomena that were undoubtedly known, at first, to members of many of the Christian Gnostic movements of the first century, and later to the Judaizing bishops of the second century and to their skillful re-editors of the primitive Gospels, who found in them the historical framework within which to situate the pious, hopeful mythical narrative of the descent of the Son of God to earth: the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem, set within the literary context supplied by the book of Micah.<sup>6</sup> Within this process by which the Church Judaized the early Christian Gnosis, the Greek and Hellenistic myth of divine incarnation (represented by the Orphic Dionysus) was rendered literally and materially “flesh” through the Jewish myth that identified this astral conjunction with the birth of the Davidic Messiah. For certain mystical Jewish sects believed that these significant movements of the heavens both announced and validated the coming of the earthly Messiah foretold by the ancient oracle of Nathan in *2 Samuel*.<sup>7</sup>

Curiously, Jewish Kabbalists—who regarded the figure of Jesus as wholly irrelevant—continued throughout the Middle Ages to predict the coming of Israel's Messiah precisely at the moment of a new conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. The clearest and best-known case is that of the Portuguese Jew Isaac Abravanel, who, indifferent to the Christianity of the Church, continued to explain in the fifteenth century that the Messiah would come when Jupiter and Saturn conjoined in Pisces.<sup>8</sup> “Abravanel,” Jung wrote, “expected the coming of the Messiah under the sign of Pisces—that is, at the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in that sign. Nor was he the only one to express such hope. We find concordant data four centuries earlier in Abraham ben Ḥiyya (d. 1136) and

<sup>6</sup> Miqueas. 5.2. «Pero tú, oh Belén Efrata, aunque eres pequeña entre las familias de Judá, de ti saldrá el que será el gobernante de Israel, cuyo origen es antiguo, desde los días de la eternidad».

<sup>7</sup> *2 Samuel*. 7.12-14.

<sup>8</sup> H. P. Blavatsky. Op. Cit. Vol. III. 265.

Salomon Ibn Gabirol (1020–1070).”<sup>9</sup> For Jung, the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn symbolized the union of extreme opposites. “In the year 7 BCE, this celebrated conjunction occurred no fewer than three times in the sign of Pisces. The closest approach came on May 29 of that year, with a separation of only 0.21 degrees—less than half the width of the full moon.”<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, alongside these astronomical events that undoubtedly held special significance for certain Judaizing bishops of the Church, one must not forget the prophetic timetable for the coming of the Davidic Messiah established in the Book of Daniel.<sup>11</sup> The combination of astronomical data and prophetic calculation proved decisive, in the period following the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem, for establishing reasonably credible dates in which the primitive Christian myth—of Greek origin—of the descent of the divine into the human soul could be harmonized with Jewish cultural referents which, together with Daniel’s prophecy, legitimated and validated the liberating presence of the Messiah of David’s lineage. For although more than a dozen interpretations can be found regarding Daniel’s prophetic announcement—depending on the terminus a quo used to calculate the “weeks”—nothing prevents us from discerning a common denominator, one in close harmony, and almost coinciding, with the year of the triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn and with the chronology established by Dionysius Exiguus for the *Anno Domini*. In short, a remarkably narrow and astonishing coincidence between the spectacular planetary conjunction, the prophetic timetable of Daniel’s seventy weeks, and the ultimate editorial shaping of the Gospels, which provided a temporal framework to the Greek myth of divine incarnation, dissolving its timeless, mythical dimension into the sacred history of the Jewish people: the descent and material birth of the Son of God, a *Christós* ultimately endorsed by the prophets and clad in Jewish garments, yet entirely foreign, in essence, to the anointed Davidic Messiah announced by the oracle of Nathan.

The undeniable proof that this was indeed the case was confirmed by the temporal calculations carried out by Pope John I in 525 and by his astronomer, Dionysius Exiguus, whose results established the *Anno Domini* as the point of departure of the Church’s new era. To understand this, we must recall that in Daniel “a day was a year (and a year was a day),” and that the prophet spoke of

<sup>9</sup> C. Jung. Op. Cit. 139.

<sup>10</sup> Op. Cit. 143.

<sup>11</sup> *Daniel*. 9.24-27.

two successive periods of seven and sixty-two weeks,<sup>12</sup> from the liberation from Babylon to the beginning of the ministry of Israel's Messiah, which would take place in the seventieth week. That is, sixty-nine weeks totaling 483 days—equivalent, by the prophet's own code, to 483 years—at which time the messianic activity would begin.

Many interpretations have been offered for these calculations; but I adopt the most straightforward, which assigns the 483 years to the period between the return of the exiles from Babylon, coinciding with the reign of Artaxerxes I (mid-fifth century),<sup>13</sup> and the preaching of John the Baptist, between the years 26 and 30 of our era—coinciding, according to the texts, with the beginning of the public ministry of the Son of Man in the Jordan (Mark). This fits with, surprising precision, the development of the Gospel narratives (Matthew and Luke), which, using such data, situated the Greek myth of the divine incarnation and the birth of the Son of God near the time of the triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn—the year seven before our era. All of which suggests that both the redactors of Daniel and the final editors of the Gospels, under the influence of Judaizing sectors of the Church, belonged to a cultural milieu possessing deep astronomical knowledge, within an esoteric and astral tradition concerning the coming of the Davidic Messiah—a tradition later reflected in Jewish thinkers like Ibn Gabirol, Abraham ben Hiyya, and Isaac Abravanel.

We find ourselves before a constellation of cultural relationships—the triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in 7 BCE; the prophecy of Daniel's seventy weeks; and the final redaction of the Gospels after the destruction of the Temple—that offers a coherent explanation for many of the perennial mysteries surrounding the Hellenistic myth of the descent of the Son of God and the incarnation of the Son of Man as the perfect *Anthropos*. At the same time, it sheds light on the work carried out in the sixth century by Pope John I and his court astronomer Dionysius Exiguus, who, seeking to extend the tables then used to calculate the date of Easter<sup>14</sup> (based on the lunar calendar), established

<sup>12</sup> Op. Cit. 9.25.

<sup>13</sup> Los libros de *Esdras* y *Nehemías* hablan de la repatriación a Judea. Y *1 Esdras* registra la fecha de la salida de Babilonia coincidiendo con el mandato de Artajerjes: el primer día del primer mes del séptimo año del reinado de Artajerjes. *1 Esdras*. 8.6.

<sup>14</sup> Hay que reconocer que fue solo en el contexto del uso de las tablas pascales donde Dionisio utilizó la datación basada en el nacimiento de Cristo y, a pesar de la repercusión posterior, no parece haber tenido en principio la intención de inaugurar una nueva era cronológica.

and demarcated the birth of the new era of Pisces-Christ in accordance with the cultural meanings of both the triple astral conjunction and Daniel's seventy weeks. For everything mentioned earlier—together with other factors—was undoubtedly taken into account in the work entrusted to Dionysius in 525. Work which, in one way or another, culminated in the establishment of the year one (there was no year zero) as the first year of the Christian era—based on interpreting the supposed year of Christ's birth through the triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, through Daniel's prophetic timeframe, and through the narrative chronology of imperial and local authorities mentioned in the Gospels.<sup>15</sup> A synthesis which, despite the seven-year error, approximated rather closely the date of the triple conjunction,<sup>16</sup> fitted reasonably with the prophecy, and—though leaving many loose ends which have tormented theologians for centuries—aligned with the historical figures framing the allegorical literature of the Gospel texts.

Thus was the year 754 of the Roman era established as the beginning of the Christian era (*Anno Domini*), which endures to this day throughout the world. Note, moreover, that the feast of Christmas was not instituted until the mid-fourth century (but within the Roman chronology), and that until the sixth and seventh centuries—when references to the *Anno Domini* began to be used through Pope John's paschal tables—Christian texts employed no chronological system at all. Until that very late date, the story of Christ was a “history” without chronological history, whose only obscure temporal references derived from the mentions in the Gospels of Herod, Augustus, Tiberius, and Pontius Pilate, and from the dim echoes of the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem.

It becomes clear—contrary to the opinion of certain would-be specialists—that astrology and astral-solar symbolism did not need to wait until after the imperial decrees of Constantine and Theodosius to infiltrate Christianity through supposed “contaminations” by the demons and specters of Greco-Roman

<sup>15</sup> Poncio Pilatos en los cuatro evangelios canónicos. El tetrarca Herodes en Marcos, Mateo y Lucas. Augusto y Tiberio, únicamente en Lucas. Y Herodes el Grande, en Mateo y Lucas. No hemos de descartar el hecho de que los habilidosos redactores de los evangelios estaban inmersos, cuatrocientos años antes de Dionisio el Exiguo, de aquella tradición judía que anunciaba la llegada del mesías en una de las conjunciones de Júpiter y Saturno.

<sup>16</sup> Téngase en cuenta que los evangelios hablan de un nacimiento coincidente con el rey Herodes, quien justamente reinaba el año de la triple conjunción planetaria, siete años antes de la fecha del nacimiento adjudicada por Dionisio el Exiguo. (*Mt.* 2.1.).

culture. This is the fiction promoted by those who imagine in primitive Christianity an impossible “ideal purity,” a “point zero” contradicted at every step by the constant evolution and cultural transformation of a transitional Christianity later ignored or suppressed by the triumphant Church. Astrology and astronomy were already present, symbolically, in the texts of early Christian Gnosis; and the entire Hebrew-Hellenistic symbolism (Roman, Greek, Persian, Syrian-Chaldean, and Egyptian), which intensified after the Council of Nicaea (325), was already present in the New Testament—and long before, in the mystical sects of the Hellenistic world and even in the marginal and Kabbalistic Judaism of Judea.

True, the figure of the fish, the Persian-origin Star of Bethlehem, the adoration of Chaldean magi, the seven stars, the seven seals, the twelve apostles as substitutes for the twelve patriarchs chosen by Joshua in the crossing of the Jordan, the twelve signs of the zodiac, the twelve years, and the twelve baskets appear to us almost as innocent, decorative testimonies compared with the upheaval that Jung’s astronomical contributions, together with my interpretation of Daniel’s prophetic material and my linking of both to the work of John I and Dionysius Exiguus, must represent for ecclesiastical and Lutheran orthodoxy.

No less provocative than the irreverent contents of the Apocalypse of John—an authentic treatise of astrology according to many authors—whose symbolism and cosmic density surpass by far the themes of the Jewish apocalyptic literature from which it arose and of the Iranian apocalyptic motifs that preceded it. “Christian apocalyptic,” Widengren noted, “inherited both the schema and most of the concrete features of late Jewish speculation, and thus of more ancient Oriental and Indo-Iranian conceptions. Its classical expression is found in the Apocalypse of John, where we encounter many elements of the apocalyptic schema, but also a strong imprint of late Babylonian astral speculation, even more pronounced than in Jewish apocalyptic.” More recently, it has even been argued that the final book of the New Testament reflects a conception proper to late first-century Gnosticism, if we attend to the motifs and narrative structures through which the revelation of wisdom, the coming of the Kingdom, and the end of time are represented.

Anyway... Merry Christmas, and peace on earth! —for such was once the greeting shared before among men of good will during this season.



This article is an updated and corrected edition  
of a text published within the book

## **SACRIFICIO Y DRAMA DEL REY SAGRADO**

Chapter:

**ASTROLOGÍA Y COSMOLOGÍA EN EL PRIMER CRISTIANISMO.**

**En torno a los astros, el calendario celeste, el tiempo del mesías,  
y el mundo patrocinado por los obispos de la Iglesia.**

Pages 597-626.

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