

## BIBLICAL SIGNS IN THE SKY?

Will the sky on September 23, 2017 mirror “signs” from the Book of Revelation in the Bible?

**On that date, according to various Internet sources, the heavens themselves will be a tableau of Revelation 12 in the Bible:**

*“A great sign will appear in the sky, a woman clothed with the Sun, with the Moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of 12 stars. She is with child and wails aloud in pain as she labours to give birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod.”*

On September 23 this year the Sun will be in the zodiac constellation Virgo — *“a woman clothed with the sun”*. The Moon will be at the feet of Virgo — *“with the moon under her feet”*. The nine prominent stars of the constellation Leo, plus three planets (Mercury, Venus, and Mars), will be at the head of Virgo — *“on her head a crown of 12 stars”*. The planet Jupiter will be in the centre of Virgo, and, as the weeks pass after September 23, Jupiter will exit Virgo — *“She is with child and labours to give birth”*. Jupiter is the largest of the planets, the “king” of the planets, so to speak — *“She gives birth to a son, a male child, destined to rule all the nations with an iron rod”*.

**Must this not be a sign of something momentous, like the Internet sources say?**

Astronomers are a diverse group, and some of you are probably saying right now, “what a bunch of nonsense!” Others of you may want to like to learn more about it. **Interest in questions like this reflects a basic interest in astronomy, combined with interest in religion and what motivates society.** It is a reasonable question and serious scientists need to be able to answer questions like this, because the question will not go away just because it is dismissed.

So, lets look at the details:

**First**, the Sun travels the entirety of the ecliptic every year, and thus is in Virgo every September.

**Second**, the Moon goes through its cycle of phases every month, and passes through every constellation of the zodiac. Therefore there is always a day or two every year when the Sun is in Virgo and the Moon at her “feet”.

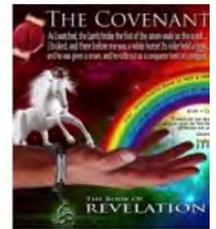
**Third**, the nine prominent stars of the constellation Leo are always at the head of Virgo.

**Fourth**, Jupiter takes 12 years to orbit the Sun and will be in Virgo for a year every 12 years.

**Fifth**, for the combination of the planets Mercury, Venus and Mars to be in those same positions with the Sun, Moon and Jupiter at the time of the autumnal equinox in September is somewhat rarer. But in the past 1,000 years this same event has happened at least four times already, in 1827, 1483, 1293, and 1056. **Therefore, while this specific combination of celestial objects in the sky at 23 September 2017 is rare, it is by no means unique. It will happen again in about 200 years.**

An interesting sideline to the story is the association of the constellation Virgo with the constellation Libra. Once part of the constellation Scorpion (its two main stars still have the arabic names *Zubeneschamali* and *Zubenelgenubi*, meaning northern and southern claw respectively) the Romans saw Libra as symbolising the balanced length of night and day at the autumnal equinox. It was only in AD 729 that the Sun left Libra and shifted into Virgo at that date, due to the 26,000 year precession of the Autumnal Equinox, one of the two points were the ecliptic crosses the equator.

AK, with EarthSky and Wikipedia Notes



Just a few of the results of Google images search for the words September 23, 2017 and Revelation 12.



The constellation Virgo on September 23, according to the Stellarium software. The moon's size is exaggerated.

