

THE HEAVENS DECLARE – Dr. Thomas L. Marshall Chapter Four

THE TRUTH DISTORTED

Now that we've seen the early disbursement of the original star charts among the people and places of the earth, let's consider how early the distortion of its gracious message began. Take a moment to read Romans 1:18-23:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Professing to be wise, they became fools

And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Do you see the clear parallel to what happened at the Tower of Babel 6,000 years prior to the writing of this letter to the Romans? God showed the truth to a group of people – the truth of Himself, His power and His godhead – causing them to be without excuse should they deny it. Yet instead of glorifying God and being thankful, they became proud, and their hearts were darkened. Then they changed the glory of God (remember, “*The heavens declare the glory of God. . .*”) into images of corruptible mankind, animals, birds, and insects.

Take a look now at Genesis 11:3-6:

Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar.

And they said, “Come let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.

And the Lord said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do, now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.

This is the account of the people of earth collaborating on the Tower of Babel. Notice in verse 4, the tower is planned to reach the heavens. In the King James Version, you will read “whose top *may reach* unto heaven.” The words

“may reach” are in italics, which means that they were added by the translators in the hopes that it would help us understand the verse better. However, in this case – and this is not the only instance of this in the Bible – they seem to confuse the issue rather than clarify it.

The translation of this could be “Let us build us a city and a tower whose top IS AS unto the heavens....” This would suggest that the ceiling (“top”) would have a copy of the star chart engraved upon it, assuming that this is the correct translation, of course.

There is a fascinating archeological find housed in the British Museum called Birs Nimroud. This is almost certainly the remains of the Tower of Babel, the tower of Nimrod, the first king among men (Genesis 10:9-10). Oriental tradition teaches that the tower consisted of seven layers, each one of which ascended in conical fashion, and each one of which was of a different color. This was accomplished by dyeing the bricks as they were being made. Many of these bricks are also in the British Museum, and they are indeed of seven different colors.

The startling find to which I refer was located at the fifth level. It was a tablet containing a record of a popular myth that attempted to explain the creation of the world and the sun, moon, and stars. It is known as the “Creation Tablet”. It is in the form of a poem, praising Anu, the creator. Here is a translation of that poem into English. The information in brackets are my notes:

Anu [the Creator] made excellent the mansion [the celestial houses] of the great god

Twelve in number [the twelve signs or mansions of the sun].

The stars he placed in them. The lumasi [groups of stars or figures] he fixed.

He arranged the year according to the bounds [the twelve signs] which he defined.

For each of the twelve months three rows of stars [constellations] he fixed.

From the day when the year issues forth unto the close, he marked the mansions [the Zodiacal signs] of the wandering stars [the planets] to know their courses that they might not err or deflect at all.

Study the first lines carefully because they establish the universal idea that there were twelve “mansions” (Psalm 19 calls them “tabernacles”) for the sun. Also notice the next statement, “The stars he placed in them. The lumasi he fixed....” Here is the idea of the creator naming the stars.

The fourth line of this poem says that Anu fixed three rows of stars for for each of the twelve signs. So, according to this poem, each one of the twelve signs of the zodiac would have three additional constellations that ere associated with them. Remember that formula – twelve signs, each with three companion constellations, totaling forty-eight pictures. This will become very important as we get into the actual study of the Gospel in the stars.

Nimrod’s kingdom was founded in rebellion against all that God had ordained and in disobedience to His command to mankind to cover the earth and

replenish it. Instead of ascribing to God all honor and praise, they took the very revelation that He gave and turned it into the object of their new religious activity.

It is my opinion that the pyramids and ziggurats found throughout the world are the offspring of this original effort on the part of man to usurp God's dominion and to pervert His revelation because it is not uncommon to find that the top of many of these ancient structures have astrological signs engraved on their surfaces. In fact, it is uncommon to find those that do not have them so engraved.

So we see that man's first attempt at his own religion without divine revelation is, in fact, an attack on the true revelation itself and a wicked perversion of the symbols of that revelation. Scripture makes it very clear that God's wrath and judgment will fall on the perversion of His original star revelation, especially on the pseudo-sciences of astrology and mythology. In Deuteronomy 18:9-14, Moses warns the Israelites that when they enter the Promised Land, they would find unspeakable idolatry. They were warned that astrology would be the chief among the heathen religions discovered there. Read these verses carefully because they show the heart of God toward these evil idolatries. He calls them "abominations" and includes the "soothsayers" (King James interprets as "observers of time") in with them. These were the forerunners of today's astrologers.

When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations.

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you.

You shall be blameless before the Lord your God.

For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the Lord your God has not appointed such for you.

God's strong condemnation of these practices is even more clearly seen in Isaiah 47:13-14. Here He calls them by the very names of "astrologers" and "star gazers." Notice their doom in verse 14.

*You are wearied in the multitude of
your counsels;*

*Let now the astrologers, the
stargazers,*

*And the monthly prognosticators
Stand up and save you*

*From what shall come upon you.
Behold, they shall be as stubble,*

*The fire shall burn them;
They shall not deliver themselves
From the power of the flame;
It shall not be a coal to be warmed by,
Nor a fire to sit before!*

MYTHOLOGY

If we are to understand the truth of this revelation, we must first understand how it was perverted through either the agency of Satan or the ignorance of man. Both the words (names of the stars and their meaning) and the figures (the pictures) were corrupted through the years. These corruptions took two forms, astrology (corruption of the words) and mythology (corruption of the figures). Let's take a closer look at mythology first.

It is important to understand that a myth is not just a fable that was invented for the entertainment of its audience. While that is all certainly true, it does not go far enough in its definition. We must acknowledge the intentions of the inventors of these myths. Myths are ancient man's attempts to explain and account for real, observable phenomenon. Therefore, they always contain a kernel of that original truth within the story, setting, plot, or characters of the myth itself. The ancients actually experienced the phenomenon (a reality that strikes our senses) of these star charts. They saw the signs, understood them as the revelation of God, and correctly understood the truth of the message they presented. Yet from the very beginning, something else began to happen. Many of them rejected the truth, and so, they were faced with the necessity of inventing something that would take the place of the truth. They succeeded to some limited extent in getting rid of the truth, but they still had the signs to contend with. What do they do with them? They invent "cunningly devised tales" (2 Peter 1:16). In other words, myths.

Many civilizations had myths that had their origin in the Genesis account of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. The most famous is the story concerning the golden apples of the Hesperides, who, according to Greek mythology, are nymphs who live in a beautiful garden located in the Arcadian mountains wherein is planted a tree with golden apples. The garden is guarded by a dragon with one hundred heads, and the only one who succeeded in getting any of those apples was Heracles who tricked Atlas into helping him. This is a typical example of a myth that was invented to explain an existing phenomenon for which nothing in their culture could offer anything like a reasonable accounting. The same thing holds true of the many flood myths found among ancient civilizations. Why is it so difficult for modern man to believe that these myths are all attempts to explain a very real event, an actual world-wide flood?

Mythology is identified by several characteristics. First, and most obvious, it ignores the original truth. It uses all of the forty-eight ancient signs and even creates several new ones. It makes no effort to cause man to be aware of his need for a controlling plan in his life. In fact, the sole purpose of a myth is simply

to entertain, causing the figures or signs to be cheapened or made to appear to be mere fantasies. Mythology ignores the descriptive aspect of the names of the stars in these constellations, changing them to be simply proper names. Finally, mythology teaches by inference that no one is in control of anything.

ASTROLOGY

Let's briefly look at astrology. This perversion continues to permeate our society even to this day. Though very few people still believe in the mythological gods and goddesses of ancient literature, many still subscribe to a belief system that whatever sign they were born "under" will determine much of their personality and fate. Many still open the newspaper every morning for a check of their daily horoscope, adjusting their schedules and delaying some decisions based on what it says.

The pseudo-science of astrology uses only the twelve signs of the Zodiac while completely ignoring the names of the stars and their meanings. It does, however, claim to influence man's destiny, teaching him that he controls his own fate by harnessing all cosmic energies to his own advantage.

It is an interesting study to look at the meaning of the word Zodiac. Its origin is Greek, meaning "a circle of living animals." This presumably refers to those signs on the zodiacal equator which are associated with astrology. (The fact that not all of the signs are actually living creatures – Hydra, for example, apparently didn't occur to anyone). The Greeks used only the sound of another word that had actually come down to them, and since that word sounded like their word for animal (we get our English word zoo or zoology from its root), they easily made this circle of signs into the explanation they sought. The truth was something else entirely.

The Greek astrologers were ignorant of the much more ancient Hebrew word *sodi* (notice how that sounds like the Greek word?) which means a "way" or a "path." As a path, it referred to the sun's travel through the heavens (that is, its apparent movement) completing its circle once a year. But as a way, it referred to the "way of life" through the grace of the One who Himself had originally given this message to mankind. This improper and incomplete translation of a word is a vivid example of how God's star revelation was corrupted.