

THE HEAVENS DECLARE – by Thomas L. Marshall, Ph.D.

CHAPTER THREE

Up to this point we have looked at biblical evidences of the authorship and intended purpose of the ancient planispheres (or star charts). There are evidences found outside the Bible as well. The most important of these would be the age of these charts.

The physical age of these discovered star charts is usually rather easy to determine. Other discoveries from the same time and space proximity, ink composites, papyrus (or stone) samples, and even surrounding fossils make the physical age of the star charts fairly easy to determine.

The significance of the age of these charts is in the “internal” age. Remember Aratus the Greek poet and Eudoxos the astronomer from the last chapter? The star charts discovered from the time of Eudoxos are easily identified as physically beginning in his lifetime. In other words, the ink and media all match up with similar findings from that era. But the charts could not possibly have been drawn from the night skies above Eudoxos’ house because, as I explained before, the precession of the equinox would make that impossible.

One of the best explanations I’ve heard for the precession of the equinox is to compare the spinning earth to a spinning top. Picture yourself snapping a spinning top into motion. The top will stand up perfectly straight and steady when you first spin it. Then, as it begins to slow down, it begins to wobble a bit, ever so slightly at first but then more so as the top loses speed. Finally, the wobble is so exaggerated that the top falls over.

The earth is like that spinning top, and it wobbles too. But much more slowly than we can imagine, for it takes 25,000 years to complete just one wobble. With this wobble going on all the time, the arrangement of the stars on each equinox (when the day and night are of equal length) is just slightly off from where it was the preceding year. From one year to the next, even for the lifetime of two or three generations, the change is so slight it is almost unnoticeable. But over the period of centuries, the change is pronounced.

The ancient astronomers who drew these charts would mark certain times of the year with symbols, including the spring and fall equinox and the summer and winter solstices (when the sun is at its greatest declination, or exactly halfway between equinoxes). The astronomers who copied these charts would include these symbols in their own charts, so when modern astronomers review the ancient findings, it is easy to make certain determinations.

The task then is to determine the internal age of the original copy of the star chart. We get a clue of this from the Chinese, Chaldean, and Egyptian charts which all seem to indicate an internal age originating when the summer solstice was in the sign of Leo which would make the spring equinox occur in the sign of Taurus, the bull.

Knowing now the precession of the equinox, it is an easy thing to compute the number of years since that has actually occurred – approximately 6,000. It should also be noted that the French astronomer Nouet insisted that he had other internal evidence that demanded a date of origin some 1,400 years earlier.

So we are dealing with some very old charts, at least as old as the dawn of recorded human history.

By the way, not only do some of these ancient charts indicate the spring equinox, but much of the literature (such as "Phainomena" by Aratus) also begins in the same way. So we have a double witness to assure us of this internal evidence.

The great age of these charts are important in order to account for the amazing uniformity of figures and names found on them, despite the vast differences in the places where they were unearthed. This similarity among star charts is another strong evidence we have of one author. Today archeologists consistently dig up copies of these charts etched into the stones of many different countries, representing vast separations of both time and space. The mathematical probabilities that a Greek philosopher sat down one day and drew forty-eight different pictures in the sky and gave them names that just happened to agree in nearly every detail to a similar chart drawn by a Chinese monk 1000 years earlier, which in turn, just happened to agree with one drawn by an Aztec priest 500 years before that, which just happened to agree with one from the Hindu culture, which just happened... You get the idea. That mathematical probability simply doesn't exist, it is so infinitesimal.

We will consider in just a moment how the original star charts may have been dispersed throughout the ages, but let's look briefly at a few more extra-biblical evidences for God being the author of the original star-chart.

There is some curious information found in the works of Josephus, an important first-century Jewish historian. In his Book I, chapters 1-3, he explains the commonly held Jewish tradition that God Himself gave the entire plan for man's salvation in this star-revelation by teaching it to Adam, Seth, and Enoch. It is traditionally believed that Enoch, after having received the final part of this revelation, was then immediately translated into God's presence. (The Bible does teach that Enoch was so translated, but it does not mention that it was at the end of any particular revelation.)

There are two other ancient intellectuals who recognized that in considering the star charts they were dealing with a wisdom that came from an ancient, even divine, source. Aristotle, that famous Greek philosopher, admits that, as regarding religion and philosophy, mythology offered no acceptable accounting for all that had been lost. In fact, he indicates that "much had been added" to mythology and so much so that the truth as originally presented was now that which "may have been preserved to our times as the remains of ancient wisdom." (quotes are from METAPHYSICS, X:8) Neander also plainly stated that mythology was "the fragments of a tradition, which transmitted the knowledge of divine things possessed in the earliest time." These men may not have known what these starry wonders were, but they were sure what they were not.

So we see that this star chart is a very old revelation from the dawn of history, and yet it speaks to us today with a fresh new insight into the eternal plan of God and His love for us.

THE DISPERSION OF THE STAR CHART

As mentioned before, the similarity of these star charts found all over the world would indicate one author, so we must consider how one chart could, in fact, make it's way down to so many civilizations living in so many different places at so many different times. I believe, and Jewish tradition as written by Josephus seems to support, that the original chart was given by God to Adam, Seth, and Enoch. This chart was copied and given to other righteous men. Then, at least one copy found its way onto the ark with Noah and his family. It then came down to the Tower of Babel era when Nimrod, who is described as the first king among men, determined to make a gigantic astrological observatory around which he could fashion the first man-made religion on earth, one which would ignore the creator of these beautiful stars and instead worship the stars themselves by such perversion that we can hardly imagine.

Of course, the Lord intervened in judgment, confusing the tongues of men, and as a result, the "nations" were founded. Look at Genesis 11:9.

Therefore the name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Genesis 10 backtracks that for us and shows us the geographic regions into which the various groups clustered after the confusion of their tongues. That is, the earth was split into various geographical portions, and these portions were then assigned to various groups of people with everyone in a particular group now presumably speaking the same language. It was probably not at all so systematic and formal as this makes it seem. Undoubtedly, it involved flaring tempers, territorial fights, family dissention, even wars.

Notice verse 25 of Genesis 10:

To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided...

This verse says that the earth itself was then divided (in Peleg's day). This means that the physical earth – the land, rocks, sand, and all – were split up just as modern science states in its "Floating Continents Theory". Contrary to this modern theory, however, the Bible states that this separation took place in the lifetime of one man (who, according to Genesis 11:18-19, lived only 139 years), and not the millions of years modern scientists assert.

So from the Tower of Babel, many copies of the original charts made their way to the various nations and when the earth split in Peleg's day, those charts were dispersed among the modern continents. After all this division in and among the nations we have the original star chart now much copied and distributed all over the earth. Therefore, all nations had this comprehensive revelation of God's grace. They were all now without excuse.

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