

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

An interesting evidence of this star-revelation is the familiarity that ancient biblical characters and cultures had with the stars. Job is a wonderful example of this. The history covered in the book of Job took place in the early patriarchal days of the Bible. In fact, the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament which was widely in use at the time of Christ's birth) added a post-script which ascribed Job as Jobab, the great-great-great grandson of Shem (Genesis 10:29). "Ab" simply means 'father' which does not change the meaning of the word or the identity of the name. If this is true (and we have no reason to assume it is not), Job would have been living during the Tower of Babel days, making him a very distant cousin of Abraham's, yet five generations older. (See Genesis 10)

With that in mind, let's look at the book of Job. One fascinating passage is found in Chapter 38. This is the point where God came "out of the whirlwind" and demanded that Job "prepare (himself) like a man" for God's interrogation. Job had been given quite a bit of advice from some well-intended friends. Much of that advice was just plain wrong. God's sovereign purpose in all of Job's suffering had been completely overlooked by these so-called counselors.

God begins to make Job understand the all-important fact of God's supremacy by asking him a series of rhetorical questions which were intended to demonstrate the ignorance of Job and his friends and to give a small hint as to the infinity of God's wisdom.

God's questions begin with creation when "the morning stars sang together" (vs. 7) and go on to cover many different aspects of the universe, including this planet and man's purpose in being here. Yet, as we read each question, we see that it is filled with reference to the stars. This masterpiece of Biblical literature (Chapters 38-41) may prove to be the most fascinating view of the night skies in Scripture. It will become very clear in this passage that God was using the things that were most familiar to Job to teach him the very important lesson that all Christians must ultimately learn – that God's sovereignty extends to every aspect of our lives and the lives of all creation. If it is sufficient to the good pleasure of His will then that is the end of it. Whatever God's will proves to be, we can be sure that it is for His glory and our ultimate good. God's freedom to exercise His sovereign good will in our lives is the key to its success.

God chose to make Job understand this crucial truth by demonstrating that He did "found the earth in wisdom, and establish the heavens in understanding..." (Prov 3:19) by using **each and every one** of the ancient constellations to teach Job that He was the supreme, reigning monarch of all creation. He shows that the earth is a marvelous product of infinite wisdom.

Study the following chart, and though, at this point, you do not have extensive understanding of the evidences supporting it, look for the incredible parallel between Scripture and the ancient constellations. The reference is in the first column, the phrase which refers to a constellation in the second column, and the constellation to which it refers is listed in the third column.

	<u>Phrase or word</u>	<u>Constellation</u>
Job-		
38:31	"Pleades"	TAURUS
	"The Band"	THE BAND
	"Orion"	ORION
38:32	"Mazzaroth"	(Zodiac)
	"Arcturus"	BOOTES
	"with his sons"	URSA MAJOR, URSA MINOR, ARGO
38:33	"THE ORDINANCE OF HEAVEN AND ITS DOMINION ON EARTH"	
38:34	"lift up thy voice"	LYRA
38:37	"the bottles of heaven"	AQUARIUS, CRATER
38:39	"the young lions"	LEO
38:41	"the raven"	CORVUS
39:1	"the wild goats"	CAPRICORNUS, ARIES
39:5	"the wild ass"	CANCER
39:9-10	"the unicorns"	TAURUS, MONOCEROS, BAND
	"his (unicorn's) strength"	HERCULES
39:12	"thy seed"	VIRGO, COMA
	"leave thy labor to him"	LIBRA, CRUX
39:13	"the peacock" and "the ostrich"	PERSEUS, MEDUSA ??????
39:15	"the wild beast"	OPHIUCHUS, SCORPIO
39:19	"the horse"	CENTAURUS, SAGITARIUS, PEGASUS
39:23	"the quiver"	SAGITTA
39:26	"the hawk"	PHOENIX, AQUILLA
39:27	"the eagle"	CYGNUS
40:15-23	"behemoth (that drinketh up the Jordan"	PISCUS AUSTRINUS, PISCES
41:1	"leviathan"	DRAGO
41:31	"that maketh the deep to boil"	CETUS
41:32	"that maketh a path to shine"	HYDRA, SERPENS

It becomes very apparent to the informed reader of this passage of Scripture that Job was, at the very least, familiar with the ancient constellations.

As the course of human history progressed, and as God further revealed His wondrous plan of salvation through the use of other witnesses such as the law, prophets, and eventually, the inspired Word of God, we see evidences of a cultural memory of this star-revelation that survived, though greatly diminished and greatly misunderstood as time wore on.

One example of this is found in the arrangement of the camp of Israel as it is described in Numbers 2:2. The camp was arranged with each of the tribes having its own ensign, or "standard." This would have been a flag raised on a staff, and each tribe would have had its own unique design. We get a strong clue of what these signs possibly were in Genesis 49 where the blessing of Jacob is given to each of the twelve tribes. In that chapter, Jacob says of Judah that he (his tribe) is a LION. Jewish scholars agree that the tribe of Judah had as its

ensign the figure of a lion. (Remember, too, that the expression “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” is a title given to the promised Messiah.) So, here we see the sign of LEO being used as an ensign.

Another example from this same chapter would be the blessing upon Issachar, to whom Jacob assigned the figure of the ass as its ensign. The Zodiacal sign known as CANCER is also associated with the ass, having two stars in that constellation that bear its name.

In verse 27, Jacob assigns the wolf (or dog) to his son, Benjamin, which would be the sign of GEMINI that has two constellations associated with the wolf (dog). Also, the tribe of Dan is called a serpent in verse 17, and in the diagram, we see that it is given the sign of SCORPIO. It should be noted, however, that Hebrew scholars have held that Dan had an eagle for its standard, which is the natural enemy of the scorpion and snake. This alteration from a zodiacal sign is probably due to the fact that SCORPIO represented Satan, and the tribesmen of Benjamin would have shrunk from owning a standard which symbolized the enemy of their inheritance.

Another clue to this cultural memory in the standards of the Israelite tribes is in Deuteronomy 33 where Moses is blessing the tribes before they enter the Promised Land. In his blessing on the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (who are the two tribes of Joseph), he assigns them the bull, TAURUS.

New Testament Memory

As the Greek empire spread and quickly became the world power, the Gospel revelation in the stars became salted with mythical overtones, and the cultural memory of the original righteous meaning began fading beyond most, but not all, hope of recall.

In Acts 17, we read of an instance where Paul was on Mars Hill in Athens, discoursing with the Greek philosophers there. Look at verse 28:

“...for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’”

Paul is quoting from a poem entitled “Phainomena” by the Greek poet Aratus (or Aratos, as it is sometimes spelled). Aratus was using the astronomy of a man named Eudoxos who lived and wrote four hundred years before Aratus.

The subject of the poem is the heavenly revelation as it was understood by the then contemporary Greeks who worshipped Zeus. The entire poem is devoted to the task of identifying and locating each of these ancient constellations and praising the Greek deities about whom much mythology had already been invented.

The interesting thing about this is that Eudoxos’ astronomy described a night sky that could not possibly have been seen during his own lifetime. In fact, Eudoxos describes a sky that would have appeared nearly four thousand years before he was born. We know this because of what astronomers call the

“precession of the equinox” which we will examine briefly in the next chapter. The conclusion, then, is that Eudoxos, and therefore Aratus, were both discussing the ancient star charts in their literature.

This poem becomes a very valuable tool in helping us identify these ancient constellations, as well as some of the kernel truths around which these myths were fabricated. It very systematically establishes the history of each of these important signs and thus becomes an important extra-biblical source for modern scholarship. I have included the first thirteen lines of “Phainomena.” They are only the first part of a rather lengthy poem. You may want to go to your local library or search the internet to find and read the entire work.

From Zeus we lead the strain; he whom mankind
Ne'er leave unhymned: of Zeus all public ways,
All haunts of men, are full; and full the sea,
And harbours; and of Zeus all stand in need.
We are his offspring: and he, ever good and mild to man,
Gives favouring signs, and rouses us to toil.
Calling to mind life's wants; when clods are best
For plough and mattock; when the time is ripe
For planting vines and sowing seeds, he tells,
Since he himself hath fixed in heaven these Signs,
The stars dividing; and throughout the year
Stars he provides to indicate to man
The seasons' course, that all things duly grow,”

Although Aratus attributes to Zeus what we know to be from God, it is extremely interesting that even he attributes the placement of the stars in the night sky to the supreme deity.

In these first two chapters, we have examined some of the evidence found in Scripture that supports this gospel presentation in the stars. But is there any extra-Biblical evidence that supports our theory? There is most definitely. Let's take a look.

Copyright 2007 Thomas L. Marshall, Ph.D. No part of this work may be reproduced in any manner without written permission from the author except in the case of brief quotations in critical articles and reviews.