

Details of Izapan Art

By Neil Steede © 2017

In an article published last year, I introduced the concept of how the Izapan art style was a unique expression of gospel stories. We understand that this graphic expression of the gospel was a communication device used by the Sons of Mosiah to bring home the message of the gospel through a series of images that taught sacred relationships. In this article, I will provide a specific example to illustrate how these images are simple, yet the layering of concepts is very detailed. These are very effective teaching tools even by today's standards.

The image I will use is from a stela known as Stela 2. This stela illustrates the Garden of Eden story. It is particularly interesting because of the manner in

which several aspects of the story are illustrated. The stela shows Quetzalcoatl descending to Earth from Heaven by means of a gateway, and he appears head-down above a cleft-tree with nine circular fruits. At the edge of each principle branch are

humans that appear to be reaching toward the descending god.

Of particular interest on this stela is the transitional band that usually divides the celestial and terrestrial scenes. The band is drawn to depict a hole that allows free access between Heaven and Earth. Apparently, the portrayed Diving God has either gone through, or created, the hole.

These bands bracket a celestial canoe and the extended angles focus on the flexed legs of the Diving God. The message appears to be that the Diving God is the creator of the celestial canoe, and this concept is a Christian belief as the pathway to the afterlife is only available through the conveyance (canoe)



Continued on Page 3

Signs in the Heavens

By David B. Brown © 2017

One of the hallmarks of the Restoration religious movement is the enlarging on the information concerning Enoch and the Zion Kingdom concept. The expanded Genesis chapters that talk about Enoch are amazing since they were written in the mid-1830's, but the full expansion of knowledge about Enoch was not known in sacred writings until shortly after that time when five books totaling 108 chapters were discovered.¹

In these five books we learn that Enoch was given extensive tutelage on the times and seasons of the Sun, Moon and Stars. It implies that he was

shown the heavenly signs for all of the most important events that would take place on the Earth, and he was instructed to write them down.

How does this relate to our research of the parallels between the Maya culture and the Book of Mormon? I am glad you asked. First, let me provide some examples of how the Maya tied their major events to celestial alignments.

In Yaxchilan, the ascension to the throne of Y'oaat Balam II (Benjamin, the son of Mosiah the Elder) was recorded as occurring during a triple conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn.

Our records indicate that this triple conjunction took place in 146 BC. David Stuart indicates that this throne ascension at the 146 BC triple-conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn was in honor of the throne ascension of Y'oaat Balam I during a similar triple-conjunction in 563 BC. In Book of Mormon terms this would

Continued on Page 2

Inside this issue:	
Details of Izapan Art <i>Cont.</i>	3 & 4
Signs in the Heavens <i>Cont.</i>	2 & 8
Adventures in Archaeology	5 & 6
From Tuxtepec to Jalapa de Diaz	7

Signs in the Heavens *continued*

be the year that Mulek ascended as the first Mulekite King.

Why wasn't it at 586 BC when Jerusalem fell and the Mulekites escaped? We do not know for certain because we only have a Nephite record and not the Mulekite record, but understand the situation that we *do* know. When Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, he imprisoned King Zedekiah and his prince sons. He later killed these princes of Judah and then removed the eyes of Zedekiah. This story implies that any potential king from Zedekiah's loins were killed so that none of his lineage would ever sit as king again. But, a prince that was newborn or even one that was not yet born may have easily gone unnoticed. Therefore, Mulek was most likely *very* young at the time of the siege on Jerusalem. If he was newborn, then Mulek left Jerusalem at 586 BC. His ascension to the Mulekite throne took place in 563 BC, which makes him about 23 years of age when he assumes/reestablishes his father's throne. This reasonable timeline seems to demonstrate that the Mayan archaeological record and the Book of Mormon record compliment one another.

So, it is noteworthy that heavenly signs are important to the Maya as they often performed important dedications in correlation with unique celestial events. This seems to suggest an Enochian knowledge, or at least some form of recognition of celestial movements with implied meanings.

Now, for another example. At Palenque we have indications that the events recorded on the Tablet of the Cross and the Throne South Panel of Temple XIX coincided with two aspects of the same celestial sign. First, it was yet another triple-conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn that was the sign of the birth of the Corn God (Quetzalcoatl/Christ) in 7 BC. The emissaries of G-I (Nephi), G-II (Lehi) and G-III (Samuel the Lamanite), took gifts to the baby god when this conjunction occurred. But, the glyphs also indicate that this was the event that transitioned the Age of Aries to the Age of Pisces. This is because the entire conjunction event from March of 7 BC thru February of 6 BC took place within the "V" of Pisces.

These recitations of planetary alignments as they relate to important king-ly/godly events seem to allude to a perspective that looks for celestial indicators for important events that will oc-

cur. Does the celestial event just happen to occur at this time? Or, do the principle people involved in arranging the kingship event schedule it to occur at that time? Who can say? But, these celestial events are markers of changes regardless of whether they are consciously timed or not.

That being said, we have similar things happening in our day and age. In 1493-1494 there was a series of four blood moons that happened in succession on the Passover and the Feast of Trumpets two years in a row. This creates what is called a *tetrad* which is a series of four blood moons (lunar eclipse) on the Spring and Fall Feasts. Most Americans understand the importance of this date because it coincides with Christopher Columbus' discovery of the American continents in 1492. What many people do not realize is that it also coincides with the Spanish Inquisition where the Spanish Monarchs issued a decree in support of the Catholic Church to force the Jewish population to either convert to Catholicism or leave the country. There is even strong implication that Columbus was of Jewish descent whose search for America was an effort to provide a means of escape for people of his descent.² Regardless of what is known or not known about Columbus, this blood moon tetrad occurred within a year of the Spanish Inquisition and the discovery of America—it had a profound effect on the Jewish people.

The next blood moon tetrad that occurred was in 1949–1950 beginning in April of 1949 within a year of the official establishment of Israel as a nation. This may seem coincidental except that the very next blood moon tetrad took place in 1967-1968 beginning just two months prior to the Six-Day War where the enemies of Israel attempted to destroy them, but in the process Israel doubled the size of their nation with the captured territory which included Jerusalem. Again, both of these tetrads taking place within months of profound historical events concerning the nation of Israel.

Then, we just experienced the 2014-2015 tetrad on the Jewish Feasts. While there was no profound event that we can yet detect, as history unveils its secrets over the next few years we may discover that once again things took place that had profound effects on Israel. One speculation might be the unex-

pected rise of an American President who completely reversed the US policy concerning Israel and appears to be in total support of defending Israel from all enemies. Only time will fully expose what exactly this tetrad heralds, but make no mistake, something is definitely changing in our world and this is what the tetrads herald—profound changes that affect Israel.

For those who may not be aware, there is yet another celestial sign approaching us this fall. The 12th Chapter of Revelation begins with a description of a virgin giving birth.

Revelation 12:1 *"And there appeared a great sign in heaven in the likeness of things on the earth: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. [2] And the woman, being with child, cried, travailing in birth and pained to be delivered. [3] And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God and his throne."*

This first verse describes the positioning of stars that will occur on September 23, 2017. On that day the King planet Jupiter will have been recently "born" from the belly of the constellation of Virgo (the virgin) after having spent over nine months in her "belly." On the 23rd of September she will be "clothed in the sun" because this is a daytime event and the Sun is "clothing" or covering up our view. But, she will have the crescent moon at her feet, and above her head are the nine stars of the constellation Leo, along with the planets of Mercury, Venus and Mars which makes a total of twelve stars as a crown for Virgo. John the Revelator calls this a great sign in heaven. Christ tells us this about the last days:

Matthew 24:37 *"And as I said before, After the tribulation of those days, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. [38] And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. [39] And whoso treasureth up my words shall not be deceived. [40] For the Son of Man shall come, and he shall send his angels before him with the great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather to-*

Continued on Page 8

Details of Izapan Art *continued*

that the Creator has provided; this alludes to Noah's Ark that carried passengers safely over the tempestuous seas. This concept of safe passage from Earth to Heaven is illustrated on these stelae by the canoe. The flexed "frog-like" legs also imply birth, as in a position to give birth.

It needs to be pointed out that the existence of this passage (hole) indicates a downward movement of the deity. That is to say, "He comes to Earth." Within the hole we see the usual breath scrolls and jaguar fangs. Once again, the message is, "the breath of Quetzalcoatl and the breath of man, as well as, the death of Quetzalcoatl and the death of man are required in both planes of existence."

As stated earlier, the flexed legs strongly imply birth. In fact, this is the manner in which the Messiah came to Earth—through the birthing process. However, understand that the claim is not being made that the Garden of Eden shown here was literally attended by the Messiah (Quetzalcoatl) through birth. Rather, this illustrates how far the Messiah will go for us. This is why the directional bands focus on (point to) the flexed legs. Quetzalcoatl will leave His celestial realm to gather each one of us. He will become the "Tree of Life" which bears fruit that will bring us to His Kingdom. Quetzalcoatl then becomes the pathway for entry into the afterlife, the flexed legs at the portal into the heavenly realm indicate that we must be born through Him into the celestial realm.

The wings and apron of the Diving God carry information concerning this deity, one of the more important pieces of information is found mid-wing and identifies who he is. Here we see an "X" within a cartouche. In Mesoamerica the cartouche is used particularly with titles rather than a particular name as in the Egyptian culture. The "X" found here is also interpreted as a cross. Both of these are recognized by many Mesoamerican archaeologists and epigraphers as the Cross of Quetzalcoatl. The point is, this gives direct identification of this deity. There are other markers, but this is enough to know who is represented here.

I have enhanced the bracket that encloses the area depicted. It is curious that this bracket is so clearly drawn here with four corners. In Mesoamerican imagery, objects with four corners tend to indicate a geographic location. In my opinion, this is, at least in part, an indication that the Garden of Eden was in a specific location



and that it was a specific event, not just a story. And, it also seems to imply that the ones who are gathered beneath the "shadow of His wings" will also enjoy a geographic location.

Actually, this brings up the question as to the geographic limitations of the Garden of Eden. Was the Garden of Eden a literal area of limited size? This might be a possibility since it was taken from the Earth. Therefore, it appears that we must at least consider that it did not cover all of the Earth.

Note that a double scroll emerges from the head of the Diving God and it extends to the hand of the man on the left side of the stela. We must first recognize that these two items are not breath scrolls. Moreover, they do not emerge from Quetzalcoatl's mouth. Rather they seem to emerge from the hat He wears. The lower split scroll is, indeed, a breath scroll. It seems to indicate that "life was breathed into this man." However, just above the split breath scroll we see what appears to be a reclining "J." Actually, if we view the illustration upside-down so that the Diving God appears right side-up, we recognize that this item is similar to the elongated upper lip associated with Zotz, who is the vampire bat representing

death. To me this indicates that man needs two types of breath, physical and spiritual, and that death will play an important part of the life given. That is to say, death must occur to give life meaning.

It appears that both the male and female have an insect-like exoskeleton on their back. The shell seems to be segmented and insect-like. It appears as though this aspect is drawn to show that both beings are capable of participating in some type of metamorphosis. Again, this alludes to the transformation that takes place when the gospel is received and a new creation forms within the individual being gathered.

The obvious use of sacred geometry can be viewed on this stela. (illustrated on the next page) The triangle created between Quetzalcoatl and the two humans is obvious. Not as obvious is the triangle created between the wings and the tree below. However, the combination of these two triangles create the well-known Star of David. It is an interesting consideration that the downward triangle implies the condescension of God to Earth and is formed from the two heavenly

wings and center on the fruit of the tree that has two main branches. Does this allude to the two types of trees in the Garden of Eden? The Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? Does this further allude to the dual nature of man, pitting his spirit in battle against his physical drives?

It is interesting to note that the upward triangle is founded on the dualistic aspects of humanity; his spiritual and physical. Then it culminates at the point of the flexed legs and indicates a rebirth into the celestial region.

To further develop the Tree of Life consideration, I have overlaid the pattern of the Hebrew Sephiroth (Tree of Life) on the stela and it encircles all of the pertinent images. All of this is part of their use of sacred geometry.

Sacred numerology is also present on this stela as it is on most Izapan stelae. There are a total of nine fruits on the tree. First, note that the fruit is perfectly round. Circles are used to indicate equality for there is no point on the perimeter that is closer or farther away from the center of the circle than any other point. It is uniform in all aspects, therefore the circle is used to symbolize the spiritual realm.

Continued on Page 4

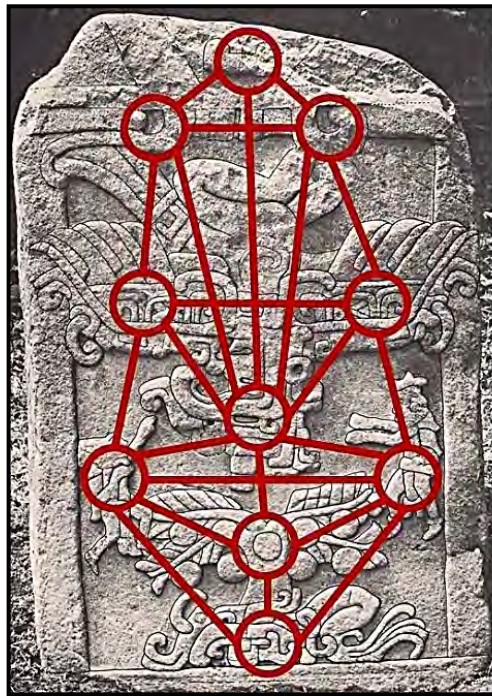
Details of Izapan Art *continued*

This indicates that the fruit on this tree is spiritual in nature. The arrangement of the fruit alludes to several numbers. There are two groups of four (4). Together they combine for a sum of eight (8). Eight (8) is symbolic of "resurrection." Four (4) is the number for Quetzalcoatl, which is also the number used in Hebrew Kabbalah for the Messiah. It appears as though the double set of four references the physical and spiritual. Then the single fruit on the trunk of the tree is positioned to imply that it is the link between the two divisions of four. Nine (9) is symbolic for "expectancy" such as birth. Does this mean that rebirth is the unifying link between the spiritual and the physical?

It is also of interest that the upper leaves of the two branches on the tree has twelve (12) segments to allude to the Hebrew connection. The head of the Diving God nearly touching the twelve leaves seems to imply that He will be born into the family tree of the 12 tribes. There are also four (4) branches which is the number for Quetzalcoatl. Moreover, the four branches create an "X", which again, is the symbol for Quetzalcoatl.

We can see that both sides of the tree

trunk have paraphernalia attached to it. On the left we see a large nostril with



breath scrolls and on the right is a frog's leg. Both of these items are important to comprehend. The nostril is placed on a large overhanging lip (Zotz-like). The breath scrolls move down to the ground rather than curling upward. Meanwhile, the frog-leg toes curl up and then down back to earth. The former implies the need for death and resurrection while the latter implies the imperative need for metamorphosis. It is even more interesting that when the two symbols are viewed connected together they imply an "S" symbol. This symbol refers to the foundation for everything illustrated here; a reversal of action or repentance.

This story is about the Garden of Eden and the Christian story of the Tree of Life which was found in that garden. The story tells of the Messiah's visitation to the garden, the need for him to return through birth to save mankind, and for man to be reborn through the Messiah in order to attain the spiritual realm. It is amazing the way that the missionary artists have used their craft to be able to create so many messages of incredible relevance; and all of this before the birth of the Messiah. Nothing less than inspired.



Adventures In Scriptures

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Amlici Starts a War

Alma 1:53-101

The Nephites were living in a time period when *judges* ruled. It was a peaceful time until a man named *Amlici* caused people to become *angry* with the way the government was organized. He became very powerful by *lying* and *tricking* some of the people into thinking that having a King was better than having judges to rule over them. Amlici wanted to be *king* and his *followers* were called Amlicites.

The government was run by “the voice of the people”. A king would take away the *rights* and privileges from the people.

Alma was the chief judge and governor of the land. He and the people of Nephite were becoming alarmed by the *behavior* of the Amlicites. The Nephites knew that the Amlicites were arming themselves with *weapons* of war. In self-defense the Nephites armed themselves with swords, cimeters, bows and arrows, stones and slings. They prepared for war by appointing captains to guide them in battle. The Nephites wanted to be at *peace* but had to prepare for *war* to defend themselves.

Alma was a man of God. He prayed mightily to God in prayer. His prayer was that God would save his life so that he could lead and protect his people. The Amlicites attacked the Nephites and the *fighting* was fierce. Alma came face to face with Amlici in battle. Alma survived and killed Amlici. The Nephites scattered the Amlicites and drove them into the wilderness. Many people died and there was great *ruin* and destruction. There was a great deal of *sadness* in the land. War causes great suffering.

F	T	I	C	I	L	M	A	R	M	J	Z	C	T	F
P	Z	R	V	Q	M	H	O	L	S	I	W	Y	N	N
R	E	J	I	O	F	I	G	H	T	I	N	G	N	A
O	A	A	I	C	V	P	S	U	H	W	N	X	M	V
Q	A	W	C	A	K	Y	U	H	G	J	N	S	J	S
S	Y	L	H	E	R	I	V	U	I	P	D	A	C	H
R	G	E	X	G	Y	Q	N	B	R	H	P	D	L	K
E	B	F	N	A	P	Z	W	G	U	Y	K	N	D	V
W	M	A	S	B	Q	E	L	Y	I	N	G	E	F	X
O	I	L	B	E	A	N	I	U	R	Q	N	S	Y	K
L	M	T	G	P	G	K	W	F	G	W	Y	S	I	D
L	R	E	O	Z	I	D	M	Y	S	J	I	U	A	J
O	C	N	G	N	V	K	U	E	A	Y	Z	T	L	O
F	S	Q	G	V	O	H	H	J	Y	L	G	T	M	S
A	E	I	F	T	D	Y	G	A	K	J	S	A	U	

Word search

Find and circle the words from the Amlici story:

- ALMA
- AMLICI
- ANGRY
- BEHAVIOR
- FIGHTING
- FOLLOWERS
- JUDGES
- KING
- LYING
- PEACE
- RIGHTS
- RUIN
- SADNESS
- TRICKING
- WAR
- WEAPONS

Write down the message from each set of footprints and chose who you want to follow.



Am ci ir dh fo st ng
li st re is ll ow er oa er



Al en ur ed es ef pe
ma co ag ad ir or ace

Alma 1:61

Alma 1:125

Unscramble the letters to reveal the weapons listed in the story.

MECSETRI



DWSSOR

SBWO

RSWROA

LGNSSI

TOSESN



From Tuxtepec to Jalapa de Diaz *A Testimony by Jose Angel Martinez © 2017*

First of all, to start with this I have to say thank you all for taking the time to read or listen to my article and second for your prayers in my behalf. God's way is very mysterious until this time I still don't know how it is possible to have met such wonderful people. Thanks Tim, Mike, Edd, Doug, Rex, Carol, Joanie and all of you guys that came to the trip to Chiapas and showed real interest into helping others, in this case me. I apologize if I missed to mention some one of you.

All started with the trip to Jalapa de Diaz in 2015. Sergio, my friend for years asked me if I could travel with some American people traveling to Jalapa, I was available, I didn't [know] the purpose of the trip, but I could not refuse because Sergio never denied me a favor.

The date we suppose to go Sergio had to work that was the reason he sent me in his place with his son. We met at the Meson de la Chinantla Hotel early in the morning for breakfast and then take off Jalapa de Diaz bound, the first stop was in the town of Jalapa going to the house of one of the town politics to deliver the goods [that] Tim, Mike and the group had for the community. It amazed me how big of a heart some people can have to travel such huge amount of miles just to help this people with clothing and medical stuff.

Just to make a point to anyone that hasn't been in this area of Mexico, the state of Oaxaca is one of the poorest states; people eat all week with 30 dollars sometimes 20 so whenever Mike and Tim arrive with the goods, is more like a blessing to them because they really can't afford to buy clothes more less a good pair of shoes.

After a little talk with this people we proceed to head up to this small town on the way to the mountains named Santo Domingo del Rio where we arrived to a ladies home where Mike had some to do (he-he-he) unloaded the goods for the people in this community [and we] remained there for about an hour. They made arrangements to return after going a little further into the mountains to do the last delivery in this area. The name of the town is Piedra Ancha; very nice people. We walked uphill to this small wooden cabin and waited for the man to arrive while they tried to converse a little.

The man arrived and as usual started to unload the clothes and goods for the kids. This people get really excited when this happens because if they get lucky they get to wear something neat and their own size, plus even if they had the money to buy it, they have to travel long distances just to go shopping.

Right after that we left going back to the second town, did the arrangements for the next day. I couldn't go, I had to work. Right after that we took the same road like [we were] going back to Jalapa de Diaz, but we had one more delivery to do on a village on the side of the road towards a city called Huatla de Jimenez. It took a little while to get there, but we made it safe and good.

This family makes clothes. I can't remember who bought what, all know is that they purchased some nice traditional blouses. Not to mention that this time we had to walk down hill to get to this people's houses; difficult, but not impossible. Returned to the SUV, said good-bye to the family and finally took off towards the city where the hotel is. Oh, I forgot to mention getting lost looking for a church in a nearby town, but as lucky as we are, we found it. Now we knew where to go the next day, the bad part was that I wasn't going to be there.

Now Tuxtepec bound I must assume that everybody was hungryyyy!!!!!!!!!!!!!! There wasn't a lot of talking as in the beginning it was logical (he-he-he). Once we made it to Tuxtepec we went

straight to a taco shop to get the delicious Mexican tacos. Thank God, everything worked out pretty good that day. Our Creator sent this beautiful people to provide them with this goods. I can't stop saying in the name of this people and myself, thank you for being there and being so supportive even though you guys have to travel so long to carry on this duty.

We ate good, once we were finished they proceeded to go back to the hotel but they forgot something. They had to drop me off. Well they did thank me for my help on the mission and it wasn't until 2016 that I got to see them again with the mission of going to the state of Chiapas.

I really have to recognize that Mike and Tim and the rest of the group do an amazing effort to help others and I know that's the reason why they will receive huge blessings from our Creator. I, Jose Angel Martinez, personally have to thank Tim and Mike for all of the unconditional support in this toughest time of my life where I am dealing with an illness that won't give up. [It is] the challenge of my life. God only knows the reasons, and I won't complain as much. All that I ask God is the strength to keep going and pray that pretty soon all of this will go way.

Well this is a short description of what happens when the group comes to Mexico—the land full of surprises as the story of the trip to Chiapas.

God Bless You All !!!!!!!!!!!



Our interpreters from Tuxtepec. They were invaluable to our communication with friends. Then they became our friends and participants in the work we are performing. From left to right: Tim Brown, Sergio Estrada, Joshua Estrada, Jose Martinez, and Mike Brown

**We're on the web at
www.hceti.org**

The Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, Inc is a Missouri not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the study, research and dissemination of information as it pertains to the Book of Mormon. Our primary focus is to research and assemble archaeological and other related information to help establish the historical feasibility of the Book of Mormon.

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Children's Page by Terry and Chris Scott

Signs in the Heavens *Continued*

gether the remainder of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

So, if this celestial alignment in Virgo this fall is the Great Sign in Heaven, then what can we expect? The scriptures in Revelation 12 say that the child that is born was caught up to God to His throne. Many believe this is present tense—that the church will be caught up at that time. But, latter-day Restoration scripture tells us that the child of the virgin (Bride of Christ/Church) is Zion, and it is already caught up to God and His throne. This happened during the time of Enoch when he and his city were taken up to God. John is implying that this child of the church (Zion) will be born and that the great beast (Satan) will attempt to devour the child, but that Michael and his angels will battle the beast and the child (Zion) will be brought forth. What we have to endure are the labor pains of this process, and such is the tribulation.

So, the tetrad of 2014-2015 is certainly telling of a major spiritual shift in the world, and it definitely affects Israel

because it is the gathering of all of Israel, both literal ancestry and adopted through the blood of Christ.

Earlier in the article we talked about the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn as it relates to ascension to kingship. The last triple-conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn occurred in the constellation of Virgo in 1981. This implies that some momentous event took place at that time concerning the ascension of someone who will greatly impact latter-day Israel. I have yet to understand who that was or is, but I have no doubt that time will reveal it.

Enoch was given personal heavenly instruction concerning the signs of the times, those celestial markers in the heavens that watchmen could seek out to understand the events that were about to transpire. The Magi were watchmen, and because we know that the Maya were the culture of the Magi, we know that they had the sacred knowledge of Enoch which compelled them to watch the heavens for the signs of His coming.³ We too are commissioned to watch for His signs. The Psalmist David knew about this when he penned this verse: "*The heavens*

declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." The signs will be in the heavens—how do we know? Because King David told us in the 8th Chapter of Psalms: "*When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained,*" God has ordained the motions of the heavens to signal to us what is about to transpire. He is about to establish His kingdom on Earth. We are about to witness the gathering of Israel, the flourishing of Zion and the return of our Lord and King.

The Maya were watchers and they recorded how the signs in the heavens marked particular shifts in Israelite culture. That aspect of our God still applies today for He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Footnotes

1. Charles, Robert: Book of Enoch (translation) Book of Astronomy.
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