



The Descending God

By David B. Brown © 2023

The Yucatan region is known for its imagery of the Descending God, also referred to as the Diving God. This is most often a plaster frieze image of a mortal with his feet in the air above his head and his head and arms in a diving position. These images are found on vases and above doorways on buildings throughout the Yucatan.



The questions that arises here are these: Does the Diving God of the Yucatan connect to anything in the Book of Mormon? Is this figure indicating something that is important for

our research that connects the cultures of Mesoamerica with the Book of Mormon? To answer these questions, we must consider the New World paradigm of who Jesus Christ was and how he was perceived by the peoples of this land.

The Old World document of Jesus Christ is contained in the record of the Jews which we call the Holy Bible. Here we read of a Messiah who was prophesied for millennia prior to the advent of Jesus. Then they witness his birth, his youth, his ministry, his passion, his death, his burial and his resurrection. It is the complete story that includes all of the facets of the human experience. Therefore, the primary Biblical symbol for Jesus Christ is the cross; some with Christ on it and others with an empty cross. But it is a cross none-the-less—it is the symbol of humanity willingly conspiring to sentence their creator to death as they reject His ministry. They saw him as a **human being** who was overstepping his place in society and was not willing

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The Value of On-site Research

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As a son of Glenn A. Scott (author of Voices from the Dust), an avid reader of the Book of Mormon and a Board Member of the Hill Cumorah Expedition Team, I guess I qualify as a novice researcher of Book of Mormon archaeology. This last trip to Mexico was my fifth venture abroad to visit the Maya ruins in Mesoamerica and I would like to share some of my excitement regarding the ten ruins we visited June 3rd thru 13th of this year.

First, kudos should be given to Dave Brown as the arranger of our nightly hotel accommodations and the primary researcher for all the sites we visited; Dzibilchaltun, Oxkintoc, Mayapan, Dzibanche, Uxmal, Calakmul, Tulum, Coba, Ek Balam and Chichen Itza. All of these are within the loop of the new Mayan Train route currently

under construction. Next in line for our appreciation was our excellent driver Mike Brown for his negotiation of the Mexican traffic and back roads, and finally we owe a lot of our success to the kindly expertise of our Mexican guide and interpreter Sergio Estrada who took ten days off his job to accompany us.

Rather than comment on each of the ten sites already covered by Dave Brown in his daily email to all our members, I want to concentrate on

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to submit to their rules. They concluded that He needed to experience the wrath of the system He was constantly ridiculing. The cross symbolizes the physical realm that rejected its very creator.

However, the New World experience of Jesus is much different. While the people of the New World were provided signs of the events taking place in the Old World, they never experienced Jesus as an infant, as a boy, as a young rabbi, as a minister of the temple, or as a rabbi teaching in the wilderness.

The people of the New World witnessed the dramatic sign of Christ's birth and 30-plus years later they experienced the incredible destruction of their physical world. All of the cities were destroyed by some form of calamity; mountains raised up from valleys and valleys created when high mountains crumbled. Everything was changed, and a sizable portion of the population was lost in this destruction. In fact, the clear statement of judgment indicates that only the more righteous of the culture were left to pick up the pieces. They had experienced an event that demonstrated the awesome power of God.

It is in this context that the people of the New World experienced the appearance of a risen Christ descending to them in His resurrected glory. The Old World put Jesus on the cross and that is their symbol for him. The New World received a risen Jesus; how would they symbolize him here? We believe that the people of Mesoamerica (Central America) symbolized Jesus as an interdimensional being who descended from Heaven to Earth. Thus far, we have found three specific indications of this concept, and we find them all in the ancient structures of the Yucatan Peninsula.

Some of the most famous and highly-visited sites have plaster-frieze features of the Diving God. Tulum has several of these plaster-frieze images and especially at the



Temple of the Frescoes at Tulum.

Temple of the Frescoes. The ground floor of this temple has a total of five doorways with a Descending God over three of them, and images of honey bees alongside. The numbers and architectural placement of these features tell the story.

Being two stories, it is indicating heaven and earth with the ground floor representing the earth. This is further verified by the five doorways which correlates to the earthly plane created by the two axes of length and width. This creates the plane of five points where the end point of each axis represents the four directions and a fifth point by the intersection of the two axes.

The implication of the three Descending God doorways with honey bees in the façade refers to the Three Nephites who were given the gift of moving freely between heaven and earth to gather souls for the harvest, just as bees gather pollen to create honey. The plaster images are displayed directly over the doorways because they enter and exit our physical realm through the doorway, or portal, of prayer. The Three Nephites are symbolized on the ground floor because they en-

tered into their interdimensional calling by first being physical beings that were supernaturally transformed into interdimensional missionaries.

The orientation of this building is such that these three doorways are on the north/south axis. In Mayan cosmology, this axis from south to north pivots 90-degrees to become the earth to heaven axis; the south becomes the earth and the north becomes the heavens.

The second story of the building is placed directly in the center of the floor plate above the ground floor. It only has one doorway and one Descending God displayed over that doorway. This represents Jesus descending from heaven into the physical realm in His resurrected and glorified state. Being placed above the ground floor, his "mansion" above represents the axis of earth to heaven and He is diving out of His heavenly realm into our earthly realm.

Further, the imagery of the Descending God is such that the feet are positioned at the top to indicate that His feet are in heaven for it is

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where He walks and resides, but the arms and head are in the earthly realm because that is where He performs His work (arms) and imparts His knowledge (head).

Several more structures at Tulum have images of the Descending God over the doorway. These include the Temple of the Descending God, El Castillo (lighthouse) and the Temple of the Wind God. It is clear that Tulum was not only a port for merchants to trade their wares, but it was also used for visitors to be introduced to the sacred beliefs of the people who built and maintained these lands.

Several miles inland at Coba, we have another structure with images of the Descending God. *Nohoch*



Descending God at Nohoch Mul in Coba.

Mul is the tallest pyramid at the site, and it has a temple at the top of this 137-foot tall pyramid. There are three Descending God images on the façade of this structure, but only one doorway located beneath the middle Descending God plaster image. We believe that these represent those who have the ability to move in and out of the earthly realm by utilizing the portal of

prayer. Therefore, this is referring to the Three Nephites who were given the gift of interdimensional travel through the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. Additionally, there is a conical pyramid that the archaeologists call “The Watchtower”, but its design bares a striking



The Throne located near the top of the Acropolis on the north end of Ek Balam. This demonstrates a tomb swallowed up by the Earth Monster who devours all flesh. But, above all is the God-head of three entities, one of which steps into the physical realm.

resemblance to a beehive, which is a consistent theme at Coba. Again, we see this as evidence of the ancients testifying of their experience with the Three Nephites and the special supernatural commission they received to move in and out of the “hive” (heaven) to win souls to Christ until He comes again.



The “Beehive” Pyramid at Coba.

At Ek Balam, we see another symbol of Jesus Christ. At the Temple of the Throne, located on the north Acropolis, there is a tomb, above which several plaster figures are displayed. Again, as Tulum, the architecture and design tell the story. The plaster figures are all locat-

ed above the lintel of the tomb—they are located in the heavens. The three directly above the tomb door represent the Three-in-One. God the lawgiver is seated on a throne in the center; the Holy Spirit is sitting cross-legged on the left; and Jesus is seated to the right of the Father, but He is positioned with one foot stepping out of the heavenly realm because He is our earthly messenger and mediator.

These three heavenly figures are positioned directly above the tomb door because they are the highest point of the axis of earth to heaven. At death, our bodies go into the earthly tomb and our spirits immediately return to God in heaven.

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What about the other figures that are also located in the heavens, but are off to the side? There were originally two on the left and two on the right, but time and decay have erased the one on the far left.

We believe that these are the four “tarriers”; the Three Nephites and John the Beloved. As a matter of fact, we believe the one on the far right is representing John. His dress is much different than the others, he has twelve large beads on his chest plate that we believe alludes to his membership as one of the original twelve apostles, and he is positioned on the east end of the display because his story takes place over

way to death, so they have overcome death. Each of the four figures have wings to indicate that they are airborne creatures. And, they are not positioned between the tomb door and those who reside in heaven; these four exist outside of the tomb and pathway from death to the creator. What was the gift that Christ gave these four servants? That they would not taste of death until Jesus would come again in His glory with the powers of heaven. Therefore, these four do not stand over the tomb doorway for their bodies have not died. They stand above the doorway because they move in and out of heaven, and

descended from heaven to earth and then commissioned “winged” servants to perform the role of collecting souls for a royal harvest.

One added note of interest concerning these three ancient sites; if one places a starting point on the Temple of the Descending God in Tulum and draws a line to the large kiva at Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon, the line goes right over the top of pyramids at Coba and Ek Balam. Most of these Yucatan sites were abandoned during the 9th and 10th Centuries AD and that is the same time that a new influx of migrants came into the Chaco Canyon region. It is as if the ancient people of the Yucatan were pointing to the place where they were heading.

One last symbol for the concept of a Descending God can be found at Chichen Itza and other sites built with similar themes such as Mayapan. It is at these sites that we find the concept of the feathered serpent known in Maya as Kukulcan, and sometimes better known by its Aztec name of Quetzalcoatl. The large central pyramid at Chichen Itza is called El Castillo, and the primary artistic feature of this structure is the descending serpent whose tail is depicted in the pillar of the temple at the top with his head resting on the ground at the base of the steps. (Photo on page 8).

Archeoastronomy reveals that on the night of Christ’s birth (September 9, 7 BC), the serpent constellation Draco was the northernmost constellation in the sky and the Phoenix was the southernmost constellation. In conjunction with many other planetary alignments, all of these features were then incorporated into the symbol of the feathered serpent. Kukulcan is a symbol of Christ coming out of heaven and taking human form. Humanity is equivalent to the snake in that it was the deceit of the serpent that initiated the fall of man. Therefore, like the serpent, humani-

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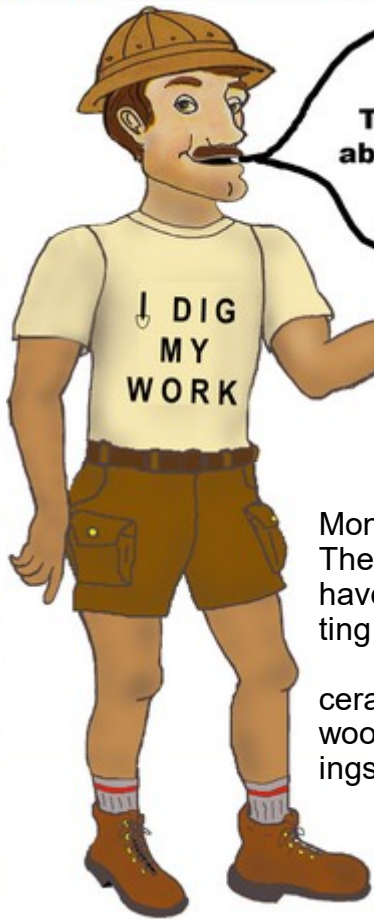
The figure on the upper left shows Christ stepping out of the heavens to enter into our earthly realm. The two figures on the right are the “tarriers” with the far right representing John the Beloved and the center one representing one of the Three Nephites.

7,000 miles east of the Yucatan in the land of Jerusalem.

I am certain the question now arises, “Why do you believe these figures are representing the ‘tarriers’?” Because of their placement. They stand above the lintel of the tomb which represents the door-

they stand to the left and right side of the doorway because they are on a pathway that suspends the process of dying and immediately returning to the Creator.

At each of these three sites: Tulum, Coba and Ek Balam, we find evidences of a belief in a God who



Hello Arty here again. I have missed you all. Today I would like to talk about the animals that lived in the Maya world with them and around them.

Animals in the Mayan world

If you went out into the forest when the Maya lived, you might find animals familiar to you such as; Bats, Deer, Ducks, Eagles, Frogs, Snakes, Squirrels, Turkeys or Turtles. In their towns you might find; Dogs or Horses. [1-4] You might even recognize Armadillos if you have been in Texas or Oklahoma.

You probably have not seen Coatomundis, Iguanas, Jaguars, Monkeys, Parrots or Toucan, unless you have visited the zoo. The Maya raised Dogs but probably not Horses. Horses must have been very rare, since no one had found horse remains dating back to the time of the Maya until recently. [1-4]

We know about these animals because the Maya created ceramics of the things they saw around them. They used clay or wood or stone to make figures, jars, bowls, toys and wall carvings. Shown below is some of their art work.

[1] Collin, Yvette Running Horse, The Relationship Between The Indigenous Peoples of The American and the Horse: Deconstructing a Euro centric Myth, University of Alaska, 2017, p.48, 144, 155
[2] Farley, Gloria. In Plain Sight: Old World Records in Ancient America. Columbus, GA: ISAC Press, 1993.
[3] Clayton E. Ray, "Pre-Columbian Horses From Yucatan," Journal of Mammalogy vol. 38 no. 2 (May 1957), p. 278
[4] Andrew Coe, Archaeological Mexico (Chico: Moon Publications, 1998), p. 304, 321, 322



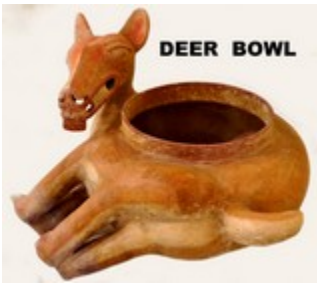
COATAMUNDI



TOUCAN



JAGUAR WHEELED TOY



DEER BOWL



TURTLE



IGUANA



EAGLE



PARROT



DUCK



DOG





MONKEY



ARMADILLO



SNAKE



SQUIRREL



BAT



TURKEY on JAR



FROG



HORSE FIGURINE

WORD SEARCH

Find and circle the words from the story:

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

- ARMADILLO
- BAT
- COATIMUNDI
- DEER
- DOGS
- DUCK
- EAGLE
- FROG
- HORSE
- IGUANA
- JAGUAR
- MONKEY
- PARROT
- SNAKE
- SQUIRREL
- TOUCAN
- TURKEY
- TURTLE

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The Value of On-site Research *continued*

what I saw as the most memorable sites we visited. Let me begin with the fact that it was HOT. It frequently was 103 degrees by mid-day when we were on most of the sites.



Panoramic view of the tight configuration of structures at Mayapan. This site also has an observatory and several similar structures to that those found at Chichen Itza. It was also surrounded by a defensive wall, indicating that it was built at a time when tensions and wars were prevalent in the region.

The first site that excited me was Mayapan which could be seen all at once from the 62-foot-high pyramid at the back of the site. There was virtually no vegetation on the site which was all on the same grade as if sitting on a giant platter.

The next site only reachable by Mexican back roads and most recently opened to the public was Oxkintoc. It was exciting to me due to the several plazas obviously built to accommodate huge crowds of worshippers.

My next favorite site was Dzibanche which was hidden back under a forest cover with two large (they are all large) temples facing each other and visitor quarters for the Mayan pilgrims.

Next was Uxmal which was one of the two largest sites we would see. The main features of this site

were the Nunnery Quadrangle (a large square surrounded by one-story temples with many doors to open rooms), the Governor's Palace (a huge elevated long, one-story building with many open rooms)

and finally the Pyramid of the Magician. This was the first structure visible to visitors as they entered the site. As the trees opened up, the pyramid completely filled our view with its immensity and its rounded corners.

I would really be slighting our trip if I didn't comment on the beauty of the setting for the Tulum seaport city built on a cliff overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. Its main feature was the lighthouse built to guide sea-faring vessels into port while missing the

reef. A disappointing feature of Tulum was the sloppiness of the construction other than the light house and its adjoining buildings. Given the superior engineering skills of the Mayans the sloppiness evident at Tulum was both surprising and disappointing.

Finally, the outstanding climax of our trip was our visit to Chichen Itza. Readers may relate to this site by the pictures of El Castillo in the central plaza, famous for the serpentine shadows creeping down its stairs at sunrise and sunset. However, that is just the beginning, other famous structures on this site were the Temple of 1,000 Warriors, the



A view of the beach below the Tulum Lighthouse that was the likely off-boarding spot for commercial goods being brought in by sea.

observatory and the mammoth ball court. I would guess (based on the 2015 KC Royals World Series celebration crowd) that the plaza around the central Temple could easily hold over a half million people at one time. Our cameras are unable to communicate the vastness of this site.

Each of these sites made the trip worthwhile in and of themselves. But with the expertise of Dave Brown regarding the archaeological significance of all these sites and seeing them in person made this trip a once-in-a-lifetime experience as the parallels with the Maya culture is revealed. It truly brings the Book of Mormon story to life.



Quetzalcoatl plaster frieze found at Dzibanche in Quintana Roo.

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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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The Descending God *Continued*

ty is doomed to eternally remain in the physical realm of the four directions until he decides to accept Christ and erect the third axis of earth to heaven. This parallels with Moses lifting the serpent on the rod and telling the bitten Israelites to look upon it and live. Establishing the axis from earth to heaven creates the pathway for man to follow Christ from the grave to eternity. Jesus rose from the grave, became the phoenix which placed feathers on the serpent and ascended back to heaven. This is the symbolism of the feathered serpent.

Once Jesus resurrected, He visited the people of this land and His depiction at Chichen Itza is of a feathered serpent descending from heaven with his head upon the earth. Therefore, the feathered serpent is yet another symbol of the descension of God from His heav-



Kukulcan feathered serpent head at Chichen Itza.

enly realm to our earthly realm. It is yet another artistic expression of a Descending God.

These three images of the Descending God with the person diving out of heaven toward earth at Tulum and Coba, Christ stepping out of his heavenly throne at Ek Balam, and the descending feathered serpent at Chichen Itza and Mayapan all dis-

play the concept of a creator god who appeared to the people of Mesoamerica in a supernatural manner as described in III Nephi when Christ appeared to them in the land Bountiful.

“And it came to pass as they understood, they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a man descending out of heaven; And he was clothed in a white robe, and he came down and stood in the midst of them; and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him; and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant, for they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them. And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying, Behold, I am Jesus Christ, of whom the prophets testified should come into the world;”