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The Voice of God in the Cosmos

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The heavens declare the glory of God! So, wrote David 5,200 years ago. How do the Heavens declare the Glory of God? What was the message God revealed in His divinely inspired word? Referring to, Psalms 19:1 and 19:7, “the Heavens declare the glory of God, the sky displays his handiwork; night after night it reveals His greatness, the Law of the Lord is perfect” Additionally, recorded in Genesis 28:10 Jacob, son of Isaac dreamed of a ladder between Heaven and earth with God's angels upon it, ascending and descending (Official Ritual, 2007, p. 40). It was challenging to understand the ancient symbolism until revealed in the New Testament, that Christ is that Ladder.

King David knew God created the Stars (Genesis 1:14-19). David understood that it was God and not chance, who set the Stars in specific places (Psalms 8:3), and it was God who named the Stars (Psalms 147:4; Isaiah 40:26). It is a fantastic Biblical fact that God named the stars and left the naming of animals to man. Various authors have posited the names of the stars were important to God due to their prophetic significance (Fleming). David knew the meanings of the names of the stars. In Hebrew, the names of the stars were in everyday use in Messianic prophecies and aspirations of God's ancient people (Fleming, 1981). David could identify well-known lucent stars and contemplate on their significance. Such were the beginnings of the Ancients whose reasoning exemplified the ideas which considered God and God's relationship to humanity. Particular to the Kabbalist was a doctrine of the Essenes, who believed that souls descended from the ether and were attracted to bodies (Pike, 1906, p.441). The doctrine of Origen came principally from the Chaldeans, who studied the heavens, spheres, and the influences of the signs and constellations (Pike, p.441).

In the Blue Lodge, seven liberal arts and sciences form the foundation of the Fellowcraft degree, one of which is astronomy. We learn from the Theoricus Grade that ancient Philosophers imagined a world of the very large and the very small and its relationship to the Creator and the Soul. The very large was the Created Universe containing the stars, planets, and the moon (Official Ritual, p. 40). The very small was the Soul of Man, influenced by the Heavens, thus establishing an intimate connection between God and man. From the Theoricus order, we understand the Sun, Moon, and Stars and corresponding signs of the zodiac unveil the hidden influences of the Great Architect upon the soul and were considered Vice- Regents to God. Constellations are composed of stars and their decans. Also, the ecliptic plane holds twelve zodiacal signs, six above and six below.

Of the twelve basic constellations, we will examine only the constellation of Virgo and its three decans (meaning a part), saving the other zodiacal signs for a later time. Each basic zodiacal constellation has three supporting constellations to amplify its underlying meaning. The twelve signs with their decans divided the zodiac into three groups, which present the threefold work of Christ as Savior. In the first four signs, Christ is the Suffering Savior delivering man from the penalty of sin. In the middle four signs, Christ is portrayed as the Glorified Blessor, delivering man from the power of sin. In the remaining four signs, Christ is the Reigning Judge delivering man from the presence of sin. As a prelude to the discussion of Virgo we examine some of the ancient meanings of the names of the major stars and how they changed through history; with only a passing familiarity of fundamental astronomy one should be able recognize the significant stars such as, Spica [in Virgo], meaning ‘the Branch’, Arcturus [in Bootis], means ‘He comes’, Pollux in Gemini, means ‘Who Comes To Suffer’, Sirius, in Canis Major, means ‘the Prince’, Elnath in Taurus, means ‘the Slain’, [in Canis Major] Procyon, in Canis Major means the Redeemer’, Vega, in Lyra, means ‘He Shall Be Exalted’. David also knew the stars had a divine purpose; there shall be for signs, for seasons, days, and years (Genesis 1:14). The stars are signs to indicate heavenly occurrences, revealing a pictorial presentation of what God was going to do in history, especially concerning the suffering and glory of the coming Savior (Fleming, 1981).

David knew and it was confirmed in Job, that God caused the 12 signs of the zodiac (meaning The Way) to appear in regular order during the year (Job 38:31-32). The first zodiac sign, in ancient writings, is Virgo (Lane. n.d.), named for the coming Seed, that is, Jesus from a woman; who would destroy the head of the Serpent (Genesis 3:15). Prophetic revelation continues through all signs of the zodiac depicting Atonement, the Suffering Redeemer, the Messiah coming to rule, and the final overthrow of Satan. The final sign is Leo, which speaks of the Messiah, Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, which conquers over evil as foretold in the second coming. Interesting, the prophecy revealed in the signs of the heavens follow the same order as the Word of God. Five thousand years ago, David declared, 'when I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou dost take thought of him?' (Psalm 8:3-4). Even without the aid of modern science, David was awestruck by the wonders of the night sky and man's smallness to it. David must have been excited that in such immenseness, God considered humans as necessary (Fleming, 1981).

Three thousand years before writing became widely used for the preservation of truth, narratives were memorized and passed down through the generations, a method familiar to masons. The ancient narratives, beyond the Biblical record, unfortunately, have been distorted by people such as Babylonian astrologers and the Greeks, who expanded the narratives into myths (Fleming; Lane). Nevertheless, the fundamental core of ancient knowledge represented in the constellations is essentially the same wherever found in different civilizations. The Hebrews, Aztecs, Babylonians, Norsemen, Egyptians, and Chinese all recognize the constellations, their stars, and their decans, applying substantially the same meaning to each.

Underneath the myths, corruption, and idolatry, the same cosmic pattern exists. The similarity of names for stars from various civilizations has led scholars to posit Judaism and Christianity developed out of 'ancient religions.' The heathen religions are a perversion of the original, which came from God in pure form (Fleming). Scripture is not silent on the subject of the stars and their relationship to the gospel (Fleming). Orion, for example, is mentioned three times in the Bible [Job 9:19; Job 38:31 and Amos 5:8]; but who would guess at that time, the prophetic illustration of the Coming Prince, was approaching in glory to judge and rule.

God placed prophetic signs in the Heavens to help man understand what will happen in the future. For example, the constellation Orion, which means, 'Coming as Light.' Orion, the Hunter, holds a club in one hand and the skin of a slain lion in the other. The hunter shows his victory over the 'roaring lion' who is Satan. Below the feet of Orion is the serpent, one foot of the Prince is raised to crush its head. The bright star that marks the foot is Rigel, which means 'The foot that crushes.' The other foot is Saiph, which means 'Bruised,' the Word of God is speaking about the serpent, 'You shall bruise Him [the Seed] on the heel. One star in the shoulder of Orion is Betelgeuse, meaning, 'The Coming of the Branch,' while the star in the other shoulder is Bellatrix, meaning 'Swiftly Destroying.' In Arabic, Al-Nitak, the right-hand star in Orion's belt means, 'The Wounded.' God named and placed the stars so the ancients would understand the truth of a coming Redeemer.

Table 1: Meaning of the Constellations of the Zodiac

Constellation	Ancient Represent ion	Meaning
1 Virgo	The Virgin	The birth mother [Woman] of the Savior [Seed of the Woman]
2 Libra	The Cross	Where Jesus [Lamb of God] died to pay the penalty for sin
3 Scorpio	The Seed of Satan	The Anti-God – where it is "Every Man for Himself."
4 Sagittarius	Divine Judgment of Nations	[Arrow] according to the Law of God

5 Capricorn	The Dispersion of Israel	[Goat sinks into Sea] for sins
6 Aquarius	The Servant Jesus	[Son of Man] washes feet of apostles at Last Supper
7 Pisces	Christians	Choose either Religion [Bound Fish] or Swimming [Free Fish]
8 Aires	The Resurrected Christ	[Lamb becomes Ram]: watches over His believers
9 Taurus	The Age of the Gentile Kings	[Bull] from the 2nd Diaspora to the Rapture
10 Gemini	The Two Witnesses	Last Prophets of God to die, the first half of the Tribulation
11 Cancer	The Sheep Folds	The False Prophet's trap, the second half of the Tribulation
12 Leo	2 <sup>nd</sup> Coming of Messiah	[Lion] Christ the King conquers all

The prophetic revelation in the heavens begins with the sign of Virgo (Fleming, 2012). Virgo is in the southern sky during the summer, distinguished by the bright star Spica. The name of the sign is from Latin and has a dual significance. Virgo means *A Virgin*, and *Virga* means a *Branch*. The Latin *Vulgate* uses both words as referring to Christ, as the *Branch* in Isaiah 11:1 and as *virgin-born* in Matthew 1:23.

In ancient languages, the same meanings are unmistakable. The Hebrew name for it is *Bethulah*, which is the common word used for a virgin in the Old Testament. The Arabs called it *Adarah* (Virgin), and the Greeks called it *Parthenos*, which is the word for virgin in the New Testament. "Behold, a virgin [Partenos] shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, or God with us (Matthew 1:23). In the traditions of these and other ancient peoples, she was not only a virgin but a virgin mother. In Egypt, she was named *Aspolio*, which means *The Seed*, thereby confirming the connection between the virgin and her son.

The names of individual stars in the sign amplify its underlying meaning. Spica, the bright star in her left hand, has the ancient meaning of *The Branch* and marks the ear of wheat (*The Seed*), which she holds. The personal identity of Him, who was the Seed of woman, connects the prophecies of the *Branch*, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the *Seed* of the woman who would bruise the head of the serpent while Himself bruised (Genesis 3:15). He was also to be called the Branch of Jehovah, in one of the most exciting lines of prophetic truth in the Old Testament (Fleming, 2012).

In Hebrew, the name for the star Spica was Tsemech. Of the more than twenty Hebrew words for branch used in the Old Testament, this is the only one that refers exclusively to the Messiah. As the Tsemech Christ identifies as *King* in Jeremiah 23:5,6 as *Servant* in Zechariah 3:8, as *Man* in Zechariah 6:12, and as *God* in Isaiah 4:2. Other star names also speak of Christ, *Zavijava*, near Virgo's head, means *Gloriously Beautiful*, the same word is found in Isaiah 4:2 concerning the Branch of Jehovah: "In that day shall the branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious." In the right arm of Virgo is the star *Vindemiatrix*, which means *The Son Who Comes* or *The Branch Who Comes*. The star *Subilon* in her right-hand means *Ear of Wheat* and looks to the coming One who called Himself the *Corn of Wheat* who should fall into the ground and die to bring forth fruit (John 12:24).

The truth presented in the sign of Virgo is that the virgin was to have a son (her Seed) who would be called the Branch of Jehovah (Fleming). God would appear in human form, the Child of a virgin mother. The order of the constellations in the zodiac the same as the Gospel of Christ unfolds in the Scriptures. The three decans of Virgo amplify the coming, the suffering, and the glory of the Seed of the woman.

The first decan in the constellation of Virgo is *Coma*. Most modern charts have the *Coma Bernecies* (Bernecie's Hair). Berneice was the wife of Ptolemy III of Egypt and vowed to dedicate her beautiful hair to the temple of Venus if her husband returned safely from an expedition (Fleming, 2012). Ptolemy did return, Berneice placed her hair in the temple, but it was stolen. Comforting her, the

astronomer Conon declared that the god Jupiter had taken it and made it a constellation. This story is an example of how ancient meanings became perverted. So the ancient meaning was changed. The name Coma in Hebrew means The Desired or the Longed For. The Egyptian temple of Denderah depicted Coma as a seated woman and her child, which dates two thousand years before Christ (Fleming).

Albumazar, an Arab astronomer in the eighth century wrote, "There arises in the first decan, as the Persians, Chaldeans, and Egyptians teach, a young woman whose Persian name denotes a pure virgin sitting on a throne, nourishing an infant boy having a Hebrew name, by some nations called Ihesu, which in Greek is called Christos." There are no brilliant stars in Coma, but there are a large number of dimmer ones. The connection with the sign of Virgo is evident. The woman in both signs is the same, the Virgin Mary. The desired Son is Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem. The Hebrew form of the root Coma is the word the prophet Haggi used when speaking of the coming of the Messiah: "The desire of all nations shall come" (Haggi 2:7). Through historical and religious records, it cannot be known if the "star of Bethlehem" was a new star in the constellation Coma. However, what the constellation Coma does reveal is the coming Seed of the woman in Virgo was to be the Child born, and the Son is given (Isaiah 9:6). The Lord Jesus was this "longed-for" Son, born in the village of Bethlehem to be the savior of the world.

The second decan in the constellation of Virgo is Centaurus (The Despised). Together with the stars of the Southern Cross, which it surrounds, it twinkles with one of the most glorious displays in the heavens. Centaurus is depicted as a centaur, the torso, and head of a man with the body and legs of a horse, illustrating two-dimensions of a single being Jesus. The Hebrew name for it was *Bezeh*, which means The Despised. It is the same word which the prophet Isaiah used in speaking of Christ: "He is despised and rejected of men" (Isaiah 53:3). Another Hebrew name for it was *Asmeath*, which means A *Sin-Offering* (Isaiah 53:10).

Christ has two natures within one Being, that is, both God and Man. The dual-natured Centaurus illustrates this. The Centaur piercing the Lupus, with a spear, and over the Southern Cross, speaks of life from death. The main star in the constellation is the third-brightest in the heavens, Alpha Centauri. The ancient name of this star is Toliman, which means The Heretofore and the Hereafter. The name refers to Christ as the One who is, who was, and who is to come (Revelation 1:8). He has eternal existence as God. In connecting the name of the constellation with the name of its chief star, we see the dual nature of Jesus Christ. As a Man, Jesus was despised as an *Offering for Sin*, and as God, He is Eternal.

The Greek name for Centaurus was Cherion (The Pierced). In mythology, he was famous for his skill in hunting, medicine, music, athletics, and prophecy; all the superlative heroes were his students. He was immortal but voluntarily agreed to die when wounded by a poison arrow. He transferred his immortality to Prometheus. In this legend, we discern a corrupted form of the prophecy of Him who was despised and rejected by men and who laid down His life that others might live. The final constellation in Virgo, Bootes, completes the picture of the first grouping of four.

In Great Britain, Bootes (The Coming Shepard) is called the Ploughman, but most ancient zodiacs picture Bootes as a herdsman, an Oriental shepherd. Bootes's name is from the Hebrew root Bo, meaning The Coming. In his hand are staff and sickle. The brightest star in the constellation Bootes is Arcturus, which means He Comes. The spiritual leader, in the Bible, Job mentions Arcturus (Job 9:9), referring to the constellation as a whole rather than the specific star. Another star, Nekkar, is in the head of the shepherd its name meaning *The Pierced* (Zachariah 12:10). The star Mizar has a name meaning *Guarding*, and the star Muphride means *Who Separates*.

The Greek poet Aratus refers to Bootes as Arctophylax. Aratus was a Greek poet who wrote a lengthy poem about the constellations in 270 B.C. in order to circulate the work of the astronomer Eudoxos who lived from 403 to 350 B.C.; whose work, in turn, come from more ancient sources (Fleming 2012). Noteworthy, it was from the poem of Aratus, called the "Devine Signs," that Saint Paul quotes in Acts 17:28. From ancient traditions, the astronomer terms Bootes as a shepherd and guardian, giving us the prophecy of the Shepherd whose name means He Comes. Another star, Al Katurops, means The Branch, and we find that the incoming Shepherd links with the prophecies of *The Branch*. The Egyptians called Bootes Smat, meaning *Who Rules*.

From these names, it should be clear that the constellation Bootes pictures Christ as the Shepherd who is coming even though He had been pierced. He is coming to separate those who are not His and to guard and rule His believers. The staff in His hand is the mark of a Shepherd, and the sickle adds the thought of harvest or the harvesting of the soul.

#### Conclusion

Jesus said to his apostles; I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. A great deal of what the sky prognosticates about the future have passed. However, there remain heavenly events that will be consummated, and while the holy prophets display their quiescent communication every night. Man is unique in God's universe and is created in God's image. We have the unique ability to reason, ask questions, and to gain understanding. As representatives of the Divine significance of the old doctrines which have eternal truths, we as expounders should endeavor to move forward and boundlessly expand, advance knowledge, and gain light (Arnold, 1894). Finally, it is hoped one will regard viewing the stars with reverent significance, that is, as a testament to God's Created Universe and as a part of His revealed noesis to humankind.

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### Note:

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