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**The new star shone brightly
In the far away sky
While the baby just born
In a manger did lie.
Who really knew the meaning of this night--
That the world was being flooded with spiritual light,
And that personified love had come down from above,
To portray to a sinsick and darkened world
The victory flag o'er death being unfurled,
So that mankind could rise above the base and the crude
Because of this babe in the stable so rude.
Pray we embrace the peace and good will
Proclaimed by the angel who beckons us still
To cleanse our hearts of hatred and shame
And take upon us Jesus' good name.
Yes, we know the meaning of what transpired in that stable,
God's Son came to earth so that we'd be able
To dwell in His kingdom with Him always,
Having joy and peace, and singing His praise.**

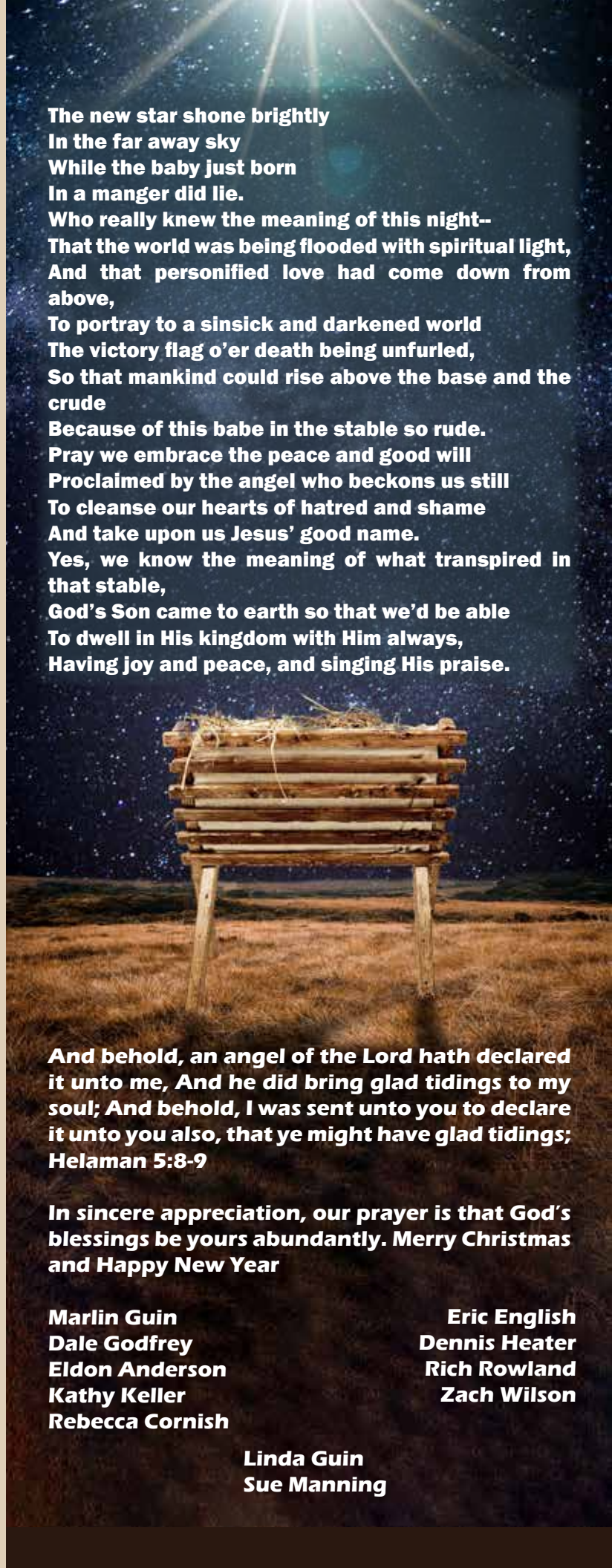
And behold, an angel of the Lord hath declared it unto me, And he did bring glad tidings to my soul; And behold, I was sent unto you to declare it unto you also, that ye might have glad tidings; Helaman 5:8-9

In sincere appreciation, our prayer is that God's blessings be yours abundantly. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

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The Relationship of God's Covenants

by James Loumiet

The house of Israel plays a major role in the fulfillment of God's covenant with Enoch and Noah. Evidence of this is found in the relationship between God's covenant with Enoch and Noah and His covenants with Israel, specifically, those with Abraham, David, Lehi, as well the New Covenant. Far from being random or unrelated to one another, together they form a system of covenants that provide the structure and substance for God's saving work with men on the earth with Jesus Christ, Redeemer and King, being the central figure in all.

One Work, Not Many

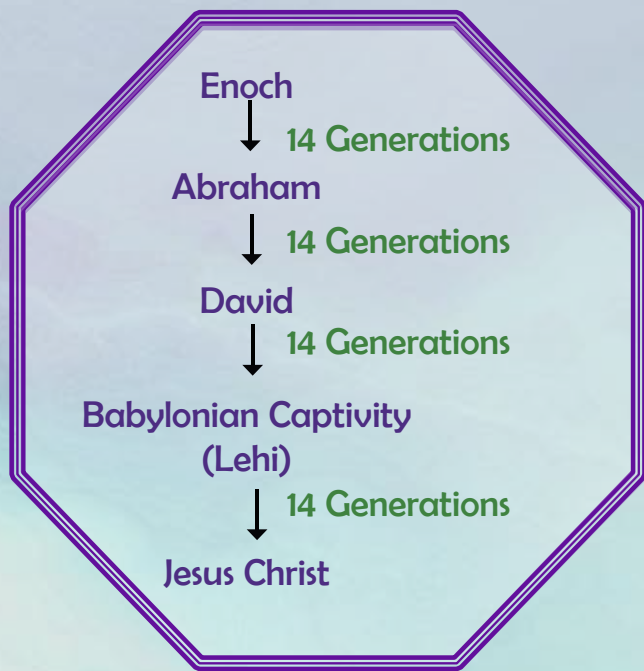
The first chapter of Matthew gives the royal lineage of Jesus Christ starting with Abraham. Then in the fifth verse a pattern is identified:

So all the generations from Abraham to David, were fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon, were fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon until Christ, were fourteen generations. (Matthew 1:5)ⁱ

A number of things are noteworthy here. Most obvious is Matthew's reference to 14 generations, not once but three consecutive times, far too precise to be a coincidence. Furthermore, these references to 14 generations are primarily between major covenant figures found in the scriptures: namely Abraham, David, and Jesus Christ. The fact that Joseph Smith, Jr. versified Matthew 1 in the Inspired Version around these figures and generations, unlike the versing in other Bibles, suggests he also recognized a significance to this pattern.

The one seeming exception to it is the Babylonian captivity, which although a significant event in the history of the house of Israel, does not seem to follow the pattern of major covenant figures. Yet there was a major covenant established during the generation of the Babylonian captivity, and that was God's covenant with Lehi.ⁱⁱ In fact, the impending Babylonian captivity provided the backdrop for God covenanting with Lehi.

Considered in this light, not only does Matthew 1:5 seem to contain a hidden reference to the Book of Mormon, but it provides a pattern for God's administration of these covenants. Expanding on this idea and adding Enoch, another major covenant figure who was in Jesus's lineage and was 14 generations before Abraham (Genesis 6:21; Luke 3:44), reveals an even broader pattern of covenant administration involving the number 14.



The use of such a pattern suggests these covenants are integrally tied to one another and that each covenant is not just a discrete, standalone entity but is part of a bigger picture or an overarching theme. They are thematically tied to God’s work to **bring to pass the immortality, and eternal life of man** (D&C 22:23b) Hence, the covenants of God overall are not so much like a greatest hits album as they are like an organically unified symphony with God as the maestro.

That God established His covenants in such a precise and ordered fashion strongly suggests He is trying to say something about them. For one, by using a pattern, especially a genealogical one, God attests to His divine authorship of His covenants. Enoch, Abraham, David, and Lehi could hardly have collaborated and controlled the arrangement of their births or the timing of God’s covenants with them.

The number 14 is also significant. Fourteen is a multiple of seven and is representative of spiritual perfection. Bullinger explains it this way:

Fourteen being a multiple of seven, partakes of its significance; and, being double that number, implies a double measure of spiritual perfection. The number two with which it is combined (2 x 7) may, however, bring its own significance into its meaning, as in Matthew 1, where the genealogy of Jesus Christ is divided up and given in sets of 14 (2 x 7) generations, two being the number associated with incarnation.ⁱⁱⁱ

If Bullinger is correct, 14 coming from seven and two is about perfection being incarnated, that is, Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. There are other scriptures that associate Jesus with the number fourteen. The Passover lamb, a clear type of Jesus, was kept until the fourteenth day of the first month when it was then sacrificed. (Exodus 12:6; Leviticus 23:5; Numbers 28:16) Numbers 29 also describes other offerings of either seven or fourteen lambs without blemish; these lambs also being a type of Jesus.

In Numbers 9:6-11 is the account of some Israelite men who were prohibited from partaking of the Passover because they came in contact with a dead body.^{iv} They went to Moses, who went to God with the matter, and God told him the men were to wait until the 14th day of the second month to keep the Passover. Clearly, the number 14 was significant to the Passover. From all this, it appears God has used the number 14 as a witness of Jesus Christ.

God’s pattern of covenant administration not only witnesses of His authorship of His covenants but personally links Jesus Christ to each one. He is, as O. Palmer Robertson called Him, “the Christ of the Covenants.”^v

In essence, God organized His covenants to function as a system. A system is a group of interdependent elements organized and working together as a complex whole. All elements needed to achieve the desired result are included. In the case of the cited covenants, together they form the divinely sanctioned framework by which God’s saving work is governed and fulfilled.

God’s covenant with Enoch ensured man would have life on the earth after the floods. God stipulated that He would call on the children of Noah through the gospel because men would need to be righteous to be saved. He promised Enoch that, as part of His work to save all men, Jesus would come to the earth in the meridian of time and in the last days. (Genesis 7:52-54, 66-67) He further promised that in the last days He would gather His elect to His holy city Zion where He would dwell with them for a thousand years. (Genesis 7:70-72; 3 Nephi 10:1-4)

Fourteen generations later, God covenanted with Abraham and laid the foundation for the house of Israel through which Jesus Christ would come in the flesh. (Genesis 12:1-6) It would be among them

in God's promised land in Canaan that Jesus would perform His saving work. Jesus would be that seed of Abraham through which all the kindreds of the earth would be blessed. (3 Nephi 9:63-65)

Fourteen generations after Abraham, God's covenant with David established God's government for God's people on the earth. It was through this covenant that Jesus became forever bound to the throne of David. In the last days, Jesus will come and reign over His kingdom as the King of Israel and Zion. (Matthew 25:32-35)

Fourteen generations later, Lehi through covenant with God obtained the land of promise in the Americas. (1 Nephi 1:150) It would be an inheritance for the remnant of the house of Joseph (3 Nephi 7:13-14), the place where the New Jerusalem on earth would be built, and where Jesus and Enoch's Zion would return in the latter days. (Genesis 7:70-72)

Fourteen generations after Lehi and the Babylonian captivity, Jesus Christ came in the flesh to mediate the New Covenant by His death on the cross and His resurrection. (Galatians 3:20) Those who chose to follow Him, Jew and Gentile, will be saved in the kingdom of God. (2 Nephi 7:42-44; 11:22; D&C 32:2b)

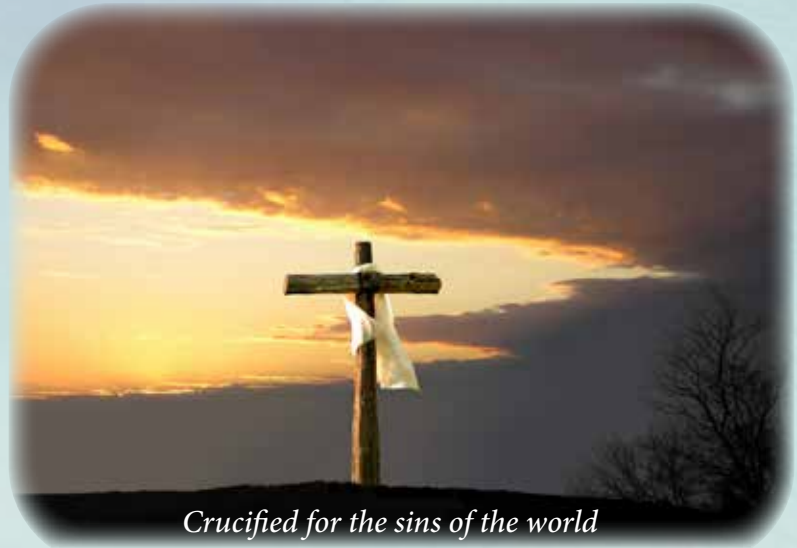
Jesus Christ and the New Covenant

The New Covenant is the new relationship between God and man mediated by Jesus Christ because of the fall and sin of man.^{vi} In the scriptures, it is referred to as the New Covenant (Galatians 3:20), the New Testament (Matthew 26:24; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:20), the Everlasting Covenant (Hebrews 13:20), the New and Everlasting Covenant (D&C 20:1a), and the fullness of the gospel (1 Nephi 3:161-170; D&C 1:4d-e; 39:3e; 66:1b; 108:11a) but they are all the same thing.

The New Covenant is the same covenant to which God has called men from the beginning. (D&C 20:1a; 49:2d) Jesus Christ its mediator was prepared **before the foundation of the world or from the foundation of the world.** (Genesis 5:43; Ether 1:77) To mediate and effectuate this covenant, Jesus came in the flesh in the meridian of time and was crucified for the sins of the world. (Hebrews 9:15-28; Mosiah 8:28-47; D&C 34:1b) He redeemed man from the fall, or first judgment and death that

came upon man in the garden of Eden. (2 Nephi 1:116; 6:10-19) Because men are redeemed from this first judgment, they are free and have agency to choose to follow either God or satan. (Genesis 6:57-58; 2 Nephi 1:116-120; Helaman 5:71-72)

Through Jesus Christ's atonement and resurrection, all men will be resurrected and stand before Him to be judged of their works.^{vii} Those who choose Jesus in this life and covenant with



Him through the New Covenant and are faithful to the end will have eternal life. Those who willfully reject Jesus and the Holy Spirit after knowing or receiving them will go through a second spiritual death. (Helaman 5:70-74; 3 Nephi 13:57-60; D&C 76:4; 83:6)

It is through repentance and the baptisms of water and Spirit that men on the earth are born again into the kingdom of God. (Genesis 6:59-65; John 3:1-10; Galatians 3:20-27) Nephi said, **For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water: and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire, and by the Holy Ghost. And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life.** (2 Nephi 13:24-25) It is Jesus Christ that established and opened this gate. Indeed, He is the gate. (John 10:1-4, 7-9)

All men are invited to enter the New Covenant and become sons and daughters of God in His kingdom.^{viii} However, this covenant must be entered into with a broken heart and a contrite spirit and a willingness to take upon oneself the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve Him to the end. (Mosiah 3:6, 11; Moroni 6:2; D&C 17:7a- d)



people, Israel, starting with Abraham. Yet prior to Abraham, God had called men into covenant with Him to be His people. In fact, Enos, Enoch, Noah, and others had not only been called of God through the gospel but were themselves preachers of righteousness. Even Melchizedek, a contemporary of Abraham, was a high priest of God and the leader of the people of God. Like Enoch and His people, Melchizedek and his people had reached a Zion level of living. (Genesis 14)

The New Covenant has been sent to men on the earth through the ministry of angels, by God's own voice, by the voice of the prophets, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, through the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ Himself, and other ways. (Genesis 5:44; Alma 9:47-56; Moroni 7:21-34) It was sent to be a light to the world and a standard for both Jews and Gentiles to seek, to be a messenger before the Lord's face and prepare the way before Him. (John 8:12; D&C 45:2d, 4b; 3 Nephi 7:38; 9:92; 10:1-2) It was sent that men might have life and be made partakers of the glories, and to prepare the weak for those things coming on the earth. (D&C 66:1b; 108:11a) By it, God will recover His people who are of the house of Israel. (D&C 39:3e; 3 Nephi 7:34-37) And the day will come that all the nations of the earth shall acknowledge it and bow to it. (D&C 49:2d-e)

It is this New Covenant through Jesus Christ that is at the heart of God's saving work with men. Since man's fall, it has been the only way they could have a relationship with God. (Mosiah 1:113; 8:5) Without the New Covenant and the infinite and eternal sacrifice of Jesus Christ that brought it into being, men would forever be lost and all other covenants between God and man would be meaningless. (1 Nephi 3:6; 2 Nephi 8:12-14; Jacob 5:19-21; Mosiah 8:76-80)

God's Covenants and the House of Israel

Noah's blessing on his son Shem (Genesis 9:29-31) brought with it the revelation and promise that of Shem's descendants would come God's covenant

A a Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;

b that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil;

c And deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

B For verily, he took not on him the likeness of angels;

B but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

A a Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethern,

b that he might be a merciful and faithful priest in those things pertaining to God,

c to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. (Hebrew. 2:14-17; Romans. 5:19)

So, why did God call Abraham and make of him God's covenant people?

One thing that stands out with Abraham compared to others before him, was that his calling was different. While others were called into the family of God, Abraham was called to father it. For

Jesus Christ to come in the flesh in the likeness of men and save them, someone had to do this. The Atonement of Christ is from the foundation of the world (Mosiah 2:10-11) and is infinite and eternal. (Alma 16:210, 215) The fact that Abraham lived after Enos, Enoch, etc. and Jesus came and died in the meridian of time is irrelevant. The Atonement is not bound by the constraints of time but reaches all men throughout history. It would be through the blessed seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ, that the nations of the earth would be blessed, both the house of Israel and the Gentiles. (Acts 3:25-26; 3 Nephi 9:63-65)

The house of Israel also provided the perfect environment for Jesus to accomplish His saving work on the earth. He would be born among them as one of them and set an example for them, and indeed, for all men. (2 Nephi 13:8-32) The law and the prophets under which Israel lived, and which defined their very existence, would provide the backdrop for His teachings, His works, and His divine nature to be made manifest. Jesus would also become subject to their sin and judgment so that all men might become subject to Him. (2 Nephi 7:5-7; Alma 5:23; 3 Nephi 12:25-35)

From the time of Abraham going forward, God's people would in many ways be defined through God's covenant with him. They would receive the covenant promises given to Abraham even in the latter days. The Gentiles that would come to God through Jesus and the New Covenant would also be numbered among the seed of Abraham and receive the Abrahamic Covenant promises. Abraham, through faith, became the father of all who believed in God and Jesus Christ. (Romans 4:11-12; Galatians 3:13-14; Mosiah 8:40-60) With no other man is this said.

It was not coincidental that Jesus Christ coming in the flesh and the establishment of the house of Israel both started with Abraham. The scriptures identify Jesus with various labels: a king, a shepherd, a vine, and a bridegroom. But kings must have kingdoms. Shepherds must have sheep. Vines must have branches. Bridegrooms must have brides. It was also for this reason that the house of Israel was established. They are the tents of Shem in which God dwells. (Genesis 9:31) It is they who have the Lord as their God and are the fulfillment of the blessing on Shem.

Even as king and high priest are offices held by Jesus (Hebrew 7:11-27), in many respects the house of Israel is the office of His covenant people. Some see the house of Israel only as a race of people but that is only part of the picture. It is the family of God. And there are multiple ways one can become part of a family, including (re)birth, adoption, and marriage. In ancient times, one could even be purchased into a household. (Genesis 17:18-19; 47:13-25; Revelation 5:8-9)

The concept of numbering is an important part of a covenant relationship with God. It comes from the Hebrew *paqad*, with one of its definitions being "to muster," which is a formal assembly of a body. In terms of a covenant, to be numbered among God's people is to be a member of God's covenant community or family with all the blessings that go with it. To no longer be numbered or have one's name **blotted out** is to be expelled from the covenant community. (Numbers 26:61-62; Mosiah 11:141-145) As already noted, even the Gentiles who come to God through covenant with Christ are numbered among the house of Israel and have an inheritance with them (1 Nephi 3:201-203; 3 Nephi 7:38, 9:92, 14:1-3). Those who reject Jesus, regardless of their lineage, will ultimately be cast off.

For behold, I say unto you,

- a That as many of the Gentiles
- b as will repent,
- c are the covenant people of the Lord;
- a and as many of the Jews
- b as will not repent,
- c shall be cast off;

For the Lord covenanteth with none, save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel.
(2 Nephi 12:77-78; 2 Nephi 7:23)

In the end, it is not whether one's lineage is Israelite or Gentile that determines their fitness for God's kingdom. It is their relationship with Jesus

Christ that determines this. Men must be born again of water and the Spirit into the kingdom or family of God (Genesis 6:62; John 3:1-10) All who do so are numbered among the house of Israel and partake of the covenant promises to them. Whether Israelite or Gentile, the name by which they are called and saved is not Seth, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, or Israel, but Jesus Christ.^{ix}

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Greek,
there is neither bond nor free,
there is neither male nor female;

for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
(Galatians 3:27-29; Jacob 3:144)

When Jesus Christ returns in glory, it will be to His elect who are numbered among the house of Israel, **even as many as will believe in me, and hearken unto my voice.** (D&C 32:2b) It will be in fulfillment of His covenant with Enoch and Noah that His elect will be gathered to prepare for His return. (Genesis 7:67-72; Revelation 21:10-12; Ether 6:10-12) The New Jerusalem will be **built up upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph** (Ether 6:6) and **they who are numbered among the remnant of the seed of Joseph.** (Ether 6:10) The old Jerusalem in the last days will be built up unto the house of Israel. (Ether 6:5, 11-12)

John, during his experience in Revelation, saw the twelve gates of the heavenly New Jerusalem with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel written on them. (Revelation 21:10-12) The hundred and forty and four thousand servants of God in Revelation will be **of all the tribes of the children of Israel.** (Revelation 7:4) The house of Israel figures greatly in God's fulfillment of His covenant with Enoch and Noah regarding Zion. It is those who have a covenant with God through Jesus Christ and are numbered among the house of Israel that inherit the

earth. (Psalms 25:12-13; 37:9-11; D&C 100:2b) In the last days, they are a remnant of Noah's seed that **should always be found among all nations, while the earth should stand.** (Genesis 7:58)

ⁱ Matthew skipped three kings listed in 1 Chronicles 3:11-12, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. While Bible scholars posit various theories about the reason for this, the fact that they were descendants of Ahab and were wicked were likely factors in his decision. In any case, Matthew's decision to exclude them appears deliberate and presumably justifiable so that his reckoning of 14 generations between David and the Babylonian captivity is valid.

ⁱⁱ 1 Nephi 1:23-34, 150; 2 Nephi 1:6-21; 2 Nephi 3:6-16; Ether 1:32. There are two reasons why Matthew would not have mentioned Lehi. One, Lehi was not in Jesus's lineage. Jesus was of the tribe of Judah while Lehi was of Manasseh. Two, Matthew would have been unaware of Lehi's existence.

ⁱⁱⁱ E. W. Bullinger, *Number in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1967), 256.

^{iv} Under the Mosaic Law, someone who touched a dead body was unclean for seven days (Numbers 19:11)

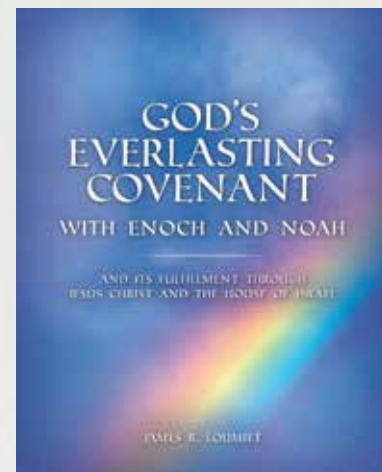
^v O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1987).

^{vi} Galatians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:19; 9:15; D&C 76:5q

^{vii} Revelation 20:12-13; 2 Nephi 6:24-30, 47; 7:43; Helaman 5:70-71; 3 Nephi 12:25-35

^{viii} 2 Nephi 11:97-105; Mosiah 3:8-12; 8:40-47; D&C 16:3; 83:7e

^{ix} Acts 4:8-12; 2 Nephi 6:48; 11:39; 3 Nephi 12:18; D&C 16:4f



This article is taken from the book, *God's Everlasting Covenant with Enoch and Noah.*

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WHO IS THE ORIGINAL GOD QUETZALCOATL



by Diane E. Wirth

The written account pertaining to Quetzalcoatl are stories natives related to Catholic friars when they arrived in the early sixteen century of Mexico. It is true, both the natives and the Spanish chroniclers made a conglomeration of their history. Catholic clergy were largely responsible for any Christian interpolations into these writings. Also, more than thirty annals are known, many are anonymous and include the work of indigenous authors.¹ Another evidence of Quetzalcoatl are pre-Columbian codices, which are screen folded books containing illustrations pertaining to their beliefs based on years of mythology and history passed down from one generation to the next.

There are those who prefer to use methodology when researching Mesoamerica. However, this method of study overlooks the rich symbolic imagery produced by the ancient natives. So, that having been said, let us look at the etymology of the word Quetzalcoatl. “*Quetzal*” roughly interprets as bird, and “*coatl*,” serpent. They are derived from the Nahuatl language of the Aztec/Mexica in central Mexico. Birds have feathers and of course fly. A serpent or snake makes its habitat on the ground. Did the natives develop this supernatural figure out of the blue, or did something in their past trigger the name: “Feathered Serpent?”

The story of the fiery serpent of brass placed upon a pole by Moses is very familiar with Biblical scholars. The account can be read in Numbers 21:5-9, and is significantly mentioned in John 3:14-15 of the New Testament, where the Son of man will be lifted up symbolically on the cross as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Those who looked to the serpent (Christ) will be healed. The

story of Moses is referred to many times in the Book of Mormon.² A brass or bronze serpent on a pole represented the hoped-for Messiah in ancient Palestine, and was maintained as such in the temple of Solomon until it was destroyed around 586 B.C.³

Another scripture in the Book of Mormon is impressive and refers to this particular incident with Moses, but uses the words “flying serpents.” [1 Nephi 17:41 LDS] (1 Nephi 5:133-135 RLDS) The word “flying serpent” is also used in Isaiah in two scriptures (14:29; 30:6), even though it does not refer to Moses’s brass fiery serpent on a pole. However, the unusual name for the Feathered Serpent of Mesoamerica is not out of line when comparing it to a “flying serpent” used in scripture of the Book of Mormon and the Old Testament. The Feathered Serpent, the symbol and name for Quetzalcoatl, was known in its artistic design throughout Mesoamerica.

To the layman, the most well-known location portraying the Feathered Serpent is Teotihuacan in Central Mexico. The Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl/ Feathered Serpent was built circa 200 A.D., having 200 human sacrificial victims found under this pyramid/temple as part of a dedicatory ritual. Quetzalcoatl was not worshipped in this enormous city at this time, but a new goddess who was portrayed in many murals at Teotihuacan. What happened around 200 A.D. in Central Mexico? Esther Pasztor has contemplated a major change took place at this time in its militaristic orientation and perhaps even in a new dynastic lineage.⁴

Most picture books covering Teotihuacan claim the images on this great pyramid are the Feathered Serpent. However, Mesoamerican scholars are divided in their opinion as to what these configurations surrounding the temple really



Pre-Columbian codices tell much of the story of Quetzalcoatl. Even the Spanish chroniclers relating stories of the culture heroes Topiltzin-Quetzalcoatl and others, must have known as we do today, they were as H. B. Nicholson wrote, “garnished with biblical overlay—[and] smacks of authentic aboriginality. In any case, the paintings may well go back, at least indirectly, to pre-Conquest pictorial history.”⁶ In many Spanish chronicles, men with the name of Topiltzin

Quetzalcoatl were frequently referred to as being a deified Creator, as well as having ascended to the heavens and becoming the Morning Star (Venus). These men were also considered to be the

Image of Sculpture on the Feathered Serpent/Quetzalcoatl Pyramid, Teotihuacan, Mexico

depict; perhaps feathered serpents, war serpents, jaguars, or a composite of mythological creatures. These figures alternate with the rain god, Tlaloc. Therefore, it is a stretch to assume this great edifice in Teotihuacan represents the worship of Quetzalcoatl, i.e., the Feathered Serpent.

Many early stories gathered by recorders of the Quetzalcoatl myth are often confusing and not in agreement with one another. This is true, as Brant Gardner so aptly showed in his 1986 article, “The Christianization of Quetzalcoatl: A History of the Metamorphosis.”⁵ Legends often refer to many quetzalcoatl (plural form), such as Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl or Kukulcan (Mayan name for Feathered Serpent), and other men who took upon themselves the name and symbols of Quetzalcoatl. As a god, these culture heroes invoked reverence and devotion, which added to their political agenda.

Records that are the most reliable are pre-Columbian codices produced in the early 1500’s before the Spanish arrived. Others were written after this date; some by the natives and others strongly influenced by the Spanish. Codices not burned by the Catholic priests are analyzed by researchers who examine their symbolic illustrations. It is particularly apparent that similarities can be seen in Spanish chronicles dealing with the god, Quetzalcoatl.



Venus/Star Glyph attached to feathered serpent from Maltrata, Veracruz, Mexico (redrawn after Janet C. Berlo, “Early Writing in Central Mexico: In Tlilli, In Tlapalli before A.D. 1000,” in *Mesoamerica after the Decline of Teotihuacan, A.D. 700-900*, ed. by Richard A. Diehl and Janet Catherine Berlo. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1989; Fig. 25).

wind god, as well as many other divine qualities. Where did they obtain these godly attributes? Some may be a Christian interpolation—some are definitely not.⁷ The stories discussed below are not a Christianization of Quetzalcoatl.

A story from the *Leyenda de los Soles* (*Legend of the Suns*) created in 1559, is a post-conquest narrative officially listed as a collection of pre-Hispanic history and stories of Central Mexico. John Bierhorst noted: “[The] Legend of the Suns is one of the finest, one of the purest sources of Aztec myth that has come down to the present times. Moreover, it is the only creation epic to have survived in the Nahuatl language.”⁸ A significant story relates to Quetzalcoatl when he descended to the Underworld (our Hell), to shed his blood onto bones of the deceased so they might live again.⁹ The entire scenario has many twists and turns, but Christians recognize the saving work of Jesus Christ among departed spirits. (1 Peter 3:19) This Quetzalcoatl myth is translated from the Nahuatl language into English by John Bierhorst.¹⁰ Key passages reveal their authenticity and are not interpolations of Christianity. To summarize, Quetzalcoatl goes to the Underworld to retrieve human bones after a great flood destroyed this world. The deceased were considered “the ancestors.”

It is interesting to note some Spanish Franciscans, such as Motolinia, saw elements of Christianity in



Ehecacatl-Quetzalcoatl back to back with Skeleton. The Deceased has a Living Heart, (see below) Codex Borgia.

pre-Columbian religions and believed Mesoamerica had been evangelized before, possibly by St. Thomas the Apostle.¹¹ People who support the Book of Mormon believe that Jesus Christ came from the heavens after his resurrection (3 Nephi), but we do not know if his name was in the Nephite language, or if it changed over time.

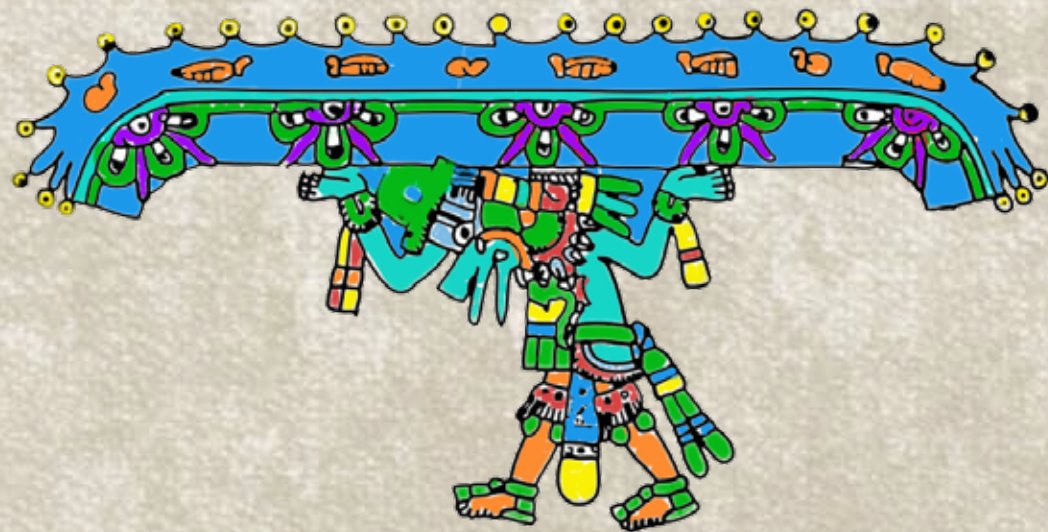


In the codices, sometimes a mask is worn by Quetzalcoatl, wherein his name becomes Ehecacatl-Quetzalcoatl. Ehecacatl means “wind.” Archaeologists called this appendage a buccal mask. Some speculate this mask is a duck or other bird’s beak since birds can fly in air through the wind. The beak is meant to be a vehicle where this god blew breath, air, or wind. Could what comes forth from this beak also be the breath of life? A prime example can be viewed in a pre-Columbian book called the *Borgia Codex*. Ehecacatl-Quetzalcoatl is illustrated back to back with a skeleton. The skeleton, however, has a living heart. This has been interpreted that Ehecacatl-Quetzalcoatl gives life to the deceased. After the Conquest, Ehecacatl-Quetzalcoatl was added to new codices with the man Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl wearing a cape along with the buccal mask.

As already mentioned, the natives, and consequently the Spanish chroniclers in their ethnohistorical documents, incorporated Ehecacatl-Quetzalcoatl attributes into their hero Topiltzin



Mask of Ehecacatl-Quetzalcoatl, worn by a priest taking on the attributes of the Creator and Wind God of pre-Columbian Mexico (Matlatzinca of Calixtlahuaca, Mexico)



Ehecattl-Quetzalcoatl Raises the Sky, Mixtec Vienna Codex

Quetzalcoatl's list of godliness, most likely after seeing drawings in the codices. This included illustrations of Quetzalcoatl's creating the heavens and earth.¹² In the pre-Columbian Mixtec *Vienna Codex*, Ehecattl-Quetzalcoatl is shown raising up the sky. The firmament of water above and the stars below are represented. Ehecattl-Quetzalcoatl is also viewed in the *Borgia Codex* as having a shell earring and pendant around his neck, which was symbolic of wind, birth and life.¹³ At the back of his head is the Sun. These attributes were also assimilated into the culture hero Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl in the Spanish chronicles.

Scholars believe Ehecattl-Quetzalcoatl's involvement in the creation exhibits the least amount of Christian influence. Michel Graulich found:

Careful reconstruction and analysis of the myths dealing with the first phase of the creation of the world... [show] variations on a single theme. Comparative analysis also suggests that the often-suspected Christian influence is minor and points to the unity of Mesoamerican thought.¹⁴

In other words, the title of Ehecattl-Quetzalcoatl designates him as a god of life, even the creator, as well as the god of wind/breath and birth, and significantly, the sun. Did this god appear to the people of Mesoamerica? Two quotes follow:

On the date we call Tecpatl a great light came from the northeastern sky. It glowed for four days in the sky, then lowered itself to the rock... in the Valle [Valley] in Oaxaca. From the light there came a great, very powerful being, who stood on the very top of the rock and glowed like the sun in the sky.... Then he spoke, his voice was like thunder, booming across the valley.¹⁵

There is also an interesting account among the Quiche Maya regarding the sun, which could have been a visit from a deity. This story may refer to the first dawn recorded in the *Popol Vuh*, which describes the light of the sun as a man.



Ehecattl-Quetzalcoatl, Borgia Codex
Shell pendant and Sun at back of head

The sun was like a person when he revealed himself. His face was hot, so he dried out the face of the earth. Before the sun came up it was soggy, and the face of the earth was muddy before the sun came up. And when the sun had risen just a short distance he

was like a person, his heat was unbearable. Since he revealed himself only when he was born it is only his reflection that now remains. As they put it in the ancient text, “the visible sun is not the real one.”¹⁶

Various accounts from the Spanish chroniclers speak of the return of Quetzalcoatl, which to many, appear to have a Spanish “spin.” This myth may have been derived from an original belief among the natives, and transferred to the many men taking on the name of Quetzalcoatl. One of the primary advocates of this myth being originally with the native, is David Carrasco of Princeton University. Carrasco writes, “There are a number of references in the primary sources to the expected return of Quetzalcoatl.... These references strongly suggest that the belief in Quetzalcoatl’s return was a pre-Columbian attitude and not, as some have suggested, invented by the Spaniards.”¹⁷

Most likely there will never be found another codex due to climate conditions that would destroy these books, but artifacts such as pottery and murals also tell a story. LiDAR Technology is opening thousands of new vistas in the archaeology of Mesoamerica.¹⁸ Five hundred monuments alone have been found in southern Mexico dating as far back as 3000 years. They are buried and unseen to the naked eye, but the LiDAR surveys bring them to the attention of researchers. There are now hundreds of ancient pyramids all over Mesoamerica waiting for excavation, and who knows what will be discovered in the years to come.

It is not a “slam dunk” the information presented above concerning Quetzalcoatl is Jesus Christ. We are left with the following varying conclusions: 1. Speculation, 2. Possible hypothesis, or 3. It may be so that the original Quetzalcoatl is Jesus Christ.



¹ Laurette Sejourne, *El Universo de Quetzalcoatl* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1962). 8.

² For an excellent paper on the Brazen Serpent, see Wallace E. Hunt, Jr., “Moses’ Brazen Serpent as It Relates to Serpent Worship in Mesoamerica,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* Vol. 2, No. 2, Article 9 (Utah, Provo: Brigham Young University, 1993).

³ Maurice H. Farbridge, ed. *Studies in Biblical and Semitic Symbolism* (England, Hartford: Stephen Austin and Sons, 1923), 75.

⁴ See Esther Pasztory, *Teotihuacan: An Experiment in Living* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 115.

⁵ Brant Gardner, “The Christianization of Quetzalcoatl: A History of the Metamorphosis” *Sunstone* 10 #11 (1986), 6-10

⁶ H. B. Nicholson, *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl: The Once and Future Lord of the Toltecs* (Colorado, Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2001, 72.

⁷ Nicholson, *Toiltzin Quetzalcoatl*, 71.

⁸ John Bierhorst, *History and Mythology of the Aztecs: The Codex Chamalpopoca* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 7.

⁹ Francisco Paso Y Troncoso, *Leyenda de los Soles con otras leyendas, y noticias* (Florence: Salvador Landi, 1903), 29.

¹⁰ John Bierhorst, *History and Mythology of the Aztecs*, 142-146.

¹¹ Quetzalcoatl, Wikipedia.

¹² Mary Miller and Karl Taube, *The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 84, 142.

¹³ Mary Ellen Miller, *Maya Art and Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 220, 222.

¹⁴ Michel Graulich, “Myths of Paradise Lost in Pre-Hispanic Central Mexico,” *Current Anthropology* 24/5 (1983). In 575.

¹⁵ For a translation, see Tony Shearer, *Beneath the Moon and under the Sun* (Albuquerque: Sun Publishing, 1975), 72. In 1578 Juan de Cordova wrote *Arte en Lengua Zapoteca* in Mexico.

¹⁶ Denis Tedlock, *Popol Vuh: The Definitive Edition of the Mayan Book of Dawn of Life and Glories of Gods and Kings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 161. The *Popol Vuh* was related orally by the natives to the Spanish of their sacred mythology and history passed down to their descendants.

¹⁷ David Carrasco, *Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire: Myths and Prophecies in the Aztec Traditions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 192.

¹⁸ See for example: Dale Godfrey, “Extensive Roadway System Identified in the Mayan Lowlands (Independence, MO: *The Witness*, The Book of Mormon Foundation), issue 181/2023.

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