

The Astronomical Knowledge of Abraham

The Urim and Thummim

“Is it hard to project ourselves from the elemental world of puny man to the world of Omnipotent God, who with great purpose has developed precision instruments operated through his omnipotent knowledge? It is difficult to believe that the Urim and Thummim, carried down through the ages by the prophets, even in the hands of our own modern-day prophet, could be that precision instrument which would transmit messages from God himself to his supreme creation—man? Can god have limitations? Can atmosphere or distance or space hold back the pictures? Would it be so difficult for Moses or Enoch or Abraham or Joseph to see a colorful, accurate, moving picture of all things past and present, and even future?” (Spencer W. Kimball, in *Improvement Era*, June 1962, p. 436. See also John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 25:215; Mark E. Petersen, *Abraham, Friend of God*, p.128.)

Astronomy

“Abraham knew far more in his day regarding the planets and the great fixed stars out in space than the greatest astronomer knows today. How did he get his knowledge? Not through the telescope; not through the spectroscope; but through the opening of his vision by the Spirit of God. He was taught by the Lord himself who revealed unto him all these things and explained the great heavenly bodies and their workings, also the earth, in a manner that never has been approached and cannot be approached by the scientific man with all his instruments to aid him and inspired by worldly learning.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:147-48)

“His supernatural knowledge was probably supplemented by research and observation in the clear, starry nights in the plains of Mesopotamia, but he must have received the major part through the Urim and Thummim with could have been far more revealing than the most powerful telescope in the most modern observatory. In his 175 brilliant years of life he accumulated knowledge in many fields, but especially in astronomy, in which field he seems to have excelled, and was perhaps equal or superior to even the highly trained Egyptian astronomers.” (Spencer W. Kimball, in Conference Report, Apr. 1962, p. 60.)

“The Lord creates worlds in a systematic manner. He places them throughout the Universe by perfect and infinite calculations. It is not a matter of chance but of divine order. Earth’s are created primarily as habitations for living creatures.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, p28.)

“In other words these great, governing planets control all others in their revolutions, or are the centers around which the others revolve. As the moon revolves around the earth, and the earth with the other primary and secondary planets belonging to this solar system revolve around the sun, so has the sun a center around which it, with all its earths and moons, revolves, while this grand center has a governing planet also, a sun or world around which it, with its attendant systems of suns and worlds, revolves, and so on until we come to Kolob, the ‘nearest to the celestial or the residence of God,’ which is the grand center with governs all the suns and systems of suns ‘which belong to the

The Astronomical Knowledge of Abraham

same order' as our earth and those that move with it." (George Reynolds, *Book of Abraham*, pp. 105-6.)

Abraham was protected so that he could withstand the brilliance of the Lord and so that he could see and comprehend. The visions that Abraham saw at this time before his sojourn in Egypt were beyond all description. Perhaps no should even with the strongest telescopes has ever seen the thousandth part of what Abraham saw as to this universe with all its limitless parts and functions. He also saw the creation of this earth." (Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, p. 89.)

"In the knowledge of astronomical and other philosophical truths, which in our modern great men are searching after and pride themselves in, they are but babes, compared with the ancient fathers. Do the wise men of modern ages understand the laws which govern the worlds they have grown weaker when they ought to have grown stronger and wiser," (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, pp. 163-63.)

Suffice it to say, that the Lord himself instructed Abraham in things pertaining to this and other worlds, and that he in his day possessed more light and intelligence on the principals alluded to than all the combined wisdom of the world of to-day." (John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 21:245)

"Who taught the Egyptians? Abraham taught them the science of astronomy, so we are informed, by late Egyptologists and revealed unto them the principle concerning the motions of

the heavenly bodies." (John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 25-215)

"The learning of the Egyptians, and their knowledge of astronomy was no doubt taught them by Abraham and Joseph, as their records testify who received it from the Lord." (Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 251)

Kolob

"The Lord made known to him the following facts: That Kolob is the first creation, and is nearest to the celestial, or the residence of God. It is the first in government, the last pertaining to the measurement of time. This measurement to according to the measurement of this earth, which by the Egyptians was called Jah-oh-eh. Oliblish, so called by the Egyptians stand next to Kolob in the grand governing creation near the celestial, or place where God resides. This great star is also a governing star and is equal to Kolob in its revolutions and in its measuring of time. Other grand governing stars were also revealed to Abraham." (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man: His Origin and Destiny*, p. 461.)

"The Lord pointed out to Abraham that Kolob was immense in size. The fact that it took one thousand years of our time for it to make one completed turn on its axis - in other words, for one day's time to elapse also is indicative of its enormity. Modern astronomers have discovered many stars which are gigantic in size. These they call 'super-giant stars.' One of the largest of them is named Betelgeuse. It has a diameter of approximately four hundred sixty millions of miles.

The Astronomical Knowledge of Abraham

Another super-giant approximately four hundred sixty millions of miles. Another super-giant star, being also enormous in size, is named *Antares*. This immense body of matter is located in the *Scorpio* constellation. It has a diameter of approximately three hundred millions of miles. Another giant star being a little larger than Antares is named *Myra*, and another is called *Arcturus*. The latter one has a diameter of thirty six millions of miles. Any of these massive bodies of matter could easily be accepted as being comparable in size to the great star Kolob which God showed to Father Abraham.” (Milton R. Hunter, *Pearl of Great Price Commentary*, p. 93.)

“According to this, 1000 years of our time is equivalent to one day with the lord. If you were to live to be 100 years old on earth, that would be 1/10 of one day with the Lord. Now suppose we divide the Lord’s day into 24 equal parts, as our day is, just for comparative purposes: 100 years of our life would be equal to 1/10 of 24, or 2.4 hours. . So according to this, if you live to be 100 on this earth, that would be equivalent to 2.4 hours in the Lord’s time calendar...

“Imagine yourself for a moment back in the spirit world before you came to earth. You were living in the presence of God in the celestial world. You knew from firsthand experience the fullness of the glory of God. You knew you could not participate in his glory, or become as he is, because you were only a spirit; you didn’t have a physical body. Now the opportunity comes for you to go to earth where you can receive such a body and become as he is. . . .

“Wouldn’t you promise to endure almost anything for two hours to get the blessings that the Lord has promised of

eternal life and to become as he is?” (Eldred G. Smith, in *Improvement Era*, June 1966, p. 513.)

(Compiled by Anthony Rivera, Jr.; source, *The Pearl of Great Price*, LBCC, 1996)