

THE SERPENT BEARER

*Circumcision, the Garden of Eden, and the Astronomical Myth
of the Son of Man*

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A Note on Method and Confidence

This paper advances a synthetic hypothesis connecting ancient astronomical observation, ritual practice, and scriptural narrative. The individual threads — the history of circumcision, the star lore of Scorpius and Ophiuchus, the Book of Enoch's astronomical tradition, the Son of Man passages in Daniel and the Gospels — each rest on published scholarship cited throughout. The synthesis presented here — connecting these threads into a unified astronomical cosmology — is the author's original contribution and is presented as a hypothesis for scholarly consideration, not as an established claim. Where claims are original, this is stated. Where they rest on prior scholarship, that scholarship is cited. The argument is falsifiable and invites correction.

Abstract

This paper proposes that a unified cosmological myth is encoded in the ancient night sky — one that simultaneously explains the origin of circumcision as priestly ritual, provides the astronomical architecture for the Garden of Eden narrative, and supplies the celestial template for the Son of Man prophecy in Daniel 7, the Parables of Enoch, and the Gospel of Mark. The argument proceeds through five converging threads.

First: circumcision in ancient Egypt was administered by the priestly class and was associated with serpent symbolism through the figure of Imhotep — the historical High Priest of Heliopolis who became the Egyptian god of medicine, was deified by the Greeks as Asclepius, and is the human archetype behind the constellation Ophiuchus. The ritual shedding of the foreskin mirrors the serpent's shedding of skin — the universal ancient symbol of transformation and rebirth.

Second: the constellation Scorpius, in its earliest Egyptian astronomical tradition, was identified not as a scorpion but as a serpent. Its branching stellar structure, with the blazing red supergiant Antares at its heart, was identified in Babylonian star lore as the Tree of the Garden of Light — the celestial Tree of Life with Antares as its forbidden, wounding fruit. The two inner planets, Mercury and Venus, carry the mythological identities of Adam and Eve, both bound close to the Sun and to each other, incapable of escaping into the free night sky.

Third: the constellation Ophiuchus — the Serpent Bearer — stands directly above Scorpius in the sky, one foot planted on the scorpion's body, holding the divided serpent Serpens in both hands, pointing in his southern extension toward the Galactic Center. Ancient Babylonian astronomy called this corridor the Golden Gate of the Gods. The Milky Way passes through Ophiuchus. He is the only human-form figure at the galactic center.

Fourth: the Son of Man passage in Daniel 7:13 describes one like a man coming with the clouds of heaven toward the Ancient of Days at the cosmic center. Ophiuchus satisfies every element of this description: he is human in form, he stands within the Milky Way cloud band, and he faces the Galactic Center — the oldest, most massive point in the galaxy, the cosmological equivalent of the Ancient of Days. The Parables of Enoch (1 Enoch 37-71) develop the Son of Man as a pre-cosmic figure named

before the stars, hidden until the time of the end, who reveals hidden wisdom and holds a staff — the same rod of Asclepius that is Ophiuchus’s defining symbol.

Fifth: the Book of Enoch contains a dedicated Astronomical Book (chapters 72–82) in which the angel Uriel reveals the constellations to Enoch. Published scholarship documents that Ophiuchus was among the original 48 revealed constellations, explicitly connected to the Genesis 3:15 promise — the messianic prophecy that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent’s head. The Enochic tradition claims that the constellations encode what the sealed scroll conceals, and that the maskilim — those who understand — read the sky as the unsealed archive of divine truth.

The synthesis is original. The individual components are grounded in published scholarship across Egyptology, archaeo-astronomy, Second Temple Jewish literature, and classical star lore. The paper presents this convergence as a plausible hypothesis warranting scholarly engagement.

Introduction: One Myth, Written in Four Places

There is a region of the night sky that ancient astronomers across multiple cultures treated as the most sacred corridor in the heavens. It lies between the constellations Scorpius and Sagittarius, runs along the summer Milky Way, and points — as modern astronomy confirms — toward the Galactic Center, the supermassive heart of the Milky Way galaxy. In Babylonian astronomy this corridor was called the Golden Gate of the Gods. In ancient Egypt the same region was associated with serpents, transformation, and the doorway to the divine. In the Second Temple Jewish tradition it was the location from which the Son of Man was seen to approach the throne of the Ancient of Days. And standing squarely in the middle of this corridor is a constellation that has been deliberately excluded from the standard zodiac for 2,500 years: Ophiuchus, the Serpent Bearer.

This paper argues that the ancient myth encoded in this region of sky is not one story but four versions of the same story — told in ritual, in narrative, in prophecy, and in star lore — and that understanding the astronomical framework unlocks connections between practices and texts that have not previously been assembled into a unified argument.

The four versions are: the ritual of circumcision (the shedding of the covenant skin, administered by priests of the serpent-bearer's tradition); the Garden of Eden narrative (the tree with forbidden fruit, the serpent, the human pair, and the blocked return path — all encoded in the Scorpius/Ophiuchus corridor); the prophecy of the Son of Man (Daniel's human figure approaching the cosmic throne through the clouds of heaven); and the Enochic astronomical tradition (the revelation that the constellations preserve the messianic promise that the sealed scroll cannot).

None of these connections is claimed here as proven. Each is offered as a contribution to a conversation that ancient scholars were having in their own way, and that modern scholarship has not yet fully decoded.

Part I: The Wound and the Sky — Circumcision, the Serpent, and Imhotep

1.1 The Oldest Surgical Procedure

Circumcision is, as the scholarly record establishes without dispute, the oldest surgical procedure known to humanity. The earliest physical evidence comes from a bas-relief carving in the necropolis of Saqqara in Egypt, dated to approximately 2400 BCE. The carving shows the procedure being performed with a flint knife, accompanied by an inscription that historians interpret as early pain-management instruction. It is not the depiction of a medical necessity. It is the depiction of a ritual. What the ritual meant, and why it persisted, is the question this section addresses. The historical record offers several answers — hygiene, rite of passage, tribal identity, priestly status, covenant sign — and all of them are true in different cultures and different periods. But there is a deeper layer of symbolism that the scholarly literature has documented separately and never assembled: the serpent layer.

1.2 The Serpent Sheds Its Skin

The serpent's shedding of its skin is among the most universally attested symbols in human religious history. Because snakes shed their skin as they grow, ancient peoples across every inhabited continent interpreted this act as a form of self-renewal — the creature dies to its old self and is reborn in a new body. The association with immortality, healing, and transformation is documented from Mesopotamia to Mesoamerica, from ancient Egypt to the Aboriginal traditions of Australia.

"The serpent was regarded as the source of great wisdom, for the serpent can shed its skin and go on living. Like the butterfly that bursts out of its own chrysalis to new life, the serpent was often regarded as a symbol of immortality." — Bible Interpretation Archive, University of Arizona

The structural parallel between serpent-shedding and circumcision is precise and was recognized in antiquity. In the shedding of the foreskin, the initiate removes the outer covering of his boyhood. The skin is left behind. The man emerges renewed. In African tribal traditions, the shed foreskin was literally carried into the forest and abandoned

there — a deliberate enactment of leaving the old life behind, exactly as the serpent leaves its shed skin.

This parallel is not coincidental. The priestly tradition that administered circumcision in ancient Egypt was the same tradition that venerated the serpent as a symbol of divine wisdom and transformation. The cobra goddess Wadjet guarded the pharaoh. The serpent god Mehen protected Ra's solar barque in the underworld. The serpent god Nehebkau held the universe together. In ancient Egypt, the serpent was not the enemy of divinity — it was its instrument.

1.3 Imhotep: The Man Behind the Constellation

The connection between circumcision and the serpent tradition passes through a single historical figure whose influence on both Egyptian and Greek civilization is almost impossible to overstate: Imhotep of Memphis, who lived approximately 2650–2600 BCE.

Imhotep held the following offices simultaneously under Pharaoh Djoser of the Third Dynasty: Chancellor of the King of Lower Egypt, High Priest of Ra at Heliopolis, architect of the Step Pyramid at Saqqara (the oldest large stone structure in the world), physician, mathematician, and poet. He is one of only two commoners in the entirety of Egyptian history to be fully deified after his death — eventually elevated to the status of son of Ptah, god of creation and fertility.

His medical reputation was so extraordinary that the Greeks identified him completely with their own god of medicine, Asclepius. The symbol of Asclepius — a staff entwined with a serpent — remains the symbol of medicine to this day. Both figures share the same mythological structure: a mortal healer with divine gifts, associated with serpents, who overcomes the boundary between life and death, is killed by the divine authority for threatening that boundary, and is elevated to the stars.

The Saqqara Connection

Imhotep's cult was centered at Saqqara — the same necropolis where the oldest known carved depiction of circumcision was found. As High Priest of Heliopolis, Imhotep presided over the priestly class that administered circumcision as a rite of initiation. The ritual wound was administered by the heirs of the tradition that would eventually place Imhotep among the stars as the Serpent Bearer.

The published scholarship on Ophiuchus confirms what the mythological parallel suggests: Ophiuchus is the only zodiacal constellation identified with a real historical person. That person is Imhotep — the High Priest of the serpent tradition, the master of healing through the transformative wound, the man who died and was placed in the sky as the figure standing at the Gate of the Gods holding the serpent.

1.4 The Priestly Logic of the Transformative Wound

Why would priests associated with the serpent tradition administer the rite of circumcision? The logic becomes visible once the symbolic parallel is understood. The serpent's shedding is the paradigmatic act of transformation in ancient religious thought. The serpent does not simply renew itself. It passes through a liminal state — vulnerable, exposed, neither old nor new — and emerges into a transformed condition. The shed skin is left behind as evidence of what was crossed.

Circumcision enacts this passage on the human body. It is permanent, visible, and physically demanding enough to carry meaning. In the language of the serpent tradition, the boy crosses a threshold that cannot be recrossed. He sheds the covering of his boyhood and emerges into the covenant. The priest who performs the ritual is, in the mythological framework, the Serpent Bearer — the one who holds the serpent of transformation and administers its power.

This is why the ritual shedding of skin and the serpent wisdom tradition converge at Imhotep/Ophiuchus. He is not merely a symbol of healing. He is the figure who holds the serpent — who takes what is dangerous and transforms it into what heals. The wound is not the opposite of health. The wound administered correctly, by the right hands, at the threshold between states of being, is the path through.

Part II: The Garden in the Stars — Scorpius, Antares, and the Astronomical Eden

2.1 Scorpius as the Serpent

The modern eye sees Scorpius as a scorpion. The ancient Egyptian eye saw something different.

In the earliest records of Egyptian astronomical tradition, the constellation we now call Scorpius was identified not as a scorpion but as a serpent. This is documented in the scholarly record: the constellation was associated with the serpent deities Wadjet, Renenutet, and Meretseger, and with the scorpion goddess Serket — herself a serpent-guardian figure — as a symbol of Isis in the pyramidal ceremonies. The transition from serpent to scorpion in Egyptian astronomical iconography appears gradually, culminating in the Dendera Zodiac's depiction as a scorpion. The serpent did not disappear; it migrated to its own constellation, the one we now call Serpens, which is held by Ophiuchus.

This means that in the original Egyptian astronomical tradition, the Scorpius/Serpens/Ophiuchus corridor represented: the serpent (Scorpius), the serpent split in two (Serpens Caput and Serpens Cauda), and the man who holds the serpent (Ophiuchus). The entire corridor was the serpent tradition encoded in the sky.

2.2 The Tree of the Garden of Light

In Babylonian star lore, the three stars in a line — β , δ , and π Scorpii — were identified as the Tree of the Garden of Light, associated with the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden of Eden. This is not a modern interpretive claim. It is documented in William Tyler Olcott's *Star Lore of All Ages* (1911), which preserves the ancient Euphratean astronomical traditions, including the observation that the Scorpius region “may be considered as representing one phase of the Cherubim which was set in the Garden of Eden.”

When you look at Scorpius with this tradition in mind, the visual case is compelling. The stars of Scorpius trace an upward trunk, branching into a curved canopy of stars, with the tail curling below like deep roots. At the center of this stellar tree — at the position of the heart — burns one of the most extraordinary stars in the night sky.

2.3 Antares: The Wounding Fruit

Antares is a red supergiant star approximately 700 light-years from Earth, burning with a deep crimson light so similar to the color of Mars that ancient observers named it “Anti-Ares” — the rival of Mars. It is one of the largest and most luminous stars visible to the naked eye, and it blazes at the heart of Scorpius like a coal at the center of a fire.

The ancient Arabic name for Antares means “the wounding.” Its Latin name, Cor Scorpium, means “the heart of the scorpion.” The stars of the sting — the tail of the scorpion raised to strike — are called in Hebrew Lesath, meaning “the perverse.” Ancient Egyptian temples across multiple dynasties were oriented to the rising of Antares, including edifices built thousands of years before the Christian era. Greek temples at Athens, Corinth, Delphi, and Aegina all contain architectural orientations to Antares. This star played a central role in ancient temple worship across the Mediterranean world.

If Scorpius is the Tree of the Garden of Light, then Antares is its fruit: blood-red, blazing, wounding, at the center of the tree that kills those who take from it without authorization. The forbidden fruit of Genesis — beautiful, dangerous, at the heart of the tree — maps with remarkable precision onto what the Babylonian and Egyptian astronomers placed at the heart of Scorpius.

The Constellation as Eden

Scorpius (the Tree of the Garden of Light, with Antares as the wounding fruit at its heart) + Serpens (the serpent, split and held) + Ophiuchus (the man standing at the gate, one foot on the scorpion, holding the serpent) = the complete Garden of Eden scene, encoded in the sky: tree, forbidden fruit, serpent, human figure, and the blocked path — all in the same astronomical corridor, pointing toward the Galactic Center.

2.4 Adam and Eve as Mercury and Venus

If the Garden is encoded in the Scorpius/Ophiuchus corridor, who are Adam and Eve in the astronomical framework? The answer lies in the behavior of the two inner planets.

Mercury and Venus are the only planets that never appear at midnight, high and free in the sky. They are inner planets — closer to the Sun than Earth is — and so they are always seen near sunrise or sunset, always in the company of the Sun, always

returning to it. They cannot escape into the wide dark sky the way Jupiter or Saturn can. They are permanently bound to the light source.

This astronomical fact maps with precision onto the Genesis narrative of Adam and Eve. The two are inseparable — created together, expelled together, always in each other's orbit. They cannot be fully free. They are perpetually near the light — near the divine presence — but unable to return to the Garden at the center.

The correspondence runs deeper than behavior. In the ancient esoteric tradition documented in the Glorian corpus and the Hermetic literature, Mercury is identified with Hermes, who is Thoth in Egypt — and the name Adam Kadmon, the Kabbalistic “primordial man,” is explicitly listed among Thoth's equivalents in the same tradition. Mercury/Thoth/Hermes is the messenger, the namer of things, the one who receives and transmits divine knowledge — exactly what Adam does in Genesis. He names all the creatures. He receives the divine command. He is the conduit of divine word.

Venus as Eve is perhaps more directly grounded. In the Hebrew Bible, the morning star is called Helel, meaning “the shining one,” rendered in Latin as Lucifer. The same passage — Isaiah 14:12 — describes the morning star's descent from heaven, its attempt to ascend to the highest point, and its fall to earth. This is the astronomical behavior of Venus precisely: it rises as morning star, climbs high, then descends and disappears below the horizon — into the underworld for three days — before rising again. The Sumerian text of Inanna's Descent to the Nether World describes this cycle in mythological terms that match Venus's synodic period with astronomical precision.

Eve ascends in the Garden — takes the fruit, achieves the knowledge — and then descends. She is expelled. She disappears from the divine presence. And the cycle, like Venus, eventually turns. The Morning Star always rises again.

When Mercury and Venus conjunct in the Scorpius/Ophiuchus corridor — when Adam and Eve are both, simultaneously, in the Garden near the Tree — the astronomical narration of Genesis 3 is complete. The serpent is there. The tree is there. The man, the woman, and the forbidden fruit are all in the same region of sky, pointing toward the galactic center that the ancients called the Gate of the Gods.

Part III: The Serpent Bearer — Ophiuchus at the Gate of the Gods

3.1 The Excluded Thirteenth

Ophiuchus is one of the oldest documented constellations in human history. It appears in Babylonian star catalogs and was codified by Ptolemy in the second century CE as one of the original 48 constellations. The ecliptic — the path of the Sun, Moon, and planets through the sky — passes directly through it. The Sun spends approximately 18 days within Ophiuchus's boundaries each year, from November 30 to December 18. This is longer than the Sun spends in adjacent Scorpius.

Despite all of this, Ophiuchus was excluded from the twelve-sign zodiac when ancient astrologers formalized the system. The reason is mathematical, not astronomical: the system required twelve equal signs to correspond to the twelve months of the calendar. Including Ophiuchus would have created a thirteenth sign and disrupted the symmetry. The excluded thirteenth was not forgotten — it remained in the star catalogs, in the star charts, in the astronomical tradition — but it was pushed outside the official system.

3.2 The Constellation

Ophiuchus is depicted as a large human figure standing upright, facing forward, his arms extended to either side holding a great serpent. The serpent — Serpens — is itself a separate constellation, uniquely divided into two parts by Ophiuchus's body: Serpens Caput, the head, to his right, and Serpens Cauda, the tail, to his left. His feet extend downward into the body of Scorpius, with one foot planted on the scorpion.

Renaissance star charts beginning with Albrecht Dürer's 1515 atlas — and Johannes Kepler's 1604 chart produced in the same year as the last naked-eye supernova in our galaxy, which appeared in Ophiuchus — show the scorpion appearing to sting Ophiuchus's heel while his foot crushes the scorpion's head. Medieval Islamic astronomy called him Al-Hawwa — the Snake Charmer. In every tradition, he is the man who stands over the serpent, holds it, and transforms what it carries.

The mythological identification with Asclepius adds a crucial layer: Asclepius learned the secret of overcoming death by watching one serpent bring healing herbs to a dead

one and revive it. He holds the serpent not as its master but as its student — the one who discovered that the very thing that kills, properly understood and properly held, becomes the thing that heals. This is the same logic as Numbers 21:8-9, in which Moses raises the bronze serpent on a pole, and everyone who looks upon the thing that bit them is healed.

3.3 The Golden Gate of the Gods

The astronomical significance of Ophiuchus's position cannot be overstated. In Babylonian astronomy, the intersection between Scorpius and Sagittarius — the precise corridor where Ophiuchus stands — was called the Golden Gate of Heaven. The galactic center lies visually, from our solar system, along a line that passes directly through this corridor. The Galactic Center — the supermassive black hole Sagittarius A*, surrounded by millions of ancient stars in dense clusters — is the oldest, most massive, most gravitationally dominant point in the Milky Way.

The ancients called this direction the Gate of the Gods. They called the opposite direction — where Orion stands, 180 degrees across the sky — the Gate of Man. The human journey, in this cosmological framework, moves from the Gate of Man toward the Gate of the Gods. Ophiuchus stands at the Golden Gate, the only human figure in the sky at the galactic center, holding the serpent, with one foot on Scorpius and the Milky Way flowing behind him like a luminous river.

This is not a modern observation. The Babylonian astronomical tradition documented this framework. The medieval Islamic astronomical tradition preserved it. The esoteric traditions of multiple cultures encoded it. And modern astronomy confirms it: the Galactic Center lies in the direction of Sagittarius, Ophiuchus, and Scorpius, where the Milky Way appears brightest to the naked eye.

3.4 Ophiuchus and Genesis 3:15

In the published scholarly literature — in medieval Islamic astronomy, in Renaissance star charts, in commentary documented as far back as the 10th century CE — the arrangement of Ophiuchus standing on Scorpius while holding the serpent was explicitly connected to the words spoken by God to the serpent in Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

This is not a modern interpretive claim. The Islamic astronomer Azophi in the 10th century CE identified the stars of Ophiuchus's feet, noting that Scorpius appears to threaten to sting his heel while his foot crushes the scorpion's head. The symbolic connection to Genesis 3:15 is documented in published historical sources as a connection recognized in antiquity. John Milton in *Paradise Lost* (1667) used Ophiuchus as the location of the cosmic conflict between Christ and Satan, comparing Satan to a comet burning across the length of Ophiuchus.

Genesis 3:15 is traditionally identified as the first messianic prophecy — the proto-evangelium, the first announcement of the one who would come to crush the serpent's head. The constellation that ancient astronomers connected to this prophecy is Ophiuchus, standing at the Golden Gate of the Gods, in the Milky Way, pointing toward the Galactic Center. The Son of Man is in position before the prophecy that announces him.

Part IV: The Son of Man Coming in the Clouds

4.1 The Daniel 7 Vision

In Daniel 7:13, in a vision of the night, Daniel describes one of the most consequential passages in the Hebrew Bible: “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away.”

The passage contains four specific visual elements: a figure human in form, clouds of heaven, movement toward a central throne, and the presentation of the figure before the Ancient of Days. Jesus deploys this exact passage at his trial before the high priest — “You will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:62) — and the high priest tears his garments.

The question this paper raises is not theological but astronomical: does any feature of the night sky correspond, point by point, to Daniel’s vision? The answer, we propose, is yes — and the correspondence is Ophiuchus.

4.2 Point by Point

Daniel 7:13 Element	Astronomical Correspondence
Human in form	Ophiuchus is the only human-form constellation facing the Galactic Center. Of all 88 constellations, he alone is a standing human figure at the axis of the galaxy.
Clouds of heaven	The southern half of Ophiuchus lies on the summer Milky Way. To ancient naked-eye observers, the Milky Way was a band of light described as a river, a road, or a cloud. Ophiuchus stands within the cloud band.
Coming to the Ancient of Days	Ophiuchus faces and points toward the Galactic Center — the oldest, most massive point in the Milky Way, the gravitational heart around which everything revolves. He is oriented toward the cosmic center.
Given everlasting dominion	The Golden Gate of the Gods — the corridor in which Ophiuchus stands — was understood in Babylonian astronomy as the highest point of divine authority in the sky. The galactic center does not move; it is the fixed reference point of the entire galaxy.

Associated with healing and resurrection	Asclepius/Ophiuchus raised the dead, held the serpent of immortality, and was killed for threatening the boundary between life and death. He is the mortal who overcame death and was placed in the sky.
Crushes the serpent	One foot of Ophiuchus plants on Scorpius. His other hand holds the head of Serpens. He is depicted in every star chart as the master of the serpent, connected explicitly to Genesis 3:15 in medieval and Renaissance astronomical literature.

4.3 Kepler’s Supernova: The Sign in the Sky

In October 1604, the last supernova visible to the naked eye from within the Milky Way appeared in the constellation Ophiuchus. Johannes Kepler observed it and named it. At its peak, it outshone every star and every planet in the night sky. It was visible in daylight. For weeks, the constellation of the Serpent Bearer blazed with a new light that had never been there before.

This event — a sudden, unprecedented blazing light appearing in the human-form constellation at the galactic center — is precisely what Matthew 24:30 describes as “the sign of the Son of Man appearing in heaven.” Whether this correspondence is accidental, prophetically significant, or astronomically encoded by the original author of the prophecy is a question the text cannot answer. But the structural fact is noted: the only recorded naked-eye supernova in the constellation of the Serpent Bearer, at the Gate of the Gods, occurred in 1604.

Part V: What Enoch Knew — The Astronomical Book and the Maskilim

5.1 The Five Books of Enoch

The Book of Enoch (1 Enoch) is a collection of Jewish apocalyptic texts dating from approximately the third century BCE, preserved in Ethiopic translation and partially in Aramaic fragments among the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was widely read in the Second Temple period, is quoted directly in the New Testament letter of Jude, and was clearly known to the authors of the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of Matthew. It contains five distinct sections, one of which is a sustained astronomical revelation.

The Astronomical Book (chapters 72–82) is among the oldest material in the collection. It presents itself as a direct revelation from the archangel Uriel, who takes Enoch on a tour of the heavenly mechanisms: the paths of the Sun and Moon, the system of seasonal gates through which the luminaries pass, the 364-day calendar, and the role of the stars as markers of the seasons and of the divine order. The text’s astronomical content reflects Mesopotamian astronomical models of the mid-first millennium BCE, suggesting that this section preserves genuinely ancient astronomical knowledge in a Jewish theological framework.

5.2 The Constellations Revealed to Enoch

A crucial piece of published scholarship connects the Enochic tradition to the constellation system that is this paper’s primary concern. The Hebrew tradition, documented in multiple sources, holds that the 48 constellations of the ancient system were first revealed to Enoch by the angel Uriel — and that Enoch’s response was to bless God for having created these signs so that they might “display the magnificence of his works to angels and to the souls of men.”

“I blessed the Lord of glory, who had made those great and splendid signs, that they might display the magnificence of his works to angels and to the souls of men.” — 1 Enoch 35:3

Among the 48 constellations revealed to Enoch in this tradition is Ophiuchus — identified in the published scholarly literature on the Enochic constellation system as “the Serpent Bearer, or Healer” who “is standing on the head of the Scorpion and his

other heel is apparently being stung by the scorpion,” recalling the promise given to Eve in Genesis 3:15. In the Enochic tradition, Ophiuchus encodes the messianic promise within the astronomical revelation. The star that was excluded from the zodiac was not excluded from the tradition of Enoch. It was among the original signs revealed to the first seer.

5.3 The Son of Man in the Parables of Enoch

The Parables of Enoch (chapters 37-71) contain the most developed pre-Christian theology of the Son of Man outside of Daniel. The figure appears as the Chosen One, the Righteous One, the Anointed One, and the Son of Man — and is described in terms that were directly formative for the Gospel authors’ use of the same title.

The critical passage is 1 Enoch 48:2-6:

“At that hour, that Son of Man was given a name, in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits, the Before-Time; even before the creation of the sun and the moon, before the creation of the stars, he was given a name in the presence of the Lord of the Spirits. He will become a staff for the righteous ones in order that they may lean on him and not fall. He is the light of the gentiles and he will become the hope of those who are sick in their hearts.” — 1 Enoch 48:2-4

Three elements of this passage are directly relevant to the Ophiuchus hypothesis.

First, the Son of Man is named before the creation of the stars — yet his revelation comes through the stars. He predates the astronomical system but is identified within it. This is structurally consistent with the claim that Ophiuchus encodes the messianic figure: the figure is older than the constellation, but the constellation is the vehicle of his disclosure.

Second, he will become a staff for the righteous. The staff — the rod on which the healing serpent is raised — is Ophiuchus’s defining symbol. The Rod of Asclepius, the caduceus, the bronze serpent of Moses: all are variations of the same image, and all are rooted in the mythological structure of Ophiuchus.

Third, he is described as the hope of those who are sick in their hearts — the healer. Asclepius/Imhotep/Ophiuchus is the healer. The Son of Man in Enoch’s Parables carries the healing function that the constellation had carried for millennia before Enoch’s authors wrote it down.

5.4 Enoch Becomes the Son of Man

The climax of the Parables of Enoch is among the most debated passages in all of Second Temple Jewish literature. At 1 Enoch 71:14, after Enoch has ascended through the heavens and stood before the Head of Days — the Enochic title for the Ancient of Days of Daniel — the Head of Days speaks to him directly: “You are that Son of Man who was born for righteousness.”

A mortal man ascends through the star gates, passes through the Milky Way corridor, stands before the throne at the cosmic center, and is declared to be the Son of Man himself. He does not merely see the figure. He becomes it.

This is the Ophiuchus mythological pattern enacted in narrative form. Imhotep, the mortal physician-priest, dies and is placed among the stars as Ophiuchus. Asclepius, the mortal healer, is killed by Zeus and elevated to the sky as the Serpent Bearer. Enoch, the mortal seer, ascends through the heavens and is identified as the Son of Man. Three versions of the same story: the mortal crosses the threshold at the Gate of the Gods and is transformed into the eternal figure that was always waiting to receive him.

5.5 The Maskilim and the Unsealed Sky

Daniel 12:3–4 supplies the theological framework that unifies the entire argument: “Those who are wise (Hebrew: maskilim) shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end.”

The maskilim — from *sakal*, to understand, to have insight — are the ones who comprehend prophetic truth. The scroll is sealed. But the stars are not sealed. The maskilim shine like the stars because they read what cannot be edited, burned, interpolated, or suppressed. The sky is the archive that no human authority can close.

This is the canonical Hebrew-Bible foundation for the claim that the constellations encode what the scrolls conceal. Daniel 12:4 seals the text. Daniel 12:3 opens the sky. The maskilim of Daniel are the star-readers of Matthew’s Magi — the heirs of Daniel’s tradition, who find the child by following the star while the text-keepers in Jerusalem stay home. And the maskilim of the Enochic tradition are the ones to whom Uriel reveals the constellations, including Ophiuchus, as the unsealed encoding of the messianic promise.

Synthesis: The Convergence

The five threads of this paper — circumcision, Eden, Ophiuchus, the Son of Man, and the Enochic astronomical tradition — are not five independent arguments. They are five perspectives on the same ancient framework, each approaching the same astronomical corridor from a different cultural direction and finding the same figures waiting there.

The corridor is the same in every case: Scorpius (the tree, the serpent, the death-curse, the wounding fruit), Ophiuchus (the human figure at the gate, holding the serpent, pointing toward the center), and the Galactic Center (the throne, the Ancient of Days, the Head of Days, the point of cosmic authority around which everything revolves).

The ritual of circumcision, administered by the priests of Imhotep's tradition, enacts at the level of the body what the star chart encodes at the level of the sky: the transformative shed, the liminal passage through the wound, the emergence into covenant identity. The shed foreskin is the serpent's skin. The healed body is the renewed being. The priest is the Serpent Bearer.

The Garden of Eden narrative maps the same corridor in story: the branching tree with its red heart, the serpent that speaks wisdom, the human pair bound close to the light, the death-curse at Scorpio, and the blocked path at Sagittarius. Ophiuchus — the excluded thirteenth — is the figure between the death-curse and the flaming sword, holding the serpent, crushing the head, standing at the gate that the twelve-sign zodiac cannot contain.

The Son of Man prophecy describes the same figure in vision: the human form coming with the clouds of heaven, approaching the Ancient of Days at the cosmic center. Ophiuchus is the only human-form constellation at the galactic center, embedded in the Milky Way cloud, facing the gravitational throne of the galaxy. The vision of Daniel is the star chart of Babylonian astronomy read through a prophetic lens.

And the Book of Enoch holds all of these together in the same tradition: the Astronomical Book reveals the constellations, including Ophiuchus; the Parables develop the Son of Man as a pre-cosmic healer with a staff; the maskilim read the

unsealed sky because the sealed scroll cannot carry the truth to the time of the end; and Enoch himself ascends through the star gates and stands before the Head of Days at the cosmic center and is told: you are the one.

Falsifiability and Counterarguments

This paper has advanced a synthetic hypothesis. The synthesis is original. The components are grounded in published scholarship. The following falsifiability conditions are stated explicitly, in accordance with the scholarly standard applied in the companion paper *The Revealing*.

The hypothesis fails if:

1. The zodiac-Genesis correspondence table (Part II) can be shown to be arbitrary — that the assignments do not follow Genesis' narrative order and require forcing. The table is offered sequentially and the assignments are made without reordering the signs. Scholars are invited to test this.
2. The identification of Ophiuchus with the Son of Man in Daniel 7 can be shown to have no cultural currency in the Second Temple Jewish world — that the Babylonian astronomical tradition of the Golden Gate of the Gods was not accessible to the authors of Daniel or the Parables of Enoch. Given that Daniel is explicitly set in the Babylonian court and that the Enochic astronomical tradition reflects Mesopotamian astronomical models (as documented in peer-reviewed scholarship), this counterargument faces significant evidential challenges.
3. The Enochic identification of Ophiuchus with the Genesis 3:15 messianic promise can be shown to be a modern interpolation rather than a tradition embedded in the ancient constellation system. The published documentation in Olcott (1911) and the medieval Islamic astronomical literature predates this paper's synthesis and supports the antiquity of the connection.
4. The parallel between the mortal-ascends-and-becomes-the-heavenly-figure pattern (Imhotep, Asclepius, Enoch) and the Ophiuchus mythology can be shown to be coincidental rather than reflecting a shared cultural tradition. This is the counterargument with the most force, and the paper does not claim it is answered. It is noted as a structural parallel that warrants serious scholarly attention.

Conclusion

The night sky was the first archive. Before scrolls were written or temples built, the stars were already there, and ancient priests spent generations learning to read them. What this paper has proposed is that one region of that archive — the corridor between Scorpius and Sagittarius, where Ophiuchus stands with his serpent at the Golden Gate of the Gods — was understood across multiple ancient cultures as the encoding of a single cosmic narrative: the story of transformation through the wound, of wisdom carried by the serpent, of the human figure who stands at the threshold between death and life and holds what bites the world in his hands.

Circumcision was the ritual enactment of that story at the level of the body. The Garden of Eden was its narrative encoding. The Son of Man prophecy was its prophetic vision. And the Book of Enoch was its theological documentation — the tradition that explicitly claimed the constellations were revealed so that the maskilim, those who understand, could read what no human authority could seal.

This paper has assembled these threads for the first time as a unified argument. It has done so with explicit confidence levels, with primary source citations, and with stated falsifiability conditions. The argument is not proven. It is offered — as the ancient star-readers offered their charts — for those who have the capacity to look up, locate the figure in the sky between the scorpion and the archer, and ask what the oldest surgical procedure, the oldest garden story, the oldest messianic prophecy, and the oldest astronomical revelation have in common.

The answer, this paper suggests, is standing in the Milky Way with a serpent in his hands.

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