

## The Five-year Prophecy of Samuel the Lamanite

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In the 86th year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi (Helaman 13:1), a Nephite prophet (also named Nephi) “was baptizing, and prophesying, and preaching, crying repentance unto the people, showing signs and wonders, working miracles among the people, that they might know that the Christ must shortly come—Telling them of things which must shortly come, that they might know and remember at the time of their coming that they had been made known unto them beforehand, to the intent that they might believe” (Helaman 16:4-5). Nephi’s labors met with limited success; the majority of the Nephites “did wax stronger and stronger in their pride, and in their wickedness; and thus they were ripening again for destruction” (Helaman 11:37).

At the same time, the Lamanites “did observe strictly to keep the commandments of God, according to the law of Moses” (Helaman 13:1), while “the mountains and the wilderness” were “infested” with “robbers [who] did still increase and wax strong, insomuch that they did defy the whole armies of the Nephites, and also of the Lamanites; and they did cause great fear to come unto the people upon all the face of the land. Yea, for they did visit many parts of the land, and did do great destruction unto them” (Helaman 11:31-33).

During that perilous time, a Lamanite named Samuel was visited by an angel who confirmed the gospel of Christ to him and sent him to the Nephites to declare “glad tidings” concerning the expected Messiah. Most of the Nephites “would not receive” the Lamanite “and they did cast him out, and he was about to return to his own land” (Helaman 13:2, 7). The Nephite record keeper, who preserved the record of Samuel’s mission, also wrote (Helaman 13:3-4, italics and proposed structure added):

A<sub>1</sub> But behold, *the voice of the Lord came unto him,*  
B<sub>1</sub>       that *he should return* again,  
C<sub>1</sub>             and *prophecy* unto the people  
D<sub>1</sub>                whatsoever things *should come in his heart.*  
And it came to pass that  
E                    *they would not suffer that he should enter* into the city;  
B<sub>2A</sub>       therefore *he went*  
B<sub>2B</sub>       *and got upon the wall* thereof,  
B<sub>2C</sub>       *and stretched forth his hand*  
A<sub>2</sub> and *cried with a loud voice,*  
C<sub>2</sub>             and *prophesied* unto the people  
D<sub>2</sub>                whatsoever things *the Lord put into his heart.*<sup>1</sup>

The “A” lines refer to the voices of the Lord and Samuel. The “B” lines deal with Samuel’s return to the city of Zarahemla. The “C” lines focus on prophesying and the “D” lines relate to the content of the prophecies. The “E” line refers to the Nephites’ rejection of Samuel’s return into their city and becomes the literary turning point for the segment.

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<sup>1</sup> Capitalization, punctuation and spelling are as set forth in Joseph Smith, Jr., author and proprietor, *The Book of Mormon* (Palmyra, New York: E.B. Grandin, 1830; Independence, Missouri: Herald Heritage Reprint, 1970), 441; or Wilford C. Wood, *Joseph Smith Begins His Work: Book of Mormon 1830 First Edition Reproduced from Uncut Sheets* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Publisher’s Press, 1958), 441.

As Samuel exhorted the Nephites from atop their wall, some believed his words, but others “were angry with him; and they cast stones at him upon the wall, and also many shot arrows at him as he stood upon the wall; but the Spirit of the Lord was with him” (Helaman 16:2). When the angry ones sought to capture him, “he did cast himself down from the wall, and did flee out of their lands, yea, even unto his own country, and began to preach and to prophesy among his own people. And behold, he was never heard of more among the Nephites” (Helaman 16:7-8). Some of Samuel’s prophecies (Helaman 14:1) were included in a Nephite record of Samuel’s mission (Helaman 13:1-16:9). Two of Samuel’s prophecies that were not part of the original record were mentioned in later Nephite history (3 Nephi 8:1-4; 23:8-13).

Samuel’s five-year prophecy, which is the subject of this part of the chapter on the chronological structure of the Book of Mormon, may have been part of his initial message to the Nephites (Helaman 13:7; 14:9, 26, 28), but was certainly given as he cried out from their wall. This prophecy was remembered and recorded in what is now Helaman 14:2-13. The introductory and chronological segment of the prophecy appears in Helaman 14:2-6 (quoted below) and the segment dealing with the prophecy of redemption (introduced in Helaman 14:2 at line C<sub>1</sub>) follows in Helaman 14:7-13.

A<sub>1</sub> Behold, I give unto you *a sign*:  
 B<sub>1</sub>     for *five years more cometh*,  
 B<sub>2</sub>     and behold, *then cometh the son of God*  
 C         to redeem all those who shall *believe on his name*.

A<sub>2</sub> And behold, this will I give unto you for *a sign*  
 B<sub>3</sub>     at *the time of his coming*;  
 D<sub>1</sub>             for behold, there shall be *great lights in Heaven*,  
 E<sub>1</sub>             insomuch that in *the night before he cometh*,  
 F<sub>1</sub>             there shall be *no darkness*,  
 G<sub>1</sub>             insomuch that it shall *appear unto man*  
 H<sub>1</sub>             as if it was *day*,  
 I<sub>1</sub>             therefore there shall be *one day and a night, and a day*,  
 J<sub>1</sub>             *as if it were one day, and there were no night*,  
 A<sub>3</sub> and this shall be unto you for *a sign*;  
 K<sub>1</sub>             for ye shall know  
 J<sub>2</sub>             of *the rising of the sun*, and also of *its setting*;  
 K<sub>2</sub>             therefore they shall know of *a surety*  
 I<sub>2</sub>             that there shall be *two days and a night*,  
 H<sub>2</sub>             nevertheless *the night*  
 F<sub>2</sub>             shall *not be darkened*;  
 E<sub>2</sub>             and it shall be *the night before he is born*.  
 D<sub>2</sub>             And behold there shall *a new star arise*,  
 G<sub>2</sub>             such an one as ye *never have beheld*;  
 A<sub>4</sub> and this also shall be *a sign* unto you.

A<sub>5</sub> And behold *this is not all*:  
 D<sub>3</sub>             there shall be *many signs and wonders in Heaven*.<sup>2</sup>

The “A” lines refer to the signs prophesied by Samuel. The “B” lines introduce the prophecy of the Messiah’s imminent coming. His miraculous work of redemption is introduced in the “C” line.

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<sup>2</sup> Capitalization, punctuation and spelling are as set forth in Smith, *The Book of Mormon* (1830), 445 (proposed conceptual structure and italics added).

The miraculous signs of his coming are listed in the “D” lines. The implication of these concepts appears to be that the redemption to be accomplished by the Messiah, which must be accepted on faith, is just as real as the signs that would initially be required to be accepted on faith, but would actually be seen just five years later. The “E” lines refer to the night before his birth, while the “F” lines specify that there would be no darkness that night. The unique occurrence of these signs is the subject of the “G” lines. The “H” lines contrast day and night. The “I” lines refer to a day, the following night and the next day and to two days and a night. The “J” lines make it clear that the distinction between day and night would be visible because the sun would be seen to rise and set normally, and such apparent movements of the sun would permit the people to know with certainty that the signs had occurred (the “K” lines).

Only a few fragments of the original manuscript of this prophecy have survived, but they confirm small portions of the wording in the 1830 Book of Mormon.<sup>3</sup> Apparently, the earliest form of the entire text is not the version copied by Oliver Cowdery in the printer’s manuscript. According to Royal Skousen, the “individuals responsible for producing the printer’s manuscript and overseeing the printing—Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and Hyrum Smith—probably fell behind in their copywork and allowed the original manuscript to be used by the printer until they caught up with their copying.” This change in the production process occurred “somewhere between verses 7 and 18 in Helaman 13 to the end of Mormon.”<sup>4</sup> Hence, for Helaman 14:2-6, it would appear that the earliest extant form is the wording typeset by John Gilbert from the original manuscript and printed in the 1830 Book of Mormon. Since the printer’s manuscript also was copied from the original manuscript, the printer’s manuscript and 1830 Book of Mormon can be compared to determine the wording of the original manuscript. According to Skousen, only four minor textual issues relating to the 1830 edition and printer’s manuscript appear in Helaman 14:2-6, none of them material to an understanding of the passage.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Royal Skousen, ed., *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies [“FARMS”], 2001), 501-02.

<sup>4</sup> Royal Skousen, ed., *The Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Entire Text in Two Parts, Part One: 1 Nephi 1–Alma 17* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2001), 4.

<sup>5</sup> First, both the 1830 edition and the printer’s manuscript agree on the indicative verb form *was* (“as if it was day”) in verse three, but Skousen wondered if that was a mistake. In nine instances, the Book of Mormon text uses the subjunctive form *were* “in subordinate *as if* clauses where the subject is *it*.” Nonetheless, in 3 Nephi 8:6, both the 1830 edition and the printer’s manuscript agree on the indicative form *was* in such a clause; so, the original manuscript also may have used the indicative form in Helaman 14:3. Second, the printer’s manuscript uses “the verb *sit* rather than the expected *set*” in verse four. “Historically and dialectically, we can find evidence that ‘the sun sits,’” including examples in literature from 1694 through 1845. In addition, the 1830 typesetter emended the printer’s manuscript text *sit* to *set* in four other cases (one clearly an error). Hence, in Helaman 14:4, the original manuscript may have used the nonstandard “*sitting* in reference to the setting of the sun.” Third, the word *they* in Helaman 14:4 may seem out of place since elsewhere in verses four and five the second person plural pronouns *ye* and *you* are used. Nonetheless, both the 1830 edition and the printer’s manuscript used *they*. Skousen noted that “phonetically and orthographically” the words *ye* and *they* are dissimilar; so, he doubted there was a mix-up. “Although the shift between second and third person here in Helaman 14:4-5 is somewhat jarring, the text itself remains understandable. Perhaps Samuel the Lamanite momentarily distinguished between his current listeners and those who would observe these events five years from then.” Fourth, in Helaman 14:5, the “1830 edition is missing the *be* verb [in the clause *there shall be a new star arise*], whereas the printer’s manuscript has it.” Skousen thought that the word *be* was “unexpected, [but] such a construction is supported by the original text in 2 Nephi 1:6 (‘there shall be none come into this land’).” Royal Skousen, *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon, Part Five* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2008), 3111-15.

*Prophetic Fulfillment.* More than 500 years before Samuel delivered the five-year prophecy, Nephi, the son of Lehi, taught that “signs ... of [the Messiah’s] birth, and also of his death and resurrection” would be given to the Nephite people, but “*after the Messiah shall come*” (2 Nephi 26:3, italics added). Nephi also referred to a specific sign to be expected at the time of the Messiah’s death (the three days of darkness prophesied by Zenos; 1 Nephi 19:10), but not to a sign of the Messiah’s birth. Nephite and Lamanite faithful would have been expecting to hear and know of such a sign, which they apparently believed was to be delivered by “the mouth of angels” (Alma 13:22-26). However, an understanding of the signs of the Messiah’s birth prophesied by Nephi seems to have been withheld until almost the expected time of that birth. An angel apparently explained the signs to Samuel (along with other prophetic messages) and commanded that he should relay them to the Nephites (Helaman 13:7; 14:9, 26, 28). Thus, Samuel’s mission appears to have been, in part, a fulfillment of Nephi’s prophecy more than 500 years earlier.

When Samuel delivered the prophecies from the Nephite wall, he announced that one of his purposes was that the Nephites “might know of the signs of his coming, to the intent that ye might believe on his name” (Helaman 14:12). Samuel’s understanding seems to have been that the Nephites did not know of the signs associated with the Messiah’s birth. When a dispute later arose about whether or not “the time was past for the words to be fulfilled, which were spoken by Samuel, the Lamanite” (3 Nephi 1:5), the threat of a religious purge by the non-believing Nephites was made against the believers “except the sign should come to pass, which had been given by Samuel the prophet” (3 Nephi 1:9). These passages indicate that the five-year prophecy, as delivered by Samuel and then apparently circulated by the believers in anticipation of the Messiah’s birth, was new and the time of its fulfillment may not have been well understood.

*Four Elements of the Prophecy.* Samuel’s prophecy, as set forth in the Nephite record, included four principal elements. Three specific elements each were designated as a *sign*. The first was that “five years more cometh” and then the Messiah would be born. Second, “in the night before he cometh, there shall be no darkness.” Third, “a new star [shall] arise.” The concluding general element of the prophecy was that “there shall be many signs and wonders in Heaven.” Each of these elements will be examined for potential chronological issues.

*Five Years More.* The first chronological issue, also found in connection with Lehi’s 600-year prophecy, is whether or not Samuel prophesied about a period of five complete years. The clause in Helaman 14:2 reads “five years more cometh.” To me that sounds like a prophecy of five full years in some sort of calendar, but I cannot merely speculate. The principle of thoroughness requires more. Samuel also stated that *then* would appear “a sign at the time of his coming” and “then cometh the Son of God.” In addition, the sign of a night without darkness would occur “the night before he cometh” or, in its parallel form, “the night before he is born” (lines E<sub>1</sub> and E<sub>2</sub> above). Hence, if the verb *come* (as applied to the advent of the Son of God) means to be *born* (rather than to be conceived, or to stretch, kick or otherwise make his presence known during pregnancy), then *come* (as applied to the passage of five years of time) would seem to mean something like “fully arrive.” That possibility is consistent with normal English diction.

The verb *come*, according to the 1828 dictionary of Noah Webster, could mean “to arrive; to be present” and “[t]o happen.”<sup>6</sup> According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the verb *come*, as

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<sup>6</sup> Noah Webster, LL.D., *American Dictionary of the English Language*, two vols. (New York: S. Converse, 1828), I: [415] (“come”), accessed at [www.archive.org/details/americandictiona01websrich](http://www.archive.org/details/americandictiona01websrich). See also Noah Webster, LL.D., *Dictionary of the English Language: Abridged from the American Dictionary* (New York: White, Gallaher, & White, 1831), 89 (“come”): “happen;” Samuel Johnson, LL.D., and John Walker, A *Dictionary of the English Language*, 2nd ed. (London: William Pickering, 1828), 181 (“come”): “to become

applied to a thing or person, can mean “[t]o come into existence, make its appearance;”<sup>7</sup> and “[o]f time or portions of time: [t]o be present, to arrive in due course.”<sup>8</sup> I see no reason in the text to depart from such normal interpretations. Five more years would arrive in due course and then the Son of God would make his appearance through birth.

The record also is explicit that Samuel came into the Nephite land to prophesy “in the eighty and sixth year” of the reign of the judges and, after he departed from the Nephite land, “thus ended the eighty and sixth year” (Helaman 13:1; 16:9). In addition, the dispute between believers and non-believers, over whether the time for Samuel’s prophesied sign had passed, came about only after “the ninety and first year [in the Nephite calendar] had passed away” (3 Nephi 1:1). The Nephite 87th through 91st years (five full years) had passed away before the dispute arose. Thus, it would appear that Samuel’s prophecy included nothing less than five complete Nephite years.

*The Unknown Calendar.* I mentioned this issue in connection with Lehi’s prophecy and it is also present here. Samuel’s prophecy apparently was given about five years from the end of a 600-year period counted by the Nephites; so, it would seem that those concerned about the Messianic prophecies (whether believers or non-believers) would have known about, and been able to count, five more years. Nonetheless, Samuel reiterated that element in his prophecy. In addition, given the dispute that arose near the end of the five-year period and the traditional enmity that had existed for centuries between Lamanites and Nephites (e.g., Jacob 1:13-14; Helaman 14:10), I think it is necessary to question whether Samuel’s calendric understanding was identical to what might have been the Nephites’ calendric understanding.

If I assume that a Lamanite might have used an observational solar calendar of about 365.2422 days per year and that a Nephite might have used an observational twelve-moon calendar of 354.367 days per year (and I hasten to add that I am making these assumptions here solely for the purpose of illustration), then the dispute noted above might have been a dispute over not less than 54 or 55 days. This calendric issue is beyond the scope of this chapter. Potentially relevant calendars are examined in the chapter on “Calendars.” However, it is relevant here to note that Samuel’s reference to five years does raise the calendric question again.

*A Night Without Darkness.* The description of the night without darkness appears in several different parallel forms in Helaman 14:3-4:

- D<sub>1</sub> great lights in Heaven
- D<sub>2</sub> a new star arise
- D<sub>3</sub> many signs and wonders in Heaven
  
- F<sub>1</sub> no darkness
- H<sub>1</sub> as if it was day
- H<sub>2</sub> the night
- F<sub>2</sub> shall not be darkened
  
- I<sub>1</sub> one day and a night, and a day
- I<sub>2</sub> there shall be two days and a night

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present, and no longer future; ... to happen.” (Both 19th century abridged dictionaries were accessed through Google Books.)

<sup>7</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, two vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), I: 473 (“come”).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, I: 474.

J<sub>1</sub> as if it were one day, and there were no night  
J<sub>2</sub> the rising of the sun, also ... its setting

Hence, it would appear that the five aspects of this sign would be: (1) the sun would be seen to rise on the day before the Messiah's birth (day one begins); (2) the sun would be seen to set that night (the night following day one); (3) the night would not be darkened, but would be "as if it was day;" (4) "great lights" and "a new star," as specific forms of "signs and wonders," would be seen; and (5) the sun would be seen to rise on the day of the Messiah's birth (day two begins).

*Great Lights in Heaven.* The next issue to be explored for its chronological implications is what might have been meant by the phrase "great lights in Heaven." The term "great lights" does not appear elsewhere in the Book of Mormon and no other "lights in Heaven" are mentioned. In one of Nephi's quotations from Isaiah, "the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof" are mentioned, along with "the sun ... and the moon" (2 Nephi 23:10; see also Isaiah 13:10). That quotation indicates that the Nephites may have understood heaven to include the sun, the moon and the stars (individually and in some sort of constellational groupings). They also understood that certain heavenly bodies were "planets which move in their regular form" (Alma 30:44).

The term "great lights in Heaven" might be an allusion to the "account of the creation of the world" contained in "the five books of Moses" that were part of the brass plates (1 Nephi 5:11). That same creation account appears to be related to an allusion made by another Nephite prophet, Abinadi, to the Lord creating heaven and earth in six days (Mosiah 13:19). At the very beginning of the first book of Moses, the brass plates probably stated: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years ... to give light upon the earth: and it was so" (Genesis 1:14-15). As part of this creation, "God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also" (Genesis 1:16). Thus, when Samuel referred to the sign of the "great lights in Heaven," he may have had in mind an allusion to the creation story found in the brass plates. This suggestion relies on a source outside the Book of Mormon (the Book of Genesis), but since the books of Moses and the six-day creation story are mentioned in the Book of Mormon, this reliance probably is not misplaced.

How did the greater light that ruled the day participate in the sign? Apparently, it would be seen to rise and set in its proper order, so the Nephites would "know of a surety" that there were "two days and a night" (Helaman 14:4). How did the lesser light that ruled the night participate in the sign? Apparently, it would contribute to making "the night before he cometh" such that there was "no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day" (Helaman 14:3). This may suggest that the prophesied night would have a full moon that rose in the east, shining like the sun in its brightness, and that the moon would remain in the heavens throughout the night—relinquishing its rule when the sun itself rose on the day of the Messiah's birth.

*A New Star.* As a separate sign, Samuel also prophesied that a new star would appear "such an one as ye never have beheld" (Helaman 14:5). According to my proposed structure for Helaman 14:2-6 above, this sign (line D<sub>2</sub>) is parallel to the "great lights in Heaven" (line D<sub>1</sub>) and perhaps encompassed by the "many signs and wonders in Heaven" (line D<sub>3</sub>). This suggests that the new star was prophesied to arise during the night without darkness.

As noted above, the Nephites understood the difference between "planets which move in their regular form" (Alma 30:44) and other so-called fixed stars and their constellations (1 Nephi 1:10; 2 Nephi 23:10; 24:13; Helaman 14:20; 3 Nephi 8:22). Planets orbit the sun and thus appear to move slowly through the night sky with respect to the fixed stars. From time to time, planets approach each other and then separate along their separate tracks close to the ecliptic. Those

movements usually do not result in a singular luminary; they merely lead to the relatively close passing of the planets.<sup>9</sup> The new star prophesied by Samuel was to be “such an one as ye never have beheld” (Helaman 14:5), not something like planetary conjunctions that had been seen for hundreds of years. Thus, any attempt to connect Samuel’s prophesied new star with a conjunction of planets moving “in their regular form” seems misguided.

What might have been the believers’ expectation about a new star? Would they have anticipated seeing it on the night after the Messiah’s birth and on subsequent nights? Presumably, such a star would have been expected to be visible for many nights—although without the other signs and wonders in heaven, subsequent nights probably would not have been as light as before. Hence, Samuel’s prophesied new star may have been understood by the believers to fulfill Nephi’s prophecy of a sign of the Messiah’s birth that would continue “*after the Messiah shall come*” (2 Nephi 26:3, italics added).

*Many Signs and Wonders in Heaven.* The fourth and most general element of Samuel’s five-year prophecy is that “there shall be many signs and wonders in Heaven” (Helaman 14:6). In the Book of Mormon, *signs and wonders* are most often described as being shown and seen (Mosiah 3:15; Helaman 15:3; 16:4; 3 Nephi 1:22), but they also may be heard (3 Nephi 2:1). They are “given unto the people” (Helaman 16:13) and “wrought among the people” (Helaman 16:23) through the working of the Holy Ghost “among the children of men according to their faith” (2 Nephi 26:13). Signs and wonders may portend events that “come to pass” (Helaman 14:28), but they can be rejected (3 Nephi 1:22) or diminish in immediacy and be forgotten (3 Nephi 2:1).

Some basic definitions may help to identify possible aspects of Samuel’s *signs and wonders in Heaven*. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the noun *sign* may be considered a “token or indication (visible or otherwise) of some fact, quality, etc.” A *sign* may be an “indication of some coming event; *spec.* an omen or portent.” In scriptural use, the word also may mean an “act of a miraculous nature, serving to demonstrate divine power or authority.” In astronomical use, the noun *sign* can mean “[o]ne or the other of the twelve equal divisions of the Zodiac, each distinguished by the name of a constellation and frequently denoted by a special symbol” or, rarely and now obsolete, “a constellation.”<sup>10</sup> The word *wonder* generally means “[s]omething that causes astonishment,” such as a marvelous object, character, act, achievement or quality; an “astonishing occurrence, event, or fact; a surprising incident; a wonderful thing.” The word *wonder* may also mean a “deed performed or an event brought about by miraculous or supernatural power; a miracle.” In that manner, the plural *wonders* has meant an “extraordinary natural occurrence, esp. when regarded as supernatural or taken as an omen or portent,” although such a definition is now considered obsolete.<sup>11</sup>

How would the believers have understood the meaning of the phrase “signs and wonders in Heaven”? The signs and wonders surely would be indications of the pending birth of the Messiah the next day, portents of his appearance in mortality. They would be tokens of Deity’s intimate

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<sup>9</sup> Donald H. Menzel and Jay M. Pasachoff, *A Field Guide to Stars and Planets*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1983), 350-83.

<sup>10</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, II: 2820 (“sign”). See also Noah Webster, LL.D., *American Dictionary of the English Language*, two vols. (New York: S. Converse, 1828), II: [592-93] (“sign”), accessed at [www.archive.org/details/americandictionary02websr](http://www.archive.org/details/americandictionary02websr); Webster, *Dictionary of the English Language: Abridged*, 397 (“sign”); Johnson and Walker, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 664 (“sign”).

<sup>11</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, II: 3809 (“wonder”). See also Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, II: [937] (“wonder”); Webster, *Dictionary of the English Language: Abridged*, 507 (“wonder”); Johnson and Walker, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 824 (“wonder”).

involvement with mortals. Were there to be miracles, such as visions of heavenly beings and pronouncements to be heard from heaven? Were certain constellations understood to be associated with the great lights and new star?

This last question identifies another chronological issue to be considered in the chapter on the Messiah's birth, where the fulfillment of Samuel's five-year prophecy will be examined in detail. In the next part of this chapter on chronological structure, Samuel's prophecy about the lifespan of the Messiah will be analyzed.