

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.***

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#04-1069

Total Solar Eclipse – Easter Island

July 12, 2010

On July 11, 2010, a total solar eclipse occurred that could be observed in only a few inhabited locations across the South Pacific as it made an 11,000 km or 6,800 mile arc across the Pacific. A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes between the Earth and the Sun, blocking out the Sun. The next one to appear across the globe will occur on November 13, 2012.

One of the only land areas to have a direct hit, so to speak, was **Easter Island, Chile**. As the Sun was positioned 40° above a north-northwest horizon, the eclipse began at 12.40 pm (1840 GMT) that lasted 4 minutes and 41 seconds.

A group of reporters from Xinhua observed the celestial event from the island. Their observation was telling: “For about five minutes the sky turned into a dark, magically fascinating blanket over the island, with only strange lights coming from distant horizons. Silence reigned over the time and space. People who were jubilant just a few seconds ago now suddenly stopped talking and laughing, as if the fear for the nature’s amazing power and for the loss of the light took their breath away: If, the Sun never shines on the Earth again.”

Mankind has always been fascinated by, and often fearful and superstitious of, eclipses.

A total solar eclipse has not been seen on Easter Island for 1400 years, making it a very rare occurrence for the island that is known for its **monolithic human heads carved out of stone** called the **Easter Island Heads**, which have been a source of mystery for centuries. Why they were carved, what they signify, and how they were transported across the island have been a source of intrigue for which many have sought answers. Also, in the 19th century, some tablets were discovered on the island that have writings on them in what is called *rongorongo*, which is described as a system of glyphs (carved figures). Interestingly, no one has ever been able to decipher these writings, in spite of numerous attempts to do so. *Rongorongo* and the heads remain a mystery to this day.

One professor who studied the *rongorongo* language surmised that the writings discovered on the island dealt with rituals “**praising the avatar – incarnation or son of the god.**”

It is interesting that the word *avatar* would come into focus with a total solar eclipse on Easter Island after the blockbuster movie ***Avatar*** hit the theaters on December 18, 2009 and was released on DVD on April 22, 2010.

There are several explanations of the word *avatar*; but, for the most part, it refers to a divine being or spirit transforming into a human form, as in descending from heaven to earth or descending down to the level of the flesh. It is mostly translated into English as *incarnation* or, more accurately, as *appearance* or *manifestation*. According to Indian Hindu, *avatar* refers to *re-incarnation*. In a much broader and modern-day interpretation, *avatar* refers to any of a variety of ways that a spirit (or whatever) changes or transforms into something else to achieve some set purpose.

One further bit of information deals with how the island got its name. A Dutch explorer named Jacob Roggeveen was the first recorded European visitor to the island. He was looking for another island and came across this island of monolithic heads on Easter Sunday 1722; thus, it was called Easter Island, which is the same name given to it in Spanish, *Isla de Pascua*.

Now, you might be wondering where I am going with all these details.

Perhaps there is no significance to this event. But then again, considering how close we are to the coming of the kingdom of our Lord, we shouldn't discount events as merely coincidences but instead should be discerning if God is saying something to us in these last days. After all, the Word of God tells us that there will be signs in the heavens involving the Sun and the Moon and the Stars.

The first detail that should catch our attention is the naming of the island based on Easter Sunday, which links it to the resurrection from the dead of the Son of God, the Savior of the world and the soon-to-be reigning King of the nations.

The second detail that should catch our attention is the meaning of the word *avatar*, especially as it relates to "incarnation or son of the god" and a deity descending from heaven to earth. *Avatar* is associated with the Hindu religion and, as such, is not considered a Christian word; however, its reference to incarnation, son of (the) god, and descent should not go unnoticed.

It is hardly necessary to remind a Christian that Jesus is **Immanuel, "God with us"** (Matthew 1:23), the one **who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men** (Philippians 2:6-7 NASB). He is the one **who descended from heaven** (John 3:13), **the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation** (Colossians 1:15 NASB), **the Son of God** (John 1:34; 1 John 5:20).

The third detail that should catch our attention is the fact that Easter Island is known for its thousands of carved monolithic human heads. Actually, they are heads with bodies, but the head is much larger than the body, comprising 3/5^{ths} of the entire structure.

Again, it is hardly necessary to remind a Christian that God's second commandment warns against making and worshipping idols. Easter Island being filled with idols speaks volumes about the condition of mankind in these last days that worships many idols of the heart, and the church of God is not excluded from this judgment.

(4) "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. (5) You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, (6) but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Exodus 20:4-6 NASB)

The fourth detail that should catch our attention is that the Moon blocked out the Sun. **But to you who fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness shall rise up, and healing will be on His wings** (Malachi 4:2 LITV). The world-at-large has rejected the Son (Sun), **the Light of the World** (John 8:12). **For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples. But Jehovah shall rise on you, and His glory shall be seen on you** (Isaiah 60:2 LITV). The good news is that it is **God who said, "Out of darkness Light shall shine," who shone in our hearts to give the brightness of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ** [Isa. 42:6, 7, 16] (2 Corinthians 4:6 LITV). His light may be blocked from many hearts in our day, but the day of His light and glory filling the whole earth is coming soon. Praise God!

Finally, the fifth detail that should catch our attention is that this eclipse is a celestial sign of the coming of the Lord, the Son of Man. The Bridegroom is coming and nothing will be hidden from Him.

(1) The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. ... (4) Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, (5) which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; it rejoices as a strong man to run his course. (6) Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them; and there is nothing hidden from its heat. (Psalm 19:1, 4-6 NASB)

Let us be mindful that God summons the heavens above, and the earth, to judge His people. The heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge. He will gather His godly ones, the sons of God, to Himself (Psalm 50:4-6). Let us be rid of all idols of the heart and be ready as a watchful bride.