

“WE SAW HIS STAR
IN THE EAST AND WE HAVE
COME TO WORSHIP HIM.”
MATTHEW 2:2



CREATION STUDIES INSTITUTE

Reaching the World with the Truths of Creation

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The Stars Speak to Us

There is a sense of incredible awe and playful mystery in our nighttime skies. The stars compel our attention and plead with us to venture outside and turn off the lights.

A constellation is a grouping of stars that form an image based on a story or theme. Identifying them is not like connecting dots to reveal an object; rather, certain stars or arrangements of stars provide mere points of reference for each figure. For example, Orion, the great hunter, is identified by three bright stars in a line known as the Belt of Orion and a bright star named Rigel at the lower right that marks his foot. Since they are also for “signs and seasons” for us humans, they are always constant and dependable. While some question this, others also see another message imbedded in the constellations, proclaiming from the beginning of time the gospel of Christ, the Messiah. Many books have been published on this subject. If you would like to learn about it, I would encourage you to begin by reading one written by the belated D. James Kennedy titled, *The Real Meaning of the Zodiac*. Since our Creator made the stars to declare His glory—ultimately manifested in His Son—it makes perfect sense that the heavens would declare His plan of salvation, doesn’t it?

The Star of Bethlehem

From antiquity, men have studied the heavenly bodies and used the constellations as reference points, early on realizing that they were reliable travel guides on both land and sea. This brings us undeniably to the most famous heavenly sign in history—declaring the birth of Christ. As the Wise Men proclaimed in Matthew 2:2, “For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.” But just what was that mysterious manifestation, that colossal astronomical event in the night sky that drew the attention of the Magi and launched them on a long and arduous quest to honor the soon-coming King? Some believe it was a special, divinely created star, others maintain it was a comet, while still others think it was a unique conjunction of planets. We believe a new and powerful documentary from the producer of *The Passion of the Christ* answers this question with clarity and understanding and will enhance your celebrations of our Lord’s birth. *The Star of Bethlehem* DVD will walk you through biblical and historical clues revealing its incredible significance as well as the vastness of God’s creativity.

The Creation Studies Institute also needs your help this holiday season. **For your most generous gift of \$35.00 or more**, you can partner with us in proclaiming the Gospel to every creature and receive the exciting DVD, *The Star of Bethlehem*. Join presenter Rick Larson on his quest to identify the Star that marked the very time and place of our Savior’s birth. This DVD will give you a chance to experience the glories of God’s Word and His heavenly host in an entirely new light. It’s a wonderful gift to give yourself and your loved ones this Christmas, and your support will help CSI end the year strong. For your convenience you may also donate online at www.creationstudies.org. May you and yours have a truly Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!

Tom DeRosa,

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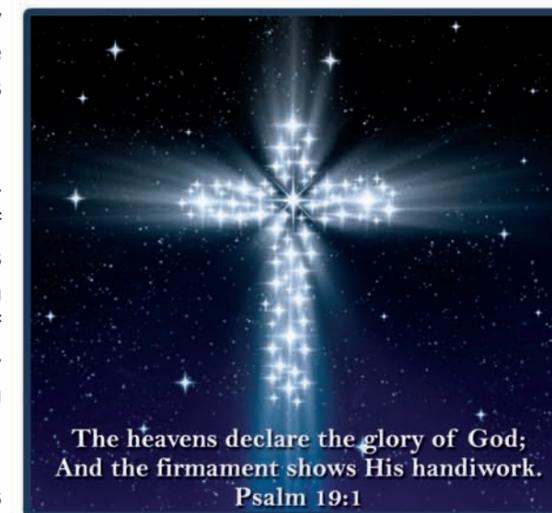
They sparkle like glittering diamonds in the blackness of space and play hide and seek, revealing themselves most fully only when we sequester ourselves in total darkness. However, before we may witness the vast array in all its glory, the moon also needs to hide its bright reflective light beneath the horizon. Only then does the “heavenly host” come out of hiding and show its “true colors.” Ironically, the more we move into darkness here on earth, the more the beauty of the stars shine. The more insignificant and obscure we make ourselves, the more the night’s luminary objects display God’s awesome grandeur.

Nightly, the heavenly bodies put on a wondrous performance, dancing and moving against the utter darkness of a jet-black stage. Amazingly, however, their light reaches our eyes only after traveling at amazing speeds through trillions of miles of empty space, sending a message of hope and assurance that God is near. Yet, the magnificence of a star-filled evening sky is only a dim reflection of our Creator and Savior’s true glory.

I believe that having witnessed the majesty of the Kings of kings and the Lord of lords when he was a young shepherd boy sleeping under a canopy of glittering stars shining in all their splendor, could well have inspired King David to pen these words:

*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.
Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.
There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.
Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
Psalm 19:1-4*

Does God really talk to us through the stars? If not, why would He create such an awe-inspiring display? According to David’s inspired words, the heavens “utter speech” and “reveal knowledge.” He says “their voice” is heard throughout the world. Having done much research on this topic, I have found an abundance of scientific evidence that supports the conclusion that our Creator does indeed communicate to us through the heavenly bodies in several fantastic ways, and that all we have to do is be still to hear what they are saying.



The Heavens Declare the Hope of God’s Heavenly Splendor

For the most part, the universe is empty and void, with tiny invisible molecules of celestial gases spread thinly throughout its seemingly infinite distances. In fact, estimates indicate the cosmos is so devoid of matter that it averages only 16 molecules per cubic inch. This creates such a strong vacuum that even our advanced technology cannot come close to duplicating it! You might expect that the darkness of space is due to this emptiness, but that is not correct. The ambient light of the stars and other luminary bodies is actually ubiquitous (everywhere). It invisibly pervades the darkness just as the Apostle John wrote of Jesus Christ: “And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:5 NKJ). I believe this hidden reality of the nighttime skies actually gives us a glimpse of the incredible splendor we will experience when we meet our heavenly Father.

On an ideal moonless night in a remote location anywhere on earth, the human eye can scan several thousand stars. But this is just a small sampling of what is truly there. The light from the vast majority of stars present in the universe is blocked from our vision by dust particles from the celestial gasses. If the dust were removed, you would be stunned to find the night skies lit up so brightly that there would not be a trace of darkness on the earth’s entire horizon, except perhaps in your immediate vicinity. Composed of emanations from an unimaginable number of stars, the sky would appear as a solid block of light. If our eyes could stand it, it would be an amazing glimpse of God’s magnificence!

Perhaps the cosmic dust is a consequence of man’s sin. As Paul states in Romans 8:21, the whole creation, including the universe, awaits its redemption from “the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (NKJ). When we stand face-to-face with our Maker in heaven, we will see Him in all of His magnificent splendor and glory. And when He creates the new heaven and new earth, there will be no need for stars or sun or moon, because He Himself will illuminate everything. As Revelation 21:23 says, “The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.” The truth is, if we could see the light from all the stars in the nightly heavens, even that would merely serve as a taste of what is in store for us in God’s kingdom!

The Heavens Declare the Creator Has No End and No Boundaries

The question of how many stars the universe contains has challenged astronomers for centuries. With each new development in observational instrumentation, the number keeps increasing. After careful study, in 2003 Australian astronomers gave a star count of 70 sextillion or 70 thousand, million, million, million. This is equivalent to about 10 times the grains of sand on all the world’s beaches and deserts. Our Milky Way galaxy alone is composed of between 100 billion and 300 billion stars. More recently, the Hubble Telescope has found 125 billion galaxies, leading scientists to estimate the star count at upwards of a trillion, trillion. So immense are the figures that one astronomer has concluded that, “The actual number of stars could be infinite.” It is no accident that the nighttime skies force us to think of infinity. Our Creator’s “handiwork” lets everyone on earth know that He is infinite in power, might, and in His very Being. No wonder we are told that the heavens declare the glory of God!

We get another glimpse of God’s glory when we realize that, like a shepherd, He names and numbers every star—no small feat! As Isaiah 40:26 states:

“Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”

Just how much space does God’s heavenly “flock” cover? The earth is close to 25,000 miles in circumference, and the sun is about 93 million miles away. But the closest star to our solar system is Proxima Centauri, which is 4.2 light years or 25 trillion miles away. Our Milky Way alone stretches for 90,000 light years or 530 thousand, trillion miles in space.

Such distances are hard for us to imagine. However, understanding that we have observed galaxies close to 13.7 billion light years away (82 billion, trillion miles) helps one appreciate how enormous the universe is and how, size-wise, we humans represent the tiniest of micro dots occupying an almost invisible dust speck—the planet earth. But it doesn’t end here. While the universe is currently estimated at about 27.4 billion light years in diameter, studies of cosmic background radiation expanding along with it suggest that it may be many times wider, measuring up to 156 billion light years across. To think that God has named and numbered every star it contains is utterly astounding!

As believers in a Creator, surveying the universe in which we live should certainly humble us and may at times even give us a sense of insignificance. However, those who state that everything evolved by accident out of a “Big Bang” offer only an existence of utter and continual hopelessness. Some may recall the popular educational TV series, *The Cosmos*, produced in 1980 and starring belated, well-known astronomer Carl Sagan as he walked in and out of mystical and appealing galactic stage settings. Creatively photographed and filled with poetic rhetoric, it inspired a sense of wonder in millions, but it also left behind a feeling of despair. Proclaiming the Darwinian gospel, Sagan declared that the universe and everything in it came from a giant explosion, and that through a series of random, fortuitous mishaps we evolved from ocean scum into full-fledged human beings. Sagan’s ideology is summarized by the famous quote that began his book of the same title as the TV series: “The Cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be.” If you believe Sagan, there is no room for a Creator or a Savior. Man, a tiny, living micro speck in the universe, exists for no apparent reason and has no particular purpose. He just is. On the other hand, an abundance of evidence suggests that earth holds a uniquely privileged place in cosmos because, so far as we know, it alone possesses all the conditions necessary for biological life—almost like it was actually designed for this purpose! However, I believe its true specialness is due to the fact that the tiny beings that walk this speck of dust (us) are the image-bearers of Christ. It is also where the Son of God Himself became a microdot in the great big universe He created to offer Himself as the sacrificial Lamb of God and purchase a place in heaven for us. We are not Carl Sagan’s hopeless accidents, but the special objects of God’s love, grace, and mercy with an everlasting hope and purpose. And we can take strong encouragement in knowing that amid the trillions of stars and vast reaches of space, our Creator speaks to us, telling us that we have a unique place of honor and glory in all of creation. His message is not Darwin’s rhetoric of meaningless struggle and the finality of death, but of earthly purpose and the promise of joyous life eternal, where no more pain or suffering exist. God, in deed, has given Man a very exalted place in His creation, as the Bible states:

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

Psalm 8:3-5

Signs of Christ?

First mentioned on the fourth day of creation as “lights in the firmament” in Genesis 1:14, heavenly bodies are referred to in the Bible more than 300 times. As God said, they are “to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years.” Two are identified as the “greater light” (the sun), and the “lesser light” (the moon), and part of their stated purpose is to govern the planet earth so mankind and all living creatures could live in a regular cycle of light and darkness in a 24-hour day. God also formed the trillions and trillions of stars on the fourth day.

The book of Job, considered by many scholars to be the oldest book in the Bible (650 years before Moses), refers to stars in the form of constellations. This is especially noticeable in the King James Version: “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?” (38:31-32). Mazzaroth is the twelve constellations of the Zodiac that continually appear in the nighttime skies.