

Wonders of God-02 Psalm 8-the Starry Heavens

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald explores the wonders of God's creation through the lens of the starry heavens, emphasizing His power, love, and the significance of humanity in the grand design of the universe.

Duration: 36:50

Scripture: Psalm 8:3-4, Psalm 19:1-2, Psalm 147:4-5, Amos 5:8, Romans 1:19-20

Topics: "Heavens"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the beauty and power of God's creation, specifically focusing on the sun and the stars. He emphasizes that God's understanding is infinite and that he not only counts the stars but also heals the brokenhearted. The speaker then discusses the fine-tuning of the universe and the significance of planet Earth in the grand scheme of things. He concludes by marveling at God's love for humanity despite our insignificance in the universe.

Transcript

First of all, about the starry heavens. Actually, Rick Dulles is the one that should be speaking about this, because he's forgotten more than I've ever known about it. Let's read some scriptures, and where do you think we turn? Anybody guess where we turn for the wonders of the starry heavens? Well, Job, yes, Psalms.

We're going to turn to Psalms. Psalm 8, verses 3 and 4. Psalm 8, verses 3 and 4. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man, that you visit him? That's beautiful, isn't it? When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers. What beautiful language.

Makes us think of Genesis 1, he made the stars also. It's almost put in as an afterthought. Psalm 19, Psalm 19.

So familiar to us. 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's 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. In them he has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a

bridegroom coming out of his chamber and rejoices like a strong man to run its race.

It's describing how the sun rises in the east and goes up to the height of the sky at noonday and then descends in the west at night. Its rising is from one end of heaven, and it's circuit to the other end, and there's nothing hid from its heat. Beautiful.

Psalms 147. Psalm 147, verses 4 and 5. He counts the number of the stars. He calls them all by name.

Great is our Lord and mighty in power. His understanding is infinite. But notice the verse that came before that.

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. What a wonderful God that the same God who counts the number of the stars heals the brokenhearted. It's great, isn't it? The God who is infinitely high is intimately nigh to his people.

Only the Holy Spirit of God would ever put verses together like that. He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He counts the number of the stars.

Well, that's more than man can do. We don't have any way of counting the number of the stars. We don't have numbers that go up that high.

Great is our Lord and mighty in power. His understanding is infinite. And then in Amos, you don't have to turn to Amos 5, verse 8. It says, He made the Pleiades and Orion.

The Lord is his name. You know, before thinking about the stars, I'd like to think about the universe that the stars are in. Because God must have made that too.

You don't think of that. We think of material things. But what about the universe itself? Does it have any limits? Where is the edge of it? I don't know.

But God knows. And I think it's wonderful to think of him doing that. Making the universe that contains all the heavenly bodies.

In other words, he made space. And I think the thought boggles my mind as well at night. Spurgeon said this.

It's very nice. He said, any part of the creation has more instruction in it than human mind will ever exhaust. But the celestial realm is peculiarly rich in spiritual lore.

In other words, anything to do with God's creation is more than the mind can take in. But when you start to think about the heavens and the heavenly bodies, it's especially rich in spiritual matter. If it cost a penny to travel a thousand miles, a cruise to the moon would cost only \$2.38. Quite the bargain, isn't it? Just a penny to travel a thousand miles.

You could go to the moon for \$2.38. If you wanted to go to the sun, the one-way ticket would cost \$930. That's a penny for a thousand miles. Not a dollar.

A penny for a thousand miles. To go to the sun would cost \$930. And a trip to the nearest star, hold your hat, would cost \$240 million.

With the naked eye, we can see about 5,000 stars. And with a home-style telescope, about 2 million come into view. But the Palomar Observatory, they know there are billions and billions of stars.

And I've quoted this before here, I'm sure. Sir James Jeans says that there are probably as many stars in the heavens as there are grains of sand by all the seashores of the world. I just have to pause and get my breath.

And James Jeans lived some time ago, but Carl Sagan says the same thing in his book, *The Cosmos*. He says the same thing. There are many stars in the heavens as there are grains of sand on all the seashores of the world.

That's amazing, isn't it? What a wonderful God we have. And we look at them, they look so close together, don't they? Oh, watch out, they're going to bump. Oh, they don't bump.

They're like lonely lightships in an ocean without shores. No danger of any of them ever bumping. Think of the power that holds them in their space.

Isn't that marvelous? While God is healing your broken heart down here on Earth, He's keeping all of those stars in just the right place. I think it's wonderful. Astronomers today can see objects 10 billion light years away.

A light year is the distance that light travels in a year. How much does light travel in a second? Well, it travels 186 odd thousand miles a second. So in a year, it travels 6 trillion.

Well, I don't understand 6 trillion. I mean, that's what it travels in a year, 6 trillion miles. And they measure the distances of the stars from us by light years.

I would be awed if they just did it in miles. But no, light years. And this really, I've been thinking a lot about this.

So when we look up at the stars at night, we're not seeing current events. We don't see the stars where they are now. We saw the stars where they were years ago.

For instance, there's a star named Regal, and we see Regal where it was 540 years ago. It has taken the light from that star 540 years to come to us. And don't forget how fast light travels.

So that's fascinating. Now, when I look up at the stars, I can see history, not current events. And a thought strikes me.

Well, if I can see history down here on Earth, what's to prevent me from seeing history in heaven? What's to prevent me from seeing the original creation, Genesis 1.1? What's to prevent me from seeing Calvary just the way it took place? What's to prevent me from seeing the resurrection? Wouldn't that be thrilling? I think we will. Those light waves are all in the universe, and God, it would be an easy thing for God to harness them and show us the whole panorama of Bible history. Why should it be thought a thing impossible? If we can see history in the stars today, I think in heaven we'll see more than that.

The galaxies seem to be traveling away from us at enormous speeds. I'm sure you've read in the newspapers a lot about the Big Bang Theory, you know, how it all started. Well, it isn't how it all started.

It's how it all exploded. They have no explanation of the original matter that exploded. Atom.

But it does seem that the galaxies are traveling away from us at enormous speeds, and if any of them are traveling at the speed of light, well, too bad, we'll never see them. Our little planet is insignificant in the universe. That makes me think of the verse we just read.

What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? If the planet we live on is so insignificant, how insignificant you and I are. And yet he loves us, and he can't love us more than he loves us right now. The God who made the universe, he cannot love us more than he loves us right now.

It's really marvelous. It would take 1,300,000 planet Earths to make one sun. I can feel my brains pressing against the side of my head when I say these things, can't you? We just can't take it in.

1,000 Earths could fit inside Jupiter. 1,000 Earths, that's a lot. And the Milky Way is big enough to contain 300 million suns, and some planets could hold 500 million suns the size of ours.

I like this. A lot of these statistics, I mean, they're just beyond me. They're out there somewhere, but I like this one.

It's estimated that there are 100 billion galaxies. I didn't say stars, I said galaxies. It's estimated that there are 100 billion galaxies and 100 billion stars in every galaxy.

I think young people would say today, that's awesome. And it really is awesome. Einstein believed that with our largest telescopes, we've only seen a billionth of theoretical space.

Marvelous, isn't it? Our theme is our wonderful God, and we have a wonderful God. God the Creator. With our largest telescopes, we see only a billionth of theoretical space.

If somehow we were propelled out into the universe, the chances that we would touch anything, any planet, anything, are infinitesimally small. We'd just keep going, going, going, going, and never touch anything. The stars, on the average, the stars are light years apart.

Light years apart. And Sagan, Carl Sagan, not a believer, far from it, I like what he says, the study of the galaxies reveals a universal order and beauty. Wonderful when you hear, well it's sad in a way, but it's wonderful when you hear ungodly men who refuse to admit that there's a God, yet they have to say that the galaxies exhibit a universal order and beauty.

I was reading a map that National Geographic put out, and there's an astronomer named Alan Sandage, and on one of the maps it says, think of this now, Galaxies are to astronomy what atoms are to physics. That's a marvelous statement. Galaxies are, you know atoms are pretty small in the study of physics, aren't they? Well, galaxies are to astronomy what atoms are to physics.

Wonderful how God can make unsaved men say things that really magnify him and his greatness. Another astronomer spoke of the awe which the universe inspires because of the intricate and subtle way it is put together. They come awfully close, don't they? The universe inspires awe because of the intricate and subtle way it is put together.

Actually, the size of the universe is beyond human comprehension. I often argue with myself, is the universe infinite? Does it have any limits? And I really don't know the answer to that. Maybe somebody can help me with that today.

I know God is infinite, but I don't know whether the universe is infinite. Carl Sagan, again, if I can just quote him, he said, it's rich in elegant facts, in exquisite interrelationships, in the subtle machinery of awe, the subtle machinery of awe. And we say, wonder of wonders, vast surprise, can greater wonder be that he who built the starry sky once bled and died for me.

That's enough to put us in awe, isn't it? When I think that God his son, not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in. But on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to put away my sin. Then sings my soul, my savior God to thee, how great thou art, how great thou art.

I may have quoted this last week, I can't remember. When you get to be my age, you don't remember what you said last week. But I'll say it again because there's some here that weren't here last week.

One scientific article recently said that the universe is so finely tuned that for it to happen by chance would be equivalent to throwing out a little dart to the most distant quasar and hitting a bullseye one millimeter in diameter. It's so finely tuned that the chances of it happening by chance would be equivalent to that. Taking a little dart and hurling it out to the most distant quasar and hitting a bullseye one millimeter in diameter.

Not worth talking about, is it? Not worth talking about. Planet Earth. You hear a lot about Mother Earth today.

Environmental issues. Romans 1, 19, 20 says, What may be known of God is manifest in them, that is, in people. For God has showed it to them.

For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. God has left the wonderful book of creation, and man can know there's a God by the book of creation. He just doesn't want to know there's a God, that's all.

He doesn't want to admit there's a God. Because he knows if there's a God, he's responsible to Him, and he doesn't want to be responsible to Him. And it's so interesting to read the books of scientists and astronomers especially, and how close they come.

How close they come, and then you just detour right away from it. When God finished the work of creation, He saw that it was very good. And I don't think any of us will ever realize how very good it was.

Everything that the Lord does is perfect. And this is never more true than of the planet on which we live. He designed the earth so that it would be absolutely ideal for human habitation.

As far as we know, there's nothing else in the universe that would be suitable for us. As far as I know, there's no other heavenly body with liquid water. And you certainly need that to live.

But it's absolutely ideal for human habitation as to its beauty, and its comfort, and its economy. It's just the right distance from the sun. That's marvelous, isn't it? If it were any other distance from the sun, it would be either too hot or too cold, and we wouldn't make it.

Life would not survive. And it's just the right size, too. I don't think we think of that very often, but if it were different, the blanket of atmosphere surrounding it would be too dense or too thin, and all life would become extinct.

The tilt of the earth is just right. Imagine God working this all out so that the earth tilted just right, so that we'd have the seasons of the year. And so the cultivation of crops would be made possible.

If it weren't for the tilt of the earth, the earth would be one vast Sahara desert. And we go to sleep at night, and we don't worry about these things. Are you still tilting out there, earth? It never comes to your mind.

God takes care of it. You don't have to worry about it. The earth's rotation is not accidental.

It's finely tuned to just the right speed in its 24-hour orbit around the sun. Isn't it wonderful the way the movement of the earth disperses the warmth of the sun evenly around the earth? Who would have ever thought of that? It generates the winds and the ocean currents. The Lord had a lot to think about, didn't he, when he made it all.

And you know, the atmosphere is just what we need. It's composition and density. Oxygen makes up 21% and nitrogen 78% of the air we breathe.

It's just right. It's rather interesting, too. Oxygen, H₂O.

Two parts of hydrogen, one part of oxygen. Hydrogen's very combustible, isn't it? Wasn't it hydrogen that filled the Graf Zeppelin when it exploded? Terrible burst of flame back in Englewood, New Jersey, or some years ago. Hydrogen.

And oxygen, you have to have oxygen to have combustion. And here he has this combustible hydrogen and this which aids combustion, oxygen, and he puts it together and you can put out a fire with it. Who would have ever thought of that? It's kind of a paradox, isn't it, in God's wonderful creation? Anyway, every one of us is a living proof of the suitability of the atmosphere that there is around the earth.

Take a deep breath. Just right, isn't it? If it weren't, you wouldn't be alive. And God designed the ozone layer around the earth to protect us from the harmful rays of the sun.

Now, with all his cleverness, man is poking holes through the ozone layer. But that's his problem, not God's. God made it right.

Water is indispensable to our existence. God so kindly covered four-fifths of the earth with water. Streams, lakes, and seas.

And as I said, science knows of no other planet that has a supply of water in liquid form. It's a major constituent of all living matter, water. And think of the things it's good for.

It's good as a solvent for your laundry. You never think of that. When you open the door of your washing machine and put the laundry in and turn it on.

It's good as a coolant for beverages and as steam for power plants. Think of all the things that you can do with water. We just take it for granted, don't we? But it was all done by the wisdom and the design of God.

Water is heaviest at three degrees centigrade. Now, God has made--water is different from all liquids. If water were like other liquids, when the cold weather comes, the lake would freeze right down to the bottom.

And that would be goodbye to fish. But God made water different so that it doesn't freeze down to the bottom and the fish survive. You know, to think that this all happened by chance is quite unrealistic.

One man said that it would be akin to supposing that the Mona Lisa painting came as a result of people throwing globs of paint at an easel. That's true, too, isn't it? It's just as unrealistic as to suppose that. A wonderful planet on which we live in.

God's infinite design, infinite wisdom in designing everything that he made. And then the creatures that he put here. The wonders of God with regard to the creatures, too.

Psalms 148 says, And they do. They do. I think of the migratory instinct of birds.

You know, it's enough to stagger the imagination. How birds know their proper destination, the right place for them to nest, feed, and winter. One type of sandpiper travels 9,900 miles to get to its winter home.

A little creature, mostly feathers. And it travels 9,900 miles to get to its winter home. Some land birds fly over thousands of miles of water.

They have no place to land. They have no place to feed. But in migration, they fly over thousands of miles of water to get to their proper place.

That means that they have to wait. They have to wait until just the right fat content in their bodies. Because that's the fat that's going to provide the fuel for their flight.

But how do they know when it's the right amount of fat? And then they take off and they have to allow for wind currents. They don't want to fly off course. Because they'd never get there.

They don't have fuel. They can't go too fast. That would use up too much fuel.

They can't go too slow. That would use up too much fuel. That would use too much fuel also.

Sometimes they fly in V formations to conserve fuel. How do they know? Who taught the birds? They seem to know the optimal speed. They have to take account of wind resistance.

And as I say, some of them do that by flying in V formation. They have a built-in navigational system that mankind understands. Science is clever, but science doesn't know all the answers.

It would be fatal for them to drift off course. So they constantly adjust for adverse winds. And, you know, men have tried to disorient them.

They'll get the birds and put them in a box and spin the box around and try to disorient them in every way so they really don't know where they are. It means nothing to them. When we were kids we tried to do that with pigeons.

We used to raise pigeons. Try to trick the pigeons. Pigeons were always home before we could get home.

They just flew straight for their nests. There's a bird called the lesser white-throat warbler. And warbling isn't its only achievement.

A little feathered friend. It summers in Germany and then winters in the south. It heads south for a warmer climate, but in doing so, it commits a classic case of child neglect.

It leaves the little ones behind. The parents just take off and fly south and leave the little ones behind in Germany. Not to worry.

When the proper time comes, the little ones take off and fly to the same place they've never been there before. Now they know where to go.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/12/SID12782.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/william-macdonald/wonders-of-god-02-psalm-8-the-starry-heavens/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net