

## Lights in the Heavens<sup>1</sup>

(Genesis 1:14-19)

*How hard to realize that every camp of men or beast has this glorious starry firmament for a roof! In such places standing alone on the mountaintop it is easy to realize that whatever special nests we make – leaves and moss like the marmots and birds, or tents or piled stone – we all dwell in a house of one room – the world with the firmament for its roof – and are sailing the celestial spaces without leaving any track.  
– John Muir (written while camping in Alaska, July 18, 1890)*

According to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, **astrology** refers to "the divination of the supposed influences of the stars and planets on human affairs..." **Astronomy** refers to "the science of the celestial bodies and of their magnitudes, motions and constitution." [**astro** meaning "star"]

Psalm 147:4, "He tells the number of the stars; he calls them all by their names."  
Jeremiah 33:22 states, "The host of heaven cannot be numbered."

The term **made** (Hb. 'asah, v. 16) need only mean that God "fashioned" or "worked on" them; it does not of itself imply that they did not exist in any form before this.<sup>2</sup>

As in vv. 14, 15, the term for **lights** can mean "luminaries." The word can either designate the sun, which emits light, or the moon, which reflects light.<sup>3</sup> It is different than the word for "light" in verse 3. Luminaries (according to Webster) has two meanings: 1) a source of light or illumination; or 2) A body that gives lights, especially one of the celestial bodies.

**God Made the Two Lights** (with chiasm, a literary device):

- A. to divide the day from the night (14a)
- B. for signs, for fixed times, for days and years (14b)
- C. to give light on the earth (15)
- D. to rule the day (16a)
- D'. to rule the night (16b)
- C'. to give light on the earth (17)
- B'. to rule the day and the night (18a)
- A'. to divide the light from the darkness (18b)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Title taken from John Macarthur, *The Battle for the Beginning* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2001), 105.

<sup>2</sup> Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 50.

<sup>3</sup> Earl D. Radmacher, Ronald Barclay Allen, and H. Wayne House, *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997), Ge 1:16.

<sup>4</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1987), 21–22.

## 1. **The Creation of the Compass** “for signs” (v.14)

(Job 38:31-33 navigational signs) Like a compass, travelers and sailors navigated by the stars.

## 2. **The Creation of the Climate** “for seasons” (v.14)

(Psalm 104:19 – He made the moon to mark the **seasons**; the sun knows its time for setting.)

“The axis of the earth tilts about 23 1/2 degrees. It is this tilt and the earth’s revolving around the sun that **creates the seasons of the year**. Because of the tilt, different parts of the earth face the sun more directly at different times during the year. Of course, the more directly a place faces the sun, the warmer it is, and the more indirectly, the cooler it is. It is this, the warmth and coolness of the earth’s surface, that gives seasons to the earth.”<sup>5</sup>

## 3. **The Creation of the Calendar** “for days and years” (v.14)

“Rotation” refers to an object’s spinning motion about its own axis. “Revolution” refers the object’s orbital motion around another object. For example, Earth rotates on its own axis, producing the **24-hour day**. The moon revolves around the Earth, creating the **month**. Earth revolves about the Sun, producing the **365-day year**.

Day and night **already existed** since the first day of creation. Therefore, **the rotation of the earth already existed**. The light came from God Himself, without the creation of the sun (see **Revelation 21:23**). The creation of the sun set permanence and order in our solar system.

## 4. **The Creation of the Carbon Cycle** “to give light on the earth” (v.15, 17)

“Almost every segment of the light spectrum is essential for sustaining life on earth. Ultraviolet rays are vital for photosynthesis—the process by which plants, and even some bacteria, use energy to produce sugar, carbohydrates, and other nutrients from carbon dioxide. In the process they release oxygen. That means earth’s vegetation works like “lungs” for the planet, taking the carbon dioxide emitted by other living creatures and converting it back to nutrients and oxygen. Again, an incredibly intelligent design is revealed in the way the environment works. All of this is made possible by the light emitted from the sun.”<sup>6</sup>

## 5. **The Creation of the Cosmos** “He made the stars also” (v.16)

“The closest star to our solar system is Alpha Centauri. It is actually a triple–star system, with one star similar to our sun and two smaller red stars nearby. The center of this star system is 4.35 light–years away... That means when observers from earth look at Alpha Centauri in the night sky, they are seeing light that left that star system nearly four and a half years earlier. And that is the *closest* star visible in the night sky. Most stars are immeasurably farther away than that.”<sup>7</sup>

**Psalm 8:1, 3–5** <sup>1</sup>O Lord, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens! <sup>3</sup>When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, <sup>4</sup>What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? <sup>5</sup>For You have made him **a little lower than the angels**, And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

- Hebrew is Elohim (God, or perhaps “heavenly beings”) NASB, NLT – “God”; Amp – “God [or heavenly beings]”; ESV – “heavenly beings”; CEV, GNB – “lower than You”; ISV – “a little less than divine”.

**Astronomer Geoffrey Marcy** once said this about our solar system to *The Washington Post*, “It’s like a jewel. You’ve got circular orbits. They’re all in the same plane.... It’s perfect, you know. It’s gorgeous. It’s almost uncanny.”

**Psalm 19:1, “The heavens declare the glory of God...”**

<sup>5</sup> Leadership Ministries Worldwide, *Genesis (Chapters 1–11)*, vol. I, The Preacher’s Outline & Sermon Bible (Chattanooga, TN: Leadership Ministries Worldwide, 1996), 83.

<sup>6</sup> John MacArthur, 116.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 118.