

Session 12 God's Beauty in Creation: Macro Marvels

I. BEAUTY IN THE SKIES ABOVE (PS. 19:1)

- A. David exhorted us to look up to see God's beauty in His heavenly art gallery (Ps. 19:1). He understood that by looking at the sky we could catch glimpses of our beautiful God.
¹The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. (Ps. 19:1)
- B. We consider something beautiful when it causes us to feel attraction, admiration, delight, or a sense of marvel, awe or wonder. For example, seeing beauty in the stars attracts us to God.
- C. Job spoke of the Holy Spirit as the "Divine Artist" who adorned the heavens (Job 26:13-14).
¹³By His Spirit He adorned the heavens...¹⁴These are the mere edges of His ways, and how small a whisper we hear of Him! But the thunder of His power who can understand? (Job 26:13-14)
- D. All the beauty that we see in this world is but a token of the source of ultimate beauty— God. The beauty of a sky, sea, or mountain points to beauty in the New Jerusalem and the new earth. They are a mere whisper of the perfect beauty that will be openly displayed when Jesus returns.
- E. "Simply put, the Lord makes things beautiful because He *is* beauty. We can see beauty in the *sounds* (melody, pitch, rhythm, harmony), *sights* (color, brilliance), *smells* (fragrances), *systems* (order, harmony, proportion, symmetry) present in creation. *In God's personality and activity there is no clash of color or sound. He is morally exquisite, and aesthetically elegant.*" **Sam Storms**
- F. "...in seeing the natural world we are to let our eyes run up the beam of beauty to the Original." **John Piper**
- G. The universe above us is God's art gallery displaying many colors, great energy, enormous sizes, and unfathomable speeds and distances in a number of stars that are incalculable. These many facets display the beauty of God's creativity and communicate important things about His personality.
- H. I am blessed by Sam Storms' book, *Onething: Developing a Passion for the Beauty of God*, and by Thomas Dubay's book, *The Evidential Power of Beauty*. Both books trace the signature of God through creation, ranging from the wonders of the Milky Way to the cosmic rotation of planets to the makeup of earth's atmosphere, and through the marvels in molecular and sub-atomic particles. These two books have helped me to marvel at the intentionality of God to display His beauty.
- I. Thomas Dubay's book *The Evidential Power of Beauty* has inspired me. I borrowed his terms ***Macro-marvels*** (chapter 7): enormous universe on a cosmic scale, difficult to believe ***Mid-marvels*** (chapter 8): are accessible to our five senses in plant and animal life ***Micro-marvels*** (chapter 9): tiny universe of cells with subatomic particles and DNA, etc.
- J. Jesus' creative genius and beauty are seen in each of these areas.

II. GOD'S BEAUTY: MACRO-MARVELS

- A. Astronomers estimate that in the known universe there are over **100 billion galaxies**, each having billions of stars. The diameter of the observable universe is over **15 billion light-years**. A light-year is the distance that light travels in one year. It moves at 186,000 miles per second or 6 trillion miles per year. Light can circle the earth (nearly 25,000 miles) seven times in a second.
- B. The Milky Way contains over 100 billion stars and is about 100,000 light years in diameter! If you travel at the speed of light, it would take you 100,000 years to cross its span. The moon is 240,000 miles from earth, yet it takes light less than 2 seconds to get here from there.
- C. Our solar system is part of the Milky Way galaxy. If our solar system were the size of a football, the nearest star would be half a mile from us. The Milky Way galaxy alone would reach 12,000 miles!
- D. The largest known galaxy is the **Abell 2029**, a cluster of galaxies consisting of more than 100 trillion stars with a diameter of 6 million light years. It is over one billion light-years from us.
- E. After the sun, the nearest star to us is **Proxima Centauri**—it is over 4 light years from us.
- F. The galaxy closest to us is the **Andromeda galaxy**. It is over 2 million light years from earth (15 quintillion miles—15 with 18 zeros). The **Virgo galaxy** has more than 5 trillion stars in it.
- G. In the Milky Way, the most luminous star system is the **Eta Carinae**. It is 5 million times brighter than our sun, is 400 million miles in diameter, and is over 7,000 light years from us.
- H. The largest star known so far is **Betelgeuse**, with a diameter of 800 million miles (about 1,000 times wider than our sun). Some stars are 50 million times the mass of the earth!
- I. The Hubble Telescope has identified the **Pistol star** which releases over 10 million times the power of our sun. It unleashes as much light in 20 seconds as our sun does in one year.
- J. **Our Sun**: It is 93 million miles from the earth and is over 800,000 miles in diameter. It would take one million earths to fill the space the sun occupies (the earth is 8,000 miles in diameter).
1. On the surface of the sun the temperature is about 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit. In the core of our sun the temperature reaches 30 million degrees. This is enough to produce helium. The energy released in this reaction supplies the light and heat for the earth. Through photosynthesis, this light becomes the energy source for everything living on earth.
 2. In our sun, billions of trillions (10 followed by 38 zeros or 10^{38}) of nuclear fusion reactions occur every second —over 600 million tons of hydrogen are converted into helium every second—resulting in the continual production of remarkable amounts of heat and light.
 3. The energy produced can be compared to 100 billion hydrogen bombs exploding every second. (The sun's energy is produced by nuclear fusion of hydrogen nuclei into helium, producing energy in the form of light).
 4. The sun burns up about 4 million tons of its own substance every second.

- K. **Quasars:** The newly discovered Quasars are highly powerful celestial objects. One quasar, referred to as **3C-48**, is over 3 billion light years from earth and is 1,000 times more illuminous than all the stars in the entire Milky Way. In other words, it is 1,000 times the brightness of 100 billion stars!
- L. The Lord asserted that He creates, brings out, names, and upholds these billions of billions of stars. There are more stars in the heavens than there are grains of sand on the earth. Yet, the Lord has named each one of them! He gave Adam the job of naming animals, but not the stars.
- M. Information about the universe has a practical impact on how we live (Isa. 40:25-27).
²⁵***"To whom then will you liken Me that I would be his equal?" ...***²⁶***Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might...not one of them is missing.***²⁷***Why do you say..."My way is hidden from the LORD, and the justice due me escapes the notice of my God"?***
(Isa. 40:25-27)
1. **Lift up your eyes:** The Lord exhorts us to think deeply and often on the message contained by God's creation of the stars
 2. **The One who leads forth:** The Lord leads their host, meaning they obey Him.
 3. **He calls them all by name:** This reflects His ownership and understanding of the uniqueness of each one of them.
 4. **Not one is missing:** Not one star is overlooked or out of place.
- N. When we see Jesus' excellencies, it causes us to desire to know, please, and give all to Him.
- O. The Lord's strength never wanes. He has as much energy today as He had billions of years ago.
²⁸***Do you not know?...The Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.***²⁹***He gives strength to the weary and to him who lacks might He increases power.***³⁰***Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly,***
³¹***Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.*** (Isa. 40:28-31)
1. **Does not become weary:** God never gets tired or preoccupied.
 2. **Waiting on God:** This is active engagement, seeking to know the Lord more and to partner with Him in a more consistent way. It includes trusting what He says and entrusting the affairs of our life to His timing.
- P. *"What melts our hearts is not just that there is beauty in the universe. What melts us is the knowledge that God designed all beauty, to show us who He is, as a symbolic language of the soul. All nature is God wooing us to Himself."* **Stephen Mansfield**

III. NATURE REVEALS GOD'S CARE, PROTECTION, PROVISION*

- A. ***Nature reveals God's care:*** The most common substance on earth is water. Our planet is close enough to the sun to keep the water as a liquid. If it were just a little farther away, all the water on the planet would become ice!
1. God's design of how water molecules behave shows His creative design and care. Water is denser as a liquid than when frozen, so ice floats. If ice did not float on the surface of water, the floors of oceans and lakes would be covered with glaciers of ice that would never melt. Surface ice helps regulate the climate by reflecting energy.
 2. As a liquid, water's temperature range is perfect for cycling water from the oceans to the land. Water requires a lot of energy to evaporate into a vapor, and it releases this energy when it condenses back into liquid, balancing the temperatures in the global climate. If less energy were required for evaporation, then streams, rivers, and lakes would evaporate away quickly.
- B. ***Nature Reveals God's protection:*** Some of the energy radiating from the sun is needed, while some of it is harmful to life. The energy that is useful is only a very small part of the spectrum, yet due to the Lord's laws of physics the right kind and amount of sunlight comes to the human race.
1. Our bodies need many forms of protection—from rocks falling from space to temperature control. If the earth had a thinner atmosphere, the earth would be hit with falling rocks and harmful radiation. The moon has almost no air, so its surface is scarred with craters from the impacts of giant boulders. If earth had a thicker atmosphere, it would be boiling hot.
 2. Sunlight reaches us through important "filters" in the atmosphere. It allows in the sun's radiation that is useful to life, but blocks the radiation that is harmful to life. Only a fraction of the radio waves and some of the visible light and infrared radiations are blocked, but almost all of the harmful ultraviolet rays, x-rays, and gamma rays never reach us. The atmosphere provides just the right amount of air and warmth we need and sunlight for plants that feed us.
- C. ***Nature Reveals God's provision:*** The sun's energy warms our planet. Air distributes the heat of the sun to cooler areas. The sun's energy brings rain. Water evaporates from the ocean and falls to the land as it cools. The sun powers the winds that move the water vapor to the land.
1. The sun's energy renews air. With our sun's energy, plants convert carbon dioxide into oxygen. The sun's energy grows food. Plants capture sunlight and store it in sugar, starch, and fat. Many stars are too hot or too cold to support life. Some stars are too big and some are too small. Our sun is one of the few types that is ideally suited to support life. It has the right brightness and variability. It radiates the right range of energy in the right amounts.
 2. There are thousands of examples of God's integrated and purposeful plan for provision through the flora and fauna of our planet.

**This information on page 4 was gathered mostly from the Institute for Creation Research.*