May the Lord keep you and guide you.

*The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, “Thus says the Lord, ‘If you can break My covenant for the day and My covenant for the night, so that day and night will not be at their appointed time, then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant so that he will not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers. As the host of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.’”*

Jeremiah 33:19-22

God created the day and the night, and He ordained that one should follow the other continually. He even made a covenant with Himself that as long as the earth would last, day and night would not cease. (Genesis 8:21-22)

God is unchanging, so we know that His promises and decrees are true. Day and night will continue; and as sure as that promise is, so is the promise to David. David’s greater son, Jesus, will reign supreme over all the earth.

The Levitical priests will also serve God continually; worshiping in His presence. These will be actual descendants of Levi, as well as spiritual descendants: God will have His priests to serve Him forever.

Praise God for this wonderful promise. The Bible is about our redemption and how God accomplishes it. And He has accomplished it through the One who will reign on David’s throne.

In Christ’s love

John

12-5-21

Genesis 1:14-19

All of creation is a display of the vastness of God’s majesty. The Genesis account of all that God did in creation is a display of His infinite power. Here on day four, God created the huge inanimate residents of the firmament which He had created on the second day. God is continuing His work of providing for what will be His most beloved creation: human-beings; the only members of His creation to be His image bearers.

We already saw how God created light on day one and brought forth living plants on day three, all without the sun. And there is no reason to believe that things didn’t take place in this way. First off, He is God, and He is able to do these things. Secondly, in Revelation 21:23 we are told about the new Jerusalem where God will dwell, “*And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb*.”

Our finite minds have trouble with this; How can there be light without a source? So, people have thought up complicated ways to have the heavenly bodies created on the first day along with the rest of the universe. The Hebrew wording can be made to look like the celestial bodies were created along with the heavens and then assigned their places and positions on day four. Truly, what the text plainly says is easiest and makes the most sense.

God created the heavens and the earth; He also created the firmament. In these things we have the universe. Often times, we think of the universe as space and everything it contains. But what we read here in Genesis indicates that the universe or heavens or the firmament are simply the vast empty space. On the fourth day, God created the things that are in that vast space. It’s a hard concept to think about, but God created that empty area we call space; before He created it, there was nothing: not emptiness, not darkness, no area to put stuff in later: nothing. Of course, God existed, but He is Spirit and doesn’t need a place to be; there was nothing else until He created it.

The idea of an empty universe is backed up by Job in 26:13, “*By His breath the heavens are made beautiful*.” This indicates that the heavens were already there; God spoke (His breath) and made them beautiful by what He created and placed there.

Also consider that if God had already created the celestial bodies at the same time He made the heavens, that would mean that on the fourth day He didn’t actually create anything. There is no reason to have one of the six days of creation to be so radically different from the others.

Our first and most reasonable response to the fact that God called the sun, the moon and the stars into being should be worship. He not only called them into being but assigned them their tasks to which they obey completely. We don’t need pictures and statues to remind us to praise God. Every morning the rising sun, a furious mass of nuclear reactions, is completely under the control of our God. Psalm 19:5-6 describes the sun that God has created in glory.

*Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber;  
It rejoices as a strong man to run his course.  
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.*

This is a beautiful way to describe the sun’s path through the sky; reminding us to praise God even as the sun does itself in its power and obedience to Him.

The night sky should also fill us with awe. The uncountable stars and the unbelievable distances we know are there. Try to imagine One with the strength to command all this into existence. The night sky ought to bring us to the point of worshiping the one true God who brought it all into being.

Mankind has always had a fascination with these occupants of the firmament. Unfortunately, this often led to a worship of the created rather than the Creator. Almost every civilization has worshiped the sun and the moon; either as gods themselves or the manifestation of some deity. Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nation originally came from Ur of the Chaldeans, a culture known for focusing on the moon as a god. This is precisely what God did not want to happen.

It is with reason that the creation account does not name the sun and the moon. They are called a “greater light” and a “lesser light”. It was to differentiate the Biblical account from the pagan accounts that named the sun and the moon for gods. Specifically for the Israelites, they would have been used to Egypt who believed that the sun was Ra and the moon was Thoth. Additionally, Ra created himself; there was a time when he didn’t exist and then he brought himself into being. Yahweh is making it very clear that there is only one God and it is He. He was never brought into being; He has always existed and everything else is His creation and under His control.

God basically gave all these luminaries three jobs. The first is to give light to the earth; the second is to separate day from night; and the third is to be for signs and seasons, days and years.

In verse 15 it says, “*let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth*” The sun, moon, and stars are servants of God; they do what their Creator tells them to do. They are also servants of mankind, by the providence of God. See how heinous it is for human-beings to worship these luminaries? They were put here by God to serve us; to be for our benefit.

God has already created light, but now He gives the job to these celestial bodies to be light-bearers. He created the sun to go through the necessary reactions to cause the light to shine. He made the moon and positioned it so that it would reflect the light of the sun. The stars are like the sun in their ability to shine light; an ability given by their Creator.

Further, the book of Job shows us that the luminaries are light bearers but not the actual source of light. This is Job 38:19-21 and God is asking, “*Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place; That you may take it to its territory; And that you may discern the paths to its home?*” Obviously, God doesn’t consider the sun, moon, and stars to be the dwelling place or source of light. He created the light and the luminaries separately; and one does not create the other.

It is apparent that the greater light is what we call the sun and the lesser light is what we call the moon. Now, there are some things to quibble about here. For example, the moon doesn’t create any light, it simply reflects light from the sun. We know that there are other stars in the universe that are massively larger than our sun and put out a lot more light and energy. There are things in our own solar system that are larger than the moon, such as the planets.

There is no reason to quibble about these things, the Bible is simply communicating in our language from our perspective. The moon looks like it gives off light; the sun looks like the biggest thing in the sky in the day while the moon does at night. We use this kind of language all the time. For example, we speak of the sunrise and the sunset and the Bible speaks the same way. We all know the sun doesn’t rise nor does it set; it just looks that way from the earth rotating. Remember that it is not the Bible’s purpose to explain scientific detail; its purpose is to explain our redemption.

Secondly, they are to “*separate the day from the night*”. This may seem kind of obvious; the sun is out during the day and, for the most part, the moon and stars are out at night. God made the sun to “*govern*” the day and the moon to “*govern*” the night. Your translation might say “rule” instead of govern.

What better way is there to rule than to serve? That is what these do, they serve in obedience to their Creator by giving light to the earth and its inhabitants. Jeremiah tells us that giving light is their function in 31:35, “*Thus says the Lord; Who gives the sun for light by day; And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night*.” There is a lesson here for us that goes along with Jesus’ teaching, “*But the greatest among you shall be your servant.*”

We need to understand that governs means something like “dominates”. This is the biggest thing we see when we look into the sky. The sun and the moon are the principal sources of light at these times. To govern does not mean that they control us in some mystical way. The ancient ideas of astrology and the zodiac still hold great importance to people today. It is believed that the stars or what sign you were born under guides your destiny. This is at best foolishness and at worst a means of demonic manipulation. Opening your mind or heart to astrology is opening a doorway for an evil spirit to have influence in your life. Once they come in those open doors, it’s hard to get them out.

Thirdly, they are “*for signs and for seasons and for days and years*”. Certainly the cycle of the sun and the moon show that days and years pass by. But its usage here gives another indication that the days mentioned here in Genesis are the same twenty-four-hour periods that we call days now. The Hebrews also went by a lunar calendar so the position of the moon told them which part of the month they were in.

The stars in particular indicated the seasons of the year. The positioning of the stars and constellations marked out the year’s progress. This told them when to plant their crops and it also told them when the different feasts and festivals were to be held. In a world without clocks the sun, moon, and stars played a very important part in the people’s lives. Once again, a providence from the creator God to His image bearers.

The heavenly luminaries were also for signs. In Matthew 16:2-3 Jesus quotes one of the people’s own sayings, “*When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.*’” Likewise, when the sun seems to hurry on and the days become shorter, we know that winter is on its way.

But God also has special signs reserved for the luminaries to coincide with the end times. Joel 2:30-31.

*“I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth,  
Blood, fire and columns of smoke.  
“The sun will be turned into darkness  
And the moon into blood  
Before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes.*

And Jesus Himself tells us of signs in Matthew 24:29. “*But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.*” Once more we see the power of Almighty God when these great things He has created will again do His bidding to announce the return of His Son, Jesus Christ, to rule as King over the earth.

Regarding all the host of heaven, God made two things very clear in His word. The first is that they are not to be worshiped. Deuteronomy 4:19, “*And beware not to lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven*.” Again, these are part of His creation and He made them to benefit all people by His common grace.

People have consistently rebelled against the Creator to worship what He has made; to worship something they can see. There is no way to please God with this because this is worshiping without faith; as we are told in Hebrews 11:6, “*without faith it is impossible to please [God]*” It is also a mistake to think that this kind of thing doesn’t happen in our modern western world. The zodiac is published in thousands of newspapers and is available through the internet. Many people really believe that the stars control our future.

The term “sun worshipers” is common among those who seek tans to look good and this is really an expression of idolizing the self. The goal is to look good now in spite of the devastating consequences later. During the autumnal and vernal equinox, groups will still gather to dance in praise of nature. Witchcraft is widespread in our culture and they believe much of their power comes from the celestial bodies.

We who are Christians must be careful. How often are we tempted to glance at the “astrological forecast” just for fun; or give credit to “mother nature” just as a manner of speaking? We must ask ourselves, “Why would we want to give any credence at all to something that is such an affront to our beloved God?”

The second thing made clear in God’s word is that He is to be praised and worshiped. He is mighty God who has made these things. We can take a lesson from the luminaries. In Psalm 19:1-4 we read:

*The heavens are telling of the glory of God;  
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.  
Day to day pours forth speech,  
And night to night reveals knowledge.  
There is no speech, nor are there words;  
Their voice is not heard.  
Their line has gone out through all the earth,  
And their utterances to the end of the world.*

No, the heavenly bodies do not speak with words, yet their glorification of Almighty God is clear. He made these things; He spoke and they came into being. They do His will moment by moment and in the future, they will announce the coming of Christ the King.

We are without excuse if we do not praise God. We are not inanimate objects; we have the understanding needed to give Him glory and to know that it is due Him. To withhold worship becomes sin for us because we know better. Let us follow the example of the heavenly host and praise God with our very existence; with our very lives.

Prayer

Creator God, You made not only the universe but everything in it. When we look into the sky, we must say along with Your servant David, “*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers; The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; What is man that You take thought of him; And the son of man that You care for him?*”

And yet, Your word assures us that You do. You care for us with a love that is beyond our comprehension. All Your creation testifies to us that You exist; and Your Son came to us to accept Your righteous wrath in our place.

Help us Holy Spirit, to rightly worship God our Father and His Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Give us that faith we need to be pleasing to God so that our sacrifice of worship is acceptable to Him.

We ask these things in Jesus’ name

Amen