

# A Powerful Message from Space

Psalm 19:1-4

## Intro

Lately in the news we are hearing so much about “if there is life on other planets” and if we can pick up some signals of intelligent life in the other galaxies.

Charles Bolden Jr., the Administrator of NASA, confirmed he and many others believe there is life beyond Earth and evidence of this will be discovered in years to come (Source: Daily Mail, June 18, 2015).

One of the main instruments that will help is the James Webb Space Telescope. It is four stories high; as big as a tennis court and 100 times more powerful than the Hubble Telescope. It is to be launched Oct. 2018 and one of its main functions is to search for life on other planets.

Astronomers are diligently probing the cosmos to find a planet with the right conditions like ours that sustains life. Also they have many space radio telescopes trying to pick up any message from outer space to see if there is intelligent life beyond our solar system.

Well, can I tell you that there is a powerful message being transmitted from space since the beginning of time? This message has been emanating from the cosmos but only a few are picking up the message because it can't be detected by man-made instruments. This message is powerful and it points to the greatest intelligence. As a matter of fact it is revealing incredible knowledge every day and night for many millennia. The only ones who are picking up the message are people of faith and of a very special communiqué. Do you want to know this powerful message from space? Here is:

*“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”* (Psalm 19:1-4).

The powerful message is that space is declaring the glory and splendor of the Creator. It is pointing to the work of his hands.

For the psalmist, David, space is not empty but a revelation of God's creation of the magnificent heavenly bodies. Space is declaring that there is a Creator and it is his handiwork - his workmanship. This powerful message is a revelation. It is a revelation that transcends human communication without the use of speech, words and sounds. It's a revelation that goes out into all the world and to the ends of the world.

Yet there are people who are not tuned in to the message. They refuse to accept it. Some say, “We've not seen enough evidence to believe the message.”

Well, it's like this. Imagine a family of mice who lived all their lives in a large piano. To them in their piano-world came the music of the instrument, with beautiful sound and harmony. At first the mice were impressed by it. They drew comfort and wonder from the thought that there was someone who made the mice—though invisible to them—above, yet close to them. They loved to think of the Great Player whom they could not see.

Then one day a daring mouse climbed up part of the piano and returned very thoughtful. He had found out how the music was made. Wires were the secret; tightly stretched wires of graduated

lengths that vibrated. They must revise all their old beliefs: none but the most conservative could any longer believe in the Unseen Player.

Later, another explorer mouse carried the explanation further. Hammers were now the secret, numbers of hammers dancing and leaping on the wires. This was a more complicated theory, but it all went to show that they lived in a purely mechanical and mathematical world. The Unseen Player came to be thought of as a myth.

But the pianist continued to play. And, there are people in our world who look at what we believe and ask that very question. They either say they don't believe God exists (atheists) or they say they can't know if God exists (agnostics).

Both groups basically say: "We've not seen enough evidence to believe God exists."

### Humorous Story

During the colonial times there was an individual who confronted an old Quaker and taunted him: "*Have you ever seen God? Have you ever felt God? Have you ever smelled God? Ha! And you say you have a God!*" In other words: "Where's the evidence? Where's the proof?"

The Quaker thought for a couple of moments and then replied:

*"Hast thou ever seen thy brains? Hast thou ever felt thy brains? Hast thou ever smelled thy brains? Ha! And thou sayest thou hast brains!"*

### **Religion and Science**

But over the years as we have probed deeper into the cosmos more discoveries have been made and new information has come to the surface that have caused many to rethink their positions.

Sharon Begley the science editor for The Wall Street Journal says that relationship between religion and science is undergoing a seismic change. This is how she describes the new discoveries and the impact they are having:

*"Astronomers findings-both the new nebulae and novas and the galaxies they spy with their telescopes-are restoring a sense of wonder and even of purpose, in a world at times hostile to both. Instead of leaving less and less room for a Creator who at least once, acted in the world, their findings are acting as an inspiration to and a support for faith."*

Senator John Glenn and former astronaut, when he was about 70 years old, returned to space in 1998, traveling on the Discovery Space Shuttle. He said: "*I don't think you can be up here and look out the window as I did the first day and see the Earth from this vantage point, to look out at this kind of creation and not believe in God.*"

One of the few astronauts to walk the moon and the first to ride the moon buggy was James Irwin in July, 1971. His trip into space was so moving that he later became a Christian. This is what he wrote of viewing earth from his space ship: "*The earth reminded us of a Christmas tree ornament hanging in the blackness of space. As we got further and further away it diminished in size. Finally it shrank to the size of a marble, the most beautiful marble you can imagine. That beautiful, warm, living object looked so fragile, so delicate, that if you touched it with a finger it would crumble and fall apart. Seeing this has to change a man, has to make a man appreciate the creation of God and the love of God.*"

The universe never ceases to amaze us with its sheer size and splendor. The star studded sky above us and the vast unexplored eternity that lay beyond us have always captured both the human mind and heart. While the glitz and shine of the stars and the spectacular celestial aura have drawn us towards them, it is impossible to deny that our space programs are barely at a stage of infancy, with 99.9% of the universe still left unexplored. I wonder if all these theories that are being purported will change with time since we know only point 1% of the universe.

### **Psalm 19**

The revelation of God's glory has been written in two volumes. There is, first, the book of *Natural Creation* which unveils the splendor of God in space and stars and the skies above. Second, there is the volume of *Holy Scripture*. As glorious as the highest heavens may be, and as breathtaking as the immensity of space assuredly is, all pales in comparison with the glory of God revealed in his Word. I like what John Calvin wrote, "*From nature we know only the hands and feet of God but from Scripture we may know his very heart.*"

Psalm 19:1-4, "*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. <sup>2</sup> Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. <sup>3</sup> They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. <sup>4</sup> Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.*"

This is really what the first half of the Psalm 19 is all about, the supremacy or greatness of God's glory, and the verbs in **verse one** are in the present continual tense, the sky is continually declaring, telling and displaying the glory of God. The rest of the verses really are illustrations of the summary statement of verse one.

"*Glory*" means heaviness, or weight – when used of God it often has idea of dazzling blinding light, splendor, beauty or a manifestation of his attributes. Creation is designed to give God glory. The way the universe glorifies God should cause us to want to glorify God.

So, how do the heavens declare God's glory? In what ways may it be seen? Consider our own disc-shaped galaxy, the Milky Way, rather small when compared to what we know of other galaxies in the universe. Our Sun is only one of some 200 billion stars that comprise it. It is approximately 100,000 light years across. How big is that, you ask? Well, light can travel about 300,000 kilometers per second. So, it isn't hard to calculate that in a year's time light can travel just short of about 10 trillion kilometers.

So, if the Milky Way is 100,000 light years in diameter, that works itself out to 1,000 quadrillion kilometers! As massive as that sounds, and as small as it makes us feel (knowing that we are tiny creatures on an indescribably tiny planet in an indescribably tiny solar system within the Milky Way), there are billions and billions of galaxies in just the observable known universe. Many of these galaxies contain over a trillion stars each!

Stephen Hawking, one of today's foremost theoretical physicists said, "*The odds against a universe like ours emerging out of something like the big bang are enormous. . . I think clearly there are religious implications whenever you start to discuss the origins of the universe. There must be religious overtones.*" (Source: *Stephen Hawking's Universe*, page 109).

In his book on Albert Einstein, author Walter Isaacson told of a dinner party in Berlin where everybody assumed Einstein was an atheist and he said, "*No, I have a deep feeling of faith, a deep*

*religiosity that comes from my appreciation of the way the Lord made the universe*”, and everybody was stunned. (Source: *Einstein, The Life of a Genius* by Walter Isaacson, 2009, pg. 62).

Dr. Robert Jastrow (founder of NASA’s Goddard Institute) said something profound: *“For a scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance he is about to conquer the highest peak as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”* (Source: Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers*)

Today, we want to not just appreciate the creation of God, but to glorify the God of creation, and the witness He has left us in both nature and His written Word.

### **Privileged Planet**

Some astronomers are exploring the scientific evidence for intelligent design and purpose in the universe. In the process, Earth is revealed as far more than the product of time, chance, and random natural processes. We now know that a rare and finely tuned array of factors makes Earth suitable for complex life. We depend on our planet’s oxygen-rich atmosphere, its large moon, its planetary neighbors, and its precise location within the solar system and Milky Way galaxy.

But the story does not end here. For, the same factors that make a planet like Earth hospitable to life also provide the best conditions for scientific discovery. Is this correlation merely a coincidence? Or does it point to a deeper truth about the purpose of the cosmos and the reality of a transcendent designer? The answer could dramatically affect 21st century science.

Our solar system with its 9 planets is within the Orion Arm of the Milky Way Galaxy. We are in a relatively depopulated and dust-free region called the *Local Bubble*. In dustier regions of the Orion Arm, stars are more numerous and more densely packed and great star-forming nebulae shimmer and obscure the view of space. But we are positioned in a perfect protected region of space that makes it possible to observe the universe. Our solar system is in a unique position of our galaxy.

Jupiter is known as many things: king of the planets, an impressive gas giant, and defender of the inner solar system. This last notion comes from the idea that Jupiter is so massive that its gravitational influence deflects objects like comets, which, as they spiral toward the Sun, could potentially hit inner planets such as the Earth. The comets get a very slight kick, an increase in energy, from Jupiter. For these comets, Jupiter stops them from coming back time and time again. Jupiter makes them leave or pulls them in. In 1994 it took a big wallop hit with the Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet. Just the diameter of the explosion was the size of our Earth. Jupiter is like our big brother who protects us.

These are only a few examples of the complexity of the universe. It is truly amazing to see that all this came by design and not by accident.

### **Conclusion**

The glory of the stars gives us a hint that the glory of their creator must be even greater. The brightness of the sun is a hint of the splendor of God’s Sun, Jesus Christ. The size of the universe doesn’t make a statement about us, it’s about God - who’s more immense and more dazzling than the universe put together.

Are you dazzled by God? Are you fascinated by God? Or is your attention mesmerized by fleshly pursuits? Are you consumed with so many lesser things in life, other than God? Have you grown immune to God’s constant reminders and revelation in His world all around us? The sad fact is that

we think we will find happiness in these smaller things, when the only true happiness is found in our awesome and glorious God who alone can supremely satisfy.

Steven Curtis Chapman wrote:

*“Sometimes it feels like I’m playing Game Boy in the middle of the Grand Canyon. I’m eating candy, sitting at a gourmet feast. Splashing in a puddle when I could be swimming in the ocean. What is wrong with me? Wake up and see the glory”*

God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. God has so much more for us than the mud pies of worldly pursuits, and the trivial and temporary things here on earth that we put so much importance on. We are made for His glory, and we have reminders in the natural world everyday that speak of God’s glory.

Frankly I think a lot of us miss out almost everyday on the amazing ministry God has provided in the skies. They are shouting about God, every sunrise, every sunset, every magnificent scene that is beyond any artwork that people can create, every dazzling starlit night – is shouting about the greatness and grandeur and glory of God!

### **What should be our response to God’s glory in creation?**

The next time something from nature or creation amazes you or takes your breath away, praise God and give Him glory.

Romans 1:20-21, *“For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*

The great indictment in Romans chapter one is that they were not thankful and did not give God glory. There is enough reason to thank God, every time there is a sunrise, every day that we are able to breathe God’s air, and see His handiwork.

I have been trying to practice and apply this, every time I see the stars or the colors of the leaves, or the mountains, the ocean, or the sunset.

Be dazzled by God. Get fascinated with Him. Just ponder on the immensity of this universe and how our planet is just an infinitesimal speck in our galaxy, and our solar system is a microscopic fraction in a series of galaxies, and those galaxies all put together are relatively tiny or invisible in relation to the rest of the known universe, and we don’t even have a clue how massive everything is and how far it goes. Wow! And double wow!

God is so BIG! Yet He is so mindful of us that He sent His Son to our tiny planet to show us who He is and how much He loves us. I am blown away!