

The Heavens Declare The Glory of God

*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*

Psalm 19:1-2

So what is it, exactly, that the heavens declare, proclaim, pour forth and reveal? The mysteries of space, with distances that human thinking cannot begin to fathom; the ever-changing beauty of sunrise, sunset, and storm; the machinations of God's natural processes – all of these things shout aloud of a God possessing the most supreme intellect, sovereign over a universe that boggles the most fantastic imaginings.

In Isaiah 40, we are told that God marked off the heavens with a “span,” or as the NIV puts it, with the “breadth of his hand.” This phrase in the Hebrew represents the distance between the end of the pinky and the end of the thumb when stretched to maximum width. Let's try to break this down a bit. If our solar system, the sun and nine planets, could fit into a coffee cup, the Milky Way would be the size of North America. If the Universe were a city block, a punctuation mark would be 50,000 times too big to represent our solar system. A beam of light is so fast that it will circle the entire earth 7 times in 1 second. That same beam would take approximately 750,000 years just to get to our nearest neighboring galaxy of Andromeda. And God measured it off with a ‘span’.

Some time ago, I came upon a you-tube video that attempts to put some perspective on the size of the known Universe. It posits a trip on a craft racing through the cosmos at the speed of light, 186,000 miles per second. Leaving earth, we reach the sun in a little over 8 minutes. After 5 light years, we reach our nearest neighbor, Alpha Centauri, some 25 trillion miles away. After five million light-years, we reach a point where we can see a cluster of 30 or so galaxies, which Scientists call “the local group.” The Local Group!? We have to travel for 5 million light-years to get to the Local Group! After 50 million light-years, we reach the Virgo Cluster, containing over 2,000 separate galaxies, each containing billions of stars! And so it goes.

Let's consider for a moment the number of stars. The Bible tells us that God “also made the stars”, that He “calls out the stars one by one and gives them each a name,” and that, “because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.” Through modern, powerful telescopes, billions of galaxies, each containing millions of stars, have been discovered. Currently, the estimated number of stars is 300 sextillion, which is 300 with 60 zeroes behind it. To get some sense of this, if this number of stars were divided among the world's current (2014) population, each one of us would receive 42.6 trillion stars!

Intellectual honesty DEMANDS that we fall on our knees and worship this amazing, powerful, transcendent God. Truly, the fool has said in his heart that there is no God. Atheism is lunacy; faith is logical, and should always lead us to adoration of our Holy God.