

## LENT COURSE WEEK 4 – LET THERE BE LIGHTS IN THE SKY

Last week, thanks to Joy, we thought about land and plants, and how we need to value and protect nature.

This week we consider the fourth day of creation when God made two great lights – the sun and moon – and the stars. As well as providing light, the sun, moon and stars divide time into day and night, seasons and years.

### *Read Genesis 1: 14 - 19*

God created light on Day One, but there is a distinction between that day and Day Four. On the first day, God separated the light from the darkness and declared the light to be good. On Day Four, however, God declared both the night and the darkness to be good. Darkness is important – to rest, for cool in a hot climate, for sleep.

The Israelites were all too ready to worship the sun, moon and stars. Many people today look to the stars by reading their horoscopes to predict what is going to happen to them. God created these heavenly bodies – they, like us, are under God's control. So our lives are not determined by the movements of the stars; rather we should live our lives trusting in God.

**What is the most important factor in determining how you live your life?**



Day Four of creation causes us to look beyond this world into space – that incredible vastness beyond our planet - and to remember that **all** of this was made by God.

Some facts and figures:

The world we inhabit is one planet within the solar system .... within a galaxy .... within the Universe. Our sun is just one of between 200 billion and 400 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy, and earth is just one of at least 100 billion planets. There may

be also 10 billion white dwarfs, a billion neutron stars and a hundred million black holes. And that is just one galaxy out of possibly two trillion galaxies. Our understanding of the Universe is constantly evolving and we can only wonder at the vastness of it and our small part in it.

Read how the Psalmist expressed praise for the Creator -

[See Psalm 8: 3-4, Psalm 19:1-6 and Psalm 148: 1-4](#)

**How do you feel when you look up at the night sky and seen a glimpse of the vastness of the Universe?**

Read the words of verse 3 of The Servant King by Graham Kendrick:

[Come see His hands and His feet](#)  
[The scars that speak of sacrifice](#)  
[Hands that flung stars into space](#)  
[To cruel nails surrendered](#)

This provides a link between creation and redemption – God created the Universe, flinging stars into space, and cares so much for the people he created who messed things up that he sent his Son Jesus to die for us. By this, we can be reconciled to Him if we believe in him and accept him as our Lord and Saviour.

The Bible tells us that the world will end one day and Jesus will return. Many of the apocalyptic predictions are associated with signs in the sun and moon.

**[Read Acts 2: 14-21](#)**

People have been predicting when the world would end since time began, but Jesus tells us clearly that:

[“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.” \(Matthew 24:36\)](#)

We do not know when Jesus will return in glory. Some people might say that the current pandemic sweeping the world is a sign of the end times – but there have been emergencies in the past such as the Plague of 1665 and the Spanish flu which killed so many in 1918 – 1920 and we are still here! The Biblical references to the sun turning dark, the moon to blood and stars falling from the sky are probably not to be taken literally. What God wants us to do is be ready for when that day comes by living lives pleasing to him. Then we don't need to worry! This is a huge, complex area which is worth discussion when life returns to normal.

## What actions are we encouraged to do this week?

In the Lent booklets we are encouraged to establish a rhythm of prayer and to gaze at the night sky on a clear night and reflect on how everything and everyone is bound to one another and to God.

To help protect our planet, we are also encouraged to turn our heating controls down as the weather warms up.

### LECTIO DIVINA

A clear night sky is an amazing sight. Abram (later renamed Abraham) couldn't count the stars but believed in God's promise to bless him. For our Lectio Divina reading this week, read the following passage:

- Pause before the first reading, so you are quiet and ready to listen to God.
- Read the passage slowly, and listen to what God is saying to you,

### *Genesis 15: 1-6*

#### **The LORD's Covenant Promise to Abram**

**15** Some time later, the LORD spoke to Abram in a vision and said to him, "Do not be afraid, Abram, for I will protect you, and your reward will be great."

<sup>2</sup> But Abram replied, "O Sovereign LORD, what good are all your blessings when I don't even have a son? Since you've given me no children, Eliezer of Damascus, a servant in my household, will inherit all my wealth. <sup>3</sup> You have given me no descendants of my own, so one of my servants will be my heir."

<sup>4</sup> Then the LORD said to him, "No, your servant will not be your heir, for you will have a son of your own who will be your heir." <sup>5</sup> Then the LORD took Abram outside and said to him, "Look up into the sky and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants you will have!"

<sup>6</sup> And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith.

- Reflect on a significant word or phrase.
- Read the passage again, how does that word or phrase speak into your life, why has it connected with you. Ponder it carefully. Can you think why this word, or phrase speaks to you?

- Read the passage a third time and as you do, ask yourself what is God calling you to do? Pray for the grace of the Holy Spirit to plant this word or phrase into your heart.



Look up into the heavens. Who created all the stars?  
He brings them out like an army, one after another, calling each by its name.  
Because of his great power and incomparable strength, not a single one is missing.  
Isaiah 40.26

A prayer on the sun, moon and stars from the Philippines

*Written by Rei Lemuel Crizaldo*

Our heavenly Father, as we look up to you in the vastness of the skies,  
The sun that you have made opens our eyes to a world lit in colour and clarity,  
And the moon and the stars remind us of your faithfulness and steadfast presence,  
Amidst the seasons of darkness and our community's moments of uncertainty.  
Lord Jesus, you have shown us how from beginning to end was the light of love,  
That as endless as the heavens above so is the grace that sustains all things,  
So with faith that the Spirit has wrought in us, we seek the care every creature is to  
have,  
As we dream, hope and labour for a future wrapped in the fullness of joy that your  
new creation brings.  
Amen

*Anne Rees*