

**Series: God & Abraham #1285**

**Title: Genesis 15.5**  
**The Stars**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. One of the things that brings me such joy in studying the Bible verse-by-verse are the surprises. I just never know where a certain verse will lead me. Take just this week as an example. Two days ago (on Wednesday) we were talking about ancient cuneiform tablets, unearthed by archaeologists in modern-day Iraq, a region known as Mesopotamia in Abraham's day. We had a lesson in history and culture that I had not expected until I read and began to thoroughly study Genesis 15, verses 2 and 3.

Well, today we are going to have a lesson in astronomy, based on Genesis 15, verse 5. Here on *God Is* we are always in the discipline of theology. But we also appeal to other disciplines like history, archaeology, anthropology and now *astronomy*. And let me make sure you understand I said astronomy, *not* astrology. Astronomy is this: the scientific study of the universe and of objects that exist naturally in space, such as the moon, the sun, planets, and stars. This is what we want.

Astrology is the study of the movements and the positions of the sun, moon, planets and stars in the belief that they affect the character and lives of people. This is *not* what we want. Astronomy is a legitimate science that must be of interest to Christians. Astrology is an evil that must be rejected by Christians. I certainly hope you know that the horoscope – that supposed forecast of your future, based on the relative positions of the stars and planets at the time of your birth – what you might see in today's newspaper or online – that is all, bunkum (to use the word of my mother who hails from Northern Ireland). By bunkum she means *nonsense*! And I mean nonsense, lies, and nothing that any of us should ever take seriously.

Astronomy. This is what we want to draw on now. And why? Listen to what God says to Abram in Genesis chapter 15, verse 5, “[**The Lord**] **took [Abram] outside and said, ‘Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’”** I want to speak with you about stars. I find it fascinating that this is how God proved Himself to Abram. He took him outside and had him look heavenward to see *stars*. Now you need to know that I am no scientist. In college I took a course on introductory astronomy and *loved* it. (I know! You are probably shaking your head, “Swallow loves all his university classes!” Hey, it's *true*! I admit it with no reservation, I am a lifelong learner. And I miss formal study in a reputable academic institution and setting.)

Anyway, basic astronomy was *awesome* because we got to hear lectures on God's grand creation. We wrote on the sun, the moon, the planets, the galaxies, and the stars. And we took on atheists and those who embrace the lies of evolution, in conversation and debate, and demonstrated how God really did create this one universe. And yes, I believe in *one* universe. I reject the *multiverse*. And, I personally enjoyed my coursework in which I buoyed my arguments for a literal six-day creation, as precisely written by God in Genesis chapter 1. Yes, I believe in a literal six-day creation. It is remarkable how a course, especially when taught by a competent and memorable professor, can teach us lessons that we call upon decades later. (Thank you, Professor Dale Pleticha.)

Even though I am not a scientist, nor an astronomer, I can read and do my research work and whenever I read about this universe in the Bible, and about God the Creator, I am drawn into astronomy. Such is the case at verse 5 in Genesis 15 regarding the stars. Let's return to the Bible and go back to the first chapter of Genesis. I will read verses 14-16. Genesis 1, verses 14-16, “**Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; <sup>15</sup> and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth; and it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also.’”**

Light! As the scientists know, this is essential to making the earth and what is on the earth (who is on the earth) to function. There is the sun. And there is the moon. And there are the stars. Oh, so much more can be said about this, including the purpose of these lights, note: “for signs and for seasons and for days and years.” But what I want you to notice is that God made the stars. In almost like a throw-away line, Genesis

chapter 1, verse 16 states: **“He made the stars also.”** Well, that may seem like a minor point, but every word in the Bible is a big deal. And stars, wow, did God love creating the stars. He made *so many* of them.

Dr. Werner Gitt, who was director and professor at the German Federal Institute of Physics and Technology in Germany, has written *Stars and Their Purpose* and he reports that “the local Milky Way galaxy (of which our sun is a part) has been found to contain 200,000 *million* stars (*Counting the Stars*, Answers in Genesis website, March 1, 1997).” And Milky Way is not the only galaxy in this universe. Think of the Andromeda galaxy, for instance. So, the stars abound. And here is how the Bible connects with astronomy. Is it any wonder the Lord said to Abram, “count the stars, if you are able to count them.”

Abram is not working with a super powered telescope, either. He has been taken outside to look at the starry sky with his naked eye. We have the honor, the joy, and the intrigue of owning and peering through telescopes, and we still can only estimate how many stars are out there! But did you know that God, the Creator, not only makes the stars, He not only numbers the stars, but He names them? Oh yes. Psalm 147, verses 4 and 5 says, **“[God] counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. <sup>5</sup> Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.”**

You know what? I am going to read that to you again on a busy Friday. Psalm 147, verses 4 and 5, “[God] counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. <sup>5</sup> Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.” It is! We are finite, but God is infinite! And the Creator created stars far too numerous for our limited minds to grasp. And each star is numbered *and named* by Him.

I would be remiss if I did not also draw your attention to the prophet Jeremiah. Listen to what Jeremiah writes in the Book by his name, chapter 33 and verse 22, **“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...”** This verse sounds a lot like what we have read in Genesis 13 and 15. Jeremiah says the host of heaven cannot be counted. He says the sand of the sea cannot be measured. So will God multiply descendants to (this time) David. Question: according to the Bible, how many stars are there? Answer: there are too many to count!

I am not done talking about God, Abram, and the stars. I want to bring us back here, connecting astronomy to the Bible, on Monday. Please do plan to be with us to start the week. As we end, I do want to stimulate you to worship and to think about the God who, on the one hand, creates, numbers, and names stars while, simultaneously, on the other hand, creates, numbers, names, and cares passionately for people, like Abram and like us.

Listen to Psalm 8, and use this in your praise of God. **“<sup>3</sup> When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; <sup>4</sup> What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? <sup>5</sup> Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty! <sup>6</sup> You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;...<sup>9</sup> O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!”**

That’s part of Psalm chapter 8. (Psalm 8.) We are talking about a man named Abram. *And* we are talking about the stars. God made both. And God cares for both. Please join me this weekend worshiping The Creator God. He is worthy of our praise, glory, honor, and majesty. “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!” Join us again on Monday because God Is.

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