

## *God's Wristwatch*

Isaiah 40:21-31

July 2, 2023

Please open your Bibles today to Isaiah 40. Imagine a watch that keeps **perfect** time. It hasn't lost a second even in five thousand years and it never needs to be wound. Imagine such a watch so accurate you can predict future events and know for certain when things happened in the past. You might remember when we talked about Jonah that a solar eclipse covered Nineveh on June 15, 763BC. How do we know that? Because God's watch keeps perfect time. This watch, however, would never fit on your arm, nor even in this building. It's so big, you need a galaxy to wear it. God's giant wristwatch is our solar system! For by it, we can know not only when lunar and solar eclipses will occur and have occurred, but when new moons, full moons, and supermoons will come as well as high and low tides, the appearance of comets and so very much more.

Three thousand years ago, the shepherd-turned-king David watched the sky as he tended his sheep and was just as amazed as we are today. In Psalm 19 he wrote, "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 display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." The Mayans heard this speech and learned to keep time using God's giant wristwatch. They made a 5000 year calendar that was exact and precise. Other supposedly ignorant ancient peoples did the same. God's giant wristwatch is incredible.

It's been a great week at VBS. Thanks to all who helped in any way. The decorators, the teachers, the helpers, the food, the prayers, the leaders, the clean up crew, etc. It was awesome to see it all come together. I asked Becky if we could hold onto the solar system in here until today and she graciously consented. These giant spheres can remind us of God's creative power that we so often take for granted and fail to give Him the glory that He rightly deserves. We want to mediate and ponder His great Creative power today and worship Him for it. If you are able, please stand as we read from Isaiah 40:21-26

21 Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? 22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. 23 He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. 24 No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. 25 "To whom will you compare

me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. 26 Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

What a mighty mighty God we serve! And we are like grasshoppers below Him. Say I'm a grasshopper. It's like us seeing ants from the top of the Woodstock Tower. What's phenomenal about this passage is that Isaiah mentions "the circle of the earth" 2300 years before Columbus proved the earth was round. In fact, most everyone in Columbus' day believed the earth was round too, contrary to the myth. The story of the Church trying to discourage Columbus because he would fall off a flat earth was made up by anti-Christians in the 1800s, especially Washington Irving who wrote Columbus' biography 350 years later. For those willing to dig, you'll find that no one in recorded history up to the time of Columbus believed the earth was flat and all theologians and scholars who spoke about the issue implied or stated directly that the earth was round. Where did they get that idea? Perhaps from Isaiah 40 that we just read. In addition, thousands of years before astronomers confirmed it, Job said (26:7) that [God] spreads out the northern [skies] over **empty space**; he suspends the earth over **nothing**." These beach balls hang here by fishing line today, but God hung the sun and the planets, which are infinitely heavier, on **nothing** in empty space. What a mighty God we serve!

People often say the Bible is not a science book and they're right. It's not. But where it does mention scientific facts, it is 100% accurate. These are but a few examples. Deut 10:14 says, "To the Lord your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it." God controls everything about the sky and space and earth. He used a star to announce the birth of His Son and He darkened the sun when we crucified Him. He turned day into night in Egypt, and even made the sun stand still so the Israelites could gain a victory.

I love the imagery of God spreading out the heavens above us like the inside of a diamond encrusted tent or a beautiful star studded canopy that we get to see from the underside. In Isaiah 45:12 God says, "It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts." Astronomers tell us there are as many stars in the universe as there are grains of sand on all the beaches on earth. Think about that! Trillions and trillions! They estimate that there are about a hundred billion stars in our own Milky Way Galaxy (that's a lot of chocolate) and that there are 100 billion galaxies in our universe, some even much bigger than ours. Do the math. That's a lot of stars! God didn't have to make all those but He did. Why? Perhaps to give us something else to glorify Him for. To display His power. Something to reach for, to explore, to discover. As we still are.

And Isaiah says God calls them each star by name! I used to work for a guy who had 30,000 chickens. He told me he had all of them named. I said, "What's that one's name?" He said, "Frank." I said, "How about that one?" "Frank. They're all Frank. It's easier to remember." Not with God. Vs 26 ... He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, **not one** of them is missing." So not only did God create and name all these quadrillions of stars, He keeps up with each of them as well. In addition to stars, He made planets, comets, asteroids, black holes, quasars, pulsars, novas, and supernovas, meteors, etc. He combines solar flares with earth's magnetism to create the northern lights. For what? So we will look up and worship! That we will glorify Him! To fail to do that is criminal! It is a crime of high treason against the God of heaven who loves you so and puts on this lightshow for you every night, these fireworks for us to enjoy.

Job 9:8-9 tells us that, "He alone stretches out the heavens and ... 9 He is the Maker of the Bear (the Big Dipper) and Orion, the Pleiades and the constellations of the south." We can look up at the sky tonight and see the same constellations Job saw 4-5000 years ago. I once read a book by D. James Kennedy that describes how the constellations actually tell the Gospel story! It's been corrupted and worshipped by human beings, but the original intent of Virgo the Virgin, Cancer the crab, Draco the dragon and all the rest is the story of Jesus Christ written across the sky in the largest of fonts! But they're not to be worshiped as happened at the Tower of Babel and down through history. Islam is founded on worship of the moon. The Egyptians worshipped the sun. Many cultures thought the planets were gods and sacrificed and prayed to them. A thousand times no! Don't worship the created, but the Creator! Don't worship the watch, worship the watch Maker! Even today, millions of people turn to horoscopes thinking that the movement of stars somehow determines their fates. What is the first part of that word? Horror! God knows your fate! His will for you is in this book, not the stars. Burn your horoscope and live by the Holy Word of God!

Let's talk about our solar system a bit and start with our own star, the sun. Say sun. The sun is a wonderful gift of God, but boy is it hot! It is over 10,000 degrees on the surface and over 27 million degrees at its core. That's cookin. The sun provides us with energy, food, heat, light, and million other things. But the sun is an inanimate creation of Almighty God, not to be worshipped! The moon likewise cleanses our oceans with its predictable tides, it gives light to the night and triggers behavioral responses in many plants, animals, pregnant women and even school children. But it too is not to be worshipped!

Let's ponder a minute the size and scale of our solar system. Although we've managed to squeeze it all into this sanctuary, not only is it scaled down, but it's not to scale. The sun, although one of the largest beach balls I've ever seen, is still minute compared to the real thing. To be to scale, if the sun were 6 feet in diameter like this one,

the earth wouldn't be this big, but less than 3/4ths of an inch in diameter. 1.3 million earths can fit inside our sun. And instead of being this close to the sun, the earth is 95 million miles away meaning that if the sun were this size, the earth would be over a 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile away at the St. Luke Rd and Senedo Rd intersection over there.

Even the biggest planet, Jupiter with its eye, which, if it were to scale, would be only be a little over 7 inches in diameter. 1300 earths can fit inside Jupiter, but Jupiter would be out about Mowery's Orchard 6/10 of a mile from here. Jupiter's eye is actually a massive storm several times the size of earth that has been storming for hundreds of years. Like a giant hurricane. Pluto would be only be 1/8 inch in diameter and would be somewhere near Valley Pike Church nearly five miles away. These are truly astronomical sizes and distances.

But even a watch this big is still infinitely too small to fit on God's wrist, for according to vs 12 of this same chapter, God used His hand to mark off or measure the heavens. 1 Kings 8:27 tells us that even the highest heaven cannot Him! The GN z-11 galaxy is the furthest one yet discovered at 32 billion lightyears away. And yet God is bigger than that! Which helps us appreciate Psalm 103:11 which assures us that, "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, (32 billion ly) so great is his love for those who fear him." Remember that next time you doubt God's love for you! It's higher than even the furthest star.

And if the earth is only 3/4 of an inch, how big does that make us? How's that make you feel? That's why David sung in Psalm 8:3-4, "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" The making of the heavens didn't even require God to use His hands, only His fingers! And yet, He still cares about us. He takes notice of us. And He loves us. In fact, His love for us is why He made all of this! For us to enjoy. And God didn't give His Son for Jupiter and Mars, but for you!

The earth is perfectly spaced from the sun, perfectly tilted on its axis, perfectly balanced to support life. Scientists sometimes use the word "Goldilocks planet" to describe how everything is "just right" on earth. If the force of gravity were altered by just a fraction of one percent (a decimal followed by 37 zeros and then a one), it would be **impossible** for the sun to even exist which would eliminate us as well. If Jupiter wasn't exactly where it is, millions of asteroids would pummel the earth wreaking havoc for all living things. If our earth rotated much faster, wind velocities would be too great and if it were any slower, temperature variations from day to night would be too great for life to survive.

According to Frank Turek and Norman Geisler, co-authors of I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, scientists have identified 122 of these factors that are like

the little bear's porridge, just right on earth, for life to exist. These include the thickness of the earth's crust, the amount of water vapor, the frequency of lightning and earthquakes, the speed of light, and centrifugal force. It all just happened, right? Don't be stupid, only the fool has said in his heart, there is no God. David tells us in Psalm 33:6 "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth." Astrophysicist Hugh Ross calculated the probability that this unique set of 122 "just right" conditions would exist anywhere else in the universe, even as big as it is, and his answer is one chance in 10 to the 138<sup>th</sup> power. That's a 10 with 138 zeros after it! Most physicists agree that anything less than 1 in  $1 \times 10^{50}$  will never occur.

Imagine if you found a running wristwatch lying on the sidewalk, you would immediately recognize it as having been both designed and carefully made by someone intelligent at Timex or Rollex. To assume it formed by random chance would not only be incredible stupidity, it would be a great insult to the jeweler who made it. Why then, do we apply different criteria when looking to the heavens? It is beyond comprehension that such a precise mechanism keeping accurate track of hours, minutes, and seconds for thousands of years could have formed itself even over eons of time. How can anyone believe that this magnificently beautiful, perfectly accurate, and enormously huge solar system clock gradually came into existence all by itself? It is infinitely more complex than even the most complicated clock man has ever made and it never needs a new battery, yet keeps time down to the second. To God be the glory!

And because God is powerful enough to make all of this and control all of this, Isaiah tells us in Vs 23 that it's a simple thing for Him to control everything on earth. "He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing." Don't get all bent out of shape when evil leaders do evil things. If God is big enough to create, regulate, and control the sun and the stars, He can certainly control kings, presidents, and prime ministers and take care of you as well. That's the whole point of Isaiah's argument.

Jump down to Vs 27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God"? (Ever feel that way?) Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. 29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. 30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; 31 but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

As we enjoy and marvel at the predictability, the vastness, and the awesomeness of the solar system, let us listen to its speech declaring the wisdom and power of its Creator and let us praise and glorify Him for it! For as incredibly amazing as His Creation is, The Creator is even more amazing! Let's put our hope in this great

Watchmaker that we might have our strength renewed, that we might soar on wings like eagles, and run and not grow weary! Let's worship Him and glorify Him for the works of His hands!