The Mysteries of the Heavenlies: The Fourth Day

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[0:00] I hope you're enjoying Genesis as we work through verse by verse. When I first began to think in terms of preaching through Genesis, I didn't anticipate that I would be a sermon per day of the creation.

There's just too much. I couldn't combine them because there's just too much on the front end to say as we think about Genesis being the foundation for everything. When we say that, the foundation for everything, everything that we understand and know about living a life pleasing to Almighty God stands on the first chapter of Genesis as the foundation for our faith, our belief.
The way that we know and understand God, the way that he presents himself to us at the beginning as creator God.
We're not seeing the cross yet. We're seeing this wonderful, magnificent being who has no beginning and no end, creating everything that we need to live on this earth from nothing and doing it in an immediate way.
And it's supposed to us. The title of my message for this morning, then the mysteries of the heavenlies. This is the fourth day of creation.
[1:27] The mysteries of the heavenlies. Friends, the Bible tells us holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.

Revelation 4, 8. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty. We worship the Lord for who he is and because he is.
That's where the Bible starts. That's where everything begins. Here is this magnificent God. Know him for who he is.
As he reveals himself to you as the creator of everything, know this God in this way. That's where we start. That's where we begin to know God.
In James Boyce's commentary, he shared a quote from Francis Schaeffer. Here it is. Our praise to God is not, first of all, in the area of soteriology, that is salvation.
[2:39] If we are being fully scriptural, we do not praise him, God, first because he saved us. No, but because he is there and has always been there.

And we praise him because he willed all other things, including man, us, into existence. End quote.
The creation account reveals God to us as not a creator, but the creator, so that all the universe belongs to and answers to Almighty God.
This is a fundamental truth of Christianity, is it not? It's one of the things that distinguishes us from many, many, many other faiths, even though they have all kinds of ideas about origins and many creation myths.
Look at how the scripture declares the reality that God is the creator and that all that he's made. And that all that he's made belongs to him so that he stands over and beyond all that God has made.
[3:46] The heavens are yours. The earth also is yours. The world and all it contains.

You have founded them in Psalm 89. The God who made the world and all things in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.
We know that. Where does the Lord dwell on the earth? In trees? In the sun? In the moon? In the plants? In the animals? In the ground? In mother nature?
Where does God dwell on this earth? In the hearts of men, my brother said. That's right. In us, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, marvel at this, friends.
Don't let it escape you as you sit here listening to this this morning from the text of Scripture. The God that is being presented to us as the creator of all things lives in you.

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[4:52] Such is the power of almighty God. We shouldn't struggle one single bit with the creation account. When God can come and live in a human being.

And offer us the glory and promise of all eternity. Making the sun and the moon and the stars is nothing for him. And yet, it is everything.
As we understand the foundations of our creator God. And all that he'll do in creating us. And then recreating us in salvation. And then recreating us in glory.
For an eternity with him. This is our God. This is the creator that's being revealed to us this morning. The God who made the world and all things in it.
For the earth is the Lord's. And all it contains. You and I are simply stewards, are we not? It doesn't belong to us.
[5:51] Your cars really don't belong to you. Your clothes and all the things that you think are yours are not yours. They all belong to God. We're just borrowing it for a time. You'll die and take none of it with you.

It'll all stay here and somebody else will have your stuff. Somebody else will live in your house. Your clothes will be given to other people to wear. And all your precious possessions will go to others. And then they'll die. And it'll go to somebody else. Until it's no more. We are encouraged by scripture to put our confidence not in the stuff of this world that God made, but in the one who made it.
Now, all of this from the scriptures are self-evident truths. So that every single human being knows these truths, listen to this, within themselves.
Whether they acknowledge them or not. Every single human being grows up knowing that what we've put up on this screen about God as creator is true.
[6:55] They know that within their own hearts. Now, you might say, Jeff, are you sure? Yes, absolutely. The scripture teaches this in Romans. Look at this particular passage, however, that speaks to the reality that though they know within themselves that God is their creator and has made all things.

Here's the reality of what we do with that. That which is known about God is what? Evident within them. For God made it evident to them.
For since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes. What attributes? His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen.
How? Being understood through what has been made. So that they are without excuse.
The reality in all of this is that every single person grows up knowing that God is creator based on the fact that they live in a world that God made.
[8:05] They're breathing God's air. But what we do is that we suppress that reality of his power and divine nature so that we are without excuse.

Creation either bears witness against us if we deny worship to God as creator or it bears witness with us if we worship the Lord as creator.
My goodness, it's stunning to me to think that in my lostness, I was outdone by a rock. To say that we're dumb as rocks is wrong.
We're dumber than rocks because rocks have enough sense to know who made them. Creation speaks to the glory of God. A rock doesn't struggle with why it's here.
It knows exactly why it's here and who put it here. Trees don't struggle with that. The whole earth is screaming. Glory to God in the highest.
[9:10] Now, we're the ones that struggle against God being our creator. Or creation bears witness with us if we worship the Lord as creator.

There is no middle ground. There is no middle ground. Genesis 1 establishes the foundation for our worship. Our worship in God as our creator.
We don't want to blow past that. We don't want to blow past this and get to the cross as critical as this is in our lives. As much of a difference maker as this is in our lives.
This is not where God introduces himself to us. In Genesis 1 chapter 1. Right? It's not. We see God as creator. He is the one who made our world a livable place for us.
And so right at the jump street here. Right at the gate. We are encountering and we are introduced to this wonderful God who's doing all of this that we might have life.
[10:19] So we owe him everything. We owe God everything just for who he is. Before we're ever saved. Before we're ever brought to faith in Christ.

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We owe God everything. As the foundation for everything. My goodness. And yet you and I come out of the womb suppressing it.
You and I come out of the womb going, I want my way. Feed me. Change me. Hold me. Entertain me. We find 300,000 ways to let the world know that it's all about us.
And it's not. It's all about this great and marvelous God who made us and made a place for us to live. And we just we just can't afford to blow past that.
You and I have life because of and in God alone. And he should get all the glory. He deserves it.
Creation, my friends, is super natural.
[11:25] Just mark that down right now. Creation is super natural. It defies our understanding of the natural world we live in.

We are supposed to see a big God doing a bigger thing in ways we cannot attain to. So we can't take what we know now and put it back on creation, the creation account and say, oh, I know how he did that.
No, you don't. I don't. And the scientists don't. That's all speculation. Science cannot help you understand a great big God with no beginning and no end taking nothing and making something. We don't have anything in our world to help us with that. We just have to come by faith and look at this and say, this is the God who is. And this is the God who is making our world.
We are supposed to see him as big. So, friends, it is imperative. It is absolutely imperative that we see this truth and the truths that I've been rehearsing and all truth for that matter through the eyes of faith.
[12:40] But hear this part, just as God has written it for us. So I am just not going to fudge one iota in the sequence.

I'm not going to fudge one iota in the repetition. I'm not going to get in here and try to get in between the verses and say things that aren't there. We're just not going to do that in any part of scripture. We're not going to speculate. If I want to do any of that at all to any degree, I'll tell you now this is Jeff and I'll try to be as brief as possible.
And the only reason I can't even think of a reason I would do that, I think I do that on occasion, but very rarely. You need thus sayeth the Lord. It is imperative that we see all of this through the eyes of faith as God's written it.
Now look, on the fourth day of creation, you and I have God's testimony about how he made. And this is very important, how he placed the heavenly bodies in the expanse, that expanse that we talked about last time that he created on the third day.
[13:47] So now we have this great stretched out heavens and now God's going to start filling it. And this is going to be the work that God does from now on as we get into the seventh day when he, quote unquote, stops his work and rests.

Now everything that God did in the first three days is going to circle back around and God's going to start filling in on what he's made in those first three days. That's what he's about to do.
This is the fill and multiply part of what God is going to do in the way of commanding man in that stewardship. All right. So we're in the fourth day and he is beginning to fill what he made in the previous days.
Let's read the passage together through where we'll be stopping, at least for today. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void and darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Holy Spirit.
The spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, let there be light. And there was light. God saw that the light was good and God separated the light from the darkness.
[14:53] God called the light day and the darkness. He called night. There was evening. There was morning one day. Then God said, let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters.

Let it separate the waters from the waters. God made the expanse and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse.
And it was so. God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning. A second day.
Then God said, let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place and let the dry land appear. And it was so.
God called the dry land earth. And the gathering of the waters he called seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, fruit trees on the

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earth, bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them.
[16:00] And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, trees bearing fruit with seed in them after their kind.

And God saw that it was good. There was evening. There was morning. A third day. That's where we left off from last Sunday. Now for today.
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.
For days and years. And let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth. And it was so.
God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, the lesser light to govern the night. He made the stars also. God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth and to govern the day and the night and to separate the light from the darkness.
[17:12] And God saw that it was good. There was then evening and there was morning. A fourth day. So here we are with God's good way, a fourth day, making the heavenly bodies as we know them.

And we begin in the same pattern as with every day so far. The good of God said God is doing a wonderfully good work.
And it begins with God speaking into existence. What does not exist. Now, God has then in verses 14 and 15 spread out the expanse of space just prior to that.
And now he's created a breathable atmosphere on earth. He's divided the waters into seas and the great bodies of dry land forming boundaries for the water.
That's all established in 14 and 15. Now we see him doing this new work. The Lord God stretched the heavens and that space now waits to be filled with the mysteries of our sun and our moon and with untold numbers of other planets, stars, galaxies.
[18:28] It's an incredible work of the hand of almighty God. And you and I get to see it every single day and night. God created light. Now, remember this God created light on day one.

The earth has not been dependent on the sun and the moon for light, has it? No, there's a reason for this that we're going to get into. He created light on day one.
The source of light is God. Not the sun and not the moon and not the stars.
I'm going to explain that. Very important. Those are not the sources of light. Who created light? God.
God is the source of light. And so these other things are instruments or objects that he's now going to form and manipulate.
[19:27] That have a relationship to that light that he's already created. He himself being light. Light. There's no mystery here in terms of how God connects this with Jesus being the light of men.

God is that light. So these bodies supply light, but they are not the source of that light. That is why light and the day-night cycle could and did exist prior to the sun and moon.
A mystery to us? Yes. But absolutely clearly declared in the scripture that before the sun and the moon, the earth is already rotating on its axis.
We already have the cycle of a 24-hour day and night. And God is providing the light. It's absolutely amazing, isn't it?
I'm saying all of this because as we move through this, there are certain people, even Christians, who have been manipulated and understanding this to be a 24-hour day cycle because they say one of the reasons is we didn't have any sun prior to this.
[20:39] There couldn't be 24 hours. There was no sun to create a 24-hour cycle. And again, they just don't accept by faith that God doesn't need the sun to do that.

God established the sun as part of that design and purposed it. But that was already happening before the sun was made. This is one of the reasons that the order is so important.
Because you and I step back and say, wow, we can't even conceive of that. We just have to take that on faith and say, what a big God. Amen. Amen. That's exactly the design.
Let me share this quote with you from John Calvin. Now, this is a little bit complex, maybe at first reading, but just let's take it at face value and work our way through it.
I wanted to share it with you, even though it's a little challenging, because I think it captures the essence of what's being said here with this fourth day. All right. Here's the quote.

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[21:37] God had before created the light. That is back on day one before day four. But he now on day four institutes a new order that the sun should be the dispenser of diurnal.

Diurnal is daytime light as opposed to nocturnal. And the moon and the stars should shine by night. So we have the sun by day and the others by night.
All right. We get that. And then God assigns them to this office. Why? To teach us that all creatures are subject to his will and execute what he enjoins upon them.
For Moses relates nothing else than that. God ordained certain instruments, the sun, moon and stars to diffuse through the earth by reciprocal changes.
The sun by day, the moon by night, the stars by night. That light which had been previously created. Now, here's the difference between that light on the beginning and the light now that's being diffused by the sun and the moon.
[22:52] The only difference is this, that the light was before dispersed. Now proceeds from lucid bodies, the sun, moon and stars, which in serving this purpose, obey the commands of God.

Now, I hope you caught that. Whereas God created light on the first day and it was dispersed as God just in his glory. We don't know exactly what that light is, but we're told in Revelation 21 with the new heaven and the new earth, there will be no sun and moon or any need for them.
And there will never be night. Why? Because God and the lamb will be the light and the glory of the light will light the earth. Maybe that's what it was.
But whatever it was, God did it. And now we have God making the sun and the moon and saying, now the new order will be you're going to help diffuse the light.
Whereas one time it was dispersed by me. Now you will help diffuse that light for the earth. It's as simple as that. Do you know what I mean by simple? God did it and he gets the glory.
[24:03] We don't understand it. But the scripture says this is exactly what happened. And so we take this at face value. And I thought Calvin caught it. I just said, man, that's that's an awesome reality.

It's a mystery to us, but not to God. The vastness of space is a mystery. Humans will never solve or fully comprehend ever.
That needs to be OK. Each creation day brings new miracles to our awareness from nothing. God spoke.
And it was so. That's that's the formula for us as Christians. God speaks from nothing creation. It was so.
Beautiful. Now, fourth day, God creates two lights in space. Our sun and moon are two more of God's miracles.
[25:05] And he gives us the purposes for these. And they're stated very plainly. And even now you and I can go, OK, I can see that. Here here are some of the purposes for the sun and moon, as stated in this particular text of scripture.

To separate the day from the night. That's great. We need that to be for signs and for seasons. We need that to be for days and years to give light on the earth.
This just we don't have to do a lot of hard work here mentally to say, yeah, OK. These purposes are the ways that you and I measure time.
God is beyond space and time, right? He's outside of all of that creating it. But we live in it. It's why we can't get outside of it. We have no concept to be able to do that.
Everything about our life is constrained by time and space. Everything. Everything. If you don't believe that's true, then get in one of these rocket ships and go up into space and don't wear a space suit and try to take a walk outside the capsule.
[26:18] You're going to find out real quickly the limits of space on your life. Right. Or climb up 100 feet into the air and step off the edge and you're going to find real fast what space is.

This is what we live in. This is how we we understand life. And but God stands outside of all of that. We measure time and move along in our cycles of life by our calendar.
Established for us by sun and moon and stars in the heavenlies, which God tells us was the purpose. What a wonder, folks. What a wonder.
We want to take in this marvel of creation each day that God is making this. And so I'm going to move quickly then to the good God made made.
He's spoken. This stuff on the fourth day is in existence. Now he's making this and he's repetitive here. These two lights are said to govern the earth.

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[27:24] If you'll look at verse 16 with me. 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. Another meaning of this govern from the new American standard is to rule, rule the earth.
Or another way of looking at it is like this. The sun and the moon and the stars dominate the sky day and night. They dominate. If you go outside now on a clear day, you're going to see that the sun dominates the sky, doesn't it?
It steals the show. When the sun sets and the moon comes out, even a crescent moon, but especially a full one, dominates the night sky. And in certain places where the lights are low, the stars are sparkling in the sky.
All of these govern much of how the earth operates in its cycles and seasons. I'm not going to go into a lot of that. Many, many, many books are out there you can read that talk about the scientific way that the sun and the moon and the stars affect the earth.
[28:31] I'm just going to go into a little bit of it that you may not be aware of. The point is this. God made these marvels. He made them.

They did not evolve from other entities billions of years ago. They did not. The moon is not the product of some great crash and it broke off.
And there it sits. There it sits. Well, I just don't even know how to talk about that. So I won't because it just frustrates me. I know.
I know what we do. We we suppress the truth and unrighteousness against this. So I'm not mocking unbelievers. I was an unbeliever and I had the same notions. I didn't understand.
But the scripture is so clear. And as Christians, we just need to receive this on faith for what it is. I continue to encourage you to do that. They didn't evolve. As with the other objects of creation, God spoke the sun and the moon and the stars into instantaneous existence from nothing.
[29:37] There was no sun. There was no moon. There weren't any stars. God spoke and they came into life, into being. That's it. That's what the Bible tells us. The sun is said to govern the day portion of the 24 hour cycle.

That's the purpose of the Lord. The sun is an astounding, mind boggling mystery of creation. But we do know some fascinating things about its operations and effects on our planet.
And some of you have probably read some of this. Jeff in NASA. Jeff is part of NASA and he's an engineer there. And they design all kinds of stuff to get out into space and probe these wonders.
So there are some things that we can know. But look at this. Our sun is a star. What's a star?
Listen to this. A star is a luminous, luminous ball of gas, mostly hydrogen and helium held together by its own gravity.
[30:50] The sun is the largest object in our solar system. Now, look at this. The sun and moon, as the scripture describes them as light bearers or luminaries, comes from the Latin luminare.

It means to shine. The root word is lumen, which means light. The brightness even of our own light bulbs is expressed in what? Lumens, right?
The higher the number on the light bulb box, the brighter it is. Like Earth, the sun is composed of three layers in its atmosphere.
Now, the names of the layers, the three layers on the sun's atmosphere are different from the names we have. But they have three broken up into three layers for the sun as well.
The first one, the nearest layer to the sun's surface is the photosphere. Then the next layer out is the chromosphere.
[32:00] And then finally, furthest out in the terms of these layers of atmosphere around the sun is the corona. The surface of the sun, the bottom then of the photosphere, you have that first layer off the ball, that first one at the very bottom of the photosphere, closest to the surface of the sun.

It is about 11,000 degrees. 11,000 degrees. As you move away from the surface of the sun out to about 350 miles, you come to the upper boundary of that first layer, the photosphere, before you get into the chromosphere.
The temperatures there change to about 6,600 degrees. So you're not startled, you're not surprised necessarily that the further you get away from the surface, the temperature begins to drop.
But that's within the first layer. To put that in perspective for you, that 11,000 degrees and that 6,600, which is the range of the first layer, the photosphere, putting that in perspective, for those of you who understand this, a welding arc is about 10,000 degrees.

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Many of you have seen welding, and you got to wear the thing. And that's welding at about 10,000 degrees. So that's just a little bit less than the surface of the sun.
[33:34] That's crazy, isn't it? I would have thought that would have been so much different, so much higher on the sun. Now listen to this part. The air around a lightning bolt can get up to five times hotter than the top portion of the photosphere around the sun.

Really? Well, what in the world is this all about? Well, listen. Here's the strange part. This is what has scientists mystified.
As you move through that second layer, the chromosphere, and further away from the surface of the sun at the photosphere, into the outer layer, the corona, the temperatures get hotter.
Hotter the further you move away from the surface. At about 1,300 miles from the surface, the temperatures range from about 900,000 degrees to 2 million degrees.
Now, kids, just to put that in perspective for you, when your mom or dad puts something in the oven to cook for you, like meatloaf or something like that, usually they set the oven at about 350 to 375 degrees, ladies.
[34:57] Am I right? Right around there? 375 degrees to cook your food. I just said 900,000 degrees to 2 million degrees in the third layer of the atmosphere of the sun.

That's anywhere from 80 to 300 times hotter than the surface. How's that even possible?
We don't know. Who does? Right. Right. Can you imagine walking away from a fire, and the further you get from it, the hotter it gets on you?
No. You can't. I can't either. But that's the truth of the sun. Look at this. The power of the sun is mind-boggling.
That's a solar flare. Solar flares are large explosions from the surface of the sun that emit intense bursts of electromagnetic radiation.
[36:14] The intensity of the explosion determines the classification of the flare. They have degrees or classifications that they use to say, oh, this was a mild flare.

And they have numbers they assign. And then you get up, and I think it's X to the whatever power. Those are larger flares. But here's the interesting part.
While most flares are mild to moderate in their intensity, some flares, some solar flares off the sun can be more powerful, listen now, than a simultaneous explosion, a simultaneous explosion of more than one billion hydrogen bombs.
That's enough energy to power the entire planet for 20,000 years. It's a big old God.
That explosion that I just described from the hydrogen bombs, that explosion is 100 million times greater than a volcanic eruption.
[37:31] But it is less than one-tenth of the total energy emitted by the sun per second. God made this thing.

He made it. And as powerful as it is, as mystifying as it is, God's more powerful, more mystifying, and stands above it.
The sun doesn't deserve to be worshipped. But the God who made it does. Amen. God sustains the sun in its cycle.
God sustains the sun in its power. In order to keep us alive. Let me say just a few more things about this, just to put it in perspective for us.
The sun is 93 million miles from the earth. 93 million miles distant from the earth. The fastest thing that we know of is light.
[38:36] Light travels at over 186,000 miles per second. And it takes light more than eight minutes to get to earth.

That's how far the sun is from the earth. The fastest thing we know of takes eight minutes to travel from the sun to the earth. That might, you may think, boy, that's quick. But think about how far that is when you're going 186,000 miles per second.
Yet, these solar flares affect earth all during the year. Last August, a solar flare caused a radio and navigation blackout across all of North America and across the Pacific Ocean.
Get this. In 1859, a flare known as the Carrington event became the most powerful solar storm ever recorded to date.
So, you know, in 1859, the way that we communicated was through telegraph.
De-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee-dee. Right? You sit at your station and you tap on that little thing and it goes across the wires.

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[39:52] So there's people all over the country sitting at their stations doing telegraphs for people. And then the Carrington event happens. This event gave electric shocks to telegraph operators sitting at their stations all across the country.

Even fires broke out at telegraph offices as the currents generated by the storm surged through their wires and set the stations on fire. That's 1859.
1859. It's the most powerful one we've ever encountered. That is an amazing and astounding reality. There's so...
Oh, it just fascinates me. Listen, I have to admit something to you. I would sit here through the week. This has been happening to me every week. And I'll study through this and try to gather all this together and figure out what I'm going to do and how much I'm going to...
And folks, sometimes I just burst into tears and just sit there and weep. Thanking God for his greatness. Marveling, marveling at the wonder and mystery of this great God who condescended to us.
[41:02] To save us. Oh, it's... I'm so glad that God gives us these truths to help awe us with who he is and what he's done.

So many more things could be said about the marvel of God's creation in the sun. Just the wisdom behind all of this. But we also need to say a few things about the moon.
And we need to be careful to understand that in all that I've just told you about the sun, with all this great energy and power going on, God sustains the sun in just the perfect way that we are alive and not dead.
A little bit further out, we'd freeze to death. A little bit closer and we'd burn up. So that is so important to us as well.
Well, what about the moon? What about the moon? Beautiful, isn't it? It's just beautiful. We love looking at the moon. Why did God make the moon?
[42:02] Well, we've already looked at a few reasons from the text itself that God made both the sun and the moon. But the Hebrews, the Hebrew people, also needed this creation account of the moon's creation to counter pagan beliefs and worship.

I was actually reminded and a little bit surprised that so many pagan cultures, ancient cultures, worship the moon even more than they worship the sun.
That should surprise you a little bit. Because when you read Egypt's history and other ancient cultures, you hear all about the sun. With Egypt, I think it was Ra, wasn't it? R-A, Ra, the sun.
But actually, these pagan cultures worship the moon more than the sun. That's fascinating to me.
From about 3,000... Now think about this as me trying to help you understand some of the background of God writing the creation account and handing it to his people through Moses.
And why they needed to hear this as they wandered in the wilderness, which is most likely the time when Moses wrote this and then the Israelites received it. Before they went into the promised land.
[43:15] From about 3,000 B.C. to more than 800 years after the Israelites left Egypt, pagan cultures have worshipped the moon. In fact, the city of Ur...

Does that ring a bell? The city of Ur, where Abraham came from, was devoted to the moon god, Nana. So for those of you who call your grandmother Nana...
Or Nana... This moon god was believed... Here it is. This moon god, Nana, was believed to be the father of the sun god.
So an even more important deity in the minds of ancient people is the moon god. The moon temple in Ur still stands today in Iraq.
Here is an artist's rendition of what the temple most likely looked at. This moon god temple. That's a magnificent structure for ancient people, isn't it?
[44:19] On any scale. At any time. That is a magnificent structure. That's what they think it looked like in its completed stage in the city of Ur.

But here's what it looks like today. It's the most well-preserved ziggurat of ancient times. Have any of you ever seen this firsthand?
I think Matt's probably seen it, right? Yeah. Yeah. He's probably landed a helicopter right by it. Yeah. He had knocked a brick off.
He said, oops. Sorry. Yeah. We're just kidding. Matt, we love you. If you listen to this, we love you, brother. It's all good.

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If he was here, he'd be laughing going, yeah, I probably did that. Listen to this. In Akkadian worship, they called the moon god Sin, which meant the lamp of heaven and earth, the king of all gods, or the divine crescent.
[45:26] The divine crescent. Among the Hittites and Canaanites, the sign of the crescent moon symbolized the moon god. Now, I'm going to pause right there and I'm going to tell you this through my studies.

I didn't have time to chase this down, but it became a fascinating fact for me, and I want to go back and look at it. I just did a cursory look, and I realized I was starting to go down that hole, and I had to just come back to life because it's fascinating.
The Islamic flag has the sign of the crescent moon and a star, as do many Islamic nations. And I thought that was fascinating.
I don't know how that might be connected in any way, but I thought, land's in. Who is the god of this world? Satan. And we all know that Islam is a false religion because they do not honor the god who made the world and everything in it, the Lord Jesus Christ.
The Egyptians even worshiped the moon god of Thebes, Kansu. Even the name Jericho comes from the word for moon.
[46:42] Eight centuries after the Israelites entered the promised land, 800 years after they went into the promised land, they came under God's judgment. They were conquered by and deported to Babylon.

One of the main or primary reasons for this judgment against Israel was their rampant moon worship. They had adopted the worship of the pagan cultures around them, and one of those chief characteristics was the worship of the moon.
And so God judged them. These historical realities underscore the importance of the details and the sequence, the sequence of the creation account as the Lord wrote it.
The Bible says, Then God said, that's where we start, Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. Here are the purposes of the sun and the moon.
Let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years. Let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, and it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, the lesser light to govern or dominate the night.
[47:58] He made the stars also. Isn't it interesting that that's almost like a footnote? Oh, and he made the stars also. Billions and billions and billions and billions of uncountable stars and galaxies beyond galaxies.

Oh, and he made the stars also. Boop! It's fascinating to me. And then verse 17. Notice this. This is where we are now.
God placed them. God placed them in the expanse or the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth and to govern the day and the night and to separate the light from the darkness.
Here's that work of separation again that only God can do, and God saw that it was good. So here we are at verse 17 and 18. The good of God placed.
Remember I told you, a little bit further out and we'd freeze. A little bit closer in and we'd burn up. This is the idea of the Hebrews in their mind seeing Almighty God the Creator who spoke and these things came into existence and then it's as if he took it and he just placed it right exactly where it needed to be in relation to our solar system and the distance from the earth.
[49:12] This is your God putting it just where it needed to be in terms of distance and everything else so that this would be a livable place. Where else in the entire universe have we been able to find something like that or even remotely similar?

Nowhere. Thank you, God. That's what it's supposed to do. Put us on our faces before God. Thank you, God, for my life and for making a place where I can live my life.
A place unlike any other place in all of the great expanse of the universe. Thank you, God, for loving us and considering us like that.
Amen. I'll say more about that in just a moment. Here again in verses 17 and 18, you and I encounter repetition in the account. Here's the repetition.
But now the emphasis is on God placing these bodies in the precise positions to serve his deliberate creative purposes.
[50:22] Now, what does that mean? Here's what it means, friends. There is no random. Okay? There is no chance.

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There are no billions of years. There is absolutely no way to misconstrue the plain meaning and order of what God is doing if you just read this in a casual, literal way.
You read it just as it's written and you just say, wow. There's no way to misconstrue this. God created the sun and the moon on the fourth day after.
After he created the seas and the vegetation. Do you hear what I'm saying? In terms of the sun and moon, the seas don't need the moon to do the tidal thing.
They don't need that. Not right now. Well, the vegetation doesn't need photosynthesis from the sun. God's taking care of all of that just as God.
[51:23] He's got all of that under control. Now he's going to put the sun and the moon in the skies for us to help us with time, to measure time and seasons and years.

You say, Jeff, how do you know that? Well, we just read it. Just read it, right? This I just want so much for you as a faithful Christian to come to this account and be awed by God and take it and run with it.
This is designed to help you worship. So don't don't. No pun intended. Monkey around with it. Don't monkey around with it. There are there's no evolve here.
None whatsoever. God created the sun and the moon on the fourth day after he created the seas and vegetation. And that is an important point.
In other words, here's the thing. God doesn't need anything. God doesn't need the sun or the moon to give light, to provide any aspect of what his creation needs to be sustained under his power.
[52:31] He does not. It was his pleasure to create the sun and the moon for the reasons that we've already talked about. Let me offer you this quote, too, because I thought this was very helpful.

The order of events in Genesis 1 is deliberate and meaningful. The creation of the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day of creation teaches a profound lesson.
The creator is infinitely superior to his works, including the heavens. Therefore, no visible heavenly body, including the moon, should be worshipped.
Amen. Amen. We understand that. In scripture, the sun, moon, and stars symbolize, hear it now, God's faithfulness to those he loves and saves.
So every time you go out today and you see the sun and tonight you see the moon, I saw I stood there at the window last night at 2.30 in the morning looking out up at the moon. I think it was about half and just thinking, man, Lord, thank you so much.
[53:37] Every time I see that moon and that sun, it reminds me you're a good and gracious God who does a good and gracious thing for your people. We have life on this earth because you're good. You're good.

You care. Because you stoop to care for us, the people who put you on the cross. I put him on the cross. I might as well have been there.
God is showing us his faithfulness. He loves us, desires to save us. It's an interesting... Let me just show you.
In Jeremiah chapter 31, I'm just going to turn there real quickly. You don't have to turn there if you don't want to. Talking about the faithfulness of God.
In Jeremiah 31, beginning in verse 35, here's what Jeremiah is telling the people. Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar.
[54:48] the Lord of hosts is his name. If this fixed order departs from me, in other words, the fixed order of the sun and the moon and the stars and all the cycles and seasons and years and days that they regulate.

Look, if this fixed order departs from me, from before me, declares the Lord, then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before me forever.
Thus says the Lord, if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for what they have done, declares the Lord.
What is he saying? My faithfulness is akin to the faithfulness that Israel is akin to the faithfulness that I show all of humanity by keeping all of this in place and sustaining it day after day, year after year.

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Such is my faithfulness to Israel. And if you can go out into the expanse and you can measure the boundaries of space, if you can go out into space and measure the ways of my creation, if you're ever able to do that, then my faithfulness to Israel would have ceased.
[56:08] You can't and you never will. It'll always be a mystery to us as long as we're on this planet. But God says, by these things that I've created, my faithfulness will never leave Israel.

Is that not a good message for today? I wish I could get that message to the Hebrew people, although I know they know their Old Testament. I want to send that to Netanyahu and just say, brother, the one who promised all that is named Jesus Christ.
Look to Christ. I had some Jehovah Witnesses come by in the street the other day. I was out there getting my trash can to bring it back to my house. And they're out there and they were delightful men and I stood there talking to them for a few minutes and they wanted to share scripture with me, so they did.
So then I reciprocated and shared with them and they wanted to tell me that while Jesus was a good person and a good man and I stopped them and said, Jesus Christ is the Lord of all creation. He's the reason that we're here and that everything is sustained. You guys would do a great, great service to your hearts to look to Jesus Christ as the Lord of all the earth. Y'all have a great day. Because they don't want to hear it.
[57:20] They only want to argue it. They don't want to hear it. But leave them with Christ, right? Leave them with the hope of the Lord Jesus Christ. God doesn't need any of this.

It shouldn't be worshiped. In scripture, it's all about his faithfulness. As we look to the sun and the moon and the stars, we see faithfulness. The faithfulness of Almighty God. And he declared that to his nation, Israel.
Look, the luminaries of heaven also symbolize, no surprise, God's great glory. In that, he has made all of this.
He sustains all of this day to day. We should be awed. God, you are so faithful. God, your glory is tremendous. I can't even attain to just this one part of creation.
I just can't even fathom it. Thank you, Lord. Job, Solomon, Paul, the psalmist, each of these speak of the sun, the moon, the stars in a way that highlights the beauty and the wonder and the love that God has instituted for us in this life.
[58:29] But, the rebellious hearts of unbelieving mankind do not and cannot understand or accept the things of God. So, what do we do?

Creation is elevated over the creator. Creation is elevated over the creator. Today, folks, as I move toward a close, listen to this. Today, there is big, big money in the idea that there is life beyond our galaxy.
Right? That somewhere in the vast ocean of space, there must be, there must be some form of life. Perhaps even worlds, plural, populated by intelligent beings.
And that maybe, maybe, these beings even visited earth at one time or do visit earth. Makes for great science fiction. Oh, I love Star Wars.
Like watching Star Wars. Good guys win against the bad guys and all that stuff. And Luke just, and it's all done. You know, I love, I love watching the space movies.
[59:35] What's, what's another space movie? Arrival. No, I don't know that. Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Okay. What's another big one though? I'm forgetting it. Star. Thank you, Star Trek. I grew up on that.

Now, those are fun, right? These are fun. See, you're smiling. I love watching this stuff, right? But they can mess with your head in terms of God as creator. Now, now, please listen carefully as I close out here.
This is, this is important in terms of how we begin to understand God as creator and what's going on. It's fun to think about those things, but listen, as we take in the uncountable numbers of planets, stars, and other galaxies, and how all our attempts to this point have turned up one conclusive reality about them all.
They cannot and do not sustain life. I believe this is just one more testimony to the majesty of God as creator.
What do you mean, Jeff? I personally believe there are no other forms of life beyond what the Lord has given us on earth. I tease Suzanne all the time when we watch these shows.

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[60:51] I say, I believe, I believe, aliens and all that, but it just aggravates her. I just do it to aggravate her. Amen. Amen. No, I don't believe.

I believe there are no other forms of life beyond the earth because the lifeless, harsh, and barren nature of the other planets, the cold, cold darkness of space, I believe, are proofs for God's deliberate design for our livable earth.
You with me? The entire cosmos shows Jesus' handiwork, but our planet shows his handiwork is for us to have life by his omnipotent and gentle hand.
This magnificent, magnificent creator who made all of this vastness that we look into and can't even find the end of.
We keep sending these probes out, these telescopes out. I just read where they sent NASA. Did you work on this one, Jeff? The probe that went to the sun?
[62:07] We actually have a probe right now that penetrated the corona of the sun. I don't have any clue how you guys pulled that off and it didn't just melt, but it's sending back images.

With all of that, listen, this magnificent creator who gave us our livable world and our lives, who stands so majestically over us and over all that he's made, humbled himself to come to this earth as a human being.
He willingly gave himself up to his creatures to mock him and spit on him and beat him and ridicule him and laugh at him and then torture him to death on a cross.
He did that. This God who made all this sun and sustains it all became a human and he willingly gave himself up for all that.
This is Jesus who holds your life in his omnipotent gentle hands. this is the God who took your place on the cross to die the death you deserved for your sins.
[63:36] This God, this Jesus, creator Christ, creating life for us through his death and resurrection. This God who relentlessly pursues us from the time of creation, making a habitable world for us that he knew we would populate.

And still he pursues through all of that to find you and save you and love you on this livable, habitable place that he made for you.
If God hadn't done all of this at the beginning, there'd be no you. And if there was no you, there'd be no you to save and there'd be no eternity in heaven for you. God is on the foundation for everything is on the shoulders of this God.
And we need to come to him as his creatures and offer him worship and thanksgiving for all that he does for us in his death and resurrection.
Look, the Lord has always been the Lord of life and hope. Amen? Always. God looked on his work on day four. And what does the scripture say? And God saw in the end of verse 18 that it was good.
[65:03] There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day. Let's pray together. Well, Father, we are humbled and awed and inspired even by the glories of your creative power.

Even more so that you, this same creator, Jesus, who was at the beginning so that all things were made by him and through him and for him and to him, that this Jesus walked this earth, the creator that made it, walked on it, and even gave yourself up to your creatures to abuse you and ridicule you and then torture you to death, that you might save them.
It wasn't enough that you made us a place to live unlike any other place in all the cosmos and gave us life. You came down and sacrificed your life so that we could live with you forever.
Let us look up today as we leave and see the sun and the clouds, to see the expanse and the blue sky. Let us take a moment to look around and notice that you are the God who made all this, but you are also the God who came and gave yourself for us.
Help us to be your people as we worship you in spirit and in truth. Help us, Father, to love you even as you love us and have given yourself for us.
[66:35] If there's anyone here this morning who has never come to the place where they know you as the saving creator God, they've never trusted Jesus to forgive them for their sins.

I pray that you would help this burn into their hearts even now and that they would not leave this place until they come and talk to us and ask us, how can I know Jesus like you know him?
How can I know Jesus in this saving, trusting way? We pray for an opportunity to share with them how they can know you as their God and their King, their Lord and their Savior.
May you be glorified in all these ways, even as your people stand to sing your praises as our Creator and our Savior. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

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