

# Studies in the Psalms 03 of Stars and Men

by Neil Fraser

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*God's love for humanity is greater than his concern for the universe, and he is more interested in healing broken hearts and binding up wounds than in creating stars.*

**Duration:** 45:40

**Scripture:** Psalm 147:1-4, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Gods Creation", "Human Priorities"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that God created the universe as a stage to portray the great drama of life. He highlights the tragedy of mankind focusing on studying the stage (the world) rather than understanding the drama that God has portrayed. The preacher then shares a story about a renowned astronomer who urgently needed help finding a small screw for his telescope to witness an important sight. The sermon concludes by questioning the prioritization of studying the stars over healing the broken in heart and binding up their wounds, emphasizing the importance of recognizing God's power and glory in all aspects of life.

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## Transcript

Now, I think this morning we'll turn to Psalms 147. 147, and I wonder if we might not read this psalm responsibly. I'll read verse 1, please, and you'll read verse 2, and we'll go down the psalm, because it will do us good.

Psalms 147. Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and praise is comely. The Lord doth build up Jerusalem, he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. Great is the Lord, and of great power his understanding is infinite. Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving, sing praise upon the heart unto our God.

He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy. For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates, he hath blessed thy children within they.

He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth, his word runneth very swiftly. He casteth forth his ice like morsels, who can stand before his cold? He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. Thank you.

The Lord will bless to us his holy word. Now, Psalms 147 is in the last five Hallelujah Psalms. These last five begin and end with the words, Praise ye the Lord, or Hallelujah.

When you come to these closing psalms, the long and loud groaning of Israel is over. Their cries to God for deliverance, their cries for vengeance, as we call them the imprecatory psalms, are hushed. Israel's troubles are over, and there's nothing but praise, nothing but hallelujahs rising to the Lord.

Now, in this psalm there is the constant mingling of God's power in creation, and his providence in meeting the need of his creature man. If you read the psalm carefully, which I hope you will again sometime today, you'll see the constant intermingling of God's benevolence in the laws of nature, and God's particular providence in the individual needs of man. But I want you to notice, please, particularly verses three and four, from which I'd like to speak today.

He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth a number of the stars, he calleth them all by their names. Now you would imagine that in these days, when we are made so conscious of space travel, and we have seen in our day man making a couple of journeys to the moon, and safely back again, when there's all this interest and expense and risk on the behalf of man to invade the solar system of which he is a part, you would imagine all this interest in astronomy would make it imperative that verse four should come before verse three.

That is to say, that it's far more important to tell the number of the stars, and to learn their names, than it is for God to heal the broken in heart and bind up their wounds. The theologians would tell us that verse four is the cosmological argument for the existence of God. That is to say, that God's eternal power and Godhead are understood by the things that are immense, and that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

That's the cosmological argument, the argument from the cosmos from the world. And that the other, in verse three, is the experiential argument, the argument from experience, man's inner consciousness of the existence of God. Someone has said that while man has proof of existence of God as he looks about him, he has something which is infinitely better, and he has the inward consciousness of God.

He has inside information that there is a God, and that he is tremendously interested in him. So that instead of the cosmological argument coming first, and God directing our attention to astronomy, to telling the number of the stars and giving them names, the order here is the order of experience, and then the order of astronomy. Which leads us to say, and what I like to show this morning, is that God is infinitely more interested in meeting individual human names than in creating a universe of stars.

Now, of course, astronomy is a great science. If what they tell us is true, as we are sitting here this morning, we are traveling, that is, our earth is traveling at 72,600 miles an hour at this very moment. And at the beginning of the year, we began to make one journey around the sun, and it will take us 365 and a quarter days to make one orbital journey, traveling at 72,600 miles per hour.

Now, you and I can scarcely take that in. We've got so used to astronomical figures in our day, that the mention of them fails to awaken us the consciousness, awaken in us the consciousness that they should. For instance, we say that the moon that man has made a safe journey to is, we say, well it's 243,000 miles away, and man has made the journey.

But we fail to realize that if you were to get into an airplane today, and for the airplane were to be able to go 500 miles an hour, with no stops, day and night, it would take us 20 days at that incredible stage to get to the moon. Now, the moon is, or shall I say the sun, is 93 million miles away. And if you divide 93 million by 243,000, you'll discover that the sun is 380 times further from the earth than the moon is.

Now, if you if you go along with me a little further, let me say that the earth makes its safe orbital journey, one journey around the sun safely, never losing a minute in a hundred years. If it did, it would begin to work havoc in the universe. We must keep in our own orbit, century after century, keep up the speed, and not get any closer to the sun.

The attraction of the sun is a tremendous thing, and the pull of the sun is determined by the weight of the earth, the mass of the earth. If the earth weighed more than it does now, the pull of the sun would be greater, we are told. Or if the earth weighed less than it does now, the pull of the sun would be less, so that the pull of the sun and the weight, the mass of the earth, must be in perfect equilibrium.

Does that not remind you of something in Isaiah which tells us that God weighs the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? And it's because of the perfect balance of these forces that we remain in our proper orbit, century after century. Now that's tremendous. Now because of the pull of the sun, it's necessary for our great heavy earth to travel 62,600 miles an hour.

Now closer than we are to the sun is Mercury, which in contrast to our 93 million miles, is 35 million miles from the sun. Now being that it's so much closer, the pull of the sun is greater, so it has to go faster to balance up. It's so much faster than we are.

It has to go 165 times faster than we do to maintain its equilibrium. And they tell me that Neptune is at the other end of our system, 2100 million miles away, and it will take, no I was wrong, 35 million is Mercury, 2100 is the other, and it takes 165 of our years to make one journey around the sun. Now all that's tremendous.

Now when we say all that, we've just been talking about the immediate family of the sun. We've just been talking about the planets in our system. The earth is making its journey, Neptune is making its journey, Mercury is making its journey, and all the other planets.

And we've just been talking about the immediate family of the sun. We haven't been talking about the stars as such yet. And then when we begin to talk about the nearest star, you begin to talk about light years.

Now in case you have forgotten, a light year is the speed that light will go in a distance in a year. Light travels 186,000 miles per second, and you have to multiply that by 60 to get what light travels in a minute, and 60 by what it travels in an hour, and 24 what it travels in a day, and 365 and a quarter what light travels in a year. And when you've added all that up, you've got a tidy sum, I assure you.

And they tell us that our nearest star is four light years away. And then they begin to stretch out, and out, and out, until after a while they're not only talking about 300,000 light years away, but they're talking about groups of stars, constellations. There are 300,000 light years away from each other.

It staggers imagination. None of us can take it in. And yet, when the Bible describes it, the making of those things, it describes them in five words.

He made the stars also. That's all. God was not greatly concerned in making stars, and the reason that he made a universe at all was just that the world and that which surrounds it would just be a theater, a stage upon which he would portray the actors in time to come.

This present earth that you and I live on is just the stage upon which God was going to portray the great drama of life, and unfold the plans that he had made from all eternity. And that's why God only spent five words, really, to tell us what he did that morning. He made the stars also.

It's a tragedy that mankind will bend its energies and spend most of its life in studying the stage, and fail to learn the drama that God portrayed upon that stage. Now, that is why I think that it says here that God is more concerned about healing broken hearts and binding up wounded people than he is in telling the number of the stars and calling them all by their names, you see. And so, I want to emphasize that today.

When God created a man, and when God set that man on his feet on the earth, with the earth beneath him and the stars above him, God had created something infinitely greater than all the universe. Because when he made that man, he gave him something that the universe didn't possess, and that was volition. That was free choice.

That was a will which he could put on the side of good or evil as he chose. When God made that man Adam, he made a man who could say no to God Almighty if he chose to do so. The universe was just a machine, just obeying inexorable law.

But when God put a man on the earth, and presently a woman by his side, God endowed that pair with something tremendous. He endowed him with volition, free choice, will. Sometimes people say, why did God not make Adam incapable of choosing evil? Why did God not make him so that he could only do the good, and thus save us from all the trouble we've had ever since? Well, the answer to that is that God could have done so.

The reason that he didn't do so was probably because if he had done so, man would have been not any different really from the universe. He would just have been a machine, ever moving in one direction, having no power of choice. God would just have made a machine, and you can't have intelligent fellowship with a machine.

But God wanted to make something, somebody, with whom he could have intelligent fellowship, who would obey him because he was worth obeying, who would love him because he was worth loving, who would serve him because he was worth serving, you see. And so God made that man, and he placed him upon the earth to do his will. He could have prevented the importation of sin into the earth.

Sin had its rise not in the earth, but in the heaven. It was conceived there, it was conceived by a being whom God had equally endowed with volition, choice, will. And that being, as he watched the angels rushing to do the bidding of God, said, I will exalt my throne like the most high, I will be as God.

And he who sought to do so was deposed, becoming the prince of the power of the air, and later imported that disobedience into the earth, and inoculated humanity with his own disobedience. And so sin has come into the world, and all that we see today, adversely, is the outworking of that sin which entered the world that day, when that pair listened to the voice of the serpent, instead of the voice of God. Satan was very cunning, as we remember.

He waited evidently until Adam and his wife Eve were separated, probably at extreme ends of the garden. He approached the woman, and instead of her running to the shelter of her husband, where together they might have stood, and replied to Satan, she took upon herself to reply to him alone. And he attacked her in the way that he attacked our savior later, and that he attacks every one of us since, in the lust of the eye, in the lust of the flesh, and in the pride of living, the pride of life.

And John tells us later that that's all that's in the world. Satan, you remember, first of all inserted a doubt as to the word of God, as God said. And then he followed that with a denial, ye shall not surely die.

And then he followed that with a declaration, that if they did partake of the tree, they would be as God, as big as God, for the word rendered God in Genesis 3 is the same word in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. It is God in plural, not in dual, singular or dual, as the Hebrew language has three numbers, but in the plural God. And so sin was brought into the human race, inoculated into our veins, and is the cause of the unhappiness of the world.

Now this is the great day of science. Now people are prepared almost to fall down and worship at the feet of science, which has given us so much. But science doesn't make homes happy.

Science doesn't lower the divorce rate. So science doesn't lower the crime wave. Science doesn't lessen the unhappiness and unrest and rebellion of our colleges and universities.

Science can make us more comfortable sitting on foam rubber cushions in our home, but makes us uncomfortable by what we see on the television, in the unrest and crime and weapons and germ warfare and everything that man is piling up against the day of total universal confrontation. Now according to this psalm, therefore, God is more interested in healing broken hearts in that little spot called the earth, and in binding up wounds than he is in creating stars. That's what I want you to get hold of today.

They say that our earth is represented by any grain of sand that we might pick up on a seashore as we walk along. That one tiny grain of sand is represented by our earth in the expanse of the universe. And you say you mean to tell me that God is more interested in that grain of sand and what lives on that grain of sand than all the rest? Yes, yes.

I heard a story one time about a German astronomer whose observations told him that on a certain night something would be seen in the heavens that would not be seen again for 200 years. And he resolved that he would be on the job early, and he was hoping for a clear night when he might see the position, the juxtaposition, the relation of two heavenly bodies. So he was early on the job, so early that he paused for a moment to speak to the old caretaker who sat at his table reading.

And the great man said, well John, I see you're reading. It's a lovely night for what I'm about to say. What are you reading? Well, he said, I'm reading the Bible, sir.

He says, the Bible, eh? He said, yes. He says, you know, there's a statement in there that I, as an astronomer, can't receive. It is what's after? It says that God so loved the world, and that he gave not just a thought to it, but a son to it, that he gave his only begotten son.

My, he said, I find that hard to believe. And away he went upstairs. But presently the old man heard a commotion.

He heard a sound of hurrying feet. He heard the man coming down the stairs and bursting into his room. And he said, hurry up man, help me.

I was adjusting a screw in my telescope. I had the window open, I was adjusting the lens, and the screw came right out in my fingers. It fell on the ledge, and it has fallen outside on the cobblestones.

Help me find it, for if I don't, I won't save the sight that I've set my heart to save, and to tell the world about tomorrow. Help me. So the two men rushed out, and they began to search.

And the minutes were passing, and after a while the great astronomer was down on his hands and knees, searching among the rough stones and the dirt for that little tiny adjusting screw. But he found it, and he was in time to rush up the stairs, insert it in the lens, adjust the lens, and see that great sight. So he came down greatly pleased, and John was still reading.

Well he said, John, I saw it. It was a marvelous sight. I'll tell the world about it tomorrow.

And John said, well sir, if you'll excuse me, I'm very much surprised at you. He says, why? He says, you the great German astronomer, down on your hands and knees, searching for a tiny screw not worth a penny. I could buy one tomorrow for a penny.

And you were on your hands and knees, your smooth hands, on the rough stones, searching for a thing not worth a penny. And the great man said, but don't you see? I needed that screw. It was part of my scheme.

It was part of my machine. I had to have to see that sight. John says, I understand.

And he says, God so loved the world, that little tiny insignificance, that for his plans and for his scheme, he sent his son into the world. And his son came into this world, I was going to say, on his hands and knees amongst the filth of human depravity, to find people for the great plan and scheme of God. Let it be so.

Now, God is tremendously interested in the drama portrayed on the stage, because after that drama has revealed the entrance of sin, with all that sin has brought, the scene shifts, and there's another man comes on the stage. And what a man! He's called the second man. He's called the last Adam.

And on that stage, God portrays something that creation could never show. He portrayed his love for dying, lost humanity. Humanity that suffers in wounds received by sin.

Humanity that has broken hearts because of the ravages of that which sin has produced. Crime, murder, wars, pride, ambition, divorce, broken homes, disease, pain, and death. And God wants to bind up wounds and heal broken hearts.

And more than that, God is more interested in giving people a life that is unseen and spiritual, and that must be received by faith, than he is even in healing the diseases of humanity. And we have that portrayed, don't we? When those four men brought their fellow to the Lord, when he was in the house, and when the crowd filled the house to the very door, and the men saw that they were not going to be able to get their friend in who was ill and helpless on their couch. Each one had carried a corner to the door, and when they saw they couldn't get in, they went up on the roof and uncovered the tiles, and let the man down in front of Jesus.

They had to make room for him then, otherwise they'd have to hold him on their heads. So they all squeezed back, and the man got down in front of Christ, and you can see the eager faces of the four men on the top of the ceiling. And as they look down, you see their faces change, and a look of keen disappointment coming into their faces.

For Jesus, instead of saying, arise up and walk, what do you think he said? He said, son thy sins be forgiven. Can you see the disappointment? We didn't bring him for that. We weren't really interested in spiritual things.

We were interested in physical things. We thought he would make him well again, and now he says, thy sins be forgiven. But look around and you'll see other kinds of faces standing around Jesus.

They're not disappointed faces, they are scowling faces, and they're saying, how can this man forgive sins? And Jesus, our Lord, says, but that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power enough to forgive sins. He said to the sick of the body, rise up and walk. And the man rose and went away, not simply with healing of the body, but healing of the soul with his sins forgiven.

And it was our Lord's way of telling us, to lose your wealth is much, to lose your health is more, but to lose your soul is such a loss that no man can restore. And the Lord is anxious to heal the inward diseases of the soul than he is to heal the physical diseases of the body. That must come first.

And yet, after that, now we're in the family of God. We have to learn, and we do learn, and we're rejoiced in it, and we join this psalm and hallelujah for this. But after meeting our deep spiritual need, God is tremendously interested in meeting our physical need day by day.

And God is interested in the smallest detail of your living and my living. I want you to know that. So let me give you some illustrations of it.

We'll begin with bigger things and go down to smaller things. There was a man in Los Angeles years ago had a vision. He had a vision before the Lord of building a Bible school.

He said, Lord, I'd like to, I'd like to see a Bible school started in Los Angeles. And he began to pray that God would make it possible. He began to make known to just a few friends his vision, and they joined him in prayer that God in his greatness would enable them to build a Bible school.

And one day, a man came into his office, a man whom he had never seen before. And the man says, I hear you're interested in a Bible school. He says, yes, that's our prayer.

He says, well, there's something to start it off. And he threw a check on the table, and he walked out, and a man lifted up the check, and it was a check for two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, quarter of a million, thrown on his desk by God who was interested in building Bible schools. There was another woman in California who had the vision.

She says, you know, Lord, what I'd like to do, I'd like to build ten little cottages for returning missionaries, where they could come and stay for a week, or a month, or more, and just rest. Lord, that's my vision. It'll take fifty thousand dollars.

And she says, Lord, I haven't got fifty thousand, but I do have a lot, and you're welcome to the lot. It's not worth fifty thousand dollars. That's worth a few thousand, but you can have it, Lord, you can have it.

And she prayed and prayed. A man came to see her one day. He said, you own that lot, such and such? She said, yes, I do.

He said, would you lease it to us? We're drilling for oil. We'd like to drill for oil on your lot, and we'll pay you so much a barrel. She said, good enough.

And she signed the lease, and they drilled for oil, and it proved to be a gutter, one of those things that comes in fast, and continues fast, and stops suddenly. Hers was a gutter. And she began to get checks, and checks, and checks in the mail, until she had fifty thousand dollars in the bank, and it stopped.

My, she said, I wish I had asked for a hundred thousand. I could just as soon have gone. See, God was interested, friends, in that woman's vision.

And the resources of the Almighty are infinite. Oh, you see, that's an awful big thing. Well, I heard a Methodist minister tell this story about his sister.

I heard this story in Virginia, Minnesota. Perhaps Elwood and Ellen heard this man talk to her Valentine for many hours. It wasn't something he had read in a paper, it was concerning his sister.

In southern Minnesota, she was going to have a dinner party one winter evening. She had made up her mind to have twelve guests. And she made up her mind that to serve twelve guests, one of the best things would be baked ham.

So she ordered ham, and she got it baking that afternoon. And then it began to snow. And it snowed, and snowed, and snowed.

And she said to herself, only half of my guests will turn up. And she was right. And as she was clearing away after supper, she said to herself, what will I do with all this ham? Oh, she says, I know.

I'll take some to Mrs. Stone, so she lives alone up the street. I'll take it to her tomorrow. And the Lord seemed to say, no, take it tonight.

But she said, I can't take it tonight. I've got guests in my house. I will take it tomorrow.

The Lord said, no, take it tonight. But she said, I can't take it tonight. And there's no use of asking my husband.

He wouldn't be of sympathy with that kind of talk. But Lord, I will take it tomorrow. He says, no, take it tonight.

Did you ever try to expostulate with God? She did. And she had no peace until she got some of the baked ham and wrapped it in paper and ran. And ran all the way to the neighbor's house and put it down beside the door and banged on the door and ran back to her guests.

And the next day or the day after, when she could negotiate through the snow, she came to the neighbor and said, how did you like that ham? She said, did you, did you bring that ham? She said, yes. Oh, she said, let me tell you about that. She said, you know, I was sick in bed.

I was sick for several days. I couldn't eat a thing. But I began to feel better.

I began to get hungry. And I began to think of the few things I had in the house to eat. And my stomach revolted against every one of them.

But I just lifted, I just lifted my heart to my heavenly father. And I said, father, you know what? I could eat baked ham. She said, I could really eat baked ham.

She says, make it baked ham. I just laid back and make it baked ham. Make it baked ham.

And there was a knock at the door. I thought, well, who's that? And I came to the door and there was nobody there, but there was a package, and it was baked ham. And I told you on Saturday night about my toothpaste and shaving cream, and how God has provided it.

Oh, friends, I want you to know that God is more interested in yours, just yours. However trivial, because he isn't greatly interested in stars, but he is greatly interested in his saints. And when you read the rest of the psalm, which I hope you will, you'll find that God feeds restless beasts, and God feeds ravenous ravens.

And ravens were unclean to a Jew. And yet it says that God feeds ravens, even as he fed Elijah with ravens, even as he fed the awful Paul and Malta with Gentile ravens. God does that sometimes.

And it's all given to show us, dear friends, that nature is only made to subserve the need of man. We have a great God. Amen? And we have a great Savior.

Blessed be the Savior. Amen. Let's sing number eight, please, together.

Let's sing it, number eight. Shall we stand while we sing, and the remaining standing, please, while they're closing prayer. And I'll ask my brother, Mr. Willie, please, to close in prayer.

Verse number eight, and shall we just sing for our time has gone, verses one and two and five. Standing, please, to sing. Let's bring it as it goes, shall we? We praise Thy name, we thank Thee for Thy interest in us, and we applaud Thy interest in us.

And these wondrous words from Thy Word might give us a greater interest in Thee and in Thy faith. Dress us, O Lord, as we separate now, and may we carry Thee safely with us in our hearts. And lift this crown over, and O God, teach us more of the wondrousness in the name of the Lord Jesus.

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