

Genesis 1:14-19     *THE FOURTH DAY*

*14 Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;*

*15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so.*

*16 Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.*

*17 God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth,*

*18 and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.*

This is the history of the fourth day's work, the creating of the sun, moon, and stars, which are here accounted for, not as they are in themselves and in their own nature, but as they are in relation to this earth, to which they serve as lights and signs and seasons and days and years.

1. Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven. God had said, Let there be light (v. 3), and there was light; but this was without distinction or definition, the light is now divided into categories. The light being formed into several luminaries, rendered both more glorious and more serviceable. God is light, so he is the Father and former of lights. Those lights were to be in the firmament of heaven, that vast expanse which encloses the earth, and is seen by all of creation. God is seen by all of creation. (Luke 8:16), A stately golden candlestick the firmament of heaven is, from which these candles give light to all that are in the house. (Daniel 12:3)
2. The use they were intended to be of to this earth.
  - (1.) They must be for the distinction of times, of day and night, summer and winter, which are interchanged by the motion of the sun, whose rising makes day, his setting night, his approach towards our tropic summer, his recess to the other winter: and thus, under the sun, there is a season to every purpose, Ecclesiastes 3:1.
  - (2.) They must be for the direction of actions.

They are for signs of the change of weather Matthew 16:1-4

Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

(3.) They do also give light upon the earth,  
that we may walk (John 11:9), and work (John 9:4), according as the duty of every day requires.  
The lights of heaven do not shine for themselves, they shine for us, for our pleasure and advantage.  
The lights of heaven are made to serve us, and they do it faithfully, and shine in their season, without fail:  
We are set as lights in this world to serve God, our light does not shine before God but before men

3. The lights of heaven are the sun, moon, and stars; and all these are the work of God's hands.

(1.) The sun is the greatest light of all, more than a million times greater than the earth, and the most glorious and useful of all the lamps of heaven, a noble instance of the Creator's wisdom, power, and goodness, and an invaluable blessing to the creatures of this lower world. Let us learn from Psalms 19:1-6 how to give unto God the glory due unto his name, as the Maker of the sun.

(2.) The moon is a less light, and it is here noted one of the greater lights, even though it is inferior to many of the stars, yet, by virtue of its position, as ruler of the night, and in respect of its usefulness to the earth, it is more excellent than they.

(3.) He made the stars also, which are here spoken of as they appear to the natural eye, without distinguishing between the planets and the fixed stars, or accounting for their number, nature, place, magnitude, motions, or influences; for the scriptures were written, not to gratify our curiosity and make us astronomers, but to lead us to God, and make us saints.

Psalms 136:9 The moon and stars to rule by night, For His mercy endures forever.

The best and most honourable way of ruling is by giving light and doing good: those command respect, and so shine as lights.