And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: (Genesis 1:14)

There was a time when the stars in the sky were much more important to us than they are today. We still rely on objects in the sky for signs, seasons, days and years, but they tend to be artificial objects – satellites that have been launched to help with issues such as global positioning and weather monitoring.

In times past, stars would have been used to help people find their way. Most people know that there is a star called Polaris which is pretty much above the Earth's North Pole, but few know how to find it. When you have found it, then you know which direction is North. Not only that, but if you measure the angle of Polaris above the horizon, then you know what line of latitude you are on. And if you watch the stars appear to move around Polaris during the night, then you will get an idea of what the time is.

Where the Earth is in its orbit around the Sun changes what stars can be seen in the sky at different times. That is why, wherever we are in the world, we often speak of Summer and Winter constellations. So the stars also tell us what season of the year we are in and, indeed, when the year is about to begin again.

All this information is still available to us, and it is worth learning at least a bit of it because the heavens declare the glory of God.


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