

Psalms 147:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.

Analysis

He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. The Hebrew moneh mispar (מִנְהָ מִסְפָּר) literally means "counting the number"—God knows the precise count of stars, which ancient observers recognized as innumerable (Genesis 15:5). Modern astronomy confirms billions of stars in our galaxy alone, with trillions in the observable universe. Yet the Creator not only numbers them but "**calleth them all by their names**" (lechulam shemot yiqra, לְכָלָם שְׁמוֹת יִקְרָא).

In Hebrew thought, naming signifies authority, intimate knowledge, and personal relationship. God named the stars just as He named the first man (adam) and woman (chavah). This cosmic census demonstrates infinite knowledge and meticulous care. Isaiah 40:26 echoes this theme: "He bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might." The God who numbers and names celestial bodies without confusion certainly knows and names each of His covenant people (Isaiah 43:1; John 10:3).

The theological movement is breathtaking: the same God who orchestrates cosmic vastness stoops to gather scattered outcasts (v. 2). His transcendence doesn't negate His immanence. The Creator of galaxies knows your name and numbers even the hairs on your head (Luke 12:7).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern peoples observed stars with sophisticated astronomical knowledge, tracking constellations, planets, and seasonal movements. However, they often deified celestial bodies, worshiping them as gods (a practice Israel was forbidden to follow, Deuteronomy 4:19). Against this backdrop, the psalmist declares that Yahweh is not merely another star-god among many, but the sovereign Creator who made, numbered, and named all stars. They are His creation, not His peers.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does contemplating God's intimate knowledge of countless stars affect your confidence that He knows your circumstances?
2. What does it mean practically that God 'calls you by name' with the same personal attention He gives to naming stars?
3. How should the vastness of God's cosmic sovereignty shape your worship and trust during personal crises?

Interlinear Text

וְיִתְלֹא:	שָׁם וְתִ	לְכֹל מֵ	לִפְנֵיכֶם יְמִ	מִסְפָּר	מִזְהָב הַ	He telleth	the number	of the stars	H3605	them all by their names	he calleth
H4487	H4557	H3556								H8034	H7121

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 40:26 (Parallel theme): Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.

Psalms 148:3 (Parallel theme): Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

Psalms 8:3 (Parallel theme): When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

Genesis 15:5 (Parallel theme): And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

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