

What Do We Do With Pluto?

This past week the news has informed us that a group of astute scientists have determined that the icy mass formerly known as Pluto, our ninth planet, is a planet no more. It is now called the prototype of a new category of Transneptunian objects, so while it is a dwarf planet it is also the prototype. It sounds fancy, but it can hardly compensate the loss or, worse yet, the fact that Pluto never really was a planet! "Pluto didn't cease to exist," one scientist said. "It didn't lose or gain any atoms. Its physical characteristics haven't changed a bit because of this. It already was perceived to be a member of a larger group of objects." Okay, this really brings significance to Pluto; at best one scientist, Murphy, said it has membership in a large group of objects. Let me see if I understand this correctly, it is something...it is an object among other objects in our universe.

So, what do we do with Pluto? The Bible says, *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). Notice in the second verse of the Bible it says, *"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep..."* (Genesis 1:2). God took Earth without form and void and gave us what we have today (with the after effects of the flood included). As we look at Pluto, it doesn't look like God gave it the detail with which He honored Earth or even Mars, Venus, and Saturn. But it doesn't mean in the plan of God that Pluto (whatever it is) is without significance.

One of my favorite verses in Genesis reads: *"And 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"* (Genesis 1:16). Now, the amazing point of this statement is that some of the stars, which are actually suns, would make our sun look like a "dwarf sun." Yet the Bible states with an almost casualness, *"...He made the stars also."* God seemed to downplay the more massive bodies, yet places His affection of this little planet called Earth! Further in this vein of thought Christ said, *"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these"* (Matthew 6:28, 29). Later Jesus said, *"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows"* (Matthew 10:29-31). Solomon said, *"Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise"* (Proverbs 6:6). Not only is God concerned with this small object in the universe called Earth, but He is placing value on lilies, sparrows, and ants. This is all pointing to man, on whom He places the greatest value. *"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"* (Psalm 8:4). As people of science have reclassified Pluto and we wonder what we should do with Pluto, allow me to give my suggestions:

1. Do nothing with Pluto.

It belongs to God. *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist"* (Colossians 1:16,17). God declares that all things were made *"...by Him and for Him."* No matter how distant from our sun and our personal knowledge, Pluto was made by God and it is in existence to fulfill God's glory and purpose.

2. Give thanks because it gives God pleasure!

The Scripture says, *"O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein"* (Psalm 104:24-26). The Psalmist bursts forth into praise to God for His manifold works, creeping things beyond human capacity to number, and small and great beasts of the sea, many of whom

we know little or nothing. As God in His love and wisdom beholds the earth He sees man navigating through the oceans and seas, which should remind us in these days of dangers in travel, God sees us and watches over us. But then we see in this passage of Scripture that God watches the leviathan, this ancient sea creature and He says in essence that He has made it to play before Him. If the sea creature in the furthest, most remote places of the sea brings God pleasure as he swims through the sea or ascends into the air splashing back into the waters, be encouraged that as you obey God and do His will, you also bring God pleasure. *"For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation"* (Psalm 149:4). Therefore, as we consider God's handiwork giving God pleasure, we must say, in some wonderful way, Pluto gives God pleasure no matter how we classify it.

3. We shall remember with fondness seventy-six years as a planet!

It was discovered February 18, 1930 by Clyde W. Tombaugh in Arizona and received its name came from the suggestion of a young English girl in Oxford, England on May 1, 1930. As long as I have been alive, Pluto has been a planet. The only surviving Pluto I have now in my frame of reference is my old friend, Mickey Mouse's dog, Pluto! And he only lives through cellulose, ink, computer imaging, stuffed animals, and my memory.

Now, after seventy-six years Pluto shall not be considered a planet. Is there something to be said for God receiving glory from a temporary lifespan? In taking a second look at the Psalm 104, it says, *"...there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein"* (Psalm 104:26). There is that Leviathan. What is the Leviathan? Is it a whale or some other great fish of the sea? For further help in knowing what this mighty creature was, we look to another reference: *"In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea"* (Isaiah 27:1). God called the Leviathan, "the dragon that is in the sea." In Job 41:19 and 20, God says of the Leviathan, *"Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron."* One scholar commenting about this verse wrote, "Just as the bombardier beetle has an explosion producing mechanism, so the great sea dragon may have an explosive producing mechanism to enable it to be a real fire breathing dragon." It is also speculated that this mighty creature is perhaps the extinct dinosaur, plesiosaurus. Suffice it to say, some believe in certain remote areas of the world Leviathan is still with us. So, not trying to discuss the Loch Ness Monster or the strange huge dragon-like creature pulled up a few years ago off the waters of Japan, let's say the Leviathan (as the Bible speaks of) lived thousands of years ago and is no more. It should be understood that God put things on the earth with a time line when He created it and then it ceases to be. Although Pluto is still with us, some stars and planetoids have been with us, but are no more.

I shall celebrate Pluto! It was good, now it is gone (as a planet). We know great people of the earth who were godly, upright and influenced us to be closer to God. Here's the wonderful thing about people who know Christ. They are here for fifty, sixty, seventy, eighty, or ninety years, but when they are declared dead, it's not over. We shall see them again. So when we celebrate the life and decease of a Christian, it is "See you later," not really good-bye! *"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him"* (I Thessalonians 4:13, 14). I like what one scientist recently said, "Good-bye, Pluto; we thought the world of you!" We may say as one Christian to another, "So long, Brother; see you in the next world!"

- Pastor Pope -

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