

HOW MANY STARS ARE THERE?

John A. Gibson

One of the most enjoyable things to do in the summertime is to go outside at night and observe the starry sky. I'm not incredibly good picking out the constellations but I enjoy looking. I often stand amazed at what God has created.

On a clear, moonless night one can see about 3,000 stars with the unaided eye. If you have a small telescope you may be able to see as many as 100,000. If you are able to do that you are still only viewing stars in our corner of the Milky Way. And you see, that is just the beginning! The experts tell us that there are 100 billion stars in our Milky Way galaxy.

Yet beyond this, there are 100 billion galaxies that are known to exist. How many stars would be in all of these galaxies? Be ready to stretch your mind. Donald B. DeYoung in his book, *Astronomy and the Bible*, put it this way, "Taking the Milky Way as an average galaxy, the number of the stars is thus (100 billion) $2 = (10^{11})^2 = 10^{22}$. The estimated stars number 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000, when we write this number out."

I have a hard time with big numbers like that. DeYoung helps me a little by saying, "Suppose these stars were divided up among the world's total population of five billion people. Then each person would receive two trillion stars!"

Again, that's still hard for me to wrap my mind around, but this I do know. God is great and powerful. All these stars may just be one page in God's great book of the heavens. It may be that there are an infinite number of stars in God's heavens.

What an excellent way for God to show His glory! Whatever the number of stars may be, even if they could be numbered by man, God calls them all by name and keeps count of them. "He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them" (Psalm 147:4). "Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power Not one of them is missing" (Isaiah 40:26).
