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THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

DONALD B. DEYOUNG AND JOHN C. WHITCOMB

The currently popular theory of the origin of the universe held by the vast majority of astronomers involves a gigantic explosion of matter and energy about twenty billion years ago (the "big bang" theory) with subsequent cosmic expansion and evolution. The authors examine this cosmogony from both scientific (empirical) and biblical (exegetical) perspectives and conclude that it does not fit the facts of general and special revelation.

* * *

THE dominant theme in astronomy today is that the universe was spontaneously born out of chaos. This "big bang" interpretation assumes that an immense explosion of mass-energy took place about fifteen billion years ago. Ever since, we are told, fragments of matter and even space itself have been expanding outward like a fireworks display. Stars and galaxies, planets and people are said to have gradually formed from these fragments in a purely mechanistic fashion.

However, in spite of the current popularity of this theory, the dramatic beginning of the universe which the "big bang" assumes has proven to be an embarrassment to many cosmologists. Where did the initial mass-energy come from? What caused it to become unstable and begin to expand? Natural science simply does not have answers to these fundamental questions. Some scientists have desperately tried to avoid the entire question of ultimate origins by appealing to oscillating or steady state models of the universe which have neither a beginning nor an end. However, neither of these perpetual motion models is conformable to the presently known laws of physics. Others have tried to read the first verses of Genesis directly into the big bang theory. For example, the American astronomer Robert Jastrow feels that God somehow orchestrated the explosion as the Divine method of creation. This is an unsatisfactory compromise, as admitted by Jastrow in the beginning of his book, *God and the Astronomers*:

It should be understood from the start that I am an agnostic in religious matters.¹

Harvard astronomer Steven Weinberg, one of the leading proponents of the big bang, echoes this same frustration:

Can we really be sure of the standard [big bang] model? Will new discoveries overthrow it and replace the present standard model with some other cosmogony, or even revive the steady-state model? Perhaps. I cannot deny a feeling of unreality in writing about the first three minutes [of the universe] as if we really know what we are talking about.²

The more the universe seems comprehensible (via the big bang) the more it also seems pointless.³

The big bang theory continues to lead many others to this same despairing view of the origin and purpose of the universe.

From a biblical standpoint, such frustration is perfectly understandable, and for two prominent reasons. First, the concept of a living, personal, all-knowing, all-powerful and transcendent God is almost totally absent from the thinking of modern cosmologists. Faith in such a God has been replaced by faith in chance through time. All that is really left, however, according to the title of one of Isaac Asimov's latest books, is "A Choice of Catastrophes."⁴

Secondly, even the knowledge that a personal God rules the universe does not necessarily remove all human fear. Though he possessed a profound knowledge of God, David, overwhelmed by the magnitude and silence of the universe around him, could ask, "What is man that Thou dost take thought of him?" (Ps 8:5-8).⁵ Thus, a confidence that God truly exists must be coupled with a deep confidence that he has revealed his clear plan and purpose for men in the words of holy Scripture. "We have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place" (2 Pet 1:19).

EVIDENCE FOR THE BIG BANG

Two discoveries have helped promote the big bang theory in recent years. The *first* is a measured redshift in the light radiated from

¹R. Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975) 11.

²S. Weinberg, *The First Three Minutes* (New York: Basic Books, 1977) 9.

³*Ibid.*, 154.

⁴I. Asimov, *A Choice of Catastrophes: The Disasters That Threaten Our World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979).

⁵All Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation.

distant stars. This property of starlight is similar to the lowering in pitch of a departing train whistle, also known as the Doppler Effect. Light waves from most stars are found to be stretched out and therefore reddened as if the stars were moving away from the earth at various rates of speed. According to a basic assumption called the cosmological principle, the stars would show an identical expansion from any vantage point in the universe. Thus the light wave shift is taken as direct evidence of a big bang explosion in the remote past.

However, there are a variety of other recognized explanations for the stellar redshift which do not require any explosion or expansion of the universe. For example, light waves can also be reddened by gravity, the attractive force between all matter in the universe. This gravitational effect on light, first predicted by Einstein in 1912, can be demonstrated in laboratory experiments with Mössbauer Spectroscopy.⁶ Interestingly, if the earth happened to be positioned at the precise geometric center of the entire physical universe, the surrounding symmetric sphere of stars and galaxies would exactly produce the redshift that we observe today.⁷ This alternative is *not* a revival of historic geocentrism, since the earth in such a position could still rotate upon its axis and revolve around the sun. Although not essential to a biblical view of creation, this possibility of a special location of planet earth is intriguing in view of the special emphasis given to the earth throughout the Scripture.

The *second* discovery supporting a big bang is the presence of weak microwave radiation throughout space. It was first detected by A. Penzias and R. Wilson of Bell Laboratories, who subsequently received the Nobel Physics Prize in 1978 for their work.⁸ This background radiation is found to have a characteristic temperature just three degrees above absolute zero. It is interpreted as a "last fading ember" from the great explosion itself, and was actually predicted by the big bang theorist George Gamow three decades ago. As with the redshift, however, there are a variety of other possible sources for these detected microwaves. They may be radiated from distant regions of the universe, perhaps from certain varieties of stars. The physical universe is permeated with a complex variety of waves and particles, including cosmic rays, whose origin and purpose we simply don't know at this time. To claim that the microwave background is fossil radiation from a big bang explosion is a biased interpretation based on an unwarranted extrapolation into the past. In

⁶R. Pound and G. A. Rebka, Jr., "Gravitational Red-Shift in Nuclear Resonance," *Physical Review Letters* (1959) 439.

⁷P. C. W. Davies, "Cosmic Heresy," *Nature* 273 (June 1, 1978) 336.

⁸R. W. Wilson, "The Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation," *Science* 205: 4409 (August 31, 1979) 866-74.

conclusion, the two major evidences for the big bang, redshift of starlight and background radiation, are by no means conclusive.

MISSING LINKS

Although the big bang theory is recognized today by the majority of scientists as the final and correct view of cosmic origins, it actually is faced with a number of difficult and fundamental problems. There are several "missing links" in the theory.

Consider first the concept of *missing mass*. If an expanding universe were to consist of sufficient material and unlimited time, gravity would eventually stop the outward motion and pull everything back together again into a cataclysmic fireball. This might even lead to a rebounding universe with endless expansions and contractions. As mentioned earlier, many scientists find this oscillating universe idea attractive since it postpones the embarrassment of explaining an ultimate origin and a final destiny for the universe.

However, recent data reveals that there is simply not enough material in space to draw the universe back upon itself. The mass density of the universe is too small by a factor of one hundred.⁹ Desperate attempts to locate this "missing mass" in the form of neutrinos or black holes remain speculative. The universe is found to be "open" and *not* in an eternal state of alternating expansion and collapse. This conclusion is in agreement with a *one-time* creation origin, even though it is the authors' position that no random big bang explosion ever occurred.

Time is another missing link in the big bang theory. Many observations indicate a recent creation of the universe, only thousands of years ago instead of the assumed billions of years of history. These observations include studies of comets, galaxy shapes, and individual stars.¹⁰ A complex theoretical cycle of evolution has been established for the stars. They are assumed to form initially within vast clouds of gas and dust by gravitational contraction. Then they mature slowly through stages called protostars, main sequence stars, red giants, and finally white dwarf stars. A billion-year time scale is assumed for these changes as the stars power themselves by nuclear fusion. Our own sun is thought to have five billion more years of steady light as a main sequence star before it swells into its red giant phase and extinguishes life on earth. Even so, the sun has a very short life compared to the time span of the big bang. It is called a second or third generation star, not having formed until long after the initial explosion.

⁹N. A. Pananides and T. Arny, *Introductory Astronomy* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979) 321.

¹⁰H. S. Slusher, *Age of the Cosmos* (San Diego: Institute for Creation Research, 1980).

Historical records of the star Sirius B, however, tell a different story. This binary star of Sirius A has visibly and unexplainably changed from a red giant star to a white dwarf within only a thousand-year period.¹¹ The star is evidently decaying on a time scale which is much shorter than current theory indicates. This finding is appropriately called a "Sirius problem"! The giant star Betelgeuse, among others, has also shown color changes during recorded history.¹² Such findings challenge the vast time scales assumed for the life cycle of stars, a time scale required by a big bang.

Even our own star, the sun, has recently raised serious questions about the assumptions of time and stellar energy. It has been taught for a half-century that the sun heats itself by way of nuclear fusion, converting hydrogen into helium. Such a reaction should also produce an intense flood of sub-atomic particles called neutrinos. Current experiments are underway to detect these solar neutrinos and verify the theoretical nuclear reactions. After ten years of careful searching, the result is that the particles cannot be found.¹³

Could it be that the sun is producing energy by some other mechanism than by nuclear fusion? The next most likely source of solar energy would be a gravitational contraction of the sun, first proposed by Helmholtz a century ago. Since this type of mechanism cannot possibly exist on a billion-year time scale, it has been totally rejected by modern astronomy.¹⁴ However, the problem of *missing neutrinos* may well be a testimony to a recent creation of the sun. Solar physicist John Eddy concludes:

I suspect that the sun is 4.5 billion years old. However, given some new and unexpected results to the contrary, and some time for frantic recalculation and theoretical readjustment, I suspect that we could live with Bishop Ussher's value for the age of the Earth and Sun. I don't think we have much in the way of observational evidence in astronomy to conflict with that.¹⁵

¹¹R. G. Kazmann, "It's About Time: 4.5 Billion Years," *Geotimes* 11 (September, 1978) 18.

¹²D. E. Thomsen, "Color Changes on a Scale of Centuries," *Science* 117:4 (January 26, 1980) 56. Cf. "A Very Rapidly Evolving Star," *Sky and Telescope* 596 (June, 1980) 462.

¹³B. G. Levi, "Solar-Neutrino Hunters Still Seek Explanation," *Physics Today* 31:12 (December, 1978) 19-20.

¹⁴Panides and Arny, *Introductory Astronomy*, 255.

¹⁵Kazmann, "It's About Time: 4.5 Billion Years," 18. James Ussher (1581-1656), a brilliant Irish archbishop, concluded, on the basis of his analysis of biblical genealogies, that the world was created in 4004 B.C. For evidence that these genealogies may point to a somewhat earlier date for creation (perhaps 8,000-10,000 B.C.), see J. C. Whitcomb and H. M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961) 474-89.

There is also a *missing explanation* for the initial formation of stars. Calculations originally done a century ago by the creationist scientist, James Clerk Maxwell, show that a gas cloud in space will simply not collapse by itself into a star.¹⁶ Instead, gas dissipates outward due to thermal pressure in accordance with the second law of thermodynamics, the universal tendency toward disorder. This is exactly what is observed for gaseous nebulae in space—they are spreading out rather than contracting.

To circumvent this natural formation problem, it is proposed that gases may be squeezed together by nearby exploding stars called supernovas.¹⁷ This interesting explanation says that stars form from stars! But if the universe began with a big bang explosion, how could the first stars possibly originate? Furthermore, supernovas are a rare phenomenon, unable to produce the vast number of stars visible. The last supernova observed in our galaxy was recorded by Kepler in 1604. This fundamental star origin problem extends even to the makeup of our own bodies. Big bang calculations show that only the simple elements hydrogen and helium could possibly form in space following such an explosion, and even then, only after 700,000 years!¹⁸ All the varieties of atoms other than hydrogen and helium can naturally form only within the cores of mature stars, assuming nuclear fusion is occurring. Thus, if a big bang cannot produce stars to begin with, it also cannot produce the atoms of which we ourselves are made up!

Biblical chronology fixes the creation of stars after the creation of the planet earth and before the creation of the human race, within a 24-hour period. Some have objected that Gen 1:16 does not state that the stars were “created” (ברא), but merely that they were “made” (עשה). But this does not produce a significant distinction of meaning in the context of Genesis 1. The two terms are used interchangeably in creation contexts elsewhere. For example, marine creatures were “created” (ברא) on the fifth day, but land animals were “made” (עשה) on the sixth day. Obviously, no distinction is intended.¹⁹

Biblical revelation points clearly to a *completed creation*, with no new materials or basic kinds of things being added from time to time.

¹⁶G. Mulfinger, “Critique of Stellar Evolution,” *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 7:1 (June, 1970) 7-24.

¹⁷W. Herbst and G. E. Assousa, “Supernovas and Star Formation,” *Scientific American* 241:2 (August, 1979) 138-45.

¹⁸H. L. Shipman, *Black Holes, Quasars, and the Universe* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1976) 232.

¹⁹Compare also Gen 1:26 with 1:27, Gen 2:4a with 2:4b, Gen 1:1 with Exod 20:11, and Gen 1:16 with Ps 148:3-5 and Isa 40:26 (where we learn that stars were “created”—ברא). For a more detailed analysis of this question, see J. C. Whitcomb and D. B.

"Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made" (Gen 2:1-3; cf. Exod 20:8-11; 31:17). The author of Hebrews presupposes a literal interpretation of Gen 2:1-3 when he builds his argument for the necessity of entering into God's completed work of salvation (Heb 4:4, 10).²⁰

So far from evolving into higher and higher levels of cosmic complexity, the stars we observe appear to be slowly *dying out* one by one. As they exhaust their nuclear fuel, some stars contract into burned out cinders. Ones with a mass greater than 1.4 times that of the sun may die violently in infrequent supernova explosions. Still larger stars (3 or more times as heavy as the sun) may collapse without limit under the force of gravity. Calculations indicate that their size should decrease to that of the earth, then a baseball, and finally to a mere point!²¹ Thus, some stars *may* eventually collapse out of sight and into the speculative realm of *black holes* in space. Any object trespassing within the gravity grasp of such a black hole would be permanently captured. Do black holes really exist? Evidence remains uncertain; none have been clearly detected. However, the idea is in keeping with the observed rapid unwinding and decaying of all things in the universe.

All of this is in complete harmony with the inspired statements of the psalmist written 3000 years ago: "Of old, Thou didst found the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. Even they will perish, but Thou dost endure; and all of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing, Thou wilt change them, and they will be changed" (Ps 102:25-26; quoted in Heb 1:10-12, cf. Luke 21:33). More than 200 years later, the prophet Isaiah confirmed this analysis of universal processes which we now describe in terms of the Second Law of Thermodynamics: "Lift up your eyes to the sky, then look to

DeYoung, *The Moon: Its Creation, Form and Significance* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH, 1978) 72, n. 31. For the theological significance of the creation of the sun and moon after the creation of life on the earth, see *ibid.*, 153-55. If the sun and moon were created after the earth, nothing is gained toward a harmonization of Genesis 1 with evolutionary cosmogonies by stretching the creation days to long ages. For biblical evidence for twenty-four-hour creation days, see *ibid.*, 76-83.

²⁰"The labors from which God rests are the works of creation; but he continues to be active in providence, in judgment, and in grace" (P. E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977] 161). Cf. R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of Hebrews/James* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1946) 132, 133.

²¹Panides and Arny, *Introductory Astronomy*, 266-67.

the earth beneath; for the sky will vanish like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment, and its inhabitants will die in like manner" (Isa 51:6a). Thus, the non-technical but completely accurate perspectives of Scripture combine with the detailed and prolonged empirical observations of science to contradict the evolutionary pre-suppositions of the currently popular big bang theory of the origin of the universe.

LIFE IN SPACE

An intense search is underway to find life in space. If this universe and life itself began with a spontaneous explosion, many then reason that life must also have arisen in countless other places. A typical astronomy text reads:

If any planet has surface conditions suitable or at least tolerable to any terrestrial organisms, life may be assumed to have developed there.²²

Even more dogmatic is the 1976 pronouncement of Robert K. G. Temple, author and researcher:

An attitude which asserts that man is the only intelligent life form in the universe is intolerably arrogant. Anyone holding such an opinion today is an intellectual freak.²³

Massive books have been written on the general subject of alien life in space, called exo-biology, without a shred of supporting data.²⁴ Man seems determined to prove that he is the result of blind chance rather than a special creation! For twenty years, radio telescopes have been searching deep space for intelligent signals. The results so far point to a final missing link in big bang cosmogony, namely, that of *no life in space*. Probes sent to the moon, Mars, Venus, and the moons of Jupiter have revealed hostile, sterile surfaces. Where is everybody? It is not surprising that there is a growing feeling among astronomers that man may be alone in the universe after all:

There is a deeply ingrained conviction in the great majority of mankind, to which the appeal of science fiction and fantasy bears witness, that the universe is so constituted that if an opportunity exists for life to originate, it will be actualized, and if an opportunity exists for hominids to evolve, that too will be actualized. Whatever may be the

²²V. A. Firsoff, *Mind and Galaxies* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1967) 58.

²³R. K. G. Temple as quoted by J. Oberg, "Alone Again: UFO Update," *Omni* 2:5 (Feb., 1980) 32.

²⁴C. Sagan and I. S. Shklovskii, *Intelligent Life in the Universe* (San Francisco: Holden-Day, 1966).

basis for such convictions, it clearly must be sought outside the domain of science. The most this study has been able to establish is that even the opportunity for such achievements occurs quite rarely among the vast profusion of forms in which matter is consolidated in the universe.²⁵

Could it be that life exists uniquely on the earth because God created it here and nowhere else?

Because of the obvious failure to find any evidence of intelligent physical life outside of the planet earth, a two-day symposium was held at the University of Maryland late in 1978 to explore the topic, "Implications of Our Failure to Observe Extra-Terrestrials." In an article describing this symposium, James Oberg commented that this topic "was bound to be provocative. For most of those attending, the implications were clear: since we haven't seen any trace of [extra-terrestrials], either they aren't there or there is something fundamentally wrong with our comprehension of the universe."²⁶

There are a number of biblical indications that point clearly in the direction of the absolute uniqueness of physical life on the earth. Psalm 115 focuses our attention upon the uniqueness of our God as creator and controller of the universe in total contrast to the man-made deities that characterize pagan religions. The Psalmist climaxes his message with this statement in v 16: "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord; but the earth He has given to the sons of men." A valid implication of this inspired statement is that those who truly know the Lord cannot possibly be threatened by anything that is in the universe beyond. In other words, the only "extra-terrestrial intelligence" men need to be deeply concerned about is the intelligence of God Himself, as revealed in his Word.

Isa 45:18 adds significant light to this fascinating question: "For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), 'I am the Lord, and there is none else.'" Since the Hebrew word *תִּהְיֶה*, translated here "a waste place," also appears in Gen 1:2, this statement in Isa 45:18 has frequently been used to support the so-called Gap Theory interpretation. This view maintains that God created an originally perfect earth (Gen 1:1), which later became "a waste place" because of the fall of Satan. Then, millions or billions of years later, the earth was re-created in six literal days. However, this is really not the thrust of Isaiah's statement. Isaiah is saying that God did not create the earth

²⁵W. G. Pollard, "The Prevalence of Earthlike Planets," *American Scientist* 67:7 (November-December, 1979) 653.

²⁶J. Oberg, "Alone Again: UFO Update," *Omni* 2:5 (Feb., 1980) 32.

to be a waste place, but created it to be inhabited (in contrast to all other planets). As we turn to Genesis chapter one, we discover that is the way the earth was created. It was not created to remain empty, but within six brief days to be fully inhabited.

In comparing the statement of Isa 45:18 with Gen 1:2, Edward J. Young comments:

Isaiah does not deny that the earth was once a *tohu*: his point is that the Lord did not create the earth to be a *tohu*, for an earth of *tohu* is one that cannot be inhabited, and has not fulfilled the purpose for which it was created. The purpose rather was that the earth might be inhabited.²⁷

If intelligent physical life exists only on the earth, the question must be asked, "Why do countless stars and galaxies exist throughout the universe? Many Christians have asked, "Why would God go to all the work of creating billions of galaxies and then put life on only one comparatively small planet?" In answer to this question, it must be recognized, first of all, that it required no more exertion of energy for God to create a trillion galaxies than to create one planet. "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary and to him who lacks might He increases power" (Isa 40:28-29).

God has condescended to give to men three basic reasons for his work of creating the stellar universe. "Let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for light in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth" (Gen 1:14-15). The three stated purposes for the existence of the universe, as far as man is concerned, are: (1) signs, (2) a clock-calendar system, and (3) illumination by day and by night for earth dwellers. A fourth reason is conspicuous for its absence, namely, platforms for extra-terrestrial intelligent physical beings. The sign-value of the stellar universe is clearly emphasized in Psalm 8, Ps 19:1-2 and Rom 1:18-19. God apparently considers these three basic purposes sufficient for the creation of the stellar universe, and therefore it is unnecessary to multiply reasons beyond God's statement in Scripture.

²⁷E. J. Young, *Commentary on the Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 3. 211. Some commentators have questioned the meaning of "a waste place" for *תהו* in Isa 45:18, because the following verse demands the idea of "in vain" for this term. Young pointed out, however, that "despite this slight modification of connotation, it is correct to say that as God's creation was not for the purpose of being a *tohu*, so also His revelation is not a *tohu* but fulfills its purpose. The difference in connotation is not as great as at first sight appears" (3. 212).

The most significant biblical evidence for the uniqueness of life on the earth is the incarnation and Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The second person of the triune God, through whom the entire universe was brought into existence (John 1:1-3, Col 1:16-17, Heb 1:1-2), became a permanent member of the human race by incarnation (John 1:14). The staggering implication of this fact dare not be minimized by those who profess to be Bible-believing Christians. There is not a shred of evidence in Scripture that the first coming of Christ was a comparatively insignificant event in the career of the Son of God, stopping briefly on earth, as it were, on his way to other planets and galaxies to carry on a cosmic ministry of revelation and redemption. The great Creator who became our Savior also told us to pray: "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:9-10). The earth, not some other planet, will be the location of Christ's Kingdom.

In isolation, not one of these biblical evidences is sufficient in itself to demonstrate the uniqueness of life on earth. However, in a book that professes to give to men all that is necessary for our understanding of life and the universe, it is highly significant that not one word is given that would support the concept of extra-terrestrial intelligent life. Secular scientism is haunted by the fear that we are totally alone in the universe. But this is not the biblical perspective at all. Many millions of spirit beings, called angels, are deeply involved in the affairs of men (e.g., Dan 10:20, Luke 20:36, Heb 1:14). Infinitely above all of these invisible and powerful creatures, however, is God, the creator of all things, who has revealed himself to men as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

God created men in such a way that they cannot find full and deep satisfaction apart from him. Utterly frustrated by the inequities and frustrations of this life, a psalmist by the name of Asaph entered into the sanctuary of God, and thus gained a totally new perspective on the world (Ps 73:17). He concluded with these inspired words: "With Thy counsel Thou wilt guide me, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth" (Ps 73:24-25). The ultimate tragedy of cosmic evolutionism is that it virtually ignores the very God who created us to find our fulfillment in him alone. The secular scientific establishment, with its big bang cosmogony, has deliberately rejected the Christ "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3). In all of their vaunted brilliance, men are bypassing the Son of God "in whom all the fulness of the Deity dwells in bodily form," for "in Him," the apostle Paul asserts, "you have been made

complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority" (Col 2:9-10). To the Christian, the universe is not meaningless. We are not alone.

A THEISTIC BIG BANG?

The big bang theory, aside from the multiple problems of missing links in astronomy, clearly and directly contradicts the order of creation events in Genesis 1. Thus, there is no legitimate way of harmonizing the big bang theory with a Christian theistic view. Christian theism presupposes the authority and infallibility of the Bible. An honest and consistent application of hermeneutical principles in analyzing the biblical record of ultimate origins leads one to a complete impasse in accommodating it with the most popular cosmogonical theory of our generation. Theistic evolutionists speak much of God (or "a god"); but they apparently have not heard the clear message of his Word.

In contrast to the six-day creation period of Genesis, for example, the big-bang concept does not envision even such simple elements as hydrogen and helium appearing until about 700,000 years after the explosion. Stars did not form for perhaps another billion years. How can this be reconciled with the declaration of God that the planet earth was created *before* the stars? (Cf. n. 19.)

The big bang theory postpones man's appearance until twenty billion years of apparently purposeless natural processes have run their course. But the Genesis record depicts man as the true king of the earth at the very beginning of earth history, exercising dominion over all animals, including those in the depths of the seas (Gen 1:26-28; cf. Ps 8:5-8), within a matter of hours of their creation. Even the stars of the heavens antedated man by the space of only two days (Gen 1:19, 31; cf. Exod 20:11), for they had no independent purpose of existence. They were created for the Son of God (Col 1:16) and for those who have been created and renewed in his image (1 Cor 3:21-23; Col 3:10). They did not wait billions of years to accomplish what they were created for, namely, to serve as "signs" to men of God's creative wisdom (Gen 1:14; Rom 1:20). Only by denying the clear testimony of the chronological sequences of Genesis can one speak in terms of a "theistic big bang."²⁸

²⁸N. L. Geisler is one of several evangelical theologians who accept the "theistic big bang" concept. Geisler is convinced that "the big bang theory is in amazing accord with the creation account of Gen. 1:1," and feels that it provides "overwhelming scientific evidence for creation (as recorded in Gen. 1:1)." Review of R. Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers*, in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 22 (1979) 282-84.

CONCLUSION

A specific description of origins cannot be *proved* by science, whether a random explosion or a supernatural creation. The origin of the universe is a single past event. Thus, it is not subject to the scientific method of testing and reproducing. As God asked Job long ago, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth! Tell Me, if you have understanding" (Job 38:4). Today science is depended upon for a great variety of answers, including origins. However, there is much more at stake here than the latest temporary theories of man. A deep personal faith is required, either in a random big bang or in an orderly creation by the God of the universe. But these alternative faith commitments cannot be equal options for men who bear the image of God indelibly imprinted upon their innermost being. The God of creation simply will not allow himself to be compared with any other "deity," including evolutionary time/chance: "To whom then will you liken Me that I should be his equal?" says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created the 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 . . ." (Isa 40:25-26).