
Creation Answers

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Who does this newsletter?

This newsletter is produced by Wayne Spencer of Creation Education Materials on a Quarterly basis. Its purpose is to bring creation research within the reach of Christians and provide up-to-date reliable information on creation issues. Wayne Spencer is a creation author and former teacher who has presented papers at the International Conference on Creationism and contributed to radio programs for the Institute for Creation Research.

This newsletter is meant to help people plug into creation resources and get informed about creation and evolution. It is provided free of charge on request. Using the free Adobe Acrobat Reader is the best way to view the newsletter. There are no restrictions in copying this newsletter or passing it on to others. To request to be placed on the e-mail list, send a request to Wayne at w.spencer@attbi.com.

More information on Wayne Spencer's education and publications can be found on the **creationanswers.net** web site. You'll also find many other resources. <http://creationanswers.net>

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A Personal Note from Wayne Spencer

Greetings. I hope everyone getting this newsletter is having a good summer. I am still unemployed and continue to look for work in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. I do want to thank everyone who has expressed concern and who has prayed for me. There have been some encouraging leads and one interview to date, but nothing definite yet.

The International Conference on Creationism is now rapidly approaching. This is always a significant event that I look forward to a great deal. Many of the best creation researchers present papers there and there are always important new ideas that come out of this conference. Notice the section later in this newsletter that tells more about the conference. These conferences occur about every 4 or 5 years. I will be presenting one lecture there, on Wednesday, August 6th at 10AM. This paper, called "Tidal Dissipation and the Age of Io" will be published in the bound volume of the conference proceedings. If you have never come to the meeting of the DFW Creation Study Group, you might consider coming for July. At the July meeting, I plan to do a presentation based on my Io paper at the ICC. Look on my web site for the meeting date and time.

I was invited recently to write for Creation Matters, a newsletter published by the Creation Research Society as well as for a publication called "Origins" from the Biblical Creation Society in England. Note that my e-mail address may change in coming months. If it does it will not affect my web site so go there to get the new address if you have trouble e-mailing me.

Wayne Spencer, M.S., Physics

A Biblical Approach to Astronomy, Part 2

It is important to clarify how much we can learn about astronomy from Scripture. Before there can be definitive answers to scientific questions from a young age creation viewpoint, it is important to clarify the limits of what Scripture does and does not tell us about astronomy. There are a number of issues in astronomy in which there is a need for creative original thinking from young age creationists. In the light of Romans 1:18-20, intelligent design must have relevance to astronomy. Much of astronomy tends to be based on the assumption that the Big Bang model of the universe cannot be seriously questioned. Even a number of arguments that the universe is designed by a Creator are (wrongly) based on the assumption of the Big Bang. Young-age creationists, who have a commitment to the authority of Scripture need to carefully evaluate arguments from astronomical research. It is easy to err in one of two ways in this endeavor. Either we can allow our assumptions of what the Bible teaches to lead us astray in how we understand science, or we can allow our assumptions from science to lead us astray in how we understand the Bible.

There are a number of references to the stars or astronomical phenomena in Scripture. They generally emphasize God's greatness and power. Psalm 103:11 illustrates the magnitude of God's love for us by the distances to the stars! There are occasional references to constellations, and to God "stretching out the heavens" at creation (see Isaiah 42:5, 44:24, 45:12, or Jeremiah 10:12). Isaiah 40:26 and Psalm 147:4 indicate God names all the stars (see Part 1 of this series). Jeremiah 31:35-37 essentially says that man will never be able to measure the heavens. Some of these statements raise difficult interpretational

questions about how they should be understood.

For example, Isaiah 40:26 says God "brings out the starry host one by one and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength not one of them is missing." Should this be taken to mean that stars cannot "die" as astronomers say? I would prefer to take it to mean nothing in the universe, including stars or galaxies, is outside of God's control. So, no astronomical object would cease to exist (such as a star exploding for instance) apart from God allowing it.

In Jer. 31:35-37 mentioned above, is Scripture somehow incorrect because astronomers have used various types of observational data to calculate distances to galaxies and other astronomical objects? I don't think so. Every time man learns a way to extend his reach in terms of what we can see of the universe, there is always more out there. We have no way of knowing how far the universe goes, we only know what we *have* measured. There is even debate in astronomy sometimes about whether the universe has a finite "size" at all. We know that we've detected various galaxies and other objects at great distance, but there is always more than we have measured. Many things about astronomy should remind us of our human limitations and God's infinite nature.

Our Place in the Universe

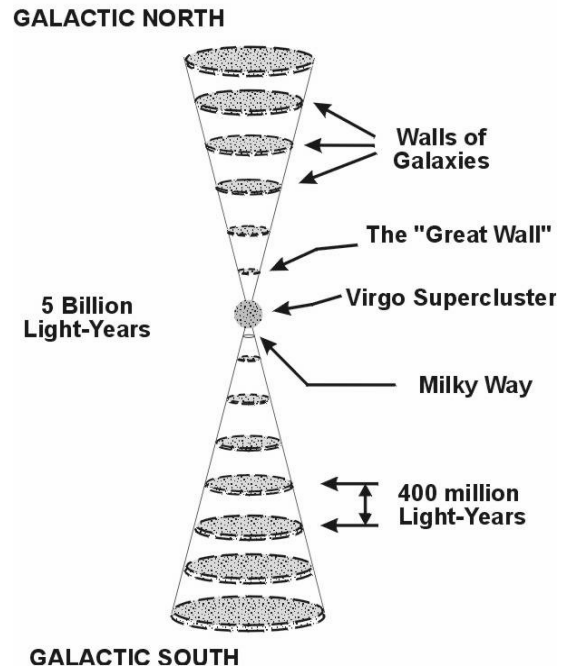
The second verse in the Bible begins by describing the unfinished condition of the Earth on the first day of the creation week. Isaiah 45:18 says about the Earth, "he did not create it to be empty but formed it to be inhabited." Earth was made special to be the home for life, especially human life. But it is not only the Earth that had to be made special in order for it to be a safe home for living things. God's intelligent had to extend from the subatomic level within every atom to the largest scales of clusters of clusters of clusters of galaxies. Without God's

intelligent design on all these levels, we would not have a stable safe existence. Earth is at the center of God's attention in Scripture. Genesis 1:16-17 include the stars in saying that astronomical objects were created "to give light on the Earth."

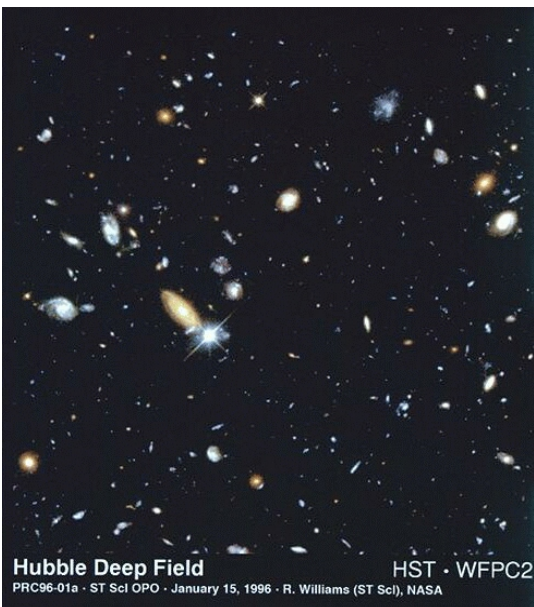
In 1984 astronomer William Tift and colleagues published some observations about the redshifts of galaxies. Redshifts occur when something, such as a galaxies' motion, decreases the frequency and color of the light given off by the galaxy (or star). These changes in the light are used to estimate the distances to galaxies and stars. Tift's observations were very controversial and took a long time for astronomers to accept. The measurements showed redshift ratios did not take on just any values but they concentrated around certain regularly spaced numbers. His results implied there were regularly spaced walls of galaxies going out to great distances. Over the years this observation has been confirmed independently by other researchers and extended out to even billions of light-years distance by the Hubble Space Telescope. In the Big Bang view of the origin of the universe, it is very awkward, perhaps impossible, to explain this. But creationist physicist Dr. D. Russell Humphreys has

published a recent paper showing that Big Bang scientists ignore or do not think of a simple explanation of the regularly spaced galaxies.

Galaxy Map



The regularly spaced galaxies shows an extremely large scale order in the universe. Such a pattern cannot be an accident. The best explanation is that galaxies were created in concentric shells that are equally spaced in all directions. Our galaxy then would have to be very near the center of the shells, otherwise the walls of galaxies would not be equally spaced. Note that this would not be the same as Geocentricity, which puts the Earth precisely at the center of the universe. Rather the Earth would orbit our Sun and our Sun would orbit the center of the Milky Way galaxy. The Milky Way galaxy would be divinely placed in or near the center of the universe. Scripture does not explicitly tell us anything about where the center of the universe is in relation to us. But, this finding certainly fits in nicely



with the Bible's emphasis on God's focus of attention being our blue planet.

This finding from astronomical science is very important. In Big Bang cosmology, where our existence is ultimately an accident resulting from natural forces, we could not have a special location in the universe. Consider the following quote of Physicist Stephen Hawking from 1973:

However we are not able to make cosmological models without some admixture of ideology. In the earliest cosmologies, man placed himself in a commanding position at the centre of the universe. Since the time of Copernicus we have been steadily demoted to a medium sized planet going round a medium sized star on the outer edge of a fairly average galaxy, which is itself simply one of a local group of galaxies. Indeed we are now so democratic that we would not claim that our position in space is specially distinguished in any way. We shall, ... call this assumption the Copernican principle.

But God was not democratic in creating the universe! Also, God made mankind distinguished as being created in His image. Man was made for a personal relationship with the infinite Creator of the universe.

There are a number of other scientific facts about where we are in the universe that are of special benefit to us. In recent years some scientists have realized these things that show how really "fortunate" we are. For instance, if our solar system were located near the center of our galaxy, we would be close to supernova explosions and possibly dangerously close to a Black Hole where radiation and other hazards could affect us.

Our Sun orbits the center of the galaxy in a manner similar to Earth orbiting the Sun. But, for the Sun (our star), there

are many other stars in the same spiral arm our Sun is located in. Our Sun happens to move in synch with the spiral arms. This is good because if it were moving faster or slower than the arms, it would cross the arms and come close to other stars, which could cause various catastrophic events to happen. Also, God has placed our solar system in the middle of the spiral arms. This allows us to see both the dense part of the central region of the Milky Way, and also see out into distant space. If we were near the center of the galaxy, we would not be able to see nearly as far into the universe because of all the obscuring gas and dust that would block our view.

The Sun and the Earth

It is actually very significant that our star, the Sun, is an "average" star. It is not too large or too hot. It is not a variable star or part of a double or triple star system, which are quite common in the universe. All these other types of stars would create dangers to living things.

Our planet Earth is obviously specially made for life. This clear from the study of other planets and moons in our own solar system. It is also shown by recent findings regarding planets orbiting other stars. Water is very necessary for life in many ways and Earth is the only body we know of that is able to have liquid water on its surface. Scientists debate whether Mars may have had liquid water in the past, but Mars is not nearly so comfortable an environment for life as Earth.

Earth has enough mass to hold gases such as carbon dioxide and oxygen in an atmosphere so they do not escape into space. Earth's distance from the Sun is in the right range to make it's temperatures suitable for life. Also, if Earth were too close to the Sun, such as like Mercury for instance, it would be tidally locked so that the same side always faced the Sun. This would severely restrict life or make life impossible. Earth's Moon has a purpose as well. The tides, caused by the Moon's pull on the

Earth, cause the oceans to be essentially stirred and this has many benefits to sea life and to us. Earth's tilt is also very important and the Moon helps stabilize Earth's tilt. The seasons are due to Earth's tilt (23.5°). If Earth had no tilt it would cause ice to accumulate at the poles and probably make much of the Earth too dry. If Earth had too much tilt, the temperature extremes would be too great for us.

Design, the Big Bang, and the Atom

We've seen how God has arranged our place in the universe and our place in the galaxy. God has also intelligently engineered our star and our planet to give us a safe stable existence. God's intelligent design of the universe extends further, down to the level of fundamental physical constants and the properties of the atom itself. A number of physicists and astronomers in recent years have written about the many characteristics of the atom and the fundamental forces of nature that have "turned out just right" to allow for life. Some of these scientists argue that the properties of the universe and the atom point to an intelligent Creator. Some of these scientists are also Christians. However, usually these arguments for design are put into the context of the Big Bang cosmology. Thus statements will be made to the effect that God controlled the Big Bang, especially in its early fractions of a second, so that the universe would turn out as we find it today.

Ian Barbour is considered a top scholar on the issue of the relationship between religion and science. He lists three things as examples of this so-called "fine-tuning" of the universe. The first point he makes is about what he calls *the expansion rate* of the universe. It has been said that if the expansion rate of the universe were smaller by even a minute fraction, it would recollapse and nothing would form. If it expanded too fast then the gases would be

moving too fast for any stars or planets to pull together.

This argument presumes the Big Bang. As we will see more later in this series, the Big Bang does not agree with the Bible and has scientific problems as well. Thus, the "expansion rate" rather than being an argument for intelligent design, is actually an indication that the Big Bang would not work. The expansion of the universe in the Big Bang requires a very special rate to work that there is no physical explanation for a process that would cause the rate to be just right. Yet, scientists either just view this as an insignificant curiosity or they ignore the conflicts with the Bible and suppose that God used the Big Bang. Neither way of thinking is Biblical.

Barbour also refers to the *Particle/Antiparticle ratio*. This is another problem with the Big Bang. The Big Bang should produce equal quantities of matter particles and antimatter particles, such as protons and antiprotons, electrons and positrons, and neutrons and antineutrons. Antimatter particles and the corresponding matter particles completely annihilate each other on contact, giving off radiation. The problem is why does the universe have almost no antimatter when the Big Bang would produce both types of matter? Physicists believe that there was just one extra proton (regular matter) for every billion antiprotons. The same thing would have had to happen for neutrons and electrons in order for atoms to be able to form. Again, rather than being an argument for design or being just a curiosity, this is a problem with Big Bang theory.

However, Barbour also refers to the *formation of the elements* as one of the "fine-tuned phenomena." There is a force within the nucleus of the atom known as the strong nuclear force. It essentially holds the nucleus of the atom together. If the nuclear force were slightly stronger or weaker some elements in the periodic table could not exist. Carbon, which life and our bodies depend on so much, might not be stable if the nuclear

force were slightly stronger. This I think is a valid evidence of intelligent design, though it is not about the *formation* of the elements, but about their stability and their beneficial properties. Paul Davies is an Australian professor of Mathematical Physics. He makes an interesting observation about the order in the universe. "It is particularly striking how processes on a microscopic scale—say, in nuclear physics—seem to be fine-tuned to produce interesting and varied effects on a much larger scale—for example, in astrophysics."

This shows that God has thought through all the details from the subnuclear level to cosmological distance scales. I will let God sum this up in His own words from Isaiah 44:24 (NIV):

I am the LORD,
who has made all things,
who alone stretched out
the heavens,
who spread out the earth
by myself.

The Creation Adventure Team - Videos from Answers in Genesis

The Answers in Genesis organization now has some fun new videos made for kids. I purchased one of these programs, called "A Jurassic Ark Mystery," which is about 45 minutes long. These programs are intended for ages 7-12. They have real actors but also use some computer graphics and animation. There is also a character in a dinosaur suit called Proto.

This particular program has a story of a paleontologist in a museum who is trying to tell about the evolutionary view of dinosaurs to a reporter in an interview. The paleontologist is interrupted by a call from creationist friends in the middle of the interview. The call came on what are called "Biblical Reality Glasses," which are like virtual reality glasses. The reporter becomes totally fascinated by the Biblical

Reality Glasses and impressed by what they say about the creation view of dinosaurs. The program is also made somewhat like the "X-Files" TV program in segments called the "X-tinct Files." The entire program is presented as a mystery and is done in a fun way. Various aspects of the Biblical view of creation, the Flood, and animals are presented in an entertaining manner. The end of the program has several out takes that are a lot of fun as well.

Though young children may need some additional help understanding some of the creation concepts, I would recommend the programs. There is also enough detail in the program that it can be enjoyed more watched several times.

Fifth International Conference on Creationism

August 3 - 9, 2003 the International Conference on Creationism takes place at Geneva College in Pittsburgh, PA. Over six days there are 58 lectures by a number of speakers. There are two technical tracks and one Basic nontechnical track. For anyone who wants to hear the very latest creationist research or who wants detailed answers to technical questions, there is no better place to learn. To find out more, on the web go to <http://www.icc03.org>. You can get more information by sending an e-mail to csficc@csfpittsburgh.org. Or, call (412) 341-4908. The conference schedule can be downloaded from the icc03 web site. Topics range from Biblical exegesis, science history, geology, astronomy, psychology, and geophysics.