

## The Bible and Astronomy

### Int.

1. Aim: To show that the world of astronomy is another proof that the Bible is true.
2. Gen. 1:3 "Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light."
3. Gen. 1:14-19 ESV "14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. 16 And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. 17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, 18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day."
4. The word "astronomy" derives from two roots — astron, "star" and nomps, "law."
  - a. The word suggests an arrangement or distribution of the stars.
  - b. This, in itself, implies a law-giver or an arranger.
  - c. Astronomy, then, basically means star law. It suggests the idea that the stars or the heavenly bodies function according to law.
  - d. They're not characterized by haphazardness, randomness, but rather, they function according to what we call celestial laws.
5. The Greeks called the universe cosmos
  - a. The word "cosmos" means order, arrangement, design and it's the opposite of the word "chaos."
  - b. Cosmos is that which is orderly. Chaos is that which is disorderly.
  - c. The universe, then, is not the chaos. It's the cosmos.

6. The Bible itself speaks of the "ordinances" of the heavens (Jer. 31:35)
  - a. What's an ordinance? Well, a law. So the prophet then suggests the idea that the heavenly bodies are regulated according to law
  - b. The ESV says "The fixed order"
  - c. It is a fundamental principle of logic that where there is law, there must be a law-giver.
  - d. The U.S. Constitution did not compose itself!
  - e. The law-giver, the orderer of the universe, is its Creator, God.
7. More formally stated, astronomy is the science of the study of the stars, planets, etc., together with their movements and relations to one another.
  - a. Originally, this "science" was steeped in superstition (astrology); it is only in relatively recent times that it has gained scientific respectability.
  - b. And even now, it is woefully afflicted with evolutionary falsehoods.

## Discussion

### I. ORIGIN OF HEAVENLY BODIES

- A. Basically, there are two views of the origin of the universe.
  1. It occurred either naturally, or its beginning was supernatural.
  2. The question is: which idea is taught by the evidence ?
- B. The common view today is that the universe resulted from the "Big Bang."
  1. It is suggested that all the matter then in existence (which supposedly dates to some 20 billion years ago) "was compressed into an infinitely dense and hot mass" (called a "cosmic egg") that finally exploded (about 10 billion years ago), thus producing the ordered systems of the universe (Jastrow, 2-3).

2. According to an article in *National Geographic*, the "egg" was "many billions of times smaller than a single proton" (705). Where this "egg" came from, no one seems to know. Certainly no "cosmic chicken" has yet been located!
- C. There are, however, many problems with the Big Bang theory. Consider just two of them.
1. As noted already, the Greeks called the universe the cosmos, meaning "order," because it is so precisely mechanistic — like a brilliantly designed, well-regulated machine.
    - a. No mere "explosion" could have occasioned this machine.
    - b. A blowup in a printing factory does not produce an encyclopedia.
    - c. A stack of lumber and dynamite cannot construct a house. But ". . . every house is built by someone; but the builder of all things is God" (Heb. 3:4 NASB).
    - d. Intelligence can fashion a habitable dwelling; mere force cannot.
    - e. And so, "accident" is not an adequate explanation for an ordered system.
    - f. Henri Poincare (1854-1912), considered to be one of the greatest mathematicians and original thinkers of his day, declared: "The world is Divine because it is a harmony" (Young, 135)
  2. An explosion propels objects radially - in all directions.
    - a. If you light a firecracker on the driveway, after it explodes you will find paper fragments scattered all around. There is no order to these.
    - b. The planets in our solar system have order and balance and arrangement.
    - c. It is not just randomness. There is order.

## II. ASTRONOMY AND DESIGN

- A. David declared in Psalms 19:1 "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."
1. ESV "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handywork."
  2. The stars testify concerning God in two ways:
    - a. The vastness of the stars is a testimony to His Power.
    - b. The organization is testimony to His Intelligence.
- B. The Number of the Heavenly Bodies is beyond our ability to understand.
1. Ancient men and astronomers tried to number the stars.
    - a. In 150 B.C., Hipparchus estimated there were less than 3,000 stars.
    - b. Three centuries later, Ptolemy suggested a slightly larger figure.
    - c. One of the latest estimates today is that there could be as many as 100 septillion stars in space (that's a one followed by twenty-six zeros).
    - d. And Albert Einstein suggested that the totality of space could be as much as 100,000 times greater than known space (Boyd, 289).
  2. All the while, though, the Scriptures had taught that the stars are numberless
    - a. Gen. 22:17 "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven,"
    - b. Jer. 33:22 "As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me."
    - c. And God knows them all by name - Psa. 147:4 "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names."

3. What power has the Maker of this universe!

C. Second, David described the starry hosts as Jehovah's "handiwork," indeed, the exquisite work of his "fingers" (Psa. 8:3). "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;"

1. Job exclaimed that the heavens were "garnished" by the Creator (Job 26:13).
2. The original term is a feminine form suggesting "fairness, beauty, brilliancy."
3. A New Testament writer says the "worlds" were "framed" by the word of God (Heb. 11:3).

D. Reflect upon some of the design features of the Lord's universe.

1. Our earth is the third planet from the sun (93 million miles away). It is spinning on its axis at the rate of 1,000 miles per hour (at the equator).
  - a. Too, the earth is moving in an elliptical orbit around the sun at an average speed of 66,600 m.p.h.
  - b. It travels 595 million miles in its yearly route around the "track."
  - c. Here is a good question: What started this movement?
    - (1) There is no natural explanation.
    - (2) Sir Isaac Newton's First Law of Motion asserts that a stationary object will remain so until force is exerted upon it from some other source.
    - (3) This fact has forced many philosophers and logicians to postulate a "Prime Mover."
    - (4) The Bible calls Him "God."

- d. The earth is delicately balanced in its orbit.
    - (1) As the earth moves around the sun, centrifugal force pushes it outward (much like a weight attached to a string and whirled above your head).
    - (2) At the same time, the force of gravity pulls it toward the sun.
    - (3) It has been estimated that it would take a steel cable at least 8,000 miles in diameter (comparable to that of our earth) to equal the strength of the force which ties this planet to the sun (Stoner, 55).
    - (4) Gravity ! What a mysterious force.
      - (a) We constantly see its effect, but Still do not understand it.
      - (b) We can explain the principle of its universal force, but we really do not even know what it is.
  - e. The amazing balance between these forces of nature can be explained reasonably only in the light of intelligent design.
2. Some scientists refer to the "mathematical orthodoxy" of the universe.
    - a. In his book, *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, Lincoln Barnett talks about the "functional harmony" of the universe (22).
    - b. Think about this. As the earth travels in its orbit around the sun, it must make minute adjustments to conform to its elliptical "track."
    - c. Our planet digresses from a straight line one-ninth of an Inch every eighteen miles.
    - d. If the modification was only a tenth of an inch, our globe would gradually move toward outer space and eventually become a frozen ball.

- e. If the adjustment was as much as one-eighth of an inch, we would be pulled toward the sun and finally incinerated.
  - f. The balance is just right.
3. If not for the mathematical precision of the universe, how could astronomers predict eclipses? How could space scientists target satellites with such pinpoint accuracy?
  4. One unbelieving scientist, Dr. Edward Friedkin, a physicist, has confessed: "It's hard for me to believe that everything out there is just an accident ... it seems likely to me that this particular universe we have is a consequence of something which I would call intelligent" (Wright, 69).

### **III. THE PURPOSE OF HEAVENLY LUMINARIES**

- A. Why did God create the sun, the moon, and the stars?
  1. Most of them are far beyond mans ability to visit, even if a human could survive there.
  2. If one wanted to draw a map of our universe, with a scale of 1 inch = 93 million miles (the distance from earth to the sun), his paper would have to be four miles long to include our next nearest star.
  3. The map would need to be 25,000 miles long just to reach to the center of the Milky Way galaxy!

B. Psalms 8:4 "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" A look at the earth in comparison to the heavenly bodies shows how small we really are

1. Size of the earth with Venus, Mars, Mercury and Pluto - Larger
2. Comparison to Saturn and Jupiter - smaller
3. When the Sun is shown the earth is a tiny speck
4. In comparison to the star Arcturus the sun is very small and the earth is invisible
5. But the Star Antares makes Arcturus look very small
6. So in comparison the earth and mankind are very small and insignificant.

C. Moses described the purpose of the planets and stars in Genesis 1.

1. They were designed to "divide the day from the night," to be for "signs, and for seasons, and for days and years," and to serve in the expanse to "give light upon the earth" (1:14-15).
2. The sun provides light (and heat) upon the earth for the day time.
3. It is called the "greater" light (compared to the moon); it is significant that the inspired Writer did not say, the "greatest" light (as the sun would have appeared to the ordinary observer fifteen centuries before Christ), for there are many stars larger than the sun.
4. The rotation of our earth upon its axis, in relation to the sun, produces the day-night sequence.
5. The revolution of the earth in its orbit around the sun, each 365 days, measures the year.
6. The inclination of the earth on its axis, relative to the sun, provides our seasons, which facilitate the growing of crops.

7. For many centuries the stars have served as material "signs," i.e., navigational devices for the mariner.
  - a. On their dangerous voyage to Rome, Luke notes that the inmates of the ship were unable to see either sun or stars for many days, hence, knew not where they were (Acts 27:20).
  - b. Moreover, the constellations Pleides and Orion (Job 38:31) make their appearances in the spring and fall respectively, thus heralding the coming of these seasons.
  
8. Further, the Lord has made use of celestial bodies as "signs" for the teaching of spiritual lessons.
  - a. When Joseph dreamed of the sun, moon, and stars bowing down to him (Gen. 37), it was a prophetic symbol of his future glory.
  - b. Balaam's prophecy of a "star" to come out of Jacob (Num. 24:17), is most likely a preview of the coming of Christ, who refers to himself as "the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16).
  - c. Perhaps it is significant that the wise men from the east, who followed the star to Bethlehem, may have been from the same region where Balaam himself had lived.
  - d. God employed some sort of heavenly light ("star" — a generic term) to guide the wise men to the place where the infant Christ lay (Mt. 2:2, 9). This phenomenon cannot be explained save by a miracle.

## **CONCLUSION**

1. The sun, moon, and stars are magnificent evidences of the Creator's genius and power.
2. They are both aesthetic and functional.
3. Dr. Arthur Harding, Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at the University of Arkansas, wrote: As we look at the machines in some of our factories we sometimes wonder at what the mind of man has created, overlooking the fact that we are living on a little World that is a part of a gigantic machine which is operating silently and everlastingly in the sky . Surely here is a gigantic machine which makes us stand in awe and wonder at the power of the creator who could design such a machine and put it into operation.
4. Unfortunately, over the centuries, some have given the heavenly bodies undue prominence.
  - a. It is an interesting fact that whereas the ancient heathen gave much attention to the sun, moon, and stars — even worshiping them — the Hebrews were not preoccupied with such matters, doubtless due to prohibition against star worship,
  - b. Deut. 4:19; 17:2-5;
  - c. Isa. 47:13;
  - d. Jer. 44:19
  - e. Modern devotees of astrology (who allege that the sky's luminaries have control over the destinies of men) are equally pagan.
5. Truly, the heavens do declare the glory of God (Psa. 19:1)

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Sermon by Arthur Pigman - Sunday Night Sept. 13, 2009  
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