Does Astronomy Contradict The Bible Teaching Of Creation?

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> The conventional model for solar system formation, called the solar nebula hypothesis, holds that the solar nebula cooled from T > 2000 K with an initially uniform solar composition. The condensation was then quenched at a certain temperature (which is a function of distance from the sun), and the remaining gas was blown away by a high luminosity early sun. Most of the dense material then aggregated to form planets. A fraction of this material was scattered by gravitational encounters with other protoplanets, forming the comets and chondric meteorites. Some of the volatile material was swept up by planets and incorporated into planetary atmospheres. Some large, differentiated bodies were fragmented through collisions, producing stoney-iron and iron meteorites. (Weisstein 2)

Although maybe a tad complicated, this statement states what is commonly known as the Big Bang Theory. This theory is the basis of the evolutionary view of the beginning of the universe. The Big Bang, in one form or another, is also the starting point of the focus of astronomy.

Man has always been interested in his beginnings. Many theories have been put forth, and mythology teems with ideas concerning our origin. What is little known is that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) exists to answer the question of our beginning. Literally, billions of dollars have been, and will be, spent to research the issue of the origin of the universe.

In this lesson, we want to address whether astronomy contradicts the Biblical teaching of Creation. To do this, we will begin by making a few observations concerning the field of astronomy.

By definition, astronomy is “The scientific study of the universe beyond the earth, esp. the observation, calculation, and interpretation of the positions, dimensions, distribution, composition, and evolution of celestial bodies and phenomena” (Webster). It is not to be confused with astrology which is “The study of the positions and aspects of heavenly bodies in the belief that they have an influence on the course of human affairs” (Webster). From astrology comes the horoscope and the notion of planetary alignments influencing our actions and lives. The question generally associated with astrology is “What is your sign?”

Astronomy does not hold to the astrological belief but endeavors to offer a scientific study of the solar system. Astronomy attempts to explain the movements of the planets, stars, moons, etc. and how these movements influence other things in the universe. The biggest goal of the astronomer is to explain the origin of the universe.

Man has been studying the universe for centuries. The development of the calendar is a result of these studies. The most influential ancient astronomer was Ptolemy of Alexandria (circa 140 A.D.), who made studies of the universe and held that the Earth was the center of the universe. Ptolemy's views were held as truth through the Middle Ages.

The beginning of modern astronomy is traced to the works of Copernicus and Galileo in the middle 1500's A.D. Their work showed that all planets circle the Sun and not the Earth. The Catholic Inquisition forced Galileo to renounce this idea, yet we now know that Copernicus and Galileo were correct.

The basis of modern astronomy is the Big Bang Theory. According to this theory, a gigantic explosion took place some 10 – 20 billion years ago. From that explosion, particles were sent forth that became our planets, stars, moons, etc. This explosion set in motion an ever-expanding universe. From the astronomer's viewpoint, the universe is still expanding and if we can get information from the edge of that expansion, we can solve the mystery of the origin of the universe. The goal of our space missions is to get to that ever-elusive edge.

To help further understand the goal of astronomy, please note the following quotes:

> The radiotelescope, a metal latticework bowl resembling a TV satellite dish, was capable of intercepting naturally emitted radio signals from celestial bodies up to 10 billion light years away. The signals help scientists understand the origins of the universe. (*Arkansas Gazette*)
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> Astronomers say they have detected starlight from the birth of a galaxy 12 billion years ago, which would mean galaxies kept forming long after the universe emerged from the "Big Bang" . . . The object is too far away for positive identification, but scientists detected evidence that perhaps 1 billion suns ignited as a huge gas cloud collapsed under its own gravity 71 billion trillion miles, or 12 billion light years, from Earth. . . . (*The Daily News*)
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> In a discovery that could upset theories of cosmic evolution, astronomers have detected a light coming from surprisingly close to the edge of the universe – and hence near the beginning of time. (*Detroit Free Press*)

There, more than eight miles above Earth, they found a reassuring match between astronomical theories and the chemical components of huge gas clouds hundreds of trillions of miles from Earth. (*Arkansas Democrat*)

While these quotes help to emphasize the main focus of astronomy, it must be noted that not everyone is comfortable with the Big Bang Theory. While not admitting there is a God, David Berlinski did cast a doubt as to the validity of the Big Bang Theory:

> Physicists, no less than anyone else, are uneasy with the idea that the universe simply popped into existence, with space and time "suddenly switching themselves on." The image of a light switch comes from Paul Davies, who uses it to express the miracle without quite recognizing that it embodies a contradiction. A universe that has suddenly switched itself on has accomplished something within time; and yet the Big Bang is supposed to have brought space and time into existence. (Berlinski 14)

To help further its agenda, NASA has founded 13 centers in its Astrobiology Institute. This institute was founded by NASA to blend astronomy, biology, chemistry, and physics to help identify life in the universe. (*Newsweek*) (Or, as we would say it, "Is there life on other planets?") Three of these centers are at Harvard, UCLA, and Michigan State University.

A few years back, NASA thought it had made a great discovery proving life had at one time existed on Mars. A meteorite was discovered in Antarctica that caused great excitement and controversy among scientists. Please note the following about this meteorite:

1. It was discovered in 1984.
2. Its origin was not recognized until 1993.
3. In 1996, NASA scientists announced they had discovered traces of life from Mars on this meteorite.
4. According to the scientists, this meteorite was formed beneath the surface of Mars about 4.5 billion years ago. It was probably knocked loose from Mars about 16 million years ago and drifted through space until falling to Earth some 13,000 years ago. (*USA Today, "Scientists..."*)

Is it just me, or does anyone else see a few problems with this? For instance, why did it take nine years to figure out where it came from? How did they figure out where it came from? Did it have a "Made In Mars" tag on it? And, how on Earth could someone look at a rock and come up with such an elaborate history of its travels through space?

Several space missions have been launched by the United States and Russia seeking to answer the questions concerning our origin. From 1962 – 1978, the United States successfully sent 38 spacecraft to research space. Apollo, Mariner, Ranger, Viking, Pioneer, and Voyager are some of the familiar names of this period.

After a six-year journey, the Galileo Orbiter and Probe reached Jupiter. The Probe, according to reports, entered Jupiter's atmosphere on December 7, 1995. Note these two observations concerning the Probe's work:

> . . . From Jupiter's size and mass, astronomers have long known that it is almost entirely made of hydrogen and helium – the two most abundant elements in the

> universe as a whole. Precise measurements of the amounts of oxygen, carbon, neon, and nitrogen – the next four most abundant elements in the universe --, as well as helium and other less abundant ingredients, can not only have implications for understanding Jupiter today but can also provide clues to the planetary formation and evolution process.
>
> Concerning some unexpected findings: Accounting for these results provides challenges and opportunities for refining our ideas about the formation and evolution of Jupiter and the solar system. (*Galileo*)

The Galileo Orbiter is still in the area photographing, and recently sent back photos of Io, Jupiter's largest moon. (*USA Today, "Galileo..."*)

Another mission is the Microwave Anistrophy Project (MAP) set to launch on June 30, 2001. It is hoped this mission will help resolve the age of the universe.

> The light and the heat produced by the Big Bang presents itself as microwave radiation. The CMB (cosmic microwave background, C.C.) radiation we see today has been traveling to our part of the universe for as long as the universe has existed – a highly debated length of time (generally estimated between 10 and 16 billion years) and one of the puzzles scientists hope MAP will help solve. (*Science, "A Map..."*)

In August 2001, NASA plans on launching a new mission to study the Sun. This spacecraft, Genesis, is designed to open up and "entrap solar wind particles" which will be brought to Earth for study (*Science,* "Genesis..."). (I am not making this up, C.C.). Another mission is NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory, deployed from the Space Shuttle Columbia in July 1999. (*The Chandra Mission*). Also, two balloons were sent up by scientists to study cosmic microwave background (a result of the Big Bang). These balloons were the Boomerang and the Maxima. (*Science,* "Universal..."). All of these missions are to provide more insight into the origin of the universe.

Even though we have had all these efforts made to discover the origin of the universe and of life itself, the prize of the space program is Hubble. The Hubble Space Telescope was put into orbit in April 1990 and was to give scientists a more accurate look at the universe. Hubble, which has cost about $4 billion so far and costs $200 million a year to operate, is designed to help scientists discover if there is life elsewhere in the Universe. The Hubble Constant, which supposedly shows the universe still expanding as a result of the Big Bang, is used to help determine the age of the universe. Hubble is scheduled to operate until 2010.

Lest anyone worry about what scientists will do once Hubble is gone, NASA is already planning on sending more telescopes into space: Next Generation Space Telescope in 2007; Space Interferometry Mission telescope in 2007; Terrestrial Planet Finder telescope in 2012; and, the Life Finder telescope in 2025. All of these are "geared toward finding out whether there is life elsewhere in the universe. (*USA Today,* "A Decade...").

I think we can safely say that the purpose of astronomy is to show that the Theory of Evolution is true as to the origin of life and the universe. Unfortunately, many will believe the "great discoveries" of science and be led away from God to eternal punishment. Please look back over the quotes in this lesson and ask yourself the following questions:

1. How could anyone know that the light we see from the stars originated billions of years ago? To know this, we would have to know exactly where the light source is and when the light was turned on. You cannot look at the end of the light and figure out its beginning.

2. How do scientists know that light is coming from close to the edge of the universe? Do we really believe we can measure a light's travel time that began 12 billion years ago? I am always curious as to how they can definitely single out a particular light source that is supposedly 71 billion trillion miles from here!

3. Do we really believe that scientists can measure the chemical composition of gas clouds that are hundreds of trillions of miles from Earth, even from an observatory that is about 8 miles above Earth? My next question would be, "How do they even know they are gas clouds?"

4. Why can't scientists just be honest and admit they cannot tell us that a meteorite found on Earth came from Mars? We have nothing to compare it with since no one has been to Mars!

5. When trying to measure cosmic microwave background radiation, scientists say that it has been coming to our part of the universe since the Big Bang. This being the case, how can scientists say the universe is expanding away from us as a result of the Big Bang? If the universe were expanding away from us, then would not the radiation be going away from us rather than to us?

6. Why are scientists not honest enough to admit that the Big Bang Theory is based on pure assumption and involves itself in reasoning in a circle? It has always been interesting to me that scientists always seem to "find" support for their assumptions. Astronomy "reasons" thusly: "How do we know there was a Big Bang?" "Because we said so." "Why do we say so?" "Because there was a Big Bang." "How do we know there was a Big Bang?" "Because we said so." etc., etc. "Reasoning in this manner, they have to prove nothing and people actually think they are smart.

Does astronomy contradict the Bible's teaching on creation? Consider the following:

ASTRONOMY: Everything began from some giant explosion of unknown origin.
THE BIBLE: God created the universe (Genesis 1:1).

ASTRONOMY: Out of randomness came order.
THE BIBLE: God created everything in its place and functioning properly (Genesis 1,2).

ASTRONOMY: The Sun, the Moon, and the stars are the result of some chunks from the Big Bang explosion stopping in the right places.
THE BIBLE: God placed the stars, the Sun, and the Moon in place to be used by man for signs, seasons, days, and years (Gensis 1:14-19).

ASTRONOMY: Everything is continuing to evolve.
THE BIBLE: God created everything in the seas, the skies, and on the Earth. Everything that could reproduce was created capable to reproducing after its own kind (cf. Genesis 1,2; Exodus 20:11)

ASTRONOMY: The universe is around 12 billion years old.
THE BIBLE: The Bible supports the view of a young Earth as seen from a comparison of the genealogies recorded in Genesis 5 and 11. The times given here indicate an approximate 2000-year period to Abraham. From Abraham to Christ is approximately 2000 years, and from Christ to now is approximately 2000 years. The Bible would give us a universe that is less than 8,000 years old.

ASTRONOMY: The universe was not created all at once. Some things came into play millions to billions of years later.
THE BIBLE: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* (Genesis 1:1).

Astronomy not only contradicts the Bible, but if the teachings of astronomy are followed, man will be led farther away from God, and then, lost eternally. Our origin is not of purely naturalistic beginnings. We are truly made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26,27), and will one day answer to God for the deeds done in our lives (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Romans 2:6).

> Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (Hebrews 11:3)

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