

A Case for Intelligent Design

by Jim Schicatano

THE QUESTION OF DESIGN

In the past two centuries, it seems that the more we have learned about the world and the universe around us, the more inconsequential we have become in the grand design of the cosmos. If we were important to God, then why weren't we among His initial creations? Instead, we are creatures that did not appear until billions of years after the Earth's formation. If we are the only significant life-form in the universe, then why is the universe so vast and contain so many other galaxies, stars, and – undoubtedly – planets? Why isn't the Earth the center of our solar system? Why isn't our solar system the nucleus of our galaxy?

Because these questions cannot be properly addressed without understanding God's thoughts and inclinations, many agnostics do not recognize the significance of our creation. Since our very existence was supposedly derived from natural processes (as most scientists claim), there does not appear to be any real purpose in accepting the existence of a Supreme Being.

And yet, where is the Bible wrong in any of its claims about humanity? The Creation Story clearly states that God created all of creation before He made man on the Sixth Day. We were said to be God's *final* creation – a fact that even science can not refute. Nowhere does the Bible ever claim that the Earth resides at the center of our universe with the sun, the planets, and the galaxies revolving around our world. Human beings may have claimed these beliefs to be true, but the Scriptures never plainly stated any of them.

Today, scientists and non-scientists agree that the Earth does not appear to be located at the center of anything. What was once heresy – the discovery that our Earth revolved around the sun – is now an accepted fact. When the heliocentric model of our solar system was introduced, it appeared that God and the holy words of the Bible were being seriously challenged by scientific knowledge. Today, it is clear that the Bible has withstood that discovery.

Perhaps a similar scientific challenge is being mounted today in the form of time. Science has determined that our universe is billions of years old. Millions of stars shined and faded away before our sun had ever emitted a single spark of light. In addition, over 4.5 billion years have passed since our Earth was created. To many believers, such

a tremendous passage of time is unacceptable; consequently, they refute the science that has determined this. Our obsession with time today compels us to think in much shorter terms than billions of years. In addition, some believers feel that it makes little sense for God to wait so long before creating His most important creation.

Hundreds of years ago, it might have been heresy to believe that billions of years had passed before man was created – much as the heliocentric system was considered heresy. But the passage of such enormous amounts of time does not threaten the credibility of the Bible or the Creation Story. The exact date of the creation event is never given in the Scriptures, and long Creation Days is an acceptable – and some might argue, preferable – interpretation.

Human beings are more fixated with impertinent matters like the physical location of the Earth, and the time that has passed since the initial moment of the Big Bang. Neither of these scientific discoveries diminishes our creation. If God desired to make a fully operable universe in one hour, He could have achieved just that. But if God wishes to wait a million years, a billion years, or even a trillion years, why does that trouble us? How is time relevant to an omnipotent Being? What is important is not the passage of time but man's special creation, and the possibility of establishing a personal relationship with God.

As science continues to unlock the secrets of our universe, it might have been anticipated that the God of the Bible would be proven away for all eternity – much like the multitude of myths and legends of ancient man. This would certainly be expected considering the size and age of our universe. But as science resolves and understands more of the mysteries of nature, something else is occurring. The evidence for a Designer or Creator of our universe is now growing.

While science and our secular culture might not have anticipated "finding" God in their eternal quest for truth and knowledge, such a discovery would only serve to confirm that which Biblical readers already knew. The wonder and complexity of nature itself reveals God's works, and thus His existence. Two Biblical passages that speak of nature as evidence are:

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. – Psalms 19:1-2 (NIV)

"But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which

of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this?" – Job 12:7-9 (NIV)

Many renowned scientists have proclaimed that millions or even billions of Earth-like planets exist in our universe. If this is true, then the probability that life exists elsewhere is greatly magnified. In fact, many scientists will declare unequivocally that life does exist somewhere besides planet Earth. But is their confidence supported by the evidence?

When we think of an Earth-like planet we envision a world that contains a breathable atmosphere, possesses fresh water, and is capable of supporting plants and animals. Perhaps our "exposure" to the alien worlds that we witness in science fiction movies and television simplifies the factors involved to sustain human life. In reality, the ability of any planet to produce and sustain intelligent life is far more complicated than most non-scientists would expect.

The Earth's gravity, magnetic field (protects us from stellar radiation), axial tilt (moderates surface temperature), ozone layer (protects us from UV radiation), and atmospheric composition are all significant factors in maintaining life on our planet.¹ If these conditions varied greatly or did not exist, life on planet Earth might not be sustainable.

The Earth-moon system is unique among the planets in our solar system. The size of the moon in comparison to the Earth is considerably higher than any other satellite in our solar system (the Pluto-Charon system might be the one exception). Because of the moon's size, it exhibits a far greater gravitational pull on the Earth than any other planet receives from its satellite(s). The gravitational pull of the moon produces the tides on the Earth. The tides deposit water (and its nutrients) over greater areas of land, while cleansing coastal areas. It is also believed that the moon has stabilized the Earth's rotational spin over time, preventing it from wobbling excessively and threatening any life that existed here. The moon's ability to reflect light from the sun has aided mankind through the centuries, softly illuminating the otherwise dark and dangerous night. The existence of our large satellite is either a serendipitous stroke of fate or a blessing from a Creator that possessed both intelligence and foresight.

Water, a liquid which is essential for life, possesses the unique and unexpected property of becoming lighter in its solid form (ice). Without this remarkable property, bodies of water would begin to freeze upward until becoming completely solid. That a simple molecule formed of hydrogen and oxygen could attain this extraordinary

characteristic is either highly fortuitous for mankind or a carefully contrived achievement of a master Designer.

On a larger scale, life on our planet would be greatly threatened if our solar system was a binary or multiple star system. The mass and age of our sun, the sun's distance from the center of our galaxy, the Earth's distance from the sun, and even the age of the universe are all factors in determining the type of life that is able to exist on the Earth.²

The Big Bang theory, and the discovery that our universe had a beginning, has done more than just augment our ever-expanding scientific knowledge. It also allows for the existence of a Creator. If the universe had always existed – as many scholars had believed through the centuries – there would not have been a need for someone to create it. Yet this relatively recent discovery begs the question: If the universe had an origin, who or what created it? Ironically, with the scientific discovery of the Big Bang and our universe's origin came the rational acknowledgment that the existence of a Creator could no longer be dismissed.

Even subatomic processes do not escape the appearance of a divine Creator. In *God: The Evidence*, Patrick Glynn observes:

Even the most minor tinkering with the value of the fundamental forces of physics – gravity, electromagnetism, the nuclear strong force, or the nuclear weak force – would have resulted in an unrecognizable universe: a universe consisting entirely of helium, a universe without protons or atoms, a universe without stars, or a universe that collapsed back in upon itself before the first moments of its existence were up. Changing the precise ratios of the masses of subatomic particles in relation to one another would have similar effects.³

The failure of scientists to duplicate the origin of life on planet Earth allows for yet another possibility for God's existence. Only a few decades ago, science eagerly anticipated the imminent discovery of the "natural" mechanisms that led to the origin of life on our planet. Today, they would acknowledge that such mechanisms are far more complicated than they had originally anticipated. While many interesting and potentially plausible scenarios have been proposed and considered today, the process that once initiated life continues to elude the best scientific minds on our world. If such a natural process remains undiscovered and inexplicable in the future, can we continue to dismiss the possibility of a Creator and a divine origin?

All of these factors demonstrate that our universe – and our planet – have been “fine-tuned” by a master Designer to accommodate life on planet Earth. They also suggest that God had a reason, or purpose, in His creation. Perhaps, we are discovering evidence of His design through nature.

In the book of Isaiah, it is revealed that God did have a purpose when He created the Earth.

For this is what the LORD says – he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited – he says: “I am the LORD, and there is no other.” – Isaiah 45:18 (NIV)

As science forges ahead in its quest to understand our universe, it may come to realize that the numerous parameters and conditions that we have come to accept as “natural” have actually been specifically designed by God. It would be ironic, indeed, if those seeking natural solutions to the enigmas of the universe stumbled upon the inescapable conclusion that there must be a Designer or a God. They may conclude that our universe is actually a highly complex creation designed by a Deity that endowed us with the very abilities that we use to reason, comprehend, and learn about His creations. If mankind were to ever stumble upon the existence of God it would certainly be our greatest discovery. And, I believe, it would also be the final piece of the elusive puzzle to understanding the awesome and enigmatic universe that surrounds us.

NOTES:

1. Hugh Ross, *The Fingerprint of God*, 2nd Ed. (Orange, California: Promise Publishing Company, 1991), pp.130-131
2. Ibid., pp.129-130
3. Patrick Glynn, *God The Evidence: The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason in a Postsecular World* (Rocklin, California: Forum, 1997), p.29