

The Origin of the Universe

by John Whitcomb

The origin of the universe is a complex topic that requires understanding both biblical and scientific evidence, and the Bible teaches a young universe that is supported by scientific evidence.

Duration: 56:34

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-5, Genesis 1:9, Genesis 1:16, Genesis 1:21, Genesis 1:25-27, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Creation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the topic of the origin of the universe from a biblical and scientific perspective. They mention that the Son of God brought the entire universe into existence within one literal week by supernatural processes. The speaker also addresses the uncertainty regarding the time periods between Adam and the flood and between the flood and Abraham, making it difficult to determine the exact date of the creation week. They suggest that a reasonable estimate for the antiquity of man and the world is around 10 or 12 thousand years. The sermon emphasizes that the Bible divides the heavens into three categories and discusses the Apostle Paul's experience with visions and revelations. The speaker concludes by stating that on the fourth day of creation, God created the sun, moon, and stars, as indicated in Genesis chapter 1.

Transcript

This is the second of our series of lectures on the general theme of the Bible and science entitled the origin of the universe. Genesis chapter 1 verses 1 to 5 and 14 to 19 describing the creation of the earth and the solar system and the universe. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters and God said let there be light and there was light and God saw the light that it was good and God divided the light from the darkness and God called the light day and the darkness he called night and the evening in the morning for the first day and God said let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth and it was so and God made two great lights the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night he made the stars also and God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth and to rule over the day and over the night and to divide the light from the darkness and God saw that it was good and the evening in the morning were the fourth day.

In our first lecture in this series on the Bible and science we discovered that the Son of God the second person of the triune Godhead brought the entire universe into existence within one literal week of time by purely supernatural processes out of nothing. Our uncertainty as to the time periods that elapsed between Adam and the flood and between the flood and Abraham made it impossible for us to give an exact date to the creation week but this does not mean that the universe was created millions of years ago or even hundreds of thousands of years ago. Ten or twelve thousand years at the most would seem to be a reasonable estimate of the antiquity of man and therefore the world that God created for him from the standpoint of biblical chronology but it is not possible scientifically to allow for such a recent origin of the universe is it? It all really depends on what one means by scientific.

If science means a systematic analysis of presently observed phenomena and their processes then science cannot contradict the biblical record of origins for no one can determine the age of a thing unless he knows its original condition and the rate of change that has brought it to its present condition. Let's begin with two simple illustrations. If you were to walk into an abandoned house and find on the table a candle still burning and noticed after a period of observation that it was burning at the rate of about one inch an hour and you also discovered that at the time you entered the house the candle was six inches high.

How long ago was that candle lit? Well obviously you can't find that answer unless you know one additional factor namely how high was it when it started to be burned. You see the starting point is absolutely vital as well as the process rate to determine the age of an event or a thing. If you looked up on the wall and saw an old clock still ticking, an eight-day wind-up clock, and you notice that just five minutes after you entered the house the clock stopped ticking.

How long ago was it wound up? Well you might guess approximately eight days but wonder if the owner of the house had just wound it up partway when he left. Thus you cannot determine whether its original condition was a full wind-up or whether it was halfway unwound. The starting point is absolutely essential to determine how much time has elapsed during the process.

Now let's apply these illustrations to the age of the stars and of the moon and of the earth and of the oceans and of the human race. People ask the question if God created all things at a comparatively recent time how is it that some stars are hundreds of millions in fact billions of light-years away? Does this not demand that God created them billions of years ago? And the answer is no because a light-year is a measurement of distance not of time. And while we do have accurate means of measuring the distance of stars not simply by parallax but also by studying certain pulsating stars and their rate of pulsation in comparison to their intrinsic brightness and apparent brightness and other very subtle and quite accurate methods so that we do know that the universe is fantastically large.

In fact the scriptures emphasize the vastness of the universe which no man can measure. Yet can we be sure that those stars were created at a time indicated by their distance from the earth? Let's put it this way did God have to wait several billion years after he created the stars for the light to get to the earth to accomplish its God-intended purpose? Notice the statement in Genesis 1:14 and 15. Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven and let them give light upon the earth.

Their basic purpose was to shine upon the earth and knowing the omnipotence of God as set forth in the holy scriptures we may be sure that God was perfectly capable of creating not only the stars but the star light already reaching the earth accomplishing God's purpose for it. In other words God created a dynamic

functioning universe. God is not limited by time or process.

Consider the moon. All of us are fascinated by the astronauts walking upon the moon and bringing back samples of moon dust and moon rocks. Very few people seem to realize however that the basis upon which the age of these rocks is determined is filled with all types of hidden assumptions.

How do you really know how old a moon rock is? Is it soft and crumbly and rotten if it's old but hard and firm if it's young? No. Certainly you can't tell by looking at a rock how old it is. All of these things must be measured according to a uniformitarian scheme of interpretation which decides in advance what the moon must have been like when it started and then work from there to its present condition.

But how do we know what it was like when it started? The facts are that the moon does not contain within itself the clues to its own antiquity. Some astronomers have thought that the moon was condensed from gas dust particles together with the earth. But as we shall see this is impossible from the standpoint of physics and chemistry.

Some think the moon was captured by the earth from some other orbit or that it popped out of the earth and moved into its present orbit. But neither of these theories can possibly be maintained in the light of known laws of astrophysics, celestial mechanics. So that we do not know what the moon was like.

Was it highly radioactive? Did it have a cool crust? Nobody knows. Therefore until we have that missing factor, that missing clue of the starting point of the moon's condition, we have no basis, no criterion for determining its age. Consider the earth itself.

Geologists of course assume that the earth is about four and a half billion years old. How do they know? They assume that when the earth began it was a molten mass of highly radioactive rock and metal. But this can't be proved.

The word of God tells us that the earth was created with a cool crust, capable of supporting liquid oceans. And that God distributed throughout the crust of the earth all types of metals for man to discover and to utilize for God's glory. Subduing the earth and ferreting out its hidden mysteries was one of the great challenges God gave to Adam and to his descendants.

God created the earth, you see, as a dynamic functioning entity appropriate as a home for man. And God did not have to wait four billion years for it to cool down to make it a home for man. Therefore, if we do not know what the earth was like when it started, we have no way of determining how long it has taken for it to get to its present condition.

Astronomers of course are deeply perplexed with the question, how could a molten mass of highly radioactive rock and metal have come into existence in the first place? Even if we grant, for the sake of argument, that the earth began in that condition, the more important question is how did it get to that condition? Where did it come from? And as we shall see, no one knows the answer to that either. Consider the age of the oceans. Scientists have estimated that the oceans must be hundreds of millions of years old on the basis of assuming that it began as fresh water poured out of the crust of the earth, juvenile volcanic water.

And that through hundreds of millions of years of gradual erosional processes as rivers eroded from the continental areas, the rocks and the salts that were carried in solution, sodium and chlorine and so on, that gradually the salts accumulated in the ocean to their present amounts. But how do we know that the

oceans began as fresh water? The book of Genesis suggests that God created the oceans as well as the continents as a dynamic, mature entity, complete with its salts that were the proper environment for saltwater creatures. So we, on this basis, are forced to conclude that the oceans are very young because of God created them as salt and rivers have added more and more salt since their creation.

They would all have become like the Dead Sea by now if the earth were hundreds of thousands of years old. Take the human race itself. Could the human race have been on this earth hundreds of thousands of years? No, because even if the population growth rate were one-fourth of what it has been in recorded history, there would be so many people now alive that the known universe could not contain them.

Dr. Henry Morris has worked out this formula very carefully in his volume, *Modern Science and Biblical Cosmology*. The fact is that the rarity of human fossils and the rapid growth rate of the human race today points inevitably to a comparatively recent creation of man and a comparatively recent distribution of man since the time of the Great Flood. God created the earth mature, functioning, fully equipped.

God created liquid oceans on this planet and an atmosphere composed basically of the gases as we see them today. Thus our philosophical religious starting point, our basic assumptions are all important as we seek to determine the original state and the true antiquity of God's creation. These facts have been revealed to us by God himself and if we reject his word we find ourselves forever locked within the limitations of our finite and sinful perspective.

God alone holds the key to origins. But are there any clues from the realm of science that point to a relatively recent creation of the universe? Yes there are. Allow me to mention just three or four of these clues.

First, in a remarkable article in the 1971 annual edition of the *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, Dr. Thomas G. Barnes, professor of physics at the University of Texas in El Paso, explains how the rate of decay of the Earth's magnetic field demands a recent origin of our planet in terms of thousands rather than millions or billions of years. Secondly, in the same quarterly, Professor Harold S. Slusher, an astronomer and geophysicist at the University of Texas in El Paso, points out that over 14 million tons of meteoritic dust fall into the Earth's surface from outer space every year. If the Earth were five billion years old, as evolutionary uniformitarian geologists demand, there should be 54 feet of such dust rich in nickel content all over our planet and the ocean floors.

But the fact is there is almost none. The same is true of the moon where astronauts expected to sink deep in moon dust at their first landing but found only a very thin layer on the average of about one quarter of an inch. In the third place, Professor Slusher has pointed out that comets are an integral part of our solar system.

Astronomers agreeing that whenever the solar system began, it had its complete supply of comets as well. However, comets are continually undergoing disintegration from gravitational and radiational effects of the Sun and the planets as they orbit through the solar system. Therefore, all comets would have vanished by now if the solar system were more than 15 to 20,000 years old.

In the spiral arms of galaxies due to differential rotation, the rapid breakup of star clusters, the rapid escape of helium from the Earth's atmosphere, and the hopeless contradictions in ages of rocks determined by the so-called radiological clocks. For additional evidences, I would recommend very highly two recently published volumes by the Presbyterian and Reform Publishing Company entitled, *Why Not*

Creation? and Scientific Studies in Special Creation, edited by Dr. Walter Lamerts, a geneticist from the University of California, containing the best articles of the last decade from the standpoint of scientific creationism on the whole spectrum of problems related to the origin of the world and of the complex things that we find within it. This brings us to the vitally important question, what did God actually create in the beginning? What were the heavens and the earth like when God first brought them into existence? For the sake of human convenience, the Bible divides the heavens into three categories.

We discover in 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 that the Apostle Paul had a unique experience early in his ministry as an apostle. We read, Now it is not expedient for me, doubtless to glory, I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth, such a one caught up to the third heaven.

And I knew such a man whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth, how that he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one will I glory, yet of myself I will not glory, but rather in my infirmities. In other words, that passage clearly states that God's heaven beyond the universe, where His glory is manifested and adapted to the eyes and to the capacities of angelic and human creatures in that realm, we find a third heaven.

Obviously, as we trace through the Bible on this, we discover that from man's viewpoint, God's heaven is the third. Outer space, the universe, is the second heaven. And the first heaven is the atmospheric realm surrounding our planet.

And therefore, as we standing on the planet look upward, we look through two heavens. And beyond that somewhere is God's special manifestation of glory in the third heaven. Now, at the time of creation, in Genesis 1.1, the first heaven had its complete supply of atmospheric gases necessary for life.

It was not methane, ammonia, and hydrogen, as evolutionists must assume for their miracle of chance origin of a speck of life in the ancient oceans. But it had its full balance of nitrogen, oxygen, and the other gases that are unique to this planet. But it was totally dark, because the second heaven of outer space was completely empty.

The sun, moon, and stars had not yet been created. And the special light that God created during the first day, in Genesis 1.3, was not yet in existence. It's not that the heavenly bodies were obscured by heavy cloud blanket, for the waters had not yet been lifted up above the firmament or atmospheric expanse, an event that occurred on the second day of creation.

If the sun and the stars were simply unveiled on the fourth day, rather than being created, as those who hold to the gap theory believe, this idea could have been more clearly expressed by the use of the verb appeared, as we find it in verse 9 of Genesis 1. Let the dry land appear. In other words, if something had been there already, but was veiled or covered, and then unveiled or uncovered it would have appeared. It would not be described as being made.

Those who hold to the gap theory do attempt to make a great distinction between created, which is from the Hebrew verb bara, and made, which is from the Hebrew verb asa. And therefore, in Genesis chapter 1, when we read in verse 16, that God made two great lights, that is, the sun and its reflector, the moon, that God did not actually create them. He simply brought them into function again, in reference to the earth.

He unveiled them. He began to use them. But this distinction is impossible.

Notice, for instance, in verse 21 of Genesis 1. We are told that God created great whales, bara. But then in verse 25, God made the beast of the earth, asa. Surely there is no possible distinction intended here between the way God brought sea creatures into existence and the way He brought land animals into existence.

These are just synonyms. And in this particular chapter, the verb made, asa, which is a broader term than bara, created, the verb made gains its meaning, its particular meaning in this context from the basic verb created, with which the chapter begins. Likewise, when God created man, we read in verse 26, and God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

And the next verse, so God created man in his own image. Obviously, a perfect example of Hebrew parallelism, in which we have a variety of verbs used to convey basically the same idea. A very useful technique, by the way, in literature, because if for some reason the meaning of one of the verbs in the synonymous parallelism is obscure, then we know what the statement means by comparing it to its parallel statement, where a different synonymous verb is used.

So throughout Genesis chapter 1, whatever may be true of other passages in the Bible, the verb made actually means created. It is synonymous with bara, created. Therefore, the text actually says that on the fourth day, and not until the fourth day, did God actually create the sun and the moon and the stars.

And therefore, they were simply not present. They were not in existence at the beginning, and that is why the earth was shrouded in total darkness when God first created it by his word. Part two of our lecture on the origin of the universe.

We have seen that when God first created the heavens and the earth, the first heaven, that is the atmospheric realm, was shrouded in total darkness, but completely equipped with the gases that are still present uniquely on our planet. The second heaven of outer space beyond was totally empty, devoid of any planets, of any stars at all. No sun, no moon.

And therefore, the earth was shrouded in darkness because there were no light sources yet created. The third heaven beyond was populated with hundreds of millions of angelic beings. For we read in Job chapter 38, in this magnificent poetic description of God's creation of our earth, who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest, or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened, or who laid the cornerstone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Sons of God is a technical expression in Hebrew for angels.

B'nai Elohim, directly created beings, or morning stars, to use the parallel. Angelic beings were on hand, and we learn in Daniel chapter 7 and other passages that God created hundreds of millions of these magnificent incorporeal beings as his messengers and agents in the governing of his universe, ministering spirits that are sent forth now to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, Hebrews 1.14. Why did they shout and sing for joy when the earth was first created? Doubtless because they knew something of the fantastic events that would transpire on this planet in the future. They were on hand, therefore, in Genesis 1.1, as part of the heavens that God created, although obviously they were not visible from the standpoint of the earth.

Thus the earth was created with a cool crust capable of supporting liquid oceans, enveloped in an atmosphere appropriate for living things, shrouded in total darkness and spinning on its axis in an empty universe. But do not science and logic demand that the solar system should have preceded the earth? Do not all leading astronomers agree that the earth had to come from the sun or from some proto-sun? If Genesis teaches that the earth was created before the sun, moon, and stars, then Christians who believe the book of Genesis are obviously in serious conflict with evolutionary theory at this point. It's for this reason that many Christians feel that Genesis must be interpreted in such a way as to avoid this conflict.

After all, is it not perfectly clear from astronomical studies that the earth and the other planets did come from some primordial mass of gas and dust? It will be our purpose in the next few minutes to show that this is simply not true. By 1940, all the various encounter or planetesimal theories which postulated the near approach of another star to our Sun, resulting in the drawing off of embryonic planets, had been discarded as hopelessly inadequate explanations of the origin of the solar system. In more recent years, leading astronomers such as von Weizsäcker, Whipple, Spitzer, Urey, Gamow, Hoyle, Kuiper, and others have attempted to avoid the difficulties of the so-called planetesimal theories by returning to a form of nebular hypothesis, whereby the Sun and its planets supposedly condensed out of swirling eddies of cold, dark, interstellar clouds of gas and dust.

How well this currently popular theory succeeds in explaining the solar system in terms of physical, chemical, and mathematical principles alone may be judged by the Christian for himself after considering some of the basic problems which remain to be solved by evolutionary astronomers. First, before any condensation of gas and dust could occur, this nebula, or vast cloud, would have diffused into outer space. Dr. Gerald P. Kuiper, a leading proponent of the evolutionary concept, admits that before gravitational attraction would become significant, the particles would have to be as big as the moon.

We can't see anywhere in the universe dust condensing, and there is a vast amount of interstellar dust. Can you imagine throwing a handful of dust up in the room and seeing it gradually condense into planets? The particles simply are not big enough to exert attraction gravitationally to each other. Second, the theory demands a complex system of roller bearing eddies of gas and dust, but this is impossible because such vortices must remain perfectly intact during essentially the entire period of planetary accretion or growth.

But Dr. Kuiper confesses that, quote, it is difficult to conceive that the beautiful system of vortices would actually have been in existence long enough, even for ten or a hundred years, to get the condensation of the building material for the planets underway, end of quote. Yet the evolutionary theory demands many millions of years. Third, what stopped the process from continuing so that the entire mass of material didn't form one large body? The Sun makes up ninety-nine and six-sevenths percent of the mass of the solar system.

So what would have kept the remaining one-seventh of one percent from falling into the main body? In other words, how could we end up with nine planets that are distinct from the Sun? Fourth, other Suns do not seem to be condensing or developing planetary systems. There is much interstellar material in the vicinity of our Sun, but it's not condensing. Dr. Greenstein of the Mount Wilson Observatory is of the opinion that the known stars rotate so fast that one must conclude that they could never have been formed by a condensation process.

Professor David Laser, professor of astronomy at Harvard University, says that there is no known solution to the problem of the small angular momentum of the Sun, that is, the property that keeps the Sun rotating

and keeps the planets revolving around it. If it had been part of a gaseous proto-galaxy, its angular momentum would have to have been a billion times as much as it now possesses. How it could have lost all but one ten-millionth of one percent of its original angular momentum has never been explained.

You will find Dr. Laser's article on this subject under the heading Cosmogony in the McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology. Fifth, the planets contain less than one percent of the mass of the solar system, but a staggering 98% of its angular momentum. David Bergamini, in the Life Nature Library volume on the universe, observes and I quote, a theory of evolution that fails to account for this peculiar fact is ruled out before it starts, end of quote.

In the sixth place, evolutionary theory cannot explain why seven of the nine planets have direct rotation in reference to their revolution around the Sun, but Venus rotates slowly backwards and Uranus rotates at a 98 degree angle from its orbital plane, even though its orbit inclines less than that of any other planet. In other words, it's only in recent years that we have discovered that while almost all the planets spin in the same direction that they orbit about the Sun, Venus spins backwards while orbiting forwards, and Uranus spins almost horizontally, sidewise, as it moves in its beautiful orbit about the Sun. Professor Laser of Harvard states, quote, it is an open question whether this state of affairs is consistent with current theories of the origin of the solar system.

No one can imagine, for example, how these planets could have been bumped and thus have their rotational direction reversed. Can you imagine the momentum of these enormous masses of matter suspended in the vacuum of outer space having their direction suddenly changed without being totally destroyed? On the basis of a gyroscope or a spinning top, the forces involved are almost beyond imagination. In the seventh place, evolution has no answer to the problem of retrograde satellites, that is, moons that orbit backwards around their mother planets while the planet orbits forward around the Sun.

Of the 32 moons in our solar system, 11 are orbiting in directions opposite that of the rotational direction of their mother planets. Of special interest is Triton, the inner of Neptune's two moons, which has nearly twice the mass of our moon, its diameter being 3,000 miles, and which revolves backwards every six days in a nearly circular orbit only 220,000 miles from Neptune, closer than our moon is to the Earth. Dr. Isaac Asimov, as well as most evolutionary cosmogonists, believe that Triton was, quote, thrown away from that planet by some cosmic collision or some other accident, end of quote, and that later on Neptune recaptured its lost moon into a retrograde backward orbit by a, quote, similar accident, end of quote.

This is from his book, The Intelligent Man's Guide to Science, Volume 1, page 78. But how many such accidents may one be permitted to invoke to prop up a theory already tottering under the weight of its own unproved assumptions? Dr. Asimov further states that retrograde satellites are, quote, minor exceptions, end of quote, to the general rule of satellite orbits. However, 11 out of 32 moons having retrograde orbits can hardly be brushed aside as minor exceptions.

Eighth, what can evolution really offer as an explanation of the angular momentum in these satellite systems? Let's permit Professor Laser of Harvard to state the problem, quote, except in the Earth-Moon system, which is exceptional in other respects as well, the mother planet, the primary, carries the bulk of the angular momentum instead of the satellites, the moons. This circumstance aggravates the theoretical difficulty presented by the slow rotation of the Sun, for if the Sun has somehow managed to get rid of the angular momentum it would be expected to have, according to the nebular hypothesis, why have the planets not done likewise, end of quote. Ninth, in spite of some ingenious and very complicated theories, it

has never satisfactorily been shown why the Earth is composed of such heavy elements.

In the words of Professor Fred Hoyle of Cambridge University, and I quote, apart from hydrogen and helium all other elements are extremely rare all over the universe. In the Sun they amount to only about 1% of the total mass. The contrast with the heavy elements which predominate in the Earth brings out two important points.

First, we see that material torn from the Sun would not be at all suitable for the formation of the planets as we know them. Its composition would be hopelessly wrong. And our second point, in this contrast, is that it is the Sun that is normal, and the Earth that is the freak.

The interstellar, gas, and most of the stars are composed of material like the Sun, not the Earth. You must understand that cosmically speaking, the room you are now sitting in is made of the wrong stuff. You yourself are a rarity.

You are a cosmic collector's piece, end of quote. In other words, our planet, with its heavy core of nickel and iron, cannot be explained as to its origin in this universe. We might add, as a final point, that the atmospheres of the planets are all different from each other and from that of the Sun.

Venus has an atmosphere of carbon dioxide. The Earth has an atmosphere mostly of nitrogen and partly of oxygen. Jupiter and Saturn have atmospheres of methane and ammonia.

And nobody really knows why and how these planets came equipped with such unique and distinct atmospheres. All of which illustrates a basic point in our analysis of the evolutionary theory. Namely, the more you know about the facts, the details, the less you can take seriously the evolutionary hypothesis.

Evolutionism thrives best in a realm of low visibility, as we move away from facts and fill in the blanks with our human speculations. The most rational way to explain the origin of our vastly complex solar system is in terms of a direct creation by God. And if this is a reasonable position within the revealed framework of biblical theism, in view of the conspicuous failures of evolutionary alternatives, may not the supernatural origin of the astronomic system that we know the best, namely our own solar system, serve as a model for the supernatural origin of the stellar systems that lie beyond our own.

We know that our solar system could not have evolved. It had to be created. And therefore it is highly reasonable, knowing as we do, the omnipotence of our God and something of his methods as revealed in the Bible.

To insist that the whole universe beyond was created directly by his word as a dynamic functioning entity, like the earth and the other eight planets and the sun and the moons. In other words, if God created ex nihilo, the two great lights that rule the day and night, he could also have created ex nihilo the stars also. In the words of Dr. Paul Zimmerman, quote, the biblical account of creation by Almighty God has not been disproved by science.

It remains today, even from the viewpoint of reason, the most logical, believable account of the beginning of the earth and the rest of the universe. End of quote. Why did God create the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day rather than the first day? One possible explanation is that in this way God has emphasized the supreme importance of the earth among all astronomical bodies in the universe.

In spite of its comparative smallness of size, even among the nine planets, to say nothing of the stars themselves, it is nonetheless absolutely unique in God's eternal purposes. It was on this planet that God placed man, created in his image and likeness, to exercise dominion and to worship him. It was to this planet that God came in the person of his son 1,900 years ago to become a permanent member of the human race and to die for human sins upon a rugged cross.

And it will be to this same planet that this great God and Savior will return again to establish his kingdom. Because of its positional superiority in the spiritual order of things, therefore, the earth was formed first and then the stellar systems, just as Adam was first formed, then Eve. Another possible reason for this order of events is that God, by this means, made it clear that the earth and life upon it do not owe their existence to the greater light that rules the day, namely the sun, but rather to God himself.

In other words, God was perfectly able to create and take care of the earth and even living things upon it, fruit trees included, without the help of the sun. Apart from the scriptures, of course, this would hardly be an obvious fact to mankind. In ancient times, and even in some parts of the world today, great nations actually worshiped the sun as a god.

In Egypt he was called Ray, and in Babylon he was known as Shamash. The Aztecs, at their great temple of Teotihuacan, worshiped a sun god and offered human sacrifices to sustain and please him. After all, such worship seemed quite reasonable in view of the fact that the sun provided light, warmth, and apparently life itself.

Even the Jews were greatly tempted to enter into such worship, as may be judged by such passages as Deuteronomy 4.19 and Deuteronomy 17.3. And even Job, that great patriarch of old, frankly confessed, If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand, that is, in secret homage or worship, this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge. Why? For I should have denied the God that is above. Job chapter 31, verses 26 to 28.

Job was surrounded by sun and moon worshipers in his day. You say, well, at least nobody does that in the civilized world anymore. Are you sure? Perhaps it's not inappropriate to suggest that the evolutionary theory provides a modern and subtle counterpart to the ancient sun worship cult, even though men do not bow down before an altar dedicated to the sun in a temple with priests.

We have to face the fact that in all of our science textbooks dealing with ultimate origins, in all of the classrooms of our great universities, we find scientists boldly asserting that we can trace our origin to the sun or to a proto-sun, and if we live, move, and have our being exclusively through its boundless blessings and provisions, then it is our God. The creation account in Genesis completely undermines all such blasphemies by putting the sun in a secondary position in reference to the earth. It's not only a creature of God, but also a servant to man, the crown of God's creation.

But if the sun, moon, and stars are not ultimately essential to the earth's existence, then why did God create them? Why didn't God keep the original system of simply one light source somewhere in the universe in reference to which the earth went through its night-day cycle? Three basic reasons for the creation of our present astronomic system are listed in Genesis 1.4. They are for lights, for a calendar, and for signs. As lights, they replace the special and temporary light of the first three days and shed light at night on man's pathway as well as by day.

As a calendar, they are greatly improved over the first system, because now we have with the sun, the moon, the planets, the stars, a calendar that can divide seasons, days, and years, and even centuries, and enable men to plan their work accurately to the distant future to accomplish God's purpose for man on earth as originally intended. And as signs, they teach and ever remind men of vastly important spiritual truths concerning the Creator. They are not there to frighten men like UFOs that supposedly indicate the hostile intent of intelligent beings on other planets or in other worlds.

They're not for astrology to determine for us what we will do tomorrow or the next day or whether or not we were born under a lucky star. No, in Jeremiah chapter 10 verse 2, we are warned, fear not the signs of the heavens as the heathen fear them, for they are afraid of them. No, God didn't create them for that purpose.

David learned from the heavens the transcendence of God and his own comparative nothingness. When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him? Psalm 8 verse 3. Psalm 19, the heavens do what? Declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day showeth knowledge.

Speech is heard in a voiceless manner as the message goes out day and night concerning the glory and wisdom of God. The Apostle Paul insisted that men are utterly without excuse for their idolatries, for the things that are made give clear testimony to the everlasting power and divinity of the Creator. Romans 1 20.

Apparently the sun, moon, and stars more effectively accomplish these purposes than one great light source could have. There need be no other reason for their existence than this threefold ministry to man. But you might ask, would this not have been an unnecessary waste of God's creative energies to create all these billions of island universes and galaxies just for men to look at? The answer is given in Isaiah chapter 40 verse 28.

Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard? The everlasting God, Jehovah, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary. There is no searching of his understanding. God simply spoke and the universe came into existence.

It took no more work for God to create a billion galaxies than to create one planet. In fact, as David put it, the heavens are the work of God's fingers. God spoke, it was done.

And when they have fulfilled their God-intended purpose, these heavens with all their suns and moons will flee away from his face and no place will be found for them. Revelation 20 verse 11. The eternal city will have no need of the sun or moon to shine in it, for the glory of God will lighten it and the Lord Jesus Christ will be the lamp of that city.

Revelation 21-23 and Revelation 22 verse 5. It is Christ and his word, therefore, that must be our final guide as we seek to understand the origin, the meaning, and the destiny of the heavens and the earth.

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