

So You Say, “The Big Bang Never Happened!”

“By faith we understand that the whole created order was fashioned by the command of God.” (Hebrews 11:3)

There has of late been a shift in the strategy of young-earth creationists in their apologetic challenge to atheistic materialism. Until recently, their attacks focused directly on undermining the foundations of the Darwinian paradigm, including 1) the utter lack of transitional remains in the fossil record of the history of life, 2) the immensity of the challenge of non-living material naturalistically “evolving” to become life of even a most simple kind (technically the Darwinian change-mechanism can’t even work *until* there exists life to be changed), 3) the challenge of blind processes (having no foresight or goal) producing, step-by-step, irreducibly complex machines (e.g. the stator rotator on a flagellum), and 4) the reality of enormous amounts of information laden within in the DNA of even the most primitive life forms discovered. I agree that these four challenges carry enormous weight, even though I do not agree with certain aspects of their conclusions.

Just recently, certain leading young-earth creationists have, as late-comers, significantly expanded their apologetic strategy into the whole new area of astronomy. For many old-earth creationist Christians, “cosmology” (the scientific study of the cosmos) and “cosmogony” (the scientific study of the *beginnings* of the same) has, as a branch of knowledge, become a very effective source of scientific evidence supporting the existence of the God of the Bible. Young-earth creationists, on the other hand, have a far different assessment of the same evidence, particularly with respect both to the status of the evidence *for* a Big Bang, and also the implications of the Big Bang for the question of God’s existence.

I took the opportunity a few months ago to carefully study a lecture on you tube titled, “*The Big Bang Never Happened,*” by scientist Spike Psarris. He claims to have previously been an atheist, but apart from any Christian influence on his thinking about cosmology, he says came to believe in a young-earth view of creation strictly on the basis of the scientific evidence alone. The video of his presentation had been recommended to me as her proof that a straight scientific examination of the cosmos, free from “evolutionary” assumptions, points to a cosmos that is between six and eight thousand years old.

In order to untangle Psarris’ train of thought and the consequent “conclusions” he draws within his presentation; it is necessary that viewers of the video make a distinction between the two concepts that are labeled “science” and “scientism.” “Science,” can be defined as either a particular *field* of study within the *material, natural* world (physics, astronomy, geology, zoology, botany, etc.), or as the systematic *study* of the natural order (called the “scientific method”). By contrast, “scientism” is NOT science, but instead, a philosophical belief about the extent and nature of reality as a whole. *Scientism* as a philosophy, emphatically holds that material entities (matter and energy) are the only things that exist. *Scientism* denies any reality to spiritual existence (Spirit, spirituality, mind, personality, etc.). It is precisely because this philosophical position believes (hence: the suffix “ism”) that only material things exist (hence: the root word “science”) that it is called “scientism.”

Dr. Psarris completely confuses these two concepts. Whether this confusion is sourced in personal ignorance, or whether it is deliberate, I cannot tell. I shudder to imagine him to *deliberately* set out to deceive non-scientists. Neither error, however, can it bode well for a lecturer arguing against the Big Bang on the authority of his scientific credentials as a physicist, by means of such confusing logic. For example, Psarris repeatedly asserts that the Big Bang model is atheistic and explicitly anti-supernatural on the grounds that naturalism is the only allowable explanation for the events it purports to describe. The logical problem with that objection is simple. While it must be granted that certain cosmologists indeed allow only *naturalistic* explanations (thereby embracing the “scientism” described

above), it emphatically does NOT logically follow from their *philosophical* prejudices that the broadly-acknowledged scientifically-attained data concerning the history of the universe is false.

The roster of that very data, ascertained by observation, which supports the absolute beginning of the universe out of nothing in the finite past, includes the cosmic pattern that 1) all galaxies are flying apart from one another, 2) that they are measurably farther apart now than they were in the past, 3) and that this expansion has been slowing down, 4) even as the temperature of the universe is cooling off. 5) We can also observe the background radiation from the initial “blast” (which was not chaotic, but highly controlled) at its beginning, 6) which reveals (with increasing visual detail as instruments improve) the disconformity in the radiation at the level that was required in order for stars to form. Were this unfolding development reversed like rewinding a movie, that same pattern would take all of material existence back to a zero-volume singularity, the Big Bang, which was the absolute beginning of all things.

Dr. Psarris asserts that the Big Bang fails because, as an attempted scientific *explanation*, it violates the first law of thermodynamics (that matter is neither created nor destroyed). This is one of the most obvious illustrations of the nature of his confusion. The six points of observational data listed in the last posting do NOT serve to scientifically *explain* the beginning of the universe. Indeed they cannot, for the reason that they are themselves part of the very object of study which demands an explanation. Rather than providing an explanation, the data instead identifies a problem, or rather the challenge (the existence of the cosmos, complete with a history trail which leads all the way back to its absolute beginning), that is laid bare by the tools of scientific investigation. So rather than offering an explanation, the Big Bang poses a problem which *demand*s an explanation—an explanation, furthermore, which science can never, and therefore will never, even in principle provide.

Psarris repeatedly asserts in his lecture that the Big Bang is materialistic (and atheistic) by its very nature. That is both logically nonsense, and it is historically false. The Big Bang indeed highlights the question for which only the *transcendent* God (one who stands completely *outside* of the natural order) can provide as a possible answer. In short, the Big Bang absolutely demands the existence of the God of the Holy Bible God as the creative Agent who brought it all into being. For this reason, it is significant that in truth (contrary to Psarris) the first opponents of the Big Bang were atheists, not Christians. Albert Einstein, Sir Arthur Eddington, and Sir Fred Hoyle, as atheists, initially resisted the Big Bang precisely because its implications pointed to the notion of a transcendent creator. It was only with resistance that the first two came to embrace the Big Bang because of the weight of evidence. It is a controversial matter, as far as I can tell, whether Hoyle ever came to accept the Big Bang. But what is certain about even him is that his long-standing resistance to it had been based precisely on its theological implications.

In summary, Dr. Psarris’ repeated attempts to discredit the historicity of the Big Bang on assertion that it violates the laws of science fail. Not only has he involved his audience in a confusion of categories (description vs. explanation), he also built his objection to the Big Bang on the “red herring” fallacy. To state as he has that the Big Bang can’t scientifically *explain* the origin of the cosmos, accomplishes nothing whatsoever to undermine the status of the scientific data that is alleged to support that beginning. Raw data cannot be dismissed out of hand simply on the charge that it apparently explains nothing. Psarris likewise has done nothing to invalidate the data (partially listed in the previous posting) that he philosophically brushes to the side. The big Bang did indeed happen. That it did, raises the kinds of questions only the Bible can provide (Genesis 1:1, Hebrews 11:3. Etc).

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