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Distant Stars and a Young Earth?

I am often asked the question of whether the stars are as far away as we are being told. The reason for this curiosity is that if the stars are millions of light years away, then the earth would have to be millions of years old in order for us to see the light. One light year is the distance light would travel in one year and thus, it would take millions of years for the light to reach us.

There are some questions as to the validity of the measurements of these distances, however, there is little question that they are indeed vast light years away. Probably the most typical and most Scriptural explanation is that God created a world in a mature state. For example, the trees had fruit on them the moment they were created, Adam and Eve were walking and talking and the rocks must have have also had the appearance of age. Why then, would God not make the light from the stars already reaching the earth?

Some believe this is not a good argument for a young earth because too much faith is involved. For myself, faith is the key issue no matter what explanation is used, evolutionary or otherwise. Critics argue that since nova's (stars that explode) leave an image of the explosion within its light, the explosion had to

have taken place after the unexploded body was formed. Perhaps, however, God could easily have created such imagery immediately as well. I guess it still is the chicken or the egg argument except in this case, which came first, the explosion or the body that exploded. My faith reasons that God could have created an explosion right away. For those who do not accept this mature creation as a good explanation, the following might be of help.

There are also some very good scientific explanations that may also fit well with Scripture. The speed of light is assumed to be at a constant 186,000 miles per SECOND. That is a tremendous speed, however, is it really a constant one? In the past 300 years the results of over 150 speed measurements using 16 different techniques have been published. Astronomer, Barry Setterfield of Australia has compiled this information in his book, *The Velocity of Light and the Age of the Universe* (1983). Dr. Setterfield has shown that the "velocity of light had decreased so rapidly that experimental error cannot explain it." So what is the explanation?

In 1927, French astronomer M. E. J. Gheury de Bray used 75 years of measurements to come to the conclusion that the speed of light was slowing down. His results were even published in *Nature* in April of 1931 and again in March of 1934. In one article de Bray wrote, "There are twenty two coincidences in favor of a decrease of the velocity of light, while there is not a single one against it" (April, 1931). Modern studies also show this decrease in speed, however, the further one goes back, the greater the decrease. The pattern of this apparent decrease seems to be exponential. Therefore, the further one goes back in time the much greater the speed of light becomes. In fact, so great that if the stars are millions of light years away as proposed, it would easily reach the earth in hundreds if not thousands of years.

For over half a century we have known that the more distant a star is the more its light is shifted to the red end of the spectrum. This

fact, may also support the idea of a decreasing speed of light. If the speed of light has changed, so must the other "properties" of matter. For example, the radioisotope dating methods that we have discussed in other newsletters would be affected greatly by this change in light. We have shown many problems and assumptions involved with these dating methods, but here is one more nail for its coffin. If the speed of light would decrease by half of its original velocity, the radiometric dating would show much older ages than reality would accept because in the past the decay rate would have been much greater than it is today, therefore, leaving us with what appears to be old rocks.

Another interesting observation was made from the Setterfield data. The decay rate of the speed of light seemed to stop in 1960. Therefore, the evidence showed a consistent decrease in light speed for almost 300 years until 1960 and then it remained constant. Interestingly, 1960 marked the beginning of using atomic clocks to measure light speed. However, since atomic clocks and all atomic velocities theoretically change with the speed of light, a constant light speed should be seen whether it is really decreasing or not. This certainly could explain the sudden change in data in 1960.

Still other support for this decrease in light speed comes from Einstein who predicted that light would bend as it passed by bodies having any gravitational pull. Astronomers have seen that double or triple images have been seen from many very distant stars. This has been explained by saying that each image reached the earth by taking a different route. It seems that the light was split as it went around the galaxies in its path. The light reaching the earth was said to be from the same star because its chemical composition and red shift were identical. The question then becomes, how can one split images of light traveling millions of light years around large galaxies and yet meet its companion image at earth at almost the same time? (Under a year apart). If this light had traveled much

faster in the past, that would explain why it could take different paths but meet up again with only a short time delay between them. This is exactly what Scripture says. "In the beginning You laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing You will change them and they will be discarded (Psalms 102:25-26). What Scripture says is also a known and accepted law of science, the second law of thermodynamics which states that all things are decaying and wearing out. This would also include the heavens. Nothing remains constant, even the speed of light!

Once again science can easily support the Scriptures. The problem is too many people are using science to interpret the Scriptures rather than letting the Scriptures interpret the sciences. God is not against science, in fact, in a way, God is science. All the scientific laws are merely man's understanding of God's creative order. God is not a LORD of chaos but of orderliness. It would have been considered a miracle for man to walk on the moon 100 years ago. But now that God has let us understand the orderliness of math, gravity etc., this miracle has been redefined as science. I often wonder if we won't slap our hands against our forehead when we get to heaven, saying, "that's how He changed water into wine." This miracle may have a scientific answer, we just have not been blessed with the knowledge of how God used it. Understanding scientific laws are merely understanding God that much more. One can only imagine how far we would now be technologically speaking if man were not so stubborn and would only go to God for our wisdom and insight, not just for religious ideas but even scientific. As it is stated by Paul, "For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength" (1 Cor 1:25).

It is no accident that many modern inventions like the MRI and the stealth invisible radar were invented by Bible believing, Jesus

loving Creationists. May God grant you the wisdom He has to offer you in all parts of your life on this young earth.