

INTRODUCTION

Is God Dead? Did God ever exist? Or is the concept just a figure of mankind's imagination?

These crucial questions have posed themselves to humans since the awakening of human consciousness. In *God: Fact or Fiction?* I explore such diverse subjects as science; micro and macro-evolution – hence Natural Selection, speciation and variation; and God. Do they co-exist? Are they diametrically opposed? Are any of them obsolete? Is religion just a crutch for the weak to grasp hold of, while the intellectuals don't need to believe in God?

Through *God: Fact or Fiction?* you will draw your own conclusions as to whether God exists as I reveal the relationship between science, religion and the origin of life. Many think that never the twain should meet, but actually you should discover quite a harmony by the time you reach the end of this book.

This is an opportunity to discover where the majority of the evidence resides as science has exploded exponentially in the last century. It has uncovered wonderful truths about our world and the universe during the 20th Century while simultaneously developing areas of knowledge which make many tremble.

In the process of writing this book, I have felt myself drawn towards utilizing philosophy more and more. Therefore you will find a touch of it within Part 1 and much more in Part 2. I'm sure you will be appreciative that this has been included to such a degree. It has proved to be such an important part of the evidence towards the existence of a creator. Here it is important to note that the evidence I'm using throughout the book should be taken in its entirety. Like the example of a court case utilized in this book, it's important to look at the big picture, and use all the evidence to prove beyond reasonable doubt that a Creator exists.

Part 1

Often it is perceived that science has been at loggerheads with religion. The Enlightenment provided the opportunity for the attack on religion and as a result there was a backlash from the days when science and a belief in a creator/designer were intertwined. As a result science seemed to throw God out the door, followed by a swift kick. Science has explained a lot of the unknown which formerly was attributed to God's direct intervention and control. In effect, as science discovered the natural laws and processes there was a swing from one extreme to the next – assign everything to God, then assign nothing to God. But worse, science seemed to say, “There is no God!” But as you will read in this book, there is a swing away from the extreme view of “There is no God!” What is this view? You will soon discover the relationship between science, religion and the origin of life.

Maybe the subject of science brings back fond memories, or maybe it makes you sweat. We are drawn back to those experiments with the Bunsen Burners and trying to blow up the lab, or worse for those squeamish types when you who had to endure the dissection of frogs in the science of biology.

In the first section of *God: Fact or Fiction* we will delve into the very beginning of the universe; the intricacies of evolution; the question whether a creator or God exists; the possibilities for the random occurrence of life; and the explanation of Intelligent Design. Furthermore we will explore such diverse aspects of science such as:

- the universe and the relationship of space, time, matter and energy with its inception. The wonderful and awe inspiring facts of our universe, including it's size and composition; what science has revealed about the distance of certain planets from us; what delicate intricacies were needed for the origin of life – now these are fascinating!; and we delve into whether the universe could in fact be expanding eternally?
- the theory of intelligent design with irreducible complexity (explained in detail).

- the wonder of the human cell, proteins and different aspects of biochemistry. Prepare to be astounded by the information rich capacity of DNA.
- Paleontology and whether the fossil record has the evidence for macro evolution.
- the amazing secular evidence to the actual existence of Jesus, and some of the historical figures revealed in Sacred Scripture.
- the fascinating discoveries made through archaeology which substantiate different parts of Sacred Scripture.

The labyrinth-type complexity within nature will engross and astound you, bringing you deeper into the amazing intricacies and inherent order residing there.

Moreover, you will traverse the theories of man evolving from apes and an ancestry even dating back to amphibians and bacteria. As a consequence we naturally ask, “Does this theory exclude God? You will ponder the apparent answers of the feasibility of life happening by chance, without a creator. Furthermore, you will learn what mathematicians have deduced in relation to the mathematical possibility of life evolving by chance. Plus the revelation of whether macro-evolution and God are compatible will be discussed. Within the subjects of Astronomy and Biochemistry I seek to open an wonderful world of intricate order, design and details that will astound you.

Part 2

The second section looks at such diverse subjects encompassing religion such as:

- truth being subjective or objective
- whether evil exists
- can we prove the existence of God?

- whether there is historical evidence that supports places, events or people revealed in Sacred Scripture – includes sources taken from extra-biblical historical records
- aspects that distinguish us from the animal kingdom?
- if there is a God, what is this God like? Has God revealed himself? Do we reflect images of such a God?
- what is a miracle? Do they still happen?
- do we need Faith, Reason, Revelation and Experience?

There are many different perceptions of the word religion and what it entails. But simply religion is the practice of one's belief in a Creator. Though sadly the concept is now being widened to a belief in anything, which astonishingly includes Jedi, being a class of religion on the New Zealand Census papers.

Therefore you can discover how both religion and science can help you ponder on the likelihood of the existence of God and whether such a God can or does intervene in the world today.

Throughout this book when talking about the Bible, I use the term Sacred Scripture, as this reveals a deeper meaning to such an inspiring book, which is in fact the best selling book ever.

Within *God: Fact or Fiction?* I use humour and wit to bring relief to what may be heavy and challenge subjects in parts of the book. Plus, it's so much part of me that I couldn't omit this part of my personality.

Writing is developing into a career for me. Therefore I have another five or so concepts of books I would like to write, so please do drop me a line so that I can keep you up-to-date with what is on the publication line. Furthermore I really value feedback. If you found this book as inspiring as stated by Dr. Michael Behe on the back cover, or you thought I should include, or change some aspect, then please don't hesitate to send me an email at brendanr@ihug.co.nz or write to the address you'll find in the author's note at the back of *God: Fact or Fiction?*

The research undertaken to write this book has been exciting and fascinating. Hopefully, you will be able to capture the brilliance and

wonder of some of the enthralling discoveries that I have researched. Like me, you may have been ill-informed concerning some of these discoveries, but once you reach the end of this book, it is my desire that you will be equipped to set out on your journey to undertake your own research, and that the door to many wonderful aspects of the relationship of nature, science and religion, will be opened to you. Enjoy!

CHAPTER 1

CATAclysmic BANG

A brilliant burst of light flashes through the darkness. Black metamorphoses into a resplendent surreal glowing light. But there is nothing to be seen in the light or around it; the stillness is as haunting as a deserted island. Then a thunderous noise shatters the silence; a gigantic explosion rips through the solace, and rolling clouds of matter explode through the now expanding universe, followed by billions of additional explosions. If you were a witness of such an event, you would be filled with awe and maybe a touch of fear. The sound would be deafening as you observe the very universe exploding into being. With this sudden beginning the laws of nature have been set in motion, and wait to be discovered. But if you knew what was coming you would be engulfed with a burning enthusiasm, and an electrifying and somewhat agonizing anticipation.

But now a period of millions of years passes; fast-forwarded in time the universe continues to take shape, transforming before your eyes. The cosmic dust whirls around within the newly formed space, dazzling and mesmerizing as it forms into clumps, and then planets. The planet earth morphs from a barren landscape, to a world with the vast sea of blueness; brown and green colours canvas the planet; you are in awe as you gaze from your vantage point above. But then you are taken on a journey down to earth, still in this fast-forward motion. Now you marvel as life roams the earth; with prehistoric beasts, such as dinosaurs, roaming the land, and after perhaps millions of years, birds, and the vast animal kingdom begins to appear with tigers, bears, mammoths, elephants, etc; and then humans. You would be observing the dawn of life!

This illustration of the nucleus, or heart of life is referred to as the Big Bang. What a rather insignificant name to give such an incredible

explosion; the gigantic bang, or the cataclysmic bang would be more fitting.

Expansion of the Universe

In California, during the year 1929, Edwin Hubble gazed at the universe through the humble version of the telescope. In his observations Hubble discovered that whatever direction he explored, the galaxies of the universe are moving away from us. He also discovered that the farther the galaxies are from us, the faster they are moving away. In other words the universe is in fact expanding.

But this revelation wasn't new to science. It had its birth with Einstein's formulation of the theory of relativity. In 1922 Alexander Friedmann, the Russian mathematician, used Einstein's theory to explain that the universe must be expanding or contracting, but can't be static. As a result Theoreticians concluded that if the universe is expanding then it was once smaller, and that all the matter and energy in the universe used to be concentrated only in the one place. From that place, which was an infinitely small point, exploded into being the origin of the universe with the force of an atomic-like explosion; and so formed all the matter that became the stars, planets, rocks, and living organisms of the universe.

The question we are faced with, the quest for life, which captivates, and galvanizes mankind, concerns the origin of life: how did this Big Bang occur? Was it by chance? Or was there a cause, a designer of this Big Bang and the subsequent formation of life? This question has even haunted mankind as some have spent a lifetime proving there was no God, and consequently on their deathbed had doubts about their disbelief, and tortured themselves because they couldn't make the final step to reach out to God for help, as if their pride was the final hurdle to overcome.

Background Radiation

Two Physicist's Ralph Alpher and Robert Herman, helped form the Big Bang Theory. They also formulated the belief that if the Big Bang happened it could be scientifically confirmed. In 1948 Alpher and Herman calculated that if the universe started by such an explosion, then a residue of the incredible heat created should still exist. This heat would in fact be a cosmic radiation that would be pervading the entire universe.

Because we have a good idea of how much helium was 'made' from hydrogen when the Universe was young, and because we know a good deal about the nuclear reactions and the conditions required to allow this kind of fusion, by 1950 it was possible to get a rough idea of what happened to the Universe as it expanded away from the initial singularity. ¹

The radiation residue permeating the universe was weak but could be easily detected with simple radio telescopes at microwave frequencies. Therefore in 1964 the Russian Scientist, Yakov Zeldovich and his associates, ID Novikov and AG Doroshkevich proposed that the existence of the radiation might be tested by radio astronomy, a radio telescope.

At Bell Laboratories, Holmdel, New Jersey, two astronomers, Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson were using a radio telescope, a horn antenna. Though they were unaware of the work of the Russians, they were agitated because a perplexing static that they could not explain or eradicate, was obstructing their work using the horn antenna. Strangely, the sound did not vary, no matter what direction they aimed the antenna, or what time of day or season it was. The sound did not change in relation to the antenna's position, or that of the earth, the solar system, or the entire galaxy (the Milky Way). In fact, the sound appeared to be coming from the entire universe.²

The unevenness of the sound coming from every direction was vivid evidence that it indeed permeated the entire universe. However it was too even; the background radiation was apparently the same emanating from every direction.

The solution to this quandary came when a satellite was launched in 1989. It was capable of detecting unevenness in the cosmic background radiation. Therefore it was named, the “Cosmic Background Explorer”. The mission to detect the background radiation was such a success that the satellite detected the ripples (variations), in the temperature of the background radiation (light, radio and other electromagnetic waves). This success led George Smoot, the leader of the mission, to exclaim, **“If you’re religious, it’s like looking at God.”**³

Big Crunch

Scientists have deduced two possibilities regarding the future of the universe. The first, that the universe will expand forever. The other includes a component which is much scarier and would change the universe as we know it.

The Big Crunch Theory expounds that the universe will expand to a certain distance due to the consumption of available energy. Depending on whether there is enough matter, eventually gravity will pull harder and overcome the expansion; hence the expansion of the universe will slow to a halt. As a result the universe will collapse faster and faster under the incredible contraction until it is squashed into another explosion, another Big Bang. Then maybe it will expand again, and thus the Big Bang, Big Crunch cycle would be repeated forever. The scientist, Carl Sagan is a trumpeter of such a theory, believing in its eternal process. He likens it to an accordion opening and closing.⁴

Astronomers conducted tests to ascertain whether there was enough matter in the universe for the Big Crunch, and the results have been startling:

After four year’s work, a six-man team of British, Australian and Chinese astronomers concluded that the mean density of matter in the Universe is only 14% of that required for the Universe to collapse back on itself.⁵

Their conclusion was that the Big Crunch theory was flawed. Harold Slusher, author, painstakingly illustrates another defect and the effect that the theory has on evolutionist astronomers:

We can calculate the amount of gravity that must be present to keep the galaxies together. Knowing the amount of gravity in turn allows us to calculate the amount of mass it would take to hold the clusters together. The result has surprised and astonished evolutionist astronomers. In the Coma Cluster the mass is too small to counterbalance the velocity dispersion by a factor of seven. In other words, for every 7 kilograms of mass necessary to hold the cluster together, only one kilogram can be accounted for. This is not a trivial matter. *There is only fourteen percent of the matter in the cluster to stay together. Astronomers have looked "high and low" for this "missing mass", but it is nowhere to be found.* Things get worse in this search when clusters other than the Coma Cluster are studied; from two to ten times the needed mass is "missing" for many. For the Virgo Cluster, it turns out that there should be fifty times more mass present than is observed. Ninety-eight percent of the mass expected is not found.⁵

Why can only one seventh of the amount of matter required to hold the universe together be detected? This incredible discrepancy is leaving evolutionist astronomers baffled, and perhaps a bit afraid.

Is there matter in existence that cannot be detected or calculated? And if there is such an undetected matter is God the creator of it?

How Now Shall We Live by Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, refutes such a theory as the Big Crunch and the notion that the universe could have been in existence forever. He uses entropy to refute Sagan:

Sagan's speculation runs up against the basic laws of physics: Even an oscillating universe would use up the available energy in each cycle, and it would eventually run down. The second law of thermodynamics, the law of decay, shoots down any notion of an eternal universe. (The energy described here is energy available for work, not total energy.)⁷

Big Bang Expansion Rate

Stephen Davis, author, reveals the fine tuning needed for there even to have been a Big Bang and the formation of stars and galaxies:

Galaxies (and thus stars, and thus planets) would have been impossible had the expansion rate and the total mass of the universe not been finely tuned to each other. Too rapid a rate of expansion relative to the total mass would have overpowered the gravitational attraction of the various bits of matter to each other, and no gases could have been formed, let alone the galaxies that the gases later became. Too slow a rate of expansion relative to the total mass would have caused too much gravitational attraction, and the universe would have collapsed back into itself billions of years ago. The expansion rate lies perilously close to the borderline between recollapse into a crunch and total dispersal of all matter.⁸

Philosopher of science, J.P Moreland explains acutely the fine-tuning needed. He says, “A reduction by one part in a million million would have led to collapse before the temperature could fall below ten thousand degrees. An early increase by one part in a million would have prevented the growth of galaxies, stars, and planets.”⁹.

Big Bang Vs Naturalism

The reality of the Big Bang theory, “deals a near fatal blow to naturalistic philosophy”¹⁰ Those who followed naturalist philosophy believed that an unbroken cause and effect could be traced back forever. However, their theory was extinguished by the Big Bang theory. Resistance has swept through the naturalist community of scientists; the physicist Arthur Eddington summed up what many of his colleagues felt, that the idea of a beginning is philosophically “repugnant”.¹¹

A definite beginning is repugnant to those who have hatred against a creator. It forces them to face the philosophical, and religious question: what existed before the Big Bang?

They are faced with the fact the Big Bang happened from an infinitely small point. It is the smallest point in physics, 10^{-43} . From this infinitely small point the universe came into being, and continues to expand. What is so exciting about this theory is that this infinitely small point is equivalent to nothing. Therefore the Big Bang happened from nothing. From this point, the universe was given its birth, and so were space, time, matter and energy.¹² As there must be a first cause of an event then whatever caused this space, time, matter and energy must have been outside these components. Therefore this points either to a Creator, and therefore God, or to an alien or spaceman in the 21st dimension. Scientists hold more to the likelihood of a Creator being the cause. This concept of creation from nothing, fits hand-in-glove-like, to the Christian doctrine Ex Nihilo, in which material and spiritual things are produced by God from nothing. Therefore with the Big Bang God creates from nothing.

Some philosophers and scientists who try to disprove God, insist that if God exists then the beginning of the universe shows that God is just a first cause that started things off, and has left the world to self-exist. There you go, a windup creation.

However as you will discover in this book, this is partly true. God has created the world to self-exist but only after creating the foundational nature (birds, animals and humans, plants, etc) and the laws of nature (e.g. gravity, and the workings of the human cell and DNA); He created nature itself – time, space, matter and energy, but He can and does intervene in the Universe. I will elaborate on this throughout *God: Fact or Fiction?* – especially in the chapters *On the Wings of Faith and Reason* and *Miracles Transcending Time*.

St Augustine of Hippo elaborates upon the origin of time concept:

Time does not exist without some movement and transition ... Then assuredly the world was made not in time, but simultaneously with time.

For that which is made in time is made both after and before some time – after that which is past, before that which is future.¹³

Eternal Universe?

The Big Bang theory and the fact that the universe is continuing to expand are exhilarating revelations. It does not disprove a creator or a designer of the universe, but in fact quite the opposite; and the fact that the universe is expanding proves that it had to begin somehow – we are told it was from a single point, an infinitely small point, the Big Bang. There is more evidence pointing towards the likelihood of a Creator than disproving God from this theory.

I have entitled this chapter, “Cataclysmic Bang” because it should be defined more expansively than a Big Bang. It seems more appropriate as cataclysmic means a “sudden, violent change.” This description is much broader than stating it is big; maybe “Super Cataclysmic Explosion” would be even more fitting.

With this cataclysmic explosion we are left with a few basic questions which will be covered throughout this book: What? How? Whom? Why? When?; What was there before?; How did it happen? Who or what caused it? Why did it happen? When did it happen?

Origin of the Universe

The expansion of the universe happened from the infinitely small point/space – the origin of space, time, matter and energy. Therefore whatever caused the Big Bang from what can be classified as nothing, could not be constricted by these components. In fact, whatever caused it had to be outside of time, space, matter and energy.

Australian Physicist, and famous author, Paul Davies relates the concept to time:

The infinite density of matter and the infinite squashing of space also mark a boundary to time. The reason is that time as well as space is stretched by gravity...The conditions at the Big Bang imply an infinite distortion of time, so that the very concept of time (and space) cannot be extended back beyond the Big Bang. The conclusion that seems to force itself upon us is that the Big Bang was the ultimate beginning of all physical things: space, time, matter and energy. It is evidently meaningless to ask (as many people do) what happened before the Big Bang, or what caused the explosion to occur. There *was* no before.¹⁴

While it is meaningless to ask what happened before the Big Bang, it is not meaningless to ask: What made it happen? Or, what caused it?

Whatever caused it had to be outside space, time, matter and energy. The logical conclusion is that it was either a spaceman, or a Creator.

It points to a loving God who didn't create the universe and then forget about it. Instead he created the world and has intervened, like a loving parent, in history in order to ensure we don't wander too far. This concept is also elaborated upon later.

Who created God?

The most common question in response to the claim that God created the cosmos is, "So who created God?"

While the answer can be as simple as "No one created God as he wasn't bound by time, space, matter or energy", there needs to be an elaboration. St. Athanasius, a recognized theologian of the Early Church (also known as an Early Church Father), writing against the Arian heresy that the Word (God made flesh/human, Jesus) was only a creature and not divine, explains that creatures make objects out of already existing substances, for if the Word was a creature then how, "is he able to frame things that are nothing into being?"¹⁵

Throughout this book, I will cover the concept of contingent beings and a necessary being (see *The Philosophy of God's Existence* chapter). But

for now it will suffice to explain that God is not bound by time, space, matter or energy. Therefore if He created it out of nothing and with so much power, then it is very possible that He could exist forever.

So if no one created God, and God created the universe, then God has existed forever, and it is most likely he still exists. If he still exists, then what are we doing? Are we trying to seek the truth? Are we spending time in getting to know the Creator?

Summary

We have explored such concepts as the Big Bang; the fascinating rate of expansion of the universe; and that most scientists believe the Big Bang reveals a creator outside of space, time, matter and energy.

In fact it confirms Sacred Scripture's *Ex Nihilo* (creation from nothing). This theory haunts some and abdicates others. Without the Creator's intervention the universe will continue expanding, possibly forever (unless some matter is detected which could cause the universe to stop expanding). It's fascinating exploring the likelihood that no one created God. While some die-hards would be thrilled if God had been killed, I would like to share my conviction as you will read throughout this book, that the Creator of the universe is in fact very much alive, and has an active interest in His creation. But the big question is: Now that such a theory reveals a Creator, do other areas of science reflect a Creator? You will discover this answer as we explore further.

Chapter 1 – Bibliography

1. R A Alpher, RC Herman, "Evolution of the Universe," *Nature* 162, 1948, 774
2. RH Dicke, PJE Peebles, PG Roll and DT Wilkinson, "Cosmic Black-Body Radiation", *Astrophysical Journal* 142 (1965) p 414-419; AA Penzias, RW

- Wilson, "A Measurement of Excess Antenna Temperature at 4080 mc/s," *Astrophysical Journal* 142 (1965), p 419-421.
3. For Smoot's description of the research, see George Smoot and Keay Davidson, *Wrinkles in Time* (New York; Morrow, 1993
 4. Carl Sagan, *Cosmos*, New York: Random, 1980, 259.
 5. *The Australian* newspaper. Nov 11, 1983
 6. Harold Slusher, *Age of the Cosmos*, San Diego, California, Institute for Creation Research, 1980, 12
 7. Colson & Pearcey, *Now How Shall We Live*, Illinois, Tyndale House Publishers Inc, 1999, 60
 8. Stephen T. Davis, God, *Reason & Theistic Proofs*, WMB Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1997,108
 9. J.P Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987) 52-3
 10. Colson & Pearcey, *Now How Shall We Live*, Illinois, Tyndale House Publishers Inc, 1999, 59
 11. Arthur Eddington, as quoted in Hugh Ross, "Astronomical Evidences for a Personal, Transcendent God," in *The Creation Hypothesis*, ed. J P Moreland (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 145-46.
 12. Stephen Hawking & Roger Penrose, "The Singularities of Gravitational Collapse and Cosmology" *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*, Series A, 314 (1970):529-48
 13. Augustine: De Civitate Dei XI:6
 14. Paul Davies, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, *The Last Three Minutes*, London, 1994, 24
 15. Athanasius: Contra Arianos II: 21, 22: c.f. II:27, 31. 57ff