Heaven
Lesson 6

A. **The first heaven** is where the birds fly, and where the clouds form and bring rain to the earth: **Gen. 1:20** (2); **7:11-12** (10); **Deut. 11:11** (308); **Daniel 8:8** (1311); **Rev. 19:17** (1822).

B. **The second heaven** is where the sun, stars, and planets are and have their orbits: **Gen. 1:14, 16, 17** (1); **Isa. 13:10** (1039); **Joel 2:30** (1336); **Mt. 24:29** (1440).

C. **The third heaven** is where the throne of God is: **1 Ki. 8:30, 39** (562); **Psm. 11:4** (866); **53:2** (896); **Psm. 80:14** (918); **102:19** (932); **139:8** (960); **2 Cor. 12:2-4** (1703); **Rev. 21 and 22** (1823).

In our study, we will focus upon what Paul calls the third heaven and paradise: **2 Cor. 12:2, 4** (1703). This is the place that most Christians refer to when they speak of heaven. The Old and New Testament alike tell of a time and place when there will be a new heaven and a new earth that God will create: **Isa. 65:17** (1103); **2 Pet. 3:13** (1789); **Rev. 21:1** (1823).

D. **Many things will be different in heaven**

1. Never get bored: **Psm. 16:11** (867)
2. The animals will be tame and their diets changed: **Isa. 11:6-7** (1037); **65:25** (1103)
3. The desert will blossom like a rose: **Isa. 35:1** (1064)
4. No deformities of any kind: **Isa. 35:5-6** (1064)
5. No more violence of any kind: **Isa. 60:18** (1098)
6. We'll build houses and plant gardens: **Isa. 65:21-22** (1103)
7. Before we ask, God will answer: **Isa. 65:24** (1103)
8. Children will play there: **Zech. 8:5** (1382)
9. We will grow in knowledge and stature: **Mal. 4:2** (1394)
10. We'll visit with the patriarchs and prophets: **Mt. 8:11** (1408)
11. The tree of life is there: **Rev. 2:7** (1801); **Rev. 22:2** (1825)
12. The redeemed sing and play music: **Rev. 15:2-3** (1816)
13. The city is called The New Jerusalem: **Rev. 21:2** (1823)
14. God will dwell with us: **Rev. 21:3** (1823)
15. No tears, death or sorrow of any kind: **Rev. 21:4** (1823)

16. The city has walls of Jasper and is pure gold like clear glass: **Rev. 21:18** (1824)

17. The city has gates of pearl and streets of gold: **Rev. 21:21** (1824)

18. There is no need of the sun, for Jesus is the light: **Rev. 21:23** (1824)

19. No night there: **Rev. 21:25** (1825)

20. The River of Life: **Rev. 22:1** (1825)

21. The leaves from the Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations: **Rev. 22:2** (1825)

E. What will we be like in heaven?

1. **Phil. 3:20-21** (1725)

2. **1 Jn. 3:2** (1792)

F. What was Jesus' resurrected body like?

1. **Lk. 24:36-43** (1544)

2. **Jn. 20:11-16** (1586)

3. **Jn. 20:19, 20, 24-29** (1587)

4. **1 Cor. 13:12** (1684); **1 Cor. 2:9** (1671)

Review

1. What is the name of the Holy City? _____

2. The Bible speaks of different heavens. How many are there? 3 5 7

3. The disciples could handle and touch Jesus after His resurrection. T F

4. In heaven we will have real bodies and participate in real activities. T F

5. List two things about heaven you like most. _____

_____

ASTRONOMY

Published in *Forum* – July, 1972

Forum is published monthly by Palmer Publications, Inc., Rt. 3 Box 36, Amherst, Wis. 54406

One of the most awe inspiring and thrilling of recent disclosures of astronomers is that there is a great empty space in the north, in the nebula of the constellation of Orion, a heavenly cavern so gigantic that the mind of man cannot comprehend it, and so brilliantly beautiful that words cannot adequately describe it

The revelations were made possible by gigantic lenses, plus long exposures of' photographic plates which in turn can be further magnified. This increases the vision of man so tremendously that he is able to peer into the depths of interstellar space and glimpse the vastness of infinity itself. What has been found corroborates the words of job: "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place (Job 26:70). In a book entitled Early Writings published **in** 1943, the writer says:

"The powers of heaven will be shaken at the voice of God. Then the sun, moon and stars will be moved out of their places. Dark heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. Then atmosphere parted and rolled back. Then we could look up through the open space in Orion whence came the voice of God. The holy city will come down through that open stage!"

Modern astronomers all agree that there is a huge opening in Orion which is perhaps more than 16,740,000,000,000 miles in diameter. The diameter around Earth's orbit is' 186,000,000 miles which distance in itself is incomprehensible to man - yet the opening into this heavenly cavern of Onion is 90,000 times as wide. In other words we could put 30,000 solar systems like our own, with a sun in the middle of each, across the entrance of the opening in the north, and still have room to spare.

But surpassing the immensity of its size is its exquisite beauty and the luminous colors that are unlike any upon earth. Professor Larkin of Mt. Lowe Observatory gives us the following description of it.

"These negatives (photographs) reveal the opening an interior of a cavern so stupendous that out entire solar system would be lost therein. I have watched it since the days of youth in many telescopes of many powers but never dreamed that the central, region is the mouth of a colossal cave. Human speech is impotent. Pen of writer and brush of artist alike are lifeless an[d] inert in any attempt to describe this interior.

In the depths of the Orion Nebula are torn, twisted and riven masses of shining glass, irregular pillars, columns of stalactites in glittering splendor and stalagmites rising from the mighty floor. The appearance is like that of light shining and glowing behind Herculean walls of ivory and pearl, and studded with millions of diamonds-shining stars.

There must be some reason why all this grandeur is lavished on this one spot in the heavens -why the colored area hue peculiar to Orion and studded around the opening so that they appear as a pavement of starry sand.

John saw the holy city coming down from God of heaven (**Rev. 21:2**). Then in **Matthew 25:31** we are told that the son of God shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with Him. No wonder the astronomers (many of them not religious) say: "They seem *to* feel as if they were in some mighty 'presence' while scanning this part of the heavens, and become speechless before this great outburst of grandeur extending for trillions of miles through space."

HAVE ASTRONOMERS FOUND GOD?

Published in *Reader's Digest* – July, 1980 – Condensed from *New York Times Magazine*
written by Robert Jastrow, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and professor of astronomy and geology at Columbia University. He is the author of *Red Giants and White Dwarfs, Until the Sun Dies*, and *God and the Astronomers.*

When an astronomer write about God, his colleagues may assume he is either over the hill or going bonkers. In my case it should be understood from the start that I am an agnostic in religious matters. However, I am fascinated by strange developments going on in astronomy–partly because of their religious implications and partly because of the peculiar reactions of some of my colleagues.

The essence of these developments is that the universe had a sharply defined beginning–that it began at a certain moment in time. Was the creative agent on of the forces of physics, or was it, as the Old Testament Apocrypha says, "thy almighty hand, which created the world out of formless matter"?

The crux of the new story of Genesis, better known as the "big-bang" theory, is that we live in an expanding universe, in which all the galaxies around us are moving away from us and one another at enormous speeds. It is as if we are witnessing the aftermath of a gigantic explosion. If we trace the motions of the outward-moving galaxies backward in time, we find that they all come together roughly 20 billion years ago.

At that time, all the matter in the universe was packed into a dense mass, at temperatures of many trillions of degrees. The dazzling brilliance of the radiation in this dense, hot universe suggests the explosion of a cosmic hydrogen bomb. The instant in which the cosmic bomb exploded marked the birth of the universe.

The essential elements in the astronomical and Biblical accounts of Genesis are the same: The chain of events leading to man commenced suddenly and sharply at a definite moment in time, in a flash of light and energy.

Some scientists are unhappy with the idea that the world began in this way. Until recently, many preferred the steady-state theory, which holds that the universe had no beginning, and is eternal. But astronomical evidence makes it almost certain that the big bang really did occur.

The scientific story that leads to the big-bang theory began in 1912 at the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona. There, American astronomer Vesto Melvin Slipher discovered that about a dozen galaxies are moving away from the earth at speeds up to a million miles an hour. Slipher reported his extraordinary finding at a meeting of the American Astronomical Society in Evanston, Ill., in 1914. He presented his paper with great modesty, but his slides clearly revealed the telltale red shift (a change in the color of the light) that indicated an enormously rapid motion of these galaxies. "Then something happened which I have never seen before or since at a scientific meeting," recalled astronomer John Miller, who was in the audience. "Everyone stood up and cheered."

Although Slipher's colleagues did not know exactly what his discovery meant, they felt that it was of great importance. Also in the audience was Edwin Hubble, who later picked up Slipher's clues and built them into a new picture of the universe.

Mounting Evidence. In Germany, two years after Slipher reported his discovery, Albert Einstein published his equations of general relativity. Almost immediately, Dutch astronomer Willem de Sitter found a solution to them that predicted an expanding universe in which the galaxies of the heavens moved rapidly away from one another.

Einstein had failed to notice that his theory predicted an expanding universe, and later he missed still another expanding-universe solution to his own equations. Tis time, Russian mathematician

Alexander Friedmann found that Einstein had made a schoolboy's error in algebra, which caused him to overlook the additional solutions. In effect, Einstein had divided by zero at one point in his calculations–a "no-no" in mathematics. As soon as Friedmann corrected the error, the missing solution popped out. Einstein was irked by Friedmann's discovery of his mistake. In a rare display of churlishness, he first ignored Friedmann's letter describing the new solution and subsequently debunked it in print. But, by 1923, he had acknowledged his double error.

De Sitter's theoretical prediction of an expanding universe made a great impression on astronomers immediately after World War I. For the first time, they saw the larger significance in Slipher's discovery of the outward-moving galaxies. Nevertheless, signs of irritation began to reappear among the scientists. Einstein was disturbed by the idea of a universe that blows up, because it implied that the world had a beginning. In a letter to de Sitter, Einstein wrote, "This circumstance [of an expanding universe] irritates me."

This is curiously emotional language for a discussion of some mathematical formulas. I suppose that the idea of a beginning in time annoyed Einstein because of its theological implications. He had well-defined feelings about God, but not as the Creator. For Einstein, the existence of God was proved by the laws of nature; that is, the fact that there was order in the universe, and that man could discover it.

In the early 1920s, Edwin Hubble and Milton Humason began to follow up on Slipher's work–using the 60-inch telescope on California's Mount Wilson. Then they attacked the problem with the 100-inch telescope, the world's largest at that time. Hubble and Humason measured the speeds and distances of many galaxies too faint to be seen by Slipher with his smaller instrument, and confirmed Slipher's discovery; all the galaxies were moving away from us at high speeds. Some were retreating at the extraordinary speed of 100 million miles an hour.

In 1929, Hubble came upon the relationship now known as Hubble's law: *The farther away a galaxy is, the faster it moves.* The same law was predicted by Einstein's theory of relativity. The agreement made a tremendous impression on astronomers.

But Einstein resisted the new developments until 1930, when he visited Hubble at the Mount Wilson Observatory in Pasadena. He studied Hubble's plates, looked through his telescope, and announced himself convinced, Now that evidence pointed to the fact that the universe had a beginning, a few scientists dared to ask, "What came before the beginning?" Some, even bolder, asked, "Who was the Prime Mover?" The British theorist Edward Milne wrote a mathematical treatise on kinematic relativity, which concluded by saying, in the context of expansion, "The first cause of the universe is left for the reader to insert. But our picture is incomplete without Him."

Nevertheless, the views of most physicists and astronomers were closer to that of the theologian who, when asked what God was doing before He created the materials of heaven and earth, replied, "He was creating hell for people who asked questions like that." In fact, some prominent scientists began to feel the same irritation over the expanding universe that Einstein had expressed earlier.

The Clincher. Then, in 1965, Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson of the Bell Laboratories discovered that the earth is bathed in a faint glow of radiation coming from every direction in the heavens. The measurements showed that the earth itself could not be the origin of this radiation, nor could any other particular object in the sky. The entire universe seemed to be the source.

The two physicists, puzzled by their discovery, did not realize that they had stumbled upon the answer to one of the cosmic mysteries. Scientists who believed in the big-bang theory had long asserted that the universe must have resembled a white-hot fireball in the first moments after the big bang occurred. Gradually, as the universe expanded and cooled, the fireball would have become less brilliant, but its radiation would never have disappeared entirely. It was the diffuse glow of this

ancient radiation, dating back to the birth of the universe, that Penzias and Wilson apparently discovered.

The clincher, which has convinced almost the last doubting Thomas of the big-bang theory, is that the radiation discovered by Penzias and Wilson has exactly the pattern of wavelengths expected for the light and heat produced in a great explosion.

Reception Committee. Theologians generally are delighted with the proof that the universe had a beginning, but astronomers are curiously upset. Their reactions provide an interesting demonstration of the response of the scientific mind–supposedly a very objective mind–when evidence uncovered by science itself leads to a conflict with the articles of faith in our profession. A few years ago in a British Broadcasting Corporation film on cosmology, astronomer Philip Morrison of M.I.T. said, "I would like to reject the big-bang theory, but I have to face the facts."

This reaction and similar responses by other astronomers have an odd ring of feeling and emotion. They come from the heart, whereas you would expect such judgments to come from the brain. Why?

I think part of the answer is that scientists cannot bear the thought of a natural phenomenon that cannot be explained. There is a kind of religion in science; it is the religion of a person who believes that every event in the universe can be explained in a rational way as the product of some previous event. This faith is violated by the discovery that the world had a beginning under conditions in which the known laws of physics are not valid, and as a product of forces we cannot discover. When that happens, the scientist has lost control. He reacts by ignoring the implications, or by trivializing and calling it the big bang, as if the universe were a firecracker.

Consider the immensity of the problem. Science has proved that the universe exploded into being at a certain moment. It asks, what cause produced this effect? Who or what put the matter and energy into the universe? Was the universe created out of nothing, or was it gathered together out of pre-existing materials? And science cannot answer these questions, because, according to the astronomers, in the first moments of its existence the universe was compressed to an extraordinary degree, and consumed by the heat of a fire beyond human imagination. The shock of that instant must have destroyed every particle of evidence that could have yielded a clue to the cause of the great explosion. The scientist's pursuit of the past ends in the moment of Creation.

This development was unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* But we scientists did not expect to find evidence for an abrupt beginning because we have had, until recently, such extraordinary success in tracing the chain of cause and effect backward in time. We have been able to connect the appearance of man on this planet to the crossing of the threshold of life, the manufacture of the chemical ingredients of life within stars that have long since expired, the formation off those stars out of the primal mists, and the expansion and cooling of the parent cloud of gases out of the cosmic fireball.

Now we would like to pursue that inquiry further back in time, but the barrier seems insurmountable. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.