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Big Bang Cosmology

'Big bang cosmology is probably as widely believed as has been any theory of the universe in the history of Western civilization. It rests, however, on many untested, and in some cases untestable, assumptions. Indeed, big bang cosmology has become a bandwagon of thought that reflects faith as much as objective truth.'

Burbidge, G., 1992.
Why only one big bang?
Scientific American, **266** (2):96.

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BANG and here we are!

Most of today's scientists subscribe to one form or another of the Big Bang model..

This is a quote from a physics professor of a well-known secular university. Here he admits that the big bang is built on a large amount of assumption.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics demonstrates that the universe began in a highly ordered, energy-packed state, but that over time it has become increasingly disordered as its energy has dissipated. This clearly presents a problem to those relying on a 'natural' Big Bang origin, since random, purposeless events produce highly disorganized states of matter. If a drinking glass falls off a table and shatters on the floor, we can assume that the shards will never reorganize themselves into another highly organized system, such as a glass ornament, but will remain a disorganized mess. If the Big Bang was a random, chance event, the resulting universe would have started out at a high level of disorder, with little energy available to organize matter into the ordered structures we see all around us today. The British mathematician and physicist Roger Penrose, who worked with Stephen Hawking to develop our current understanding of black holes, computed the odds of the Big Bang producing by accident our ordered universe as opposed to a chaotic disorderly one, and estimated them as 'one in 10(10)(123). This number is so absurdly large that it is said to have more zeros than the total number of particles in the entire universe!

For centuries, we have been learning through science about the nature of our universe, and our growing scientific knowledge is steadily whittling away the possibility that the universe came into being by chance, or that it must necessarily exist as it does. In pulling the main strands of this subject together, we can settle for the fact that if something exists now, one of three things must be true of it: it is either eternal, created by something that is eternal, or self-created. The first option clashes with the Second Law of Thermodynamics, since an eternal universe would have dissipated all its energy long ago. The third clashes not only with the First Law of Thermodynamics, but also with the law of contradiction, because in order to create itself it would have to exist before it existed, to be and not to be at the same time, a proposition which is scientifically and philosophically ridiculous. This leaves the second option, and the God of the Bible satisfies all the necessary criteria.

This is not a battered theist's desperate ploy to invent a 'God of the gaps', something to plug the holes science is unable to fill. Instead, it identifies a Being whose existence explains why science can explain anything - and why it cannot explain everything. As Keith Ward puts it, 'To grasp the idea of God is to grasp an idea of the only reality that could form a completely adequate explanation of

the existence of the universe, for God is the only reality which, in being supremely intelligible or comprehensible to itself, explains itself.'

A growing number of scientists in many disciplines are turning in this direction and being drawn to the conclusion that divine intelligence preceded and planned the natural universe and the laws by which it is governed. Although not attached to any religious tradition, Paul Davies writes, 'The delicate fine-tuning in the values of the constants, necessary so that the various different branches of physics can dovetail so felicitously, might be attributed to God. It is hard to resist the impression that the present structure of the universe, apparently so sensitive to minor alterations in the numbers, has been rather carefully thought out.' Stephen Hawking goes even farther: 'It would be very difficult to explain why the universe should have begun in just this way, except as the act of a God who intended to create beings like us'

In response to atheistic attempts to find some other kind of explanation, theism points to a simple, transcendent, eternal, self-sufficient, omnipotent Being with freedom to bring about anything he wishes (including matter, time and space), who chose to do so for his own purposes, and who sustains the whole of his creation by laws of nature which he ordained and whose limits he determined. The hard-core atheist may dismiss all of this as wishful thinking, but surely the issue deserves closer attention than that? Without such a God, the most basic questions of all can scarcely be considered, let alone answered. Why should a universe exist at all? Why should it be as complex and orderly as it is? If it was not the result of a natural process governed by natural law, must it not be the result of something supernatural? Is the fact that in human beings matter has become personal and self-conscious not a clue that the universe has a transcendent and personal origin and meaning? How else can we explain the emergence of personality? Why should the rationality we claim for ourselves harmonize with the rationality we find in the rest of the universe? How can we make rational sense of the cosmos unless the cosmos does make sense and we do have the power of reasoning? And how can either of these things be true if the whole shooting match is a gigantic, senseless fluke? Is atheistic prejudice a good enough basis for refusing to consider that there might be a theistic answer to all of these questions?

In closing I leave you with two quotations, one from a theist and the other from an agnostic. The first, from William Lane Craig, gets right to the heart of the one fact I have been trying to establish, namely that the existence of the entire matter-energy-space-time package raises a massive problem for the atheist:

'Since everything that began to exist has a cause of its existence, and since the universe began to exist, we conclude, therefore, that the universe has a cause of existence. We ought to ponder long and hard over this truly remarkable conclusion, for it means that transcending the entire universe there exists a cause which brought the universe into being ex nihilo... This conclusion ought to stagger us, ought to fill us with a sense of awe and wonder at the knowledge that our whole universe was caused to exist by something beyond it and greater than it'.

The second statement is from a high-profile astronomer with no religious axe to grind. Writing in the New York Times in 1978, Robert Jastrow, Director of NASAS Goddard Institute for Space Studies, asked the question, 'Have Astronomers Found God?', and came to the conclusion that they had, or had at least come close to doing so. After determining that the universe had a beginning in time, and accepting that its creation by an act of God was a reasonable possibility, he then went on to say that the astronomical evidence points to a theistic view of the origin of the world:

'The details differ, but the essential elements... 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.' The closing words in Jastrow's article are particularly telling, not least because they are written by an agnostic:

'This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians... 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... At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. 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.'

Extract from 'Does God Believe in Atheists' by John Blanchard

Here is an extract from the main stream New Scientist magazine as an end note to show that this is a subject that even the secular world cannot close its eyes to any longer, however we would realise that the prejudice concerning the Bible's account of origins is one not easily overcome even with such foundations crumbling.

Did the big bang really happen?
02 July 2005
Marcus Chown
Magazine issue 2506

WHAT if the big bang never happened? Ask cosmologists this and they'll usually tell you it is a stupid question. The evidence, after all, is written in the heavens. Take the way galaxies are scattered across the sky, or witness the fading afterglow of the big bang fireball. Even the way the atoms in your body have come into being over the eons. They are all smoking guns that point to the existence 13.7 billion years ago of an ultra-hot, ultra-dense state known as the big bang.

Or are they? A small band of researchers is starting to ask the question no one is supposed to ask. Last week the dissidents met to review the evidence at the first ever Crisis in Cosmology conference in Monção, Portugal.

There they argued that cosmologists' most cherished theory of the universe fails to explain certain crucial observations. If they are right, the universe...

The complete article is 3472 words long.

