

# CAN GOD WITHSTAND THE BIG BANG?

One of the most controversial and contested parts of the Bible is how the universe came into being. Does the universe have a creator or was it produced by chance? The accounts of creation in the first book of the Bible, Genesis, are ridiculed as unscientific myths. Those who attack Genesis in this way have missed the point that Genesis is making and the way it makes its point.

Firstly, the creation account wasn't written as a scientific description of the physical processes involved in the creation of the world, it's written as poetry. You don't interpret poetry in the same way as instructions on how to put together flat-packed furniture. If we read a phrase like "I wandered lonely as a cloud..." and ask if it was meant literally, we've missed the point.

Secondly, the main point of first chapter of Genesis isn't how the world was created but who created it. Genesis doesn't tell us about the physics of the early universe but about the one who made it and the reason for its creation. Once we see that this is the main point Genesis is making we can see whether the big bang theory is compatible with, or contradicts the Bible.

Until the later part of the last century, the prevailing scientific theory of the universe was called Steady State Theory. This suggested that the universe didn't have a beginning, but had always existed much as we see it today. As Walter Bradley, Professor at Texas A&M University, points out: "A universe that eternally existed is much more congenial to an atheistic or agnostic worldview. By the same token, a universe that began seems to demand a first cause; for who could imagine such an effect without a sufficient cause?"

Observations over the last thirty years have led to the rejection of Steady State theory. This has been superseded by the Big Bang Theory which restores the Biblical idea of a universe that came into being at a specific point, the beginning of time. Robert Jastrow, founder of the Goddard Space Centre and an agnostic, wryly observed:

*"For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story [of the big bang theory] ends like a bad dream. For the past three hundred years, scientists have scaled the mountain of ignorance and as they pull themselves over the final rock, they are greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."*

Science cannot tell us about the point of creation itself or anything before it because as the point of creation is approached, the laws of science break down and are no longer valid. Whilst science will never be able to prove or disprove the existence of God, current scientific theory is very compatible with the Bible accounts. Whereas scientists ask the question 'how?', the Biblical accounts are much more concerned with the questions 'who?' and 'why?'