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## ASTRONOMY

### Age of universe cannot be refigured to fit Bible

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BY TOM STATLER

I've written before about the strong evidence, from many different sources, that Earth, our solar system, our galaxy and the universe are all billions of years old.

Most of us find it thrilling that we can see, with our own eyes, light from the Andromeda Galaxy that has traveled through space for more than 2 million years.

It's sad that some think this idea threatens their interpretation of the Bible, and they'll go to a lot of trouble to make it go away.

Biblical creationists have a whole museum full of ways to try to sound scientific.

For example, how could we see galaxies millions of light-years away if creation happened only a few thousand years ago? For them, it's easy: The speed of light used to be faster -- back in the day. A million times faster, in fact, to make the numbers work out.

Changing the speed of light isn't like reposting the speed limit on a highway. The speed of light is one of the fundamental properties of the universe. Change it, and you alter everything about how matter emits and absorbs light.

If light traveled a million times faster 6,000 years ago, any stars seen more than 6,000 light-years away would be totally different from stars nearby. Yet starlight from galaxies millions of light-years away is exactly the same as light from the sun and nearby stars.

Moreover, the speed of light is locked to the strength of the electric force that holds all atoms and molecules together. Change it, and you change all of chemistry.

The rocks under our feet, the water in our blood and the DNA in our cells would be totally different -- assuming they could exist at all. The early Earth and everything in it would have had to have been made of substances utterly unknown to us.

Creationists object to the idea that life can evolve and change its genetic makeup over billions of years. But in their universe, humans would have had to change their entire molecular composition in just a few thousand.

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