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## ASTRONOMY

### Young-Earth creationists continue to miss big picture

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BY TOM STATLER

Previously, I wrote about the young-Earth creationists, whose way of interpreting the Bible has convinced them that the universe is no more than a few thousand years old.



This conflicts with objective evidence. If light has had only a few thousand years to travel through space, why can we see galaxies billions of light-years away? In my October column, I critiqued the creationist suggestion that the speed of light was millions of times faster during the six biblical days of creation.

Not surprisingly, I got some mail.

One letter rightly pointed out that the really sophisticated young-Earth creationists don't buy the variable speed-of-light idea. Front-running creationist scenarios now try a different tack: Time on Earth elapsed incredibly more slowly than everywhere else for exactly one week.

A variant of this contrivance, "white hole cosmology," tries to twist itself into agreement with Einstein's theory, but it gets the math messed up.

None of these scenarios amounts to a workable theory. None has made a significant cosmological prediction, designed an experiment to test it and passed the test. In short, none has been doing what the Big Bang model has been doing for 40 years.

That's the difference between Nobel-quality science and dogmatic guesswork.

Without a doubt, there are young-Earth creationists with advanced academic degrees. But they profess to know the answers before even asking the questions, and that's not science.

A solid scientific theory is a conceptual picture of nature that seeks out and adapts to new knowledge. Acknowledging that any part of the theory could, in principle, be proven wrong is a hallmark of science done right. Insisting that a certain interpretation of Scripture cannot be questioned is a hallmark of creationism.

One letter, from a self-described biblical creationist, put it best. Through faith, he wrote, "Science becomes irrelevant and the scriptural record of the Bible becomes paramount." I wonder if he noticed the irony in sending his comments by e-mail.

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