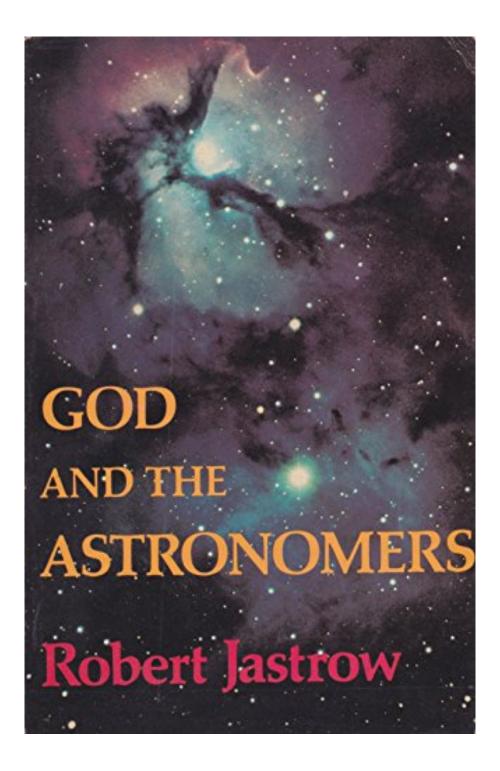


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In this new edition Robert Jastrow discusses the scientific discoveries that bring science into agreement or conflict with religion and examines the latest evidence for, as well as against the Big Bang theory, which argues that the Universe exploded into being. He explains the evidence for the mysterious Anthropic Principle, which asserts that the Universe was designed for mankind to live in and examines the case for and against Darwin's theory of evolution. This edition examines these issues from the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish viewpoints. Robert Jastrow is also the author of "Red Giants and White Dwarfs" and "Until the Sun Dies".

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The riddle of creation explored by a scientist

By Barbara LeMaster

Robert Jastrow is an astronomer and, while he covers rather deep subjects like the Big Bang and theories of expanding universes, he never talks down to his readers. The most famous excerpt from this book has to be the anecdote about scientists scaling the "mountains of ignorance" and finding, at the summit, a band of theologians who have been sitting their for centuries. It's fitting, considering that the Big Bang theory seems to echo the Genesis creation story. The book was published in the mid-1970s so it's obviously not the most current astronomical book out there, but it's still a fascinating read.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

DID THEOLOGIANS AND THE BOOK OF GENESIS ARRIVE AT THE TRUTH BEFORE SCIENCE DID?

By Steven H Propp

Robert Jastrow (1925-2008) was an American astronomer, physicist and cosmologist. He wrote many popular books, such as Red Giants and White Dwarfs, Until the Sun Dies, The Enchanted Loom, etc.

He wrote in the first chapter of this 1978 book, "When an astronomer writes about God, his colleagues 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 some strange developments going on in astronomy---partly because of their religious implications and partly because of the peculiar reactions of my colleagues. The essence of the strange developments is that the Universe had, in some sense, a beginning... and under circumstances that seem to make it impossible ... to find out what force or forces brought the world into being at that moment." (Pg. 11-12)

He adds, "The details differ, but 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..." (Pg. 14)

He observes, "Now three lines of evidence---the motions of the galaxies, the laws of thermodynamics, and the life story of the stars---pointed to one conclusion; all indicated that the Universe had a beginning." (Pg. 111) He adds, "In fact, some prominent scientists began to feel the same irritation over the expanding Universe that Einstein had expressed earlier... There is a strange ring of feeling and emotion in these reactions. They come from the heart, whereas you would expect that judgments to come from the brain. Why? I think part of the answer is that scientists cannot bear the thought of a natural phenomenon which cannot be explained... There is a kind of religion in science... This religious faith of the scientist is violated by the discovery that the world had a beginning..." (Pg. 113)

He concludes, "The scientist's pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation. This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: in the beginning God created heaven and earth... For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He had 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." (Pg. 115-116)

Certainly, this book's "history" is not current (it's more than 35 years old, after all). But it is Jastrow's comments and conclusions that will attract most readers---who can easily look elsewhere for a "history of Big Bang cosmology."

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful.How Big Bang Theory impacted astrophysicists perspective of the First CauseBy Nancy RobinsonThis book gave me insight into the history of the progress of the big bang theory and how it impacted the scientific community.

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