

# Eltham Message Church

Christian Messages on the Web at [www.messagechurch.com](http://www.messagechurch.com)



## OF ELEPHANTS AND TRUTH (INTRODUCTION)

There's an old Indian story of four blind people trying to determine what an elephant was like. Each one walked forward and felt the elephant.

One, holding a leg said, "It is like a big pillar." Another said, "It is like a thick snake wrapping itself around me." Another described the big ears as sails or a fan, while a third hanging onto its tail said it was like a sinewy rope.

They were all correct in that they were all describing the elephant as they found it.

From this old story a modern false conclusion is often drawn. The argument goes that each person had truth even though the truth was different for each. So truth is subjective, it isn't an absolute.

Nice try.

The truth is bigger than those individuals statements. Yes, they told the truth about what they had experienced but an elephant is more than one leg, or a trunk, a large ear or a tail. The truth about an elephant is that it is a large four legged intelligent animal with a large tummy, sometimes some tusks, always with two large ears a tail and a trunk. The truth was far more than all of their reports, even when put together.

We fall into serious error if we accept any one of the four blind researchers.

There are many areas of scientific research. Many of these are like the men describing the elephant. Each area is so intensely set on its often narrow research that the big picture is missed. There is also a theory about the elephant, that it all happened by chance. As a result the research is often linked to that theory even though that link is unscientific. Many make the same leap of faith our blind friends did and assume their small part explains the whole.

This book is a brief look at quite a few subjects, at the legs, trunk, ears and tail, not of an elephant, but of the universe, the world and life. Or to use Douglas Adam's terminology from the "Hitchhikers Guide to the Gal-

axy" this book looks at the meaning of life, the universe, and everything. His answer of 42 is about as accurate as any other chance or random answer, but there are other answers.

To consider other answers the book purposely steps back from the intense scrutiny and discussions of focussed research to view the big picture, the whole elephant.

## THE UNIVERSE

### CHAPTER 1

Bill Bryson did an absolutely amazing job describing the Big Bang theory in his book "A Short History of Nearly Everything." The Big Bang theory basically states that everything in the universe was once in a space so small that it couldn't be measured or weighed and time did not exist. This is called a singularity. The singularity suddenly expanded bring atoms, plants, galaxies and time into existence.

So, basically scientific theory is saying that the universe came from, well, nothing. Name it what you like, something so small that it cannot be measured or weighed is nothing.

The Big Bang theory is a logical conclusion resulting from the finding that all the universe seems to be moving away from itself. In other words the universe is expanding.

For those who are interested it was all discovered through the Doppler Effect; itself the very reason I failed my Science exam at school. The Doppler Effect, as I re-discovered after the exam, is what happens to sounds when you travel past their source.

Sound is carried through the air in waves. If you are on a train approaching a ringing railway crossing bell it will sound high. Then, as you pass the bell, its sound becomes lower. That is because as you approach the bell you are meeting the sound waves coming towards you. The highs and lows of the wave are hitting your ears quickly. Once you are past the

bell you will be travelling with the wave, and because the wave appears more stretched out the sound is lower.

Let me put it this way. Imagine being on a boat at the beach. Waves are coming in from the ocean. As you head out from the beach you are moving towards the waves and your boat hits them often. Now turn about and head back into the beach. You are now moving with the waves and they seem longer and less frequent. The waves haven't changed their speed or frequency but because you are travelling first through them and then with them they seem different. That is the Doppler effect.

Ernest Hubble, after whom the space telescope is named, used the giant telescope at Mount Vernon in California to view stars in the 1920s and 30s. Up until then it was generally believed that all we saw in the night sky were stars, like our own sun. Many of these suns, or stars, were larger and some were smaller. But Hubble discovered that some of what seemed like big individual stars were actually masses of stars all clustered together in galaxies. This was a breakthrough for astronomy as until Hubble's discovery it was believed that our Milky Way was the only galaxy.

Then came the discovery that the light from these distant galaxies was in longer wavelengths than expected. Light too has wavelengths, blue being short wave, red and infra-red being longer wave lengths. Everything was shifted towards the red end of the spectrum.

Now comes the logic part. Either all the galaxies in every direction only produced light from close to the red end of the spectrum, and there are stars called red dwarfs that are like that, or what we had here was the Doppler effect with light. In other words all the galaxies were moving away from us; the universe was expanding so the light waves seemed longer than they really were.

This upset the belief in a solid state universe where everything is ordered, fixed, safe and secure. A solid state universe had always been there and always will be there. (Naturally there was no need for a God for something that had always existed)

Because of this new idea of an expanding universe the theory of the universe being a permanent fixture was doomed. If all the other galaxies were moving away from each other then there must have been a time when everything was together. To put it another way the universe had a beginning, just as the Bible said it did. One eminent astronomer of the time who preferred the solid state universe theory rudely stated that if the universe was expanding it must have started with a big bang. The name stuck and the Big Bang theory is the name for the current explanation for the state of the universe.

Once the speed at which the galaxies were moving away from each other was worked out then the time of the start of all this, the Big Bang itself, could be calculated. It is 13.5 billion years ago, give or take a decimal number or two.

Science is claimed to be the careful measurement, observation and experimentation that provides truth about our universe, and indeed life itself. The Big Bang could not be observed. The Big bang cannot be measured, estimated yes, measured no. There are also experiments which can show some portions of the logical sequence of events after the big bang occurred could happen. But the Big Bang cannot be measured, observed or duplicated by experimentation. It is and will remain theory.

But the Big Bang theory raises certain questions.

Assuming that all things, all energy, all time, all space once existed in a spot so small that it could not be measured or weighed, (a singularity) then how did it gain an outward motion? Apparently the singularity became so dense it exploded. After all, the outward motion of all things in the universe indicates an explosion.

That explosion created three dimensions of time, energy and matter. Any explosion we know of destroys, but this one didn't. One would think that such a random occurrence would produce random results, but, supposedly, the reverse is the case this time. It actually started a series of runs of incredible good luck.

Within a fraction of a millisecond of the Big Bang the strength of the greater and weaker nuclear forces were set, gravity's value stabilised, the electromagnetic force established at a precise and fortuitous level as was proton mass, and Planks's constant, among many other things.

Basically we won the cosmic lottery. If these and other forces and particles were anything other than what they are then atoms could not have formed, molecules would not stick together, stars, planets, galaxies, even life itself could not exist. The chances of such a thing happening is less than one against the total number of atoms in the universe, but that's just the luck of the draw. Or is there any such thing as luck?

Of course some people think that there was a God who created everything, with or without a big bang, and that explains the fact that there is an order and structure in everything. But for many of the so called scientists the big bang was luck and so was the structure of universe that came from it. It was all pure dumb luck.

And the best of it all is that our luck continued.

See THE WORLD and other articles in this series