

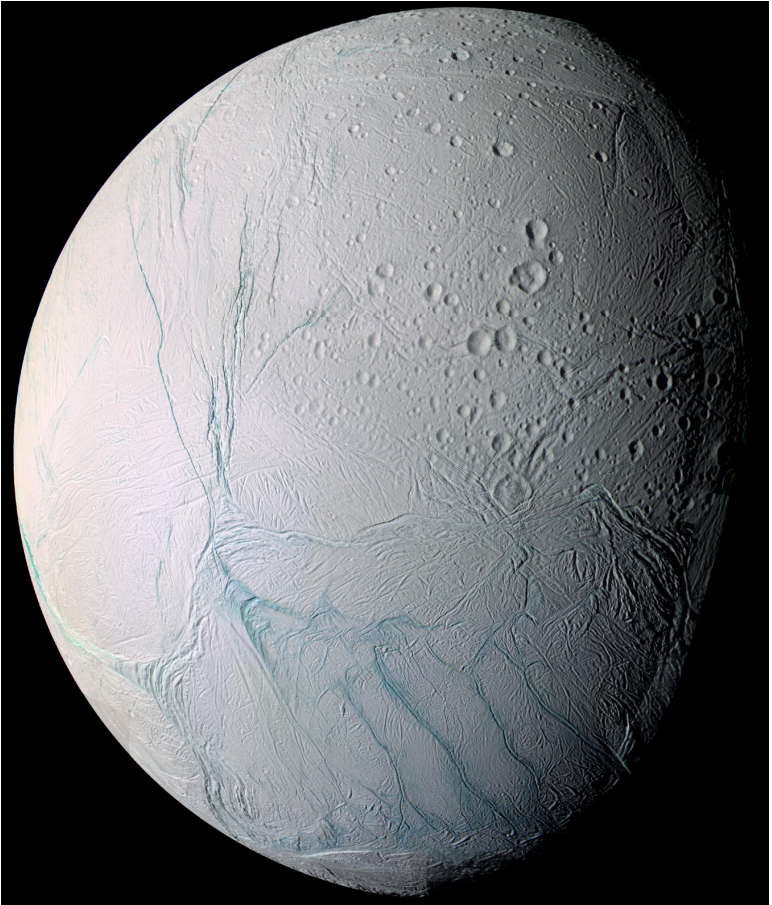
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**THE  
BIBLICAL  
ASTRONOMER**

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**FALL 2010**



## PRODUCT LIST

(Continued from back cover.)

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*Editor:* Gerardus D. Bouw, Ph.D.  
4527 Wetzel Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44109  
U.S.A.  
**E-mail address: [gbouw@geocentricity.com](mailto:gbouw@geocentricity.com)**  
**<http://geocentricity.com/>**

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**Front Cover:** Saturn's moon, Enceladus, is banded by cracks called "tiger stripes." Lately, the orbiting space probe Cassini has spotted fans of near-freezing water vapor escaping from the cracks. Of course, the detection of any such phenomenon mandates that the possibility of alien life be invoked, even though Enceladus' sister moon is very dead.

# THE BIBLICAL ASTRONOMER

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## EDITORIAL

Finally, another issue of *The Biblical Astronomer*. I hope to follow this one with another shortly and to get back on track.

In this issue we devote most of it to Robert Sungenis' "Scriptural Passages Teaching Geocentrism." His paper really is the first Catholic exposition from the Bible that uses a biblical approach to geocentricity. Prior papers downplayed the role of scripture and appealed to Catholic authorities and Papal decrees and statements. As in the last issue, I, as your editor, do not endorse the use of the various new versions although I do believe that the Douay-Rheims is a better translation than the NIV, NASV, etc. But I do think that our readers will appreciate a different approach, whether they agree with it or not. After all, no one ever agrees 100% with the beliefs of another.

Work on the revision of *Geocentricity* has been at a standstill for months. The main factor is that things are happening fast and furious on the geocentric battle front. In this issue's "Panorama," you will find a report of an article that is overtly geocentric, even using the word in its title. Although the math is hard to follow in the original paper, I've tried to distill the essence of it to understandable every-day terms. What is not overtly stated in the paper, but is readable between the lines, is that our personal view of the universe is strongly influenced by our biases and opinions. I've tried to develop that somewhat in the "Panorama" note.

To this geocentric development, I will also mention a paper we commented on before but bears repeating. In order to save our modern theory of gravity, astronomers have proposed that most of the universe consists of two dark substances. The first, and oldest, is dark matter. Dark matter was originally called "missing mass" because the mass of the Milky Way seemed to be about ten times higher when weighing the Milky Way gravitationally (by measuring the orbits of its stars) than actually counting stars and "weighing" them by their spectrum, thus giving us another estimate for the mass of the Milky Way. Lately, however, observations of supernovae have led astronomers to believe that there exists a force causing stars to repel each other. That force is called "Dark energy." A paper published not too long ago mentioned that the need for dark energy disappears if the earth is near the center of the universe. Again, geocentricity raises its dreadful head to stare into the face of its deniers.

In a recent email exchange, an American physicist, whom I shall not name at this time, rejected the geocentric model by claiming that physics seems to conspire to make it look as if the speed of light is iso-

tropic about the earth. Yes, that needs a translation: it means that light reaches the earth at the same speed no matter where the source of light is located and how fast and in what direction it is moving.

Not being given much to conspiracy theories, I mentioned to the physicist that he had not only failed to disprove geocentricity but, by invoking that physics *conspires* to make the universe look geocentric, he confirmed the reality of the geocentric universe.

I shall end this with a bit of insight into Americana.

## **ONLY IN AMERICA**

Only in America do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions, while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.

Only in America do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a diet coke.

Only in America do banks leave vault doors open and then chain the pens to the counters.

Only in America do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.

Only in America do we buy hot dogs in packages of ten and buns in packages of eight.

Only in America do they have drive-up ATM machines with Braille lettering.

## **And a few truisms from Ronald Reagan**

Government is like a baby: An alimentary canal with a big appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other.

The nearest thing to eternal life we will ever see on this earth is a government program.

Government's view of the economy could be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, tax it. If it keeps moving, regulate it. And if it stops moving, subsidize it.

# PANORAMA

## Cavitation Changes Half-life of Thorium

The nuclei or cores of atoms consist of neutrons and protons. Most of the time the configuration of neutrons and protons is stable, but for some combinations the nucleus is not stable. In that case, the nucleus will have to expel one or more protons or neutrons. Those nuclei are said to be “radioactive” and the splitting process is called “radioactive decay.” The amount of time it takes for half of all those radioactive atomic nuclei to decay is called the “half-life.”

The half-lives of radioactive nuclei are believed to be constant, so that they can reliably be used to measure the ages of rocks and minerals. The only uncertainty that remains is the question of how much of the radioactive element the rock originally had when it was formed. But it now appears that decay rates may not be constant, after all.

About a year ago, we reported on one element whose decay rate changed with its distance from the sun as well as a decay rate that changed in the presence of solar flares, violent explosions on the surface of the sun.<sup>1</sup> Now we have uncovered a report that exposes another phenomenon, cavitation, which can change the half-life of an element.

Cavitation occurs when vacuum bubbles are produced in fast-flowing water. When the bubbles collapse, the slap of the water produces shock waves—very powerful on tiny scales—that can rapidly fray boat propellers and pumps, as well as catastrophically erode water tunnels. Cavitation can also emit flashes of light. Italian researchers Cardone, Mignani, and Petrucci found that cavitation speeds up the nuclear decay of the radioactive element thorium ( $^{228}\text{Th}$ ). The cavitation caused the radioactive thorium decay rate to accelerate by a factor of 10,000 during a 90-minute experiment. Cavitation also appears to affect the nuclei of atoms in heavily resonating solutions (e.g., jewelry cleaner and rogue waves).<sup>2</sup>

Creationists have noted that radioactive decay was rapidly accelerated in zircon crystals. The abundance of  $^3\text{He}$  nuclei in zircon crystals can only be accounted for if the decay rate of radioactive uranium, which produces the  $^3\text{He}$  in the crystal, was greatly accelerated in the not-too distant past.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Panorama, 2009. “Half-life Nightmare Begins,” *B.A.*, **19**(128):46.

<sup>2</sup> Cardone, F., R. Mignani R. and A. Petrucci. 2009. “Piezonuclear Decay of Thorium,” *Physics Letters A*. **373**(22):1956.

<sup>3</sup> Humphreys, D. R. “Young Helium Diffusion Age of Zircons Supports Accelerated Nuclear Decay,” in L. Vardiman, A. A. Snelling, and E. F. Chaffin (eds.), *Radioisotopes*

Since the assumption that radioactive decay rates are constant in time is a cornerstone of radiometric dating, and since radioactive dating methods are the cornerstone of the theory of evolution, it is clear that radiometric dates are not to be trusted. As noted in our first “Panorama” note, variations in the speed of light or the strength of a gravitational field can also accelerate the decay rates. In light of these new revelations, it becomes clear that radiometric dating may not be as reliable as evolutionists would have us believe. That is, it may be a young universe, after all.

### **Geocentric Cosmology: A New Look**

In a 2010 paper entitled “Geocentric cosmology: a new look at the measure problem,”<sup>4</sup> Mahdiyur Noorbala and Vitaly Vanchurin, both from Stanford University, at Stanford, California, point out that a geocentric universe solves one of the key problems in cosmology. The authors phrase it this way in their abstract:

We show that most of cutoff measures of the multiverse violate some of the basic properties of probability theory when applied repeatedly to predict the results of local experiments. Starting from minimal assumptions, such as Markov property, we derive a correspondence between cosmological measures and quantum field theories in one lesser dimension. The correspondence allows us to replace the picture of an infinite multiverse with a finite causally connected region accessible by a given observer in conjunction with a Euclidean theory defined on its past boundary.

The big bang theory has long been plagued by what physicists call an initial value problem: what were the initial conditions of the big bang? And whence came those conditions? The usual way to solve the latter problem is to ignore it or to disallow the question. The reason for this, of course, is that the only viable answer to the problem is God created the universe, or, at least, the big bang. The initial conditions are equally arbitrary. The theory supposes that the big bang arose from the firmament, the super-dense medium that pervades all space and, indeed, every particle in the universe. The problem, of course, is how did the universe decide how much of the firmament to use to make the universe we live in? In time, the big bang model has been replaced by

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*and the Age of the Earth*, Volume II. El Cajon, CA: Institute for Creation Research, and Chino Valley, AZ: Creation Research Society: 25.

<sup>4</sup> Noorbala, M., & V. Vanchurin, 2010. “Geocentric cosmology: a new look at the measure problem,” arXiv:1006.4148v1 [hep-th] 21 Jun 2010.



what is now called an eternally inflating multiverse.<sup>5</sup> However, we cannot make any predictions about any such multiverse unless one imposes upon it some regulations or a measure that can be tested by experiments. The authors of the paper contend that most of the cutoff measures are “inconsistent with the most basic properties of the probability theory when applied to local experiments.”

Most Christians chafe at the mention of probability, tending to dismiss it as anti-God. Yet Solomon tells us that “time and chance happeneth to them [men] all.”<sup>6</sup> Likewise, Jesus acknowledged the role of chance in Luke 10:31.<sup>7</sup> The problem is that the Calvinistic concept of predestination keeps us from a true understanding of chance, for predestination is not applied to the reprobate in Scripture but only to the saint. The saint is predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ. The root of that predestination was foreknown from the foundation of the earth and is experienced by everyone that cleaves his life to the way, the truth, and the life. To understand this you must broaden God’s omnipresence to apply not just to space, but also to time. The atheist thinks his chance of salvation is based on probability and very long times, but that is wrong, salvation is based on the man Christ Jesus.

In the fourth page of Noorbala and Vanchurin’s article we encounter this sentence:

In other words, we can find the probability distribution everywhere by propagating our knowledge outward, hence possible names lab-centric, observer-centric, or simply, *geocentric*. [Emphasis in original.]

Now this is probably as clear as mud, but consider the implication. The authors claim that the geocentric nature of fundamental experiments about the earth give a true picture, not an illusionary or conspiratorial picture of the nature of the universe at large.

Noorbala and Vanchurin follow this with an example drawn from classical electromagnetic field theory of a given temperature. They derive an equation called a Lagrangian—which is a statement about conservation of energy, namely that energy can neither be created nor

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<sup>5</sup> Your editor’s model of the firmament does not allow for the spawning of some  $10^{37}$  “parallel” universe per second from the firmament. Instead, my model of the firmament perceived these so-called parallel universes as sheets of time that are detailed records of the present and so form a stack of time sheets we call the past. See *Biblical Astronomer* vol. 117, nos. 121 and 122 for details.

<sup>6</sup> Ecclesiastes 9:11.

<sup>7</sup> And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

destroyed in the natural realm—and note that it fits the observed temperature of the universe and that all we need to do to fit it into our cosmological observations is to add additional fields or interactions. They then announce that we need only find an appropriate Lagrangian and we would not need the infinite, unphysical multiverse. A geocentric Lagrangian statement about the firmament would suffice or, at least, be a good starting point.

Once again, cosmology is forced to conclude the geocentric universe as real, and not an illusion. It is the baggage we bring to our model of the universe that keeps us from acknowledging the truth of creation; both worldly and Christian baggage alike. But rather than be forced to the conclusion, Christian and atheist alike will rather tweak the truth with additional fields (physics, theology, archaeology, astrology, anthropology, mythology, etc.) and interactions (our experiences with teachers and authorities, for instance) to conform the universe to what we think it should be.

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### **Cause for concern!**

A Washington, DC airport ticket agent offers some examples of why our country is in trouble!

- A lady Senator called and said, “I need to fly to Pepsi-Cola, Florida. Do I have to get on one of those little computer planes?” I asked if she meant fly to Pensacola, Fl. on a commuter plane. She said, “Yeah, whatever, smarty!”
- A senior Senator called and had a question about the documents he needed in order to fly to China. After a lengthy discussion about passports, I reminded him that he needed a visa. “Oh, no I don’t. I’ve been to China many times and never had to have one of those.” I double-checked and sure enough, his stay required a visa. When I told him this he said, “Look, I’ve been to China four times and every time they have accepted my American Express!

## SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES TEACHING GEOCENTRISM Part 2

Robert A. Sungenis, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>

Here is the second installment of Dr. Sungenis' "Scripture Passages Teaching Geocentrism. In the first installment, Dr. Sungenis covered Joshua's Long Day in detail as well as the related passage in Habakkuk 3:11. The first installment ended with a brief account of Hezekiah's sign, where the sun went back ten degrees.

### Psalm 8:3-6

<sup>3</sup>When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established;

<sup>4</sup>what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?

<sup>5</sup>Yet thou hast made him little less than God,<sup>2</sup> and dost crown him with glory and honor.

<sup>6</sup>Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet

There is no explicit geocentric information in this Psalm, but the "establishment" of the moon and the stars requires an explanation from the geocentrist in light of the fact that the same word, "establishment" (Hebrew: *kun*) is used of the Earth in passages such as Ps 96:10: "Yea, the world is established, it shall never be moved." If the moon and stars move but the Earth does not, why is the same word "establishment" being used for all three? First we see that Ps 96:10 adds the key phrase that specifies the Earth's immobility ("it shall never be moved"), a phrase that Scripture never applies to the moon, stars or sun. Second, all scientific parties agree that the moon moves, and thus the use of *kun* in this verse is in the more general sense of the Hebrew word.<sup>3</sup> Third,

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from the book: *Galileo Was Wrong: The Church Was Right, Volume II, The Historical Case for Geocentrism*. Second edition, published February 2008, ISBN: 9780-9779640-9-3. For purchase, contact CAI Publishing, Inc. at [cairomeo@aol.com](mailto:cairomeo@aol.com)

<sup>2</sup> Hebrew here is אֱלֹהִים (elohim), often translated as "God," but can also refer to angels. RSV, ASV, NAS, NRS translate it here as "God," the KJV and DR as "angels," the NIV as "heavenly beings."

<sup>3</sup> Hebrew כּוּן (*kun*). See footnote on Ps 93:1 and Ps 96:10 for the definition and usage of *kun*.

the verbal form of *kun* (כִּוְנַנְתָּהּ) is chosen specifically for this Psalm. It is a polel perfect in the masculine singular. This is somewhat of a grammatical oddity since the singular is followed by the plural “stars” that is also coupled with the “moon.”<sup>4</sup> The oddity is explained by the fact that the singular verb is treating the multitudinous heavenly bodies (the moon and plurality of stars) as one mechanized unit. The intensive verbal form, the polel perfect, is for the purpose of indicating that God has so perfectly measured the distances, motions, and places of the heavenly bodies in the cosmos that they all act as one giant clock with each part functioning precisely as planned and without fail. It is this precision about which the Psalmist is marveling. Hence, the “establishment” of the moon and stars refers to their clockwork precision as they do their particular jobs in the cosmos; whereas the “establishment” of the Earth, due to the Psalmist’s addendum that it does not move, refers to the Earth’s centrality and immobility around which the moon and stars revolve.

### Psalm 19:1-6

<sup>1</sup>The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

<sup>2</sup>Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

<sup>3</sup>There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard;

<sup>4</sup>yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun,

<sup>5</sup>which comes forth like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

<sup>6</sup>Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and there is nothing hid from its heat.

<sup>7</sup>The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

In the same familiar manner of Hebrew poetry that is characteristic of the Psalms, vr. 5 first speaks of the sun in metaphorical terms. It is compared to a bridegroom that comes out of his chamber, and a strong man running a race. The purpose of these descriptions is not for mere cosmetic value. These metaphors portray the images of tremendous energy and movement. In fact, there are few images that better

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<sup>4</sup> Hebrew: יָרַח (moon) וְכִכְבֵּימָם (and the stars) אֲשֶׁר (which) כִּוְנַנְתָּהּ (you have established). Here the moon is without an article so it is more easily coupled with the stars as one unit.

represent single-minded determination and vigor than a bridegroom who seeks his bride and an athlete running a race. Both have strong desire firmly in mind and no concern or obstacle can bar them from their appointed goal. One would have to cripple or kill them in order to stop them. So strong are these images that, if the sun did not actually move in a circuit each day, there would be little reason for the Psalmist to employ the metaphors. In fact, the Psalmist uses five distinct words of movement to describe the sun's daily traverse – one describing the background against which the sun moves (“set a tent for the sun”), and four describing the sun's movement (“comes forth,” “runs its course,” “rising” and “circuit”).

The addition of “there is nothing hid from its heat” is very significant, since it is a scientific fact that the sun radiates heat. Logically, one scientific fact deserves another. Hence, it follows that the sun's movement must also be a scientific fact, since it would be rather inconsistent to treat one aspect of the sun scientifically and the other unscientifically.

Although vr. 7 is sometimes regarded as the heading of the second section of the Psalm (vrs. 8-14), it is still an important foundation for the truths that are told in vrs. 1-6. The “testimony of the Lord is sure” in all cases. It would certainly be difficult to trust in what the Lord has to say about the spiritual things we cannot see if, indeed, he was not precise about the cosmological objects and movements we can see. In fact, looking back on history, we can safely say that a relativistic interpretation of the above verses has produced a relativism about Scripture in general, which has then led to a relativism of morals.

The accuracy of the account can be noted in the fact that there are only two options for the sun to complete its course. Either it refers to the heliocentric view that believes the sun is traveling around the Milky Way galaxy, or it refers to the geocentric model in which the sun travels around the Earth. Of the two options, we are confined to the latter, since the word “circuit” refers to the time span of one year.<sup>5</sup> In the heliocentric system, the sun travels around the galaxy only once in 250 million years, hence, in that case, the “circuit” of Ps 19:6 could not be completed. Only in the geocentric system wherein the sun travels around the Earth in the period of one year can the passage have any fulfillment and meaning. As it stands, the sun begins its year-long journey at one sign of the zodiac and completes it at the last sign. It is these

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<sup>5</sup> תְּקִיפָהּ (*tequphah*) appears four times in the Old Testament. The word literally means “the revolution of the year” (Ex 34:22: “and the feast of ingathering at the year's end”; 2Ch 24:23: “At the end of the year the army of the Syrians came”; 1Sm 1:20: “and in due time Hannah conceived”). Each of these usages is based on the time elapsed in a year.

two points that the Psalmist refers to when he says in vr. 6: “from the end of the heavens...to the end of them.”

Of course, some may claim that the Psalmist is speaking “as it appears.” Besides the fact that such an interpretation would make the strong imagery superfluous or inappropriate, other passages of Scripture that are more specific about the sun’s and moon’s movement (*e.g.*, Joshua 10:10-14) and the Earth’s non-movement (*e.g.*, Ps 93:1; 96:9-10; 104:5,19) do not, in themselves, allow that option, at least on a grammatical-historical basis.

### Galileo’s Interpretation of Psalm 19

In a letter to Monsignor Dini on March 23, 1615, Galileo offered an interpretation of Psalm 19 (Psalm 18 in the Vulgate and Douay-Rheims) that was designed to counter the interpretation of Cardinal Robert Bellarmine. Dini told Galileo that Bellarmine was adamant that Psalm 19 afforded no other interpretation than the sun revolving around the Earth. Galileo retorted with the following:

Now I believe that the passage of the Psalms... “He proceeded as a bridegroom from his chamber and he exalted as a hero in running his course”...I would understand this to be said of the radiating sun, that is, of its light and the above-mentioned spirit which warms and fecundates all material substances and which is most quickly diffused throughout the whole world as soon as it leaves the body of the sun. Every word of the text fits this interpretation exactly. In the word “bridegroom” we have the power to reproduce and make fruitful. “Exalts” refers to the emanations of the sun’s rays, which in a way occur by fits and starts, as the meaning clearly shows. “As a hero” or “as a strong man” denotes the efficacious power and activity of penetrating all bodies, together with the highest velocity of motion through immense spaces, for light emanates as though it were instantaneous. The words, “he proceeds from his chamber,” confirm that his emanation and motion should be attributed to the light of the sun and not to the body of the sun itself. For the body and globe of the sun is the recipient and “like a chamber” for that light, and it would not be good to say that “the chamber proceeds from a chamber.” In what follows, “his progress is from the highest heavens,” we have the first derivation and separation of that spirit and light from the highest parts of the heavens, that is, from the stars of the firmament or perhaps from the seats of the most sublime. “And its path goes up to its highest point” refers to the reflection and, as it were, the re-

emanation of that light up to that same summit of the world.<sup>6</sup> What follows, “Nor is there any thing which escapes its heat,” refers to the vivifying and fecundating heat, which is distinct from the light, and which is much more penetrating through all material substances, even the most dense. For there are many things which fend off and recover from the penetration of light, but from this other power “there is nothing which escapes its heat.”<sup>7</sup>

Galileo then goes on to talk about the sunspots he has discovered that seem to indicate that the whole mass rotates. From this he theorizes that all the other celestial bodies rotate, including and especially the Earth. Unbeknownst to Galileo, astronomical science has revealed that only some of the planets rotate, and thus Bellarmine was, by our modern hindsight, correct in disallowing Galileo to make such an unqualified presumption.

Galileo’s interpretation of Psalm 19 is precisely what we would expect from someone who, although he might have a devotion to God and Scripture, takes advantage of some of the metaphorical language of the passage so that he can mold it to his preconceived interpretations of the scientific data. The letter to Dini shows quite clearly that Galileo believed Copernicanism was a fact of science.<sup>8</sup> Once he established that premise, it was a rather easy task to apply secondary or alternative meanings to Scripture’s words. The same is done today by modern exegetes who have accepted heliocentrism as a scientific fact. Since science, unlike Scripture, usually does not sprinkle metaphors in its celestial descriptions, the public assumes that scientific propositions are precise and unfazed by pride or prejudice, but that Scripture, at least those portions that have a healthy mixture of poetry and prose, are to be molded to conform to one’s scientific interpretations, which would then allow a modification to the non-metaphorical words of Scripture so that they, too, can conform. The basic question is, of course: when is Scripture to be interpreted literally and when is it to be interpreted figuratively? Arriving at the answer is sometimes a very difficult process. More contentions in religion, and even within the heart of Christianity,

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<sup>6</sup> Original Italian: “Da quello che segue, *a summo caeli egressio eius*, aviamo la prima derivazione e partite di questo spirito e lume dall’ altissime parti del cielo, cioè è sin dale stele del frimamento o anco dale sedi più sublimi. *Et occursus eius usque ad summum eius*: ecco la riflessione e, per così dire, la rianazione dell’ istesso lume sino alla medesima sommità del mondo” (*Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, vol. 5, p. 304).

<sup>7</sup> *Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, vol. 5, pp. 303-304, as translated by Blackwell in *Galileo, Bellarmine and the Bible*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>8</sup> Galileo states that Copernicanism is “qual è il sapere la vera disposizione delle parti del mondo” (“the knowledge of the true arrangement of the parts of the world”) (*Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, vol. 5, p. 298).

have been caused by whether Scripture is to be interpreted literally or figuratively than probably any other single cause, save man's own blindness caused by sin. Suffice it to say, there must be an ultimate authority on how Scripture is to be interpreted. There really is no other way to solve the problem. As it stands, Bellarmine represented that authority and Galileo himself recognized it. For all his scientific prowess, Galileo knew that the final word rested with the Church, which was guided by the Holy Spirit.

Be that as it may, Galileo's interpretation is rather poor even on a basic exegetical level. For all his attempts at turning the metaphors into representations of the sun's light, Galileo ignores the fact that not once does the passage explicitly refer to the sun's light. Not even the last sentence ("and there is nothing hid from its heat") specifically mentions the sun's light. The addition of "heat" to the passage is more of an afterthought, hence, what emanates from the sun is not the primary focus of the passage. Galileo's attempt to picture light as a strong man running a course is also off the mark. By his own testimony ("for light emanates as though it were instantaneous") light proceeds effortlessly from the sun. There is no labor involved, which is quite opposite the picture we imagine of a runner in a strenuous race against the elements or his opponents.

Additionally, Galileo, perhaps not familiar with the Hebrew of the Old Testament, seems unaware that the word "circuit" (verse 6: "and its circuit to the end of them") refers to the space of one year as opposed to instantaneous emanation.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the Psalmist insists that it takes the sun one year to complete its circuit, whereas to Galileo, due to his interpretation of the Latin Vulgate's "occurus," believes he has room to posit that the sun completes its task instantaneously wherever it is in the universe.

Coupled with the above problem is the beginning of verse 6: "Its rising is from the end of the heavens,") where again Galileo is working off the Latin translation which renders it "a summo caeli egressio eius," and translates literally into English as "to the highest heaven progress his" or more easily "his progress is to the highest heavens."<sup>10</sup> Galileo, appealing to the connotation engendered by the word "progress," is led to think in a metaphysical-type framework, or possibly that the sun's light "progresses" from the stars above it. It is safe to say that neither Galileo nor few, if any, of his contemporaries would have known the actual grammar of the passage, which is somewhat deeper than what

<sup>9</sup> See previous footnote #233 on תְּקוּפָהּ (*tequphah*).

<sup>10</sup> The Latin Vulgate, which for Psalm 19:6 is Psalm 18:7, has: "a summo caeli egressio eius, et occurus eius usque ad summum eius nec est qui se abscondat a calore eius," of which both clauses are somewhat inadequate in relaying the original Hebrew.



our English, or even the Latin, translations can afford us. Saving for the clause “and nothing is hid from its heat,” the grammatical structure of Psalm 19:6 [18:7] places “from the end” and “to their ends” at opposite poles of the main clause, and positions “his rising” and “his circuit” as one unit connected by a *waw*-consecutive, which is then placed between the two “end” points noted above.<sup>11</sup> Because a circle has neither beginning nor end, the polarity of “from the end...to their ends” is the colloquial way to describe the dimensions of a circle. If it begins at the ending and ends at the ending, then it has no beginning or ending. It just continues, *ad infinitum*. Within this closed circle, the Psalmist puts both the “rising or going forth” of the sun grammatically adjacent to its “circuit or orbit,” thus denoting that the “going forth” is the same as its circuit or orbit that transpires between the two end points, all of which takes place in one year. With the additional fact the passage does not mention the stars as an end point, Galileo’s interpretation is high on imagination but rather low on solid evidence.

### 1Chronicles 16:30

Tremble before him, all the earth; yea, the world stands firm, never to be moved.

### Psalm 93:1-2

<sup>1</sup>The Lord reigns; he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed, he is girded with strength. Yea, the world is established; it shall never be moved.

<sup>2</sup>thy throne is established from of old; thou art from everlasting.

The point of these passages is to portray the Lord’s majesty and strength, as a king who wears his royal robes signifies that he reigns supreme over all the land and has subdued all his enemies. One specific display of the Lord’s power is that he has established the world so that it cannot move. Like the throne of a king that does not move unless by his order, so the world has been set and will not be moved.

Although the comparison between the strength of God and the stability of the world is quite evident in the passage, there are very few options available regarding the meaning of the “establishment of the world” if one seeks to make a legitimate comparison to God. The world

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<sup>11</sup> The Hebrew word order is as follows: מִקְצֵהוּ (from the end of) הַשָּׁמַיִם (the heavens) מוֹצֵאוֹ (his rising, or going forth) וְהַפּוֹקֵדוֹתָיו (and his circuit or orbit) עַל (to) קְצוֹתָם (their ends).

cannot refer to the political machinations of the nations, for they shift quite frequently. It could not refer to the whole universe, since if the universe were moved, to where would it move? The best way the Psalmist's analogy can have its intended effect is if an object exists that is unmoved in the midst of all other objects that are moving. For example, if the Psalmist were referring to an unmoving Earth, then the image displayed by Ps 93:1 would be most accurate, for the Earth would be the only body at rest in the midst of a sea of moving bodies in the heavens. The Earth would be the only foundation point; the only immovable object, and thus the best example to picture of the immutability of God himself. More to the point is that Ps 93:2 adds that God's throne is also "established."<sup>12</sup> Logically, if his throne does not move then the world cannot move. The intended imagery would be identical to passages that call the Earth the "Lord's footstool," since footstools are understood to be at rest, not moving.<sup>13</sup>

Some might object that the phrase "shall never be moved" could also be translated as "shall never be shaken." If that is the case, then one could argue that a "shaking of the world" could have some political overtones. This might be true, except for the fact that the political systems of the world are inherently unstable, and thus they would not make a good comparison in displaying the strength and throne of God almighty. Conversely, the physical world, marked as it is by times and seasons that have been repeating themselves in exact precision for eons, is the only possible "world" that could be compared to the infinite stability of God.

In actuality, if the proper translation were "shaken" rather than "moved," this would only enhance the imagery of an immobile Earth, for this interpretation would require that the Earth be so firm in its posi-

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<sup>12</sup> Ps 93:1 and 93:2 use the same Hebrew word for "established," the word כּוּן (*kun*), which appears over a hundred times in the Old Testament in most of the Hebrew tenses. In vr. 1 it is utilized in the Niphal imperfect and in vr. 2 in the Niphal participle, which is the simplest of the passive tenses. Although *kun* includes the concept of an original founding date (e.g., "the building was established in 1955"), it also includes the concept of stability and longevity (e.g., "the rock of Gibraltar was established"). *Kun* also refers to rest or immobility (Jg 16:26: "and Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, 'Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests"; 16:29: "And Samson grasped the two middle pillars upon which the house rested"; Er 3:3: "They set the altar in its place").

<sup>13</sup> Is 66:1; Mt 5:35. In all of these passages the notion of "rest" for the Lord's footstool is emphasized: Is 66:1: "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house which you would build for me, and what is the place of *my rest*?"; 1Ch 28:2: "I had it in my heart to build a *house of rest* for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God"; Ps 132:7-8: "Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool! Arise, O Lord, and go to thy *resting place*, thou and the ark of thy might" (see also Ac 7:49). "Rest," of course, refers to motionlessness, which is appropriate in the Earth's case only if it is not moving through space.

tion that it would not only be prohibited from rotating or revolving, but it would also be prohibited from shaking. As we learned in the science portion of this work, the Earth is held in space by the combined torque of the whole universe. To move the Earth would require that it overcome the combined torque of the universe. Consequently, we can see why this particular Hebrew word (*moht*) for “move” or “shaken” was chosen, since it includes the Earth’s resistance to even the slightest outside movement.<sup>14</sup> If vibration occurs, it will occur within the internal structure of the Earth but not with respect to the Earth’s position in space. In fact, the reason earthquakes occur is that the internal movements within the Earth are rubbing against the external forces that are keeping the Earth immobile in space.

The only other detail of Ps 93:1-2 regards the meaning and usage of the word “world.” As it stands, the Hebrew consistently uses the term in reference to the earth, not the universe at large.<sup>15</sup> Hence, it is the Earth alone that is kept immobile, not the universe.

### Psalm 96:9-11

<sup>9</sup>Worship the Lord in holy array; tremble before him, all the earth!

<sup>10</sup>Say among the nations, “The Lord reigns! Yea, the world is established, it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.”

<sup>11</sup>Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it;

Here again the Hebrew כּוֹן *kun* and מוֹט *moht* appear in tandem. Although it would be proper to interpret *kun* (“established”) and *moht*

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<sup>14</sup> Hebrew: מוֹט (*moht*) appears 39 times in the Old Testament, 20 in the Psalms. The Qal form appears 13 times, 23 times in the Niphal, and one each in the Hiphil and Hithpael. It can refer to things as simple as slipping with the foot (Dt 32:35; Ps 17:5; 38:16-17) to moving the earth (Ps 82:5; Is 24:19). *Moht*, in the physical sense, refers to the transition from a state of rest to a state of movement; in the figurative sense, from a state of stability to a state of instability. Of all the words in Hebrew referring to movement (e.g., הִפְיָן, הִרְיָן, הִרְיָן, נָדַד, נָוַע, נָוַק, רָהַק, et al) מוֹט (*moht*) is used when any, even the slightest movement, is in view. Hence, it can refer to a shaking or vibration as well as a change of location.

<sup>15</sup> Hebrew: תֵּבֵל (*tebel*) appears 38 times in the Old Testament. It is often a poetic synonym of אֶרֶץ (*erets*) referring to the “earth” (e.g., 1Sm 2:8; Ps 33:8; 77:18; 90:2; Is 34:1; Lm 4:12), but in non-poetic contexts it sometimes has a larger focus than the physical world and may include the more abstract notions associated with existence, such as the totality of human consciousness (e.g., Is 24:4; 26:9). In the non-poetic passages that *tebel* is used without *erets*, *tebel* always refers to the earth or that which is inhabited by mankind (e.g., 2Sm 22:16; Is 13:11; 14:17, 21; 18:3), not to the universe at large.

("moved") as words conveying the idea that the Lord's reign over the nations is such that it will be uninterrupted and always produce justice, the unavoidable dimension of this passage is that the Lord's reign is being compared to the already known fact of the world's immovability, and it is the Hebrew poetic form that brings these two dimensions into comparison. Without the poetic form, the passage could have simply stated: "The Lord's reign is established and it shall never be moved, he will judge the people with equity," and the salient point of the Psalmist would have been accomplished nonetheless. But within the poetic form, the Psalmist is drawing on facts he and other authors have stated elsewhere about the world's establishment and immobility, such as Ps 104:5: "Thou didst set the Earth on its foundations, so that it should never be shaken" or 1Ch 16:30: "tremble before him, all the Earth; yea, the world stands firm, never to be moved." In other words, he is using the scientific fact of the Earth's motionlessness as the basis for the analogy as to why the Lord will always reign and judge with equanimity. Both states will always be true: (1) the Lord will reign with equity, and (2) the world will never move. One verifies and supports the other. If one fails, the other fails also.

We can imagine how difficult it would have been for the Psalmist to prove his point if, indeed, the world was constantly moving through space. If it were a fact that the Earth was moving, the Psalmist would, instead, have had to make a comparison between the stability of the Earth's orbit and the stability of the Lord's reign. In actuality, however, he cannot do so, because previously he had made a comparison between the stability of the Lord's reign and the orbit of the sun (e.g., Ps 19:4-14), and thus it would not be permissible now to compare the Lord's reign to the orbit of the Earth, since obviously both the sun and the Earth cannot be orbiting around each other.<sup>16</sup>

On a theoretical basis, one might object that since the Psalmist regards the sun as orbiting the Earth he could just have easily regarded the Earth as orbiting the sun, since both systems are equivalent, geometrically speaking. But although the geometrical reciprocity between the two celestial models is true, the Psalmist is working from a perspective of propositional truth that will only allow him to appeal to the *actual* celestial model and force him to discount its geometric or mathematical equivalent. That is, since the Psalmist's major point concerns the eternal stability of God's reign, he can only communicate that important truth analogously if he knows which celestial model is actually

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<sup>16</sup> Moreover, mutual orbiting around a common center of mass will also not satisfy the Psalmist since in that case neither the sun revolves around the Earth nor the Earth revolves around the sun.

true, the heliocentric or the geocentric. Any false information will necessarily negate his analogy.

To say it another way, although one could argue that from a relativistic perspective the Psalmist has the option of using the stability of an orbiting Earth as the analog to the Lord's stable reign, the fact remains that he, in the general scope of his Psalmic writings, chooses an immobile Earth (Ps 96:10) and a moving sun (Ps 104:4-6). This choice is significant, since in order to make the analogy he is proposing valid, the Psalmist must base it on an incontrovertible scientific fact. If he chooses the wrong celestial model, his very purpose in creating the analogy is defeated, for the Lord's reign cannot be compared to something fictitious. Either the Earth is fixed and the sun moves around it, or the sun is fixed and the Earth moves around it. Both cannot be true, and the Psalmist must adopt the correct one in order for his analogy to be genuine.

In retrospect, we can see why the Psalmist does not state cosmological truths as mere brute facts. Rather, to make the strongest argument, he purposely compares the immobility of the Earth to the unshakable reign of the Lord, since in serving as witnesses to one another, both must be absolutely true, or, consequently, both are absolutely false. Similar to instances in which God swears to Himself because he can find no one greater to serve as a witness (*cf.* Hb 6:13-18), so here in the Psalms we have the Lord comparing his unflappable divine justice to a divinely-set immovable object.

Some might object, however, that passages such as Ps 82:5 ("They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken") contradict the above conclusion that the Earth does not shake. A careful comparison, however, will show that Ps 82:5 specifies that the "foundations" of the Earth, not the Earth itself, are shaken, while Ps 96:10 says that the *world*, in its totality, will not be shaken or moved.<sup>17</sup> As noted earlier, the "foundations" of the Earth are part of the inner structure of the Earth which lie beneath its surface. The foundations may shake but they will not move the Earth itself out of the position in space God has given it.

### **Psalm 75:2-4**

<sup>2</sup>At the set time which I appoint I will judge with equity.

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<sup>17</sup> The same emphasis on the "foundations" is noted in the following passages: Ps 18:7: "Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry." Similar rationale can be applied to Ps 46:2; 60:2; 68:8; 97:4; 99:1; 104:32.

<sup>3</sup>When the earth totters, and all its inhabitants, it is I who keep steady its pillars. *Selah*

<sup>4</sup>I say to the boastful, “Do not boast,” and to the wicked, “Do not lift up your horn.”

Here the “tottering” refers to the Earth’s land mass, not the Earth’s position in space. Although the land mass may totter, and perhaps even vibrate its pillars, ultimately God holds the pillars in position and the Earth’s surface remains firm. The Hebrew word for “totters” is **מוֹג** (*moog*), which refers mostly to “melting” or some kind of structural weakening.<sup>18</sup> Similar to all the other Psalms that speak in this same way, the movement attributed to the Earth refers to its internal structure, not its spatial position in the cosmos.

### Psalm 104:5, 19

<sup>5</sup>Thou didst set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be shaken.

<sup>19</sup>Thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting.

This Psalm makes an important distinction from the other Psalms that speak of the foundations of the Earth shaking, particularly Ps 82:5 (“They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken”). Ps 104:5 is very similar to Ps 96:10: “Yea, the world is established, it shall never be moved,” since both passages are speaking about the Earth’s position in space. The word for “foundations” in Ps 104:5 is not the normal word used for “foundations of the Earth,” but the Hebrew **מַחְצוֹן** (*mahchon*), which refers to a fixed place.<sup>19</sup> As such, it is referring to the fact that the Earth is positioned in its spatial foundation (*e.g.*, Jb 26:7:

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<sup>18</sup> Hebrew **מוֹג** (*moog*), appears 17 times in the Old Testament, mostly as “melt” (*e.g.*, Ex 15:15; Ps 46:6; Am 9:5), sometimes “faint” (*e.g.*, Js 2:9; Jr 49:23). Ps 75:3 is in the Niphal participle (“when the Earth and its inhabitants are melting...”).

<sup>19</sup> Hebrew **מַחְצוֹן** (*mahchon*) appears 17 times in the Old Testament, and refers to a settled and immovable place. In 16 of the references it refers to God’s dwelling place that is impenetrable and immovable (*e.g.*, Ex 15:17; 1Kg 8:13, 39, 43, 49; 2Ch 6:2, 30, 33, 39; Er 2:68; Ps 33:14; 89:14; 97:2; Is 4:5; 18:4). The only time God’s “place” is moved is in the apostasy (Dn 8:11). The word **מַחְצוֹן** is applied to the Earth once (Ps 104:5), which states that the Earth is set into its **מַחְצוֹן**, from which it cannot be shaken or moved. A similar word is **מַחְצוֹנָה**, the feminine form of **מַחְצוֹן**, which appears 24 times and is normally translated as “stands” or “base” (1Kg 7:27-43).

“he...hangs the Earth upon nothing”) from which it cannot be moved or shaken. Additionally, in contrast to the Earth’s spatial immobility, the Psalmist speaks in vr. 19 of both the moon and the sun moving in space to accomplish their particular tasks.

### Psalm 119:89-91

<sup>89</sup>For ever, O Lord, thy word is firmly fixed in the heavens.

<sup>90</sup>Thy faithfulness endures to all generations; thou hast established the earth, and it stands fast.

<sup>91</sup>By thy appointment they stand this day; for all things are thy servants.

There are several interesting features to this passage. First, the phrase “stands fast” is from the Hebrew עָמַד (*amad*), the same word appearing in Joshua 10:12-13 in reference to the sun and moon that *temporarily* had no spatial movement in the sky. But here in Psalm 119 it is applied to the Earth that is *always* without movement. It does not refer merely to the existence of the Earth, since the preponderant usage of *amad* in Hebrew refers to the lack of motion or the deliberate cessation of motion.<sup>20</sup> *Amad* is also the word behind the phrase “they stand” in vr. 91, although it is in the plural since it is referring to both “all generations” and the “Earth.” By the same token, the Psalmist is careful not to imply that the “heavens” themselves stand fast like the Earth; rather, the heavens are merely an indication of the general steadfastness of the Lord’s word.<sup>21</sup> As was the case in Ps 96:9-11, the Psalmist is comparing the very character of God to the scientific fact of the Earth’s motionlessness. One fact supports the other.

### Ecclesiastes 1:4-7

<sup>4</sup>A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains for ever.

<sup>5</sup>The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises.

<sup>6</sup>The wind blows to the south, and goes round to the north; round and round goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns.

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<sup>20</sup> Hebrew עָמַד (*amad*) appears over 500 times in the Old Testament, usually denoting the conscious decision of the individual to cease motion and remain in a certain position (e.g., Gn 19:27; 41:46; 2Ch 34:31).

<sup>21</sup> The RSV’s “firmly fixed” in Ps 119:89 is the Hebrew נָצַב (*nahtzab*), a frequently used word in the Old Testament referring to something built or erected with firmness or authority.

<sup>7</sup>All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.

In 1579, Didacus à Stunica, in his famous commentary on Job in which he opted for the Copernican system, stated the following about the above passage:

“that text signifieth no more but this, that although the succession of ages, and generations of men on earth be various, yet the earth itself is still one and the same, and continueth without any sensible variation...and it hath no coherence with its context (as Philosophers show) if it be expounded to speak of the earth’s immobility. The motion that belongs to the earth by way of speech is assigned to the sun even by Copernicus himself, and those who are his followers....To conclude, no place can be produced out of Holy Scriptures which so clearly speaks the earth’s immobility as this doth its mobility. Therefore this text of which we have spoken is easily reconciled to this opinion. And to set forth the wonderful power and wisdom of God who can indue the frame of the whole earth (it being of monstrous weight by nature) with motion, this our Divine pen-man added: ‘And the pillars thereof tremble.’ As if he would teach us, from the doctrine laid down, that it is moved from its foundations.<sup>22</sup>

Stunica, whose book was eventually condemned in 1616 along with Galileo’s works, sees no problem interpreting the passage the exact opposite of what the face value wording exhibits. He attempts to reverse the role of the sun’s movement against the Earth’s immobility by appealing to what a tremendous feat it would be, and a point he feels that Solomon himself wishes to stress, for God to move such a heavy object as the Earth around the sun. Hence, according to Stunica, if we should glean any truth about the physical universe from this verse it should be that putting the Earth in motion is a testimony to the great power of God, and therefore Copernicanism is vindicated as more worthy than models advocating a non-moving Earth. Apparently, it didn’t occur to Stunica that it would have been an even more tremendous feat for God to move the sun around the Earth, since now we know that it is a million times bigger than the Earth and weighs 333,000 times as much.

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<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Thomas Salusbury’s *Mathematical Collections and Translations*, London, 1616, pp. 468-470, as cited in Stimson’s *The Gradual Acceptance of the Copernican Theory of the Universe*, pp. 44-45.



Irrespective of Stunica's poor attempt, there are several important features to the passage. First, by making reference to what we now know are scientific facts (*e.g.*, the circuits of the wind and the courses of rivers running into the sea), the context establishes itself as teaching general facts about terrestrial events. That being the case, one can logically assume that the passage is also giving scientific information about the celestial events it addresses, namely, the movement of the sun between the horizons. Although one might object that the language of the 'sun rising' and 'sun going down' is phenomenal, this does not prove that the sun does not revolve around the Earth in the scientific sense. If the author of the passage is working from knowledge of the scientific fact of the sun's movement, he could describe a revolving sun either from the phenomenal perspective (*e.g.*, sun rising or setting) or from the actual perspective (*e.g.*, the sun revolves around the Earth). Considering that the author knows the scientific facts about the courses of the Earth's winds and rivers, he would most likely know the scientific facts concerning the other objects that traverse the Earth's domain, in this case, the sun. Not only does the author appear familiar with the science of the sun's course, he also knows enough to describe the movement as one requiring much labor.<sup>23</sup> This was the very reason that Cardinal Bellarmine appealed to the "wisdom of Solomon" to defend geocentrism when he confronted Galileo, which we will see in more detail in Chapter 14.

Second, similar to other passages that speak of the Earth's stability, Solomon says that the Earth "remains forever." By itself, we may grant that the clause may be making a mere indicative statement that the Earth exists and remains unchanged while a new population of human beings appears every generation. In the context of a moving sun, however, the implication of the clause tends more toward affirming the truth stated in other passages, namely, that the Earth is motionless in space. The Hebrew word for "remains" is עָמַד (amad), which is the same word employed both by the Psalmist to depict the Earth's motionlessness and by Joshua to describe the cessation of both the sun's and moon's movement (Js 10:13). Moreover, while the sun and moon of Joshua's day ceased their movement temporarily, Solomon tells us that the Earth maintains its celestial *amad*, "forever," from the Hebrew word עוֹלָם (olam), which can refer to an unending time or a long but

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<sup>23</sup> The author uses the Hebrew word שָׂאֵף (shaaph) which refers to the panting or gasping that comes from hard labor. As we noted in the scientific portion of this book, the sun travels in the opposite direction to the rotation of the universe, lagging behind by about one degree per day due to the sheer force of the universe's current, which then makes the sun appear to travel through the zodiac once per year.

indefinite period. In the case of the Earth's state of motionlessness, *olam* is the appropriate word to use since the Earth will remain as it is at least until the end of time, and perhaps continue as such in the New Heaven and New Earth.<sup>24</sup>

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## QUOTABLE QUOTES

Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue.

—Anonymous

Voltaire once wrote a severe and scholarly criticism of the Bible that later was discovered to have been written by a Dominican Priest: word for word. The Priest had written on Bible problems and gave their solution. Voltaire left out the scholarly solutions.

—D. K. Lifschultz

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The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

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Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Is 65:17; 66:22; 2Pt 3:10-13; Ap 21:1.

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The Biblical Astronomer was founded in 1971 as the Tychonian Society. It is based on the premise that the only absolutely trustworthy information about the origin and purpose of all that exists and happens is given by God, our Creator and Redeemer, in his infallible, preserved word, the Holy Bible commonly called the King James Bible. Any scientific endeavor which does not accept this revelation from on high without any reservations, literary, philosophical or whatever, we reject as already condemned in its unfounded first assumptions.

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We affirm that no man is righteous and so all are in need of salvation, which is the free gift of God, given by the grace of God, and not to be obtained through any merit or works of our own. We affirm that salvation is available only through faith in the shed blood and finished work of our risen LORD and saviour, Jesus Christ.

Lastly, the reason why we deem a return to a geocentric astronomy a first apologetic necessity is that its rejection at the beginning of our Modern Age constitutes one very important, if not the most important, cause of the historical development of Bible criticism, now resulting in an increasingly anti-Christian world in which atheistic existentialism preaches a life that is really meaningless.

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*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

– Isaiah 8:20

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