

Coach House Church BEACONS

ITS ALL TALK

1ST AUGUST 2020

A recent article in a newspaper explained how scientists –cosmologists in particular - had been able to measure energy that comes from the stars. They called it 'cosmic background radiation'. I can't even begin to explain or understand just exactly how they managed to do this. But I have heard that there are people working in this field of science and I accept that there is so much in the science world that I will never get my head around. I know the limits of my abilities and also the amazing brains that others have.

So, my understanding of the article is this:

Ripples of sound have been measured emanating from stars. The scientists believe that these sound waves are harmonic notes that rang out like a bell at the beginning of time. They propose that they rang out during the big bang, the moment at which they suggest our world came into existence. Further, their theory is that these sound waves became matter, leading to the formation of the stars and planets. The presence of 'cosmic radiation background' leads to the theory that the whole universe started with sound waves. All matter, all substance, the stuff our universe is made of, has its origin in vibration and sound.

It may sound like science fiction, but so many discoveries do. How many scientists have tried to explain their theories, to be ridiculed or even labelled as insane, before understanding has caught up with a theory. People once thought the earth was flat, or that it was okay to have open drains flowing through towns! As humans, we are always learning.

My lack of understanding is not always an argument that I can use to discredit something. However, I can see what the bible says about it all.

Genesis chapter 1 says: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And

the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said 'Let there be light', and there was light.

Throughout the chapter it repeats – and God said...and God called...In other words, God used his voice. Then in verse 28 it says God spoke to the humans he had created and blessed them. Again he used his voice.

What is clear from genesis chapter 1 is that God spoke. So, God's sound waves initiated our universe. Whether or not there was also a big bang as God spoke – maybe. In Samuel, Job and the Psalms it talks of God speaking with a mighty voice of thunder from heaven. Maybe we just have to wait and see and one day in heaven we can ask – so how exactly did it all happen? The newspaper article does not mention God at all but it is interesting that important elements line up with the bible. I find it fascinating that current scientific thinking is drawn back and linked to the biblical account. Creation is always pointing back to the creator. In Genesis chapter 11 there is the account of the Tower of Babel from where we get our word 'babble'. Originally there was one language for all the people on earth so communication was easy. There was no need for translators or interpreters, no mediators to iron out misinformation or confusion. Imagine a world without online translation apps, world conferences where everyone understood each other with little effort, where you need only one version of any correspondence. Yet, the people tried to work together, to build a tower that would reach up to heaven so that they could be famous, 'to make a name' for themselves. Their focus moved from relying on God, the creator, to their own understanding, where they focussed on their own superior thinking and abilities. As a result, God confused the people with different languages. From that time on, they would struggle to understand each other and would need to work hard to communicate on the most basic of tasks.

Did you know that babies have the ability to create all the sounds of speech when they babble? As they become tuned into a language that they are surrounded by, particular speech sounds become redundant and not necessary so they are forgotten. We soon learn to recognise the sounds that are used around us, that are important for communication and necessary if our needs are to be met. God, our creator, wants us to listen to him. His word, the bible is full of encouraging, comforting and strengthening words to help, support and direct us day to day. The psalms have many instances of the writer crying out for God to listen to his prayers and of God responses in times of need.

Psalm 115 warns about putting your trust in idols, in things that have no voice. They may appear to have a mouth but are not able to create a sound. They have no life and so cannot answer or support in any way. Only the creator understands his creation and can respond to its needs.

Sound waves alone have little value for communication. They are just a movement of air molecules. What is needed is a receptor, something that converts the sound waves to a meaningful form. For human speech this is our brain because we don't listen with our ears, we listen with our brain. The vibrating sound wave is converted to electrical impulses within the inner ear, the cochlea, and then it travels along the auditory nerve to the language centres of the brain. It is only at this point that the brain can decode the signal and understand the message. This tells me that there is a difference between just hearing :the physiological response of the hearing system – and listening: processing and making sense of the sounds being sent to the brain.

We can hear but not listen. The sounds can go in but not be recognised- as in the people at the Tower of Babel. The sounds can go in and not be acted upon or ignored. Jesus spent time on earth talking to people. Some just heard, some listened and understood what he was explaining to them – that through his sacrifice on the cross they could have total forgiveness for sins, that they could trust in his words and learn how to live a life that was pleasing to God, that he would send them the Holy Spirit as a comfort and strength in daily life, that one day they could enter heaven itself, not because of their own worth but because Jesus personally led the way to heaven, presenting the creation back to the creator.

Colossians 2:8 warns us Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. It is important to weigh up what we hear. Does it fit with the pattern of the bible, God's overarching plan for his creation? Does it fit with Jesus' teaching?

So, God the creator used his voice to create the universe. He used his voice to show his pleasure in his creation. We are asked to listen to Jesus teachings and to

act on them for the benefit of ourselves and those around us. At the same time we must check out what we listen to and whether it lines up with God's word. God's words are powerful and should not be ignored – from creating the universe, to acknowledging Jesus as his only begotten son, in Matthew 3:17 ..a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'.



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