



EDUCATION FOR SPACE

PRESENTED

by

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on

*The
Back to God
Hour*

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"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth."

-Psalm 33: 6

When Neil Armstrong stepped on the moon and announced that his achievement signalled a giant step for all mankind, most everyone assumed that it was a step forward. After all, the lunar landing and subsequent successful return to earth came at the end of a long, long road of scientific and technological advance. And most men assume that such advance is the most important activity of the human race.

Maybe it is too early to raise skeptical questions about the wisdom of further space adventures. Mankind is still too giddy with the excitement of his new victory. So it is like sacrilege to suggest that perhaps Neil Armstrong's giant step for mankind was, in fact, just another step in a long, long journey backward.

Yes, it may be too early to consider such disturbing ideas, but if man's fixation on the planets is in fact a departure from the pursuit of nobler goals, it is our duty to be critical, whether we want to be or not. And even if the majority of mankind would continue to insist on searching out the secrets of the moon and Mars, those who know man's real task and duty could possibly separate themselves from those who continue this lunatic policy. (I use the word *lunatic* only as adjective derived from lunar).

There are many reasons why it is difficult for us to look at the space program objectively. Certainly one of the reasons is that, in general, the space program enjoys a good press. The

mass communications media devote a great deal of their coverage to these matters. This is expected. In addition, the space program has a tremendous economic impact. Already talks of cutback bring panic to certain parts of the United States, and slowdowns have created space age ghost towns. Now that men have developed the space industry as they have, it is practically impossible to turn the corner and go the other way. The very economy of the world is tied into space and, therefore, it is very hard to be objective about what is being done and planned.

But there is a more basic reason why modern civilization seems to be moving forward with greater plans for space exploration without so much as a pause for critical evaluation. Oh, there are some public servants who suggest that the money spent in space could better be spent on other projects. But this is a question of priorities, not the basic question whether or not the space venture is itself noble and necessary. And it is so hard to ask such basic questions because the space exploits have been prepared for during the last three or four decades in the most significant way possible. Men have been educated for space.

The great educational systems of the world, during the last decades, have been so designed that countless millions of people have been psychologically, intellectually, and emotionally prepared for space exploration. Be sure, the space adventures have been prepared for by advances in computers, mathematics, and other complex sciences. But when you see the big picture, the space race appears to be a result of a whole system of education that has propelled man into the heavens.

Men have been educated for space and our children are being educated for space right now. The space program also includes the educational systems of the great nations of the world. We program computers to do thus and so. We have also programmed ourselves so that we have all become inevitably involved in this great human adventure. And now, as our involvement becomes more intense, we find that, if in general, mankind is incapable of being critical of what he is doing, he has been educated for space, programmed for space, and what is happening now is, among other things, the result of this great educational process.

The space adventure in many ways is part and parcel of the evolutionary view of the world and of mankind, and this evolutionary view of the world is shown by the way goals for the space program are described. When we question key scientists about what we are going to get out of going to the moon or even to Mars, they often say that we must do this so that we can learn about the origin of our universe, about the birth of our planet, and (possibly about its inevitable end).

Joined to this great curiosity concerning our origins, we are also told that we wish to see if there are other forms of life within the universe. There may be, you see, and some of them may be intelligent. Perhaps we will be able to converse together, and when such communication is established we may learn more about ourselves. Or, even if we never meet intelligent forms of life, we may encounter life in the early stages of evolutionary development and that will throw light upon our own development, too.

And hasn't it been true that the recent suc-

cesses in space have been described in terms that are drawn from an evolutionary view of the world? One of the big men in the rocket program has said that if he were to compare man's walking on the moon with any other event, he would have to compare it with the time the first aquatic creatures crawled from the slime of the sea and began to live on the land. In the same vein, others have pointed out that now man has demonstrated that this earth is not his only home, but the entire universe. Man is a being destined to find his way, not only here where his way of life leaves something to be desired, but on the moon and on other planets as well.

Now such observations, and the reasons given to support the massive journey into space, flow naturally from a view of the world that presupposes that our earth and the vast planetary system that form infinite galaxies have simply come into being through a process of evolution. And man, who finds his origin in the aquatic creatures crawling from the slime of prehistoric oceans, now continues his evolutionary march across the heavens.

But there are some who might object to the suggestion that the space program rests on an evolutionary view of the universe. They might say that never in recent history has there been so much talk about God and about prayer. Why, the first astronaut to circle the moon read from the first book of the Bible, Genesis, "In the beginning, God . . ." And there has even been a postage stamp, ~~desi~~ with these words written across it. When the first astronauts set foot on the moon, they had a scrap of the Bible with them which they left behind. And one of them read from Psalm 8 on his

return trip. So there are many who are quite impressed with the piety of the space age.

But don't be fooled. None of the references to God or the readings from the Bible ever gave the slightest reason to believe that men have finally abandoned the evolutionistic view of the world. God is the Creator and you don't have to go into space to find that out. The Bible reveals that God has made us in His image and He requires that we live according to His laws and someday He will come to judge us all. The Bible says, furthermore, that it is wrong simply to speak about creation without recognizing that Jesus Christ is the great person through whom God has made the worlds and nothing can be understood about ourselves and our universe without reference to Jesus. And how often have you heard the name of Jesus mentioned during the last few months in connection with our pell mell race through space? Seldom, if ever.

Because of the overriding impact of the evolutionary view of the universe and of man, there is every reason to believe that the modern space piety is simply an appropriation of traditional Biblical ideas into an essentially evolutionary theory of origin. Surely it is true, that "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork," as Buzz Aldrin remarked from Columbia. But you can know that without ever going to the moon if you believe the Bible. The Bible also declares that you do not have to go to the moon to find out just how our universe was born. Psalm 33: 6 we read: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth . . . For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood

forth." This is the message of the Psalms, unmistakable and plain as day. Surely we will find smatterings of information that will alter the various theories about the origin of the universe one way or another when we go to the moon or take pictures of Mars. But nothing we will ever learn will alter the supremely important fact that God has made the world, out of nothing, through the word of His creation.

The New Testament reiterates the glorious message of creation and ties it directly to Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word of God in the flesh and the opening verses of John's Gospel announce: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." (vs. 1-4)

Admittedly there has been a lot of talk about God lately, and even about creation. But the question remains whether it is the God of the Bible men are talking about, and whether it is the creation through the Word of God that the Bible speaks about. Every evidence says it is not. Just try to say, for example, in the classroom that what must be understood by the word *creation* is the act of a supernatural transcendent God who calls something into being out of nothing. Just try it once. If you do, you will be told that you are introducing a sectarian belief into education. Just try to say that somehow Jesus Christ must be acknowledged as the great and sovereign Lord of the space race, and you will find that you will be accused of saying something which is certainly not in good taste.

So long as the dominant educational systems of this age continue to build their basic point of view on an evolutionary view of man, would be foolish to conclude from the few references to the Bible and to God that mankind is returning to Biblical view of man kind's origins. And so long as this evolutionary point of view prevails, it is going to be virtually impossible to evaluate mankind's goals in space.

For if we assume that the great fundamental facts of man's origin and destiny are still unknown, obviously we should leave no stone unturned to find the answers we need. We don't know where we came from and what is going to happen to us, obviously we are confronted by mystery on every side. Surely, if space holds the keys to these secrets, we should try to find them. And if there are others like us somewhere, quite possibly we will benefit from getting to know them better, though, admittedly, men of different races have not got along very well on earth. Maybe in space it will be different. And surely, if you conceive of human history as evolutionary development from a lower form of life to a higher, it may well be true that our feeble race will find its greatest development on some unknown distant star.

On the other hand, if the Biblical view of creation is allowed a hearing, it will be possible for us, even now at mid course, to examine what we are doing in space and critically appraise our goals. The creationist view of origins, as this is expressed in the Bible, is absolutely opposed to the materialistic evolution that prevails today in society and in education. Materialistic evolution asserts that material is independent and self-generated. God, if He exists, either does SC? alongside material reality or is a part of it. The creationist view of the Bible declares that material reality has been called into being by the transcendent God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. And none of the processes that occur within our world or within human history occurs without His sovereign direction. Those who believe the Bible's message that the heavens were made by the Word of the Lord begin with the answers the evolutionists still claim to be searching for. Once you know that the answer to the question of origins is that God is the Creator, you can begin to worship the Creator and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who reject the Bible's message, find that they inevitably become so interested in creation they don't even hear the Creator when He speaks to them. And those who know that men are 'Creatures of God, created in the image of God, can begin right now to devote their energies to living as an image bearer of God. We need not wait until we find some new friends on some far off cosmic reaches who will tell us the truth about ourselves. We know already. Not every thing, of course, but we know enough to know that we must concentrate on the greatest task of all, that of loving God above all and our neighbor as ourselves.

Oh, it may well be that when Armstrong stepped on the moon, mankind did not step forward, but backward. It may well be that our frantic, limitless effort to go on and on and on could finally be the great process by which man shall succeed in destroying all that is fine and noble in the human spirit. There were some pious folk who doubted God at the time.

ever let us walk the face of His moon, for we would be trespassing the forbidden territory. And now we have seen that God will allow it. But it is possible that our punishment which failed to come in a flash of heaven sent fire or a simple accident somewhere along the line, may yet fall as God abandons man to use less pursuits.

The great question that must be raised in connection with mankind's space venture are not the questions of money. Surely, the space race is expensive and perhaps the money should be spent for other causes if it is really as important as many think it is, then obviously we can find ways of financing it one way or the other. The great question is whether it is worth our effort. The great question is whether or not by this great venture we are fleeing from the God who made the worlds and us and closing our ears to His great message in the Bible.

It is almost impossible to ask such questions because the great systems of modern education are oriented to an evolutionary view of the world. For years and years already, men have been programmed for the space age. All of their thinking has prepared them for this hour of human history. And so we hurtle onward. Is it progress? We find that most of us are not even prepared to judge.

By the word of the Lord were the heavens made - that is the Biblical point of view. Somehow this message must be made to live among us all in education too, and in our common life together. Only when we take our stand within the grand perspective of the Bible, believing it and submitting to its authority, will we be able to chart our future course.

the Bible in space is not enough. Leaving pages of it on the moon is not enough either. Believing it here, and living in obedience to Jesus here, is the only thing that will save us now.

PRAYER

Creator God, Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, revive within mankind faith in Thy holy Word, the Bible. Grant that some at least may divest themselves of those points of view which declare that we must comb the stars for answers to the riddles of our origin and future. Help us understand that Thou hast provided important, useful answers to our most basic questions within the Bible.

If our present course to Mars arid beyond is folly, show us. Do not abandon mankind to a course that is not prudent and ultimately destructive. May we see clearly what our highest duties are and may we willingly devote our energies to doing Thy holy will, O God, our strength and our redeemer. Through Christ. Amen.

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