

Trends

A majority (52%) of all Americans who self-identify as 'Christians' think that at least some non-Christian faiths can lead to eternal life . . . The findings confirm that most people who take this view believe that even non-Christian faiths (including Judaism, Islam and Hinduism) can lead to eternal salvation.

- via The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life

Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Sentence Sermons

"God can be realized through all paths. All religions are true. The important thing is to reach the roof. You can reach it by stone stairs or by wooden stairs or by bamboo steps or by a rope. You can also climb up by a bamboo pole."

—Ramakrishna, Hindu mystic

John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

News & Notes

Pray for one another: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please pray for the success of Ron Halbrook's 72nd preaching trip to the Philippines (Nov. 27-Dec. 18). If you would like to contribute to the effort see brother Craig.

Please pray for one another! "comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Please pray for Ryan & Jennifer and the brethren of the Northern Michigan church of Christ. They are now meeting in their newly purchased building in Roscommon, Michigan.

Please keep sisters Virginia Brown and Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. Their faithfulness sets a great example and gives encouragement to all! Ditto for Al (our Barnabas!).

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?! Let me know.

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Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



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Earth's Cosmic Coincidences Convey an Overwhelming Impression of Design

By Michael Denton | October 2, 2018 | 2:40 PM EDT

CAPE CANAVERAL - AUGUST 8: In this NASA handout, The United Launch Alliance Delta IV Heavy rocket payload fairing is seen with the NASA and Parker Solar Probe emblems, August 8, 2018 at Launch Complex 37, Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida. Parker Solar Probe will travel through the Sun's atmosphere, closer to the surface than any spacecraft before it. (Photo by Bill Ingalls/NASA via Getty Images)

NASA's Parker solar probe blasted off from Earth August 12. If all goes as



planned, it will go where no probe has gone before—so close to our host star that it enters the sun's atmosphere. But first up for Parker: a close flyby of Venus Wednesday. It will use the planet's gravi-

ty to slingshot itself closer to the sun.

The historic flyby is a fitting moment to reflect on how fortunate we are to orbit a star such as the sun, and from a planet with an atmosphere like Earth's, and not like that of Venus. It's thanks to this double good fortune that advanced creatures like ourselves can exist here, and do astronomy.

Even as late the 1950s scientists imagined that intelligent life might exist on

Venus. Not anymore. We now know that the planet's surface temperature is hot enough to melt lead—over 800 degrees Fahrenheit—due in part to the planet's thick, CO₂ atmosphere.

So, Venus is deadly to life. But even if intelligent life had somehow emerged and thrived there, what then? Carl Sagan once asked readers to imagine such an alien race. Then he posed a question: "Would it then invent science? The development of science on Earth was spurred fundamentally by observations of the regularities of the stars and planets. But Venus is completely cloud-covered ... nothing of the astronomical universe would be visible if you looked up into the night sky of Venus. Even the Sun would be invisible in the daytime; its light would be scattered and diffused over the whole sky—just as scuba divers see only a uniform enveloping radiance beneath the sea."

Light and Air

It is remarkable enough that the sun and most stars beam out radiation mainly in the tiny Goldilocks region of the electro-magnetic spectrum. The two types of electromagnetic radiation useful to life—visible light and infrared—occupy two exceedingly tiny regions in the immensity of the electromagnetic spectrum, and these just happen to be the same regions in which the sun and indeed the vast majority of stars emit nearly all of their radiation. To grasp how small this life-giving slice of the spectrum is, imagine just a few playing cards in a stack of cards stretching from here to beyond the Andromeda Galaxy. Andromeda is more than 25 million light years away! But our good fortune stretches further still.

Before this life-giving slice of the spectrum can enable life on a planet's surface, at least two further preconditions must be satisfied. One, the atmosphere must allow the sun's life-giving light to penetrate right down to the ground to permit life-essential photosynthesis. And two, a portion of the sun's infrared radiation must be absorbed by and held in the atmosphere. This heat radiation warms the Earth above the freezing point of water and animates the atoms of life for chemistry.

Happily, our atmosphere—unique in our solar system—obliges us in this critical double task. So, Earth's atmosphere is just right for photosynthesis and just right to warm it into the ambient temperature range, enabling "light eating" aerobes like ourselves to thrive on the planet's surface.

Keeping Out the Riff Raff

And it's not just that our atmosphere lets through the right light. It also strongly absorbs radiation from the dangerous regions of the electromagnetic spectrum on either side of the visual and near infrared regions.

The only other electromagnetic radiation not absorbed is in the radio region and the far microwave region. Very little strong or ionizing radiation in the UV, X-ray, and gamma ray regions—that is, radiation less than 0.3 microns—penetrates to the Earth's surface. Further, our atmosphere absorbs radiant energy of wavelengths longer than fifteen microns (in the far infrared and near microwave regions). Very little of it reaches the ground. This is also almost certainly protective because microwave radiation has many reported damaging effects on living systems even at very low radiation fluxes.

Fine Un-Tuning

What if our atmosphere absorbed a slightly different region of the electro-magnetic spectrum? For example, imagine it shifted ever so slightly to the right from its current position, so that the atmosphere absorbed all the visual light and all the infrared and let through instead the adjacent far ultraviolet. Then not only would photosynthesis be impossible, but the world would have suffered a runaway greenhouse effect. It would be a hot hell-house like Venus because our air would absorb all the sun's infrared radiance.

In such a scenario, no carbon-based life could survive on the Earth's surface, and certainly no air-breathing aerobes like ourselves!

Conversely, if we imagine it shifted to the left, all the light and infrared would have been absorbed by the atmosphere, again causing a runaway greenhouse effect.

Miracles of Fortuity

That the slice of the electromagnetic radiation emitted by the sun and the slice allowed through the atmosphere should both be largely restricted to the same tiny useful regions is an extraordinary example of a special fitness in nature for our type of aerobic life on a planetary surface. The fit is truly stunning.

Notice too that our atmosphere not only allows for life. It also allows us to see and study the stars, a privilege crucial to the birth of science.

The existence of technological creatures like ourselves depends on these and a host of other coincidences in nature's order, ones I explore in my ongoing [*Privileged Species*](#) series. Altogether these coincidences convey an overwhelming impression of design. How else can we describe these coincidences except as miracles of fortuity?

*Michael Denton is a Senior Fellow with Discovery Institute's Center for Science and Culture and holds a PhD from King's College in London. He is the author of the new book [*Children of Light: The Astonishing Properties of Sunlight that Make Us Possible*](#).*