

THE MESSENGER



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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Math Patterns in the Cosmos

by John Clayton

As you admire the sky on a dark winter night, you have two choices about the origin of what you are observing. You can believe it is all a part of a great accident that scattered galaxies, stars, planets, moons, and a variety of other objects across space. Or you can believe that an intelligence created the cosmos with purpose and conscious design. Both views have their problems and questions. The idea that the cosmos is an accident does not explain anything about the origin of time, space, and/or energy. Suggesting that these things have always been is at odds with scientific law. The suggestion the cosmos is a product of intelligence and design raises questions about those things which seem to be poorly designed or destructive in nature.

For those of us who wish to carefully and thoughtfully consider these options, it is interesting that the creation is full of math patterns. Some of these have just been discovered and many of which are not understood even though they have been recognized for many centuries. In 1702 a Scottish astronomer, David Gregory, saw a pattern in the solar system that was later popularized by Johann Bode and is called Bode's law. Take a series of numbers starting with zero and three and double each number. That would be 0, 3, 6, 12, 24, 48, 96, 192 . . . Now take each number and add 4 to it and divide by 10. The result would be .4, .7, 1.0, 1.6, 2.8, 5.2, 10.0, and 19.6. That last set of numbers is the location of the planets around the Sun in terms of the earth's distance from the Sun. Here are the actual numbers:

Planet	Bode Number	Actual Number
Mercury	.4	.39
Venus	.7	.72
Earth	1.0	1.0
Mars	1.6	1.52
Asteroids (Ceres)	2.8	2.8
Jupiter	5.2	5.2
Saturn	10.0	9.54

This turned out to have predictive value. Bode popularized his law in 1768, but Saturn was the last known planet at that time. The next number after 10.0 in the Bodes Series would be 19.6. Years later William Herschel discovered Uranus and its distance is 19.2. Things break down at this point, with Neptune discovered in 1846 not matching the pattern. Modern astronomers think that orbital resonances and planets interfering with each other may account for some of the Bode's law numbers, but no one really knows at this time why the pattern is there.

There are other patterns like this. One we all know about, at least in a general way, is the fact that the Moon is 400 times smaller than the Sun and it is also 400 times closer to us than the Sun, making them appear to be the same size. That also allows solar eclipses in which the Moon exactly covers the Sun giving the spectacular “diamond ring effect” and “halo effect” we see in the wonderful pictures of eclipses.

Recently a new special numerical connection has been discovered between Earth and what is called the 1/8 circle rule for the other planets. During one earth year each planet performs a certain number of spins on its axis. This number does not come out even, so each planet will turn some additional amount which will be a fraction of a rotation. Every planet’s extra rotation turns out to be a fraction of, or multiple of, 45 degrees. Venus, for example, rotates once during an earth year, and then it rotates through 181 degrees in addition. This is roughly 4 x 45 degrees. During one earth year Jupiter rotates 883 times and then rotates an additional 89 degrees or roughly 2 x 45 degrees. Saturn rotates 882 times in an earth year and then rotates an additional 227 degrees or roughly 5 x 45 degrees.

This 45 degree pattern also applies to each planet’s orbital period. It takes Mercury 88 days to revolve around the Sun. During that 88 days Earth revolves through 87 degrees (roughly 2 x 45). It takes Mars 687 days to orbit the Sun, and during that time Earth rotates through one revolution and an additional 317 degrees which is roughly 7 x 45. This is true of all of the planets including Pluto. (For more data go to www.halfrightanglerule.com.)

There may be some undiscovered principle of celestial mechanics involved, perhaps with phase locking or particle effects, but many astronomers will just blow it off as coincidence. The famous mathematician, Pythagoras, was spellbound when he realized that the square of any right triangles’ sides added up to the square of its hypotenuse. It is reported that when he realized this he sacrificed 100 oxen to the gods because he felt it was a stunning relationship which had to be divine.

We should not “invent a God” to explain such relationships, but to attempt to suggest that multiple numerical features like this will come about by chance is equally foolish. When we design something, we use patterns. Man’s creations are aesthetically appealing when structure, form, and pattern are thought through and conceived in a special way. When we are told “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1, NIV) the message is expressed in multiple ways. It is more than just looking in wonder at the beautiful sky above us. It is also growing in our understanding and appreciation of the patterns and order built into all we see. What at first appears to be chaotic and accidental ends up showing wisdom and form.

Once again we are reminded that we can know there is a God through the things He has made (Romans 1:19-22). However, we still have to plead ignorance to God’s challenge to Job: “Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead the Bear with its cubs? Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you set up God’s dominion over the earth?” (Job 38:31-33, NIV). We are forced to reply with Job, “Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know” (Job 42:3b, NIV).

NOTES & NEWS:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

“...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16