

# Understanding ‘stretching of the heavens’ in Scripture—a call for balance

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One or more leading creationist cosmologists have become committed to the view that scriptural references to the ‘stretching of the heavens’ cannot possibly refer to cosmological expansion, labelling such a position eisegesis. But have they, in fact, moved in the direction of eisegesis themselves in some of their interpretation of these verses? There is no strong scriptural reason for creationists to be wedded to the view that these ‘stretching’ verses cannot possibly have any present-day context. If expansion is still occurring, God may intend this to be a present-day witness to mankind. Accepting that some form of expansion *might* be occurring today does not pre-suppose acceptance of big bang cosmology. On the contrary, big bang presuppositions have led secular cosmology today into a severe crisis. Creationists should take advantage of this situation in our apologetics, while also explaining that possible present-day expansion of the heavens, while not required, is also not inconsistent with Scripture. Ultimately, we need balance in how we approach this issue.

## The scriptural argument

What does the phrase, the ‘stretching of the heavens’ (*natah ha-shamayim*), refer to in the Scriptures?<sup>1</sup> The phrase appears in the books of Job, 2 Samuel, several of the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, but it does not appear in Genesis nor anywhere in the Pentateuch. Did God create the heavens (the stars and galaxies) and then stretch these within a fixed empty space, or did He stretch space as a whole and the galaxies’ positions within it? Did all this occur during Creation Week and then end, or are ‘the heavens’ still being stretched today? Alan Pace recently referred to Dr Russell Humphreys’ “now famous 17 verses on the stretching out or spreading out of the heavens” in the latter’s 1994 book, *Starlight and Time*.<sup>2</sup> The implication of this analysis, also citing Dr John G. Hartnett and Dr Charles Taylor, is that the Hebrew word *natah* should not be interpreted as relating to expansion.<sup>3</sup> I respectfully disagree. I believe that an expansionist interpretation of these verses, that is, the view that a ‘stretching of the heavens’ *may* still be occurring today, remains perfectly reasonable within their scriptural context. Whether this is *actually* occurring today, however, remains an open question.

### The Hartnett/Humphreys view

Formerly, Hartnett thought these verses could describe a cosmological expansion of space,<sup>4</sup> but he no longer believes that. He asserts that the very “idea that the biblical text could at all allude to expansion of space ... now seems quite preposterous”.<sup>5</sup> He published this revised view in 2011.<sup>6</sup> Thereupon Humphreys, who previously held an expansionist perspective on the ‘stretching’ verses as well, also came to change his point of view, agreeing with Hartnett.<sup>7</sup> Hartnett

has recently reaffirmed his view that the Hebrew verbs cited in these passages “cannot be used for [describing] cosmological expansion”. Those who might hold the latter view he accuses of eisegesis.<sup>8</sup> The expansionist view is more and more under assault within the creationist community—it is apparently seen as merely an extension of presuppositions related to big bang cosmology (inflation, dark energy, etc.). Whether true or false scientifically, the idea that possible present-day expansion in the context of the ‘stretching of the heavens’ verses should be rejected on *scriptural* grounds is, in my opinion, unwarranted.<sup>9</sup>

The ‘Hartnett/Humphreys view’, as I shall refer to it here, constrains how we should interpret many of these verses by limiting them to the idea of the heavens and/or of space being able to be so stretched only so far ‘as a tent’. Humphreys asks: “why would God compare the material being stretched to such materials as tent curtains, which can extend their dimensions by only a few percent before tearing?”<sup>10</sup> It may be a good question to ask with respect to the model that Humphreys is developing, but perhaps it is the wrong question to ask with respect to what I believe to be the chief intention of Scripture in these passages.

### The fabric issue and the tent/curtain analogy

In my assessment, the Hartnett/Humphreys view places an unwarranted focus on the question of fabric, both in presenting a particular creationist model and in critiquing “the rubber-sheet analogy of modern big bang cosmology”.<sup>11</sup> While the fabric referred to in these verses is not irrelevant in discussing this topic, it may be secondary to the actual *role* of the tent in nomadic life and to what the biblical writers may have been intending to convey.

A desert-based Bedouin tent is the closest thing we have today to understanding how the nomadic ancient Israelites might have viewed and responded to the scriptural descriptions of the heavens ‘as a tent’ (figure 1). When one thinks of an ordinary tent for a poor Bedouin family living in Israel or Jordan today, it is not usually very large. However, it is home to that family. It is also a place of refuge from the dangers of the desert and all that is outside the tent. Meanwhile, the head of the family is the master of everything that takes place inside the tent. It is his domain. The tent sets a *boundary*, so to speak, of the master’s absolute authority.

Within the scriptural context, God is the Master of the heavens—they are *His* domain; they are *His* tent. His authority and power extend throughout. These are some of the broad concepts that the writers of Scripture sought to convey, I believe, when, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they used the phrase ‘as a tent’ or ‘as a curtain’. I don’t think that they were focusing on the fabric of the tent or curtain nor trying to describe a specific kind of cosmological model. Others may have a different view.

There is safety and security in the tent. All of the ancient Near East nomadic customs of protection are conferred upon the guest who has come to visit and is under the roof of the tent. One can picture a visitor lying down on a carpet inside the tent, and, perhaps while eating a meal, looking up through an opening in the tent at the great expanse of the night sky overhead. In a similar way, God’s tent—the heavens—cover all of us; we are under His power, authority and protection.

In Bedouin culture today, the greater or grander the power and authority of the Bedouin *sheik* or personage, the larger the tent will likely be to house his family, relatives and guests. A pastor-friend of mine in Israel and his wife have been guests among many Bedouins in Israel and Jordan over the years and know Bedouin culture very well. They were once feted by a powerful *sheik* in a large Bedouin tent. They agree with the general proposition that ‘the greater the personage, the greater the tent’, and also with the view that a tent might be enlarged as needed to entertain a greater number of guests. Thus, there is no reason to assume that the analogy in Scripture to the heavens being stretched ‘as a tent’ must necessarily be constrained or limited by a single type of fabric. The tent might simply be expanded as needed, irrespective of the fabric used.

Psalm 104:2, Isaiah 40:22, Isaiah 54:2

Psalm 104:2 is one of the key verses that refers to “stretching out heaven like a [tent] curtain”. In that same verse we also see God covering Himself “with light as with a cloak”. He is “clothed with splendor and majesty”. These descriptions depict God’s greatness as being far beyond anything man can comprehend. ‘Stretching the heavens’ is expressed in the same vein. ‘God’s tent’ represents the vastness of Creation. This is poetic language describing the greatness of God and His power, not an exact physical description of a universe that can only stretch as far as some fabric in a tent. This view is echoed in Isaiah 40:22, where the scripture describes God stretching the heavens “like a curtain ... like a tent to dwell in”. Note that it is God (not man) who would be doing the dwelling if He sought to do so within the vastness of space! The incredible vastness of the universe was a notion beyond the wildest imaginings of the ancients. Majesty and greatness are the attributes conveyed in these passages, which seem much more aligned with the concept of vastness than with the image of a constrained universe where the fabric of space or of the heavens themselves might tear if stretched too far.

Humphreys also seeks to enlist Isaiah 54:2 on behalf of his position: “*Enlarge the place of your tent; Stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not ...*”. He writes:

“It is likely that the outer coverings of the tabernacle in the wilderness were stretched taut ... to prevent them from flapping in the wind. This is an example from Old Testament times of applying tension to a fabric without having much extension of its length or width.”<sup>12</sup>

However, this passage actually implies the exact opposite meaning in my view—it is not discussing tension, tautness, or constraint, but rather expansion, growth, and



Figure 1. Bedouin tent in Israel today (near Sde Boker, Israel)

increase. God was preparing His people for something *way beyond* what they had been used to. Linking Isaiah 54:2 to the Tabernacle and to the question of ‘stretching the heavens’ seems, if the reader will pardon the expression, quite a stretch in itself—we need to dispense with that image entirely.

Our focus should instead be on *why* the Israelites are being told by God to “enlarge the place of [their] tent”. The reason He is telling them this is because they “*will spread abroad to the right and to the left ... your descendants will possess nations. And they will resettle the desolate cities*” (v. 3). There is no sense here of limitation or constraint. Instead, the ‘tent’ of Israel is to be greatly enlarged to accommodate all of the new territory and nations that will come under the Israelites’ purview. The Lord is saying to Israel, in effect, ‘Get ready, I am going to expand you beyond anything you can imagine’.

### Stretching only during Creation Week?

According to Genesis, in the beginning God made the expanse [*raw-kee-ah*] and called it ‘heaven’ (Genesis 1:8). Neither placing the lights in the expanse of the heavens, nor the creation of the stars (Genesis 1:14–16) *necessarily* refer to any stretching or spreading.<sup>13</sup> Later, when the Flood takes place and the floodgates of heaven are opened (Genesis 7:11; 8:2), there is also no reference to stretching. The idea that the ‘stretching of the heavens’ *had* to occur during Creation Week is not demanded by Scripture. It might have occurred then, or it might have occurred at a later time, or there may have been a combination of these events.

Hartnett and Humphreys, however, assume that most or all of the ‘stretching of the heavens’, whatever it consisted of, occurred during Creation Week. Pace agrees.<sup>14</sup> Humphreys claims: “Many of the seventeen verses connect the stretching with events of the Creation Week.” He concludes that “the stretching (an increasing of tension) occurred during the first six days of Creation, and was completed (stopping the increase of tension) during that period”.<sup>15</sup> While possibly true, this is unsubstantiated on scriptural grounds in terms of forcing us to accept that it *had to occur* during Creation Week. This is because there are *no* passages in Scripture that directly connect the ‘stretching of the heavens’ with the act of Creation. It is merely an assumption by some creationists.

Job 9:8

Job is believed to be one of the oldest books in the Bible. Job 9:8 says: “He alone stretches out the heavens and treads on the waves of the sea.” The context seems to be in the present tense, not the past. Consider the last part of the verse: “[He] ... treads on the waves of the sea ...”. Think of Jesus Himself walking upon the water (Matthew 14:25 and

elsewhere). The image of God treading on the waves of the sea is a *present* description of His continuing power—it has nothing to do with Creation Week. Since the last part of Job 9:8 is clearly not tied to Creation Week, we need not assume that the first part of the verse *must* relate to Creation Week.

Irrelevant verses

Looking at the Hebrew text, Humphreys asserts that several of the ‘stretching’ verses “are *qal* perfect, implying a past action”, while two other verses (2 Samuel 22:9–10 and Psalm 18:8–9) “follow a *qal* perfect verb with a *waw* consecutive prefixing a *qal* imperfect verb, which implies past action”.<sup>15</sup> But these two particular passages (2 Samuel and Psalm 18) relate to God coming down and ‘bowing the heavens’ in a theophany. Hebrew scholar David Brewer states: “The imagery here is similar to what we see when the Lord descended to Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16–19).”<sup>16</sup> These verses are about God’s judgment and rescue, not about Creation or Creation Week. These passages are irrelevant to the question of when the ‘stretching of the heavens’ occurred and should be dropped from the discussion.

Past action with continuing after-effects?

Humphreys also refers to Isaiah 45:12; 48:13 and Jeremiah 10:12; 51:15, stating that these are all ‘*qal* perfect, implying past action’.<sup>15</sup> Yes, these verses do imply past action. But does that mean that the action has been completed? Isaiah 40:22 may provide greater insight to our understanding. Here we see *natah* used as a *qal* active participle (He ‘... is stretching’), followed by a *waw* consecutive with the verb *maw-thakh* as a *qal* imperfect, which might be translated as ‘and He has spread them out like a tent ...’. So we may have past action in some of the relevant passages, but this does not necessarily signify *completed* action.

Apart from how we may interpret these verses, Humphreys asserts that, even with all of the stretching (an increase of tension) of the heavens occurring during Creation Week, the “results of the increase, such as a slow increasing of the gravitational potential of the cosmos, could still be occurring to this day”.<sup>15</sup> In other words, we might have an action during Creation Week (the initial stretching), but there may be after-effects of that stretching up to the present day (in Humphreys’ view, possibly “a slow increasing of the gravitational potential of the cosmos”). But in that context, if there are *any* after-effects of past stretching into the present day, regardless of what they are, then it is also plausible to infer that current expansion *might* be among those after-effects in terms of how we interpret the text.

Viewed in that context, the debate over whether these verses must be interpreted as implying past *completed* action collapses. The after-effects of the stretching, whether they occurred during Creation Week or later, could be being described by the writers of Scripture as having both a past and present component to them. This doesn't mean that present-day expansion is occurring, but it does mean that we have no strong reason to rule it out on scriptural grounds.

It is also very clear that God has a *present-day* relationship with the stars and galaxies. The scripture says: He "*leads* forth their host by number; He *calls* them all by name". And because of the greatness of His power, "Not one of them is missing" (Psalm 40:26). The heavens *today* "are telling of the glory of God ... their expanse is declaring the work of His hands" (Psalm 19:1).

*Not one* of the stars is lost or misplaced. God knows where each one is, and each has a specific place—what a wonderful analogy this was not only for ancient Israel but also for us today! Isaiah compares this incredible truth to God's relationship with the Jewish people, asking: "Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the Lord...?'" (Isaiah 40:27). God's 'stretching of the heavens' is one of several witnesses primarily to the Jewish people that He is a God who keeps His covenants.

### A witness to mankind

Much of Isaiah 42 is devoted to describing God's majesty and His care for His people. Verse 5 refers to "God the Lord who created the heavens *and* stretched them out ...". The 'creating' and the 'stretching' *could* be interpreted as two separate events. If so, Scripture places no obligation on the text that the latter event *must* have occurred during Creation Week. Whatever the case, both events are *witnesses* of God's power to feeble mankind.

Isaiah 48:13 has a similar passage. The Lord "founded the earth" and His "right hand spread out the heavens". Next He says, "When I call to them, they stand together." God may have been stretching the heavens and then fixed them in place, or this passage may mean something else. We see God creating, stretching and calling out. The purpose of the passage is not to give us an exact chronological description but rather to give us a glimpse of God's majesty and power. This passage serves as a *witness* to us and especially to the people of Israel, to get their attention: "Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last ..." (Isaiah 48:12).

The notion of a limited, barely stretchable 'tent/curtain' view in these verses as the *only view* consistent with Scripture is unsupported. We all must be careful to avoid placing our own preconceived ideas onto Scripture, seeking the Holy Spirit's aid at every turn to interpret Scripture

properly. The question of the 'stretching of the heavens' and what that really means remains unresolved. While one can agree with Hartnett "that *it is not possible* to categorically state that Scripture requires that the universe is expanding at all [emphasis in original]";<sup>17</sup> the possibility that the heavens *may* currently be being stretched (expanded) is also not inconsistent with Scripture.

### The apologetical argument

The *apologetical argument* flows from our assessment of Scripture. Secular observers today certainly believe in a currently expanding universe. That, of course, does not make it true, but a simple belief in cosmological expansion today—stripped of its big bang presuppositions—is not unscriptural in the way that, for example, belief in macroevolution is. The idea that the 'stretching of the heavens' *might* still be occurring today should not automatically be equated with what Hartnett calls the 'dark science' regarding "the notion of expansion of the fabric of space."<sup>18</sup> Perhaps there is another alternative.

The purpose for 'stretching the heavens'?

What was or is the real *purpose* of God's stretching the heavens? We don't know—perhaps it has a *utilitarian* purpose so that the universe is not static. However, the broader purpose of stretching the heavens, as Scripture makes clear, was and is *to be a witness to mankind of God's greatness and glory!* This is extremely important. The numerous references to 'stretching the heavens' are mostly apologetical in tone and intent. They imply that mankind should be aware of this stretching, that knowledge of its existence or occurrence would be an argument for showing God's greatness and power. Here then, perhaps, is a question at least as important to ask as the question about the nature of the fabric of the tent (or space)—*why would God tell us in His Word over and over again that He had stretched the heavens unless He also provided some evidence that He had stretched or is continuing to stretch the heavens?*

God is speaking to us through His inerrant Word, telling us that He has indeed 'stretched the heavens' in the past and/or is still stretching the heavens in the present and that this is evidence of His glory. And who is supposed to be the *primary* audience for this evidence?—the people of Israel, the Jewish people.

In Zechariah 12:1, the 'stretching of the heavens' is cited by the Lord as one of three events defining His majesty and power and proclaiming what He is *yet* to do with the people of Israel. Those three events are: 1) stretching the heavens; 2) laying the foundation of the Earth; and 3) forming the spirit of man within him. In this passage, God is citing His

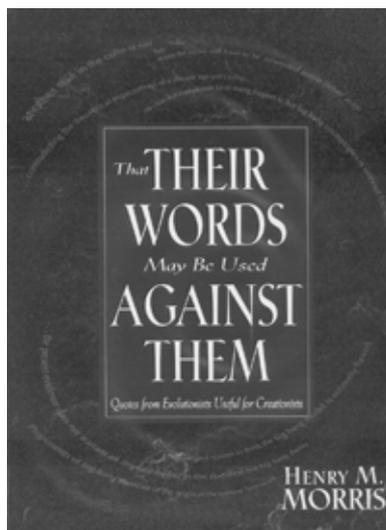
credentials as a witness and testimony that He is yet to do something that is extraordinary and beyond human understanding: *He is going to redeem unrepentant Israel*. ('Redeeming Israel' is also related to God's promises in the New Testament in Romans 11.)

When Zechariah penned his words under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he could have had no understanding (unless God revealed it to him supernaturally) of the incredible vastness of space, of hundreds of billions of galaxies, or of the speed of light. But God Himself, speaking through the prophet, uses this example of stretching the heavens to show His power and authority. The other two events—laying the foundation of the Earth and forming the spirit of man within him—were things that Zechariah would have understood. But 'stretching the heavens'? As a prophet, he was only repeating what the Lord had told him. God used Zechariah as His mouthpiece to give "The word of the Lord concerning Israel." And that word had to do with the 'last days' and what God is *yet* going to do when all nations of the earth are gathered against Jerusalem (12:3). God will deliver the people of Israel, and then they shall look on Him whom "they have pierced" (the Messiah) (12:10).

The 'stretching of the heavens' in Zechariah thus stands *as a testimony against the world by the living God*. In Isaiah 51, the Lord rebukes the children of Israel, saying, you "have forgotten the Lord your Maker, [the One] who stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth ..." (Isaiah 51:13). These scriptures are *primarily* about the Jewish people. They are intended both as a witness for salvation to those who will believe and a witness *against* those who will not, both in the prophets' days and in our own.

Many of the best-known cosmologists today are self-proclaimed atheists of Jewish background. They accept cosmological expansion as a given, based on big bang cosmology, including alleged inflation of the universe, and related factors. As a creationist, I reject those presuppositions, as well as attempts to derive an age of the universe based on them. At the same time, believing that these passages *might* refer to present-day expansion of the universe does not thereby obligate me to accept the whole rotten edifice of big bang cosmology. Can these two things be divorced from each other? That is the question.

The biblical passages about the 'stretching of the heavens' are stark statements made centuries ago by the



**Figure 2.** Cover of Dr Henry M. Morris's 1997 book, *That Their Words May Be Used Against Them*

Hebrew prophets—perhaps, in part, as a witness to our own unbelieving generation. To me, this is really more an apologetical or missiological question at this point in time rather than primarily an academic or scientific one. We are in a struggle for men's souls. If pointing to the possible expansion of the heavens can challenge non-believers to look into Scripture and God's promises, I believe that we have a wonderful opportunity here to use this as part of our witness. Meanwhile, I am also concerned that we, as the creationist community, do not, as the saying goes, 'cut off our nose to spite our face' by unnecessarily dismissing one possible interpretation of Scripture at a moment in time when it can give us great advantage.

### 'That their cosmology may be used against them'

I have always deeply appreciated Dr Henry Morris's book, *That Their Words May Be Used Against Them* and the spirit behind it regarding evolutionists' quotes and worldview.<sup>19</sup> (this year is also the twentieth anniversary of its publication in 1997). We can certainly use similar approaches in our apologetics when it comes to aspects of big bang cosmology without embracing the big bang itself, in the spirit that 'Their Cosmology May Be Used Against Them' (figure 2). What does modern-day cosmology claim?

Three of the most important indicators that appear to support cosmological expansion include: redshift measurements of distant galaxies according to Hubble's Law; the predictions of general relativity; and, based on supernovae data, the change in the rate of expansion derived from measurements of the purported cosmological constant. Hartnett has examined these and related factors in depth and their pros and cons with respect to expansion in two key articles that appeared in this journal in 2011.<sup>20</sup>

#### Redshift and Hubble's Law

As readily admitted by a leading cosmologist, while Hubble's Law may be "almost exactly true nearby, [it is] ... not necessarily true over a large fraction of the observable universe".<sup>21</sup> Beyond that, Hartnett has recently shown that '*the greater the redshift, the greater the distance rule*' upon which big bang cosmology and the Standard Model of expansion are based may not hold for quasars and active galactic nuclei (AGNs).<sup>22</sup> Thus, while redshift measurements may indicate an expanding universe (and most cosmologists

believe that they do), Hartnett has noted that some of the data can fit “a static universe with a simple Euclidean non-expanding space just as well as ... the standard concordance BB model”.<sup>23</sup>

#### General relativity

General relativity predicts that the universe is expanding. Whether this is interpreted as other galaxies moving away from us at tremendous speeds or whether space itself is expanding, general relativity asserts “that these two equivalent viewpoints ... are equally valid”. General relativity also allows for the possibility that space itself may be expanding faster than the speed of light: according to physicist Max Tegmark, “while nothing is allowed to move faster than light *through space*, ... space itself is free to stretch however fast it wants to”.<sup>24</sup>

#### The supernovae data and the cosmological constant

In recent decades, cosmologists have considered type 1a supernovae explosions as a form of calibrated ‘standard candles’ used as yardsticks for measuring distances.<sup>25</sup> Celebrated efforts by two research teams in 1998 resulted in measurements of dozens of supernovae in numerous galaxies. Figure 3 shows a photo of a 1994 type 1a supernova. According to secular cosmologists, these measurements from type 1a supernovae (SN1a) indicate that the universe is expanding and that the expansion rate may be accelerating.<sup>26</sup>

Hartnett himself stated in 2011: “The type 1a supernova (SN) measurements are the *very best evidence for an expanding universe* [emphasis in original].” At the same time, he also examines the many assumptions that are built into the interpretation of that evidence.<sup>27</sup> For secular cosmologists, however, the supernovae measurements confirmed an extremely tiny but positive cosmological constant, known as *Lambda* ( $\Lambda$ ), at a stunning measurement of  $10^{-120}$  power smaller than what was estimated from theory—a knife-edge so fine as to defy comprehension. Conflict between theory and observation concerning this value has produced a deep crisis within physics and cosmology today. It is difficult to over-estimate the depth of this crisis, which hit the physics and cosmology communities like a ‘proverbial ton of bricks’, according to well-known Jewish atheist physicist Leonard Susskind. Susskind acknowledged: “No missing mathematical logic is going to explain that.”<sup>28</sup> Alluding to William Paley’s famous watch analogy, self-proclaimed atheist and NASA scientist Carlos I. Calle has referred to this apparent extreme fine-tuning measurement of the cosmological constant as the “the biggest watch of all”.<sup>29</sup> Physics writer Brian Greene admitted that when he first heard of the supernovae measurements, his first reaction was: “It just can’t be.”<sup>30</sup>

This crisis in cosmology has been so extensive that it has helped propel *multiverse* theory as the only way out for many secular cosmologists, since they cannot believe that a designer designed *this* universe with such apparent fine-tuning.<sup>31</sup> In other words, their own theory and observation have led them to this cosmological dead-end (from their perspective). This has then led to the ridiculous notion that there are near-endless trillions upon trillions of universes, or that ‘all possible universes exist’ and that we just happen to find ourselves in ‘one that contains life’ (the so-called *anthropic principle*). Dissenting Jewish atheist philosopher Thomas Nagel, whose critique of the standard neo-Darwinian materialist worldview in his book, *Mind & Cosmos*, has upset so many of his colleagues, rightly calls this notion of the *multiverse* a ‘cop-out’.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, the supernovae data present a huge problem for secular cosmologists. Further, these SNIas “can equally be telling us that the presumptuous assumption of the Cosmological Principle is not a certain doctrine upon which to build one’s worldview”.<sup>33</sup> The Cosmological Principle assumes that there is ‘no unique centre, and no edge’ in our universe. This is a separate issue from the question of expansion, but it shows how much impact the supernovae data have had.

Since the rest of the scientific world today *assumes* that the universe is expanding, we can and should use this conundrum of secular cosmology in our apologetics. We can do so without embracing big bang cosmology with all of its presuppositions. We can point out to non-believers that present-day ‘science’ has reached a complete dead-end on this issue and is thoroughly confused, making up ‘fudge factors’ to try to get out of this dilemma, while at the same time showing that, if the universe is indeed expanding at present, Scripture pointed to that fact long ago. This can serve as a powerful witness to our world today.



Figure 3. Type Ia Supernova, SN1994d

## Conclusion

We know from the Word of God that the heavens (and/or space) were indeed stretched in the past, either during Creation Week or later. They may also still be being stretched or expanded today. There is no *scriptural* requirement to exclude this possibility. Thus, I believe that Hartnett has gone too far to conclude: “To suggest that these texts describe cosmological expansion of space ... is not justifiable and is pure eisegesis.”<sup>34</sup> If believing that current cosmological expansion might be occurring (with respect to these texts) is eisegesis, then the same charge might be applied to the Hartnett/Humphreys view as well—to the extent that perhaps more is being inferred from the text with respect to the tent fabric analogy than the text supplies. In 2011, after examining all the current scientific evidence for and against an expanding universe, Hartnett stated: “it is impossible to conclude either way whether the universe is expanding or static. The evidence is equivocal.”<sup>35</sup> Given that reality on the scientific front, what we need now is balance on the scriptural side as well, allowing both views to have their proverbial ‘day in court’ to see where true science leads within a biblical framework.

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26. However, this is not necessarily true. As de Repentigny has pointed out: “an objective handling of the data does not necessitate this interpretation” (de Repentigny, ref. 9, p. 127).
27. Hartnett, J.G., ref. 20, part 1, p. 111.
28. Susskind, L., *Cosmic Landscape: String Theory and the Illusion of Intelligent Design*, Little, Brown and Company, New York, p. 185, 2006.
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30. Greene, B., *The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, p. 142, 2011.
31. I critique the current secular crisis in cosmology, multiverse theory and fine-tuning in Melnick, A.J., The Quantum World: A Fine-Tuned Multiversal Reality? *J. Interdisciplinary Studies* 27:45–60, 2015.
32. Nagel, T., *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 95, fn 8, 2012.
33. de Repentigny, ref. 9, p. 127. Jake Hebert and Jason Lisle have recently published two extensive articles in the *Creation Research Society Quarterly* regarding galactic luminosity and the question of special location in the universe. They describe the *cosmological principle* as “the assumption that on the largest distance and angular scales, there are no special places or directions in the cosmos”. They state: “The biblical worldview may well allow for this principle, but it does not require it.” Herbert, J. and Lisle, J., A Review of the Lynden-Bell/Choloniewski Method for Obtaining Galaxy Luminosity Functions. Part I, *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 52(3):177–178, 2016.
34. Hartnett, J.G., ref. 6, *J. Creation* 25(2):125. Elsewhere he has repeated that charge and added “and not good exegesis” (Hartnett, ref. 5, p. 457).
35. Hartnett, J.G., ref. 20, part 2, p. 120.

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