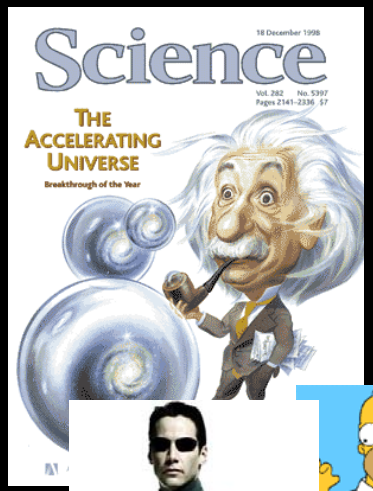
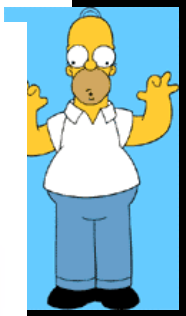


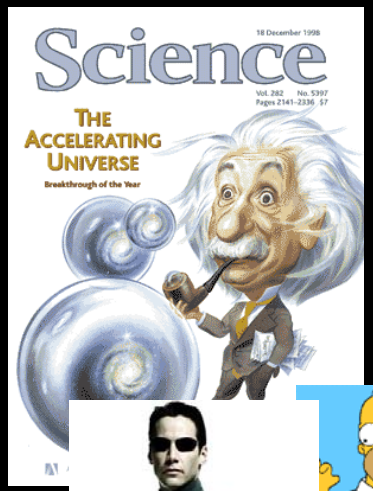


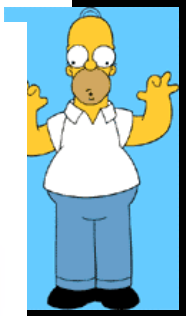
Christian eschatology and an accelerating universe

Revd. Dr. David Wilkinson

Christians in Science conference, Leeds, 19th March 2005

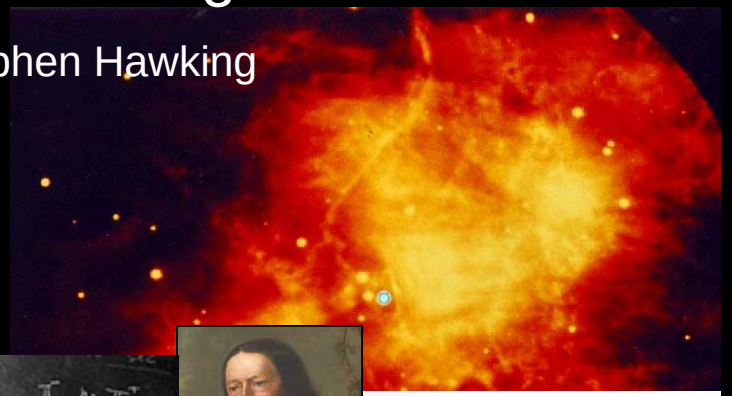
Left Behind, Frozen or Fried?



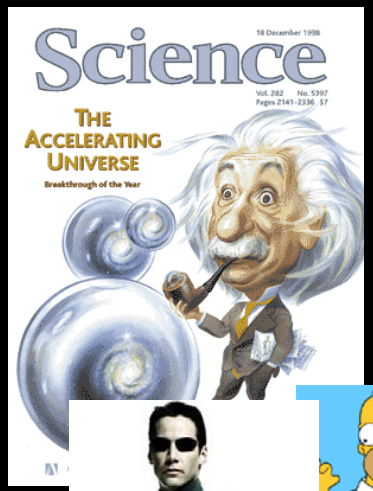


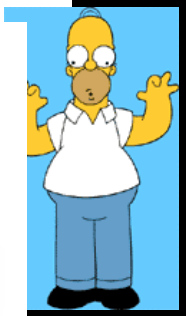
‘by 2600 the world’s population will be standing shoulder to shoulder, and the electricity use will make the Earth glow red hot’

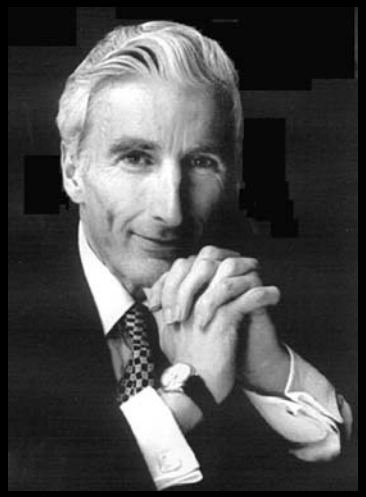
Stephen Hawking



Left Behind, Frozen or Fried?



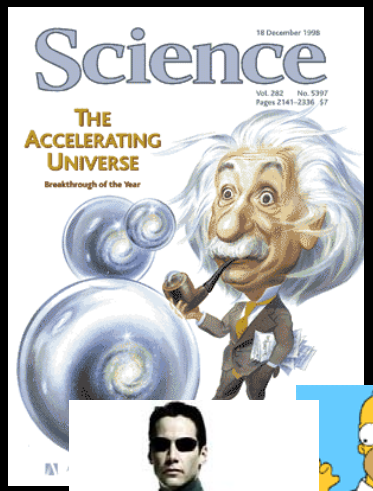


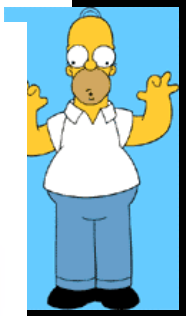


‘the odds are no better than fifty-fifty that our present civilisation on Earth will survive to the end of the present century’

Sir Martin Rees, the Astronomer Royal

Left Behind, Frozen or Fried?

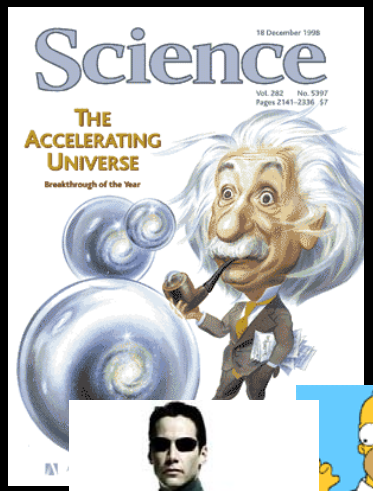


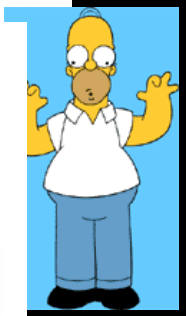


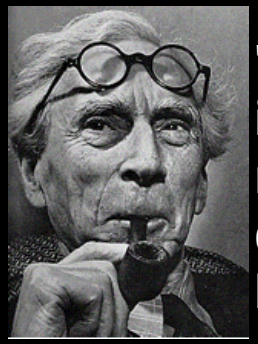
‘I would love to believe that when I die I will live again, that some thinking, feeling, remembering part of me will continue……The world is so exquisite with so much love and moral depth, that there is no reason to deceive ourselves with pretty stories for which there's little good evidence.

Carl Sagan

Left Behind, Frozen or Fried?



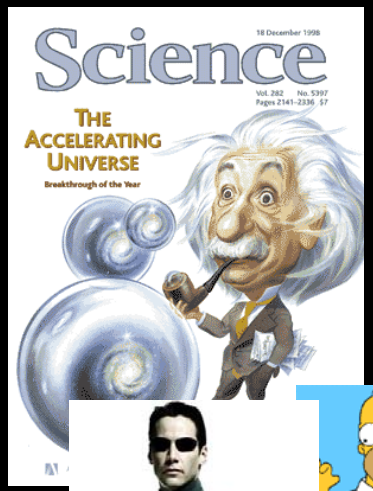


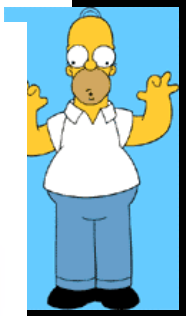


'the world which science presents for our belief is even more purposeless, more void of meaning.....all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction……and the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins.'

Bertrand Russell, philosopher

Left Behind, Frozen or Fried?

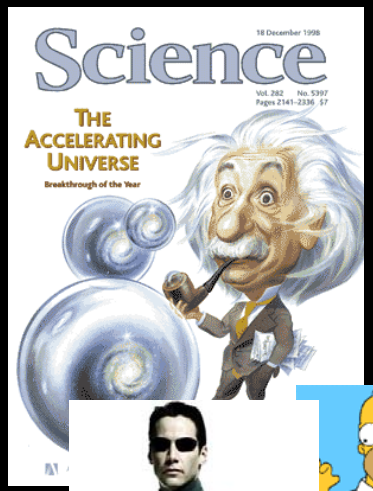


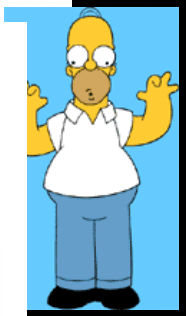


‘an almost empty universe growing steadily more cold and dark for all eternity is profoundly depressing’

Paul Davies, cosmologist

Left Behind, Frozen or Fried?

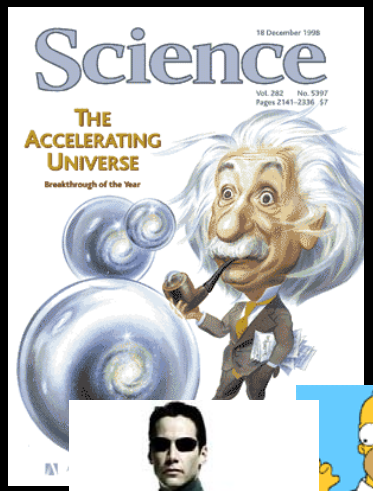


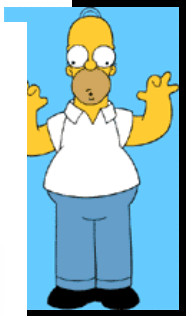


‘a universe without an eschatological dimension is a universe that is incomplete, if not crippled’

Simon Conway Morris, paleontologist

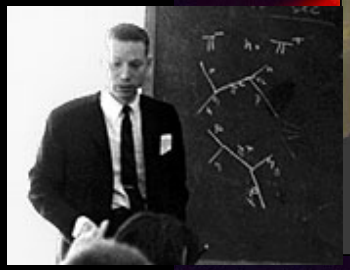
Left Behind, Frozen or Fried?



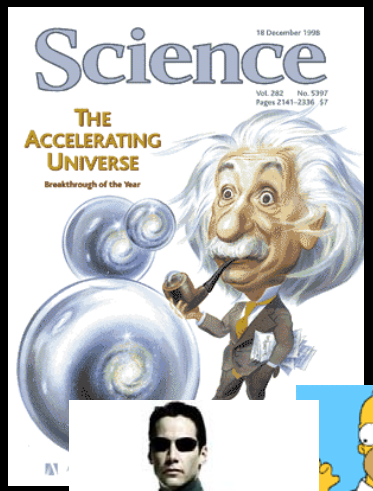


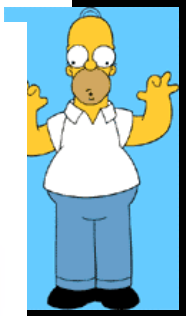
‘the world has no value, no interest for Christians. The Christian thinks only of himself and the salvation of his soul.’

Feuerbach



Left Behind, Frozen or Fried?

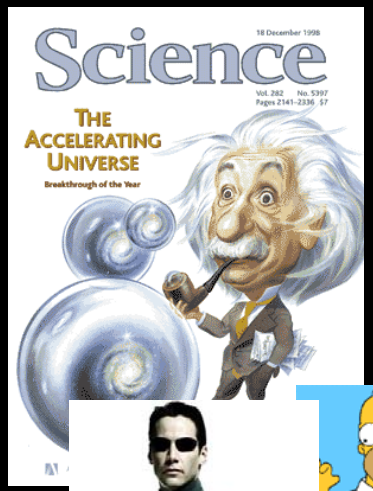


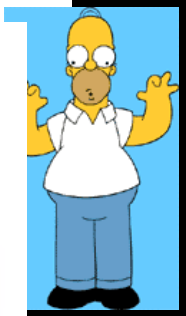


‘If the predictions of contemporary scientific cosmology come to pass (“freeze” or “fry”) then it would seem the universe will never be transformed into the new creation.’

Robert Russell, theologian

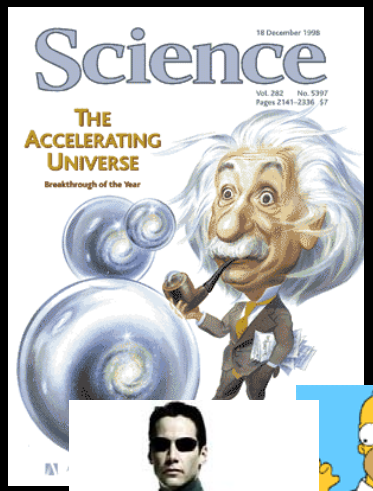
Left Behind, Frozen or Fried?

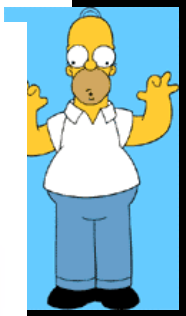




‘When I contemplate the scientific future of the Universe……. Doh!’

Homer Simpson, scientist and political commentator



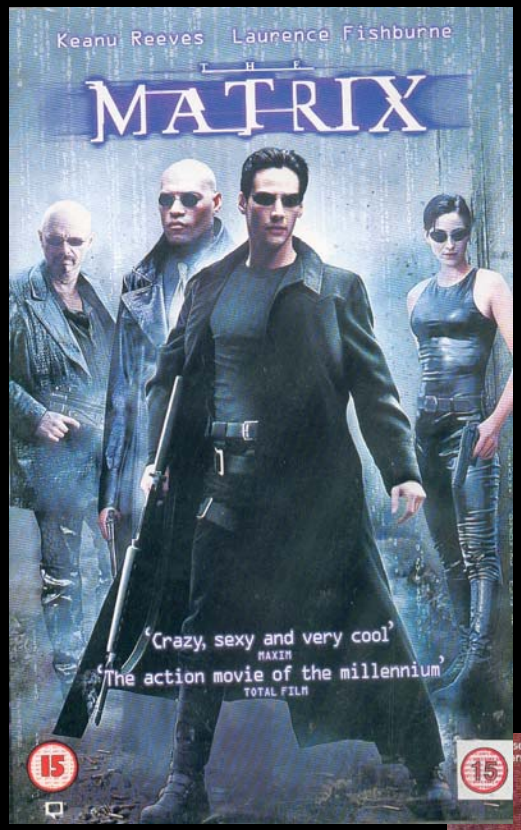


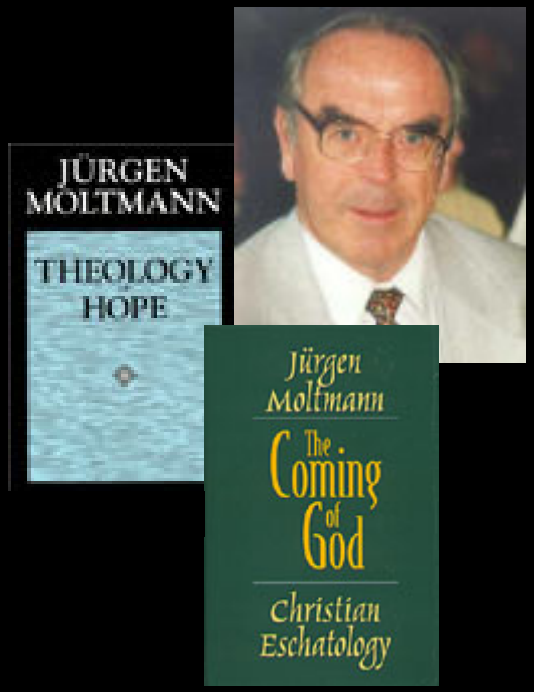
Christian eschatology and an accelerating universe

Revd. Dr. David Wilkinson

Christians in Science conference, Leeds, 19th March 2005

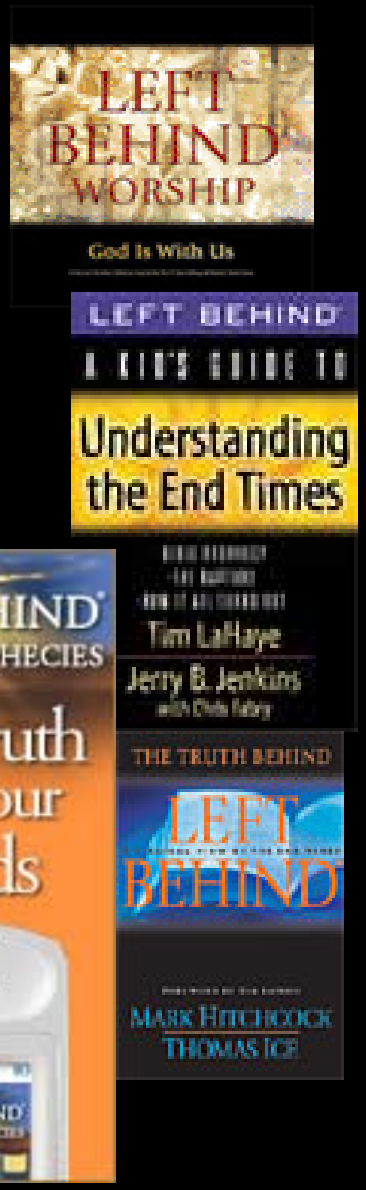
Science
18 December 1998
Vol. 282 No. 5397
Pages 2141–2336 $7
THE ACCELERATING UNIVERSE
Breakthrough of the Year
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE


Keanu Reeves Laurence Fishburne
THE MATRIX
'Crazy, sexy and very cool'
MAXIM
'The action movie of the millennium'
TOTAL FILM
15
15


JÜRGEN
MOLTMANN
THEOLOGY
HOPE
Jürgen
Moltmann
The
Coming
of
God
Christian
Eschatology

Left Behind?

ARMAGEDDON
TIM LAHAYE
JERRY B. JENKINS
LEFT BEHIND
TIM LAHAYE
JERRY B. JENKINS
GLORIOUS APPEARING
TIM LAHAYE
JERRY B. JENKINS

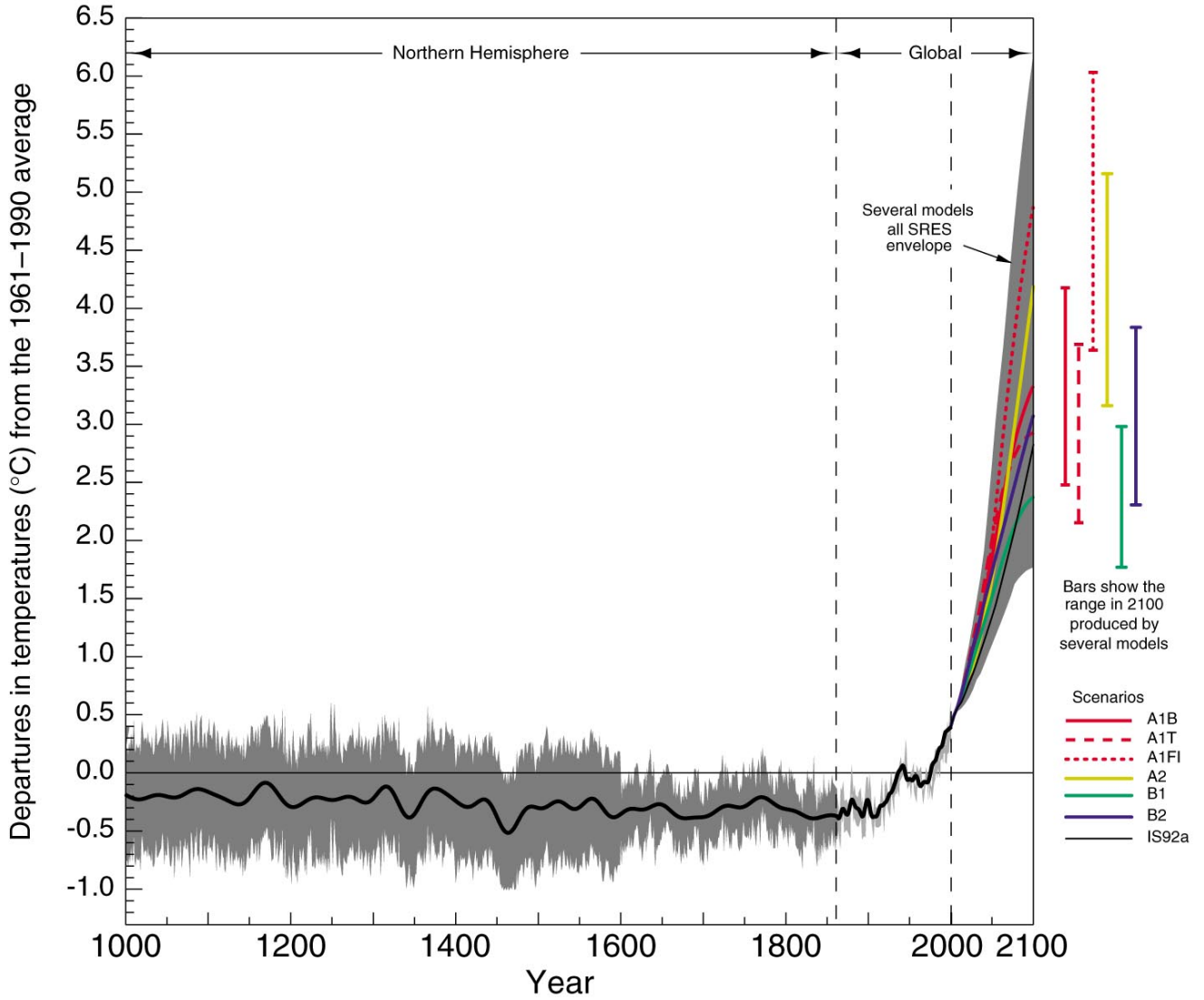

LEFT BEHIND WORSHIP
God Is With Us
LEFT BEHIND
Understanding the End Times
Tim LaHaye
Jerry B. Jenkins
LEFT BEHIND
MOBILE PROPHECIES
The truth is in your hands
THE TRUTH BEHIND
LEFT BEHIND
MARK HITCHCOCK
THOMAS ICE

Environmental Problems

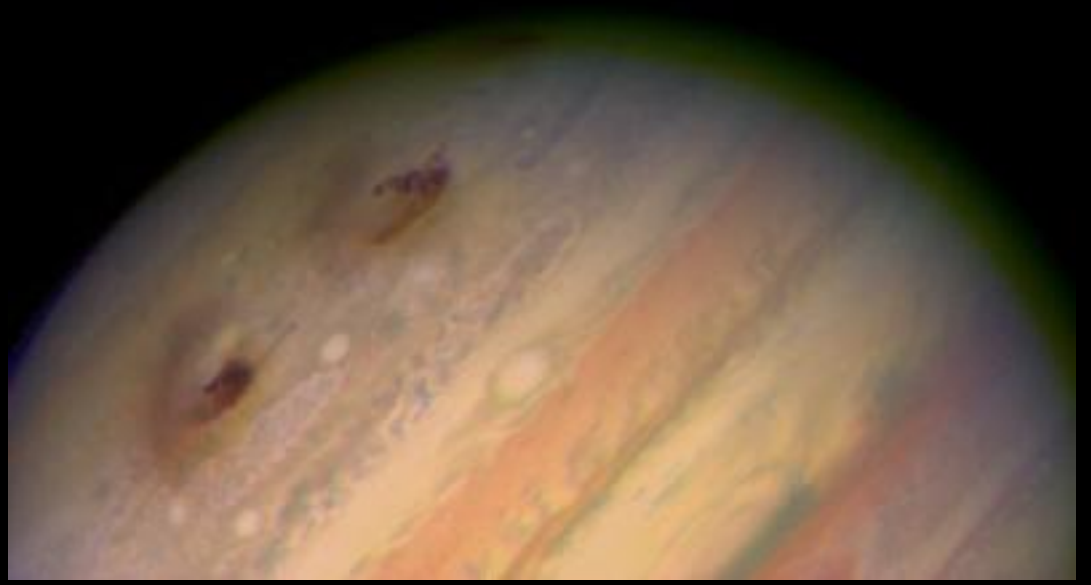
- Global Resources
- Global Pollution
- Global Catastrophe
  - ozone layer
  - global warming

Variations of the Earth's surface temperature: 1000 to 2100.

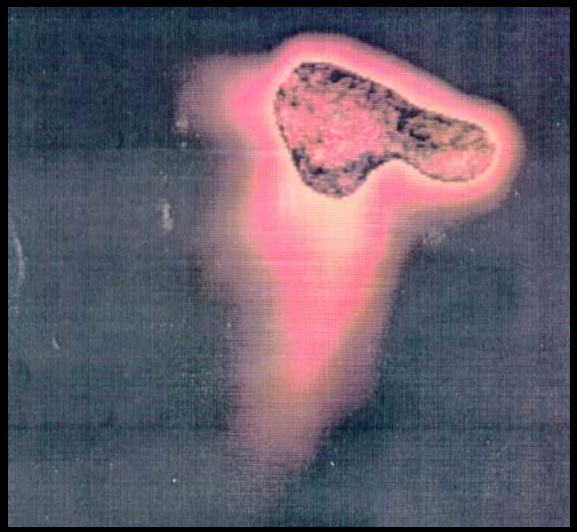
1000 to 1861, N.Hemisphere, proxy data; 1861 to 2000 Global, instrumental;
2000 to 2100, SRES projections



Comet or asteroid impact?

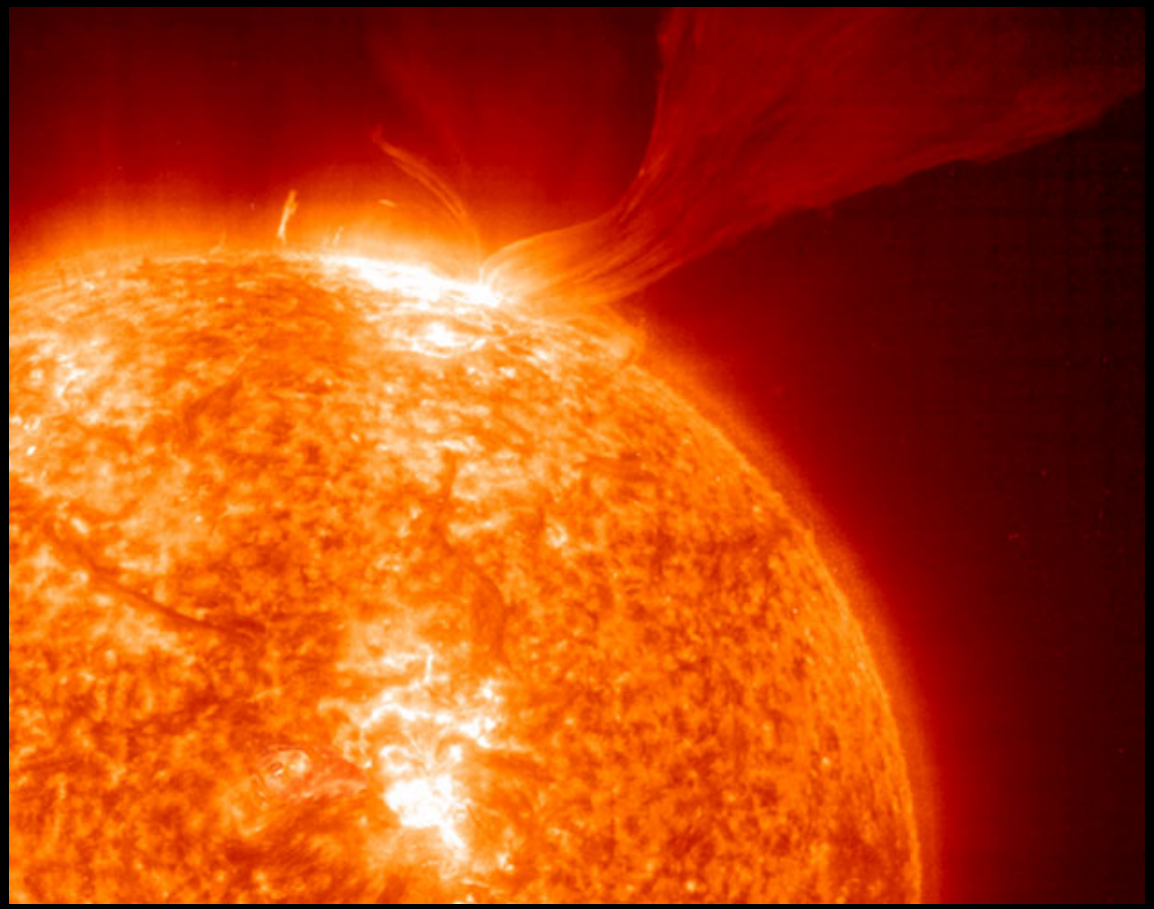


Comet or asteroid impact?



Halley's Comet

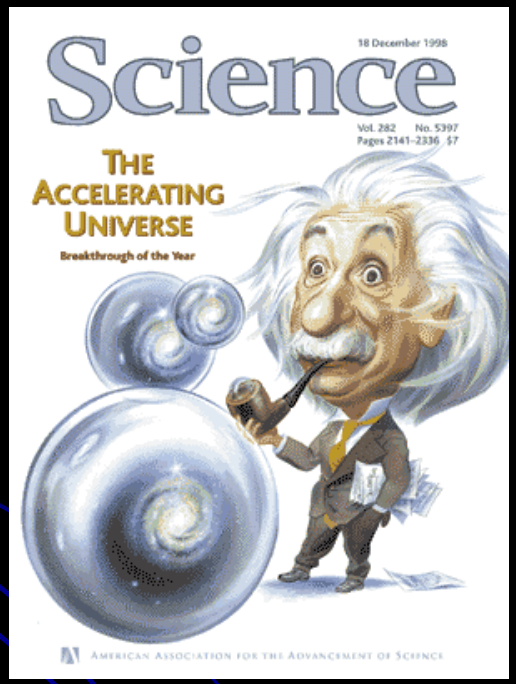
The End of the Sun



The End of the Sun

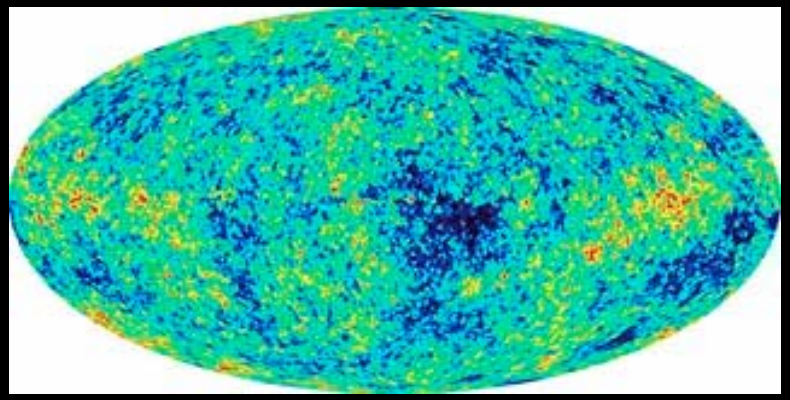
NGC 2392 • "Eskimo" Nebula **HST • WFPC2**
NASA, ESA, A. Fruchter and the ERO Team (STScI) • STScI-PRC00-07

The End of the Universe



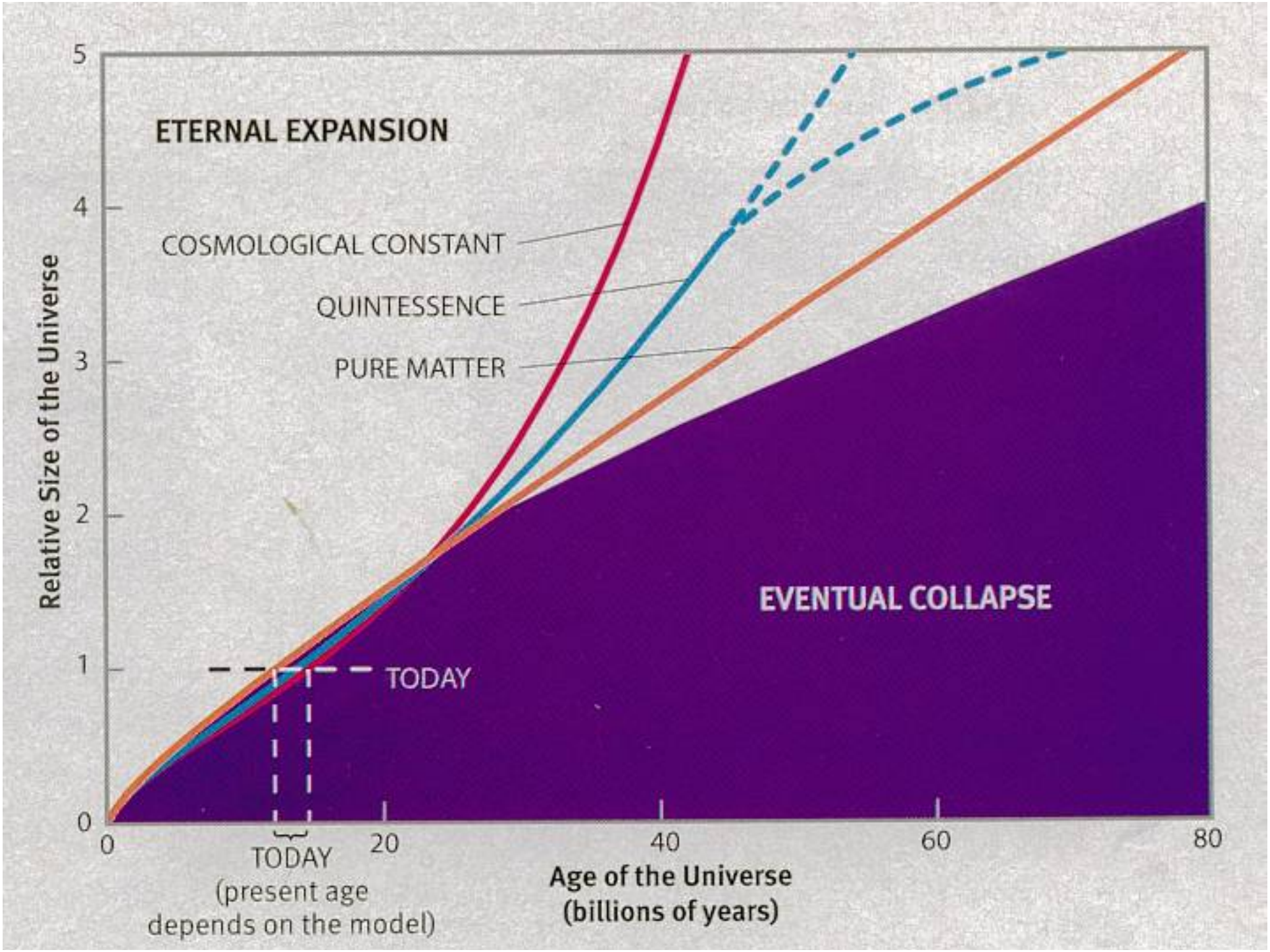
SN1994D

CiS conference, Leeds, 19th March 2005



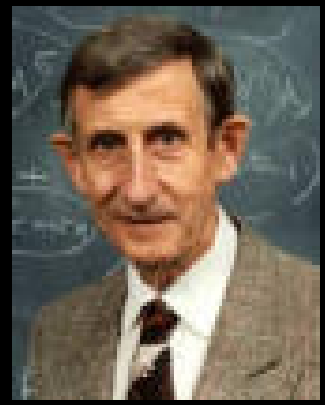
380,000 years after Big Bang

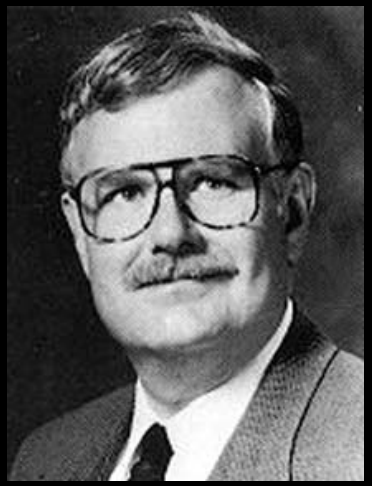
WILKINSON MICROWAVE ANISOTROPY PROBE (WMAP)

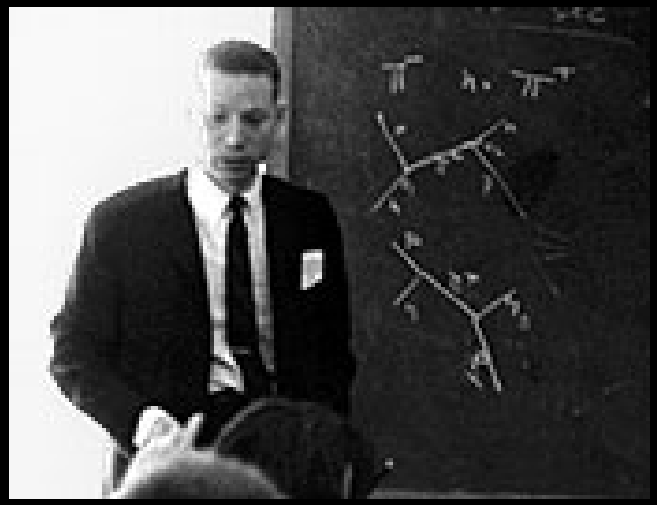

ETERNAL EXPANSION
COSMOLOGICAL CONSTANT
QUINTESSENCE
PURE MATTER
EVENTUAL COLLAPSE
TODAY
TODAY
(present age
depends on the model)
Relative Size of the Universe
Age of the Universe
(billions of years)
0
1
2
3
4
5
0
20
40
60
80

Scientific optimism?

- Endless fertility of bubble universes
- Dyson's Life in All Directions
- Tipler's Physics of Immortality







‘the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless’.

Response of theologians

- Hartley's *Paradise Restored*
- Burnet's *Theory of the Earth*
- 1781 sermon *The General Deliverance*

Biblical themes

Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 65:17-25

1 Thess 4:13-5:11

2 Peter 3:10-13

Rev 21:1-8

Romans 8:18-30

1 Cor 15

Col 1:15-20

Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 65:17-25

1 Thess 4:13-5:11

2 Peter 3:10-13

Rev 21:1-8

Romans 8:18-30

1 Cor 15

Col 1:15-20

Biblical themes

- New creation

Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 65:17-25

1 Thess 4:13-5:11

2 Peter 3:10-13

Rev 21:1-8

Romans 8:18-30

1 Cor 15

Col 1:15-20

Biblical themes

- New creation
- Action of a Creator God

Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 65:17-25

1 Thess 4:13-5:11

2 Peter 3:10-13

Rev 21:1-8

Romans 8:18-30

1 Cor 15

Col 1:15-20

Biblical themes

- New creation
- Action of a Creator God
- Creation and new creation

Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 65:17-25

1 Thess 4:13-5:11

2 Peter 3:10-13

Rev 21:1-8

Romans 8:18-30

1 Cor 15

Col 1:15-20

Biblical themes

- New creation
- Action of a Creator God
- Creation and new creation
- Transformation

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be burned up

2 Peter 3:10

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare

Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 65:17-25

1 Thess 4:13-5:11

2 Peter 3:10-13

Rev 21:1-8

Romans 8:18-30

1 Cor 15

Col 1:15-20

Biblical themes

- New creation
- Action of a Creator God
- Creation and new creation
- Transformation
- Judgement

Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 65:17-25

1 Thess 4:13-5:11

2 Peter 3:10-13

Rev 21:1-8

Romans 8:18-30

1 Cor 15

Col 1:15-20

Biblical themes

- New creation
- Action of a Creator God
- Creation and new creation
- Transformation
- Judgement
- Process and event

Isaiah 11:1-9

Isaiah 65:17-25

1 Thess 4:13-5:11

2 Peter 3:10-13

Rev 21:1-8

Romans 8:18-30

1 Cor 15

Col 1:15-20

Biblical themes

- New creation
- Action of a Creator God
- Creation and new creation
- Transformation
- Judgement
- Process and event
- Resurrection

NT Wright: *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. 2003, London: SPCK.

Resurrection

-denied by pagans

-affirmed by many Jews

-reaffirmed and redefined by Christians

Resurrection

- This creation is important
- Transformation
- Continuity and discontinuity
- Hope

Resurrection and the Universe

- Decay to flourishing
- Action of God
- Time in new creation
  - Real
  - Not coupled to decay
  - No longer limiting
  - Arrow of time and multi-dimensional time part of any theory of everything

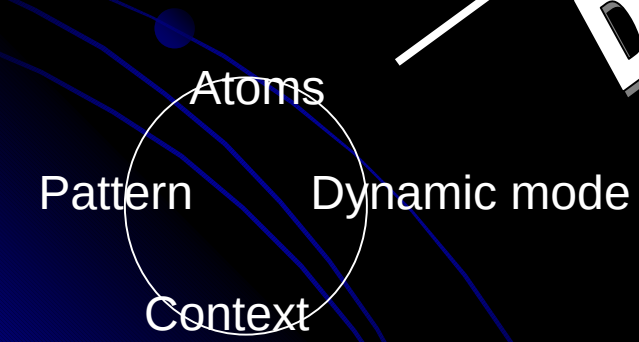
Resurrection and the Universe

- Decay to flourishing
- Action of God
- Time in new creation
- Matter in new creation

Resurrection and the Universe

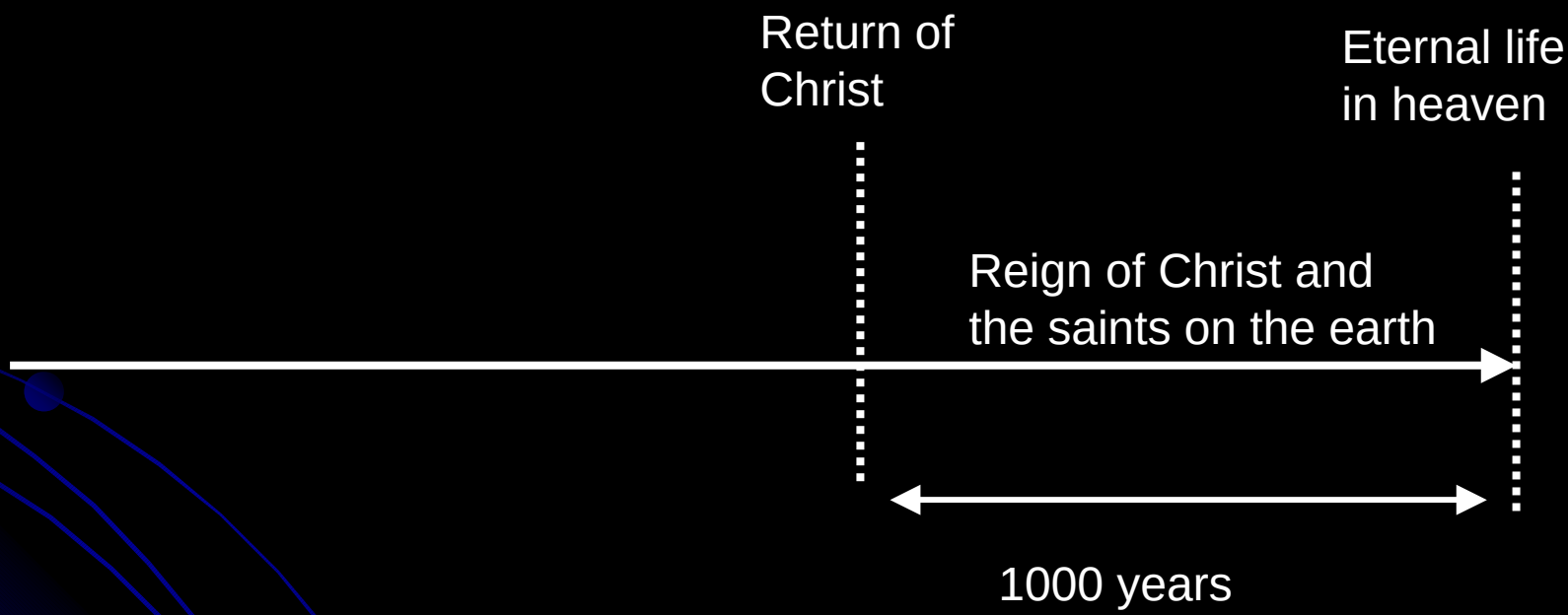
Continuity

Discontinuity



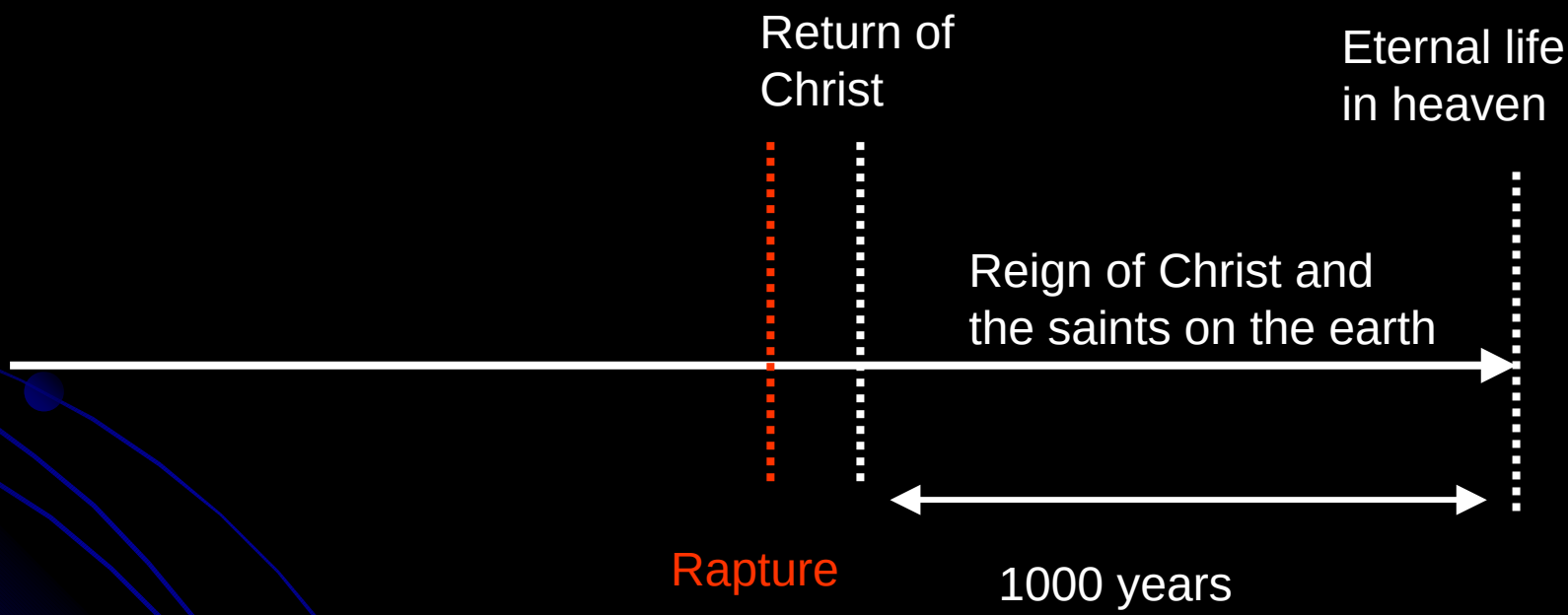
Millennium

Premillennialism



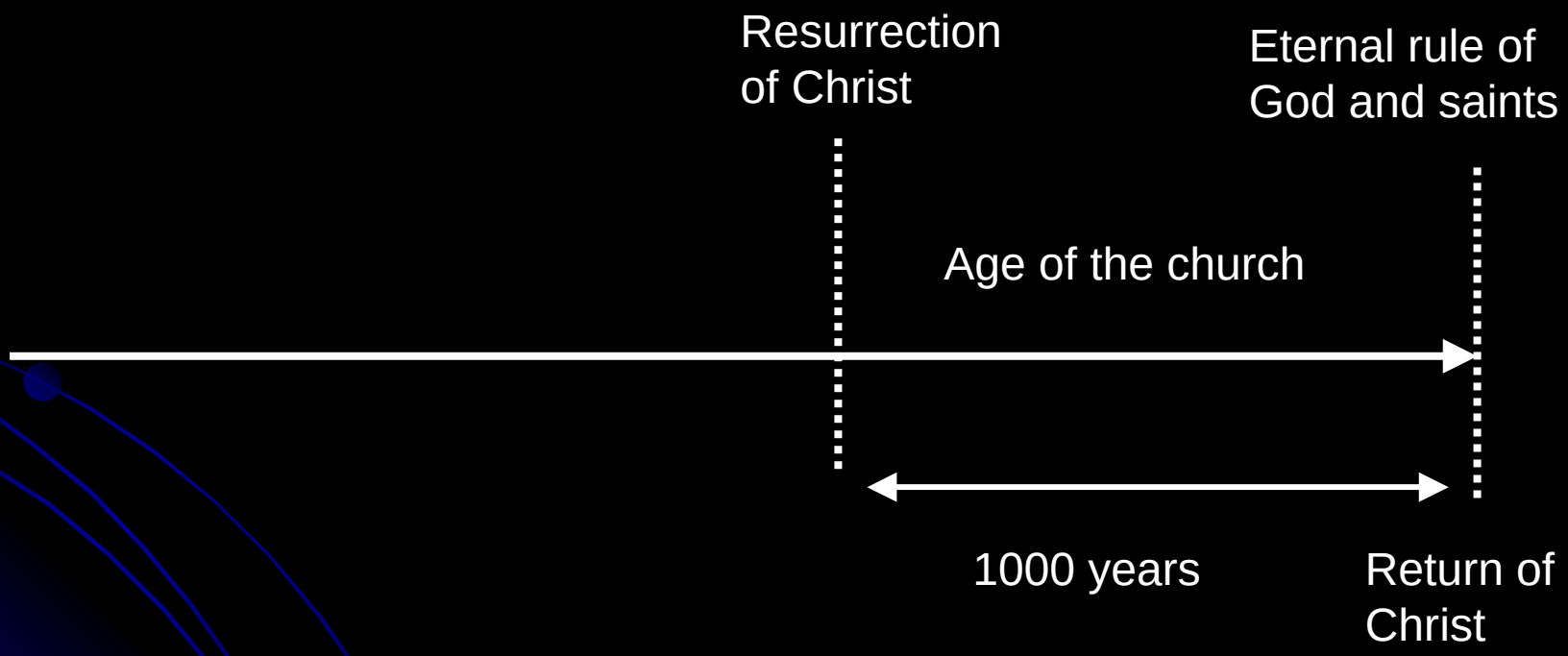
Millennium

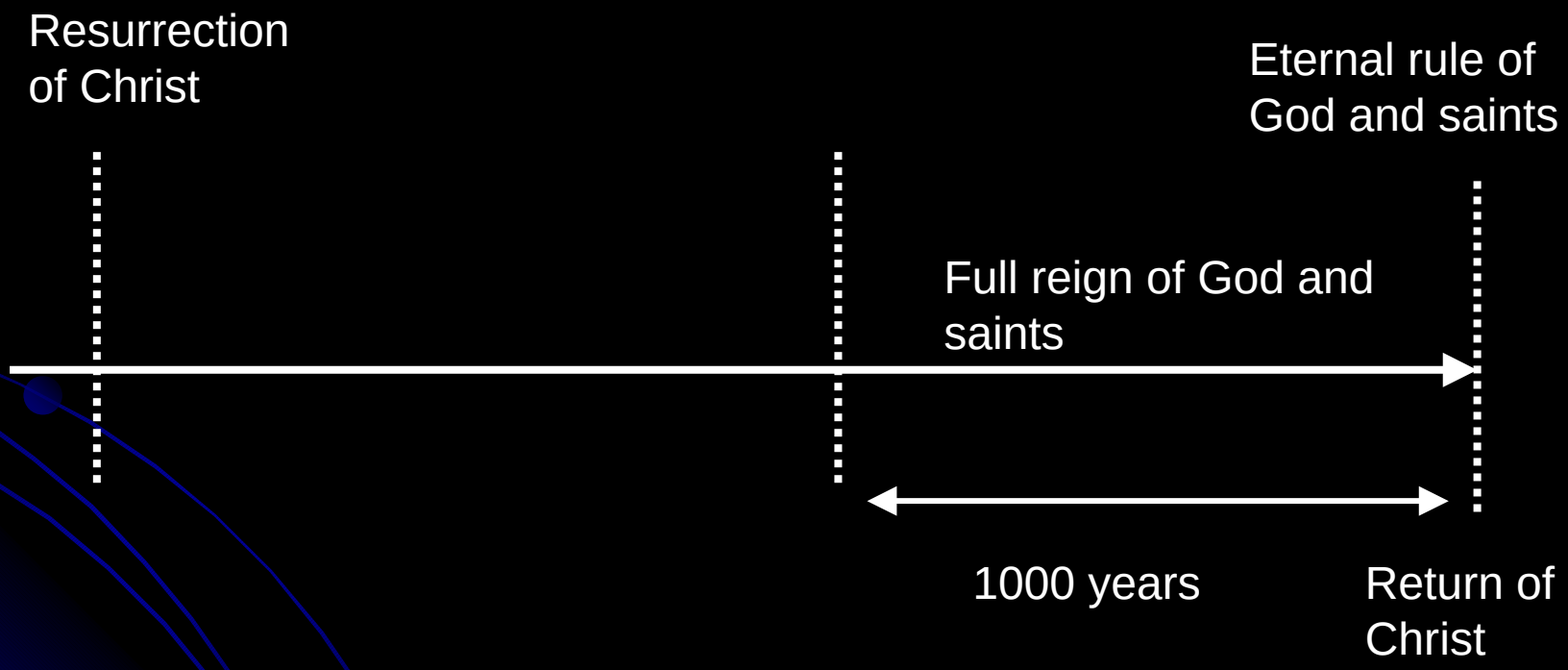
Premillennialism



Millennium

Amillennialism



Millennium

Post-millennialism