

It appears that black holes represent “soundings” so deep into the fabric of space that they echo Christ’s unbounded glory. The picture they reveal of God exceeds our comprehension, and is frightening indeed! This should properly move us to fear and know our God; these are the true starting points of all wisdom and scientific knowledge (Proverbs 9:10). But we can also be comforted by the fact that God’s love for his own will never end because it, too, is infinite (1 Chronicles 16:34). After a million shining years of fellowship with our beautiful Lord Jesus, he will continue to cherish his people just as much as he did when he went to the Cross for their sins!

God and his creation are totally distinct from each other. God is infinite, and the universe is not. But if there is one thing in nature that heralds the limitless character of our Creator, it may very well be black holes. Let’s continue to stretch our

minds to understand that which is difficult to grasp. Nature proclaims the glory of God (Psalm 19:1), and it is a discovery of Christ’s glory that will lead us to what we really desire—the nature of true joy!

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Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! . . . For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

ROMANS 11:33, 36

HIS Nature

*Can you fathom the mysteries of God?
Can you probe the limits of the
Almighty? They are higher than the
heavens—what can you do?*

JOB 11:7-8

THE GRAVITY OF INFINITY

In the vast, frigid expanse of outer space lies a mysterious object with such incredible power that it defies the imagination. It is the blackened, burned-out remains of an enormous star that has come to the end of its life. In its death throes, this star—maybe 10 or 20 times the mass of the sun—has collapsed under its own weight, forming a truly ominous place known as a black hole.

Black holes are unlike anything else our Lord God has created. They are so dense and their gravity so great that even light cannot escape their clutches. Nothing can



Spiral Galaxy

satisfy their ferocious appetites. Some black holes literally rip apart whole stars as they devour them with their titanic gravity. Incredibly, astronomers estimate the number of black holes in the universe to be in the millions.

Since light is unable to escape the gravitational pull of black holes, they appear to us here on earth as empty regions of space—pitch black. But if we can’t see them,

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how do we know that they exist? Astronomers have been able to locate black holes by studying the incredible effects they have on nearby stars. Through a telescope, for instance, a faraway star may be observed orbiting around what appears to be . . . nothing.

Scientists believe that super-massive black holes lie in the center of most galaxies. And the gravitational pull of these galactic giants may exceed one million times that of our sun!

The notion that a celestial body might be great enough to prevent light from escaping its grip was first proposed in 1783 by Reverend John Michell. Unfortunately, this idea was then shelved for more than 120 years. In the twentieth century, black hole research was revitalized by the work of Albert Einstein. He showed that our three-dimensional world actually resides in a four-dimensional universe, where God has woven space and

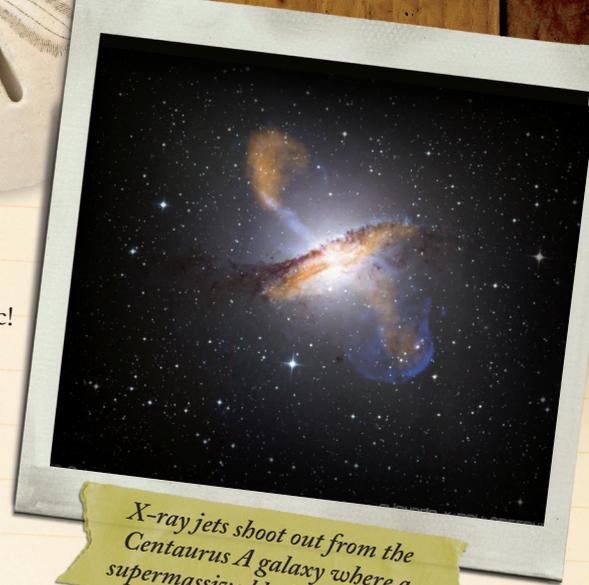
time together into a kind of "fabric" (known now simply as space-time).

Christ's creation of space-time can be likened to a colossal sheet of rubber stretching throughout the heavens. The Bible seems to hint at this in certain passages—notably Psalm 104:1-2 and Isaiah 40:22. Imagine stars and planets sitting on top of this elastic garment. The more massive an object, the more it causes space-time (represented by the rubber sheet) to pucker or dimple, and the greater its gravitational pull inward toward the center of that dimple. If the cosmic fabric of space-time seems incredible to you, carefully consider what God says will happen to the universe at the end of time: "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end" (Hebrews 1:10-12).

Thus Einstein was not the first to conceive of the universe as a kind of fabric!

According to Einstein's equations in his Theory of General Relativity, as a giant star runs out of fuel it is possible for it to crush down to a point so small as to become infinitely dense. This can be illustrated by an infinitely deep hole or "bottomless pit" in our rubber sheet. Anything coming close to this black hole will fall in and never escape. The problem is that we don't see what's going on within the heart of a black hole.

So, we may ask ourselves, "Can something created truly be infinite?" The answer is no! Only God himself is infinite. But even though a black hole is not infinite, its existence deep in the fabric of space-time illustrates our Creator's infinite power. We must resist the temptation to think that black holes somehow connect to God. Although the universe vividly displays God's glory, Christ is exalted above all creation (Psalm 113:4). Nature



X-ray jets shoot out from the Centaurus A galaxy where a supermassive black hole resides

cannot reach up and touch God; he must reach down to us.

As far as we know, the Bible does not mention black holes specifically, but it does teach us much about Jesus, their Maker (Romans 1:20). If black holes appear to be infinite in structure (according to Einstein's equations), it's because they reflect God's unlimited character. However, they remain part of a creation that has boundaries. But should it surprise us that our Almighty Creator is able to fashion an object that cannot be penetrated by the "eyes" of our best telescopes? Black holes are shrouded in mystery—hidden from our view—and they reveal that God himself is infinitely mysterious.

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