You can?t help but be impressed by the universe

by Mark Pavilons

There seems to be an incredible, artistic pattern to it all.

No, my friends, there's nothing random about billions of galaxies flying through the universe, all with their own unique qualities.

It's like all the masters combined their talents to paint the heavens.

Breath-taking.

You don't have to be interested in astronomy or science to marvel at the heavens above.

Recent photos from the James Webb Space Telescope gave us a new glimpse into just how colourful and immense our universe is. With greater detail, astronomers may get a better handle on it all.

Several of those involved in the project, and countless armchair astronomers, actually cried when they saw these newest images. They were overwhelmed by the grandiose nature of all things.

Maybe it was a ?religious experience.?

I get it, I really do.

Many say that science and religion can't co-exist, that they are opposed. That's simply not true.

Science, like religion, seeks to find the truth and make sense of things. It seeks a ?higher meaning.?

?And God saw all that He made, and it was very good.? ??enesis 1:31

Carl Sagan once said that we live on an ?insignificant planet of a humdrum star? in a galaxy tucked away in some forgotten corner of a universe in which there are far more galaxies than people.

After decades of looking out into the deep reaches of space, Hubble first gave us a smidgen of God's handiwork.

And now, as images continue to pour in from James Webb, marvels will present themselves.

And so will some bizarre and amazing pieces to one very large puzzle.

For the average person, galaxies, black holes, quantum physics, dark matter are just incomprehensible things. Most of what we do know about them tend to be educated guesses, mathematical probabilities and concepts based on gravitational physics.

To give you an idea of what we're starting to see, a NASA?administrator said Webb's images are like putting a grain of sand on your fingertip and stretching our your arm. That's what we're looking at ? one tiny splice of the heavens. The scope of space is truly mind-bending.

And so is the idea of looking back in time, because that's exactly what Webb is capable of doing. Looking at an object that is, say, 14 billion light years away, is like looking at the birth of the universe. You see, it takes light from a star that far away to only now reach our eyes. That star, and all of its planets, are likely long gone, burned out, uninhabited. And yet their ghostly flicker remains.

Time is still quite trippy in terms of the universe.

Tracy K. Smith wrote that you can't look at these images and ?not feel like something else is going about its business out there.?

Something else, indeed.

God and his powers are invisible to us. So too are many things in the universe and yet we know they are there.

?The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.? ??salm 19:1-2

As an armchair astronomer, I've been fascinated with the heavens above since my high school years. I devoured books on space and became a dyed-in-the-wool Trekkie.I?hope I live long enough to see concrete proof of life on other worlds.

We are relative newcomers in this universe of course. Our Earth is only roughly 4 billion years old, and the rest of the universe is estimated to be upwards of 14 billion years old.

Scientists have also discovered that the five main elements for life ??ucleobases in DNA and RNA ??ave been found in meteorites. These are the necessary compounds for life and, technically speaking, a meteorite containing all these landing on a strange world is like a seed, planting all life. That's just crazy.

Who sent these ?seeds??across the cosmos?After all, ?? He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.?

Scientists speculate the visible universe is roughly 93 billion light-years in diameter, but others say the Bayesian model of averaging puts it at least 250 times that, or 7 trillion light-years in diameter.

We are but specks of dust, tiny microbes in this huge tapestry.

One of the biggest arguments of a ?higher power??is the question:?how can something come from nothing? How can life just spontaneous appear and evolve on Earth and perhaps other planets?

Galileo mused that our sun, with all our planets revolving around it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as if it had nothing else in the universe to do.

And that's the beauty of it all. Our sun, positioned perfectly for the third planet, has given us everything. I?can't believe it was all random, that rocks and elements and life-giving material was just flying around the universe aimlessly, settling here, just for us.

This is divine intervention on a truly massive, incomprehensible scale.

What does it all mean?

Well, not much, since none of us will ever reach the stars in a meaningful way.

But maybe it's the start, the beginning of a new creation theory. This theory is that everything in the universe and beyond is connected, similar, related and important.

Are we, and all the galaxies that make up the universe, designed by God?

I will leave you with the words of E.E. Cummings:

?Listen; there's a hell of a good universe next door: let's go!?