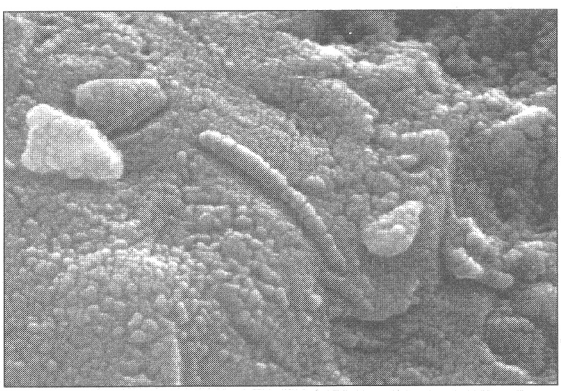
PANORAMA

Death of Bacterial Life on Mars

On page 30 of *Biblical Astronomer* **6**(78), Fall 1996, we reported on the fabulous Antarctic Mars rock which, it was claimed, held the fossils of ancient Martian bacteria. We went on to note some problems with that particular interpretation for the features in the so-called Mars rock. For instance, they fossils are too small to contain genetic code, and other rocks, clearly terrestrial in origin, show similar features; and we noted the timing, that the "find" happened right at budget time for NASA's Mars probe. Now an article in the British magazine *Nature* for the week of November 30 casts further doubt on the fossil nature of the "Mars rock" ALH84001.

John Bradley, Ralph Harvey, and Harry McSween examined the rock and argue that the "microfossils" are the edges of mineral structures sticking out from inside the rock. The advocates of Mars life, called the "McKay group," persist in their belief and acknowledge the existence of the mineral structures but claim that they are not confusing them with the "fossils." One of the differences between the two groups is that the McKay group coated their sample with gold which, according to the Bradley group such coating can change texture, round off shapes, and even produce such segmentation as seen on the "worm" which graced the cover of *Biblical Astronomer* number 78.

The McKay group counters saying that it's impossible to confuse the layers of minerals (they align in strata in places) since they form layers whereas their candidate fossil does not. They also argue that



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s-shaped worms could not be produced by such ledges of minerals. Bradley's group shows examples where the minerals are s-shaped. On the whole, the waters are muddied as neither group backs down. So I'm reproducing the picture of the most convincing worm-like object and asking the reader to decide for himself. Do you see a similar but shorter segment just under its tail? Do you see, under the bright "rock" at left, a thin strip of bright beads forming a line which can be traced all the way to the ridge at bottom-center and which runs parallel to the "worm"? Do you see another ridge, this time above the darker "rock" just above and behind the bright "rock," which runs parallel to the "worm"? Do you see that the "worm" lies in what looks like a groove? Do you see that in the middle
of the "worm" is a very narrow segment? How do you suppose that squares with biologists' contention that the "worm" is too small to contain genetic material?

Mars Lander

From a NASA press release: "Since its landing on July 4, 1997, Mars Pathfinder has returned 2.6 billion bits of information, including more than 16,000 images from the lander and 550 images from the rover, as well as more than 15 chemical analyses of rocks and extensive data on winds and other weather factors." The batteries died on the lander in early October. Some of the discoveries made by the Mars lander and listed by NASA are as follows:

1. Martian dust includes magnetic, composite particles, with a mean size of one micron. So what else is new?
2. Rock chemistry at the landing site is different from Martian meteorites found on earth, such as the much-heralded ALH840001 (see above) which showed "signs" of bacterial life. The Mars lander results are consistent with basaltic andesite composition, the second most common rock in earth. Martian rocks are indistinguishable from rocks on earth. In other words, forget those "Martian rocks" in Antarctica, they're not from Mars. They may be terrestrial (thrown out of Krakatoa or similar volcanoes) or, doubtfully, lunar; or just plain meteorites.
3. The soil chemistry of Ares Vallis, where Pathfinder landed, appears to be similar to that of the Viking 1 and 2 Martian landing sites. In other words, the case against ALH840001 is stronger than admitted by NASA.

4. Frequent "dust devils" were found.
5. Diversity of albedos, or variations in the brightness of the Martian surface, was similar to other observations, but there was no evidence for the types of crystalline hematite or pyroxene absorption features detected in other locations on Mars. This should call into question the use of microwave radar and other orbitally determined chemical composition methods. It should — but it won't.
6. The atmospheric experiment package recorded a temperature profile different than expected from microwave measurements and Hubble observations. See my comment to number 5.
7. Rock size distribution was consistent with a flood-related deposit. (Consistent with Genesis 1.)
8. The possible identification of rounded pebbles and cobbles on the ground, and sockets and pebbles in some rocks, suggests conglomerates (which look like pebbles embedded in cement) that formed in running water, during a warmer past in which liquid water was stable. Of course, the Bible has water present at the creation, but that runs contrary to NASA's goal of de-godifying the universe to make the universe safe for humanism. Conglomerates can also be formed by vulcanism.

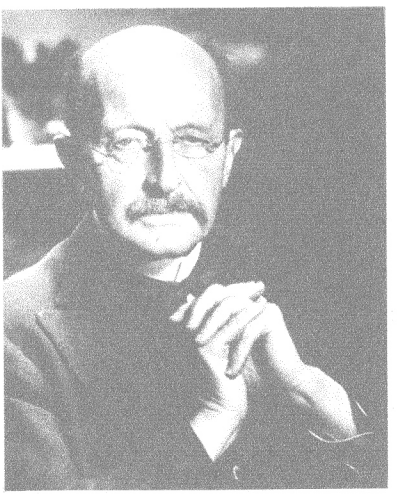
Einstein, Planck, Boltzmann: A Tidbit of History

Recent biographies have exposed Albert Einstein as a lecherous charlatan of high-average intellectual abilities but whose genius, in his own words, was highly overrated. Now evidence has surfaced that the only reason that Einstein's papers got published was because Max Planck was the editor of the journal *Physicalische Zeitschrift* at the time. Planck was the darling of the monied German aristocracy, with family connections to the Siemens Corporation. As a young man he was promoted to the University as a full professor, over the more accomplished and talented associate professor, Ludwig Boltzmann. Boltzmann was treated like trash because he was a commoner. After being passed over for promotion, and in despair about his findings on entropy (see "The Waves of Sin" in the next issue, D.V.), Boltzmann went into a depression for several years and finally committed suicide.

After Planck promoted Einstein, the likes of British physicist and opportunist Eddington came on board the relativity bandwagon. Eddington "tested" relativity by observing an eclipse of the sun and measuring the

deflection of starlight around the sun. He had determined that he would prove relativity before he left, and he had to throw out roughly 40% of his measurements to get the "correct" result. In time Einsteinianism became unquestioned dogma: a religion for Twentieth Century atheists and a flimsy excuse for moral relativism (see *Geocentricity* for more details on that relationship between relativity theory and moral relativism). The net result is that relativity theory successfully allowed the world's "scientists" to defer public discussion of the structure of the electron, proton, neutron, atom and nucleus for the balance of the twentieth century. In that way they avoided having to accept the Creator and his sustaining power in his creation. But there was one unexpected spin-off from relativity, and that is that is paved the way for acceptance of geocentricity for a handful of physicists and astronomers.

Boltzmann



Planck

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