

Evidence for the Biblical Flood

By Bill Jahns

We live today in a skeptical world that no longer believes the Bible should be taken literally. This is especially true for the beginning chapters of Genesis. Is there evidence outside the Bible that the world was indeed covered by water? The answer is a resounding yes!

Let's notice what the Bible says itself about the Flood. "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart" (Genesis 6:5). The cause of the Flood is clear; the ways of mankind had become so evil that God had determined to destroy all of mankind. In Genesis 6:13 we find "And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

One of the compromises made today with the Bible is the assertion that the Biblical Flood was local, covering only a small portion of the world in the Middle East. Let's let the Bible speak for itself: "The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died" (Genesis 7:18).

Notice the strength of these terms: "All the high hills under the whole heaven." The Bible is clear—all the mountains of the earth were covered by water at least 15 cubits deep (approximately 22 feet depending upon the length of the cubit).

Why has the idea that the Flood was local come about? Many scientists and geologists today will tell you that there is no evidence of a universal Flood. We'll demonstrate here that there is much evidence of it. Another argument revolves around the Hebrew word for "earth" in Genesis 7:18. The Hebrew is "erets," about which Strong's Concordance says: "the earth (at large, or partitively a land ... field, ground, land, ... wilderness, world."

You can see from this definition that the Hebrew word in some contexts could indicate just a local area. Yet, the context, "All the high hills under the whole heaven," shows it should be understood to mean the entire earth, a universal flood.

The Bible says that the Ark landed in the "mountains of Ararat" (Genesis 8:4). Mt. Ararat has an elevation of 16,945 feet. Revell Bible Dictionary says: "In any local Flood, the ark would have only been swept along toward the sea. Only a cataclysm like that described in Gen. 6-9 could have lifted Noah's boat to such a height" ("Ararat"). The lowest valley in the mountains of Ararat is about 6,000 feet above sea level.

Using the Bible as a guide, we must conclude that the Flood had to be universal.

Science

The Scriptures indicate there would come a time when men would no longer believe what the Bible teaches about the creation and the Flood. ‘Scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being Flooded with water’(2 Peter 3:3-6).

Note, as well, the indication that these scoffers would be motivated by their own selfish, carnal desires. Not wanting to subject themselves to God, they try to discredit His Word.

Paul also warned Timothy about this problem. ‘O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge’ (1 Timothy 6:20). ‘Gnosis,’ the Greek word for ‘knowledge’ is translated as ‘science’ in the KJV. There have always been those who do not believe what God says and have attacked the Bible as being ‘only another book.’

The Bible also says that God would confuse the wise. ‘For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden’ (Isaiah 29:14). Wisdom that is based on man’s own intellect without God’s Spirit and direction is destined to fail. Christ reflected this fact in a prayer: ‘In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes’ (Luke 10:21). Intellectual vanity can blind a person to God’s truth.

Evidence for the Flood

There is much evidence outside of the Scriptures for the Flood. These stories are found all over the world and have much in common with the Bible. The following are just a few of the stories that are found in cultures around the earth, according to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

American Indian Traditions: Among the American Indians traditions of the Deluge were found by travelers to be widely disseminated. Mr. Catlin says, “Among the 120 different tribes which I visited in North, South, and Central America, not a tribe exists that has not related to me distinct or vague traditions of such a calamity, in which one, or three, or eight persons were saved above the waters upon the top of a high mountain” (quoted by Wm. Restelle in *Biblical Sac.* (January, 1907), 157). ...According to [this legend] the 4th age was one of water, when all men were turned into fishes except Tezpi and his wife Hochiquetzal and their children, who with many animals took refuge in a ship which sailed safely over the tumultuous waters which overwhelmed the earth. When the Flood subsided the ship stranded on Mount Cohuacan, whereupon he sent forth a vulture which did not return, and then a humming bird which returned with some leaves in its beak. The Peruvian story differs from this in many particulars. According to it a single man and woman took refuge in a box and floated hundreds of miles from Cuzco to an unknown land where they made clay images of all races, and animated them.

The Babylonian Tradition: The most instructive of these traditions are those which have come down to us from Babylonia, which until recently were known to us only through the Greek historian Berosus of the 4th century bc, who narrates that a great deluge happened at some indefinite time in the past during the reign of Xisuthrus, son of Ardates. Xisuthrus was warned beforehand by the deity Cronos, and told to build a ship and take with him his friends and relations and all the different animals with all necessary food and trust himself fearlessly to the deep, whereupon he built "a vessel 5 stadia (3,000 ft.) long and 2 stadia (1,200 ft.) broad." After the Flood subsided Xisuthrus, like Noah, sent out birds which returned to him again. After waiting some days and sending them out a second time, they returned with their feet tinged with mud. Upon the third trial they returned no more, whereupon they disembarked and Xisuthrus with his wife, daughter and pilot offered sacrifice to the gods and were translated to live with the gods. It was found that the place where they were was "the land of Armenia," but they were told to return to Babylon. Berosus concluded his account by saying that "the vessel being Thus stranded in Armenia, some part of it yet remains in the Corcyrean mountains."

The Greek Tradition: The Greeks, according to Plutarch, had five different traditions of the Deluge, that of Deucalion being the most important. According to this, Prometheus warned his son Deucalion of the Flood which Zeus had resolved to bring upon the earth by reason of its wickedness. Accordingly, Deucalion constructed an ark and took refuge in it, but with his vessel was stranded on Mount Parnassus in Thessaly, whereupon they disembarked and repopulated the earth by the fantastic process revealed to them by the goddess Themis of throwing stones about them, those which Deucalion threw becoming men and those which Pyrrha threw becoming women. Lucian's form of the legend, however, is less fantastic and more nearly in line with Semitic tradition. In the Greek legend as in the Semitic, a dove is sent forth which returns both a first and a second time, its feet being tinged with mud the second time, intimating the abatement of the Flood (1995-96 by Biblesoft, "Deluge").

Many other stories outside the Bible could be added. All these stories have several common threads:

1. The Flood was caused, because mankind somehow displeased a Divine being.
2. Only a small number of humans were saved.
3. An ark was built to save the hero.
4. Birds were sent out after the Flood to determine if the waters had subsided.
5. Sacrifices were offered to placate the "gods" after the Flood.

This is exactly the scenario we would expect if a Flood had indeed destroyed all of mankind. The fact that these stories vary in some ways from the Bible is also to be expected. That these stories are found all over the world adds weight to the assertion in the Bible that the Flood was universal.

Scientific evidence

Those who advocate a local Flood point to scientific evidence. Here is a typical comment: “The Historicity of the story .—The modern study of geology and comparative mythology has made it impossible to see in the story of the Deluge the literal record of an historical event” (Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, ‘Deluge’).

Those who dismiss a universal Flood as a real event fail to note that scientific ideas change with time, as new discoveries are made. For example, geologists thought for many years that the geologic record showed no evidence of catastrophes. It was thought that every formation could be explained by uniformitarianism. Today, these ideas have changed and many geologists and scientists say that the dinosaurs died when a meteorite hit the earth—a catastrophic event.

Man’s ideas change, but the Word of God stands forever—“The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever” (Isaiah 40:8). This has been the record of mankind throughout history. Scientific ideas are not a constant that must be taken as the final word. New evidence often comes to bear on theories, which causes them to be changed.

If the world were flooded for a year, we should expect to find some geologic evidence of it. When modern theories are discounted, the evidence indeed is there. Most of the world is covered with sedimentary rocks (about 80%). Sedimentary rocks are those which are often deposited under water or associated with water.

Sedimentary Rock: in geology, rock composed of geologically reworked materials, formed by the accumulation and consolidation of mineral and particulate matter deposited by the action of water or, less frequently, wind or glacial ice. Most sedimentary rocks are characterized by parallel or discordant bedding that reflects variations in either the rate of deposition of the material or the nature of the matter that is deposited (“Sedimentary Rock,” Microsoft® Encarta® 98 Encyclopedia, 1993-1997, Microsoft Corporation, All rights reserved).

According to The Dynamic Earth, 75% of the rocks seen on the earth are sedimentary in origin. 25% are igneous (volcanic). This is further evidence of the Flood. In some areas, sedimentary strata covers the earth around 5 miles deep. We understand of course, that not all of the geologic record can be explained by one Flood. There are many difficulties with this position.

The biblical Flood probably caused many formations. Here is a description of one such formation: “A similar deposit is found at Agate Springs in Sioux County in the northwestern corner of Nebraska. What remains of the hill covers about ten acres. This bone bed was accidentally discovered in 1876. It contains the bones of rhinoceroses, camels, giant wild boars, and other animals, buried together in a confused mass as only water would deposit them. It is estimated that the bones of about nine thousand complete animals are buried on this one hill. ...Hence, it is likely that many times that number of animals were brought together at this hill and buried there by the action of water.... This is a fact that is most important. Animals of every kind died in great numbers and were

buried almost instantly” (The Flood by Rehwinkel, 1951, Page 183, emphasis author’s). Notice that this deposit was obviously made under water.

Dating methods problematic

Why, then, don’t geologists understand that the biblical Flood caused these formations? The answer is found in the dating of these formations. The theory of evolution is so dominant in the scientific world today that it affects the way that formations are dated. One of the ways dates are determined is by “radiometric” dating methods. But, dating methods have their problems, and there is good reason to believe that errors have been made.

Let’s examine one of the most popular dating methods, Carbon-14. “Radiocarbon is continuously created in the atmosphere through bombardment of nitrogen-14 (14N) by neutrons created by cosmic radiation. 14C, with a half-life of 5730 years, decays back to 14N. ... As long as the production rate remains constant, the radioactivity of natural carbon remains constant because rate of production balances the rate of decay.

“While an organism is alive and is taking in carbon from the atmosphere, it contains this balanced proportion of 14C. However, at the death the balance is upset, because replenishment by life processes such as feeding, breathing and photosynthesis ceases. The 14C in dead tissues continually decreases by radioactive decay” (The Dynamic Earth by Brian J Skinner and Stephen C. Porter, 1989, pp. 138-139). By measuring the amount of 14C and comparing that amount to the original, a date for the death of the organism can be obtained.

There are many problems with these “dates,” however. For example, living mollusks in a river when dated by 14C give dates up to 2,300 years before the present (Science, “Radiocarbon Dating: Fictitious Results with Mollusk Shells,” Vol. 141, p. 634). Carbon-14 dating methods are obviously affected by the environment around the item being dated.

Another problem is the method of dating. Recently, a new method (mass spectrometer) has been used to date ancient items. This method has given a different date than previously accepted for the earliest Mayan civilization.

“The oldest known Mayas turns out to be younger than archaeologists originally believed. The remains of a woman found below a layered platform at a site called Cuello in northern Belize had been thought to be more than 4,000 years old... As a result of new dating methods, about a thousand years have been trimmed from the chronology. Norman Hammond of Boston University, who began digging a Cuello in the 1970’s says the remains now are believed to be from about 1200 B.C., still earlier than any other known Maya settlement. The accelerator mass spectrometer allows scientists to analyze the bones of the ancient Maya without severely damaging them. The new technique can date carbon samples weighing only a few milligrams; a specimen the size of a match head will do” (National Geographic, November 1990, “Oldest Known Maya: Not Quite So Old”).

Here a new dating method has changed by c. 1,000 years the date of the earliest Maya civilization. Radiometric dating methods have been used to date formations that could be associated with the Flood. These dates supposedly prove these formations are millions, not thousands of years old. Yet, we find that a new method can radically change the result.

The potassium-argon [K-Ar] dating method used to date lava flows has problems.

“Several methods have been devised for estimating the age of the earth and its layers of rocks. These methods rely heavily on the assumption of uniformitarianism, i.e., natural processes have proceeded at relatively constant rates throughout the earth’s history. ...“It is obvious that radiometric techniques may not be the absolute dating methods that they are claimed to be. Age estimates on a given geological stratum by different radiometric methods are often quite different (sometimes by hundreds of millions of years). There is no absolutely reliable long-term radiological ‘clock’” (The Science of Evolution by William D. Stansfield, 1977, pp. 80, 84).

Studies of Mt. St. Helens have raised more questions about potassium-argon dating.

“The conventional K- Ar dating method was applied to the 1986 dacite flow from the new lava dome at Mount St. Helens, Washington. Porphyritic dacite which solidified on the surface of the lava dome in 1986 gives a whole rock K-Ar ‘age’ of 0.35 ± 0.05 million years (Ma). Mineral concentrates from this same dacite give K-Ar ‘ages’ from 0.35 ± 0.06 Ma to 2.8 ± 0.6 Ma. These ‘ages’ are, of course, preposterous. The fundamental dating assumption (‘no radiogenic argon was present when the rock formed’) is questioned by these data. Instead, data from this Mount St. Helens dacite argue that significant ‘excess argon’ was present when the lava solidified in 1986... This study of Mount St. Helens dacite causes the more fundamental question to be asked—how accurate are K-Ar ‘ages’ from the many other phenocryst-containing lava flows worldwide?” (Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal, vol. 10, no. 3, 1996, ‘Excess Argon within Mineral Concentrates from the New Dacite Lava Dome at Mount St. Helens Volcano,’ by Stephen A. Austin, pp. 335 •344).

Evolutionary bias

Many formations are dated too early by geologists because they have allowed themselves to be prejudiced by the theory of evolution. For example, evolutionists commonly accept as fact that certain species existed on the earth at one time, only to become extinct. In the state of Wyoming, for example are fossils of millions of fish believed to have died during the ‘Eocene’ epoch, dated at approximately 50 million years ago.

Only certain life forms were supposed to have been extant during this time. Often, however, fossils of supposedly extinct animals and plants have been found alive today. The most famous example of this is Coelacanth. According to the evolutionary ‘Geologic Column’ and modern interpretations of the fossil record, Coelacanth was supposedly non-existent for 70 million years. Yet, in 1938, a fisherman off the coast of South Africa caught a live specimen. This discovery, along with others casts doubt upon the interpretations given by evolutionists of the geologic record.

It is very likely that they have also miss-dated strata, because of an evolutionary bias.

Another interesting discovery happened just a few years ago. A tree that was believed extinct for over 150 million years was found alive and well in Australia. ‘David Noble was out on a holiday hike when he stepped off the beaten path and into the prehistoric age. Venturing into an isolated grove in a rain-forest preserve, [he] suddenly found himself in a real-life Jurassic Park—standing amid trees thought to have disappeared 150 million years ago. The discovery is the equivalent to finding a small dinosaur still alive on Earth. ...The biggest tree towers 180 feet with a 10-foot girth. ...The trees are covered in dense, waxy foliage and have a knobby bark that makes them look like they are coated with a bubbly chocolate’ (SLC Tribune, December 12, 1994, ‘Newfound Pine Goes Back in Time—It was Believed to be Extinct’).

How many similar discoveries will yet to be made, showing inaccuracies in the evolutionary timetable? The evidence to date is that there probably will be many more, as we continue to explore our earth.

The fish fossils in Wyoming are a powerful testimony of a powerful catastrophic event in the past. This destruction probably occurred when the ‘fountains of the great deep’ were broken up to flood the earth in Noah’s day. One result of such a catastrophe would be volcanoes erupting and poisoning the sea, killing many creatures. This is probably the cause of these fish dying.

There are many evidences that at sometime in the past, mountain tops were under water. You can hike in the mountains of the west and find seashells, fossils of fish and other evidence that these mountains were at one time covered with water.

In summary, the Bible asserts that the Flood was ‘universal’ and covered the whole earth. We should not be surprised, in view of the scriptural warnings, that ‘science’ today has concluded that the Flood never happened. When you are climbing in the mountains and find an aquatic fossil, think of Noah’s Flood and his ark. God’s Word is true!