

THE GENESIS FLOOD

The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications

by

JOHN C. WHITCOMB, JR., Th.D.

Professor of Old Testament, Grace Theological Seminary,
Winona Lake, Indiana

and

HENRY M. MORRIS, Ph. D.

Director of the Institute of Creation Research
Vice-President of Christian Heritage College,
San Diego, California

Foreword by

JOHN C. McCAMPBELL, Ph.D.

Professor and Head, Dept. of Geology,
University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana

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This book had a powerful effect in strengthening my faith in the Bible.

I was blessed to have met both authors several times.

This chapter is presented to help whet the appetite of the reader
and urge all to purchase the book and read it.

This book is indispensable for learning the doctrines of the Creation and the Flood.

The book can be purchased here:

<https://store.icr.org/dr-henry-morris-the-genesis-flood-50th-anniversary.html>

Chapter I

Basic Arguments for a Universal Flood

In harmony with our conviction that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, verbally inspired in the original autographs, we begin our investigation of the geographical extent of the Flood with seven Biblical arguments in favor of its universality. The first six of these arguments are briefly stated, but the seventh is more complex and requires a number of supporting arguments. The major objections to these seven arguments will be considered in Chapter II and Chapter III.

THE DEPTH OF THE FLOOD

One of the most important Biblical arguments for a universal Flood is the statement of Genesis 7:19-20:

And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.¹

One need not be a professional scientist to realize the tremendous implications of these Biblical statements. If only *one* (to say nothing of *all*) of the high mountains² had been covered with water, the Flood would have been absolutely universal; for water must seek its own level– and must do so quickly! Herbert C. Leupold makes the following statement concerning the exegesis and interpretation of this crucial text of Scripture:

A measure of the waters is now made by comparison with the only available standard for such waters– the mountains. They are said to have been “covered.” Not merely a few but “all the high mountains under all the heavens.” One of these expressions alone would almost necessitate the impression that the author intends to convey the idea of the absolute universality of the Flood, e.g., “all the high mountains.” Yet since “all” is known to be used in a relative sense, the writer removes all possible ambiguity by adding the phrase “under all the heavens.” A double “all” (*kol*) cannot allow for so relative a sense. It almost constitutes a Hebrew superlative. So we believe that the text disposes of the question of the universality of the Flood.³

The phrase “fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail” does not mean that the Flood was only fifteen cubits (22 feet) deep, for the phrase is qualified by the one which immediately follows: “and the mountains were covered.” Nor does it necessarily mean that the mountains were covered to a depth of only fifteen cubits, for this would require that all antediluvian mountains be exactly the same altitude.

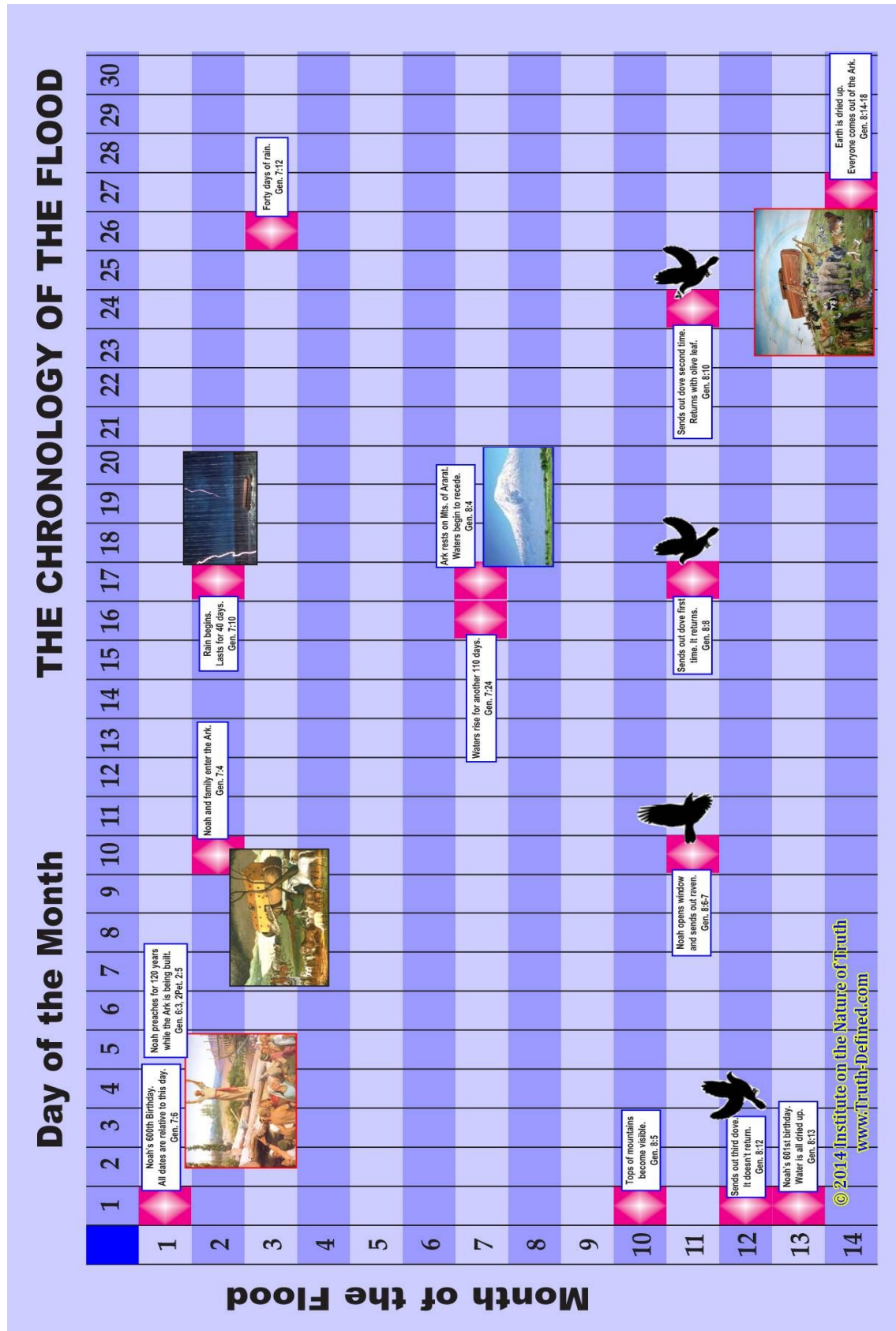
The true meaning of the phrase is to be found in comparing it with Genesis 6:15, where we are told that the height of the Ark was thirty cubits. Nearly all commentators agree that the phrase “fifteen cubits” in 7:20 must therefore refer to the draught of the Ark. In other words, the Ark sank into the water to a depth of fifteen cubits (just one-half of its total height) when fully-laden. Such information adds further support to this particular argument for a universal Flood, because it tells us that the Flood “prevailed” over the tops of the highest mountains to a depth of at least fifteen cubits. If the Flood had not covered the mountains by at least such a depth, the Ark could not have floated over them during the five months in which the waters “prevailed” upon the earth.

Figure 1. THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE FLOOD*

There were forty days during which the rain fell:	40
Throughout another 110 days the waters continued to rise, making 150 days in all for their “prevailing” (7:24)	110
The waters occupied 74 days in their “going and decreasing” (AV margin). This was from the 17th day of the seventh month to the 1st day of the tenth month (8:5). There being 30 days to a month, the figures in days are 13 plus 30 plus 30 plus 1	74
Forty days elapsed before Noah sent out the raven (8:6-7)	40
Seven days elapsed before Noah sent out the dove for the first time (8:8). This period is necessary for reaching the total and is given by implication from the phrase “other seven days” (8:10)	7
Seven days passed before sending out the dove for the second time (8:10)	7
Seven days more passed before the third sending of the dove (8:12)	7
Up to this point 285 days are accounted for, but the next episode is dated the 1st of the first month in the 601st year. From the date in 7:11 to this point in 8:13 is a period of 314 days; therefore an interval of 29 days elapses	29
From the removal of the covering of the ark to the very end of the experience was a further 57 days (8:14)	<u>57</u>
TOTAL	371

* This table appears in E. F. Kevan’s commentary on Genesis in *The New Bible Commentary*, ed. F. Davidson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1953), pp. 84-85. As is pointed out in our discussion below (p. 4), the Flood probably reached its maximum depth after the first forty days, instead of rising throughout the 150 days as Kevan indicates.

----- See graphic on the next page.



This graphic is not part of the original text. It has been added by the editor to help the reader to visualize the Flood chronology.

THE DURATION OF THE FLOOD

A careful study of the Biblical data reveals the fact that the Flood lasted for 371 days, or a little over a year (see the accompanying chronology chart, Figure 1). That the Flood continued for more than a year is entirely in keeping with the doctrine of its universality but cannot properly be reconciled with the local-Flood theory. While there may be a difference of opinion among Christian scholars as to the general depth of the Flood (depending upon the altitude of antediluvian mountains), there can be no question as to its duration.

Twenty-one Weeks of "Prevailing"

Now some commentators have assumed that the waters continued to rise during the 150 days that the waters "prevailed upon the earth," because "the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained" (8:2) only after the end of the 150-day period (8:3). This is certainly a possible interpretation of the text, but it is better to conclude with Leupold⁴ that the Flood attained its maximum depth after the first forty days and continued to maintain this level for an additional 110 days before beginning to assuage (7:24, 8:3). Our basis for assuming this is found in 7:4 and 7:12, where we read that the rains came "upon the earth forty days and forty nights"; and 7:17 where we are told that "the flood was forty days upon the earth." Most of "the waters which were above the firmament" (Gen. 1:7) must have fallen through "the windows of heaven" during the first period of forty days; and although "the windows of heaven" were not stopped for another 110 days (8:2), the rainfall during this second period may have contributed only to the maintaining of the Flood at its maximum height.

Thirty-one Weeks of "Assuaging"

One's imagination is indeed staggered at the thought of a Flood so gigantic as to overwhelm the high mountains of the earth within a period of six weeks and then to continue prevailing over those mountains for an additional sixteen weeks, during which time the sole survivors of the human race drifted upon the face of a shoreless ocean! But if the Biblical concept of a deluge covering the tops of mountains for sixteen consecutive weeks is hard to reconcile with the local-Flood theory, what are we to say of the fact that an additional thirty-one weeks were required for the waters to subside sufficiently for Noah to disembark safely in the mountains of Ararat?

Arthur C. Custance has recently published a booklet in defense of the local-Flood theory, in which he attempts to deal with this problem:

There are certain figures indicated in the text which, if we are rightly interpreting them, provide some rather surprising information about the rate at which the waters receded. In Gen. 8:4 we are told that the Ark came to rest, i.e., grounded, on the 17th day of the 7th month . . . The record states then that the waters receded (Gen. 8:5)

until the first day of the 10th month, at which time apparently it became possible to see dry land. Before this, the raven released from the Ark had not found any resting place within easy flying distance so that we must assume that the peak on which the Ark was actually grounded had not appeared above the water up to this time. Obviously, if land could be seen, the raven would have found a place to alight instead of wandering to and fro as depicted in Gen. 8:7. In this interval, therefore, from the 17th day of the 7th month to the 1st day of the 10th month the water level had fallen perhaps 25 or 30 feet. It is clear that as soon as the level had fallen by the amount equal to the draught of the vessel dry land would appear . . . and 25 feet in 74 days is the equivalent of a drop in level of about 4 inches per day.⁵

Custance then proceeds to demonstrate that a drop in water level of only a few inches a day would be more appropriate for a limited flood than a universal one.

When we turn to the text of Genesis, however, we discover that this could not have been the case. For 8:4-7 indicates that “the tops of the mountains” were seen as much as forty days *before* the raven was sent forth. Custance assumes that the raven was released forty days after the Ark was grounded and that the 74-day period described in 8:5 overlapped the 40-day period mentioned in 8:6. But if this were true, the entire bird episode, including the plucking of the fresh olive leaf, would have been completed two weeks before the tops of the mountains were seen!⁶ Noah did *not* send forth the raven to determine whether any mountain peaks had emerged as yet, as Custance assumes, but to gain information about the nature of these exposed areas. Alexander Heidel explains:

Forty days after the tops of the other mountains had become visible, Noah opened the window of the ark and sent forth a raven (8:5-7). The wild, omnivorous bird went flying back and forth, sometimes away from the ark and sometimes back to it again, until the waters had dried off the earth, but he did not again go into the ark. He presumably found some carrion meat floating in the water or deposited on the mountaintops, or some aquatic creatures trapped on the mountain peaks as the water receded, and this provided sufficient sustenance for the unclean raven with his carrion-eating propensities. The raven’s failure to return into the ark does not show that he proved himself useless for the intended purpose and that the experiment was unsuccessful. To the contrary, it was a good sign; for it proved that the waters had declined considerably and that even though the outside world was still very unfriendly or inhospitable, it was no longer too inhospitable for so sturdy and unfastidious a bird as the raven.⁷

Furthermore, it can hardly be emphasized too strongly that it was not merely the top of the high mountain on which the Ark rested that was seen on the first day of the tenth month. The Scriptures inform us that on that day “were the *tops* of the *mountains* seen.” In other words,

the Flood waters must have subsided hundreds of feet in order for *various mountain peaks of different altitudes* to be seen by then.

Nor does the Bible teach that the tops of the mountains were still submerged on the last day of the ninth month and then suddenly emerged on the first day of the tenth month. With equal justification, one might argue that the ground was still soaked on the twenty-*sixth* day of the second month because we are told that the ground was dry on the twenty-*seventh* day of the second month. It is obvious that the Scriptures speak of definite stages of drying in verses 11, 13, and 14, with the implication of a uniform process between the stages. In like manner, from the day that the Ark grounded on the highest peak in the mountains of Ararat, more and more of the lower peaks emerged from the waters as they gradually subsided. Doubtless during much of the ninth month the tops of various mountains were seen. But it is also true that on the first day of the tenth month “were the tops of the mountains seen.” It just so happens that God chose this date, rather than a slightly earlier one, to mark a stage in the abating of the waters.

The order of events as set forth in the first part of the eighth chapter of Genesis would seem, then, to be as follows: (1) After the waters had “prevailed upon the earth” 150 days, the waters began to assuage. (2) The Ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat the same day that the waters began to assuage, for the 17th day of the 7th month was exactly 150 days after the Flood began. (3) The waters continued to subside, so that by the 1st day of the 10th month (74 days later), the tops of various lower mountains could be seen. This would suggest a drop of perhaps fifteen or twenty feet a day, at least during the initial phase of this assuaging period. (4) The Flood level continued to fall for forty more days, so that Noah, no longer fearing that the Flood would return, sent forth a raven to investigate the conditions outside the Ark. These events are sketched in Figure 2.

Instead of constituting an objection to the universal Flood concept, the rate of decline of the water level thus becomes a strong argument in its favor. For if nothing could be seen but the tops of mountains after the waters had subsided for 74 days, we are left with no other alternative than to conclude that the Flood covered the whole earth. The duration of the Flood in its assuaging, as well as in its prevailing, compels us to think of it as a global, not merely a local, catastrophe.

THE GEOLOGY OF THE FLOOD

Since so many arguments against the universality of the Flood have been based upon supposed geological objections, it is very important to realize that the Scriptures have something to say about the geological factor too. In fact, the first recorded event of the Flood is that “on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up” (7:11). According to Brown, Driver, and Briggs, the word *tehom* (translated “deep” in this verse) has the primary meanings of (1) “deep, of subterranean waters,” (2) “sea,” and (3) “primeval

ocean, deep.”⁸ There can be little question, then, that the phrase *t^ehom rabbah* (“great deep”) points back to the *t^ehom* of Genesis 1:2 and refers to the oceanic depths and underground reservoirs of the antediluvian world. Presumably, then, the ocean basins were fractured and uplifted sufficiently to pour waters over the continents, in conjunction with those waters which were above the “firmament” (expanse) and which poured down through the “windows of heaven.”

The close connection that exists between Genesis 7:11 and 1:2-10 must be evident to all who have studied the text with care. For example, Franz Delitzsch calls our attention to the fact that “it was by a cooperation of subterranean and celestial forces, which broke through the restraints placed upon the waters on the second and third days of creation, that the Deluge was brought to pass.”⁹

But the most significant fact to be observed is that these geological phenomena were not confined to a single day. In fact, the Scriptures state that this breaking up of “the fountains of the great deep” continued for a period of *five months*, for it was not until after the 150 days had passed that “the fountains of the deep...were stopped” (8:2). Such vast and prolonged geologic upheavals in the oceanic depths cannot be reconciled with the theory that the Flood was merely a local inundation in some part of the Near East. Instead, this Biblical information gives substantial support to the concept of a geographically universal Deluge.¹⁰

THE SIZE OF THE ARK

According to Genesis 6:15, Noah was commanded to make “the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.” The first question to be considered, of course, is the length of the cubit as used in this passage. The Babylonians had a “royal” cubit of about 19.8 inches, the Egyptians had a longer and a shorter cubit of about 20.65 inches and 17.6 inches respectively, while the Hebrews apparently had a long cubit of 20.4 inches (Ezek. 40:5) and a common cubit of about 17.5 inches.¹¹

While it is certainly possible that the cubit referred to in Genesis 6 was longer than 17.5 inches, we shall take this shorter cubit as the basis for our calculations. According to this standard, the Ark was 437.5 feet long, 72.92 feet wide, and 43.75 feet high. Since it had three decks (Gen. 6:16), it had a total deck area of approximately 95,700 square feet (equivalent to slightly more than the area of twenty standard college basketball courts), and its total volume was 1,396,000 cubic feet. The gross tonnage¹² of the Ark (which is a measurement of cubic space rather than weight, one ton in this case being equivalent to 100 cubic feet of usable storage space) was about 13,960 tons, which would place it well within the category of large metal ocean-going vessels today.¹³

Arthur Custance questions whether the Ark could really have been this huge and suggests, without evidence, that the cubit of those days may have been much shorter than eighteen inches. Then he goes on to say:

I think anyone who tries to visualize the construction of a vessel 450 feet long by four men will realize that the size of the timbers alone for a “building” 45 feet high (analogous to a four story apartment building) would seem by their sheer massiveness to be beyond the powers of four men to handle. With all the means later at their disposal, subsequent builders for 4000 years constructed seaworthy vessels that seldom seem to have exceeded 150 to 200 feet at the most. The Queen Mary has a total length of 1018 feet which is not very much more than twice the length of the Ark. It was not until 1884 apparently that a vessel, the Eturia, a Cunard liner, was built with a length exceeding that of the Ark.¹⁴

The Scriptures, however, do not suggest that Noah and his three sons had to construct the Ark without the help of hired men. Nevertheless, we agree that the sheer massiveness of the Ark staggers the imagination. In fact, this is the very point of our argument: for Noah to have built a vessel of such magnitude simply for the purpose of escaping a local flood is inconceivable. The very size of the Ark should effectively eliminate the local-Flood view from serious consideration among those who take the Book of Genesis at face value.

THE NEED FOR AN ARK

Not only would an ark of such gigantic proportions have been unnecessary for a local flood, but there would have been no need for an ark at all! The whole procedure of constructing such a vessel, involving over a century of planning and toiling, simply to escape a local flood, can hardly be described as anything but utterly foolish and unnecessary. How much more sensible it would have been for God merely to have warned Noah of the coming destruction, so that he could move to an area that would not have been affected by the Flood, even as Lot was taken out of Sodom before the fire fell from heaven. Not only so, but also the great numbers of animals of all kinds, and certainly the birds, could easily have moved out also, without having to be stored and tended for a year in the Ark! The entire story borders on the ridiculous if the Flood was confined to some section of the Near East.

The writers have had a difficult time finding local-Flood advocates that are willing to face the implications of this particular argument. Arthur Custance, however, has recently suggested that the Ark was simply an object-lesson to the antediluvians:

It would require real energy and faith to follow Noah’s example and build other Arks, but it would have required neither of these to pack up a few things. and migrate. There is nothing that Noah could have done to stop them except by disappearing very secretly. Such a departure could hardly act as the kind of warning that the deliberate

construction of the Ark could have done. And the inspiration for this undertaking was given to Noah by leaving him in ignorance of the exact limits of the Flood. He was assured that all mankind would be destroyed, and probably supposed that the Flood would therefore be universal. This supposition may have been quite essential for him.¹⁵

But how can one read the Flood account of Genesis 6-9 with close attention and then arrive at the conclusion that the Ark was built *merely* to warn the ungodly, and not *mainly* to save the occupants of the Ark from death by drowning? And how can we exonerate God Himself from the charge of deception, if we say that He led Noah to believe that the Flood would be universal, in order to encourage him to work on the Ark, when He knew all the time that it would *not* be universal?

With respect to the animals in the Ark, Custance takes the view that they were only domesticated varieties that would prove to be useful to man:

To begin with, there is plenty of evidence to show that the domestication of animals was first undertaken somewhere in this general area. Assuming that such species as had been domesticated in the centuries between Adam and Noah were confined to the areas settled by man and had not spread beyond this, any Flood which destroyed man would also wipe out these animals. The process of domestication would then have to be begun all over again, and probably under far less ideal conditions ... It is almost certain that domesticated animals could not have migrated alone ... For this reason, if for no other, some animals at least would have to be taken on board ... but these were probably of the domesticated varieties.¹⁶

But where does the Book of Genesis suggest that Noah was to take only domesticated animals into the Ark? The purpose of the Flood was to destroy “both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens” (6:7), and “to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven” (6:17, cf. 6:12-13, 19-21, 7:2-4, 8, 14-16; 8:1, 17-19; 9:8-17). And this was accomplished when “all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both birds, and cattle, and beasts, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was on the dry ground, died. And every living thing was destroyed that was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; and they were destroyed from the earth” (7:21-23). These are exactly the same terms used in the first chapter of Genesis to describe the various kinds of land animals which God created. If only domesticated animals were to be taken into the Ark, are we to assume that only domesticated animals were created by God in the first chapter of Genesis? The fact of the matter is that no clearer terms could have been employed by the author than those which he did employ to express the idea of *the totality of air-breathing animals in the world*. Once this point is conceded, all controversy as to the geographical extent of the Deluge must end; for

no one would care to maintain that all land animals were confined to the Mesopotamian Valley in the days of Noah! Joseph P. Free, Professor of Archaeology at Wheaton College, concludes:

The fact that every living creature was to be destroyed would indicate that the whole earth was subject to the flood (Gen. 7:4). Probably the animals had scattered over much of the earth; a universal flood would have been needed to destroy them ... Certainly all the main groups of animals were represented on the ark. The variations which we observe today within the main groups of animals could have developed in the few thousand years (more or less) since the flood.¹⁷

The fact that Noah was commanded to build an ark “to the saving of his house” (Heb. 11:7) and was commanded to bring in two of every kind of animal “to keep seed alive upon the face of the earth” (7:3) proves conclusively that the Flood was universal in scope.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLE PETER

One of the most important Biblical passages relating to the magnitude of the Deluge is to be found in II Peter 3:3-7:

... knowing this first, that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of the water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

In this passage of Scripture, Peter speaks of a day, yet future from his standpoint, when men would no longer think seriously of Christ’s Second Coming as a cataclysmic, universal intervention by God into the course of world affairs. And the reason for this skeptical attitude would be none other than a blind adherence to the doctrine of uniformitarianism – a doctrine which maintains that natural laws and processes have never yet been interrupted (or newer and higher laws introduced) so as to bring about a total destruction of human civilization through the direct intervention of God. And since this has never been the case in past history, there should be no cause to fear that it will ever occur in the future!

In answering these skeptics of the end-time, the Apostle Peter points to two events in the past which cannot be explained on the basis of uniformitarianism. The first of these events is the creation of the world: “there were heavens from of old, and an earth ... *by the word of God*”; and the second event is the Flood: “the world [*kosmos*] that then was, being overflowed with water, perished [*apoleto*].”

But it is the second of these two events, the Flood, which serves as the basis of Peter's comparison with the Second Coming and the final destruction of the world. For even as "the world that then was" perished by *water*, so "the heavens that now are, and the earth," protected as they are, by God's eternal promise, from another aqueous cataclysm (Gen. 9:11-19), have, nevertheless, "been stored up for *fire*, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men."

Let us now consider the implications of this passage with respect to the geographical extent of the Flood. In speaking of the events of the second and third days of creation, Peter uses the terms "heavens *from of old*, and an earth" in a sense that is obviously universal. By the same token, no one can deny that Peter also uses the terms "heavens *that now are*, and the earth" in the strictly universal sense. Otherwise, Peter would be speaking of the creation and final destruction of only a part of the earth!

Now the one event which Peter sets forth as having brought about a transformation, not of the earth only but also of the very *heavens*, is the Flood! It was the Flood that constituted the line of demarcation between "the heavens from of old" and "the heavens that now are" in the thinking of the Apostle Peter. It was the Flood that utilized the vast oceans of water out of which and amidst which the ancient earth was "compacted," unto the utter destruction of the *kosmos* "that then was."¹⁸ It was the Flood to which Peter appealed as his final and incontrovertible answer to those who chose to remain in willful ignorance of the fact that God had *at one time* in the past demonstrated His holy wrath and omnipotence by subjecting "all things" to an overwhelming, cosmic catastrophe that was on an absolute par with the final day of judgment, in which God will yet consume the earth with fire and will cause the very elements to dissolve with fervent heat (II Peter 3:10).

If the Flood was limited to the region of Mesopotamia, it is difficult to see how Peter's appeal to the Flood would have any value as a contradiction to the doctrine of uniformitarianism, which assumes that "all things" have *never yet* been upset by a universal cataclysm. Nor is it easy to excuse Peter of gross inaccuracy when he depicts the Flood in such cosmic terms and in such an absolutely universal context, if the Flood was only a local inundation after all.

Merrill F. Unger, Professor of Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary, emphasizes the crucial significance of Peter's statements in determining the magnitude and effects of the Deluge:

That the antediluvian era, described by Peter as "the world that then was," was obviously different climatically and geologically from the "heavens" and "the earth ... that now are" (II Peter 3:7), is clearly implied in the Apostle's stern warning to naturalistic skeptics, who mock at the idea of Christ's supernatural Second Advent on the ground that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation"

(II Peter 3:4). Against the false naturalistic theory of uniformity, the Apostle urges the truth of supernatural catastrophism as evidenced by the Noahic Flood.¹⁹

Thus, the third chapter of Second Peter provides powerful New Testament support for the geographical universality of the Flood. Anything less than a catastrophe of such proportions would upset the entire force of Peter's argument and would give much encouragement to those whom he so solemnly warned.

THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF A WIDELY-DISTRIBUTED HUMAN RACE

Our seventh and final basic argument for a universal Flood is founded upon the Biblical testimony of a total destruction of the human race outside of the Ark. Such an argument, to be conclusive in demonstrating a geographically universal Flood, must include two sub-arguments: (1) the Bible teaches that all mankind perished in the Flood and (2) the human race had spread far beyond the Near East, if not around the earth, by the time of the Flood. In the development of this argument, we shall set forth four major reasons for believing that the Bible teaches a total destruction of the race and two major reasons for believing that the antediluvians had become widely distributed by the time of the Flood.

The Total Destruction of Humanity

From the very beginning of the Flood controversy, there has been little question among conservative Christian scholars as to the total destruction of the human race by the Flood. In the year 1845, Charles Burton could say, without fear of contradiction:

Among the Christian philosophers who dispute on this arena, there is a perfect agreement on the most important point, viz., that by the Flood, the whole population of the world was destroyed. With the Mosaic narrative before them, no other opinion could be entertained.²⁰

The same situation prevails today, more than a century later, with only very rare exceptions.²¹ The reasons for this remarkable unanimity of opinion among evangelical scholars must now be presented.

The moral purpose of the Flood. The Flood must have destroyed the entire human race outside of the Ark, because the Scriptures clearly state that the purpose of the Flood was to wipe out a sinful and degenerate humanity; and this purpose could not have been accomplished by destroying only a portion of the race. Turning our attention now to the most important passages of Scripture that shed light on this question, we read in the sixth chapter of Genesis:

And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And

Jehovah said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them (6:5-7) ... And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth (6:11-13).

The constant, almost monotonous repetition of phrases depicting the utter depravity of antediluvian humanity has filled the minds of believers with a sense of awe and astonishment. Every statement seems calculated to impress upon its readers the idea of *universal sin*; not just the exceptional sins of this group or of that region, nor even of specific times or occasions, but rather the sin of an entire age and an entire race that had utterly corrupted its way upon the earth and was now ripe for the judgment of a holy God. W. Graham Scroggie has skillfully and graphically sketched the Biblical picture of antediluvian humanity:

The appalling condition of things is summed up in a few terrible words, words which bellow and burn: *wickedness, evil imagination, corruption, and violence*; and these sins were *great, widespread, "in the earth," continuous, "only evil continually," open and daring, "before God," replete, "filled," and universal, "all flesh."*

.....

This is an astounding event! After over 1,600 years of human history the race was so utterly corrupt morally that it was not fit to live; and of all mankind only four men and four women were spared, because they did not go with the great sin drift.²²

In the light of these facts, the conclusion seems to be self-evident that God's stated purpose of destroying "man whom I have created," because of his hopeless depravity and in order to start afresh with Noah, could not have been accomplished by destroying only a part of the race and allowing the rest of Adam's descendants to continue in their sinful ways.

The exceptional case of Noah. The fact that all mankind, rather than just a part of the race, was destroyed in the Flood is emphasized in the Scriptures by repeated statements to the effect that Noah and his family were the *only* ones who escaped the judgment waters. The pertinent passages in Genesis read as follows:

But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah ... *Noah* was a righteous man and perfect *in his generations*: Noah walked with God (6:8-9) ... *everything* that is in the earth shall die. But I will establish my covenant with *thee*; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee (6:17-18) ... And Jehovah said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for *thee* have I seen righteous before me *in this generation* (7:1) ... and they were destroyed from the

earth: and *Noah only was left*, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days. And God remembered *Noah* ... (7:23,24; 8:1).

And lest there might remain some lingering doubt in the minds of Bible students as to whether or not Noah's family constituted the *sole* survivors of the Flood, we have two emphatic statements by the Apostle Peter on this matter:

... the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein *few*, that is, *eight souls*, were saved through water (I Pet. 3:20).

God spared not the ancient world [*kosmos*] , but preserved Noah *with seven others*, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world [*kosmos*] of the *ungodly* (II Pet. 2:5).

Now it would seem to be perfectly evident from studying these passages that Noah was spared because of his righteous character. By the same token, the Flood came to destroy others because they were unrighteous. Now if it should actually turn out to have been the case that only a portion of the human race outside of the Ark was destroyed by the Flood, then we must conclude one of two things: (1) there were people outside of the Ark who were as righteous as Noah and thus were permitted by God to escape the Flood waters also; or (2) having a righteous character was not the only factor that determined who was to escape the Flood.

As we consider these two alternatives, we must admit that the first one is quite inconceivable, for the exceptional and unique righteousness of Noah is emphasized over and over again throughout the entire Bible (Gen. 5:29; 6:8,9,18; 7:1; 9:1; Ezek. 14:14,20; Heb. 11:7 and II Pet. 2:5). Also, the abysmal and universal wickedness of the antediluvians has been affirmed by an astonishing array of Scriptural testimony (Gen. 6:1-6,11-13; Luke 17:26-27; I Pet. 3:20; II Pet. 2:5 and Jude 14-15). To deny this is simply to deny the Word of God.

But the second alternative is equally untenable, for the Scriptures give no hint anywhere that men were destroyed for any other reason than for their ungodliness. Now if any ungodly people actually did escape the Flood, they must have done so by virtue of the fact that they didn't happen to live in that particular area where the Flood came (assuming that the Flood was local) ; or else they were stronger or more ingenious than other sinners and thus, in one way or another, managed to escape the onrushing Flood waters. But if this had been the case, then those who died in the waters did so only because they were unfortunate enough to be living in the wrong place or because they were not sufficiently strong or clever, and not simply because they were ungodly!

We pause at this point to ask the question: can sane and sensible hermeneutics tolerate for one moment such an interpretation of the Biblical doctrine of the Flood? We may disagree on

various methods of interpretation or even on whether the Biblical record is to be accepted as authentic and trustworthy and credible. But when mature and trained scholars can examine the Scriptural account of the Flood, in both Old and New Testaments, and conclude that the Bible *does not really intend to teach* that the Flood was sent to destroy *all ungodly men*, then Biblical hermeneutics, in our opinion, ceases to be a scientific and scholarly discipline.

Consequently, both of the above-mentioned alternatives must be rejected without hesitation. The Scriptures *do* teach that the Flood destroyed all mankind outside of the Ark, because none outside of the Ark were godly and the Flood was sent by God to destroy the ungodly.²³

The testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. It almost seems that our Lord made a special point of choosing His illustrations and warnings from those portions of the Old Testament that would become objects of unbelieving scorn and ridicule throughout the coming centuries. For example, in Matthew 19:4 He referred to the creation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden; in Luke 17:29 to the destruction of Sodom by fire and brimstone from heaven; in Luke 17:32 to the transformation of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt; in Matthew 12:40 to the experience of Jonah in the belly of the great fish; in Luke 11:32 to the repentance of the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah. And in addition to all of these, our Lord made special reference to Noah and the Flood in the seventeenth chapter of Luke. For the sake of our subsequent discussion, we must include part of the context in our quotation of this passage:

And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them *all*. Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them *all*: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed (Luke 17:26-30. Cf. Matt. 24:39).

Now it is very important that we observe the context into which our Lord places the Flood-destruction. It is placed alongside the destruction of Sodom and the destruction of the ungodly at the time of Christ's Second Coming. This fact is of tremendous significance in helping us to determine the sense in which the word "all" is used in reference to those who were destroyed by the Flood.

Our argument proceeds in the following manner: the force of Christ's warning to the ungodly concerning the doom which awaits them at the time of His Second Coming, by reminding them of the destruction of the Sodomites, would be *immeasurably weakened* if we knew that *some* of the Sodomites, after all, had escaped. This would allow hope for the ungodly that *some of them* might escape the wrath of God in that coming day of judgment. But we have,

indeed, no reason for thinking that any Sodomite did escape destruction when the fire fell from heaven.

In exactly the same manner, Christ's warning to future generations, on the basis of what happened to the ungodly in the days of Noah, would have been pointless if part of the human race had escaped the judgment waters. In fact, the only characterization which our Lord made of those who perished in the Flood was that they ate and drank and married and were given in marriage. Thus, if it should be argued that people living in other parts of the world might not have been as wicked as those who lived in the area that was flooded, it would be sufficient reply to point out that our Lord's characterization did not have to do with degrees of ungodliness, but rather with the utter absence of that positive godliness which was essential to salvation.

Therefore, we are persuaded that Christ's use of the word "all" in Luke 17:27 must be understood in the absolute sense; otherwise the analogies would collapse and the warnings would lose their force. A heavy burden of proof rests upon those who would maintain that only a part of the human race was destroyed in the Flood, in view of the clear statements of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's Covenant with Noah After the Flood. One of the most difficult problems to be faced by those who deny that the Flood was anthropologically universal is the covenant which God made with Noah after the Flood had ended. For if the Flood destroyed only a part of the human race, then those who escaped the Flood waters were not included in the Covenant of the Rainbow.²⁴ Only toward the descendants of Noah would the birds, beasts, and fishes show fear and dread (Gen. 9:2); they only would be prohibited from eating flesh with the blood (9:3-4); and they only would have the authority to take life (9:5-6).

If God's covenant with Noah means anything at all, it must be a covenant with the entire human race. But the Scriptures repeatedly state that God made this covenant with Noah and his sons (Gen. 9:1-17). Therefore the whole of humanity has descended from Noah's family and the Flood destroyed the entire antediluvian race. Samuel J. Schultz of Wheaton College has reached a similar conclusion on this crucial question:

Had any part of the human race survived the flood outside of Noah and his family they would not have been included in the covenant God made here. The implication seems to be that all mankind descended from Noah so that the covenant with its bow in the cloud as a reminder would be for all mankind.²⁵

The Extensive Distribution of the Antediluvian Race

Those who acknowledge the tremendous weight of Biblical testimony concerning the total destruction of the human race outside of the Ark, and yet who are still unwilling to admit that the Flood was geographically universal, usually maintain that the race had not spread

beyond the region of Mesopotamia during the period from Adam to Noah.²⁶ But it is our conviction that such a position cannot be successfully defended and that for at least two reasons which must now be considered.

Longevity. In the first place, the vast possibilities for population growth due to longevity among the antediluvians must be recognized. Even a rather cursory examination of Genesis 5 brings to light some rather startling statistics in this respect. In that chapter we read that Adam lived 930 years, Seth 912, Enosh 905, Kenan 910, Mahalalel 895, Jared 962, Enoch 365 (who did not die, but was translated to God's presence without dying), Methuselah 969, Lamech 777, and Noah 950. The average of these ages, omitting Enoch, is 912.²⁷

William R. Vis has prepared a graph to indicate the contrast between the ages of patriarchs before and after the Flood (see Fig. 3). He explains:

A study of this chart shows in a striking way that *something extremely significant happened to the earth and to man at the time of the flood*. It would seem that whatever this was, it probably removed the dominant factor for the long life of the patriarchs. The spiritual message of the Bible is clear: the length of life decreased because of the entrance of sin into the human family. However, the scientific explanation is not evident. Could some antediluvian climatic or other condition have been extremely favorable for long life in man? Perhaps future scientific research will cast some light on this.²⁸

That there is nothing inherently impossible about such long ages is believed by many modern students of the phenomenon of biologic aging and maturity. One of the researchers on these problems is Dr. Hans Selye, Director of the Institute of Experimental Surgery at the University of Montreal. Dr. Selye has recently said:

Medicine has assembled a fund of knowledge that will now serve, I believe, as a point of departure for studying the causes of old age. If the causes of aging can be found, there is no good medical reason to believe that it will not be possible for science to find some practical way of slowing the process down or even bringing it to a standstill.²⁹

Possible physical explanations of antediluvian longevity, and its decline after the Flood, will be discussed later.³⁰ We merely accept the *fact* at this point and note the important consequences of this fact with respect to the world population before the Flood.

The record in Genesis 5 clearly implies that men had large families in those days. Although in most cases only one son is named in each family (apparently for the purpose of tracing the line of descent from Adam to Noah), it is also said that each "begat sons and daughters," so that each family must have had at *least* four children, and probably many more.

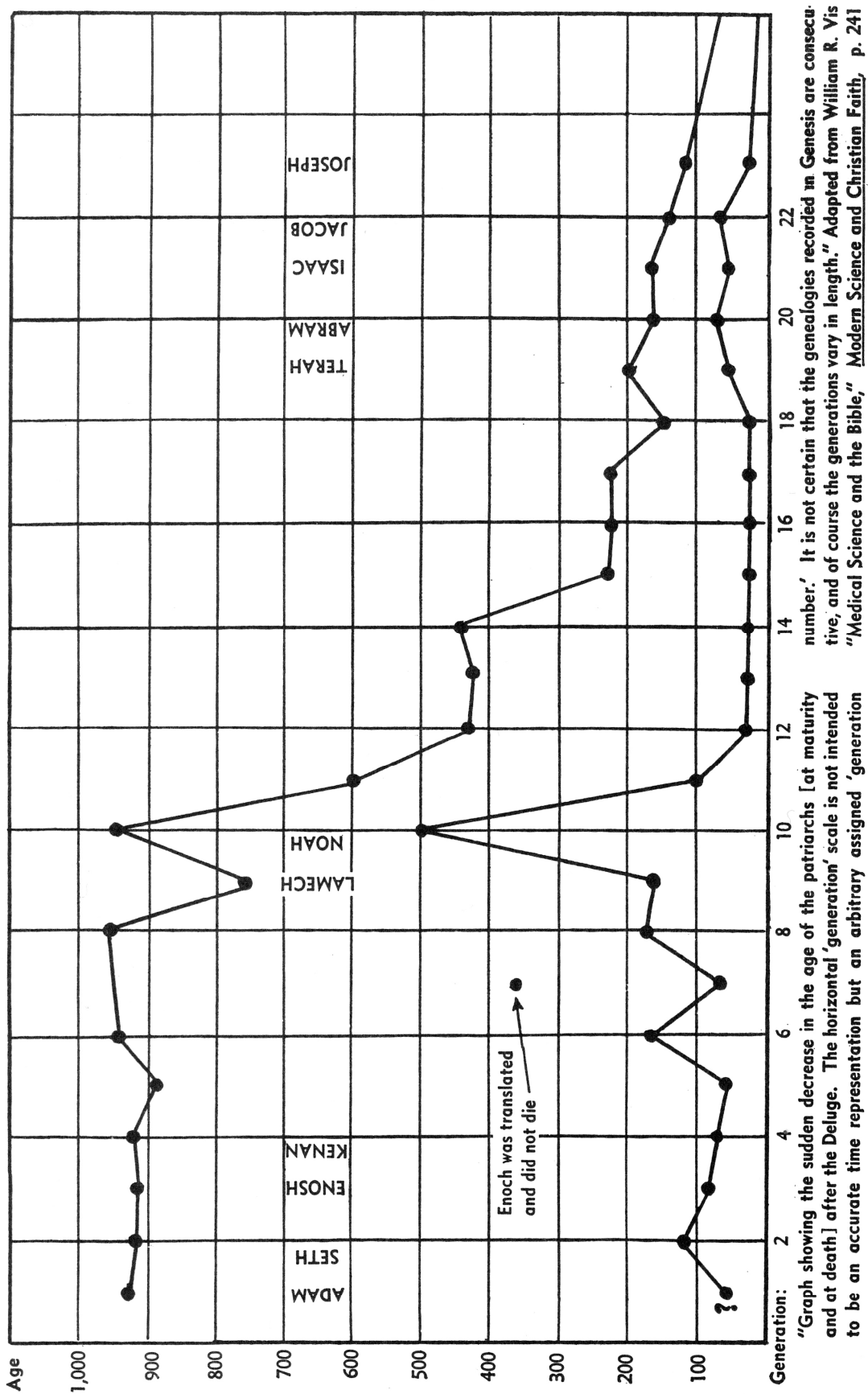


Figure 3. PATRIARCHAL AGES AT MATURITY AND DEATH.

Furthermore, the age of the fathers at the birth of each of the *named* sons ranged from 65 years (in the case of Mahalalel and Enoch) to 500 years (in Noah's case). Consequently the Bible implies that: (1) men typically lived for hundreds of years, (2) their procreative powers persisted over hundreds of years also, and (3) through the combined effects of long lives and large families, mankind was rapidly "filling the earth" (Gen. 1:28; 6:1,11).

All things considered, it is certainly very conservative to estimate that each family had, say, six children, and that each new generation required ninety years on the average. That is, assume the first family (Adam and Eve) had six children; the three families that could be established from these had six children each; and the nine families resulting from these each had six children, and so on. Actually, each probably had far more than six children, but this figure will allow for those who did not marry, who died prematurely, etc. At an average figure of ninety years per generation, which seems far higher than was probably actually the case, one can calculate that there were some eighteen generations in the 1,656 years from Adam to the Flood.

The total number of people in the n th generation can be calculated on this basis as equal to $2(3)^n$. Thus, at the end of the first generation (n equals one), the number in the family was $2(3)$, or 6. At the end of two generations, it was $2(3)^2$, or 18. Finally, at the end of 17 generations, the number was 258 million and, at the end of 18 generations, it was 774 million! If, at this time, only one previous generation was still living, the total population of the earth would have been over 1,030 million! And we believe that anyone would agree that these calculations are extremely conservative, assuming only that the Biblical statements are true.

Lest anyone regard such rates of population increase as unreasonable, listen to the following:

During the first half of the nineteenth century, world population reached 1 billion; in 1930 the figure was about 2 billion. In 1957 and 1958 alone, the earth's population increased by 90 million, a figure twice the population of France, and the world is expected to have 3 billion inhabitants by 1962. The acceleration of population growth in underdeveloped countries is especially spectacular. Annual increases of 2 percent or more are usual in most of these countries, and in some there is a growth of 3 percent³¹

The present rate of world population increase is thus approximately 2 per cent per year. But the rate of population growth we have supposed for the antediluvian period is less than 1.5 per cent per year!

Of course, the modern population "explosion," as it is sometimes called, is not believed to be typical of increase rates during earlier periods of history. Theorists usually say that earlier

population increases were lower due to the effects of war, disease and starvation. But as Fairfield Osborn points out:

It must be remembered that the numerical loss of human life in the last two great wars was relatively inconsequential when measured against the total populations of the countries at war. In fact, the wars of the last century have had virtually no influence in restraining population increase in the countries engaged.³²

Similarly, there is little real evidence to support the opinion that either disease or starvation, although they have occasionally taken great toll of human life, have had any very significant influence in restraining population increase, on a percentage basis. And especially is this true with respect to the antediluvian period, when the very fact that men lived to such great ages would indicate that famine and disease were not serious problems.

We are confident, therefore, that our estimate of a population of one billion people on the earth at the time of the Deluge is very conservative; it could well have been far more than this. A population of this order of magnitude would certainly have spread far beyond the Mesopotamian plains – in fact, for all practical purposes, would have “filled the earth,” as the Scripture says. In fact, this very figure is the estimated population of the earth in 1850,³³ the earliest date for which there is any really accurate estimate of world population, and the entire earth was certainly “filled” at that time.

In the early days of the controversy over the geographical extent of the Deluge (1840-1860), the most common arguments for a limited antediluvian population, as set forth, for example, by John Pye Smith,³⁴ Edward Hitchcock,³⁵ and Hugh Miller,³⁶ were that the extreme sinfulness of the race made rapid population growth impossible and that the patriarchs did not beget children until late in life, with only a few children being mentioned even then.

With regard to the first of these arguments, it needs only to be pointed out that while the Scriptures *do* say that the earth was filled with “*violence*” (Gen. 6:11,13), they say, at the same time, that “the *earth*” was “*filled*” with violence!³⁷ In other words, the very proof text which these men put forward in support of the limited-population view, turns out upon closer examination to be an even more effective argument for the universal distribution of antediluvian populations. Furthermore, if analogies with postdiluvian history are at all valid in such a study, they certainly prove beyond any question that extreme sinfulness and a tendency to strife and violence in human society are factors that have favored the scattering, rather than the centralizing, of populations. The history of Indian tribes in the Americas and of the Gothic and Germanic tribes in Europe illustrates this fact clearly. And finally, the nations which boast the highest birth rates in the world today (India, China, and Russia) are not necessarily the most righteous!

The second objection commonly urged against a large antediluvian population was that children were not born until the patriarchs were well advanced in years and that even then few children are named in the genealogies of Genesis. For example, it was observed that Noah lived 500 years before he begat any sons, and then only three are named.

But such an argument is refuted by the following considerations: (1) Noah must have been the exception to the rule, because in the case of *every other patriarch* the phrase “begat sons and daughters” is used; (2) if Noah did not have any children until he was 500 years old (which cannot be proved), then he was also exceptional in this regard; for all the other patriarchs had children when they were less than 200 years old, and most of them (if we include Adam) when less than 130 years of age; (3) the fact that Noah was 500 years old when he begat three sons is important, for it proves that the patriarchs were capable of begetting children for hundreds of years; (4) it is possible that the sons who are named in Genesis 5 were *not* the first-born sons in each case, because we know that Adam had sons and daughters (Cain, Abel, and Cain’s wife, at the very least) long before we read the formula of Genesis 5:3, “And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth”;³⁸ (5) God’s command to Adam and his descendants was to “be fruitful and multiply, and replenish [fill] the earth” (1:28), and this command was obeyed: “men began to multiply on the face of the ground” (6:1).

A well-known German writer of the present day has expressed the matter as follows:

Already in the time of Cain, apparently in his advanced age, a city could be built (probably at first simply an established colony), Gen. 4:17. This is the less astonishing, since the life-energy of the youthful race must at the beginning have been very powerful. Also, with the long lives of the parents, the number of children must have been much greater than later on; and, for the same reason, many generations must have lived alongside of each other at the same time. With an average of only six children per family, by the time Cain was only 400 years old he would have had far more than 100,000 descendants.³⁹

C. F. Keil agreed with Franz Delitzsch that one explanation for the amazing longevity of these patriarchs was “that the after-effects of the condition of man in paradise would not be immediately exhausted”; to which Keil added these words: “This longevity, moreover, necessarily contributed greatly to the increase of the human race.”⁴⁰ A contemporary Catholic scholar comes to the following conclusion as to what the Bible teaches concerning the geographical distribution of antediluvian humanity:

In view of the insistence shown by the sacred writer on the multiplication of the race by the repeated declaration that each of the patriarchs begat “sons and daughters,” and that he allows so much time between Adam and the flood (MT 1656 years, Samaritan text 1307, LXX 2256), it is hardly to be assumed that he thought all men

could still be living in one region. In fact, the text indicates to the contrary, for God not only gave the command to increase and multiply, but also to “fill the earth,” 1:28.⁴¹

Robert Jamieson, prominent nineteenth century defender of the local-Flood theory, must have realized the inherent weakness of Pye Smith’s arguments for a limited distribution of humanity in the days of Noah, for he did not use them in his lengthy defense of the local-Flood theory in the *Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary* (1870). In fact, his only remark on the subject was this: “The human race as yet occupied a small tract of western Asia, their members being comparatively few, as is evident from the single fact that the preaching of Noah was within the hearing of all that generation.”⁴² Since this argument is still being echoed today,⁴³ we do well to examine it more closely.

We must first of all recognize that nowhere in Scripture are we told that “the preaching of Noah was within the hearing of all that generation.” Peter says that Noah was “a preacher of righteousness” (II Peter 2:5), and the author of Hebrews tells us that Noah by faith “prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world” (Heb. 11:7). But this is not equivalent to saying that Noah preached directly to all the people of his generation!

While it is true that multitudes of people may have heard Noah’s impassioned warnings directly, Noah’s condemnation of the world probably consisted mainly in the very contrast of his godly and believing life with the lives of all others in his time. To him only God could say: “Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation” (Gen. 7:1). The fact that no other human beings of that time had Noah’s faith and righteousness was the condemnation of the world. The kind of faith that produced *obedience* (Gen. 6:22), even unto the building of the Ark, was the only kind of faith that could bring deliverance from judgment. No one else had the kind of faith that produced obedience; therefore the world was condemned. In like manner, only a relatively few persons of the world ever saw the Lord Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry; but it is true, nevertheless, that “the world knew him not” (John 1:10) and “this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil” (John 3:19).

But even if the fact that Noah’s ark-building faith “condemned the world” should mean that everyone in the world heard the warnings of Noah, it would by no means follow that the human race had to be confined to one small region of the earth. During that 120-year period of grace “when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing” (Gen. 6:3, I Pet. 3:20), the news of Noah’s remarkable activities and alarming warnings could easily have spread throughout the entire earth.⁴⁴

To summarize briefly, it is easier to understand how the earth could have been filled with people by the time of the flood if we realize the greatness of antediluvian longevity,

fecundity, and strife and the command of God to “fill the earth” (Gen. 1:28). The sinfulness of the antediluvians and the characteristics of patriarchal family life are objections that can easily be turned into supporting arguments, and the fact that Noah was a preacher who condemned the world can be made to harmonize perfectly with the concept of a widely scattered antediluvian race.⁴⁵

Paleontology. Our second reason for believing that man had travelled far beyond the confines of the Near East by the time of the Flood is based upon evidence from paleontology. It is not our purpose here to enter into a discussion of the absolute age of the various “fossil men.” Nor are we attempting to settle here the difficult question of which, if any, of these human remains are antediluvian. Our purpose in appealing to such evidence in this chapter is simply to show how devastating to the limited-distribution theory would be the discovery that even one human fossil from Africa, Europe, Asia, or America antedated the Flood.

Now the important fact to be observed with regard to these ancient fossils is that practically all of them have been found hundreds, and even thousands, of miles from the Mesopotamian Valley! In view of this fact, the advocates of the limited-distribution theory are forced to maintain one of two possible positions: (1) no human fossils that ever have or ever will be discovered outside of the Mesopotamian Valley can be considered antediluvian, or (2) if men actually did migrate to distant regions before the Flood, they must have been driven back into Mesopotamia by some universally compelling force, whether natural or supernatural, in order to be drowned in a limited Flood.

George Frederick Wright, a geologist of two generations ago, seeing the futility of defending the first of these two alternatives, wrote as follows:

An insuperable objection to this theory is that the later discoveries have brought to light remains of prehistoric man from all over the northern hemisphere, showing that long before the time of the flood, he had been widely scattered.⁴⁶

He then proceeded to defend the second alternative, by suggesting that:

in connection with the enormous physical changes in the earth’s surface during the closing scenes of the glacial epoch, man had perished from off the face of the earth except in the valley of the Euphrates, and that the Noachian Deluge is the final catastrophe in that series of destructive events.⁴⁷

But this second alternative is also faced with insuperable objections: (1) if we are to follow the modern scientific theory of Pleistocene ice ages, then we must also follow the scientists when they tell us that the ice sheets never covered the major part of the earth at any time;⁴⁸ (2) even if an ice age could have succeeded in confining mankind to the Mesopotamian Valley, it would not help the limited-distribution theory, because the Flood must have come

at a later time when temperatures had risen sufficiently to cause a sudden melting of the ice sheets (as Wright himself suggests), and (3) the Scriptures

give no hint whatever of any natural or supernatural gathering of humanity back into Mesopotamia to be drowned by melting ice sheets!

Wright's hypothesis has received little support in the twentieth century, and we must concur with Byron C. Nelson's verdict that "it was a fruitless effort to combine the theory of the Flood with the theories of modern geology."⁴⁹

In conclusion, it must be admitted that evidence from paleontology presents some very embarrassing problems for those who believe that the entire human race was confined to the region of Mesopotamia at the time of the Flood. If it should ever be proved that any of the ancient human fossils discovered in Java, China, South Africa, or Western Europe were antediluvian, then the universality of the Flood could be proven by paleontology alone.⁵⁰ For it would be quite futile to defend the theory that a mountain-covering, year-long deluge extended from Mesopotamia to Western Europe, South Africa, China, or Java, without at the same time covering the entire earth.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have attempted to establish the geographical universality of the Flood on the basis of seven major Biblical arguments: (1) the Bible says that the waters of the Flood covered the highest mountains to a depth sufficient for the Ark to float over them; (2) the Bible also informs us that this situation prevailed for a period of five months and that an additional seven months were required for the waters to subside sufficiently for Noah to disembark in the mountains of Ararat; (3) the expression "fountains of the great deep were broken up" points unmistakably to vast geological disturbances that are incompatible with the local-Flood concept, especially when these disturbances are said to have continued for five months; (4) the construction of the Ark with a capacity of at least 1,400,000 cubic feet, merely for the purpose of carrying eight people and a few animals through a local inundation is utterly inconceivable; (5) if the Flood had been limited in extent, there would have been no need for an ark at all, for there would have been plenty of time for Noah's family to escape from the danger-area, to say nothing of the birds and beasts; (6) Peter's use of the Flood as a basis for refuting uniformitarian skeptics in the last days would have been pointless if the Flood had been merely a local one, especially when we consider the cosmic setting into which he placed that cataclysm (II Pet. 3:3-7), and (7) a widely distributed human race could not have been destroyed by a local Flood.

In support of our seventh argument, we presented four Biblical reasons for the necessity of a total destruction of humanity in the days of Noah: (1) since the stated purpose of the Flood was the punishment of a sinful race, such a purpose could not have been accomplished if

only a part of humanity had been affected; (2) the fact that the Flood destroyed the rest of mankind is greatly strengthened by repeated statements in Genesis, I Peter, and II Peter, to the effect that only Noah and his family were spared; (3) the Lord Jesus Christ clearly stated that all men were destroyed by the Flood (Luke 17:26-30), and (4) the covenant which God made with Noah after the Flood becomes meaningless if only a part of the human race had been involved.

In addition to these arguments for a total destruction of the human race except for Noah's family, we gave two reasons for believing that the human race could not have been confined to the Mesopotamian Valley at the time of the Flood: (1) the longevity and fecundity of the antediluvians would allow for a very rapid increase in population even if only 1656 years elapsed between Adam and the Flood; and the prevalence of strife and violence would have encouraged wide distribution rather than confinement to a single locality; (2) evidence of human fossils in widely-scattered parts of the world makes it very difficult to assume that men did not migrate beyond the Near East before the time of the Flood.

The writers are firmly convinced that these basic arguments, if carefully weighed by Christian thinkers, would prove to be sufficiently powerful and compelling to settle once and for all the long-debated question of the geographical extent of the Flood. This is not to say, of course, that a universal Flood presents no serious scientific problems; for the remaining chapters of this volume are devoted largely to an examination of such problems. But we do believe that no problem, be it scientific or philosophical, can be of sufficient magnitude to offset the combined force of these seven Biblical arguments for a geographically universal Flood in the days of Noah.

REFERENCES

- 1- Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the American Standard Version of 1901.
- 2- The present Mt. Ararat, on or near which the Ark was said to have grounded, is some 17,000 feet in elevation!
Of course, unless uniformitarianism be presupposed, it is not necessary to assume that antediluvian mountains were this high. See below, pp. 266-270.
- 3- H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1942), p. 301.
- 4- Leupold, *op. cit.*, pp. 300, 306. Cf. Alexander Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels* (2nd Ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), p. 246.
- 5- Arthur C. Custance, *The Extent of the Flood: Doorway Papers #41* (Ottawa: Published by the author, 1958), pp. 8-9. Earlier in the century, George Frederick Wright wrote in a similar fashion: "The duration of the Deluge, according to Genesis, affords opportunity for a gradual progress of events which best accords with scientific conceptions of geological movements. If, as the most probable interpretation would imply, the water began to recede after 150 days from the beginning of the Flood and fell 15 cubits in 74 days, that would only be 3% inches per day— a rate which would be imperceptible to an ordinary observer." *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., reprint, 1946), II, 824.
- 6- Even if one were to adopt E. F. Kevan's theory that the tops of the mountains "were not then just beginning to emerge, but had been hidden by the mists which such a downpour of rain must have created" (The New Bible Commentary, p. 84) it would still not be permissible to overlap the 74 days and the 40 days, for this would call for an interval of 103 days instead of 29 days between 8:12 and 8:13 (see Figure 1). But Kevan's theory (which is similar to the "phenomenal" theory of Ramm discussed on pp. 58-59) is contradicted by the fact that the Scriptures do not speak of *mists fading away* until the tops of the mountains were seen, but rather of *the waters decreasing continually* until the tops of the mountains were seen (8:5). It should be noted that Custance is not appealing to any "mists" to confuse the picture, as others have done, but is claiming that not even the mountain peak on which the Ark rested emerged from the waters until the first day of the tenth month.
- 7- Heidel, *op. cit.*, pp. 251-252. Similarly, Robert Jamieson commented that the raven "went forth going and returning; i.e., roving on the heights that had emerged from the waters, or-perched on the external covering of the ark, so that he was at no loss for a resting-place, and his voracious appetite would find plenty of carrion floating on the slimy hillsides on which, after so long an abstinence, he would greedily prey." *Critical and Experimental Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., reprinted, 1948), I, 102. The dove, on the other hand, would not be satisfied until it found a clean and dry resting-place. For a discussion of the significance of the olive leaf, see pp. 104-106.
- 8- Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Boston, New York, and Chicago: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1906), p. 1062. Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1953), II, 1019, give the first two meanings of *t'hom* as (1) the primeval ocean, and (2) the subterranean water.
- 9- Franz Delitzsch, *A New Commentary on Genesis*, trans. Sophia Taylor (New York: Scribner & Welford, 1899), p. 267. J. P. Lange was much impressed by the geological argument: "the flood itself may, perhaps, have been partial, but the earth-crisis, on which it was conditioned, must have been universal. With the opening of the fountains of the deep stands the opening of the windows of heaven in polar contrast ... As an earth-crisis, the flood was probably universal." *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Genesis*, ed. J. P. Lange (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), p. 296.

- 10- See below, pp. 122, 127, for further discussion of this point.
- 11- R. B. Y. Scott, "Weights and Measures of the Bible," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. XXII, No.2 (May, 1959), pp. 22-27.
- 12- The displacement tonnage of the Ark (defined as the weight of sea water displaced by the structure when submerged to its design draught, assumed at 15 cubits), is:

$$[(300)(50)(15)(17.5/12)^3(64)]/2240 = 19,940 \text{ tons}$$
- 13- The U.S.S. Mariposa is 14,512 tons, the U.S.S. Constitution is 23,719 tons, and the U.S.S. United States (the largest American ocean liner) is 53,329 tons. (New York, 1960 *World Almanac*, N. Y. World Telegram Co., p. 680). See below, p. 103, for a discussion of the structure and stability of the Ark.
- 14- Custance, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
- 15- Custance, *op. cit.*, p. 18. Custance feels that the Ark was not overly large (see above, p. 10) and that it did not take over a century to build. The 120 years of Gen. 6:3, in his opinion, refers to man's future life-span. But where is the evidence that man's life span after the Flood was to be 120 years? Many men lived much longer than this (11:11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25; 25:7; 35:28; 47:9). See Heidel, *op. cit.*, p. 230, and Leupold, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-257.
- 16- Custance, *op. cit.*, p. 19. For further discussion on the problem of animals in the Ark, see below, pp. 63 ff.
- 17- Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History* (5th ed. rev.; Wheaton, Ill.: Scripture Press. 1956), p. 42. Some defenders of the local-Flood theory claim to have found in Genesis 9:10 support for their view that only a few land animals were affected by the Flood. They claim that a literal reading of this verse calls for two groups of animals: "from all going out of the ark to every beast of the earth." It is highly questionable, however, whether this is the correct translation. Brown, Driver, and Briggs cite this verse as an example of the special usage of *lekol* at the close of a description or enumeration, and translate it as follows: "all that go out of the ark *as regards* (=namely, even) all the beasts of the earth." *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 514. See also Franz Delitzsch and August Dillmann in loco. The ASV thus improves over the AV by translating: "of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth." Thomas Whitelaw, who believed that the Flood was local, admitted that this verse is "not necessarily implying ..., though in all probability it was the case, that there were animals which had never been in the ark; but simply an idiomatic phrase expressive of the totality of the animal creation (Alford)." *The Pulpit Commentary*, ed. H. D. M. Spence (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., reprinted 1950), p. 143.
- 18- Henry Alford's comments on the use of *kosmos* in this passage are important: "... *kosmos*, as an indefinite common term, takes in the *ouranoi kai ge* [heavens and earth], which were then instrumental in, and purified by, the destruction, if not altogether swept away by it." (*The Greek Testament*, 5th ed.; London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1895, IV, 414).

Of special significance also is this comment by Joseph B. Mayor: "It is evident from [II Peter 3:7, 10, 12] that the writer looked forward to a fundamental metamorphosis of the existing universe through the final conflagration, and this naturally leads him to take an exaggerated [*sic!*] view of the deluge, which he regards as a parallel destruction. Hence the present heavens and earth are distinguished from the antediluvian in the next verse [v. 7]" (*The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter*, London, Macmillan & Co., 1907, p. 153). It would be appropriate for a uniformitarian to describe Peter's reference to the Flood as "exaggerated." True Biblical exegesis simply cannot be harmonized with this philosophy of earth-history.

- 19- Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (3rd. Ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956), p. 62. There are some writers who have applied II Peter 3:6 ("the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished") to Genesis 1:2 instead of to Genesis 6-9. See J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book* (London: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, Ltd., 1951), I, 42; and Kenneth S. Wuest, *In These Last Days* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1954), p. 67.

But such an application is impossible for three reasons: (1) Genesis 1:2 does not speak of a world perishing by being overflowed with water, whereas four entire chapters of Genesis are devoted to a description of the great Noahic Deluge which fits Peter's description perfectly; (2) II Peter 3:5 describes the earth's condition during the second and third days of the creation week (Gen. 1:6-10), and the catastrophe of II Peter 3:6 obviously follows this; (3) Peter has already referred to the Noahic Deluge twice before (I Pet. 3:20, II Pet. 2:5), and therefore the context would demand that II Peter 3:6 refer to the same Deluge. Neither Baxter nor Wuest offers proof for his interpretation, and the vast majority of commentators agree that Peter is referring to the Flood.

- 20- Charles Burton, *Lectures on the Deluge and the World After the Flood* (London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co., 1845), p. 21.
- 21- Bernard Ramm (*The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1954) is one modern evangelical writer who believes that only a part of the human race was destroyed by the Flood. Because of the important implications of this view, we shall devote most of Chapter II to an examination of his arguments.
- 22- W. Graham Scroggie, *The Unfolding Drama of Redemption* (London: Pickering & Inglis, Ltd., 1953), I, 74, 77. Italics are his.
- 23- William Sanford LaSor claims that the Flood was sent as a judgment upon the godly Sethite line for intermarrying with the ungodly Cainite line. Thus, the Flood needed to be only as extensive as the Sethite line ("Does the Bible Teach a Universal Flood?" *Eternity*, Vol. XI, No. 10 [December, 1960]). But how could the Flood have destroyed the Sethites only, if they were living with Cainites? Even more important, the Scriptures emphasize everywhere that God brought the Flood not to destroy sinning saints, but rather to destroy "the world of the *ungodly*" (II Pet. 2:5).
- 24- God's thrice-repeated promise never to wipe out "everything living" and "all flesh" again by a Flood (Gen. 8:21; 9:11,15) makes it quite impossible to accept the view that only a part of the human race was destroyed by the Flood. And if it be insisted that these terms are to be understood in a limited sense, then we must say that God has broken His promise repeatedly; for millions have perished in vast and destructive local floods in many parts of the earth. The same argument is decisive against the view that the Flood was geographically local though anthropologically universal, for God promised not only to spare the human race (to say nothing of "every thing living") from another Flood but also *the earth itself* (Gen. 8:21; 9:11, Isa. 54:9).
- 25- Samuel J. Schultz, "The Unity of the Race: Genesis 1-11," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, VII (September, 1955), p. 52. LaSor *loc. cit.*) argues that the Flood did not destroy all men outside the Ark because the New Testament consistently traces the human race to Adam rather than to Noah! It hardly seems necessary to point out, however, that Noah could not have been the federal head of postdiluvian humanity because neither his wife nor his three daughters-in-law owed their physical existence to him in the same sense that Eve owed hers to Adam.

- 26- Another possibility would be that antediluvians in other parts of the earth died or were driven back into Mesopotamia just in time to drown in a local Flood. See below, pp. 32-33.
- 27- C. F. Keil says concerning Genesis 5: "Every attack upon the historical character of its numerical statements has entirely failed, and no tenable argument can be adduced against their correctness." *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., reprinted 1951), I, 123.
- 28- William R. Vis, "Medical Science and the Bible," *Modern Science and Christian Faith* (2d ed.; Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1950), p. 242. Italics are ours.
- 29- Hans Selye: "Is Aging Curable?" *Science Digest*, Vol. 46, December 1959, p. 1.
- 30- See pages 399-405.
- 31- "Population Growth," News item in *Science*, Vol. 129, April 3, 1959, p. 882. referring to a recent report *The Future Growth of World Population*, published by the United Nations' Bureau of Social Affairs.
- 32- Fairfield Osborn: "Our Reproductive Potential," *Science*, Vol. 125, March 22, 1957, p. 531.
- 33- V. E. McKelvey: "Resources, Population Growth, and Level of Living," *Science*, Vol. 129, April 3, 1959, p. 878. See also our discussion on post-diluvian populations, pages 396-398.
- 34- John Pye Smith, *The Relation Between The Holy Scriptures and Some Parts of Geological Science* (5th ed.; London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), pp. 269-270.
- 35- Edward Hitchcock, *The Religion of Geology and Its Connected Sciences* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co., 1852), p. 132.
- 36- Hugh Miller, *The Testimony of the Rocks* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1875), pp. 316-319.
- 37- The Hebrew word for "earth" ('*ares*') can sometimes be translated "land." Except in rare instances, the context clearly indicates which translation is preferable. '*ares*' appears 79 times in the first nine chapters of Genesis, but in only four cases can it be legitimately translated "land" (Gen. 2:11,12,13; 4:16). For a discussion of the limited usage of universal terms, see below, pp. 55-62.
- 38- For further discussion of this point, see below, pp. 479-480.
- 39- Erich Sauer, *The Dawn of World Redemption*, trans. G. H. Lang (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1952), p. 67.
- 40- C. F. Keil, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124.
- 41- Edmund F. Sutcliffe, 8.1., "Genesis," *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (New York; Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1953), p. 190.
- 42- Jamieson, *op.cit.*, p. 99.
- 43- Custance, *op.cit.*, p. 18: "The very method by which God forewarned men implies a situation in which the population of the world was still fairly well congregated." Ramm, *op.cit.*, p. 239, uses the same argument to prove that the Flood was anthropologically local, affecting only a small part of the human race!

44- Civilization may very well have reached great heights before the Flood, and thus communication systems may have been efficient. "Vast strides must have been made in knowledge and civilization in such a lapse of time. Arts and sciences may have reached a ripeness of which the record, from its scantiness, conveys no adequate conception. The destruction caused by the Flood must have obliterated a thousand discoveries, and left men to recover again by slow and patient steps the ground they had lost" (J. J. Stewart Perowne, "Noah," *Dr. William Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed., H. B. Hackett and Ezra Abbot. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1896, III, p. 2178). See also below pp. 40-41.

If, in addition, we allow for a possible uniformity of language before the Flood, more than a hundred years during which the report of Noah's words could have been spread abroad, and the sensational nature of his ark-building enterprise, we have more than enough reasons for assuming that everyone in the world had an opportunity to hear directly or indirectly the warnings of this mighty "preacher of righteousness."

45- Many Old Testament scholars believe that the period from Adam to the Flood lasted much more than 1656 years, because of gaps in the genealogy of Genesis 5. If this be true, how much more impossible it would be to insist that the human race did not spread out beyond Mesopotamia by the time of the Flood! See pp. 474-477.

46- George F. Wright, "The Deluge of Noah," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, II, 824.
Cf. Ramm, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

47- Wright, *loc. cit.*

48- Richard F. Flint of Yale University claimed that "glaciers have covered nearly one-third of the land area of the world." *Glacial Geology and the Pleistocene Epoch* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1947), p. 10.

49- Byron C. Nelson, *The Deluge Story in Stone* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1931), p. 134. As late as 1950, however, Dr. R. C. Stone defended this view: "The Biblical account does not preclude mass migration to S. America, Java, Northern Europe, and the Far Eastern Asia mainland before Noah's day, providing such men had become extinct before the Flood or were killed by the flooding of these areas." (Exegesis of the Biblical Account of the Flood," Unpublished Paper, Wheaton College, Nov. 11, 1950).

50- This argument seriously undermines the popular local-Flood view. Wright's bizarre theory would not be affected by it, of course; nor would Ramm's theory of an anthropologically local Flood. In fact, Ramm uses this same argument to defend his own view: "Some assert that man never spread beyond the Mesopotamian Valley. This is impossible to defend in that it is so well proven that men were to be found outside of the Mesopotamian area long before the Flood." *op. cit.*, p. 239. Then, in a footnote, he adds: "Rehwinkel admits this. *op. cit.*, pp. 32-40."

But this is a strange way to express it, since Rehwinkel, a defender of the universal flood view, cited those numerous instances of human fossils in various parts of the world for the very reason that they constitute supporting evidence for the universal Flood view!

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