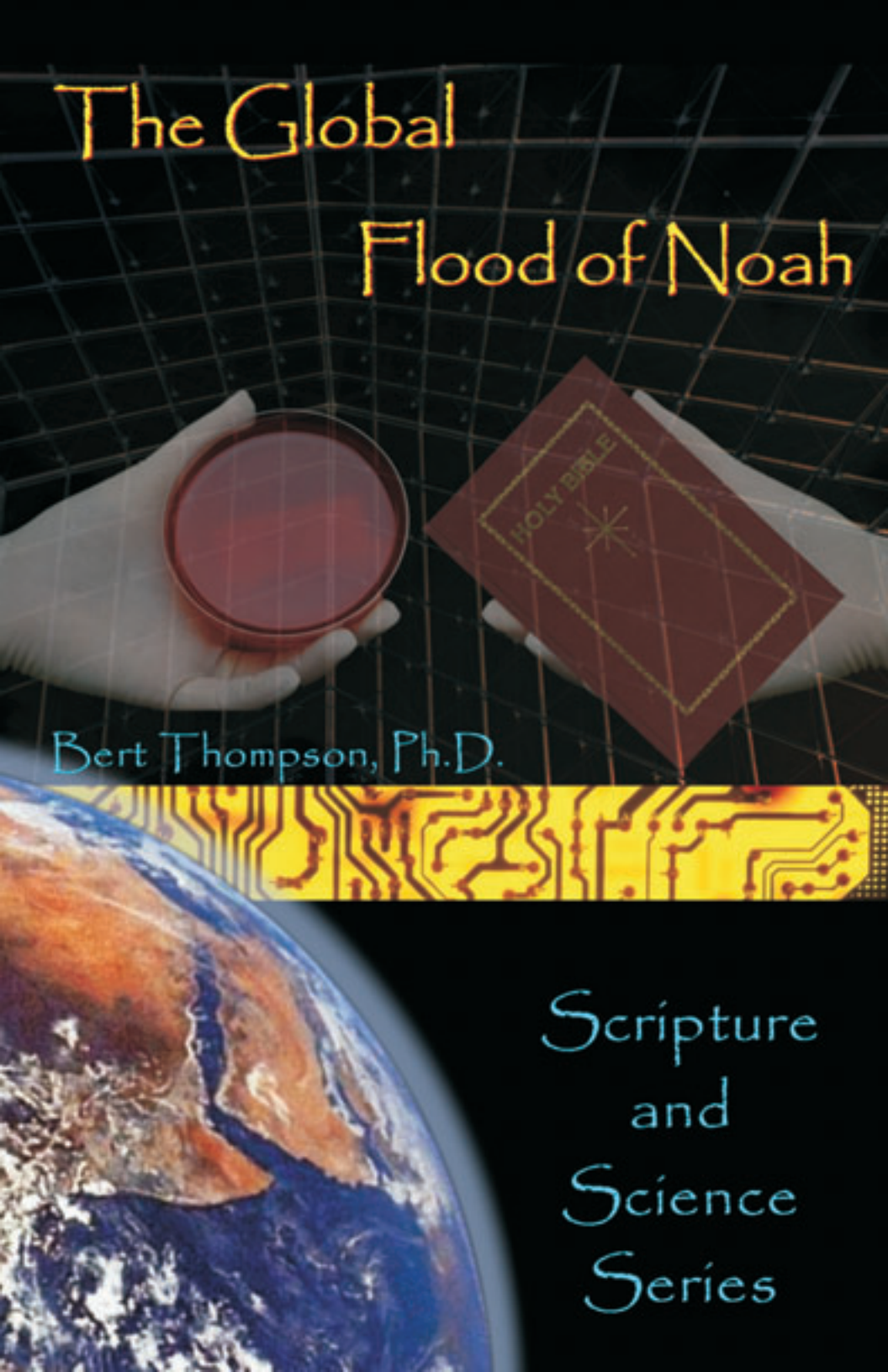
The Global Flood of Noah



Bert Thompson, Ph.D.

Scripture and Science Series

The Global Flood of Noah

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APOLOGETICS PRESS

Apologetics Press, Inc.
230 Landmark Drive
Montgomery, Alabama 36117-2752

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated with deep appreciation to Joe and Beryl Nisbet, two "wee Scots" who, as husband and wife, have devoted their entire adult lives to teaching the Gospel in their native Scotland and who, through their many personal sacrifices and exemplary conduct on behalf of the Lord and His church, have become such an endearing example for everyone around them.

1

INTRODUCTION

A careful study of biblical history reveals that God always has provided man with the information required for both his physical and spiritual well-being. In every age, God ensured that men possessed the rules, regulations, guidelines, and injunctions necessary for happiness and success in their earthly pilgrimage. At the same time, however, He endowed mankind with a precious gift. Men were not created as robots to serve God slavishly without any personal volition. Rather, they were created as free moral agents who possessed the ability to choose the path they would follow and the eternity they would inhabit.

Throughout the ages, human responses to God's gift of personal volition have been many and varied. Some—humbly desiring to comply with God's directives—have accommodated their lives to His wishes, and have done their best to live as He has instructed. Others—thumbing their nose at their Creator—have ignored His commands and have lived in stubborn rebellion to divine law.

Sadly, mankind has not been content merely to disobey God. Along the way, the tenets of God's law systems (Patriarchal, Mosaical, and Christian) not only were indifferently ignored, but vigorously ridiculed as well. The precepts that composed those law systems have been denigrated, vilified, and attacked. No divine concept escaped unscathed. Great spiritual truths such as God's infinite nature, His workings in His creation, the inspiration of His written Word, His mercy and grace as extended through the virgin-born, crucified, and resurrected second member of the Godhead, and many more, were broadsided by infidelity. None was immune to man's desecration and/or disobedience. Humankind, so it seems, resolved with a vengeance to set its face against God.

MANKIND'S RESPONSE TO THE GENESIS FLOOD

One example of man's determination to oppose that which God has decreed can be seen in the variety of responses pertaining to the Great Flood of Genesis 6-8. It would be difficult to find an account from any period of biblical history that has been ridiculed more frequently, or with greater derisiveness, than the story of the Flood. Such a response from those who do not believe in God hardly is surprising, since by all accounts the concept of a recent global Flood is incompatible with the naturalistic system of origins espoused by unbelievers. For more than a hundred years, the Flood has been under accelerated attack by infidels within the scientific community who have chosen to support such concepts as uniformitarianism and organic evolution. In fact, atheistic writers have admitted that one of the main forces behind the rise of uniformitarianism was the desire to eliminate God as Creator, and as Initiator of the Great Flood (see Gould, 1965, 1987).

There can be no doubt that the Genesis record of a global, universal Flood has become the target of sustained, concentrated attacks –the goal of which is to discredit the account in its entirety. Unbelievers of every stripe delight in attempting to undermine the faith of the believer by showing the "ridiculous nature" of the story as recorded in the book of Genesis. One particular example comes to mind.

Perhaps you have heard of the concept known as "Dial-A-Prayer," where it is possible to dial a telephone number and hear a recorded, inspirational message from (or about) the Bible. But have you ever heard of "Dial-An-Atheist"? Some time ago I was in western Tennessee on a speaking assignment. One evening prior to the lecture that I was to present, a gentleman asked me if I ever had heard of such a phenomenon. I told him I had not. He urged me to listen to the locally recorded message. As I did so, I found myself the recipient of a stern (albeit recorded) rebuke by an atheist who castigated Christians for their belief in the God of the Bible. As "proof" of his claim that God did not exist and that the Bible was not His inspired Word, the speaker took aim at the Flood story of

Genesis 6-8 which, he said, no "enlightened, twentieth-century intellectual" ever would, or should, believe. As he ranted and raved, he listed as his arguments against the literal nature of the Flood (and therefore against the God behind the Flood) such things as: the impossibility of gathering the animals; the impossibility of getting the animals into the boat; the impossibility of building an ark large enough; the impossibility of planet Earth surviving a year-long, global flood, etc. In short, his entire diatribe was one long attack upon the Flood and anyone whom he considered stupid enough to believe it.

Such an attitude has not always prevailed, however. For centuries prior to our time, scientists and theologians alike attributed many of the Earth's features to the Great Flood of Noah, and generally were in agreement with the Bible's teachings on Creation and the Flood. As Harold W. Clark has observed:

> The truth of the matter is that creationism is one of the oldest of all recorded explanations of the origin of the earth and its life. The book of Genesis was written a thousand years before the Ionian philosophers formulated their naturalistic cosmogonies. For over three thousand years it has been regarded as an authoritative statement regarding the beginning of the earth.... The period from the Reformation to the middle of the 19th century has been called the "Golden Age of Creationism." Many fundamental discoveries in science were made, and there was a genuine spirit of recognition of the validity of the Genesis story of creation and the Flood as a background for science. However, as geological knowledge grew rapidly in the 18th century, theologians found it increasingly difficult to adjust the new knowledge to the short chronology of Genesis. With increasing favor they began to turn to notions that were being propounded by scientists, not all of whom were sympathetic toward the Scriptural account of the past (1968, pp. 12,17-18).

Many of the great scientists of the past firmly believed in, and accepted as factual, the biblical account of a universal Flood. Michael Oard observed: "More than 150 years ago, many scientists believed the rocks on the earth's surface were

laid down and fashioned by the Genesis Flood" (1990, p. 24). Robert Whitelaw noted: "Long before anyone knew of the carbon 14 clock, and up until Darwin's day, the scientific world recognized the abundant evidence of a worldwide watery catastrophe such as the Genesis Flood" (1975, p. 41). Rehwinkel addressed this point as well.

> Every student of the Bible and of geology knows there exists today a seemingly irreconcilable conflict between Genesis and geology. This conflict dates back about 125 years and had its origin in the rise of evolutionary geology. Up to that time, theologians and scientists were generally in agreement with the Biblical teachings concerning Creation and the Flood. But that is no longer the case. Today textbooks prescribed for courses in physical geography and geology in American high schools and colleges no longer teach a Biblical creation of the universe in six days of twenty-four hours each by a divine fiat. Some teachers, in fact, take delight in ridiculing the Biblical creation story and rule it out of modern thinking as naive, absurd, or as mere folklore of primitive people. Now and then there are still those who try to harmonize Genesis and the theories of geology by juggling language and extending the six days of creation into six periods of unlimited time, each measured by millions, or possibly billions, of years. Still others preserve an out-ward reverence for the Bible and speak of Genesis patronizingly as a beautiful but poetical conception of the origin of things (1951, pp. xvi-xvii).

Religionists of both the past and the present have minimized, compromised, or attacked the global nature of the Flood. Among those of the past, several prominent writers spring to mind. In the *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary* (1870), Robert Jamieson presented a lengthy defense of the local Flood theory. John Pye Smith, in his work, *The Relation Between the Holy Scriptures and Some Parts of Geological Science* (1854), strongly advocated a limited, local Flood. Edward Hitchcock, in his text, *The Religion of Geology and Its Connected Sciences* (1852), and Hugh Miller in his work, *The Testimony of the Rocks* (1875), also defended the local Flood theory, asserting that the biblical account of a global Flood simply was not acceptable.

Over the past several decades, a number of prominent religionists also have opposed a global Flood. In the early 1950s, evangelical theologian Bernard Ramm championed the view of a local Flood in his book, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (1954), and urged those who accept the biblical account of a global Flood to abandon their "hyperorthodox" attitude toward uniformitarianism and surrender the notion that the Flood was universal in scope. Later that same decade, the famous Canadian religionist and anthropologist, Arthur C. Custance, defended the idea of a local flood in his book, *The Extent of the Flood: Doorway Papers No. 41* (1958; see also his 1979 volume, *The Flood: Local or Global?*).

In the late 1960s, John N. Clayton of South Bend, Indiana, a frequent lecturer on Christian evidences, made his views known regarding the unlikely possibility of a universal Flood when he said:

> There is no way geologically of supporting the idea that there was a worldwide flood.... On the North American continent, for example, there is no place, no real conclusive evidence that there has ever been a flood over this continent.... You cannot go to geology and find evidence to support the idea of the worldwide flood.... The Bible does not maintain positively that this was a worldwide flood.... It seems to me plausible that possibly the flood was confined to the known earth at that time (1969).

In the 1970s, John Warwick Montgomery defended a local Flood in his book, *The Quest for Noah's Ark* (1972). That same decade, Davis A. Young (who at the time was serving as a professor at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington) authored *Creation and the Flood*, in which he espoused the view that "arguments can be adduced to suggest that the flood was a gigantic local deluge.... The flood was fundamentally a judgment of God and not a major geological event, certainly not an event which reshaped the globe" (1977, p. 212). [Almost two decades later, as a professor of geology at Calvin College, Young reiterated and expanded his views on a local Flood in a 1995 volume, *The Biblical Flood* (pp. 309-310).]

In the commentary on Genesis that he authored, John T. Willis of Abilene Christian University wrote: "There is simply not enough concrete information to allow a dogmatic judgment in this matter." He then listed the various arguments set forth for a local flood, and ended with this assessment: "Geologists have discovered ample evidence of flooding all over the globe but no conclusive evidence of one universal flood. Rather, available remains can as easily point to local floods that occurred at different historical periods" (1979, p. 174).

Clyde Woods, in *The Living Way Commentary on the Old Testament: Genesis-Exodus*, apparently agreed with the assessment made by Clayton and Willis since he suggested:

> The extent of the flood has been disputed; some scholars insist that only a worldwide flood can satisfy the demands of the record, whereas others believe that the flood was limited to the area of man's habitation. **A local flood seems favored by the extra-Biblical evidence**, but it does appear at first glance that the more natural meaning of the text favors a universal flood (1972, p. 20, emp. added).

Woods then listed the various arguments for a local flood, and drew the following conclusion: "Thus, the local flood hypothesis seems to be a valid alternative."

In the early 1980s, Neal D. Buffaloe, a biology professor at the University of Central Arkansas, and N. Patrick Murray, an Episcopalian minister, authored *Creationism and Evolution*, in which they wrote: "By contrast [to the literal, historical view of Genesis–BT], the mainstream of Biblical scholarship rejects the literal historicity of the Genesis stories prior to Chapter 12, and finds the literature of parable and symbol in the early chapters of Genesis." Later, in referring to the events of these chapters, including the Flood, the authors stated that "these things never were..." (1981, pp. 5,8).

During the 1990s, perhaps the most outspoken defender of a local Flood was progressive creationist Hugh Ross, who commented regarding Genesis 6-8:

> I kind of read through the text and it seemed obvious to me that it had to be a local flood, not a global flood, and I was shocked to discover that there are all these Christians, and even Christian scholars, that held to

> a global flood. And I wanted to figure out, you know, how did this happen? You know, how did people get off track like this? (1990).

Ross repeated these sentiments regarding his belief in a local Flood in his 1994 book, *Creation and Time*.

Surely by now the careful reader will have noticed the singular common (and conspicuous) trait shared by each of these statements. "You cannot go to geology...." "Geologists have discovered...no conclusive evidence." "A local flood seems favored by the extra-Biblical evidence." The conclusion preferring a local flood over the global Flood is based entirely on the so-called geological/scientific evidence, **without regard to what the Bible has to say**. Theodore Epp remarked concerning the local flood view:

> This concept seems to have gotten its greatest support from Christians attempting to harmonize the Bible with science. For the most part, the result has been a compromise between the Bible and historical geology, which is based on evolutionary thinking (1972, p. 138).

A sad commentary, but oh so true. And apparently this syndrome is becoming all the more common.

Why has the Flood become such a lightning rod for controversy? And why do those who profess to believe other areas of Scripture oppose so vehemently the concept of a global Flood? In short, the answer is this. Those who oppose a worldwide Flood (like the writers referenced above) have defended publicly the standard geologic timetable inherent in the evolutionary model of origins. They understand all too well that they cannot advocate an ancient Earth based upon that timetable—while consistently maintaining a belief in a universal Flood. Prominent creationist Henry Morris addressed this point when he wrote:

> The Biblical Flood in the days of Noah has become a great divide between two watersheds of belief. On the one hand there are those who say it is either a purely mythological event or else possibly a local or regional flood. This group includes practically all evolutionists, but it also includes the "old-earth creationists."

> These all accept the so-called geological ages as the approved record of Earth history, recognizing that a global hydraulic cataclysm would have destroyed any evidence for such geological ages. **The geological ages concept and a worldwide devastating Flood logically cannot coexist**.
>
> On the other hand, "young-earth creationists" accept the Biblical record of the Flood as a literal record of a tremendous cataclysm involving not only a worldwide Flood, but also great tectonic upheavals and volcanic outpourings that completely changed the crust of the earth and its topography in the days of Noah.
>
> Those of us who hold this view are commonly ridiculed as unscientific and worse, so it would be more comfortable and financially rewarding if we would just go along with the evolutionist establishment, downgrade the Flood, and accept the geological ages (1998, p. a, emp. added).

Dr. Morris is correct in his assessment. The simple truth of the matter is that the Genesis account of the Great Flood has been, and is being, attacked because it provides a formidable obstacle to a comfortable belief in the geologic timetable espoused by evolutionists and those sympathetic with them.

In the final analysis, however, the central issue is not what current "evolutionary geology" decrees. It is not what "modern science" mandates. Nor is it what those intent on compromising the Bible "wish" God's Word had to say. Rather, the issue is **what the Bible actually says**. As Edwin Jones has written:

> …the account of the flood that we have does not contain all of the details necessary for a full understanding of how things were done. To judge a general account by rules governing a specific, detailed explanation is simply not fair. There is nothing that cannot be accounted for by plausible argumentation in defending the concept of a universal flood. The main concern, as always, should be **what do the Scriptures teach**? (1996, pp. 60-61, emp. added).

Since it is the **biblical** Flood about which we are speaking, and since it is from the Bible itself that we learn more about the Flood than from any other source, it is now to the Bible

that we turn for information on whether the Flood was indeed a global event, or some minor, local "mini-catastrophe." The position presented here is that God's Word speaks plainly of a worldwide Flood. The evidences to that effect from both Scripture and science are overwhelming both in nature and in number.

2

THE FLOOD IN SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY

As I embark on this study of the Flood, and what the Bible has to say about it, let me state clearly that I do so from a perspective that recognizes, appreciates, and defends the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible. Although some modern "scholars" may be disgruntled with this approach, the simple fact is that God has given both **divine revelation** ("once for all delivered," Jude 3) and **historical fact** through inspiration. Faithful Christians must stand firm on the fact that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We likewise must understand that "no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21).

Correct exegesis of Scripture yields truth that is ascertainable, knowable, and absolute. I realize, of course, that such a statement does not play well in certain quarters where it is fashionable to deny the inspiration of God's Word in order to court popularity with the world. One alleged apologist, for example, stated his opinion on this matter when he wrote: "I do not contend that it can be conclusively proven to 20th Century Americans that the Bible is inspired" (Clayton, 1976, p. 89). If it cannot be "conclusively proven" that the Bible is inspired, then it cannot be "conclusively proven" that Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son and Savior of the world, for it is the Bible as the inspired Word of God that provides such information.

If a person cannot "conclusively prove" that Christ is the crucified and resurrected Son of God, then he cannot **know** that he is saved. Yet the apostle John specifically stated: "These things have I written unto you, that ye may **know** that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:13, emp. added). The existence of God, faith in God, and salvation at the hand of God all are tied directly to the inspiration of His Word. I concur wholeheartedly with Benjamin B. Warfield as he gave admirable expression to the concept of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures when he wrote:

> The Church has held from the beginning that the Bible is the Word of God in such a sense that its words, though written by men and bearing indelibly impressed upon them the marks of their human origin, were written, nevertheless, under such an influence of the Holy Ghost as to be also the words of God, the adequate expression of His mind and will. It has always recognized that this conception of co-authorship implies that the Spirit's superintendence extends to the choice of the words by the human authors (verbal inspiration), and preserves its product from everything inconsistent with a divine authorship... thus securing, among other things, that entire truthfulness which is everywhere presupposed in and asserted for Scripture by the Biblical writers (inerrancy) [1948, p. 173, parenthetical comment in orig.].

And so it is with such an attitude—which reverence of God and His Word demands—that I approach what the Scriptures have to say regarding the greatest of all physical events ever to occur on this Earth—the global Flood of Noah. As the prophet Isaiah wrote: "Come now, let us reason together..." (Isaiah 1:18).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE GLOBAL FLOOD

Even its detractors admit (albeit begrudgingly) that the subject of the Flood is a prominent story in the Bible, with more attention given to it than even to Creation. Four of the first

eleven chapters of Genesis are devoted to the record of the great Flood. In fact, next to Creation, the Flood of Noah's day is the greatest single physical event in the history of the Earth; nothing comparable to it has happened since, nor will anything comparable happen again—until the final destruction of this Universe in the fiery judgment yet to come (2 Peter 3). There are repeated references to the Flood account in numerous books within the Old Testament. Further, Jesus and the writers of the New Testament often alluded to Noah and the Flood as if both were historical in nature (cf. Matthew 24:36-39; 1 Peter 3:18-22; Hebrews 11:7; 2 Peter 3:5-7). Alfred Rehwinkel wrote:

> The flood marks the end of a world of transcendent beauty, created by God as a perfect abode for man, and the beginning of a new world, a mere shadowy replica of its original glory. In all recorded history there is no other event except the Fall which has had such a revolutionary effect upon the topography and condition of this Earth and which has so profoundly affected human history and every phase of life as it now exists in its manifold forms in the world. No geologist, biologist, or student of history can afford to ignore this great catastrophe (1951, p. xv).

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, numerous scientists and theologians of the past attributed many of the Earth's features to the Flood of Noah, and generally were in agreement with the Bible's teachings on Creation and the Flood. Now, however, that no longer is the case. In our day and age, young people often are subjected to what may well represent one of the greatest possible threats to their faith—the challenge of the conflict between evolutionary geology and the inspired Word of God. The simple fact of the matter is that it is impossible to correlate the Bible with evolutionary geology (see Jackson, 1984, pp. 296-297; Jackson, 1990; Thompson, 1995, pp. 125-218), even though there have been those who have attempted such a compromise (Clayton, 1976; Ross, 1994; Young, 1977, 1982, 1995; see Jackson and Thompson, 1992, for documentation and refutation of this kind of compromise).

As our children study under those who do not believe in God, who delight in ridiculing the Flood account, or who attempt to effect a compromise of evolutionary thinking with the biblical record, this challenge to their faith becomes all the more real. As Rehwinkel lamented:

> The shock received by the inexperienced young student is therefore overwhelming when he enters the classroom of such teachers and suddenly discovers to his great bewilderment that these men and women of acclaimed learning do not believe the views taught him in his early childhood days; and since the student sits at their feet day after day, it usually does not require a great deal of time until the foundation of his faith begins to crumble as stone upon stone is being removed from it by these unbelieving teachers. Only too often the results are disastrous. The young Christian becomes disturbed, confused, and bewildered. Social pressure and the weight of authority add to his difficulties. First he begins to doubt the infallibility of the Bible in matters of geology, but he will not stop there. Other difficulties arise, and before long skepticism and unbelief have taken the place of his childhood faith, and the saddest of all tragedies has happened. Once more a pious Christian youth has gained a glittering world of pseudo-learning but has lost his own immortal soul (1951, p. xvii).

THE REASON FOR THE FLOOD

According to the Bible, the world was created by God in six, literal 24-hour days. After the Creation (and the seventh-day rest), man was given three positive commands and one negative command. The three positive commands were: (1) be fruitful and multiply–fill the Earth (Genesis 1:28); (2) subdue the Earth and have dominion over it (Genesis 1:28); and (3) tend the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15). The one negative command was to avoid eating the fruit of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:17). As every student of Bible history knows, Adam and Eve transgressed the law of God and ate the forbidden fruit. For this sin, they were evicted from the garden paradise and a curse was placed upon them (Genesis 3:16-19; cf. Romans 8:20-22).

Outside the garden, Adam and Eve began their family. [NOTE: According to Genesis 4:1ff., it was only **after** their eviction from the garden that any conceptions and/or births are mentioned. Apparently, since one of the original commands God gave them was to reproduce, they did not remain in the garden very long before they sinned (see Thompson, 1999, for elaboration on this point).] Their first two sons were named Cain and Abel. Cain murdered Abel, and eventually went into exile, separating himself from the rest of the family (Genesis 4:16ff.).

Like two distinct streams, the two groups flowed along side-by-side for more than a thousand years. Eventually, however, the righteous married indiscriminately, being motivated by lust. The Bible observes that "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose" (Genesis 6:2). These marriages gave rise to people who found themselves in total rebellion against God, as described in Genesis 6:5-7.

> And God 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."

That the righteous could lose their spiritual integrity by improperly motivated associations with the wicked should not shock us. Paul spoke of such evil consequences in 1 Corinthians 15:33 when he wrote: "Be not deceived: evil companionships corrupt good morals."

At this point, it might be prudent to point out that the period from Creation to the Flood was not just "a few short years." Sometimes when we discuss the events that led up to the Flood, we may leave the impression inadvertently that they occurred within a very short span of time. The truth is, the time span involved was approximately 1,656 years (see Rehwinkel, 1951, pp. 24-25). A millennium-and-a-half represents a long time

span in human history. During that period, people (especially those who lived to advanced ages as did the patriarchs—see Thompson, 1992; 1995, pp. 265-275) would have proliferated and spread to many areas around the globe. Man not only was endowed with far greater vitality of body and mind than he now possesses (a point that may be inferred legitimately from the great ages to which he lived), but inhabited a pristine world of practically unlimited, unspoiled natural resources.

Living longer under such conditions also would mean that man was much more prolific than he now is. Yet even in our age, when life spans are shortened considerably, 1,656 years would be enough time to produce an enormous population. During the century between 1830 and 1930, for example, the world population doubled in number (i.e., it increased by about 850 million people within a hundred years). Imagine—given the antediluvian setting of a worldwide mild climate, great vitality, longer life spans, and impressive natural resources—the increase that would occur, not in 100 years, but in **1,656 years**.

Some, in an attempt to limit the Flood to a "local" event, have objected to the suggestion that mankind covered the globe. As one author stated:

> It would be highly unreasonable to suppose that mankind had so increased before the deluge as to have penetrated all the corners of the earth. It is indeed not probable that they had extended themselves beyond the limits of Syria and Mesopotamia (Hitchcock, 1854, p. 122).

The concept, however, that man must have been "limited" to the Mesopotamian region will not withstand the evidence at hand. In fact, it would be "highly unreasonable" to suggest—with the great ages of mankind in the antediluvian world and the number of years involved—that man did **not** spread around the globe.

The stage, then, was set for God's wrath upon a sin-sick world. His decree was that He would destroy man, beast, and bird from the face of the Earth. There was, however, something that prevented God from carrying out that decree im-

mediately. It was the fact that a man named Noah had remained faithful to God. Noah, the biblical text makes clear, was an island of righteousness in a sea of iniquity. His amazing character is described in Genesis 6:9 by three expressions. (1) "Noah was a just man" (i.e., he was honest–likely an unusual trait for his day and time). (2) Noah is described as being "perfect in his generations." Edwin Jones has suggested that "Noah's being perfect refers to his being blameless because of his wholehearted, complete loyalty to God. Noah did what was right because he had a complete, well-rounded relationship with God" (1996, p. 58). (3) Noah "walked with God" (cf. James 2:23, where this same phrase is applied to Abraham).

Because of Noah's faithfulness, a "probationary period" of 120 years was established by God (Genesis 6:3). During that time, Noah preached to the people of his generation (1 Peter 3:18-20) and carried out the commands of God regarding the building of the ark (Genesis 6). After approximately 100 years, Noah's work was completed. Genesis 5:32 indicates that Noah was 500 years old prior to the events of Genesis 6-8; Genesis 7:6 indicates that Noah was 600 years old when he entered into the ark. It therefore appears from a straightforward reading of the text that, of the probationary period imposed by God, Noah used 100 years or less.

However, for all his preaching Noah's only "converts" appear to have been members of his own family group. People no doubt grew accustomed to the large hulk of the great ark, and at the same time grew apathetic to Noah's message of salvation from impending doom. Sin continued as the probationary period drew to a close. The decree had been made; the grace of God had been extended; the time for action was at hand. Mankind's sin now would cause the Creator to send a worldwide Flood.

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS OF THE FLOOD

The account of the Great Flood in Genesis 6-8 entails the overriding power of an Almighty God in what undoubtedly were supernatural (i.e., miraculous) events. Critics of the ac-

count, however, have objected to the introduction of the miraculous. Byron Nelson, in his classic text, *The Deluge Story in Stone*, called attention to this fact when he wrote:

> What is called "modern" geology has eclipsed Flood geology because of a dislike for those supernatural elements which are the backbone of Christianity. The Flood theory of geology has not been abandoned because it does not satisfy actual geological conditions. There is nothing known about the earth's geological state today which makes the Deluge theory any less satisfactory an explanation of the fossiliferous strata than in the days when the leading scholars of the world accepted it. Rather the contrary—there are facts known now about the geological conditions of the earth remarkably supporting the Flood theory which Williams, Catcott, Harris and others never dreamed of. It is a disregard for God and the sacred record of his acts, and nothing else, which has caused the discard of the Flood theory to take place (1931, p. 137).

Theologian Bernard Ramm provides the perfect example of the "disregard for God and the sacred record of his acts" of which Nelson wrote. Ramm sneered: "If one wishes to retain a universal flood, it must be understood that a series of stupendous miracles is required. Further, one cannot beg off with pious statements that God can do anything" (1954, p. 165). Consistency, of course, is not the norm for those who defend error. The same Bernard Ramm who made the above statement militating **against** miracles also argued **for** miracles as an inherent part of the Bible when he said: "The miracles are not warts or growths that may be shaved or cut off, leaving the main body of the gospel record untouched" (1953, p. 174). So which is it? Is the miraculous to be accepted or not? Apparently Ramm and his cohorts wish to answer in the affirmative in regard to certain portions of the Bible, but in the negative in regard to others—so long as **they** are the ones who are allowed to pick and choose.

What does Ramm mean when he says that "one cannot beg off with pious statements that God can do anything"? God **can** do anything consistent with His own nature. And He does not need Bernard Ramm, or anyone else, to tell Him

what He can or cannot do. God made it clear in these chapters that He was in control–from the bringing of the animals to Noah (Genesis 6:19-20) to the shutting of the door of the ark (Genesis 7:16). It was a miraculous situation from beginning to end. And though Ramm would disagree, to deny the operation of supernatural forces in the launching and control of the Flood is tantamount to denying inspiration. "The simple fact of the matter is that one cannot have any kind of a Genesis Flood without acknowledging the presence of supernatural powers" (Whitcomb and Morris, 1961, p. 76). Furthermore, even those who attempt to minimize the miraculous eventually end up returning to it. Ramm, for example, has admitted that the animals coming to Noah were "prompted by divine instinct" [i.e., a miracle–BT] (1954, p. 169).

God miraculously superintended the entire Flood process, and Bible believers should not be ashamed to admit it. Whitcomb has listed at least six areas in which supernaturalism is required in the context of the Genesis Flood: (1) divinely revealed design of the ark; (2) gathering and care of the animals; (3) uplift of oceanic waters from beneath; (4) release of waters from above; (5) formation of present ocean basins; and (6) formation of present continents and mountain ranges (1973, p. 19). There may be other areas where the presence of supernaturalism is required, but the fact remains that certain aspects of the Flood record cannot be accounted for on the basis of purely natural processes.

Nevertheless, it is not necessary to appeal to an "endless supplying of miracles to make a universal flood feasible," as Ramm has suggested somewhat satirically. Whitcomb noted:

> Apart from the specific miracles mentioned in the Scripture which were necessary to begin and to terminate this period of global judgment, the flood accomplished its work of destruction by purely natural processes that are capable of being studied to a certain extent in hydraulic laboratories and in local flood situations today (1973, p. 67).

The fact of the matter is that both natural and supernatural phenomena worked side by side during the Flood. It did not require an "endless supplying of miracles."

THE UBIQUITY OF FLOOD STORIES

Professor Harold W. Clark, in his work, *Fossils, Flood and Fire*, discussed the important fact that flood stories abound in practically every known culture.

> Preserved in the myths and legends of almost every people on the face of the globe is the memory of the great catastrophe. While myths may not have any scientific value, yet they are significant in indicating the fact that an impression was left in the minds of the races of mankind that could not be erased (1968, p. 45).

In volume three of his multi-volume set, *The Native Races of the Pacific Slope–Mythology*, H.H. Bancroft wrote: "There never was a myth without a meaning;...there is not one of these stories, no matter how silly or absurd, which was not founded on fact" (n.d.).

The account of the Genesis Flood hardly stands alone in human history. Researchers have described over 100 flood traditions from Europe, Asia, Australia, the East Indies, the Americas, East Africa, and many other places. Rehwinkel wrote:

> Traditions similar to this record are found among nearly all the nations and tribes of the human race. And this is as one would expect it to be. If that awful world catastrophe, as described in the Bible, actually happened, the existence of the Flood traditions among the widely separated and primitive people is just what is to be expected. It is only natural that the memory of such an event was rehearsed in the ears of the children of the survivors again and again and possibly made the basis of some religious observances (1951, pp. 127-128).

Kearley observed that "these traditions agree in too many vital points not to have originated from the same factual event" (1979, p. 11).

After the "trappings" are stripped away from the kernel of truth in the stories, there is almost complete agreement among practically all flood accounts: (a) a universal destruction by water of the human race and all other living things occurred;

(b) an ark, or boat, was provided as the means of escape for some; and (c) a seed of mankind was provided to perpetuate the human race. These flood stories, of course, have aroused the interest of scholars who have spent entire lifetimes studying, collecting, and cataloging them. Earlier in the twentieth century, a collection of mythologies was published by the Archaeological Institute of America–a collection that included flood traditions of many peoples. Johannes Riem, a German scholar, stated in the introduction to his book on the subject:

> Among all traditions there is none so general, so widespread on earth, and so apt to show what may develop from the same material according to the varying spiritual character of a people as the Flood tradition. Lengthy and thorough discussions with Dr. Kunike have convinced me of the evident correctness of his position that the fact of the Deluge is granted because at the basis of all myths, particularly nature myths, there is real fact, but that during a subsequent period the material was given its present mythical character and form (1925, pp. 7ff.).

Among the noted scholars of days gone by who have studied these matters in detail are such men as James G. Frazer (*Folklore in the Old Testament*) and William Wundt (*Elements of Folk Psychology*). Wundt, who did his utmost to find some kind of reasonable case for independent origins of the various flood sagas (and who had no great love for the biblical evidence), was forced to admit: "Of the combination of all these elements into a whole (the destruction of the earth by water, the rescue of a single man and seed of animals by means of a boat, etc.), however, we may say without hesitation, it could not have arisen twice independently" (1916, p. 392, parenthetical comment in orig.). Sir John William Dawson, the famous Canadian geologist, wrote:

> Further, we know now that the Deluge of Noah is not mere myth or fancy of primitive man or solely a doctrine of the Hebrew Scriptures. The record of the catastrophe is preserved in some of the oldest historical documents of several distinct races of men, and is indirectly corroborated by the whole tenor of the early history of most of the civilized races.

> As to the actual occurrence of the Deluge as a widespread catastrophe affecting, with a few stated exceptions, the whole human race, we have thus a concurrence of the testimony of ancient history and tradition, and of geological and archaeological evidence, as well as of the inspired records of the Hebrew and Christian revelation. Thus no historical event, ancient or modern, can be more firmly established as matter of fact than this (1895, pp. 4ff.).

It is to this "historical event" which is a "matter of fact" that we now turn our attention–the global Flood of Noah.

3

THE GLOBAL FLOOD OF NOAH

As I mentioned earlier, whether or not the Genesis Flood has any real significance depends on the answers to two important questions: (1) Was the Flood an actual event of history, or simply a myth or legend?; and (2) Was the Flood universal, or merely a local, Mesopotamian flood limited to a small part of the then-known Earth? There is ample evidence to indicate that **some** kind of flood occurred. J.W. Dawson put it like this:

> ...we have thus a concurrence of the testimony of ancient history and tradition, and of geological and archaeological evidence, as well as of the inspired records of the Hebrew and Christian revelation. Thus, no historical event, ancient or modern, can be more firmly established as matter of fact than this (1895, pp. 4ff.).

The question is: Was that flood local or universal? Men such as those quoted in chapter one would have us believe, for whatever reasons, that this flood was both local and limited. God's Word, however, provides evidence that leads to exactly the opposite conclusion. I would like to examine that evidence here.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN WORLD ("THE WORLD THAT THEN WAS")

The Garden of Eden must have been a wonderful place to call home—a place with an ideal climate and setting where man, the apex of God's creation, could live in a covenant relationship with his Creator. The climate apparently was so

mild that Adam and Eve were able to inhabit the garden on a daily basis completely unclothed (Genesis 2:25). It was truly a paradise setting. How long, however, did such a climate remain after man's fall, or did it continue at all outside the Garden of Eden? Several pieces of evidence, both scriptural and scientific, point to the fact that indeed, the mild climate present in the Garden did continue, at least for a while (and most likely even up to the time of the Flood).

In all likelihood, the antediluvian world was vastly different from the Earth of today. For example, we know from clear statements of Scripture (e.g., Psalm 104:8) that after the Flood, God caused the mountains to rise and the valleys to sink, evidently indicating that the mountains of the antediluvian world were not nearly as high as those of today. We also know from Scripture that on day two of Creation, God "divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament" (Genesis 1:7). It is the view of some scientists that there may have been a water "canopy" of some sort above the Earth (the same canopy, they suggest, that later would shower rain on the Earth for 40 days and 40 nights–Genesis 7:17 and 8:6). What effect(s) would this canopy have on the Earth's climate if, in fact, it did exist? Whitcomb and Morris have suggested:

> The most immediate and obvious of these effects would be to cause a uniformly warm temperate climate around the earth. Such water vapor as is present in the atmosphere today has this specific effect of regulating the earth's temperature. The inferred antediluvian vapor envelope would have produced this result in much greater degree, with a larger percentage of the sun's incoming radiant energy being absorbed and retained and uniformly distributed over the earth than at present, both seasonally and latitudinally.... The constant battle of "fronts" would be mostly absent, so that antediluvian climates were not only warm but also without violent windstorms (1961, p. 240).

Various other writers (e.g., Rehwinkel, *The Flood*; Patten, *The Biblical Flood and the Ice Epoch*; Dillow, *The Waters Above*) have made reference to the possibility of an antediluvian world

different from our own, but most have done so, correctly, in cautious tones, attempting to be careful to respect Scripture while at the same time avoiding unwarranted conclusions. For example, Whitcomb and Morris stated:

> Although we can as yet point to no definite scientific verification of this pristine vapor protective envelope around the earth, neither does there appear to be any inherent physical difficulty in the hypothesis of its existence, and it does suffice to explain a broad spectrum of phenomena both geological and Scriptural....
>
> We feel warranted, therefore, in suggesting such a thermal vapor blanket around the earth in pre-Pleistocene times as at least a plausible working hypothesis, which seems to offer satisfactory explanation of quite a number of Biblical references and geophysical phenomena. The detailed physics of this inferred antediluvian atmosphere is bound to be uncertain as yet, especially in view of the fact that so little is known about even the present atmosphere, but there seems to be no inherent physical difficulty with the concept (1961, pp. 241,256).

There have been those, however, who have taken exception to the canopy theory. For example, John N. Clayton has objected to it quite vociferously, and has raised what he considers to be a number of serious problems (1980, pp. 5-6). However, such arguments are indicative of a lack of study in this area. *The Genesis Flood* was published in 1961. Since then, much additional research has been done, and many of the objections to the canopy theory have been answered. The reader interested in an examination of data bearing on a global water canopy should refer to the classic text in this area, *The Waters Above*, by Joseph Dillow (1981), or to technical research reports such as the one presented at the second International Conference on Creationism (see Rush and Vardiman, 1990, pp. 231-245).

Interestingly, even evolutionists speak conclusively of a universally mild climate characterizing the Earth at one time. Speaking of the age of reptiles, for example, E.H. Colbert said:

> Many lines of dinosaurs evolved during the 100 million years or more [according to the evolutionists' timetable–BT] of Mesozoic history in which they lived.... In those days the earth had a tropical or subtropical climate over much of its land surface, and in the widespread tropical lands there was an abundance of lush vegetation. The land was low and there were no high mountains forming physical or climatic barriers (1949, p. 71).

W.J. Arkell, in summarizing the so-called Jurassic Era, remarked that "...a fairly rich flora of temperate facies flourished within or near both the Arctic and Antarctic Circles, in East Greenland and Grahamland" (1956, p. 615).

Geological evidence, in fact, points to a universally warm climate during the antediluvian era. The canopy theory harmonizes quite well with this portion of the evidence. Such a canopy likely would have produced a "greenhouse" effect on the Earth, ensuring a warm, uniform climate worldwide–due, in large part, to the trapping of the Sun's incoming radiant energy. This concept certainly fits the picture provided by the flora and fauna of the past world. Naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, a scientific contemporary of Charles Darwin, commented:

> There is but one climate known to the ancient fossil world as revealed by the plants and animals entombed in the rocks, and the climate was a mantle of spring-like loveliness which seems to have prevailed continuously over the whole globe. Just how the world could have been this warm all over may be a matter of conjecture; that it was so warmed effectively and continuously is a matter of fact (1876, 1:277).

Samuel Kinns quotes a writer by the name of Figuier as stating almost the same thing:

> It is a remarkable circumstance that conditions of equable and warm climate, combined with humidity, do not seem to have been limited to any one part of the globe, but the temperature of the whole seems to have been nearly the same in very different latitudes. From the equatorial regions up to Melville Island in the Arctic Ocean, where in our days eternal frost prevails– from Spitzbergen to the center of Af-

> rica, the Carboniferous flora is identically the same. When nearly the same plants are found in Greenland and Guinea; when the same species, now extinct, are met with of equal development at the equator as at the pole, we cannot but admit that at this period the temperature of the globe was nearly alike everywhere. What we now call climate was unknown in these geological times. There seems to have been then only one climate over the whole globe (1886, p. 166).

Fossils of plants and manmade tools show that at one time the African desert was covered with luxuriant vegetation and was inhabited by man. Similar remains have been discovered in the Gobi Desert of China and in numerous other desert areas around the globe. The Arctic regions testify forcefully to the warm temperatures that apparently were found there in the distant past. The Arctic Islands, north of Siberia, are packed quite densely with the remains of elephants and other mammals, along with dense tangles of fossil trees and assorted plants.

The great coal beds at both poles speak of the warm conditions that must have prevailed at one time throughout the world. Whitcomb (quoting from *National Geographic*, February 1963, pp. 288,296) has commented concerning the coal beds of Antarctica: "The frozen and forbidden shoreline of the South Polar continent challenges our imagination as to its former condition. The fact that it was once warm and humid and had abundant vegetation is shown by 'wide-spread discoveries of coal and petrified wood' " (1973, p. 82; see also *National Geographic*, November 1971, p. 653). The stratified rocks of Antarctica have yielded fossils of such plants as ferns, oaks, magnolias, ginkoes and breadfruits (the latter usually growing only in India and South China). Many of the plants buried in the frozen strata can grow only in climates entirely different from those where their remains are found. Additionally, Whitcomb and Morris (and others) have called attention to the "large numbers of fossil mammals, apparently trapped and in some cases partially frozen before the soft parts had decayed" (1961, p. 288).

These facts, and others like them far too numerous to discuss here, tend to support the contention that "the world of Adam and his immediate descendants contained proportion-

ately more habitable land than the world today. There were no enormous waste areas, such as the great deserts of Africa, Asia, America and Australia" (Rehwinkel, 1951, p. 2). Some creationist scientists have suggested the likelihood that the early Earth (i.e., prior to the Flood) may have been a singular land mass. If this were true, that certainly would account for more "habitable land" and, considered along with the possibility of a pre-Flood canopy, would help explain a globally equable climate. While it is neither possible nor desirable to be dogmatic on these points, they do bear serious consideration and provide "food for thought."

As an aside, although I do not have the space here to develop the concept in its entirety, I would like to mention that antediluvian longevity also might be explained on the basis of something to do with the vapor canopy. Remember that "before the Flood, therefore, everything was conducive to physical health and longevity. Equable temperatures, freedom from environmental radiation, and other factors attributable to the vapor canopy all contributed to this effect" (Whitcomb and Morris, 1961, p. 404). The early chapters of Genesis record great life-spans for the patriarchs, topped by Methuselah at 969 years. This may seem incomprehensible to us, but obviously was quite possible under the conditions prevailing in the antediluvian world. Donald Patten and his son Phillip, in their unpublished manuscript, *The Longevity Accounts in Genesis, Job, Josephus, and Augustine*, have suggested that perhaps a much higher carbon dioxide content in the atmosphere would have slowed maturation rates and induced longer life. Slowing maturation also would produce, in some instances, giantism. Geological and biblical evidences do indicate that plants, animals, and even some humans of the past were larger than we now seem to observe (e.g., grape clusters carried back from the land of Canaan by the twelve spies, dinosaurs, and Goliath, just to name a few). As one writer stated:

> The Flood completely altered the climatic balance. The ozone layer was disturbed thereby letting a greater quantity of harmful ultra-violet radiation penetrate to the ground. The carbon dioxide balance was altered giving much reduced percentages. Thus life spans were dramatically shortened.... The curve of declin-

> ing longevity is perfectly consistent with a gradual reduction of carbon dioxide. The average age of antediluvians, Enoch excepted, was 912, but this reduced in a mathematical curve after the Flood thereby suggesting a physical cause (Fisher, 1982, p. 54).

Indeed, only after the Flood do we begin to notice a severe reduction in men's ages. The data suggest a "physical cause." [Once again, however, in an effort to placate those who are intent on viewing mankind through evolutionary presuppositions, some have attempted to "explain away" the great ages of the patriarchs. For example, John N. Clayton has suggested that possibly the patriarchs did not live to these great ages, but rather had their ages calculated via calling the "years" by our "months," subsequently necessitating that the patriarchs vast ages be divided by a factor of twelve in order to ascertain the correct age (1978, pp. 11-13). Filby has dealt with this concept, and shown how ridiculous this assertion is. "This we reject completely, as not only can it be shown to be absolutely wrong, but it makes more difficulties than it solves. Enoch, we are told, had a son Methuselah when he was sixty-five. If we divide by twelve, he had a son when he was 5.4 years old!" (1970, p. 101). There is no reason to have to "explain away" the long ages of the patriarchs. They are to be accepted just as they are given in the biblical record (see Thompson, 1992, 12:17-20; 1995, pp. 265-275).]

But questions frequently arise. What was the cause of the eventual decrease in man's longevity? What was the cause of the dramatic environmental changes that obviously have occurred? What caused the two Poles of the Earth to become frozen wastelands when once they were beautiful, forested landscapes? What caused otherwise lush tropical areas to be turned into vast deserts? **Something** obviously happened. That "something" could well have been the global Flood of Noah.

THE NECESSITY OF CONSTRUCTING AN ARK

According to the account recorded in Genesis 6:5, God "saw that the wickedness of man was great," and declared His intention to destroy the Earth by water as a result of man's

willful rebellion. Approximately a century before the Flood, God chose to reveal to a single human being, Noah, His decision. God then instructed Noah to make the necessary preparations for this coming judgment by building an ark that would serve as the instrument of salvation not only for his own family, but also for the seed of all land-living, air-breathing creatures. Rehwinkel observed:

> The word "ark" seems to be derived from the Egyptian language and signifies "chest" or something to float. The word occurs only twice in the Bible, here for the ark of Noah and again in Ex. 2:3-5 for the ark of bulrushes in which the infant Moses was saved from the cruel decree of Pharaoh (1951, p. 58).

A fundamental question that must be asked in the biblical context is this: If the Flood were merely a local inundation limited to the Mesopotamian region of that day, **why would Noah need to build such an ark in the first place?** Whitcomb has suggested that:

> **...there would have been no need for an Ark at all if the flood was local in extent.** The whole procedure of constructing such a vessel, involving over 100 years 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 simply to have warned Noah of the coming destruction in plenty of time for him to 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 of the danger zone also, without having to be stored in a barge for an entire year! The Biblical record simply cannot be harmonized with the concept of a flood that was confined to the Near East (1973, p. 47, emp. in orig.).

This is a point that almost all advocates of the local flood theory either have missed or ignored. Speaking as coauthors of *The Genesis Flood*, Whitcomb and Morris opined: "The writers have had a difficult time finding local-Flood advocates that are willing to face the implications of this particular argument" (1961, p. 11). It is easy to understand why.

In attempting to support the concept of a local flood, while simultaneously trying to provide a logical solution to **why** Noah should have been instructed to build an ark in the first place, Arthur C. Custance suggested that the entire ark-building episode was merely an "object lesson" for 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 Noah could have done to stop them except 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 (1958, p. 18).

Responding to this suggestion, Whitcomb and Morris, asked:

> But how can one read the Flood account of Genesis 6-8 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? (1961, p. 12, emp. in orig.).

In addressing this same point, Van Bebber and Taylor wrote that it would be strange indeed for God to require Noah to spend approximately 100 years of his life

> ...building a huge boat to save representative animals which really didn't need to be saved. Most, if not all, of these animals were alive and well in other parts of the world. Dry land was just over the horizon all along. Despite the lack of necessity, God kept Noah trapped in this boat full of animals under these strange circumstances for over a year!... If only those animals

> in a specific geographic region died, it would have been unnecessary to protect pairs in the Ark for the express purpose of preventing their extinction. Surely there would be representatives of their kinds in other areas. If, on the other hand, there had been some unique kinds in the path of a local flood, then it would seem more logical to send representative pairs out of the area, rather than to the Ark, as God did. Certainly the birds could have flown to the safety of dry land. If the Flood had been local, God could also have simply sent Noah and family out of the area (1996, pp. 56-58).

Further, consider that Genesis 7:21-23 plainly states:

> 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 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.

Once again, Whitcomb and Morris have sought to remind local-Flood advocates:

> These are exactly the same terms used in the first chapter of Genesis to describe the various kinds of land animals which God created.... 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! (p. 13, emp. in orig.).

One final point needs to be mentioned. Some today are fervent in their insistence that the ark has been found on top of the 17,000-foot-high Mt. Ararat in Turkey. Among that number is John Warwick Montgomery (1972). Montgomery, however, is a proponent of the local flood theory. How can a man claim to accept biblical and/or scientific evidence that he feels points to the remains of Noah's ark being on the top of Mt.

Ararat, **and then deny the biblical testimony to the global Flood that put it there?** Does Dr. Montgomery understand what he is asking us to believe? To claim that the remains of the ark are on top of the 17,000-foot-high Mt. Ararat, while at the same time insisting that it was put there by a **local** flood, is to strain at the gnat and swallow the camel. [NOTE: I do not accept Montgomery's claim that the ark can be proven to be on Ararat, but that is beyond the scope of this book. For further discussion of this point, see Morris, 1992; Major, 1994.]

THE CONSTRUCTION AND SIZE OF THE ARK

God told Noah (Genesis 6:15) to make "the length of the ark three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits." If we are to understand the size of the ark, we first must understand the length of the cubit. "The Babylonians had a 'royal' cubit of about 19.8 inches, the Egyptians had a longer and a shorter cubit of about 20.65 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" (Whitcomb and Morris, 1961, p. 10). Rehwinkel has noted:

> It is generally supposed that the cubit is the distance from the point of the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. Translated into our own standard of measurements, the common cubit is estimated at about 18 inches. But Petrie, a noted Egyptologist, is of the opinion that it measured 22 inches. Whether or not Noah's cubit was comparable to any one of the cubits now known to us, no one is able to determine. It is not unreasonable, however, to assume that, in keeping with nature about him, man before the Flood was more fully developed and was of larger stature than now and the length from his elbow to the tip of his finger was even longer than the suggested 22 inches. Two feet may be more nearly correct.... But accepting the lower figures and placing the cubit at eighteen inches and then again at twenty-four inches, we get the following results: According to the lower standard, the ark would have measured 450 feet in length, seventy-five feet in width, and forty-five feet in height.

> According to the higher figure, the length would have been six hundred feet; the width, one hundred feet; the height, sixty feet.... The ships of the maritime nations of the world never approached the dimensions of the ark until about a half century ago (1951, pp. 59-60).

In fact, as Filby has pointed out, as late as 1858 "the largest vessel of her type in the world was the P&O liner *Himalaya*, 240 feet by 35 feet." It was in that year that Isambard K. Brunel produced

> ...the *Great Eastern*, 692 feet by 83 feet by 30 feet of approximately 19,000 tons...five times the tonnage of any ship then afloat.... Still more interesting are the figures for the *Great Britain*, designed by I.K. Brunel in 1844. Her dimensions were 322 feet by 51 feet by 32 feet, so that the ratios are almost exactly those of the Ark. Brunel had the accumulated knowledge of generations of shipbuilders to draw upon. The Ark was the first of its kind! (1970, p. 93).

Using the most conservative estimate available for the length of the cubit (17.5 inches), Whitcomb and Morris have shown that the ark would have been 437.5 feet long, 72.92 feet wide, and 43.75 feet high. In its three decks (Genesis 6: 16) it had a total area of approximately 95,700 square feet–the equivalent of slightly more than twenty standard basketball courts. Its total volume would have been about 1,396,000 cubic feet. The gross tonnage (a measurement of cubic space rather than weight, one ton being equivalent to 100 cubic feet of usable storage space) was about 13,960 tons (1961, p. 10).

Critics of the Flood account have stated that the ark was not large enough to handle its assigned cargo. Such critics, however, generally have not taken the time to consider just how large the ark really was, or the cargo it had to carry. As Whitcomb has pointed out:

> For the sake of realism, imagine waiting at a railroad crossing while ten freight trains, each pulling 52 boxcars, move slowly by, one after another. That is how much space was available in the Ark, for its capacity was equivalent to 520 modern railroad stock cars. A barge of such gigantic size, with its thousands of built-

> in compartments (Gen. 6:14) would have been sufficiently large to carry two of every **species** of air-breathing animal in the world today (and doubtless the tendency toward taxonomic splitting has produced more "species" than can be justified in terms of Genesis "kinds") on only half of its available deck space. The remaining space would have been occupied by Noah's family, five additional representatives of each of the comparatively few kinds of animals acceptable for sacrifice, two each of the kinds that have become extinct since the Flood, and food for them all (Gen. 6:21) [1973, p. 23, emp. in orig.].

Whitcomb and Morris investigated the numbers of animals that would have been on the ark (using the highest possible estimates, and taxonomic figures provided by evolutionists), and showed that the biblical account **can** fit known scientific facts regarding these matters (1961, pp. 65-69). Their book, *The Genesis Flood,* was published in 1961. Thirty-five years later, John Woodmorappe expanded on their original work and produced what is likely the most exhaustive, well-researched feasibility study ever put into print dealing specifically with the ark's construction and contents (1996). His data-based conclusions established beyond any doubt that the ark could do what it was designed to do.

Some have complained that an examination of such facts and figures amounts to little more than "mental gymnastics" (Clayton, 1980, p. 8). However, it is not "mental gymnastics" to examine the physical structure and size of the ark provided by the Bible itself and then to compare that information with known scientific facts regarding the animal kingdom.

Some, like Custance, have stated (or implied) that the building of such a large boat as the ark, in such remote times of antiquity, by so few people, simply was not possible, or at best was highly unlikely. Regarding such statements, I would like to offer the following comments. First, as Whitcomb and Morris have noted:

> 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 imagi-

> nation. 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 (1961, p. 11).

Second, as Filby has remarked:

> Yet even granting all this, some may feel that the Ark was too large for early man to have attempted. A survey of the ancient world shows in fact the very reverse. One is constantly amazed at the enormous tasks which our ancestors attempted. The Great Pyramid was not the work of the later Pharaohs; it was the work of the 4th Dynasty–long before Abraham! This pyramid contained over two million blocks of stone each weighing about 2½ tons. Its vast sides, 756 feet long, are set to the points of the compass to an accuracy of a small fraction of one degree! The so-called Colossi of Memnon again are not of recent times– they belong to the 18th Dynasty of Egypt. Cut from blocks of sandstone, they weigh 400 tons each and were brought 600 miles to their present position.... As our thoughts go back to the Colossus of Rhodes, the Pharos Lighthouse, the Hanging Gardens, the Ziggurats, the Step Pyramid–or even in our own land, to Stonehenge– we have no reason to suppose that early man was afraid to tackle great tasks (1970, p. 92).

Custance's argument thus is shown to be completely at odds with historical data. Merely because the ark was large does not mean the task was impossible. And we must not forget that Noah had 120 years in which to build it (Genesis 6:3).

GATHERING, STORAGE, AND CARE OF THE ANIMALS

Objections of every kind have been raised regarding the Genesis record of the Flood, but perhaps none has been echoed as loudly as those relating to the gathering, storage, and care of the animals destined to live through that Flood via the ark. As early as 1854, John Pye Smith began raising objec-

tions (1854, p. 145), and local flood advocates have been raising them ever since. For the most part, objections can be grouped under four main headings: (1) gathering of the animals; (2) storage of the animals; (3) care of the animals; and (4) migration of the animals after the Flood.

The objection has been raised that it would have been impossible for creatures from different regions of the world to leave their respective homes and meet Noah in the Mesopotamian Valley. The unique creatures of Australia, for example, certainly could not have traveled to the ark since Australia is an island. And how could the polar bear survive a journey from its native land to the sultry plains of Mesopotamia? The variety of climates, the difficult geography, and other various and sundry items seemingly would make such journeys impossible. Some have viewed such "impossible journeys" as militating against the accuracy of the Flood account. Whitcomb and Morris, in commenting on such arguments, wrote:

> An equally serious fault in this type of reasoning is that it begs the question of the extent and effects of the Deluge. It assumes, for example, that climatic zones were exactly the same before the Flood as they are now, that animals inhabited the same areas of the world as they do now, and that the geography and topography of the earth continued unchanged. But on the assumptions of a universal Deluge, all these conditions would have been profoundly altered. Arctic and desert zones may never have existed before the Flood; nor the great intercontinental barriers of high mountain ranges, impenetrable jungles, and open seas (as between Australia and Southeast Asia, and between Siberia and Alaska). On this basis, it is quite probable that animals were more widely distributed than now, with representatives of each created kind of land animal living in that part of the earth where Noah was building the Ark (1961, pp. 64-65).

Rehwinkel has suggested that during the probationary period, "migration of these animals which God had intended to save might have extended over several generations of animals" (1951, p. 75). Thus, when the ark was ready for its occu-

pants, the animals already were in the nearby geographical regions. I also might point out that Genesis 6:19-20 makes it clear that God caused the animals to "come unto Noah." Noah did not have to "go after" all the various animals. Even Bernard Ramm has admitted that the animals must have come to Noah as they were "prompted by divine instinct" (1954, p. 169). Here, too, is an intriguing point to consider: If God could bring the animals to Adam to be named (Genesis 2:19), could He not bring them just as easily to Noah to be saved?

After acknowledging the gathering of the animals into the ark by God's intervention, how, then, do we explain the storage and care of the animals in the ark? Genesis 6:14 states that Noah was instructed to build "rooms" (cubicles, cells, or cabins) in the ark to hold the animals. Once onboard, the animals were placed into these "rooms" for the long trip. We need to remember, of course, that the Genesis "kind" (Hebrew, *min*) is not the same as the biologist's "species" of today. Noah did not have to take two or seven of every **species** of animal. He had to take two (or seven) of every "kind." That there was ample room on the ark for all these animals already has been documented, both here and elsewhere (cf. Whitcomb and Morris, 1961, pp. 65-69; Woodmorappe, 1996).

But critics still are plagued with what they consider to be insurmountable problems. How could eight people possibly feed and care for all the different animals on the ark? Ramm, as one such critic, complained: "The problem of feeding and caring for them would be enormous. The task of carrying away manure and bringing food would completely overtax the few people in the ark." He further suggested that the problem of "special diets and special conditions needed for the animals overthrows the idea of a universal flood" (1954, p. 167).

Ramm, however, apparently has overlooked several important factors. First, of course, is the fact that his local flood theory suffers from the exact same problem. Even if the Flood were local, the care and feeding of the animals **still** would present a major problem. Second, if the animals could have been "prompted by divine instinct" (to use Ramm's own words) to come to the ark, could they not be cared for in the ark by He Who was responsible for that "divine instinct"?

Third, Ramm has overlooked two important Bible passages. Genesis 7:1 records, "And Jehovah said unto Noah, **Come** thou and all thy house into the ark..." (emp. added). Reading the verse from a version of the Bible that has God's command translated correctly (KJV or ASV, to name just two), one sees the Lord instructing Noah not to "go over there and get in that ark," but rather to "**Come** into the ark" –a personal invitation from the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe to join Him on a year-long trip! The point is this: **God was with Noah and his family**. This is depicted quite graphically in Genesis 8:1 where it is stated that God "remembered" Noah and all the animals in the ark. The Hebrew word *zakar*, translated "remembered," suggests God's continued watch over the occupants of the ark. In the Scriptures, God's "remembering" always implies His movement toward the object of His memory (cf. Genesis 19:29; Exodus 2:24; Luke 1:54-55, et al.). In fact, the primary meaning of *zakar*, according to Hebrew usage, is "granting requests, protecting, delivering" when God is the subject and persons are the object (Brown, Driver, Briggs, 1979, p. 270).

Noah and his family were not abandoned or left to their own devices to tackle this giant task. God was "with them" and "remembered them." The **how** of this process is not stated specifically in the inspired text. Whitcomb has suggested that possibly God supernaturally imposed a year-long hibernation process on the animals, thereby minimizing the necessity of a great deal of food and care.

> What Biblical evidence do we find to support this significant concept? **First**, we must assume that God supernaturally controlled the bodily functions of these animals to bring them to the Ark in the first place, overcoming all of their natural instincts during that period of time. All alternative possibilities have been shown to be hopelessly inadequate. **Second**, there could have been no multiplication of animals (not even the rabbits) during the year of the Flood, for the Ark was built just large enough to carry two of each, and the animals entered the Ark two by two and a year later went out of the Ark two by two. Note that it was not until **after** Noah brought the creatures out of

> the Ark that God commanded them to "breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth" (8:17).... In the entire matter of gathering the animals to the Ark and caring for them during the year of the Flood, the Book of Genesis is **consistently supernatural** in its presentation (1973, p. 32, emp. in orig.).

While it is impossible to be dogmatic about what God did in regard to gathering and caring for the animals prior to, and during, their journey, it is clear that, to use the words of Robert Jamieson, "They must have been prompted by an overruling Divine direction, as it is impossible, on any other principles, to account for their going in **pairs**" (1948, p. 95, emp. in orig.). There was **some** divine "overruling" in the storage, feeding, and care of the animals, to be sure. How much the Bible does not indicate. But as Rehwinkel has observed:

> But, if we are willing to accept the possibility of the miraculous, some such solution is at least conceivable. The Flood as a whole was a stupendous, miraculous interference with the laws governing the entire universe; a temporary suspension of the laws governing the routine and habits of a select group of animals for one year is but an insignificant detail in comparison. The Biblical account of the Flood is so brief, and our knowledge of the world before the Flood, and particularly of the ark, is so limited that here, as elsewhere, many questions must remain unanswered (1951, p. 76).

How the animals became so widely distributed over the Earth, once they disembarked from the ark after the Flood, is not explained in the Genesis account. Whitcomb and Morris have made some viable suggestions in *The Genesis Flood* (1961, pp. 79-86). Migrations may have taken place by land bridges, by air, or even by direct supernatural intervention of God Himself. Other possibilities exist. For example, perhaps after the Flood those animals that came off the ark lived in or around the mountains of Ararat, and there they were able to "breed abundantly in the earth, and multiply upon the earth" (Genesis 8:17). Their **descendants** then migrated slowly, generation by generation, until the Earth once again was filled

with animal life. Critics often are heard to ask questions like, "How did the unique animals like marsupials get back to Australia, for example?" [NOTE: For a discussion of this topic, see Major, 1989a.] There is a significant assumption in that question, however. Who can **prove** that the marsupials were in Australia **before** the Flood in the first place? Some pieces of information we do possess; some we do not. We do know, for example, that a certain number of every kind of air-breathing animal entered the ark. We know that representatives of each exited the ark. And we know that the survivors bred and multiplied, filling the Earth once more with animal life. Exactly how they migrated (or were distributed) to various parts of the Earth, how long that took, or why some animals later became extinct, we may not be able to determine conclusively. These are questions that must remain unanswered.

THE EXTENT AND DURATION OF THE FLOOD

Genesis 7:11 gives us some indication of the devastating nature of the Flood when it states that "all the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." This was no gentle spring rain. Rather, it was the final judgment of an angry God on a sin-sick, destined-to-die world. Water came down ("the windows of heaven were opened") and water rose up ("all the fountains of the great deep were broken up") until finally Genesis 7:19-20 records: "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." In assessing these passages, Whitcomb and Morris wrote:

> 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 mountains had been covered with water, the Flood would have been absolutely universal; for water must seek its own level—and must do so quickly! (1961, pp. 1-2, emp. in orig.).

Critics, however, have been quick to point out that the phrase "all the high mountains" need not necessarily mean **all** the high mountains, for the word "all" can be used in a relative or distributive sense. H.C. Leupold has dealt a deathblow to that argument.

> 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 a few merely 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 (1942, pp. 301-302).

How deep, then, was this water "over all the high mountains"? The text indicates it was "fifteen cubits upward" that the water "prevailed." This phrase obviously cannot mean that the waters went only fifteen cubits high (approximately 22½ feet), for the phrase is qualified by the one that immediately follows–"and the mountains were covered." The true meaning of the phrase is to be found in comparing Genesis 7: 19-20 with Genesis 6:15, where it is stated that the ark was thirty cubits high. The phrase "fifteen cubits" must then refer to the draught of the ark. The draught of a boat such as the ark is generally half its height. That is, when fully loaded, it sinks in the water to a depth equal to half the height. If the ark was thirty cubits high, and sank half of that, it would sink fifteen cubits. If the waters then prevailed upward "fifteen cubits," that would be adequate to protect the ark as it floated on the waters all over the Earth for little more than a year. Therefore the ark would not hit any mountain tops during its journey. [As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, since Psalm 104:8 speaks of God "raising up new mountains" after the Flood, it is likely that the mountains of Noah's day were not nearly as

high as the mountains that today. It seems probable that such mountains were much smaller than, say, such peaks as Mt. Everest or Mt. McKinley that are so well known to us.]

A careful reading of the Genesis text indicates that the Flood lasted approximately a year. By way of summary, Whitcomb and Morris observed:

> 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 (1961, p. 7).

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLE PETER

One of the most important, and most convincing, passages relating to the magnitude and significance of the biblical Flood is found in 2 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 wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of 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 stirring passage, Peter spoke of some who—because of their fatal adherence to the false doctrine of uniformitarianism—did not take seriously Heaven's promise of the Second Coming of Christ. These "mockers" lamented that all things were continuing as they had "from the beginning of the creation." In response to that erroneous idea, Peter discussed two events that simply cannot be explained on the basis of uniformitarianism, and in so doing destroyed forever infidelity's arguments.

The first of these events was the creation of the world: "there were heavens from of old, and an earth...by the word of God." The second of these events was the Great Flood of Noah: "The world [Greek *kosmos*] that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." Peter compared the destruction of the world that occurred during the Noahic Flood to the destruction of the world that will occur at Christ's Second Coming. For, said Peter, as "the world that then was" perished by **water**, so the "heavens that now are, and the earth" have been "stored up for **fire,** being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." From Peter's straightforward language, it is impossible logically for men to suggest that Peter meant to imply a coming destruction by fire of only **part** of the Earth. Peter's terms—"the heavens that **now are**, **and the earth**"—obviously are universal in nature. Peter portrayed one event that brought about a transformation not just of the Earth, but also of the heavens as well. That event, according to the inspired apostle, was the Noahic 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." 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 cause the very elements to dissolve with fervent heat (II Peter 3:10) [Whitcomb, 1973, pp. 57-58, emp. in orig.].

British scholar Derek Kidner, in his book, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, noted that

> ...we should be careful to read the [Flood–BT] account wholeheartedly in its own terms, which depict a **total** judgment on the ungodly world already set before us in Genesis–not an event of debatable dimensions in a world we may try to reconstruct. The whole living scene is blotted out, and the New Testament makes us learn from it the greater judgment that awaits not only our entire globe but the universe itself (2 Peter 3:5-7) [1967, p. 95, emp. in orig.].

If the New Testament "makes us learn" from the Noahic flood account that the coming judgment of which Peter spoke will involve "not only our entire globe but the universe itself," how can this lesson be learned from a flood that was merely **local** in extent?

There can be no doubt, then, that Peter's argument (that there is a coming universal destruction awaiting this world–an argument framed from a comparison with the historical fact of the Flood of Noah) provides inspired testimony regarding the universal destruction of the Genesis Flood. "Anything less than a catastrophe of such proportions would upset the entire force of the apostle's argument and would give much encouragement to those who would teach what he so solemnly condemned" (Whitcomb, 1973, p. 59).

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

In Luke 17:26-30 (cf. Matthew 24:39), the Lord made the following statements:

> 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 (emp. added).

The Lord thus predicted an impending doom upon the Jews of His day who would not heed the Word of God. But for our purpose here, note the context in which Jesus discussed the Flood destruction of Genesis 6-8. He placed the Flood right alongside the destruction of Sodom and the destruction of the ungodly at His Second Coming. Whitcomb has observed:

> 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....
>
> 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 (1973, pp. 21,22, emp. in orig.).

THE RAINBOW COVENANT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

A point that often is overlooked by local flood advocates is the importance of the rainbow covenant that God gave (Genesis 9:11-15). God promised (three times—Genesis 8:21; 9:11;

9:15) never again to destroy "everything living" and "all flesh" by a flood. After the Flood, He set a rainbow in the heavens as a sign of the permanency of that promise. If the Genesis Flood were merely a local event, then it is obvious to even the casual observer that God has broken His covenant repeatedly since there have been countless local floods upon the face of the Earth in which multiplied thousands of people have perished. If the Genesis Flood were local, but God promised never to send another (local) flood, then why have local floods continued?

Advocates of the local flood theory have God breaking His promise, in spite of plain statements of Scripture (like Titus 1:2) which state that God "cannot lie." S.J. Schultz therefore wrote:

> 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 (1955, p. 52).

To those who respect the inspiration of Scripture, the arguments that establish the Flood as a global, universal, worldwide event are incontrovertible.

4

CONCLUSION

In this examination of the biblical doctrine of the Great Flood of Genesis, I have attempted to draw conclusions based on sound, scriptural evidence and proper exegesis. For example, I noted that without the inspired testimony of both the Old and New Testaments, we would know little about the entire Flood incident. We are dependent upon the Scriptures—which exhibit verbal, plenary inspiration—for information about the Noahic Flood. We have seen, from biblical testimony, the reason for the Flood—man's rebellion and sin against God. We have discussed the supernatural elements relating to the Flood, without which it would have been impossible. At the same time, however, we have noted that many of the events associated with the Flood (e.g., the building of the ark, Flood water damage, etc.) were purely natural, not supernatural, in character. We have observed the ubiquity of flood myths, stories, and legends. And I have documented the attacks on, and compromises of, the Genesis account of the Flood, and have explained, and refuted, each of these attacks and/or compromises.

Lastly, it has been my intent to explain why the Bible demands a global Flood and not merely a local inundation of some kind. By examining such factors as the need for an ark, the design and construction of the ark, the size of the ark, the gathering and care of the animals, etc., I have explained the necessity of accepting the universal nature of the Flood. And, of course, I have presented extensive biblical testimony from a variety of sources regarding the Flood (Jesus, Peter, etc.).

It has not been the main thrust of this book to present scientific evidence that supports the concept of a global Flood.

As I said earlier, since it is the **biblical** Flood that is under discussion, the truthfulness of the Genesis record dealing with the Flood must be determined by an appeal to the Bible. However, there is ample scientific evidence available to indicate the presence of a global Flood in the distant past. In fact, whole volumes have been written documenting such evidence.

The classic volume *The Genesis Flood*, although first published in 1961 and therefore somewhat dated, is a good beginning point for such material. [The second edition, published in 1998, makes available newer information.] John Whitcomb's two sequels, *The World That Perished* and *The Early Earth*, contain valuable additional material, including responses to critics of *The Genesis Flood*. Harold Clark also has written a book dealing with such matters (*Fossils, Flood and Fire*). Similar books (*The Flood*, by Rehwinkel; S*peak Through the Earthquake, Wind & Fire*, by Fisher; *Grand Canyon: Monument to Catastrophe*, by Austin) are available, and speak to the fact of the cumulative amount of scientific evidence that supports the concept of the Genesis Flood.

However, I believe a word of caution is in order. In the past, extremes have been documented from those on both sides of the issue. Some have made indefensible statements like "...There is no way geologically of supporting the idea that there was a worldwide flood..." (Clayton, 1969). On the other hand, some have interpreted almost every shred of evidence as supporting a global Flood, even going so far as to identify a particular layer within the geologic column as **the** Flood layer—a posture that, in the end, proved extremely inadvisable (as well as embarrassing).

Both extremes should be avoided. Biblical evidence establishes the fact that there **was** a universal Flood. Knowing that, we then may be alert to evidence from science that possibly provides support for the Flood model. At the same time, however, we must realize that it is not always an easy task to interpret such evidence, for none among us has experienced or witnessed a global Flood. As Austin warned: "The worldwide Flood recounted in Genesis has no parallel in today's world" (1994, p. 192). Oard offered a further assessment when

he wrote: "Small-scale local floods may not compare well with such a gigantic catastrophe as a worldwide Flood" (1997, p. 3). Therefore, whatever measurements we make must, by necessity, be on a much smaller scale (e.g., using local flood information, etc.). This being the case, it behooves us to use great care, for we do not want to abuse, misuse, or over-extrapolate the evidence from science.

Critics of what generally is referred to as "Flood geology" have been quick to point out what they view as flaws in the system that attempts to interpret Earth history in light of the global catastrophe of Genesis 6-8. Certainly, I know of none among us who would advocate that there are no difficulties with respect to the Flood theory of geology. Even those who are at the forefront in writing and speaking on these topics (e.g., Henry Morris, John Whitcomb, Steven Austin, John Woodmorappe, Walter Brown, John Morris, and others) are quick to admit that they do not have all the answers.

At the same time, however, neither should we be intimidated by, nor fall prey to, the false, unbiblical concept of evolutionary uniformitarianism. Truth be told, attempts to avoid any possible interpretation of Earth history via Flood geology, and to harmonize interpretations of Earth history via strictly natural processes, present more problems than they solve. As Cockburn stated the matter: "No man departs from the Flood theory upon pretense of avoiding any absurdity therein supposed, but that he ran himself upon the necessity of believing greater absurdities than any he pretended to avoid" (1750, p. 163).

While there may be some difficulty coming to a full and complete scientific, after-the-fact understanding of the geology associated with a **global** Flood, the arguments for a **local** flood (whether allegedly based on biblical exegesis or on modern science) are unconvincing, and, more important, wrong. There are good, sound arguments in favor of a universal deluge. Henry Morris, for example, in *The Remarkable Birth of Planet Earth*, has suggested 96 arguments (64 biblical, 32 nonbiblical) that support the idea of a worldwide Flood (1972, pp. 96-100). While one may not agree with every single argument, it quickly will become apparent that it is impossible to dispose of each of the arguments in a nonchalant manner.

For example, vast animal graveyards and fossiliferous rubble shifts have been found worldwide. Evidence of a great, sudden, and recent watery cataclysm—followed by a deep freeze across the entire great north, accompanied by titanic hydraulic forces and crustal upheavals burying a host of elephants and other huge beasts in a region that now is almost totally devoid of vegetation—has been documented. Vast numbers of fossil trees and plants, standing erect, oblique, and even inverted while piercing through successive beds of water-laid stone (i.e., polystrate fossils) have been uncovered.

Vast and numerous rifts, fissures, and lava beds have been discovered, scarring the world ocean floor and bespeaking some gigantic submarine upheaval of the Earth's crust (as in the breaking up of the "fountains of the deep"). Geologic evidence suggests that most, if not all, of the world's mountains have been under water at some point in the past—a conclusion demanded by the existence of sedimentary deposits and marine fossils at or near their summits. Much of the Earth's crust is composed of sedimentary rocks (shales, limestones, sandstones, etc.) that generally are known to form under water.

Worldwide fossilization has occurred in vast quantities, including fossils of even many modern forms of life. These fossils are found in sedimentary strata, often at great depths and under great pressure. Yet as Henry Morris has observed: "Fossils, however, normally require very rapid burial and compaction to be preserved at all. Thus every sedimentary formation appears to have been formed rapidly—even catastrophically—and more and more present-day geologists are returning to this point of view" (1998, p. b). While it is not the intention of creationists to suggest that **every** instance of rapid burial and fossilization or mass destruction is attributable directly and specifically to the Great Flood, many may well be. [NOTE: The reader who is interested in a discussion of some well-known cases of fossilization that may turn out not to be Flood-related (e.g., woolly mammoths in Arctic regions) is encouraged to examine articles by Major (1989b) and Oard (1990, pp. 86-91).]

In addressing the well-known geologic column, Dr. Morris commented:

> It is also significant that the types of rocks, the vast extent of specific sedimentary rock formations, the minerals and metals, coal and oil found in the rocks, the various types of structures (i.e., faults, folds, thrusts, etc.), sedimentary rocks grossly deformed while still soft from recent deposition, and numerous other features seem to occur indiscriminately throughout the various "ages" supposedly represented in the column. To all outward appearances, therefore, they were formed in essentially the same brief time period (1998, pp. b-c).

Sedimentary fossil "graveyards" have been found worldwide in rocks of all "ages." Various rock types (granite, shale, limestone, etc.) are found in all parts of the geologic column, and there exists a general disorder in the fossil record that would be expected if a global Flood occurred.

The temptation undoubtedly exists, especially in today's climate of extreme scientific prowess, to exalt science above Scripture. Such a stance, while obviously to be expected of those who do not profess a belief in either God or His Word, simply is not an option for the person who accepts the truthfulness and inspiration of the Bible. John Morris addressed this particular temptation, and what happens when Bible believers fall prey to it, when he wrote:

> Unfortunately, many others now have begun to judge Scripture's accuracy by its agreement with scientific dogma, and then to distort Scripture until the two seem to agree. In doing so, scientific opinions of some scientists are elevated to a level they don't deserve, and Scripture suffers.
>
> If such a method of interpreting Scripture is followed throughout, other doctrines will fall also. After all, miracles are "scientifically" impossible. Scientists know that virgins don't give birth, men don't walk on water, and bodies don't rise from the dead. One may gain scientific credibility among the secularists by twisting Scripture to fit science, but it would be better to honor God by believing His word (1998, p. d).

Let us openly and fairly examine the biblical and scientific evidence that supports the Genesis Flood, and simultaneously urge others to do likewise. Let us be cautious as good students,

but never willing to compromise inspired testimony. Indeed, "the main concern, as always, should be what do the Scriptures teach" (Jones, 1996, p. 61).

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