



*“The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1)*

# REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

SEPTEMBER 2004

## FYI

### [Hugh Ross Visit](#)

Originally planned for September, Dr. Ross' visit has been postponed until later in the year. If your church or group is interested in hosting an outreach event, please contact the chapter at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org).

### [NSTA Conference](#)

The chapter will be participating in the National Science Teacher Association's Conference in Seattle November 18-20. If you would like to help, we need prayer and financial resources. Donations can be sent to: Reasons to Believe-Seattle Chapter, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683.

### [Get Involved](#)

We're looking for people who want to help spread the word that science the Bible agree. For more information, contact us at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org).

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

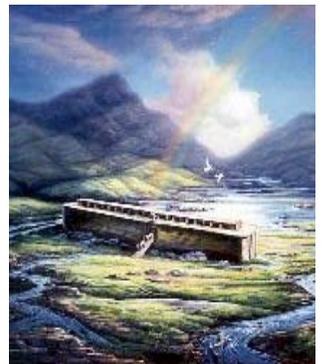
- Basically Good? . . . . . page 2**
- Apologetics Tool Kit. . . . . page 2**
- Book Reviews . . . . . page 3**
- How Big is Your God? . . . . . page 4**
- Great Resources . . . . . page 4**
- RTB Fast & Prayer . . . . . page 5**
- Who We Are . . . . . page 10**

## A Brief History of Flood Geology

JON GREENE

What is *flood geology*? When did it originate and who were its first proponents? Flood geology demands Noah's Flood be global, but is that the only valid interpretation? Though Scripture implies a global flood, does exegesis allow for a local flood? Is it possible Scripture actually negates flood geology? These are some of the questions this article hopes to answer.

One of the primary tenets held by many young-earth creationists is flood geology—a fairly recent concept that began only about 150 years ago. Also known as *catastrophic geology* or *neo-catastrophism*, flood geology purports that nearly all geologic formations on earth resulted from Noah's flood, which is characterized as a world-wide deluge about 4,500 years ago. All sedimentary strata, measuring several thousand feet in thickness, are said to be evidence for the Flood. Wayne Grudem describes flood geology way:



[Flood geology] is the view that the tremendous natural forces unleashed by the flood at the time of Noah significantly altered the face of the earth, causing the creation of coal and diamonds, for example, within the space of a year, rather than hundreds of millions of years, because of the extremely high pressure exerted by the water on earth. This view also claims that the flood deposited fossils in layers of incredibly thick sediment all over the earth.<sup>1</sup>

Flood geology was popularized in the 1960s by the publication of *The Genesis Flood* by John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris. It was a bombshell of a book and was selected by *Christianity Today* magazine as one of its "Choice Evangelical Books of 1961."<sup>2</sup> The book has a wide following even to this day.

See FLOOD GEOLOGY, page 6

# Basically Good?

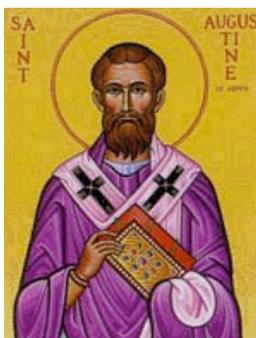
DAVE OUELLETTE

In last month's article, "Natural Evil or Natural Suffering," I commented on C. Fred Alford's book *What Evil Means to Us*.<sup>1</sup> In the book, Alford tries to answer some of the age-old questions about evil. While Alford writes from a secular perspective, he does raise some interesting points. And, though he tries to deny it, some of his conclusions seem to agree with what the Bible says about evil.

## EVIL'S SOURCE

Alford does not believe evil has any religious, moral, or intellectual foundation. The source of evil he says, "has its origins in nothingness because it is no-thing: the dread of boundlessness and all that goes with it—loss of self, loss of meaning, loss of history, and loss of connection to the world itself." The problem I have with his definition is the phrase "origin in nothingness." How can something come from nothing? Evil must have an origin.

Much of the Christian view of evil comes from Saint Augustine. He believed evil does not exist in itself but it is a corruption of good. Augustine reasoned, "Goodness is, so to speak, itself. Badness is only spoiled goodness. And there must be something good first before it can be spoiled." Thus, evil is not an original thing created by God, rather it is, in Augustine's words, a parasite.



Everyone has his or her opinion on the source of evil. One of things Reasons to Believe promotes is: "Test everything, hold on to the good" (1 Thessalonians 5:12). Could there be a way to test the source of evil? In chapter two of the book, Alford describes an interesting clinical study that seems to do just that.

## THE MILGRAM EXPERIMENTS

In the late 1960s, a well-known study was conducted called the Milgram experiments. Two famous social psychologists, Stanley Milgram and Philip Zimbardo, investigated social influence and the obedience to authority. The subjects, called teachers, believed they were participating in a study of the effects of punishment on learning.

If the learner failed to memorize word pairs, the teacher was told to deliver progressively stronger electrical shocks. The teacher was shown a device that was said to deliver shocks from 15 to 450 volts. The higher levels were labeled in big letters: Strong Shock, Very Strong Shock, Intense Shock, Extremely Intense Shock, Danger Severe Shock, and XXX. Each teacher was given a mild shock from the device so they would think it was real. But the learner, an accomplice of Milgram's, never actually received shocks.

The learner was a mild-mannered, vulnerable-looking, middle-aged man who was said to have heart condition. As he was given the shocks, he would scream,

See BASICALLY GOOD, page 9

## APOLOGETICS TOOL KIT

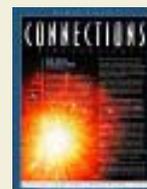
### [Creation Update Webcast](#)

Join Hugh Ross each Tuesday, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM (PT), for an exciting discussion about how the latest scientific discoveries provide powerful new evidence for the God of the Bible. Listen live through the RTB website [www.oneplace.com/ministries/creation\\_update](http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/creation_update). You can also listen to and/or download past episodes.



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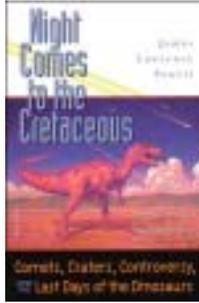


## Book Reviews

### Night Comes to the Cretaceous

James Lawrence Powell  
Harvest Books, 1999

Reviewer: Fred Spann



*Night Comes to the Cretaceous* is a fascinating and very readable account of the struggle within the scientific community over the astroid-impact theory explanation for the extinction of the dinosaurs and 70 percent of all species 65 million years ago. The theory, advanced by a retired Nobel prize winning Physicist, Luis Alvarez, and his son Walter in 1980, challenged established geological dogma.

In the book, Powell provides a lucid and objective account of science at work, including the passionate struggles, personal conflicts, setbacks and victories which transformed geological science. Powell's story of the claim for an extraterrestrial extinction cause draws on many different fields of science: vertebrate paleontology, micro-paleontology, evolutionary biology, rare-metal chemistry, astronomy, magnetism, statistics, geologic age dating and physics of nuclear explosions. To a novice in these fields, his scientific explanations are understandable and enlightening.

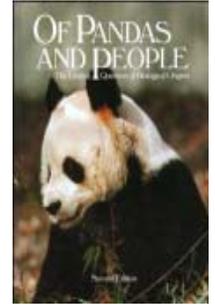
James Powell is president and director of the Los Angeles county Museum of Natural History and was a professor of geology at Oberlin College for 20 years. From this perspective he takes the reader into the inner workings of the scientific community in a captivating solution to a mystery. The book of 221 pages is well researched and documented.

Powell does not present a faith perspective in this book. The value of this book for Christian apologist lies in the insight into the working of the scientific process. The process works, in spite of passionate and flawed human beings. The Christian can trust the scientific process when faithfully applied. It is also fascinating to gain new understanding into the ways God has acted in the history of our planet to prepare a place that is just right for the crown of his creative activity.

### Of Pandas and People

Percival Davis and Dean H. Kenyon  
Haughton Publishing, 1993

Reviewer: Greg Moore



*Of Pandas and People, the Central Question of Biological Origins* is an excellent book for those who want to examine the intelligent design alternative to Darwinistic evolution.

Written like a science textbook, the book presents the information at two levels. The first section provides a lighter, easy to understand treatment of the subjects. The excursion chapters that follow provide an in-depth, more academically challenging treatment of the material with a glossary of terms, charts and illustrations to enrich the material.

The book presents data from six areas of science that bear on the central question of biological origins. It begins with an examination of the origin of life issue. Next, it discusses genetics and macroevolution, the fossil record and the issue of homology. Finally, the book examines the origins issue from the perspective of biochemical similarities. For each area, the book presents the interpretations of those who hold to the Darwinian frame of reference and contrasts them to the interpretations of those who adhere to intelligent design.

While the authors support the intelligent design view, they try hard to present a fair treatment of the data. They also encourage readers to use *Pandas and People* as a supplement, not a substitute for normal biology texts. Used together, they say, both texts will balance the overall curriculum.

I recommend this book for Christians and skeptics who want a solid understanding of the creation/evolution debate. It is also a great science resource for parents to use with their children, whether for homeschooling or to provide an alternative to secular biology textbooks. While the authors are proponents of intelligent design, their goal is to get people to think objectively about the issues and not blindly accept either view. Used properly, *Pandas and People* can become an exciting part of the educational journey.

# How Big is Your God?

MARK RAMBO

Earlier this year, I helped at the Seattle Chapter booth at a home schooling conference. When a lady who visited the booth found out I believed in an old earth she made the comment, “How Big Is Your God?” This comment started my mind down a recollective path of comparing my views of God before and after I became familiar with the Reasons to Believe ministry.

While my conversion to Christ was not due to evidence from the created order, my pre-RTB worldview deemed it a logical corollary that the God of the Bible should be indicated in the evidence from the natural realm. My first exposure to RTB was the book, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, which I purchased while perusing book titles at a local Barnes & Nobel. Not only did the book bring together the continuity of the God of the Bible and record of nature, it gave me greater awe of the Creator.

Since then, the more I have learned about how wonderfully fine-tuned and designed the universe and life are, the bigger my view and awe of God has become. Thus, my view of God has grown post-RTB. I have also come to realize young-earth creationists often have a small view of God and, while the age of the universe/earth is not a core issue to the Christian faith, it does effect one’s worldview, one’s witness, and the unbelieving world’s reactions to that witness.

When young-earth creationists make an honest assessment of the evidence from astronomy, in particular the issue of starlight and time, they must revise their view on the age of the universe or conclude the stars are but an illusion.<sup>1</sup> Not only does this view of an illusory universe contradict what God says about himself—He does not lie or deceive (Numbers 23:19, Hebrews 6:18)—it provides a much smaller mental picture of God.

Another peculiar view taught by many young-earth ministries is the universe was perfect before the fall and the universe, including the Earth and Sun, will exist into eternity.<sup>2</sup> Not only is this stance contrary to Scripture (Matthew 24:35, 2 Peter 3:5-13, Psalm 102:25-27, Isaiah 34:4, Isaiah 51:6, Isaiah 65:17), it lacks the big view of the purpose of this universe—to bring a quick resolution to evil—and of a transcendental God who plans to create a new heaven and earth.

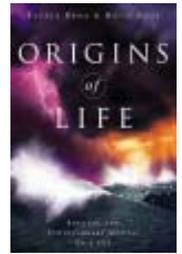
Perhaps the reason many young-earth creationists hold such views is because they are tightly bound to the no-animal-death-before-the-Fall theology. However, there is no basis for claiming we must all agree with that theology. As Hugh Ross has skillfully and tactfully argued in his book *A Matter Of Days*, the old earth view holds to the inerrancy of the Bible, agrees with the essential tenets of the Christian faith and is in keeping with the views of the early Christian leaders.

The age of the earth/universe could be considered just one of those

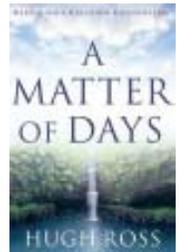
See HOW BIG, page 5

## Great Resources

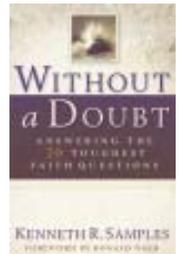
In this new book, *Origins of Life: Biblical and Evolutionary Models Face Off*, Hugh Ross and Fuz Rana reveal how life’s beginnings can be tested. They examine the latest evidence from the origin-of-life field and explode the myth that the data supports a naturalistic origin of life. *Intermediate/Advanced, Hardback, US\$ 12.95.*



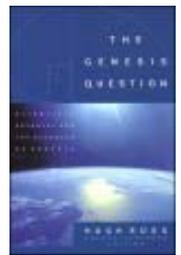
The length of time represented by the word “day” in the Genesis creation account is a source of controversy in the Christian church. In this new book, *A Matter of Days*, Hugh Ross explores how this controversy developed and addresses many of the key issues. *All Readers, Paperback, US\$ 9.95.*



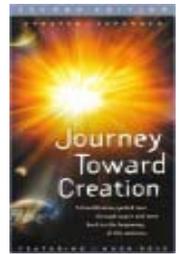
In this new book, *Without a Doubt*, RTB philosopher and theologian Ken Samples gives readers a great apologetics handbook. The question-and-answer format is easy to follow and addresses 20 prominent issues skeptics raise about God, the Bible and Christianity. *All Readers, Paperback, US\$ 9.95.*



Does the Bible teach the Earth is 10,000 years old? How does science and Genesis relate? In this 2nd edition of, *The Genesis Question*, Hugh Ross examines these and other issues from an old-Earth perspective. A great book to share with Christians as well as skeptics. *All Readers, Paperback, US\$ 9.95.*



Is life in the universe common or rare? What are the odds of finding other Earth-like planets? Take an amazing journey with Hugh Ross as he examines how the universe has been meticulously fine-tuned for human life using state-of-the-art computer animation. *All Viewers, VHS US\$ 15.95, DVD US\$ 19.95.*



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issues that do little except divide churches if it were not for the ramifications on our ability witness to unbelievers. Unfortunately, much of the academic and science community lump all creationists into the young-earth camp. Their view of creationists is similar to those of philosopher of science Larry Laudan who states: "Creationists make a wide range of testable assertions about matters of fact...[they] say the earth is of very recent origin...they argue that most of the geological features of the earth's surface are diluvial in character...[and they] are committed to a large number of factual...claims...In brief, these claims are testable, they have been tested, and have have failed those tests."<sup>3</sup> Not only do they consider creationist models falsified, some consider creationists to be "downright dishonest."<sup>4</sup>

What is perhaps most amazing about this issue is we are living in an age when God has allowed, rather planned, for man to discover so much about the natural realm that there is little doubt the universe and life was designed. While there still is resistance from those with a materialistic world-view, their position is becoming increasingly tenuous. As William Dembski puts it, "...there is good reason to think that intelligent design fits the bill as a full-scale scientific revolution...J.B.S. Haldane remarked...theories pass through four stages of acceptance: (i) this is worthless nonsense, (ii) this is an interesting but perverse point of view, (iii) this is true but quite unimportant, (iv) I always said so."<sup>5</sup> Intelligent Design is the latter stages of this process.

The evidence is becoming so strong I have little doubt mainstream science will accept Intelligent Design in the future. The question I ponder is who will they think the Designer is? Will the view of God of some evangelical Christians remain so small as to be incompatible with evidence displayed in the creation? Or, will they allow themselves to see our awesome God and Designer in the true revelation of nature and thus strengthen their witness to an unbelieving world? I pray for the latter.

*Mark Rambo is civilian employee of the Navy. He is a trained apologists and active in the Seattle chapter.*

#### REFERENCES

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2. *A Matter Of Days*, Dr Hugh Ross, NAVPRESS 2004. Chapter 10 *Peace Through Paradise* page 112.
3. *Darwinism, Design, And Public Education*, John Angus Campbell and Stephen C. Meyers, Michigan State University Press 2003 *Essay – Teaching the Controversy: Is It Science, Religion, or Speech?* David DeWolf, Stephen C. Myers, and Mark E DeForrest.
4. *A Matter Of Days*, Dr Hugh Ross, NAVPRESS 2004. Chapter 1 *Flash Point* page 18.
5. *The Design Revolution*, Dr William A. Dembski, InterVarsity Press 2004, *Preface* pages 19,20

## Prayer & Fast

JEANNIE GLENN

Every quarter, the Reasons To Believe home office holds a prayer-and-fast event. Over a 24-hour period, staff and volunteers fast to seek God's direction and ask for strength and wisdom in service of the ministry. What is fasting? Simply put, it's abstaining from food—one meal or several days' meals—for a spiritual purpose. It's substituting physical food for spiritual food, with the desire to learn to see things through God's eyes.

Some of the right motivations for fasting include giving ourselves more fully to God in order to honor Him, expressing sorrow over our disobedience to God for doing things our way instead of His, and wanting to discern God's will and the course of action to take to accomplish it.<sup>1</sup> He delights in honoring such requests! There are also improper motives for fasting. A sure way to bring wrong motives to light so that they can be dealt with and cleared out of the way is to ask the Father to help you come before Him with clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24:3-5).

The next prayer-and-fast is scheduled for Saturday, October 2. If you would like to participate, Hugh and Kathy Ross have compiled some "Notes on Fasting," which outline right motives, as well as physical and spiritual guidelines, for fasting. Please feel free to request a copy from Bob Stuart at RTB ([bstuart@reasons.org](mailto:bstuart@reasons.org)) or from me ([jglennrtb@comcast.net](mailto:jglennrtb@comcast.net)). Also, a book written by Ronnie W. Floyd, *The Power of Prayer and Fasting: 10 Secrets of Spiritual Strength*, is a comprehensive and practical resource on fasting.

Fasting for 20-plus hours may not be feasible or advisable for everyone. Please follow God's leading on this, and also be sure to consult with your doctor, if necessary. Regardless of how long, or even if, you fast, simply setting aside quiet time to be in God's presence is what is crucial for discerning His will for the Reasons To Believe ministry, and for each of our roles in it. The act of our collectively giving our attention to the Creator pleases Him!

"May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance" (2 Thess. 3:5).

*Jeannie Glenn is treasurer of the Seattle Chapter. She is a trained apologists and manages construction projects for local contractor.*

## ORIGINS OF FLOOD GEOLOGY

Flood geology dates back a century prior to The Genesis Flood. Whitcomb and Morris adopted their ideas from George McCready Price (1870-1963) who, in turn, cited the writings of Ellen G. White (1827-1915). "It's an intriguing and somewhat sorry tale of how the ideas of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century founder and self-styled prophetess of Seventh Day Adventism (Ellen G. White) came to be so influential in orthodox Christian circles."<sup>3</sup>

White, the prophetess and founder of the Seventh Day Adventist Movement, was the earliest proponent of flood geology. Following one of her trance-like visions, White claimed to have actually witnessed the Creation.<sup>5</sup> In the vision, she claimed she was carried back to the creation and shown that the first week, in which God performed the work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh day, was just like every other week.<sup>6,7</sup>

White taught "Noah's flood had sculpted the surface of the earth, burying the plants and animals found in the fossil record."<sup>5</sup> Her information on the history of the creation and the flood came from her *divine visions*.<sup>6</sup> According to noted creationist authority Ronald Numbers:

White professed Noah's Flood as a worldwide catastrophe...had buried the fossils and reshaped the earth's surface. After the floodwaters had subsided, exposing the rotting carcasses of antediluvian life, God had buried the organic debris...by causing a powerful wind to pass over the earth...in some instances carrying away the tops of mountains like mighty avalanches, forming huge hills and high mountains...and burying the dead bodies with trees, stones, and earth."<sup>7</sup>

Implicit in White's thinking was the Seventh Day Adventist doctrine of the Sabbath, which demanded a literal creation week. She reasoned if Exodus 20:11 were not literally true with literal 24-hour days, then the Seventh Day Adventist Sabbath observance made no sense.<sup>3</sup> In her visions, she was *shown* six literal 24-hour days of creation, culminating with a literal 24-hour Sabbath day of rest.<sup>6</sup>

Succeeding White was George McCready Price, a scientifically self-taught young-earth creationist. Price dedicated his life to the scientific defense of White's version of earth history and was first to coin the term "flood geology."<sup>5</sup> An arm-chair geologist with little or no formal science training and almost no geological field experience,<sup>8</sup> Price enrolled in a one-year teacher-training course at Provincial Normal School of New Brunswick in 1896 where he took some elementary courses in some of the natural sciences, including some mineralogy.<sup>9</sup> This was the extent of his science training.

In 1923, Price published a 726-page tome, *The New Geology*, which argued "a simple or literal reading of early Genesis showed that God

had created the world six to eight thousand years ago and had used the Flood to construct the planet's geological past."<sup>8</sup> At the time of publication, Price's ideas were not taken seriously by professional geologists and had little impact outside of Adventist circles. Over the next decades, however, the strength of Darwinian evolution grew. As a defense against evolution, "Price's flood geology seemed to infiltrate the greater portion of fundamental Christianity in America...[and] formed the backbone of much Fundamentalist thought about geology, creation, and the flood."<sup>10</sup>

In the 1960s, the mantle of flood geology passed from Price to Henry Morris and John Whitcomb, who published *The Genesis Flood* in 1961. When Morris first discovered Price's book, *The New Geology*, he called it "a life-changing experience."<sup>11</sup> Like Price, neither Morris nor Whitcomb had professional degrees in geology.

Morris and Whitcomb's treatise, *The Genesis Flood* was an updating of Price's work.<sup>8</sup> Some regarded it as "little more than Price's shelf-worn flood geology, neatly repackaged for the discerning evangelical of the 1960s."<sup>12</sup> The potentially negative association of Ellen G. White and George McCready Price prompted Whitcomb and Morris to "sanitize their manuscript by deleting all but a few incidental references to Price and any mention of his Adventist connections."<sup>13</sup>

## NON-ACCEPTANCE BY GEOLOGISTS

In spite of the fact flood geology has been actively evaluated and scrutinized for decades, its advocates have persuaded almost no professional geologists, even those who are Bible-believing evangelical Christians.<sup>14</sup> Many of the arguments against flood geology have been delineated by Davis A. Young, an evangelical Christian and professional geologist, in his book *Creation and the Flood: An Alternative to Flood Geology* and other works.

Summarizing current geological thought on the age of the earth and the validity of flood geology, Wayne Grudem states:

Young's arguments for an old earth based on many kinds of scientific data from different disciplines seem to be very strong. This is particularly true of arguments based on fossil-bearing rocks, coral reefs, continental drift, and the similarity of results from different kinds of radiometric dating...it is difficult to understand why God would have created dozens or perhaps hundreds of different kinds of rocks and minerals on the earth, all of which actually were only one day old, but all of which had the appearance of being exactly 4.5 billion years old... So the old earth advocates seem to me to have a greater weight of scientific evidence on their side, and it seems that the weight of evidence is increasing yearly.<sup>15</sup>

Commenting on the lack of scientific support W.U. Ault explains:

The writings of these non-geologists [Price, Morris, Whitcomb] exhibit a basic lack of understanding of even the fundamental principles of geology. Kulp and Ramm have reviewed a number of basic points that completely invalidate the flood geology approach...To hold to the flood geology theory of catastrophism in the face of all the evidence to the contrary, much data and analytical techniques must be rejected, even though they can be demonstrated repeatedly by observation and measurements... The serious bible student will not seek to support the physical aspects of Bible history with pseudoscience.”<sup>16</sup>

#### LOCAL OR GLOBAL?

Flood geology demands Noah’s Flood was a global event. But, was the geographical extent of the Flood local or global? There are Godly believers on both sides of this issue and we need to respect each other’s opinions. Some scholars believe there is evidence for a global flood. Others believe the evidence favors a local flood limited to the Mesopotamian area.

Some of the support for a local flood comes from the fact geological silt deposits in the Mesopotamian Valley provide evidence for a local flood, while silt deposits over the globe are missing or open to interpretation. Major questions also persist about the quantity of water needed from underground and atmospheric sources to cover all the earth’s mountaintops (i.e., it would take 4.5 times the total water resources of the planet to cover the mountains.<sup>21</sup>) Further, there is the very real problem that levels of water sufficient to cover mountains would disrupt the rotation of the earth.<sup>17</sup>

What about the argument from flood geologists about marine fossils on Mt. Everest? Geophysicists see these fossils simply as evidence of plate tectonics. As the Indian and Asian sub-continental plates collided, the ocean floor between the two continental plates (replete with marine fossils), buckled up to form the Himalayas. The rising of that particular piece of ocean floor explains why marine fossils are so common on Mt Everest. The beginning of this marine layer uplift predates the Genesis Flood by many millions of years.<sup>22</sup>

However, regardless of the science, it is absolutely clear that God’s intent for the Flood was to deal with man’s sin and reprobation by eradicating mankind:

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...And the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land...(Gen. 6:5,7)

Scripture makes no mention that mankind had moved beyond the Mesopotamian region before the Flood. In Genesis 1:28, God spoke to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, telling them to “be fruitful

and multiply and fill the earth.” Genesis 2:10-14 speaks of Eden and the Tigris and Euphrates rivers which were located within Mesopotamia. East of Eden is the only geography mentioned prior to Noah.

After the Flood, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (Gen. 8:4) in the northern Mesopotamian region. Again, God told Noah and his sons to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” (Gen. 9:1) In the events surrounding the Tower of Babel, Genesis 11 describes the descendents of Noah on a plain in the land of Shinar—ancient Babylonia and also within the Mesopotamian region:

And they said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. (Gen. 11:4)

Since they had refused to move, God caused them to disperse:

Therefore, its name was called Babel...from there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth. (Gen. 11:9b)

Thus, Scripture seems clear that before and after the Flood (before Babel), mankind resided within the Mesopotamian region and had not “scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” Therefore, for God to “blot out man from the face of the land” would only require a local or regional flood within the Mesopotamian area.

#### EXAMINING SCRIPTURE

Though the words of Scripture seem to suggest a global flood, careful exegesis does allow for a local flood interpretation. Genesis 7 states:

And the water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh that moved on the earth perished... (Gen. 7:18-21a)

The Hebrew word for earth, *erets*, has several meanings. Vine’s states, “*Erets* does not only denote the entire terrestrial planet, but is also used of some of earth’s component parts, i.e., land, country, ground, soil, area occupied by a nation or tribe.”<sup>18</sup> References to the entire planet are found in Genesis 1:1, 2:1, and 14:22. However, more typical references might be Genesis 1:10, 2:11, or 2:13, where *erets* is translated as land.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, the Hebrew word for mountain, *har*, can refer to mountain, mountain range, mountainous region, or even an inhabitable site situated on hills or mountainsides.<sup>20</sup> The Hebrew word in Genesis 7:19 translated as covered, *kasah*, can mean residing upon, running over, or falling upon. Twenty feet of water running over or falling upon the mountains (*har*) is quite different from that amount resid-

See FLOOD GEOLOGY, *page 8*

ing upon them, although either could universally destroy human and animal life.<sup>21</sup>

Noah, from his perspective floating in the ark, perceived water prevailed “everywhere under the heavens.” The use of such language in other passages is helpful to understand the meaning here. In Genesis 41:56 we are told, “The famine was spread over *all the face of the earth.*” We normally interpret this famine as devastating the lands of the ancient Near East around Egypt and do not assume American Indians and Australian aborigines came to buy grain from Joseph. First Kings 10:24 states “*the whole world* sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.” Surely Inca Indians from South America or Maoris from New Zealand had not heard of Solomon and sought his audience.<sup>19</sup>

From these and other examples in Scripture, it is possible to interpret “everywhere under the heavens” as pertaining to the local Mesopotamian area and not necessarily to the entire planet. In fact, if the entire Mesopotamian valley was flooded and the water receded slowly, then Noah might have seen only water, with distant mountain ranges being over the horizon.<sup>21</sup>

#### PSALM 104

One of the most powerful arguments against a global deluge, as demanded by flood geology, comes from Psalm 104. Like Genesis 1, Psalm 104 describes the creation of the Earth and its oceans:

You covered it with the deep, as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. But at your rebuke, the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took flight; they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys to the place you assigned for them, You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth. (Psalm 104:6-9)

While Whitcomb and Morris suggest this passage refers to the Flood account,<sup>23</sup> numerous commentaries suggest Psalm 104:6-9 refers to the third day of creation. P.H. Seely writes, “Of the twenty-eight commentaries on Psalm 104:6-9 (ranging from the sixteenth century to the present) which I consulted, *all* of them regarded Psalm 104:6-9 as referring to the third day of creation. Some of them explicitly denied that these verses referred to Noah’s flood.”<sup>24</sup> *The Ryrie Study Bible* footnotes on Psalm 104:6 state, “Not a reference to the Flood of Noah’s time, but to the third day of God’s creative activity.”<sup>25</sup> Based on these commentaries, a worldwide, flood geology interpretation of Noah’s flood would seem to contradict to Psalm 104.

#### LOOKING FORWARD

It is significant to note that Adventists, the originators of flood geology, have now revised their position. In 2001, the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Biblical Research Institute Science Council met at

the Adventist center in Loma Linda. The meeting was “historic [and] represented a strong shift away from trying to include all or most of the geologic column within the time of the Genesis Flood...the shift may be described as the ‘collapse of the traditional SDA Flood model.’”<sup>26</sup>

As time goes by, flood geology—a concept used today by some skeptics to reject Christianity—will be supplanted. Today, we are blessed to be living in a time when bona fide, scientific findings are available to counter atheistic naturalism and support the absolute truth of God’s creation and His Word. Christians need to understand the enormous significance of recent research findings in many areas of science that refute Darwinian evolution and powerfully support the Biblical creation model including:

- Origins of life research <sup>27,28</sup>
- Biochemical complexity of life (without naturalistic explanations) <sup>29,30</sup>
- Sequence-specificity and information-content properties of DNA <sup>31,32</sup>
- Intelligent design <sup>32</sup>
- Fossil findings of the Cambrian Explosion (opposite of evolutionary teaching) <sup>33</sup>
- Cosmological “fine-tuning” of our expanding universe <sup>34</sup>

These issues provide Christians with scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful arguments for witnessing to skeptics in our contemporary secular world.

*Jon Greene is retired and worked in the pharmaceutical field. He is trained apologist and is active in the Seattle chapter.*

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See FLOOD GEOLOGY, page 10

yell, kick the door, demand to be let out and complain of chest pain. When the shocks exceeded the 330-volt level, he would fall silent and give no further responses. Yet, at each step, the teacher was instructed to continue administering higher shocks.

Before conducting the experiment, Milgram asked several psychiatrists what percentage of the teachers would actually deliver the complete sequence of 33 shocks. All the psychiatrists agreed that only a very small percentage of disturbed, sadistic individuals would do so. In fact, an astonishing 65 percent of the teachers delivered the full battery of shocks.

Many teachers felt extreme anguish over the pain they thought they were inflicting. They sweated, trembled, bit their lips, or broke into fits of nervous laughter. Some said they worried about the learner and asked the experimenter to not go on. Some jumped up and acted like they were going to walk out but didn't. To stop the experiment all a teacher had to do was to refuse to go on but less than half did. Other social psychologists conducting similar experiments have observed comparable levels of obedience among men and women all over the world.

Milgram designed the experiment to understand the obedience of Nazi soldiers in killing millions of Jews during World War II. When interviewed after the experiment, many of Milgram's subjects said they had obeyed mainly because they thought the experimenter would bear responsibility for any harm to the learner. Similarly, when Nazi death camp administrator Adolf Eichmann was tried for murdering thousands of innocent people, he attributed his behavior to the fact he was merely following orders.

#### BASICALLY GOOD

A recent poll administered to professing Christians indicates 77 percent of evangelical Christians believe human beings are basically good.<sup>2</sup> Of course, that depends on the definition of "good." Would a "basically good" person subject someone to pain to the point of causing possible death just because they were following orders? I'm sure the vast majority of the Christians who believe humans are "basically good" would respond with an emphatic "no." Yet the Milgram experiments illustrate how our perceptions of ourselves are vastly different than who we really are.

Alford argues the Milgram experiments do not support the idea that evil is part of one's self. He states, "Only a fool would argue that these experiments prove that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, as Genesis 8:21 puts it." Yet, in a later chapter, "Suffering Evil, Doing Evil," Alford seems to reverse himself. "The whole truth," he says, "is that there is evil all around us. The face behind the mask is not just yours. It is your wife's, your husband's, your mother's, your father's, your child's, your teacher's, your lover's,

your friends." In other words, Milgram-type experiments indicate we are all capable of doing evil because evil is part of our nature. We all think we are "basically good" but our actions indicate reveal our true self.

#### NOT EVEN ONE

This is where Alford's conclusions seem to agree with the Bible. Paul states in Romans 3:10-12, "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." The point Paul is trying to make is left to our own abilities we will all fall short of being truly good in the eyes of a Holy God. Evil and disobedience are an inherent part of who we are.

What then are we to do? Is it possible for people to overcome this evil nature? While secularists, like Alford, have no answer for this predicament, Scripture does. Romans 3:22-24 tells us, "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." What Paul is saying is we can't rely on ourselves to be good. It is only when we put our faith in Jesus Christ and submit to Him as our Lord and Savior that we can hope to deal with our fallen nature and begin to be truly justified in the eyes of God our Father.

*Dave Ouellette is vice-president of the Seattle Chapter and a trained apologist. He is a software developer and works for a local consulting company.*

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## REASONS TO BELIEVE SEATTLE CHAPTER

### Who Are We?

The Seattle Chapter of Reasons to Believe is a local extension of the worldwide, interdenominational Reasons to Believe ministry. We exist to support our parent organization and foster local involvement in the ministry. We serve the Puget Sound area and are composed of Christians of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, what God says through His written word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and seek to provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinian evolution and young-Earth creationism.

### What Do We Do?

The Seattle-Area Chapter exists to remove the doubts of skeptics and strengthen the faith of believers. We provide scientific, historical and philosophical evidence that supports the Christian worldview and helps remove barriers to a belief in God, the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission by:

- Helping people access RTB and other resources that are scientifically and biblically sound.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Providing a local team of trained apologists to address questions about science, the Bible and related topics.
- Training Christians to shed their fear of science and use science to spread the Gospel.
- Working with teachers and homeschoolers to achieve a balanced approach to the teaching of origins.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of the RTB ministry.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, encouraging them to evaluate their worldviews.

## Questions? Get Answers.

Whether you are looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God, the Bible, and science, contact us at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org). You can also call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.