



What's Happening?

More Sound Reasons

The next chapter event is scheduled for Saturday, April 9. Mark your calendar and plan to join us at Highlands Community Church in Renton, 8:30-11:00 AM.

We are also in the process of planning a potential visit by Hugh Ross in the spring (probably the week after Easter). If your church or group would be interested in hosting a presentation, contact us ASAP at seattle@reasons.org.

New RTB Online Courses

Reasons Institute will offer several training courses in January 2011:

- Biblical Archeology, Dr. John Bloom
- Critical Thinking, Ken Samples
- World Religions & Science, Ken Samples
- Origin of Life, Fuz Rana
- Humans Origins, Fuz Rana

More info at www.reasons.org/learning/reasons-institute/courses.

New RTB Product

Here's a great new resource at the RTB webstore: *Impact Events - The Universe*. This study guide is designed to help youth better understand God's creation. Go to www.reasons.org/catalog/impact-events.

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The Genesis Flood Why the Bible Says it Must be Local

By Rich Deem

Many Christians maintain that the Bible says the flood account of Genesis requires an interpretation that states the waters of the flood covered the entire earth. If you read our English Bibles, you will probably come to this conclusion if you don't read the text too closely and if you fail to consider the rest of your Bible. Like most other Genesis stories, the flood account is found in more places than just Genesis. If you like to solve mysteries on your own, you might want to read the flood account first and find the biblical basis for a local flood.

Other Creation Passages Eliminate the Possibility of a Global Flood

The concept of a global Genesis flood can be easily eliminated from a plain reading of Psalm 104,¹ which is known as the "creation psalm." Psalm 104 describes the creation of the earth in the same order as that seen in Genesis 1 (with a few more details added). It begins with an expanding universe model (reminiscent of the Big Bang) (verse 2, parallel to Gen. 1:1). It next describes the formation of a stable water cycle (verses 3-5, parallel to Gen. 1:6-8). The earth is then described as a planet completely covered with water (verse 6, parallel to Gen. 1:9). God then causes the dry land to appear (verses 7-8, parallel to Gen. 1:9-10).



The verse that eliminates a global flood follows: "You set a boundary they [the waters] cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth." (104:9). Obviously, if the waters never again covered the earth, then the flood must have been local. Psalm 104 is just one of several creation passages that indicate that God prevented the seas from covering the entire earth.² An integration of all flood and creation passages clearly indicates that the Genesis flood was local in geographic extent.

The Bible Says Water Covered the Whole Earth?

When you read an English translation of the biblical account of the flood, you will undoubtedly notice many words and verses

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Meet our Members



Introducing Jon Greene

What do you do for a living?

I am retired from a 30-year career with The Upjohn Company in pharmaceutical sales, marketing and education.

How and when did you become a Christian?

In my youth I attended a mainstream denomination church, which unfortunately was not a Bible-preaching or teaching church. I became a Christian at age 37 after hearing the true Gospel for the first time in my life. What I read in the Bible was amazing! I came to understand that God miraculously created this world and that Christ was the Messiah described by Old Testament prophets centuries in advance. He was Immanuel, God with us.

How and when did you discover RTB?

I have long had interest in creationism, starting in the 1980s with Henry Morris' book, *Scientific Creationism*. Many years later, a friend loaned his copy of *The Genesis Question* by Hugh Ross. Suddenly the harmony between Scripture and science became evident. Later I learned of the Seattle Chapter of RTB and began attending meetings.

When did you become a part of the Seattle Chapter?

I attended my first meeting in 2002. Greg Moore presided over the meeting at a conference room at Microsoft. In 2004, I completed RTB's Apologetics Training Program.

What is your role in the chapter?

Outreach coordinator. I help set up local speaking events for visiting RTB scholars and work at the events. I have also written articles and book reviews for the Seattle Chapter newsletter, and I've given several presentations to local groups on the evidence for God from mainstream science.

What is your favorite pastime?

I attend a weekly Bible study at my church and enjoy reading books and articles on Christian apologetics -- also have an active interest in national politics, stock market investing and home landscape projects.

What is the most interesting thing you've done?

Towards the end of my career, I traveled to various countries including England, Belgium, France, Portugal, Netherlands, Australia and Japan. While there, in my spare time, I enjoyed seeing the sights and visiting local eateries. Business travel can be rather lonely, but one time my wife was able to accompany me to the UK and we had a wonderful time.

Bible & Science In the News

■ Thank God for Carnivores

This RTB article by Hugh Ross discusses how many people, Christians and nonbelievers, wonder why a loving God could allow the pain and suffering related to carnivory. He then looks at the issue biblically and scientifically, concluding that carnivory is an important component of God's good creation. Go to www.reasons.org/thank-god-carnivores.

■ The St. Augustine Challenge

This *tothesource* article by Benjamin Wilker challenges readers to read St. Augustine's *Confessions* for an hour without interruption from the internet or cell phones. The exercise is meant to illustrate how these technologies impact our brains and are rendering our souls incapable of concentration. Go to: www.tothesource.org/1_12_2011/1_12_2011.htm.

■ "Science Says" Just Another Claim

This article by David Klinghoffer posted on the Discovery Institute website, discusses the authority science has held and how appeals to science are used to demand our acceptance of many issues. He examines how science forces compliance and contends that not trusting scientists does not make you ignorant, but a realist. Go to www.discovery.org/a/16161.

■ Addiction or Sinful Habit?

This *tothesource* article by Benjamin Wilker contends that labeling destructive behaviors "addictions" connotes that the offenders are helpless victims. The problem from a Christian perspective is it destroys the idea of morality and the ability to choose. He says we should call them what they really are: sinful habits. Go to www.tothesource.org

■ Creating Artificial Life

This RTB article by Fuz Rana discusses the process scientists are taking to try to develop artificial life. He says their work illustrates the intelligence and ingenuity necessary to create life in the lab, and provides empirical evidence that life must stem from the work of an Intelligent Designer. Go to: www.reasons.org/eating-elephant-bite-bite.

Book Review

God's Undertaker

John C. Lennox
Lion Hutton, 2009

Reviewer: Mike Brown

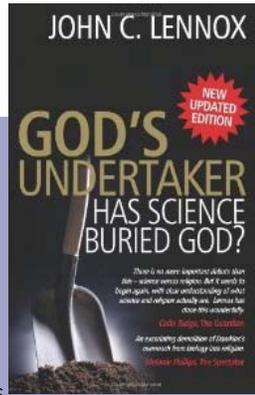
John Lennox, MA, PhD, DPhil, DSc, is Professor in Mathematics at the University of Oxford and a fellow in Mathematics and the Philosophy of Science at Green Templeton College. He has debated Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens and has lectured at many universities.

This is one of the best books I have read in recent years. Alister McGrath, Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Oxford referred to it as: "A brilliantly argued re-evaluation of the relation of science and religion, casting welcome new light on today's major debates. A must-read for all reflecting on the greatest questions of life."

The book is divided into twelve chapters addressing worldviews, the scope and limits of science, reductionism, design in the universe and biosphere, the nature and scope of evolution, the origin of life, the genetic code and information, Dawkins' "monkey machine," and the origin of information.

In the chapter on worldviews, Lennox makes the following quote. "With this we come to one of the major points we wish to make in this book which is that there is a conflict, a very real one, but it is not really a conflict between science and religion at all. For if that were so, elementary logic would dictate that one would find that scientists were all atheists and only non-scientists believed in God, and this, as we have seen, is simply not the case. No, the real conflict is between two diametrically opposed worldviews: naturalism and theism. They inevitably collide." (28)

You might think that a distinguished British professor from Oxford would be a difficult read for the average layperson. In this case you would be very wrong. Lennox' style of writing makes difficult subjects exciting and appealing to all levels. Another Oxford professor in his review said it well. "This short book is more than just a critical analysis of the deep question posed in its title. It is a scientific detective story, which keeps the reader on their toes as the evidence is put in place bit by bit." (Keith Frayn Professor of Human Metabolism)



that seem to suggest the waters covered all of planet earth.³ However, one should note that today we look at everything from a global perspective, whereas the Bible nearly always refers to local geography. You may not be able to determine this fact from our English translations, so we will look at the original Hebrew.

The Hebrew words which are translated as "whole earth" or "all the earth" are *kol* (Strong's number H3605), which means "all," and *erets* (Strong's number H776), which means "earth," "land," "country," or "ground."⁴ We don't need to look very far in Genesis (Genesis 2) before we find the Hebrew words *kol erets*.

- The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole [*kol*] land [*erets*] of Havilah, where there is gold. (Gen. 2: 11)
- And the name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole [*kol*] land [*erets*] of Cush. (Gen. 2: 13)

Obviously, the description of *kol erets* is modified by the name of the land, indicating a local area from the context. In fact, the term *kol erets* is nearly always used in the Old Testament to describe a local area of land, instead of our entire planet.⁵

"Whole Earth" Often Refers to People

However, there are many more examples of where *kol erets* is used without reference to any specific land, although the context clearly indicates a local area. For example, in Genesis 11 (the Tower of Babel) the text says, "the whole [*kol*] earth [*erets*] used the same language."⁶ We know that this reference is not really to the earth at all (and certainly not to the "whole earth"), but to the people of the earth, who all lived in one geographic location. It wasn't until later that God scattered the people over the face of the earth.⁶

There are many other examples of where *kol erets* actually refers to people rather than the geography of the "whole earth" including: Genesis 18:25, Joshua 23:14, Samuel 14:25 and 15:23, Kings 2:2, 1 Chronicles 16:23 and 16:30, Psalm 33:8, 66:1, 66:4, 96:1, 96:9, 98:4, 100:1 and 105:7, and Isaiah 14:7.

"Whole Earth" Usually Refers to Local Geography

There are also many examples of where *kol erets* refers to a local area including: Genesis 13:9 and 41:57, Exodus 34:10, Leviticus 25:9 and 25:24, Judges 6:37, Samuel 13:3, 2 Samuel 18:8 and 24:8, 1 Kings 10:24, 1 Chronicles 14:17 and 22:5, 2 Chronicles 9:28, and more.⁸

As can be seen, in the majority of instances *kol erets* does not refer to the entire planet earth. In fact, of the 205 instances of *kol erets* in the Old Testament, it might refer to the entire planet just 40 times,⁹ and even some of those are questionable. About half of those instances occur in the books of Psalms and Isaiah. The Genesis flood

narrative also uses the phrase “the face of the earth.” This is the exact phrase used by Cain when he was banished by God (Gen. 4:14). Are we to think that Cain was banished to outer space? In addition, the flood narrative says that “the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth” (Gen. 7:17). If “earth” really refers to the planet, this text would imply the ark somehow levitated above the planet. Obviously, “earth” refers to the local land on which the ark was sitting, not to planet earth.

Could the Text More Clearly Indicate a Global Flood?

I am glad you asked! There is a Hebrew word that always refers to the entire earth or the entire inhabited earth. The word is *tebel* (Strong’s H8398), which is found 37 times in the Old Testament. Curiously, this word is never used to describe the flood, although it is used extensively to describe the creation of the earth and the judgment of the peoples of the earth.

Erets Revisited

Let’s look at the actual Genesis flood passage to determine if it can be interpreted from a local viewpoint. As we determined above, the word *erets*, often translated “earth” can also refer to the people of the earth. Is it used this way in the actual Genesis flood passage?

- Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. (Gen. 6:11)
- And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. (Gen. 6:12)
- I set My bow in the cloud, it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. (Gen. 9:13)

Genesis 6, verses 11 and 12 both tells us that the earth was corrupt, although we understand this verse to refer to the people of the earth. Likewise, in Genesis 9:13, the verse tells us that God made a covenant between Himself and the earth. However, later verses clarify that the covenant is between God and the creatures of the earth.¹⁰ The Genesis text clearly establishes (along with the New Testament¹¹) that God’s judgment of humans was universal (with the exception of Noah and his family).

Outside Genesis one (through Gen. 2:5), the entire Genesis account through the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) specifically refers to local geography. All the place names mentioned are in the Mesopotamian flood plain. Therefore, all the instances of the word *erets* can and should be translated “land,” instead of “earth,” since it all refers to local geography. There is no reason to think that the flood account is any different.

When “All” Does Not Mean “All”

The flood passage uses many universal descriptions, which suggest global proportions. However, the universal text contradicts itself, if it is to be interpreted globally.

For example, the Genesis text tells us that all flesh had become corrupted.¹² However, the same passage tells us that Noah was a “righteous man, blameless in his time.”¹³ It is clear from the text that “all flesh” did not actually refer to all flesh, since there was at least one exception.

Local Perspective of the Flood

Does the Genesis text indicate that the flood was local? If you read it carefully, you can determine the perspective is local. Most English translations are actually interpretations that are skewed to favor a global flood interpretation. For example, Genesis 7:20 is usually translated as:

The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.

In reality, the Hebrew word *ma’al*, translated “higher” really means “upward.” So, in essence, the text is saying the flood was 15 cubits (20 feet) deep, in total, not 15 cubits above the mountains. In addition, the Hebrew word *har* really refers most often to hills rather than mountains.

The translators of most English Bibles use the word “earth,” which to us means “planet earth.” However, their mistranslation can be seen in the following passages:

- Gen 8:5 - And the water decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of mountains became visible.
- Gen 8:6 - Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made;
- Gen 8:7 - he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth.
- Gen 8:8 - Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land;
- Gen 8:9 - but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark; for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself.

We see that in the tenth month, the mountains became visible to Noah (Gen. 8:5). Some 40+ days later (Gen. 8:6), Noah sent a dove out of the ark (Gen. 8:8). However, the dove was unable to land because of all the water (Gen. 8:9). Then, the text tells us that water was “on the surface of all the earth.” This is obviously a bad translation of *kol erets*, since we know that the water had not covered the mountains for at least 40 days. The context makes it clear that *kol erets* must refer to local geography and should be translated as the “all the land” or “all the ground.” In fact, all of our major English translations (NASB, NIV, KJV, etc.) make this same error. It is no wonder that people who read the English translation of the Bible “literally” come to the conclusion that the flood must have been global. However, it is

apparent that our English “translations” of the Genesis flood text are more than just “translations,” and actually interpretations (and probably incorrect ones).

Planet Earth Became A Desert After the Flood!

Another problem for the global flood interpretation is what happened to the “earth” after the flood. You can see from the following verses why the word “earth” does not refer to the entire planet:

- Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made; and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth. (Gen. 8:6-7, NASB)
- After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. (Gen.8:6-7, NIV)
- Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. (Gen. 8: 13a, NASB)
- By the first day of the first month of Noah’s six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. (Gen. 8: 13a, NIV)
- and in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. (Gen. 8: 14, NASB)
- By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry. (Gen. 8: 14, NIV)

If one were to interpret these verses from a global perspective, one would have to conclude that the entire earth became a desert after the flood. Obviously this interpretation is false, so the translations must be bad. In these verses, the dryness of the earth is obviously referring to the local land area and not the entire planet earth.

THIS CONCLUDES PART 1 OF THIS ARTICLE. PART 2 WILL APPEAR IN THE FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER.

Note: For the footnotes cited, please go to Rich Deem’s website for the original article at www.godandscience.org/apologetics/localflood.html.



Seattle Chapter Reasons To Believe

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 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, God’s Word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinism and young-Earth creationism.

What Do We Do?

Our mission is 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 scientifically and biblically sound resources.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Assembling a team of local apologists to address questions about science and the Bible.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of RTB.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, to expose them to God’s word.

We welcome your involvement and support. For more information, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Seattle RTB, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683.

Questions? Get Answers.

If you’re looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God, the Bible, and science, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. Or call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.