
Creation Answers

Creation Education Materials, P.O. Box 153402, Irving, TX 75015-3402

Who does this newsletter?

This newsletter is produced by Wayne Spencer on a Quarterly basis. Its purpose is to bring creation research within the reach of Christians and provide up-to-date reliable information on creation issues. Wayne Spencer is a creation author and former teacher who has presented papers at the International Conference on Creationism and has published in various creation publications, such as the Creation Research Society Quarterly, Creation magazine, the Journal of Creation (TJ), and Origins (from the Biblical Creation Society, UK).

This newsletter is meant to help people plug into creation resources and get informed about creation and evolution. It is provided free of charge on request. Using the free Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary for viewing the newsletter. There are no restrictions in copying this newsletter or passing it on to others. To request to be placed on the e-mail list, send a request to wspencer@creationanswers.net.

More information on Wayne Spencer's education and publications can be found on the creationanswers.net web site. You'll also find many other resources. <http://creationanswers.net>

In this issue...

- **God's Flood, Part 3**
- **Review of "God of Wonders" DVD**
- **Noah's Ark, April 2010 Report**

A Personal Note from Wayne Spencer

Greetings,

I hope you and your family are having a good summer. This issue concludes a series on the Flood. I hope it will be helpful. The Flood account in Genesis is not so implausible as many have said. It is not impossible to believe if you can believe in the God of the Bible. In God's Flood, Part 3, we look at various issues of interpretation of Genesis that relate to how the Flood took place and what the pre-flood world was like. Mankind sinned against God so God took away part of his good provision in our planet by judging the Earth and mankind on it. I do not believe the Flood means God is cruel. To see that God is not cruel in judging sin requires that you accept that mankind has a sin problem like the Bible tells us. A god who did not take action against evil in the world would not be worthy of our worship.

I have been busy with various research and writing projects on creation. Recently on June 16 an article appeared on the website of Answers in Genesis which I authored. It was called Global Warming and Earth's Design. It is an updated version of something that appeared in this newsletter first. [Click here to go to this article.](#) Also, in March or April the Journal of Creation published a paper I wrote on "The search for Earth-like planets."

Wayne Spencer, M.S., Physics

God's Flood, Part 3

In this series we have looked at what Genesis tells us about the global Flood in the time of Noah. Though it is often referred to by Christians as "Noah's Flood" I have decided to call it "God's Flood." The God of the Bible is Judge of mankind. In Parts 1 and 2 we have also looked at various questions about Noah and his family and about the Ark itself. In Part 3 we will consider a variety of things from Genesis that affect how we understand the Flood. You might think of this as "tying up loose ends." Or you could consider this some biblical questions about the Flood. These are issues Christians may take different views on. Thus the following is only my perspective after years of studying these questions.

Raquia

There are some questions about Genesis chapters 1-3 that affect how we understand the Flood in chapters 6, 7, and 8. One of these is the meaning of the Hebrew word "raqia" in Genesis 1:6-9. This word is translated "expanse" in the NIV and "firmament" in the King James Bible. When the King James was translated in the 1600's the translators elected to use a Latin word for "raqia" and not even attempt to translate it into English. This is something translators have sometimes done in English Bibles for words that are difficult to translate. Thus, "firmament" comes from the Latin word "firmamentum." You may find other ways this is translated in other Bible versions. I think the NIV translation is good to use "expanse." There has been significant controversy about the meaning of raquia in Genesis 1. Raquia in the Old Testament is used in a couple of ways. Sometimes it is used to mean a solid surface, such as in Ezekiel chapter 1 where Ezekiel has a vision of God on his throne in heaven and it describes the throne as sitting on a solid transparent crystal surface. That

surface is described with "raqia." However since this passage is about a vision I do not think it tells us anything about the meaning of raquia in Genesis 1. Genesis 1 is not a vision or symbolic. Genesis 1 is a narrative. There are some Christians who would insist that the meaning of raquia in Genesis 1 is indeed the same as in Ezekiel 1. There are other ways raquia is used in the Old Testament that must be considered. Sometimes raquia is used in a way very similar to the word for "heavens," which is transliterated "shamayim" from Hebrew. It may be that the ancient Hebrews thought of the sky as a solid dome that held up stars and the "waters above." But I do not think Scripture necessarily teaches or encourages the idea that raquia is a solid. This was a common concept in ancient times that does not come from the Bible.

The word for "heavens," "shamayim" is a word that is used a variety of ways also and you must be careful interpreting it in the Old Testament. The meaning of raquia in Genesis 1 depends on how you understand "heavens," "sky," and the "waters above." Sometimes "shamayim" may refer to where God and the angels are, at other times it may refer to Earth's atmosphere where clouds or birds are, or it may refer to outer space where the stars are. To know the difference you must look at the context to get clues from what the passage is talking about. So if it refers to stars or constellations near the word "heavens" then you know it is referring to outer space. There apparently are no words in Hebrew specifically for "outer space" or "Earth's atmosphere". The same word, "shamayim" is translated as either "sky" or "heavens" in various passages in the Old Testament. So in the Bible, the word "heavens" can mean "where the birds are," or "where the stars are," "where the Moon is," or "where God is" depending on the context. Psalm 19:1 and Daniel 12:3 are verses that use "raqia" to refer to outer space and they use the word in a way that exactly parallels the word for heavens, "shamayim." These

two verses use what is known as parallelism, where an idea is stated and then restated using slightly different wording. This clearly shows that raquia can mean the same thing as the word for "heavens." The Bible refers to the "heavens" and the "sky" but it does not tell us what the sky actually is. It describes it in terms of what is there that we can see.

In Genesis 1:6-9, raquia is used to describe a separation between "waters above" the expanse and waters below the expanse. Then in Genesis 1:20 it refers to the birds flying across the "expanse" (raquia) of the sky. The Bible never really gives a technical scientific description of things in nature, but I believe it is accurate in what it does say. Thus it won't answer all technical scientific questions about some details. There has been different views of "waters above" suggested by creationists and Bible scholars.

The Vapor Canopy Idea

One idea put forward by creationists is that the "waters above" refers to a vapor canopy, a layer of Earth's atmosphere that no longer exists today. The vapor canopy would have served the purpose of helping provide a uniform near-tropical climate in the pre-flood world, but the canopy would have collapsed or dissipated in the Flood and no longer exists. This canopy is envisioned as a transparent layer of Earth's atmosphere that held water vapor. It was once thought that the vapor canopy might provide water for the 40 days and nights of rain in the Flood. However, when the Institute for Creation Research did research on this concept, they found that such a canopy could not contain large amounts of water such as would be required for 40 days of rain. Only a small amount of water could be in the canopy or otherwise the greenhouse heating effect from it would be so strong it would make Earth's surface uninhabitable. Some creation scientists still believe in the vapor canopy today but a number of

creation scientists have abandoned the idea as unnecessary. I would personally say the vapor canopy idea is possible Biblically and scientifically but not really a necessary concept. At least we can say that if there was a vapor canopy, it did not provide the water for the 40 days of rain in the Flood.

I would not be dogmatic on the meaning of "waters above." I think it is possible the "waters above" may simply refer to clouds. Some creation scientists have suggested "waters above" refers to water out in space. See, for instance, Psalm 148:4 which mentions waters "above the heavens." Or, the way raquia, sky, and waters above are described in Genesis 1, it might be possible it is saying something about HOW God created the atmosphere, not describing what it is made of. It could be God took some water from the Earth's surface and used it to make the atmosphere, separating it from the Earth's surface and then converting it to different gases in the atmosphere. There is also water vapor throughout Earth's atmosphere (and sometimes ice crystals), so there may be other possibilities. Earth's atmosphere could have been different before the Flood in a manner that we are not aware of. But I think it is incorrect and unrealistic to say that raquia in Genesis 1 definitely refers to a solid surface. It is where the birds fly, so it is logical to say it is not solid. The word "raquia" does not tell us anything about what raquia is made of in Genesis 1. Also, raquia in another passage and a different context, such as Ezekiel 1, may be using the word to refer to something totally unrelated to Genesis 1. Genesis 1 does not explain what raquia actually is. It is only a "separation" between waters above and waters below.

Preflood Rain

Another controversy pertaining to Genesis chapters 1 and 2 is about rain. Some have suggested there was no rain on Earth until it rained at the beginning of the Flood. What is this based on? This idea is

sometimes related to the vapor canopy idea, arguing that when the vapor canopy collapsed this started the first rain. Recall that the vapor canopy idea does not offer a good explanation of the rains of the Flood, but I think a vapor canopy was possible. Another basis for the "no rain until the Flood" idea comes from Genesis 2:5. This verse says, "no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground (NIV)." This verse is apparently describing the state of the Earth between the third day and the sixth day. When it says the Lord had not sent rain, does this mean there would never have been rain until the Flood? Genesis is not clear on this, I do not think we know if there was rain before the Flood or not. It could be it did rain after Adam was created. We can infer a few things about the preflood world from fossil evidence and the general description in Genesis that it was very good. I think rain is not necessarily a bad thing, but violent dangerous storms are. Rain as we know it often causes erosion of the soil, which is indeed a bad thing. Today people take measures to minimize and prevent soil erosion. But if rain were gentle it would not cause soil erosion. Thus, I think it is possible there could have been gentle rain in the preflood world, but we do not know. There are other possibilities for how God may have provided water for plants, such as through ground water and morning dew.

On the other hand, when the Flood began, there was indeed intense rain. Genesis 7:11 says, "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month--on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened (NIV)." In Genesis 7:4 and 7:12 it states that it rained for 40 days and nights. This clearly implies intense storm activity that would have been frightening to people who

were used to living in such a pleasant environment. The 40 days of rain also is scientifically interesting because today it is physically impossible for Earth to do this. Earth's atmosphere probably could not sustain rain this long. Also, it seems likely, though it is not explicitly stated, that this rain was global. In order for it to rain this long over the entire Earth surface, something had to put large amounts of water into Earth's atmosphere. Earth's atmosphere apparently became "overloaded" or supersaturated with water in a way that was sustained for weeks. I suspect that even at the end of the 40 days there could have been continuing rain on some occasional or scattered basis for some weeks.

Creation scientists have much debated what Genesis 7:11 means when it says "springs of the great deep" or "fountains of the deep." Volcanic eruptions, hot water geysers, water jets from the mid-ocean ridges, and impacts from space vaporizing ocean water have all been suggested as possible means of putting large amounts of water into the atmosphere rapidly. Some or all of these catastrophic mechanisms could cause intense long lasting rains. The Flood account in Genesis raises many scientific questions. Surely a global Flood would cause many geological and physical effects on the Earth. The Bible does not spell out what happened in technical detail but it gives a general outline of the events. There is a great desire on the part of Christians in the sciences who are creationists to understand what this Flood did to the Earth. Though we may never fully answer every question about the Flood, various ideas have been proposed to relate the Flood as described in Genesis to what is known from modern Earth sciences.

Movement of the Continents

A question that sometimes comes up is what about the continents and the concept of Plate Tectonics. In other words, was there once one large supercontinent that split up, as is believed today by modern geologists?

Could this have something to do with the Flood? Some creationists would say, yes this does have a lot to do with Noah's Flood. But, other creation scientists reject the idea of Plate Tectonics completely. Does the Bible speak to this? It has been argued by some creationists that the Bible implies there was once one continent based on Genesis 1:9-10. This passage says, 'And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas."' The relevant part is about the water being "gathered to one place." The idea is that this implies one contiguous body of water in the ocean, therefore there would be one contiguous land mass. However, I think this is a very weak argument. In fact, since verse 10 says the gathered waters were called "seas" plural, it may be incorrect to take this to mean there was one contiguous body of water. I would be reluctant to infer anything about the arrangement of the pre-flood oceans or continents from the information in Genesis 1. However, even if Genesis does not say anything about a supercontinent in the past, that does not necessarily rule it out as a possibility. It could be something the Bible just does not mention. There are many processes that may have happened in the Flood that the Bible does not describe.

Another passage in Genesis is sometimes related to the break up of a past supercontinent, Genesis 10:25. This is in the section of Genesis often called the "Table of Nations." It lists descendants of Noah's three sons and shows that there were groups of people who came from Noah's descendants. Thus the Israelites would have known something about the origins of the various people groups they would encounter in their journey to Caanan because of the background about those people groups given in Genesis. Among the descendants of Noah's son Shem is a man named Eber who had two sons, one of

whom was Peleg. This is what Genesis 10:25 says about Peleg, "One was named Peleg, because in his time the earth was divided." The name Peleg apparently means "divided" or similar. Thus some have suggested this verse is talking about the Earth continents dividing in the time of Peleg. However, I don't think this is clear from Genesis based on just the little information in this verse. Genesis 10:25 comes right before the account of the Tower of Babel and thus Peleg and the Babel account were probably concurrent in time. So I think it is most likely Peleg's name refers to the dividing of people groups by different language groups, not the dividing of Earth's continents. Also, Peleg would have lived a few hundred years after the Flood considering Genesis 10, so if Peleg did refer to the breakup of the continents, that would put the breakup of a supercontinent after the Flood, rather than during the Flood. This has also been suggested by some creationists. A number of well known creation scientists today tend to lean toward the view that a separation of the continents happened during the Flood. I would agree with this view, though I would say other views are worth considering. I do not think Genesis answers the question of was there once a supercontinent that broke up. I think science must be applied to answer that question.

Something that is important for understanding God's Flood is the chronology of the event from Scripture. Creationists still debate some details about the sequence of events. Following is a sequence that Genesis gives us of what happened in the Flood. This is describing it from the perspective of Noah in the Ark. Time is apparently marked in Genesis based on days from Noah's birthday.

Chronology of Flood Events

Date	Events	Reference
Noah's yr 600, Mo 2, day 10	Noah enters Ark	Gen. 7:7-9
Mo 2, d 17	40 days of rain starts	7:10-11
Mo 3, d 27	End of 40 days of heavy rain	7:12
Mo 7, d 17	150 days. Ark rests on a mtn in Ararat. Rains stop	7:24, 8:2, 8:4
Mo 10, d 1	Other mtns visible from the Ark	8:5
Mo 11, d 11	Raven sent out. Dove sent out and returns	8:6-9
Mo 11, d 18	Dove sent out again, returns with olive leaf	8:10
Mo 11, d 25	Dove sent out again, does not return	8:12
Noah's yr 601, Mo 1, d 1	Some dry land	8:13
Yr 601, Mo 2, d 27	Land completely dry. Noah exits Ark	8:14-19

To summarize, Noah, his family, and the animals were in the Ark for one year and 17 days. This is probably based on 30 day months. Note that over half of the Flood year, Noah was sitting on the mountain waiting for the water to go down. Another point worth noting is that in the Ararat region, there is a whole range of mountains. The mountains of Ararat are volcanic. There is evidence they uplifted during the Flood and volcanic eruptions caused them to grow in altitude for some time after the Flood. So, at the end of the Flood, the mountain would not have been such a high altitude as it is today. Many mountains in the Earth today would have formed during and after the Flood. This means the Flood waters did not have to be over 25,000 feet deep so that Mt. Everest was covered with water. Mt. Everest did not exist in the pre-flood world. Thus the post-Flood world is very different from the pre-flood world.

The God of the Bible did indeed judge mankind in the past with a global catastrophic flood. This shows he is a holy God who judges sin. He promised not to do that again, and he has given a way of salvation through faith in Christ. This gives us hope for today and for the future.

Review of God of Wonders DVD

"God of Wonders" is a video program available from Randolph Productions that overviews all of nature to connecting creation with the God of the Bible. It makes you consider the greatness of the Creator and also consider the meaning of the way we are as human beings and our place in God's creation. It is a high quality production done in wide screen with beautiful footage of many things in nature. The entire program is 85 minutes long. It addresses everything from the atom to the Sun and stars, as well as plants, flowers, sea creatures, birds, animals, and man. You can learn about the special

properties of water, hummingbirds, flowers, and how big the largest stars are compared to our Sun. It addresses intelligent design in all of the segments on nature, but it does more than just address that there is a Creator. It connects things in nature (as well as in human nature) to the attributes of God and to his provisions for us. The program makes you think about what it means that the world is so orderly, beautiful, and abundantly well designed for our benefit.

Individuals from a variety of ministries appear in the program, including Dave Hunt, Ian Taylor, Roger Oakland, Ken Ham, as well as ICR scientists Larry Vardiman and Frank Sherwin. The well-known Dr. John Whitcomb appears in the program at several points to address the spiritual significance and make things relevant to us as human beings. There is also Gary Parker and David Menton, Jason Lisle, and Don DeYoung. This brings together expertise from a wide variety of academic disciplines, all discussing the meaning of the order and purposeful design in the world. In each section Bible verses are displayed on screen or quoted that bring out God as Creator and provoke thought about the meaning of some aspect of creation. There is an incredible breadth of topics addressed and it is not just left on a factual level. The emphasis throughout is on connecting the way things are made with what it means about the God who made it all. This is what I like so much about it. Seldom have there been programs that effectively do this. This may be the best example of this I've ever seen.

There are interesting interviews with what seem to be "average people" on the street. I can't help wonder how people were selected to be interviewed for this. The interviews are very good though for making the program have a personal relevance. The people interviewed are asked simple questions like "Do you have a conscience?" The people interviewed admit they have lied

and done other things that they know are wrong. The program makes the point that all people have an innate ability to judge right and wrong. All people know they have fallen short of what they know is right. This shows how people need a relationship with their Maker. The last section is entitled "God of Love." In this the gospel from the New Testament is explained clearly about what Jesus Christ did in dying for our sins and raising from the dead and that we can trust in Him for salvation.

I think this program will be a great encouragement to Christians. I've enjoyed it immensely. It could also be a great program to show to nonchristians or to children, to spark discussion about the existence and nature of God. With nonchristians or with kids, it might be necessary to use it one section at a time rather than showing the entire program in one setting. Each section can be started from the DVD menu. New sections start with a title and usually a Scripture being put on the screen. My only real criticism of the program is that the Scriptures are sometimes not displayed long enough to read them on the screen. I'd recommend using the Pause button and looking up these passages if they are unfamiliar. This great program shows how the natural world is meaningful in pointing us to our Creator.

If you would like to purchase a copy of this video or other christian video programs, you can contact Randolph Productions, an arm of Campus Crusade for Christ. You can go to their website at <http://www.go2rpi.com> or call them at 800-266-7741 Monday through Friday.

Noah's Ark, April 2010 Report

In April a Christian ministry in Hong Kong released a press report claiming to have found Noah's Ark. Pictures and videos were made available on the internet showing a pit or cave with worked wood in it. I will not go into all the details here but I would refer you to the webpage below, from Creation Ministries International, in Australia. They have done some investigation into the issue. I agree with them that this is likely to be a hoax. However in this case apparently the Christian organization from Hong Kong, The Media Evangelism, Ltd. seems to be a victim of the hoax and not the perpetrators. It seems likely that locals in Turkey have perpetrated the hoax. To read more, go to <http://creation.com/noahs-ark-or-what>