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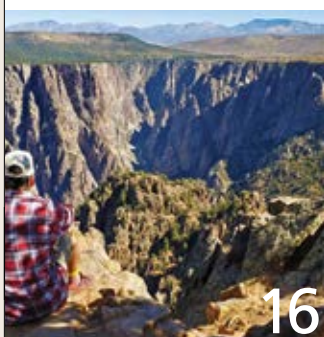
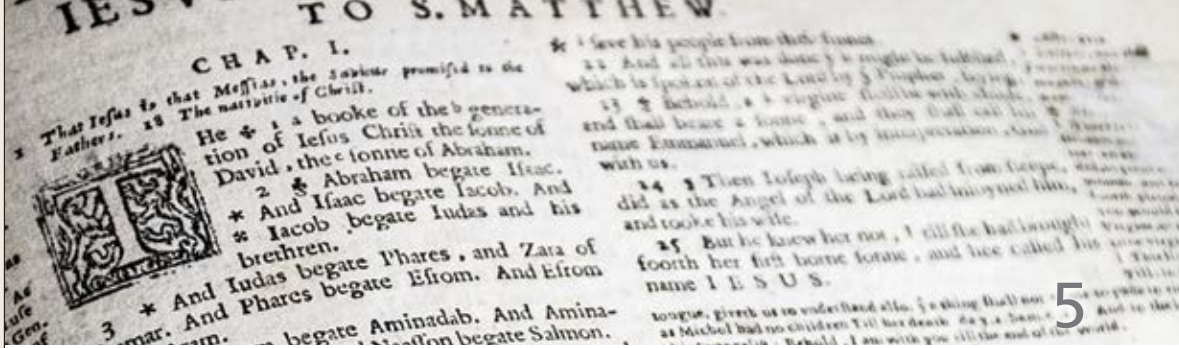
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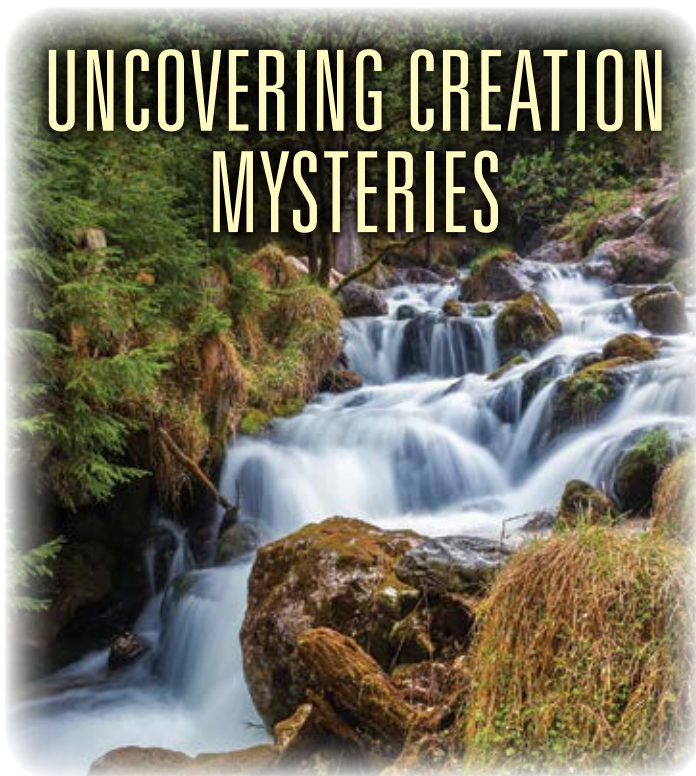
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Our Creator could have immediately revealed everything there is to know about His creation from the beginning—but He didn't. Could it be that He enjoys a good mystery? Perhaps He sees value in the process of scientific investigation, the search for greater understanding of what He has made. At the very least, it seems He created people with an innate curiosity and desire to explore.

On the other hand, some mysteries don't have to be mysteries at all. But they remain mysterious to those who are trying to understand God's world without a knowledge of God Himself. For them, even some "clearly seen" clues remain unresolved.

No matter the mystery, if it relates to creation you can bet the Institute for Creation Research's scientists will be on the case. They've dedicated themselves to examining the evidence and offering solid answers to confounding questions, and they talk about a few of them in this issue of *Acts & Facts*.

In "A Texas-Size Spider Mystery," ICR zoologist Frank Sherwin introduces us to "a delightfully creepy spider" (page 14). (It's a mystery to me how anyone could call a spider delightfully anything.) He says the creature was "dubbed the Texas Mystery Spider" but points out that it's no mystery to those who understand creation. He says, "Although *Myremecicultor* is a mystery to secular scientists, it's not one for creationists who see spiders as having always been spiders."

Drs. Brian Thomas and Tim Clarey address mysteries of another kind in their

Park Series article "Gunnison's Black Canyon: The Flood Solves Mysterious Missing Time" (pages 16-19). They say, "Black Canyon does more than drop jaws. It conceals mysteries, including supposedly lost eons of time." Read on to see how they explain the mystery and how Noah's Flood is involved in exposing "one of the wildest stories ever to wind its way into science."

Dr. Jeff Tomkins addresses the mystery of the missing tetrapod transitional forms in his article "The Fossils Still Say No: The Fins-to-Feet Transition" (pages 10-13). He examines supposed water-to-land transitions offered by evolutionists and concludes, "The ultimate death knell for the evolutionary story is that fully terrestrial tetrapod tracks were found in rocks dated *older* than when any of these so-called transitional forms supposedly existed."

In "Do We See Complex Design in Mosquito Eggs?" (page 15), ICR researcher Scott Arledge provides details of the Creator's intricate design in tiny mosquitoes, but he points out that some things are still un-

known. He says, "It's still a mystery how the melanin [in the mosquito egg] reduces water leaving the egg, but these two features masterfully work together." He continues, "Things seem complicated as we observe creation all around us, but if we take the time to zoom in on the details, we find even more mind-boggling complexity."

So, where do we go to uncover answers to the mysteries that continue to puzzle us? Dr. Randy Guliuzza reminds us of the foundational source

of truth that our Lord Jesus has given us—the precious gift of His Word. He says, "God clearly communicates what He wants to say to people....The average person who doesn't have an advanced degree in science or theology can attain a clear understanding of what the Bible means" ("ICR Upholds the Clarity of Scripture," pages 5-7). He emphasizes the importance of Scripture, saying, "By reclaiming biblical clarity, Christians embrace a truth that releases them from the bondage of theological or scientific elites."

We may not find the answer to everything there is to know about creation in the Bible—after all, even the Author seems to love a good mystery. But His Word offers the truths we need to know Him and to walk honorably as we explore His world. And as we take His Word at face value, we'll find that many creation mysteries were meant to be uncovered by us all along.

Jayme Durant

Jayme Durant
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

ICR UPHOLDS THE CLARITY OF

SCRIPTURE

R A N D Y J . G U L I U Z Z A , P . E . , M . D .

The Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God” has been affirmed repeatedly from pulpits. But did you know this important declaration presupposes two other essential doctrines of the Bible? These are biblical preservation and clarity.

Preservation means that God has supernaturally safeguarded the information He wanted in His Bible all the way from Moses, and perhaps Adam himself, to now. Clarity affirms that *anybody* can understand the plain message of Bible passages such as “for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them”

(Exodus 20:11). In comparison to the doctrine of inspiration, clarity and preservation seem to get little respect, but they are equally important truths. After all, what good is a God-breathed book to a Christian if it’s either unintelligible or can’t be found?

It’s easy to understand the doctrine of biblical clarity (technically called *perspicuity*) when we strip away the theological jargon. It means that God clearly communicates what He wants to say to people at any time and in any culture when they can read an accurate translation of the Bible. The average person who doesn’t have an advanced degree in science or theology can

attain a clear understanding of what the Bible means. In short, with *nothing more* than our own reading of the Bible’s words, Christ clearly communicates His thoughts to us—regardless of whether we are a religious cleric or a hotel clerk.

Do you recall that the apostle Peter thought it was important to “stir up” his reader’s memory about very important matters through repetition (2 Peter 1:13; 3:1)? Biblical clarity is so vital to creationists that it’s worth a bit of repetition. It’s also fundamental to one of the Institute for Creation Research’s missions, which is to help pastors lead, feed, and defend their flocks.

article highlights

- Biblical clarity and preservation are essential doctrines for upholding the Bible’s inspiration and inerrancy.
- God clearly communicates His thoughts in Scripture.
- Words in Scripture have a plain and natural meaning within their immediate context.
- Reclaiming biblical clarity liberates Christians from theologians and scientists who insert themselves as essential interpreters of the Bible.



The Geneva Bible was translated in the 16th century by a group of English Protestant scholars who sought refuge in Geneva, Switzerland, from persecution. One of the Reformation’s goals was putting the Bible into the hands of common people so they could read it for themselves.

As I mentioned in a previous article on biblical clarity, few creationists understand why clarity supersedes inerrancy in making the biblical case for a young earth and supernaturally created, non-evolving creatures.¹ I recounted a debate I had with a theistic evolutionist and a progressive creationist. Everyone on the panel claimed to endorse biblical inspiration and inerrancy. But the debate centered on whether Christians could reliably arrive at a correct biblical interpretation by giving the words their normal meaning in their normal context, or if outside information supplied by scientists was also essential. Thus, the crux was not strictly over science but over the sharp division about biblical clarity.

Nonbelievers Can Demonstrate the Clarity of Scripture

Could someone who doubts God's existence interpret the Bible correctly? Yes, because the Bible's words are clear. So, if an agnostic gives the Bible's words their normal meaning in context, they can come to a correct interpretation. This is demonstrated in the Bible commentary *Asimov's Guide to the Bible*, authored by the famous agnostic Isaac

God clearly communicates what He wants to say to people at any time and in any culture when they can read an accurate translation of the Bible.

Asimov, in the sections where he interprets Genesis 1. He arrives at a normal interpretation that God created the universe in six 24-hour days. But, to succinctly paraphrase what Asimov concludes about that straightforward message, he says in effect, "That's crazy."

Asimov demonstrates the truth of both biblical clarity and of 1 Corinthians 2:14, which says, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." This passage doesn't say that the Bible is unintelligible to unbelievers but that after they understand the words they conclude that what is being said is foolish. They understand what the Bible's words mean, but those precious words mean nothing to

them because they are devoid of spiritual discernment.

Interestingly, a 2019 book review on *Asimov's Guide to the Bible* states that people should read the Bible. But the author, Josh Jones, doesn't want to let the Bible speak directly to readers by giving the words their normal meaning in their normal context. He suggests inserting something like *Asimov's Guide* between the Bible and the reader as an interpretive filter. He says, "Everyone should read the Bible, and—I'd argue—should read it with a sharply critical eye and the guidance of reputable critics and historians, though this may be too much to ask for those steeped in literal belief [i.e., those holding to biblical clarity]."²

It's easy for one agnostic who disregards the plain implications of a biblical passage to persuade other agnostics to do likewise because neither believes in inspiration. But how could someone who holds to biblical inspiration but rejects the implications of a clear passage of the Bible get other believers to also disregard it? By dipping into the same playbook used by secularist Josh Jones. If some Christians don't like what the Bible clearly teaches, then they seek to insert an interpretive filter between the Bible and themselves.

Biblical Authority Stands on the Clarity of Scripture

Christians intuitively sense that biblical authority is being undermined when either a scoffer or a fellow believer asserts that additional information outside of the Bible is crucial to understand it. Let's consider why this is true and some practical ways to avoid being ensnared by this erroneous line of thought.

If you discuss the Genesis 1 creation account with theistic evolutionists, they will inevitably assert that several words really mean something different from their normal contextual meaning and that biblical interpretations must be informed by *scientists*. Creationists often respond that this undermines the authority of Scripture. To



From left, Chas Morse, Jeff Tomkins, Jake Hebert, Tim Clarey, Frank Sherwin, Randy Giuluzza, and Jim Johnson at an *Unlocking the Mysteries of Genesis* Conference in El Paso, Texas, in September 2018

this, theistic evolutionists offer reassurances of their belief in biblical inerrancy—that sounds like belief in its authority—which seems to nullify the creationists’ argument.

However, when anyone asserts the necessity of scientists to determine the true meaning of the Bible, creationists should respond that the Bible teaches that its words are clear. Remind them how throughout church history the truth of biblical clarity has always been a threat to those who want to control another person’s thoughts by *telling* them what the Bible means and not letting them learn from it for themselves.

Thus, if Christians allow scientists to tell them how to understand the Bible rather than relying on the Bible’s words themselves (and the Holy Spirit), then scientists now sit as the Christian’s immediate authority instead of the Bible. So, to keep the Bible in its proper place of direct authority, don’t interpret the Bible through the lens of the world’s science or philosophy.

Creationists and theistic evolutionists diverge greatly over the scientific merits of evolutionary theory, but just as importantly they differ in their approach to Scripture and biblical clarity. ICR has always been at the forefront in championing the clarity of Scripture. Biblical clarity and the normal interpretation of Scripture are two sides of the same coin.

By reclaiming biblical clarity, Christians embrace a truth that releases them from the bondage of theological or scientific elites who proudly insert themselves as an essential interpretive filter between believers and the Bible. ✎

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ICR Discovery Center Associate Ivana Semidey works on the Camarasaurus fossil display, a new exhibit for 2021



Ivana painting the Noah’s Ark activity board, an enhancement to the Noah’s Ark exhibit for 2021

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Largest Canyons Were Formed by the Receding Flood

Two newly discovered canyons in Greenland and Antarctica have a lot in common with Grand Canyon. Both canyons are as deep as or deeper than Grand Canyon and are at least 60 miles in length. But what's especially revealing is the fact that they all appear to have formed around the same time.

Grand Canyon is 277 miles long and about a mile deep in many places. Secular scientists claim it started to form just prior to the Pliocene, part of the Neogene system or Late Cenozoic erathem. The Late Cenozoic date for the canyon is confirmed by about 150 Ice Age lava flows that poured down Grand Canyon's carved walls, demonstrating that the canyon existed prior to or very early in the Ice Age.¹

Petermann canyon, Greenland's largest subglacial feature, is as deep as Grand Canyon and about 450 miles long. This canyon wasn't formed by the scouring of the current ice sheet but by catastrophic water-flow beginning in the Pliocene prior to the Pleistocene Ice Age.²

The likewise massive Denman Canyon in Antarctica is 62 miles long and twice as deep as Grand Canyon.³ Secular scientists speculate that it formed as continental ice poured off the eastern edge of Antarctica. However, it's more likely this canyon had its origins in the Late Pliocene. Like many glacial canyons, the ice sheet probably scoured out an earlier water drainage system.

All three of these major canyons appear to have formed about the same time, just prior to the Ice Age. And we could add the second-largest canyon in North America, Palo Duro Canyon, to this list since it also had its origin around then.⁴

If uniformitarianism is true, why aren't there countless similar-size canyons

throughout the rock record? There should be massive canyons mixed in at all levels of the geologic column, not just near the top. And these should be filled to the brim with later sedimentary deposits (Figure 1). And yet, the majority of the rock record reveals nothing on the scale of the canyon erosion that's observed in the Late Cenozoic.⁵ All of the world's largest canyons seem to have formed simultaneously just before the Ice Age. It's as if massive canyons didn't exist prior to the Late Cenozoic.

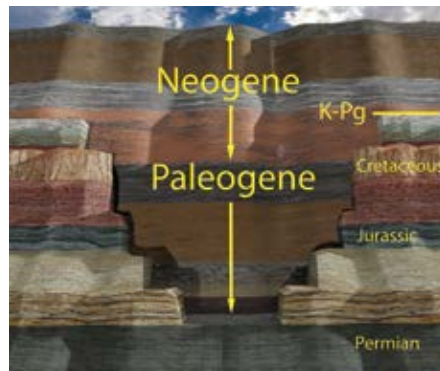


Figure 1. Diagram illustrating a large fictional canyon that formed at the end of the Cretaceous (K-Pg boundary). This canyon would most likely have been filled by later sedimentary rocks of the Paleogene and Neogene. However, we do not observe major canyons originating at this level in the rock record, or at any time earlier for that matter. We only see major canyon development originating in the Neogene (near the N-Q boundary) from Flood runoff.

Furthermore, if the post-Flood boundary is located at the K-Pg (Cretaceous-Paleogene), we should also observe numerous massive canyons originating at that level in the rock record. But we don't. The only time we see large-scale canyon erosion is just before the Ice Age, at the end of the Neogene system. That's another reason Institute for Creation Research scientists place the Flood/post-Flood boundary near the N-Q

article highlights

- Canyons comparable to Grand Canyon lie under Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets.
- These massive canyons appear to have been carved around the same time before the Ice Age.
- Evidence indicates they all formed when the global Flood's waters drained off Earth's continents.

(Neogene-Quaternary)—it best fits all of the geological and paleontological data.^{5,6} The K-Pg is likely just the high-water level of the Flood around Day 150 when the whole earth was inundated.⁵

Only the receding phase of the Flood provides the conditions necessary to carve massive canyons all over the world at the same time, as I illustrated for Grand Canyon in a previous article.⁷ Because it was a one-time event, the Flood also explains the lack of countless erosional canyons originating within rocks prior to the Late Cenozoic. The sheer volume of water that drained off the continents at the end of the Flood provides the perfect recipe to carve all of these canyons in a matter of months. ☞

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The Fossils Still Say No: The Fins-to-Feet Transition

One of the alleged greatest transformations in vertebrate evolution is said to be the emergence of creatures that traded fins for feet and transitioned from water to land.¹⁻³ In other words, fish somehow evolved the numerous anatomical and physiological systems found in four-legged amphibians and various land-based reptiles. Despite evolutionary propaganda surrounding unusual fish-like creatures discovered in the fossil record, the necessary evidence of such a monumental evolutionary leap is profoundly lacking.

In 2012, Jennifer Clack, one of the most famous vertebrate paleontologists of the modern era, concluded, “The question of where tetrapods evolved is even more difficult to answer than that of when.”¹ Echoing this frustration, a 2018 research paper stated, “The fish-to-tetrapod transition is one of the fundamental problems in evolutionary biology.”⁴

The alleged fins-to-feet evolutionary transformation is thought to have brewed during the deposition of Devonian strata, which I described in a previous article as the geological period known as the Age of the Fishes—a point in the rock record when numerous types of unique fish show up suddenly with no evolutionary precursors.⁵

article highlights

- Fossil evidence for fins-to-feet evolution is notably lacking.
- Fish and tetrapod anatomies are fundamentally different, and the forms evolutionists claim as transitional are all fish.
- Fossilized tetrapod tracks were dated before the supposed fish-tetrapod transitions, blowing the evolutionary story out of the water.
- When it comes to evolution, the fossils still say no.

The supposed transition from water to land would have required the evolution of many novel structures in skeletons, musculatures, neural systems, internal organs, sensory networks, and respiratory systems.¹⁻⁴

Anatomically speaking, specialized appendages and skeletons along with associated musculatures would need to have formed to support a creature’s body weight against gravitational forces to allow it to move on land. In contrast, fish are highly specialized to live buoyantly in the water, largely avoiding the effects of gravity on movement.

Furthermore, to facilitate respiration, gill breathing would have

needed to transform into lung breathing—a radical physiological change in itself—through other highly specialized innovations.

Are Lobe-Finned Fishes Tetrapod Ancestors?

Lobe-finned fishes (sarcopterygians) are bony and scaly fish with fleshy, lobed, paired fins that are connected to the body by a single bone. Their fins are different from those of other scaly fish in that each one is borne on a fleshy, lobe-like stalk. Because of this unique extended fin structure, evolutionists have eyed this feature as a potential limb “looking” to evolve into arms, legs, hands, and feet.¹⁻⁴ Many sarcopterygians also have two dorsal fins with separate bases compared to the single dorsal fin found in ray-finned fishes. In reality, sarcopterygians simply represent a unique category of fishes with unique features.

Lobe-finned fishes first appear suddenly at the beginning of the Devonian rocks along with many other types of fish (jawless, jawed, armored, spiny, and cartilaginous) with no evolutionary precursors.⁶ Two living examples of these types of fish are the coelacanth (Figure 1) and the lungfish. The oldest coelacanth fossil is dated by evolutionists at about 408 Ma (millions of years ago), and the youngest is found in rock layers conventionally dated as about 66 Ma.⁶ While the coelacanth was originally thought to have been extinct, we now know that it’s alive and well and adapted to live deep in the ocean. Off the coast of South Africa, it’s found between 500 and 2,300 feet below the surface. Obviously, this fish so deep in the ocean is far from the possibility of evolving to roam on land.



Figure 1. Coelacanth

Image credit: Richard Pyle, Association for Marine Exploration



Figure 2. A reconstruction of Panderichthys

Image credit: Tyler Rhodes

Evolutionists have picked the extinct lobe-finned fish called *Panderichthys* (Figure 2) as the main basal candidate leading to a terrestrial creature in the evolutionary tree. Fossils of this sarcopterygian don’t appear until the Late Devonian system, claimed to be 380 Ma. Because of its lobe-finned anatomy and other features, like a more flattened head and a lack of dorsal fins, it had a crude four-limbed (tetrapod)⁷ appearance similar to some amphibians, although its rear fins (where hind legs should be evolving) were very small. Thus, evolutionists have placed this as one of the first fish on the path to living on land.

Tiktaalik

Next up the ladder is *Tiktaalik*, claimed to be 383 Ma, a rock star in evolutionary circles and held up as one of the most important transitions to a land-dwelling creature (Figure 3).¹⁻³ For all practical purposes, *Tiktaalik* was just another unique type of lobe-finned fish similar to its supposed evolutionary precursor *Panderichthys* in many features. It had fishy body scales, fin rays, gills, and a lower jaw like *Panderichthys*. However, it did have a slight separation between its head and shoulder region, allowing more head movement. The forelimb had more joints than *Panderichthys*, providing more fin movement, and the pelvic girdle was enlarged and more elaborate. It’s believed that *Tiktaalik* may have pushed itself up onto land like mudskippers do today—although this is purely speculation.

Furthermore, *Tiktaalik*’s lobe-fins were still fish-like, so these structures could not have supported its weight on land. It was clearly adapted to live in water or in a swampy environment. Clack noted these obvious fish fins and said, “The paired fins of *Tiktaalik* still retain fin rays: Loss of fin rays is part of the way in which limbs are distinguished from fins.”⁸ While having some interesting traits, *Tiktaalik* was simply a unique kind of fish that was incapable of living and walking on land.



Figure 3. A reconstruction of Tiktaalik roseae

Image credit: Tyler Keillor/Beth Rooney



Figure 4. A reconstruction of *Acanthostega*

Image credit: Dr. Günter Bechly

Acanthostega

The next main candidate above *Tiktaalik* on the evolutionary tree is *Acanthostega*, claimed to be 365 Ma, found in Late Devonian sediments (Figure 4).^{1-3,8} Although it exhibited a number of distinct fish-like features, evolutionists have claimed it was nevertheless an early tetrapod by the definition of having limbs with digits.⁸ *Acanthostega* also had an enlarged pelvic girdle and was differently structured than *Tiktaalik*, but it was still relatively small compared to land-walking tetrapods and was connected to the vertebral column by soft tissue rather than a bony junction. Some of the other prominent fish-like features of *Acanthostega* included a tail fin supported by long bony rays and internal covered gills (like fish), clearly indicating it was an underwater gill breather.⁸ Its shoulder and forelimb were also distinctly fish-like.

For evolutionists, the discovery and analysis of *Acanthostega* were as much a blessing as a curse. It was one of the first fish-like creatures found that had seemingly recognizable appendages with digits, eight digits on the front “feet” and six on the back. However, the controversy centered around the fact that the standard number of digits for land-based tetrapods is five. Furthermore, the eight front digits were linked by webbing, creating functional paddle fins, and the limbs lacked wrists, which would keep it from walking on land. In other words, its front appendages couldn’t bend forward at the elbow, and thus the creature couldn’t have achieved a weight-bearing position.

Clearly, this creature had its limbs and digits adapted for swimming and also perhaps for grasping aquatic plants. Once again, we have another unique type of extinct fish with no real hope of being terrestrial. In fact, Clack interpreted *Acanthostega* as an aquatic animal that never left the water.⁸

Ichthyostega

The last alleged key tetrapod transitional creature in the evolu-



Figure 5. An artist’s rendering of *Ichthyostega*

Image credit: Nobu Tamura

tionary tree is *Ichthyostega*, claimed to be 370 Ma—5 Ma older than *Acanthostega*, its supposed precursor (Figure 5). Like *Acanthostega*, this creature had features showing it was well-adapted to life in the water. Such fish-like features included fully functioning gills (even as adults) and a fin containing fin rays on its tail.^{1-3,8} Compared to its supposed evolutionary precursors, it had more elaborate limbs, but they were not suited to walking on land. Research manipulating its limb bones in computer models showed there was almost no long axis rotation of the humerus and femur; the animal couldn’t stand or turn its hand or foot flat to the ground.⁹ Therefore, it couldn’t have pushed its body off the ground or moved its limbs in an alternating sequence as typical land-walking tetrapods can.

Other features of *Ichthyostega* are also confusing from an evolutionary perspective, leading Clack to admit this was a “problematic genera.”¹ The design of the vertebral column was found to be unexpectedly different based on anticipated evolutionary assumptions.¹⁰ The digit count on its rear limb was seven as opposed to eight for *Acanthostega* or the standard five for most tetrapods. The strange hodgepodge of traits in this fish-like creature led Clack to state, “*Ichthyostega*, far from being representative of a Devonian tetrapod, turns out to be highly specialized in its own way.”⁸ Thus, while *Ichthyostega* was a unique fish-like creature with an interesting mosaic of unusual traits, it fails to fit the role of a water-to-land transitional form.

A Water-to-Land Transition Is Still Missing

After *Ichthyostega*, any other transitional form candidates simply disappear in the rock record, as noted by Clack: “The fossil record of post-Devonian tetrapods is notoriously sparse for about 30 million years after the Devonian/Carboniferous (Mississippian system) boundary.” Clack also states, “The origin of limbed tetrapods did not coincide with the acquisition of full terrestriality, an outcome that probably arose in the Early Carboniferous. This latter part of the story is documented by few fossils.”⁸

In other words, the huge evolutionary gap between water and land still exists with no fossil solution in sight. Renowned vertebrate paleontologist Michael Benton acknowledges this fact with the hopeful statement “Perhaps fully terrestrial tetrapods emerged only 25 Ma later in the Carboniferous.”²

Perhaps?

Ancient Tracks Derail Tetrapod Evolution

If a complete lack of transitional forms for water-to-land tetrapod evolution weren't enough, the biggest deal breaker in this whole story is one of dating. All of the key fossils discussed in this article leading up to a missing terrestrial transition are assigned to a very short period in the Middle-Upper Devonian (385-365 Ma).^{1-3,8} Not only is a 20 Ma window a very short time for all of this purported evolution to occur, but a fairly recent discovery has made the conundrum even greater.

In 2010, it was reported that well-preserved and “securely dated” land-walker tetrapod tracks from an ancient Polish marine tidal flat were found that were supposedly 397 Ma.¹¹ These well-preserved fossil tracks suggest that a group of two-meter-long terrestrial tetrapods lived near the south coast of Laurussia (a section of the ancient pre-Flood Pangaea supercontinent) that “were walking” with “stout legs.”

Since these tracks would have been made before any of the creatures discussed in this article ever existed, the whole tetrapod evolutionary story is void of any evidence whatsoever. The authors of the 2010 study said, “[The tracks] force a radical reassessment of the timing, ecology and environmental setting of the fish-tetrapod transition, as well as the completeness of the body fossil record.”¹² After Clack reviewed the timing of the Polish tetrapod tracks, she admitted in the newspaper *The Guardian*, “It blows the whole story out of the water, so to speak.”¹²

Conclusion

This series of fossil fish-like creatures that supposedly represent the evolution of something that could eventually transition to live on land offers little substance to solve the evolutionary story—it rather blurs it. In fact, the confusing mixture of traits these fish-like creatures possessed and the problems it gave evolution were noted by Clack:

“Depending on which characters were ordered versus unordered and which taxa were included or excluded, different results were obtained. In other words, the phylogeny of Devonian tetrapods was unstable.”¹¹

But the ultimate death knell for the evolutionary story is that fully terrestrial tetrapod tracks were found in rocks dated *older* than when any of these so-called transitional forms supposedly existed.

When we apply the creationist global Flood model of progressive burial by ecological zonation, the presence of these unusual fish-like fossils makes perfect sense.¹³ Since these creatures were buried in the Flood layers shortly before most coastal land plants appear in the Carboniferous, it becomes apparent that they likely inhabited coastal waters based on their various unique adaptations and their place of burial in the Flood strata. When it comes to the evidence, the fossils say no to tetrapod evolution. ✎

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Like today's mudskipper, the creatures addressed in this article were well-suited to their environments. None of them were transitioning to emerge from water to live on land. Each was unique and possessed the form and features it needed to thrive in its particular habitat.



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article highlights

- Spiders always show up in the fossil record with eight legs—no transitional forms exist.
- A newly identified spider family appears to have a symbiotic relationship with ants.
- Evolutionists struggle to explain the development of such elaborate mutually beneficial relationships.
- Our Creator designed His creatures with the features they need to fill the amazing variety of Earth’s ecological niches.

A Texas-Size Spider Mystery

The delightfully creepy spider belongs to a class called Arachnida—which is distinct from the “bug” class Insecta. Not surprisingly, according to the fossil record, spiders have always been spiders with four pairs of walking legs.¹ Their origin is much-debated by invertebrate zoologists. Regardless, each time fossil spiders are found, they are 100% spiders, not ambiguous evolutionary ancestors with partial or transitional features.

In 1999, a significant discovery was made in the arena of the arachnids. Biologists at Midwestern State University’s Dalquest Desert Research Station in the Chihuahuan Desert in West Texas found a tiny spider they initially couldn’t identify. Dubbed the Texas Mystery Spider, it turned out to be “a big deal in the world of spiders.”²

Researchers eventually determined that *Myrmecicultor chihuahuensis* is a new family of spiders that lives in an apparent symbiotic relationship with at least three different kinds of ants. More than half of animals known to biology live in a symbiotic relationship in their community. It may turn out that these ants and *Myrmecicultor* share a mutualistic condition. In other words, these creatures might benefit from one another while neither one suffers, which is similar to what we see with lichen, green

algae and fungus living together where both benefit from the relationship.³ Zoologists can investigate this interesting relationship between arachnid and insect without so much as a nod to evolution. Indeed, the evolutionary explanation of symbiotic origins is tenuous, conveniently occurring “millions of years ago,” as one report presumes:

When life on earth developed, symbiotic associations arose as a successful strategy millions of years ago, with which organisms of different species cooperate as a close-knit community, to gain an advantage in the struggle for survival. However, we still largely do not know why they do this, what the real benefits of such partnerships are, and which molecular mechanisms are important.⁴

Symbiotic relationships are a big roadblock to evolution theory. Consider something called *cleaning symbiosis* between little cleaner shrimp and the large predatory fish whose teeth they clean. You can view this association firsthand in most of the nation’s aquariums. How could such a complex relationship evolve through chance and time? The tiny shrimp would somehow have to evolve the idea to swim into the menacing mouth of a fish that naturally eats small invertebrates like shrimp.

At the same time, the big fish would

have to evolve the idea to let the shrimp pick away at debris between its teeth and pick parasites from its mouth and gums. Then the fish would have to evolve the idea to let the cleaner shrimp out again! After which, the big fish would swim away looking for small invertebrates—just like the shrimp—to eat. And all this would’ve had to randomly happen at the same time. Creationists, on the other hand, see this relationship as a special adaptation that suits each type of creature for its unique role in the web of life.

Although *Myrmecicultor* is a mystery to secular scientists, it’s not one for the creationists who see spiders as having always been spiders—and ants as having always been ants. They, like other animals and plants, were designed by the Creator with the ability to move in and fill Earth’s amazing variety of ecological niches. ☞

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Q. Do We See Complex Design in Mosquito Eggs?

A Mosquitoes hatch from tiny eggs and spend a few days filter-feeding on things like bacteria, pollen, and algae. They molt three times as they grow, storing up the energy reserves needed to pupate in a manner similar to a butterfly. Their “chrysalis” has a shrimp-like tail that enables them to swim while they morph into a flying insect.

A couple days later they emerge from the pupae shell and the whole process starts over. Complex? Yes. So, let’s take a look at just the egg.

It’s not a simple shell. What we find is an exquisitely designed life-preserving environmental interface system.

An *Aedes aegypti* mosquito lays eggs right above the waterline on a moist surface. The embryo can survive in the egg an astounding five years while it waits for the right conditions.¹ How does the embryo survive harsh environments and hatch only when conditions are ideal? It’s due to the brilliant design of the mosquito egg.

The egg shell isn’t a single layer but actually four (Figure 1). The outer two layers—exochorion, endochorion, and the air gap they create—keep the embryo from

running out of oxygen even if the egg is completely submerged. The outer layer, exochorion, is a hydrofuge—it sheds water like a duck’s back.

It’s also covered with a beautiful micropattern of bumps called *tubercles* (Figure 2). These tubercles increase the surface area of the exochorion exposed to the surrounding water and act as a gill, enabling the egg to “breathe” by gas exchange from dissolved gases present in the water.² These bumps

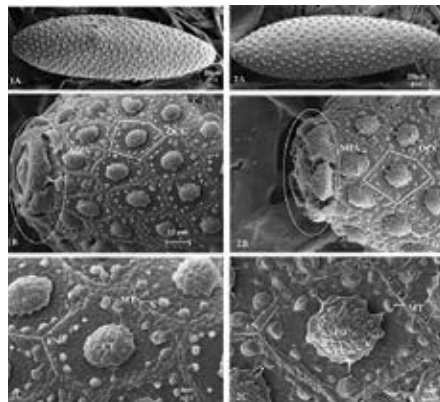


Figure 2. Mosquito eggs possess tubercles that increase the surface area and aid the outer layers’ gill-like function

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also resist biofouling (clogging) because of their special hexagonal micropattern. This has inspired the design of new technology to utilize this ingenious effect, a process known as *bioinspiration*.

The egg first starts out with only the outer two layers. The embryo inside waits for some important processes to finish and then excretes a jelly-like serosa membrane that completely surrounds the embryo.³ This membrane then secretes a cuticle containing chitin that allows just the right amount of water to leave the egg while retaining moisture inside. The egg shell also has a brown pigment called *melanin*. It’s still

article highlights

- Even living creatures that appear simple, like mosquitoes, are remarkably complex.
- Some species of mosquito eggs and the embryos they contain are designed to survive for years waiting for the perfect time to hatch.
- The closer we look at creation, the more design details we see and the more glorious God’s handiwork looks.



a mystery how the melanin—also found in human skin—reduces water leaving the egg, but these two features masterfully work together so the embryo doesn’t dry up and die.

The embryo doesn’t simply mature and then hatch. It waits for just the right condition—namely, low levels of oxygen in the water. This is important for the diet of a newly hatched mosquito, which consists of bacteria and algae. The presence of both these micronutrients drastically reduces the oxygen level in water. When there are sufficient levels of this food, as indicated by low oxygen, the mosquito hatches and consumes the bacteria and algae. This is especially beneficial for other aquatic life that needs oxygen to survive.

Things seem complicated as we observe creation all around us, but if we take the time to zoom in on the details, we find even more mind-boggling complexity. This explanation of the mosquito egg is a very simplified version, but it nonetheless demonstrates the great artistry and engineering of our Creator and Savior, Jesus—the same One who created us and provides us the path to salvation. ✨

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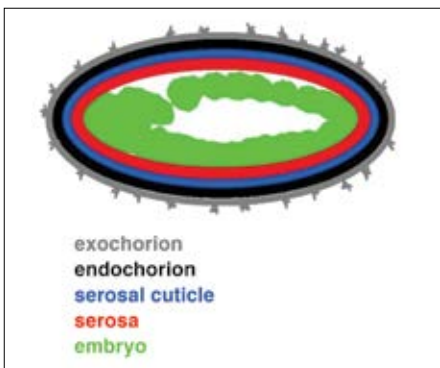


Figure 1. Cross-section drawing of the structure of an embryo and four-layer egg covering

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GUNNISON'S BLACK CANYON

The Flood Solves Mysterious Missing Time

The Gunnison River winds westward from the Colorado Rocky Mountains through dry and dramatic landscapes. Morning sunlight enlivens Colorado's tallest cliff, the stunning Painted Wall, found in Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park (Figure 1). Lookout points along the park's south rim road permit people to peer down into the deep canyon where birds fly far below and the Gunnison River roars in the distant depths (Figure 2).

But Black Canyon does more than drop jaws. It conceals mysteries, including supposedly lost eons of time.



Figure 1. Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park's stunning Painted Wall
Image credit: Daryl Robbins



Figure 2. ICR's Dr. Brian Thomas gazes over the deep Black Canyon gorge
Image credit: Daryl Robbins

B R I A N T H O M A S , P H . D . , A N D T I M C L A R E Y , P H . D .



article highlights

- Black Canyon's dramatic Painted Wall was formed in a high-energy event, matching the Flood's catastrophic processes.
- The canyon's secular rock dating doesn't match known erosion rates—a billion years of erosion is inexplicably missing.
- The Flood model explains Black Canyon's supposedly missing time.

Earth's First Rocks

Painted Wall is 2,250 feet of almost vertical dark metamorphic crystalline basement rock. Gashes of light-colored igneous rocks across its face look like fossilized lightning bolts.¹ Official park books and signage try to explain how this happened, but they weave in some wild storylines.

This basement rock formed early in Earth's history. Secular and biblical perspectives both acknowledge that crustal rock was cooked and squeezed under pressure. Later, molten material mixed with extremely hot water was injected into cracks and fissures, putting the painted look on the stunning cliffsides. This once-forceful injection implies much higher energy was at work here than we find today.

Genesis speaks of "all the fountains of the great deep" bursting upward until waters covered the earth "under the whole heaven" (Genesis 7:11, 19). Catastrophic plate motion during Noah's year-long Flood would have supplied plenty of energy, heat, and water.

"Eons" That Left No Trace

Mainstream geologists assign an age of about 1.7 billion years to this basement rock.² Biblical geologists point to only thousands of years. Erosion rates lean toward the latter assessment. Various studies suggest that today's slow erosion rates would take a maximum of about 50 million years to completely wash Earth's continents into the seas.³

The park signage itself points out another mystery that a thousands-of-years age assignment would solve. A sign titled “The Great Unconformity” says:

The thin, light tan layer you see on the canyon rim is Entrada Sandstone, a mere 165 to 170 million years old. The rock immediately below it was formed in the Precambrian period and is about 1¾ billion years old. More than a billion years is absent from the geologic record of Black Canyon!

What would a billion years of erosion do to the top of this basement rock?⁴ Erosion carves valleys between mountains and gullies or canyons between hills. But the top of the basement rock just beneath the Jurassic Entrada Sandstone is perfectly flat!⁵ It looks like not even one year elapsed between these features.

Similarly, what would a billion years of earthquakes and tectonic motions do to basement rock? They would leave numerous fissures, tilts, and cracks. But the top of the basement rock looks perfectly horizontal and intact to this day!

Noah’s Flood Solves the Mystery

Where are the rocks here that represent early Flood deposits like the Cambrian, Ordovician, Silurian, and Mississippian? None exist below the Entrada. Why? A view of rock thicknesses across North America reveals an answer (Figure 3).⁶ Most likely, these earlier rock systems were never deposited here. They weren’t here to erode away!

In a biblical Flood model, areas without early Flood deposits were probably higher in elevation in the pre-Flood world. Pre-Flood lowlands collected early Flood deposits. Since Western Colorado

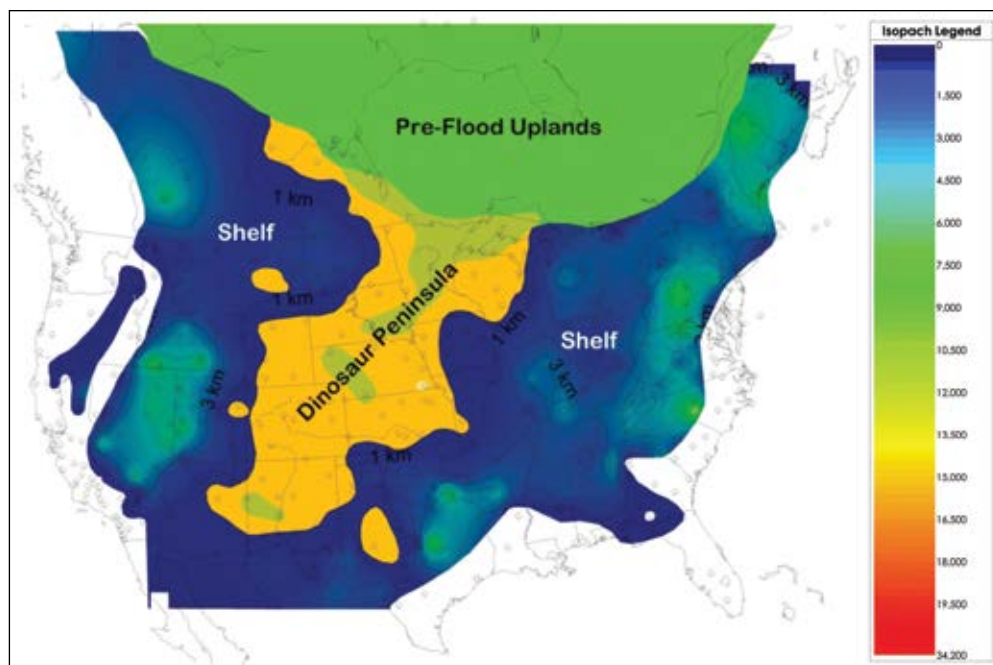


Figure 3. Thickness map of the early Flood sedimentary rocks, including the Cambrian through Mississippian systems, showing the possible extent of the pre-Flood Dinosaur Peninsula in yellow. Black Canyon is located on the southwestern part of this peninsula. The measurement is in meters.

Image credit: Werner J. Davis

Figure 4. Detail of the Great Unconformity, i.e., the basement rock/Entrada contact. One billion years between these strata would have left ruts and tilts. Instead, rapid deposition fits this flat contact.

Image credit: Brian Thomas



didn't accumulate these early layers, floodwater didn't reach this region's heights until later in the Flood year.⁷

The Flood model accounts for Jurassic system rocks lying on the flat crystalline basement rocks with no earlier sediments in-between (Figure 4). This area stayed relatively dry during the Flood's first months. Later, tsunami-like waves reached these higher elevations as they flooded the whole earth.

Key Lessons from Black Canyon

Black Canyon exposes one of the wildest stories ever to wind its way into science—a billion years of Earth history that left no trace. These rocks show that the billion years never really happened.

Recent, rapid, high-energy Flood processes better explain the flat contact between basement rock and the Entrada Sandstone. Since the Flood deposited that sand onto the basement rock only thousands of years ago—not 170 million—no wonder it shows no tilts or folds. There hasn't been enough time for tectonics to leave a trace.

The Entrada Sandstone exposed at Black Canyon provides strong evidence that the one-time judgment event described in Genesis solves the missing time mystery. ✎

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Do the Unpersuaded Have Enough Proof?

At a local Bible conference, a respected seminary professor unintentionally contradicted the apostle Paul. During the Q&A session, he opined that “you cannot prove the existence of God to anyone because you must choose to believe in God.” While the second half of that statement is correct, the first half fails Forensic Evidence 101, clashing with the proof principles taught in Romans 1:18-28.¹

Did the seminary professor’s reasoning mischaracterize God’s proofs of His creatorship? If so, how did he stumble? The professor confused proof with persuasion.

Studying God’s truth, while appreciating its “many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3, KJV), is a sanctified usage of our minds. By intentionally glorifying God as our Creator and being grateful to Him as our Maker, we logically worship our Lord God.¹ As ICR

President Dr. Randy Guliuzza often notes, worship is the logical response to seeing and understanding God’s handiwork.² This demonstrates the doxological role of biblical creation apologetics.^{1,3}

Yet, creation apologetics has a horizontal role, too—we also share the evidences of God’s creatorship with others. Creation evidences are like testifying witnesses and trial exhibits that illustrate the work of the Creator, including His bioengineering genius and providential care.³

However, documenting and explaining these wonderful witnesses of creation don’t automatically convert skeptics into believers.^{3,4} Why? Because proof is not the same as persuasion.

Proof requires giving relevant information, true facts. But persuasion requires choice: “clearly seen” truth can be accepted or rejected.^{1,3,4} Proof of relevant, clearly seen facts—what the apostle Paul called “clearly seen” evidences (Romans 1:20)—is proof beyond an honest doubt, which can be (and often is) rejected when a person’s receptiveness to truth is corrupted.^{3,4} Such corruption comes from suppressing available God-given truth (Romans 1:18). Evolutionists attribute their origins to accidents occurring to inanimate material. Some imagine that geophysical elements somehow selected and/or sculpted inorganic nonlife into pre-creating life forms. Some accredit life on Earth to immigrating meteor-borne crystals

article highlights

- The evidence of God’s creatorship is abundant and clearly seen.
- While proof focuses on facts, persuasion requires choice.
- We should present God’s truth with its infallible proofs, but it’s up to others whether they believe that truth.

or to lucky ingredients self-assembling inside a warm pond.^{1,3} In short, such imaginations are idolatry.^{2,4}

Carefully presenting God’s truth along with its many infallible proofs can simultaneously glorify God and serve others, benefiting them with relevant information and insights. But no matter how skilled our presentation is, no matter how conclusive our evidences are, we cannot choose for others to believe that truth.

As Paul reminded the Christians in Rome, God manifests His power and glory in us—our own bodies are walking, talking, blood-circuiting, breathing witnesses of who God is as our Creator.^{4,5} God holds every breath we take—and every breath is itself a providential miracle!⁵

So, there is no lack of adequate proof of our Creator’s existence, power, wisdom, care, and glory. Rather, those who choose to be unpersuaded are, as the apostle Paul says, “without excuse.”⁵ ❧

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Dr. Jim Johnson speaking at an *Unlocking the Mysteries of Genesis Conference* in El Paso, Texas, in September 2018

The first of seven great signs of Jesus' deity recorded in John's gospel is the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11). By the time Jesus arrived with His disciples, the consumption of wine had exhausted the supply—a matter of great social embarrassment to the hosts. Then Jesus stepped forward and, to the amazement of the servants and His disciples, revealed His miraculous creative powers by transmuting

slow erosion of godly standards had reached its peak: leadership became rebellious, thievery and bribery were lauded and rewarded, and care for needy orphans and widows was forgotten (Isaiah 1:21-23). It started at the top and worked its way down. Eventually the whole culture was polluted and diluted.

God finally chose to act. He announced through Isaiah that He would deal with the corruption personally: "I will rid Myself of

My adversaries, and take vengeance on My enemies. I will turn My hand against you, and thoroughly purge away your dross" (Isaiah 1:24-25). The verses that follow make it clear His discipline was not vindictive but restorative: "I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city" (v. 26). While these promises will be ulti-

Dross and Dilution

simple water into complex wine. The Lord Jesus saved the day by transforming the ordinary and mundane into the extraordinary and delightful.

Centuries earlier, the people of ancient Jerusalem had done exactly the opposite. The prophet Isaiah records that they had been "nourished and brought up" like precious children by God (Isaiah 1:2), a "faithful city" that was "full of justice" and "righteousness" (v. 21). But their rebellion corrupted what had started out as pure. "Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water" (v. 22). Morally and spiritually, the people of Jerusalem were no longer what they used to be. They had grown morally impure and spiritually diluted.

As the Old Testament Scriptures show, it didn't happen all at once. The historical books of Judges and 1 and 2 Kings depict a pattern of increasing spiritual decay and apostasy, punctuated at times by national revivals under the leadership of godly prophets, priests, and kings. By Isaiah's day, the



article highlights

- Our Lord transforms through His creative power, but ancient Israel gradually corrupted His good work.
- In the time of Isaiah, the people of Israel were marked by injustice and unfaithfulness. Although God confronted their corruption, He promised to ultimately restore them.
- Like ancient Israel, America today needs the light and truth of God. More than ever we must proclaim our Creator and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

mately fulfilled in the coming kingdom age, God's purpose—is the same then as it is today—is to transform His people to a state of godly purity.

The similarities between ancient Jerusalem and our culture today are unmistakable. Now is the time for Christians to stand up and shine the light of our Creator and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, into an increasingly dark world. Our Adversary is "roaring" like never before, and an entire generation is growing up in a world corrupted by dross and dilution that disparage the gospel of Christ and the evidence that affirms His perfect Word.

ICR has the ability and biblical commitment to combat these threats, but not without help from God's people to fully develop our current initiatives. If there was ever a time to help ICR with a gift of significance, now is that time. Pray for us, and please help if you are able. ✉

Mr. Morris is Director of Donor Relations at the Institute for Creation Research.



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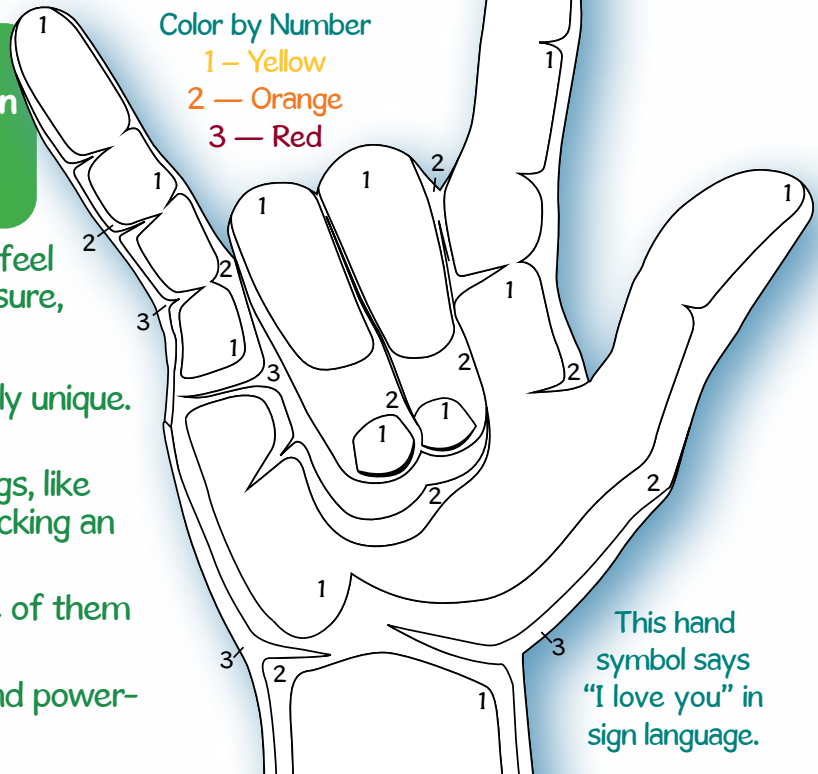
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Human Hands

Oh, the wonders of the human hand! It's the tool you never forget to bring with you. You can use it to mold clay, play the piano, or throw a baseball. Check out these other handy facts:

- ✓ Nerves and sensors in your hand help you feel things in your world. They can detect pressure, texture, vibration, pain, and temperature.
- ✓ The lines and ridges on your hand are totally unique. Even twins have different fingerprints!
- ✓ Your hand is amazing! It can do strong things, like carrying a bucket. Or gentle things, like cracking an egg.
- ✓ People have created robot hands, but none of them work as well as human hands.
- ✓ Only our Creator, the Lord Jesus, is wise and powerful enough to design our incredible hands.



This hand symbol says "I love you" in sign language.



Hand craft! You will need scissors, a pencil, construction paper, 5 straws, string, and tape.



1 Cut string, straws, and hand shape as shown.



2 Tape the straws to the paper hand as shown.



3 Thread the string through each straw piece.



4 Tape the top of each string to the back.



5 Gather the strings and pull down to see the fingers and thumb work!



I was so excited when I saw this [Creation Kids Acts & Facts page] in the magazine, and my kids are adults!

— T. M.



Dear Dr. Clarey,

I just read through your fascinating paper “Use of Sedimentary Megasequences to Re-create Pre-Flood Geography.” I just wanted to let you know that you answered many of my questions concerning the fossil record and re-sparked my belief in Flood geology. This paper was an answer to my prayers. Thank you for your work and your endurance. It is highly appreciated! God bless!

— J. S.

Editor’s note: You can read this technical paper by ICR geologist Dr. Tim Clarey and Davis Werner online at digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/icc_proceedings/vol8/iss1/27. His related Flood research is available in ICR’s In-Depth Science book *Carved in Stone: Geological Evidence of the Worldwide Flood*.



Congratulations to Brian Thomas (with John Morris, Jake Hebert, and Timothy Clarey) for having done an outstanding job in producing *Why the World Looks So Young*. While some have claimed

that the world has an appearance of having a vast age, this book briefly yet effectively makes a compelling case that this is not so! I

hope it receives a wide audience.

— R. B.



Dr. Guliuzza,

Wow, to read your article [“Unity Worthy of Our Creationist Heritage” in the January 2021] *Acts & Facts* was an unbelievable breath of fresh air! Thank you for helping to bring much-needed unity to this foundational niche we call the creation movement.

— E. H.



Your work is absolutely essential to counter the erroneous evolutionary dogma that our academic institutions have programmed into the minds of this generation! Shalom from Canada!

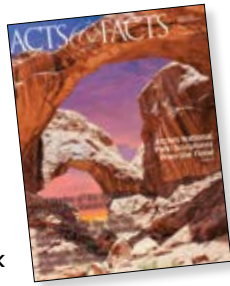
— T. D.



God’s timing is incredible!

Yesterday, [our son] had a science lesson about erosion and weathering. The virtual lesson talked about Arches National Park and how the arches were formed over millions of years of weathering and erosion. Being creationists, we don’t believe the earth is millions of years old but rather only thousands of years old. [Our son] and I both looked at each other when reading his assignment, and we both said that sure looked like something that could have happened quickly in a worldwide flood (aka, Noah’s Flood). Look what came in the mailbox today! God knew [our son] would have that lesson this week and orchestrated the Christian scientists to write this article and be in the very issue of *Acts & Facts* that came in our mailbox the day after we had a lesson on it...If you’re looking for a good scientific creationist magazine, check out *Acts & Facts*. They always have evidence to back up their claims, and the articles are written by some of the most brilliant godly minds in the science world.

— K. C.



ICR By the Numbers

ICR’s Dr. Vernon Cupps earned his Ph.D. in nuclear physics from Indiana University-Bloomington, has published **73** peer-reviewed articles, and worked at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory for **23** years.

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