

"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22).

August 1999

Biblical Uniformitarianism

by Henry M. Morris *

Christians who believe the Biblical record of recent creation and the worldwide Flood have long recognized the key significance of the Apostle Peter's commentary on these two defining events in world history.

There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished (II Peter 3:3-6).

Peter was writing to all *"them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ"* (II Peter 1:1). This declaration surely includes all true Christians and (under divine inspiration) is written in the context of future trends *"in the last days"* (II Peter 3:3).

Consequently his warnings and exhortations are more relevant to us to-

day than to anyone before us, for we are closer to the last days (and quite possibly *in* them) than any one before us. A true Biblical worldview for these days, therefore, must correlate with Peter's divinely inspired prophecy.

Although I was probably not the first to do so, I remember teaching on this passage to a Bible class more than 55 years ago, while on the faculty of Rice University, and I discussed it in my first book, *That You Might Believe*, published in 1946. I stressed its significance at the 1953 convention of the American Scientific Affiliation in a paper entitled, "Biblical Evidence for Recent Creation and a Worldwide Deluge," and this paper was reprinted in the January 1954 issue of *His* (the magazine of the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship). It was emphasized also in the book, *The Genesis Flood*, written by Dr. John Whitcomb and myself and published in 1961 (see especially the conclusion of the book, pages 451-453). In its context (the last chapter written by Peter before his martyrdom), it is surely a critically important component of God's Word to professing Christians today.

The reason why it is so relevant today is because of both its prophecy of the dominant secular uniformitari-

*Dr. Morris is Founder and President Emeritus of ICR.

anism of the last days and also because of its cogent answer to this philosophy.

“All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” This is as succinct a definition of the dogma of uniformitarianism as one could find. Not only the basic “laws of nature,” but also all natural processes are assumed to be always essentially equivalent to those operating today—similar rates of erosion and deposition, similar rates of salt influx to the sea, similar rates of radioactive decay, similar rates of biological variation, similar rates even of local flooding and volcanism, etc. No sudden global change in earth processes, and certainly no divine intervention in these processes is allowed. This has been the accepted scientific worldview for the past two centuries.

But this assumption is very wrong. There have been two tremendous global divine interventions in the uniform course of natural processes in the past—Creation and the Flood! *“By the word of God, the heavens were of old, and the earth. . . .”* The cosmos was created, not by continuing natural processes, but by one supernatural “process”—the spoken Word of God!

Secondly, *“the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.”* This cataclysmic destruction of the prediluvian cosmos necessarily implies a sudden drastic change in all process rates—the *world itself* perished during the great flood!

The changed world that later emerged as the waters retreated following the year of the Flood, when the present continents were uplifted, the present ocean basins established, and all the residual catastrophism following the Flood (Ice Age, etc.) settled down, soon became a world where uniform processes would prevail thereafter. God Himself promised: *“I will not again curse the ground any more for*

man’s sake . . . neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Genesis 8:21,22).

That is, as long as the present earth remains (though not forever, for the earth will eventually be purged by fire—II Peter 3:10), there would be no other global cataclysm, and the basic geophysical processes—the rotation of the earth and its orbital revolution and inclination of its axis around the sun—which basically control or influence all other natural processes, would be constant. Thus uniformitarianism would be a valid principle with which to study all natural phenomena since the end of the Flood period.

But not before! The Flood caused such a drastic change in most natural processes—especially those of erosion and deposition, but of most others as well—that scientists cannot *legitimately* extrapolate present processes beyond that period in the past.

This is true *Biblical uniformitarianism*. Even then, however, the *basic laws of nature* did not change. These were established at the end of the period of Creation, including the Fall and Curse. The two most basic and certain natural laws are those of conservation and decay, the First Law of Thermodynamics (conservation of mass/energy) and the Second Law of Thermodynamics (increasing entropy or decreasing organizational complexity). All natural processes operate within the constraints imposed by these two universal divinely imposed laws of nature and nature’s God.

The First Law was established following the completion of God’s work of creation, when the Creator (the Lord Jesus Christ) *“rested from all His work which God created and made”* (Gen-

esis 2:3). He is ever since “*upholding all things by the word of His power*” (Hebrews 1:3). No matter or energy can be naturally either created or destroyed, because God is *conserving* what He created. (Special local miracles are an exception to this principle, but there must be strong reason and evidence for any such alleged miracle.)

Then the Second Law was enacted by God following Adam’s sin, introducing the great Curse of pain, decay, and death not only on Adam but also on all his dominion. “*Cursed is the ground for thy sake . . . and unto dust shalt thou return*” (Genesis 3:17,19). Ever since that time, “*the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now*” (Romans 8:22).

Thus the basic laws of science go back just to the end of the Creation/Fall period, while the natural processes operating within the constraints of the two laws have been operating uniformly only since the end of the Flood period. Recognition of this Biblical fact means that one cannot estimate the age of the earth with any process based on the premise of uniformitarianism, since that premise is valid at best only back to the end of the Flood period.

This conclusion is of fundamental importance in dealing with the question of origins. Evolutionism depends for its supposed evidence entirely on the assumed billions of years of geologic history. However, all such estimates of age must necessarily be based on the assumption of uniformitarianism as applicable back to the very beginning. This fact applies to age calculations based on any geological, biological, or cosmological process whatever. This constraint must also affect radioactive decay processes, which are those few processes that have been used to support the argument that the earth is billions of years old. The so-

called “daughter/parent” isotope ratios in certain minerals found in igneous rocks, therefore, are *not* a legitimate indicator of the age of those rocks or of the mantle from which they may have emerged. They cannot really be the product of the decay of the daughter isotope from the parent at present decay rates, if the Biblical record is inerrant, as most Christians believe. Rather, these ratios must be viewed either as created directly during the Creation period or by vastly accelerated decay rates during either that period or the Flood period, or perhaps by profound contamination during the Flood.

To say that such a conclusion is “unscientific” is to say much more than one knows and is essentially an admission of intolerant atheism. If God exists, and if the overwhelming evidences that the Bible is God’s Word are valid evidences, then God could indeed miraculously have created the whole world in a state of functioning maturity (a better term than “apparent age”), and He could also miraculously increase process rates (including radioactive decay rates) in connection with His global intervention in natural processes at the times of the Curse and/or the Flood. Both these periods were times of special divine activity in respect to the earth and its processes, as clearly revealed in the Bible.

Biblical uniformitarianism is a valid premise back to the end of the Flood period, but secular uniformitarianism back to “*the beginning of the creation*” is not. If we really want to **know** the time when the world began, we must ask the One who created it, for only He was there. He has provided this information in His inspired Word, the Holy Scriptures, but the tragedy is that the modern world—including, sadly, many leaders in the evangelical world—are afraid to believe what He has said. ❧

Does Convincing Evidence for Evolution Exist?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.

Before answering this question, let me define the term “evolution” as I will be using it, lest I be misunderstood. Darwin used the term on a grand scale, and so will I. His concept of evolution proposed that all of life has come from a common ancestor. Thus over time, basic forms of life altered into other, totally different forms of life.

These large changes are in contrast to small-scale changes as we see expressed as varieties, adaptations, and genetic recombinations. These changes might not be trivial, but they are merely variations within a stable basic kind.

Much evidence exists for these small-scale adaptations. The claim by evolutionists is that over eons of time, small-scale changes will accumulate into large-scale evolution, and thus man descended from a fish. Needless to say, evidence for this is harder to produce.

For decades creationists have called attention to the fact that small changes do not lead to true evolution. From all we can observe in the present, there are genetic barriers to major changes. Mutations never add information to the DNA code, as would be necessary for major evolutionary advancement. Such changes may result in a loss of ability or structure and produce novel birth defects, but give no insight into the origin of finely tuned components.

Nor does it appear that large-scale evolutionary changes happened in the past, for the fossil record exhibits the same basic life forms as today. Many unique varieties are seen as fossils, and many interesting animals have gone

extinct, but even evolutionists admit the dearth of transitional forms in the fossil record between basic kinds.

This lack of hard evidence for evolution has spawned a new discipline in evolution, that of scouring the creationist literature for any demonstrable error in an effort to put creation on the defensive and shift the focus off of evolution’s many weaknesses. I am still being severely castigated on the Internet for not retracting an incidental statement I made about Donald Johanson and the authenticity of the knee joint of the famous australopithecine fossil “Lucy” (“Back to Genesis,” November 1989). Johanson’s statements, both publicly and in print were unclear and even though I no longer use that argument, I’m still not certain of the truth. The point is, even if the knee is actually part of “Lucy’s” skeleton, she was still fully chimp-like.

A similar diversion tactic surrounded the article “What They Say” (“Back to Genesis,” March 1999). An evolutionist’s quote mistakenly used out of context was used to negate the entirety of the article and creationist claims regarding the lack of transitional forms. But the pointing out of a wrongly used quote still doesn’t produce transitional forms documenting transformation of basic kinds! (The original articles and ICR’s responses can be found @ www.icr.org.)

Evolutionists would have a more convincing case if they could produce firm supporting evidence. Since they can’t, or at least haven’t, they must resort to smoke screens such as these. ❧



SINGLE COPIES 10¢

ORDER FROM: **INSTITUTE FOR CREATION RESEARCH** © 1999 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

P.O. BOX 2667, EL CAJON, CA 92021