



"VITAL ARTICLES ON SCIENCE/CREATION"

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The History and Impact of the Book, *The Genesis Flood*

by John C. Whitcomb*

The Genesis Flood has been a life-changing experience for its authors, even since 1961 when our book was published. My highly esteemed and long-time friend, Henry M. Morris, co-author of *The Genesis Flood*, joins me in giving praise to God for allowing our 550-page book to be published and I quote: "The publication of *The Genesis Flood* made a tremendous difference in my life, culminating in a change from engineering to full-time concentration on creationism and Christian evidences. There were numerous speaking requests, then the formation of the Creation Research Society [1963], then eventually the Institute for Creation Research [1970], and extensive seminars, conferences, debates, etc., all over the world. Many have attributed the global revival of scientific Biblical creationism to the catalytic effect of *The Genesis Flood*."

In His merciful providence, God sent Henry Morris to Grace Theological Seminary (where I was professor of Old Testament) in September, 1953, to present a paper to the American Scientific Affiliation meeting there, entitled, "Biblical Evidence for a Recent Creation and Universal Deluge." This revolutionized my entire approach to ultimate origins, and God motivated me to spend four years writing a 450-page doctoral dissertation entitled, "The Genesis Flood: An Investigation of its Geographical Extent, Geological Effects, and Chronological Setting" (Winona Lake, IN: Grace Theological Seminary, 1957). Soon, he agreed to co-author *The Genesis Flood*. Both he and I agreed that a project of such magnitude, dealing with stupendous scientific and theological issues, needed the perspectives of a scientist as well as a theologian.

In this enormously time-consuming process, twenty-one scientists, nine theologians, and two grammarians were asked to review all or part of the manuscript. In retrospect, it seems significant to us that 1959 was also the year of the great Darwinian Centennial celebration in Chicago, at which Sir Julian Huxley, and other atheistic evolutionists, announced that creationism was essentially dead. In retrospect, however, this "graveside service" appears to have been premature!

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Negative Responses to *The Genesis Flood*

In the late 1980s, about twenty-five years after the publication of our book, two significant counter-movements began to appear. Both of these movements were opposed to naturalistic Darwinism, but, at the same time, were opposed to Biblical and scientific creationism.

From a Biblical perspective, this was sadly predictable. Paul confronted the church at Corinth with these words: “*There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you*” (1 Corinthians 11:19). On the one hand, this can be a healthy process. God’s people must not adopt any view just because of a human authority figure, however brilliant or eloquent. Each of us needs to examine the “*Scriptures daily*” to see if these things are so (Acts 17:11). On the other hand, large numbers of Christians have been deceived into abandoning Biblical truth.

Progressive Creationism

The first of these movements is called “progressive creationism,” represented especially by Dr. Hugh Ross, a Christian astronomer. He believes that creation began many billions of years ago with a so-called “big bang”; that animals were supernaturally and periodically created (not evolved) through millions of years; that Adam’s rebellion against God did not cause death in the animal kingdom; and that the Flood was local in extent. He believes that the Bible’s 66 books are fully inspired, but need to be reinterpreted in the light of a 67th book, namely modern science.

In January, 2003, the Institute for Creation Research responded in depth to the challenges of “progressive creationism.” I was invited to join three scientists and another theologian to participate in eight panel discussions and responses to the views of Dr. Ross. (*After Eden: Understanding Creation, the Curse, and the Cross.*) I was especially amazed at the futile effort of “progressive creationists” to reduce the Genesis Flood to a Mesopotamian catastrophe in order to justify millions of years of sedimentation and fossilization before the creation of mankind.

The Intelligent Design Movement

The second counter-movement is even more amazing to behold. It is called “the intelligent-design movement” (IDM), and is dedicated to the proposition that atheistic naturalism and neo-Darwinian evolutionism have completely failed to explain the irreducible complexity of living things. ID scholars also believe that evolutionism can be defeated by scientific and rationalistic arguments without any appeal to the Bible or to the Creator of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every Christian should applaud legitimate efforts to restore sanity and reality to the study of ultimate origins. Most IDM augmentation is, to this extent, on target. *The tragedy* of the movement, however, is that it deliberately stops short of honoring God’s written revelation on origins, the Bible. In fact, the book of Genesis as literal history seems *to be an embarrassment and an unwanted and unnecessary burden to bear* in their debate with evolution-oriented scientists.

Dr. Philip Johnson, IDM’s leading spokesman counsels: “Get the Bible and the book of Genesis out of the debate, because you do not want to raise the so-called Bible-science dichotomy. Phrase the argument in such a way that you can get it heard in the secular academy and in a way that tends to unify the religious dissenters. That means concentrating on, ‘Do you need a Creator to do the

creating, or can nature do it on its own?’ and refusing to get sidetracked onto other issues, . . . They’ll ask, ‘What do you think of Noah’s flood?’ or something like that. Never bite on such questions because they’ll lead you into a trackless wasteland and you’ll never get out of it” (“Berkeley’s Radical” in *Touchstone* 15:5 [June, 2002], p. 41).

Indeed, to assert that the universe is the product of an Intelligent Designer is *an essential foundation for origins study*. But it is only the very bottom rung of the ladder that leads upward to full Creation Truth. *It is vastly insufficient!* To truly honor God and to bring genuine light into this enormously important question, one must also believe in the divinely inspired account of origins in Genesis 1 and 2 and in God’s record of the magnitude of the Flood in Genesis 6–9. True Christians should be deeply shocked to learn that *the Son of God*, by Whom all things were “*created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth*” (Colossians 1:16), the One “*in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*” (Colossians 2:3), the ultimate Designer of all life, matter, energy, space, and time, *has been practically ignored* by these who write so eloquently of “intelligent design.”

In response, we humbly insist that *it is essential to believe the Genesis record of origins in order to please God. This obviously includes the manner in which living things were created* (“full-grown,” with a superficial appearance of history); *the order in which things were created*; and *the duration of creation events* (six 24-hour days only a few thousand years ago). Our Lord explained that Adam and Eve were created “at the beginning”—not millions of years after the earth came into existence (Matthew 19:4). Thus, it is also essential to believe that *death in the animal kingdom did not occur before the creation of mankind, but was an effect of Adam’s rebellion* (Genesis 1:31; and Romans 5:12 in the light of Romans 8:20–23). Trillions of fossilized plants and animals all over the world, with very rare exceptions, can only be explained in terms of *the global catastrophism of the Genesis Flood*.

In the creation/evolution debate today, there is a truly frightening element that is sadly neglected and can lead to one’s eternal loss. Our Lord said: “*Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of Him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory*” (Luke 9:26). If we leave Christ Himself out of the discussion, how, then, can we truly help people who are walking in the darkness of materialistic evolutionism?

We agree that discussions and debates concerning Intelligent Design can (in God’s providence) temporarily catch the attention of unbelieving minds. But *saving faith* can only come through the acceptance of the living and powerful Word of God (Hebrews 4:12) and its witness to the finished work of Christ upon the Cross and His bodily resurrection from the dead (cf. Romans 10:9–10). That is why the apostle Paul ended his powerful presentation of Intelligent Design to the Athenian philosophers on Mars Hill by asserting that the true and living God of creation now commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:16–18). He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead (vv.30–31). It was because he honored the Lord Jesus in this address that some men joined him and believed (v.34). On another occasion, Paul wrote: “*I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*” (Romans 1:16).

Here, then, is the burning question that modern proponents of Intelligent Design must answer: are people believing in Christ as Lord and Savior and experiencing a profound renewing of their hearts and minds as a result of hearing their message?

God's words, not ours, can change men's destiny. Saving faith, "*cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*" (Romans 10:9,17). This is the only "wedge" that can separate evolutionists from the blindness of sin and bring them to a *full knowledge of Christ the Creator of the world and the only Savior of men.*

Thus, while Dr. Hugh Ross and his followers have attempted to reduce the mountain-covering, year-long Deluge in the days of Noah all the way down to a local flooding in Mesopotamia, the Intelligent Design scientists and philosophers officially ignore not only the Genesis record of the Flood, but also the entire book of Genesis and the sixty-five God-inspired books which follow it.

Conclusion

Truly, God's people around the world must make a huge decision concerning the origin of the world: either we take God at His Word because of Who He is, and the God who never lies; or surrender our minds to the ever-changing opinions of finite and sinful men who are saying more loudly than ever before: "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." But God gives us His infinite and eternal perspective on such thinking: "*This they willingly are ignorant of, . . . the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished*" (II Peter 3:5-6).

Our Lord Jesus Christ confirmed to us that in the days of Noah "*. . . they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away*" (Matthew 24:38-39). Stop to think: Our Lord said that one man survived "*the flood*" by entering "*the ark*" when "*the flood came, and took them all away.*" Could this possibly mean that a *regional flood*, which did not need *any kind of an ark* for Noah to survive, took away only *some people*? Or, as some Christian men of science believe, all mankind in those days was confined to just one region, so that a regional flood could indeed take them "*all*" away? But even in such a highly unlikely scenario, would an "*ark*" really be needed? Could not Noah and his family, given even a two-month warning have escaped a regional flood? Would all birds, mammals and reptiles in the world have been destroyed by a regional flood?

The bottom line is this: was the Son of God a dependable source of information about the Flood? Could He ever deceive people? Was He serious when He said: "*If ye believe not [Moses'] writings, how shall ye believe my words?*" (John 5:47).

With all of its deficiencies, then, God has apparently used our book to help thousands of people around the world take the Bible more seriously. It does not require great skills in Biblical theology and hermeneutics and exegesis to understand God's message concerning the depth, extent, and significance of the Flood.

Biblical catastrophism, in the final analysis, stands firmly upon the foundation of divine revelation in Scripture, not on the finite and ever-changing theories of men.



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