

GENESIS ACCEPTED



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Remember

Lot's Wife

It is reliably reported that when Lot became aware that his wife had turned into a pillar of salt, he said to his daughters: "Let's look on the bright side: we can always open a chippy."¹

Careless reading of the Bible

It is an observation of mine, over many years, that people do not read the Bible carefully enough; and this includes Christians as well as non-Christians. There are some stories which have been told so often that we know them fully, don't we? So when we come to re-read them we only read them in the version we have fixed in our memory—and here the word 'version' is making absolutely no reference at all to the translation of the Bible we prefer. In other words, we read carelessly and the childhood understanding of the story is simply reinforced and thereby perpetuated.

There are quite a few stock favourites which can be trotted out. Most biblical students do know that Eve was not tempted to eat an apple in the Garden of Eden, despite the popular myth. The Genesis account nowhere identifies the fruit concerned save to say that it was from 'The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil'. Though it could have been an apple, we simply don't know, and the high probability is that it wasn't.

Then there is one of my real favourites because it returns minimally once-a-year to haunt pedants like myself at Christmas. The Wise Men, in any translation of the Nativity story you care to look at, visit the infant Jesus when He is living in a house (Mtt. 2:11). They are not part of the stable scene at all on the wonderful night Jesus was born, and the angels sang, and the shepherds knelt at His manger bed. Indeed, if you study the story carefully and properly, the sequence of events has to go something like this: Jesus is born in a stable and the shepherds come to see Him; on the eighth day He is circumcised

¹ For the benefit of our non-British readers, a 'chippy' is slang for a fish and chip shop. Chips are our equivalent of French fries but are chunky and much larger than weedy fries, and are liberally covered in salt (and usually malt vinegar) for flavour and taste. It is quintessentially the most British of dishes, along with roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. A good supply of salt is an absolute necessity in a chippy—hence the little joke.



The caption reads: 'Wise Men or Kings present gifts to baby Jesus', and this is from Christian Clip Art!

in the synagogue at Bethlehem; after 42 days, when Mary has finished her time of purification for her uncleanness after the birth of a boy (Lev. 12), He is taken up to Jerusalem where the sacrifices are offered according to the Law—there He meets the prophetess Anna and old Simeon—they return to Bethlehem, and only then can the Magi enter the story. By this time the family have found a proper roof for their heads. Minimally it must have been nearly seven weeks after the stable/manger scene and could have been up to two years after the birth. So much for the popular Nativity story beloved of schoolchildren and Sunday schools every year. But why spoil the fun?

Lot flees from Sodom

So we come to that famous incident where Lot and his family flee from Sodom: Lot's wife looks back and turns into a pillar of salt. The popular image we have of this is that, having been told not to look back by the angels, Lot's wife, like a sort of Hebrew Pandora, cannot contain her curiosity about what is happening, as the noise and banging of destruction behind her proves too much of a distraction, and



A pillar of salt at the Dead Sea reminiscent of Lot's wife

she fatally succumbs. It is not too difficult to feel somewhat sorry for her because we would all have found such a temptation difficult to withstand. We all enjoy, what the police at motorway accidents call, 'eyeballing'. I believe, however, that her sin was far more profound than this and her fate was well deserved because of it.

Let us look again at the story

You will remember that Lot showed hospitality to the angels when they came to Sodom and 'as the morning dawned' (Gen. 19:15) they put him and his family outside the city, telling them to flee to the hills. Lot, for some reason, is afraid to go there and asks leave to go to Zoar. The Bible reads:

'Behold, your servant has found favour in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness in saving my life. But I cannot escape to the hills, lest the disaster overtake me and I die. Behold, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there — is it not a little one? — and my life will be saved!' He said to him, *'Behold, I grant you this favour also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. Escape there quickly, for I can do nothing till you arrive there.'* Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

'The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zoar. Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulphur and fire from the LORD out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife, behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.' (Gen 19:19-26, emphasis added).

The emphasis we put into the text highlights what happened as Lot was fleeing to Zoar: NOTHING. Dawn was breaking as they moved away from Sodom and it was sunny as they entered Zoar. The angel told them that he could do nothing until they got there. So there was nothing to see behind them as they fled, no destruction and fire raining down from heaven. The day was just dawning as normal so, had Lot's wife glanced over her shoulder to see what was going on, there was nothing to see. She would hardly have been tempted to disobey under those circumstances and, even if she had, nothing would have happened to her because the destruction had not yet begun.

What happened

Graciously, therefore, the angel stayed his hand until the family was entering Zoar. Lot and the girls were ahead and his wife was behind. They entered Zoar in sunshine but suddenly, just as they got into the safety of the little settlement, which scripture euphemistically calls a city, pandemonium broke out behind them. The sky darkened, fire and sulphur rained down, and they would have been forcibly aware of it. Zoar, being on the plain, was possibly in a dip and

though they could see the sky above, they could not see what was happening to the twin cities beneath. They had all arrived safely in Zoar and it was then that Lot's wife disobeyed, 'looked back' and paid the price.

What she seems to have done is not so much as glance behind her—there was little enough to see by doing that—but rather she turned around, left the safety of Zoar, and went back to a vantage point from where she could actually see what was going on. The safety zone was only within the refuge of Zoar and so she was overcome. Lot, and the girls, would have seen it happening, or how did they know what her fate had been? However, they were helpless to prevent it. She had turned her back on God's refuge and run away towards Sodom.

Her sin was akin to apostasy

The notion that her looking back implies positive movement, or steps, to go back rather than just taking a sneaky peek over her shoulder, is given credence by the fact that Jesus used this incident by way of illustration in Luke 17:32. (We will return to this point below.)

Her sin was far more deliberate than one of being overcome with curiosity and taking a quick backwards glance. She was actually inside the refuge which God had provided for her, deliberately defied His instruction and warning, and went back towards her sinful past. It resonates with the warning Jesus gave that *'no one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'* (Luke 9:62). Such a going back implies a deliberate decision to leave the refuge of God's grace, having been placed safely in it, and returning, or attempting to return, to the life left behind. It is not simply a slip-up-type sin, where our old life catches us out, but rather it is an apostasy. The Hebrew Letter spells it out thus, in the context it was addressing: *'For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then fall away, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt'* (Heb 6:4-6). Lot's wife was saved in the refuge which God had provided, and deliberately disobeyed and ignored the angelic instruction to her destruction.

What Jesus was teaching

When Jesus used the second shortest sentence in the Bible, 'Remember Lot's wife,' He was engaged in a discussion of the coming of the kingdom and 'one of the days of the Son of Man' (Luke 17:22). These are frequently confused in people's minds with His coming, or appearance as it should more correctly be called, at the end of the world. There were quite a few 'comings of the Lord' and these could all be linked with



Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (Daniel 2)

prophecies He made. After all, many had come claiming to be the Christ. We have no knowledge of them in our day but there was messianic fever abroad in His. The Jews were well aware of the prophecies in Daniel 2 concerning the coming of Messiah and the establishment of His Kingdom in the time of the Fourth Kingdom counting from Babylon, according to Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.. They were looking for it and would be confused by the various claimants. How could they tell which one was correct?

Well, in Deuteronomy 18:21-22, the test of a true prophet is laid out clearly:

'... if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?' — when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.'

It's a blindingly obvious, and simple test. If the prophet's words do not come to pass, he is not a prophet from God. There is no need to listen to him. So Jesus was making prophecies and His followers knew that as they were fulfilled so they verified His truth claims, especially about His messianic claims to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And His greatest claims lay in three areas: i) that He would rise from the dead three days after He was crucified, ii) that Jerusalem, and the temple, of course, would be destroyed within the lifetime of the generation who heard Him make that prophecy (Matt. 24:34), and iii) that he will come again at the end of time to claim His own. The first was fulfilled around 30AD and the second in 70AD. We await the third with eager expectation.

After His first prediction came true,

the early church looked expectantly for the fulfilment of the second and third. Some mistook them and thought that the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple would also be the end of the world, but of course it wasn't. However, many thought that all three would happen in their lifetime and this spurred them on to godly living and faithfulness in spite of great persecution.

In 1 Corinthians 3:13 and Hebrews 10:25, we find references to 'the Day', when judgment on the quality of a person's work will be made (Corinthians) and that they must remain faithful as they see it approaching. 'The Day' is spelt with a capital 'D' in both cases. Neither reference is to the end of the world but rather to the Day when Jesus' judgement came on Jerusalem, the temple was destroyed and Christians were to remain embroiled in persecution and testing for many years to come. This finished biblical Judaism as a religion (see Post Script), and was to refine Christians as if by fire. As Hebrews 8:13 says: *'In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.'* The Old Covenant was about to vanish as a viable option. Henceforth the field would be left entirely to the Christians and their New Covenant after 'the Day' arrived.

This Day would come with signs, persecutions and great testing of the individuals' faith (Matt. 24:3-35) and the building he/she had done in the lives of others (1 Cor. 3:12-15). Some would see it burn up. Others would see it stand the test. The former would not lose their own salvation but would suffer the loss of knowing they had not built properly, as 'their' converts deserted under pressure.

The coming at the end of time will not be accompanied by signs, nor will the work of the faithful then be tested by fire. The most common phrase about it is that it will come *'like a thief in the night'*, completely unannounced. Christians have to be ready and watching (Matt. 25:1-13) but life will be going on as normal: eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, etc. (Matt. 24:38). And when it happens *'we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet'* (1 Cor. 15:51-52). There will be nowhere to hide and nowhere to run or flee to. The saved will rise to meet Christ in the air and go to be with Him for ever (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

Back to 'Remember Lot's wife'

Speaking as He was of the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus was giving warnings and instructions to His followers about it. He was telling them that when they saw His prophecies coming true, don't go back for anything but flee to the hills. If you do go back, you will be overcome and not get out. These instructions are made very clear in Matthew 24:15-22.

‘So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.’”

Just as Lot was told to flee to the hills to escape the coming tribulation, so the Christians who were living in Jerusalem were told to flee from the tribulation they saw coming upon their city. God had provided a refuge for them but they had to flee with nothing but their trust in Him. If you cling to the past, He said, you won’t escape. ‘Remember Lot’s wife’. Obviously she had not only looked back but also foolishly started to walk or run back. She had made very positive movements in that direction as she fled from God’s protection.

These verses in Matthew 24 present us with difficulties of interpretation, especially verses 29-31; however, we can be certain that they have nothing to do with the end of

the world because, a) Jesus said quite clearly in verse 34: ‘This generation will not pass away until all these things take place.’ They were prophesied for the lifetime of His hearers. They anticipated it. We should have no expectations for our—or future—times in these words. b) The instructions to flee clearly indicate that this prophecy is not about the end of the world because i) Christians will not be running away from anything then but rather will be safe in the arms of Jesus, and ii) there is nowhere to run to anyway for anybody, saved or lost alike, at the end of time.

What happened in 68AD

This prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled to the letter. So accurate was it that liberal scholars maintain that these passages are late inserts into the Gospel narratives by Christian editors, after the events, to bolster their claims that Jesus was a prophet and the Son of God!

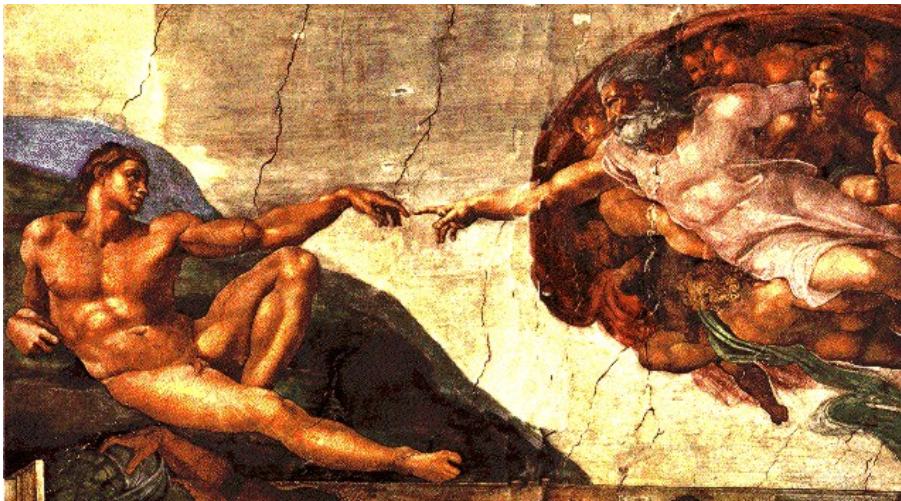
In 68AD, well within the lifetime of the generation who heard Jesus, the Romans lost patience with the Jews, and their armies advanced on Jerusalem. People from the surrounding countryside fled into the safety of its walls and the army surrounded the city, trapping the people inside. However, as with any military action, supply lines must be maintained and the Roman advance guard had overstretched themselves. The surrounding armies with-

drew briefly until the back-up was properly in place. Jews fled into the city but Christians, remembering Jesus’ words, fled out and, in fact, fled to Pella, in Transjordan. They had no time to gather belongings, or rescue friends, or even reluctant relatives. They did as the Lord told them and they were saved. They remembered Lot’s wife!

Post Script

Three years later, in 70AD, Jerusalem was taken and the suffering and slaughter during those years was unimaginable. It is reckoned to have been one of the worst such actions in all of history, as Christ said it would be (Matt.24:21). The temple was destroyed, never to be rebuilt. The Jewish records, including their genealogies, were destroyed, so no Jew today can tell which tribe he/she belongs to. Hence there can never be a legitimate Levitical/Aaronic priesthood again to offer sacrifices in the temple on the Day of Atonement. There is no method of obtaining salvation under the Law of Moses today, and never will be. What the Jews practise today is not biblical Judaism and, as such, it can make no claims to being God’s way according to the Bible. AD70 was the end of their age and the Lord ‘came’ in full majesty and might as His prophecies and predictions all came true. Our 1st Century brethren had all the ‘proof’ they needed to confirm Jesus’ claims.

The Oldest Person Ever?



Earth (Gen. 5:5), however, if God gave him an age of 40 at his creation, he would have been ‘older’ than Methuselah at his death even though he had lived on Earth 39 years less than Methuselah did.

Is this a reasonable assumption? Well, of course, we have no idea yet given the great ages of the antediluvian patriarchs—912 was their average if you don’t include Enoch in the statistics because he didn’t die—an age of 40 at creation for Adam is not such an unreasonable assumption. For us, with our shorter lifespans, 40 is middle aged but not for those men whose lives had then hardly begun.

The point of this speculation is not to try to claim some new insight but rather to introduce the concept of a built-in ‘age’ for everything when God made the Universe. The Earth would appear to be old at Creation, so too would the stars, and if Adam had chopped down a tree on Day Six, when he was created, the tree would have contained rings indicative of years of growth yet it would only have been maximally four days old having been created on Day Three. This ‘appearance of age’ will be an important concept later when we discuss topics like the age of the Earth, or the age of the Universe.

Who was the oldest person who ever lived? The smart biblical answer is: ‘Methuselah who lived to be 969.’ (Gen. 5:27). But is this correct? Well, technically it is, and it is definitely the correct answer to the question: ‘Who lived longest on the Earth?’ Yet who was the oldest person to die?

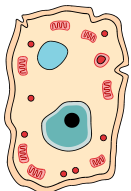
The answer hinges on the interesting observation that when God made Adam He had to give him a built-in age even though he was only one day old. Adam was created on

Day Six of Creation Week but he wasn’t a baby; he was a fully grown man, able to speak, reproduce and know all he needed to know to survive. Not for him the trials of puberty as his hormones played havoc with his emotions. Not for him the delights of finding a sort of fluff on his face and wondering if he should shave or not. Adam was a fully grown, fully operational man when God made him.

So at what ‘age’ did God make him? He actually spent 930 years living on the

Biological Design

Evidence of design in nature exists quite clearly at the astronomical level, however, evidence of biological design is even stronger. At one time biologists thought that the cell



A cell

was a very simple thing—the simplest thing imaginable in this field in fact—and were prepared to postulate that all life arose from it. Now it is known

that, far from being simple, the cell is extremely complex. Darwin, and other early Evolutionists, could not have known this because the technology to study it was not in place. Modern biologists, like Michael Denton, now know it and the implications for the Theory of Evolution. Denton wrote a book, *Evolution: A Theory In Crisis*, and though he would never admit that Creationists are right, he is convinced that the current Theory of Evolution is

definitely wrong. Not being a Christian believer, let alone a Creationist, he wishes it were otherwise but he is honest enough to admit that the evidence points most strongly against Evolution. Nature is complex, very complex, far too complex for the integrated design, which is so necessary for even the cell to function, to have been created by the random effects of chance mutations, which is the current position of the Evolutionary Theory.

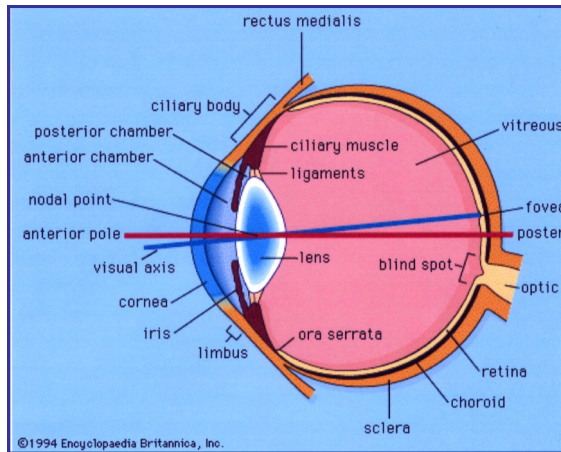


The Eye

It was the evolution of the eye which bothered Darwin most when he wrote *Origin of Species*. He was right. It is an insuperable problem for his theory because it is so obviously the product of a master design by a master designer.

Darwin wrote (in *Origin of Species*): 'To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic observation could have been formed by natural selection seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree.' This, however, did not stop him pursuing his variation of the Theory (he did not, of course, originate it; the Greeks had their version over 2,000 years earlier!).

Darwin therefore accepted that the eye evolved, via a sequence of beneficial muta-



tions, from a simple light-sensitive spot to the complex eye of human beings. This despite the impossibility of such an evolution taking place under the driving force of natural selection. Natural selection operates on the principle that a mutation gives a creature some sort of biological advantage which enables it to survive better than its rivals. Leaving aside for now the fact that evolution depends on an increase of information being placed into the DNA, and that mutations, in fact, do the very opposite, there is no advantage at all to the creature in any slight mutational change to a light-sensitive spot until ALL the mutations have occurred and the eye is up and running. The eye cannot function at all until everything possible for it to function is in place. Furthermore the Theory proposes that, in conjunction with all evolutionary development, eyes are supposed to progress from the simple to the complex.

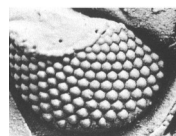
Cambrian Trilobite Eyes

Unfortunately for the Theory some of the most complex compound eyes are found in the early Cambrian fossils, known as trilobites. These creatures, which look like wood lice, are perceived as being close to the base of the

evolutionary tree since they appear, without any trace of fossil ancestors, in almost the lowest geological strata to contain life, AND at the very bottom of those layers, dating from 600,000,000 years ago, according to the normal Geological Time Scale. Their eyes, however, were far from simple and could well have been even more complex than ours. How did they evolve?



Fossil trilobite



A Trilobite's Eye

Some of the Eye's Mechanisms

It isn't just the eye which has to evolve in order for it to work. A complete eye is of absolutely no use without the complex nerve connections necessary to transmit signals to the brain, and the brain's ability to convert those signals into images. The human eye has 137,000,000 special cells—called rods and cones—which receive light from the lens and convert it into electric signals. These then travel at 300 mph along the optic nerve to the brain, where millions of intricate electrical connections produce the image we see.¹

The eye had to evolve all sorts of other things as well, such as pupils which contract and dilate to compensate for different brightness of light, tear ducts to keep the surface bathed, lids to do the bathing, lashes to help prevent dirt and grit getting in more frequently than they do, a lens which focuses the image precisely at the back of the eye, eye sockets in the skull to house the eyes, which are placed perfectly to produce binocular vision, etc. etc. Without any of these more obvious mechanisms, the eye could not function for long—if at all. All this has to come from a light-sensitive spot.



House fly

Different creatures have different mechanisms to help them in their environments. Some have compound eyes, like trilobites, for underwater vision. Flies have thousands of lenses for all-round vision (which is why we find it hard to swat them!). There are eyes which rotate independently so the creature can look in all directions, but presumably not with binocular vision. So different are the varieties of eyes that Evolutionists believe that there have been at least three independent strands of eye evolution, as if one were not sufficient for the Theory to cope with!

When Darwin was alive, the general analogy for the eye was the simple camera. Now we know that the eye is far more complex even than a television camera but



that is the nearest we are going to get. Nobody would suggest that even a simple camera evolved by chance and was not well designed for its purpose, let alone a television camera; however, when it comes to the greatest design of all such notions are dis-

missed—not because the idea is preposterous but because to admit it would be to admit there is a Creator. And that is what the Theory of Evolution wants most of all to demonstrate, that there is no Creator. It is an anti-God faith system at root not an honest interpretation of the data, which forces a different conclusion on the truly open mind!

Probability

What is the probability of forming an eye through mutations and natural selection? Let us assume that 1,000 mutations would be necessary. Millions would be nearer to the truth but 1,000 will do perfectly well for our purposes.

For now, let us forget that 99.99 per cent of mutations are deleterious and assume that 50 per cent are beneficial. So, if we are to get a chain of 1,000 beneficial mutations, the probability of getting the eye would be like throwing heads with a coin 1,000 times in succession: $1/2^{1000} = 1/10^{300}$. So the chance of forming the eye would be one in ten followed by 299 noughts. In other words it would not occur.²

When we consider the complex structure of eyes, the intricate circuitry provided to make them work, and the many wonderful variations in the eyes of living things, the idea that ‘blind chance’ was responsible seems particularly far fetched. Darwin was correct to be worried about the effects of considering the evolution of eyes on his variation of the Theory, for they demolish it at a stroke. When considering the question of Biological Design, the eyes have it.

Other pointers to Biological Design

Evolutionists frequently cite the neck of the giraffe as an example of natural selection in operation. The fact that no skeletons of the developing giraffe with a shorter neck have



Giraffe at Whipsnade Zoo

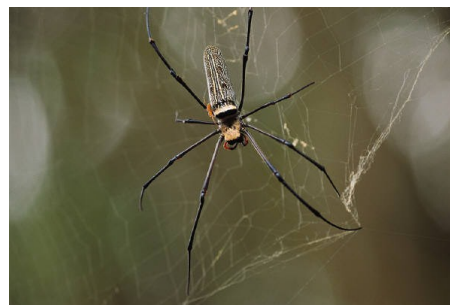
ever been discovered can be set aside for now. By straining up for the leaves out of reach of other animals, the giraffe developed a long neck over millions of years, so it is claimed. It also developed precisely the right neck bones to support it and the heart to pump its blood such a long distance. Seeing the proto-giraffes getting an advantage over them, why didn't other animals try to match them and strain ever upwards thereby developing long necks themselves—or was it that only giraffes were smart enough to spot this form of advantage? And again, how did they survive while they were busy evolving their necks and not die out before the attempt succeeded?

This question can be posed of the sea anemones and the clown fish. Clown fish are brightly coloured and are easy prey to fishy predators on the sea bed. Feeling somewhat upset by this, they decided to live amongst the sea anemones. But sea anemones are deadly to fish. When a fish swims too close to its tentacles and touches one, a poisoned dart is fired at the fish and it is numbed and soon eaten by the anemone. The clown fish, however, darts and sports safely within its fronds, apparently coming to no harm. The sea anemone is its defence against its predators.

Apparently all fish are covered in mucus, which makes them feel slimy. There is an amino acid in this mucus which triggers the sea anemone's tentacles. Clown fish don't have this amino acid so can swim safely where others dare not tread.

They had to be designed this way. Had they lived in open waters predators would have made a meal of them driving them to extinction. Entering the ‘safety net’ of the sea anemone before they had evolved their amino acid-free skin would also have seen to their extinction swiftly. They had to have their defence mechanism in place and working before they could join the anemones, but while they were busy trying to perfect it over millions of years, they would have died out. Such relationships are plentiful in nature but had to be created fully working from the start.

One could continue by asking similar questions concerning most of the life-forms of the Earth. How did spiders survive while they were evolving their web-spinning facility? They could not catch their prey without it yet the millions of years involved before it was perfected apparently somehow ‘allowed’ them to survive. How did woodpeckers survive the bashing their heads receive (8-10 beats per second) whilst their special skull and shock-absorber mechanism, which enables them to do it, was evolving? Again the answer has to be that they were designed this way since everything had to be in place from



the start or it would not work. There is no half-working facility in the design.

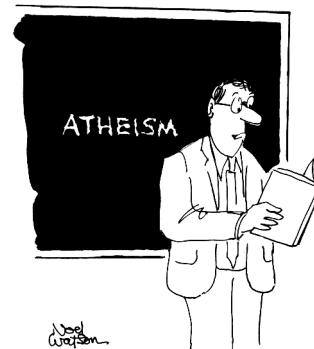
Conclusion

This article has been difficult to prepare, not because the subject matter is hard to understand but because of the abundance of material from which to choose. Almost every creature, great and small, has evidence of unique design in its make up, and the design had to be working right from the start or its survival would not have occurred much beyond a season let alone for æons of time.

It is the biologist who studies most of the unique handiwork of the Creator and it is the biologist, in general, who most wants to deny that a Creator exists, such is the stranglehold which evolutionary theory has on his mind. Once one denies the existence of God, one cannot possibly admit the hypothesis that there is deliberately planned design in nature, for such an admission would run counter to one's presuppositions in this field of study. Such presuppositions, if held, deny the one doing the study the possibility of considering that there is a God and that He made everything.

¹ The technical details on the eye came from the Creation Resources Trust FACT-SHEET No. 42, *All In The Eye*.

² The details contained in this paragraph were taken from R.L. Wysong's book, *The Creation-Evolution Controversy*, page 308.



'And nobody said, "Let there be light": and there was no light.'

Spectator 6.11.04

ANSWERING CRITICS

Two Creation Accounts

A common accusation, levelled at those who accept the accounts of Creation in Genesis as being literally true, is that there are two competing stories in Genesis 1 and 2, so which one do you believe? Sadly such accusations are just as common on the lips of those who are supposed to be defending the Bible, namely the clergy, as they are from atheistic detractors. They seem to imply that because they have stumped Creationists on this, the case for Evolution is proven. In the *Sunday Telegraph* of 3.4.05 was printed this letter from (The Rev) Keith G. Williams of Pevensey Bay, East Sussex, on this very topic.

'The Rev Robert Weissman says that he believes the "Biblical account of creation" (Letters, March 27), but which account does he mean? There are two: Genesis chapter one tells how God created the world in six days, forming plants, fish, birds and animals in succession. He concluded with human beings, male and female, made in His image. Chapter two tells how the Lord made Adam first and then the plants, animals and birds. Finally He made Eve from one of Adam's ribs.

The two accounts are quite separate and clearly incompatible. They were written by different authors at different times. They can't both be literally true.

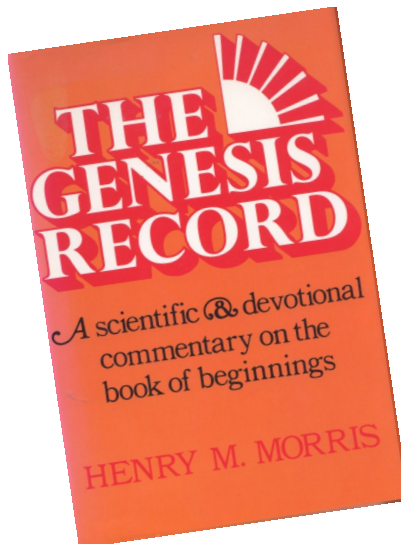
It is the persistence, 150 years after Darwin, in treating as scientific fact stories originally designed to engender faith that leads teachers and pupils to repudiate all religion and treat God as irrelevant and boring. I am saddened and angry that should be so.'

Different Authors

At first glance this seems like a very good point to make. There are two accounts and they do seem to differ quite significantly. The language patterns indicate two different authors for these stories. Now, why this should present a problem to any educated person, I do not know. All who have been through some form of higher education, which includes erudite clergymen, and who have therefore had to research topics, know that drawing on sources from other people's writing is an absolute necessity. Quoting them verbatim does not in any way negate the truth that the work as a whole is still the responsibility of the one who compiled and presented it. The only difference today would be that, where such a practice has occurred, the author is expected to place it in quotation marks and declare his sources. Moses was not under any such literary constraints, though he does seem to have used a form of quotation marks punctuating his

different sections. The fact that he drew on the works of others to compile the Genesis section of his account is obvious since he was not alive to record these events for himself. His inspired editorial hand would naturally come into force as he did it. This in no way detracts from his authorship, acting under guidance from the Holy Spirit at every point, of course.

Punctuating the Genesis Sources



Throughout Genesis there is a recurring phrase: 'These are the generations of...' or sometimes, 'The book of the generations of...' Most translators put them as headings to a paragraph but they actually seem to be signatures at the end of the sections preceding them. Genesis divides into nine subdivisions punctuated thus:

1. 'The generations of the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1-2:4).
2. 'The book of the generations of Adam (Gen. 2:4b-5:1).
3. 'The generations of Noah' (Gen. 5:1b-6:9).
4. The generations of the sons of Noah' (Gen. 6:9b-10:1).
5. 'The generations of Shem' (Gen. 10:1b-11:10).
6. 'The generations of Terah' (Gen. 11:10b-11:27).
7. 'The generations of Isaac' (Gen. 11:27b-25:19).
8. 'The generations of Jacob' (Gen. 25b-37:2).
9. 'The generations of the sons of Jacob' (Gen. 37:2b-Exodus 1:1).

Each account was probably written by an eyewitness to the events recorded, possibly even by the person(s) named, and preserved and passed down to succeeding generations. Thus the writer of 'The generations of Adam' could well have been Adam himself. The only exception to this has to be the first set of generations—of the heavens and the earth. There could be only one author of that, namely God Himself. Either He wrote it Himself, as He did

the Ten Commandments for example, and then gave it to Adam, or He gave it to Adam by revelation and Adam recorded it.

Thus the fact that there is evidence of two authors for Genesis 1 and 2 should neither be a surprise nor a distraction. And so as not to fall into the trap of not declaring my sources, I will let you know that the book I referenced for help with this article is, *The Genesis Record* by Henry M. Morris, 1976, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. It is superb and comes highly recommended as both a commentary and reference work for the entire Book. Henry Morris is a Creation Scientist and was a co-author of the book which got modern Creationism off the ground in the 1960s: *The Genesis Flood*.

The different stories of Creation

The first and most obvious point is that the two accounts are not dealing with the same detail. In Genesis 1 we have the macro view, where God gives us the majestic sweep of His work during Creation Week. Genesis 2 zooms in, as it were, on the creation of man and the Garden of Eden, where details are picked up which were not possible in Chapter 1. It complements Chapter 1, not contradicts it. From verse 2b of Chapter 2 to 5:1 we probably have Adam's own account of events, and it was seen from his perspective.

The Lord Himself saw no contradiction in the two accounts because, in His teaching on divorce in Matthew 19:3-9, He mingles the two records together to make His point:

'Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female [First account] and said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh?" [Second account] So they are no longer two but one flesh' (19:4-6).

If Jesus had no problem here, maybe it is presumptuous of those who are supposed to follow Him to express any. However, we will continue.

Now, it certainly appears that Adam places his creation before that of the plants thus presenting us with a dilemma. However, we are in the hands of the translators here. Morris points out (on page 84) that a perfectly plausible translation of the difficult passage would be: *'In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens there was as yet no field plant in the earth and no field shrub growing, since the Lord God had not yet established rainfall on the earth and since there was as yet no man to cultivate the ground. But there were water vapours arising from the earth, which kept watering the whole face of the ground.'* (Gen. 2:4b-6, emphasis added.)

Even if this translation is unacceptable, there is a perfectly consistent understanding

of this difficult passage. Let the commentator speak: *'Although the growth of the shrubs and sprouting of the herbs are represented here as dependent upon the rain and the cultivation of the earth by man, we must not understand the words as meaning that there was neither shrub nor herb before the rain and dew, or before the creation of man, and so draw the conclusion that the creation of the plants occurred either after or contemporaneously with the creation of man, in direct contradiction to Gen 1:11-12.*

The creation of the plants is not alluded to here at all, but simply the planting of the garden in Eden. The growing of the shrubs and sprouting of the herbs is different from the creation or first production of the vegetable kingdom, and relates to the growing and sprouting of the plants and germs which were called into existence by the creation, the natural development of the plants as it

had steadily proceeded ever since the creation. This was dependent upon rain and human culture; their creation was not. Moreover, the shrub and herb of the field do not embrace the whole of the vegetable productions of the earth. It is not a fact that the field is used in the second section in the same sense as the earth in the first.' (from Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, *Electronic Database*. Copyright (c) 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.)

Conclusion

People who raise such problems frequently do so in order to undermine faith and are airing their ignorance as they do it. Satan uses half-truths and misapplication to twist the scriptures to suit himself. The 'Reverend Gentleman' who petulantly dismissed the literal understanding of the

two accounts of Creation has probably never even probed the passages concerned with a view to seeing how they could possibly be compatible. Having made up his mind that evolution is true and Genesis therefore cannot be understood as an historical account, in these early chapters at least, he issues a cheap challenge to believers. Unfortunately when this happens there is sometimes no slick throwaway reply to counter it and the halting retort is taken as weakness in both the argument and the person concerned.

As Peter wrote: [we should] 'always [be] prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks [us] for a reason for the hope that is in [us].' (1 Pt. 3:15). Though he was not referring at all to matters like the record in Genesis, but rather to our relationship to Christ and why we hold to it, nevertheless the principle is a good one to adopt.

The Most Remarkable Creation Day

Playing around with material for *Genesis Accepted*, I am being forced into thinking even more deeply about the events recorded in that Book and what some of them signify. Until recently it never occurred to me to reflect on the question, 'Which of the six days of Creation was the most remarkable?' Without thinking, I feel sure we would select, say, Day Six, because on that Day God made man and all the land-based living creatures. When you think of the marvels of the human body and how all the bits fit together, or the other mammals, or insects, or reptiles, or... yes, dinosaurs, we gasp at the infinite variety and the intricacies of each one. We wonder how He had the time to design each one. I know that time was not of the essence to Him for He simply called them into being, yet we see all sorts of shapes and variety of life that we find it easy to imagine God just having fun as He was doing it. Some are so exquisite like the tiger or giraffe, and others are so, frankly ugly, like the warthog or the bedbug, that you wonder if He was playing a sort of joke on



The warthog

somebody. One thing is certain, God has a sense of humour. He proved it when He created woman, and played that joke on man! (It's nice being the writer; you can get away with things like that; at least you can until the wife reads it!)

Boring Day 2

With all that sort of creative energy which God put into Days Five and Six, or even Day Four where He created the Sun, Moon and stars (which are actually more impressive for their size and scale rather than their intricacies), why did He spend all of Day Two fiddling about with water? Frankly it seems like the least interesting Day of the lot. He'd already buried the new Earth under water on Day One, so it was actually created and in place by Day Two. Then what?

'And God said, Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and



The mighty power of water at the Canadian Horseshoe Falls of Niagara

there was morning, the second day.' (Gen. 1:6-9).

Really! Was God almost having a day off? Was He tired after Day One and coasting a little, sort of gathering breath for the big pushes to come on Days Three, Four, Five and Six? Or was it that the waters were to play such an important part in the life of the planet that He decided it needed all of His creative energy for that whole Day just to ensure that it was absolutely perfect and right? When you put it into human terms like that, you begin to appreciate the significance of water in God's whole scheme of Creation, and, may I remind you, of His scheme of redemption (see *Genesis Accepted*, Number 1).

Water creates and destroys

The properties of water are truly amazing, as we noted earlier in Number 3, page 4. However, the power of water is equally astonishing. It is a comfort, it gives life, it sustains, cleanses and protects. It also destroys with unmerciful force carrying all before it in flood, and, as we are all now painfully aware, in tsunami. Biblically it is a wonderful symbol of life and salvation but it is also a symbol of judgement and death. No wonder then, with importance such as this, God gave it His total concentration on Day Two.



The Grand Canyon: monument to a sudden, enormous catastrophe not the slow processes of erosion over millions of years

When I studied, and later taught Geology, we gave very little thought to its destructive powers. In the form of rivers we looked at how it eroded its valleys and formed things like waterfalls, e.g., Niagara (see above) and ox-bow lakes. But apart from seasonal flooding, which countries such as Egypt could exploit to their advantage, this was a relatively benign force. Certainly some might be swept away in a torrent or flash-flood but this was local and not global in scale. Tsunami could devastate but they too act over relatively small areas; what's a mile strip of shoreline on the overall scale of the land masses? They also are rather rare, at least the truly devastating ones are. We might not witness another on the 2004 scale again in our lifetime.

In the form of oceans, we studied how storm waves erode cliffs and break down shorelines. Again, these are localised events and easily avoided. Both rivers and ocean waves also create features, which Geography students have to learn about, and they helped pay my wages for 21 years. In the form of ice, water erodes the landscape carving deep U-shaped valleys, leaving some of the world's most spectacular scenery for us to admire today. Ice Ages come slowly and are no threat to life, so we are told. They might force people to migrate but their mechanisms are usually benign. (I don't believe this is true and we will consider the Ice Age and its effects in later volumes, but this is what we are told.)

Geologists' preferences

Modern geological scientists look at the world we live in and contend that the processes we see and study today have always behaved like this since time began. *'They deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was*

formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.' (2 Peter 3:5-6). They do not believe that a global Flood destroyed the world and that water is THE most destructive natural force there is on the planet. The geology of the Earth today owes much of its character to catastrophic water-power. They see the Grand Canyon and believe it was slowly eroded over millions of years, when in truth it was carved out probably in a matter of days as an ice dam burst upstream and the lake waters, ponded up behind it, gushed down the valley in spectacular style. In the Flood there were earthquakes way beyond anything we can imagine, and these created tsunami after tsunami as the land broke up and shifted around making the 2004 Boxing Day disaster appear like a rather tame surfing wave by comparison. They don't recognize it because it brings them face to face with the concept of Judgement, and they don't like that. They like geology we can understand and cosy up to. They don't like geology which can sweep them away into eternity in an instant. Or if they have to encounter it, it is best on a very minor, local scale; or way back in millennia past before man evolved, if it has to be on a large scale.

Water destroys to save

But it was Peter again, when writing in his First Letter, who linked the destructive power of water to the saving power of water, when he was developing an argument about Christ:

'For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the

spirit, in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.' (1

Peter 3:18-22).

In this instance, water both destroyed and saved. It destroyed the wickedness of the old life in the old world but brought cleansing and salvation to those who trusted in God. Unfortunately in Noah's day that amounted to only eight people. When we are baptized, we experience in the one action both the destructive and the cleansing power of God, who took so much care over His water on Day Two. He promised us that His precious water would serve to bury and destroy our past sins, cleanse and renew our souls and save us by appealing to Him for a good conscience because of the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus, who took our sins on Himself and was destroyed and buried in the grave to rise again freed from the penalty of death.

There is, of course, no magic in the water. It is just water. The cleansing and saving power we have is in the blood of Christ but we don't have to shed either our blood, or any blood, to have our sins forgiven today. Jesus paid it all. All we have to do is to link up with that power in the water as He asked us to (Romans 6:3-11).

Conclusion

With such power of life and death being created, it is no wonder God spent a whole Day ensuring that He got it absolutely right. Because we possibly undervalue the significance of water in God's scheme of Creation and redemption, we could well write off Day Two of Creation Week. Yet if God thought so much about His wonderful water, maybe we should appreciate it a lot more too. And maybe, just maybe, boring old Day 2 was possibly **THE** most remarkable Creation Day of the whole week!

A Fly on the Wall

One of my all-time favourite passages in the Bible comes right at the end of the Book of Genesis. Joseph's words

of comfort to his brethren is an amazing statement of forgiveness and love for the unlovely. It shows the value of believing that if we put God in the middle of our lives and reference Him at all points, then Paul's statement in Romans 8:28 that, *'We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who are called according to his purpose,'* is absolutely true. No matter what happens to us, God works for our good if we love Him and put our lives totally into His hands.

So what was it Joseph said to them? Jacob was dead and his brothers were convinced that now that the old man was out of the way, he would exact a terrible revenge on them for what they had done to him. They had no idea just what a godly brother they had in Joseph. Listen to what happened: *'But Joseph said to them, Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.'*" (Gen 50:19-21). *'As for you, you meant it for evil against me, but God meant it for good.'* What an amazing statement of love, forgiveness and the absolute awareness that God was directing every aspect of his life, though he had been sold into slavery and thrown into prison because of the lustful machinations of a wicked woman—Potiphar's wife. I think that these are THE most wonderful words ever spoken by a sinful human being in the Bible.

No doubt the most wonderful words in the Bible are found in John 3:16, *'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.'* I couldn't fault that, but you can't beat Joseph's words to his brothers as a sign that here was a man whose spirituality had risen way above that shown by almost every human being, because he had learned to put God in the centre of all that he did and thought no matter what happened to him. I would love to have been a fly on the wall, a Hebrew-

speaking fly, of course, when Joseph uttered those words of loving forgiveness to them. I doubt they could begin to comprehend what they were hearing nor did they know how to respond, except with supreme relief that their undeserving necks were safe for all time. The Bible doesn't tell us but I hope they thanked Joseph and praised God for what he had done. They learned a lot about grace at that point too.



Joseph reveals himself to his brothers and forgives them

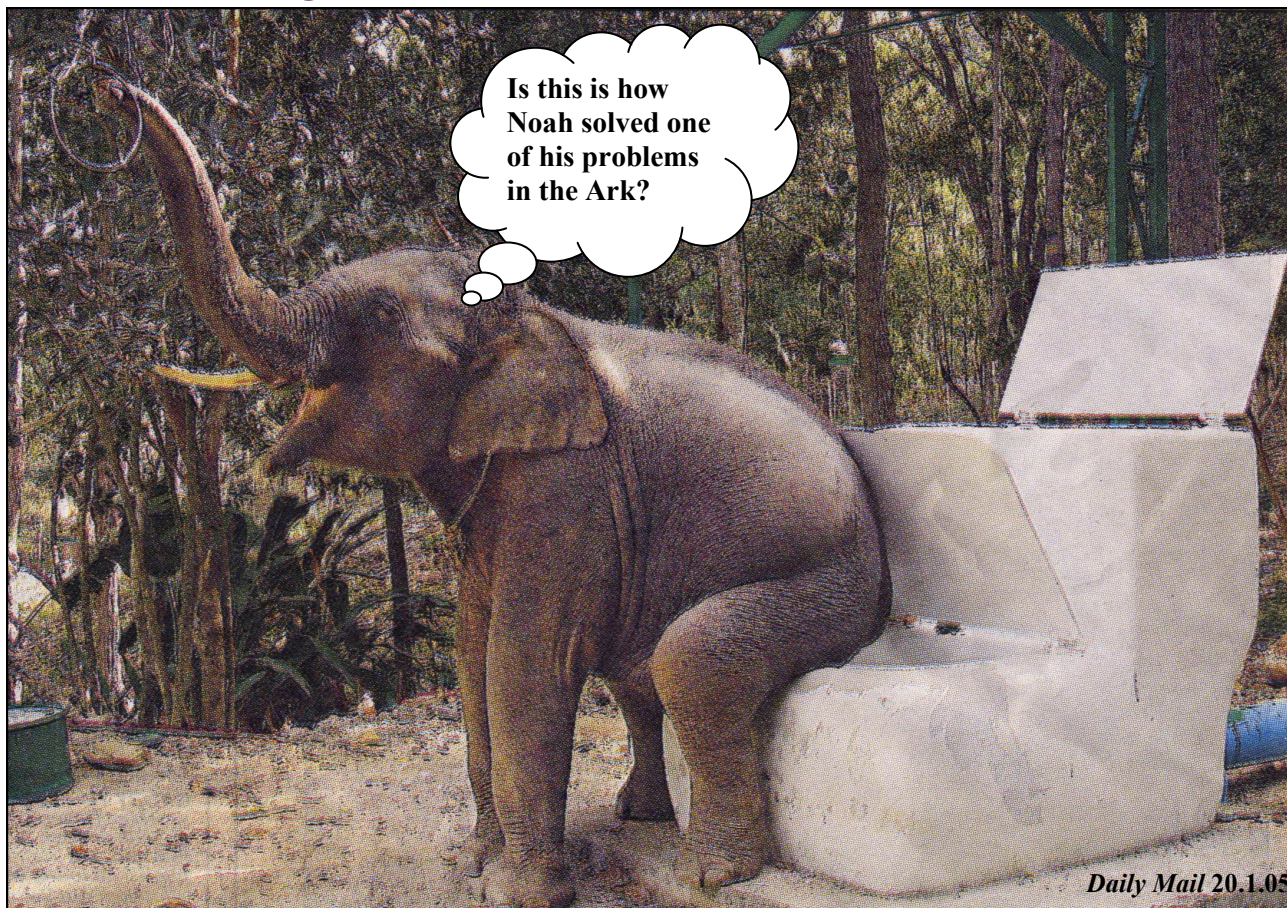
And if I could have been a fly on the wall just a little time earlier, I would have loved to have been present at the totally unrecorded incident when the brothers returned from Egypt to Jacob after they had discovered that the grand vizier they were dealing with was none other than the brother they had wronged. In my own malicious way, I would like to have been there not so much as to see the unbelief on old man Jacob's face at first when he discovered that his beloved son was alive, but to see just how they explained to him about what had actually happened to Joseph now that there was no hiding place for them. Did they openly tell him how they had plotted to kill him but deflected from that course, sold him, and then, dipping his 'coat of many colours' in a goat's blood, let their father believe he was dead, trying to make the most of it by the truth which allows a lie to remain active: "But dad, we never actually said he was dead; you just assumed it, so we didn't enlighten you." Or did they repent in abject misery for their sin against both Joseph and Jacob, admitting exactly what they had done and why.

And how did Jacob react? Did he forgive them out of the relief that things had worked out fine by God's grace, or did he rant at them and determine, initially to do them down if he could? Or perhaps in the wisdom of old age maybe he pondered on how he was actually as culpable in the story as they were, since it was his folly in

showing favouritism to one son which actually led to their actions. He might also have reflected on how he had not learned the lessons from his own parents, Isaac and Rebekah, that favouring one child over another leads to disaster and sorrow for all concerned. If he had learned not to make the mistakes of his parents, maybe none of this mess would have happened. Yes, in all things God does work for the good of those who love him, but sometimes we really don't make things easy for Him do we?

There are many lessons we can learn from these people of faith from the past. They were human just like we are. They had their loves and their weaknesses just as we do. Flies on their walls would show us this quite clearly. They would also show that the only successful way to live is to trust and obey, for there's no other way. Love God and put Him in the centre of everything and He will take care of you. For the Christian this begins at our baptism and ends when we die. God's promise is for those who love Him, and those who love Him do as He asks them to, and you don't need to be flies on any walls to understand this and witness to the truth of what we believe. And, like Paul, we can then say: *'I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord,'* (Rom. 8:38-39). Joseph and many others knew the truth of this principle, and so should we.

Problems of living in the Ark



Critics of the concept of keeping an Ark full of animals for over twelve months sometimes cite the problem of mucking out the animals, amongst other things. How could eight people look after those thousands of creatures? This is fair comment—how could they? And it's not just a problem of mucking out but also of feeding and possibly of exercising them where necessary.

The photo above is absolutely irresistible! Park rangers, from Thailand I believe it was, in one of their tourist parks have trained their elephants not only to use a toilet made specially for them but also to flush it. It is an attempt to make the park as clean as possible for the tourists. When God told mankind to have dominion over the animals, did He really intend us to go this far? Would some people think that this

is removing the animals' dignity, always assuming, of course, that they have any to remove in matters such as this? My little Jack Russell most certainly hasn't any in this department of his life and I doubt if elephants have either. However, I digress.

There are many things we would love to know about life inside the Ark, and indeed how it was constructed. There must have been conduits for flushing away both the liquid and solid deposits of the animals. At least there was plenty of water available for this purpose.

Most Creationists point out that we must be careful of not forgetting that the Ark was God's idea and it was His project designed to save both humans and animals from total destruction. Consequently He would have ensured His miraculous help

for Noah and his family inside the Ark, just as He miraculously brought the animals to him in the first place. Noah did not have to tramp the world looking for specimens to take on board.

The best concept seems to be that the bulk of the animals would have been placed into a state of hibernation for most of the time, where God lowered their metabolism miraculously, whether they were naturally hibernating species or not. Therefore Noah's family would not have had the problems of feeding, mucking out, or exercising most of the animals at all, especially the larger ones.

[I really think that the picture is so priceless I am going to run a caption competition for it, with a small box of chocolates as a prize for the best. Send them in before 31st October.]

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All quotations are from the *English Standard Version* of the Bible (Anglicized version, 2002), unless otherwise indicated.

