

GENESIS ACCEPTED



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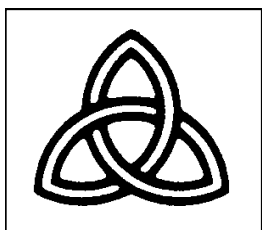
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Jesus in Genesis

Okay, so Jesus isn't mentioned in Genesis! This is going to be a very short article. Not a bit of it. Jesus isn't mentioned by name in Genesis, of course, because He is not known as Jesus until He became incarnate and was born of Mary, nevertheless He permeates this foundational Book from the beginning in all sorts of ways.

The Triune God

Before we begin to look at the work Jesus did in Genesis, it might be helpful to take a brief excursion into something of the nature of the Trinity. Though the word 'Trinity' is not biblical, the concept most certainly is, and there is no other single word for it in English. Scripture reveals that God is both One and Three: Three in One and One in Three. This revelation defies description, though many have tried down the two millennia since Jesus walked this Earth.



The traditional symbol of the Trinity

Sometimes it is helpful to think of God as One and at other times it is helpful to think of Him as Three. This is not being perverse, or bending ideas to suit a preconceived notion about the Godhead; it is down to what God has said and revealed about Himself. Just as light can best be thought of at times as waves and at others as streams of particles, yet the two concepts defy a unified explanation, so it is with God. One day somebody might just manage to accomplish the currently impossible with light but I doubt anybody can ever succeed in producing such a feat over God. The finite cannot define or fully comprehend the Infinite; and there it must remain. And since 'God is light' (1 John 1:5), it should not be too surprising to discover that the true nature of both defy simple description.

So we understand that God can be thought of as Three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus, of course, is God the Son, the Word (John 1:1), the Second Person in the Trinity, and as that Person He has a very clearly defined rôle within the Godhead. The Father is the master planner; the Son is the One who carries out the plan and will of the Father; and the Holy Spirit maintains and

sustains the plans.

Thus when the Father planned the salvation of mankind it was the Son who had to carry out the plan and the Spirit who maintains it. It could be no other way. The Son had to be the One to come to Earth to die for us on the Cross. The Holy Spirit could not have done that; it is not His function. Many wonder whether somehow there was a sort of hole in heaven when Jesus came to Earth as a human being to make our salvation possible: that the Godhead was somehow incomplete. In no way was this happening. God the Son was being perfectly God, doing what He has always done by carrying out the Father's will, while He was here on Earth. And at that point in time it was the will of the Father that the Son should come to die for the sins of the world and destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3:8).

Jesus in Creation

So, when it came to Creation, the Father planned it and the Son carried out that plan. And this is precisely what we read about in the scriptures:

'Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.' (Heb 1:1-2, emphasis added).

John's great opening to his Gospel also makes the point that Jesus was the creator, or the agent of creation, if you please:

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.' (John 1:1-3, emphasis added).

Paul too adds his two-penn'orth in Colossians:

'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.' (Col. 1:15-17, emphasis added).

The deity of Christ is clearly established in these passages and, as we have said, He was the agent of Creation; the Person of the Trinity who carried out the momentous plan of the Father. Jehovah's Witnesses maintain that Jesus is a created being but this Colossians passage puts paid to that notion. 'Firstborn' is not 'first born' but rather refers to His pre-eminence over all things, and He created 'all things' including spiritual beings in heaven as well as earthly creatures.

The plurality of the nature of the Creator-God is comfortably recognised in Gen-



The creation of Light (God is light)

esis 1:26 in the enigmatic phrase: *'And God said, "Let us make man in our image after our likeness."'* Father, Son and Holy Spirit combined to agree to the creation of man having Their image, thereby placing him well above all other created earthly beings.

In the Garden of Eden

Today, when we think about God speaking to us and walking with us, we think in abstract terms. We know that 'God is spirit' (John 4:24) and we don't think of Him literally walking with us and talking to us. We can imagine a voice booming down out of the sky to give us a message, or in a dream sequence, or a whisper on the wind but not coming like a man and talking face-to-face, man-to-man, with us.

But Adam and Eve had nobody to talk to apart from each other. So it seems that God used to come in recognizable human form to keep them company, mainly in the evening after the day's work was over. They were both perfect and met Him comfortably. Though He was covered, they were not, 'and were not ashamed'. After they had sinned, they recognized their nakedness and took steps to cover themselves before their evening tryst with the Lord. On hearing Him walking in the Garden, they hid amongst the trees. If their regular meetings with God involved Him as merely a voice, or a whisper, or a wind, they would never have even thought they could escape from His gaze—any more than we would today—but they hid from a real human-like being whom they recognized in that form. It was Jesus whom they met, or rather it was the Second Person of the Trinity whom they met.

Messianic prophecy and promise

So we can imagine the scene. Adam and Eve come shame-facedly out from the trees



Adam and Eve before the Fall

to face their Maker. They know they've done wrong and now must answer for it. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent, and, as they say, the serpent didn't have a leg to stand on—or at least he didn't after the curse. (Whether he did before the curse is another idea for us to consider at a later date.)

Jesus (for we will call Him by this Name for convenience's sake) pronounced a curse on all three: the serpent, Eve and then Adam, in reverse order from their guilty pleading. He knew to whom He was talking when He addressed the serpent. Satan had been allowed by the serpent to use it for the task of tempting Eve, so it received a punishment, but in verse 15 of chapter three He gave a double curse which included a prophecy: *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."* (emphasis added). This almost innocuous statement of the obvious situation, which would prevail after the Fall between snakes and humans, contains the promise that God's plan of salvation, laid before the foundation of the world, would swing into action. It must have been with a heavy heart that the Lord gave the first intimation that, despite all the bruising Satan could and would do to humankind, his head would be bruised as he was fatally wounded, though some 4,000+ years and an awful lot of bruising of heels, later.

Having put forward the first messianic prophecy Himself, the Lord went out immediately afterwards and slew an animal to provide a garment of skins to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve. Blood was shed to cover the very first sin, and this was to be the pattern right down to the culmination of the sacrificial system at Calvary. Thus the Lord pronounced both the curse and the promise, and symbolically provided the picture of the solution right there at the beginning of Genesis.

Why 'He' had to be Jesus

The Bible is quite clear that it is impossible to look on the face of God and live. One of the clearest examples of this is seen in Exodus where God, who knew Moses face-to-face (Deut. 34:10), refused to let him see His face:

'And the LORD said to Moses, This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you

have found favour in my sight, and I know you by name.' Moses said, Please show me your glory.' And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But, he said, You cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.' And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen." (Ex. 33:17-23, emphasis added).

Now this is a very odd thing to have happened in chapter 33 because in chapter 24, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu *'and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.'* (Ex. 24:9-12, emphasis added). What's going on?

God cannot be seen for it is death if we do, yet Moses and the others saw God. God cannot be seen but Jesus is God and thousands saw Him. Sometimes it would be helpful if instead of calling Him 'God', the Bible called Him 'Father', or 'God the Father'. It is God the Father whose face we cannot see and live. It was God the Father who placed Moses in a cleft and passed over Him but it was God the Son whom the Israeli elders saw earlier in Exodus and, of course, it had to be God the Son with whom Adam and Eve walked and talked, and still could do so after they had sinned. As sinless beings before the Fall, it would probably have been possible for them to have seen the Father and lived, had things been done that way, but not once they'd sinned. It seems, however, that it was always God the Son with whom they walked and talked as that was another part of His commission from the Father.

Beyond the Garden

It was God the Son whose Divine commission was to interact in human form within Creation. This

sweeps through the Bible culminating in the ultimate action of the incarnation when Jesus, *'though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.'* (Phil 2:6-8).

By the time of Cain and Abel, the Lord still seems to have been speaking on face-to-face terms with them. That Cain could imagine that a spirit God would not know where Abel was and that his, *'I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?'* (Gen. 4:9), would be sufficient to deflect an unseeing God from knowing the truth, is unimaginable unless their dealings were still very much face-to-face.

Abraham and the Lord

In John's gospel we read that Jesus once claimed to know Abraham. *"Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." So the Jews said to him, You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."* (John 8:56-58). There is no doubt that by Abraham's time the Lord was communicating via dreams and visions and giving men voices from heaven either direct-



Isaac carries the wood for his sacrifice. (Jesus was later to carry the 'wood' for His sacrifice)

ly or through angels, but He also still came in person at times too.

In Genesis 18 Abraham meets three men by the oaks of Mamre: two of them are angels but the third is the Lord Himself. Abraham offers them hospitality and during their conversation he is told that Sarah will have a son. Then two of the men set off towards Sodom to deal with the sin problem in that city but the Lord stays back and continues talking to Abraham. Then follows the famous 'bargaining' scene where Abraham gets Him to agree to spare the city for ten righteous people but they can't even find ten. All through the narrative the one talking to Abraham is referred to as 'the Lord'. In the opening verse of chapter 19, remembering that chapter divisions are not part of the original text but are a much later addition, the two who carried on down to Sodom are identified as angels. So the three men, who appeared as men to Abraham and to the people of Sodom, were men from the spirit world on an earthly mission. The Lord was the Son, whom we later know as Jesus.

Mount Moriah

Quite a few years later, when Isaac had grown up a little, if not fully—we are not told how old he was but he could carry the wood for the sacrifice so he had to be somewhere approaching his teens at least—God told Abraham to journey to a specific spot where he must offer Isaac as a sacrifice. The symbolism of this amazing act of faith by Abraham, where he offers his only son as a sacrifice, is permeated with undertones of Jesus (even to the carrying of the wood for the sacrifice) and the sacrifice the Father was to make for us. Jesus is very much present in this story for it is the type of which He is the antitype.

What is more amazing, however, is that Abraham was told to travel until he came to a very specific spot. It took him three days to get there. Why was this necessary? Why wouldn't any old spot do? Well, for one thing the journey made a statement about Abraham's willingness to obey the Lord and his determination to do so, but there was much more to it than that. You see, Mount Moriah was the very place where the Temple was later to be built (2 Chron. 3:1) and where atoning sacrifices were to be offered down the years until finally, on Calvary, the Son of God would make the last ever atoning sacrifice which was acceptable to, and accepted by, God. Abraham offered Isaac at Calvary! No, we are not saying it was the exact spot of Calvary but the two spots were in the same area and it was not chosen at random but rather with the Lord in mind.

Jacob's encounter

Jacob was about to meet Esau again for the first time since they parted so acrimoniously many years ago. He was a strong man, a very strong man indeed, who had relied



Jacob and Esau reunite

often on his strength, and cunning, to overcome his problems. Slowly but surely he had been learning to rely on God but not to the point where he was ready to recognize that such reliance must be total.

On the night before he was to meet his brother, he took steps to ensure the safety of his family and stayed awake. If he stayed awake to pray, or to meditate on his life and what might lie ahead of him since Esau had been threatening to kill him when they parted, we are not told. What happened was not exactly what he had planned. He wrestled all night with a man; or someone he took to be a man but who was God Himself.

Jacob faced two struggles: the earthly one with Esau and the spiritual one with God. In this encounter he learned the true meaning of repentance and reliance on God. He was promised that he would prevail on both fronts. Though he fought hard with 'the man', he was disabled quite easily, yet his tenacity and determination not to yield until he had been blessed, proved that he was ready now to rely on God for his strength and not on himself. His name was changed from Jacob to Israel and he became the man God always wanted him to be. He marched out to meet Esau and the two were instantly reconciled in a beautiful and touching scene, but more importantly he marched out truly as God's man as he had never fully been before. This was the final turning-point of his life.

The narrative tells us: *'he said to him, What is your name?' And he said, Jacob. Then he said, Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.'* Then Jacob asked him, *Please tell me your name. But he said, Why is it that you ask my name? And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.'* (Gen. 32:27-30, emphasis added).

So it was God with whom Jacob struggled yet, as Jacob acknowledged, he was allowed to live. That is because seeing the Son was not punishable by death. Had it been so, He could never have come to Earth as Jesus and interacted with humankind as He did.

Conclusion

Over the course of the Genesis story we see God meeting people in a very visible and sometimes physical way. The Deists who saw God as a Creator who set things in motion and then withdrew from the scene to assume the rôle of disinterested spectator, got it completely wrong. God has always wanted a meaningful relationship with His creatures and He has done so in many different ways down the centuries, culminating in the amazing, and final revelation which we see in Jesus. His previous encounters had been brief but in Jesus we are blessed to have received a sustained and sustaining understanding of the love, might, power and grace of the Father.

That the Son has been active in the world ever since Day One of Creation Week is evident from the ways in which He appeared many times in the story. It would be very easy for Christians to think that, once He had created the world, He sort of sat back in heaven until it was time for Him to become incarnate and come to Earth to live and die for us; and then to appear again at the end of time. The true picture is that He has been active throughout the Bible and, though the last authenticated instance of Him appearing to a human being was on Patmos to the apostle John, He is still active on our behalf. His main task now is to be our great High Priest in heaven acting as our mediator. But, as He said to His apostles, and through them to us: *"I am with you always, to the end of the age."* (Mtt. 28:20).

He has never stopped loving and caring for His people. The Bible is full of Him and the opening Book of all, Genesis, shows Him working wonderfully for us.



John's vision of Christ on Patmos.
(The last known authentic vision of the Lord on Earth.)

Love Story

Any student of the Bible must be curious about all sorts of things and no doubt would have loved to have been a silent onlooker or observer as they unfolded. Watching Jesus hold out his hands and side to Thomas, who was sincerely doubting the resurrection, would have been a wonderful moment, as would that beautiful encounter with Mary Magdalene in the Garden on res-



The resurrected Lord meets Mary

urrection morning. Watching King David's face turn purple with rage when Nathan set him up with a story about a rich man, who stole the single ewe from a poor man to prepare a feast for some guests, while having great flocks of his own, and then seeing it collapse as Nathan hit him between the eyes with: 'Thou art the man!' – it sounds much more dramatic in the Authorized Version (KJV) than the milder modern form of, 'You are the man!' Sin sounds much worse in old English, such as 'the lust of concupiscence', in 1 Thessalonians 4:5, or the 'superfluity of naughtiness' in James 1:21. Those Elizabethans knew how to ladle on the guilt with their colourful condemnations. 'Make 'em squirm', was their motto. After all, they burned heretics at the stake in those days!

The story I want to focus on is a favourite of mine, in gentle sort of way. We read these stories frequently and, knowing the end from the beginning, we can take them for granted and fail to 'see' the real human lives exposed to our gaze. They were real people in them, with real emotions and we are only getting a minute snapshot of them and their lives, yet we form judgements based on these fleeting moments. In *Genesis Accepted* Number 4 we looked at a lovely line from the last chapter, where Joseph forgives his brethren (page 9). The one for this article comes about halfway through the Book in chapter 24 and behind it lies a rich wealth of spirituality, faith and love of God.

The lovely line is from the story of Isaac and comes in Genesis 24:67. Isaac and his bride-to-be, Rebekah, have just met for the first time. He quietly accepts her as his bride, no doubt acknowledging this before witness-

es as custom would demand – though we don't read of this in the text – and he takes her into his dead mother's tent, thereby installing her not only as his wife but also as the leading lady in that tribal context, his mother Sarah now being dead. The Bible records the incident thus: '*Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her.*' 'And he loved her', that is a beautiful, tender phrase which has never been used before in scripture and rarely used again, indeed I can only think of one other instance where it is used like this and that is where Samuel's dad, Elkanah, gave a double portion to his then barren wife Hannah, 'because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb' (1 Sam. 1:5).

When you think about arranged marriages and how couples are brought together more-or-less for procreation to continue the line, and 'who cares about love and whether they loved each other; that's an irrelevance?', how lovely it is to see that here in Isaac was a man who not only went along with the arrangement but also who loved his Rebekah from the moment they met. How often did this happen? How many contractual marriages are loveless marriages? She was to be a most blessed woman and he received an instant blessing because he was immediately comforted after the loss of his precious mum, Sarah. I would have loved to have been there to see that wonderful moment when they met; to have seen how beautiful Rebekah truly was and how tenderly Isaac treated her.

This really is a remarkable story. Abraham did not want a Canaanite bride for his son, Isaac, the son of promise. So he sent his trusted servant to his family in their home land to get a bride for him. You can read all about it in Genesis 24. What immediately stands out in it is the great sense of faith and trusting in God to guide providentially in the matter. The servant, as well as Abraham, showed amazing faith and trust in God's guidance. But even more remarkable is the willing acceptance of the hand of God on her life by Rebekah. She meets a total stranger at the well, apparently accidentally, and she agrees to draw him water and see to his camels too.

This is the signal Abraham's servant had requested from God, but she didn't, and couldn't, have known that. When he tells about his mission and how he came to light upon her as the future bride of his master's son, she accepts that God's hand is truly on her life and goes off with this unknown stranger, to live in a land she did not know, amongst people she'd only heard about but never met, and to marry the son and heir, about whom she knew virtually nothing. No doubt the servant filled her in about how things were at home as they travelled there, but she was well committed then and if she hadn't liked what she heard, it was far too late to back out.

The beauty of the story, therefore, lies in the great trust in God; the belief that He was indeed guiding their destinies and that, if He chose her for him, Isaac was willing to accept her, sight unseen, as his beloved bride. Isaac knew that God does not make mistakes and that God would choose the very best of brides for him. He was not to be disappointed for God does not make mistakes if we truly place our lives in His hands and follow His leading. And Rebekah too was willing, not only to accept Isaac, sight unseen (though she did see him briefly before they were married), but also to dwell in his country amongst his people all of which were unknown quantities for her. When she saw



Rebekah is chosen as Isaac's wife

Isaac in the field where he had been meditating in the evening as she approached, she modestly put a veil over her face, thereby showing her genuine spirituality in the context of her day. It's quite possible that Isaac never saw her face until after the wedding and the deed was irrevocably done. Imagine his delight when he found she was beautiful. His son Jacob was to get an amazing shock on the morning after his wedding night! I'm sure many a couple brought together in an arranged marriage have had to struggle

against their disappointment over the choices made on their behalf. Not Isaac and Rebekah, because God made this choice and they merely followed His lead.

It may be hard for us to do the same but if we truly put God into our lives in everything and allow Him genuinely to lead us, we will never be disappointed with His choices for us; and I'm not talking solely about marriage now but about every aspect of our lives and the choices we must

take – especially the important ones like who to marry, where to live, what job to pursue, and so on. It may be hard to do at times. Isaac was not young when he married and may have wondered if he was missing opportunities in this area of his life but he never seems to have pre-empted God's will for him and God's guidance in all things. Put God in the middle in all things and work away from that; there's really no better way to live than that – ask Isaac and Rebekah.

CREATIONISM

A Question of Age

They say that it's impolite to ask a lady her age. Most women go through three stages in this regard: when they are young they want to be thought of as older; when middle-aged they want to be thought to be younger; and when they are old they are proud to give away their age so that they can be admired for how 'young' they appear! 'Really! You can't be *that* old. You look nothing like it,' are words which are music to their ears. (Mind you, many men have the same notions too.) Well, 'Mother Earth' is definitely coy about her age. Scientists want to maintain that 'she' is very old indeed: 4.5 billion-years-old, in fact. Creationists, however, insist that she's a mere whippersnapper at around 6,000-years-old, which is 750,000 times younger! She, being a woman,

is enjoying sending out conflicting signals just to keep us all guessing.

We will be looking at some of those signals in Number 6, our next issue, and assessing them. Meanwhile we have to understand a little of how scientists come to believe that billions of years are involved, as opposed to merely thousands. We must emphasize now that it is not just because most are being deliberately perverse in spite of the evidence, as some Creationists might want to maintain, but because their basic assumptions—the axioms on which they build—lead them to believe as they do. Why they accept these axioms in the first place has little to do with science and a good deal to do with religion: the religion of humanistic evolutionism, in fact.

The Law of Uniformity



If you were to go into a room and saw a lit candle, you might wonder how long it had been burning. How could you tell? You would begin by looking at the quantity of melted wax in the dish below and make a calculation of how big you thought the candle was at the beginning. Then you would need to know the rate at which it had been burning so you could calculate just how long it had taken to reach the position in which you found it and hence when it had been set alight. Simple? Not a bit of it!

In order to make an assessment of the problem you would have to assume several things to be true: a) the flame has burned continuously at the same rate all the time with no wind fanning it; b) that the wax has all fallen into the tray and that none has been removed; c) that there was no wax in the tray before the candle was lit. If those assumptions hold true, a calculation of reasonable accuracy could be made.

When scientists come to study the universe, they make similar sorts of assumptions. Firstly they believe that the laws governing rates of decay (burning in the candle) have been constant over time and have always been the same as they measure them today. Secondly they assume that the physical laws we can measure on Earth will be exactly the same throughout the universe under the same conditions and have been the same throughout time. Thus, as the great axiom of the geologists puts it: 'The present is the key to the past'. Thirdly they assume that they know what the conditions were when things started, i.e. how much wax was in the tray at the beginning and that nothing has been added or taken away.

This is the Law of Uniformity. It can't

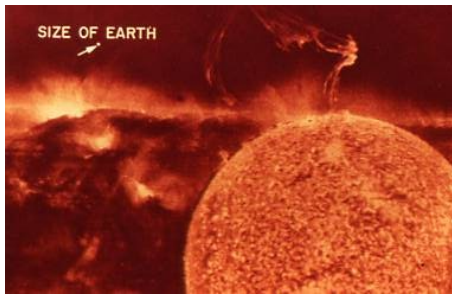
be proven, hence it is axiomatic. It is also a belief, an act of faith, if you will. Just as the Christian says, 'I believe in God,' so the scientist says, 'I believe in the Law of Uniformity'. It is indeed a good Law when applied to the present because, to some extent, we can test it but it could well be most unreliable when dealing with the past. It cannot, for example, allow for any global catastrophe to have happened because such things are not happening now.

Western scientists like this Law because it philosophically under-girds a stable social situation where prosperity depends on maintaining the *status quo*. Russian scientists, under Communism, were inclined to reject the concept because their socio-political philosophy had to accommodate catastrophic revolution. Acceptable science *can* be tailored by social and political forces, and it often is. Darwin's development of the Theory of Evolution did not occur in a scientific vacuum where truth alone has to prevail irrespective of where it might lead. That sort of thinking belongs to the great myths of science.

The Law in operation

We have already considered the Big Bang Theory of origins (Number 2). To calculate the time it is supposed to have happened astronomers **must** assume that the properties of light have been constant throughout time and are constant throughout space. So much of their beliefs depend on the analysis of light emanating from distant stars and galaxies. They must also assume that the supposed rate of expansion observed today in the universe has been constant throughout time so that extrapolation of the values can be made.

When scientists consider the age of the Sun, they apply this Law most rigorously. They assume that the rate of atomic reaction, changing hydrogen into helium, has been constant and that there was no helium present at the beginning. In other words there was nothing in the 'tray' when the light was



The Sun: an eruptive prominence
(photo taken from Skylab in Earth orbit)

ignited. They also assume that it is fired by an atomic reaction. There are other explanations which are equally as valid, but not nearly as popular.

Dating methods used on Earth

Almost everybody has seen and heard a Geiger counter operating at some time. It ticks, or should that be clicks(?), with alarming vigour when close to a radioactive source. Even a luminous watch will activate it as that source gives off radiation. Listening to it ticking is like listening to decaying taking place since it is caused by a wasting process.

Some rocks contain radioactive isotopes with elements such as uranium, thorium, potassium, argon and lead in them. There is also a form of carbon, which all living things absorb whilst they are alive, which is radioactive. This is called carbon 14 (C_{14}) and it is used to date once living things. All of these methods depend on the concept of the half-life of the elements involved.

The half-life is the time it takes for a radioactive element to decay to half its size. It produces another element as it does so. Assuming therefore that the Law of Uniformity operates and is accurate, by measuring the amount of the original element in the rock against the amount of the daughter element it has changed in to, and knowing how quickly it decays to its half-life, an age can be determined for the parent rock.

This method is fraught with difficulties because of the assumptions. It is assumed that the decay rates have been constant throughout time; that there was only the pure

radioactive isotope present when the rock was formed and that all the daughter elements came from the original; that the sample is pure and that nothing has contaminated it by seeping in or reducing some elements by leaching out. One final thing that few realize when scientists give out confident ages of rocks is that when they come to date a rock they already have an assumption about what sort of age it should be. Theoretically tests using different dating methods for the same sample of rock should yield the same date. But they don't! When they don't, the ones giving the 'wrong' date, i.e. the date the scientists did not expect, are rejected and only the 'accurate' ones are accepted: 'accurate' being defined as 'expected'.

For example, Canadian pitchblende was dated using three different methods on the same sample:¹

$U_{238} > Pb_{206}$ (uranium to lead) = 337 million years,

$U_{235} > Pb_{207}$ (uranium to lead) = 389 million years,

$Th_{232} > Pb_{208}$ (thorium to lead) = 705 million years.

Argon, the derived element in the potassium-argon dating process, can migrate within rocks thus giving larger daughter elements than would be expected and an appearance of greater age under that dating method. Hawaiian lavas known to be less than 200-years-old were dated up to 3 billion-years-old by this method!²

Radiocarbon dating fares even worse. It depends on the fact that living things absorb C_{14} whilst alive but once they are dead no more is absorbed and it begins to decay. Fluctuations in radiocarbon levels have taken place in the past and attempts to align them with evidence from tree rings by dendrochronology, have failed. Contamination of samples is far easier in once living matter than in rocks, and ludicrous results have occurred:

- 1) Living molluscs have had their shells dated at 2,300 years.
- 2) New wood from living trees—10,000 years.
- 3) Mortar from Oxford Castle—7,370 years (the castle was only built 800-

years ago!).

- 4) Freshly killed seals—1,300 years and mummified seals known to be only 30-years-old—4,600 years.³

(Incidentally, any who would like to place confidence in the results of the dating of the Turin Shroud by this method need to understand why that exercise was a complete waste of time in establishing anything significant about its age.)

Dating rocks and fossils by these methods is a complex subject. The important thing to note is that there are huge assumptions made by the scientists who employ such methods. Most have an agenda to ensure that the accepted ages of the Earth are upheld because the alternative—that the Earth is young—is unacceptable philosophically to them.

Built in age

One final point on dating, which Creationists do accept, is the concept of the appearance of age, which could lead to the Earth seeming to be older than it is. Let us imagine that we could go back in time by using a time-machine, and we could meet Adam on the Day he was created (Day 6), how old would we think him to be: 30, 40, 50? We discussed this concept in *Genesis Accepted* Number 4. God made him and gave him a built-in age even though he was not even one day old. So too with trees in Eden, which were created fully mature on Day 3, yet were only three days old when Adam was created on Day 6. What would their tree rings tell us? There's a good deal more to this than meets the eye but it is a useful concept to bear in mind.

In our next issue we will follow up on this and look at some of the evidence that the Earth is indeed quite young.

¹ A.J. Monty White, *What About Origins?*, page 152.

² R.L. Wysong, *The Creation-Evolution Controversy*, page 151.

³ *Ibid*, page 155.



Noah's Wife

I think it is odd that we should know nothing about such an important woman as Mrs Noah and the part she played in the history of the world according to the Bible record. We are going to speculate in this article, though not, I hope, in a vacuum, but rather by reasoning from the biblical record and using logical imaginings to see if we can obtain some understanding of this pivotal woman of God. The Bible doesn't say what her name was. Legend offers us three suggestions: Noema (Yaschar), Noria (Gnostics), Vesta (Cabbalists). 'Nitty Nellie'¹ isn't on the list!

Scientists have discovered a genetic bottleneck around 5,500 years ago, which is consistent with a worldwide Flood killing almost everybody. All male genes do indeed come together in the person of Noah but do all the world's female genes come down to her? Biologists recognize mitochondrial Eve, but is it really mitochondrial Mrs Noah they are looking at? Let's see what we can discover.

Some important points about Noah's background

Some details about Noah could well be significant in our thinking about his wife. The first are that he was righteous, and he became a father at 500. Secondly, though mentioned in the commissioning of the Ark (Gen. 6:18), the lads, Shem, Ham and Japheth, were not born at the time of the commissioning. This was about 120 years before the Flood, so the project was 20 years down the line when they began to come along, yet implicit in the commissioning of the Ark was a promise that Noah would have a family before he entered it. The Bible is clear that it was only Noah who found favour in God's eyes and it was through his righteousness alone that the promise of salvation came. There are implications in this for our analysis.

Who was she?

One legend² has it that Noah's wife was a daughter of Enoch. Enoch was Noah's great granddad but he was translated into

heaven 69 years before Noah was born. If she was one of his daughters and was born nine months after Enoch was translated, she would have been bearing Noah's children beginning with her firstborn at 569. Is this likely? Well, though men were reproductively vigorous well into mighty old age, women did not seem to be so blessed, if Sarah is a reasonably good example. By Abraham's time, though they were still living much longer than we do, Sarah was considered to be well past childbearing age at 90. Though women in antediluvian times must have been capable of having children at very old ages by our standards, it seems reasonable that menopause kicked

years before the Flood.

The puzzle of the lateness of Noah becoming a father

Why was Noah 500 before he had children? He was massively older than his nearest rival for the title of 'World's oldest man to become a father for the first time'. That rival was indeed Methuselah at 187 (Gen. 5:25). Could it be that Noah wasn't married until very late in life? It does happen today so why not then, and why not Noah? We notice with Abraham and Sarah a great and heartfelt anxiety about her inability to bear children and the worrying at the passage of the time for the promises from God to be



Noah's family offer sacrifices after the Flood (Were all the womenfolk sisters?)

in comparatively early and thus their reproductive cycle would still place them many years behind the male reproductive capability. Mrs Noah would most probably have been well past it by 569 had she been Enoch's daughter. She therefore must not have been, and actually must have been very much younger than Noah. Though she could not have been Enoch's daughter, she could easily have been a daughter of Methuselah or Lamech. Is this likely?

As a daughter of Methuselah, she would have been Noah's aunt, and it is no problem for her to have been very much younger than he was. Methuselah, you remember, died in the year of the Flood. Moses' mother, Jochebed, was the aunt of Moses' father, Amram, (Exodus 6:20) so such marriages were not unknown AND the laws of incest had not been brought in until Sinai. They were quite legal in God's eyes because the gene pool was not remotely as corrupted as ours is so congenital deformities would have been virtually unknown in those days. If she had been a younger daughter of Lamech, she would have been Noah's sister. Again, this too would not have been wrong and was quite possible since Lamech only died seven

accomplished. No such anxiety is attributed to Noah and his wife, yet similar pressures should have been on their shoulders as the years slid by to his reaching 500 and nothing happened, if they had married when Noah was a young man. However, if he were still a bachelor by the time he reached 480—his age when God commissioned him to build the Ark—there would be no such pressure on him until after God had placed His time-limit on the world

and told him of the part that he, and his family, were to play in its history. Family? What family? Obviously then there became an urgency about his need to find a wife to produce this family and preserve the race.

Finding a godly wife

By the time the Ark was commissioned, the world was totally corrupt and violence ruled where peace had once reigned. Where could Noah have turned for a wife? What would have been more natural than to look within his own family because the line of godliness was being preserved through it? It is quite possible that Lamech, Noah's father, married one of his own sisters, for the same reason, and that Noah took one of his younger sisters as his wife on the same basis. This was not needed to keep the gene pool pure and vigorous, inbreeding actually has the opposite effect, but rather to preserve the spirituality of the family which was to begin the new world afresh. Also, if he chose one of his sisters, he would have had a ready-made ally and godly support for the work he was already undertaking when they were married. Just as we are told not to be 'unequally yoked with unbelievers' (2 Cor. 6:14), so that principle had to be followed by Noah. He could not have succeeded in his

task if his wife had not been fully behind him, supporting him in his obsessional Ark-building over many years and being very understanding of the necessity for him to concentrate his efforts and energies on it rather than her and the family. So it seems logical that she was indeed a very close relative, and I favour the closest of all, namely a much younger sister.

The daughters-in-law

Noah, however, is the only antediluvian patriarch, whose genealogy we have preserved for us, who is not listed as having daughters. So where did Shem, Ham and Japheth get their wives from? If the principle of marrying your sister was a good one to maintain the spiritual line, they would not have been allowed to go much beyond their immediate family to find wives. Legend² has it that they married three daughters of Eliakin, son of Methuselah. This being the case, the girls would have been their grandfather's sisters, or, to put it as we would understand it more easily, their great aunts. This would have had the same spiritual, and more-or-less the same genetic effects as marrying a sister. If they married three of Lamech's daughters rather than Methuselah's, they married their aunts, their mother's sisters(!), and this we know happened in those days. The whole family which entered the Ark therefore must have been totally inbred, hence the genetic bottleneck, mentioned earlier, but there was nothing incestuous, sinful or indecent in the arrangement. God had to put a block on this inbreeding when He gave Moses the Law (see Leviticus 18) because by then it would have begun to have disastrous congenital consequences. Even first cousin marriages today, though not biblically illegal and therefore sinful, are somewhat genetically unwise on this basis. The Darwin family interbred with their cousins the Wedgwoods', of pottery fame, and paid the price in some of their offspring.

Summarizing Mrs Noah

Mrs Noah then was probably a very close relative, if not the closest possible, much younger than her husband and totally supportive of his God-given commission. She would have had to have been resourceful and self-motivating, a practical woman because of all she would have to do in the Ark. There is no record at all in the account of the antediluvian world of slaves or servants in households. Had there been, Noah would no doubt have been able to preserve not just his family in the Ark, but his household as well. That he had no household to preserve seems to indicate a singular lack of servants or slaves to do the normal household chores. They were his wife's job, later assisted by her daughters-in-law/sisters.

Thus we can say confidently that Mrs Noah, and Mrs Shem, Mrs Ham and Mrs Japheth were practical, resourceful and godly women. We can assume this because after

the Flood they had to teach the skills of womanhood to the up-and-coming generations of wives and mothers. They would have had to teach spiritual values to their households as well as these practical ones. If they hadn't the skills and spirituality to do this, led by Mrs Noah as the sole matriarch of the world, just as Eve once had been in her generation, they would have floundered desperately into the postdiluvian world. She was therefore obviously a woman of amazing skills, knowledge and abilities, not a woman to be trifled with but one to be respected and admired. The tasks God had given to her in supporting Noah before the Flood, helping him cope during it, and then leading the female side of the advance into the strange, new postdiluvian world, tells us of a truly remarkable woman indeed.

We may read absolutely nothing at all about her in the Bible, which I have always thought was kind of sad, but by thinking carefully about the implications of what we do read and imagining her rôle in the midst of it all, we can come to some sort of understanding of this great, unsung heroine of the Word of God.

Final speculation

We began and ended this short piece about Mrs Noah by musing on why she gets no mention at all in scripture, especially considering that she was such an important figure in the history of the world. Maybe the reason might well lie along the lines suggested below. I couldn't be at all certain but it makes some sort of sense to me.

The Holy Spirit knew perfectly well what He was doing when He inspired Moses to write the Pentateuch, and Genesis in particular, since that is our special area of interest. Knowing full-well what sincere, but misguided, religious people would do with the text in the future, He decided not to give them any more 'ammunition' than was necessary. He could see that many, if not most, would be unable to comprehend the concept of dispensational religion, and that what was allowable under one dispensation was not in another. So, in Christendom today, we find altars, priests, the separation of clergy and laity with the clergy wearing fancy robes of office, tithing, incense and other things which carried over from the Old Mosaic Covenant into Christian thinking, where it has absolutely no place at all. He could see many Christian believers thinking that the 'Thief on the Cross' who repented, was saved as a Christian, thereby forgetting that Christ's sacrifice had not been accomplished so the Jewish faith was still God's power unto salvation, albeit was coming rapidly to a close at that moment. The Thief was saved as a Jew under the Jewish dispensation.



A modern priest.
(An Old Testament concept carried over)

If then He had trumpeted the family relationships of Mrs Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth to their husbands, many might be tempted into saying something like this: 'God is

the same yesterday, today and forever and He allowed close family marriages in the Old Testament so they must be fine in our day.' Thus some would be tempted to practise incest and claim it is allowed in the Bible and that they are Bible-based believers. So He said nothing about where Cain got his wife—she definitely was his sister—or where any of the antediluvian patriarchs got their wives. The only marriages He mentions before the Flood were the illicit ones where the Sons of God married the daughters of men in Genesis 6:1-4. (We will deal with them in a later article). Even post-Flood we find Abraham married Sarah who was his half-sister; they both had the same father.

I don't know, but by keeping them totally out of the picture we are allowed to focus on the truly important points being made in the story as judgement came on the sinful world and God saved Noah by faith, through the Flood. This is a mega-theme, which many deny today because they deny that the events actually occurred. It did not need the clutter of things which were unimportant to it, nor did it need to give detractors the opportunity apparently to seize the high moral ground by declaring that the story is immoral because of its incestuous undertones, which would have been gleefully presented by them—they too not understanding dispensational revelation and religion.

It's just a thought! But it still would have been nice just to know their names, wouldn't it?

¹ 'Nitty Nellie': Many readers will remember that this name comes from a cartoon character in a British television series under the title of 'Nutty Noah and Nitty Nellie'. Voiced by Richard Briers, it was not exactly a knockout success in its day and never seems to be revived today!

² References in this article to legends come from, *Legends of Old Testament Characters from the Talmud and other sources*, by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, Macmillan & Co., 1871 (he who wrote 'Onward Christian Soldiers').

The book that converted me!

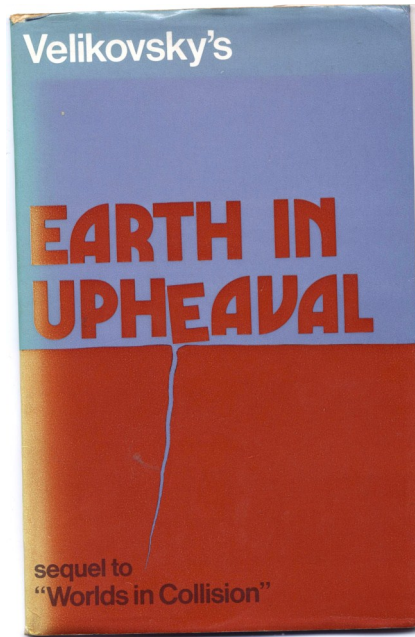
No! I am not going to talk about my conversion to Christ. My acceptance of Him fully into my life had nothing at all to do with a book. I was raised as a Christian, by Christian parents, and it was more of a realisation and conviction that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the Living God, and that I needed to be baptized to acknowledge this belief as He would have me do, that made me accept Him some 18 days before I was 13 years of age, in October 1954. The conversion I am talking about was from a Theistic Evolutionist into a full-blown, 6-Day, Young-Earth Creationist, sometime in the early 1970s. And this was down to one book, *Earth In Upheaval*, by Immanuel Velikovsky.

The congregation I grew up in did not run a midweek Bible study. There was Sunday School and Sunday worship. You got your teaching there, or at your parents' knees at home. I don't remember Creation ever being on the agenda, at least not in terms of its opposition to the Theory of Evolution. School taught me an Old-Earth Geography and Geomorphology. I didn't do Biology to the point where evolution was taught; it was just assumed to be correct. On going up to university, I studied Geology as a subsidiary subject linked to Geography and there Uniformitarianism was openly taught. Uniformitarianism is the belief that the world has been fashioned by the slow processes we see in nature, and can study, today; and that these have not changed throughout time. It is summed up by the phrase that *'The present is the key to the past.'* It is opposed to Catastrophism which believes that in the past, swift catastrophes have largely fashioned the Earth's geology (and indeed the universe at large) and that these best explain the Earth's physical history. Uniformitarianism is a belief system, not a proven fact. It is simply assumed as being true by most geological, biological and cosmological scientists.

I learnt my Geology as a believer—and I learnt it well. I had absolutely no doubt in my own mind that God created the world, but that it was by means of an evolutionary process that He did so—so I believed. Science answered the 'How?' question of Creation, and the Bible answered the 'Who?' and 'Why?' questions. I never noticed that my belief in Noah's Flood was inconsistently opposed to the concept of Uniformitarianism. You can't always think of all angles on everything when you're young, especially if nobody is pointing things like this out to you.

When you are young, you want satisfactory answers to questions, which usually involve explanations too. I remember my mother once saying that she thought the world was created in six days because the Bible said so. That was the only evidence she

offered and somehow, at that time, it simply wasn't good enough for me. You see, in the 1950s, Creationist thinkers simply had not got their act together. There was in existence 'The Evolution Protest Movement' (EPM) but when I came across some of their literature, in the 1960s, it was poor. I remember reading about a preacher who made little marginal notes to himself on his sermon scripts. On one he had pencilled in: 'Point weak—shout!' The EPM's pamphlets seemed to me to be little more than



shouting at the opposition. I was not impressed.

By the mid-60s I had met up with some Christians, whom I admired greatly as teachers. They believed firmly in the literal truth of Genesis. Their explanations, however, were also not too convincing in this area, again because Creationists still had not got their act together, though, unknown to me, a seminal book had been written and was slowly having an impact in this field. It was *The Genesis Flood*, by Whitcomb and Morris (1961) - it's still in print, still a classic and still well worth reading. From this point on, Creationists began slowly to make reasoned and reasonable scientific arguments in opposition to the Evolutionists and, when I was ready to absorb and accept it, it was there waiting for me.

But it was a friend who triggered things for me without realizing that she had. She told me about an interesting book with unusual theories about the shaping of the world, and in particular having startling things to say about the Exodus, Joshua's Long Day (Joshua 10) and other biblical events. It was called *Worlds In Collision*

by Immanuel Velikovsky. I obtained a copy from the library and read it. It was indeed interesting but hardly light reading. In it he suggested that the Earth has been visited by planets, or planet-like bodies, flying close by, and their interaction with us caused devastation and catastrophes on a massive scale, both by their enormous tidal effects and also electromagnetic discharges. These encounters are enshrined in folklore, myths, legends and also in the Bible as miracles. Indeed the single major reference work for his theories was the Bible.

I enjoyed it but was not overly impressed because I had little point of contact with the facts he was drawing upon to support his ideas, namely the myths and legends of ancient peoples. What did impress me was the interesting point that many of the things he suggested in 1950, when the book was first printed, and which were laughed out of court by regular scientists, had begun to be found to be accurate. (It was the space race which was confirming his conclusions.) Also, when publishers (the Macmillan Company of New York) accepted it for publication, the scientific world ganged up on them and threatened to withdraw their patronage of the company, so they were blackmailed into withdrawing from publishing the book. That put me slightly on his side because I didn't like that. It was later published by a firm, Victor Gollancz, which had no scientific publishing in its portfolio. (It was printed in paperback by Abacus.)

The scientific world had criticized Velikovsky's ideas in *Worlds In Collision* on the grounds that he had used non-scientific sources, and unreliable non-scientific sources at that, to make out his case. Undaunted, he sat down and wrote *Earth in Upheaval*, which was published in 1956, and which used only scientific evidence to demonstrate the fact that the world's surface has not been fashioned by slow processes acting over countless millennia but by swift catastrophic forces, in recent, historical times.

I read it and couldn't put it down. It was like scales falling off my eyes. You see, much of what he wrote about concerned the Ice Ages and this was my field. I had a point of contact. I knew what he was talking about and I knew that what he was saying was right. There had/has always been a good deal of doubt in mainstream geological circles about the Ice Ages and what caused them. There are more puzzles than answers. Why was Siberia never glaciated yet it is the coldest spot on Earth? Why were parts of Alaska never glaciated? How can ice flow from the Equator outwards? How were tens of thousands of mammoths frozen quickly in ice? You could go on. Geologists usually de-

scribe glaciated features but give few, if any, explanations because they have none. There were other pointers too in the book, such as coal formation, but these will do for now.

Suddenly all of the unarticulated doubts and niggles that I'd had in these areas fell away. Of course Uniformitarianism was wrong. It was Catastrophism which best explained the evidence. I was converted, not to Creationism but to Catastrophism! However, now that there was a rational explanation for the fashioning of the Earth's surface by swift means in days, or months and not almost countless millennia, it was a small matter to become a Young-Earth, 6-Day Creationist. And by this time the Creationists were getting their act together. The Evolution Protest Movement was soon to become the Creation Science Movement. The Biblical Creation Society got under way in Britain and the Answers In Genesis team, with their magnificent publications, videos and other materials were soon making serious inroads. It was good to be there in the early days. And of course there were, and still are, many books published to help Christians in this area.

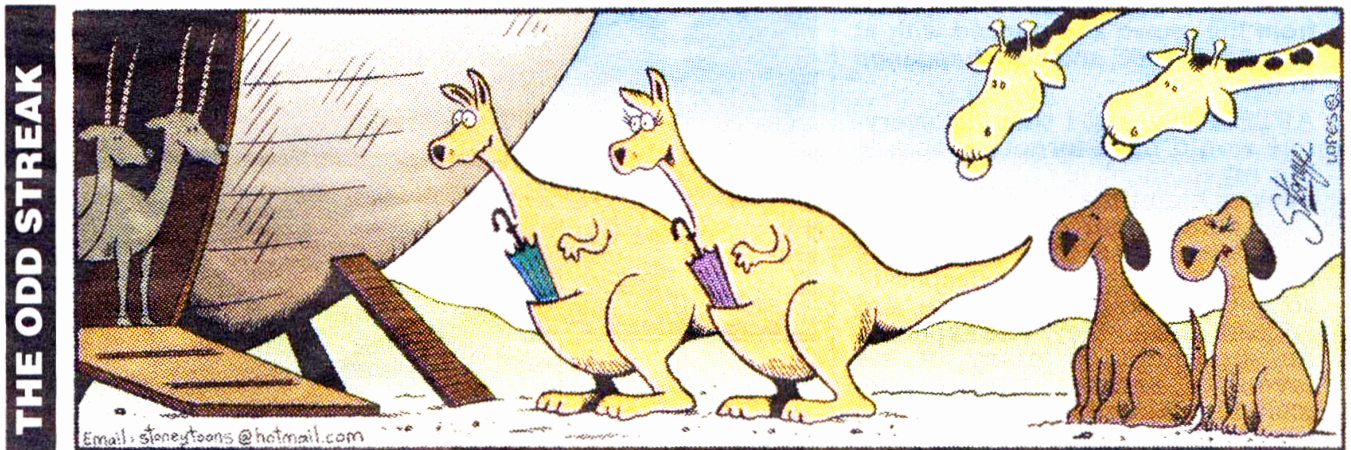
I then went back and re-read *Worlds In Collision*, not as a doubter but as a convert. I read it twice more, bought my own copy, and

carefully followed up all the biblical references Velikovsky made. It opened up my eyes to a greater understanding of much of the Old Testament, and even some of the New. He used the Bible to support his theories but in November 1979 I was privileged to give a series of five lectures in Liverpool entitled 'Catastrophes that Fashioned the Bible'. I reversed the process and used Velikovsky's theories to open up our understanding of the Bible. These lectures, and some more original research material, were turned into my first book, *Speak Through The Earthquake, Wind And Fire*, which was published in 1982, and which has been advertised as still available in *Genesis Accepted* Number 3.

Velikovsky never dealt seriously with the Flood: that was left to Donald W. Patten in *The Biblical Flood and the Ice Epoch*, Pacific Meridian Press, 1966, using Velikovsky's inspiration for his thesis. Creationists have never taken Astro-Catastrophism, Velikovsky-style, on board. This, in my opinion, is a mistake. They rightly focus on the main catastrophe of the Flood but fail to recognize subsequent, devastating catastrophes which shattered somewhat more local areas, putting almost everything down to the one event of the Flood. I believe that this is unsustainable,

but I understand that they are loath to accept Astro-Catastrophism because they wish to meet the scientific community head-on on its own terms. A Velikovsky-style scenario seems too close to Flat Earthers' for comfort, so they keep it at a distance. They still look down instead of up for the mechanism of the Flood and the coming of the Ice Age. It seems odd but I think these good people need to fix their eyes heavenward as they search for answers in these areas. That's a very good direction for Christians to look.

Both *Earth In Upheaval* and *Worlds In Collision* are still available through Amazon. They come in hardback and paperback, at different prices, of course. Prior to writing this article, I re-read *Earth In Upheaval* again and though it obviously didn't knock me over as it did in the early 1970s, it is still an astonishing read making the case for Catastrophism as powerfully as ever. I owe it an amazing debt because it gave me a consistent and sustainable view on both Creation and Geology—the two fields in which I have a special interest. It was the means of converting me in both fields from being an inconsistent Uniformitarian into a totally consistent Catastrophist. And all Creationists have to be Catastrophists!



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



Cover picture: Snails climbing a post in the Editor's back garden—June 2005