

GENESIS ACCEPTED



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The Sons Of God

It is a truth worth stating that it is very seldom we can come to a biblical topic with a completely open mind. I'm not saying it is impossible, because it isn't. However, over the years what we have heard at our mother's knee, or in Sunday School and church services, or even at school, filters into our subconscious and these things subsequently bear down on the problem whether we realise it, like it or not.

The only time I can recall it happening to me was some time in the mid 70s. We were conducting a Bible Correspondence Course in Liverpool and each of us doing the teaching had several correspondents to deal with. One good brother, now sadly deceased, came to me and said: 'Gra, what do you know about the Nephilim in Genesis 6?' 'The what?' I replied, never having ever heard of them. It appeared that one of his students was a man who loved asking questions. I think we all know the type if we've ever engaged in such activities as we were. They love asking questions, the more awkward the better, but don't really want answers. Indeed, if you look remotely like answering them, they simply change the question. They enjoy demonstrating what they think is their biblical knowledge by aiming their favourite raft of difficult questions at you just to see how you stand up to them. They can waste your time with consummate fluency because usually their questions defy the one-line answer approach, often requiring almost a book to reply, or if not a book, a whole series of supplementary studies taking weeks to deliver. Satan has many ways of blunting our efforts, and by making us waste valuable time struggling to provide a reasonable answer, which the questioner, as we said, doesn't really want, when we could be doing much more effective things for the Lord, is a brilliant strategy.

I promised my brother that I would go away and discover what I could about the Nephilim. The reference I was given was to Genesis 6:1-4. I never remembered having studied this passage before and had absolutely no idea what I would discover. The commentaries I looked at were not at all helpful, so I was left on my own with only the cross-references in the centre of the page of my Bible to guide me.

The Nephilim

It wasn't hard to do this and it soon became obvious that 'Nephilim' was the name given to fierce warrior types in the ancient world, often associated with giantism. Goliath could be classed as one of the Nephilim. The Authorized Version actually uses the word 'giants', not 'Nephilim', in this passage in Genesis. That part was relatively easy, but



Goliath: who could be classed as a Nephilim

who were they in Genesis 6? Where had these particular Nephilim come from? That was what the questioner really wanted to know and this was the point where the commentaries were singularly unhelpful. I was left with as completely an open mind as I'm ever likely to have, floundering for an answer. The one I came up with surprised me and, I later discovered, put me at odds with a great many people, many of whom were, and still are, excellent Bible students. However, I am resolutely going to stick to my guns and fearlessly present the case, as I understand it, to you for your consideration! In a study such as this, there is no need at all for you to accept my conclusions. If it makes you think things through in a new light, my objective will have been achieved.

The passage under discussion

Let us begin by citing the passage concerned:

'When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. Then the LORD said, My Spirit shall not abide in

man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.' *The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.'* (Gen. 6:1-4).

Exegetical methods

There is an approach to Bible study, which most conservative scholars accept and adopt, and that is that if we are able to, we let scripture interpret scripture. In other words if we come to a problematic passage and we can turn up other scriptures for enlightenment, that's the approach we prefer to adopt. It is one I heartily endorse and it was this approach I used concerning this passage. Unfortunately many of those who disagreed with me in the 1970s, when I first put these ideas forward, and later when I put them into my little book, *Why Believe In Adam?* (pg. 80-81, 1990), apparently forgot this principle.

The term 'Sons of God'

In the New Testament we find the descriptive phrase 'the sons of God' applied to Christians who have been sanctified by their association with the Spirit (e.g. John 1:12, Rom. 8:14-19, Phil. 2:15, 1John 3:1-2). It's a generic term and can also be applied to sisters in Christ as well, and the phrase 'children of God' (Rom. 8:16) describes our new-found status as heirs with Christ because of the Cross. It is not difficult to work out what it means in these verses. Indeed in Luke 20:36 the RSV and the ESV use the words 'sons of God' but in the AV the phrase 'children of God' is used. In the New Testament these phrases are interchangeable.

In the Old Testament, however, its use is very different. In Deuteronomy 32:8 the more modern versions do exactly the same as they did in the passage in Luke and swap 'children of Israel' for 'sons of God'; we know precisely what is meant. It is in Job that we find the phrase used in an entirely different context. Here in Job 1:6, 2:1 and 38:7 there is no equivocation. The phrase 'sons of God' refers to angels, and every commentator agrees with this, and so, of course, do I! The question therefore is: 'Are

the 'sons of God' in Genesis 6 angels or merely humans who are definitely on God's side?' My conclusion was that they were quite obviously angels, and it was this conclusion which upset(s) many brethren.

Sons of godly Seth and daughters of Cain

Those who opposed my view told me that the 'sons of God' were sons of the godly line of Seth who married into the ungodly line of Cain because Cain's daughters were beautiful. They could not be angels because angels are sexless - Jesus said so in Matthew 22:30. Here Jesus was set a trap by the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection. They postulated a woman having seven husbands and asked Him whose wife she would be in the resurrection. Jesus replied that they were ignorant because *'in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.'* Thus the argument goes, angels are sexless so these Genesis 'sons of God' could not have been angels. It's a good argument but I believe that it is mistaken.

Let us look at what was said and see certain difficulties with it. This view takes 'the sons of God' to mean godly, spiritual children, as it does in the New Testament, and that Seth's line were the godly ones. It is odd that Cain produced beautiful daughters but that the daughters of righteousness were ugly by comparison - so ugly that the godly men preferred the evil beauties. There is absolutely no hint of such a thing in the scriptures.

Secondly there is no reason to suppose that such marriages, if they did take place, would produce fierce warrior types probably of giant size. The corrupt daughters of Cain would no doubt corrupt most of the godly men if they'd married them - that's a sad fact of life - and such children would probably not grow up to love God; but that would not turn them inevitably into Nephilim. Clearly something was radically wrong genetically with this unholy alliance in Noah's day. The children produced were not only super evil but also super tall, super fierce and super powerful.

To parallel the Genesis 'sons of God' with the New Testament use of the phrase is to draw a parallel where none can be drawn. In the New Testament the phrase is not gender specific and, as we said earlier, refers to all children of God of either sex. However, not only is it gender specific it is also clan specific, if the reference really is to Seth's sons marrying Cain's daughters. No mention is made of the ungodly reverse happening with the 'sons of man' marrying the 'daughters of God', i.e. Cain's sons marrying Seth's daughters, if these two sons of Adam are truly the same as 'man' in Cain's case and 'God' in Seth's.

In Genesis 6 these 'sons' were of the



Destruction of Sodom and Lot's wife turns into a pillar of salt

male gender only, taking human daughters to wife as they chose and fathering monstrous offspring. In the scriptures, angels are always referred to as being male - sorry girls but that's a fact - and to think of these Genesis 'sons' as angels, and therefore male, is perfectly consistent with all of scripture, and particularly this story. Who said angels are sexless? Jesus simply said they don't marry in heaven. Had Moses intended 'the sons of God' to read 'godly children of Seth' he would have had to have written to the effect that 'daughters of God' also took the 'sons of man' and corrupted the world. But the godly daughters of Seth equally are covered in this story by the way it is phrased. These 'sons of God' took daughters of man; there were no 'daughters of God' taking sons of man and producing ungodly offspring as a result. It is a one-way only reference.

New Testament passages

If the only reference to this incident was in Genesis 6, it might be quite difficult to sustain this argument as a strong argument, especially in the light of what Jesus said about angels, but it is not. There are passages in the New Testament which refer back to these times and have to be making reference to these antediluvian incidents or they make no sense at all. Accept that the 'sons of God' are angels and the references make perfect sense! It might create other difficulties for the exegete; but not making scriptural sense is not one of them. Scripture expands and explains scripture, so there is no need for confusion or ignorance as to their references. The passages to be considered are: 2 Peter 2:4-10 (but especially note 4-6), Jude 4-9, 1 Peter 3:18-21, and 1 Corinthians 11:10 (but read 2-16 if you want the context).

Second Peter and Jude

The two most significant references are in Second Peter and Jude. Let us look at both of these passages and then consider

them in their relevant detail:

'For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked... then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority.' (2 Peter 2:4-10, emphasis added).

Jude is covering the same basic ground as Peter. They both wanted to encourage faithfulness in the face of the strongly pervasive wickedness extant in society, and being taught by some in the church, because the Lord can preserve the righteous and will punish the wicked. Those they were opposing wanted to live lustfully by flying in the face of godly authority. Jude writes:

'...certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day — just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire. Yet

in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.' (Jude 4-9, emphasis added).

Plucking out examples from the Old Testament of people who had resisted temptation to defy authority and indulge in lustful passions, both Peter and Jude turn to the earlier scriptures for their examples. Jude goes to the Exodus, then to angels and on to Sodom and Gomorrah. Peter, however, puts his examples into an historical batting order: angels, Noah and the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah. It is right to ask the question: 'Which early Old Testament incident is being referred to when they both mention angels?' And with Peter placing the reference to something which occurred before the Flood, we only have the first six chapters of Genesis from which to choose. If Genesis 6:1-4 is not this reference, nothing at all in scripture alludes to it. If this is the case, one is left to wonder just why both of them used an unreferenced incident as an example with which to encourage, and indeed admonish, our First Century brethren. This defies common sense. The answer has to be that the reference is to angels in Genesis 6.

Jewish understanding of this incident

The Book of Enoch is not scripture and not therefore authoritative, nevertheless it was known to the Jews of the First Century. Furthermore Jude actually quoted from it in his Letter (verse 14 and possibly verse 9). Some commentators are not certain that this Book was extant in Jude's day but definitely say that he was referring to a well-known oral tradition. Either way, by including references to this tradition, both Jude and Peter were pointing their readers to what was popularly believed about these 'sons of God'. If the tradition was flawed, they should have said so in order to prevent confusion, or simply not use the examples of the angels to make their point. That they chose to use it seems to me to be indicative of approval of the basic truth behind the story, and that they used it as an example of God doing the same thing in the spirit world as in the human one. He is Lord of both.

So what does it say? Below is an extract from Enoch quoted in *Legends of Old Testament Characters from the Talmud and other sources* by Sabine Baring-Gould (he who penned 'Onward Christian Soldiers'), Volume 1, page 96:

'Hear and fear not, Enoch, thou righteous man, and writer of righteousness, come hither and hear my words: Go speak unto the Watchers of Heaven, and say unto them, Ye shall pray for men and not men for you. Why



Jacob's dream: angels in their proper place

have ye forsaken the high and holy and eternal heaven, and have joined yourselves to women, and polluted yourselves with the daughters of men, and have taken to you wives, and have become the fathers of a giant race? Ye, who were spiritual, holy, and enjoying eternal life, have corrupted yourselves with women, and have become parents of children with flesh and blood; lusting after the blood of men, ye have brought forth flesh and blood, like those who are mortal and perishable. Because men die, therefore did I give unto them wives, that they might have sons, and perpetuate their generation. But ye are spiritual and in the enjoyment of eternal life. Therefore I gave not to you wives, for heaven is the abode of the spirits...'

This then was the First Century understanding of the situation which appertained in Noah's day before the Flood and caused God to close down on the world He had made, preserving only one righteous family to continue the story.

The angels' proper place

We may have made out a good case for the 'sons of God' being angels but how do we deal with the statement by Jesus concerning no marriage in heaven because we will be like the angels? Jude, I believe, provides us with this answer and the quotation from the legends helps our understanding at this point too. In verse 6 he writes of *'the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left*

their proper dwelling'. Jesus was referencing angels who kept their position of authority and remained in their proper dwelling place. In other words, they were those who did as they were told, did not rebel against God in any way but only did His bidding in the ways He told them to, and remained in heaven unless given a specific earthly task to perform by God.

The angels we are talking about defied God's authority and left their proper dwelling place because they lusted after earthly women. Angels are created beings with free will. In order for them to remain faithful and loyal to God, boundaries had to be set and had to be kept for their obedience to be recognized. We have no idea just what kind of obedience God asks His angels to give Him via the exercise of their free will, but forbidding them to come down to Earth and join in with mortal human beings, as, or almost as, human beings themselves was obviously one of them. They were not to do it. That does not mean that they could not do it if they so desired. That spiritual beings could somehow join with fleshly beings is not putting any strain on the scriptures, after all Jesus Himself not only did so, He also went a stage further and actually became fully human, something angels cannot do. But this does not mean that they couldn't come close and join with humans in an unholy, lustful union. The major difference between this and Jesus, apart from its sinful nature acting in disobedience to God's will, is that Jesus became 'obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross' (Phil. 2:8). They could not die for they were not mortal even though they were able to adopt fleshly bodies and satisfy their lust.

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God's response

So what did God do? These corrupt and disobedient angels could not die, consequently, if unchecked, they could continue in their sin and continuously corrupt the Earth. God was not going to allow this to happen. He decided to prepare to destroy the Earth and its now amazingly wicked people, who were far more corrupt because of what these angels did than people are today, and save a handful of uncorrupted people. The angels' children would die in the Flood but the angels themselves had to be dealt with and prevented from ever repeating this great wickedness. So, as both Jude and Peter tell us, God locked them up in hell, in eternal chains of gloomy darkness awaiting Judgement Day. The Greek word for 'hell' here is *Tartarus*, as every footnote in the Bible will tell us. It is only used this once in the New Testament, in 2 Peter 2:4, and it seems that it is part of the Hadean world where the departed wicked go before Judgement Day. It is called 'torment' by Jesus in Luke 16:23

and these evil angelic spirits were put there and actually locked away, as if in prison, never more able to reach the Earth and corrupt it. They had laid down a challenge to God's authority, which almost succeeded in Noah's day, and this gives us a clue as to just how powerful these forces were. Noah was truly a remarkable man of faith.

1 Peter 3 and 1 Corinthians 11

Though they were locked away in their gloomy prison of *Tartarus*, they still had hope that evil would win and they could be released. Satan himself had not joined them in this particular sin and he, and his other angels who had not joined in either, were out there doing their worst. Just as they nearly succeeded before the Flood, so they thought they had finally triumphed as they saw Jesus nailed up on the Cross at Calvary. The Son of God Himself had gone the way of all flesh, and in a delightfully horrible way. Satan must have been gleeful and his minions in 'prison' were expecting release.

Jesus died and entered into the Hadean realm but not to capitulate. He went, as 1 Peter tells us, *'and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark'* (1 Peter 3:19-20, RSV). The ESV uses the word 'proclaimed' rather than 'preached', so what did He preach and proclaim during His sojourn in Hades between His death and resurrection? Well, He made a special point of telling those spirits in prison, who had been kept in eternal chains in the gloom, that their fate was finally sealed. Evil had not triumphed but rather what they thought was their key to freedom, namely His death, was in fact the culmination of God's eternal plan to save the world and judge wickedness for ever.

Some people teach that He went and offered salvation to those who disbelieved before the Flood, giving them a second chance. This is nonsense. *'It is appointed for man to die once and after that comes judgement'* (Heb.9:27). There is no second chance at all. No, He did not go to the *souls* in prison but to the *spirits* in prison. The spirits who were in prison since Noah's time were

the disobedient angels whom God had locked away. Dante has the gateway to hell decked out in the words 'Abandon hope all ye who enter here'. Jesus proclaimed the absolute abandonment of any sort of hope for these wicked angels. They had failed, and now they knew it was true and would be eternally true. This is an amazing truth for us to recognize as we struggle to overcome evil. Jesus has triumphed over evil and He took this message right into the depths of the Hadean world and told those, who were spirit beings but sold out because of lustful disobedience, that they had lost.

That angels are capable of lusting after women who present themselves in an unseemly manner and not as being under godly authority as the Lord wants, is picked out by Paul in an enigmatic reference to rebellious attitudes amongst women in Corinth, who had misunder-

vested in her man, be he husband or father. If women are seen to be not under authority, presumably because of disobedience, this could tempt angels as it did in Noah's day. That angels now are probably not going to rebel does not mean that we should not worry about presenting them with temptation. Whether wearing some sort of head-covering today performs this function, or not, is not part of my remit on Genesis. It's a big topic and needs expert, in-depth analysis. The enigmatic reference to angels in 1 Corinthians 11:10, in my opinion, only takes on meaningful significance in the light of what happened in Genesis 6:1-4.

Conclusion

That this article is somewhat controversial is not denied. This in no way makes it worthless, on the contrary, if it has given rise to stimulating thoughts and extra study it will have done its job, no matter what you conclude. I have presented the case as strongly as I am able but I don't see it as a salvation issue. We can disagree in love but need not be disagreeable.

If all we had to consider was the narrative in Genesis, I would still think that 'the sons of God' were angels but would not feel myself to be on overly solid ground. It is the New Testament references which are the clinching factors for me, for, if they do not refer to this incident, the writers have left us high and dry without any cross-reference to consider at all. They will have meant something to the original recipients of the Letters but are now completely lost to us. I do not find that a compelling

understanding of the situation, especially when there is a perfectly good reference to go on in Genesis.

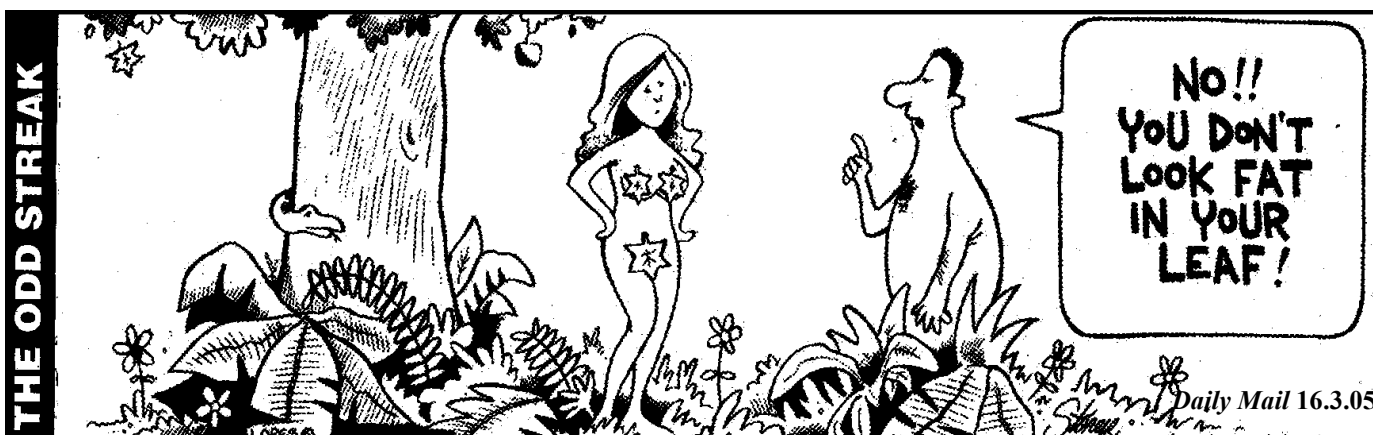
My conclusion may well open up all sorts of subsidiary questions but I am convinced that the scenario I have painted above is true to scripture and is internally consistent with the texts we have been left by the Holy Spirit.

I rest my case. For me, the 'sons of God' in Genesis 6:1-4 are angels.



Modest Middle-Eastern Female Dress

stood the concept of freedom in Christ to mean they were not under any authority. Paul focused on head-covering in the assembly. Women were to show that they did not reject (Jude) or despise (Peter) authority, as did the people and angels of old. Just as Christ willingly placed Himself under the Father's authority, and Christians are under Christ's authority, so godly women must be seen to be in a loving, willing relationship where the headship of the home is in-



How Old Is The Earth?

The problems over dating the age of the Earth by radiometric methods were outlined in *Genesis Accepted* issue Number 5. Scientists are generally well aware of them yet most persist in using these techniques and rely on their findings for their data. The Book of Hebrews defines faith as 'the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen' (Heb. 11:1). The old ages thrown up by the atomic clocks are what they hope for so few bother to examine the other evidence, which might cast doubts on their findings because, if the Earth is found to be young, the hypothesis that there might be a God who created everything would have to be entertained as a distinct possibility. There is ample evidence, from different scientific disciplines, that a biblical age of between 6-10,000 years is much more accurate.¹

Short-Period Comets

Comets have always interested mankind and have been viewed as the harbingers of misfortune and doom in some instances. They certainly do signal something significant scientifically about the Solar System and its age.

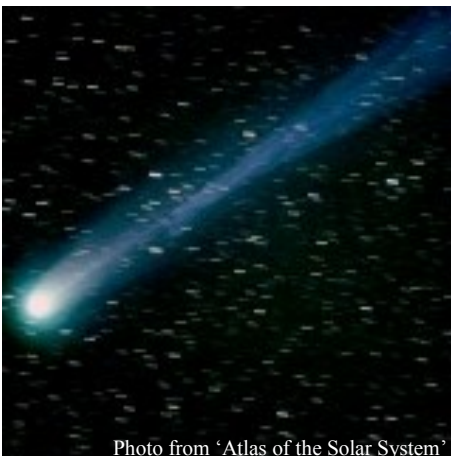


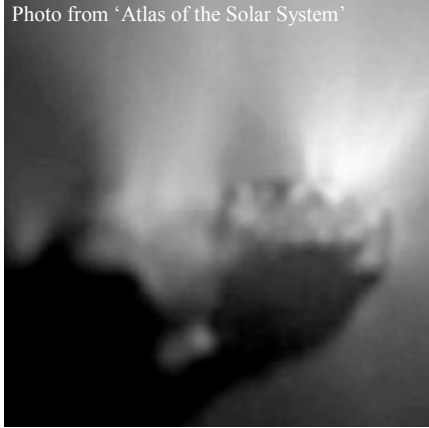
Photo from 'Atlas of the Solar System'

Hyakutcke's Comet (1996)

Thought to be a long-period comet with a 14,000 year period.

Comets follow highly elliptical orbits and return after a given number of years—Halley's Comet, for example, has a period of approximately 76 years. Those which return under 150 years are called short-period comets, in contrast to long-period comets whose orbits are supposed to extend up to a million

Photo from 'Atlas of the Solar System'



Head of Halley's Comet

years! The head of the comet is about 80 miles (100km) across and is basically a giant, sludgy snowball of ice and dust. The tail of a comet, which becomes visible as it approaches the Sun due to particles reflecting sunlight, is the result of particles being blown off the head by high-energy emissions from the Sun—hence it always points away from the Sun. Thus, as it orbits around, it is losing material and disintegrating.

Scientists believe that these comets are an integral part of the Solar System, orbiting the Sun as part of one system with the planets. They can calculate their rate of decay and are forced to conclude that short-period comets cannot survive more than 10,000 years at the most. This would suggest that the planets too must be no older than 10,000 years; however this is philosophically unacceptable to evolutionary astronomers. Some, therefore, suggest that these short-period comets (which, of course, are also short-lived) are supplied to the Solar System. The most acceptable supply source is one proposed by the Dutch astronomer, Jan H. Oort. He proposed that there is a vast cloud, or shell, containing 200 thousand million comets, lying between 30,000 to 100,000 times further from the Sun than is the Earth, and, ever so conveniently, lying just beyond the limits of visible detection. Nobody can see it, or in any way prove that it is there, but 'faith' accepts it as fact. Every now and again a perturbation from, say, a passing star will disrupt the cloud flinging some fresh comets into the Solar System to replace the dying and dead ones. Thus the supply is maintained and the problem of having to admit to a young age for the Earth is solved!

The Earth's Magnetic Field

It was Gauss who first measured the Earth's magnetic field in 1835. Based on figures taken from then until 1965, its half-life has been calculated to be 1,400 years. This means that in 600AD the Earth's

magnetism was twice as strong as it is today and four times as strong in 800BC. Going back as far as 10,000 years it would have had the magnetic strength of a magnetic star, and at 20,000 years ago the heat generated would have turned it into a liquid. By a million years ago, at these rates using the Uniformitarian principles loved by evolutionary scientists, the magnetic field would be greater than the magnetism of all objects in the universe and the Earth would vaporize.² Either the principle of 'the present is the key to the past' - which underpins such calculations - is wrong, or the Earth is significantly younger than 10,000 years old.

The Population Numbers' Game

It is when we come to look at population statistics and the rates of growth among humans, we can readily realize how problematical the notion of mankind having been on Earth for any more than a biblical time scale becomes evident. (By a biblical time scale, in this instance, we mean post-Flood, because the Bible tells us that the antediluvian population was destroyed leaving only eight survivors of which six only were in three breeding pairs.) Let's do some calculations.

If a generation is 35 years, and each family has only three children (there has to be more than two or we would have zero population growth), and everyone, on the average, lives to the ripe old age of 35, how many people would be on Earth after 52 generations (1820 years)? The answer is 4.34 billion. Evolutionary theory tells us that hominoids have been around for at least five million years but let's be kind and reduce that to only one million - what do the figures show? This would be the equivalent of 28,600 generations. The answer just isn't big, it's absolutely mind-blowing: 10^{5000} . That's a number 1 with 5000 noughts after it. That's only 10^{4000} times greater than the number of people who could fit into the entire known universe! Even allowing for wars, plague, childless couples and the unmarried lowering the statistics, nothing can accommodate figures like that.³

Whitcomb and Morris (*The Genesis Flood*, pages 396-398) have applied similar thinking to the figures we should see today going back to the time Noah had his first son. Applying the population statistics which were triggered off by the famous studies of Malthus, it has been calculated that the population has doubled over historical times about every 175 years. (It is admittedly difficult to arrive at a precise figure because statistics are not very reliable in many areas of the world even today.) This would allow for 30 doublings and would take us back to about 3,300BC—very close indeed to a biblical dating of the Flood—when things be-

gan again with one couple (Noah and his wife). Going back much further, the population figures soon make nonsense of the notion that human beings have been around for more than several thousands of years, let alone millions.

The Rotation of the Earth

The Earth is an oblate spheroid; it bulges at the Equator and is flattened at the Poles. This bulging is caused by its speed of rotation, which scientists have noted is slowing down. The principle cause of the slowing down is the tidal pull of both the Sun and the Moon on it. Extrapolating backwards in time, on Uniformitarian principles again, the spin would increase and billions of years ago it would have looked like a flat pancake. The land masses would have been flung to the edges, on the Equator, and pulled out to a height of 40 miles. The oceans would have been congregated at the Poles. The land masses are not distributed thus so we have to conclude that the Earth cannot be billions of years old.

Atmospheric Helium

Radioactive elements, such as uranium and thorium, are continually decaying to form helium—this is the principle of the radiometric dating process. If this decay had been going on for billions of years, the atmosphere should contain much more than its current 1.4 parts per million of helium. At the measured rate of helium formation based on today's values, the Earth can only be about 10,000 years old.

The presence of a universe consisting almost entirely of hydrogen betokens a young age for that too. Hydrogen is being converted into helium throughout the universe but it cannot be produced, in any

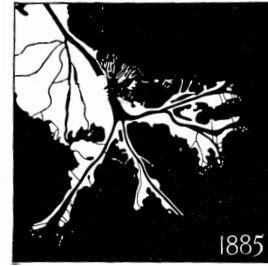
meaningful quantity, by the conversion of other elements. If the universe were extremely old, there should be little or no hydrogen left. In 1960, Fred Hoyle, a professor of astronomy, said, 'How comes it then that the universe consists almost entirely of hydrogen? If matter was infinitely old, this would be quite impossible. So we see that the universe being what it is, the creation issue simply cannot be dodged.' (F. Hoyle, *The Nature of the Universe*, Harper, 1960).

Sedimentation

The continents are covered in sedimentary rocks, i.e. rocks laid down by water. There is very little sedimentation going on today in the oceanic deeps. The most active areas are in deltas and estuaries of the major rivers of the world.

Assuming sedimentation rates to be slow, geologists give estimates of the length of time it takes for strata to be laid down. Canyons, like the Grand Canyon, are thought to have developed over hundreds of millions of years, yet in 1980 there occurred a cataclysmic event which shattered this notion. Mount St Helens, in Washington State, USA, exploded after being dormant for 123 years. Layers of rock up to 600ft were laid down in a matter of months and a canyon, half-a-mile long and 140ft deep, was carved out in soft sediments on 19th March after a natural dam failure. The scouring effect here eroded through older, solid rock to depths of tens of feet.⁴

It was Mark Twain who noted that the Mississippi should have long since filled up the Gulf of Mexico if it were millions of years old. He was right. Sedimentation



Growth of the Mississippi delta over 50 years. What would it be like over a million?



rates of about 300 million cubic yards dumped each year would have achieved that. As it is, by measuring the rate of growth of the delta, it can only be about 4,000-years-old.

Conclusion

There are other evidences for the conclusion that the Earth is young. R.L. Wysong lists 33 in his book, *The Creation-Evolution Controversy*.

The issue is far from clear despite the confident declarations of the media. Since nobody was there when the world was created, all we can do is weigh up the evidence. If you don't know the other side of any argument, you might not be able to make an accurate assessment. On this issue evolutionary scientists are biased: so are creation scientists. It is not a case of biased versus unbiased but rather whose bias best fits the evidence.

The Ace in the Hole!

Those who believe in an old Earth have one ace, and what an ace it is: light from distant stars. How can it be sustained that the Earth—and indeed the whole universe—is young when we are seeing stars whose light has taken billions of years to reach us?

We will be considering this in our next study of Creation Matters in *Genesis Accepted* Number 7.

¹ White, Dr A.J.Monty, *How Old Is The Earth?*, Evangelical Press, 1985, ISBN 0 85234 198 9.

² Wysong, R.L., *The Creation-Evolution Controversy*, Inquiry Press, 4925 Jefferson Avenue, Midland, Michigan 48650, USA. 1976. ISBN 0-918112-02-8, page 161.

³ *Ibid*, page 169.

⁴ Austin, Steven A., *Grand Canyon—Monument to Catastrophe*, Institute for Creation Research, 109946 Woodside Avenue North, Santee, California 92071, USA. 1994. ISBN 0-932766-33-1.



Fan delta of the East and West Lyn rivers at Lynton and Lynmouth (N. Devon)

Marvellous Mars

Scientists are forever discovering new and wonderful things about Creation. Sometimes they interpret them accurately, as far as the Bible is concerned. That is when they simply describe what they have found without adding an evolutionary gloss to it. At other times they misinterpret them because of how they are pre-programmed to think.

Take this beautiful photograph from Mars, printed in the *Daily Mail* 29.7.05, as an example. Accompanying it was the following report:

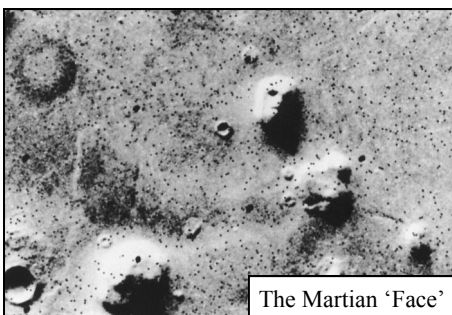
'A beautiful circle of pale blue, it looks like an exotic pool where travellers could take a dip. But don't even think about packing your swimming gear and heading there. For this is a patch of ice sitting on the floor of a crater near the north pole of Mars...

Scientists obtained definite proof of water on Mars more than 18 months ago and since then have produced pictures of varying quality. This is the most spectacular image to date. The impact crater is located on... a broad plain that covers much of the far northern Martian latitudes. It is 21.7 miles wide and has a maximum depth of about 1.2 miles. The circular patch of frozen water is present all year round. Faint traces of ice are also visible along the rim of the crater and the crater walls. A large dune field is thought to lie beneath the ice layer some of which is exposed at the edge of the bright patch.

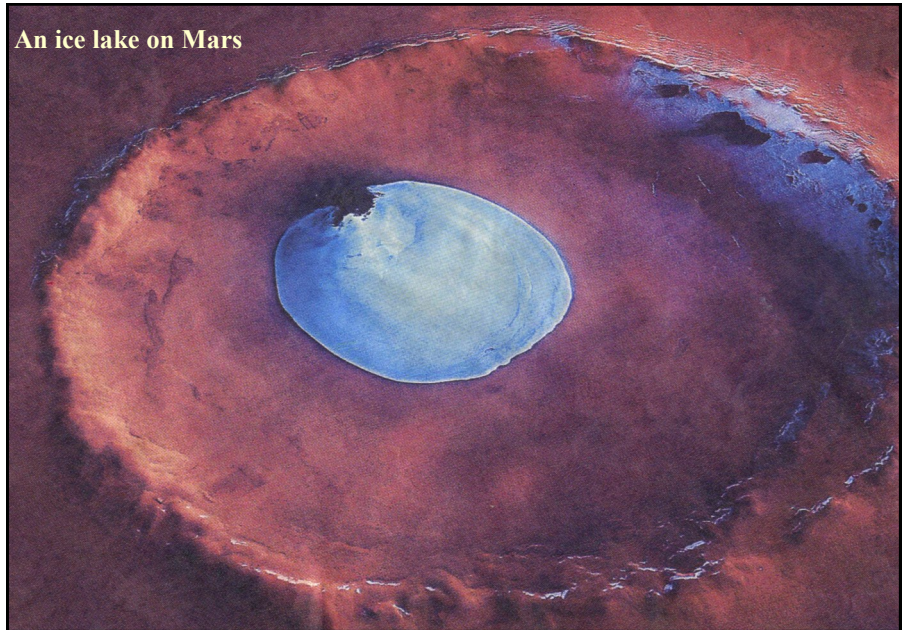
The existence of large bodies of water on Mars does not necessarily mean there was, or is, life there. But it makes it much more likely, although any such life is likely to be confined to primitive micro-organisms.'

Life on Mars

It's a good, straightforward report, giving the facts, in the main. Right at the end, however, there is the reflex sop to the concept that planetary exploration today is primarily concerned with the search for extra-terrestrial life. Mars has been thought to be a prime candidate for well over a century. Telescopes over 100 years ago seemed to show canals; the presence once of water on the surface was suspected for years and has now been proven, and the photograph of the



The Martian 'Face'



'face', seemingly carved on the surface like a prehistoric Mount Rushmore, seemed to confirm such views. Modern exploration and photography has confirmed that the 'face' is nothing more than a trick of the light on a rocky outcrop and seeing the face in it is similar to looking into coals on a fire, or at cloud formations, and 'seeing' images there.

Scientists always look for water when they look for life on other planets. Water is their necessary prerequisite for its existence since water presupposes oxygen in the atmosphere. More detailed exploration of the Martian surface now shows what seem almost certain to have been river beds at one time. There is no doubt that of all the planets Mars is the closest to the Earth in its characteristics. That actually doesn't make it similar at all; it merely makes it the best one for the title of 'our closest relative'. The reality is that Mars is an amazingly hostile environment with only superficial similarities to planet Earth.

Water on Mars

Now let us pick up on a few pointers which will serve us well in later editions of *Genesis Accepted*. We have already noted the presence of water, albeit in the form of ice. This is no surprise but the question is, 'How did it get there and how, and when, did the rivers once form?' Without going into any detail here, it is my belief that Mars too was inundated about 2,500 BC when the Earth was being destroyed in the Flood. Thus the ice we are looking at in the picture is essentially a remnant of the Flood. This was also when the Martian ground ran with rivers of water, now leaving dry river beds all but fossilized on the surface of the planet.

Martian craters

Our main photograph shows clearly that the Martian surface is cratered quite spectacularly. Like our Moon, and other 'terrestrial' planets (as opposed to the gas giants), its surface is pitted with craters, an indication that in the past it was bombarded, not just by the odd meteorite but absolutely showered by many - and they were not all small ones either. Once again we will be looking primarily to the Flood, and then down as late as 750 BC, for answers to this conundrum. Mars has not had a quiet life in the past even though it is relatively docile today.

That 'Life' question again

Finally we've already noted the obligatory reference to the possibilities of life existing there. We note that the cautious scientist talks about 'primitive' life, in this case 'primitive micro-organisms'. That sounds comfortable until you realise that there is no such thing as a 'primitive' life-form. All the so-called simple, or primitive, forms of life are very complex indeed.

It is highly unlikely that they will find anything resembling life on Mars, or any other planets for that matter, since there would be little point in God creating life on these planets. The assumption being made concerning life is, of course, that it evolved and that therefore the Earth is not special, as far as the existence of life is concerned, just that it is better developed than our neighbours in the Solar System. If the Earth is the unique creation of God, designed for His purpose regarding humankind, it would be most surprising to find any semblance of life anywhere else in the universe, let alone the Solar System. Yes, there will be claims made for its existence elsewhere but these will probably prove to be false.

The Lord's a microdot

Some people believe that the debate over Creation or Evolution is not important and can safely be left to a few egg-heads who are predisposed to have opinions on it. They are mistaken, badly mistaken. The debate reflects on how we think of God, man's position in the universe, Jesus as the Son of God, the inspiration of the Bible, and so on. It has serious implications for us all.

In the *Church Times* for 12th August 2005 an article appeared on the Comment page. It was written by Revd Dr Keith Ward who is Regus Professor of Divinity at the University of Oxford. He's supposed to be on our side, but what he wrote there is both serious and amazing yet perfectly logical if you believe in the Theory of Evolution. Read this and I doubt that, if you had a thought that this debate doesn't matter, you will still retain that thought.

See Jesus relegated to being merely a man. Christ and Jesus are not at all one and the same. He is not coming again. There is no Judgement to come at the end of time - and fairly soon at that. Note the acceptance that there are many, and diverse life-forms in the universe. See how we have to ignore passages which tell us that Jesus was the creator of the universe. It certainly is not held in His hand and sustained by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3). The great god 'Science' has replaced Jehovah and the Bible as the authority to be believed. Evolution undermines all biblical authority, treating it as an irrelevance across the distances of time and space.

The article reads:

'The theory of a long cosmic evolution, Pope John Paul II said, is no longer a mere speculation. It is a well-established scientific theory. It could be mistaken, but those who think it is are in a small minority on the fringes of professional science. Most Christians will have no hesitation in following the advice of leading cosmologists and biologists, and accepting the theory.'

'But what will that do to ancient Christian beliefs? It will certainly put them in a new context. The first Christians thought the universe as so small that the Earth was the centre of it, and that the whole universe would come to a end within their lifetimes. They thought that they were living in the "last days".'

'Now we know that Earth is a planet circling a small star among 100,000 million stars in our galaxy, which is itself one among 100,000 million other galaxies. We are not at the centre of things. The universe has existed for about 14,000 million years, and it will exist for billions of years in the future. It is not about to come to an end.'

'If we talk about an incarnation of God in Jesus, we are not talking about a culminating event at the end of time. We are talking about an event fairly early in the history of the universe, on one tiny planet, among a group of primates that has existed as *Homo sapiens* for between five and ten million years, and has evolved from single-celled organisms that existed on Earth about



The Ancient of Days (William Blake)

four million years ago.

'This means we must rethink much of our imagery of creation, of heaven, and the coming of Christ in glory at the end of time. The creation is a billion-year development from the primal simplicity of the Big Bang, through the formation of atoms and complex molecules, to replicating organisms, the development of nervous systems and brains, and the onset of intelligent consciousnesses, perhaps of many different forms throughout the universe. There could be millions of years of evolution still to come, and perhaps God's plans for intelligent life have hardly begun.'

'Heaven, life in the knowledge and love of God, is a possibility for all intelligent conscious beings. If "everything on heaven and earth" is to be united in Christ (Eph. 1:10), that Christ must be infinitely greater than

the human Jesus. Christ must be, as John's Gospel saw, the eternal Logos of God.

'Yet Christ's finite forms may be many and diverse. We can say Christ is truly embodied in the human Jesus, that Jesus is God for us. But we must add that the eternal Word may take forms we cannot imagine, and that humans may play a relatively small part among the richness of created lives that will share the life of God in heaven.'

'Belief that Christ will appear in judgement becomes a symbol of hope that the whole cosmos will culminate, after aeons of time, not in a whimper of cold emptiness, but in the ultimate destruction of evil, and the incorporation of all the good that has ever been into the unending life of the God who was truly seen on Earth in Jesus.'

'This calls for an expansion of Christian vision. It is most unlikely that a human Mary and Jesus will be at the apex of heavenly existence, as they are in most pictures of heaven. They are most likely to be human representatives of a wide diversity of intelligent life-forms. Our iconography of heaven must change.'

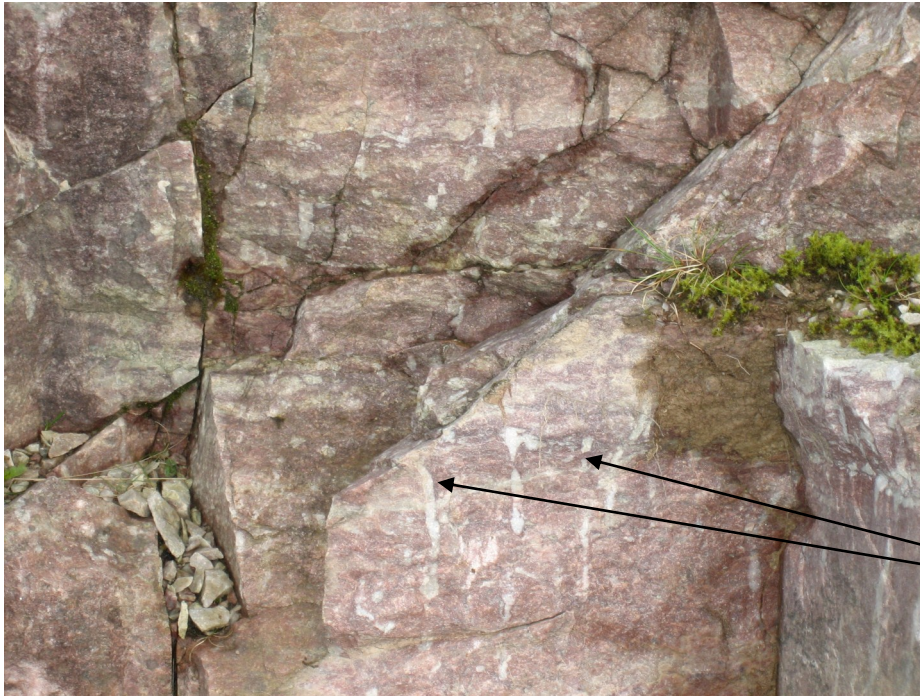
'The cosmic purpose of God is unlikely to be centred on human beings. It may well be concerned with the flourishing of many forms of sentient life, and humans may be just a passing stage, even in the evolution of life on Earth. The human Jesus will then not be the consummation of creation, though he could be an ideal exemplar of a truly human life in relation to God.'

'The Christian fundamentals can still stand firm. God is a creator of unlimited love and compassion. The destiny of humans, as of all intelligent creatures, is to be liberated from self and to share in the divine nature. Jesus is the one who reveals in human history God's purpose of unitive love, and whose life founds a new society, the Church, in which God's Spirit lives and acts. Jesus is the human incarnation of the divine Word and Wisdom, and the one who unites human nature to the divine.'

'The new scientific cosmology places these fundamentals in a much more expansive and awe-inspiring context. To see things in such a perspective makes some of our present-day concerns seem very parochial.'

'If our Church could truly grasp and communicate this vision, instead of arguing about the sex of some of its paid leaders, it might begin to earn some intellectual respect and convey spiritual wisdom, instead of disputing about things that matter little when placed in the context of our million-year cosmic journey into God.'

EVIDENCES - Worm Burrows



Pipe Rock at Skiag Bridge, Assynt, Sutherland, NW Highlands. (September 2005)

These are worm burrows, said to be in Cambrian quartzites. According to conventional geological dating this would make them some 545,000,000 years old, and therefore amongst the oldest animal remains in the world.

Worm burrows

I discovered the Assynt District of Sutherland, Northwest Scotland, in the mid 1970s, and I've been back many times since. Indeed it is my favourite holiday location of all time despite the fact that last year (Sept/Oct 2005) we had almost wall-to-wall rain. The scenery is breathtaking in its grandeur and there is so much for the discerning mind to absorb.

It is a geologists' paradise, which is an important part of its charm for me. Here can be seen rocks which geologists tell us are amongst the oldest in the world. They call them Pre-Cambrian and date them as being in the thousands of millions of years old (billions, the Americans would say). I remember seeing them for the first time with a friend who shared my interests, and when we both believed in the dates we were given (I haven't asked him but I think he probably still does). We were awestruck that we were standing on foundational rocks and we said that they look and feel old. Of course they looked and felt old because we had been told that they were old! At that time I had no evidence with which to counter such a claim. The thought never crossed my mind that 'it ain't necessarily so'.

The need to re-interpret the geology

As I switched to being a Young-Earth Creationist it became necessary to try to find a means of interpreting the geology on view within a 6,000-year framework, and this is an on-going process. It's not necessarily easy because it is a complex area, geologically speaking. But once your mind is open to the possibility that these massive ages might not be correct, you can look again at the evidences in a new light, and indeed you have to do

so or you have no credible alternative explanation to give.

The Geological Park

Go to the Northwest Highlands today and you will find that last year the whole area from Mull to Cape Wrath has been placed into a brand new Geological Park. Now all sorts of evolutionary information is thrust at visitors to help them navigate through its mysteries, including books, pamphlets, information boards, etc. We will be considering some of these evidences as we proceed with future editions of *Genesis Accepted*. For now, let us look at the worm burrows in the rocks at Skiag Bridge, Loch Assynt.

The Pipe Rock at Skiag Bridge

The picture shows what the geologists call 'Pipe Rock'. The narrow, lighter coloured, vertical markings are said to have been made by worms burrowing in the sands from which the rocks were originally made. The booklet covering this phenomenon, called *Northwest Highlands - a landscape fashioned by geology* (published by Scottish Natural Heritage 2001), has this to say about it (page 14):

'About 545 million years ago... Northwest Scotland lay at the edge of the Laurentian continent. It formed part of a wide, stable, low-lying area, gradually eroded down to a near horizontal surface over the previous 250 million years. The earliest deposits from this Cambrian age, were clean, quartz-rich sands, laid down by vigorous tidal currents in tropical, shallow seas and intertidal zones. The upper part of the resulting sand deposit was

colonised by marine worms and impressions of their burrows are very abundant, giving it the name 'Pipe Rock'. The sands were subsequently altered to quartzite... The rocks are called the Fucoïd Beds as they were initially thought to contain seaweed (fucoïds). They are now known to be worm trails, formed as these animals buried through the soft sediment.'

Analysing the standard explanation

Now, geologists require such things to have occurred slowly over millions of years. The sandstones in which the burrows are found were supposedly laid down over the latter part of 250 million years. The worms burrowed into the soft sands in shallow, tropical seas and intertidal zones. In other words water worked them over every day, as it does on our beaches with every tide. As they burrowed into these soft sands, somehow the worms managed to leave their trails intact, not just for a day but for millions of years, as the sands built up slowly and the burrows were filled up with a purer form of quartz, giving them their distinctive colouration in the subsequently formed rocks. Then the quartz-rich cement hardened the sands into rock and preserved the worm burrows.

Does the present explain the past here?

Does this square with what we can see happening today? Go on to any beach at low tide and put a trail across the damp sands. What happens? Well we all know that the incoming tide obliterates the trail immediately, as it does the tracks of any burrowing creature. Once the tide has come in and gone out, so all traces disappear virtually instantaneously. Even if they survived a tide or two

they could not survive even a week let alone a thousand, or a million years.

The main axiom of the geologist is: 'The present is the key to the past.' This unquestioned law is drummed into all would-be geologists and they are forced to interpret the landscape through its framework. These pipe rocks at Skiag could never have formed in a shallow sea or intertidal zone under conditions we can observe today. Such burrows could only have been preserved by swift action during a catastrophe such as a flood of

significant proportions, one which had repeated surges or pulses bringing down sands on top of the burrows.

Swift catastrophe fits the evidence best

Now note that the official explanation declared that these sands were 'laid down by vigorous tidal currents'; to which we say 'Amen'. Slow processes acting over long periods of time could never produce these pipes. They are clear evidence for swift burial in a matter of hours, or at most days, not millennia.

Once we recognize the truth of this, we realize that we are not looking at a landscape fashioned slowly but rather one created almost in the blinking of an eyelid. Only a flood can do this, and the only flood which we know about which could have done it occurred around 4,500 years ago in Noah's time.

The Pipe Rock at Skiag Bridge is actually evidence for the Flood!

Cap t i o n



Daily Mail 20.1.05

In *Genesis Accepted* Number 4, we printed the above picture and invited captions, vaguely on a Creation theme, from you. Several had a stab at it and below are the results:

"I'm the King of the Jungle..." (via Rudyard Kipling) - from Derek Daniell (Tunbridge Wells); no doubt that the elephant is seated on his throne.

"Cute puppy dog? No, I don't remember seeing a puppy anywhere." - from Steve Whitehead (Aylesbury, Elmhurst); the absence of toilet paper and how it so came to be, was a theme picked up on by others.

Indeed Maggie Campbell (Stirling) was even more explicit on that idea: "Hey, Noah, whose idea was it to bring those Labrador pups? They've run away with the toilet roll again!"

And another Scot, Harry McGinn (New Cumnock), broke into dialect striking a similar note: "Hey, Ham, whit did yi' dae wi' the ither Bog roll?"

All four receive a box of chocolates for their efforts. I'm not picking a winner!

R e s u l t s

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



Front illustration: A comet streaks across the sky