

GENESIS ACCEPTED



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Other Sons and Daughters

It was the end of April last year when Barbara and I attended a conference on Creation at Swanwick in Derbyshire. On the Sunday morning we joined two other brothers and went to Nottingham to Break Bread. It was there that I realised that I had truly arrived and found my niche both in life and in the church. I was busy saying 'Hello' to folks I knew when a voice behind me said, 'Oh, it's Arthur's dad.' Bingo! From henceforth my claim to fame and greatness is to be as the dad of the famous Arthur. What a fate. What a wasted life I've led, though I am indeed very proud to be the dad of such an exalted one!



The 'famous' Arthur

There are plenty of people who go through life being known as the wife, or husband, or son, or daughter, of somebody famous, and sometimes simply as their father or mother too. It's almost as if they have no identity of their own. I'm sure in our essentially patriarchal communion in churches of Christ that many an evangelist's wife has found herself being known as so-and-so's wife rather than being known by her own name, unless, of course, she has become a noted speaker at Ladies' Days, thereby acquiring status in her own right.

A son or daughter of Adam and Eve

So try to imagine, for a moment, what it must have been like not to be Adam or Eve but rather to be one of their sons or daughters. Indeed, as you try to imagine this, you begin to realise just what a strange situation that very first family must have been in, and in some ways it's not totally surprising that it became somewhat dysfunctional, as we would say today. I say that it 'became dysfunctional' because after only 10 generations God decided that He'd had enough of the lot of them; they were so evil, that He decided He could only continue with one man, Noah, who alone was righteous. That's one out of a possible 1,000,000,000 still alive when the Flood came. There is evidence to suggest that Noah wasn't married¹, and definite proof that he had no children, when God took that decision to save the world through him. The original family had expanded hugely and rapidly but then been more-or-less reduced to one righteous man, plus a few other righteous ones who were to die before the Flood came, after only 10 generations. And even his righteousness did not prevent things go-

ing wrong again very soon after the Flood was over (Gen. 9:20-27). The genealogy of Ham in Genesis 10 reads like a catalogue of men and nations who were to oppose and defy God throughout the historical record of the Old Testament.

Anonymous daughters

Fancy being a child of Adam and Eve. What on earth must it have been like? Apart from a few references to the two oldest boys and a replacement son: Cain, Abel and Seth, the others are known of simply from one verse: '*...and he [Adam] had other sons and daughters*', (5:4). I mean, you are one of the very first children ever to be born, and one definitely was *the* first daughter ever to be born, and you're only remembered as nothing more special than 'other sons and daughters.' She is not named in scripture. Of the three original children who are named, the oldest was a rotter, the second was righteous but was murdered, and the third was only conceived as a replacement for the murdered second son. One of the daughters was destined to be the world's first married woman! Since Adam and Eve were the only ones, they hardly needed to get married and make vows of love and loyalty to each other and promise to cleave only unto each other till death do them part, and even if they did, who was there to witness it? That first married woman, however, had to marry her brother and that made this marriage strange though not, of course, unique. If Cain was the first to get married and actually *take* a wife – as opposed to having one specially made for him – they were the first people to experience being single, growing up and then moving into the bonding situation of two becoming one flesh.

Life as a child of Adam and Eve

But let's go back to the children of Adam and Eve as they were being born and growing up. Nobody had ever been a child before. Nobody knew what it was like to be helpless and dependent on parents for everything. Nobody knew anything at all about the learning process: crawling, toddling, beginning to speak, starting to run, growing stronger, experiencing puberty with its strange effects on the hormones and the body. They were the very first. They had nobody to ask what it was like. Eve could not tell her daughters how she felt and dealt with menarche or how she coped with crushes and flirtations. She didn't have any. All she could truthfully say was, "Your father was the only man ever in the world for me." And it was true - he was! Barbara and I could bore... I mean give you a fascinating account of how we felt that God brought us together and it was His will that we married, and you could believe us or not – depending on your point of view and beliefs as to whether God actually did this thing or we imagined

it – but Adam and Eve, of all the couples who ever came together, could truly say that without any equivocation.

However, be that as it may, let us think about their strange childhood for a moment. They had no friends, only brothers and sisters. They had no cousins or aunts or uncles, and definitely no doting grandparents to spoil them. Adam and Eve couldn't get a baby-sitter in while they went out for a meal together; they never went out for a meal together. They couldn't even look forward to packing the children off to school and getting a bit of peace and quiet with time for themselves. They couldn't send the children out to play with their pals or let them stay out for a sleep-over. If Adam had to go out and work to feed and support the family, Eve had to be the very first home-schooler. She also had to make all of their clothes and see to domestic things as well. Bear in mind too that she was probably pregnant or nursing for many years almost continuously. What a life. She couldn't spend too much quality time with each child because she had so many children she didn't know what to do - though I don't believe she ever lived in a shoe.

How did our first family cope?

So just how did they cope? The first thing we must remember is that Adam and Eve were made perfect and were given all of the knowledge they needed, unlearned, to deal with any situation. They simply knew what to do. Eve wouldn't have to learn to sew, or cook and Adam would know how to farm and gather provisions. We must also remember that the world they lived in was physically very different than ours. It was not very hostile, especially in its climate and weather. Temperatures were mild, water was plentiful though clouds, storms and rain were unknown until after the Flood. You remember that the rainbow was not seen until after the Flood and rainbows require stormy conditions in which to form. They were not fighting the elements in an attempt to survive, as most do in our day, so the physical aspects of living were easy for them.

The perfection of Adam and Eve meant that they had perfect genes to pass on to their children, who would be strong, vigorous and atrociously healthy. I doubt if they ever got sick so medical attention, apart from the odd cuts, bumps and bruises would not be needed. We can deduce some of this by the enormous life spans they enjoyed in those early days. Indeed, if you examine the longevity of these early people, you discover from the ages we are given, that the average age (if you exclude Enoch, who didn't die but was translated at the young age of 365!) was 912. After the Flood all sorts of changes occurred, especially to the climate, and people began to live progressively shorter lives, as all sorts of nasty things kicked in in full force.

Adam's children's names

These 'other sons and daughters' obviously had names, though we don't know what they were. If I were to ask you the question: 'Who was the second woman named in the Bible?', I'd doubt you could do it. As I prepared this article, I couldn't do it either, though I could tell you who she was; she was one of the wives of Lamech, one of Cain's descendants. On looking her up I discovered she was called Adah, who became the mother of Jabel, the herdsman, and Jubal, the musician. Lamech also had another wife - he was the first recorded polygamist - whose name was Zillah (oddly enough I remembered her name when I tried myself out) and that she was the mother of Tubal-cain, the original smith.

Though we don't know any of their names, when you look at the lists of names given in the very early genealogies of chapters 4 and 5 of Genesis, we find some names which are very similar to each other. There's an Enosh and an Enoch, indeed there are two Enochs: one in the godly line from Seth and the other in Cain's genealogy. There's a Methujael and a Methushael and, of course, a Methuselah. Finally there are two Lamechs, one on each side. We've just mentioned Jabel and Jubal and noted that Zillah bore Tubal-cain, so the lad was given his ancestor's name as part of his too. Tubal-cain had a sister called Naamah and I would speculate that some of the daughters of Adam and Eve had names very similar to those of Adah, Zillah and Naamah. Though the field was theirs to play with as they chose, as far as names were concerned, they were obviously naming their children after specific blessings or concepts and were therefore not being massively original with them. There was definitely no Arthur amongst them - nor any Graham either, for that matter.

What Adam's family was like

We have looked briefly at this very strange, dysfunctional family. When you don't have friends to play with, and only your sisters and brothers to marry, when the only older generation consists of two people, your parents, and they have to be your world

completely as you grow up, it's no wonder there were tensions within its structure and maybe not so surprising that these tensions blew up into jealousy and murder before the world got too far along its course. That all was far from sweetness and light amongst these children can readily be seen by Cain's reaction to God's punishment on him for the murder; he was worried that somebody would find him and kill him. Obviously such a 'somebody' would have to be another of his brothers, or possibly one of their children, a nephew no less, so we can note that Cain had little faith in the overall niceness of his kith and kin. Mind you, he knew they had a pretty low opinion of him too. So God put a mark on him to prevent it from happening and enforced it with a curse on anybody who took revenge on Cain. Apparently nobody did, so it worked.

God's rôle in these early days

In amongst all of this, however, there is one factor we must not overlook as this unique family made its way in the world, the presence of God Himself in their lives. If we have no concept that at times the Lord took on human form and joined in with His creation at many stages in the Old Testament, not just in Genesis, we lose sight of one crucial element in the help given to Adam and Eve to live their lives and raise their family. Adam and Eve used to meet Him in the Garden before they sinned. They were not meeting a wind, or hearing a whisper from on high, they were meeting a divine Being which looked like them, just as Abraham did when he met three men, as he thought they were initially, and bargained with the Lord over Sodom. The other two were actually angels and they went on to Sodom to rescue Lot but the 'Man' who stayed with Abraham was none other than the Lord Himself.

Look at the two saddest events from these early chapters: the Fall and Abel's murder. Adam and Eve thought they could hide both their shame and themselves from the Lord. You can't hide from a wind or a voice but you can from a man. Cain thought he could bury Abel and the Lord

would not notice. Why did he think this? Because he was not meeting a wind or a voice but somebody he thought was a man with whom he talked. I believe that the Lord appeared frequently in human form to encourage, guide and help this original family and reduce their sense of isolation, not just on odd occasions, as He does later on in the story told in the Bible. This would have been absolutely necessary in these strange early days of the world and its human occupation.

Conclusions

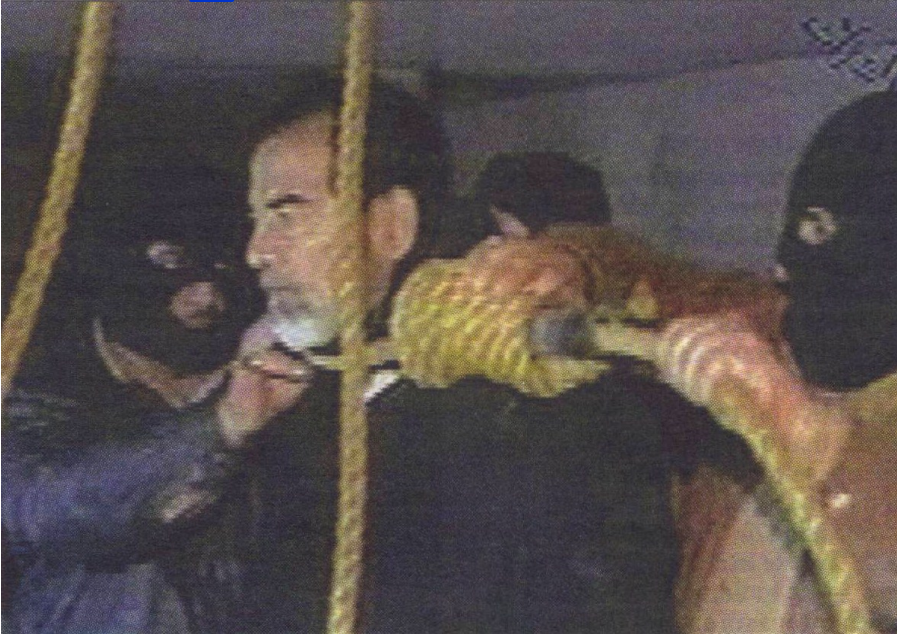
We don't get many details about these fascinating times, just a few headlines and clues. We have to remember that these children had to grow up, be taught all sorts of things, interact with each other in such an intense way which nobody has ever had to do since, except for Noah and his family after the Flood - but they had had years of experience of life and living to build on; Adam's children had absolutely nothing. Maybe it would have been a wonder if they'd got through unscathed as a family after the Fall - they would have done had the Fall not have occurred of course. As we said earlier, for them the physical side of living was probably very easy in comparison with us today but the emotional and psychological aspects of life would have been severely difficult.

It's my belief that, if we want to understand the people of the Bible better, we always need to try to see real people living in real situations in any part we study, including these early chapters. It may not be too difficult to do this by the time Jesus became incarnate and came to Earth fully as a man, complete with human mortality as well. However, to see the people of the early chapters of Genesis as real people, and try to empathize and sympathize with them, is sometimes quite hard, especially when all we read about them is that they were noted simply as being 'other sons and daughters'.

¹ For a full discussion of this see *Genesis Accepted* Number 5, 'Noah's Wife'.



Capital Punishment



On 30th December 2006 the bloody tyrant, Saddam Hussein, was hanged. The photo above is one of the official pictures, which shows a calm, if sombre scene. Some unofficial ones showed him being abused a little - scoffed at and mocked - by his captors who were apparently jubilant as he made the dreaded last walk to the scaffold. Many Christians feel uneasy about this form of punishment and are opposed to it. They feel that it flies in the face of the teaching of Jesus concerning forgiveness and loving our enemies, and that such actions smack of an 'eye for an eye, Old Testament mentality' dominated by desires for revenge and not love. It is an understandable position, sincerely held, and must be respected as a valid Christian opinion. However, it is not one I share and I am going to explain why. Consequently this article could be deemed to be controversial. Nevertheless I believe that it is very firmly grounded in scripture and founded on that foundational Book of the Bible, Genesis - without which we cannot make sense of the rest of the Bible and especially the salvation wrought through the saving grace of Jesus. No Genesis, no Jesus, which is one major reason why studies in Genesis are so basic to our faith and must be kept in the forefront of our minds as we 'work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling' (Phil. 2:12).

The Three Covenants

It is a fundamental point about our ability 'to divide the word of truth rightly' (2 Tim. 2:15, AV) that we recognize that God dealt, and deals, with mankind via three major covenants: 1) the Noachian, 2) the Mosaic, and 3) the Christian. The Noachian is found in Genesis 8:20 - 9:17; the Mosaic comes in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, but pivots around the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20: 1-

17); and the Christian is covered in the whole of the New Testament, but began historically with the Book of Acts - the Gospels being actually Old Covenant Books in their context, since Jesus had to fulfil the Old in His death before the New could come in. The covenants are very different, and many Christian believers tie themselves up into theological knots by not recognizing them for what they are and produce a mishmash of at least the latter two in their religious organisations. For example, altars, incense and priests in special garments are Old Testament and have no place in any New Testament context.

Under the Noachian covenant, and earlier too in the antediluvian patriarchal period, which we can lump together for now as the Patriarchal Age, God dealt with us through the heads of clans or families who were king-priests. This position was highly sought after and Esau, whose right it was as the firstborn son, despised it and sold it to Jacob for 'red pottage' (Gen. 29:29-34), a plate of stew. In the Mosaic Age, majestically dominated by the Ten Commandments, God dealt through the nation of Israel via a special priesthood. Under both of the first two covenants blood sacrifices had to be offered to atone for sins and only the designated ones could perform them. In the Christian Age, God deals with us as individuals, our only High Priest is Jesus, who is also our sacrifice, since His blood cleanses us from sins once and for all. Consequently, Christians can have access to the Father directly by going themselves to Him through the Son. Hence Christians address their prayers at the beginning to the Father and finish them by saying something like, 'Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen'. We are a royal priesthood (1 Pt. 2:9) with only one media-

tor, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 Tim. 2:5). We should be careful not to confuse the various covenants nor mix them up in our religious practices, observances and beliefs.

Nailed to the Cross

Jesus came to fulfil the Old Covenant (Matt. 5:17-18) and when He did so it was nailed to His Cross. Paul tells us in Colossians 2:13-14: '*And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*' So what exactly was 'nailed to the Cross'?

The covenant which Jesus abolished was the Mosaic covenant with its legalistic demands. He did not nail God's moral decrees to the Cross. Thus if God's heart was set against the moral sin of homosexuality, for example, it was not changed by the Cross. Nor did He nail the Noachian covenant to the Cross at all. It was just the legalistic regulations of the Mosaic covenant, which were so difficult to keep, which vanished on the Cross - praise God!

The Status of the Noachian Covenant

After the Flood God made promises to Noah for all time. We read that: '*Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.*' (Gen 8:20-22).

Later we read: '*Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, Behold, I establish my covenant with you and your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.*' And God said, *This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living*



The rainbow is still the sign of God's eternal promise

creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth."God said to Noah, This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth." (Gen 9:8-17).

The covenant is established for all time and the rainbow is the sign of that covenant for all time. We believe that God's promise never to destroy the Earth by flood still holds good, and will hold good until time ends with the return of the Lord, and then the Earth will be destroyed by fire (2 Pt. 3:1-10). This covenant, with its promises, was not nailed to the Cross. It is still extant. It is still, therefore, as valid as it ever was.

The Terms of the Noachian Covenant

God made several changes to what had gone on before when He established His covenant with Noah. He also reiterated some of the former things too: *'And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man.*

Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

And you, be fruitful and multiply, teem on the earth and multiply in it." (Gen. 9:1-7).

The command to replenish the Earth echoes God's command to Adam, as was the dominance of man over the animals. However, the eating of meat instead of man being a vegetarian was an alteration, with the proviso that the meat must be properly bled and that people must not eat blood. This part of the Noachian covenant was remembered in Acts

15:20 when the early church was debating whether Christians should keep the Law - the Old covenant - as well as the Christian covenant. This tells us that they did not believe for one minute that God's covenant with Noah had been altered by the death of Christ in any way. It was still in place.

Now, what does it have to say about capital punishment? Well, quite clearly it established the right for a life to be forfeited if a life has been taken. Since Noah's covenant is still operational and its promises hold good, so do its conditions. It is still right in the eyes of God for the ultimate punishment of the forfeiture of your life if you have unlawfully killed somebody. That doesn't mean we have to hang all murderers but it is not wrong, in God's eyes, to do so. You see, murder is a violation of God too, for we are made in His image.

The Antediluvian Situation

The Flood changed a lot of things, as we have noticed in the past and will notice again in the future. We are no doubt all well aware that when the first murder occurred God showed mercy on the perpetrator, Cain, whose life was spared. He did not escape punishment, and went around in fear of his own life being taken, but he had God's benevolent protection on him which apparently worked because there is no record of any revenge being exacted on him for the death of Abel. (As we noted in Number 8, 'Why Seth?', Abel was probably married but had no children). It could therefore be argued that this was God's intention all along so we must not extract the death penalty if we are to please Him.

Not a bit of it. It is God who makes the rules, not us, and He altered this one for a purpose. You remember what caused the Flood? It was the wickedness of mankind. We showed that the opening of Genesis chapter 6 contained evidence of demonic intervention and intermingling with humankind (see *Genesis Accepted* Number 6, 'The Sons of God'). Whether you accept that scenario or not, the point is that the Earth was full of violence, the like of which we have never, and will never, experience again. So much so, God decided to end it all and begin again, and He could only find one man, whom He was prepared to allow to live through the Flood, to be worthy of salvation. Satan had almost won!

What had happened was that justice had been forgotten and violence was the order of the day. It needed very firm rules of punishment to remind people that justice demands a fair punishment; that the punishment fit the crime, which clearly it did not in those days.

How do we know? Well, in Genesis chapter 4, there is a little account of Cain's great-great-grandson Lamech and the revenge he took on a poor young man who had offended him. It's unfortunate that, with all the names in the world waiting to be used, these early patriarchs had to repeat so many of them and men of the same name, like Enoch and Lamech, appear in both the godly and the ungodly genealogies, and also very similar names too, like Methushael/Methuselah. This is what we learn about the ungodly Lamech (godly Lamech was the father of Noah): *'Lamech said to his wives: Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain's revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold.'* (Gen. 4:23-24).

It was doubtless to stop such things happening that God put capital punishment in place after the Flood, and it is my opinion that this is why it is still in place today. When justice goes out of the window, no matter how well intentioned the motives of people jettisoning it might be, then injustice and violence take over. You sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. God knew what He was doing, and it was for our benefit that He did it. So when we find ourselves becoming more godly than God, we enter very dangerous territory indeed.

In the Mosaic Age

Two concepts from the Old Covenant predominate the thinking on capital punishment today: a) 'Thou shalt not kill' (Ex. 20:13, AV), b) 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth' (Ex. 21:24). What the latter says in three places is something like this: *'if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.'* (Ex 21:23-25, cf. Lev. 24:19-20, Deut. 19:21).

a) Thou shalt not kill

It is unfortunate that the general word 'kill' is used here in the Authorised Version because there are various forms of 'killing'. Almost all modern translations give it its intended meaning of, 'You shall not murder'.

That this is so can be seen in the handling of other forms of killing in the Mosaic Age under the Mosaic Law. Accidental killing, which we would call manslaughter, was handled by the provision of cities of refuge (Nu. 35:6) where the 'killer' could flee until the death of the high priest, and then he could return home (Nu. 35:28, but read all of the section in Numbers 25 to see the detail of the regulations).

Then, of course, there is killing in war. This is a big topic but suffice it to say that if

'Thou shalt not kill' covers this action, then God Himself violated His own commandment! He gave specific commands to men like Joshua and King Saul about killing off their enemies, and there would be very complicated problems with the help He gave to Joshua in chapter 5:13-15. There Joshua meets an enigmatic character called the commander of the army of the LORD. This commander was a warrior and was helping Joshua. It is not part of this study to delve into the appearances of the Second Person of the Trinity, whom we know best as Jesus, in the Old Testament, but He's there (see GA Number 5, 'Jesus in Genesis'). These appearances are called 'Theophanies'.

Hebrews 13:8 tells us that 'Jesus Christ



The walls at Jericho which God helped Joshua destroy, and all the people in the city too, apart from Rahab and her family

is the same yesterday and today and forever', and 'yesterday' He was leading Joshua's troops into battles where genocidal slaughtering had Divine approval. 'Yesterday' too, in fierce judgement He killed countless millions by drowning them in a Flood. 'Tomorrow' He will be coming in judgement to deal harshly, but justly, with sinners, casting them into eternal condemnation. We need to have a healthy regard for the activities of the Second Person in the Trinity throughout the Bible, and not just look at Him as Jesus in the Gospels, to obtain a full picture. He is multi-faceted. As Jesus, He came for a specific purpose, which included showing us more perfectly the true and loving nature of God. But one day He will come and will avenge His enemies (2 Thess. 1:5-10). This will not be the 'gentle Jesus meek and mild' manifestation we are used to and try to emulate in our lives. This aspect of the activity of the Word of God may make us feel uncomfortable but we must not ignore it.

Biblically 'Thou shalt not kill' only refers to murder and not to all lawful forms of killing, which may not be pleasant to behold or participate in (and I wouldn't like to be involved), but they are not in defiance of God's revealed intentions, and play a part in God's judgement on sinners and in dealing justly with His enemies.

b) 'Eye for eye'

Whilst on Earth the Lord Jesus said: *'You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil...''* (Matt 5:38-39). He also said, a few verses later: *'You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven...''* (Matt 5:43-45). This lays down the pattern of personal conduct when we are being wronged and how we should handle it. Love overrules the desire for retribution and revenge and 'eye for eye' is seen as being in contrast to love, and almost as the antithesis of love. Many Christians feel that this instruction for how to handle personal wrongs should be passed on to society as a guide to justice and punishment.

'Eye for eye and tooth for tooth' was not a harsh commandment in opposition to love. When it was introduced it was extraordinarily loving! As we noted earlier, ungodly Lamech went a million miles to excess in dealing with a man who had struck him. God was saying, via Moses, that the punishment should fit the crime and that it should never be more excessive than the crime. It was a loving formula for fairness and justice, which was singularly lacking in the world at the time. The criminal was being excessively punished and this was unfair and unjust. Today the pendulum has swung entirely the other way and the criminals are not having punishment to fit the crime but rather they seem to be 'getting away with it', and society at large feels a sense of unfairness and injustice in the judicial system.

Take a simple, possibly trivial, example of the current fad to deal harshly with the motorist who offends in some minor way. Speed cameras don't think and simply clock those going above the regulation limit. Those caught, even for being modestly over the limit, are given penalty points on their licences and fined. Given sufficient points they can lose their licences. The implication is that they are bad drivers, driving dangerously and deserve to be punished. Sometimes this is the case but usually it is not. We all know that very few cameras are sited in genuinely dangerous areas to prevent accidents but are usually placed in positions where there is a maximum chance of an erring motorist being caught so fines can be rattled up. It's much more a money-making racket than a safety measure. In my town of Aylesbury somebody vandalised one such offensive camera and I know of nobody who didn't applaud the action and wished it would happen more often. When the punishment does not fit the crime, and the law is being manipulated unjustly, resentment follows

and confidence in the law is undermined. This is serious. (So far I have not been caught speeding so still have a clean licence, yet I am aware that having constantly to be checking my speedometer, when driving especially in built-up areas, is probably more dangerous than straying a few miles-an-hour over the limit.)

Saddam Hussein being executed was not society seeking an eye for an eye from him. In fact most lawful executions are far more loving than the criminal ever was. For Saddam to have been treated in an Old Testament fashion, he should have been tortured and deprived of all human rights; he should not have had a fair trial with defence council trying to save him; he should have been butchered to death, or executed with some biological weapon of mass destruction, which we all know he did have and did use on people but cleverly got rid of, or hid, before the War which saw him toppled and caught. No, hanging was quick and merciful, just as lethal injection in American executions are merciful. Yes, that walk to the scaffold or the death chamber must be a horrible one to take but please don't kid ourselves into thinking it smacks of an 'eye for eye' mentality. It is no such thing. If it is anything, it is a desire for justice, not only being done but being seen to be done. When murderers get 'life', in Britain, and we know they will be free in about ten year's time, most people do not feel that justice has been done at all.

Forgiveness and repentance

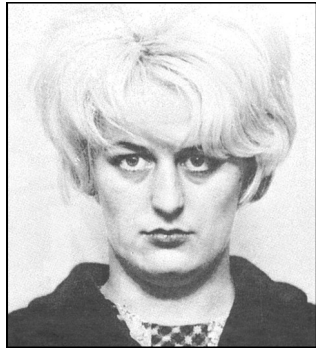
But Jesus told us to forgive and even to love our enemies, so how can capital punishment be squared with that?

There seems to me to be a good deal of woolly thinking about forgiveness and repentance. First of all Jesus was talking to us as individuals, not to judges and lawyers, about how we handle injustice, not to others but to ourselves. Secondly there is implicit in our thinking at times in this area that if a criminal repents and asks for forgiveness he/she should not be asked to pay the just penalty for their crime. In other words, they should get off scot-free. Forgiveness being given does not imply that just restitution need not be made, and if the injustice offends the law of the land, as well as an individual, the individual may well find it in himself to forgive the perpetrator but the law still requires a penalty. And if the repentance on the part of the criminal is genuine, there will be a true willingness to make restitution and pay any penalty that might ensue. And yes, if that means paying the ultimate penalty of the forfeiture of life, it has to be paid.

In America, not too many years ago, a woman went gladly to the death chamber for a murder she fully admitted. Over there the process of execution takes so long that I believe somewhere in the region of 15 years had elapsed since the murder and her execu-

tion. During that time she had repented and claimed to have found God. As a result of which she a) admitted openly what she had done, and b) said that the just penalty for her crime was to be executed, so she neither asked for a reprieve nor expected one. There were no histrionics as she went to her death, just a calm acceptance that justice was being done and that she accepted that, though she had been forgiven by God, she was getting exactly what she deserved for what she had done. She had genuinely repented. I have no idea whether the victim's family also forgave her or not.

On the other hand one of Britain's most famous murderesses, Myra Hindley, also claimed to have found God and re-



Myra Hindley 1966

pented. Nevertheless she was striving to obtain her release on the strength of this new-found faith, so she could go out and do good works, so it was claimed. She showed very little sign of remorse or repentance and never truly helped the victims' families to answers they wanted, but had she genuinely repented she would have insisted that she deserved to remain in prison for the rest of her natural life. She couldn't lose her life for her crimes but she could lose her freedom. She wanted out so she could have children herself - after all the right of every woman to have a child is one of the current feminist/liberal mantras of our society. She died in prison but was endeavouring to manipulate both the system and the gullible to her dying day.

No, repentance and forgiveness from God, or the victims, or both, is completely divorced from any form of restitution the perpetrator might have to make in law. They are entirely separate issues. If justice demands a penalty, the penalty must be paid, and paid willingly.

Jesus on the Cross

Nowhere in the New Testament is the question of the acceptability of capital punishment addressed. This is quite interesting and I believe quite telling. When soldiers are encountered they are never told to leave the army because all killing is against God's law. The only time their life-style is addressed is by John the Baptist. All sorts of people were coming to him for advice on how they could avoid the wrath to come. *'Soldiers also asked him, And we, what shall we do?'* *And he said to them, Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wag-*

es.' (Luke 3:14). He told them to deal justly and fairly, not that they were doing anything wrong by being soldiers! I mention this, not to fuel the argument about pacifism, but simply to give emphasis to the notion that, though murder is always killing, killing is not always murder. Those who refer to capital punishment as 'legalised murder' are making an argument based on emotion and not on reason, certainly not on biblical reasoning.

Jesus, of course, was a victim of a capital sentence. His trial was quite simply a mockery of justice and bore no relation to any form of due process of law convicting Him. They had no right to find Him guilty and definitely no right to have Him put to death - but who cared about what was right, fair and just on that occasion? He was, however, crucified between two criminals who had been tried justly and rightly sentenced, according to the Roman law appertaining at that time. The repentant thief made this point most forcibly. *'One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!'* *But the other rebuked him, saying, Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.'* *And he said, Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.'* *And he said to him, Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'* (Luke 23:39-43). Here we notice that the unrepentant thief simply wanted Jesus to perform a miracle and save all of them but the repentant one accepted the justice of his sentence and sought no relief at all from its rigours. Repentance does not excuse the crime nor seek escape from the punishment.

On the other hand Jesus had every right to rail against the justice He received and the sentence He was suffering under. He did no such thing but, as was His privilege, forgave those who had sinned, and were sinning, against Him. Though He forgave them they still had to pay the price for their sin. They shouted that *'His blood be on us and on our children,'* (Matt. 27:25) and it was, just as He knew it would be. He sadly warned the women who were mourning for Him, *'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'* *Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?'* (Luke 23:28-31). This was horribly fulfilled between 68AD and 70AD when Jerusalem was besieged and subsequently destroyed in one of the most vicious encounters of its kind ever. Though

forgiven by the Master, they still had to pay the price.

His failure to seize this golden opportunity to make comment on the whole concept of capital punishment, especially in view of the fact that an innocent man was condemned to death, is quite remarkable. He could have told us for all time that capital punishment was wrong, against God's wishes and should not be countenanced at all by His followers. He significantly said nothing about it. We could blame the agony He was suffering for dulling His mind but we know full well He was fully in control of His mind throughout His ordeal. He refused the drugged drink to help ease His pain. He thought clearly about His mother and her plight. He recognised genuine repentance in one thief and promised him life eternal with Himself. His mind was not clouded, but still He said nothing! Does His silence speak? I believe that it does yet even if it doesn't the silence of the inspired apostles as they taught the church about the ultimate truth contained in Jesus and how we are to behave, and what we are to believe in all areas of life, is equally significant in this area of study.

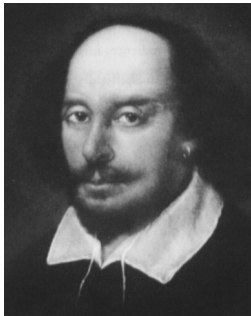
Conclusion

We said that this article could well be controversial because, in our wider communion at least in Britain, the pacifist/anti-capital punishment position dominates. I think our American brethren will have a different take on the topic, in general.

There is no doubt in my mind that to abandon capital punishment completely flies in the face of God's clear instructions to us in the Noachian covenant, which has never been revoked. It also means that in many cases of murder, though not necessarily in all, justice is not served. Society does not take revenge; only a wronged individual can take revenge. Society cannot forgive; only a wronged individual can forgive. So when society forgives, and believes that this means that the punishment should not fit the crime - because, as God pointed out, if a life is taken a life is required (Gen. 9:5-6) - justice is not served and where justice is undermined society will suffer violence, and other forms of corruption, as a result. It did so before the Flood (Gen. 6:11), so God destroyed it. He did not want this to happen again so He gave us the right to ensure that justice could be done. Justice implies correct and honest procedures being put into place and all reasonable doubt being covered before taking the ultimate step. It does not rule out compassion in certain circumstances. God has given us good brains to use and common sense to apply the laws fairly and correctly. However, in my opinion, to turn our backs on capital punishment is indeed presumptuous because it makes us out to be more godly than God, and that is very dangerous in more ways than one.

Enoch's Faith

One of the most difficult tasks facing pundits is deciding on the relative merits of people performing in the same, or related fields. Not too long ago we were thinking about the greatest Englishman ever and all sorts of names were put forward: Shakespeare, Newton, Nelson, Fisher, Churchill., etc. But how can you compare men who lived at different times and in different situations? And then, how much did they actually influence events and how much did they simply respond to them? Shakespeare and Newton were creative geniuses but Nelson and



William Shakespeare

Churchill, great though they were, responded more to events beyond their control rather than controlling events to suit themselves. If Hitler had not behaved as he did, Churchill, who actually won the 'Greatest Englishman' contest, would have been almost a forgotten politician who was considered in his day to be an eccentric rebel. 'Cometh the hour; cometh the man', and he 'came' to amazing effect. The same is true of Nelson. Had he been born in quieter times when we weren't fighting the French at sea, he would have been classed as a good sailor but few would have heard of him today. If we were not fighting sea battles at the time, his tactical genius, 'the Nelson touch' as he modestly called it, would have remained dormant. As for Fisher...! We'll draw a veil over him, but definitely not a burkha.

How can we compare?

Recently one of the greatest footballers of all time died. He was a Hungarian called Puskas. He played 83 times for Hungary and scored 84 goals – or the other way around. He also played over 600 times for Real Madrid and scored over 500 goals. In other words he was a goal-scoring machine and probably had a better strike rate than the immortal Pele of Brazil – who is usually credited as being the best footballer ever. Was Pele or Puskas actually the greatest ever? Both were forwards whose job it is to score goals, but how can you compare a forward with a goalkeeper, whose job is to stop goals, when they do entirely different things? How can you compare a bowler with a batsman in cricket? You might be able to say: 'He was the greatest bowler', or 'He was the greatest batsman' (see picture above), but the question 'Who was the greatest cricketer?' almost defies an answer.



Don Bradman - greatest ever batsman

The greatest person of faith?

So here is today's question: 'Who was the greatest man, or woman, of faith?' How do we begin to compare them? We can name a few: Paul, Peter, John, John the Baptist (who got Jesus' vote on one occasion, but in a context), Mary (Jesus' mother), Daniel, Solomon, David, Ruth, Joshua, Moses, Jacob, Abraham and Sarah, Job, Noah, Enoch, Abel, etc. I went historically backwards in my list. In the Hebrew Letter, the writer comes forwards and lists: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and there he stops because he runs out of steam, or paper, but could have continued through the prophets and on and on.

So let me ask another question? This I am sure you can answer. 'Who do you think is the greatest man, or woman, of faith, mentioned in the Bible, of course?' I'm not going to poll all *Genesis Accepted* readers to find out but I'm sure we'd all come up with many different responses. Well, my favourite for the title, for a variety of reasons, is Noah. The more I study about him the more amazed I become. But I'm going to leave him for another day, for I want to go one stage back to look at a great man of faith, his great-granddad, Enoch.

Enoch in scripture

We can cover Enoch in scripture very quickly. In Genesis 5:18-24 he first appears thus: 'When Jared had lived 162 years he fathered Enoch. Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died. When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.' Then over in Hebrews we read of him again: 'By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was com-

mended as having pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.' (Heb 11:5-7).

Enoch is mentioned briefly in Luke's genealogy of Christ, where the good doctor goes backwards to Adam (Luke 3:37), but he gets a very significant and interesting mention in Jude. Let's give him a context and look at verses 3-4, and then at 14-16: 'Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For 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... It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favouritism to gain advantage.' (Jude 3-4, 14-16). So Enoch was not only an unusual man of faith, he was also a prophet who spoke out against those who 'pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord and are grumblers and malcontents [who] follow their own sinful desires [and are] loud-mouthed boasters, showing favouritism to gain advantage'. This gives us a sweeping picture not only of the kind of opposition the early Christians faced from within the church but also the kind of opposition Enoch faced in his day too. Thus we have a window into what life was becoming in his antediluvian (pre-Flood) world.

Enoch's world

Well, what can we say about Enoch and his world, other than it was very different than our own? As we know, or can easily count, he was the seventh generation from Adam. Nevertheless he and Adam spent 230 years on this Earth together, so Enoch could, and probably would, have had access to Adam's wisdom and accumulated knowledge. He would know about the Creation and the Fall. He would be painfully aware of the murder of Abel and the havoc which Cain, and his ungodly offspring, had wreaked, and were still wreaking, on the world. Indeed he would see, as we do today, that ungodliness abounded and seemed to be gaining in strength. Only three generations later God was to shut down on the world because its sinfulness was so out of hand. So, no matter what we might think today about the way our world is going, we are

probably not in the same league as godly men of his day were. Enoch did not remain on Earth long enough to see Noah; he missed him by 69 years. But it is interesting to note that of the 10 named godly patriarchs from Adam to Noah, seven knew all ten. Only Adam, Enoch and Noah missed out on that privilege; Adam missed seeing only Noah – missing him by 126 years. Noah, however, was still alive when Isaac was born, so he saw an amazing number of the patriarchal faithful both pre- and post-Flood.

Enoch's source of spiritual guidance

When we have a spiritual problem, or want spiritual guidance, we turn to the scriptures: we take our guidance from the accumulated experiences of those older in the faith than we are and we lean on each other for strength. What did Enoch have? Well, he certainly did not have our spiritual blessings in this area. As we said, he had the combined



Adam and Eve are ejected from Eden while the cherubim guard the way to the Tree of Life

strength and spiritual knowledge of all of the patriarchs up to himself, plus the delight of his godly son, Methuselah, and his godly grandson, Lamech. Mind you, he had other sons and daughters, many of whom would take their spiritual lead from him but equally many who would not, and by the time Noah entered the Ark, death and disobedience had whittled the godly remnant down to eight. So we can say that the drift of Enoch's family was away from God rather than towards Him.

Evidences Enoch could use

But did he have any evidences to use in his defence of his spiritual beliefs? Definitely 'Yes'. Adam was alive when he was born and presumably so was Eve. They could tell him about what happened but they both actually had several other important pointers we can be certain about. First of all they could show the young Enoch their midriffs. If peo-

ple doubted the Creation story, Adam could say, "Well, look at me. I was created, not born, and Eve too had no earthly mother." I doubt he could show his side where God healed him after using his rib to make Eve, though maybe God did leave a scar there to remind them both – I don't know - but they definitely could show that they had no belly buttons. As we all know the navel is merely the plug or remnant of where the umbilical chord was attached to our mothers. Adam and Eve, having no mothers, would not have a navel and this would serve as physical evidence of the truth that they were both created - though in different fashions, of course.

The other thing which Enoch could reference would be Eden itself. God did not destroy the Garden but rather He placed cherubim there to guard the way to the Tree of Life. There is no reason to suppose that by Enoch's day Eden had vanished. Indeed its very presence would serve as a reminder to Adam and Eve, and all of their family, of just what they had done; just as the sinful, murderous, godlessness of those who were following Cain's lead would also bring shame on them and make them rue their original sin. It seems that Eden vanished in the Flood after which the world's land masses were reshaped and reconstituted. (But that's another study!)

The written record

We can, and do, refer to the written record of the past to find our spiritual guidance. 'Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of God.' (Romans 10:17). Anthropologists have a 'wonderful' track-record of telling us when ancient man learnt to read and write. They are always having to revise it backwards. Thus, we once heard, 'Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because writing had not been invented then'. Oops, that one was soon proven silly. They now know that writing goes way back beyond Abraham's day. But if you look at the record of the Flood it reads like Moses was using Noah's log book for his details and there is every evidence that he used written records from Adam's time! Each section of the Genesis narrative is punctuated by the words, 'These are the generations of...' and the first comes in Genesis 2:4, thus ending the Creation account. Then 5:1 concludes the generations of Adam, and Adam was probably the original author of both of these sections. The problem is that we are lulled into thinking that the human race has been steadily marching upwards from the Stone Age to today, whereas the Bible tells us that early man was very sophisticated and probably degenerated after the Flood. What we commonly call 'The Stone Age' is definitely a post-Flood phenomenon. Pre

-Flood people could smelt metals, including making bronze, and make music, as Genesis 4:21-22 tells us. I believe Adam could write and consequently Enoch could have had some sort of record to refer to for his faith, BUT this would be nothing like the records we have today.

What Enoch did to please God

So what does it appear that Enoch did to please God? Hebrews tells us that '*... faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.*' (Heb 11:1-3). In a world of increasing disbelief, or unbelief, Enoch was one who believed that the world was Created. In verse 6 we see that two of the things Enoch believed were that God exists and that He rewards those who believe in Him. Obviously by his day some men and women were denying the existence of God; however, he 'contended for the faith' as it had been delivered to the saints of his day. Jude links him closely into championing these things. To contend for the faith he opposed those who perverted God's grace and ways. He did not walk in the way of Cain (Jude 11). So there were those who denied God existed, and there were those who were supposed to be on God's side but who were perverting the faith, putting sensuality before humble worship, grumbling about God's seeming strictures, loud-mouthed boasters showing favouritism to gain advantage.

Enoch stood out against all of this. He would have fitted well into our times where he would recognize the same problems of atheism, ungodly practices from so-called religious leaders, malcontents and boasters looking for personal advantage. Nothing much has changed. It never does.

The example of Enoch's death

Enoch was blessed to serve as an example to us all of what God had originally planned for us that when our time was through on Earth: we would be smoothly translated into heaven, not tasting death at all – for had there been no sin there would have been no death either. By his example he is a guarantor that we, through faith such as he showed, can have the promise, not that we will miss out on death, for we can't, but that we can have the confidence that God does reward those who walk with Him. We will be translated into heaven not to taste the second death, which awaits all who will not follow and acknowledge God.

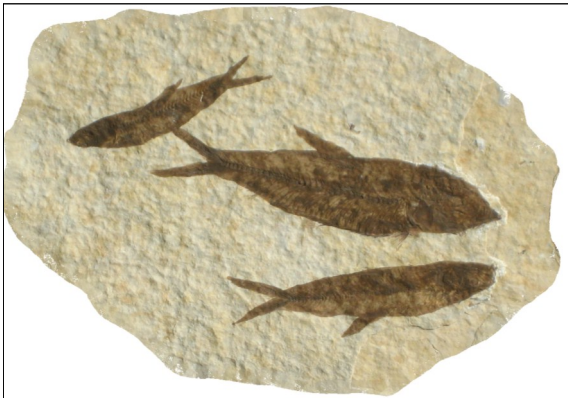
What a man! What an example! And what lessons we can learn from looking at the record of his life. It may not be very much but it's all that we need.

FOSSILS

Fossils are fascinating things. Embedded in rocks, they tell of creatures which lived long before the present age, many of whom no longer have any descendants since their species became extinct. Some are enormous and arouse great interest, like a few of the dinosaur species. Others are microscopic and are hardly noticed, yet collectively they are taken as proof of evolution: the practical demonstration of the theory.

What is a fossil?

Fossils are the remains of creatures and plants which were entombed in sediment, usually - though not entirely - formed under water.¹ They can be anything from tracks or footprints, through impressions of skin, to the perfect representation of the creature's skeleton created by a particle-by-particle mineral replacement of bones, etc. It is very rare to find evidence of the soft parts because they normally rot away too quickly to allow such mineral replacement to take place, though sometimes fish have been fossilized so quickly that they seem to have been frozen in time as they were swimming.



Fossil fish showing scales and buried instantaneously while swimming. This is a classic Flood scenario. The original fossil is part of my personal collection - G.A.F.

Fossils are created by sudden, catastrophic burial, in the main. They have to have been since predators and scavengers soon destroy the remains of dead creatures, sea or land, long before they can be buried. Remains of plant life too rot away very quickly if not buried swiftly - indeed fossils are a perfect testimony to speedy burial. Small sea creatures like brachiopods are often found intact as fossils but this is rare for land-based animals. They are usually buried quickly during a flood, if they are to develop into fossils, and flood waters notori-

ously shred bodies and bones with great power and ease. Some animals, like insects, can be entombed in tree resin, called amber, and are fossilized perfectly showing their soft parts; but this is rare. Mammoths too, in some instances, were beautifully preserved whole in ice or frozen mud and both testify to a sudden catastrophe overwhelming them unexpectedly. Fossils do nothing for the popular geological belief in gradualism. They are serious evidence for the biblical scenario of Noah's Flood.

The formation of coal

Coal is a fossil fuel; nobody would deny that. The question is 'how was it formed?' If you turn to any elementary Geography text book in schools they will tell you that coal is formed when trees die in swampy conditions. They accumulate as a layer of rotting vegetation which packs down to become peat. This is then covered by sediment from the sea, whose level oscillates, first flooding the low-lying swamps and then receding again, almost rhythmically, from time to time. Thus, as the layers slowly build up, water gets squeezed out of the peat. Depending on the degree of pressure there is the creation of lignite, bituminous coal, or anthracite, the hardest and purest form of this fossil fuel. (Diamonds, of course, are pure carbon but they are formed igneously, by volcanic action, not sedimentarily in damp swamps.) This process is said to have taken millions of years to arrive at the end product - over 80 million years is normally assigned to the Carboniferous Age during which most of our coal is said to have formed, hence its name, 'Carboniferous'.

That this is a nonsense can easily be demonstrated. The text books agree that it takes approximately 12ft (3.6m) of rotting vegetation to produce 1ft (30cm) of peat and it takes 10ft (3m) of peat to compress into 1ft (30cm) of coal. Thus it takes a depth of 120ft (36m) of rotting vegetation to produce 1ft (30cm) of coal.

However, some coal seams are over 100ft (30m) thick so, by simple arithmetic, to produce a seam of coal this thick you would require a perfectly homogeneous thickness of rotting vegetation of 12,000ft (3,600m). Ben Nevis, the highest mountain in the British Isles, is only 4,416ft (1325m). This rotting vegetation would have to have been nearly three times higher! And if 'the present is the key to the past', as geologists maintain, where in the world today do we find 12,000ft of rotting vegetation? Or, for that matter, where do

we find 12,000ft of unconsolidated sediment waiting to be compacted to form any type of rock? Nowhere.

It is quite easy to get rafts of trees floating on flood waters and piling up to over 100ft thick. All that would be needed then is a sudden burial followed by sufficient heat and pressure being applied. Coal would then form swiftly, and would, of course, then be a metamorphic rock with the required thickness without having to resort to ludicrous explanations, which involve literally mountains of vegetation to produce the desired effect. Laboratory experiments have shown that wood can be turned into coal in a matter of weeks given the right amounts of heat and pressure.² It does not require millions of years to turn a forest into a coalfield.

That coal has been formed in modern times can be evidenced by the finding of human artifacts embedded in the strata. There are records of a gold chain being found in coal in 1889 by a Mrs. S.W. Culp, an iron pot reported by a Professor W. Rush in coal supposedly 300 million years old, and a fossilized human skull made up of brown coal.³

Clams

Bivalves are held together by muscles, which can be very powerful indeed, keeping the two shells together during the life of the clam. Once it dies the muscles relax and the shells fly apart. Beds of thousands of fossilized clams are known from many places in the world. Most of the clams are shut indicating that they were very much alive when they were buried.

Polystrate trees

Amongst many amazing phenomena, which deny that millions of years are necessary for the formation of fossils to occur, are polystrate trees. These are fossilized trees which cut across several strata and which evolutionary geology required millions of years for their formation. Sedimentation is supposed to be a painfully slow process but despite this there are places where fossilized trees, cutting across strata, are found. The theory of sedimentation is that over the millennia a steady stream of microscopic particles rains down on the sea floor and slowly builds upwards over time. These trees usually do not have roots so somehow they floated there and sank in the vertical position



Polystrate trees in Yellowstone National Park

where they were gradually overtaken by the rock particles. That this process could have taken hundreds of thousands, if not millions of years, is what is claimed by the theories of gradualism. That trees simply cannot survive that long whilst waiting to be buried is obvious, therefore the burial process must have been very swift indeed, catastrophic, in fact. The trees are as well preserved at their top as they are at their bottom, which they would not be if they had to wait millennia to be fully buried.

Dinosaur tracks

If ever a species has left its imprint in both the rocks and the popular imagination, dinosaurs must be the leading contenders. Not only are their bones found in every continent (except, perhaps, in Antarctica - but since much of that is under ice and the rocks are relatively inaccessible, we must leave a cautious question mark there), there are



Dinosaur track, Klondike Bluffs, near Arches National Park, Utah

many places where their footprints too have been found. This could be because their natural habitat was swampy low land. The mud on which they walked was ideal for the preservation of their tracks.

However, go to the seashore and watch the incoming tide smoothing out the footprints of people and animals in the sand. So too with footprints in mud. True, they will remain a little longer than those formed in sand but they won't be there next year. For footprints to remain there has to be instant burial on top of the print in the mud so it is preserved rather than planed away. For this to happen we need turbidity currents and mud slides, not the normal processes of tidal action. These only come during flood conditions, and whilst it has to be admitted that they do not prove Noah's Flood - a local flood would do just as well in these cases - they certainly do point to a catastrophic origin for these types of fossils too.

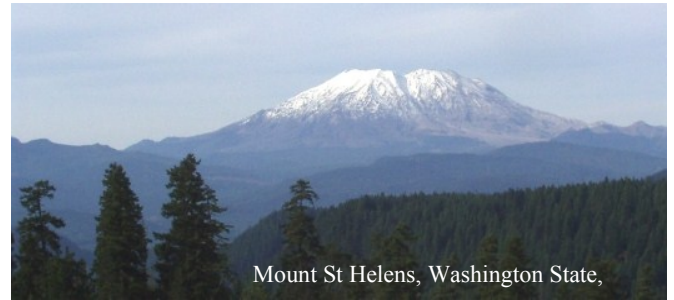
Local catastrophes

So overwhelming is the evidence for a catastrophic origin for fossils, most geologists now have to accommodate catastrophe into their 'normal' scheme of thinking. They have almost abandoned total gradualism where the slow processes of time have formed all things geological, realizing that catastrophe is part of normal geology. They do not, however, admit to anything on a global scale, being content with many small catastrophes, in local areas, to account for local phenomena.

In 1980 catastrophists and Creationists received a real fillip when Mount St Helens erupted in Washington State, USA. Rafts of trees were floated out on lakes as forests were ripped up and redeposited, and gorges and canyons were formed in days. Strata which, had they not known otherwise, geologists would have interpreted as having taken hundreds of millions of years to form, were laid down in weeks. This was a local catastrophe and is now an illustration of the move away from the 'million of years of unending serenity' scenario which typified geological interpretation not too many years ago.

What do we see?

There are very many fossils, most of



Mount St Helens, Washington State,

which have been classified into genera and species. They show some variation in their structures but seemed to burst on to the scene from nowhere. At the top of the Precambrian, the basement formation and longest period in the geological time scale, there is the Cambrian outburst. From very doubtful fossils before the Cambrian, there appears an amazing variety of life, almost as if from nowhere. This phenomenon occurs at all junctions on the geological column. Life seems to appear with no precursors and there are no intermediate forms to indicate how they got there. The Creationist model predicts this, with life being formed independently and uniquely. The Evolutionary model requires intermediate stages of development but these singularly fail to appear no matter how hard people search for them. The missing links are still missing. Even archæopteryx, the one current hope of those looking for intermediate life-forms, fails to supply. It was a bird in every sense of that term.

Conclusion

The message of the rocks is that fossils were formed swiftly and catastrophically, and that there is absolutely no evidence of developing forms from one basic kind into another - just variation within kinds as the Creation model predicts because of the gene pool. Evolution's best hope simply does not deliver.

¹ Freak occurrences such as the burial of Pompeii under volcanic ash from Vesuvius created non-sedimentary fossil, but these are exceptions to the rule.

² See the film *The Young Age of the Earth*

³ Wysong, R.L., *The Creation-Evolution Controversy*, pages 370-373.

⁴ *Ibid.* pages 366-368

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