

GENESIS ACCEPTED



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The Magic of Niagara

In 2003 we went on a month's holiday to visit friends and family in the USA. Apart from seeing them, I had two specific things I wanted to look at: the Alamo in San Antonio and Niagara Falls. Both were absolutely marvellous for entirely different reasons, of course. You cannot stand amidst the ruins of the old mission of the Alamo and not be awestruck by the heroics which were accomplished by a handful of men - about 150 - who fought to delay the advancing 4,000-strong army of the Mexican dictator Santa Anna, so that the Texans could assemble a force strong enough to beat him. They all knew they would die but willingly gave their lives so others could live in freedom. The iconic frontiersman Davy Crocket was amongst them. They delayed Santa Anna's advance for 12 days, 23rd February to 6th March 1836 (1836 was a leap year) and their sacrifice was not in vain. Sam Houston defeated Santa Anna and Texas was spared becoming a Mexican province for ever. It's no wonder they 'Remember the Alamo' especially in Texas.

Niagara

Niagara Falls set the standard by which all other falls are compared. They are simply magnificent. Other falls are higher (see photo, bottom right), or wider, or have a deeper gorge, or.... anything else you might want to look at but the starting point for comparison is always Niagara Falls. You can photograph them or film them but neither will explain them or do them justice for, when you are there looking at them, you actually experience them. No film or photograph can convey something as abstract as an experience. They are also wonderfully accessible so that at the top of the Horseshoe Falls in Canada



The mighty Horseshoe Falls in Canada.
(Retaining wall, bottom right of photo)

you can almost lean over the retaining wall and dip your hand in the water as it plunges over the falls into the gorge below (see photo bottom left). You feel the damp and the rush of air and smell the freshness of the the surroundings as if they have cleansed everything. It's awesome being there.

The retreat

The Falls, of course, are not in the least bit static. They are retreating every year, though their rate has been reduced somewhat by the effects of siphoning some of the water for hydro-electricity generation. Geologists believe that they were created at the end of the Ice Age when water from Lake Erie flowed into Lake Ontario passing

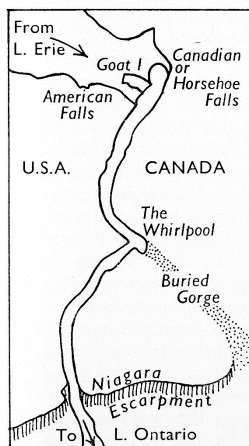
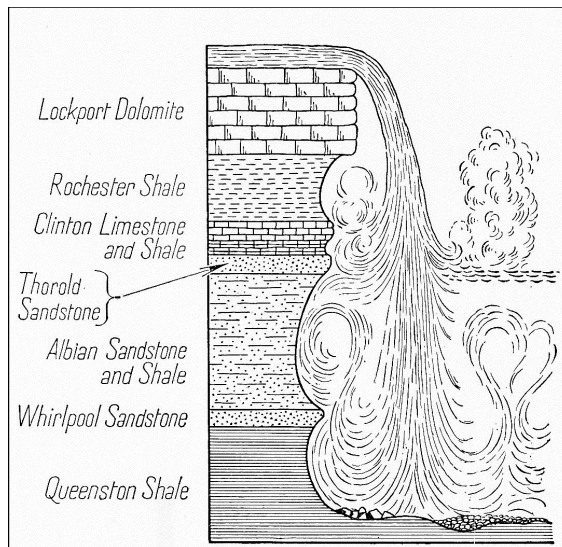


Diagram of the Gorge

over a newly formed escarpment. The subsequent gorge is now over seven miles long downstream from the Falls, and by measuring the rate of erosion and the length of the gorge from the escarpment it should be possible to date the end of the Ice Age in this part of the world at least - so you would think. We'll return to this a little later.

The mechanism

The diagram of a cross-section of the Niagara Falls (top right) shows the basic structure of the rocks over which the massive volume of water, spewing out of Lake Erie towards Lake Ontario, falls. The relatively strong dolomite limestone lies horizontally over weaker horizontal rocks of shale, sandstone and the Clinton limestone/shale mixture. Thus the erosion rates of the rocks beneath the dolomite is faster than the upper layer. The water therefore erodes the lower strata more quickly which then undercuts the upper, and in time the upper stratum is undercut so

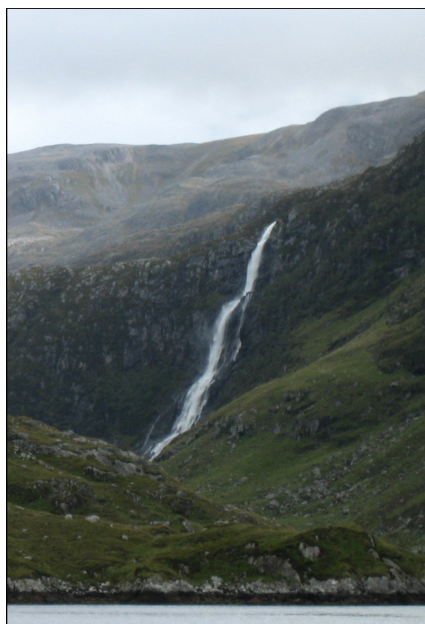


Sectional drawing of Niagara Falls showing the rock structure and how it recedes by undercutting and subsequent collapse of over hanging rock

much that it collapses - and the waterfall retreats upstream. The water drops into a plunge pool, which is hollowed out of softer rocks and the swirling back-currents do the damage. Rocks and pebbles from the fallen overhang provide the cutting tools to scour out the base of the waterfall. This is essentially how all waterfalls erode but the sheer volume and power of these falls is so impressive that the erosion is measured in feet per year, which in geological time is very rapid indeed. You can see the gathered fallen rock best at the base of the American Falls in the photograph on the next page.

Textbook explanations

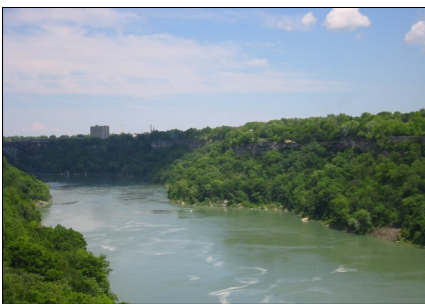
The two diagrams on this page come from the great book *Principles of Physical*



Eas a' Chual Aluinn (Assynt, Scotland) is Britain's highest waterfall (658ft). It is 3.99 times higher than Niagara Falls (165ft) but is hardly a major tourist attraction!

Geology, by Arthur Holmes. This was the geologists' 'Bible' on the subject when I was at university in the 1960s and at 1288 pages it is still an authoritative volume. He has this to say about Niagara:

'Before the diversion of much of the water to hydro-electric plants, the mean discharge over the falls... was 85 times that of the Thames at Teddington. Most of the water passes over the Horseshoe Falls which, as the name implies, have been receding much more rapidly than the American Falls. After the last great ice-sheet withdrew from this region, and uncovered the pre-glacial Niagara escarpment about 12,000 years ago, the Niagara river followed a course which descended from Lake Erie (572 feet) to Lake Ontario (246 feet) by way of a series of rapids and also one big vertical drop, where the river fell over the escarpment. Here the falls began and since then have receded 7 miles, leaving a gorge of which the rim is about 200 feet



The Niagara Gorge

above the river and on average about 360 feet above the river floor. The rate of erosion must have varied a good deal from time to time, but the measured rate for the Horseshoe Falls during the nineteenth century - about 4 feet a year - is not far from the average of 3 feet a year.' This sounds so confident and so unquestionably correct that who could argue against it, but it is almost entirely a work of fiction based on assumptions and guesswork not empirical experiments. Arthur Holmes has merely parroted what he has read in other 'authoritative' tomes, which are equally fictitious and wrong. (I wouldn't have dared to say this in 1963 while studying Geology at Keele even if I'd known about it - which I didn't. You couldn't question such a man because what he said was true, by definition, and of such attitudes are mistakes carried forwards into the minds of the following generations.)

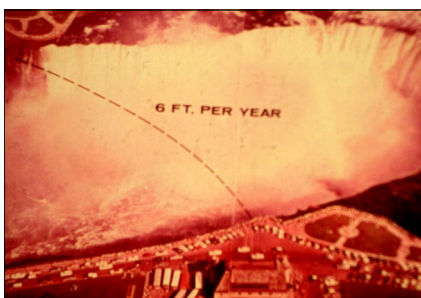
Let's question him now

One thing which Arthur Holmes said above about which there is absolutely no dispute is that 'the rate of erosion must have varied a good deal from time to time'. Indeed as the ice melted it would have discharged a good deal more water than it does today so the rate of erosion would have been much greater. But how did he arrive at the erosion rate average? Well it was quite simple really. The gorge

is about 7 miles long. That means it is approximately 36,960 feet long. The Ice Age ended 12,000 years ago so by dividing 36,960 by 12,000 you get the average erosion rate per year, which is 3.08 feet. Bingo! This then becomes the given rate in the text books, as we read in the quote above.

But just a minute, how do we know the Ice Age ended 12,000 years ago here? I say 'here' because if we happened to live in Greenland or Antarctica (which only scientists do at the moment) the Ice Age is still operating quite effectively in both of these places today. Believe it or not, the date of the end of the Ice Age at Niagara is calculated by the time it has taken the falls to erode the gorge at the average rate of 3 feet per year. And how do they get the average rate of the recession of the falls? By calculating how long it will take the falls to retreat 7 miles at the rate of 3 feet per year! Now that's not really a very scientific way to calculate these things. It's a classic case of circular reasoning. The scientific way to do it is to set up an experiment over a number of years and measure the rate of erosion and then do the arithmetic.

The nineteenth century glaciologists had already decided the approximate date they wanted for the end of the Ice Age, so they asked the inhabitants who lived there about the rate. They told them what they wanted to hear (3 feet) not what it really was, which was twice that at around 6 feet. This reduces the date of the end of the Ice



Picture from the filmstrip of the lecture by D.W. Patten 'Cataclysm from space, 2800BC'

Age to 6,160, but that is only if the rate has been held steady since it all started, which it hasn't. Now let us factor in the Flood.

The Flood and Niagara

The date we are looking at for the start of the Niagara Falls and the beginning of the gorge is approximately the age we



The still mighty but slightly less impressive American Falls

Young Earth Creationists give for the Creation itself. The Bible tells us that the Flood occurred some 1656 years after Creation and we believe that the Ice Age came minimally 100+ years after the end of the Flood - these dates are only approximate as you will realize. To arrive at a biblical estimate for the age of Niagara Falls and the end of the Ice Age we would require an average recession rate of just over 8 feet per year, which is not at all unreasonable.

If you look back to the cross-sectional diagram of the Falls where we see the type of rock strata over which the Falls tumble, they are all sedimentary: limestone, shales and sandstones. These are Flood deposit rocks so there was no 'pre-glacial Niagara escarpment', which Holmes assumes had to have been in place, for they all post-date the Flood. The tectonic movements which threw up the escarpment must be consistent with the catastrophic effects of the events which brought the Ice Age into being (see *Genesis Accepted* numbers 11, 12, 13, especially the two articles on 'The Womb of the Ice').

At the end of the Flood these sedimentary deposits were soft and easily eroded. Furthermore there was little vegetation to protect them from erosion and there was amazing quantities of run-off water around. The sediments would have become more consolidated before the ice arrived and yet would still have been more vulnerable to rapid erosion than they are today. It is not at all difficult for us to declare that the Niagara Falls are not nearly as old as is claimed popularly for them, and they are useful evidence for the Flood and the catastrophic fashioning of the Earth by the Flood.

They are also a reminder that scientists are not always as precise and objective as they would prefer us to believe they are, but rather they make assumptions to suit their purposes as do all 'lesser mortals' from time to time. We need to be aware of this when facing their challenges and never be afraid to ask questions.

Why the pope became a protestant

Of course he never has (whomever 'he' happened to be over the millennia); the pope becoming a Protestant, I mean! The 'pope' in question is the man in the photograph below: Pro-

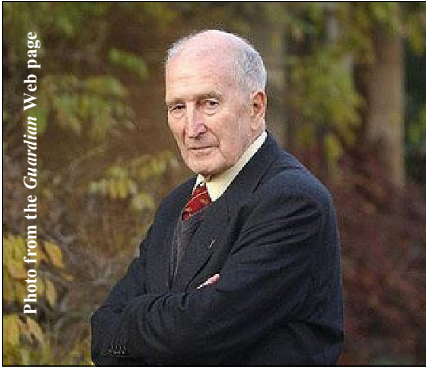


Photo from the Guardian Web page

The late Professor Antony Flew

Professor Antony Flew. He exploded on to the world of Philosophy as a champion of atheism in 1950 with the publication of probably his most famous paper, *Theology and Falsification*, which set the agenda for modern atheism for over 50 years. He was probably the world's leading academic atheistic philosopher during that time, a scourge of theists with his polite, but incisive, brand of evangelical atheism, which undermined the faith of many a young believer. Then in 2004 he resigned his 'pontificate' and declared he was now a theist, and therefore that there **IS** a God. No, it wasn't the God of the Bible and Christianity in particular he now believed in - though he accepted that the Christian God was the best 'player' in the field - but some sort of deist god whose 'mind' lay, and still lies, somehow behind the universe.

He died on 6th April 2010, aged 87, still believing in this deist position, thereby never moving further along the path of becoming a Christian. His father was a Methodist minister and prayed every day that Antony would convert and come back into the fold, but that prayer remained unanswered. His colleagues and atheistic friends were appalled by his 'fall from grace' and largely dismissed it as the sad meanderings of a semi-senile mind brought on by old age; this is on the principle of 'If you can't trash the message, trash the messenger'. It doesn't work. Tony Flew's mind was as sharp as a razor blade until he died, and the book describing his 'conversion' to deism, *There is a God. How the world's most notorious atheist changed his mind*, HarperOne, Harper Collins, 2007, demonstrates this perfectly. (I can heartily recommend it to all readers of *Genesis Accepted*). It is no exaggeration to say that this change of mind was as 'explosive' to the world of Philosophy and academic Christian apolo-

getics as the pope becoming a Protestant would be in the religious world in which we live today. It was that staggering.

The Flew I knew

Actually I didn't really know Tony Flew - though I have spelt his name, Antony, correctly! He was professor of Philosophy at Keele University (Staffordshire) when I was there from 1961-1965. For the benefit of some overseas readers, the title 'Professor' is not given over here to any and every lecturer in a university, or high school teacher in some cases, but to the head of the subject alone in a university. We say that they 'hold the chair' in that subject. It is highly academically prestigious to be awarded one. He/she is the boss in that department and set the agenda there. He was the top man in Philosophy at Keele. I did not read Philosophy but rather my main subjects were Geography and American Studies (it was a joint honours course), with subsidiary subjects in Geology and Education. The Geology complemented the Geography and the Education led to a teaching Diploma.

However, in Keele at that time we had a unique Foundation Year (FY) in our first year which all students had to take. It has subsequently been abolished since the short-sighted government of the day, in the early 1970s, decided they would not fund it no matter how good it was! Antony left Keele and went to Reading University when this happened. The FY course was a 'History of Western Civilisation' and every Professor in every subject had to lecture to us during the year, and Prof. Flew took his turn - several turns in fact. So I sat at his feet as one amongst about 250 students in a lecture hall listening to him. I also attended some debates when there was a challenge on between the Christian-believing professors, the theists, against the atheists over the existence of God, or not. Tony Flew was the champion of the latter and, unlike Richard Dawkins, was neither militant, nor rude, nor aggressive towards his opponents but kind and polite. He was a gentleman. That is the Flew I knew: nothing more and nothing less. He didn't know me.

I felt privileged to have been there at that time, but he couldn't shake my faith. If he, or anything I studied in those days, ever came near to creating doubts in my mind, I always fell back on to the question of the resurrection of Jesus and asked myself 'Who moved the Stone?', which is the title of the best analysis of the resurrection I've ever read, by a man called Frank Morison, and, though written in 1930, is still in print and is a classic. Morison confessed to being an atheist who set

out to investigate the resurrection and write a book disproving it but, after looking in depth and in detail at it, had to conclude that the resurrection happened and Jesus is Lord.

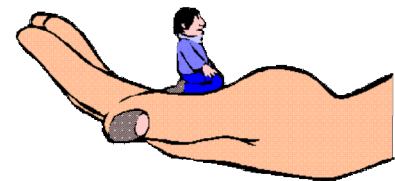
The existence of God debate

When students come to read Philosophy at university (they seldom ever study it in school), the topic they almost always cut their philosophical teeth on is the arguments for the existence of God. There are three classic 'proofs': the cosmological, ontological, and teleological proofs. To these three old stalwarts has been added a fourth, the moral argument. Any others are simply variations on one or other of these four. They are neat, crisp, relatively easy to understand, have stock pro's and con's, and rookie philosophers, as Freshmen usually are, can handle them, which is why they fulfil this opening rôle in their courses. Let us briefly take a very simple look at them below.

The 'Proofs'

We looked at them in *Genesis Accepted* Number 1, in the 'Creation Matters' article entitled 'Before the Beginning'. We therefore do not need to reproduce it in full here (if you have not got a copy of Number 1, and would like one, the DVD of the first 24 issues, in a PDF format, is available from me at £2.00 per copy including postage - G.A.F.). The clipart diagram below sums up the overall conclusion most come to. I disagree with this

One can't prove God exists with absolute certainty



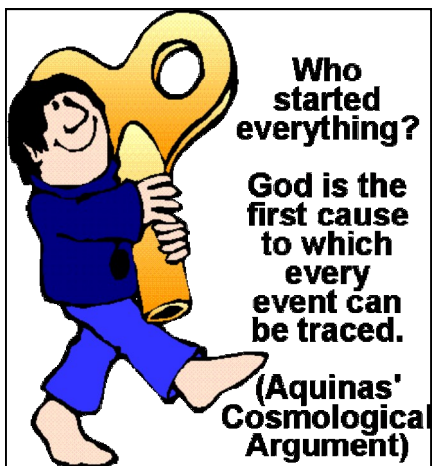
Most people don't try to prove God exists. They search for Him and find Him. Some don't bother to look.

conclusion because I think we can 'prove' His existence but the 'proof' does not lie in philosophical arguments; it is grounded in proving the fact of the resurrection of Jesus three days after He was crucified. Proving this is not the same as a Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot would do by using logic AND forensics. There are no DNA tests, soil-sample analyses or footprints to scrutinize, nevertheless the data can be placed under the microscope of logic and historical analyses and when

honestly conducted comes up with the conclusion that Sherlock comes to when he says that once 'you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth'. (*The Sign of Four*). The resurrection comfortably holds up under analysis like this and, if true, proves that Jesus is 'My Lord and my God' (John 20:28).

The Cosmological Argument

In the universe as we know it, everything has a cause. If you ask the question, 'Who, or what, caused something?' you find yourself going back in time until you arrive at a point where there is no answer to it for nothing lies beyond that. The



evolutionist must arrive at the believed-in micro-dot, or quantum wave, or whatever from which sprang the so-called Big Bang, from nothing. The Christian counters by saying that if that was indeed how the universe began (which we don't accept in our scenario in GA), there must be a being which created the original matter or gravity wave, and we call that 'Being' God. So back comes the argument that you can't have an uncaused causer setting everything in motion and retain the integrity of the argument for the logical question, if you accept the notion that God caused it, you must ask about it is, 'Who then caused God?' There's no end to such a question and no ultimate logical solution can be found in the Cosmological Argument. You are trapped in the illogicality of an 'Infinite Regression'.

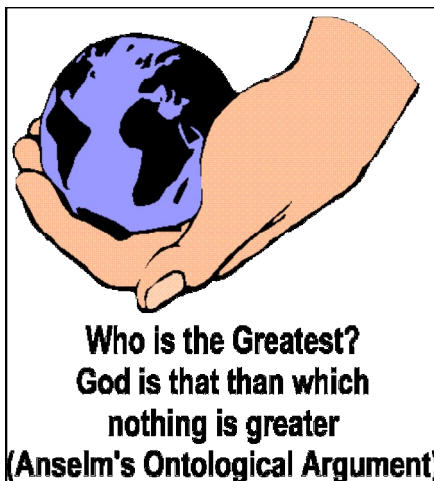
The Ontological Argument

We're going to leave the Teleological Argument to the last, so let's now briefly look at the most difficult argument to follow, the Ontological Argument. Unlike the Cosmological, and indeed the Teleological when we get to it, this Argument is about ideas and not concrete facts and scientific data. It's all about notions of perfection and greatness, and that God is the greatest and most perfect 'Being' or 'Thing' which can be imagined. We bow in awe at the size of the universe, especially when we are told by scientists that the number of stars in the universe is

greater than the number of grains of sand scattered on beaches and in deserts all over the Earth. And the Bible tells us that God knows each one and calls them by name! The Psalmist uses this to try to imagine the knowledge and power of God. 'He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names. Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.' (Ps 147:4-5).

The New Testament weighs in with the notion that God numbers the hairs on our heads and knows what all sparrows are doing and why. "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered." (Mt 10:29-30). God even knows the birthdays of cattle for He slew the firstborn not only of the Egyptians but also of their livestock, at the time of the Exodus (Ex. 11:4-5, and 12:29).

We can't comprehend such knowledge and power but we can imagine someone who can. This greatest imaginable Being is God. He is omniscient (all knowing) and omnipotent (all powerful). He is the most



perfect Being we can imagine but unfortunately our being able to dream up such a perfect Being is not proof that such a One exists. For example, at a much lower level of knowledge and power, we could imagine a perfect unicorn. Scientists could decide on every aspect of this unicorn's make-up so that all could agree on it. However, just because we could do this in no way indicates that such a unicorn exists, for we know there is no such creature in existence, nor ever has been, no matter what we can think about it. In the final analysis, the Ontological Argument merely demonstrates the range and ability of the human imagination. Some would argue that a perfect Being who exists is more perfect than a perfect Being who does not exist but perfection is not a predicate of existence, as the unicorn example demonstrates. Of course our simple summary of it here will leave many questions unan-

swered because eminent philosophers have presented these arguments in great detail. The great French philosopher René Descartes in his book *A Discourse on Method, Meditations and Principles*, came at it from a different angle. (Though the title of this book betokens an unimaginably boring read, it is in fact very easy to read and most interesting to do so. We can be heartily recommended to our readers.)

The Moral Argument

The existence of morality in the world is an enigma. We all take it for granted that it exists and that there is such a thing as morality - though what qualifies for inclusion under the term can vary from culture to culture and even person to person - but all seem to acknowledge that the notions of right and wrong, and ought and ought not, exist but have no locatable origin in nature. Indeed outside of the human species there is no morality, only selfish interest fuelled by the desire to live, eat and reproduce the species.

The atheist, who bases his philosophy on evolution has no logic or reason to believe in goodness, altruism, kindness and love in any form for anything which hinders the notion that only the fittest should survive, to preserve the quality of the gene pool, and anything which threatens this should be allowed to die from its unfit. Every hospital, doctor or nurse, every carer and anybody who tends the unfit, thereby both keeping them alive and often to the point that they can reproduce, goes absolutely against their driving principles. Yet I am quite certain that were Richard Dawkins suddenly to get a broken leg, or pneumonia or an appendicitis, he would be off to his doctor or hospital for treatment faster than he could say 'Charles Darwin'.

Morality is not natural and there is nothing in nature to point to from whence it could have come. Therefore it could only have come from an outside agent who is both loving and moral Himself, and, of course, we are talking about God.

The Teleological Argument

We've left this to the last because it is both the oldest and the best of the traditional Arguments for the existence of God. It is the argument from design.

The scientific world Charles Darwin inhabited was a far cry from the one we now occupy. This, of course, was not his fault. None of us chooses when to be born and what scientific understanding of things will prevail when we are. People born 100 years from now - if the Lord delays His return - will marvel at our ignorance and wonder how we managed without the things they have. My Dad died 40 years ago in 1972 and I frequently try to imagine what he would think if he could

come back for a visit and see what we use and take for granted: computers, mobile telephones on which you can ring California as you are walking down the street, digital cameras which don't use film, watching sport from Australia as it happens, good semi-detached houses which cost more than £4,000, to say nothing of paying ten bob (ten shillings) to post a letter second class!

By the end of the nineteenth century scientists thought they were well in control of the world and had a handle on most things. An atheistic poet, A.C. Swinburne, in a poem glorifying man, wrote:
 'Glory to Man in the highest!
 For Man is the master of things'

Hymn to Man, 1871

Then somebody invented X-rays; and somebody invented the electron microscope; and radio waves were harnessed and... They realised that there was a whole untapped universe at both the micro and macro level with all sorts of things going on so that no scientist today could possibly imagine knowing all the science there was to know. Now the humble ones realise that the more they learn the less they know. The world, no the universe is so vast in both directions - looking upwards or downwards - that we can't comprehend it. Its magnitude leaves us breathless. Even simple creatures are far from simple. The sinking of the Titanic in 1912 was not just a huge human tragedy it was almost a defining moment in knocking men off their 'master of things' perches when their unsinkable ship proved their mortal vulnerability. Darwin's world presented itself as a much simpler world than the reality we know today. He couldn't work outside its boundaries so it is perhaps not surprising that he made so many mistakes in his analysis. What is, however, more surprising is that with all the knowledge we have the vast majority of scientists still cling to some form of Darwinian explanation of things as the notion of evolution reigns supreme in their thinking and any who challenge it are seen as naive, and idiotic, for even thinking about it let alone daring



**Who designed everything?
 - Not chance!
 (Aquinas' Teleological Argument)**

actually to do something about it.

Design

Our experience of life tells us that some things are designed by some intelligent, and often ingenious, minds. The photograph I took at 5.50 p.m. of the clock leaning against a largish rock is a slight variation on a classic point made in the early 19th century by William Paley. He talked about somebody walking down a path and taking no notice of a rock, not thinking much about how it got there or who made it, but if he found a watch he would know instantly it had been designed. All the signs of design are there with parts put together for a purpose. They depend on each other and the whole will not work if one part is missing. Each piece has a purpose within the whole and nobody would deny that a mind had both designed and crafted it.



William Paley

had both designed and crafted it.

The world, the universe, geological, astronomical, biological, etc. show amazingly intricate signs of having been designed and the designs are far more complex than the clock. What is more, the deeper scientists go into the design and structure of things the more complex even so-called simple things actually are. Yet still they won't acknowledge that there is a designer behind it all. Most still claim that all this design happened by chance, just as if the parts of the clock just happened to appear by chance and somehow find each other, come together, work perfectly for each other, and show real purpose. The reason why they refuse to 'see' the great 'designer' behind the universe is that they will have to acknowledge that there is a God and they don't want to do that.

The Teleological Argument was criticised on two counts, one valid and one invalid. The invalid one, which in the books I read about these arguments was touted as the irrefutable proof against it, was that evolution has proven that we don't need a designer to arrive at things which appear to have been

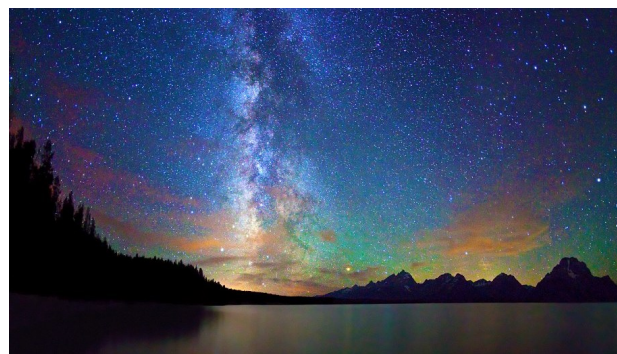


designed. The valid one is that many things which have been designed do not have one designer but rather a team of designers co-operated on it. Thus, if you accept the fact of design it does not necessarily point to one God but rather could well point to a multiplicity of gods. The Teleological Argument does not argue for a monotheistic God, such as the Christian God, but to a possible pantheon of them. This, of course, is the weakness behind the new approach to tackling atheism in the field of Intelligent Design. Yes, it argues very forcibly for the existence of intelligence, or intelligences, behind the universe, but will lead nobody to Christ and Christianity. It's a helpful concept and ally but it's not the whole answer.

God's Argument

The Bible nowhere argues a case for the existence of God. Its opening verse of *'In the beginning God created...'* (Gen. 1:1) merely affirms that there is a God and that He positively created the heavens and the earth. The Psalmist marvels at the heavens and says that they *'declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.'* (Ps 19:1 AV). This view of them brings praise from his lips:

*'O Lord, our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!
 You have set your glory above the heavens...
 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
 the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
 what is man that you are mindful of him,
 and the son of man that you care for him?'* (Ps 8:1-4)



In Romans, the apostle Paul points to the design in nature as proof against those who would deny Him: *'For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.'* (Ro 1:19-20).

It's teleology through and through. You want to know God exists, look at nature, especially by looking up at the sky - electron microscopes not having been invented in David's or Paul's day! - and marvel at His works. The 'faith' of the atheist, especially the atheistic biologist and physicist, to spend so much time studying the marvellous handiwork of God and still denying His existence is truly breath-taking. They mock the faith of the Christian, and especially one who believes in the Young Earth scenario as portrayed in Genesis 1-11, and yet their 'faith' is far more profound because of what they study, discover and then deny. It takes far more faith to be an atheist than to be a Christian, at least in the areas we are examining here.

Back to Tony Flew

So, after over 50 years as the world champion of philosophical atheism (Richard Dawkins is not a philosopher but a scientist), Antong Flew changed his mind and became a deist. It was teleology which turned him. Sadly it left him precisely where teleology, and for that also read 'Intelligent Design', can leave you - with a god, or gods, but no direction as to which god to turn to or indeed how many to accept. It does not lead to biblical monotheism. The Lord God of scripture does not need to be in place to accept design so He is sometimes fashioned as a prime mover having no further interaction with His creation, and not the God who so loved the world that He gave His only Son to interact with us and die on a Cross to save us.

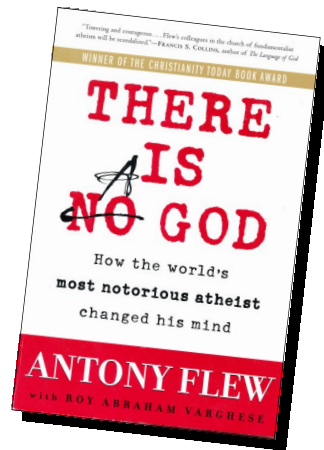
Following where the evidence leads

Flew always taught and believed in the affirmation of Socrates that we should follow the evidence wherever it leads. That takes courage, especially if the evidence leads you away from what you believed to be true. As scientists uncovered more and more of the intricate design in nature, the evidence led him to see the impossibility of the universe merely happening by chance. It was particularly research into DNA which forced this conclusion on to his mind and he felt he had to yield to the evidence; we are not here by chance. Below is what he wrote in his book.

DNA and chance

'...when asked [in a symposium] if

recent work on the origin of life pointed to the activity of a creative Intelligence, I said: "Yes, I now think it does...almost entirely because of the DNA investigations. What I think the DNA material has done is that it has shown by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce (life), that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinarily diverse elements to work together. It's the enor-



mous complexity of the number of elements and the enormous subtlety of the ways they work together. The meeting of these two parts at the right time by chance is simply minute. It is all a matter of the enormous complexity by which the results were achieved, which looked to me like the work of intelligence."

'This statement represented a major change of course for me, but it was nevertheless consistent with the principle I have embraced since the beginning of my philosophical life - of following the argument no matter where it leads.

The Monkey Theorem and Schroeder

'I was particularly impressed with Garry Schroeder's point-by-point refutation of what I call the "monkey theorem." The idea, which has been presented in a number of forms and variations, defends the possibility of life arising by chance using the analogy of a multitude of monkeys banging away on computer keyboards and eventually ending up writing a Shakespearean sonnet.

'Schroeder first referred to an experiment conducted by the British National Council of Arts. A computer was placed in a cage with six monkeys. After one month of hammering away at it (as well as using a bathroom!), the monkeys produced fifty typed pages - but not a single word. Schroeder noted that this was the case even though the shortest word in the English language is one letter (*a* or *I*). *A* is a word only if there is a space on either side of it. If we take it that the keyboard has thirty characters (the twenty-six letters and other symbols), then the likelihood of getting a one-letter word is 30 times 30 times 30, which is 27,000. The likelihood

of getting a one letter word is one chance out of 27,000.

'Schroeder then applied the probabilities to the sonnet analogy. "What's the chance of getting a Shakespearean sonnet?" he asked. He continued:

All the sonnets are the same length. They're by definition fourteen lines long. I pick the one I know the opening line for, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" I counted the number of letters; there are 488 letters in that sonnet. What's the likelihood of hammering away and getting 488 letters in the exact sequence as in "Shall I compare Thee to a Summer's Day?"? What you end up with is 26 multiplied by itself 488 times - or 26 to the 488th power. Or, in other words, in base 10, 10 to the 690th.

'[Now] the number of particles in the universe - not grains of sand, I'm talking about protons, electrons, and neurons - is 10 to the 80th. Ten to the 80th is 1 with 80 zeros after it. Ten to the 690th is 1 with 690 zeros after it. There are not enough particles in the universe to write down the trials; you'd be off by a factor of 10 to the 600th.

'If you took the entire universe and covered it to [sic] computer chips - forget the monkeys - each one weighing a millionth of a gram and had each computer chip able to spin out 488 trials at, say, a million times a second; if you turn the entire universe into these microcomputer chips and these chips were spinning a million times a second [producing] random letters, the number of trials you would get since the beginning of time would be 10 to the 90th trials. It would be off again by a factor of 10 to the 600th. You will never get a sonnet by chance. The universe would have to be 10 to the 600th times larger. Yet the world just thinks the monkeys can do it every time.

'After hearing Schroeder's presentation, I told him that he had very satisfactorily and decisively established that the "monkey theorem" was a load of rubbish, and that it was particularly good to do it with just a sonnet; the theorem is sometimes proposed using the works of Shakespeare or a single play, such as *Hamlet*. If the theorem won't work for a single sonnet, then of course it's simply absurd to suggest that the more elaborate feat of the origin of life could have been achieved by chance.'

Conclusion

I have taken a good deal of time quoting from Flew's book because it is both interesting, can't easily be summarized, if at all, and demonstrates beautifully why the universe could not have occurred by chance.

It convinced the great atheist Professor Flew that there has to be a God. And that is why the pope became a protestant!

NOAH'S FLOOD and the importance of a true biblical perspective

The world disregards the reality of the fact that the Earth, according to a biblical chronology, is only about 6,000 years old. Alongside this comes a denial that there was a Flood in Noah's day which destroyed all air-breathing life-forms save for those preserved inside the safety of an Ark, which the Lord commissioned Noah to build for this purpose. I save cuttings and the like to see if they can be used at some point and I have here two items, one of recent date and the other just over two years ago. Both have a background amongst religious people who are supposed to take the Bible seriously but both ignore the reality of the Flood. One was to introduce an absolute perversion of the Bible's message on the equality before God of all human beings and the other to disprove an archaeological claim - which probably was disproven by other means anyway - on the grounds that the Flood could not have happened.

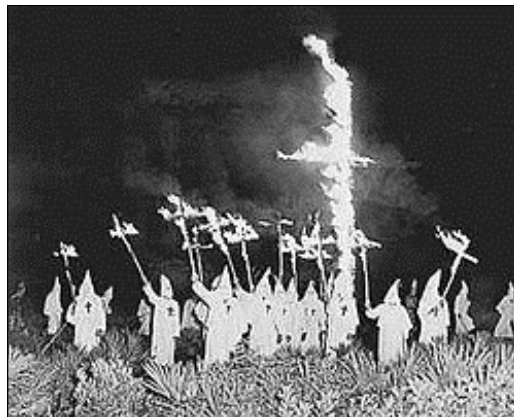
The KKK

Quite honestly I thought the Ku Klux Klan was virtually dead but apparently it still lingers on in some southern states of the USA. In the November 2012 edition of *The Christian Chronicle* there is an item about one of our brave pulpit ministers, Brad Cox, who heard of a Klan rally in Alabama and, along with another equally brave brother brother, Brian Belomy, went along and confronted their leaders to register a protest.

They met with a Rev. Mel Lewis and reported his defence of the Klan's attitude thus: *'For the next 20 minutes, Rev. Lewis explained their warped view of Scripture, namely that Jews, blacks, Hispanics and Muslims — "the mongrels" — were created "without souls" in Genesis 1, and the pure line of Adam, white people, were created later by God in Genesis 2.'*

Now that's an interesting take on the Creation story, which we won't go into here. I've never heard that one before. Mr Lewis apparently accepts the reality of the story of Creation in Genesis 1 and 2 but he's a bit thin on the rest of it, especially when it comes to the Flood. Even allow-

ing that these mysterious soulless people were created in Genesis 1 - which we don't, of course - the Genesis record indicates that some 1656 years after Creation there was a genetic bottleneck when all were destroyed save for one family, that of righteous Noah. We know that he had a



KKK rally: Gainsville Florida 1922

Photo from Wikipedia

soul and that all the world's people from him forward are descended from him so, if the poor soulless ones ever existed, they all drowned. Consequently there is absolutely no biblical argument to be made for this scandalous interpretation based on the so-called two creation accounts in Genesis. A simple understanding and belief in the truth of the Bible on these things makes defeating such evil interpretations easy. If you don't believe in what God clearly has told us happened, you can compromise your faith and open the door to letting in all sorts of faithless evil ideas - maybe not this one but there are plenty of others which can sneak in under the radar as a result.

Discounting an archaeological claim

In a copy of a religious magazine called *Third Way*, which I was sent in June 2010 to tempt me into subscribing, they carried this small item:

'Ark at that

A group of evangelical explorers is claiming to have discovered the remains of Noah's ark in Turkey. The team say they recovered wooden specimens from a structure on Mount Ararat that carbon dating proved was 4,800 years old. Archaeologists are treating the claim with a boatload of scepticism. "There's not enough H₂O in the world to get an ark that high up a mountain," said Peter Ian Kuniholm of Cornell University.'

So there you have it. It couldn't be the ark because you can't get water that high up a mountain. Case dismissed! Note the assumptions being made here:

- 1) The mountains were all in place as we see them today in Noah's day.
- 2) The oceanic deeps were as deep as they are today in Noah's day.
- 3) In other words, as Peter wrote in his Second Letter, that the Christians of his day 'remember the predictions of

the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.' (2 Pe 3:2-6).

These people have never studied a thing about the Flood so know nothing of the solution. Assuming that the Bible can't be right, they dismiss it, as Peter said they would. There are answers as we *Genesis Accepted* readers have seen, but it takes study and a biblical understanding to help here, which includes a belief that the Bible is telling the literal truth. Don't ever let sceptics undermine your faith.



Mount Everest (from Wikipedia) has fossiliferous limestone on its summit showing it was raised from the sea bed after the Flood not before it

Flood evidence from old trees



Llangernyw yew, (North Wales) St Dygain's churchyard

The North Wales Yew

I came across this photograph of an old yew tree in North Wales. It is so old that the trunk has split in two but it is one tree. The item I read did not marvel too much at it because there was no belief in the Flood of Noah's day behind it, even though it was in the *Church Times*. This is a liberal Church of England weekly newspaper and the editorial policy is strongly evolutionary and very hotly anti Creationists, whom they label 'Fundamentalists'. On that they are correct because the term simply means those who believe in the fundamental truths of the Bible. Unfortunately the militant Muslims, and others, who gladly accept the term within their religious systems, are not only believers in the basic truth of their faith but that this gives them a right to take violent action against any who don't share their convictions. In other words the term is now used with the undertone of a 'mad militant activist', which we most definitely are not. The *Church Times* backs evolution and mocks those who don't, so they missed the truth being portrayed in this yew tree.

Let us therefore look at what is said about this tree on Wikipedia:

'This male yew tree lives in the churchyard of St. Dygain's Church in Llangernyw village, North Wales. Although it is very hard to tell the age of yew trees, it is believed to be aged between 4,000 years and 5,000 years old, making it the second or third oldest individual (non-clonal colony) living organism in the world. The tree took root sometime in the prehistoric Bronze Age and is still a thriving, healthy and growing tree...

'The churchyard gate holds a certificate from the Yew Tree Campaign in 2002, signed by Professor David Bellamy certifying that the tree is dated as between 4,000 and 5,000 years old.'

I see no reason to doubt the general estimation of the age of a tree like this. We would expect it to be somewhere about 4,500 years old if it germinated immediately after the Flood, and this it appears to have done. Consequently we are looking at a tree which began its life while Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth were alive and before the Babel incident and the coming of the Ice Age. What a story it could tell if it could speak! But in this it does 'speak' because it gives a consistent message to the truth of the Bible. Carbon dating is not accurate beyond a few thousand years but over these time-spans it is a helpful tool. I think it is awesome to look at a tree and think that it is alive still yet it dates from when Noah lived and the Earth was recovering after the Flood. (How it survived the effects of the Ice Age would be a good question for some research but unfortunately I cannot undertake it, though maybe we could speculate from an armchair some time in the future.)

The Bristlecone Pine

These are thought to be **THE** oldest living things. They are situated in several places in the Rockies, mainly in California and Nevada. They consist of three different but related species and are protected either because of their age or because their rates of regeneration are very slow. They are found at high altitudes between 5,600ft and 11,200ft and here is a little of what Wikipedia says about them:

'The bristlecone pines are the oldest single living organisms known (though some plants form clonal colonies which may be many times older). The oldest bristlecone pines are single plants that have been alive for a little less than 5,000 years. These very old trees are of great importance in dendrochronology or tree-ring dating.

'The oldest living organism known is a bristlecone pine tree nicknamed "Methuselah" (after Methuselah, the longest-lived person in the Bible). It is located in the Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest in the White Mountains of eastern California, however its precise location is undisclosed by the U.S. Forest Service to protect the tree from vandalism. The age of Methuselah was measured by core samples in 1957 to be 4,789 years old.'

Here again we notice the same link to the dating of the Flood. It is not coincidence that both the North Wales yew tree and the 'Methuselah' bristlecone pine are dated, reasonably accurately, to some time just under 5,000 years ago, which is when we understand the Flood-waters abated and the Earth was repopulated with plants and trees. No doubt the growing conditions were extremely good and germination was quick. This was before the cooling effects of the Ice Age arrived to

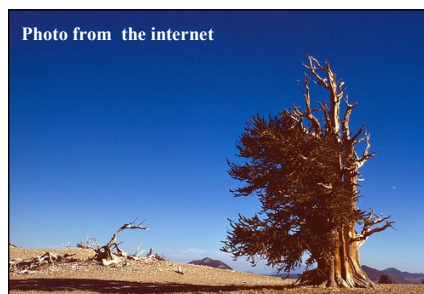


Photo from the internet

A bristlecone pine

alter global climates for good.

Once again we have significant evidence of the accuracy and truth of the biblical account and the dates it indicates for these events (it doesn't give accurate, verifiable dates but you can work them out if you wish, though why 'reinvent the wheel' when it's already been done?). This time the date was calculated by counting growth rings from a core sample, as opposed to carbon C¹⁴ dating. This tree-ring dating, like C¹⁴ dating methods, make assumptions about growth rates and whether one ring actually does equal one year or whether blips have altered them, either up or down, under certain special circumstances but essentially they are near enough for our purposes.

Conclusion

It's nice when you get unexpected confirmation of the Bible and its reliability. This strengthens faith considerably.

The faith of Abraham and Sarah

One of my favourite TV programmes is *Have I Got News For You*. For those who don't know it, it is a political, satirical, supposed quiz programme, which essentially seeks to lampoon leading politicians and what they do or are doing. I said 'supposed quiz' because, though a score is kept nobody cares about it and generally one regular panellist always loses to the other. The two are Ian Hislop, current editor of the satirical political weekly magazine, *Private Eye*, and Paul Merton, a comedian with a razor-sharp wit and mind with an eye for the absurd in the posturing of the 'mighty'. You couldn't imagine a programme like this on North Korean television, or indeed in any autocratic, authoritarian country. I think it's a very healthy sign here for all sorts of reasons. (I believe the Americans are looking into setting up their own version of it but so much depends on the acerbic wit of Merton and the political acumen of Hislop that choosing regular panellists will be a real problem for them.)



Baroness Trumpington
(Photo from Google)

Anyway, be that as it may, each week there are two guest panellists: one to accompany each of the regular pair. At the end of November 2012 one of the guests was a Baroness Trumpington, who is 90 and still sits in the House of Lords. She's what we like to call 'a character', and amongst other things she worked at Bletchley Park for naval intelligence, cracking codes during WWII. Just before the programme started to run the opening captions, we were greeted by a bemused and somewhat indignant baroness, who obviously had no idea she was being filmed as she spoke, asking, "Will somebody tell why, at 90-years-of-age, I had to sign a piece of paper before I could come on declaring that I wasn't pregnant?" Since her first name is 'Jean', not Sarah, and her husband died in 1988, we can assume there is to be no repeat unexpected miracle of birth in her case. But my mind flashed back to Abraham and Sarah immediately after she spoke before the programme got under way.

A puzzling point

There is a very puzzling point about the birth of Isaac rarely considered in lessons, and we're not referring to the

great age of both his father (100) and his mother (90). These facts are very well-known and covered.

The puzzling point is why was Sarah well beyond the age of childbearing? Well, at 90, there's no problem there, is there? However we have to be aware that conditions of maturity and fertility could, and logically should, have been different then. We know that before the Flood the patriarchs lived to massive ages by our standards but that after the Flood longevity steadily declined. However, by Abraham's time, it had not come down to today's levels. Sarah is the only woman in the Bible to have her age at death recorded. She died aged 127 (Gen. 23:1), which is way beyond today's life expectancy, but Abraham reached the much greater old age of 175 (Gen. 25:7) and fathered six more children, after Sarah's death apparently, by Keturah (Gen. 25:2).

At the time he was told that Sarah was to conceive, his immediate thought was: 'Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?' (Gen. 17:17). Clearly he thought that at 100 he was past fathering children and that at 90 Sarah was well past menopause and likewise well beyond child-bearing age. Reproductively, under normal modern conditions, they were both past it, though they were still expecting to live almost twice as long as we do today. Wouldn't you think that if they matured more slowly and lived longer, their effective reproductive life would also be naturally more extensive than ours today? However God miraculously reinvigorated them sexually and Sarah conceived Isaac, and Abraham was able to continue fathering sons into a much later old age. When God 'rejuvenates' He makes a wonderful job of it, though Sarah's blessing was confined to one baby only.

Antediluvian reproduction

Abraham was said to have died thus: 'Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years,' (Ge 25:8). Nevertheless, compared to the antediluvian patriarchs he was a mere whippersnapper. They lived on average for 912 years yet their reproductive activity came relatively early in their lifetimes. Whilst it may be true to a certain extent that the wives may have reached menopause later than their post-diluvian counterparts, they would still have done so relatively early in life given the ages when their husbands first became fathers. The oldest before Noah was Methuselah who is recorded as having sired Lamech at 187 and he seemed to have continued doing so

afterwards, but for how much longer we don't know. The ages given for first-time fatherhood for the others was much lower than this. Noah, however, was 500 before he had Shem, which was quite exceptional. He seems to have had his lads in fairly quick succession and then stopped, not being recorded as having had any daughters at all, or other sons. We looked at this a little in *Genesis Accepted* Number 5, when considering 'Noah's wife'.

Noah's family

There is no record of Noah getting upset by his lack of children, as Abraham did. Admittedly Abraham had been made a specific promise by God that he would father many nations and Noah was only told to build an ark for the saving of his family (Gen. 6:18, cf. Heb. 11:7). Yet when the ark was commissioned Shem had not been born, and was not to appear for another 20 years, so Noah may have wondered what was going to happen on the family front. The problem here is whether Mrs Noah was barren, as was Sarah, and had passed menopause, as had Sarah, or was she a very much younger woman than Noah, who had been a bachelor until he was commissioned to start building an ark? The lack of panic and questioning from Noah would seem to indicate that the latter was the case and that she was still at a fertile stage in her life. Therefore she must have been a much younger woman than her husband. Noah, we must remember, though probably very much older than she was, would be in vigorous middle-aged-type maturity, virile and active, and not at all a broken down old man. After all, he was 950 when he died and must only have been 480 when God commissioned him to build the ark to set the judgement process in motion. It's hard for us to get our heads around what life must have been like during those early days on Earth.

The post-diluvian world

We see then in the story of the birth of Isaac a different scenario than in the past. We remember from other studies that both Noah and Shem were still alive when Abraham was born, and indeed Shem outlived Abraham so must possibly have been aware of Sarah's dilemma and Abraham's anxiety. (He died when Esau and Jacob were 70.) There is no indication that his fertility level was enhanced like Abraham's was into old age, but then he didn't need it; his blessing in this regard had been well fulfilled.

Trust and Obey

But once this promise was made to Abraham and Sarah by the Lord: 'The Lord said, "I will surely return to you

about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." (Ge 18:10-14).

Now there is no notion presented here that Sarah was to conceive by the Holy Spirit, as did Mary when Jesus was to be born. This was not to be a miraculous conception but a normal one. Mary was a virgin, unmarried and pure, so God was not going to ask her to sin so that the Christ could be born. He does not accept the notion that we can sin so that grace may abound (cf. Rom. 6:1-2). Sarah most certainly was not a virgin since she and Abraham had been trying for years to have a child together. The miracle for Sarah was that she was quickened again sexually so that she could conceive normally, and bear a son normally, even though she was 90.

Now just imagine what must have been going on in the heads of Abraham and Sarah. They had faith that the Lord would honour His promise and that in twelve months she would be a mum. But, as with all men of faith who are mentioned in the Bible for their faith, it was never a case of them sitting around waiting for God to do all the work for them. Noah was told to build an ark, but he had to go out and build it, no doubt sweating and toiling to exhaustion at times in the process. God no doubt sent the animals to him but Noah faithfully built the Ark to God's blueprint. Salvation came then by the combination of God and man working together to fulfil this commission. (Salvation always comes this way: trust and obey!) God tells us to go and preach the Gospel but we have to find the way to do it and work hard at it. He won't do it for us. We do it in love and faith.



The Three Men visit Abraham (Two angels and the Lord)

One wonders just how long it had been since Abraham and Sarah had come together sexually to make love, when they were finally promised the birth. They knew that the implication behind the promise was that, if the promise was to be fulfilled, they had a big part to play in it. It wouldn't happen on its own as if by magic. Abraham had laughed at the seeming absurdity of the notion of Sarah bearing a son. Sarah had laughed too when she overheard those words. Now that they had seen that the Lord wasn't kidding there was one further test of faith for them, and they had to believe that this time it would work. They had to act in faith by making love as they once did when they were trying so hard in the past to see if Sarah would conceive, but to no avail, and believe that this time it would work. That must have taken amazing faith, when you stop to think about it. She would have no idea whether it had worked. As the Bible delicately puts it, '*The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah*'. In other words she was not menstruating so would have no early indication that conception had indeed taken place as she missed a period. She had none to miss. It would not be until a few months when she quickened as the baby kicked her, and also she began to 'carry all before her', as we say, when the 'bump' becomes

obvious, that she would know for certain that she was indeed 'with child' and that her joy was indeed finally going to be completed.

It was magic when Barbara told me that the baby who was to be our Sarah gave her a kick. We can't really imagine just how magical it must have been for a 90-year-old, once barren woman, to know she was now to be blessed. She went from sorrow and despair to unimaginable joy and that came as a result of her faith, and that faith was expressed by both her husband and herself as they once more - and possibly much more than once more - came together sexually so that their faith and trust could be seen in obedience, and ensure that the blessing would follow in due course.

Baroness Trumpington has a son; the idiot jobsworth who made her sign on the dotted line before granting her permission to participate in the programme should have had the acumen to figure that out. But the birth of Isaac is not just about a miracle, it's about a further example of Abraham's and Sarah's amazing faith.

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



