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Order
in the
Court of the King!

Volume Six

By

Mark McGee

Welcome to Volume VI of our special series, *Order in the Court of the King!* If this is the first time you've read this series, please read the first five volumes to acquaint yourself with our views on God's Eternal Kingdom.

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Volume VI is where I'm going to share some of the 'divisive' issues that arose during the first few years of my life as a Christian. By 'divisive' I mean these are beliefs within churches that often 'divide' Christians from each other.

I came into Christianity from atheism, so I didn't have any particular 'side' to defend other than what I found to be true through studying God's Word. I learned that Christians viewed particular verses or subjects in the Bible differently for various reasons. Some of them came at the Bible from a particular 'denominational' position. They were defending the beliefs of their particular denomination. Others came at the Bible from a particular 'doctrinal' position. What I mean by that is they viewed portions of Scripture based on what doctrines they had learned through teachings they had heard from others. Those teachings might come from TV preachers, radio preachers, speakers at conferences, or favorite authors - to name a few.

I hadn't been a Christian long enough to have any particular 'denominational' or 'doctrinal' view. I just believed what I read in the Bible. I really saw it as 'God's Word.' Like Jesus to the devil - "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Believing that Jesus was who said He was, God in flesh, I took Him at His word and read everything God had said and believed it.

I soon learned that many Christians didn't see that as an adequate view of what it meant to be a 'Christian.' That's when I began hearing a lot of different views (interpretations) of the same Bible verses and subjects from a wide variety of people who said they believed the Bible was the Word of God. My thought as a new Christian was that God's Word was true. I believed that what He said was true. So, how could God's Word be true if so many of His people disagreed with each other about what God said and meant?

I've already addressed the issue of divisions in the Church caused by 'heretical' teaching, so that's not where I'm going with this volume. I want to share about things I learned early in my Christian life that were more along the line of 'non-heretical' teaching. While not a direct heresy you could point to in the Bible and yell out loud - HERETIC IN THE CHURCH - they did cause divisions among God's people.

You may read some of the things I'll address in this volume and believe that they are heresy. I understand that. If you believe that, then by all means respond in the way that's appropriate. If you think some of the things I'll address are not heresy but are problematic, then please respond in the way that's appropriate. If you don't think any of the things I'll address are a problem, then keep doing what you're doing unless and until God shows you differently.

I hope that's a fair way of putting it. I love and respect my brothers and sisters in Christ. We don't have to agree on every little point to love each other. It's like what the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13 - "And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." You'll know from the context of other things Paul wrote that he's not saying we should put up with heretics in the Church because of 'love.' Not at all. What he is saying, within the context of divisions within the Corinthian church, is that we need to deal with differences in a spirit of love.

I have had many close and dear friends through the years who believed differently than me on many things in the Bible. The key to me is that we love each other enough to sit down and talk our different perspectives as brothers and sisters in Christ. We're going to spend eternity together in Heaven, so why not treat each other as part of a great eternal family?

Again, Paul to the Corinthians - “For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many” (1 Corinthians 12:12-14). Also to the Ephesians - “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:1-6).

Lots of 'oneness' in those verses. Can you feel the love? I hope so because what I'm about to share with you may come across as less than loving if we don't agree on something that's important to both of us. That doesn't mean I don't love you, and I hope that doesn't mean you don't love me. Love and respect. I hope we find ways to get there because that's what we're to experience throughout eternity - love and respect.

Surprise!

When I was an atheist journalist investigating Christianity, I wanted answers to three basic questions –

1. Does God Exist?
2. Is the Bible Historically accurate?
3. Did Jesus Christ live, die, and rise from the dead?

If any of those were not true, then Christianity couldn't true. After several months of investigating the truth claims, I came to the conclusion that Christianity was true. I became a Christian. I used several tried and true investigative techniques, including the PPT System – People, Places, Things. Did the people exist? Did the places exist? Did the things exist? I found the Bible to be an historically accurate ancient document.

So, imagine my surprise when I met Christians who said parts of the Bible were not historically accurate? I wondered if they had done the same kind of research I had, but I listened to what they had to say. I also read books and articles they said proved that Genesis chapters 1 – 11 were allegory rather than history.

I retraced my investigative steps to make sure I hadn't missed something. I would have agreed with these people months earlier. In fact, I would have said that the entire Bible was historically inaccurate, full of myths and legends, including the existence of Jesus of Nazareth. However, after painstakingly checking Bible information with non-biblical sources, and seeing that Jesus and His apostles also supported the historical data of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), I came to a different conclusion than some of my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Who Wrote Genesis?

I wondered why some Christians would think Genesis 1 – 11 was ‘allegory,’ yet view most of the rest of the Bible as history? I say ‘most of the rest of the Bible’ because many of those same Christians also viewed the Book of Revelation as allegory and Job as an ‘invented’ story. That’s a topic for another day, so I’ll stick to Genesis for now.

Why stop at chapter 11 of Genesis? Why not just say that the entire Book of Genesis was allegory? Or, why not say Genesis 1 – 5 was allegory, but Genesis 6 and following was history? Why specifically pick out Genesis chapters 1 – 11? What was it about those chapters in particular?

I had learned from my previous investigation that Moses had written Genesis and four other Books of the Bible (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). Yes, I know there is some debate about Moses being the human author of Genesis. How could Moses possibly have known about events that occurred centuries before he was born?

The most obvious answer is that God told Moses about the events included in the Book of Genesis. It's important to remember that God first 'spoke' to Moses from a burning bush that wasn't destroyed by the fire. It was a 'holy' place. It's also helpful to remember that God met with Moses personally on top of a mountain and in many other places during a period of 40 years –

So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. Exodus 33:11

Do you think 40 years was enough time for God to reveal all of the details we read in the Book of Genesis – including chapters 1 – 11? I think so, too.

Read Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and you'll see many of the things that God revealed to Moses. Moses wrote the things that God told him and passed them along to leaders of Israel – including Joshua, and the priests and elders of Israel.

When Jesus and His apostles spoke of ‘Scripture’ they meant the Hebrew Bible. Christians call that the ‘Old Testament.’ The Apostle Paul wrote, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16). The Apostle Peter wrote, “no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20-21). For those Christians who might say that Moses was not a prophet, let’s read a couple of verses from the ‘inspired’ Word of God –

*The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear.
Deuteronomy 18:15*

*But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.
Deuteronomy 34:10*

Jesus Christ believed Moses existed and often quoted from His writings, including from Genesis chapters 1 – 11. Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus at what Christians call the ‘Mount of Transfiguration’ (Matthew 17).

Quotes From Jesus/Gospels

Jesus Christ the Lord quoted from Genesis 1 – 11 in the ‘historical’ genre, not allegory or myth –

But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Matthew 24:37-39

And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Luke 17:26-27

Did Jesus mean for His disciples to understand Noah and the Flood as allegory or history? If Noah and the Flood were allegory, might it be that Jesus was saying His return to earth was also allegorical? I know that some 'church' people do believe Christ's return to earth is allegorical, so I think they would answer in the affirmative. Believing that Jesus is not going to return to earth when there is so many biblical claims that He will, doesn't that sound 'heretical?' What do you believe Jesus meant?

Here's another –

The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate. Matthew 19:4-6

Jesus quoted from Genesis 2:24. Did He just answer the Pharisees question about the Mosaic Law by using an allegory? Jesus did use parables in answering His opponents as well as His followers. However, Christ's parables were usually stories without direct quotes from Scripture. Why would Jesus answer the Pharisees with Scripture if it was just a story, an allegory? If the Pharisees believed Genesis 2:24 was allegorical, how would that answer their question with any authority?

Here's another –

Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. Matthew 23:34-36

Why would Jesus include the ‘allegorical’ murder of Abel along with the ‘historical’ murder of Zechariah, son of Berechiah? Jesus was pronouncing ‘woes’ on the leaders of Israel. Why would He mix myth with fact?

When Luke listed the genealogy of Jesus, he listed people in in the order of ‘the son of, the son of, the son of,’ etc. Notice the people on the list who are from Genesis 1 – 11 ..

... the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.
Luke 3:34-48

Was Luke repeating ‘allegory’ or ‘history?’ If allegory, why present it along with historical individuals like Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Perez, Hezron, Ram, and Amminadab? Luke told Theophilus that his purpose for writing him was ‘to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us.’ Luke wrote that his letter (Gospel) was ‘an orderly account’ so that Theophilus would ‘know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.’ If that was truly Luke’s purpose, why would Luke mix historically inaccurate information about Jesus’ lineage with accurate information? Why mix allegory with history and present it all as ‘historical?’ Does that make sense to you? Me neither.

Quotes From The Apostles

The Lord's apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, also quoted from Genesis 1 – 11 in the 'historical' genre, not allegorical or mythical –

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. Romans 5:14

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 1 Corinthians 15:22

For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 1 Timothy 2:13

By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. Hebrews 11:4

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. Hebrews 11:7

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 1 Peter 3:18-20

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly. 2 Peter 2:4-5

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 2 Peter 3:5-6

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints. Jude 1:14

For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. 1 John 3:11-12

Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. Jude 1:11

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Hebrews 12:22-24

Given so much Scriptural evidence to the contrary, why do so many Christians believe that Genesis 1 – 11 is allegorical rather than historical? Excellent question!

Genesis and Science

The way many Christians answered my question as a young Christian was to say that Genesis 1 – 11 did not agree with ‘science.’ I found that very interesting since it was ‘science’ that started me on my investigation as an atheist in the first place. Why would an atheist journalist eventually discover that science and the Bible were compatible, but some Christians didn’t? They seemed more comfortable believing that Genesis 1 – 11 had to be allegorical because it didn’t agree with millions of years of evolution (rather than God’s direct creation) and a regional flood (rather than a world-wide flood). What kind of ‘science’ were they believing?

Science is simply ‘knowledge’ gained through investigation and experimentation. I’ve watched the development of ‘science’ in many different fields for several decades and can point to continual changes in ‘scientific’ information. Why? Because people continue to learn new things. They continue to investigate and experiment. ‘Science’ continues to expand and change through that process of ‘learning.’

The Bible is different. It's complete. God has spoken and He does not change –

For I am the Lord, I do not change. Malachi 3:6

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Hebrews 1:1-4

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
Hebrews 13:8*

Science (knowledge) changes. God does not change. Jesus, the Son of God, is always the same. That we know for sure because – ‘the Bible tells us so.’

I’m interested in what scientists continue to learn. I’ve covered scientific news for almost 60 years as a journalist and know it will continue to change. Journalists who cover science always have something new to report because ‘science’ keeps changing. I’ve even seen scientists change their minds to the point that they strongly disagreed with their own ‘scientific findings’ from earlier. They do a ‘science 180.’ Why would Christians put their ‘faith’ in a changing science when they can put their faith into something far more reliable and steadfast.

I'm more interested in what God says, because it's unchangeable. God is perfect, therefore His knowledge is perfect. Jesus Christ is Truth, therefore what He says is true. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit of God would 'guide' the apostles into all truth (John 16), therefore what the apostles said and wrote is true. If they quote from Genesis 1 – 11 as truthful information, I believe them. If science doesn't agree, wait for 'scientists' to catch up with what God knows. Isn't that real science? Discovering what God has known from the beginning?

As I wrote earlier, Christians denying that parts of God's Word that are clearly written as historical are really nothing more than allegorical surprised me as a young Christian. The longer I studied the subjects involved, my surprise changed to concern – concern for my fellow believers.

Slippery Slope

Believing that portions of God's Word have to be submissive to 'science' is a dangerous and slippery slope. Once you begin that process of calling Scripture 'allegory' when it is obviously written as 'history,' you are about to fall off the edge of a cliff. Some people would call that a 'slippery slope' –

A tricky precarious situation, especially one that leads gradually but inexorably to disaster. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 5th Edition

I hate to see Christians slip and 'drift away' from the Truth of God's Word. They are slipping away from that special place God has for all of His children – under His protection. It reminds me of the words of David when God protected him from King Saul –

For You are my lamp, O Lord; The Lord shall enlighten my darkness. For by You I can run against a troop; By my God I can leap over a wall. As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a

shield to all who trust in Him. “For who is God, except the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God? God is my strength and power, And He makes my way perfect. He makes my feet like the feet of deer, And sets me on my high places. He teaches my hands to make war, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. “You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your gentleness has made me great. You enlarged my path under me; So my feet did not slip. 2 Samuel 22:29-37

I know from personal experience that this question of whether Genesis 1 – 11 is history or allegory can be very divisive in a local church. I found that many people who believe Genesis 1 -11 is allegory also believe many other portions of Scripture are also allegory (e.g. Revelation, Job).

How do we address division in a church? Ask questions of people who believe it. Find out why they believe what they believe. Listen closely to how they respond, ask more questions if necessary, pray for God's wisdom, then share your thoughts based on your careful study of God's Word. If you find that discussing it further will only make things worse, take the matter to your elder/overseers. See what wisdom they have on the matter. Are they aware of the problem in the church? Are they already addressing it? If not, will they? If not, why not? If elders of a church are unwilling to address the issue, you will have to make your decision about how to proceed.

Will you remain in a church where portions of God's Word are allowed to be discussed or even taught as being allegorical when they are clearly historical? Keep in mind that our primary objective as Christians are two-fold: bring glory to God and finish the work He has given us to do. Where does God want you to do that? Ask Him and He will give you direction and peace.

When a Christian begins to fall away from beliefs they once held to strongly, or from beliefs that are central to the beliefs of a particular church, there is a good chance they will continue to slip into other errors. The best advice that comes to mind at this moment is what the Apostle Paul wrote the Galatians. It's not exactly the same context we're looking at now, but it demonstrates the 'attitude' Christians should have toward each other when they see someone slip or drift toward error –

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load. Galatians 6:1-5

James 5 is another example – again not the exact context – but a demonstration of both ‘attitude and action’ to help a brother or sister who drift into error –

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. James 5:19-20

Christian, who do you trust with your life? God or science? Trust God. He is Perfect in all His ways. He does not change. Science is often imperfect in its ways and can change over time. I chose God almost 55 years ago (or should I say He chose me). Best decision I ever made.

On Challenging God

Jesus therefore answered and said to them, “Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. John 6:43-45

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. John 16:7-8

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted

ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2:1-9

I am under no illusions about the fact that God saved me without any help from me. I am thankful that I had no part in it because I would have messed it up. People who are 'dead in trespasses and sins' do that, you know – mess up. I'm glad Jesus Christ established an 'orderly' system for salvation based on, 'by Grace alone, through Faith alone, in Christ alone.'

I want to make that clear so you don't misunderstand the points I'm about to share. I take no credit for my salvation. It was all of God. I 'boast' in Him and Him alone.

It seems like just yesterday. I was live on air challenging God to 'prove' He existed. I challenged God to sit across a table from me and let me interview Him on live radio. I waited several seconds, but nothing happened. God didn't appear. As an arrogant, mocking atheist radio talk show host, I laughed and said maybe God was sick or on vacation. What I didn't know was that He was with me in the radio control room and heard my challenge. I also didn't know that He loved. He accepted my challenge, but His way of responding wasn't what I expected.

Months later I interviewed a scientist who was in town to speak at a local church about leading a group of scientists to Mt. Ararat to search for Noah's Ark. I thought it would be a laugh to have him on my show. What I didn't know as that God was answering my challenge that day. The scientist was a leader in the 'Creationist' movement.

Dr. Henry Morris had earned degrees from Rice University in Houston, Texas with a BS in Civil Engineering, and the University of Minnesota with an MS in Hydraulics and a Ph.D. in Hydraulic Engineering. He was a professor and Chair of Civil Engineering at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, a professor of applied science at Southern Illinois University, and Department Chair of Civil Engineering at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). In 1961, Dr. Morris worked with Dr. John C. Whitcomb, an expert in the Old Testament, to publish *The Genesis Flood*. They used data from several scientific disciplines (e.g. geology, archaeology, and hydrology) to demonstrate that they believed science supports the biblical record of the worldwide Flood in Genesis.

Dr. Morris answered questions from an atheist (me) with kindness, patience, and the kind of detail that was truly impressive. God touched my mind that day in a way that no one ever had before. That caused a small crack in my 'atheist armor.' That crack grew larger as I investigated the scientific answers Dr. Morris had given to my questions, plus other information I found and confirmed.

God met me again when I had an evangelist on my radio program, and through him met an expert in Old Testament archaeology. I wanted to know if God existed, if the Bible was a credible historical document, and if Jesus of Nazareth had actually lived, died, and risen from the dead. By the time my investigation was completed, the evangelist introduced me to the God I had challenged. I became a believer.

As I wrote earlier, I am under no illusions about any part I played in my salvation. All I did was challenge God to meet with me. I didn't believe God existed, so never expected Him to show up. Show up He did, and I am so glad He did.

Creation

Did I mention that as an atheist I believed in ‘evolution?’ Makes sense. No God, no Creation. I had been taught ‘evolution as fact’ since I started attending public schools. Evolution was the way people viewed things in the 1950s and 60s when I was in various public schools and college. To suddenly learn that God existed and had created the ‘heavens and the earth’ was quite a surprise to me. I was also surprised that Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, had made ‘all things,’ that without Him ‘nothing was made that was made’ (John 1:3).

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the

beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. Colossians 1:15-18

So, imagine my surprise after becoming a Christian to meet Christians who didn't believe in 'direct creation.' By that I mean they didn't believe God spoke matter into existence. They believed God got things started, then watched as matter and life 'evolved.' What? How could a Christian who had read the same Bible I had read say they believed in evolution instead of Creation? No wonder God sent a Creationist for me to interview. If I had interviewed a Christian who was an evolutionist like me, how would that have put a crack in my armor as an atheist? It would have demonstrated to me that Christians believed what I believed – except they believed in the existence of God. Okay, but where's the evidence if things just evolved? I know God saves people in any way He wants. I'm just sharing from my perspective. An evolutionist wasn't who I needed to talk with. I needed someone who knew science and the Bible, and that's who God sent me.

Direct Creation

I want to spend a few minutes on ‘direct creation’ because it will help share my perspective as a young Christian (and now as well). What I mean by the word ‘direct’ is that God created space, time, and matter without anyone or anything’s help – including millions or billions of years of ‘evolution.’ As an atheist researching the Bible, the claim was clear – God ‘directly’ created. In fact, that’s one of the problems I had with the credibility of the Bible. It clearly claimed that God directly created everything. That didn’t fit with my view as an evolutionist. I struggled with that during my investigation, prior to becoming a Christian.

- So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Genesis 1:27
- And the Lord God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Genesis 2:7

- By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. Psalm 33:6
- By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. Hebrews 11:3
- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. John 1:1-3
- For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. Colossians 1:16
- I have made the earth, And created man on it. I—My hands—stretched out the heavens, And all their host I have commanded. Isaiah 45:12
- When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower

than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. Psalm 8:3-5

- But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Mark 10:6-8
- Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was *done*; He commanded, and it stood fast. Psalm 33:8-9
- He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion. Jeremiah 10:12
- Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created. Psalm 148:5
- You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created. Revelation 4:11

- Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell *Me*, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy? Job 38:4-7
- Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Genesis 1:31

These were some of the Bible verses that directly countered my belief in ‘macro-evolution.’ So, how could any Christian who also read these and other verses about God’s direct creation without the help of an evolutionary process possibly believe in ‘evolution?’ I wondered.

Creation In The Gap

I was sharing my testimony at a church and a man walked up to me after the service. I must have said something about how God's 'direct creation' of all things impacted me as an atheist because he asked me if I was familiar with the 'Gap Theory.' I wasn't, so he briefly explained that Genesis 1:2 is where the millions and billions of years of evolution are found in the Bible. Really?

The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Genesis 1:2

That didn't seem like a difficult verse to understand from a 'direct creation' perspective. God the Holy Spirit was involved in 'direct' Creation even as God the Father and God the Son. Genesis 1:1 was thematic – it told us what God was going to tell us. Genesis 1:2 began the process of God making spaces (the heavens and the earth), then filling those spaces (e.g.

water, land, sun, moon, grass, herbs, trees, animals, birds, fish, humans, etc).

God is often referred to in the Bible as a 'Potter.' He is the Creator. He creates space and time, then makes things to fill space and time. Have you ever watched a potter create something? They start with clay or dirt that has no form, along with water. They take the formless clay, mix it with water, spin it on the 'potter's wheel' and 'form' things. What had no form became a functioning piece of art or functional cookware, etc. Genesis 1:2 didn't seem like a big mountain that I needed to climb. However, I promised the man I'd look into this Gap Theory.

When I 'look into' something, I really look into it. That's just the way I'm built. I'm an investigative journalist, which means I love to research things. So, I started researching the Gap Theory.

Researching anything in 1971 and 1972 is not like researching things today. I actually had to drive to the library and do my research there or check books out of the library and read them at home. I also asked some of my mentors and friends what reading materials they had that I could borrow. One of my mentors was a PhD with a large personal library at his house. He kindly opened his home to me and allowed me to use his library as part of my ongoing research into several topics.

The first step of an investigation is to ‘observe.’ That simply means to look at everything and take notes of what you see. Questions come next, followed by answers to those questions. Once an investigator has observed everything, asked all their questions, and heard all the answers to their questions, the process of interpretation begins. Application follows that. Too many people want to hear something and immediately go to ‘interpretation’ and ‘application.’ That leads to believing many things that are not true, and doing many things that are not right.

The first thing I noticed about the ‘Gap Theory’ was the name. Two words – ‘Gap’ and ‘Theory.’ The man had told me that Genesis 1:2 was the ‘Gap Theory,’ so somewhere in that verse must be the alleged ‘gap.’ The verse seemed to flow naturally from verse 1 and I saw no ‘gap,’ but I wasn’t going to make any interpretation until I finished the investigation. As for the word ‘theory,’ that was easy to understand. It’s ‘an idea or set of ideas that is intended to explain facts or events’ (The Britannica Dictionary). Just the title told me that the ‘Gap Theory’ was an idea or set of ideas intended to explain how God created the heavens and the earth.

As I continued to research the ‘Gap Theory,’ I discovered that there was more than one ‘gap’ theory. I didn’t know that when the man at the church asked me about it. If I had, I would have asked him more questions. However, I didn’t know how to find him. So, I didn’t know which ‘theory’ he believed. Didn’t really matter, because I had learned that there were multiple ideas about the alleged ‘gap’ in Genesis 1:2.

Theory #1

The first ‘gap theory’ I found was where God created a perfect ‘heavens and earth’ filled with life, including animal and human life, but Satan rebelled and God threw him and his angels out of Heaven. Satan’s rebellion allegedly ruined God’s creation, brought death into the world killing all the created beings, and caused the earth to become ‘formless and empty.’ God had to start over again – ‘re-creating, rebuilding.’

I came across some theorists who believed God only ‘re-created’ the Middle East and left the rest of the world to somehow survive and evolve on its own.

Some people who believe this theory spoke of it as the ‘Two Creation Theory,’ or ‘Two Earth Theory,’ meaning that God created the earth twice because He destroyed the first earth after Satan’s rebellion.

Some believe there were ‘two Adams’ – one from the first earth that God destroyed, and one from the second earth that God ‘reconstructed’ after the ‘destruction’ (Destruction to Reconstruction Theory). According to this theory, you and I are living on the second or ‘reconstructed’ earth, and what we read in the Bible about Adam being the ‘first Adam’ and Jesus Christ being the ‘last Adam’ (1 Corinthians 15:45) was based on the ‘reconstructed’ earth. I found no information explaining what happened to the human-like beings destroyed on the first earth. Did they have souls? Did Christ’s death on the second earth cover their sins? Will we meet some of them in Heaven? All I had were questions – no answers – at least not yet.

I did find some Christians who believed that God created the first earth for His angels where they enjoyed it as their ‘home,’ along with the animals and human-like beings until Satan rebelled against God and took many of the angelic host with him. Some of the ‘theorists’ quoted from Ezekiel 28 as a proof-text of that occurrence and ensuing destruction from God against the earth, and the restoration through earth #2.

Was that the context of the text? We'll see as we continue investigating.

I read that people who believed in this 'catastrophe/reconstruction' (also known as 'ruin/restoration') theory believed the length of the 'gap' between verses 1 and 2 could have been millions of years on earth (or longer), thus fitting in better with an evolutionary view of how God created the heavens and the earth. That theory was gaining ground in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Some of the early 'gap theorists' included Scottish theologian Thomas Chalmers and English theologian G.H. Pember. The theory was included in the *Scotfield Reference Bible* in the early 20th century and became more mainstreamed within many churches. Evangelist Harry Rimmer also helped popularize the Gap Theory in the 20th century.

Prior to the 19th century some in the scientific community discovered what they believed supported lengthy geological eras. 18th century French anatomist Georges Cuvier and French naturalist Alcide d'Orbigny held to the idea of God destroying and re-creating various parts of the earth, thus supporting the various stages in the geologic time scale. That was a way of attempting to make the Creation account in Genesis fit with what were then new scientific discoveries and theories.

Keep in mind that 'theory #1' puts death on earth between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. That seems to contradict what we read in Genesis chapters 2, 3, and 4, and what Paul wrote in Romans 5:12, but it's not time to interpret yet. Just an observation with a bunch questions so far.

Theory #2

The second 'gap theory' I found was where Christians believed God put things in motion (think 'big bang'), then left it alone to slowly evolve. What came from God's 'beginning' would have been what Darwin discovered and spoke of in terms of 'evolution.' Some people who believe 'theory 2' think God just started it, sat back and let it do its thing without any personal involvement. Others believe God stepped into the evolutionary process from time to time to give it some 'direction' when and where needed.

Becoming a Christian from the background of atheism is – well, how can I put it nicely? – CONFUSING!!

I'm living my life as atheist, minding my own business, when God sends somebody to mess with my head and my heart. That's what 'apologetics' does to atheists. It messes with their heads and hearts. At least it did in my situation.

Why did I believe God didn't exist? Because I believed Christians were ignorant and hypocritical. Why did I believe Christians were ignorant and hypocritical? Because they said they believed the Bible (which I didn't), but didn't by the principles they espoused.

Why didn't I believe the Bible? Because it didn't agree with 'science.' There you have it. I believed that sciences – like astrophysics, biology, chemistry, physics, etc – were the only way to know what was 'real.' I found my 'reality' in scientific information. That's how I lived my life as an atheist.

So, what did God do? He sent a scientist to my radio show who believed the Bible was **real**. What? How could that be when science and information in the Bible clashed on every front? Science had disproved the Bible long ago – so I believed. Science had disproved God’s existence long ago – so I believed. Science had disproved that Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose from the dead – so I believed. That’s why God sent me a scientist who believed the Bible! God wanted my attention and He got it during a two-hour radio interview with that scientist.

The scientist was in town to talk about putting together a group of scientists to search for Noah’s Ark on Mt. Ararat in Turkey. So, much of the interview time dealt with that. However, we also had time to talk about whether God existed and created the heavens and the earth. I didn’t believe He did. The scientist believed He did. The scientist, who was also a science professor, knew ‘science’ far better than I did. God used that to put a crack in my atheist armor and some ‘stones’ in my shoes. I later learned that Dr. Morris wrote and lectured on the events recorded in Genesis chapters 1 – 11, chapters he believed were historically accurate.

My belief that Christians were ignorant had hit a wall – a hard wall. Here was a very well-educated scientist telling me he believed God existed, that the Bible was a credible book of ancient history, and that Jesus Christ had lived, died, and risen from the dead. I was going to have to look into that more, which is exactly what I did. When I finished looking into it, I became a Christian and that's when the fun began.

I devoured every opportunity to study the Bible, ask questions, search for answers, attend church, take notes, ask more questions, develop friendships with other Christians, etc. Two of my mentors were professors of ancient languages, so they helped me with the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Old Testament. One of the pastors at the church I attended taught verse-by-verse from the Greek New Testament, so that was another great opportunity to learn from the original.

The joy of the Lord filled my mind, heart, and soul as I worshiped Him and praised His Holy Name. I loved Christian music – the old hymns and the new ‘contemporary’ music being written and performed in the early 70s. 1971 was quite a time to become a Christian.

However, it wasn’t long before I began to learn that not every Christian was in agreement about many things. I learned about denominationalism. I learned about heresies and heretics. I learned that some Christians didn’t agree with some of the very things that convinced me that Christianity was true. What was I to do with all that?

It drove me even deeper into God’s Word. I read lots of books written by Christians who lived centuries before my time. I wanted to see what they thought about the Bible that I was reading. I found some with whom I agreed, and some not. I realized I was going to have to use the same journalistic skills that helped me investigate Christianity when I was atheist to investigate why there were so many divisions among Christians. I knew God wasn’t divided. I knew the Holy Spirit wasn’t confused. I knew Jesus Christ wanted unity in the

Church He was building. I just needed to learn how to address the divisions, confusion, and lack of unity that was all too pervasive in churches at the time.

Evolution?

I wrote about Creation in the last part of this series. I also addressed the so-called ‘Gap Theory’ that many Christians believed was a good explanation for how someone could believe that God ‘created’ the heavens and the earth over a period of millions or billions of years through the process of ‘macro-evolution’ – thus demonstrating that science and the Bible were not at odds about the age of the earth or the process of species development.

But why? Why use one verse in the Bible to build an entire belief system about God creating one earth with all its living inhabitants, then destroying it and reconstructing a second earth? Or why use one verse in the Bible as a proof-text that God started a little thing with a ‘bang,’ then let it randomly evolve into the much bigger thing we see before us today – a world filled with beauty and complexity that appears as if someone ‘designed’ it to look and function as it does. Why?

I was an investigative journalist. I was not a Bible scholar, nor was I a scientist. So, how would I investigate such a big topic? Easy – the same way I did any other story of large magnitude – one piece at a time. Investigative journalists are not necessarily experts at anything other than investigative journalism. What they do is talk with experts in a variety of fields that help them understand the facts as gathered and confirmed.

I already knew one scientist who had spoken and written extensively about the subject – the same scientist I interviewed on my radio show. He lived in California at the time, which was a long way from Florida, so having long talks with him would be difficult. However, I did have access to some of the books he had written. One was titled ‘The Genesis Flood’ (1961). Another was ‘Evolution and the Modern Christian’ (1967).

I also had access to books written by people who believed in the Gap Theory, and others who weren't Christians at all and believed in 'evolution.' I was familiar with evolution since that's what I had been taught in public schools and college, but that didn't make me an expert in the field. I needed to read the findings of people who were experts in evolution.

I went to the library and looked at some books about evolution, including Charles Darwin's '*On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*).' I read many other books about evolution – some old, some new (at the time). I recognized much of what I read from my years in public schools, so it was a good refresher for me.

One of the arguments for believing in evolution that I had used as an atheist was – ‘all scientists agree with evolution.’ Well, as I found out during my interview with Dr. Henry Morris, not ‘all scientists agree with evolution.’ While numbers of people who believe something to be true or false doesn’t and shouldn’t ‘sway’ an investigation one way or the other, I did take note that a well-known geneticist by the name of Hermann J. Muller had created an ‘evolution manifesto’ in the mid-1960s that had been signed by scores of biologists (about 180 or so I believe). That didn’t surprise me as I remembered the textbooks in school written by many scientists attesting to the theory of evolution. I had guessed there were a lot of scientists who believed in evolution.

Anything like that from people who believed God created the world without the use of evolution? Interestingly, the scientist I interviewed was involved with an organization called the Creation Research Society. It was formed by a group of ten scientists in 1963 that included the scientist I had interviewed when I was an atheist. Dr. Henry Morris and John Whitcomb, Jr. published a book titled 'The Genesis Flood,' that reportedly led to the establishment of the Creation Research Society. Dr. Morris was one of the original founders and heralded by many as the 'Father of the modern creation science movement.' I didn't know that when I interviewed him. I just knew he was in town to talk about searching for Noah's Ark on Mt. Ararat.

As for 'numbers,' the Creation Research Society had grown from ten members in 1963 to more than 300 within a few years. That almost doubled the number of scientists who had signed Muller's 'evolution manifesto' a few years later, but that wasn't proof that one theory was right and the other was wrong

When I interviewed Dr. Morris on radio, I introduced him as founder of a new organization known as the Institute for Creation Research. It was a research division of Christian Heritage College that Dr. Morris had founded and where he served as president. He also worked closely with Dr. Duane Gish, a Ph.D from UC Berkeley in biochemistry, who worked for the Upjohn Company. He left Upjohn to become involved full-time in teaching direct-Creation and debating evolutionists from his scientific expertise.

Investigative Findings

Interestingly, I found that the idea of ‘creation’ by God or ‘gods’ was an ancient belief. Whereas, the idea of the world ‘evolving’ was a more recent idea. However, by the time I entered the public school system in the 1950s ‘evolution’ seemed to be the pre-denominate theory being taught as ‘fact.’ Direct creation had lost its place in public education. One of the stories I reported on as a journalist in 1968 was when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on Epperson v. Arkansas. The high court invalidated the state statute that prohibited the teaching of evolution as being unconstitutional. As an atheist at the time, that seemed like a good decision. I thought students everywhere should learn about all the ‘theories’ concerning the beginning of the universe and the earth. Evolution was the ‘new boy’ on the block and should have the right to be heard.

Though I had been taught evolution for years and saw myself as being a believer in evolutionary theory, reading the ‘direct creation’ accounts in the Bible gave me pause. Was it true that there was ‘no’ scientific evidence for God creating the heavens and the earth? Through the investigative process of reading as many scientific views about the origin of the universe, and specifically of the earth, I found there was scientific evidence.

Evidence is not the same thing as ‘proof.’ I knew that as an investigative journalist. Evidence often led to proof, but not always. I was also a crime and courts reporter, so I spent a lot of time with detectives, forensic scientists, and lawyers prior to court cases and watched how they put together their ‘evidence’ for trial – whether criminal or civil. Many of the judges would share with me privately (in their chambers) how they viewed evidence. I also spent quite a bit of time with coroners and fire inspectors learning how they viewed evidence at a crime or fire scene. I’m also thankful for the feedback they gave me after seeing how I covered their evidential presentations in my news stories. I’m thankful for all the years of being able to learn from them.

Origins

Every news story has an overarching subject. The disagreements about Creation and evolution came under an overarching subject of ‘Origins.’ How did everything begin? Though I found general agreement among Christians that the universe and the earth had a ‘beginning,’ there was disagreement how it happened. Some Christians, like Dr. Morris, believed in God’s direct creation (aka ‘special creation’). Others believed in ‘theistic evolution,’ while others held to the view of ‘progressive creationism.’

Even though I became an atheist in my teens, I was raised by Christian parents. They took me and my brother to church every Sunday. What I learned in church didn’t contradict what I was learning in public school about the origin of the earth or of species. It caused me no heartburn whatsoever, which made atheism even easier for me later. Atheism and Christianity of the 1950s and early 60s seemed in lock-step about the issue of evolution.

As I researched the history of how Christians changed their views about ‘origins,’ I came across a book titled ‘*The Christian View of Science and Scripture*’ written by theologian Bernard Ramm (1954). Ramm did not believe that the Bible was a reliable source for determining ‘origins’ of the universe, earth, or life species. I read that Ramm’s involvement with the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA), a Christian group, and his position about ‘progressive creationism’ opened the way for many Christian biologists to accept evolution as a standard position for churches and denominations. Russell L. Mixer, who served as president of the ASA in the early 50s, also helped push the organization away from ‘special Creationism,’ also known as ‘antievolutionism.’

Interestingly, the publication of Ramm’s book led John Whitcomb, Jr. to begin work on his own book to refute ‘progressive’ and ‘theistic’ evolutionary views. Whitcomb, who had studied geology and paleontology at Princeton, was also a theologian and professor. He teamed up with Dr. Henry Morris to write ‘The Genesis Flood.’ It was published in 1961, several years after Ramm’s book. By that time, many well-known Christian authors and speakers were already

promoting some form of evolution. ‘The Genesis Flood,’ and other books that would follow, would have a large impact on Christian thinking about ‘origins.’

A few years after I had interviewed Dr. Morris on radio, he published a book titled ‘Scientific Creationism’ (1974). Many scientists contributed as writers and consultants. Dr. Morris prepared the basic text of the book and acted as the general editor. Though the book was published after I had reached conclusions from my own investigation into origins, what I found in ‘Scientific Creationism’ supported many of my findings.

Conclusion

I compared the scientific evidence put forward by various ‘evolutionists’ (secular and Christian) to the scientific evidence put forward by various ‘creationists.’ I then looked again at what the Bible stated about ‘origins.’ My conclusion was that the Bible, God’s Word, supported ‘specific creationism’ rather than evolution – progressive or theistic.

I came to that conclusion more than 50 years ago, but that did not mean I stopped investigating. I have continued to research new findings, new articles, and new books about the subject of ‘origins.’ Anyone interested in the topic now will find a wealth of information about the subject. Though some form of macro evolution is still taught in many churches and denominations, the number of Christians who believe in the biblical perspective of ‘specific creation’ appears to be growing. They believe God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in it out of ‘nothing’ (*creatio ex nihilo*) rather than any type of evolution.

So, what are Christians to do when they disagree on something that seems so important to Christianity? First, love and respect one another. Second, ask questions, listen to answers, pray for wisdom, and share your views. Third, use the Bible and science in your discussion. God created everything, including the systems that govern how things work in God's creation. That's where 'scientific investigation' is helpful. It leads to learning how God's 'systems' work.

My hope and prayer are that as Christians discuss this important subject they will find God's 'orderly' process for Creation. God is not a God of confusion or 'disorder.' He created all things in an orderly fashion and governs accordingly. Even though the 'Fall' led to curses and chaos, we can still see how God rules His creation in an orderly way.

The Flood

We looked at different views of Genesis 1:1-2 in the last part of our study. Let's move on now to views about the Flood from Genesis chapters 6 – 9. Was it a 'worldwide/universal' flood or a 'local/regional' flood?

I recommend studying the Bible verse by verse, from the original language if possible. It's also important to study text within context. That comes from both the verse-by-verse study process, and by understanding the recipients of the biblical writings. How would they have understood the text? Knowing that might help us understand the text better.

I believe that Moses wrote Genesis as God revealed to him some things that only God would have known for certain. There is also the possibility that God's people (lineage of Seth) may have passed along information from generation to generation that eventually reached the children of Israel. It could also be a combination of both. Moses and the people of Israel knew about many things concerning their history,

especially concerning the general history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his twelve sons who were the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel. How much they knew about what happened prior to Abraham is not known for certain.

What we do know for certain is that Moses spent 40 years speaking with God – “So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Exodus 33:11). God, who spoke to Moses as a friend over a period of 40 years, could have easily told Moses all of the details that we read in Genesis. That would include the first 11 chapters that many Christians think are ‘allegory’ rather than ‘history.’ Moses would have written what God told him and passed them along to Joshua and the elders of Israel. Those writings were in the care of the leaders of Israel for centuries, who viewed them as the very words of God. The process of preserving the writings of Moses, the prophets, and others is quite amazing in both the precision and persistence of the people given the responsibility of ensuring the accuracy of every copy of those holy Writings.

So, as I look at Genesis chapters 6 – 9 that concern the topic in question, the Flood, I believe Moses wrote what God told him to write. I also believe that what God told Moses was ‘historical’ rather than ‘allegorical.’ You can read previous parts of this series to see why I came to that conclusion.

The Pre-Flood World

To understand the full impact of the ‘pre-flood world,’ be sure to read Genesis chapter 5. That’s where we learn about Seth and his family. Seth was born to Adam and Eve after Cain killed Abel. Seth’s older brother Cain was still alive, but God had banished him from his family for killing his younger brother, Abel.

It’s important that we don’t read through Genesis 5 so quickly that we miss this verse – “So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.” Remember what God told Adam in the Garden of Eden? “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17). Adam lived a very long life, but he died physically just as God said he would.

As we follow the genealogy of Seth's descendants through several generations, we come to a man named Noah. Noah was the son of Lamech who said this when he named Noah as a baby – “This *one* will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord has cursed” (Genesis 5:29). In light of what we read next, Lamech's words at the naming of his son seem prophetic.

Genesis 6 speaks of a world filled with wickedness, violence, and corruption. God determined that He would destroy every living thing on the earth, “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” (Genesis 6:8). The next two verses repeat some of the lineage information we read in Genesis 5 about Noah's sons (Genesis 5:32), but it adds more context –

This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Genesis 6:9-10

That's quite remarkable when you think about it. Genesis described Noah as a 'just man, perfect in his generations,' even though Noah lived in a world that was filled with wickedness, violence, and corruption. Genesis 5 also mentions that Noah was 500 years old when he started his family. That was much older than when his ancestors started their families. Why was that? I think it might be because Noah did not participate in the wickedness of people until God called him to build an ark. Here's why I think that –

The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it ... But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh you shall

bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them ... And Noah did according to all that the Lord commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth. Genesis 6:11-15, 18-21; 7:5-6

Notice that God said the 'earth' was corrupt before God, and the 'earth' was filled with violence. So, God looked upon the 'earth,' and indeed it was corrupt. 'All flesh' had corrupted their way 'on the earth.' Then God said, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me' and that he would 'destroy them with the earth.' As a young Christian reading an English translation of Genesis, it looked as if God planned to destroy 'all flesh' on the 'earth' except for Noah, his family, and other living beings (e.g. birds, animals, creeping things) kept safe in the 'Ark.'

Genesis chapters 7 – 9 are very specific about the number of days and months involving the Flood, how it impacted the earth, those living on the earth, and those protected in the Ark. Here's an example –

And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days. Genesis 7:21-24

Before getting into some of the disagreements among Christians about whether the Flood was worldwide/universal or local/regional, let's look at Scripture to see how various inspired writers addressed this event –

- 1 Chronicles 1:1-28 includes all of the lineage of Adam through Seth until Abraham and his sons. The list in 1 Chronicles includes Noah, his ancestors, and his descendants listed in Genesis 1 – 11.
- Isaiah 54 includes God telling the prophet that, ‘this *is* like the waters of Noah to Me; For as I have sworn That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, So have I sworn That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.’”
- Ezekiel 14 includes God telling the prophet that, ‘Even *if* these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver *only* themselves by their righteousness,” says the Lord God,’ and ‘even *though* Noah, Daniel, and Job *were* in it, *as I live*,” says the Lord God, ‘they would deliver neither son nor

daughter; they would deliver *only* themselves by their righteousness.

- Matthew 24 includes Jesus answering questions from His disciples about the sign of His coming and the end of the age. Jesus replied, ‘But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.’
- Luke 3 includes the lineage of Jesus Christ through Mary and includes the name of Noah and others mentioned in Genesis 1 – 11 – ‘*the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.*’

- Hebrews 11 mentioned Noah and the Flood – ‘By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.’
- 1 Peter 3 mentions Noah and the Flood – ‘when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.’
- 2 Peter 2 mentions Noah and the Flood – ‘and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly.’
- Psalm 29 mentions God and the Flood – ‘The Lord sat *enthroned* at the Flood, And the Lord sits as King forever.’

Scriptures outside of Genesis treat Noah and the Flood as historical, so I will as well. The prophets, Jesus Christ, and His apostles viewed the events of Noah's day to be history, not allegory.

Flood – Local or Universal?

When I read through Genesis during my investigation as an atheist, it was apparent to me that the writer was describing a world-wide event. I had covered many floods as a reporter in Florida, most from tropical weather events (e.g. tropical storms, hurricanes). I had seen photos and film of some of the worst flooding events in the world in previous years, including super-destructive tsunamis. However, I had never seen anything nor heard of anything that matched the scale of the flood described in Genesis chapters 7 and 8.

- all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.
- The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth.
- The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters.

- And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered.
- The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered.
- And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils *was* the breath of the spirit of life, all that *was* on the dry *land*, died.
- So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who *were* with him in the ark remained *alive*.
- And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.
- Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that *were* with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of

heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased.

- Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth *month*, on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

As a journalist and atheist these details sounded ridiculous. There was no possible way a flood of that magnitude could have occurred on the earth. However, the scientist I had interviewed on my radio show believed it was historical. So, my goal was to undertake an 'objective' investigation into the Flood claims. Once I finished my investigation into evidence for the existence of God, the historical reliability of the Bible, and the reality of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, I became a Christian.

Based on what I had found in my investigation, I was surprised to meet many Christians who didn't believe some things that were written in the Bible. One of those things was whether the Flood described in Genesis 7 and 8 was 'worldwide/universal' or 'local/regional.' Some believed the key was in the Hebrew word for 'earth.' They said that אֶרֶץ (*erets*) meant 'land,' which could be any size. They said there was no evidence for a 'worldwide' flood, so local or regional flooding was the correct way to understand the wording in Genesis chapters 7 and 8. They were correct – to a point.

The word *erets* is found about 25-hundred times in the Bible. English translations use words like 'earth, land, ground, countries, floor, world, territories, region, etc. The key is always context. Many people I talked with who believed in a local/regional Flood believed God was only concerned with the people who lived in Mesopotamia. They said the Flood probably occurred between the Tigris and Euphrates, known as the 'Tigris–Euphrates river system' that flows into the Persian Gulf. They believed that a large rainfall as described in Genesis 7 and 8 would have caused the two rivers to fill and overflow the '*erets*.'

I had several problems with their 'local' Flood theory –

And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them. Genesis 6:6-7

God didn't limit Himself to being sorry He made a small group of the people who lived on the earth, but not others who lived in other parts of the world. He said He would 'destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth.' The phrase 'face of the earth' (*pənê hā'ăḏāmāh*) could be translated 'face of the ground' or 'face of the land,' but the context seems much larger. The anger of God against the violent, wicked, corrupt humans He had made seemed larger than just those who lived in a small land area.

Even if you think God was only destroying the people and animals living in the area of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (ancient Mesopotamia), there are some other things we need to consider.

all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.

Look at the phrase ‘all the fountains of the great deep were broken up.’ The Hebrew for ‘great deep’ is *təhōwm rabbāh*, and means ‘sea, abyss, many, much.’ The Tigris and Euphrates rivers are very long, but not particularly deep or wide. I wondered about the location of the ‘fountains of the great deep’ that would be ‘broken up’ and add so much water to the land, in addition to the forty days and nights of rain.

Another challenge to the ‘local/regional’ Flood theory is how long the water covered the earth (land, ground) and what it covered.

And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.

And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered.

The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered.

Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

I had never seen or heard of a flood that prevailed (*gabar* – to be strong, mighty) for 150 days. Given that much of the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was flat (plains), I wondered about the water covering ‘mountains.’ The Murat River begins near Mt. Ararat, so there is a connection there. However, the question remained for me – how did that much water cover the mountain to the point that the Ark would have come to rest on it after the water receded?

Another question – why did it take so long for the flood waters to recede if it was a local/regional flood? I had seen many devastating floods from tropical storms, and storm surges from powerful hurricanes that brought surges of several feet of water along the coast. However, the flood waters took a matter of days to recede rather than weeks or months.

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. Genesis 7:11-12

And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried. Then God spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark. Genesis 8:13-19

I did the math based on information that ancient months were 30 days in length. The total length of time from when God unleashed His wrath through the great Flood until the day that Noah and his family stepped on dry ground was more than a year. I never covered nor heard of such a ‘flood event.’ This was truly remarkable in the history of the world.

Based on everything I had studied in Genesis and other portions of Scripture that addressed the Flood, it appeared to me that it could not have been a local/regional flood. Everything I saw pointed to a worldwide/universal Flood. Why haven’t we seen anything like that again? Because of a promise God made to Noah –

Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. Genesis 9:11

If the Genesis Flood was just local/regional, wouldn't that cast doubt on God's promise? He said, "never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." Haven't there been thousands of local/regional floods since God made that promise? God is not a liar. He said He would never again destroy the earth and cut off all flesh 'by the waters of the flood.' That's more evidence that the Flood was worldwide.

The Post-Flood World

One other important piece of evidence supporting a world-wide Flood is what happened after Noah and his family left the Ark. God made a ‘covenant’ with Noah ‘and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations’ (Genesis 9:12). God established a special sign of His covenant in the sky for all to see and remember –

I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” And God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth. Genesis 9:13-17

That 'sign of the covenant' is still seen across the entire world, in every country, not just in a local or regional area.

God also established specific rules for how people were to address the type of violence that was so prevalent on the earth before the Flood. God also told Noah and his family the same thing He told Adam and Eve about being fruitful and multiplying across the earth –

So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. Genesis 9:1

Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. Genesis 9:6

We see in Genesis 11 that the “whole earth had one language and one speech.” Noah’s family left Mt. Ararat and “found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there.” They found a place to begin building “a tower whose top is in the heavens” for the purpose of making a name for themselves, “lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” The people did not want to obey God, so God confused their language. That confusion of languages caused the people to scatter from each other – ” So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.” The languages were apparently confused according to families. You can read in Genesis 10 and 11 about the families and where they went after the confusion and scattering at Babel.

I spent time following each family by name and was able to track most of them through extra-biblical historical sources. I also noticed that the Bible didn’t list any other names from that ‘post-Flood’ era except for those found in Genesis 10 and 11. Another evidence that the Flood was universal in destroying ‘all flesh’ except for those whom God protected on the Ark.

Discussing Differences

God does all things in an orderly fashion. People do not, but God does – always.

That is the primary message of our series – *Order in the Court of the King!*

I learned early in my Christian life that while Christians agreed on many things in the Bible, they also disagreed on many things in the Bible. Whether Genesis chapters 1 – 11 is historical or allegorical is one of those things. For those who accept the historical account, some may say that God used evolution to bring about His ‘creation.’ Some may say that the Flood as described in Genesis chapter 6 – 9 was local/regional rather than worldwide/universal. Some may say that the people mentioned as descendants of Noah in Genesis chapters 10 – 11 were only some of the people alive on earth at the time – based on the belief in a local/regional flood rather than a world-wide Flood. If you agree with them, you will have no differences. However, if you disagree with them,

you will have differences. The question before us is how to talk with fellow believers on matters you believe are important to discuss.

I came from atheism to Christianity through the process of discussing important matters with people with whom I disagreed. I've used the same process in discussing disagreements with Christians. Mutual respect is helpful during discussions. If the discussion disintegrates into rudeness or aggressive behavior from either side, it is very difficult to continue the discussion at any level that will be helpful.

You don't have to 'win' an argument or debate, but you do need to be respectful –

- **Ask** questions
- **Listen** to answers
- **Pray** for wisdom
- **Share** the wisdom God gives you

That's the basic ALPS process of discussing disagreements with anyone – believer or unbeliever.

If you are talking with a believer (Christian) about anything in Genesis chapters 1 – 11, you can use the Bible as evidence and support for your position (see previous parts of this series for examples). However, if you are talking with an unbeliever (non-Christian), they may not accept any evidence you present from the Bible. That's where you can turn to extra-biblical sources to support your position.

Scientific Evidence

God sent a scientist in answer to an atheist's challenge. I've written about that many times. It was scientific 'evidence' that grabbed my attention during a two-hour interview with Dr. Henry Morris about Creation and the Flood. Notice I did not write the word 'proof.' I wrote 'evidence.' There's an important difference, which I have detailed in previous studies.

Scientific evidence comes from the process of 'scientists' using the 'scientific method.' I found 'evidence' from scientists from many different positions about Creation and the Flood. As Christians presented me their ideas about God using evolution to bring about the expansion and growth of the universe and earth, I looked at scientific evidence for evolution, as well as for 'specific' Creation. As Christians presented me their ideas about Noah's Flood being local/regional rather than worldwide/universal, I looked at scientific evidence for both positions.

The combination of comparing Scripture with opposing scientific evidence led me to continue to believe what I had discovered during my investigation as an atheist. I have continued to read findings from both theories (evolution and specific Creation) through the years. That's the process of combining findings from both the scientific method and the investigative method.

Knowing what you believe Scripture teaches, along with what scientists discover, will help you in discussing differences with Christians and non-believers. Scripture does not change. It is 'settled' –

*Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven. Psalm
119:89*

However, 'science' is not settled. It changes as scientists continue their experiments and research as part of the 'scientific method.' Knowledge about our universe and the earth upon which we live has changed through the years since I became a Christian. It will continue to do so because that is the way of scientific investigation.

So, how do you as a Christian stay up with scientific investigation as it relates to our universe and life on Planet Earth? As we say in journalism – ‘follow the science.’ In other words, keep up with what’s happening in the world of scientific investigation. Read books and articles from evolutionists and Creationists. Visit their websites. Watch for news articles that address the subject. From what I’ve seen through the years, the general news media gives more coverage to evolution science than to Creation science or Intelligent Design science. However, you can use that information to keep up with what’s happening with evolution science, then search to see how Creation scientists and Intelligent Design scientists may be researching similar data.

There are more Creation and Intelligent Design articles available now than when I became a Christian 55 years ago. You’ll find good materials on the [ICR website](#) (Institute for Creation Research) the [Discovery Institute website](#). You can also receive regular email or direct mail information from both groups that will help you keep up with what’s going on in ‘science’ as it pertains to evolution, Creation, and Intelligent Design.

When you talk with Christians who hold to an evolutionary perspective, you can include pertinent scientific information in your discussion with them. Remember, the point is not to ‘win’ an argument. Be respectful and loving in your comments and responses. The goal is to share what you believe is true, then watch God do what He does best – change minds and hearts for His eternal purposes.

Next eBook

This concludes Volume VI of our series, *Order in the Court of the King!* We have one more to go.

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