

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>"Jericho," *Encyclopedia Americana* (1996) and at [www.visit-palestine.com/jericho/places/place.htm](http://www.visit-palestine.com/jericho/places/place.htm)

<sup>6</sup>Private e-mail with Carol in 2003.

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## Just Wait

I would like to briefly address Alan Blodgett's letter, "A Response to Carol Hill's 'Noachian Flood' Account."

1. *Date for Noah/Flood.* Yes, I know that many Christians date the Flood 500-1000 years before ~3000 BC. Some also date it much later than I do. This is because there is no real way of knowing when Noah's Flood occurred, and so one can only do one's best to bracket the date using clues from archaeology and the Bible (which I tried to do in my article "A Time and Place for Noah," *PSCF* 53, no. 1 [March 2001]: 24-40). If it happened a thousand years earlier, Noah's Flood could correspond to the flood of Utnapishtim (the date of which is not firm) and to Woolley's "flood deposits" at Ur. However, since floods are endemic to Mesopotamia, this could have been another flood entirely.
2. *Flood Deposits.* Two points relate to this discussion:
  - (a) Floods not only *deposit* sediment, they also *erode* sediment. Therefore, the intensity or "greatness" of a past flood *cannot* be determined by the thickness of sedimentary deposits in any specific place (such as at Ur).
  - (b) There have been no recent comprehensive studies done on the absolute dating, distribution, deep drilling, or correlation of flood deposits in different parts of the Mesopotamian hydrologic basin. Most studies are old, such as those of Woolley (1920s) and Parrot (1930s). Therefore, any firm conclusions concerning the age and extent of flood deposits in Mesopotamia is premature (i.e., "ambiguous," and so should be treated as such, as I have tried to do).
3. In my past articles on the Garden of Eden and the Flood (*PSCF*, March 2000, March 2001, September 2002), I do not discuss the Origins problem at all—for good reason. This is a very complicated and controversial subject that is not possible to address in a short paper, let alone in a brief response letter. For one possible scenario, the reader is referred to John McIntyre's article on "The Historical Adam" (*PSCF* 54, no. 3 [September 2002]: 150-7).
4. *How Could the Ark Have Traveled Up-Gradient to Jabal Judi?* A series of articles on the hydrology of the Flood is planned for sometime in the future. Arlan Blodgett and others will just have to wait for this explanation.

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## Concordism Revisited

I have followed with interest the correspondence between Carol Hill, Art Hill, and Paul Seely concerning a local Genesis flood (*PSCF* March 2003, June 2003, and September 2003). However, not being a geologist, I do not wish to enter into the discussion about the nature of the flood itself.

On the other hand, I would like to comment on an issue that Seely raises concerning the kind of record presented in the early chapters of Genesis. In his letter (June 2003), Seely comments:

I do not believe that concordism's long-standing attempt to read Scripture as describing a merely local flood covering no more than Mesopotamia or the Black Sea is any closer to the biblical data than creation science is to the scientific data.

The purpose of this letter is to note that present archeological data lead to the *presumption* that the chapters of Genesis before Abraham in 2000 BC (chapter 11 back to the formation of Adam in Gen 2:7) present the same kind of reliable history as the chapters after Abraham. Because of this *presumption*, the interpretation of these early chapters (including the flood in chapters 6-8) should assume that the Genesis record is historical.

The basis for this *presumption* of historicity for the early chapters of Genesis is that Scripture has been shown to be in agreement with secular history back to Abraham. For example, in his *History of Israel* (1959), John Bright writes:

It has become increasingly evident that a new and more sympathetic evaluation of the traditions is called for ... Far the most important of these (various lines of objective study) has been the light cast by archaeological research on the age of Israel's origin ... And, as the early second millennium has emerged into the light of day, it has become clear that the patriarchal narratives, far from reflecting the circumstances of a later day, fit precisely in the age of which they purport to tell.<sup>1</sup>

Bright repeats this statement verbatim in the 1981 edition of his book.

Scriptural history, then, is reliable back through Abraham (about 2000 BC) in Chapter 12 of Genesis. But the earlier chapters of Genesis, back to the formation of Adam in Gen 2:7, are connected by genealogies to Abraham. Furthermore, these genealogies are repeated without interruption in Luke 3 from Christ to Adam through Abraham. The *presumption*, then, is that the history before Abraham is a continuation of the confirmed history after Abraham. The account of the flood, as part of the history before Abraham, should be historical.

During his investigation of Adam,<sup>2</sup> I have been surprised how often secular history supports the *presumption* that the Adam of Gen 2-4 is an historical person. Scripture presents Adam as a farmer in lower Mesopotamia with sons who are a farmer and a herdsman. From this information, secular history (archeology) concludes that Adam and his sons lived in Mesopotamia after 10,000 BC.<sup>3</sup> This being true, secular history also reveals that other people were living in Mesopotamia at the same time as Adam and his family. The presence of these people from secular

history in turn explains several of the puzzles in Scripture arising from the traditional assumption that Adam was the first man. Cain found a wife from among these Mesopotamians and Cain's fear of other men becomes understandable. Scripture also says that Cain was building a city east of Eden. Again, Scripture interacts with secular history which knows that the first cities in the world were built in Mesopotamia and in the Susiana plain 250 km to the east about 4000 BC.<sup>4</sup> Assuming the scriptural and the archeological cities to be the same, this information dates Cain after about 4000 BC. And finally, the puzzling passage in Gen 6:1 can be explained:

When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.

The commentators explain the sons of God as angels<sup>5</sup> or as pagan myths.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, with an historical scriptural Adam the sons of God are from Adam's family (Adam is called the son of God in Luke 3:37) and the daughters of men are children of the Mesopotamians living at the same time. Just as for the scriptural account of Abraham, the scriptural account of Adam "fits precisely in the age of which it purports to tell."

We are witnessing, then, the same uncovering of Scripture as that for other ancient historical records. When I was in school, we were taught that the Trojan Wars were a myth. Now Troy has been found and dated. As ancient history continues to come up over the horizon of time, we are finally seeing the early chapters of Genesis come into view.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), 62-3.

<sup>2</sup>John A. McIntyre, "The Historical Adam," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 54 (2002): 150-7.

<sup>3</sup>See e.g., R. J. Wenke, *Patterns in Prehistory* (New York: Oxford, 1999), 289.

<sup>4</sup>Wenke, *Patterns in Prehistory*, 404-8.

<sup>5</sup>Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 113.

<sup>6</sup>Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 43; and Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977), 110.

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## On the Hills of Concordism and Creation Science

In his contribution to the discussion of the extent of Noah's flood,<sup>1</sup> Paul Seely explains why he doubts that "concordism's long-standing attempt to read Scripture as describing a merely local flood covering no more than Mesopotamia or the Black Sea is any closer to the biblical data than creation science is to the scientific data." He evidently believes that the Genesis flood account is an inspired version of an ancient myth, a "theological revelation ... accommodated to the already ingrained prehistori-

cal traditions present in Israel at the time that God revealed himself to them."

We may seem to have only three major alternatives: Moses gave either (1) a true account of a local flood, (2) a true account of a flood that left no land above the waves anywhere on the planet, or (3) a fictional account of a flood too extensive to be considered merely local. Probably very few *PSCF* readers know that a fourth alternative has recently been advanced: (4) a true account of a flood that was neither merely local nor quite universal.

According to Seely, the flood account in Genesis implies "that God has spoken in Scripture ... as a Father to his little children, as a tutor (Gal. 3:24), accommodating his theological lessons to the mentality and preconceptions of his young children, aware that in time they will learn better of both history and science." We can agree that God speaks to us as Father, tutoring even through such things as the law of Moses, yet knowing that his people would not always remain under its supervision (Gal. 3:25). One must also concede that the Bible includes only a small part of all history and science (John 21:25).

The interesting question here is whether God uses fictional stories, cleverly disguised as factual history, to reveal some kind of truth, as Seely evidently believes. References to a "literally moving sun" do not prove his hypothesis. Even modern astronomy texts mention sunset as though it were the sun, not the earth, that moves, and since the Bible is for ordinary people, it is no surprise to find terms like *earth*, *sky*, and *star* that are understood more superficially by some folks than by others. There may even be popular misconceptions related to such things, of course, but pedantic technicalities alone cannot compromise the gist or integrity of a history.

If God actually does teach through fiction in the guise of history, then how can one separate fact from myth when reading the Bible? Did Jesus really rise from the dead, or was the resurrection story only an accommodation for people too ignorant to know that such a thing is impossible? To the men who wrote John 21:24, Gal. 1:11-12, and 2 Peter 1:16, confidence in the trustworthiness of God's words, warnings, and promises was more precious than life. We can conclude that the Christian faith is supposed to be rooted in factual history stretching seamlessly all the way back to creation (Acts 7; 2 Peter 2:4-9; and 3:3-7).

Seely wrote: "Nowhere in Scripture does God say or imply with logical necessity that divine inspiration guarantees the scientific and historical accuracy of biblical historical accounts." How then should we understand Hebrews 11? Here several heroes of faith are mentioned, including Abel, Noah, Moses, Samuel, and the prophets. At the very end of the chapter, the writer even works himself and his readers into the mix. If Noah is fictional, what about the others? Would the tutorial value of the chapter be enhanced in our day by including Spiderman or Santa Claus to impress children who might believe these are all real people?

To what extent can history as recorded in the Old Testament be confirmed through secular data? Sixty or seventy years ago, the kingdoms of Judah and Israel could not be related with confidence to the secular history of the region, and the recorded lengths of the various reigns appeared to