

# Evidence AGAINST a world-wide flood

Dr Michael Jarvis 03 January 2012

I will look at this subject in two ways.

**Firstly**, from a scientific evidence viewpoint.

**Secondly**, to show that the Bible account actually suggests a limited flood.



Proponents of the Young Earth Theory suggest that our earth is about 6000 years old and that the fossil record can largely be explained by a world-wide flood. Even some who accept the scientific evidence for our earth being billions of years old, still try to explain the fossil record as being the result of such a flood.

**It is therefore very important to establish whether or not such a flood actually took place.**

To many millions of people, who have been raised in our scientific generation, an insistence that our earth is a mere 6000 years old is un-acceptable. In addition, when some Christians insist that this is the only possible understanding from biblical accounts, such a viewpoint often results in people concluding that the Bible must be wrong. This conclusion can result in them discarding the rest of the Bible and so fail to discover the central theme, summarised in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Regarding the suggestion of a world-wide flood, this idea is based on a widely held understanding of the biblical account of a great flood in the times of Noah. However, this suggestion can be investigated logically by taking into account scientific discoveries and by looking again at our understanding of the Bible account.

**Because I am a Christian with scientific training, I am motivated to reconcile the Bible with the broad sweep of scientific discovery. However, in order to achieve this reconciliation it is necessary to look again at some traditional interpretations of Bible accounts.**

We can look at this question of a flood under several headings

## **1. A world-wide flood and bio-diversity**

If, for arguments sake, we initially leave the Noah's Ark Bible account out of our investigation, then clearly, any world-wide flood that covered all land surfaces would have wiped out most life forms. Since nearly all of the earth's water is saline like the sea, any such flood would also be saline (Only 2.75 % of the earth's water is fresh). As a result, only sea creatures could have survived a world-wide flood that covered all land surfaces. Land creatures, such as mammals, reptiles, birds, insects, and fresh

2.

water fishes and other fresh water organisms, would all have died. Also the majority of the earth's plants.



**Fresh water organisms, such as these fish, would have died in a world-wide flood.**

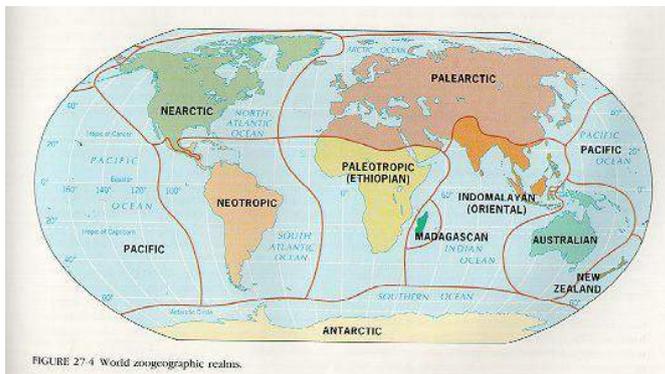


FIGURE 27.4 World zoogeographic realms.

**The zoo-geographical regions with unique life forms in each region**

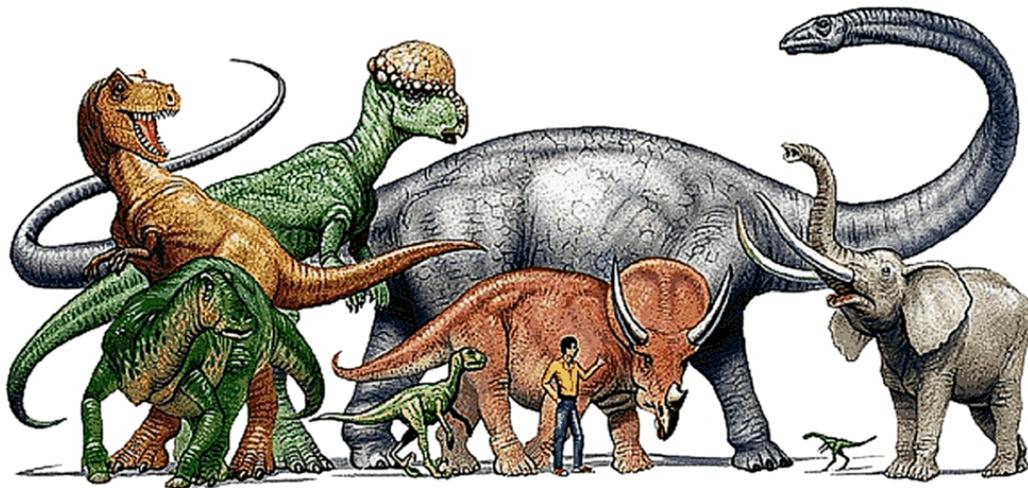
Today we know that the millions of life forms are divided into 'zoo-geographical regions'. Science explains this by compiling evidence showing that continents have moved and are still moving and that some

land masses broke from one single continent called Pangaea. This later split again and the large southern portion was called Gondwana. Australia broke free from this land mass while the earth was dominated by marsupial mammals (such as kangaroos, whose young are born at a very early stage and mature in an external pouch) In other parts of the world placental mammals (young develop internally, nourished by the placenta) replaced marsupials and we find marsupial fossils to show they once existed throughout the world. However, placental mammals never reached Australia. As a result we have the many species of unique marsupial animals characteristic of Australia.

Regarding life forms on land, we now know that our earth contains many millions of species, including about 3200 species of mammals, 8000 types of birds, not to mention reptiles and amphibians, all with very specific habitat and food requirements. Insects are by far the most abundant life forms, numbering at least 5 million species and nearly all of these would have been killed in a world-wide flood. In addition, most species of land plants would not have survived a world-wide flood that lasted, according to the Bible account, for just over one year.

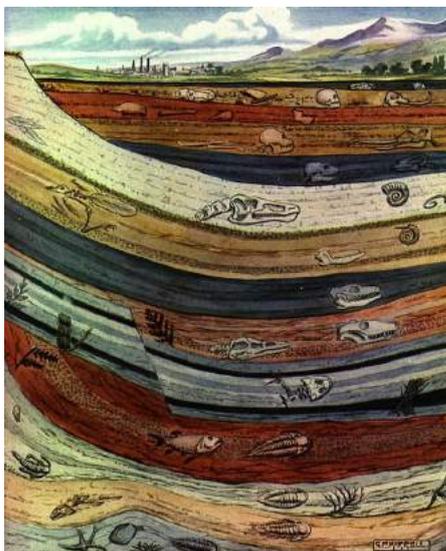
## 2. The fossil record

We also need to consider more than 500 different types of dinosaurs that have been found in the fossil record and many other animals only known from the fossils. Some of the dinosaurs weighed up to 100 tons, at least five times heavier than the largest land animals alive today, namely African elephants. According to the Young Earth Theory, all these animals were still alive at the time of the world-wide flood and should have been in Noah's Ark.



**Some types of dinosaurs, shown in comparison to the size of man and elephants**

When we study fossils in the rocks, there is abundant scientific evidence that these date back millions of years. Furthermore, in spite of claims made by the Young Earth Theory, the oldest rocks contain only primitive animals and more recent rocks more advanced animals. Very occasionally, movements within the earth's crust have mixed up these layers, but the clear overall picture is one of increasing complexity of life forms over time.



**The overall picture of the fossil record shows increasing complexity over time.**

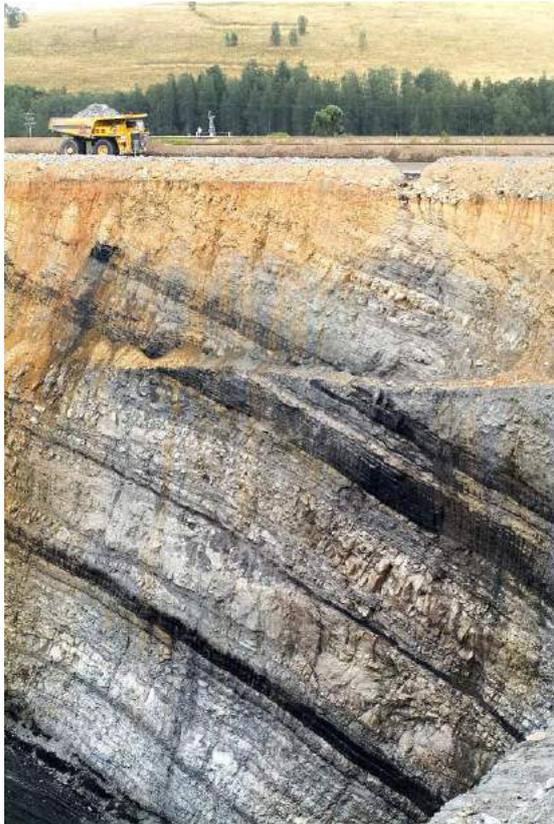
If nearly all the fossils were created by a world-wide flood event, as suggested by Young Earth Theory, we would expect primitive and more advanced creatures to all be found mixed up within the same layers of rocks. We may ask why we do not find fossils of modern animals mixed up with fossils of dinosaurs and many other extinct species of animals?

### **3. Evidence for the great age of the earth**

This evidence has been presented in detail in my free download DVD on ‘The age of the Earth’. If you have not yet seen this download please go to my webpage [www.factandfaith.co.za](http://www.factandfaith.co.za) . Click on the ‘FREE DOWNLOADS’ icon. This will show, amongst other free downloads, an extract from my Awesome Universe DVD’ series. Click on the ‘Age of earth’ DVD. In my view, the scientific evidence for an earth billions of years old is overwhelming.

Unfortunately, many proponents of the Young Earth Theory, present carefully selected items of information that, when viewed on their own, might fit into a Young Earth Theory. However, these quoted examples are controversial and are open to a variety of interpretations and, of even greater significance; they simply distract our attention from the vast volume of evidence for our earth being billions of years old.

One such controversial example, often quoted by Young Earth Theory, is the layers of rock in the Grand Canyon in America. They claim there is evidence of one flood laying all the layers down. Geologists will point out that such a suggestion fails to take into account well established dating procedures and knowledge on how successive layers of water-born deposits are laid down. Furthermore, we can show other examples of deposited layers that cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be due to one flood event. For instance, in the case of the formation of coal.



**Layers of coal, separated by other deposits, indicating a series of coal forming periods.**

Young Earth Theory suggests that coal deposits were laid down by the world-wide flood. This overlooks the scientific evidence for how coal is formed. This evidence is summarized in the same DVD download from my webpage. Geologists will look at a situation such as this, of a series of coal deposits, and will find significant differences in the chemical composition of each layer of coal. This shows that different types of vegetation contributed to each layer of coal and also that there are differences in the way the coal was formed in each layer. Furthermore, each coal formation period was separated by other deposits of sediment that became compressed over time into rock.

There is, to my understanding, absolutely no way that a trained geologist or biologist can come to the conclusion that all these coal layers were deposited at the same time.

Nor is there any way to conclude that layers, such as shown in the picture, do not represent deposits laid down over vast periods of geological time.

Other lines of scientific evidence that support the case AGAINST a world-wide flood, are mentioned in the following parts of this article.

#### **4. Fitting the Bible account into all this evidence**

The Bible gives dimensions of a very large boat, built by Noah, with instructions from God. A reconstruction shows that it was a very large boat, about half the size of an average sized modern cargo vessel, and its dimensions were exactly those needed for the greatest stability, not for forward movement.



#### **A reconstruction of Noah's Ark**

According to dates given in the Bible, we can calculate that the flood event took place about 2456 BC. It is probable that Noah wrote the account himself since archaeology has shown that cuneiform writing on clay tablets existed from at least 3000 BC.

I personally believe that Moses, who wrote much of the first four Bible books, may well have had access to Noah's account or a copy of it, when he was a prince of Egypt and schooled in all the wisdom of ancient Egypt.

**So, what does the Bible account say about this flood?** If we read the account in Genesis chapters 6 to 8, we find that Bible translators have written the word 'earth' or 'world' from only two Hebrew words used in the original text.. These words are 'Adamah' and 'Erets'. According to Bible concordances, these two words are translated elsewhere in the Bible in several different ways. For instance:

<u>ADAMAH</u>	Frequency	<u>ERETS</u>	Frequency
Country	1	Country	140 times
Earth	53	Earth	very frequent
Ground	43	Ground	96
Land	125	land	very frequent
World	0	<b>world</b>	<b>4</b>

We can see that these words are hardly ever translated as WORLD in other parts of the Bible. **The account of the flood could just as well be translated as *covering the entire land, ground or country.***

Regarding the animals that Noah took into the Ark, these could legitimately be considered to be those animals he knew about in his area. Certainly, although the Ark was large, with a total floor space on three decks of about 8,800 square meters, it could not have accommodated all the millions of life forms that we now know exist. In addition, the Young Earth Theory says that the dinosaurs and other animals, now only found as fossils, would all be candidates for the Ark.

**Some proponents of the Young Earth Theory suggest that Noah only took on board some 'key' or 'type' species, and that after the flood these diversified into the many species seen today.** Such a suggestion would require some exceptionally fast evolutionary processes, in order to explain the millions of species alive today, and Young Earth Theory does not like any suggestion that God could have used processes such as evolution to bring about His creation. On the other hand, if these theorists claim that there was such a rapid post-flood evolution, then we are entitled to ask why they are so vigorous in their denial of God having used long evolutionary processes throughout the history of the universe and of life on earth.

Another consideration, for those trying to justify their interpretation of the Genesis account, is that this account specifically states that God's creative activity ended on the sixth creative 'day'. The clear implication is that thereafter the Creator used the laws and mechanisms he had brought into existence, in order to guide future changes on earth.

Another important consideration relating to the animals Noah took into the Ark, would have been the need to provide enough feed for all these animals for just over one year. The Bible record says Noah entered the Ark on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the second month and left it on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the second month of the following year.

Furthermore, Noah would have had to take on board enough fresh water for all these animals for a year. This is because a world-wide flood would definitely have been saline like the sea. If we estimate the fresh water requirements for the mammals and birds alone, at a conservative one liter per day, this means a total of 4,200 metric tons of water. This amount of fresh water would have taken up 4,200 cubic meters of Ark space, representing about half of the available floor space!

Some Young Earth Theory advocates suggest that the fresh water was supplied from rain falling on the Ark. However, if we stick to the Bible account we find no evidence for this. In fact we are told that the rain fell for 40 days. In chapter 8, verse 2 we read, *Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky.* The account indicates that the flooding lasted a total of 150 days before the waters started to recede (Chapter 7:24). However, Noah then remained in the Ark for a further six months before he was able to come out. So, the Bible account does not support this theory of rainwater supplying the drinking water.

Some have suggested that melting of trapped ice from the last Ice Age could have had two results. Firstly, to provide much of the flood water. Secondly, to make the oceans much less saline and therefore drinkable. However, we can learn a lesson from our

present world's water supply. Only 2.5 % of the world's water is fresh and about 98 % of this is locked into polar ice or is in ground water. At the height of the last Ice Age, even if all of the world's fresh water had been locked into ice, this would have represented only a fraction of the saline water contained in the vast oceans. Furthermore, if the salinity of the oceans had been significantly reduced this would have caused the extinction of most oceanic life forms. This would conflict with the biblical account since it is clear from this that Noah could not have taken sea life forms into the Ark. They presumably survived because their oceanic environment was not dramatically changed.

**Logic demands that the Ark floated on fresh water** and Noah and his sons simply obtained drinking water from the water around them. This is another strong argument for a limited flood since a world-wide flood would have been saline.

It is also worth mention that the most elementary physics tells us that water always finds its level. In other words the level in one part of the world's ocean is the same as another. Now, if the flood had covered the entire globe and every land mass and mountain, where could this water drain away to?

In order to cover the entire world's land, the water would have had to rise by thousands of meters. Everest is over 8000 m above sea level. If we leave out the tallest mountains we still need a sea level rise of at least 6000 m to cover all the major land masses. If we multiply this height of water with the total surface area of the world, namely 510,072,000 square kilometers, we arrive at a water volume of about 3 billion (3 thousand million) cubic kilometers. This represents a volume of water about three times more water than is within all the earth's oceans today!!!

Another strong argument against a world-wide flood is the previously mentioned diversity of life in various parts of the world. How could Noah have gathered a representative sample of life forms from all parts of the world, such as Australia, and then, after the flood, have got them back to Australia and other parts of the world?

Some Young Earth Theorists have even suggested that the Pangaea and Gondwana land masses only broke up after the flood. This would defy all that we know about continental drift and the well understood forces causing the very slow movements of continents. Furthermore, if such massive theoretical movements could have taken place in so short a time, this would have rocked the earth in gigantic earthquakes and tsunamis kilometers high. Any fossils formed by such hypothetical events would have become thoroughly mixed up. A world-wide flood would have produced fossil beds with every conceivable type of animal and plant all within the same rock deposits. This we do not find.

In addition, if for arguments sake we consider the claim that the continents only broke up at the time of the flood and initially, after the flood receded, there was still a land bridge between Asia and Australia. This theory of a land bridge is proposed to try and explain how the animals released from the Ark got to Australia. Even if this theory had any geological support, it still fails to explain the unique animals of Australia.

If these Australian animals multiplied from the animals released from the Ark, they would have included Marsupial mammals (like the many species of kangaroo) and Placental mammals (like the majority of mammals existing today, including mankind). How can the Young Earth Theory explain why no placental mammals arrived in Australia across this hypothetical land bridge? In the rest of the world the existence of placental mammals resulted in the virtual extinction of marsupial mammals.

## **5. Where was the flood of Noah's time?**

Archaeology confirms that the first complex civilization came about in the Middle East. Only later did this start to spread to other parts of the world around 2000 BC. This led to the first complex civilization in China in about 1700 BC (Shang dynasty) and even later migrations took it to America, with the first complex civilization in about 250 BC (Mayas).

In other words, at the time that the Bible suggests this great flood took place, archaeology has revealed that all of advanced civilization, such as the Sumerian and others that led to the Sumerian, was still concentrated somewhere in the Middle East. It is therefore fascinating that **recent surveys under the Black Sea have revealed ancient buildings**. Could these have been where the first civilization was situated?

A look at the map of this region shows a vast area of lowland, stretching from west of the Black Sea, through the Black Sea, Caspian Sea and even further east. To the south of this vast lowland we find a continuous ridge of high ground, except for the lower area between Greece and Turkey (seen in the top left corner of this map).



**The Middle East, showing the Black Sea area where the first complex civilization may have been situated and where ruins of buildings have been found under the sea.**

From a scientific viewpoint, the last Ice Age ended about 10,000 years ago. However, for a long time after the melting began, much of the earth's water was confined within ice sheets. This meant that little or no rain fell over large areas. This may explain the biblical account where it states that, prior to this flood, no rain had fallen on the land. It would also explain why Noah saw a rainbow for the first time after the flood.

Scientific studies in this area do confirm that large floods have occurred. We can suggest that sudden torrential rain (possibly initiated by a comet explosion in the atmosphere) plus catastrophic release of trapped water under ice sheets, could have led to a very rapid flooding of this entire lowland area.

The only relatively lower land elevation, in the long belt of higher ground to the south, is at the present day straits between Greece and Turkey (linking the Black Sea to the Mediterranean). If this was originally not a strait then the flood waters could have built up to the north. However, at some point the accumulated waters could have caused a rush of water out into the Mediterranean Sea. The erosion of this passage (the present day Bosphorus Strait) would have allowed the flood waters to slowly recede.

This scenario is actually suggested in the Bible account. We read, *But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.* As mentioned earlier, we can ask where the waters could have receded to if the flood covered the whole earth. However, if the waters were receding through a newly formed Bosphorus Strait, this could explain how the flood waters finally dropped enough to enable the Ark to rest on dry ground.



**Water always finds its level. If the whole earth was covered, where could the water recede to?**

One further biblical indication that the flood was not world-wide, is the account of Noah planting a vineyard when he emerged from the Ark. If the ground had been covered for a year with the salt water of a world-wide flood then the soil would not have been suitable for a vineyard.

## **6. Spread of flood stories around the world**

Since the first complex civilization started in the Middle East around 4000 BC (according to archaeology at sites such as Tel Brak and Ebla), and the later Sumerian civilization only spread out across the world after 2000 BC, it makes sense that all civilized groups carried with them a story of a great flood. This took place, according to Bible chronology, around 2456 BC. As migrating peoples moved out across the world, the story of a great flood was carried with them, often distorted by time. Even by about 2000 BC the story had become very distorted and exaggerated in the Epic of Gilgamesh.

## 7. Conclusions

**The Bible account is, I believe, firmly based in real history.** Furthermore, if we allow for **legitimate** alternative translations of some sections of the account, it can be reconciled with scientific discovery. I am convinced that Noah's original account, written within the limitations of his own knowledge, was a very accurate account of very real events that he experienced.

In past generations it really did not matter if our understanding of Noah's flood was unscientific. However, in our generation, that is rooted and grounded in the most spectacular advances in knowledge, **I believe that God does not require us to commit what I call 'intellectual suicide', in order to cling to one narrow and unnecessary interpretation of the Bible account.** The same applies to our understanding of the age of earth. Why cling desperately to an un-scientific viewpoint when it is possible to fully reconcile the God of Creation and the Bible, with the discoveries of science?

**Reconciling biblical revelation and the God of Creation, requires us to obtain a concept of God that is awesomely great. He is aware of all things and in control of every event and process in our universe. As it says in the Bible, *He is before all things, and in him all things hold together* (Colossians 1:17). Furthermore, as Jesus said, *Your heavenly Father notices when one sparrow falls to the ground and he knows how many hairs are on your head* (Matthew 10:29-30).**

I outline my understanding of how this is possible, in various free downloads from my web page. May I suggest you start with the four extracts from my DVD 1 of the Awesome Universe series, obtained as free downloads from my web page. Start with 'The size and age of the universe', followed by 'Quantum physics and Timeless Dimension' and 'The creator' and finally by 'The age of our earth'.

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