

DEVELOPMENT OF FOX'S FLOOD MODEL

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

INTRODUCTION

In the first fifteen chapters of this volume I developed the flood model that I believe is the most reasonable interpretation of how God brought about the flood. The Scriptures link several things with the flood.

QUESTIONS OF EPISTEMOLOGY

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that relates to the questions of how and if we know things. I have for many years taught that we know things in three ways: (1) by our senses, (2) by reasoning, and (3) by evaluation of evidence.

It is essential that we determine how we will approach the problem of determining how the flood (of Genesis 6-9) occurred. Let me first begin by setting forth the ways that we know anything that we know. Let us consider the three ways that man knows anything.

Empirical Knowledge

First, we know things by sight (2 Cor. 5:7) or by one or more of our senses. This is called "empirical knowledge" by philosophers and scientists. All scientific knowledge is "empirical knowledge." This is, by definition, what scientific knowledge is all about. All scientific knowledge is based upon inductive reasoning. Therefore, it is based upon probability and cannot be 100% certain.

Scientific knowledge is tentative: "Hypotheses always remain hypotheses, that is, suppositions to the complete certainty of which we can never attain." (Kant, Immanuel - as quoted by Medawar, p. 41) Lee wrote:

"Because all scientific statements must be considered at best only tentatively correct, the phrase 'scientific proof' should be used with extreme caution in scientific discussions. Strictly speaking, nothing in science is truly proved." (p. 19)

Note also:

"No scientific theory, no matter how strongly supported by available evidence, is final and unchallengeable; any good theory is always exposed to the possibility of being overthrown by new observational evidence." (American Journal of Physics, p. 11)

Note also:

Few propositions of science are directly verifiable as true. In fact, none of the important ones are. ... Every explanation in science is put forward tentatively and provisionally. Any proposed explanation is regarded as a mere hypothesis, more or less probable on the basis of the available facts or relevant evidence. ... The vocabulary of "hypothesis," "theory," and "law" is unfortunate, since it obscures the important fact that all of the general propositions of science are regarded as hypotheses, never as dogmas.

... As a hypothesis, the question of its truth or falsehood is open, and there is a continual search for more and more evidence to decide that question. The term “evidence” as used here refers ultimately to experience; sensible evidence is the ultimate court of appeal in verifying scientific propositions. Science is empirical in holding that sense experience is the test for all its pronouncements. Consequently, it is of the essence of a scientific proposition that it be capable of being tested by observation. (Copi, pp. 463-465)

Note also:

Scientific truth in the sense I shall describe and explain it below is often thought of as the goal of a scientist’s work, though “asymptote” would be the better word, for there can be no apodictic certainty in science, no finally conclusive certainty beyond the reach of criticism. There is no substantive goal; there is a direction only, that which leads toward Ultima Thule, the asymptote of the scientist’s endeavors, the “truth.” (Medawar, p. 5)

Medawar quoted Peirce: “the conclusions of science make no pretense to be more than probable.” (Peirce, Charles Sanders, - as quoted by Medawar, page 41)

Knowledge Derived From Deductive Logic

The second way we know things is by reasoning. Mathematics is a form of deductive reasoning. For example, let us remember a fact that can be proven by Euclidian geometry: The three interior angles on any triangle ($\angle A$, $\angle B$, and $\angle C$) always form a straight line. Since a straight line is a 180° angle, we can use this information to solve for unknown angles. For example, let us assume that we know two of the three interior angles of a triangle. If we know two of the angles e.g. $\angle A = 40^\circ$ and $\angle B = 60^\circ$, we can easily determine by simple algebra that $\angle C = 80^\circ$. It should be evident that our knowledge of the value of $\angle C$ is only as accurate as our knowledge of the true values of $\angle A$ and $\angle B$. If we have the correct value for $\angle A$, but have an incorrect value for $\angle B$, we do not know the correct value for $\angle C$. We do not derive new truth by logic (or reasoning), but see old truth that was hidden from us.

Knowledge derived from deductive reasoning is only as certain as the information that we use in our reasoning. If the information used in the reasoning (including mathematics) is certain, the resulting conclusion is certain. If the information used in the reasoning is uncertain, the resulting conclusion is uncertain.

Knowledge Derived From Faith

We can either walk by faith or by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). Faith is knowledge derived from evidence (Heb. 11:1). The Greek word that is translated: “evidence” (KJV) is $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\chi\omicron\varsigma$ pronounced *elenchos*.

Elencho, however, is a much more pregnant word. It means to rebuke another with the truth so that the person confesses, or at least is convicted, of his sin (Job 5:17; Prov. 19:25). This is also the case in juristic Greek, where *elencho* is not merely to reply to but to refute an opponent. (Trench, p. 30)

With this Greek word, the writer of Hebrews is telling us that faith is certain.¹ Most

¹ Note that faith enables us to “understand” (νοεω “to perceive with the mind, to understand.” [Thayer, p.

English speaking persons do not know the biblical definition of the word “faith.” Most people use the word “faith” as a synonym of the word “think.” People say: “I believe” when they mean: “I think, but I am not certain.” This is a most unfortunate mistake in the definition of the biblical word “faith.” There are a few verses that appear to use the word “faith” (Greek πίστις pronounced “*pistis*”) as something of which we are uncertain, but these passages can be interpreted differently.

The Three Methods of Knowing Contrasted

Let us compare the three ways that we know things: (1) by our senses, (2) by reasoning, and (3) by evaluation of evidence. Knowledge is either absolute or it is tentative (not absolute). Of these three ways of knowing things, both empirical (scientific) knowledge and some knowledge derived from deductive reasoning are tentative (not absolute) knowledge. (Remember that deductive reasoning is only as certain as the information that we use in the reasoning.) The modern day adage relating to a computer is correct: “Garbage in, garbage out.”

Since science is tentative and deductive reasoning depends upon other sources (it does not give us new truth and it may be tentative, but it may not be tentative), either we do not have absolute truth or faith is absolute truth. If faith is tentative truth, then we do not have absolute truth. This conclusion is true, unless there is a fourth method of knowing truth. The educational system (in the United States and most of the Western world) has been teaching that absolute truth does not exist. John Dewey and his “progressive education” philosophy is the source of this doctrine (that absolute truth does not exist – that the only way we know anything is by science).

Since faith is absolute truth, it is irrational to allow scientific knowledge (tentative truth) to trump (veto or nullify) our knowledge derived from the Scriptures (by faith). Therefore, I will start with the Scriptures to set the parameters for our study of the flood.

INFORMATION USED TO DEVELOP A SOUND FLOOD MODEL

Information Derived by Faith (from the Scriptures) About the Flood

There are, at least, fifteen absolute truths that are derived from the Scriptures: (1) there was a curse of the ground related to the flood (Gen. 8:21). (2) It rained for 40 days and nights (Gen. 7:4, 12, 17). (3) The fountains of the deep were breaking up for 150 days (Gen. 7:11 and 8:1-3). The waters did not decrease until after the 150 days and there was a wind during the flood. (4) The windows of the heavens were open for 150 days (Gen. 7:11 & 8:1-2). (5) The flood waters did not abate for 150 days after the flood began (Gen. 8:3). (6) There was a decrease in the longevity of mankind after the flood (Gen. 9:29, 11:10-26, etc.). (7) Mankind was able to marry close relatives both before and, for a period of time, after the flood without having genetic problems

426] “In accordance with the usage of the *koine* $\nu\omicron\sigma\omega$ means in the NT “to perceive,” “to note,” “to grasp,” “to recognize,” “to understand,” ...” (Kittel, Vol. IV, p. 950)

(Gen. 9:19). Any sound universal flood model must have all humans descending from Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Most local flood models will not conform to this requirement (among other requirements). (8) Mankind ceased to be able to marry close relatives about 1,000 years after the flood. Atheistic organic macroevolution requires inbreeding of humans and animals in order to bring about additional organisms, but inbreeding of mutated organisms is detrimental (with our present conditions). (9) Planetary phenomenon were associated with the flood (Amos 5:7-9). (10) There was no rain before the flood (Gen. 2:5-6). There are two different words translated “rain” in these passages. It is possible that there was water rain for 40 days and something else rained for a longer period. (The word rain is used for several different things falling in the Old Testament [Gen. 19:24, Ex. 9:18, 16:4, etc.].) (11) There was no rainbow before the flood (Gen. 9:12-17). (12) There probably were no clouds before the flood (Gen. 9:13). (13) Ice, snow, and cold were not mentioned before the flood. (14) Storms, earthquakes, and volcanoes were not mentioned before the flood. (15) Mountains were raised during the flood (Ps. 104:5-9).

Whatever flood model is developed must conform to these 15 (and perhaps other) factors derived from the absolute truth of the Scriptures. I do not believe that prior flood models have conformed to the requirement that they must conform to these fifteen absolute truths. The following must also be followed in order to be rational: (1) the parameters for all sound flood models will be the Scriptures. (2) There is no need to conform any flood model to any theoretical hypotheses of scientists. (3) Empirical hypotheses, which are more certain, should be used to develop the flood model.²

The following are examples of some other laws of science to be used in developing any reasonable flood-model are: (1) Laws of physics such as the law of gravity, Coulomb’s law of electric field attractions, Faraday’s laws of electromagnetics, etc. can be used. (2) Other laws such as Henry’s law, Boyle’s law, Pascal’s law, Archimedes principle, etc. can be used.

Various Facts of Nature Must be Used to Develop a Sound Flood Model

There are a number of facts that we can observe in nature that must be used in developing a sound flood model: (1) Both the Earth and the Moon are cratered. These craters of the Earth and Moon might or might not be linked with the flood. Ice in the craters of the Moon might or might not be linked with the flood. There are three distinct rings of craters around the Earth. Seismographs have determined that these three rings of craters are filled with sedimentary rocks and then the next ring is above the lower craters. (There is sedimentary rock both above and below these three rings of craters.) If all of the sedimentary rocks were deposited during the flood, these craters must have been created during the flood and their existence might give clues to deriving a sound flood model. (2) The Earth has extensive evidence of erosion by water (Grand Canyon, sedimentary rocks, etc.). (3) Mountains have sedimentary rocks on them (even at the tops of the mountains). (4) The oceans have not been filled with sediment. (5) There are extensive ice caps in Greenland, Antarctica, and elsewhere. (6) There are some parts of the northern polar regions that do not have sedimentary

² For a more thorough discussion of the distinction between theoretical and empirical hypotheses refer to: Hurley (pp. 533-536).

rocks. (7) The magnetic field of the Earth is not aligned with the geographic poles. (8) The magnetic field (the poles) of the Earth wanders. (9) The core of the Earth turns faster than the remainder of the Earth. (10) Plants and animals were frozen during times that fruit was ripe (during late July or early August). Neither the fruit nor the leaves on these frozen trees dropped off. (11) The continents float on molten rock. (12) Cloud droplets condense on the molecules of sulfurous gases. (13) There are fossils in the sedimentary rocks in the interior of the continents. These fossils are both marine and terrestrial fossils. (14) There are animal tracks in some of the sedimentary rocks. (15) There are sand dunes in some of the sedimentary rocks (evidence of wind erosion). (16) There are rocks called “mudstones” in some of the sedimentary rocks. (17) There is iridium and other platinum group metals in some of the sedimentary rocks and in the ice of Antarctica and Greenland. (18) There is evidence of volcanic activity coincident with the deposition of sedimentary rocks. (19) There is extensive archeological evidence that the continental shelves were inhabited by humans in the past. These archeological sites are as deep as 300 or more feet below sea level.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY USED TO DEVELOP THE FOX FLOOD MODEL

In any study of this nature there are two parts to the study: (1) We must analyze the information (break it down into parts to see each part). (2) We must synthesize the information (put it all together into a coherent system).

In developing my flood model, I used the following methodology in my analysis: The first thing done was to assemble as much information as possible from the Scriptures. It was recognized that the Scriptures are absolute truth and science is tentative truth. Under no conditions should science be allowed to trump any sound interpretation of the Scriptures. If there are two or more plausible interpretations of a passage of Scripture, then science may be used to determine which of the interpretations is the most plausible. Science was not used to determine an answer to a question until sound hermeneutics was first applied to the Scriptures and an exhaustive search of the Scriptures was made.

The second thing done in my analysis was: Both science (empirical hypotheses [including laws and principles of science] were applied) and the facts of nature were then brought to bear on the issue. The facts of nature were given priority over science. The laws of science and principles (e.g. Archimedes principle, principle of uniformity, etc.) were given priority over empirical hypotheses. Empirical hypotheses were given priority over theoretical hypotheses. The last aspect of science that was considered was theoretical hypotheses.

The third thing done in my analysis was: The objections of those who deny that the flood occurred were taken into account and every attempt was made to develop a model that would answer their objections. In answering the objections the first thing considered was conformity with the Scriptures. In answering the objections the second thing considered was conformity with the facts of nature that are observed (sedimentary rocks, mountain ranges, fossils in rocks, etc.). In answering the objections the third thing considered was conformity with the laws of science, principles of science, and reasonably verified hypotheses (empirical hypotheses) were

used (in the order given above). Less credence was given to empirical hypotheses and almost no credence was given to theoretical hypotheses.

In developing my synthesis of the information, the facts were then synthesized (assembled into a whole) and a model consistent with all the facts and not conflicting with anything said in the Scriptures was developed. (1) This author read the writings of a number of other authors who had written on the flood (both for and against a universal flood). Some ideas were probably borrowed from other writers (this was not a conscious borrowing of ideas). Comments by various people with whom this author has come into contact also shaped the model. (2) The model was tested by presenting it to a number of people (some friendly to the idea of a universal flood and some unfriendly to the idea of a universal flood). This occurred both before the book was printed and after it was printed. This author engaged in an informal debate (over the internet) on the content of the book and was able to add more information to the model (the model was refined as a result of the debate). As with any scientific model, this model is subject to modification as more information is obtained by the author.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Any systematic study of a matter that requires different sources of information to determine the truth on the matter requires both an analysis and a synthesis of the information. It also requires that we rank the truth by the degree of certainty. If we attempt to synthesize truth derived from the Scriptures with science we must follow the procedure set forth in this treatise. My flood model conforms to these requirements. It is unfortunate that some brethren have allowed science to trump (veto) or nullify the Scriptures.

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