

- tracks and bones.
27. Johns, W. H., 1995. Letter to the Editor: Coccolithophores and chalk layers. **CEN Tech. J.**, 9(1):29-36.
28. Tyler, D. J., 1997. Flood models and trends in creationist thinking. **Creation Matters**, 2:1-3. Tyler has perhaps the best summary of the three Flood models in current creationist literature. I am indebted to him for the wording used to describe these Flood models.

EARTH'S DIVISION IN PELEG'S DAY?

Dear Editor,

I am saddened that your journal published the article by John A. Watson,¹ for I fear it will bring some disrepute to our mutually held perspectives on creationism. In fact, the article reflects indiscretion in the area of Biblical studies (I cannot speak on the issue of geology; to do so would be to commit the logical fallacy of appeal to misplaced authority).

To begin with, Watson claims to employ Isaiah 28:9-10 as '*the Bible's basic interpretative rule*' (p. 71). To name this passage as such is a misapplication of the context at best.²⁻⁴ The Hebrew phrase translated 'precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, a little here, a little there' is basically unintelligible. The context of the passage seems rather to mirror the drunken communication of those who hear Isaiah's message. It is at best reflective of baby talk; at worse, gibberish. In either case, it may also reflect in some way the foreign tongue of Isaiah 28:11, which seems in turn to refer to the Assyrian invaders who will destroy Israel (cf. Isaiah 18:2). The greater context of Isaiah 28:11-13 is that God will discipline His people's rejection of clear warnings which sound to them as gibberish, with the result that they fall into captivity. Thus the phrase is not intended to be a basic interpretative rule of the Bible, but the gibberish of certain judgment.

Secondly, Watson claims Job 38:25 uses

'the very same word "divided", and thereby qualifies, with its context, to interpret the correlating word "divided" of Genesis 10:25' (p. 71).

The same Hebrew root *plg* is indeed evidenced in both passages, but the verbal stem in Genesis 10:25 is a Niphal, and in Job is a Piel. Thus, his statement is somewhat misleading, inasmuch as a differing stem often indicates a totally different gloss for a given root. I do however agree that in the case of Job, the additional element of a watercourse is very evident. To argue on the basis of this alone for a similar meaning of *plg* in the Genesis 10:25 passage is tenuous at best. I do agree it is at least possible that this is the case, and there is ample argument with the nominal usages of *plg* which would support his view at this point, which could have been mentioned. My article 'Peleg in Genesis 10:25'⁵ cites these.

Thirdly, though Watson properly asserts that 'earth' (Hebrew '*erets*') in Genesis 10:25 is regional, he misapplies the region to that of north-west Arabia and Palestine. In support, he cites that

'the probable home of Peleg's family (was) in upper north-western Arabia' (p. 72)

based on Joktan's descendancy. Two problems are immediately evident. First, the whole of the context of Genesis 10-11 is on Mesopotamia, not north-west Arabia (or Palestine). In fact, it would not be until the end of chapter 11 and the beginning of chapter 12 that the focus would move from Mesopotamia to Canaan. Second, Peleg was an immediate ancestor (great-great-great grandfather if all generations are given) of Abram, who was called from Ur of the Chaldees (Ur of Mesopotamia). I would argue that Joktan moved to north-west Arabia which produced a lineage there, whereas Peleg remained in Mesopotamia. As the little brother to Peleg (his name means little one and he is listed second in order) he would not have had family inheritance as the first-born Peleg would have had.

Finally, migration patterns mentioned in Genesis seem to be from Mesopotamia toward Palestine rather than vice versa (hence, Terah to Haran for example, Abram to Palestine).

Fourthly, there is no modern justification whatsoever for Strong's interpretation for Peleg as 'earthquake'. No contemporary Hebrew lexicon of which I am aware does so (I cannot speak about the thinking in Strong's day). For Watson to state categorically that

'the name Peleg itself indicates that an earthquake occurred, opening an extensive crevasse that widened and filled. . . with water of the sea near the time of his birth' (p. 72)

is unfounded! Indeed, had he taken the other gloss given in Strong's ('small channel of water, as in irrigation'), his argument would have been much more supportable from Scriptural usage.

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Dear Editor,

In the course of my reading I have observed that one of the main reasons why Christians have been attracted to evolution is that in their view it offers an explanation for the distribution of fauna found in continents and islands that are separated by vast distances from the Euro/Asian/African mainland. Not only, as Darwin

Septuagint (LXX)		531 years
Samaritan Bible	omits Cainan 130 years	401 years
Josephus	Jewish historian (first century AD) adds ten years to Shem after Flood	411 years
Eusebius (264–320)	same as Samaritan	401 years
Theophilus	probably Bishop of Antioch (second century AD) omits two years from Shem after Flood	399 years
Africanus	second or third century AD— same as Theophilus	399 years

Table 1. The longer chronologies from the Flood to the birth of Peleg.⁴

showed, are there variations within types, but there are also separate species that are endemic only to the continent or island which they inhabit.

The variations can now be explained by the science of genetics, but how did nostril-breathing fauna, in particular the endemic species (for example, koalas), find their way to isolated continents or islands? The answer that most theistic evolutionists give to this is they would not have possibly found their way from the Near East where the Ark of Noah was said to have landed and therefore the Flood narrative is only a myth.

One creationist reply to this is that after the division of the Earth there existed land bridges which enabled fauna to cross to the separated continents and islands, but this reply is far from convincing.

A more convincing reply, in my view, would be that the Earth was not divided until the time of Peleg and — provided a 'long' post-Flood chronology in Genesis is accepted — there was ample time for the various types of fauna released from the Ark to have regenerated and to have migrated to the four corners of the Earth before it was divided.

For this reason I wish to challenge some of the assumptions and arguments used by John A. Watson in his thesis concerning the meaning of the words 'the earth divided' in Genesis 10:2s.¹

There is a strong Biblical argument from silence against his first assumption that the Earth was divided

at the time of the Flood; namely, that although the Flood narrative mentions some of the after-effects of the Flood, it makes no mention at all of the division of the Earth at that time. This is not to say that the Flood catastrophe did not cause many seismic fractures in the Earth that would make it susceptible to division should a subsequent catastrophe of sufficient magnitude occur.

His second assumption is that we are necessarily tied to the Ussher chronology, which is based upon the 'short' post-Flood chronology in the Masoretic text. This chronology allows only a relatively short period of 101 years from the date of the Flood to the birth of Peleg² over which fauna from the Ark might have regenerated and dispersed over the whole Earth before it was divided. (To this must be added any further years of his life that elapsed until the actual division occurred.)

Although regeneration and migration over this period is possible, the longer chronologies, if true, would enable a more feasible explanation of the dispersion in question, assuming that the Earth was divided at the time of Peleg. In addition, the time of Peleg calculated in accordance with one of the longer chronologies might possibly coincide with a suggested catastrophe that is said to have caused a shift in the Earth's tilt or axis.³ It could have thus been the major catastrophe that caused the division of the Earth at that time.

Much research needs to be carried

out before a convincing argument could be put forward that such a catastrophe actually occurred at the time of Peleg. However, if it could be shown that there is indisputable evidence that there was a dramatic shift in the Earth's tilt or axis at the relevant time resulting in a strong inference of a major catastrophic event, the above explanation is that the **ancestors** of the indigenous fauna (and human beings also), now inhabiting the separated continents and islands, lived in those territories when they were part of an undivided Earth.

The longer chronologies from the Flood to the birth of Peleg⁴ are shown in Table 1.

It is natural that all new translations from the Hebrew this millennium would be taken from the Masoretic text, which is the only surviving Hebrew text. Thus they all show the 'short' post-Flood chronology.

Reverend Martin Anstey in his book, **The Romance of Biblical Chronology**,⁵ states that Jerome followed Eusebius, but there have been several revisions of Jerome's Latin version of the Bible since his time, and for many years now, English translations thereof have shown the 'short' chronology.

Modern translations of the Letter to the Hebrews seem to infer that there was more than one Hebrew text at the time of the Apostle Paul.⁶ This could explain why Josephus adopted a chronology that was different to the one in the Masoretic text.

Notwithstanding this, the genealogy of Jesus in Luke 2:23 includes Cainan (included only in the Septuagint chronology). Anstey said that this could have been a later insertion but admits that this is most unlikely.⁷ If it is part of what Luke actually wrote under divine inspiration we would be bound to have regard to it in selecting the authentic post-Flood chronology.

The logic used by John A. Watson to justify his interpretation of the word 'divided' in Genesis is laudable but consistency requires that the word

'earth' should also be interpreted by the use of the same logic.

That the name 'earth' was given to a single landmass seems to be indicated in Genesis 1:9-10 by reason of the fact that God gathered all the waters in one place. If then the Hebrew word meaning an undivided Earth used in Genesis 1:9 is the same as that used in Genesis 10:25 (I have no ready means of checking this), there would be a powerful argument for the adoption of that meaning in Genesis 10:25.

In my view the author's argument that the context of the chapter, being regional, requires a regional interpretation of the word 'earth' does not necessarily follow. Nevertheless, the regional catastrophe he points to could very well have happened at the time of Peleg but only (in my opinion) as a part of a global one that literally divided the whole Earth.

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4. Anstey, Ref. 2.
5. Anstey, Ref. 2, p. 86.
6. For example, cf. translation of the Letter to the Hebrews in the Jerusalem Bible where it says: 'as one text says' in Chapter 4:4 and 'the text we are considering' in Chapter 4:5, in place of 'somewhere He has spoken' and 'in this place' in the RSV. Both amount to the same thing, but expressed more explicitly in the newer version.

I need only to point to Genesis 10:15-20 as indicating otherwise. He has also placed himself at a distinct disadvantage by avoiding the basic catastrophic, geological evidence that everywhere correlates with, and compliments, the Biblical account when a literal interpretation is made.

Regarding Fouts' assertion, *'Indeed, had he [Watson] taken the other gloss given in Strong's ("small channel of water, as in irrigation"), his argument would have been much more supportable from Scriptural usage'*,

I did indeed use 'the other gloss', a 'small channel of water, as in irrigation', in my interpretation (quoting Watson, p. 72 at bottom, *'Peleg's "rill", initially produced a very narrow channel quickly flowing with sea water. . !)*. But the tectonics of the incident required that I write, *further movement increased the channel and flow to that of a river...'*. Thus, I have indeed taken up both of Fouts' 'glosses' in the full interpretation of the basic Scripture, Genesis 10:25.

I also respond to Mr Butel's challenges in the order that he makes them.

The occurrence of the breakup of all the fountains of the great deep (Genesis 7:11) during the Noahic Flood strongly suggests that major folding and faulting/breakup of the single universal landmass was everywhere in progress during the Flood. One 'fountain' (of several) of the great deep, that of the river of Eden system, watered a vast area in the Middle East and Africa (Genesis 2:10-14). Its hydrologic cycle did not include the atmosphere, but was designed to bring water from a relatively freshwater ocean ('seas' — Genesis 1:10) through great conduits in the Earth's crust (sial) driven by the Earth's heat, rising and cooling to discharge in a huge spring field in Eden. Thence, the prodigious discharge coalesced into a great river and flowed eastward watering the Garden of Eden via a relatively small lateral channel. Then, on a nearly flat,

vast tilted plain of almost no regional relief the great river parted into four heads/rivers, the first, the Pison, gently watering, in a braided distributary pattern, the whole region of greater Arabia (Genesis 2:11). On the north in a similar distributary pattern the Euphrates (not the modern one) watered the region that is now the greater Euphrates watershed and the Persian Gulf; on the north of the Euphrates, the Hiddekel (Genesis 2:14a), watered the region that is now the Tigris River watershed and most of Iran. On the south-west of the Pison, the Gihan (Genesis 2:13) watered the plain that is now Ethiopia, Sudan, and part of Egypt. All this multitude of gently irrigating waters finally found its way into the universal ocean (along the shore of what is now generally the Indian Ocean), discharging from the multitude of braided channels distributed eastward to south-south-eastward from their ultimate source in Eden.¹

It is my coming to an understanding of the extent of deformation of the vast region, outlined above, from a nearly flat plain throughout, into the mountains, hills, prairies, plains, deserts, severely eroding watersheds, and seas of that region today, that has compelled me to conclude that a 'Peleg division' of worldwide extent would have 'captured' much more than a passing reference (part of Genesis 10:25) in the Bible. The transformation of Arabia from the well-watered region of the Pison distributary system, into its great deserts that predominate today, required the formation of mountains along the Red Sea coast, the Sinai, and what is now the nation of Jordan, to intercept the moisture carried by the prevailing westerly winds (west to east) blowing from the Red and Mediterranean Seas.

The Persian Gulf adjacent on the north-east of Arabia is known to be part of a great geosyncline (structural depression) with sedimentary deposits up to eight miles thick filling it. Where did such a vast volume of sediments come from? The answer is: from

surrounding, catastrophically eroding uplands, and from sediment derived from cavitation debouching in water slurries from the broken-up conduits of the great deep depressurising during Noah's Flood. Peleg's 'earth division' (Genesis 10:25) gives a clue to the matter, in that 'division' suggests 'tension', stress that tends to pull a rock body apart, which is not commonly associated with mountain-building. Mountain-building most often comes from compression of rocks. Thus, Peleg's 'division' by tension does not correlate with the origin of the Persian Gulf (by compression between active tectonic plates), which gulf is a major divisional feature between nations of the Middle East. Rather, the Persian Gulf and its great geosyncline, mostly filled, had to have formed when prodigious amounts of sediment were available, which was the case in Noah's Flood. The 'Peleg division' correlates instead with the first of two tensional movements that twice widened the Red Sea post-Flood, as shown in my paper. All this in turn strongly suggests that the 'Peleg division' was **not** a segment of a global cataclysm that literally divided the whole Earth into the general configuration that we have today.

In answer to Mr Butel's question '*... how did endemic species find their way to isolated continents or islands?*', I quote from his letter:-

The creationist reply to this is that after the division of the Earth there existed land bridges which enabled fauna to cross to the separated continents and islands ...!

But I'm not prepared to defend that position.

Regarding chronologies, actually I am not locked into Ussher's; it seems that his is my convenient source at hand. In my thesis² I consider the possibility of a longer chronology, like that of the Septuagint, better harmonising with the geological aspects of the 'Peleg problem'.

Regarding his challenge of my regional interpretation for the extent of the catastrophe, the most often used Old Testament Hebrew word for 'earth' is 'erets'; it is the same word both in

Genesis 1:10 and Genesis 10:25.³ But this apparent correlation does not appear to be significant to the question of the extent of tectonic division of the Earth during the time of Peleg, because the single, universal landmass of Genesis 1:9-10 (and Genesis 1:25,26) does not have an exclusive word 'earth' given to it by Scripture. Note that the same 'earth' of Genesis 1:25a and Genesis 1:25b are different Hebrew words, 'erets' and 'admah' respectively.⁴ Also compare verse 26. Therefore, according to all applicable Scripture, and following the rule of Isaiah 28:9-10, the divided Earth of Genesis 10:25 was not necessarily derived from the breakup/'division' of the unbroken, single, universal landmass.

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GENESIS 2:5 AND THE PLANTS

Dear Editor,

I would like to commend Michael Kruger for adhering to a recent six-day creation and defending Biblical inerrancy.¹ However, I question his interpretation that in Genesis 2:5 '*plants designed for mankind* — . . . *will spring up after man*' (p. 108). Is he saying that plants designed for mankind were not created on Day Three? That appears to be what he is saying. Or does he believe that plants

designed for mankind grew elsewhere besides the Garden of Eden and that Adam had to transplant them there, and eat from outside of Eden until they grew?

I don't think his interpretation will stand. Creationists have always believed that all 'kinds' of plants were created on Day Three, and indeed that is the clear teaching of Genesis 1. I do not think Genesis 2 may be reasonably held to say that '*plants designed for mankind*' grew everywhere except his intended home — the Garden of Eden — and then they were transplanted there.

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The Author Replies . . .

I appreciate John Goertzen's response to my paper and commend his obvious commitment to a six-day creation and Biblical inerrancy. However, I think he has missed the main thrust of my argument. My case is simply that the type of vegetation spoken of in Genesis 2:5 was specific to the Paradise of the Garden of Eden and did not spring up until after mankind appeared. This is a necessary conclusion for two reasons:-

- (1) Genesis 2:5 says that these specific plants need both rain and mankind to flourish. This obviously could not have happened until after man appeared on Day Six.
- (2) If the vegetation in Genesis 2:5 (which clearly comes **after** man) is the same vegetation spoken of on Day Three, then we have a clear and unavoidable chronological contradiction. Were the plants created first or was man created first? I avoid this contradiction by suggesting the plants in Genesis 2:5 are unique to the Garden of