

in the Septuagint *'the nouns "mountains" and "valleys" are both in the nominative (subject) case'*. It is, however, more likely that both nouns are in the accusative (object) case, which, for neuter nouns, is identical in form with the nominative. The verbs 'to ascend' and 'to descend' may both govern such a direct accusative, as is shown by the Septuagint of Numbers 21:33 and Isaiah 38:8. Taylor's translation of the Septuagint of Psalm 104:8 is, in fact, contrary to the view of some Septuagint scholars who have written on the subject.<sup>2-4</sup>

Furthermore, since the Hebrew word 'valley' is feminine and the verb 'descend' is in the masculine, Taylor's translation of the Hebrew requires breach of grammatical agreement, which, though possible when the verb precedes the subject, is improbable. Moreover, the subject of the masculine plural verbs 'pass over' and 'return' in the following verse is the 'waters', which have had a boundary set for them (compare Jeremiah 5:22 in Hebrew). Thus it is most natural to suppose that the waters are the main topic from verse 7 through to verse 9 and that Psalm 104:8 does not deal explicitly with tectonic activities.

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## References

1. Taylor, C.V., 1998. Did mountains really rise according to Psalm 104:8? *CEN Tech. J.*, 12(3):312-313.
2. Brenton, L.C.L., 1851. *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*. Samuel Bagster & Sons, London, p. 760.
3. Lust, J., Eynikel, E. and Hauspie, K., 1996. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint, Part II*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, p. 230.
4. A further issue is that in Classical Greek neuter plural subjects govern singular verbs. Taylor implies that the supposed neuter plural subjects here have plural verbs, which is perfectly possible in post-Classical Greek such as that of the Septuagint. I am very

grateful to Dr Andreas J. Kostenberger for performing a GRAMCORD search of the Septuagint for me showing the relative frequency there of singular and plural verbs with adjacent neuter subjects.



## More on mountains

Dr Charles Taylor is a scholar of highest repute. Yet his mountain uplift view<sup>1</sup> has implications that go far beyond a single Bible verse, involving a partial meeting of ways — however unintended — with the staple evolutionary explanation for Flood evidences. It cannot, therefore, pass without comment on apologetic, biblical, and empirical grounds.

Apologetically, the world-wide evidence, from the highest mountain ranges, for the Flood is as awesome as it is universal. Japanese author Kyuya Fukada writes, in a major photographic study of the Himalayas:

*'Fossils of marine life ... are found above 8,000 metres in this area. They bear out the theory that the Himalayas were once submerged .... The layers of limestone that now cover all of Mt Everest above 8,000 metres were once under water.'*<sup>2</sup>

It is likewise, in kind, for all the great mountain ranges of the world. In every case — as with the recent major dinosaur find in Bolivian Andes limestone, at an

altitude of 2,800 metres (9000 ft)<sup>3</sup> — *'marine fossils are buried with obvious land-based creatures'*, calling into question the notion of submarine uplift, which by definition would only have involved marine life.

This universal testimony, from Earth's mightiest mountains, of their once having been covered with water, and that at a time of biological complexity comparable with today's, is one of creationism's most powerful apologetic tools for the Deluge. It should not be blunted by a diluted view of pre-Flood topography. When Moses wrote that *'all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered'* (Gen. 7:19 NIV), he was writing from a post-Flood perspective, where *'high mountains'* meant just that — *'high mountains'*, essentially as they are today. While this does not rule out some *localized* post-Flood up-warping, it hardly justifies a broad-brushed extrapolation to account for the totality of modern mountain formations. Why sell the family silver of creationism for the mere assumption of uniformitarianism, particularly when the latter is hardly owed any favours!

But it is when we look closer at the biblical record that the notion of post-Flood mountain uplift becomes even more suspect. Moses shows that nearly 2½ months elapsed from when the Ark first rested on Ararat until the surrounding mountain peaks became visible (Gen. 8:4, 5). That is, more than ten weeks of continually subsiding waters before even *'the tops of the mountains were seen'*! Why such a long time, unless the *'mountains'* of then, were as the mountains of now?

Regarding the solitary passage in Scripture on which the 'uplift' view could conceivably be based, namely Psalm 104:8, the text is far from conclusive.

(a) The context, as Dr Taylor concedes (*'actually, much of Psalm 104 seems to refer to creation itself'*),

is speaking of Creation. Hence, 'You laid the foundations of the earth' (v.5) is a clear Creation reference. It is hardly sound exegesis to take a passage which all parties agree is primarily a Creation context, and apply it to Flood or post-Flood mechanics.

(b) The newest English versions, all of course based on the Hebrew, highlight why caution is in order: the NIV, 'they flowed over the mountains, they went down into the valleys' the NKJV, 'they went up over the mountains, they went down into the valleys', and the NRSV, 'they rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys'. While all three clearly agree with each other, and with the KJV, none has any hint of the 'rising mountains' scenario, though the NKJV does include, as an alternative marginal reading, 'The mountains rose up; The valleys sank down'. Yet even here, it could just as well apply to mountain uplift in the Creation week itself, when we know that such upthrusting did indeed take place — a view also suggested by the acknowledged Creation context of the chapter.

(c) The standard Bagster edition of the Greek Septuagint, with translation by Sir Lancelot Brenton, renders the verse in question differently from Dr Taylor: 'They go up to the mountains and down to the plains'.<sup>4</sup> One has no desire to lock horns with so respected a linguistics specialist as Dr Taylor. I merely make the point that it hardly seems prudent to rest an entire case on one solitary verse, about which, even among the most learned Bible translators, ancient and modern, there is such a divergence of views. Even more so when it is considered that such slender textual evidence could just as readily be explained in terms of the known mountain building of Creation week itself.

Empirical evidence, too, gives cold comfort to the post-Flood 'uplift' view. Negatively, where is there any hard data for mountains

rising today? Isolated small volcanic islands like Surtsey (Atlantic, 1963) aside, what real evidence is there for widespread tectonic uplift now — other than in the eye of the beholder? The recent proudly announced annual 'movement' of 0.6 cm (less than 1/4 inch) for the entire continent of Africa,<sup>5</sup> is more the stuff of farce than serious science. Forty years ago, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* of 1959 listed the height of Mt Everest at 29,028 feet (8,848 metres). No prizes for guessing what its height is still officially listed as!<sup>6</sup>

The pantry is, quite simply, bare in terms of sustained and demonstrable mountain uplift phenomena today. For our uniformitarian friends, who routinely invoke 'mountain uplift' as the mantra to explain Flood evidences at higher altitudes, this is disconcerting. Is not the present, according to their view, the 'key to the past'? Yet how can this be, when there is no real evidence of sustained mountain uplift in the present?

Positively, too, the observable data are scarcely more 'uplift-friendly'. Grand Canyon is the classic case — four hundred kilometres of evenly laid sedimentary strata, horizontal or nearly so throughout. Do its famed 'Palisades of the Desert', where 1,100 metres (3,600 feet) of flat strata are exposed,<sup>7</sup> point to tectonic chaos or to stability? And what of the amazing goosenecks of Utah, with their perfectly flat laminations? If there had been anything like the massive uplifts that uniformitarianism dreams about, would not the whole Canyon strata have been scrambled? Yet instead we find this remarkable overall evenness, like the layers of a birthday cake — a phenomenon reflected in strata all around the world.

To argue that only 'rising mountains' can adequately address the perceived problems associated with a global covering of present mountain configurations — as

Dillow *et al.* suggest — in my view limits God. Just as Christ's turning of water into wine at Cana, and His stilling of the storm on Tiberias<sup>8</sup> — both significantly, miracles with water — overruled the laws of fermentation and meteorology, so no hydrological model can do justice to the action of God in the Flood. An economy of miracles *is* one thing, but their complete absence *is* quite another, and surely unacceptable to a creationist mind committed, *a priori*, to the involvement of God in history.

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3. Footprints mark rare dinosaur find, *The Courier-Mail*, Brisbane, 3 August, 1998.
4. *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament*, with English translation by Brenton, L.L., Samuel Bagster & Sons, London.
5. Science Update, *ABC (Australia) Parliamentary and News Radio*, 7th March, 1999.
6. *The Encyclopedia of World Geography*, Edited by Bateman, G. and Egan, V. 1996. R.D. Press, Sydney, p. 420.
7. Austin, S.A., 1994. *Grand Canyon, Monument to Catastrophe*, Institute for Creation Research, Santee, CA. p. 68.
8. John 2:1-11; Luke 8:22-25.

## Charles Taylor replies:

I must thank Pete Williams for drawing attention to some points not covered in my article. However, I'm glad he acknowledges that, when dealing with verse, principles of gender and word order cannot be rigorously applied.

In Psalm 114 the mountains are said to skip, though not in connection