

are incorrect, the framework will mislead rather than assist our understanding.

For correlations to be scientific they must have a theoretical basis. The evolutionist has a theoretical basis in using fossils to correlate because he assumes that evolution is unidirectional. Of course this is a difficult case to defend, even from within their own assumptions. Correlations based on individual species are subject to change if the relative ranges of species are revised by further study. There are no known transitions in which one form is replaced by another similar one and there is a lack of theoretical basis for putting one form before another in time. But from a biblical perspective, all the animals buried by the Flood were alive at the same time. If fossils are to be used as a basis for worldwide correlation in a biblical model, a completely new construction is required.

What theoretical basis is there for expecting world-wide correlations during the Deluge? There is no event I would expect to be synchronous during the Deluge on a worldwide scale. There are likely to be similar processes in different regions, but I can see no reason why these could be correlated in either a one-year Deluge or in subsequent events. The best I would expect is to be able to distinguish early, mid, late and post-Deluge with vague boundaries between these.

In geology the most basic study is often a stratigraphic section or drill hole. Distinct events are evident at this scale. When one examines a formation or a basin, the temptation again is to correlate. At this scale, however, time correlation is flawed. Any erosional event would start in an area of uplift and result in local deposits. As the area of erosion grows, so does the area of deposition. Erosion in one place happens synchronously with deposition elsewhere. Obviously the start of the deluge should be a recognisable event at any location. However, the first deposits at any point on the pre-Deluge surface could be

months different in age.

Correlation may be possible if there were a similar pattern of events in the early part of the Deluge. For example, there could have been a continent-scale tectonic event resulting in deposition of predominantly non-fossiliferous sediments, then sediments with marine fossils and later still, sediments with terrestrial fossils. However, there seems to be no reason why deposits classified as Cambrian, Silurian or even Permian could not have been deposited simultaneously in different parts of the world as part of the same tectonic process.

If plate tectonics were a significant factor during the Deluge, its onset could provide a theoretical basis for correlation. Yet even here there is a problem. Why should plate tectonics have commenced simultaneously in all parts of the world? I would expect fragmentation of the crust to begin in one place and spread at different rates in different directions.

As creationists we need to build on the foundation of what God has revealed in the biblical record. Let us be careful not to build using assumptions that are not supported by clearly explained theoretical reasons. We may not agree amongst ourselves about the theories, but with the reasons explained they may be debated openly.

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## The origin of languages

Before presenting any academic paper for publication, it is imperative

that one must carry out sufficient research for the given topic and base one's theories and assumptions upon what is generally acknowledged as fact. This obviously was not the case regarding Thomas C. Curtis' article, *The origin of languages: a synthesis*.<sup>1</sup> While Mr Curtis is to be commended for attempting to address one of the greatest puzzles of human history, I am afraid that sound scholars of the Bible and other disciplines would be compelled to agree with me in saying that many — if not most — of his hypotheses are based on little more than wishful thinking and guesswork.

So, while it is not expedient here for me to proffer corrective explanations for every point of Mr Curtis' article that I consider to be erroneous, I shall limit myself to address only a few.

1. Mr Curtis offered no evidence whatsoever to support his claim that Neolithic Europe was peopled by the descendants of Ham. On the contrary, it is generally accepted that the European peninsula was settled by the descendants of Japheth: the offspring of Javan throughout the Mediterranean region;<sup>2</sup> and central and northern Europe by Gomerites.<sup>3</sup> To associate Javan with the Far East is surely a misinterpretation of Scripture, especially that of 1 Kings 10:22. The AV tells us that King Solomon '*had at sea a navy of Tarshish*' that once in three years brought exotic goods (including apes and peacocks) to Israel. Mr Curtis has rightly pointed out that these creatures are not native to the Mediterranean lands, and he thus presupposes that the land of Tarshish must have lain far to the east. However, the Bible does not say that these exotic species came from Tarshish, but merely that they were carried to Israel by ships of Tarshish. In fact, one interesting Hebrew translation of Scripture explains to us that Solomon had a large fleet of 'Tarshish' ships,<sup>4</sup> implying that these vessels were similar in design to those built by the sea-going people of the land of Tarshish.<sup>5</sup> Incidentally, if any further proof were required of the

westerly provenance of Tarshish and his Ionian kindred, we may note that the Mediterranean itself was once known as the 'Sea of Tarshish'.<sup>5</sup>

The Germanic peoples of northern Europe have long been associated with Noah's grandson, Ashkenaz; and, in fact, Jews of Central European and Germanic extraction are still known in Hebrew today as 'Ashkenazim'.<sup>6</sup> The descendants of Gomer and Ashkenaz who dwelt in Europe were certainly speakers of an Indo-European language. Perhaps it should not come as a surprise to learn that the language spoken by an early off-shoot of these people, who settled in Asia Minor and became known as Hittites, bears some similarity to Germanic (the Hittite word for water, for instance, was 'watar'; while the term for daughter was 'dohter').<sup>7</sup> The best biblical cartographers place Ashkenazites in western Anatolia,<sup>8</sup> and most scholars acknowledge that the Hittites entered the area from the same direction.<sup>9</sup>

The Cimmerians — descendants of Gomer, as the name so clearly implies — dwelt at an early period to the west of the Black Sea, and probably formed the basic stock that gave birth, not only to the Hittites, Germanic peoples and Slavs, but probably to many other nations of Indo-European provenance. Thus, to identify Gomer with the speakers of the Finno-Ugric languages of the far north-east of Europe is another error of judgment. If any descendant of Noah should be associated with these latter peoples, his grandson Meshech ought to be considered on the grounds that the city of Moscow, which is now in a Slavic-speaking state, was, previous to the Middle Ages, within the territory of Finnic-speaking tribes. In fact, Russian scholars freely admit that place-names in north central Russia, including Moskva, derive from Finno-Ugric, not Slavic.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, Ezekiel 38:6 mentions that '*Gomer and his bands*', of the '*north quarters*', will one day, along with other nations, make war upon Israel. Is it feasible to suggest then, that the Finns, Lapps and Samoyeds

are to descend from the north and do battle with God's ancient people? And, if so, how? These nomadic hunter-gatherers do not even constitute a nation of people, and are thus incapable of organising themselves into a cohesive and effective fighting machine. No! The descendants of Gomer are to be found within the European peninsula, and since the eighteenth century, in the USA; and we are witnessing the devastating, destructive power of '*Gomer and his bands*' at this very moment, as NATO unleashes its military might against Serbia.

2. Tiras, another grandson of Noah, cannot be nominated as the progenitor of those speakers of the indigenous languages of the Indian sub-continent simply because all the other linguistic groups have already been assigned to a particular patriarchal tribe, and the Dravidian branch is the only remaining one unallocated. As can be inferred from his name, Tiras was likely to have been ancestral to the Thracians — Indo-European speakers inhabiting an area lying to the north-east of present-day Greece.<sup>11</sup> No evidence that I am aware of would suggest that descendants of Tiras emigrated eastwards from the Plains of Shinar; and scholars, themselves puzzled by the origins of the Dravidian languages, have suggested that they may be somehow related to the Elamite language of ancient Persia.<sup>12</sup> Elam, of course, was a descendant of Shem, and an early eastward movement of peoples from Mesopotamia through Persia and down into India — a route not dissimilar to that taken in later centuries by a succession of invaders — is perfectly in keeping with sound common sense. However, it is always important to remember the difficulties we experience when attempting to relate language to race and ethnicity, whilst at the same time being aware of the ease with which languages can be adopted wholesale by populations into ready formations of Creoles and hybrids, etc.

3. Whilst Cush is believed to have been instrumental in the rebellion that

led to the Babel event, his son Nimrod — whom Mr Curtis believes to have been Cush's grandson — played a key role in the establishment of world-wide pagan worship after the subsequent scattering of the nations. Deified, following his untimely demise, Nimrod became known by a host of different names in the various tongues of the disparate nations who revered him. One of those designations, which perhaps removes all doubt about his paternity, was 'Bar-Cus', meaning 'son of Cush' as rendered in the Semitic language of Babylonia, Chaldean. This title later became Bacchus, the name of the Roman god of wine and revelry.<sup>13</sup>

Many biblical scholars believe today, as did a past generation, that it was righteous Shem who was responsible for ridding the world of the tyrannical monster that Nimrod had become. By the eloquence of his speech and the virtue of his wisdom — attributes that often accompany old age — Shem persuaded men to free themselves of the wicked apostate. And this image of the great Shem, incidentally, has been remembered in the name of a Celtic deity, Hercules Ogmios.<sup>14</sup> It is patently obvious then, that Shem must have lived to see the Confusion of Tongues episode and beyond, which makes a mockery of the time-scale favoured by Mr Curtis in the Septuagint. Thus the Masoretic text, in this instance, is completely exonerated.

It is highly unlikely that we will ever retrace the exact footsteps of all our forefathers following the dispersal at Babel, far less gain knowledge of which languages they first spoke. The fact that there are approximately the same number of known language groups in the world today, as there are known grandsons of Noah, may be little more than coincidence. Mr Curtis' over-simplistic approach is not appealing and, in this instance, I find complexity much more convincing than the opposite. Who knows how many languages the speech of men was divided into at Babel, far less the number of languages/language groups

that have since become extinct? Scholars today speak of linguistic super-groups, such as Nostratic, which could have included a number of Eurasian language families.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps this could have been a pan-Japhetic language. On this side of eternity, I doubt we shall ever know.

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Thomas Curtis replies:

Kenny MacDonald commends me for attempting to address one of the greatest puzzles of human history' but treats the attempt with little charity. Under the heading of 'The Synthesis', I pointed out that we interpret data according to our accepted paradigm. Unfortunately, the final three sentences got lost in the printing. They were as follows:

*'Some will reject it because it does not fit their paradigm, whether their grounds are "scientific" or religious. Others may reject it because the evidence is insufficient or the argument inadequate. Provided they seriously consider it, I will be content.'*

I am grateful to Mr MacDonald, that he has considered it serious enough to warrant a reply. However, I take issue with his statement that 'one must ... base one's theories and assumptions upon what is generally acknowledged as fact'. If this were so, once a thing was generally acknowledged, it could never be questioned, and how do we determine what things are generally acknowledged and so are beyond question?

One of Mr MacDonald's concerns was anticipated by a linguist who reviewed this paper before publication. He had this to say:

*This is an attempt to give the Table of Nations a broad base so as to involve Asian and African groups. This is a noble intention, yet surely any such attempt should not be done without giving good reasons for bypassing previous studies which have taken less notice of today's expanded world. It may be that God's intention was to link Babel only with the world as it was in Moses' day. Nevertheless, it is probably worth trying to make the link, if only to make the event meaningful to today's world.'*

I replied as follows:

*'That is what I have tried to do. If I have succeeded, well and good; if I have failed I hope someone*

*better qualified will take up the attempt.'*

I have considered the traditional locations which are available in Bible Handbooks. In the case of Javan, which is obviously the most controversial allocation, I have given more than a page to arguing the case. The allocation of Javan might be considered to warrant a complete paper on its own but, if so, I am not qualified to write it and I seriously doubt whether, if written, it could reach a definitive conclusion. In the final analysis, I think we would have to say that the location of both Tarshish and Ophir is unknown and we do not even positively know what is meant by the phrase 'a ship of Tarshish'.

For the rest, identifications are made largely on similarities of sound. For example, Javan = Yawan, Ionian - Yownian (Javan = Java(n) and Elishah = (M)alaysia is not too bad). Is this an adequate basis? It is certainly not an indisputable basis. I would think if any identification is certain, it must be Madai — Medea because in consonantal Hebrew the words are identical. If so, after Babel, did Madai and Javan and their descendants both speak proto-Indo-European? Did Gomer = Cimmerian also speak proto-Indo-European because they also are generally regarded as speaking an Indo-European language? It would be easy to conclude from the traditional approach that only the speakers of Indo-European and Hamito-Semitic languages were descended from Noah, which would fit well with the concept of Noah's flood being a local Mesopotamian event. We do not hold that view.

May I comment on the phrase 'today's expanded world' (see quote from reviewer above)?

In today's world we are unconsciously conditioned by evolutionary thinking. Biblically, the world of man expanded after Babel, but humanists would have us believe that the so called Renaissance rescued man from the Dark Ages. This is far from the truth.



Ziggurat at Ur in present-day Iraq. It is generally accepted that the tower of Babel was a ziggurat.

The Eurasian steppes have been a link between the sub-continent of China, India, SW Asia and Europe since the Babel migrations began. The Indo-European people impacted on them all, as did the Altaic peoples. Cultural exchanges were continuous. The use of the horse as a draught animal, then to draw a war chariot, and later for cavalry, all originated on the steppe and was adopted in the sub-continent. Attila's invasion of Europe (5<sup>th</sup> century AD) can ultimately be traced to the expansion of the Han Empire. Nor was trade absent or neglected; the early Han and Roman Empires were trading partners. Maritime trade also flourished. Chinese artifacts found in southern Africa predate European 'discovery' by centuries. Madagascar was settled by Austronesians. The apostle Thomas may well have evangelised in India.

It is true, of course, that the Reformation made western Europe the focus of world evangelism, although the contribution of the Roman and Eastern churches can not be entirely discounted.

*'It may be that God's intention was to link Babel only with the world as it was in Moses' day,'* (again, see quote from reviewer above).

Maybe but why? Surely Babel, like the Flood, was an event that affected all mankind, and how was the world in Moses' day?

In the time of Sargon of Akkad (RCD 2350 BC, ND 2150 BC) trade was carried on from the Indus to Crete and surely involved Egypt. I doubt that neither the Harrapans of the Indus or the Egyptians were entirely ignorant of their neighbours further out.

Nor is it necessary to assume that the Genesis record originated with Moses. Luke drew on the accounts 'handed down' and we accept his gospel as inspired. Similarly, Genesis 5:1 refers to *'the written account of Adam's line'* (NIV). Refer to Harrison for the theory that this and similar statements mark out original sources.<sup>1</sup> While Harrison sees the 'colophon' as concluding the previous tablet, Kline

interprets it as a title for the following section and this is the way it is translated in the NIV (I have referred to this in my comment on the Sumerian language appended to Table 4<sup>2</sup>). Thus, Genesis 10:1-11:9 is *'The Account of Noah's Sons'*, which along with Genesis 11:10-26 *'The Generations of Shem'* and the earlier tablets probably passed into the keeping of Terah, and probably with the later tablets, parchment or papyri, into the keeping of Joseph's heir Ephraim and his heirs. This does not exclude editorial comment or updating by Moses.<sup>3</sup> However, the Amorites were already in Canaan in Abraham's time, so no updating would have been necessary there. Terah living in Ur would have been well acquainted with the maritime trade in the Persian Gulf that extended at least as far as the Indus River in his time, and could well have been responsible for the comment on the maritime peoples descended from Javan (Genesis 10:5).

Mr MacDonald accuses me of wishful thinking. I might make the same charge of his comment, *'The Cimmerians — descendants of Gomer, as the name so clearly implies'*. I do not know how carefully he has read my paper, as he seems to find it necessary to convince me that Hittite is an Indo-European language, a fact I have dealt with at some length on page 333.

He uses the term Indo-European, but seems to ignore the evidence for a common origin of all Indo-European languages. He says that I have: *'offered no evidence whatsoever to support [my] claim that Neolithic Europe was peopled by the descendants of Ham.'* I dealt with Neolithic Europe on pages 328-330 and show evidence for two streams of settlement: the sea-going people (p. 329) including the Caphtorites of Kapturu (Crete) and

*'The early mainland settlers [who] almost certainly came from Anatolia with a strong Mesopotamian heritage. Candidates would be the Hatti (Hittite) descendants of Canaan, or the*

*Ludim, either from the son of Shem, or from the son of Mizraim or both. In any case these settlers did not speak an Indo-European language.'*

Javan is also a candidate whom I have not considered for reasons given above but the argument for the identification of Javan with Ionian is similar to the identification of Kapturu with Caphtor, which implies that the sea-going people were Hamitic.

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## Did creation mountains referred to in Psalm 104:8 really rise from below the Noachian flood waters?

In the paper, *Did mountains really rise according to Psalm 104:8?*<sup>1</sup> Charles Taylor writes: *'Actually much of Psalm 104 seems to refer to creation itself and then, 'However, verse 9 appears to be a reference to God's promise never to send a worldwide flood again.'*

I must confess to being at variance with those who, when quoting Psalm 104, give inviolable status to the bounds set in verse 9, while accepting as a non-violation the earth's **eternal foundation**, verse 5, **being removed** in 2 Peter 3:10! There is certainly nothing extravagant in stating that the bounds referred to in verse 9 are the