The logic used in this report appears sound. Synchronisms between Assyria, Egypt and Hittite rulers for the period 1,300–800 BC seem like a good argument. As the report states:

> "Hattusilis III also corresponded with the Assyrian king Shalmaneser I (ca. 1275–1245 BC). Consequently, Shalmaneser I must have been a contemporary of Rameses II as well. And we know roughly how many years there are between Shalmaneser I and his namesake Shalmaneser III: slightly over 400. Since we know that Shalmaneser III lived in the 800's, Shalmaneser I and hence Rameses II must have lived in the 1200's."[3]

Dating Shalmaneser III and the battle of Qarqar at 853 BC (astronomical anchor date) as well as the time interval between Shalmaneser III back to Shalmaneser I is a critical pillar. The Assyrian King List provides a list of kings and length of reigns for this period from Shalmaneser I to Shalmaneser III and so supports the conventional chronology. This looks like a solid argument for dating Rameses II in the 1200s BC and not 759 BC as David Down suggests.

Rod Bernitt
Upper Marlboro, MD
UNITED STATES of AMERICA

David Down replies:

Shalmaneser was a common name for Assyrian kings, and I would dispute the identification of the Shalmaneser addressed by Hattusilis III as the one scholars have numbered as Shalmaneser I.

David Down
Hornsby, NSW
AUSTRALIA

References

1. Down, D., The Hittites—second time round, *Journal of Creation* **23**(1):50–55, 2009.
2. Down, ref. 1, p. 55.
3. Aling, C., Historical synchronisms and the date of the exodus, 07 Nov 2008, <www.biblearchaeology.org/>.

Arches and natural bridges

Mike Oard's paper on natural arches and bridges provides a superior model for the origin of these spectacular features. He summarized his objection to the uniformitarian model by stating, "erosion by normal weathering processes during the formation of large natural bridges and arches would have destroyed these features long before eroding down to their present levels." This is a major point that we can make when visiting these popular land forms and interacting with other tourists there.

For those wanting to know more about natural arches and bridges, a wealth of information and great photos can be viewed at the Natural Arch and Bridge Society website. I'd like to comment on a few arches and bridges which I have visited and which can be seen at the above website.

1. Delicate Arch is not only spectacular. It is an extremely popular hike at Arches National Park in Utah. You have to hike uphill for 4.8 km with an elevation gain of 146 m to get there. When you first see it, you are struck by this freestanding (abandoned) arch located high above the surrounding countryside. When hiking to it, you can not see it until the very end of the hike when the view suddenly opens up and there it is—quite spectacular! Your first view of it is across a large, well-rounded basin. This basin appears to be the work of a colossal amount of swirling water. A lot of swirling water forming this basin at a considerable height above what is today a dry desert cannot be adequately explained by present processes. The arch and its companion basin together testify eloquently of massive amounts of water.
2. Kolob Arch, one of the largest in the world, is located in Zion National Park, Utah. This unusual arch stands directly in front of a massive cliff face. I believe that an arch situated like this was not likely formed by large amounts of late-Flood runoff. Rather, the process of post-Flood sapping may have been largely responsible for it.
3. Lexington Arch in Great Basin National Park, Nevada, is another unusual arch. It is located high up on a ridge, but is composed of limestone. Could this be a relic of a cave at this height? If so, then enormous amounts of limestone

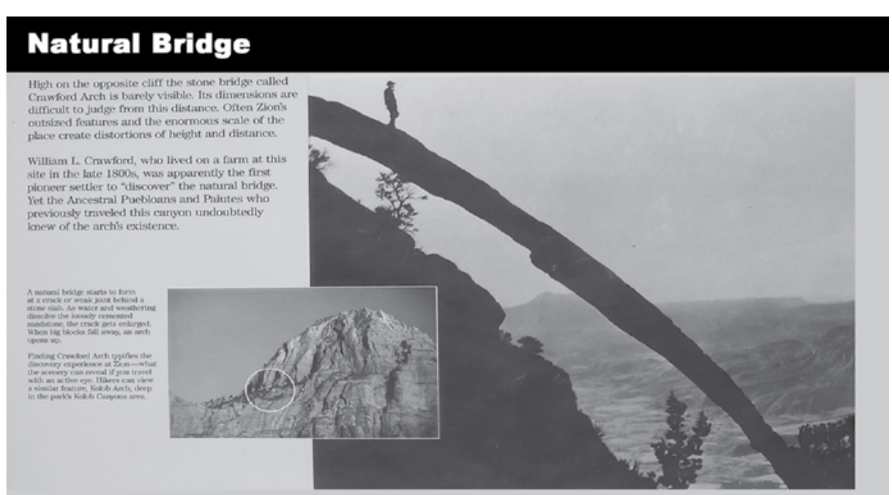

Figure 1. Crawford Arch, Zion National Park, Utah.

Figure 2. Double Arch, Arches National Park, Utah.

would have been eroded away both in front of it and behind it. The arch itself, as I recall, is only about one to two meters thick. In front and behind it is just air, since it is near the top of a high ridge. I find it easier to envision this arch forming in accordance with the secular model, not from Flood runoff. Also, as I recall, this arch is not smoothly rounded, which would have likely been the case if it had been the result of late-Flood runoff. I still believe the limestone was laid down by the Flood, but the arch itself was not very likely the result of late-Flood runoff.

4. Rainbow Bridge, I believe, based on its situation, would be a good candidate for having been formed by the undercutting of a neck of a meander bend by late-Flood runoff. This magnificent bridge is so thick, graceful, and strong that it shows no signs of pieces falling out, such as is seen, for example, with Landscape Arch. Its smoothly contoured surfaces, I believe, are better explained by its rapid formation in a Flood environment than with the slow cutting of a seasonal desert stream, modified by wind erosion. By the way, Rainbow Bridge is in Utah, not Arizona.

In conclusion, there are so many different varieties of arches and natural bridges, that there are lots of opportunities for closer study of some of these topographic features in order to try to determine how they were formed.

Art Manning
Millville, NJ
UNITED STATES of AMERICA

Michael Oard replies:

I agree with Manning that there are a variety of natural bridges and arches and that some of them formed after the Flood, but some seem to require rapid erosion characteristic of the Retreating Stage of the Flood. It sure seems that Delicate Arch and Rainbow Bridge require late Flood runoff, as Manning states. Crawford Arch on the side of Bridge Mountain, Zion National Park, is a narrow sliver of sandstone (figure 1) that also seems to require rapid erosion not that long ago. Many other arches in Arches National Park, such as Double Arch (figure 2), also would be difficult to explain by post-Food processess.

Kolob Arch in Zion National Park could easily have formed in post-Flood time, because it essentially is an eroded alcove in the massive Navajo Sandstone that became separated from its main cliff by about 14 m.

Sapping processes are a reasonable explanation. Lexington Arch in Great Basin National Park, being in limestone, could have weathered slowly in post-Flood time.

Michael J. Oard
Bozeman, MT
UNITED STATES of AMERICA