

Facts & Fancy About the Bible - 4

When Voltaire expressed his refusal to believe the Genesis 7:19 statement that “all the high hills under the whole heaven” including “the mountains were covered” with water, he seems to have been visualizing a quiet rising of water such as occurs in the flooding of a river over its banks.

But reading more carefully the Genesis account, and the Scriptures in general,, he might have discovered that this was definitely not that sort of flood. This can be seen in the terminology of the New Testament. Jesus in Luke 6:48 exhorted his audience to conduct their lives according to his teaching, and used this parable - “He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood (Grk. Plemmura = local flood) arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.”

But when Peter, in his letter to the believers, referred to the Genesis flood, he used a different word for “flood” - 2 Peter 2:5 “God...did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood (Grk. Kataklysmos = inundation, deluge) on the world of the ungodly.” The Greek word has been appropriately borrowed for the English word cataclysm to describe a violent geological or meteorological event.

And going back to the Genesis account, we do see that the flood is described in these terms, Genesis 7:11 “...all the fountains of the great deep were broken up...” This is a perfect description of what occurs during a seismic event on the ocean floor during the rupture in a stressed fault line. This generates a sudden and powerful vertical pulse of energy which is translated into a multi-millions tons wall of moving water which surges across the sea until it reaches land to devastate all before it.

After attaining maximum reach, the waters of the flood receded to leave behind their devastation. There was no need for the water to remain, any more than those 45 ft waves which inundated the nuclear power plant at Okuma, Japan in 2011.

Seismic activity has been continual throughout human history. Voltaire expressed his distress in a poem, after the devastating earthquake and triple tsunami which destroyed Lisbon on November 1, (a church holy day) in 1755, and killed more than 40,000 people in Portugal, Spain and Morocco.

That author did not see fit to cite the words of Jesus, when he was asked about a recent tragic loss of lives - “Those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish” - Luke 13:4.

Voltaire, while insisting that the evidence is overwhelming for a highly intelligent Creator, preferred to believe that He takes no further interest in that creation - which would make all that thought and effort expended by God to be with no objective in mind. But those sentient humans, even with their animal constitution, are yet capable of learning to conduct their lives in harmony with their Creator.

One of these, named Abraham, was called “the friend of God” - Isaiah 41:8. The Creator does have a purpose with His creation - to “bring many sons unto glory” - Hebrews 2:10. The way to begin that journey, said Jesus was to “repent” and begin living in harmony with God.