



The Ryburn Christian Clarion

BIBLICAL STUDIES RESOURCE

Upholding the Accuracy of the God-Breathed Word

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Unless otherwise stated, all passages are quoted from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible. All explanatory remarks by a writer within scripture verses are enclosed in brackets [].

INSIDE AT A GLANCE

DURING THIS YEAR, 2011, many will observe the 400th anniversary of the translation of the King James Bible. Its wide distribution spurred on the Reformation. At the Clarion, we still ride the crest of that wave.

“THE GOD-BREATHED WORD” is a phrase from our motto, which appears on the front of every *Clarion*. It aptly describes the essence and source of The Word. Our aim has ever been to acknowledge and share it.

by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief.....1

“GOD’S MATCHLESS WORD”: Courage, at times, may be quiet, and wisdom may save without fanfare. In **“Abigail: ‘A Woman Of Good Understanding’ ”**, calamity is avoided by the actions of a self-effacing woman of God.

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“FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT”: How about something different? In our first testimony, **“‘Downtown Deacon Brown’ ”**, the grace and mercy of God lead a man from drugs and delusion to a brighter, new day.

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“INVESTIGATING CREATION SCIENCE” ended, in the Summer, 2010 edition, with a couple of questions. This time, we’ll remind you of them, and do our best to answer them in **“The Waters Above The Firmament”**.

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“FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT” closely follows our Creation Science article with even more water. Regarding the deluge of Noah’s day, what was the source of all that water? Also, **“Where Did All The Water Go?”**

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The GOD-BREATHED WORD

JUST ABOUT EVERY Christian ministry or group that you can think of declares, as a fundamental tenet of their beliefs, that the Bible is divinely inspired. Various organizations may word it differently, and locate it in differing places in their written creeds, but all, in one way or another, acknowledge that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are God-inspired. This is true of all of them, at least in their writings and oral expressions of their beliefs, but in their approach to and handling of the Word of God, their actions often say otherwise.

When groups espouse the belief that The Word came as God revealed it to men and then talk about how the writers of the Gospels contradict one another because they wrote from memory, they are talking out of both sides of their mouths. Sadly, this kind of double-mindedness is not rare, but is found throughout Christendom. What’s even sadder is that this wishy-washy behavior is not necessary, and may be easily corrected, but *only* if the individual or group is willing to recognize *in practice* the authority of God’s matchless Word.

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The problem is that the notion that the Bible is full of errors and contradictions is widespread. This idea is compounded by the fact that the average believer does not know how to read and/or study the Word of God for himself. Furthermore, he is not likely to be instructed by his minister or pastor, who has received training in the preaching of the Gospel, but not usually in the art of conveying proper study habits and principles to others. Add to that our secular society's growing regard for anything lauded by science and you have a dilemma that only God can solve.

To resolve the difficulty, as we have stated, one must give credence to the authority of God's Word, and not just with lip service, but also *in practice*. The believer must decide to accept the testimony of scripture despite what his senses, reason, or academic training may indicate. This is an act of will on the part of the one seeking, and God will recognize it as such. One must then proceed by going into the Scriptures themselves and allowing the words of the invisible God to relate truths to his or her heart. If a saint is genuinely seeking, the reliability and integrity of the Word of God will, in time, become apparent.

Jeremiah 1:1 and 2

*The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah...
To whom the word of the LORD came...*

Ezekiel 1:2 and 3

*In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year
of king Jehoiachin's captivity,
The word of the LORD came expressly unto Ezekiel...*

Hosea 1:1

*The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea...in the
days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of
Judah, and...Jeroboam..., king of Israel.*

As the preceding verses show, the idea that the Scriptures were written by men who heard "the word of the LORD" is a constant theme throughout the Bible. Joel, Jonah, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and other Old Testament figures clearly asserted this very thing, that what they spoke and wrote were revelations from the Lord God of Israel. Paul, John, Luke, and others who contributed texts to the New Testament were no less adamant in their claims of divine inspiration. Even the Word of God itself, in verse after verse, bears witness to its own veracity and Divine authorship, establishing the point that it is reliable. As such, we shall take a moment to examine this claim.

Psalms 12:6

*The words of the LORD are pure [tavor] words: as
silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified [zaqaq]
seven times.*

This verse is an outstanding example of the Word of God testifying concerning its own precision and worth. First off, comparing the "...words of the LORD..." to a refined, precious metal like silver implies a lack of impurities or flaws in the Lord God's revealed Word. Secondly, the use of the plural noun "words" twice within the opening phrase shows a deliberate effort to emphasize that *every word* in The Word is free from defect or contamination.

The English word "pure," in Psalms 12:6, is rendered from the Hebrew adjective *tavor*, which denotes cleanness or purity, as in something that is undefiled. Then, in the closing phrase of the verse, we have the word "purified," translated from an entirely different Hebrew word, but one having a similar meaning to *tavor*. It is the word *zaqaq*, a verb indicating refining or the purging away of impurities, as in the smelting of metals. To top it all off, God's "words" are compared to silver that has been refined "...seven times." The use of the number seven in the Bible represents *spiritual perfection*, thus, God is showing us that, when originally revealed to men, *every word* in The Word was free of defects.

Proverbs 30:5a

Every word of God is pure [tsaraph]...

Could God say it any more clearly than this? Here, as in Psalms 12, the same truth is revealed, this time using the Hebrew word *tsaraph*. Meaning refined, purified, or purged of defects, *tsaraph* proclaims the same message as *tavor* and *zaqaq*, namely, that the Word of God is not the haphazard recollections of men, but is, indeed, the perfect, detailed expression of the Creator's divine character and will for mankind.

II Timothy 3:16

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God [in Greek,
theopneustos], and is profitable [or "useful"] for
doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction
in righteousness:*

Perhaps the most compelling verse in the New Testament relating to the Bible's Divine authorship is II Timothy 3:16. In this verse, we are plainly told that all scripture, every bit of it, was "...given by inspiration of God..." Then, the verse lays out the

various avenues in which the Scriptures are useful: doctrine, reproof, and correction, all of which are instruction in righteousness. The most salient point, however, is that it ALL came from God.

Interestingly, the five English words, "...given by inspiration of God..." are translated from a single Greek word, *theopneustos*. This is a compound word derived from two Greek words: *theo*, which means, "God," and *pneustos*, meaning, "breathed." When you and I speak, we breathe out, and God *figuratively* did the same as He spoke to holy men. This expression, "God-breathed," is set in the Scriptures to indicate that the "words" contained therein *literally* came from God.

The entire Word of God is a broad declaration of God's nature and will for His children. It is, however, in the details of The Word that the face of our Father becomes clearer to us. The depth and precision of all the "words" in the Bible weave for the seeker a rich tapestry of knowledge that invites him into a marvelous dimension of spiritual awareness.

Will you be satisfied with a vague inkling of something beyond the material realm, or will you put forth the effort to *know* God? Will you settle for vapid religion, or endeavor to walk in enthusiasm. In Matthew 4:4, the Lord Jesus declared that we were to live by "...every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." *Every word* in The Word came forth from

God's mouth as He breathed it out, and every saint must decide what he or she will do with them.

At the *Clarion*, we will continue to do our part to present the greatness of the God-breathed Word. Also, we are thankful for those who have contributed interesting articles over the years to help us do just that. As is our custom at the start of every year, we will now recognize those who have blessed our readers with article submissions to our "**God's Matchless Word**" column over the past year.

First off, Susan Nickerson, from Westminister, Massachusetts, submitted an offering entitled "**Military Service: No Condemnation**", an appropriate theme for a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom (Summer, 2010; Vol. VII, No. 3). Secondly, we shared a thoroughly practical study called "**Decide, Act, And Thrive**", by Pat Lubomski, of Ypsilanti, Michigan (Fall, 2010; Vol. VIII, No. 1). Finally, in this issue (Winter-Spring, 2011; Vol. VIII, No. 2), we are pleased to present "**Abigail: 'A Woman Of Good Understanding'**", by another Massachusetts saint, Karin Kydland. To one and all, we offer our heartfelt appreciation for their service to God. To our readers, too, we extend thanks for your prayers and financial support. May God richly bless you all.

-----by Rick Heeter, Editor-in-Chief

GOD'S MATCHLESS WORD:

A Forum For Presenting The Light Of Life

(This column features a wide range of subjects from God's Word as they are set forth by a host of preachers and teachers from differing avenues of Christian thought and various areas of Biblical study and concern.)

"Abigail: 'A Woman Of Good Understanding' "

by Karin Kydland

WHEN WE THINK of Abigail, what is the first thing that comes to mind? Do we think of her first as a virtuous woman, as a beautiful woman forced to break with societal expectations, an unlikely hero, or as something else? While there is no question that Abigail was a virtuous woman, whose courageous actions saved the lives of innocent men, it behooves us to take a look at what God says about her in I Samuel 25.

I Samuel 25:3

Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding [tob sekel sekel], and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

This verse sums up who Abigail and her husband were. Nabal, who was a fool, as his name suggests (I Sam. 25:25), and Abigail were on opposite sides of the spectrum. One was evil in his doings and "churlish," which Webster's *American Dictionary Of The English Language* (1828) defines as "rude; surly; austere; sullen; rough in temper; unfeeling; uncivil." On the other hand, Abigail was discerning and beautiful.

In this verse we have the first use of both the particular Hebrew words translated "understanding" (*sekel sekel*) and the Hebrew phrase rendered "good understanding" (*tob sekel sekel*). *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible* lists *tob* as #2896 and *sekel sekel* as #7922. In God's Word, Abigail is given as the only named example of what it is to have

“good understanding.” As the following verses show, Abigail had to have revered God, practiced wisdom, and had not let mercy and truth forsake her.

Psalms 111:10 (English Standard Version)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding [tob sekel sekel]. His praise endures forever!

Proverbs 3:3 and 4

Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: So shalt thou find favour and good understanding [tob sekel sekel] in the sight of God and man.

After Samuel the prophet died (I Sam. 25:1), David and his men came to the area where Nabal’s sheep were kept, and stayed there until sheep shearing. In keeping with custom, David sent men to tell Nabal how he had lost no sheep while they had camped near them, and to ask for food. (verses 6-9) Nabal, however, scornfully refused to give anything to them (verses 10 and 11), and so David’s men left.

I Samuel 25:14-17

But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal’s wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute [“greet”] our master; and he railed on them.

But the men [David’s men] were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields:

They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.

The young man knew exactly who to go to in this dire situation, and he laid the facts on the table. Abigail did not hesitate. Without saying a word to her churlish husband, she moved quickly, taking food and wine and laying them upon donkeys. Sending her servants on ahead of her, Abigail went out to meet David. (verses 18-20)

In the meantime, David’s men had returned to camp, and had relayed Nabal’s scornful message. At this, David rashly vowed to kill Nabal and all his men. He wasted no time in gathering “...about four hundred men...” to accompany him to seek vengeance. (I Sam. 25:13)

Abigail and David met in an area between her home and his camp. As soon as she saw David, Abigail dismounted from her donkey and fell at his feet. Explaining that her husband was a “...man of Belial...” and a fool (verse 25), she took Nabal’s iniquity upon herself. Abigail then offered the blessing, the food and wine she had brought, and asked for forgiveness for “her” iniquity, and then prophesied concerning David. (verses 28-31) What a woman! How many people in this world would be willing to take on the sin of another, placing themselves at the mercy of a stranger, in order to save the lives of others when their own life was not at stake?

As David meekly listened to her, he recognized, not only the truth of what she spoke but, that God had sent her. (verse 32) David accepted her offering, and heeded her words. Had Abigail not acted or had David not listened, he surely would have shed the innocent blood of Nabal’s men.

After they parted and Abigail had gone home, she exercised more wisdom by waiting until morning when Nabal was sober, before telling him what she had done. When Nabal heard her words, “...his heart died within him, and he became *as* a stone.” (verse 37) This is a figure of speech called *hyperbole*, an expression of exaggeration. His heart did not die at that moment, however, he *literally* died about ten days later. (verse 38) Upon hearing of Nabal’s death, David took Abigail as his wife. (verses 39-42)

As men, women, and young people called by God, we, too, can emulate Abigail’s example by reverencing God, practicing wisdom, and ensuring that we do not let mercy and truth forsake us. As we do this, we will have “good understanding” that will help us rise to every occasion we have to serve God.*

(Mrs. Karin Kydland has been studying the Scriptures for many years, and has taken many Bible classes and seminars. She has participated in a one-year outreach program in London, Ontario, Canada, and presently holds a Bachelor of Theology degree. She and her husband, Karsten, currently oversee a home fellowship in Taunton, Massachusetts. You may contact Karin by e-mail at k_kydland@yahoo.com.)

The Clarion: A Labor Of Love

*The Ryburn Christian Clarion is a labor of love, from saints to saints. As such, we have no paid staff, but rely on the loving financial gifts of others for operating funds. If you, or your fellowship as a whole, would like to help underwrite this outreach, regularly or by a one-time offering, please make checks or money orders payable to “The Ryburn Christian Clarion,” or simply “The Clarion.” Mail offerings to **The Ryburn Christian Clarion**, 420 Ryburn Avenue, Suite C-2, Dayton, Ohio 45405-2552, U. S. A. For more information, e-mail theclarion@godslivingroom.com.*

FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT

Testimony

(This column offers our readers a variety of inspirational and edifying submissions. In this “grab-bag,” you will find essays, book reviews, testimonies, poetry, compositions, letters, music reviews, and other things designed to exhort and comfort God’s people.)

“ ‘Downtown Deacon Brown’ ”

by Joyell Nevins

[Editor’s Note: *The following article is the result of several conversations, which the author had with the subject (and others), and is presented in an interview format.]*

HERMAN “Downtown Deacon” Brown’s life is an example of the life-changing power of God’s Word. He now attends a weekly fellowship, has an apartment, and a steady job, but it wasn’t always so for this preachin’ powerhouse.

Brown grew up in Dayton, Ohio. Despite a “good family and altogether good neighborhood,” by 12 years of age, curiosity got him started down a long, hard road.

“When you’re kids, you’re curious about something, and want to experiment,” Brown says. “Friends encourage you to try this, try that.” By 14, he was buying alcohol and going to school stoned. True friends disintegrated into “get-high buddies.” As he got older and deeper into it (almost forty years’ worth), Brown’s extra-curricular activities eventually caused him to lose his home.

“It takes everything you’ve got,” adds Brown’s friend, Tim Stewart. Brown knows that God was still looking out for him, even when he hit “rock bottom,” for people used to give him food and odd jobs to do, but he was still hustling.

“All that was bondage, pure hell,” Brown recalls. “Satan had a hold on me. I didn’t love myself.”

For eight months, Brown lived at a buddy’s house. Then, his friend told him, “Herman, it’s time for you to leave, face reality.” He suggested Herman go and live in a shelter for thirty days. Once Brown was at the St. Vincent de Paul Center, he was required to be “clean” for that whole month. Brown also had the opportunity to hear the Gospel. As a preface to being fed, St. Vincent’s expects attendees to sit and hear The Word being taught by the Gospel Mission. After thirty days, he decided that this was something he needed to continue. He checked into the Dayton Veterans’ Affairs Medical Center Rehabilitation Services, and found out how far away from reality he truly was.

“I used to say rehab was a joke,” Brown says, “then, I got there, and found out I was the joke.”

At the VA, Brown met Greg Kopilec, Stephen West, and his wife, Rhonda. Greg was a fellow veteran

in rehab, and was running a Bible study with the help of the Wests and the Akribos Theological Fellowship. Kopilec asked Brown if he wanted to come to a prayer meeting. Brown showed up one time, and they asked him to help. He agreed, and was introduced to a whole new kind of family.

Brown says, “I love my Christian family, and I love my life now,” adding, “I love myself.”

Seeing the love of God in action, a living version of I Corinthians 13, was one of the first things that attracted him to the Christian walk. It was that love, peace, and acceptance that comes when you’re surrounded by those who walk in *agape*, a Greek word referring to the love of God.

Tim Stewart, mentioned earlier, and another member of the prayer group, explains that when you’re involved in the drug scene, your life is in constant chaos. “There’s no rest and peace,” he says. “Today, I can be at rest and at peace. Now, I have a purpose. Today, life’s worth living.”

Brown agrees. “On drugs,” he observes, “life was cloudy. Now, I see. God’s opened my eyes since I’ve been clean.”

Even after he checked out of the VA, following a seven-month stint, Brown continued to grow in his love and knowledge of The Word. He took Christian Family Fellowship Ministry’s “Living in God’s Power” class several times, and Akribos’ “Greek 101” class, but it wasn’t just “head knowledge.” He wanted to share his new lifestyle with others.

“It’s all about love. With me, I try to help another person,” he says, gesturing toward Stewart. “I’m proud to sit here today, and we’re all clean. God removed everything.”

Brown acknowledges that the Devil is still there, and still tries to get to him, but he just does what Jesus Christ did when confronted by the Adversary. “Satan’s a liar,” Brown says. “He tries to attack me, but I just tell him, ‘Get behind me, Satan.’ ”

Brown admits the importance of avoiding temptation spots, both people and places. “If you keep going to the barber shop, eventually you’re going to get your hair cut,” he quips.

Brown also keeps tapped into his support system,

through his neighbor, “Ms. Mary,” and the Akribos fellowship. Very early on, he, Stewart, Charlie Thrash, George Might, and a few other men they met through the VA would gather every Friday afternoon at the Hasty Tasty, a local diner, for a “guys’ night” fellowship. Even though that fellowship no longer formally meets, Brown is still close to many of those men. “In my Christian walk,” he declares, “I wouldn’t trade in this family for nothing.”

One of the guys, Charlie Thrash, is the one who gave Herman the nickname “Deacon Brown,” and it still sticks, although the nickname has expanded to “Downtown Deacon Brown,” because he now lives in downtown Dayton.

Before that, Deacon Brown resided in the St. Vincent de Paul Center’s transitional housing for three years. Obeying the center’s strict terms for remaining there as a resident, he was no stranger to breathalyzer tests. “They taught me how to live life on life’s terms,” he details.

Now, he has his own downtown apartment, and has been working as a janitor at Dayton’s Sinclair Community College for well over three years. Even when the school’s custodial services changed corporate hands and the whole staff was replaced, Brown was called back to work after only a few months. He can even walk to work from where he lives. “When I walk to work and when I leave,” Brown says, “I thank God I have a job.”

In telling his life story, Brown uses a section from Galatians 5.

Galatians 5:17-25

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

“That’s my testimony,” he declares.

So, what does the future hold for the Dayton Deacon? “I just want to be happy, and do God’s will,” he says. “My goal is just to live an abundant life.” *

(Ms. Joyell Nevins is a lay minister serving wherever she goes, but is not employed by any one church. Presently, she works with Akribos Theological Fellowship (Visit www.akribos.org.) and Christian Family Fellowship Ministry (Visit www.cffm.org.), both of Tipp City, Ohio. Additionally, she is a journalist and the editor of the Weekly Record Herald of Tipp City, Ohio. Please feel free to contact Joyell by e-mail at lotsajoy83@yahoo.com.)

INVESTIGATING CREATION SCIENCE

(In this column, which appears in every other issue of The Ryburn Christian Clarion, members of the Clarion’s research team explore the timely and unfolding evidence that supports the Biblical assertion concerning the Divine creation of all things, visible and invisible. Join us as we take a journey into scripture and science alike to investigate the latest, compelling proofs.)

“The Waters Above The Firmament”

by Keith Jamison

IN THE LAST ARTICLE in this column, “**The Faces Of The Deep**” (Summer, 2010; Vol. VII, No. 3), we concluded by looking at how God divided the waters of “the deep” (*tehom*) by a “firmament.” The creation then, according to Genesis 1:7, had waters “under” the firmament (or expanse) and waters “above” the firmament. We also saw how the waters under the expanse were formed into “...Seas...” upon the Earth. (Gen. 1:9 and 10) We finally noted that the sun, moon, and stars were set in the firmament (Gen. 1:14-18), and observed that if these luminaries are in the firmament and there were waters “...above the firmament...,” then they may be out there yet. We then closed with a question for our readers: “Are we to believe they are

still out there, beyond the stars?” We will see what the Word of God has to say.

Genesis 1:6 and 7

*And God said, Let there be a firmament [“expanse”; *raqia*, in Hebrew] in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.*

And God...divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament...

The Hebrew word translated as “firmament,” or “expanse,” is *raqia*. Its root word means, “to pound,” suggesting that the firmament was pounded out, and has

structure, as does the “firm” in “firmament.” It’s interesting to note that the idea of a *solid* expanse is an ancient one. Even today, Einsteinian physics states that space has a structure, and is warped in a gravity field.

In Genesis 1:8, the firmament (*raqia*) is called “...Heaven...,” which, in the Hebrew, is *shamayim*. In Genesis 1:14-17, God placed the sun, moon, and stars in the “...firmament [*raqia*] of the heaven [*shamayim*]...” Later, in Genesis 1:20, fowl, or birds, are flying in the “...open firmament [*raqia*] of heaven [*shamayim*].” All this indicates that the firmament, the expanse, the heaven goes from the lower atmosphere, where birds fly, all the way past the stars, and terminates when it reaches the waters beyond. As such, the Bible debunks the scientific idea of an infinite universe.

The waters “above” the firmament, therefore, are outside, or beyond, the physical universe. This is difficult to get one’s head around. For there to be water outside the universe, surrounding it, there would have to be more water in relation to all the water on Earth than all the water on Earth in relation to the water in a thimble. This is probably why the group known as the Young Earth Creationists thinks of the firmament as a vapor canopy that once surrounded Earth’s atmosphere. The YECs, as they are called, believe that this vapor canopy would have caused uniform worldwide temperatures, higher oxygen levels, and much greater protection from ultra-violet radiation, possibly allowing for the longer life spans recorded in Genesis. For them, Noah’s flood was caused when this vapor canopy collapsed, and the waters rained down upon the Earth.¹ This idea, however, ignores the Bible’s clear statement about the waters being above the firmament, beyond the stars. What happened has to fit with all the Biblical records, and we’ll examine them, but let’s first get more data on the “waters” themselves.

Genesis 1:2b

*...darkness was upon the face [panim] of the deep [tehom].
And the spirit of God moved upon the face [panim] of the waters [mayim].*

The “waters” are first mentioned in Genesis 1:2b. In Hebrew, it is the word *mayim*, which may be singular or plural, but when involving a vast amount, it is usually rendered in the plural. In this verse, also, the term “the deep” first occurs. In this case, the Hebrew word is *tehom*, and like many words, it has more than one usage, or definition, in the Bible. This word is often later used in the Scriptures referring to the great watery depths upon the Earth, the terrestrial seas. *Tehom*’s original usage, however, refers to the vast quantity of water spoken of in the verse we are considering. These are the “waters” that God divided with an expanse. (Gen. 1:6 and 7) As “the deep” and the “waters” from Genesis 1:2b, we are talking about an inconceivably large amount of water. The words “the deep” (*tehom*) also appear later in The Word in this usage, but care must be taken to examine the contexts to be certain God is not talking about seas upon the Earth.

The second occurrence of *tehom* in the Bible is in Genesis 7:11, where “...all the fountains of the great deep...” were broken up. The usage here must be the same as in Genesis 1:2b, for waters upon the Earth were called “...Seas...” (Gen. 1:9 and 10) until after The Flood. Following the great deluge, the Earth’s seas and oceans are sometimes called “the deep,” perhaps in ancient recognition of their origin. The source of the waters of the Noachian Flood is “...the fountains of the great deep [*tehom*]...,” otherwise called, the waters “...above the firmament...”

The verse also refers to the “...windows of heaven [*shamayim*]...” being opened. A window is basically a hole. It appears that a way was opened that allowed the waters to pass through the cosmos, and thus inundate the Earth. In Genesis 8:2, the “...fountains...of the deep [*tehom*] and the windows of heaven [*shamayim*] were stopped, and the rain...was restrained...” This use of *tehom* is, again, the original definition from Genesis 1:2b, for it relates back to its second occurrence in Genesis 7:11. The waters were “...stopped...” or “...restrained...” indicating there is still water out there that was prevented from passing through the firmament.

After Noah and his family left the ark, God promised that He would never again allow the Earth to be destroyed by the waters of a flood. The validity of this promise is verified in Job 38:30, where the Bible says, “...the face of the deep [*tehom*] is frozen.” “The deep” in this verse is, yet again, referring to the enormous amount of water above the firmament, for the phrase, “...the face of the deep...,” is the exact expression that first appears in Genesis 1:2b, where *tehom* is ALSO used for the first time. Even the Hebrew word for “face,” *panim*, used for the first time in Genesis 1:2b, is used here in Job 38:30.

The Hebrew word for “frozen” literally means to be caught or stuck together. This implies that the waters above the firmament are imprisoned in some fashion. This imprisonment would honor the covenant God made with Noah, for the frozen waters can no longer flood the Earth. When water becomes frozen, the molecules stick together, and can no longer flow freely.

In conclusion, God separated the waters with a firmament. The waters below are the seas. The rest of the waters are above the firmament, beyond the universe. Some of those waters passed through the cosmos and came to the Earth as The Flood of Noah. Finally, the waters above the expanse are frozen, and can never again flood the Earth, as God promised.*

(Mr. Keith Jamison is the director of The Ryburn Christian Clarion’s Research Department, as well as the Clarion’s production assistant. Please feel free to send your comments and questions, and article submissions, by e-mail to Keith at kejamison.rd@gmail.com.)

Endnotes:

- 1) Wikipedia; Young Earth Creationists; chpt. 2.1.1, “Interpretation Of Genesis,” paragraphs 3 and 5; Accessed on March 7, 2011.

FROM THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

(This column, featuring the work of Keith Jamison, the director of The Ryburn Christian Clarion's Research Department, examines God's Word and how its application in our Twenty-First Century lives has been influenced by mythology, philosophy, and tradition.)

“Where Did All The Water Go?”

AFTER THE FLOOD of Noah's time, where did all the water go? Did the water go back from where it came, or is it still here and, if here, where?

Before The Flood, the world was a very different place. Genesis 2:5 and 6 tells us that until that time, "...God had not caused it to rain..., But there went up a mist...and watered the whole face of the ground." Also, as Genesis 1:9 and 10 says, "...the waters under the heaven he gathered together unto one place...And God called...the gathering together of the waters...Seas..." The waters in "...one place..." seems to indicate a single inland sea.

The Hebrew word *tehom* is translated as "the deep" in the Bible, and indicates a very great quantity and depth of water. It may refer to seas upon our planet, but, from the forming of the firmament until shortly after The Flood, it is never applied to any body of water upon the Earth. Before The Flood, and occasionally afterward, *tehom* refers to the vast waters "...above the firmament..." mentioned in Genesis 1:7.

These waters are most certainly the source of The Flood of Noah's day. (See "**The Waters Above The Firmament**", in this issue.) They fell upon the Earth for forty days and forty nights as "rain," something that had never occurred before. It was a global rainstorm, and would have been a strange and unnatural event, even for those who took refuge in the ark. This is why, when God later promised that He would never again allow the Earth to be destroyed by a flood, the sign of the rainbow was so important. Rainfall was a new experience, and Noah and his descendants needed this token to assure them, or every time it rained, they would fear the worst.

The seventh and eighth chapters of Genesis give us details of the deluge. The Flood started on the seventeenth day of the second month in the six-hundredth year of Noah's life. (Gen. 7:11) It rained for forty days and nights. (Gen. 7:12) The waters rose to fifteen cubits (or about 22½ feet) above the highest mountains, and "...prevailed exceedingly..." (Gen. 7:19 and 20) Furthermore, for one hundred and fifty days, "...the waters prevailed upon the earth..." (Gen. 7:24) Finally, the ark ran aground on the mountains of Ararat. (Gen. 8:4)

Some have maintained that this was merely a regional flood, albeit a massive one, around the Mediterranean. The Bible, however, is clear, for several times, it declares that everything "...under the whole heaven..." was submerged (Gen. 7:19), and that "...the waters were on the face of the whole earth..." (Gen. 8:9) It was a global catastrophe.

As a result, The Flood ushered in climate change and initiated the worldwide rain cycle that we now consider normal. This, in turn, resulted in river systems throughout the Earth that drained the waters into low-lying areas. The oceans of the world are very large and very deep puddles left over from the Noachian Flood. In addition, at any given moment, a massive amount of water is suspended in Earth's atmosphere as water vapor, clouds, or falling precipitation.

We must also consider the tremendous amount of water tied up in the polar icecaps. The continent of Antarctica alone is covered by thousands of square miles of ice, which, in some places, is more than a mile thick. This is naturally a major concern in the global warming debate, because melting glaciers and icecaps could substantially raise the sea level and inundate coastlines worldwide. If the melting ice would raise the water level, then the forming of icecaps would have lowered it. It may even be possible that the added weight of all that water tipped the Earth further on its axis, changing the climate, and allowing the formation of the icecaps in the first place.

Some have suggested that the added weight of all that water could have started plate tectonics. It has been further postulated that The Flood was responsible for the continents breaking apart, for The Word notes that not long after the calamity "...was the earth divided [or "split"]..." (Gen. 10:25) Additionally, plate tectonics may have thrust the land masses upward, enlarging the Earth's circumference, some think, by nearly 15%. This would allow water levels to recede, as would seepage underground, resulting in subterranean rivers and lakes. An element of the Japanese scientific community has further theorized the probability of trapped, super-heated steam near the Earth's core.

Wrapping this all up, the waters came from above the firmament, flooding the entire world. Then, it rose into the air as water vapor, froze into icecaps and glaciers, and seeped deep into the ground. The rest sits here still, as oceans and seas. The floodwaters never left. They changed our climate and geography, and are still here.*

(Mr. Keith Jamison is the director of The Ryburn Christian Clarion's Research Department, as well as the Clarion's production assistant. Send your comments and questions, and article submissions, to him at kejamison.rd@gmail.com.)

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