

The Flood in the Light of the Bible, Geology, and Archaeology

by Alfred M. Rehwinkel, M. A., B. D., LL. D., Professor of Theology, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Missouri. Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1951. 372 pages, \$4.75 net.

Review by CARL LAWRENZ, Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, Vol. 48, no. 4, October 1951, page 304.

Having been privileged to hear some of this material in a series of lectures by the author, your reviewer was pleased to read it in amplified form in a well-written and well-illustrated book. The subject matter is presented in twenty chapters under a fourfold division: The World Before the Flood; The Biblical Account of the Flood; Extra-Biblical Evidence of the Flood; The World After the Flood.

In his introduction the author lists four reasons which have induced him to give careful thought and prolonged study to this material and finally to present it in book-form. In these reasons we find the objectives set for the volume, and we feel that they are well met. The book helps us to see the divine judgment of the universal deluge as the momentous event that it really was, inasmuch as it marked "the end of a world of transcendent beauty" and "the beginning of a new world, a mere shadowy replica of its original glory." It makes us conscious of the prominent place assigned to the Flood in God's inspired Word, written for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. It offers help to the Christian student in the temptations with which he is faced when he makes his first acquaintance with the theories which are set forth by evolutionary geology as it ignores both the Biblical account of Creation and of the Flood. Particularly valuable in this direction is the author's critical analysis of the timetable of geological ages and of the theory of glaciation, propounded even in grade school geography texts. It finally reminds us how Scripture would have us see in the Flood a prototype of the Final Judgment. The author writes out of the conviction that the Bible "is the inspired Word of God, and therefore correct in every detail, also when dealing with natural phenomena and scientific facts. The Bible is not a textbook of geology or any other science, but whenever it touches fields of knowledge belonging to these categories, it is reliable and not merely representing in poetical or allegorical language the erroneous, naive, or limited views current at the time when it was written." (Page 94.)

Rather than reconsider flood geology, young earth creationist reject the Bible's clear teaching in Genesis 2. The geography of the garden of Eden according to the Bible interpreted literally (or critically) under geographic actualism indicates its location was in southern Mesopotamia. Observational data combined with the paradigm known as Flood geology, also founded on Biblical literalism, yields the conclusion that Noah's Flood deposited over 9000 m of sediments in this region. Such deposits obviously would have obliterated the garden geography. Thus Eden's geography and Flood geology, both based on literalism, stand in contradiction. Some weakening of one or the other is the logically necessary. Two geologists at Columbia University made a splash when they announced that a massive flooding of the Black Sea 7,500 years ago may have been the origin of the biblical Flood legend. Shortly thereafter they published a book called Noah's Flood about their theory.¹ More recently a team of marine biologists has announced that there was no massive flooding of the Black Sea at that time, based on their study of the sediments in the sea floors of the region. So it seems that the headlines were premature. Noah's Flood hasn't been found in the Black Sea. But let's imagine that the first guys were right. Archeologists are discovering what they believe to be antediluvian cities beneath many feet of clay and sediment obviously laid down by flood waters and the thought of their utter destruction is both sobering and a magnificent reflection of the power and justice of God. Rehwinkel notes, "There was no fear of God and no respect for His Law." Rehwinkel, Alfred M., *The Flood in the Light of the Bible, Geology, and Archaeology*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1951), p. 129. O'Brien, J. Randall, "Flood Stories of the Ancient Near East", *Biblical Illustrator*, (Fall 1986, volume 13, number 1), p. 61. Barton, George A., *Archaeology and the Bible*, (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1916), pp. 273-277. Keller, *The Bible as History*, p. 33. Whitcomb, John C. and Morris, Henry M., *The Genesis Flood*, (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1961), p. 38. A flood myth or deluge myth is a myth in which a great flood, usually sent by a deity or deities, destroys civilization, often in an act of divine retribution. Parallels are often drawn between the flood waters of these myths and the primeval waters which appear in certain creation myths, as the flood waters are described as a measure for the cleansing of humanity, in preparation for rebirth. Most flood myths also contain a culture hero, who "represents the human craving for life".