# GLOBAL OR LOCAL DELUGE ?

*"You can let others tell you what you are allowed to think and believe. Or you may wish to investigate some of the evidence yourself and reach your own conclusion."*

*-Awake! Sept 2006*

*"It is not persecution for an informed person to expose a certain religion as being false."*

*The Watchtower, Nov. 15, 1963, page 688*

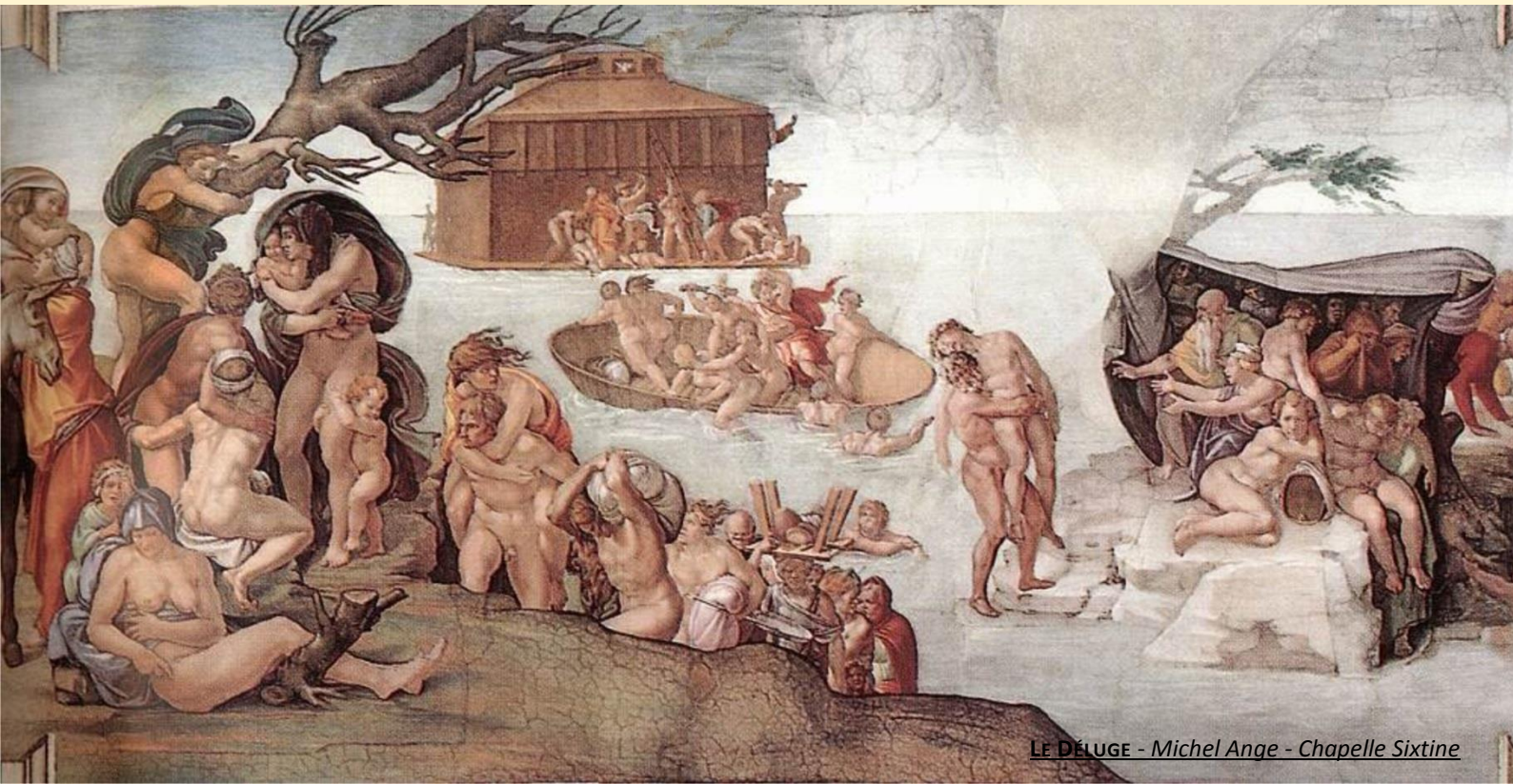
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LE DÉLUGE - *Michel Ange - Chapelle Sixtine*

This document contains complete correspondence between The **Watchtower** and **James Zimmerman** about global or local deluge. All letters are presented exactly as they were originally sent including any spelling and grammatical errors

Thanks to James for his authorization personally given by email March 7th 2013 to spread this document.

See : http://www.watchtowerletters.com/



LE DÉLUGE - *Michel Ange - Chapelle Sixtine*

# The 1st Letter to the Watchtower Society

Feb. 5th, 1997

Dear Brothers:

Greetings! I want to start by thanking you for the informative and fascinating articles you provide. I especially enjoy reading the Awake! magazine, especially the articles about Jehovah's creations.

Lately I have been engaged in much bible study and research. I have two questions, in particular, that I hope you can answer.

The first concerns the use of the word "lands", as used in the January 1, 1997 Watchtower's worldwide report for Jehovah's Witnesses. I am confused as to, what, exactly, the term means. At first, I thought that the term could be used interchangeably with "country", but that can't be quite right. For one thing, Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico are all listed as separate lands, even though they are all part of the same country (United States). Then I thought that maybe Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico were given separate entries because they are not physically part of the contiguous United States. But using this reasoning, the Florida Keys, Manhattan, Staten Island, Long Island, Nantucket and several other islands off the coast of the United States should also be given separate listings. Likewise, Britain is listed as a single entry, even though Northern Ireland is separated from England, Scotland and Wales.

I also thought, for a time, that each "land" was given its own entry if it had its own Watchtower branch office. But this can't be the case, either. For example, Kosrae, Yap, Pohnpei and Chuuk are each given their own listing even though they do not have their own branch office and, further, are all part of a single country (the Federated States of Micronesia).

So, I am not sure what, exactly, is meant by the word "land". We frequently point to the growing number of "lands" in which we preach as evidence that the work is spreading. But without knowing the precise definition of the term, it's tough to use it as a benchmark. So, I was hoping you could provide me with the answer to what is meant by the Watchtower's use of the word "land" so that I can know what is meant when we say that we've increased our preaching work from 202 lands to 213 lands.

My second question involves the flood of Noah's day. I am attempting to learn everything I can about the Great Flood. One area that I need more information about is the matter of what animals were brought onto the ark. The book Insight on the Scriptures – volume I says "Some investigators have said that just 43 "kinds" of mammals, 74 "kinds" of birds, and 10 "kinds" of reptiles could have produced the great variety of species of these creatures that are known today." I have been unable to determine what is meant by a "kind". I don't think it means "species", as there approximately 5,400 species of mammals, not 43. Likewise, I don't think it means "order" as there are only 29 orders of mammals, not 43.

So I would really like to know where those numbers came from. If you can supply a list of the names of the 127 "kinds" of mammals, birds and reptiles, I would really appreciate it. Or, if you do not have this list, can you provide me with the references to where these numbers were obtained from?

Thanks so much for taking the time to read this. Please accept the enclosed money order as a donation to the worldwide preaching work. I eagerly anticipate your reply, and I send you my love and greetings.

Sincerely,

XXXXX

# The WT's Response to the 1st Letter

WATCHTOWER
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EZT:ESM July 7, 1997

[redacted]

Dear Brother [redacted]:

We are pleased to respond to your letter of February 5, 1997, and we apologize for the very long delay in answering. You inquire about the number of lands listed for the 1996 Service Year Report in the January 1, 1997, issue of *The Watchtower*.

With regard to the number of various creature "kinds" that were likely taken along in the ark with Noah, we are enclosing photocopies of pages 14 to 16 of the December 22, 1951, issue of *The Watchtower*, containing the article entitled "Noah's Passenger List." On pages 15 and 16, sources are noted that may help you in your research.

You will note that the column where the lands are listed in the service report is headed "Country or Territory." The word "territory" is defined in *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition, as "1 a: a geographical area belonging to or under the jurisdiction of a governmental authority b: an administrative subdivision of a country." This definition would apply to the lands listed in *The Watchtower*. Therefore, you may expect the land name list to differ from an atlas listing, reflecting rather the different lands and locations in the world where the Kingdom work is being carried on without legally identifying them as separate countries with their own government.

We trust the above comments will be helpful to you. We send our warm love and Christian greetings.

Your brothers in Jehovah's service,

Watchtower B. & T. Society
OF NEW YORK, INC.

Enclosure

# Attached Article

# Noah's Passenger List

**What animals made up the ark's "Zoo's Who"?**

WITH unwarranted pride, distinguished American families frequently point to an ancestor who arrived in this country aboard the "Mayflower". But the "Mayflower's" contribution to human genealogy is fragmentary when compared with the cruise of Noah's ark. All present earthly life can attribute its existence to this latter vessel's one voyage, upon the crest of a global flood washing out an entire world in the year 2370 B.C.

Thanks to the devastating theory of evolution and the taunts and scorn of higher critics, multitudes have lost faith in the clear record of the flood found in the Bible book of Genesis, chapters seven and eight. Popular objections to the flood link in with genetics, the study of heredity recently treated in these columns. Because facts relative to this science, founded on the now-recognized principles first taught by Gregor Mendel, provide the basis for answering such objections, they are here considered.

In contrast with the idea of special creation, evolution holds that the discontinuities between life kinds rose gradually. Modern exponents of the theory claim that if all life ever in existence could be assembled, it would illustrate this by furnishing all the necessary bridges between kinds. To support this, they like to talk of the constant changes going on even now between "species", with new "species" ever making appearances.



This requires a very broad use of the term "species", as becomes evident when one turns to page 290 of the book *Man and the Biological World*, published in 1942, and reads that there are now known to be "more than one million species" of plants and animals. A footnote reveals: "According to a careful and recent estimate, there are now more than 750,000 described species of animals and more than 600,000 described species of plants."

The gist of the argument is that the changes keep building up until new species are brought forth which in turn also keep changing. Proof of the element of change is easy to find. They may point to Michael F. Guyer, professor of zoology, University of Wisconsin, who says in his book, *Animal Biology:* "No two organisms are exactly similar; moreover, changes occur from generation to generation, so that no offspring is precisely like either parent or like any ancestor. Variation is one of the most obvious facts in the animal world." Ernest Mayr of the American Museum of Natural History presents convincing evidence of infinite variety in life in the book *Systematics and the Origin of Species*, then adds: "If somebody were to name consistently everything that is different, he would have to give a name eventu-

ally to nearly every single individual."



Now then, if every variety, or at least every form dignified by evolutionists with the label of "species", had to be proved an original created "kind", how in the world did Noah ever manage to take the required number into the ark with him? Furthermore, today certain singular varieties (like the red fox, *Vulpes alascensis,* of Alaska) exist in only one sector on earth. How did their ancestors get to such isolated spots without previously multiplying and leaving descendants between there and Ararat?

***How Large Was the Ark?***

In the first place, how large was the ark? Genesis 6: 15 answers: "And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits."

Commonly the cubit was thought to represent the distance from elbow to fingertips, but due to obvious variation of arm lengths, eighteen inches came to be accepted as the equivalent. If this was the cubit of Noah's day, the ark would have measured 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. However, there is very good reason for believing the cubit of Genesis was a longer unit than this.

Here it is of interest to cite the authority of *Clarke's Commentary* on the Bible, where it deals with Genesis 6: 15: "But that the ancient cubit was more than *eighteen* inches has been demonstrated by Mr. Greaves, who travelled in Greece, Palestine, and Egypt, in order to be able to ascertain the *weights, moneys,* and *measures* of antiquity. He measured the pyramids in Egypt, and comparing the accounts which Herodotus, Strabo, and others, give of their size, he found the length of a cubit to be *twenty-one* inches and *eight hundred* and *eighty-eight* decimal parts of a thousand, or nearly *twenty-two* inches. And from this it will appear that the *three hundred* cubits of the ark's length make *five hundred* and *forty-seven* feet; the *fifty* for its breadth, *ninety-one* feet *two* inches; and the *thirty* for its height, *fifty-four* feet *eight* inches." McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia* (Vol. II, p. 598), also backed by authorities on ancient architecture, makes similar observations.

Other features of the ark's construction are of value. Common fancy usually pictures it as an orthodox boat with pointed prow and stern. But while efficient for cutting the waters in normal ocean travel, such construction robs of potential storage and accommodation space, things of utmost importance to Captain Noah. The original Hebrew word for ark, in this case, is *tebah,* which, McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia* informs us, denotes a chest or ark. It is differentiated from the term *aron* describing the sacred ark of the covenant, in that it denotes something designed to float upon the water. (See McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia,* Vol. I, p. 400, under *Ark.*) Further in the same item, this source relates:

"If we examine the passage in Gen. vi, 14-16, we can only draw from it the conclusion that the ark was not a boat or ship; but, as Dr. Robinson (in *Calmet's Dict.* s.v.) describes it, 'a building in the form of a parallelogram, 300 cubits long, 50 cubits broad, and 30 cubits high. . . . So far as the *name* affords any evidence, it also goes to show that the ark of Noah was not a regularly-built vessel, but merely intended to float at large upon the waters. We may, therefore, probably with justice, regard it as a large oblong, floating house, with a roof either flat or only slightly inclined. It was constructed with three stories, and had a door in the side."

Yet even this learned *Cyclopedia* betrays its fear of evolution's hundreds of thousands of "species". Apparently holding to the ancient belief that each of these varieties represents an original created kind, this source derides the fact that Noah could have provided for them all, several each of the "clean", two of the "unclean" kinds, in the ark. (Genesis 7: 2, 3) Thus, while citing ecclesiastical authority for doing so, the authors conclude that the Flood must have been merely local, accomplishing the blotting out of humanity, and necessitating only the preservation of a relatively few local forms of animal life. But the true Christian and believer in God's Word can never accept such a compromise. He reads that 'all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered', and that 'all flesh died that moved upon the earth'. (Genesis 8: 19, 21) So he turns away, as we now do, to consider another more plausible explanation.

### *Variation 'After Its Kind'*

In Genesis 6:20, the account of those life forms saved reads: "Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive." This will remind one of the original creation account in the first chapter, except that the "beast of the earth" is there added as well as "the fish of the sea". Of course, this latter class would be unnecessary for the ark. Carefully examine this use of the term "kind". Observe that the Creator makes no effort to itemize the hundreds of thousands of "species" of the evolutionists. True, a large number of original created types would be found within each main division; but there is nothing to show that such Genesis *kinds* would even approach in number the varieties of them now living.

So it is not necessary to dispute the facts related by learned biologists relative to obvious variation of kinds. What they see is correct, but this simply proves creation of original kinds which have since varied according to their natures. John W. Ritchie, in his book, *Biology and Human Affairs,* supposes that two animals, male and female of like kind, are "of a kind that would be able if need be to dig a hole, swim a stream, climb among the branches of a fallen tree, live on either animal or vegetable food". Turned loose in a broad land of varied topography and resources, these hypothetical animals would, in what he calls "geologically a very short time", produce many diverse offspring, including some good climbers, some runners, some swimmers, some carnivorous and fierce, etc. Yet, despite the varied progeny, all descendants would remain of the same basic *kind* as the original pair. Evolution has never proved otherwise. Nor will it ever.

This is not a rash conclusion. According to the Mendelian theory of genetics, now recognized everywhere but in the Soviet Union, variations must always be traced to activities of genes and chromosomes within the living cells of the various organisms. The noted evolutionist, Theodosius

Dobzhansky, in his work, *Genetics and the Origin of Species*, discusses at length every known way in which gene and chromosomal changes can take place. Yet he concedes, "It must be admitted that in no case have all the differences between two good species been completely resolved into gene changes." Frank L. Marsh, professor of biology, Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska, notes this and adds that then the distinction and immutability of whole groups of species must be even more concrete. Further, Marsh observes of Dobzhansky's work, "Those who have given the second edition of this author's book, *Genetics and the Origin of Species*, a careful reading will notice that after he very diligently considers all forms of change now known, he still finds no force in operation today which is of the quality to produce the present marked discontinuity. The greatest changes he has found are the mere production of additional modern 'species' *within groups already clearly set off in nature.*"

### *Fossil Record Verifies "Kinds"*

To keep his language clear, Marsh defines a common *kind* as a division within which cross-fertility is possible. Where failure to accomplish fertilization occurs, a demarcation of a kind is reached. Then he turns to the fossil record of life destroyed by the Noachian deluge. There, he points out, is to be found not the evolutionary continuity of life, bridging from one basic kind to another, but the direct opposite, clear-cut discontinuity of kinds. In support, note the words of George Gaylord Simpson, in his work, *Tempo and Mode in Evolution*, page 99:

"The facts are that many species and genera, indeed the majority, do appear suddenly in the [fossil] record, differing sharply and in many ways from any earlier group, and that this appearance of discontinuity becomes more common the higher the level, until it is virtually universal as regards orders and all higher steps in the taxonomic hierarchy."

In his own book, *Evolution, Creation and Science*, Professor Marsh reconciles the variations *within* kinds with the stability of the kinds themselves, adding: "If processes of variation today are not erasing the differences between kinds, neither could they do it in one thousand million years." Taking three simple kinds, man kind, horse kind and dog kind, he shows by a chart how relatively few created types of each could produce the great variety of each now known.

Hence, it would seem reasonable that Noah's animal passengers included a rather select "zoo's who", representing original Genesis kinds (or baramins, as Professor Marsh also terms them). Thus would the preservation of all "kinds" of life be assured. Take man as an example. Within the one original man, Adam, resided the genetic make-up able in due time to produce the great spread of humanity now evident. The fact that the great body of the race was destroyed in the flood in no way hindered this, for Noah's sons possessed within their loins the potential for producing this same varied progeny.

### *Ark Provides for All Passengers*

To trace back to each original animal kind that entered the ark would, of course, be impossible. The fact alone that some have since become extinct would prohibit this. However, *Clarke's Commentary* makes certain interesting observations. Of the six divisions of animal life it assigns, this source eliminates fish, worms and insects as not concerned in the ark calculations. This leaves *mammalia, aves* and *amphibia*. Though the *Commentary* gives the entire

naturalist breakdown of each group, it emphasizes that undoubtedly only the basic *genera* or *kinds* would be of concern. With interest we note that they assign only forty-three genera to the mammalia division (excepting the whale kind, certainly of no concern here), seventy-four to the second class, birds (not including web-footed fowls), and ten to the third class, amphibia (reptiles and serpents).

Bishop Wilkins is cited, who believed that but seventy-two kinds of quadrupeds required space in the ark and less than two hundred birds. The bishop even worked out what he considered the space necessary to accommodate all of the meat eaters as equivalent to twenty-seven wolves. The rest he computed as requiring space equivalent to 180 oxen. He allows 1,825 sheep for a year's food supply for the carnivorous kinds and 9,500 cubits of hay for the others. Ample room for such animals and their food was considered available in the ark's first two stories, with the third left for the fowl, Noah and his family.

Note now the following from George Bush, then professor of Hebrew and Oriental literature at New York City University, published in his *Critical and Practical Notes on Genesis,* in 1844. Taking even the short eighteen-inch cubit, he found the ark a vessel capable of carrying 43,413 tons. Compared to a first-rate man-of-war of his day, Professor Bush observed that "the ark consequently possessed a capacity of storage equal to that of eighteen ships of the line of the largest class, which, upon a very moderate computation, are capable of carrying 20,000 men, with stores and provisions for six months' consumption, besides 1,800 pieces of cannon. As all the various distinct species of four-footed animals may be reduced to two hundred or two hundred and fifty, it cannot for a moment be doubted that the ark would contain the specified proportion of these, of birds, insects, and eight human beings, with the requisite supplies of food for a year".

### *The Migration from Ararat*

The flood waters subsided, the ark, perched on one of the peaks of the Ararat chain, was opened, releasing its live cargo to scatter in all directions. How then did that red fox, *Vulpes alascensis,* get to Alaska? The same way its relative, *V. cascadensis,* managed to make California—through a long and extended migration. But none need try to prove that each of these varieties was an original Genesis *kind* that moved half way around the world from Ararat before trying to reproduce. How much more likely that these and probably a number of other fox varieties are all descendants of an original pair of ancestors that rode out the flood in the ark. As they migrated they multiplied, leaving varieties of their kind all along the way. How far the original pair got is unknown and unimportant. The migration continued until the farthest point of distribution was reached. Time, geographical influence and the normal degree of mutational changes did the rest. Variations occur, the *kinds* remain, unchanged, immutable. Now science is able to prove the very things the Bible, oldest scientific textbook of our globe, has so long taught.

The part Noah's ark played in the ancient and modern study of genetics has been considered. Whether or not fortune hunters ever find the frozen remains of the craft is unimportant. Its use is over. Testifying to its existence and memorable voyage are the multiplied varieties of life descended from its passengers. Now scientific fact joins hands with Bible truth to slap down God-defying evolution and critics of God's Word. Like grass, vain theories wither and die while "the word spoken by Jehovah endures forever".—1 Peter 1: 25, *New World Trans.*

# The 2nd Letter to the Watchtower Society

*[date forgotten, sent about spring 2004]*

Dear Brothers:

Several years ago, a visiting Circuit Overseer suggested that, should we desire to do more personal study, we try to learn as much about the Great Flood as possible. I wrote to you previously requesting information concerning the passenger list of the ark, and I thank you for the information that you provided me.

Further research I have done on the subject has, of course, led to more questions. My main question is this: Is it possible that the flood of Noah's day was not literally an earth-wide deluge? It seems that there are two items that need to be addressed in answering this question: First, what does the bible say, and second, what does God's book of creation reveal?

The book of Genesis states that the flood was earth wide. The Hebrew word for 'earth' is 'erets'. Other occurrences of erets include:

Exodus 9:33: this verse states that the "rain did not pour down on the earth". Here, the word earth must be understood to mean only in the area of Egypt.

2 Chronicles 36:23: here, Cyrus' empire is said to include "all the kingdoms of the earth". But surely this scripture is not meant to include empires in the Far East, Africa or in the Americas. At other times, the word erets is not even translated as earth, making it even more obvious that the word does not necessarily imply the entire physical globe. Examples of this include:

Genesis 12:1. That reads: "Go your way out of your country...to the country that I shall show you".

Genesis 19:31: here Lot's daughter's state that there is "not a man in the land (earth, King James version) to have relations with us". Obviously, they are not referring to the entire physical globe, only the general area in which they live.

And Genesis 20:1 states "Abraham journeyed from there to the land of the Negeb".

Thus, it appears as though the word erets can be translated as earth, land or country.

What about the book of creation? If the flood was literally planet-wide, where did the waters go? If there was enough water to cover all the earth, where could it drain to? It couldn't simply drain to the oceans, because they would have already been full. If the water covered even the highest mountains, then the waters' height must have been more than six miles above current sea level. And remember, the mountains were formed by this time, so this cannot be explained by stating that the earth was 'flatter' when the flood waters were draining. If there is six miles of water sitting on top of the oceans, where does it drain to? Additionally, if this amount of flood water fell from the sky in only 960 hours (40 days and nights), this would mean the rain fell at a rate of at least 15 feet per hour!

Plants native to land require oxygen and carbon dioxide, which they remove from the atmosphere. Terrestrial plants cannot survive under water for long periods of time. Even if the plant life was able to obtain these gases from the water, most of them need sunlight. Water depth exceeding six miles would block out sunlight entirely.

Fish, which obviously did not need to be brought onto the ark, would also have had a difficult time. Those requiring freshwater would suddenly find the water too salty, as a rise in sea level would cause the ocean salt to mix into freshwater lakes.

Prior to the flood, Noah would need to bring representatives of each kind of animals into the ark. The incredible number of animals needed (if every kind, earthwide, was to be represented) would be impossible for Noah and his family to care for. Modern zoos employee dozens, sometimes hundreds, of employees to care for only a portion of the animal kinds in existence. Although some sources indicate that 'only' a few hundred kinds of animals would be needed to account for the earth's present day variety, this does not seem plausible. For example, two cats would not be sufficient to produce all the species of cats we have today. A minimum of 36 pairs of cats would have needed to board the ark. Any less and it would be impossible to account for the variety in existence today, unless they rapidly evolved from some sort of proto-cat. Additionally, Noah would need to board 27 pairs of seals, 34 pairs of deer, 44 pairs of rabbits and hares, 951 pairs of bats and 1,137 pairs of rats and mice.

After the flood, many animals would have the difficulty of getting back home. How did the kangaroo get back to Australia? How did the dodo get back to Mauritius? How did the sloths return to the Amazon? How did the emperor penguin return to Antarctica? And how did the giant tortoises get halfway around the globe to the Galapagos?

In view of the foregoing, it appears as though there is sufficient evidence to suggest the flood was perhaps a localized event.

I realize we may not know the answer to some of these questions until a future time. However, the flood was a major event in biblical history; much hinges on it. Later bible writers discussed the flood, and all subsequent human history is built upon it. Friends of mine have discussed these issues with me, and it has caused considerable consternation for some. Your thoughts on the matter would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and effort. I eagerly await your response.

Your brother,

xxxxx

# The WT's Response to the 2nd Letter

Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses
2821 Route 22, Patterson, NY 12563-2237 Phone: (845) 306-1100

ECJ:ECN July 7, 2004

[redacted]

Dear Brother [redacted]:

This is in response to your letter of June 13, 2004, in which you ask if it is possible that the Flood of Noah's day was not literally an earthwide Deluge.

As to the Flood of Noah's day, we are aware that some persons will accept this account only if the Flood is viewed as merely a *local* one. But that is not what the Bible says. If the Flood had been local only, why would not God simply have told Noah to move to another locality? Why all the labor of building a large ark for survival? If the Flood did not cover all the earth, why bring animals and birds into the ark to preserve all the different kinds? Animals elsewhere could have survived to perpetuate their kinds. And the birds could have easily escaped by flying to another area. So we must face the fact that to believe this account means accepting that there was a *global* flood. In this regard please see chapter 3 of the book *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?* Furthermore, reading over the enclosed photocopies of the articles "Testimony to a Global Flood," in the July 8, 1977, issue of *Awake!*, and the "Questions From Readers" from the July 1, 1966, issue and January 15, 1962, issues of *The Watchtower* will be helpful. Additional information can be found in the *Watch Tower Publications Indexes* under the subject "Flood (Noachian)."

As to the Hebrew word for our planet, or globe, page 31 of the January 1, 1986, issue of *The Watchtower* states: "According to *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Gesenius, Brown, Driver, and Briggs; 1951) *'e'rets* means: '1. a. *earth,* whole earth ([as opposed] to a part) . . . b. *earth,* [as opposed] to heaven, sky . . . c. *earth*=inhabitants of earth . . . 2. *land*=a. country, territory . . . b. district, region . . . 3. a. *ground,* surface of ground . . . b. *soil,* as productive.' *Old Testament Word Studies* by William Wilson says of *'e'rets:* 'The earth in the largest sense, both the habitable and uninhabitable parts; with some accompanying word of limitation, it is used of some portion of the earth's surface, a land or country.'" So the first and primary meaning of the Hebrew word is our planet, the earth, as a whole.

We are enclosing also a photocopy of the article "Was There an Earthwide Flood?," in the July 15, 1968, issue of *The Watchtower.* When some contemplate that the waters covered "all the tall mountains that were under the whole heavens," they think of the more than five-mile-high Himalayan peaks. (Genesis 7:19) However, there is no reason to believe that the pre-Flood mountains had to be nearly as high as that. The article then states: "You may recall that the *Scientific Monthly* magazine suggested that in earth's earlier days 'there were no high mountains forming physical or climatic barriers.' It was apparently the tremendous weight of the Flood waters that pushed mountain peaks to their high levels and produced more than six-mile-deep valleys in the ocean floor."

We trust the above comments will be helpful to you. It is a pleasure to be associated with you and our brothers around the world in the Kingdom-preaching work Jehovah is having done earth wide today. We all are eagerly looking forward with you to the momentous events just ahead when God will deliver his people into his new world.

Your brothers in Jehovah's service,

*Christian Congregation*
*of Jehovah's Witnesses*

Enclosure

# The 3rd Letter to the Watchtower Society

23 March 2007

Dear Brothers:

Greetings. Thank you for your response to my letter regarding the plausibility of a global flood. I am replying to your letter as I have now completed research of the Watchtower and Awake! articles you kindly enclosed with your letter and have more thoughts on the issue.

In paragraph two of your letter, you ask the questions:

"If the Flood had been local only, why would not God simply have told Noah to move to another locality? Why all the labor of building a large ark for survival? If the Flood did not cover all the earth, why bring animals and birds into the ark to preserve all the different kinds?"

These are questions that I struggled with too. The answers to those questions may not be known until the future, but God's word certainly provides us with similar accounts from whence we can glean possible answers. For instance, in Joshua 6:12-15 Jehovah instructed Joshua, the 'well-equipped force' and the rear guard to march around the city of Jericho a total of thirteen times over the course of a week. The priests marched with them, having the added burden of carrying the Ark of the Covenant on their shoulders. Why would Jehovah make his servants go through all of that trouble when He could have felled the walls regardless? Perhaps Jehovah was attempting to ascertain the faith and trust they had in Him.

Additionally, when seeking a miraculous healing, why was Naaman instructed that he needed to wash in the Jordan seven times (2 Kings 5:14)? Could not Jehovah have just healed him? Perhaps Jehovah was attempting to ascertain the faith and trust Naaman had in Him.

Indeed, when we consider the blood on the doorposts (Exodus 12:22), the Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 13:20, 14:2), the need for Moses to keep his hands raised (Exodus 17:11, 12) and the copper serpent (Numbers 21:9), to name a few; it becomes clear that Jehovah frequently instructed humans to engage in extra labor for the simple purpose of testing their faith. The same can be said of Noah. In fact, even if we concede that the Deluge was global, this still doesn't explain the need for an ark – Jehovah could have easily miraculously transported Noah and any other life forms He wished to preserve to a safe postdiluvian time. Jehovah possibly wanted to test Noah's faith by instructing him to perform works.

So we see that the instruction to build an ark does not preclude a local deluge.

Your reference to the Hebrew word e'rets cites the work A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Gesenius, Brown, Driver and Briggs; 1951). While it is true that the work states e'rets is commonly defined as "the earth in the largest sense", this is not the only definition and, indeed, emphasis is likely put on the translating of e'rets into earth in the above quotation because this quote is taken from the Lexicon's entry on Earth. But this very entry (found on page 140) provides six different words that can be translated as Earth, or Earthen and even gives a list of over 75 instances where the English words Earth and Earthen are used in the Bible when the original word was not e'rets. Also, this same reference work allows for translation of the Hebrew word e'rets as Common, Field, Ground, Land, Nation, Way and Wilderness (pages 88, 163, 202, 243, 285, 475 and 482; respectively). Thus, the word e'rets is not, by default, translated into English as Earth and, conversely, the appearance of the English word Earth in the Holy Scriptures does not indicate an occurrence, in Hebrew, of e'rets in every instance. As I noted in my previous letter, occurrences of the word Earth in the Scriptures does not necessarily refer to the globe entire (see 2 Chronicles 36:23, for example). Again, it appears as though the context and, where necessary, our knowledge of God's book of creation must be employed in order to ascertain the specific meaning of this word.

The rest of your letter proved rather confusing for me. I had always believed that the Earth was millions of years old, and that life had existed on this planet for millions of years as well. The articles enclosed with the letter, however, gave arguments that only work if we assume the Earth is young. Additionally, the articles quote from sources written by people trying to prove that the earth is only about 6,000 years old. Notable among them is the book The Genesis Flood, by John C. Whitcomb, quoted in the 1968 Watchtower article. This book's author claims that the earth is far less than a million years old and spends several pages arguing why he believes so. If we believe that the earth millions of years old, than arguments in books like Whitcomb's fall flat.

As another example the Awake! article, "Testimony to a Global Flood", quotes extensively from Alexander Catcott's work A Treatise on the Deluge. I am not sure how much stock to put in Catcott's work. Catcott seems sincere, but his book was published in 1761, at a time when the overwhelming consensus among Europeans was that the Earth and all creation were about 6,000 years old. Even the 1768 edition of Catcott's treatise predates (by some twenty years) the evidence of a much older universe that James Hutton put forth in The Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (volume I). This work is, of course, the publication largely responsible for awakening the learned European community to the facts that the Earth and creation are much older, by orders of magnitude, than previously believed. As someone who believed in a very young Earth, Catcott attributes much to the Deluge that has long been proven to have occurred over eons instead of during a single year, such as the discovery of shells and corals in caves far from the oceans.

In my previous letter, I expressed concern regarding post-Flood conditions enabling animal 'kinds' to arrive at their current habitats. Your letter directed me to the Watchtower's 15 January 1962 and 01 July 1966 "Questions from Readers" articles and the 08 July 1977 Awake! article titled "Testimony to a Global Flood","

The 1962 article cites as its source the 23 September 1956 issue of the New York Times. Specifically, the quote used is taken from the article "New Explanation of Lost Atlantis". In this article, Dr. Malaise does indeed postulate a mid-Atlantic ridge existed that crossed the ocean above the surface of the water and ran from Europe to Greenland. However, Dr. Malaise's findings indicate that this Ridge existed no more recent than 10,000 years ago – it submerged under water and was gone long before humans were created and over 55 centuries before the Deluge began. But even allowing the Mid-Atlantic ridge did exist as recently as 2370 b.c.e., this only solves the problem of bridging Europe to Greenland. It fails to explain how animals managed to get from the ark to the Americas, Australia, Antarctica, Madagascar, Borneo, Great Britain and Taiwan, as well as the Galapagos, Japanese, Indonesian, Polynesian and Philippine archipelagoes; not to mention land masses such as the Hawaiian Islands, which are some 2,300 miles from the nearest continent.

The 1966 "Questions from Readers" article addresses the matter of trees; would they have been ruined in the Deluge? It cites The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (volume IV, page 404). The "Questions from Readers" quotes this encyclopedia from its entry on the cultivated olive tree thus: "an old stump will continue to send up new stems, as if its vitality were indestructible". However, earlier in the same paragraph, the encyclopedia claims that the cultivated olive requires "calcareous soil and a mean temperature of 15ºC (60ºF), and must be protected against strong winds and excessive heat." A global Deluge would, in its inherent cataclysmic nature, wash away the needed soil and subject the tree to high winds (see Genesis 8:1). And that's just the cultivated olive; the wild olive tree would be worse off. The Encyclopedia notes that the cultivated olive was a genetically engineered plant and an improvement over the wild olive and, further, that the wild variety "must not be confused with the cultivate olive". Even if we assume that the hardy olive survived a worldwide Deluge, the encyclopedia is silent regarding such hardiness in the fig, sycamore, mulberry, almond, pomegranate, apple and date-palm trees; all of which also have entries in said work. As it is, many trees suffer from root rot when faced with excess soil moisture. A global deluge, with waters remaining upon the land for over a year, would certainly qualify as excess soil moisture.

In my previous letter I noted that terrestrial plants require oxygen and carbon dioxide, which they extract from the atmosphere. Granted, Jehovah could have miraculously caused land plants to begin extracting such gases from the water. He also would need to alter the basic design of green plants to allow for the continuation of photosynthesis

under reduced – and at times totally absent – lighting conditions. But this leaves us with the converse of the question posed in your letter; why cause a global flood if it would entail all the labor of altering the chemical composition and capabilities of plants?

Regarding the amount of water needed to cover the land, the rate at which it fell, and the logistics of it draining off, the response included the 15 July 1968 The Watchtower article "Was There and Earthwide Flood?" Twice the article quotes Scientific Monthly as saying "there were no high mountains forming physical or climatic borders". This quote, though, taken from the August 1949 article "Evolutionary Growth Rates in the Dinosaurs" refers, not to a time four or five thousand years ago, but to what it calls the 'Mesozoic Era'. This era concluded 65 million years ago. Again, isn't it our belief that the earth is millions of years old? In that case, we should have no trouble accepting this article when it hypothesizes about the planet as it was 65 million years ago and, further, we should not confuse its statements about the early days of the earth as referring to a time approximately six thousand years ago.

Also, according to the Scientific Monthly article, the assertion that "the earth has a tropical or sub-tropical climate over much of its land surface" was due to the fact that much of the land was centered near the equator at that time. It was not due to a water canopy. The same can be said of the Science et Vie quote concerning a warmer Antarctica; that article attributes the warmth to the fact that Antarctica was much nearer the equator at that time rather than to a water canopy. And neither article claims that such warmth was global in nature.

The water canopy itself presents additional problems. I have been unable to find any substantiation of such a canopy. And consider this: even if we assume that mountains as high as the present-day Himalayas did not exist in Noah's day, we still know that there were mountains of significant height at that time of the Deluge. Genesis 7:19 and 8:4 note that the floodwaters covered the tall mountains and the ark itself came to rest upon the Mountains of Ararat after the floodwater had been receding for 150 days. So, the amount of water that fell must have been at least as high as the Mountains of Ararat, otherwise the ark would not have been able to later settle on those mountains. If we conservatively estimate the ark came to rest upon a mountain only one mile high (making it significantly lower than many mountains in the region, and far shorter than John Morris' estimate of 10-12,000 feet in his book Ark on Ararat), this would mean at least enough rain fell from the canopy to cover that mountain (~one mile of rain). Now, the air above our heads exerts pressure on us; it is termed 'atmospheric pressure'. When we are at sea level, there is more pressure on us than when we are high on a mountain because there is more air above our heads. The canopy would add to the atmospheric pressure, because more matter would be above our heads. Specifically, in the conservative estimate above, the canopy would have to contain at least enough water to cover the earth to a depth of one mile. Since every 30 feet of water roughly equals an increase of one atmosphere, this would mean antediluvians were living in a world with approximately 170 times the atmospheric pressure we currently experience (1 mile = 5,280 feet; 5,280 feet ÷ 1 atmosphere for every 30 feet = 176 atmospheres). This is far more than enough to crush any human out of existence.

The belief in such a canopy also contradicts the following statement, speaking of God's creative works on the fourth 'day': "Now, had there been an earthly observer, he would be able to discern the sun, moon and stars, which would serve as signs for seasons and for days and years" (from page 32 of the book Life-How Did it Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?). Imagine a SCUBA diver under water. If that person were under, say one foot of water, and looked up at the sky, they would see a very blurry picture indeed. Now imagine that this same swimmer under 5,280 feet of water. What would the sun and moon look like then? They would not be merely blurry; they would be totally absent from view. The swimmer would be in almost total darkness. Looking up, they would see nothing like the pictures on page 31 of the same book, wherein the night and day skies are clearly depicted, with no intervening canopy. The canopy theory also contradicts paragraph 4 on page 528 of the book Insight on the Scriptures – Volume 1, which states, in part: "…on the first 'day' diffused light evidently penetrated the swaddling bands, but the sources of that light could not have been seen by an earthly observer. Now, on the fourth 'day', things evidently changed'" (italics mine). Incidentally, a mile of water, falling in a mere 40 days, computes to five and a half feet of rain per hour!

At any rate, the article also quotes from the 16 January 1960 issue of the Saturday Evening Post's article "Riddle of the Frozen Giants". Here is the first part of the quote, as it appears on page 421 of this Watchtower article:

The list of animals that have been thawed out of this mess would cover several pages. …They are all in the muck. These facts indicated water as the agency which engulfed the creatures. …Many of these animals were perfectly fresh, whole and undamaged, and still either standing or at least kneeling upright.

Looking at the original Post article, though, reveals that the author was not concluding that water had destroyed these creatures; he merely mentions it as one of a few failed theories. Notice, he uses the word "indicated" - past tense! - suggesting that this is no longer the accepted theory. Indeed, the last portion of the above quote (the part appearing after the second set of ellipses) is, in actuality, a refutation of the sentences before it. As proof, consider the entire paragraph, as it appeared in original form in the Post:

These facts indicated water as the agency which engulfed the creatures. It was explained that they fell into rivers and were then deposited miles away in deltas and estuaries under layers of silt. This sounded splendid at first, but then the next lot of riddles appeared. These animal remains were not in deltas, swamps or estuaries, but were scattered all over the country. Almost without exception, they were stuck in the highest levels of the curious, flat, low plateaus that occur all over the tundra between the river valleys. It was also pointed out that the whole of Northern Asia, Alaska and Western Canada could never have been one vast delta, nor could their rivers have wandered about all over this higher land, depositing much uphill. But last, and worst of all, many of these animals were perfectly fresh, whole and undamaged, and still either standing or at least kneeling upright. [Italics mine.]

Notice the first italicized portion. Here, the author is clearly dismissing water as the cause of death for these creatures. What is more, the water in question involved, not torrential rains, but rivers. Notice, too, the second italicized portion. Here the author is invoking the fact that the creatures were found whole and undamaged as evidence against – not proof of – a watery demise.

The Watchtower article next quotes an entire paragraph from the Post article, which mentions, among other things, that vast herds of enormous beasts were suddenly killed without any visible sign of violence. The paragraph concludes by asking this question (also quoted in the Watchtower): "What, we may well ask, could possibly do this?" The Watchtower proceeds to answer the Post's question by simply stating "the logical answer is that it came with the rapid change that occurred at the time of the Flood". However, the Post article does not agree with this answer. The Post article answers its own question detailing evidence in favor of a volcanic explanation for the 'riddle of the frozen giants'.

Next, I posed a series of questions involving the passenger load of the ark. When I first wrote a letter requesting a list of the animal passengers on the ark, the reply enclosed a copy of a portion of the article "Noah's Passenger List", from the 22 December 1951 Awake! While this article did not provide such a list, it did refer me to the work Clarke's Commentary as the source of the claim that Noah needed to bring only 43 'kinds' of mammals, 74 'kind' of birds and 10 'kinds' of amphibia. This eighteenth-century work is extremely outdated, as it states:

The first CLASS, Mammalia, or animals with teats, contains seven orders, and only forty-three genera if we except the seventh order, cete, i.e. all the whale kind, which certainly need not come into this account. The different species in this class amount, the cete excluded, to five hundred and forty-three.

The second CLASS, Aves, birds, contains six orders, and only seventy-four genera, if we exclude the third order, anseres, or web-footed fowls, all of which could very well live in the water. The different species in this class, the anseres excepted, amount to two thousand three hundred and seventy- two.

The third CLASS, Amphibia, contains only two orders, reptiles and serpents; these comprehend ten genera, and three hundred and sixty-six species, but of the reptiles many could live in the water, such as the tortoise, frog, &c. Of the former there are thirty-three species, of the latter seventeen, which excluded reduce the number to three hundred

and sixteen. The whole of these would occupy but little room in the ark, for a small portion of earth, &c., in the hold would be sufficient for their accommodation.

Thus we see that Clarke's basis for claiming such a low number of animal passengers was his (now outdated) belief that, 1) inter-genera breeding is possible in every case; 2) that many animals, such as web-footed birds, could survive the Deluge by literally floating through the storm; and 3) that there are only 125 genera of mammals, birds and reptiles combined. Even if we ignore the first issue, we are still left with the more recent estimates placing the number of genera at 1,200 mammals, 2,600 birds and 866 reptiles. The conclusion here is that Noah would have needed to provide space and care (including very specialized diets in many cases) for approximately 4,600 pairs of animals. But if we say, for argument's sake, that the 'kinds' of Genesis are not equivalent to animal species or genera, but to animal families. Though this is extremely unlikely (since any given member of the same animal family can not reproduce with any other given member), it does agree with Frank Marsh in his book Evolution, Creation and Science, which is quoted in the 22 December 1951 Watchtower article "Noah's Passenger List". Marsh mentions, among other things, the 'dog' kind and the horse 'kind' and dogs and horses are both animal families (according to the book Mammals, edited by Dr. David MacDonald). Using animal families as criteria definitely minimizes the passenger list - down to 152 pairs of mammals, 202 pairs of birds and 55 pairs of reptiles. But this still leaves Noah with the enormous task of caring for at least 409 animals (the actual number would be far higher, as some of the 'kinds' were represented by seven individuals).

Even proponents of a global flood don't agree that the number was this low. In the book The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications, John C. Whitcomb and Henry Morris (whom the 1968 Watchtower article quotes from) propose that an Earth wide deluge would necessitate 25,000 'kinds' (at least 50,000 individual animals) being taken aboard the ark in order to account for the diversity of animal life we see today.

In an interview conducted with professed Christian and biologist Amanda Cook, not only each species, but each sub-species – yes, members of each race of animals - would need to be represented to account for the genetic diversity we see today. She also notes:

The problem with beginning a new ecosystem on an uninhabited planet is that you severely deplete the gene pool that you can select from. The idea behind this diminished gene pool has been coined by geneticists as the founder effect. The founder effect is defined as a reduction of the gene pool and alteration of gene frequencies resulting from the establishment of a new population when a few organisms are isolated from the parental population. With a small gene pool to draw from and a small population there is a greater chance of genetic drift in which an allele may be completely removed from the gene pool. This random elimination of alleles only serves to limit diversity. …Because of genetic drift and the founder effect it is extremely difficult to maintain diversity in a small population. You must have a representative for all of the alleles you wish to be expressed in you future ecosystem, so you must bring with you a fair sampling of each sub-species and pray that you don't lose any genetic information to disease or infertility.

So we see that not only would a pair of animals from each 'kind', but "a fair sampling of each sub-species" would be needed. Even still, she notes that the founder effect is likely to result in the extinction of the greatly depleted animal unless extraordinary measures were taken to protect the few remaining members from disease.

But let's use the lowest estimate, 409 'kinds', for argument's sake. This presents additional obstacles. Though we do not know for certain the exact number of different 'kinds' of animals during the Flood, we do know that scientists now estimate a total of 5,500 mammal species, 8,800 bird species and 8,200 reptile species, for a total of 22,500 species. While it may be true that some of these species can interbreed and produce fertile offspring, the point still remains that they are separate and distinct members that have descended from the animals on the ark. This results in the conclusion that there have been 55 new species of land-dwelling vertebrates every year during each of the 4,376 years since the Flood. New species would be coming in to existence faster than the gestation rates of some of their members! For example, how can we honestly conclude that the one pair of the mouse 'kind' has produced the 1,514 known species in existence today? This calculates out to an average of nearly 3 new species of

rodents each year! Thus we see that to accept a high number quickly flies in the face of space and time constraints, while accepting a low passenger number for the ark necessitates rapid diversification in the millennia since.

Further, in my previous letter, I noted "the incredible number of animals needed would be impossible for Noah and his family to care for. Modern zoos employ dozens, sometimes hundreds, of employees to care for only a portion of the animal kinds in existence." As a comparison, the Minnesota Zoo (at www.mnzoo.org) offers these statistics as of November 2006:

Animal species represented at the zoo: 447

Individual animals: 2,351

Volunteers: 1,133

Hours donated by volunteers: 87,266

These numbers indicate the volunteers spent 240 work-hours every day over a 12 month period (01 July 2005 – 30 June 2006) and each volunteer at the zoo provided care for approximately 2.2 individual animals! True, some of the volunteers undoubtedly care for peripheral duties, such as handling of guests, setting up displays, managing food and souvenir shops, and so on, with the result that direct animal care-givers cared for a higher number of animals. However, the volunteers at the zoo also had the benefit of a comprehensive infrastructure (e.g., animal feed delivered to the zoo daily) and modern conveniences (e.g., much labor is automated), such that said volunteers are able to care for more animals than otherwise possible. Compare this to Noah and his seven family members who, at most, could have only cared for the animals for 192 work-hours per day – assuming they never slept or spent time on personal care - without plumbing or indoor lighting. Even if we allow each member of Noah's family to provide care for 10 individual animals (far exceeding the zoo's capabilities), the total number cared for amounts to only 80 individual animals – a mere 40 'kinds' – far short of even the most conservative estimates above.

Finally, throughout this letter, and in much of the references provided, other forms of animals have been ignored. Insects, arachnids, centipedes, millipedes, worms, yes, "all moving animals of the ground" (Genesis 6:20) were brought onto the ark, adding to the workload of Noah and his family. And then there are fish. In my previous letter, I noted "fish…requiring freshwater would suddenly find the water too salty, as a rise in sea level would cause the ocean salt to mix into freshwater lakes". The sensitivity of fish regarding the salinity of their watery environment is confirmed on page 844, paragraph 2, of the book Insight on the Scriptures – Volume 2, where, discussing the conditions of the Salt Sea, we read: "The salt concentration is such that no fish, even saltwater varieties, are able to live; the few fish in the brackish water where fresh water mixes with the salt water are killed if they are swept into the sea proper." (Also see page 838, paragraph 6 of the book Insight on the Scriptures – Volume 1.)

To summarize: A global Deluge presents insurmountable difficulties for life on the planet. The ark seems to lack sufficient space and human hands to care for those intended to survive the ordeal, and while it may seem desirable to concede a lower number of passengers for the ark, this merely results in the greater problem of how this small pool of 'kinds' so quickly diversified into the great variety we see today. Life outside the ark presents additional problems. Freshwater fish would definitely not survive. Almost all tree species would suffer root rot of the highest degree. Following the Flood, the descendants of the surviving animals eventually flourished on all major (and thousands of minor) landmasses on the planet. Close investigation concerning the possibility of land bridges reveals such bridges did not exist to provide a comprehensive network linking all land masses with all other land masses and, further, the few that did exist ceased to do so millennia before the Flood.

If we are to accept Noah's Flood as global, then, the following questions need to be satisfactorily addressed:

1) How did the descendents of animals exiting the ark eventually arrive at thousands of landmasses not connected to Afro-Eurasia nor inter-connected to each other?

2) How did trees survive immense erosion, root rot, and lack of air and sunlight?

3) If we invoke the theory of a water canopy, how do we account for the resulting problem of crushing atmospheric pressure?

4) Did the ark have a relatively small animal passenger list (necessitating rapid diversification – sometimes even outpacing gestation - in intervening millennia), or a comprehensive animal passenger list (flying in the face of space and time constraints)?

5) Since fish are sensitive to salinity alterations, how did any – but specifically the freshwater 'kinds' – survive the Deluge?

Of course, all of these questions are easily and satisfactorily answered by concluding the Flood was localized.

I sincerely hope my tone is not taken as one of arguing, but of one who is attempting to be 'intellectually honest' and who "'is characterized by a 'readiness to scrutinize what one believes to be true'' and 'to pay sufficient attention to other evidence available'" (quote is from the book Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?, page 9). Through my research and discussions with others, there is a large body of data strongly indicating the Flood was localized. Would it not be a disservice to all to not at least acknowledge that, at present, the extent of the Flood is unknown? Acknowledging this does not alter the factuality or overall harmony of the bible, nor does it need diminish one's faith.

I eagerly await your response, particularly to the five questions, above. Thank you again for taking the time to read this. I send you my love and greetings.

Sincerely,

xxxxxxxx

# The WT's Response to the 3rd Letter



Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses

2821 Route 22, Patterson, NY 12563-2237 Phone: (845) 306-1100

ECH:ECO May 23, 2007

[redacted]

Dear Brother [redacted]:

Your letter of March 23, 2007, in response to our previous letter, continues to pursue your view that the Flood of Noah's day was a local one.

Of course, although we just do not know enough from our present perspective to explain all of the objections you raise to the concept of a global flood, there are possible explanations. For example, you inquire about how fish would have survived if the Flood waters in Noah's day had changed the salinity of the seawater. We cannot know just what the salinity of seawater was at the time of the Flood, or how much the Flood waters changed it, and thus how sensitive the existing fish would have been to any changes in salinity. However, as you may know, some kinds of fish such as salmon even today normally travel between freshwater and saltwater for spawning. Some of these have migrated two or three times in successive years, and some have even become freshwater natives. Therefore, even now there is flexibility in this regard in fish, and conditions thousands of years ago could have differed enough that salinity might not have been as large a factor as it is today. And, of course, Jehovah as Creator certainly could have maneuvered things so that fish were able to survive and adapt for continued existence.

Your arguments also do not take into account this possibility that Jehovah may have had a role in the way things developed or how much the tremendous weight of global floodwaters could have affected geological and chronological data. Of course, our perspective on this matter must be aligned with the clear indications in God's written Word, all of which imply an earth wide flood, not a local one. For example, Jesus Christ, who was present at the time, when warning of a coming global destruction, stated: "For just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away." (Matthew 24:37-39) "And he did not hold back from punishing an ancient world, but kept Noah, a preacher of righteousness, safe with seven others when he brought a deluge upon a world of ungodly people." (2 Peter 2:5) These texts indicate that all mankind suffered the same fate, with only eight survivors.

Similarly, 2 Peter 3:5-13 states: "For, according to their wish, this fact escapes their notice, that there were heavens from of old and an earth standing compactly out of water and in the midst of water by the word of God; and by those means the world of that time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water. But by the same word the heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men. . . . But there are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell." The destruction of "the world [kosmos] of that time" is paralleled with the "destruction of the ungodly men" over the entire earth in our time, with none of "the ungodly" remaining anywhere—again implying global destruction.

Another Scriptural indication is found in Volume 1 of the *Insight* book, page 329: "All mankind descended from the first human pair, Adam and Eve. (Ge 1:28; 3:20; 5:1, 2) After the Flood, earth's new population, including all the races and national groups on earth today, descended from Noah through his three sons and their wives, who were survivors of that global Deluge. Thus, after listing 70 offspring of the sons of Noah, the Genesis account says: 'From these the nations were spread about ["branched out over," *Tanakh*] in the earth.'—Ge 10:32."

It is good to want to be as accurate and precise as we can in such matters, yet we do not want to allow them to become a focal point in our lives. We can be confident that Jehovah's spirit will see to it that any necessary adjustments in understanding are made. In the meantime, we suggest that you let the matter rest, and perhaps in time something more will be published to clarify matters. Be assured that we will pass your comments along to those who are responsible for the content of what is published.

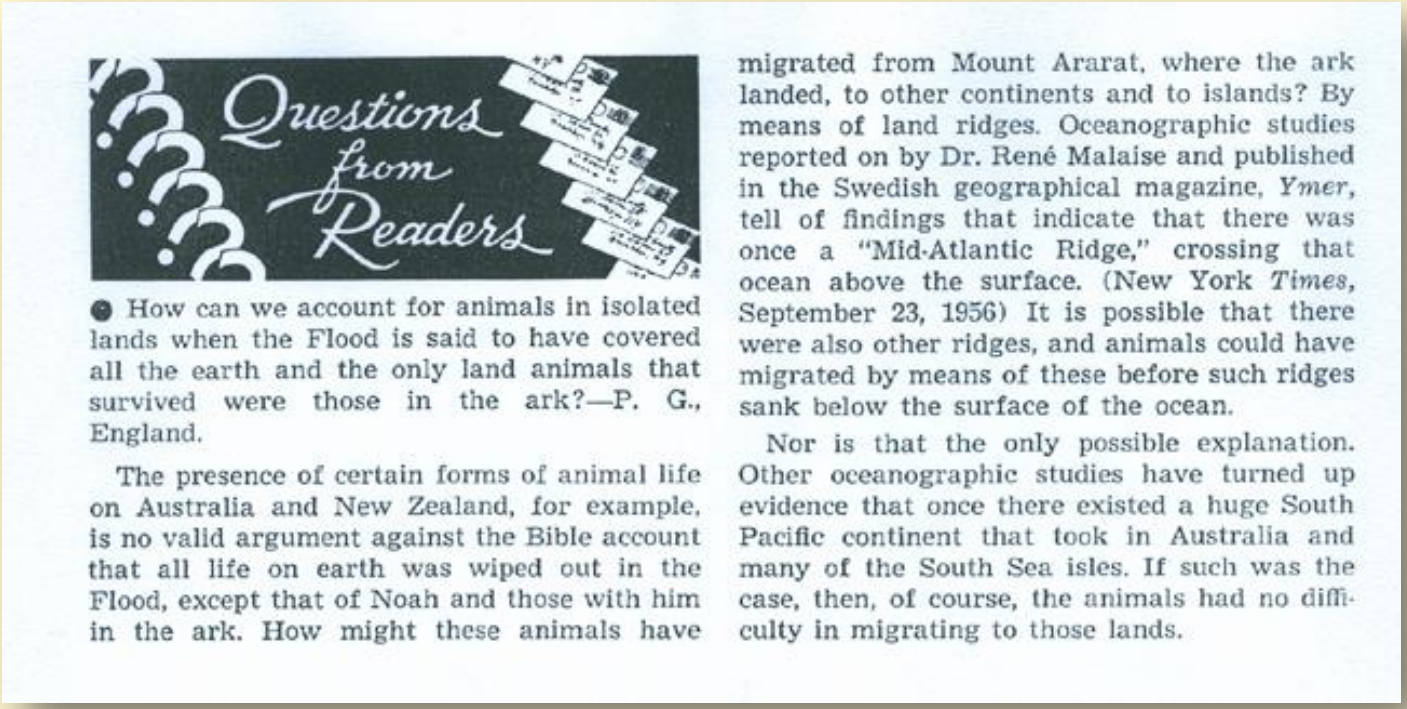
May Jehovah continue to bless your efforts to serve him faithfully by making sure of "the more important things" as you personally share the good news with yet others who are searching for the way of salvation. (Philippians 1:10) We send warm Christian love and greetings.

Your brothers in Jehovah's service,

*Christian Congregation*
*of Jehovah's Witnesses*

# Cited Article and Original Sources

It is interesting to note the manner in which the Watchtower Society often uses quotes. In paragraph two of their previous letter, they drew my attention to the article “Questions from Readers” in the 15 January 1962 issue of the *Watchtower*.



Questions from Readers

● How can we account for animals in isolated lands when the Flood is said to have covered all the earth and the only land animals that survived were those in the ark?—P. G., England.

The presence of certain forms of animal life on Australia and New Zealand, for example, is no valid argument against the Bible account that all life on earth was wiped out in the Flood, except that of Noah and those with him in the ark. How might these animals have migrated from Mount Ararat, where the ark landed, to other continents and to islands? By means of land ridges. Oceanographic studies reported on by Dr. René Malaise and published in the Swedish geographical magazine, *Ymer*, tell of findings that indicate that there was once a "Mid-Atlantic Ridge," crossing that ocean above the surface. (New York *Times*, September 23, 1956) It is possible that there were also other ridges, and animals could have migrated by means of these before such ridges sank below the surface of the ocean.

Nor is that the only possible explanation. Other oceanographic studies have turned up evidence that once there existed a huge South Pacific continent that took in Australia and many of the South Sea isles. If such was the case, then, of course, the animals had no difficulty in migrating to those lands.

Notice the reference to the *New York Times* from 1956. Specifically, the *Watchtower* article states: “Oceanographic studies reported on by Dr. Rene Malaise and published in the Swedish geographical magazine, *Ymer,* tell of findings that indicate that there was once a 'Mid-Atlantic Ridge,' crossing that ocean above the surface." Judging from the context, it would appear that this *New York Times* article is speaking in support of a global deluge that occurred some 4,000 years ago. Or, at least, that’s how the Watchtower Society seems to want its readers to interpret the quote.

# New Explanation of Lost Atlantis

A fresh water lake submerged in the Atlantic is an anomaly. It ceases to be one when it turns out that the lake was once on land and that the land sank and was covered by sea water. Swedish and American geologists established the fact of submergence years ago. The submerged part is known as the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.

Dr. René Malaise of the Riksmuseum, Stockholm, reports in the Swedish geographical magazine, Ymer, that his colleague, Dr. P. W. Kolbe, has furnished the final proof of this sinking in his study of diatoms, microscopic forms of algae, which occur both in fresh and in salt water. When the algae die they drop to the bottom and their hard, dead shells collect in the sediment and ooze. Dr. Kolbe studied diatoms in a core taken at a depth of 12,000 feet in the tropical Atlantic by Swedish scientists. Some of the diatoms in one core were exclusively of the fresh-water type, proving that the sediment from which they were brought up was once part of a lake.

## Barrier to Gulf Stream

According to Dr. Malaise these fresh-water diatoms in the ocean bottom can be explained only by assuming that there was once a Mid-Atlantic Ridge which crossed the ocean above the surface and that the core taken by the Swedish expedition came from a fresh-water lake bottom once part of the ridge. This ridge acted as a barrier to the Gulf Stream so that the Arctic Ocean was land-locked from Europe to Greenland only 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. When the land barrier sank the Gulf Stream could reach the Arctic Ocean and the Ice Age ended. This conclusion has been confirmed by Russian scientists who did some ocean-bottom exploring in the ice breaker Sadko.

Dr. Malaise believes that the submarine canyons of which we have read were formed by great inundations which originated in the Denmark Strait. They were not gouged out by the Hudson, Niger, Congo and other rivers but by Northern inundations that found an outlet when the Mid-Atlantic Ridge sank. All this agrees substantially with theories which were advanced long ago by Prof. Nils H. Odhner and which explain why some Mediterranean mollusks are found in South Africa.

## Legend of Lost Atlantis

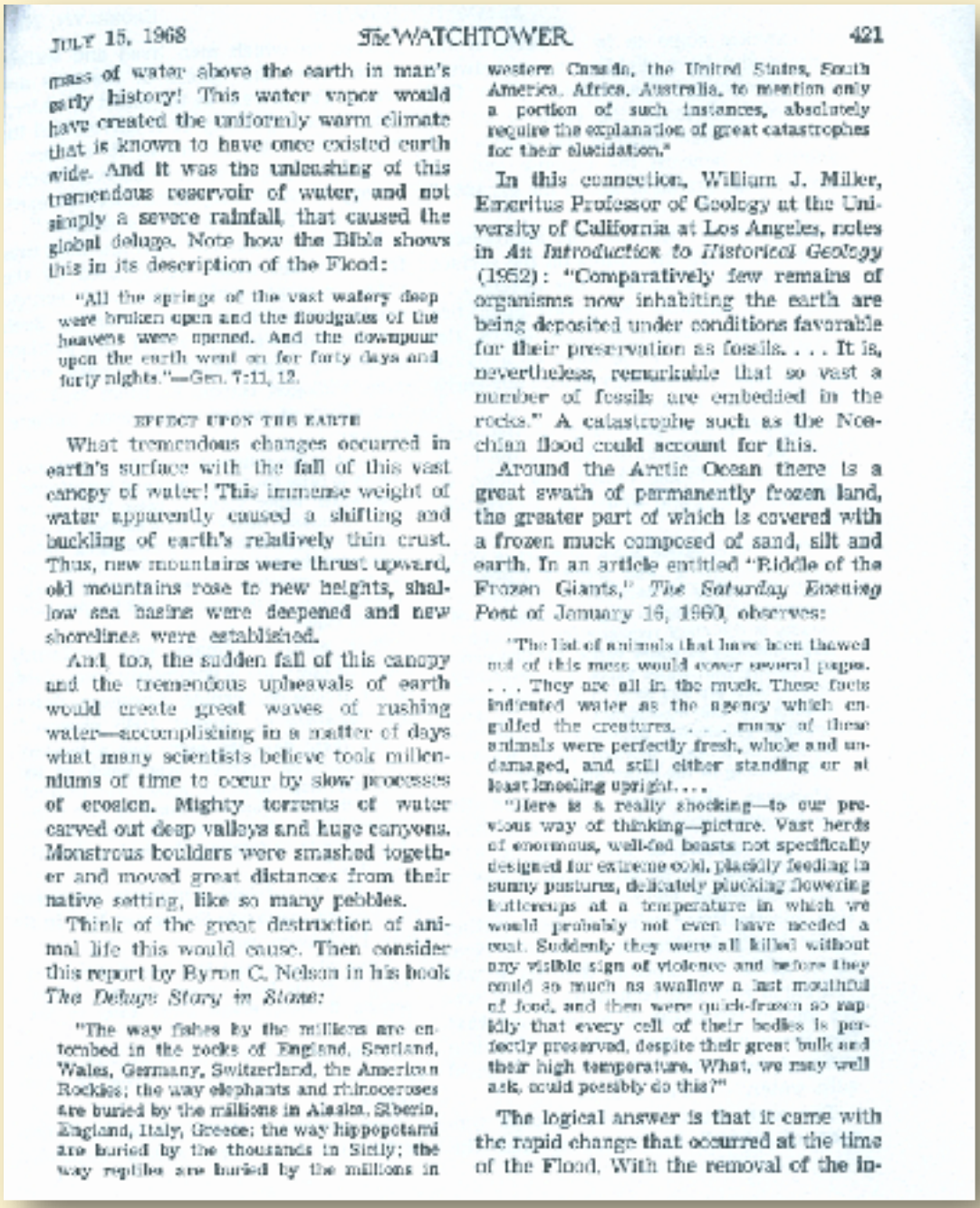
Dr. Malaise speculates on the possible consequences of the conclusions that he has reached. He finds that as long as the Gulf Stream was prevented from reaching Europe a warm current from the south brought moisture to North Africa and Southwestern Europe. When the Gulf Stream broke through the barrier and reached the Arctic its comparatively cold southern branch, the Canary Current, displaced the warm current, and the Sahara became a desert. Dr. Malaise thinks that this caused starving people from Libya and Northwestern Europe to migrate slowly toward Egypt. The invaders were defeated by Rameses III in 1195 B. C. The tales of the captives may have been the foundation of Plato's tales of Atlantis survivors. Their ancestors may have dwelt on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge thousands of years before the migration, Dr. Malaise suggests.

W. K.

The New York Times

The *New York Times* article, when not taken out of context, is clearly shown to not be providing support to a global deluge some 4,000 years ago, but to an unusual deposit of freshwater in the North Atlantic. In paragraph three of the *Times* article, we see that the ridge ceased to exist approximately 10,000 years ago – long before Noah's flood.

As another example, notice page 421 of the 1968 *Watchtower*, which the Watchtower Society included with their response letter:



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mass of water above the earth in man's early history! This water vapor would have created the uniformly warm climate that is known to have once existed earth wide. And it was the unleashing of this tremendous reservoir of water, and not simply a severe rainfall, that caused the global deluge. Note how the Bible shows this in its description of the Flood:

"All the springs of the vast watery deep were broken open and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And the downpour upon the earth went on for forty days and forty nights."—Gen. 7:11, 12.

EFFECT UPON THE EARTH

What tremendous changes occurred in earth's surface with the fall of this vast canopy of water! This immense weight of water apparently caused a shifting and buckling of earth's relatively thin crust. Thus, new mountains were thrust upward, old mountains rose to new heights, shallow sea basins were deepened and new shorelines were established.

And, too, the sudden fall of this canopy and the tremendous upheavals of earth would create great waves of rushing water—accomplishing in a matter of days what many scientists believe took millenniums of time to occur by slow processes of erosion. Mighty torrents of water carved out deep valleys and huge canyons. Monstrous boulders were smashed together and moved great distances from their native setting, like so many pebbles.

Think of the great destruction of animal life this would cause. Then consider this report by Byron C. Nelson in his book *The Deluge Story in Stone:*

"The way fishes by the millions are entombed in the rocks of England, Scotland, Wales, Germany, Switzerland, the American Rockies; the way elephants and rhinoceroses are buried by the millions in Alaska, Siberia, England, Italy, Greece; the way hippopotami are buried by the thousands in Sicily; the way reptiles are buried by the millions in western Canada, the United States, South America, Africa, Australia, to mention only a portion of such instances, absolutely require the explanation of great catastrophes for their elucidation."

In this connection, William J. Miller, Emeritus Professor of Geology at the University of California at Los Angeles, notes in *An Introduction to Historical Geology* (1952): "Comparatively few remains of organisms now inhabiting the earth are being deposited under conditions favorable for their preservation as fossils. . . . It is, nevertheless, remarkable that so vast a number of fossils are embedded in the rocks." A catastrophe such as the Noachian flood could account for this.

Around the Arctic Ocean there is a great swath of permanently frozen land, the greater part of which is covered with a frozen muck composed of sand, silt and earth. In an article entitled "Riddle of the Frozen Giants," *The Saturday Evening Post* of January 16, 1960, observes:

"The list of animals that have been thawed out of this mess would cover several pages. . . . They are all in the muck. These facts indicated water as the agency which engulfed the creatures. . . . many of these animals were perfectly fresh, whole and undamaged, and still either standing or at least kneeling upright. . . .

"Here is a really shocking—to our previous way of thinking—picture. Vast herds of enormous, well-fed beasts not specifically designed for extreme cold, placidly feeding in sunny pastures, delicately plucking flowering buttercups at a temperature in which we would probably not even have needed a coat. Suddenly they were all killed without any visible sign of violence and before they could so much as swallow a last mouthful of food, and then were quick-frozen so rapidly that every cell of their bodies is perfectly preserved, despite their great bulk and their high temperature. What, we may well ask, could possibly do this?"

The logical answer is that it came with the rapid change that occurred at the time of the Flood. With the removal of the in-

The sixth paragraph on this page of the article quotes from the *Saturday Evening Post*. Notice, especially, that the *Post* article seems to suggest that the "Frozen Giants" suffered a watery demise. Not only that, but the water demise is shown to have occurred rapidly, as "many of these animals were perfectly fresh, whole and undamaged, and still either standing or at least kneeling upright." This fits in perfectly with the Watchtower's teaching that the Flood caused an immediate and substantial change in temperature in the Earth's northern latitudes.

But here's the whole quote, as it originally appeared in the *Post*:

# Riddle of the Frozen Giants

(Continued from Page 39)

musk ox and the ground squirrel. The presence of the extinct species provides us with a fine set of riddles, and of those that are not extinct, with another set; and the absence of still others, like man, for instance, with a third set. The greatest riddle, however, is when, why and how did all these assorted creatures, and in such absolutely countless numbers, get killed, mashed up and frozen into this horrific indecency?

There was a time when there hardly seemed to be any real mystery here, apart from the preservation of animals long since extinct in what was sometimes a perfect state. When western science first became aware of the matter, they summarily dismissed it in the classic statement that "the animals fell into the ice." And, for quite a time, this suggestion seems to have proved quite satisfactory to most people; those who murmured that one cannot fall into ice were hushed by dismal accounts of Swiss mountaineers falling into crevasses in glaciers.

It came to light, however, that there are not—and never were—any glaciers in Siberia except on the upper slopes of a few mountains, and that the animals are never found in mountains, but always on the level plains and only a little above sea level. Further, it was pointed out that no bit of one has ever been found in ice. They are all in the muck.

These facts indicated water as the agency which engulfed the creatures. It was explained that they fell into rivers and were then deposited miles away in deltas and estuaries under layers of silt. This sounded splendid at first, but then the next lot of riddles appeared. These animal remains were not in deltas, swamps or estuaries, but were scattered all over the country. Almost without exception, they were stuck in the highest levels of the curious, flat, low plateaus that occur all over the tundra between the river valleys. It was also pointed out that the whole of Northern Asia, Alaska and Western Canada could never have been one vast delta, nor could their rivers have wandered about all over this higher land, depositing muck uphill. But last, and worst of all, many of these animals were perfectly fresh, whole and undamaged, and still either standing or at least kneeling upright.

A mammoth falling into a river filled with melt water is not going to be carried along in an upright position and deposited thus miles away. Also, elephants are the very best swimmers in any case, and, owing to the huge amounts of vegetable matter they must keep in their stomachs

was heartily adopted by almost everybody. But there are always, it seems, some spoilsports in mammoth hunting; they pointed out not only the above fact but also that this hypothetical "goo" would have had to be unfrozen at the time, and that this could only mean that the temperature of the air was well above freezing. The animals must therefore have been frozen after death—probably by starvation—in which case they would have fallen over and started to decompose. Two emendations were therefore proposed.

The first was the idea that the animals fell into gulches, breaking down the banks as they fell and being engulfed in mud, and that then a sudden drop in temperature took place and they were frozen, upright. The other was that after they got stuck a gigantic blizzard blew up and froze both them and the goo forever. Both theories sounded possible, but both were immediately shown to be impossible. It was particularly this Beresovka specimen that proved this.

The Beresovka mammoth was discovered by a Siberian tribesman around the turn of the century. It was sticking headfirst out of a bank of the Beresovka River, a tributary of the mighty Kolyma which debouches into the Arctic Ocean. This man axed off the tusks and took them for sale to the nearest trading post, at Yakutsk, and he there told the Cossack who bought them about the rest of the animal. Now there was a ukase promulgated by the Czar, in force at that time, stating that all mammoth or other frozen-animal discoveries were to be reported to the government. This the Cossack did, and a scientific expedition was sent by the National Academy of Sciences from St. Petersburg. The members of this company built a shack over the corpse and lighted fires within to thaw it out. They then dismembered it carefully, packed up the parts, refroze them in the air outside and sledded them to the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

This corpse was sort of squatting at the back end, but was raised on one foreleg in front, with the other held forward as if about to salute. Much of the head, which was sticking out of the bank, had been eaten down to the bone by local wolves and other animals, but most of the rest was perfect. Most important, however, was that the lips, the lining of the mouth and the tongue were preserved. Upon the last, as well as between the teeth, were

Here we see the article provides a brief history of the hypotheses originally espoused by those who discovered these frozen giants. But, in the third paragraph, it points out that the earlier hypotheses had to be dropped once more information came to light. It states: “These facts indicated water as the agency which engulfed the creatures”. But then the paragraph immediately details why this is no longer believed to be true. The final sentence of the paragraph serves as a refutation – not a support – of a watery demise.

The Watchtower Society’s publication *Benefit from Theocratic Education* (page 225) says: “Make sure that your use of quotations and statistics harmonizes with the context from which they were taken”.

And the 01 February 2004 issue of the *Watchtower* (page 30) states: “Many are of the opinion that rather than trying to understand, we should simply believe. The Bible writer Luke, however, did not share that opinion. He did research and provided accurate information so that others might ‘know full the certainty of the things’ that he had written.”

# The 4th Letter to the Watchtower Society

23 August 2007

Dear Brothers:

Thank you so much for your recent letter replying to my inquiries concerning Noah's Flood. I realize that reading, researching and subsequently responding to such letters is time consuming indeed. Since we are involved in bible education work and true educators encourage discussion, I wanted to respond to your letter in the hopes of resolving a few items.

I will begin by responding to the end of your letter, specifically paragraph six. There, you wrote: "It is good to want to be as accurate and precise as we can in such matters, yet we do not want to allow them to become a focal point in our lives". I agree, being accurate and precise - essentially allowing the 'light' to get brighter - is a good thing. I also agree that such things generally need not become the focal point of our lives. For example, there is no need to nit-pick about grammar or clothing styles or things of that nature that are of little consequence. However, as I have mentioned in two letters prior to this, the topics and concerns I bring up are of major concern to students of the bible. I don't believe this is the proper forum to go into detail about the effect the information in my previous letters has had on others, but I can assure you that it has been nothing short of life changing in multiple cases. As you have said, "when it comes to religion, mistaken beliefs have historically caused great harm" (The Watchtower, August 1, 2001, page 4).

Additionally, I was always taught "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10). To that end, brothers in the congregation have seen fit to allow accuracy and precision to become a focal point in matters such as dress (e.g., men must wear ties when serving in any capacity at the meetings; women may only wear skirts or dresses) and grooming (e.g., men may not have beards or any body piercings). Despite the fact that the examples provided here have no scriptural basis, I have time and again seen such rules enforced as law under the sincere belief that, in behaving in such a manner, Witnesses are more accurate and precise in their worship to God. Surely, if such trivialities - modern-day equivalents of giving "the tenth of the mint and the dill and the cumin" (Matthew 23:23) – are touted as important, then how much more so attaining an accurate grasp on basic biblical teachings, especially those such as the Noachian Deluge!

In the same paragraph, you stated: "we suggest you let the matter rest, and perhaps in time something more will be published to clarify matters". With all due humility, I must tell you that such a suggestion is anathema to everything I have been taught. When questions arise, I have always been taught to keep on asking and keep on seeking until the answers present themselves. Proverbs 2:3 and 4 implore us to "call out for understanding itself and give forth [our] voice for discernment itself" and to "keep seeking for it as for silver". We are also told to "Keep on asking, and it will be given you; keep on seeking, and you will find it; keep on knocking, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). These verses imply an on-going effort, not 'letting a matter rest'. The Awake! dated August 8, 1978 agrees with this by saying: "True educators present all sides of an issue and encourage discussion" (page 3, italics mine). The next page of said issue quotes Proverbs 14:15 from the New English Bible where it states: "A simple man believes every word he hears; a clever man understands the need for proof". Also, we are instructed in the February 1, 2001 Watchtower to "bolster our efforts in personal study regarding any questions or doubts…ask for help from those who are strong in the faith" (page 10). Far from allowing matters of life-changing importance to rest, the Watchtower of December 1, 2006 counsels: "If you have not already done so, make it your aim to acquire 'accurate knowledge and full discernment' by learning what the bible really teaches" (page 7). In accordance with this, the August 15, 2007 Watchtower says: "Rather than stifling further research, the Bible encourages the search for answers to both scientific and spiritual questions. ... [Job 38:18] certainly does not suggest any stifling of inquiry and investigation. On the contrary, the Master Designer here invited a study of his handiwork." And when my Uncle, an

active Witness in the Floresta, Port St. Lucie, Florida congregation merely suspected I had stopped asking questions, his response was:

I would at Bethel [sic] asking members of the Governing Body these questions until I felt they were answered. It sounds as if you did originally ask questions, got references, but then stopped asking further questions. That does not make sense? [sic] I would ask and ask and ask until I understood…if I didn't understand it, I would continue to ask until I did…I would suggest you get your butt to Bethel and ask these questions until you are satisfied. No matter the cost! …The stakes are too high. You were smart enough to ask the first question and then you stopped, how sad. That is NOT being smart.

Additionally, many of the questions in my last letter concerned your use of sources. Some quotes appear taken out of context, while others were not in harmony with current beliefs. I am unsure why I would need to wait until something more is published to clarify matters – these are issues you should be able to answer now. After all, as you said in the August 1, 2001 Watchtower, "since God has given [us] intellectual capacity to investigate the world around [us] and to ask questions concerning spiritual matters, does it not make sense that he would also provide the means to get answers to [our] questions?" So, I am compelled to respond again in the hope of asking questions 'until I am satisfied'.

First, though, please allow me to apologize for an error I made. In my last letter, I stated: "Freshwater fish would definitely not survive…Since fish are sensitive to salinity alterations, how did any – but specifically the freshwater 'kinds' – survive the deluge?" After receiving your response, I realized that my phrasing suggested that absolutely no 'kinds' of fish would be able to survive salinity alterations. As you pointed out in paragraph two of your letter, some fish may possibly survive under these circumstances. I apologize for neglecting this point; indeed, I even own fish that are capable of managing significant salinity changes, yet I spoke as though no fish could do so. Again, my apologies.

However, we still must acknowledge that most species of fish cannot survive such a change. Your letter noted the robust salmon, saying that it travels between fresh and saltwater environments for spawning. While true of some salmon species, such as the Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar), this does not apply to all salmon. Take for example, the lake trout (Salvelinus namaycush), about which the book Trout and Salmon of North America, by Robert J. Behnke, notes: "The species…cannot survive more than about one-third the salinity of the ocean. Lake trout are limited to salinities of less than 10 to 12 parts per thousand of salts. This lack of salinity tolerance - the lake trout cannot travel through seawater - has restricted its distribution to North America." Consider, also, the Arctic Grayling (Thymallus arcticus), about which the same tome states: "grayling cannot live in water in which the salinity is more than about 7 to 8 parts per thousand. As a result, their distribution is limited to freshwater routes of dispersal". (Seawater salt levels, incidentally, average 35 parts per thousand.) And these fish are not alone. Most freshwater fish are stenohaline. Therefore, the majority of freshwater fish, such as goldfish, die in salt water. Likewise, most marine organisms, such as tuna, die in fresh water. The ability, or inability, to tolerate halinity changes is so fundamental to fish composition that it is used by zoologists as a method of classification.

While it may initially seem appealing to cite a single species as evidence of an animal order's ability as a whole, this doesn't hold up under closer scrutiny. If we are to claim the ability of Atlantic salmon as evidence all fish could handle salinity alterations, then why not likewise claim that all mammals could have simply swum in the oceans, surfacing every so often for air? After all, some kinds of mammals (dugongs and cetaceans) are capable of doing so. Why not claim that all mammals could have simply flown above the Deluge? After all, some kinds of mammals (bats) could have done so. In fact, this seems more likely than the example you provided regarding fish, as mammals are not as genetically diverse as fish.

You also suggest that "conditions thousands of years ago could have differed enough that salinity might not have been as large a factor as it is today". But according to Sean Chamberlin, in his work The Remarkable Ocean World, "the salinity of the seas remains exceptionally constant, as it has for 1.5 billion years" (italics mine). The work also states that weathering of rocks adds about 0.000005% to the total amount of salt in the oceans each year. At this

rate, the salinity levels since 2300 b.c.e. have not even increased by one percent. Besides, this minute increase in salinity is offset by a nearly equal loss of relevant ions due to evaporite deposition, allochthonous salt traps, adsorption by inorganic compounds and the formation of reefs.

The bulk of your letter (paragraphs three through five) cites scriptures supporting the idea that all humans (excepting Noah and his family) died in the Deluge. I am unclear why it was felt necessary to spend the majority of the letter arguing on behalf of a teaching I did not doubt, when several of my questions received not so much as a word of response. In my letters, I have never taken issue with the teaching that all humans died in the Deluge. Even so, a local flood would surely have sufficed in this regard. Having occurred only 1,656 years from Adam's creation, it makes sense that humans had not traveled too far around the globe by that time.

Paragraph four of your letter quotes 2 Peter 3:5-13 as proof of a global Deluge. True, Peter does here draw a parallel between Noah's Day and the Day of Judgment, but there is nothing in these verses that necessitates the Deluge covered the whole literal earth. Indeed, the point of the verses is that the ungodly world of that day (the people, not the literal planet) suffered the same fate as would those on the Day of Judgment. Peter's use of the words "heaven", "celestial" and "earth" can not be taken literally in this chapter, as he claims that the heavens will pass away (verse 10), the celestial bodies will melt (verse 10), the earth will be burned up (verse 10), the heavens would catch on fire (verse 12) and that there would be a new earth (verse 13). If we are to accept verse six as referring to a literal, planet-wide Flood, then why not accept that the entire earth will be burned up as it says in verse ten? Obviously, none of this can be taken literally.

The book Life – How Did it get Here? By Evolution or by Creation? says on page 25: "When examining the Genesis account, it is helpful to keep in mind that it approaches matters from the standpoint of people on earth." Surely, to the people on Earth at that time, the Flood did cover the whole earth from their standpoint.

Your letter twice suggests that Jehovah could have maneuvered things and that the weight of the floodwaters could have affected geological and chronological data. However, I was taught that "when the Bible does touch on scientific matters, what it says is completely accurate" (The Bible – God's Word or Man's?, page 98). If we are to interpret the events of Genesis chapters six through eight as a global deluge, then why does the book Great Disasters (edited by Kaari Ward) indicate that this would not be "completely accurate"? On page 27, it states:

If a relatively minor inundation can leave behind thousands of tons of mud and silt, the biblical Deluge should have deposited a massive layer throughout the globe. Yet the search for such a universal flood layer has proved fruitless. No evidence of the interruption of life by massive flooding has even been unearthed.

When sincere, open-minded individuals cull from creation in an attempt to find answers, shouldn't the evidence lead them to discover there was an earth-wide deluge?

Granted, it is true that "Jehovah could have maneuvered things". But if this is the defense one resorts to in an effort to uphold a belief, then there is no limit to what one can claim. Why not claim, for example, that Jehovah flooded the entire Earth ten years ago, or even last night, but then "maneuvered things" so that no evidence remains? Additionally, how can new ones be brought to an understanding of the Truth if the best that can be offered in the face of opposing evidence is that "Jehovah could have maneuvered things"? While it is certainly understandable to accept a belief lacking direct proof (e.g., black holes, extra-solar planets), it is quite another thing to accept a belief for which there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary. The Watchtower from July 1, 2001 attests: "At times, you need to suspend acceptance of something till you are sure of the facts. Religious exhortations to the effect that you should just believe and should doubt nothing are dangerous and deceptive."

It is for that reason that I am once again asking very important questions:

1) Are you aware of the absurdity of ignoring context and accepting usage of the Hebrew word e'rets in the Deluge account as invariably referring to a literal, planet-wide catastrophe, especially its usage at Genesis 8:3 ("And the

waters began receding from off the earth") and Genesis 8:14 ("On the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried off)?

2) If we do accept each usage as literal, then do we also accept Genesis 19:31, 20:1, Exodus 9:33 and 2 Chronicles 36:23 as referencing the literal planet earth?

3) Is the entire account of Genesis to be taken literally, with no allowances for hyperbole, figures-of-speech or poetry, including Genesis 6:19 ("And of every living creature of every sort of flesh, two of each, you will bring into the ark to preserve them alive.") from which we must conclude that sea creatures were also boarded onto the ark?

4) The July 8, 1977 Awake! article "Testimony to a Global Flood" quotes extensively from Alexander Catcott's A Treatise on the Deluge, a book written under the incorrect notion that the earth was less than 7,000 years old. The arguments taken from this book have argumentative merit, then, only if this is believed to be true. Is it the position of the Watchtower Society that the earth is less than 7,000 years old?

5) Sole evidence provided for the claimed existence of post-Diluvian land bridges is taken from Dr. Malaise's postulate of a land bridge connecting Greenland to Europe, as noted in the Watchtower from January 15, 1962. Is this the extent of the evidence?

6) Are you aware that proof, much less speculation, of a single land bridge is not sufficient evidence to claim that there were thousands of such bridges?

7) Is the only 'proof' of plant survival during the Deluge the scant entry on the cultivated olive noted in The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge (volume IV) as quoted in the July 1, 1966 Watchtower?

8) Are you aware that the July 15, 1968 Watchtower references to the August 1949 Scientific Monthly are applying text discussing the earth as it was 65,000,000 years ago to the earth as it was less than 5,000 years ago and that, in doing so, it conflicts the suggestions found on page 225 in the book Benefit from Theocratic Education which informs: "make sure that your use of quotations and statistics harmonizes with the context from which they are taken"?

9) Are you aware of the physical impossibility of a water canopy, the lack of scriptural and scientific support for such a phenomena and that Watchtower publications are in conflict regarding the existence of such?

10) The book From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained (page 43) states: "Now, since the water canopy that had been around the earth for such a long time had fallen in the form of rain, Noah and his family had, for the first time, a clear view of the sun in its full glory. It was no longer a mere hazy spot of light in the sky. And when they looked up after dark and saw the numberless stars shining brightly in a clear sky, think how they must have been filled with wonder. Never before had their eyes been blessed with such a sight." The book supplies no scriptural, scientific or historical references to support this passage. Meanwhile, page 32 of the book Life-How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or By Creation? tells its readers, speaking of the fourth creative 'day': "Now, had there been an earthly observer, he would be able to discern the sun, moon and stars, which would serve as signs for seasons and for days and years." Since I am unable to determine how stars could "serve as signs for years" if no human eyes had been "blessed with such a sight" until after the Flood, I am forced to acknowledge only one source as correct. Am I to conclude the Creation book is correct (as it is more recent), the Paradise Lost book is incorrect, and thereby abolish any claims to a water canopy used in explaining the Deluge?

11) Since the ark obviously did not have an exhaustive passenger list of "every living creature of every sort of flesh, two of each" (see question #3, above) due to space constraints, am I to believe that the animals on the ark numbered as few as 127 pairs of animals?

12) The current estimate for warm-blooded vertebrate 'kinds' (I am here using the definition of 'kinds' as found in the book Reasoning from the Scriptures, page 87: "All interfertile varieties of any animal are just one Genesis 'kind'")

is conservatively placed at 14,600. Providing the Flood was planet-wide, this equates to a new 'kind' of mammal or bird appearing every 110 days since the Flood. Meanwhile, the Creation book dismisses the idea that animals have evolved despite the fact that, beginning with only 2 pairs of endothermic vertebrates at the K-T Boundary (~70,000,000 years ago), this means a new 'kind' has appeared only once every 4,795 years. Are you aware that the teaching of a global flood necessitates rates of evolution some 16,000 times faster than what is claimed by proponents of evolution?

I have repeatedly tried to gain answers to questions of similar substance in previous letters, to no avail. I have respectfully asked for references and citations to back up claims made in Watchtower publications and have either not been provided this information or, when such information is found wanting, I have not been provided with satisfactory replies. In my last letter, I purposely concluded my letter by summing up the issues in five numbered questions. The first four of these questions did not receive even a single word in response, and the fifth merely noted the traits of a single species of fish and applied it to all fish.

It is difficult to express the extreme sadness I have felt upon receipt of each of your letters. My first letter was a sincere, honest request for further information regarding the validity of the Deluge – research I was compelled to undertake at the suggestion of a Circuit Overseer in an attempt to bolster my faith. Upon finding the sources listed in your first letter, I wrote back hoping that you would agree with all the evidence that the Flood might not have been global. Your response, and the further research it necessitated, proved that the Flood was not global. I wrote again pointing out my findings, again in the sincere hope that such would be received as welcome information that would help us all come to a more perfect understanding of God's Word. In each case, however, you have shown a preference for maintaining the status quo rather than a desire to be like the Bereans, who carefully examined the Scriptures "as to whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

I understand the desire to hold to a literal, global flood belief. Like all imperfect humans, when our beliefs are in conflict with the evidence, "we become irritated, we pretend the conflict does not exist, or we paper it over with meaningless phrases" (Creation book, page 202). But would it not be a disservice to all to not at least acknowledge that, at present, the extent of the Flood is unknown? As John Horgan was quoted as saying in the August 15, 2007 Watchtower, "When the evidence is tentative, we should not be embarrassed to call in common sense for guidance." Since you stated that "we do not know enough at present" and that there are "possible explanations", this surely calls to mind the advice found in the July 1, 2001 Watchtower to "suspend acceptance of something till [we] are sure of the facts".

Therefore, unless I receive accurate, documented answers to all twelve questions above, I will be forced to "call in common sense for guidance" and "suspend acceptance". I will conclude that any and all questions not satisfactorily answered two months hence from the date at the outset of this letter are to be answered 'Yes'.

In harmony with paragraphs six and seven on page 22 of the May 15, 2007 Watchtower, many have commended me for raising troubling spiritual questions. While I appreciate the commendation, I am more interested in uncovering the truth and finally being able to provide accurate, precise answers to my many family and friends, such as my Uncle, whom, you'll recall, implored me to ask these questions until they were satisfied, "no matter the cost!"

I eagerly await your response, particularly to the twelve questions, above. Thank you again for taking the time to read this. I send you my love and greetings.

Sincerely,

xxxxx

Note: No reply has been received as of November 2010; however, the Watchtower Society did 'respond' to this letter in their June 01, 2008 issue of the Watchtower. That article can be read at their official site found here.

# Explanation of Question #12

In my most recent letter to the Watchtower Society, I made the claim that the teaching of a global flood necessitates rates of evolution some 16,000 times faster than what is claimed evolutionists. I arrived at this number in this way:

- Conservative estimates put the number of mammal species at 4,000. [1]

- According to the scientific community, an asteroid stuck the earth 65

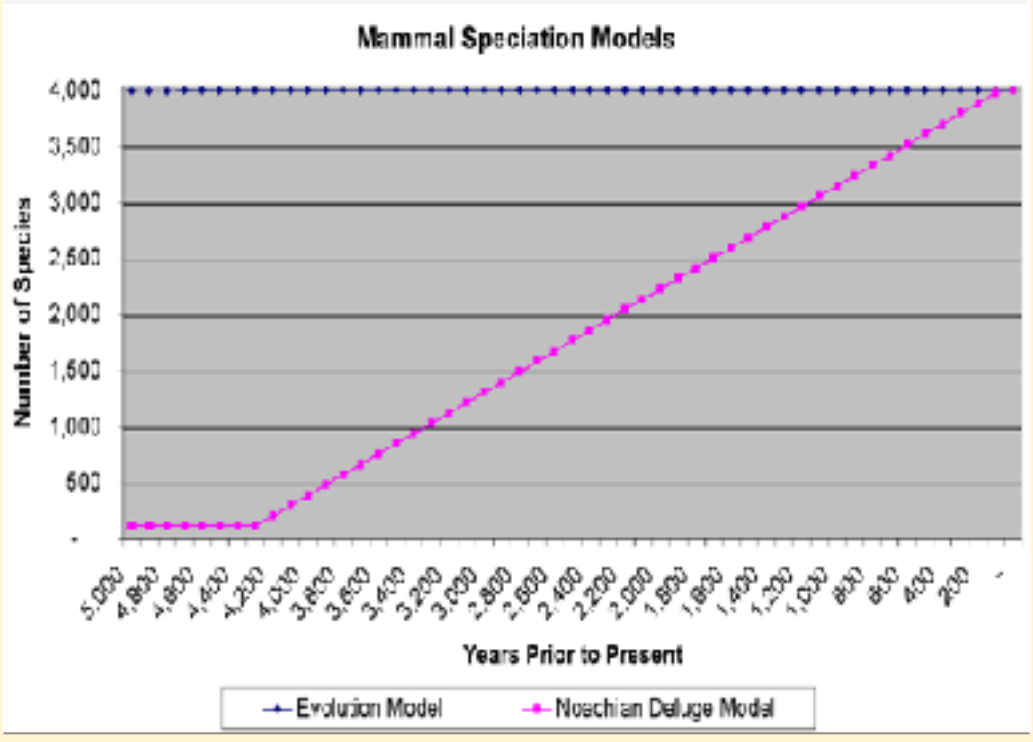
- 70 million years ago. This cataclysmic event, dubbed the K-T event (K-T boundary in some sources), happened after mammals had already come into existence. Its effects led to the extinction of dinosaurs and allowed the surviving mammals to "fill freshly vacant niches". [2] Though the number of mammalian species at the time of the K-T event was higher, for the sake of argument, my calculations were performed assuming there was only one species of mammal at this time. It should be noted that choosing a higher (and more likely) number of species would tip the argument further in favor of the evolution model.

- According to the Watchtower, Bible and Tract Society, the Noachian Deluge occurred in the year 2370 B.C., giving a total time-elapse of 4,376 years from the start of the Deluge until the time of my letter. [3]

-The Watchtower Society teaches "just 43 kinds of mammals…could have produced the great variety of species of the creatures that are known today". [4]

Taking these four bits of data, then, shows that believers in evolution accept that the number of mammal species has increased from 2 to 4,000 during the last 65,000,000 years. Meanwhile, believers in a literal, earth-wide Noachian Deluge must accept that the number of mammal species has increased from 43 to 4,000 during the last 4,376 years. This means that while, on the one hand, Jehovah's Witnesses resolutely reject evolution, they simultaneously subscribe to the notion that since the flood, mammals have evolved at a rate some 16,000 times more rapidly than is taught in traditional science textbooks.

To get a clearer idea of the rate at which mammals have diversified, take a look at the graph, below.



The red line shows the average rate of evolution that literal, earth-wide Flood believers (including Jehovah's Witnesses) must accept (whether they realize it or not).

Since the Watchtower Society claims that each species was created “according to their kind”, we can conclude there was no change in the number of species prior to the Flood. [5] From the time of the Flood, until now, the number of mammals must have increased by 3,957. This works out to one new species, on average, every 404 days (~one every 13 months).

The blue line shows the average rate of evolution taught by most textbooks. Though it may look like a straight line, it is not; the number of species of mammals has increased by exactly one during the last 5,000 years. So the line *does* increase from 3,999 to 4,000 as it travels to the right of the graph.

The pink line rises some 16,000 times faster than the blue line.

Interestingly, reptile models would display an even greater disparity. The Watchtower Society teaches that a mere 10 kinds of reptiles account for the over 8,200 reptile species today, [6] while science teaches that these reptiles have evolved over a period greater than 300,000,000 years. [7] Thus, the Watchtower Society expects its adherents to accept the belief that reptiles diversified from 10 to 8,200 kinds in the 4,376 years from the flood even though that would require speciation some 69,000 times faster than popular theories on speciation, which they expect their members to reject as “serving the purposes of Satan”. [8]

*References:*

*1. The Encyclopedia of Mammals. Edited by Dr. David MacDonald. ©1999. Published by Barnes and Noble, Inc. Page xii.*

*2. Origins. Written by Neil DeGrasse Tyson. ©2004. Published by W.W. Norton and Company. Page 28*

*3. Insight on the Scriptures, volume I. Compilation. ©1988. Published by the Watchtower, Bible and Tract Society. Page 609.*

*4. Ibid. Page 327.*

*5. Reasoning from the Scriptures. Compilation. ©1984. Published by the Watchtower, Bible and Tract Society. Page 87*

*6. Insight on the Scriptures, volume I. Compilation. ©1988. Published by the Watchtower, Bible and Tract Society. Page 327.*

*7. Wikipedia.org. Evolution, heading: "Evolution of Life" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evolution)*

*8. Life – How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation? Written by Harry Peloyan. ©1984. Published by the Watchtower, Bible and Tract Society. Page 248.*

# Concluding Remarks About the Letters

The first letter I received from the Watchtower Society was an immediate disappointment. The Watchtower Society's response about the animals on the ark was a mere two sentences long. In those two sentences, they simply directed me to an attached Watchtower article (they even got this wrong – the attached article was from the Awake! magazine, not the Watchtower). The disappointment was that I had already seen and read the article they attached. As I said in the introduction, I had already read everything the Society wrote about the Flood prior to writing to them; I would not have written to them otherwise.

The attached article (which can be viewed here) offered only one source: Clarke's Commentary. Though most libraries in my area did not carry that book, I was able to find a copy. Upon obtaining a copy, I immediately knew why most libraries didn't bother to carry it – it was published in 1810. I found the page which the Society had referenced and was saddened to find that Clarke himself did not list the animals, either. He had merely offered the numbers from other sources he had come across. I was left with the conclusion that the Society's teaching of 43 mammals, 74 birds and 10 reptiles needed to repopulate the ark was outdated, misleading and unverifiable.

For a time, I continued to believe the Flood had been an actual, historical event. I convinced myself that the answers were out there; it's just that the Society had never bothered to find them. I reasoned that the Society was so busy teaching people about God's Kingdom and about the soon-to-come Armageddon and subsequent paradise that they had little time to do more than provide cursory proof for Noah's Flood.

But as time went on, I realized that the flood was a big deal. Jesus believed it was a real event and so, if it was not real, then Jesus was either mislead, misleading or entirely fictionalized. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the Society does not allow for dissenting opinions. So, if I no longer believed in Noah's Flood then I was, by Witness standards, an apostate, even if only secretly.

Soon I came across the book Great Disasters wherein the author postulates that the Flood was an historical event, albeit a localized one. This is what I chose to believe (secretly) for a couple of years.

But in time, I discovered other areas in which the Watchtower Society was incorrect. In some cases, they seemed genuinely mistaken in their teachings, but in other cases they took quotes out of context to support their own teachings.

At the time I wrote the second letter, therefore, I no longer believed that the Watchtower Society was "the Truth". I was also quite convinced that the flood had been local, if indeed it had ever happened at all. My wife suggested that I write to the Society explaining my findings and humbly asking them if, perhaps, the flood was not global. Though I was sure they would not concede the point, my wife argued (effectively) that I should at least give them a chance. When they are unable to understand, or are frustrated about a certain religious teaching, Witnesses often resort to the maxims "wait on Jehovah" and "Jehovah will reveal it in His due time". This is what many Witnesses told me when I asked questions about Noah's flood, among other things. I was afraid to send the second letter, lest it result in disciplinary action, but I sent it hoping that the Society would admit that the Flood was not global and that, if they accused me of being an apostate, I would counter with the argument that since "Jehovah reveals things in His due time," then perhaps NOW is His due time.

As you can see from their response, however, the Society did not budge on this issue, not even so much as admitting that I might be correct.

The next two letters were sent in a further effort to point out the lack of proof there was for a global deluge. I no longer believed in a global deluge, nor did I believe that the Watchtower Society was God's channel for communicating with humanity. Nevertheless, I wrote the letters from the perspective of someone who desperately wants to know the answers, and is pleading with the Society to admit their error. My reason for this was two-fold: 1)

Had I just come right out and told them that the Flood was fictitious and that they are not God's mouthpiece, they would have rejected my letters at the outset and likely refused to respond to me at all. 2) As I said in my most recent letter to them, friends and family have continually urged me to keep asking questions. These friends and family members are well-intentioned. They believe the Watchtower Society speaks only truth and, therefore, if I disagree with the Society on any point, I must be in error. If I was to tell these people that I did not want to write back to the Society because "I know I'm right", they would not believe me. Therefore, I was compelled to write so as to have documented proof of my efforts to uncover the Society's 'evidence' for a global deluge.



# The WT's Latest Remarks Concerning the Flood

In the most recent (and presumably final) letter I received from the Watchtower Society, they addressed my questions by stating:

> It is good to want to be as accurate and precise as we can in such matters, yet we do not want to allow them to become a focal point in our lives. We can be confident that Jehovah's spirit will see to it that any necessary adjustments in understanding are made. In the meantime, we suggest that you let the matter rest, and perhaps in time something more will be published to clarify matters. Be assured that we will pass your comments along to those who are responsible for the content of what is published.

More than three years have elapsed since that letter arrived in my mailbox, but the Watchtower Society has published nothing regarding the questions in my letters. During the 2009 "Keep on the Watch" District Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses, however, the Watchtower Society released the brochure *The Bible – What Is Its Message?* Section three of the brochure (on page 6) is entitled "Mankind Survives the Flood".

Here are a couple of fascinating tidbits from this brochure:

> was right in God's eyes. When God decided to destroy the wicked people of that world, he wanted to protect Noah and earth's animal creation. So God told him to build an ark—a huge rectangular vessel. In it, Noah and his family would be preserved alive, along with numerous animal species, through a coming global flood. Noah obeyed God. During the de-

1. Notice the Watchtower Society claims that "numerous animal species" were preserved in the ark. In their book Reasoning From the Scriptures, the Watchtower Society defines the 'kinds' in Genesis as equivalent to 'species':

Each "kind" has the genetic potential for great variety. Thus there are reportedly more than 400 different breeds of dogs and upwards of 250 breeds and types of horses. All interfertile varieties of any animal are just one Genesis "kind." (page 87)

In the past, they asserted a specific number of "kinds," or species that were aboard Noah's ark. In 1988, they claimed 43 "kinds" of mammals; 74 "kinds" of birds, and 10 "kinds" of reptiles (Insight on the Scriptures, page 327). Their new publication, cited earlier, does not specify the number of species on board, choosing rather to offer the vague "numerous."

2. In my second letter to the Watchtower Society regarding Noah's Flood, I asked them if it was at all possible that the deluge was not global in nature. Despite the fact that a localized flood is consistent with both scriptural text and scientific evidence, they held to the doctrine that the flood covered the entire planet. Judging from the excerpt in their latest publication, above, they have evidently not wavered in this position.