

# Henry Morris' Deception

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The central foundation behind the "science" of creation science is a specific kind of flood geology where all of the layered sedimentary rocks around the world are remnant global flood deposits. All of today's young earth creationists hinge their entire arguments in the evolution/creation controversy around this claim, which can be traced directly to Henry Morris' and John Whitcomb's 1961 book, *The Genesis Flood*. The following are excerpts from my book discussing this and revealing Morris' deception upon fellow Christians:

Ellen G. Harmon (1827-1925) with her soon-to-be husband, James White, teamed up with Joseph Bates, and founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church, an offshoot of the Millerites. ...Ellen White quickly became the spiritual leader of the church, and today is revered as a prophet. Ellen White claimed to have upwards of 2,000 visions from God with her first occurring just after The Great Disappointment in 1844. One particular vision was the beginning of creation. She states,

*"I was then carried back to the creation and was shown that the first week, in which God performed the work of creation in six days and rested on the seventh day, was just like every other week."*

She then states that fossils were the result of the flood,

*"[humans, animals, and trees] were buried, and thus preserved as an evidence to later generations that the antediluvians perished by a flood. God designed that the discovery of these things should establish faith in inspired history; but...the things which God gave them [i.e., to us humans] as a benefit, they turn into a curse by making a wrong use of them [scientists]."*

One particular early twentieth century creationist, George McCready Price (1870-1963), was the key anti-evolution creationist most influential to today's young earth anti-evolution creationist movement even though his beliefs were considered on the fringe by fundamentalists at the time. Price promoted what he called *Flood Geology*. He claimed that geologists were completely wrong about the geologic history of the layered sedimentary rocks and the fossils they contained. While geologists were claiming that sedimentary rocks are the result of sediment (sand, clay, mud, etc.) being deposited and buried over millions of years, Price was claiming that they were flood sediments from Noah's global deluge approximately 4,000 years ago. The fossils were remnants of creatures that died during the global flood. He believed the Earth was created in 4004 BC just as Ussher had calculated using biblical chronology. This also meant that man was created fully formed, which precluded the possibility that biological evolution had any part in the origin of human beings. He began publishing his young earth flood geology literature in 1902 with, *Outlines of Modern Christianity and Modern Science*. In 1906 Price wrote, *Illogical Geology: The Weakest Point in the Evolution Theory*. He

finished his most notable work in 1923, which was a college textbook entitled, *The New Geology*.

George McCready Price had no choice but to believe in a restrictive literal interpretation where God created the universe in 4004 BC. The founder of Seventh-day Adventism, Ellen White, claimed to have received a vision from God, showing her the creation of the universe, which “was just like any other week.” Accepting anything other than a young earth would be to deny Ellen White as a true prophet. If other literal interpretations were true, such as Day-age creationism and the Gap Theory, then this would mean the Seventh-day Adventist denomination is based upon error.

George McCready Price was not the first to come up with flood geology. The scientific community settled this issue at the beginning of the previous century. A convincing argument against a young earth literal interpretation of the Bible in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was that no physical evidence for a global flood existed anywhere on the planet. A massive and violent global flood should visibly scar the surface of the Earth. English geologist and paleontologist (and originator of the Gap Theory) Reverend William Buckland (1784-1856) advanced flood geology and claimed in his published work in 1820, *Reliquiae diluvianae* (Relics of the Flood), that the gravel and till deposits spread across northern Europe and North America were the result of Noah’s flood. As the first “official” geologist at Oxford University, Buckland was one of the most respected naturalists of his age. According to Dr. Steven J. Gould (1941-2002), paleontologist and biologist at Harvard University, Louis Agassiz (1807-1873) claimed Buckland was incorrect, and that the physical evidence clearly shows this debris came from continental glaciers. Within ten years and after numerous scientific debates, Buckland reluctantly agreed with Agassiz and rejected his own work.

At the time of Buckland’s tenure at Oxford, another flood geology idea was discussed within the scientific community, which claimed that all of the world’s layered sedimentary rocks were remnant global flood sediment. Buckland quickly discounted this hypothesis since it did not conform to the geologic evidence. In 1836, Buckland writes,

*“Some have attempted to ascribe the formation of all the stratified rocks to the effects of the Mosaic Deluge; an opinion which is irreconcilable with the enormous thickness and almost infinite subdivisions of these strata, and with the numerous and regular successions which they contain of the remains of animals and vegetables, differing more and more widely from existing species, as the strata in which we find them are older, or place at greater depths.”*

According to Dr. Gould, the geology community as a whole rejected this type of flood geology, because it was “irreconcilable” with the physical evidence. As evidenced by Reverend Buckland, many well-respected experts within the scientific community in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century were devout Christians and had no difficulty referring to the Bible in scientific research. Even so, the 19<sup>th</sup> century scientific community was forced to conclude that there was no recent global flood, since there was no physical evidence to support it.

According to Dr. Numbers (a former Adventist himself), George McCready Price did not receive his education on flood geology from this early scientific debate. As stated earlier, Seventh-day Adventist founder, Ellen White, claimed to have seen in one of her 2,000 divine visions the rock layers and fossils being formed during Noah's flood. Price, believing White as a prophet, took this vision as gospel and developed young earth flood geology creationism around it.

For most in America in the late 1950's, the fear of an immediate Soviet domination took precedence over the fear that evolution was slowly destroying our social fabric, but not everyone believed this. Fundamentalist Christians had always maintained that the root cause of all social problems was this anti-God philosophy. In 1961, the anti-evolution fight was reenergized by the publication of one book, *The Genesis Flood* (1961). The authors, Henry Morris and John Whitcomb, Jr., were so convincing to fundamentalist Christians that it started a new creationist movement, in which they called *creation science*. Dr. Numbers comments upon this in his book, *Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism*:

*"At last, in the late 1950's, a breakthrough occurred. John C. Whitcomb, Jr. (b. 1924), a theologian at Grace Theological Seminary (Winona Lake, Indiana) of the Grace Brethren denomination, and Henry M. Morris (b. 1918), a hydraulic engineer of Southern Baptist background, had each been moving in a creationist direction for quite a while before finding confirmation in Price's work. Each was also disturbed by a book published in 1954 by the evangelical Baptist theologian, Bernard Ramm, The Christian View of Science and Scripture... Soon after Whitcomb and Morris met each other they published The Genesis Flood (1961), an updating of Price's work, but one that, because of Whitcomb's theological contribution and Morris' scientific expertise, made Price's points more persuasively."*

Morris and Whitcomb repackaged Prices' discarded flood geology creationism into something that the fundamentalist and evangelical community finally embraced. *The Genesis Flood* was an instant success with 29 reprints and sales in excess of 200,000 by the 1980's. It became the scientific support and justification for the belief in young earth creationism, especially since this movement was named creation science. One reason for its success, besides the more refined methods of persuasion in the book, is because Morris came from the mainline Baptist community rather than the fringe Seventh-day Adventist community as did Price. This made it more palatable for mainstream evangelicals. Morris and Whitcomb seemed to have predicted this Christian bias. In *The Genesis Flood* they do not credit George McCready Price's work, *The New Geology* (1923), as being their single most influential resource. Again, *The Genesis Flood* is merely an updated version of *The New Geology*. Don Stoner in his book *A New Look at an Old Earth*, states:

*"The connection to Price and the Adventists worried Whitcomb and Morris.... Fearing that Price's Adventist-tinted reputation might hinder the acceptance of The Genesis Flood, Whitcomb and Morris tried to avoid any visible connection with Price. Although they left the substance of their arguments unchanged, they removed nearly every mention of Price's name from their book."*

Timothy Martin points out in his book, *Beyond Creation Science*, that after 23 years and after the fundamentalist Christian community had fully embraced his book, Morris finally gives credit where credit is due. In his 1984 book, *History of Modern Creationism*, he states,

*"I encountered his name in one of Harry Rimmer's books... and thereupon looked up his book The New Geology in the library at Rice Institute, where I was teaching at the time. This was in early 1943 and it was a life-changing experience for me."*

The significance of their deception upon fellow believers cannot be overemphasized. In order to avoid the McCready Price connection, Morris and Whitcomb claimed that sedimentary rock flood geology was common knowledge even in early Christianity, and in so doing, hinted that this was the source of their modern sedimentary layer flood geology. On page 90 of *The Genesis Flood*, Morris and Whitcomb state,

*"Before 1800, some of the outstanding theologians of the church were of the opinion that the Genesis Flood not only was universal in extent but also was responsible for the reshaping of the earth's surface, including the formation of sedimentary strata. Among those who held this view were Tertullian, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Luther."*

This statement can be nothing but a deception. A thorough review of these early Christian's writings will demonstrate that they never commented upon sedimentary rock strata being the result of Noah's flood. Besides, Christian leaders prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century believed Genesis clearly states that the land, which includes all sedimentary rocks, was formed BEFORE the creation of life. Since sedimentary rocks contain billions of fossils (evidence of life), it can only mean these rocks were formed AFTER life began.

So, why is this significant as we attempt to discover the truth? First keep in mind, young earth creationists admit they filter discoveries in science with a favored interpretation of Genesis. Henry Morris claimed it is the spiritually safe approach. Price's sedimentary rock flood geology is the foundational piece of evidence that confirms the young earth creationists' interpretation, which is considered absolute truth to them, i.e., not open to questioning. The problem is this particular absolute truth came from a dream of a teenager in the 1840s.

Second, Morris purposely led his readers into believing something that was false. Christians at the time of Steno (18th century) would never have accepted this interpretation of Genesis, because it suggests life began before the formation of rocks. For Morris to claim the ancient Christians promoted this clearly demonstrates he did not want his Christian readers to know the whole truth. It is another case of cherry picking the evidence in order to convince readers of a belief, as opposed to allowing all of the evidence to speak for itself.