

data of geology or paleontology. In fact, these data do not reveal the existence of a universal Flood during the history of man's existence upon the earth, or of a widespread Flood in the Middle East of approximately one year's duration during man's sojourn in the world. These data reveal many local floods and many instances in which large areas of the earth's surface were covered by shallow seas. But these do not count as evidence for the Flood, especially since such local floods differ widely from each other in their dating, and such shallow seas were generally present for long periods of time.

Although anthropology provides us with many data concerning Flood legends in many cultures, and archeology provides us with clear evidence of local floods in the Middle East, these do not appear to constitute strong scientific evidence for a Flood covering the entire surface of the planet Earth.

In Modern Science and Christian Faith, in the article entitled "A Christian View of Anthropology," the authors take up the question of the anthropology of the Flood. They state:

"The widespread distribution of the Flood account among historical and contemporary peoples is likewise pertinent here. Kroeber states that 'Flood myths are probably told by the majority of human nations Formerly this widespread distribution was thought to prove the actuality of the Biblical Flood, or to be evidence of the descent of all mankind from a single nation that had once experienced it. Refutation is hardly necessary.' Although the situation should not be dismissed as summarily as that, there are some important considerations which should be made before the wide distribution of the Flood account should be taken as proof that all peoples have legendary recollection of it. It has been a painful lesson in anthropology that because a characteristic is widespread we cannot thereby infer that those peoples brought that characteristic with them as they migrated. Far more often it diffuses without migration. Stories, tales, and myths are especially prone to diffuse even across marked language barriers.

Furthermore, some of the Flood stories are not alike. Some might better be called 'creation myths,' because they have to do with 'primeval waters' rather than destructive flood. One version has the earth formed out of sands which were brought up from the bottom of the waters under the fingernails of a giant turtle who dived for it. The sand grew to be the earth. . . .Although we recognize that stories may and do change through time, there is little in the 'primeval water' type of tale to warrant including it in a consideration of the distribution of the Flood account. Furthermore, the point of change in tales cannot be carried too far, as other widespread legends are amazingly uniform. A famous case is the Magic Flight or the Obstacle Flight which has a distribution completely around the globe among both aboriginal and historic peoples, particularly Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, and Indonesia. In this tale there is a specific structure with a flight away from an ogre and 'objects thrown back over the shoulder forming obstacles -- a stone which becomes a mountain; a comb which becomes a thicket, oil which becomes a body of water.' The details are always