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"Truth: That which is in accord with fact and reality."

This is written so that you may believe the bible because of science rather than in spite of science.

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1)

The Story Behind The Legend of the Firmament

By Max B. Frederick, AnOldScientist

How the oceans and continents came into existence:

*“And God said, Let there be a **firmament** in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the **firmament**, and divided the waters which [were] under the **firmament** from the waters which [were] above the **firmament**: and it was so. And God called the **firmament** Heaven... And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry [land] appear: and it was so. And God called the dry [land] Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas...”*

Genesis 1:6-10 (KJV)

(Ancient Hebrew scripture as corrected in light of reality as perceived ca.. 250 BC.)

Introduction:

Thousands of years ago, God revealed to humans a lot of information about the beginning of things. He talked about the origin of the universe, how the solar system developed, the earth, the seas, the continents even the various stages of the ecology. The list of information continues on into the future creation of a new heaven and earth.

But what is important to the story behind the Legend of the Firmament is the fact that many of these bits of information occurred long before any human was there to witness such things. There is no natural way any human could have known about what God revealed to humans so long ago.

Then, after God revealed this information, God left it up to humans to relay it on to future generations.

This information comes to us by at least two paths. One is the well preserved ancient Hebrew scriptures. Another is myths and legends of other ancient religions. That path is littered with pitfalls, similar to playing the game of gossip.

In modern times, an entirely new path developed to gain this same information through natural means. That path is the route of independent discovery by modern science. Since the separation of science and religion in the time of Galileo, about three and a half centuries ago, modern science has ignored religion and set out to discover for themselves the secrets of the universe

The path that is taken in the story behind the Legend of the Firmament takes on a few sinister twists and turns. It turns out to be a combination of well preserved scripture, but “corrected” to reflect politically correct “reality.” It may even have been tainted by well meaning theologians trying to make their God look good. It is a demonstration that no human can make up a religion that is scientifically correct.

This story behind the Legend of the Firmament traces the route traveled by the information of how the oceans and continents came into existence.

Ancient History:

The history of our universe can be traced back to a small place in time and space.

Some call it the big bang¹. Others have speculated it might have been a big bounce² from some prior universe. In any event, God, when asking what Job knew about it, referred to it as a big blowout, or blast.³

From there the universe expanded to what we see today.

The expansion has been in more than one phase.

God mentioned the first generation stars after that big blast

After a while, third generation stars formed. Our sun was one of them.

Water was abundant in outer space from right after the big blast.

Eventually, planets formed in the water rich environment of outer space around our sun.

At first, our planet was supposedly a mass of swirling gasses, but that I speculate. Sometime in the far past, an outer layer of hot rock formed that coalesced into what is called the mantle.

That mantle eventually was to become the bottom of the ocean and the foundation that supports the continents by buoyancy. But I am getting ahead of myself.

Next, the mantle had to be covered with an ocean. But there was not enough water coming from inside the earth through the volcanoes. Only a mist covered the earth.

Actually, that mist eventually developed into some kind of atmosphere. From there that atmosphere accomplished the task of filling the oceans by capturing water from outer space as it fell in towards the sun before being broken up into ions and being blown back out into the far reaches of the solar system by the solar wind.

Anyway, after the planet earth was covered with oceans, there was a time when there were no continents above sea level. Where were the land dwelling animals to live?

Fortunately, there is a mechanism that causes the lighter rocks, spread out over the ocean floor and buoyed up by the mantle, to be gathered into big clumps that are big enough to stick up above the surface of the three mile deep ocean. They became the continents.

That was a big deal. It is the dividing line between the history of the universe as observed in the cosmos, and as observed in the geologic column.⁴ In the bible it is important enough to be described in the first two verses.⁵..It was big enough a deal that it is mentioned in at least eight of the major⁶ bible creation accounts.

Long before modern science discovered each and every one of the above items, they were revealed in the ancient Hebrew scripture. They were supernaturally pre-published in the ancient scriptures of the Hebrew God to later be confirmed by the independent discoveries of modern science.

How the oceans and continents came into existence (translated to reflect the originally intended meaning):

“And God said, "let there be an atmosphere between the waters, and let it separate (extract, set apart) water [onto the surface of the earth] from water [in outer space.] And God made this atmosphere and gathered (extracted, set apart) the waters [of the oceans] from the water above the atmosphere [in outer space.] And it really occurred. And God called the atmosphere sky... And God said, Let the waters under the sky be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry [land] appear: and it was so. And God called the dry [land] continents; and the gathering together of the waters called he oceans:” (MOST)

Moses, c. 1445 BC, On The Origin of the Atmosphere, The Origin of the Oceans, and The Emergence of the Continents. From the *Seven-Day Creation Account, The Bible: Genesis 1:6-10*⁷

The Double Blind Test:

But for the discovery by modern science to be independent, the true information anciently recorded in the bible had to be hidden from the modern time discoverers. That is how a scientific double blind test is conducted. The Legend of the Firmament is the how God kept modern day scientists from knowing the answers hidden in the

ancient scriptures.

Now, these answers hidden in the ancient scriptures were not blatant scientific statements like, *“Mountains and valleys achieve a level of equilibrium due to the buoyancy of the mass of less dense rocks buoyed up by the more dense semi-liquid rocks in which they are floating.”* No, In another account, knowledge of the details is only recorded as a casual mention in a song of praise for the creator. In the ancient Hebrew scripture it simply, yet clearly, mentions the fact that the mountains rise and the valleys fall to a predetermined level. Of course, early English versions based on the Septuagint translated that casual mention to imply that it was water that went up in the mountains and down in the valleys. I suppose this was because ever since ancient Greek times, everyone knew that mountains did not go up and valleys did not go down. Everyone knew hard rocks did not move like that. So, I suppose, to make their God not look bad, the meaning was, “corrected” to make God look good. But then, when modern science discovered the principle of isostasy about the year 1900 AD, quietly, and without fanfare, modern translations began to boldly get it right.

(Isostasy is what God had recorded earlier about mountains and valleys seeking isostatic balance.)

Only when theologians began to translate it into the proper scientific principle, does it become obvious that the ancient scripture had it right. Only then did it become obvious that this mention of isostasy is part of a list of many such details listed in the same order as they really happened. But I digress, We are talking about the story behind the Legend of the Firmament.

Origin of the Continental Rise Theory:

Back to the story. The scientifically correct theory that the continents rose from below sea level had a very ancient origin. That ancient origin, even though long after the event, was many millennium before modern science discovered that same information.

The first recorded biblical mention of the fact that the continents rose from below sea level of a formerly ocean covered earth is recorded in the book of Job.

The exact date of the origin of that accurate information in the book of Job is unclear. No one knows when the book of Job was written. Many theologians mistakenly date the book of Job to be after the flood of Noah because of a mention of that great flood. However, upon closer examination, the book of Job makes no mention of such a flood. That mention mistakenly attributed to the flood of Noah is in actuality, a reference to the emergence of the continents, an event that occurred long before the existence of humans.

That conversation of Job with God may be the origin of the ancient information that the planet earth was actually covered with ocean before the continents emerged to be above sea level. And that conversation may have taken place before there was any such thing as Egypt. But that is purely speculation.

c. 3000 BC:

The History of Egypt is long, from before 3000 BC to 332 BC when Egypt fell to the Greeks.

It is obvious that the ancient Egyptians too, (at least from the time the Hebrews lived

in the land of Egypt) were aware of the idea that the continents rose from below sea level. This information had been around since the time of Job, which was long before the four hundred years the Hebrews lived in the land of the Egyptians.

It is no surprise that there is an event mentioned in Egyptian mythology described as a hill rising from the sea. That Egyptian simplification is the same event described in the book of Job, an event that occurred long before there were any humans to witness such an event.

Neither is it a surprise that this does not appear to be a part of Egyptian mythology until after the first approximately fifteen hundred years of Egypt's history, until approximately the time that the Hebrews began to interact with the Egyptians. We know this from "The Book of the Dead,"⁸ dating to the Second Intermediate Period of Egypt.⁹ That period corresponds roughly to within a few hundred years of the 400 years that the Hebrews were in Egypt.

That Egyptian mythology appears to have existed before the book of Genesis was written, but not before the book of Job was written. But then, we do not even know if Job was a Hebrew or if he was an Egyptian, or neither.

c. 1445 BC:

About three thousand five hundred years ago, in the ancient scripture of the Hebrew people, Moses recorded knowledge concerning the origins. The Hebrew people had just escaped from Egypt where they had been for about four-hundred years. Moses had been educated in the household of the Pharaoh of Egypt. There is no doubt he was aware the Egyptians understood the ocean existed at an earlier time without continents, then the continental land arose from beneath sea level.

In this ancient scripture, it appears as though Moses gathered and edited information from sources that existed at the time, such as the conversations of Job with God where God described the emergence of the continents from below sea level. In that scripture recorded by Moses, the fact is mentioned that the land was separated out from the sea.

Other scientifically correct features of that Mosaic account include mention of the facts that an atmosphere developed before the oceans were filled, and the atmosphere was involved in the process of filling the oceans with water from above the atmosphere. That is, the oceans were filled with water from outer space long before the continents rose from beneath sea level. (That fact is of very recent discovery by modern science, and is not completely integrated into the thinking of many modern scientists.)

Even though the Egyptian myth is similar to the Hebrew scripture in stating a hill rose up out of the waters, unlike the ancient Hebrew scripture version, the Egyptian myth excludes facts concerning the development of the atmosphere and filling of the oceans prior to the hill rising. Also, it errs in the presence of human like life forms

That is only the beginning of the differences between accurate information in the ancient Hebrew scripture, and misinformation in the legend of the firmament.

As an aside, some scholars would discredit the bible by pointing out the similarities in ancient mythology and the bible, thus indicating that the religion of the bible was

just a human refinement of some ancient Egyptian religions.

However, there are basic principles that establish the original versus the copy. This is where the study of science and the bible becomes important.

1. It has been demonstrated many times over, that no human theologian can invent a religion that is in accord with reality when it includes mentions of scientific concepts. That is especially true when those concepts had not yet been discovered at the time the religion was invented.
2. The story behind the Legend of the Firmament demonstrates the second principle: When humans are involved, truth and reality, originally present in an account, are distorted over time by human interpretation.

No embellishment from the imagination of humans can suddenly become in accord with reality. That accord with reality is the indication of either actual eyewitness observation, or supernatural inspiration. It is counter indication of a copy.

A copy of an account that has scientific error cannot have the scientific error corrected by human imagination, especially when the truth about that science has not yet been discovered. The ancient scripture versus ancient Egyptian mythology are as different as night and day when it comes to reality as verified by modern science.

There is no way the scientifically correct ancient scripture can be a copy of a scientifically incorrect ancient religion corrected by natural human imagination.

So, the study of science and the bible is important in today's world when the politically correct position is that all religions are equal, and therefore, all are myth.

So, that is why it is important we teach the true science that is contained in the bible rather than the pseudo-science that is built up over the years from religious tradition of human origin.

The Origin of the Chaotic Mass Philosophy.

Over the years, as the Egyptian legend was handed down, the "dark waters of chaos" became a dominate feature. The dark waters of chaos dominated the thinking of the origins for a long period of Egyptian history. Then, the story behind the Legend of the Firmament can be traced as the dark waters of chaos from early Egyptian Myth transformed into Greek "science" of a chaotic mass. Eventually, the idea of a chaotic mass became a part of Greek "science."

c. 0585 BC Degradation of Continental Rise Philosophy

This Egyptian thinking prevailed until the ancient Greek philosophers began to meddle with the Legend of the Firmament.

Even though the Egyptian presence dominated the world until Egypt fell to the Greeks in 332 BC, Greek philosophy had been on the rise for a few hundred years.

Thales of Miletus,¹⁰ (ca. 624 BC–ca. 546 BC) whom many regard as the first philosopher in the Greek tradition, maybe even the father of science, was instructed by Egyptian priests. Thales taught that the earth floats, but on water, not buoyed up by the mantle foundation as taught by the Hebrew scriptures and by modern science. He taught that water was fundamental and that the world originated from water. This is one step removed from the concept of the continents rising from beneath sea level.

Rather than rising from below water, the earth originated out of water.

Thus occurred another step in the imagination of human interpretation replacing the truth of the original knowledge. Egyptian mythology is being morphed into the science of ancient Greek philosophy.

c.0580BC Origin of “Firmament” Philosophy

Another philosopher of the Milesian¹¹ school of the 6th century BC was Anaximander of Miletus¹² (c. 610 BC to 546 BC.) As a companion or pupil of Thales, he is regarded as a second Greek Philosopher. Anaximander taught that the earth was at the center of the universe and the universe was composed of concentric wheels. Fire surrounded the wheels, and the lights in the sky were holes in the wheels.

Following Anaximander, was Anaximenes of Miletus¹³ (c. 585 BC–c. 525 BC.) He was a student of Anaximander. Anaximenes taught that the sun and the moon were flat disks traveling around a heavenly canopy, on which the stars were fixed.

Thus the imagination of human interpretation carries us one more step further removed from the original reality. Notice the influence of Egyptian mythology, and the transition toward to the model of the earth being surrounded by solid crystalline spheres known as firmaments. This is one more step of departure from the ancient Hebrew model of the universe.

c.0450 BC Refinement of Chaotic Mass Philosophy

The dark waters of chaos or a chaotic mass persisted. Anaxagoras¹⁴ (c. 500–428 BC) a philosopher of the Ionian school of philosophy taught that everything existed eternally and originally as a chaotic mass which later differentiated into the present arrangements. He viewed the cosmos as having the earth at the center. Somewhere along the way, the concept expressed by that word “earth” transitioned from the continents to the planet.

c. 0350 BC Geocentric Philosophy Formalized

Eventually, about 350 BC, the legend of the firmament became the science of that ancient Greek era.. The geocentric model of the universe was formalized when Aristotle published, *On the Heavens*. *On the Heavens* described the universe as having the spherical earth at the center and surrounded by 55 solid transparent crystalline spheres that supported various heavenly bodies. Each of these solid crystalline firmaments held something back from falling to the earth at the center of the universe.

Thus, the ancient Egyptian myth concerning the origin of the universe transitioned into the Legend of the Firmament. The little of the ancient Egyptian myth that was in accord with reality degraded into a model of the universe with the planet earth in the center surrounded by solid concentric crystalline firmaments. All this transitioning was the product of the imagination of the human mind “correcting” what was previously known.

In the Meantime

While the legend of the Firmament was evolving, the writing of the Old Testament was completed and the ancient Hebrew tongue became a dead language. No longer

could it be read in the native tongue of the people. Greek had become the universal language.

At the same time, Greek thinking began to dominate the interpretation of the Hebrew scripture. One of those spheres became a “Firmament” holding back the “dark waters of chaos” from which the earth came. Thus, the origin of the continents from below water transitioned into the origin of the earth from waters that surround the earth and were held back by a transparent crystalline spherical “firmament.”

c. 250 BC Ancient Scripture Interpreted to Conform to Ancient Greek Science.

By this time, the legendary Library of Science at Alexandria had been established. The political powers at the time were filling that library with all the important writings of science and philosophy.

Contrary to the popular versions of history revisionism that has dominated our education, the translation of the Ancient Hebrew scripture into the Greek Septuagint was not divinely inspired to render the exact meaning of the original language. About the only detail surviving history revision is the account that an order went out from Ptolemy II to the Hebrew keepers of their holy book to bring it to the Library of Science in Alexandria to be translated and to be put in that library. However, we also have two other clues as to what really happened. First, the ancient record shows that no original books ever left the library. Any books taken there were copied¹⁵, and the copy returned to the original owner. If you know anything about how meticulous the keepers of the ancient Hebrew holy book were in making sure the sacred copy was perfect, you would know that relinquishing their holy book and never getting it back would be unacceptable. Second, evidence from the dead sea scrolls shows that at the time the Septuagint was translated, there were at least two co-existing Hebrew versions of the scriptures.¹⁶ Comparing the Septuagint to the two versions of the Hebrew text, reveals the Septuagint was translated from the non-Masoretic (non official) version. It becomes obvious that the Hebrew scholars in charge of safe keeping of the scriptures were not about to relinquish their holy version, so they quietly substituted what they considered to be a common street version.

But that chapter of this story is included only to show that the myths of history revisionism that say the Septuagint was a perfect translation are just that, myth.

Upon carefully studying the science in the bible and comparing the accuracy of that science in the more ancient scripture, both in the Hebrew text and in the Septuagint text reveals the fact that the science in the more ancient Hebrew text is more in accord with reality as discovered by today’s modern science.

Specifically, the concept of a firmament is not in the original Hebrew text. That concept was obviously integrated into the meaning. We can only assume the scientists felt more comfortable translating it to agree with what they already believed to be true science. They had never heard of the atmosphere capturing water from above to fill the oceans below, so, in their interpretation, what was really the atmosphere became what they were familiar with, a firmament holding back those dark waters of chaos. (Compare the beginning quote of this article and the version found a few pages later.)

In any case, the great effort expended by some modern day scholars to figure out just what was firm about that “firmament,” is just a waste of time, because there was no such thing in the original Hebrew ancient scripture.

So, the bible, in its original version, really is in accord with reality. And human interpretation is not. And that is evidence of the supernatural authorship of the bible.

And that is the story behind the Legend of the Firmament.

Note: A PDF version of this article was previously published December, 18, 2008 at, www.scienceandthebible.info/reports/art1216firmamentlegend.pdf

2) What's in Next or Coming Issues:

Does the bible contradict scientific fact? Is it possible that the bible is in accord with scientific fact? Is it possible that science just has a different interpretation of the same facts? Read articles as they become available.

www.scienceandthebible.net/articles/index.htm.

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Max B. Frederick

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¹ Sir Fred Hoyle, 1950

² Scientific American, October, 2008. <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=big-bang-or-big-bounce>

³ Translated as a shout in Job 38:7.(KJV)

⁴ Before rocks were piled up into layers to become continents there was no geologic column.

⁵ “And the continents (earth) had not formed. There was none (void.) And darkness was upon the surface of the ocean. And a powerful wind (mistranslated “Spirit of God”) blew across the panorama of the oceans.” (Edited by Moses from the book of Job where Job goes on to elaborate about when the continents came into existence and have been here ever since.)

⁶ http://www.scienceandthebible.info/reports/art080930_34_accounts.pdf

⁷ *Eyewitness to the Origins: Third Edition*, Version 3.1, October, 2008., Max B. Frederick, Publishing, Central Point, Oregon, USA., p. 290. Order from: www.scienceandthebible.net)

⁸ 35_AE_Mythology_Read, http://fc.sudbury.k12.ma.us/~sean_flaherty/FOV2-000118A9/35_AE_%20Mythology_Read.pdf?FCItemID=S00C40DC3&Plugin=Block

⁹ Second Intermediate Period of Egypt, http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Second_Intermediate_Period_of_Egypt&oldid=255068995 (last visited Dec. 14, 2008).

¹⁰ Thales, <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Thales&oldid=258208581> (last visited Dec. 16, 2008).

¹¹ Milesian school, http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Milesian_school&oldid=254593806 (last visited Dec. 17, 2008).

¹² Anaximander, <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Anaximander&oldid=258051696> (last visited Dec. 16, 2008).

¹³ Anaximenes of Miletus, (last visited Dec. 17, 2008) http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Anaximenes_of_Miletus&oldid=255060139.

¹⁴ <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/anaxagoras/>

¹⁵ http://www.geocities.com/apollonius_theocritos/page03.html

¹⁶ <http://www.voskrese.info/spl/Xlxx.html>