

The Earth Was Divided - Genesis 10:25

Compiled by Pastor Ronnie Wolfe

I. THE QUESTION

- A. In the days of Peleg (Gen. 10:25; 1 Chron. 1:19) the earth was divided.
- B. What was divided?
 - 1. The people?
 - 2. The languages?
 - 3. The land?
- C. This is not a doctrinal question, one that will make much difference between one doctrine and another; but it is an interesting thing to ponder.
- D. Three possibilities
 - 1. Languages multiplied at Babel and produced divisions among the people of the world. [See Genesis 11:1–9.]
 - 2. The continents were divided by continental drift, which began in Peleg's day.
 - 3. Greatly lowered sea levels soon after the flood (as explained by the hydroplate theory) connected all continents.¹ Sea level rose in Peleg's day, dividing the earth by water.¹

II. THE ANSWERS

- A. Quotes From Commentators
 - 1. John Gill – **for in his days was the earth divided**; among the three sons of Noah, and their respective posterities; their language was divided, and that obliged them to divide and separate in bodies which understood one another; hence that age, in which was this event, was usually called by the Jews the age of division; whether this was done about the time of his birth, and so this name was given him to perpetuate the memory of it, or in some after part of his life, and so was given by a spirit of prophecy, is a question: Josephus, Jarchi, and the Jewish writers, generally go the latter way; if it was at the time of his birth, which is the sense of many, then this affair happened in the one hundred and first year after the flood, for in that year Peleg was born, as appears from [Gen 11:11](#).²
 - 2. After examining the Hebrew meanings, a more plausible alternative interpretation would be that it describes an earth-splitting event such as a valley opening in the ground and filling with water. That could have happened anywhere along the Dead Sea Rift zone (discussed in detail later) and may have been associated with a delayed adjustment of the earth's plates in response to the rapid subsidence of the sea floors by the flood. In theory, when the weight of the waters of the flood forced the sea floors downward to fill the void

¹<http://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/FAQ216.html>, (6/26/2008)

²John Gill's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Online Bible



beneath, strain would have developed between the oceanic and continental portions of the crustal plates. Consequently, tectonic pressures were redistributed. About 100 years later the strain and pressure redistribution may have caused the earth's crust to rapidly rent in weaker places, much like a piece of ridged plastic which can be stretched and deformed. It will eventually snap if the strain remains constant. An abrupt change in sea levels could possibly accompany such an event.³

- a. Looking at world relief and tectonic maps, one possible location of the effects of this Peleg event is found in Middle East. It is called the Afar Triangle.⁴
- b. "Geologists have marshaled much evidence that the continents were once together."⁵
3. [Peleg, palag, or PLG] often contains within it a reference to water. It is used to refer to a stream of water in Hebrew, Coptic, Ethiopic and in Greek. The root is used to refer to irrigation canals which carried the water throughout the farming land of Mesopotamia. However, an examination of the Greek usage (of the family of Japeth [one of Noah's three sons]) of the root letters PL and PLG clearly shows that in the majority of the instances this root was used of the ocean. ... It is used to mean: "to form a sea or lake," "of places that are flooded and under water," "of crossing the sea," "of "the broad sea" itself, of "being out at sea," "on the open sea." It is used of seamen and ships. The noun with the result suffix is used of "an inundation." I continue: it is used of "a being at sea," of "a creature of or on the sea," of "one who walks on the sea," of "running or sailing on the open sea," of "a harbor that is formed in the open sea by means of sandbags," and in many ways of "the open sea itself," of "going to, into or toward the sea," of "roving through the sea," of "being sea-nourished," of "turning something into the sea," or "of flooding." It is quite apparent that every Greek usage here involves the sea in some way.⁶
4. Conclusion. Strong linguistic and scientific arguments oppose the two interpretations of Genesis 10:25 commonly taught: (1) a division of people by multiplication of languages, and (2) the beginning of continental drift. Instead, these studies point to an earth being divided by rising water in the days of Peleg. They also paint a picture of our ancestors migrating and exploring soon after the flood.⁷

³<http://www.kjvbible.org/peleg.html>, (6/26/2008)

⁴Ibid

⁵Morris, John D., Ph.D., *What Happened In The Days of Peleg?*, (From Internet)

⁶<http://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/FAQ216.html>, (6/26/2008)

⁷Ibid

III. WILL THIS GIVE GLORY TO GOD?

- A. Even some creationists have a problem with the dividing of the earth as a land mass during the lifetime of Peleg, because they say the flood was the only thing that could divide the earth physically, and the Flood was 100 years before Peleg's birth.
- B. However, does it not seem logical and glorifying to God to know that the Flood could have had an effect on the earth 100 years after the flood?
- C. The flood of Genesis as a devastating catastrophe. Why could it not have had a settling effect in the days of Peleg?
- D. Maybe I am wrong, but I find no reason to think that the earth could not have been divided in these years. It need not be one event; it could have been a period of several years that the earth settled from the devastation of the flood and have caused the continents to be divided.
- E. The Hebrew word ERETS, which is translated EARTH, is used in several different ways, but I do not know that it can be used to designate people. It is usually translated earth or land.
 - 1. Some of the creationists that we trust in the main thoughts have compromised in some of their teachings.
 - 2. I have been disappointed that, in the last several years, some creationists have turned away from their original belief in an early or young earth and have begun to believe that the earth is much older than they once thought.
 - 3. This is the reason for the interpretation that ERETS can mean peoples except in a very minor way when it is translated "nations," which imports not only peoples but also land.
 - 4. Let us believe what the Bible says.