What Triggered the Flood?

Note from Pastor Kevin: This handout was copied from Dr Walt Brown's web site (www.creationscience.com), where his book, "In the Beginning" can be read and studied without charge. The reader is encouraged to visit this site, where a study of Part 2 (The Fountains of the Great Deep) will provide the background to more fully understand the following.

God initiated the flood as a result of man's sin. At the end of the creation week, all that God created was "very good" (Genesis 1:31), so the flood was not inevitable at that time.1 Later, because of the depth of man's sin (Genesis 6:5–6), God flooded the entire earth. We may never know just how the physical chain of events for the flood began, but the Bible gives some intriguing clues.

The hydroplate theory, summarized on pages 107–147 , shows how a global flood, corresponding in every detail to the Genesis flood, easily explains 25 otherwise mysterious features of the earth and solar system. This theory requires two starting conditions: (1) a large volume of salty, subterranean water, and (2) steadily increasing pressure in that subterranean water. Although the Bible speaks in several places of considerable subterranean water (see page 312), why would that water's pressure increase enough to rupture the earth's crust?

First, let's look at an important feature of the newly created, preflood earth. Visualize the entire earth's surface covered by a sandwich arrangement in which a horizontal layer of rock (which will become the earth's crust) has a layer of water above and also below it. The rock layer is almost 10-miles-thick; each water layer is about 3/4 of a mile thick. The water above this rock layer is surface water; the confined water below is subterranean water. If the extensive rock layer were perfectly uniform in thickness and density, everything would be in balance. Equilibrium would exist.

Let's assume the rock's thickness and density varied slightly. The heavier parts would sag (bend) downward, like an overloaded floor, causing additional water on top to flow into each depression. That added weight would increase each sag. More surface water would flow into the growing depressions, driving the "sag" even deeper.2

Simultaneously, some rock would be squeezed down through the subterranean water, forming protrusions—or "pillars "—pressed against the chamber floor. Here's why. The rock's pressure at the bottom of its thicker, denser portions would exceed the subterranean water's pressure pushing up. If the pressure difference exceeded the rock's strength at that point, the rock would flow downward, deforming like putty.3 The deeper it went, the greater this pressure difference would become, so rock would "flow" even deeper until all pillars pressed against the chamber floor. Pillars carrying an excessive load would thicken and penetrate slightly into the chamber floor.

The same effects, but in opposite directions, would lift thinner portions of the rock layer up out of the surface water, forming continents. Keep in mind that the confined subterranean water has essentially a fixed volume, so as rock sags downward and as pillars are squeezed downward, this fixed volume of subterranean water must displace thinner parts of the rock layer, forcing them upward.

If, on Day 2 of the creation week, our “sandwich” encircled the earth like the outer three rings of an onion, water would cover the entire earth. In the following hours, the thinner rock would rise out of the surface water and become dry land. Water would drain into depressions, forming seas. This seems to be what Genesis 1:9–10 says happened on Day 3. Water covered the entire earth, then “God said, ‘Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear’; and it was so. And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas;” (Pages 326–334 further support this interpretation of Day 2.)

Interestingly, Day 2 was the only one of the six creation days in which God did not see that day’s work as being “good.” Certainly, nothing bad was done on the second day, because at the end of the creation week, God saw that all he had made was “very good.” Apparently, the second day’s activity was not completed until Day 3.

Now we can see why. On Day 2, after the crust was created with liquid water above and below it, the crust began to deform. Thicker portions sagged and squeezed down pillars, while thinner portions rose out of the water. Thus, Psalm 104:3, in describing Day 2,4 states (with my interpretations in brackets), “He lays the beams [pillars] of His upper chambers [the crust] in the [subterranean] waters.” By Day 3, surface water had drained into the depressions, forming dry land and preflood seas—a “good” condition (Genesis 1:10) necessary for the life God would create next.

Peter also seems to describe these events in II Peter 3:3–6. He states that in the latter days mockers will not understand that “the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.”

This description is consistent with the following interpretation: On Day 2, a nearly horizontal crust, or “expanse,” was formed in the midst of the liquid water covering the earth (Genesis 1:2,6,7,9). On Day 3, portions of the crust rose out of the water, causing the water above the crust to flow into seas (Genesis 1:10). In other words, the earth (its crust) was formed out of (rose out of) surface water and was formed by pressure from subterranean water.5 Almost 2,000 years later,6 the water below the crust burst forth, combined with the surface water, and, as Peter wrote, flooded and destroyed the earth in a global cataclysm.7 (The identification of the earth’s preflood crust with the Hebrew word raqia, often translated “expanse” or “firmament,” is explained on pages 330–331.)

Compressed subterranean water supported most of the crust’s weight; pillars supported the rest. Every 12 hours, tidal effects, caused primarily by the Moon’s gravity, lifted the subsurface water (and therefore the earth’s crust) a few feet, just as tides lift ocean surfaces today. Between lifts (at low tides), the crust settled. Therefore, the pressure each pillar exerted on the chamber floor increased and decreased twice daily. These loose, or flexible, contacts could be described as “sockets.” (Tides also occur in the solid earth. See Endnote 5 on page 377.)

The Bible speaks of the earth being founded on pillars. Psalm 75:3b says “It is I [God] Who have firmly set its [the earth’s] pillars.” In Job 38, God demonstrates His authority by giving Job the most difficult science examination of all time. In verses 4–6, God asks Job, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth! Tell Me, if you have understanding, ... On what were its bases sunk?” The Hebrew word for bases is used 54 other times in the Bible. In each case, it is translated as

pedestals or sockets which held pillars.

When the earth's crust ruptured, the flood began. Water flowed with great force through the subterranean chamber and up through the rupture. Pillars were crushed into fragments by the increasing crustal load they carried. Each pillar's collapse generated huge waves in the surface water and pressure pulses in the subterranean water. Those rock fragments accelerated into space by the fountains of the great deep became meteoroids. Thus, the pillars or "foundations of the world" were "laid bare." This may be what Psalm 18:15 refers to when it says, "Then the channels of water appeared, and the foundations of the world were laid bare."

But why did the pressure in the subterranean water increase enough to rupture the crust? Each "tidal lift" transferred energy from the Moon to the crust. As the massive crust settled between lifts, most of that enormous energy8 was converted by friction into heat. For almost 2,000 years, this heat was generated in the compressed pillars and the slowly moving subterranean water, especially water circulating through narrow channels. Some of that heat was conducted up into the crust or down through the subterranean chamber floor. The rest steadily increased the temperature of the subterranean water—causing it to expand and its pressure to increase. Although it is difficult to calculate how much heat would have been conducted away from the chamber, 2,000 years of slow thermal expansion of the subterranean water could easily have increased its pressure enough to rupture the crust.9

If, as estimates indicate, thermal expansion from tidal heating ruptured the crust, the hydroplate theory's two starting conditions are reduced to one: the presence of a large volume of salty, subterranean water. (The Bible speaks clearly of preflood, subterranean water. See Item 1 on page 312.)

How hot might the high pressure water have become? Mineral structures in meteorites show that most were at one time at least 750°F.10 This uniform heating had to have occurred before these meteorites were launched into cold space. (Heating due to impacts or reentry into earth's atmosphere would not be uniform. Heating during launch would not be great.) Therefore, if meteorites came from the subterranean chamber, it is possible the subterranean water was exceedingly hot.

Wouldn't such hot, erupting water kill all life, including those on Noah's Ark? Not necessarily. It depends on how much subterranean water escaped and where the Ark and surviving sea life were relative to the rupture and hot water currents. Besides, the water would rapidly cool as it escaped from the subterranean chamber, its pressure dropped, and evaporation and mixing began.

All the subterranean water did not have to come out to flood the entire earth. Remember, the thinner (and higher) portions of the crust were supported entirely by subterranean water, so as water escaped, primarily the "dry land" sank. Therefore, the flooded earth was as much a result of sinking continents as it was of rising water. 11

As the first days and weeks of the flood passed, more and more of the crust rested on the subterranean chamber floor, increasingly restricting the outward flow of water. The rupture widened, and mass within the mantle shifted slightly toward the relatively unloaded portions of the chamber floor under the rupture. Suddenly, the chamber floor buckled upward beneath the widened rupture, forming the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. As the crust slid downhill on lubricating water, any sliding rock-on-

rock contacts quickly became a molten rock-water mixture. This explains why molten lava today contains a surprising amount of dissolved water and why a saltwater layer appears to be under the continents. (See page 130.)

Final Thoughts. Sometime after the Fall but before the onset of the flood, God set in motion a chain of physical events that produced a global flood. We can't be sure exactly how it began. However, that cataclysm had many consequences: layered fossils; coal, oil, and methane deposits; major mountain ranges; ice ages; and dozens of other features. Our challenge is to show how those consequences are related and are consistent with the laws of physics and the biblical account.

For centuries, hundreds of sincere questions concerning the flood have been asked that deserve thoughtful answers. Without clear answers, a "vacuum" has existed into which evolutionists have placed their faulty theories. (Telling unbelievers to simply believe the Bible accomplishes little. While this may appeal to a few believers, it usually angers nonbelievers unnecessarily.)

As Peter wrote, Day 2—a key to explaining the flood—has been poorly understood. Had the flood been better understood before Charles Darwin popularized evolution, the "vacuum" would never have formed, and evolution explanations would have been seen as obviously inferior. Evolution would not have flourished. Our task then is to fill this "vacuum" by explaining to others what we now know about the flood.