

Cause and Effect in Creation and Un-creation¹

Robert H. Brown

The term “un-creation” has been chosen to represent a miraculous event, or series of events, that reverse the consequence of a creation event. A prime illustration is the Flood (Gen. 6-8) that reversed the consequences of Creation Week (Gen 1, 2).

Man’s distinction from the other higher level animals that exhibit intelligence—as a being created “in the image of God”—is marked by a driving desire for explanation. However satisfactory it may be, an explanation for an event or process is merely a description in terms of other contributing events or processes. We have a “good explanation” when a description is made in terms of phenomena that have been repeatedly observed to be basic manifestations of God in the regular operation of the physical universe. A good explanation of an electric motor is a description of its operation in terms of the basic laws (repeated observations) of electricity and magnetism. A good explanation of Joe’s nosebleed includes the electrical interactions between molecules in Joe’s nose and Mike’s fist, the limits of electrical attraction between the molecules in Joe’s blood vessels, and Mike’s intention.

One type of event that cannot be described in terms of continuously repeatable observations comes under the classification of creation. Such an event may be the appearance of something that has no preexistence and identifiable natural cause. A creation event that brings disorganization to something created, or removes a previous creation event, may be classed as an un-creation event.

The first chapter of Genesis lists a series of creation events described *in toto* as Creation Week, an episode that gave planet Earth a perfect biosphere. Genesis 7 describes an un-creation episode that reduced the planet back to the state described in Gen. 1:1, or something rather like it. The Flood was probably the first

¹ This brief comment is in response to the article “A Scientific Paradigm for the Genesis Flood,” by Ted Noel and Ken Noel, published in *JATS* 12/1 (Spring 2001), 106–138.

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un-creation episode the inhabitants of the universe had seen. They would have no explanation for it, other than as a unique expression of God.

The Creation Week account lists a series of creation events, none of which may be described as a consequence of the one preceding it, or explanation for the one following. If the first verse of Genesis is considered to specify a creation of matter, or the Solar System, at an unspecified time prior to the events noted in the following verses (a position accommodated by the NIV in translating *‘ereš* differently in Gen 1: 10 than in Gen 1:1 and 2:1), this event cannot be considered as a cause of, or explanation for, any of the events noted in the following verses.

The first event specified in the Flood un-creation episode is the break-up of Earth’s crust and heavy rain (Gen. 7:11). In our desire to push explanation back as far as possible, we can speculate that the break-up and rain were the result of an unspecified preceding un-creation event, such as a change in the Earth’s rotation. Without testimony from someone who observed planet Earth at the beginning of the Flood episode, there is no way to determine whether the initial break-up and rain were an unexplainable cause or an effect.

Genesis eight summarizes a late-stage-Flood creation process causing results similar to the creation event at the beginning of the third day of Creation Week—transformation from the low surface relief of the crust associated with universal coverage by water, to collection of water into basins (oceans). The erosion processes observed to be caused by wind, rain, and tides will eventually erode Earth’s crust surface to a low relief that has universal coverage by water. Genesis 1:9 and chapter 8 record two creation events/processes in which planet Earth was transformed from a natural equilibrium state to a surface disequilibrium state suitable for the support of land-based plants and animals.

Unless a change was imposed by the Creator, only relatively insignificant changes in Earth’s rotation would be associated with these surface transformations. Earth’s rotation axis is presently inclined 23.5 degrees with respect to its revolution axis about the sun. This inclination produces seasons and provides for the designation of the year as a unit of time. There are many varieties of plants that cannot survive without a cold season in the annual growth cycle.

This amount of inclination is about ideal for maximizing the portion of Earth’s surface that is desirable for habitation. According to Gen 1:14, the most reasonable presumption is that there was a similar inclination following the third day of Creation Week. A subsidiary presumption is that whatever changes may have occurred during the Flood episode, the rotation axis returned essentially to its initial inclination.

I do not perceive the foregoing comments to have any bearing on personal salvation, but offer them for whatever benefit they may have in dialog with individuals who like to associate scientific explanations with event specifications in the Bible.

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