

# Creation and Flood implications of the first angel's message in Revelation 14:7<sup>1</sup>

John T. Baldwin

## A six-day creation method

**R**ecent New Testament research by Jon Paulien, professor of New Testament,<sup>2</sup> shows that the language of the last part of Revelation 14:7, “worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea” (NASB), alludes to the language of the fourth commandment in Exodus 20:11.<sup>3</sup> In part, the Revelation passage accomplishes this significant allusion by listing, in the same order, four of the identical terms that appear in the Exodus text. Paulien offers the following conclusion regarding the certainty of the allusion: “The cumulative evidence is so strong that an interpreter could conclude that there is no direct allusion to the Old Testament in Revelation that is more certain than the allusion to the fourth commandment in Rev. 14:7. When the author of Revelation describes God’s final appeal to the human race in the context of the end-time deception, he does so in terms of a call to worship the creator in the context of the fourth commandment.”<sup>4</sup>

Building on Paulien’s conclusion, the present essay offers the diagram on the facing page to illustrate how the allusion also seems to endorse a literal, historical six-day Creation.

The diagram illustrates that by alluding to the full cosmological wording of Exodus 20:11, the allusion endorses the concept of a six-day Creation. While not rewriting a portion of Scripture, the dotted line in the diagram indicates the

biblical source for the bracketed insertion of the important concept implied by the first four words of the allusion in Revelation 14:7. The messenger could have said simply, “worship your maker,” but that would not signal a six-day method of Creation. The critical need in the end time for the allusion to suggest the six-day method of Creation is addressed in the application section of the essay. However, the complete allusion suggests more than a concept of six-day Creation.

## The biblical Flood

The allusion in Revelation 14:7 to Exodus 20:11 ends with a phrase of remarkable focus, “fountains of waters.” Do these words have some special significance? The hermeneutical key that can unlock the importance of this phrase seems to be its placement in a context and setting of judgment: “Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made . . . springs [fountains] of waters” (Rev. 14:7, NASB). The immediate connection of the phrase “fountains of waters” to a judgment setting needs to be borne in mind continually throughout the following discussion.

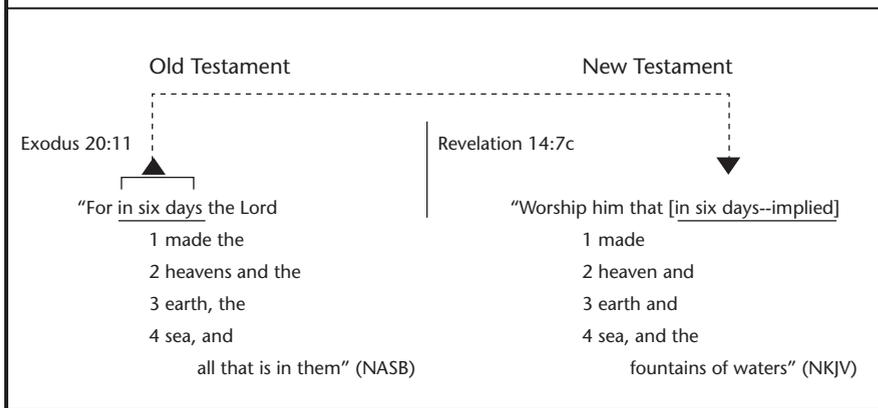
The special uniqueness of the phrase helps to raise questions that lead to a deeper understanding of its meaning. Because the allusion in the Revelation passage begins and continues as an exact verbal paralleling of the language in Exodus 20:11, the allusion can be said to end with an unparallel, thus unexpected and surprising, phrase, “fountains of waters,” not found in the Old Testament passage. A central question confronting the interpreter seems to be: If Revelation 14:7c is a clear verbal parallel allusion to the Exodus passage, why doesn’t the angel messenger complete the allusion by using the expected phrase “and all that is in them” (NASB) found in Exodus 20:11? Why does the messenger break his method of paralleling by inserting the unparallel and specifically focused phrase “fountains of waters”?

The importance of the unparallel phrase “fountains of waters” is further heightened by noting that its departure in Revelation 14:7 from the wording in Exodus 20:11 stands in sharp contrast with a biblical pattern established and illustrated elsewhere in Scripture when individuals refer at some length to Exodus 20:11. For example, in the context of describing the goodness of God as the one who sets the prisoner free, David (like the first angel in Revelation 14) articulates the following words precisely as found in Exodus 20:11, “Who made heaven and earth, the sea” (NASB), but ends by stating the expected “and all that is in them” of the Exodus passage (Ps. 146:6, NASB). In a



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## Diagram Suggesting How Revelation 14:7c Implies a Six-Day Method of Creation



The numbered words indicate the four verbal parallels existing between the two passages. This diagram illustrates that by an endorsing allusion to Exodus 20:11, and thus to the totality of Exodus 20:11, the message of Revelation 14:7 implies that a six-day method of Creation is true, and should be considered so in our day. The unparallel phrase “fountains of waters” in Revelation 14:7 is a surprising, yet highly important, feature of the text discussed later in the essay.

similar context, New Testament believers who express thanksgiving for the loving kindness of God displayed by His healing of the lame beggar mention the same portion of Exodus 20:11 and add the expected phrase “and all that is in them” (Acts 4:24) in the same manner as David. Again, when the healing of a lame man of Lystra reveals the power of God, Barnabas and Paul cite the same words of Exodus 20:11 and complete their reference to the Exodus passage with the expected “and all that is in them” (Acts 14:8, 15). Thus we discern a typical pattern used by biblical individuals when referring to or quoting Exodus 20:11. Evidently, they did not feel at liberty to deviate from the wording of the fourth commandment.

Remarkably, the allusion in Revelation 14:7 takes a different pathway.

The typical biblical pattern illustrated above is broken only in Revelation 14:7. Any scriptural parallel allusion or reference to Exodus 20:11 that starts with the words “Who made” and reaches the word “sea” and then continues never strays after that from the exact wording of Exodus except in Revelation 14:7c. Why? Is something theologically important being communicated? Is God, through the angel, signaling some relevant, theological truth(s) by means of a somewhat fluid allusion that otherwise would be lost if

Exodus 20:11 were to be fully, exactly paralleled?

Most importantly, why in this end-time passage might God select the “fountains of waters” for special mention and not some other created item among “all that is in them”? The independent research of several scholars can, when placed together, contribute to a theologically and geologically significant response to these questions.

Bible scholar David Aune indicates that the term “fountains” of Revelation 14:7 refers not to artificial constructs but rather to natural water sources flowing from below ground.<sup>5</sup> This qualification supports the claim in Revelation 14:7 that the “fountains of waters” were realities created by God and not by humans.

Wilhelm Michaelis considers several possible explanations for the “fountains of waters” mentioned in Revelation 14:7. In the end, he wonders whether they likely refer to the “fountains of the deep” of Genesis 7:11 and 8:2.<sup>6</sup> We can add that, if so, this would suggest a reference in Revelation 14 to the Genesis judgment Flood account within the Revelation judgment passage.

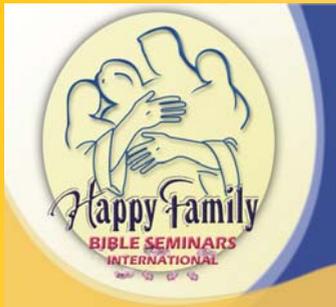
The above possibility is rendered all the more plausible when one considers that the Greek word *p'gas*, used in Revelation 14:7 for “fountains,” is also used for

“fountains of the deep” (Gen. 7:11) in the Greek version of the Old Testament (LXX). Moreover, the concept “fountains of waters” is a universal concept that would include the “fountains of the deep,” which were created by divine wisdom (Prov. 8:27, 28, 30) and were broken open at the Flood (Gen. 7:11). Here the judgment setting of the Revelation 14 phrase “fountains of waters” begins to reveal its importance.

In her recent Ph.D. dissertation, titled *Water Symbolism in John: An Eschatological Interpretation*, Wai-Yee Ng implies that, “John’s use of water symbolism . . . involves implicit allusion rather than explicit citation.” She notes that “Revelation is . . . filled with OT themes, and the two books [Revelation and the Gospel of John] unite in the formulation of a typology that harks back to creation.”<sup>7</sup> These conclusions invite the reader to seek cautiously for possible theological meaning in the allusion in Revelation 14:7.

Regarding specific water symbolism in Revelation, Ng shows that there are three groups of “water” passages in Revelation: “one related to calamities, one to God’s promise of salvation, and one to the consummation.”<sup>8</sup> She indicates that the reference to the fountains or springs of waters in Revelation 14:7 is a passage in the calamity group.<sup>9</sup> Given the immediate context of divine judgment announced by the messenger in Revelation 14, this placement becomes appropriate and helpful for purposes of this essay. The present author suggests that, understood in the calamity context, the reference to fountains of waters in the immediate context of divine judgment may be intended to recall or imply a former event of divine judgment, the biblical Flood, when the fountains of the deep were broken up. If so, the use of “fountains of waters” in the Revelation 14:7 context serves to strengthen the judgment announcement of the angel by recalling that the Lord is indeed a God of judgment, and that the hearers, therefore, should take the message with utmost seriousness.

Recently, theologian Oleg Zhigankov explored the possible meaning of “fountains of waters” in Revelation 14:7. Among other helpful suggestions, he observes



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that the use of the phrase ‘fountains of the water’ bring[s] together the idea of a literal creation and a coming judgment . . . The fact of the unavoidable judgment is confirmed by the reference to another global historical event—the flood.”<sup>10</sup> Here, Zhigankov indicates that the phrase “fountains of waters” is employed to recall the Genesis Flood as confirmatory evidence of the reality of the judgment announced by the angel in Revelation 14:7.

Henry Morris, scientist and bible student, also indicates that the angel uses the words “ ‘fountains of waters’ . . . because of their association with the earlier judgment of the great deluge, when ‘all the fountains of the great deep [were] broken up’ ” (Gen 7:11).<sup>11</sup> “The angel’s cry,” says Morris, “reminded men that as God had created all these things and then had destroyed them once before because of man’s sin, so He was still able to control all things and that another great divine judgment was imminent.”<sup>12</sup> Of the commentators studied, Morris develops the most explicit and broad connections between the phrase “fountains of waters” of Revelation and the biblical Flood.

Reflecting upon the angel’s use of “fountains of waters” in Revelation 14:7, David Fouts, professor of Old Testament, Bryan College, observes that to interpret the angel’s words as recalling the Flood is “certainly supportable in the context of judgment in Revelation 14.”<sup>13</sup> He further wonders whether a parallel might be made between the angel’s use of “fountains of waters,” as discussed by Morris, “with the words of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 24:36–39, wherein end-time judgments are linked with that of Noah and the Flood.”<sup>14</sup>

Most recently, in a Ph.D. dissertation titled “Theology of Judgment in Genesis 6–9,” Chun Sik Park analyzes, among other things, several biblical passages that he considers to be dealing with the theme of judgment in relation to the Flood, including Revelation 14:7.<sup>15</sup> He offers the following conclusion regarding the Revelation passage: “Rev. 14:7 has a terminological link to the Genesis flood narrative (‘the fountains of the deep,’ Gen. 7:11; ‘the fountains of waters’).”<sup>16</sup>

Park insightfully unpacks the connection by focusing on two dimensions of the creative power of God: “While ‘all that is in them’ (Exod. 20:11) reflects God’s global creative power displayed at creation, the corresponding phrase ‘the fountains of waters’ (Rev. 14:7c) reflects God’s global uncreative power displayed at the flood.”<sup>17</sup>

The combined research of these scholars suggests that the phrase “fountains of waters” in Revelation 14:7 points to God’s Flood, thereby endorsing its historical reality, in order to underscore the truth that the Lord is a God both of judgment and of mercy. He is patient “not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9, NASB). But all must take seriously the historical reality of God’s judgment as announced by the angel.

### Practical, contemporary application

Important spiritual, systematic theological, and geological implications flow from the above conclusions. In post-modern science, and even in evangelical circles, the long age evolutionary *method* of the origin of species and the adamant denial of a global Flood (along with the attending fatal spiritual and theological consequences indicated below) remain central working assumptions.<sup>18</sup> This means that individuals living in the end time need to know the truth about the *method* of Creation and whether the Flood was part of actual earth history. What we need to know, God delivers. That the resurrected Lord would put language into His last message to humanity that endorses a six-day *method* of Creation and recalls the biblical Flood remains a masterful and timely divine response to the rise of macroevolutionary theory and its rejection of the Genesis Flood and safeguards central biblical truths identified in the following discussion.

A historical six-day method of Creation is critical for evoking true worship, because a brief, recent, historical Creation preserves the goodness of God who, thereby, does not create by using death, suffering, disease, and predation in a cruel, demonic fashion over millions of years before human sin. Thus, God is shown

## ALL MUST TAKE SERIOUSLY THE HISTORICAL REALITY OF GOD’S JUDGMENT AS ANNOUNCED BY THE ANGEL.

to be profoundly worthy of worship. In addition, a six-day Creation renders the Sabbath a powerful monument to a finished Creation rather than to a world in the process of being created.

A global Flood stands as a necessary complement to the biblical method of Creation. The divinely initiated aquatic catastrophe can account for the formation of major portions of the geologic column after the entrance of sin and death, thus indicating that the fossiliferous geologic column does not require millions of years for its development. This means that the very possibility of a six-day Creation is preserved by the basic results of the Flood. Moreover, the Genesis Flood safeguards other crucial biblical teachings such as the authority of Scripture and, above all, the validity of an atonement based upon the truth that, in earth history, death does not precede sin but is its wage.

Spiritually, in the end time, we sorely need to know the truth about the two key earth history issues discussed above—Creation and the Flood—because the way in which these questions are answered can either establish or undermine living faith in God. Thus, the end-time reaffirmation by Jesus Christ of the concepts of the six-day Creation and the Genesis Flood in the message of the first angel in Revelation 14 is striking indeed, glorifying the wisdom, foresight, faithfulness, loving kindness, and power of God. From this perspective, the passage can be understood as God’s earnest call to everyone to accept these truths for themselves. In this way, God’s significant allusion in Revelation 14:7 to Exodus 20:11 can facilitate grateful and loving worship of the Creator.

In this age, to which all the prophets looked forward with hope, can we do no less than study together, pray together, and seek to understand the messages God has transmitted to enable us to meet the challenges of end time? ■

- 1 The author expresses appreciation to Roland Hegstad for suggestions regarding an earlier version of this essay.
- 2 Jon Paulien is chair of the Department of New Testament at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States.
- 3 See Jon Paulien “Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 9 (Spring–Autumn 1998): 179–86.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 185.
- 5 David Edward Aune, “Revelation 6–16,” in *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 52B (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1998), 828–9.
- 6 Wilhelm Michaelis, “Fountains of Waters,” in Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1954–1967), 112–7.
- 7 Wai-Yee Ng, *Water Symbolism in John: An Eschatological Interpretation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 194. Ng wrote her dissertation at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia under the direction of Moisés Silva, currently the Mary F. Rockefeller Distinguished Professor of New Testament, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts, United States. Ng serves as associate professor of biblical studies at China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong, China.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 187.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Oleg Zhigankov, “Significance of the ‘Fountains of Waters’ in Revelation 14:7,” an unpublished manuscript written in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, United States (revised 2004), 31.
- 11 Henry M. Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), 266.
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 David M. Fouts personal communication to the author, January 13, 2003.
- 14 David M. Fouts personal communication to the author, February 11, 2003.
- 15 Chun Sik Park, “Theology of Judgment in Genesis 6–9” (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2005).
- 16 *Ibid.*, 368.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 347.
- 18 For example, see, Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 188–208; Davis A. Young, *The Biblical Flood* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 311.