

IS GENESIS HISTORY?



The Interviews

Kurt Wise, PhD – Paleontology
Old Archway, Dayton, TN

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KURT WISE AT OLD ARCHWAY, DAYTON, TN

On October 16, 2015, Compass Cinema interviewed Dr. Kurt Wise (PhD in Paleontology from Harvard University) with Dr. Del Tackett at Pocket Wilderness in Dayton, Tennessee.

Understanding the Past

DEL: The arch is just incredible.

KURT: Yeah, this is quite spectacular. This is left over remains of the Dayton Coal and Iron Company built about 100-110 years ago. Back about 100 years ago this was the entrance to a coal mine. It would have gone down at kind of an angle—about a 45 degree angle—down from here. We went past a foundation where there would have been a wench that pulled up the railroad cars—the coal cars from the coal mine. It went down about 200 feet from here, underneath the creek and so on to the Richland Coal seam.

DEL: So that's all collapsed though now.

KURT: Yeah, on the other side of the arch it's collapsed. But somebody in the Dayton Coal and Iron Company had this ability to build spectacular walls—I mean much better than you need to for that. The wall is still there. The mine has collapsed—it's amazing.

DEL: They had a lot of pride in their work.

KURT: Yes, it's beautiful stuff.

DEL: But what's amazing is, if you didn't know that history and if you looked at these rocks, you would think they were very ancient. In fact, if we were in Greece, you might think they were thousands of years old.

KURT: It's hard to tell from just looking at the structure itself. It's certainly helpful to know the local history of the area, then you're like, "Oh. Okay. Now I understand."

DEL: So it's important to know the history of those rocks. Otherwise you'd get it wrong.

KURT: That's right.

DEL: Well, Kurt, then I need for you to do something for me because we've been a lot of places. We've seen a lot of evidence that points back to that historical narrative in Genesis. So could you give us that big picture, because I know that the conventional paradigm looks back in earth history and it's a straight line. A lot of uniform processes and so forth. But the Genesis history is telling us that it's not that uniform, and you see that as more of epochs. Is that correct?

KURT: Yeah, that's a good point. In 2 Peter 3, it talks about people in the latter days saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? for all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' That concept that what you see in the present, what's happening right now, what's happening in the creek down below, what's happening in every place on the earth is the way it's always been. It's always been for all of earth history.

DEL: There's your scoffers.

KURT: Scoffers say that. So the passage goes on to say, 'For this they are willingly ignorant.' They are not just ignorant of these truths. They are purposely rejecting these truths. It lists the Creation and the Flood. These are apparently events, according to the Bible, that aren't like the present. And the neat thing is that's what we see here. You've got events even here like those rocks right up there: that cliff isn't actually in place. That cliff belongs about 1000 feet up. It slid down to its current location. That's a pretty big boulder.

DEL: That's huge. It's massive.

KURT: Now, what kind of process in the present slides blocks that big down? This thing continues for a mile. It actually goes up the other side and down. The whole thing slid down from above—pointing to an event some time ago that's unlike anything in the present. But inside those rocks are yet further evidence of an event before that that's even bigger, even more unlike the present. And then inside those rocks are also fossils of a time period that's very different from the present. So according to the claims of scripture, and according to my own experience, you can't use the present to judge the past—to understand the past.

DEL: And in that passage you're referring to, they willfully ignore that. It implies that it's visible or it implies that it could be seen then.

KURT: That's right. There's evidence in these rocks that scream out. Job says, 'Speak to the earth and it shall tell thee.' When you learn to read the rock—I understand most normal people can't read a rock. It's a rock. A rock is a rock is a rock. But once you learn what a rock is telling you it screams something weird is going on. Something that's very unusual—not understandable from the present.

DEL: So if it's evident to us then—what are the epochs that you see right here? I mean this massive—you call it a boulder—it's huge. So what epochs are you seeing here?

KURT: Well, you've got to go to scripture to find out what it is we're looking at because you can't judge it from the present. There's something much bigger than anything that occurs in the present in there. So that's why I have to go to scripture to find out what happened in the past to try to understand those things.

DEL: And that's the same thing here because if we walked onto this archway and didn't have the history, the real history, we wouldn't have a clue of what this all is. But it's that history that helps us understand it. And that's what you're saying about the history we have in Genesis that helps give us that framework.

KURT: I wasn't there. You weren't there. No one alive on the planet right now was there when these things were happening. But we can consult an eye witness who was there. God was there and He wrote it down. And He tells us in His word that there are some events in the past that you cannot understand from the present. For example, the Flood. That is apparently an event,

according to 2 Peter, that you can't infer from the present. Now, you can tell that something big has occurred in the past, but not specifically a global flood. So one of those things the Bible points out is the Flood, but if you go all the way back to the beginning, you realize that the Bible lays out what I would call epochs of earth history.

Creation & Edenian Epochs

DEL: Major periods of time?

KURT: Just different things happening during each of these epochs. But if you lived in any one of the other epochs you would never understand the previous epoch because it's so different. The first one is the Creation itself. In six days God created the entire universe. He created the planets and the stars and He stretched out the universe with His outstretched arm. That's obviously not happening today. He's not creating planets. In fact, at the end of that passage He says He ended His creation work. Whatever He did in Creation, He stopped and never set it up again. There's no evening and morning in the seventh day—there's no termination of the seventh day. We're still in God's rest from the original Creation. So He did things during that week that have never been seen by humans again. We can't study the present universe and figure out what happened during the Creation week. We need that information from the Bible to know He created and He created by the word of His mouth.

DEL: So that's the first epoch.

KURT: That's the first epoch. It terminates with God, Himself, just simply ceasing to work and so it terminates suddenly. Then we move into what I call the Edenian epoch, the period of time when Adam and Eve are in the Garden of Eden. And it's distinctly different from the Creation because, again, He's sustaining the universe. He's acting in holding the universe together but He's no longer creating things.

DEL: So we have the perfect world here at this point, right?

KURT: And it's very different from the present. We get the impression from that passage, for example, that Adam and Eve, if they had not sinned, would have lived forever. Well, that's weird. It's hard to even conceive of human beings living forever.

DEL: I can't relate to that.

KURT: It's so different from the present. But the passage also implies that even animals would have lived forever, that there was no death of any kind. In fact, God, at the end of His creation week looked at everything He had created and made and, 'behold it was very good.' His impression was, as you put it, perfect. It's somehow a world with no natural evil, no natural disasters, no acts of God as they say. Those things are not occurring. Animals and plants are in mutual symbiosis. There's no disease. There's no decay, if there was—that would be horrible if you could never die but you had disease. That would be hell. So it's a different world—wildly different. How long it lasts, we don't know. Maybe years. But it suddenly terminated with Adam and Eve eating of the

tree of the knowledge of good and evil and God cursing the creation. He changed the rules in the universe. Now, no longer is the sun going to be able to burn forever. No longer are we going to be able to live forever. 'The entire creation groaneth and trevaleteth and pained together until now.' So we enter into a new epoch.

DEL: Yeah, that's a radical change.

KURT: A very radical change. We changed the rules of the entire universe. Somehow the universe could exist forever before that. The sun could burn forever without ever burning out? That's an interesting concept. That operated during the Edenian epoch but never since then.

DEL: So the laws have changed, even the physical laws have changed now.

KURT: The laws of the entire universe.

DEL: So it's hard for us to even imagine what that would be like because we only see the laws that are present.

Ante-Diluvian Epoch & The Flood

KURT: And we wouldn't have come to that conclusion if we didn't have the Word of God. And that's what I think the Word of God has been given to us for. It's giving us information we would never—we know that something different happened but we'd never get what actually happened because we just don't have enough information. But God gives us that information in his word. So we slide into the third epoch of time, what I call the Ante-Diluvian epoch—the period before the Flood and after the Fall of man. And I set it as a separate epoch because it's terminated with the Flood. It's destroyed by the Flood. And we can see the evidence of it in the fossils of the dinosaurs, the trilobites, the nautiloids, the plants that are in these rocks and so on. It's a world that's different than the present. It's got the same natural laws going on, but it's a different set of critters, a different set of plants. It's a little bit warmer earth. The continents are in different positions from what they are now. It looks significantly different.

DEL: And that's what we read in that Peter passage, right, where he says that the Lord destroyed the earth? So that's this major change from the Ante-Diluvian epoch now into something radically different?

KURT: Yeah. In fact, 2 Peter refers to it as 'the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.' It's another world. It's another epoch. It's so different that we need to at least know that there *was* a world. It's seen in the rocks and that verifies it. We can see that there is a difference. Then that global flood destroyed it. The world that was being overflowed with water, perished. Now we move into what I call the Arphaxadian epoch. I love the name of that. Arphaxadian. Now Arphaxad, in the Bible, is the son of Shem. He's born two years after the Flood and lives for 400 years following the Flood. So his lifetime, from my perspective as a geologist, is a really cool period of earth history. Basically the earth has got to recover from a global flood. Everything has

to recover. The atmosphere has to recover. The geology, the rocks have to recover. Plants and animals have to spread across the earth. They have to repopulate. They've only selected a few critters for the Ark. They've got to increase in numbers. All that recovery, it appears, occurred within a few hundred years of the Flood during Arphaxad's life.

DEL: Ok, I have to stop here because the nursery rhyme tells us that the rain came down and the floods came up, and everything just kind of got wet. And you're talking about a major recovery. So what was that recovery doing? What had to recover here?

KURT: Yeah. You bring up something which has always bothered me. Well, as a kid I didn't know it bothered me. I liked that little 'rains came down and the floods came up.' And I guess I probably had that concept of the Flood myself, that it rains 40 days and the waters came up and then the waters go down. And it's called a flood. But now as I learned about floods, I realized you don't have a flood without moving water and destroying things. No, a flood is the rain came and *then* the floods came.

DEL: Just like water in a bathtub.

KURT: Your house is overcome by a flood. You've got what in there? You've got mud in there. You've got things washed down from above. Now if that's what happens on a little flood, what happens if it's a global flood? The Biblical account tells us 'the world that then was being overflowed with water, perished.' Every living organism on the land was destroyed, except those in the Ark. In fact, if you look at the structure of the Hebrew, the implication is that if it wasn't for God protecting the Ark even that would have been destroyed because it talks about the destruction of things and then it talks about 'God remembered Noah.'

DEL: And that's what we see in Peter where it talks about that world being destroyed. So, the Flood was not just soaking everything. This is radical, radical change wasn't it?

KURT: Yeah. If we're right about what we've understood, so far, we've got continents moving, smashing together creating mountains. Mountains are rising to tens of thousands of feet. You've got water washing across entire continents. We've got some of these sandstones here from the Great Smoky Mountains, just a few dozen miles to the east of here. We've got sand grains from the Smokies in the Grand Canyon. They're being carried across the entire continent. We're washing away mountains—tens of thousands of feet of mountains are being washed away in a matter of months. We're ripping tens of thousands of feet of sediment off of the old continents and then depositing thousands of feet of sediment on top of them again. We're looking at earthquakes of astonishing power. When God is serious about taking care of sin, He's serious. It's a complete destruction. This is not a 'the rains came down and the floods came up.'

Post-Flood & Modern Epochs

DEL: So, this changed then from what you call the Ante-Diluvian epoch now into the Post-Flood. And now we're talking about Noah's grandson who has lived 400 years. So that's why you're talking about a lot of recovery. So there must have been a lot of tremors and trembling of the earth. What was that like?

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KURT: Yeah. You take whatever happened in the Flood—it's big. You've got lots of water. You've got humongous earthquakes. You've got humongous volcanos. Things that are incomprehensible to think of in the present. And more or less that period of recovery is a slow decrease in intensity and frequency of those things. So the huge volcanos get smaller and smaller and smaller.

DEL: But they're still pretty big in the beginning?

KURT: Yeah, they're still pretty big for decades and centuries. In fact, the volcanoes that we have today are left over remnants of the Flood. We're really still in the Flood geologically. The motion of rocks that was set in place by the Flood—rocks that are too high, too thick so they're sinking or they're too thin so they're rising—that's going to take 10,000-15,000 years to fully recover from the Flood. Technically, I could extend the Arphaxadian epoch all the way to the present except that probably 80% of all that recovery occurred during his lifetime. So I set that apart as a distinct period. It's kind of like the present but bigger, and it gets bigger and bigger as you go towards the Flood.

DEL: So, we have this, almost like an exponential curve you're talking about. So that period—would you say, around 400 years—that's that period where there's still a lot of trembling going on, but then it starts to bottom out?

KURT: That's right. So I like to say – here's a profound statement: the Flood is probably the wettest period in earth history. And then the earth has dried out since, and it's still drying. The Flood had the biggest earthquakes in earth history, and the earthquakes have been decreasing in intensity ever since. The Flood had the biggest volcanos in earth history, and they've been decreasing ever since. The hugest storms—we have storms that are probably continent-size or bigger during the Flood, and they decreased in size to tiny little hurricanes that we have today. And so everything – climate, temperature – everything is bringing the earth back to the original original design of the earth.

DEL: Would it be in that period that we would see the Ice Age for example?

KURT: Yes. Ironically, the Ice Age turns out to be, in our modeling, a consequence of the heating of the water during the Flood. And the process of cooling the water to recover the earth's water temperatures to what they were before is the air conditioner that generated the Ice Age.

DEL: So we have the heated water from the Flood, but now in this Post-Flood era, that heated water now is generating a lot of atmospheric issues.

KURT: It's generating a lot of water. Water is evaporating off the oceans. That cools the oceans. The water is then moving over the continents and dropping enormous volumes of water producing huge lakes, lakes for example that would fill up and then burst through their dams and produce something like the Grand Canyon. And so you've got lakes like this all over the world. Now, in certain places the oceans are going to cool enough that the rain is going to come down as snow. But coming down so rapidly and without break that it can't melt, and it accumulates to thick sequences of ice centered on the Hudson Bay and centered on Antarctica until they're miles thick. And then when the oceans have cooled enough that that rain generation system stopped,

then those glaciers collapsed under their own weight, melted back to the current position—and they're continuing to melt. This thing, global warming...the earth is still recovering from the Flood. It's still recovering. It's the consequences that came from the cooling of the oceans following the Flood.

DEL: So, that was really a fairly tumultuous era right then, but then you have one final epoch. Is that where we are today?

KURT: Yeah, our present epoch. So in the Modern epoch, you can study present processes and understand things fairly readily back to within a couple of centuries of the Flood. Then things get really weird and so I set that as a separate epoch, something that you have to put on a different set of thinking caps to understand.

DEL: I like that because this epoch we're in is pretty much a static epoch. Things are fairly stable and so that would lead one to think that these processes, if you take them all the way back...

KURT: Precisely. You take the present processes and extend them into the past—and that's what 2 Peter says, 'All things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' So they take the current rates: 'if you did this much work in a short amount of time, how much time would it take to do all of it?' It would take a long time to do what happened very quickly in the Flood. And so that's the error people make. It's reasonable. Take the present and extend it into the past. Not unreasonable. But there's evidence in the rocks themselves that you can't do that. So you need to go to the Bible to find out the necessary information to reconstruct it. And looking at it the other way, if you start from the Bible you only get the beginning of the story. God has given us the ability to read the rocks and fill in the rest of the story we need to fully understand the Flood. We start with the Bible, but then we go to the rocks. Speak to the rocks and they shall tell what has happened in the past.