

2. That it would be contrary to all analogy that a universal submergence of the continents should be brought about within the space of a few weeks and that they should emerge again sufficiently for man's occupation before the lapse of a year. Such changes have proceeded slowly for the most part, by centuries rather than by days, by millenniums rather than by weeks. If a widespread convulsion such as seems to be indicated in Genesis, had been compressed into a year, it would have made such a commotion that no ark or ship of any kind could have lived on the surface of it, but would inevitably have been wrecked a hundred times over.

3. That even if they could be gotten together, no ark could ever be built large enough to contain representatives of all existing land animals, with the necessary provision for such a mighty collection, numbering, as they do, tens of thousands of species.

These or similar objections have been regarded by not a few as decisive against the historical character of the Biblical narrative.

Some scholars of eminence are therefore disposed to look for the key to its origin and meaning in an altogether different direction. The Biblical narrative is supported by the traditions of almost all the great families of mankind throughout the world. But so far from regarding this fact as a guarantee of its historical truth, they find in it an argument that the whole story is nothing more or less than a nature-myth. The general theory of myths is that when stories of similar tenor are found current at widely different points, they are but poetic renderings of some familiar fact of nature everywhere observable. The sun, moon and stars have constantly been personified and their changing phenomena presented as the varying experiences of sentient beings, either human or divine. Some natural fact, therefore, they urge, such as the sunset amid clouds or the appearance of the crescent moon above the cloudrack like a boat carrying a passenger across the waste of waters, must lie behind all these stories of a deluge. The rest