

Professor Russell W. Maatman, a member of the department of chemistry at Dordt College, asserts in his book *The Bible, Natural Science and Evolution*, that there is considerable mineralogical evidence that the early atmosphere was largely carbon dioxide, and that it was almost totally devoid of oxygen (in contrast to our present atmosphere which, as we have mentioned, contains 20.9% oxygen). Such an atmosphere would have been capable of holding a great deal of water, in the form of thick clouds. Thus the initial atmosphere or "firmament" would have provided a means of dividing between water above the surface of the earth, and water covering the surface of the earth.

Event #6 (recorded in Genesis 1:9-10) -- God's Mediate Creation of dry land, by the structuring of earth's surface into land and seas.

At the present time, of the total surface area of the earth (197,000,000 square miles), 29% (or 57,000,000 square miles) is dry land, and 71% (or 140,000,000 square miles) is covered with water. In primeval times, as we learn from these verses, the entire surface area of the earth was covered with water.

The separation of dry land from water would of necessity involve the uplifting of enormous land masses, with the concomitant creation of deep ocean basins. It is instructive to note that, at present, the average depth of the oceans is much greater than the average elevation of the land. The average depth of the oceans is about 2 1/2 miles, while the average elevation of the land is about 1/2 mile. Thus if the continents were entirely eroded away, and the material composing them placed in the ocean, the earth would be covered by a universal sea approximately 1.8 miles deep.

Whether one holds the theory that the continents are presently where they always have been, or the theory that whole land masses have drifted to form our present continents, is not crucial to the essential interpretation of the Genesis account. However, it is interesting to note that twice in these verses (verses 9 and 10) we read of the gathering together of the waters into one place. Is this significant?

This form of expression *could* be thought to suggest the idea that only one land mass existed in the distant past; and that later the single land mass broke up to form our present continents. This is called the Theory of Continental Drift, a theory which has practically swept the field of geology