

Plate Tectonics -Some Interesting Comments
Compiled By Glen W. Chapman November 1999

Gondwanaland:

What it means to Latter day Saints

(Taken From The New Era magazine March 1971)

An earth with no Atlantic Ocean or Caribbean or Mediterranean Sea as we know them would be a strange and different world. So would a world with just one super-continent, with all of the land masses joined together.

But that's just what Gondwanaland stands for. In the words of a dictionary (only one year old but already out of date), the name means "hypothetical continent thought by some geologists to have linked land masses that later separated to form parts of South America, Africa, India, and Australia."

Actually, over the years only a few scholars ever accepted the theory, and they were generally poo-hooed by their contemporaries. Consequently, any person-scientist or not-who thought the idea had possibilities was usually regarded as a little peculiar.

But we know now that the strange idea of a Gondwanaland wasn't so strange after all.

For believers in the Bible, the idea had always stirred up controversy, simply because no one quite knew how to interpret the biblical passage of scripture that seemed to suggest that at one time the world had been divided: "And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days was the earth divided." (Gen. 10:25.)

This problem of interpretation was genuine, however, because the period of Babel-confusion of tongues, dispersion of man, and the days of Peleg were closely grouped together and seemed to be in the same general time period. Hence, some biblical scholars said that the word *divided* referred to the dispersion of man, which was described seven verses later. Other biblical scholars said that the word meant a physical and geographical division of the lands of the earth. But if the date of such a geographical division of the earth's once super-continent had been and still is in question, certainly Latter-day Saints never questioned the understanding that there was once a super-continent.

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord gave additional and amazingly clear information describing past and future events concerning the earth's history.

Here is one reference:

"And he [the Savior at the Second Coming] shall utter his voice out of Zion, and he shall speak from Jerusalem, and his voice shall be heard among all people;

"And it shall be a voice as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, which shall break down the mountains, and the valleys shall not be found.

"He shall command the great deep, and it shall be driven back into the north countries, and the islands shall become one land;

"And the land of Jerusalem and the land of Zion shall be turned back into their own place, and the earth shall be like as it was in the days before it was divided." (D&C 133:21-24.)

In 1885 the Austrian geologist Eduard Suess theorized on the existence of a super-continent that he called Gondwanaland.

On November 3, 1831, at Hiram, Ohio, the Prophet Joseph received the above revelation with its great truth: "... and the earth shall be like as it was in the days before it was divided."

The fact that Latter-day Saints have been informed for such a long period of time of the once super-continent is extraordinary, but not nearly as extraordinary as is our awareness of that which is yet to come.

The Christian has the keys for such an understanding within his Bible, but few understand the full meaning and sequence of meanings of such biblical phrases as "a new heaven and a new earth." Nor does the world understand and believe the numerous prophetic passages that discuss and prefigure changes in the earth. (For a start, see Isa. 40:4-5; 65:17-25.) And those Christians who still cling to a belief in an actual millennium are a dwindling number.

Note, however, the additional confirmation and information revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith concerning some of the things that will happen to the earth "We believe . . . that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory." (Article of Faith 10.)

To receive paradisiacal glory is to return to the conditions of paradise, or the Edenic period. In the words of Elder James E. Talmage, ". . . the description of Eden is to us as the story of another world, an orb of a higher order of existence, wholly unlike this dreary planet. Yet we learn that Eden was in reality a feature of our planet...." (Articles of Faith, p.375.)

Aside from this aspect, many indeed are other references in the Doctrine and Covenants

referring to the changing of the earth from its present state into another condition, references to mountains being made low and rough places made smooth. The earth in its present condition will give way to its "paradisiacal" period, and that in turn will give way to another, until at some point, in the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "the earth, in its sanctified and immortal state, will be made like unto a crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon, whereby all things pertaining to an inferior kingdom, or all kingdoms of the lower order, will be manifest to those who dwell on it".

(D&C 130:9.)

Many passages refer to the changing of the earth. After we read some of them (see D&C 45, 88, 133), it becomes clear that moving the earth's landmass back into one super-continent is only one of many changes to occur.

Brother Jim Jensen's recent discovery of a Lystrosaurus jawbone in the Antarctic is a great one. It helps scientists confirm their theory relating to the earth's past. But understanding the earth's past is only part of the story. We as Latter-day Saints should know that the so-called Gondwanaland will exist again.

This has many implications affecting our lives, not the least of which is this:

If these points mentioned in scripture having to do with the physical geography of the earth are true, what does it say for those countless scriptural references that encourage, plead with, even command us to *live righteously, pray always, do good to those around us, share the gospel with others, and live in the aware-ness that eventually we all will face a day of accounting?*

The great personal impact that comes from reviewing something like the Gondwanaland story should be renewed faith in scripture and renewed determination to live in harmony with all of our Father's business. -JMT

Statements on Earth History By Orson Pratt

Geologists may study year after year, all the best works they can obtain concerning the geological phenomenon of Our globe. They may speculate and say the earth is millions of years old, founding their speculations upon geological appearances they may say that it must have passed through successive changes for millions of years. But after all, what do they really know? They may have very imperfect ideas in relation to the surface of the earth.

Supposing persons, under the influence of the Spirit of the Living God, should behold how many of these changes have been brought about and how great revolutions have taken place.... Supposing they should still further see by the power of the Holy Ghost this dry land all in one place after a few thousand years separate into great continents - not by long gradual pheromone in the nature of geological periods, but by the immediate power of the Great Creator. Supposing again that this ocean should change from its location and land in many places. Supposing again they should see in visions, mountains sink, forming deep valleys--and valleys rise up and form mountains. Supposing again, that they were to see many parts of these continents sink and lakes appear in the sunken portions, and supposing too they were to behold great and important changes, at different times, wrought upon dry land., and upon the port called ocean changing by degrees. Now, a geologist would say that all these things, and all these revolutions were brought about by gradual and slow changes while they were really accomplished in a comparatively short period of time. But all these great phenomena could also be brought about in a few thousand years. By the good will and pleasure of the Creator, the earth passes through great changes by His decree... Give me the privilege of being taught by that Being who knows and comprehends everything pertaining to the creation and know the changes that it has undergone and how long the earth has continued in its present condition."

Journal of Discourses, Volume 9, pp.234.

What may have taken place millions of ages before the world was organized temporally for man to inhabit is not revealed; but so far as present change is concerned, that it took place about 6,000 years ago, man was the first being that came upon the earth and inhabited a body of flesh and bones.

Masterful Discourses of Orson Pratt pp. 65-85.

America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and many islands of the sea were all one land. The dividing of the earth into continents and islands was mostly accomplished in the days of Peleg who was born 101 years after the flood and died 339 years after that memorial destruction, Many changes were made in the days of Enoch, and no doubt the flood occasioned still greater; but we must look to the days of Peleg for the division of the earth into continents and islands and the letting in of the water upon equatorial regions.

The greatest convulsion took place at the time of its division into continents and islands, John describes it as the greatest earthquake that had ever happened since men were upon the earth not only affecting the surface by casting down mountains, and exalting valleys, but causing the very continents and islands themselves to flee away.

Ether truly told them of all things from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of the land it became a chosen land above all other lands a chosen land of the Lord,

Masterful Discourses of Orson Pratt

Spiritual Knowledge given on the Days of Peleg

"You Shall Not Be Confounded"

SENT OUT TO PREACH WHEN A BOY-FIRST EXPERIENCE IN PREACHING--QUESTIONED BY AN INFIDEL--
ANSWER GIVEN BY THE LORD.

One of the most astonishing attestations of the promise which the Lord makes to His servants, that they "shall not be confounded," that I have ever heard, was related to me by an experienced missionary, in whom I place great confidence, and for whose character I have great respect.

The incident and attendant circumstances, as nearly as I can recollect, were as follows, and I am sure I give the same in a manner substantially as related to me:

Brother A --- first heard the gospel when a youth, in his native country-England. He was soon convinced of its truth, was baptized at the age of eighteen, and immediately after his baptism was ordained an Elder, and sent forth to preach the gospel. He was an unlettered, unsophisticated, bashful youth, one of the last, it would have been thought, to be selected to preach the gospel.

He started forth and arrived at a strange village, where, at a late hour, and after some interesting adventures, he was taken in by a kind-hearted man and his wife, who made him very comfortable.

On the next day he conversed with them upon the gospel. They thought it remarkable to see such a boy as he was, out as a missionary of a new religion, became interested., and asked him to hold a meeting in their house.

He had never preached in public, but he said he would do the best he could. The appointment was spread, and the house was full at the appointed hour. The young Elder astonished himself at the ease with which he preached a long discourse on the first principles of the gospel.

Among those who had come to meeting was a hardened infidel, who was a very cunning reasoner, and who had made it a practice for many years to argue against the divinity of

the scriptures. Nothing pleased him more than to draw -some minister into a debate, and then to present some of his "unanswerable" arguments against the Bible. He had vanquished every minister in the village and every itinerant preacher who had held meetings there for years whom he could succeed in drawing into a debate

When the young missionary had ceased preaching some of the audience commenced to ask him questions Presently the infidel, evidently thinking to easily vanquish so weak an adversary, commenced with his usual routine of questions, and at length asked:

"So you believe the flood actually drowned all the animals in the world except those in the ark?"

"Yes, sir, "answered the Elder.

"We know that, not very 'long after the flood, many kinds of animals were found in various parts of the world at a great distance from 'where the ark landed, and even upon islands of the sea, far from the mainland, and under such circumstances as would render the theory of transportation by human means an absurdity. Now, how did those animals come to exist in the different and distant islands and continents?"

This question was the infidel's "trump card." At the right juncture in his debates he always asked it, and had never yet met with a minister, or any other Bible believer, who could satisfactorily answer it.

The young missionary felt his utter inability to answer this question. In trying to frame a reply, he sat gazing abstractedly at the ceiling of the room. The audience who remained knew that this was the great argument of the infidel, and did not, for a moment, suppose that the boyish preacher could meet it.

Suddenly there appeared before the young missionary's eyes, as if it were suspended in the air, a scroll. On the scroll appeared, in brilliant golden letters, these words: "In the days of Peleg the earth was divided." (Gen. x., 25). Instantly an explanation of the infidel's problem burst upon his mind.

He calmly and deliberately proceeded to explain that, prior to the days of Peleg, this whole earth was one vast continent, inhabited in its various portions, with different kinds of animals; that in the days of Peleg this vast continent was broken up into smaller divisions of land, islands, etc., and that, in this manner, the animals upon its surface accompanied the land in its divisions.

The infidel was confounded, the multitude astonished, and the young, illiterate missionary triumphant. Several remembered the passage of scripture, and none could gainsay the missionary's explanation. The latter, however, had no knowledge of any such a passage in the Bible, as he had read but very little of it, and, had the answer not come to him by revelation, lie would have been confounded.

The scroll was so plainly visible to him that it seemed as though others could see it, but they did not.

From book Four Faith Promoting Classics

A String of Pearls 1882, pp. 82

Bookcraft, Salt Lake City, 1968

Comments by Joseph Smith

This earth was organized or formed out of other planets which were broken up₈ and remodeled and made into the one on which we live. (Words of Joseph Smith p. 60)

Destruction of other Worlds From Ancient New Testament Period Apocryphal Writings

From Dr Hugh Nibley

"The *Pistis Sophia*, continuing the Egyptian teachings, [gives us] the picture of a constant remixing going on in the universe in which old, worn-out, contaminated substances, the refuse of worn-out worlds and kingdoms, is first thrown out on the scrap-heap and returned to chaos as "dead" matter, then melted down in a dissolving fire for many years, by which all the impurities are removed from it, and by which it is "improved," and is ready to be "poured from one kind of

body into another."

This whole process by which souls as well as substances are "thrown back into the mixing," is under the supervision of Melchizedek, the great re-processor, purifier, and preparer of worlds. He takes over the refuse of defunct worlds or souls, and under his supervision five great Archons process (literally "knead") it, separating out its different components, each one specializing in particular elements, which they thus recombine in unique and original combinations, so that no new world or soul is exactly like any other...

With all its perfect unity and harmony, the system [of worlds] presents a scene not of monotonous uniformity but rather of endless and delightful variety: "They are all different from each other, and he has not made one of them superfluous; hence each one has good things to exchange with its neighbors." At a new creation there is a reshuffling of elements, like the rearranging of notes in the musical scale to make a new composition."

It is even suggested, as we have noted, that old worlds may be dismantled to supply stuff for the making of newer and better ones.

"Treasures in the **Heavens**," pp.82, From book Nibley on Timely And The Timeless , Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University

"All spaces were broken and confused at the time of the transition from old worlds to new."
Gospel of Truth 26:15-16

"Every new creation leaves behind the matter of its old ages"

See Schmidt & McDermot, Books of Jeu and the Untitled Text

"There is no permanence in matter, which is always undergoing change, as worlds come into existence and pass away.

Gospel of Philip in NHLE, pp. 131-151

"Creation is organization and God is ever bringing order into the universe and He is progressively ever preparing and renewing worlds for the righteous."

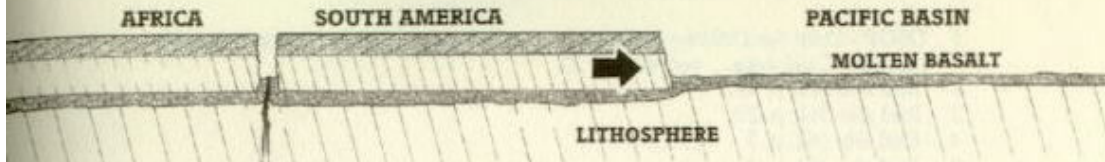
Papyrus Berolinensis 8502

God spares some worlds from dismantling until they have fulfilled their purpose.
(Psalms of Thomas 2:30-31.)

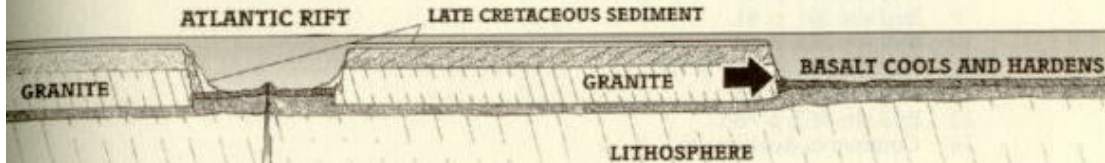
"God creates worlds and destroys worlds, and you too will be able to create worlds and to destroy worlds."

The Zohar

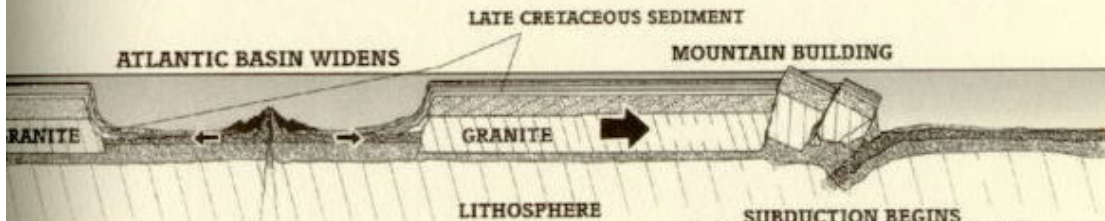
**EARTH'S SPIN RIGHT-TO-LEFT
CONTINENTS MOVE OPPOSITE TO SPIN DIRECTION**



IMPACT OPENS RIFT AND REMOVES PACIFIC GRANITE
EXTRUDES IRON AND GOLD FROM THE CORE, FORMS DIAMOND FLUMES



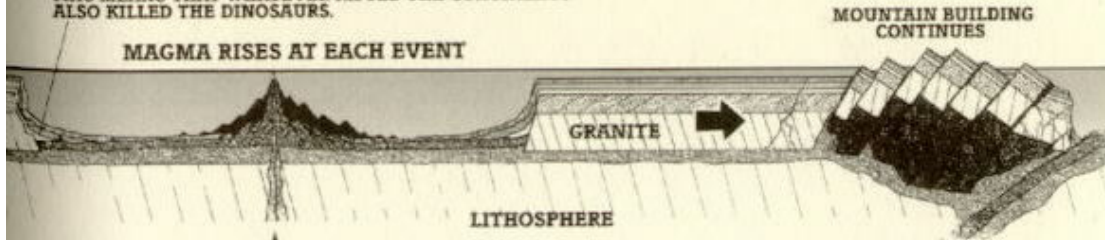
RIFT EXTENDS TO CORE



SUBDUCTION BEGINS
AS CONTINENT OVERLAYS THINNER
BASALTIC OCEAN-BOTTOM CRUST.

SUBDUCTION IS NOT DRIVEN BY 3-MILE-THICK OCEAN-BOTTOM MOVEMENT.
IT IS CAUSED BY THE FORCE OF THE MOVING 30-MILE-THICK CONTINENT.

D.S.D.P. DATA PROVES LATE CRETACEOUS SEDIMENT
IS OLDEST IN POST-RIFT SEDIMENTARY COLUMN
MEANING IT WAS DEPOSITED JUST AFTER THE RIFT.
THIS SEDIMENTARY LAYER COVERS THE DINOSAURS
WHEREVER FOUND ON THE CONTINENTS.
THIS MEANS THAT WHATEVER RIFTED THE CONTINENTS
ALSO KILLED THE DINOSAURS.



SUBDUCTION INTENSIFIES

MAGMA RISES FROM
MOJO AND LITHOSPHERE