Book reviews

A Creationist Review and Preliminary Analysis of the History, Geology, Climate, and Biology of the Galápagos Islands
by Todd Charles Wood

Center for Origins Research (CORE)
Issues in Creation Number 1. Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR. 2005

Pages 241pp **$36.00 (US).**

ISBN 1-59752-180-9

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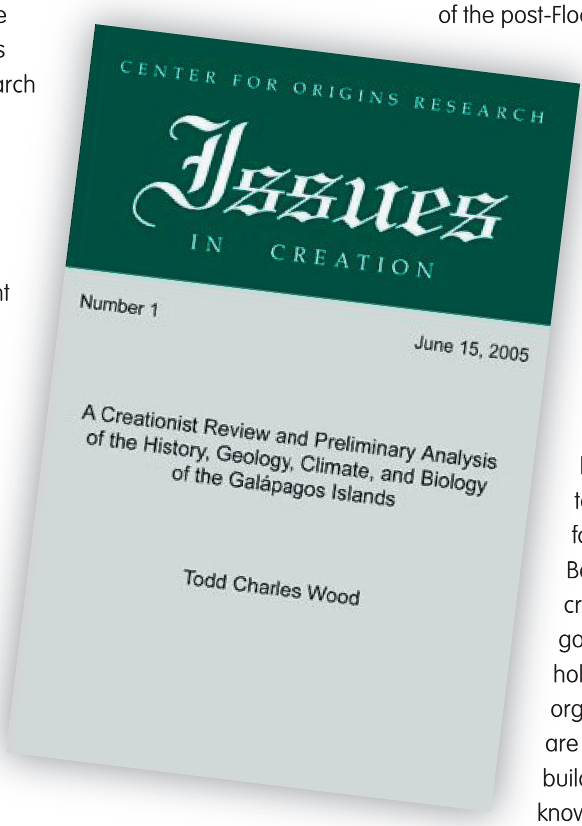

This book is the first of what sets out to be a long series of monograph-length works published by the Center for Origins Research at Bryan College in Dayton, Tennessee, USA. According to Dr Kurt Wise, editor of CORE Issues in Creation, the series "has been created to publish any monograph in any discipline … which substantially contributes to the systematic development of a positive, young-age creation model" (Series Introduction).

Dr Wood's book offers a preliminary creationist interpretation of the Galápagos Islands, which "have long served as an example of, and apologetic for, evolution". This soft cover book is divided into five chapters with 241 pages, 45 figures, six tables, one appendix, and eight colour plates. Chapter one gives a general introduction to the geographical and historical setting of the Galápagos Islands, reviews the history of creationist comments on the islands, and lays out a plan of attack for the rest of the book. Most striking, however, are Dr Wood's introductory comments regarding the "modern myth of the Galápagos as a catalyst to the discovery of evolution".

In chapter two, Dr Wood continues his discussion of this myth and concludes that "the relationship of Darwin's intellectual development to the islands has been overstated". According to Dr Wood, Darwin's development of evolutionary theory came in two stages: 1) transmutation (i.e. species are not fixed entities but have the capability to change from one species to another); and 2) natural selection as the primary mechanism to explain transmutation. After a thorough review of Darwin's own writings on the subject, Dr Wood makes a convincing argument that Darwin's visit to the Galápagos contributed to his acceptance of transmutation but not his ideas on natural selection. This is a striking claim because of persistent myths to the contrary.

Chapter three gives a thorough, yet at times technical, review of the geology and climate of the Galápagos Islands. Dr Wood brilliantly applies the Catastrophic Plate Tectonics model of Austin *et al* (1994) to the specific geology of the Galápagos and concludes that the islands are entirely post-Flood in origin. The climate section of this chapter focuses on the extreme climate variations of the modern islands produced by the El Niño Southern Oscillation. Most interesting, however, is Dr Wood's discussion of the post-Flood climate of the Galápagos and his provisional acceptance of the occurrence of extreme precipitation immediately following the Flood. Chapters one to three of this book are truly impressive, but Dr Wood's major contribution comes in chapter four.

In chapter four, Dr Wood "substantially advances the entire discipline of creation biology with his application of baraminological techniques to the Islands' flora and fauna" (Wise, Series Introduction). Baraminology is the study of God's created kinds or baramins. The goal of baraminology is to identify holobaramins (groups of known organisms that share continuity and are bounded by discontinuity) by building up monobaramins (groups of known organisms that share continuity, without regard to discontinuity with other organisms) and breaking up apobaramins (groups of known organisms bounded by discontinuity, without regard to internal continuity of its members). Dr Wood far surpasses this goal by presenting several new baraminological analyses that include the discovery of seven new holobaramins and ten new monobaramins. This chapter also presents intriguing creationist interpretations of mediated design versus degeneration, biological imperfection, and Galápagos biogeography.

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Chapter five outlines the major conclusions reached by the study, including the assertion that "rather than being good examples of evolution, the biology and geology of the islands are consistent with a young-earth creationist model of earth and life history". Dr Wood also gives many practical suggestions for future creationist research in this and other chapters. Chapter five is more than just a summary, however, because Dr Wood has one more analysis up his sleeve. This final analysis looks for separate evidence of adaptation and radiation in six groups of Galápagos organisms frequently attributed to adaptive radiation. Dr Wood concludes that only Darwin's finches show clear evidence of adaptive radiation, whereas several other groups show evidence of radiation but not adaptation. The latter suggests that radiation can occur without environmental adaptation, a finding consistent with the young-earth creation model.

The book ends with 32 pages of references and an appendix outlining the use of multidimensional scaling in baraminology. The 520 individual references listed in this book represent an extremely thorough coverage of relevant creationist and non-creationist literature, and should serve as a valuable resource for future researchers. I did, however, discover one minor error in the references section. Leonard Brand's 1997 book (see References of this review) was cited on page 123 of the monograph but was not listed in the references section. I also found two sentences in the book that were missing a single word. Finally, I find that several of the black and white photographs and colour plates are of a slightly inferior quality. These minor problems, however, in no way detract from the overall quality of the book. This monograph represents a major contribution to creation science and goes a long way in advancing the young-age creation model. Every serious creation scientist must read this book. Because of Dr Wood's smooth and easy-to-read style, this somewhat technical work can also be read by anyone who has even a casual interest in the young-earth creation model. This book is available for purchase at the CORE Issues website: http://www.bryancore.org/issues/index.html.

References

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