

Bible and the Headlines: Splitsville

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One of the movies premiering at this year's Cannes Film Festival was "Splitsville." The title says it all. The main characters have decided to go their separate ways and the remainder of the film tracks their success. Not to be outdone by a film festival, the map of Africa is premiering its own version of Splitsville. This geological parting is making headlines.

The May 27th edition of Forbes featured, "Superplume Beneath Continent Is Splitting Africa Apart." A superplume is a giant column of abnormally hot lava. Through analysis of escaping gases scientists discovered, "... a superplume lies beneath East Africa driving active tectonics ... separating the Somali plate and the Horn of Africa from the rest of the continent." This suggests parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Malawi will be a new island someday.

On June 13 the meteorological website Meteored announced, "A Giant Bubble Of Incandescent Rock Has Been Discovered Under Africa That Could Split The Continent." The article features highlights of a study published in the journal Geophysical Research Letters. The research paper, "... presents the first conclusive geological evidence of a superplume rising from the boundary between the Earth's core and mantle, extending beneath East Africa." This process means, "... within 5 to 10 million years, East Africa could break away to give rise to a new ocean."

The science website, IFLScience looked at geological Splitsville on a global scale in its June 12th article titled, "Expanding Earth: The Strange (Pre-Tectonics) Hypothesis that the Earth Is Expanding Like a Balloon." This new theory offers a fresh explanation for the separation between Africa and South America which "... were once together before the breakup of supercontinent Pangea." The hypothesis offers an explanation for the current position of the continents, but it does not explain where the planet is gaining the material necessary to expand.

Splitsville is also present in the Bible. Though God's revelation does not use the relatively modern term "Pangea" (which scholars created from the Ancient Greek word "pan" meaning "all or entire" and "Gaea" meaning "Mother Earth"), it does reveal that there was a time when all land was formed into a single continent (Gen 11:1-2). At some point after the Flood, the continents began to separate. This geological event is noted in the genealogical record of God's people, "Two sons were born to Eber: One was named Joktan (Junior) and the other was named Peleg (earthquake), because in his time the earth was divided" (Gen 10:25 and 1Ch 1:19-20).

The continents' current locations, even the Splitsville predicted by recent headlines, are the results of God's plan. The people of Ancient Athens were told, "From one man (Adam) God made all the nations to inhabit the whole earth; and God marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands" (Acts 17:26). God is not bothered with the Splitsville between continents. Rather God is concerned with the Splitsville between Himself and people. After their geography lesson, the Athenians were told, "Now God commands all people everywhere to repent because he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man (Jesus) he has appointed" (Act 17:30-31). The Bible tells how Splitsville is wiped off the map: "Jesus unites all things on earth or in heaven with himself, having made peace with God through the blood of his cross" (Col 1:20).