

Introduction

These chapters tell the most incredible historical account that is known to man. God meted out a judgment of world-wide proportions on the earth because of the systemic wickedness of mankind. This historical event is the basis for hundreds of flood myths in cultures throughout the world. The flood narrative from the Gilgamesh Epic is one such myth.

The following notes divide the account into three sections—before, during, and after.

1. Before: Entrance into the Ark, 7:1-9, 13-16

Noah was instructed to take 7 pairs of every clean animal, one pair of every unclean animal, and 7 pairs of every bird into the ark. This he faithfully did (7:5).

Note that Noah was 600 years old when the flood started! Actually his age is used as the time marker for the flood.

Finally when all the animals and people were inside, 7:16 tells us that God shut the door of the ark.

2. During: The Flood Itself, 7:10-12, 7:17-20, 7:24, 8:1-14**A. Duration – About One Year**

1. The flood started in Noah's 600th year, second month, 17th day of the month (7:11).
2. 40 days and nights of "rain" (7:4, 12). This included not just rain as we know it, but heaven's "flood gates" and the fountains of the deep. The water canopy fell, and water under the earth spurted up from beneath.
3. For 150 days the waters remained on the earth (7:24). This includes the 40 above. Apparently, the depth of the water continued to increase even after the major outpouring of water stopped (7:18).
4. The ark came to rest in the Ararat region in the seventh month, 17th day of the month, or five months after the flood began. This agrees with the 150 days mentioned above.
5. The waters decreased from then until the 10th month (2 months and 14 days later or about 74 days later), at which point the tops of the mountains began to be seen.
6. After 40 days, Noah started his tests to see if they could leave the ark. This was accomplished with a raven and a dove. The testing time took $40 + 7 + 7 + 7$ (two periods of seven plus "yet another seven days" in 8:10) for a total of 61 days that are mentioned explicitly. There are an additional 28 or 29 days after the 40 days until the doves were sent out.
7. So in the 601st year, in the first month, and the first day of the month Noah knew the ground was dried, and he opened the door of the ark (8:13).
8. It was not until about 57 days later that Noah and family actually left the ark, when the earth was basically dried, at the second month and 27th day of the month.

The end-to-end length of the flood is 1 year and 11 days (600.2.17 to 601.2.27). If we add up the days listed above as a check, we get $150 + 74 + 40 + 29 + 21 + 57 = 371$ days. This agrees with a 360-day year with 11 additional days. Basically a whole year of world history was wiped out by the flood.

(Note: We have been using a month of 30 days for our computations, but a lunar month, which was used in ancient times, is more like 29.5 days. Some major correction to the calendar would have to take place occasionally, for every year would lose about 365.25 minus $[29.5 \times 12, \text{ or } 354] = 11.25$ days. This is somewhat like our leap year correction for the 365-day calendar.)

The Institute for Creation Research has a lot of writing on what the flood would have done to the earth, and how it plays a key role in interpreting geological discoveries today. It obviously would have had a huge impact on geography, judging by the great damage

caused by small local floods that we have witnessed in our day (e.g., from Hurricane Katrina breaching the levees in New Orleans).

B. Spatial Extent – World-Wide

We say the flood was "universal," and not "local." Some interpreters cannot see clear to believe in a world-wide flood, so they limit it to the Mesopotamian region. There are several reasons why this cannot be the case:

1. Why did not Noah simply move out of the region?
2. Why did the animals need to be saved, for many of them would not have been in the region?
3. The water was higher than the mountaintops by 15 cubits, or about 22 feet. Since water seeks its own level, if it were over the top of the mountain, it would run down the other side and fill that up too!
4. God's purpose in the flood was to judge humankind on the whole earth because of the wickedness (Gen. 6:6-7, 11-13, 7:4).
5. The fact that the flood was caused by a huge outpouring of water from above and beneath would indicate a world-wide cataclysm.
6. The size of the ark. A small flood would have required a smaller ark. Actually, as mentioned above, the ark would not have been needed at all.
7. The New Testament gives plain evidence that the flood was universal. 2 Peter 3:3-7 affirms that the "world...perished." The Lord Jesus Christ affirms in Matthew 24:37-39 that all were taken away.
8. On a simple reading, the Scripture portrays the event as world-wide. If it is inerrant (and it is) then its portrayal should not be questioned.

C. Result – Massive Judgment, 7:21-23

The result of the flood was, as designed, the death of air-breathing creatures. 1 Peter 3:20 tells us that only 8 people were saved—the remainder of the people on the earth died.

3. After: Exit from the Ark, 8:15-22

God spoke directly to Noah and told him to leave the ark and bring out the animals. After so doing, Noah built an altar and offered from among the extra clean animals a sacrifice to God.

God then promised that He would not destroy the earth again in the way that He had done so in the flood. However, note 8:21 where God again said man's heart is wicked from his youth—a commentary that still applies today.

He also promised what we call "limited uniformitarianism" in the natural cycle. The seasons and day and night would not cease. I say "limited" uniformitarianism because 2 Peter 3:4 tells us of unbelievers who subscribe to a kind of "total uniformitarianism" in which they believe all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. They stake their futures on this—they say that Christ is not coming back, and they interpret the present on this basis—that science can be based on the principle that the past is the key to understand/predict the future. But obviously, creation and the flood were past supernatural interventions by God into world history. It is not the case that "all things continue as they were" for God has caused many singularities by His direct, miraculous intervention.

Conclusion

The universal flood is important for Bible-believers to uphold, just like the creation account. If we cannot trust the opening chapters of our Bible, then we cannot trust any of it. But God has ensured that it was written down and accurately transmitted to us. In addition, the flood account is not something of which to be ashamed, as if it were a myth. It really did happen, despite all the denials made by people today. Third, it is an example of how God can and will judge the world just as easily as He created it. He will do so again, though the next time with a world-wide tribulation, followed by the millennial kingdom, at the conclusion of which the earth will be destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:7, 10, 11, 12). MAP