

Text: Genesis 7:1-8:22

Title: The Global Deluge

Truth: God judged sinful mankind, but extended grace to Noah.

Date/Location: October 9, 2022 at FBC (rev. from 12/18/2005)

Introduction

These chapters tell of a most incredible historical account. 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 stories in cultures throughout the world. The flood narrative from the Gilgamesh Epic is one such story. This event also provides a very plausible explanation as the cause or source of many of the topographical features that we see today like deposition layers, canyons, ocean basins, etc. as well as evidence of marine life in places far distant from present oceans.¹ It also seems to explain the massive amount of fossil fuel material that is discovered throughout the world—it being created by the rapid destruction and compression of a millennia and a half of flourishing growth on the planet.

Some terminology: the word *antediluvian* refers to the time or activities before (ante-) the deluge (flood). Today the term refers to someone who is very out of date or old-fashioned. You will see this word in some literature about Noah's flood. We are situated on the post-deluge or *postdiluvian* earth.

The following notes divide our study into three sections—before, during, and after. Noah had spent up to 120 years building the boat as God had commanded in chapter 6. “Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.” How refreshing to read of someone obeying God!

¹ I encourage you to dig into it a bit more if you have any interest in this subject. Find it by searching for books and articles on Noah's flood and young earth creationism. You will also find professing Christians who write against the literal approach to Scripture and claim the high ground of showing the marriage of science and faith. They interpret the same data as young earth creationists, but from a science-is-king mindset instead of from a Biblical authority mindset.

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

- A. God told Noah to enter the ark. This was because “I have seen that you are righteous before Me.” So, there *are* perks to righteous behavior, even though the world downplays that as prudish and old-fashioned. You will always find blessing in obedience to God’s commandments, and protection from adverse consequences. In fact, blessing is part of obedience just like difficulties are inherent in disobedience. You will never regret living for the Lord, even if there is temporary ridicule and persecution because of it. Living for God may even save your life! (Remember, children, obey your parents...)
- B. Seven days before the rains began (7:4), God instructed Noah to take seven pairs of every clean animal, one pair of every unclean animal, and seven pairs of every bird into the ark. The purpose was to keep their kinds alive after the flood. Notice that three times in verses 2-3 God says, “a male and [his] female.”
- C. All this Noah faithfully did (7:5). God saw to it that some of the earth’s animals had a kind of instinct to know to flee to the boat.
- D. Note that Noah was 600 years old when the flood started. We can use his age to locate the general date of the flood.
- E. Finally when all the animals and people were inside, 7:16 tells us that God shut them in. I do not know exactly how that worked, for the text does not tell us in 8:18 that God had to open the door. Perhaps there was a locking mechanism inside the door, or both inside and outside. It does not much matter because Noah had enough ingenuity to get out of the ark one way or another.

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. The ark came to rest in the Ararat region of Turkey in the seventh month, 17th day of the month, or five months after the flood began. This agrees with the 150 days mentioned above.

3. 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 could become visible.
4. After 40 days, Noah started his tests to see if they could leave the ark. He did this 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 Noah sent the doves out.
5. 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. An entire year of world history was wiped out by the flood.
6. 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).
7. It was not until about 57 days later that Noah and family left the ark, when the earth was dried, at the second month and 27th day of the month.
8. We have been using a month of 30 days for our computations, but the commonly used lunar month is about 29.5 days. Some major correction to the calendar would have to take place occasionally, for every year would lose about $365.25 - 29.5 \times 12$, or 354 = 11.25 days. This is like our leap year correction for the 365-day calendar.

B. The Water – Incredible Amount

1. There were 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. As water fell from above,² water under the earth spurted up from beneath.

² I am not now convinced that there was a “canopy” of water above the earth. But whatever atmospheric moisture was there, God set it up so that some of it fell to earth.

2. Those “fountains” are still under our feet. Consider that many places where you dig you can find well water. There are numerous aquifers and even subterranean rivers and river systems. For example, System Sac Actun in Mexico is the world's longest underground river, running for 160 miles underground. If the earth were entirely flat with no ocean basins or mountain ranges, there is so much water that we know about that the earth would be covered to a depth of 2,750 meters or 9,000 feet deep. If all the earth's water were piled on top of the 48 contiguous United States, we would be under 107 miles of water!
 3. The water covered the highest mountains by 21 feet (15 cubits). Noah could have taken “soundings” to learn about this. For 150 days the waters remained on the earth (7:24). This includes the 40 above. The depth of the water continued to increase even after the major outpouring of water stopped (7:18).
- C. The long-term impact of the flood – Various organizations like Institute for Creation Research and Answers in Genesis have done a lot of research and writing on what the flood would have done to the earth, and how it plays a key role in interpreting geological discoveries today. The accompanying tectonic movement, tsunamis, and general water flow obviously would have had an enormous impact on geography. Note 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).

D. Spatial Extent – World-Wide

We read here that the flood was “universal,” not “local.” Some interpreters cannot accept a world-wide flood, so they limit it to the Mesopotamian region. This comforts them in their desire to keep science and human reason at the top of their authority structure. But 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 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 up adjacent regions. The water would spill over the rim of that region and never attain any height over the mountains. The Mesopotamian region is not a perfect bowl shape, so it would leak out in many places.
4. God's purpose in the flood was to judge all of humankind on the whole earth because of its wickedness (Gen. 6:6-7, 11-13, 7:4).
5. The fact that the flood involved 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. In fact, as mentioned above, no ark would be 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 the flood "took them all away."
8. On a simple reading, the Scripture portrays the event as world-wide. Since Scripture is inerrant, its portrayal stands. We certainly do not question it.

E. Result – Massive Judgment, 7:21-23

1. The result of the flood was, as designed, the death of air-breathing creatures. 1 Peter 3:20 tells us that only eight people were saved—the remainder of the people on the earth died in addition to all air-breathing animals.
2. This seems harsh, does it not? Yet we must remember that God gave life, and He can take it away (Job 1:21). The truth is that He has power over both.

F. Psychological Impact. The text does not tell us how the events of that year affected Noah and his family. They had to be traumatized by the knowledge that outside, the loss of life numbered in the multiple millions of humans and animals. They were remarkably busy tending the animals and so were tired. They were cooped up inside for a year—Ark-fever likely set in. How much light could they

enjoy during the daytime? The first 40 days were probably dark all the time. Knowing that God was permitting His wrath to fall full force on people they knew, and did not know, must have been difficult.

3. After: Exit, Thanksgiving, and Covenant, 8:15-22

- A. 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 a sacrifice to God from among the larger numbers of clean animals.
- B. 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—commentary that still applies today.

You may have seen a portrayal of Noah as a mystical fellow raising his hands toward heaven, moving in a dance-fashion, and in this way "hearing" God's speak to his spirit. The text of Scripture gives no such indication of a "charismatic" Noah. God spoke plainly to him, just as God spoke on the Mount of Transfiguration, or at the baptism of Jesus, or many other instances. In such cases, sound came to the ears of His audience, and they understood they were hearing from God directly.

- C. God also promised what we call "limited uniformitarianism" in the natural cycle. The seasons and day and night cycle 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—science teaches that the past is the key to understand and predict the future. But obviously, creation and the flood were 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. But in terms of the basic flow of life most of the time, seasons and days and nights will continue.

Conclusion

The universal flood is important for Bible-believers to uphold, just like it is important to believe the creation account *as written*. If we cannot trust the opening chapters of our Bible, then we cannot trust any of it. God had Moses write what we needed to know. He then ensured its accurate transmission to us.

Second, 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 by people today. Do not be ashamed of the Bible's teaching even if all your scientific friends mock it. Being ashamed is evidence that you fear people more than you respect God.

Third, the flood 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). So no, all things will *not* continue forever as they have in recent history. Substantial changes are coming. Are you ready?

Finally, because of the continued evaluation of mankind as extremely sinful (8:21), we intuitively understand the need to do as much good as possible in this world. We are to restrain sin. We are to train our children to be righteous people, and hopefully saved people. We are to *demand* our kids to be righteous while they are in our home, and even beyond. Christians today are a major reason that the world has as much good in it as it does. We need more, and it is a lot of work. We need to vote to restrain sin. We need to advocate to reduce evil.

MAP

P.S. When you hear a newscaster or movie depict a local flood as being "of Biblical proportions," just know that they are not right. The Biblical one was much larger!