

## Was The Genesis Flood Worldwide?

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### INTRODUCTION

The Genesis flood is one of the most well known events in the Bible, and in fact, it just may be the most well known event. Most everyone from Christian to atheist is aware of the Genesis flood to some degree or another. The Genesis flood has even provided material for late night talk show comedians, as they have made reference to the flood directly, or indirectly through Noah, the ark, or even the rainbow. Though they reject the Bible and its account of the flood even evolutionists are aware of it. From professors in the most highly respected universities around the world to the uneducated on isolated islands, people are aware of the great flood. However, in spite of the fact that the flood is well known, and has been since it happened, it has for years been a major source of ridicule among atheists, evolutionists, and others who reject the Bible as the Word of God. They often view the Biblical account (Genesis 6-9) as a myth, very inaccurate, and certainly incompatible with their held philosophies. This kind of reasoning might be expected from declared atheists and evolutionists, but in recent years, even so called Bible believers have come to reject the Biblical account, compromising the Word of God, and suggesting that the Genesis flood was merely a localized event. One example is Neal D. Buffalo, who for years has been known as a theistic evolutionist, and N. Patrick Murray, have written, "... the mainstream of Biblical scholarship rejects the literal historicity of the Genesis stories prior to Genesis 12, and finds the literature of parable and symbol in the early chapters of Genesis" (5). Now, not only must the Bible be defended against attacks, from those who do not believe it, but also by those who say they believe in it. In addition to an outright rejection of the Genesis account, there are many Bible believers who will often suggest that it does not really matter whether the Genesis flood was localized or worldwide, or whether it was an historical event or simply a myth or legend. Those who suggest such may be well meaning and sincere, but by doing so place into question the inspiration and accuracy of the whole Bible. If the Genesis flood, which is recorded as an actual, historical event, is shown to be inaccurate, then it would cast doubt on the validity of the rest of the Bible, even concerning such topics as Jesus, salvation, worship, heaven, etc. However, there is ample evidence that the Genesis flood was truly worldwide, that it happened as the Bible says, and that evidence is found both within and apart from the Bible.

### BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR A WORLDWIDE FLOOD

First, evidence for a worldwide flood is seen in that the Genesis account is written as an historical narrative rather than a parable, allegory, poetry, legend, myth, or some other kind of figurative literature. The Genesis record of the flood begins with the phrase, "*And it came to pass...*"

(Genesis 6:1), which is used in the Bible to indicate, that the event is historical. Over and over, from the Old to the New Testament, the phrase, *“and it came to pass,”* signifies that the event is historical (Genesis 14:1, 22:1,27:1,30, 38:1, 39:7, 40:1, 41:1, 42:35, 48:1, Exodus 12:41, 51, Joshua 17:13, Judges 13:20, 1 Samuel 13:22, 1 Kings 15:12, Nehemiah 2:1, Esther 2:8, Matthew 11:1, 19:1, Mark 1:15, Luke 2:1, 5:1, 6:1, Acts 4:5). A careful study of the phrase, *“and it came to pass,”* reveals that it is not found to be associated with parable or allegory type literature in the Bible, but only with historical events. In addition to the phrase used to introduce the events of the flood, the Genesis account provides details, which indicate that the flood is historical rather than figurative. Details such as the names of Noah’s sons (Genesis 6:10), the exact description and measurements of the ark (Genesis 6:14-16), the exact numbers of kinds of animals to be taken on the ark (Genesis 6:19- 7:3), the number of days before the rain (Genesis 7:4), the duration of the rain (Genesis 7:4,12), how long the water was on the earth (Genesis 7:24), how long the waters continued to decrease (Genesis 8:3-5), where the ark came to rest (Genesis 8:4), and many others. The specific and minute details support the fact that the Genesis flood is an historical record rather than merely a myth, legend, or any other figurative type literature.

Second, evidence for a worldwide flood is seen in that the Genesis account reports that all human beings and animals, everywhere, which were not in the ark, died in the flood. *“And Jehovah said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground...’”* (Genesis 6:7). *“And God said unto Noah, ‘The end of all flesh is come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them, and, behold, I will destroy them...’”* (Genesis 6:13). *“And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh...everything that is in the earth shall die”* (Genesis 6:17). *“...Every living thing that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the ground”* (Genesis 7:4). *“And all flesh died that moved upon the earth...”* (Genesis 7:21). The context of these verses is that of the whole earth, every person, and animal, *“all flesh,”* would die in the flood, and nowhere in the account does the author present the flood as a localized event. In fact, the record says, *“And the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt...”* (Genesis 6:11-12). However, in an effort to challenge the Genesis account some suggest that if one believes the Bible account, then logically one must believe that there were only a few people on the earth from the creation to the flood, and they would all have lived in the Mesopotamia area. The implication is that for the author to write, *“all flesh,”* would not necessarily require a global flood, if the earth’s population was few in number and they lived in a localized area. Professor Alfred M. Rehwinkel, has calculated that there were about 1,656 years from the creation to the flood (24-25). Dr. Bert Thompson writes, *“...1,656 years would be enough time to grow an enormous population. During the century between 1830 and 1930, the world population doubles in number (i.e.: increased by about 850 million people within one century)”* (4:36). Noah spent 120 years building the ark (Genesis 6:3), and in that amount of time the population of the earth could have easily doubled, so there is no reason to doubt that in 1,656 years that there were not human beings living in every part of the earth, and the population was in the millions, if not the billions. In addition to that Genesis reveals that human beings lived much longer than we do, before the flood, and could produce offspring for a much longer period of time (Genesis 5:32). The point is that when the Bible says, *“all flesh died that moved upon the earth”* (Genesis 7:4), there were more people on earth than could inhabit only the Mesopotamia area. Human beings must have been scattered to wherever there was land.

Third, evidence for a worldwide flood is seen in that the Genesis record reports how high the water rose, and where the ark rested. *“And all the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered”* (Genesis 7:19-20). Since the record states, *“all the high mountains,”* that means all the land on the earth had to have been covered with water, which means the flood could not have been localized. The *“ark rested...upon the mountains of Ararat”* (Genesis 8:4), rather than on the plains of Mesopotamia. The Genesis account concerning the depth of the water, and where the ark came to rest, clearly points to a worldwide flood rather than a localized flood.

Fourth, evidence for a worldwide flood is seen in the Hebrew and Greek words, which are translated flood, having reference only to the Genesis account. In the Old Testament, according to *“Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible,”* there are nine different Hebrew words translated into the English word, “flood” (357, 358). Of the nine, only one is used with reference to Noah’s flood, and that is the Hebrew word “mabbul,” which means, “a deluge” (357). This word is reserved in the Old Testament for reference to Noah’s flood. In the same respect, in the New Testament, there are three Greek words translated “flood.” However, there is only one of the three used with reference to Noah’s flood. The word, “kataklysmos,” which Mr. Joseph Thayer writes, means, “inundation, deluge,” is only used for the Genesis flood (Matthew 24:38,39, Luke 17:27, 2 Peter 2:5) (332). The fact that there is only one word used with reference to the Genesis flood in Hebrew and in Greek, used in no other context, all indicates the unique nature of the flood, that it was not merely localized, but worldwide. Then add to that the specific meaning of the Hebrew word, “mabbul,” and the Greek word, “kataklysmos,” and the only conclusion is that the flood was worldwide.

Fifth, evidence for a worldwide flood is seen throughout the New Testament. Jesus believed the Genesis account of the flood, from it drew a lesson concerning him, and in doing so taught that the Genesis account was accurate and factual.

*And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man* (Matthew 24:37-39).

Jesus believed, accepted, and taught the Genesis flood of Noah as fact. and so did Peter as he wrote of Noah and the flood on two occasions, both times presenting it as a factual event. Peter wrote, *“...when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water”* (1 Peter 3:20), and *“and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly”* (2 Peter 2:5). Nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus or any author suggest anything else, but that the Genesis account of the flood is accurate and historical. The New Testament concurs completely with the Old, that the Genesis flood was worldwide.

## EXTRA BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR A WORLDWIDE FLOOD

First, because of the nature of the flood described in the Bible one would expect that there would be evidence outside the Bible. Evidence of the flood begins with dozens of accounts around the world, from almost every culture and nation, which tell of a great catastrophic flood. Because there are numerous accounts from so many cultures, nations, and races, these accounts cannot be ignored. Dr. Bert Thompson writes, “Researchers have described over 100 flood traditions from Europe, Asia, Australia, the East Indies, the Americas, East Africa, and many other places” (4:37). Baden Powell, former Professor of Geometry in the University of Oxford, writes of flood story accounts among “the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Greeks, Scythians, and Celtic tribes. They have also been discovered among the Peruvians and Mexicans, and the South Sea Islanders” (1:542). George Fredrick Wright writes concerning the numerous accounts, “...the general prevalence of such traditions strongly confirms the reality of the Bible story” (2:822). Mr. Wright then goes on to tell of flood accounts from Egyptians, Asian Indians, Chinese, Greeks, British, American Indians, Babylonians, and on ancient Babylonian cuneiform tablets (2:822-824). Critics have said that such accounts have no relevance regarding the Biblical flood, and certainly do not prove the flood was universal. However, Dr. Bert Thompson demonstrates their relevance when he writes, “After the ‘trappings’ are stripped away from the kernel of truth in the stories, there is almost complete agreement among practically all flood stories” (4:37). Dr. Thompson lists the basic elements of agreement in the stories as, “a universal destruction by water of the human race and all other living things occurred, an ark, boat, was provided as the means of escape for some, and a seed of mankind was provided to perpetuate the human race” (4:37). Professor Harold W. Clark writes, “While myths may not have any scientific value, yet they are significant in indicating the fact that an impression was left in the minds of the races of mankind that could not be erased” (45). The point that each author makes is that one cannot ignore the great number of flood accounts, which have been recorded through the millenniums by almost every race, nation, and culture, and how the key elements in the accounts are the same. Could it be possible that this is a mere coincidence? That is highly unlikely. In fact, the odds would be astronomical and probably greater than the odds of the theory of evolution itself. The logical conclusion is that there was a worldwide flood.

Second, the earth’s surface and crust indicates that there must have been a worldwide flood. Dr. Henry Morris writes, “Most of the earth’s crust consists of sedimentary rocks (sandstone, shale, limestone, etc.). These were originally formed in almost all cases under water, usually by deposition after transportation by water from various sources” (1998). In addition to that Dr. Morris writes, “All the mountains of the world have been under water at some time or times in the past, as indicated by sedimentary rocks...near their summits. Even most volcanic mountains with their pillow lavas seem largely to have formed when under water” (1998). Dr. Morris’ point is that the earth’s crust, which is made up of sedimentary rocks, could only have been formed or shaped “under water.” These scientific facts certainly agree with the Biblical account of the flood.

Third, evidence of a worldwide flood is seen by the dramatic or catastrophic changes that took place in the earth and its climate throughout history. Those who typically reject a universal flood, accept an evolutionary theory, which includes what is called uniformity, which the book “The Effects of the Flood” defines as, “no dramatic changes have ever occurred” (Pathlights). Evolutionists accept that change has occurred, but that it was over a period of millions of years, rather than catastrophically. E.H. Colbert, an avowed evolutionist, said, “Many lines of dinosaurs

evolved during the 100 million years or more of Mesozoic history in which they lived. In those days the earth had a tropical or sub-tropical climate over much of its land surface..." (69:71). John Clayton writes, "There is no way geologically of supporting the idea that there was a worldwide flood..." (1969). However, in spite of what they say and write the earth tells a quite different story. In the book, "The Effects of the Flood," the author writes, "The strata are confused and often crushed and twisted. This would not have occurred if they had been slowly laid down" (Pathlights). The author also says,

...rocks, from all strata levels, reveal that a worldwide warm climate once existed everywhere on the planet, even in what is now Arctic and Antarctic areas. For example, because of widespread coal and petrified wood deposits, ...Antarctic once had an abundance of vegetation...palm trees... (Pathlights).

Fourth, possibly the most telling evidence that there was a worldwide flood can be seen in the fossils, which are formed by sudden and catastrophic changes where the plants and animals live. One author writes, that fossils "are the remains (or casts) of plants and animals, which suddenly die, were rapidly buried, and then compacted under tons of additional sediments" (Pathlights). The problem for evolutionists is as Dr. Henry Morris writes, "...that the earth's crust was formed slowly over billions of years." Dr. Morris continues, "Fossils, however, normally require very rapid burial and compaction to be preserved at all. Thus every sedimentary formation appears to have been formed rapidly – even catastrophically..." (116a). Evolutionists assign millions and billions of years to the changes that have occurred, yet, the various stratas contain fossils, which are formed quickly, and which contradicts the theory of millions and billions of years. Evolutionists must also explain why "All the mountains of the world have been under water at some time...as indicated by sedimentary rocks and marine fossils near their summits." (116a). Another problem for evolutionists is "fossil trees," or "polystrate," "the name given to these trees, which are upright and frequently pierced though several strata" (Pathlights). The problem is that again, fossils are formed very rapidly, yet, a tree would have to stood upright for millions of years as the different stratas were formed. As long as the evolutionists say it takes, the tree would have long decayed before any strata could have been formed. Dr. Bert Thompson writes, "...vast animal graveyards and fossiliferous rubble shifts have been found worldwide. Evidence of a great, sudden, and recent watery cataclysm..." (1986).

## CONCLUSION

The Bible presents the Genesis flood as fact and accurate. Jesus taught it as fact, and so did the inspired Apostle, Peter. There are more than one hundred flood stories in almost every culture, nation, and civilization, with the basic elements of the stories the same. There is the fossil record in the sedimentary crust of the earth, which indicates that sudden changes took place. The evidence is on the side of a worldwide flood of water covering the whole earth, just like the Bible records.

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