

The Flood: Judgment Determined – Genesis 6:9-22

Russ Kennedy, Tim Rech

Introduction

To people in our modern age, the story of Noah and the Ark is an interesting, but fantastic myth, a nice story for overly religious people and children's books. Most of the great writing civilizations have flood myths in their oral and written traditions. So, it is not surprising that the Christian tradition should have one as well. Whole web sites are dedicated to debunking special creation, young earth science and the Flood.

Hebrews 11 tells us that by faith we believe in creation. It is by faith we believe the Great Flood occurred. Faith is belief in what the Bible tells us. Those who do not believe in a six day special creation and deny a global flood have to think carefully about their why and on what basis they believe the rest of the Bible.

While skeptics argue against the Flood narrative, saying it is scientifically impossible, there is something more at stake. Two things are intertwined throughout the Flood narrative: God judges sin. God saves the just. God is punishing and purifying. And if God caused or allowed such a global cataclysm, then we may face such judgment again.

Many questions are raised by skeptics about the idea of a global flood. Is a global flood even being portrayed here? Is a global flood even physically or scientifically possible. There has been a long history of science scoffing at the idea of a global flood citing the many scientific difficulties. In reading some of the scholarly work on this, you can see a common and unbiblical thread through all of them. They assume that the world and the topography of the world we live in now is the same. This is not true. Listen carefully to 2 Peter 3:3-7 that presses home the literal accuracy of the Mosaic account:

Knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. 2 Peter 3:3-7 [ESV]

Peter may have had Psalm 90:3-8 in mind when he penned this text:

*Lord, you have been our dwelling place all generations.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
You return man to dust and say,
"Return, O children of man!"
For a thousand years in your sight
are but as yesterday when it is past,
or as , a watch in the night.
You sweep them away as with a flood; they are like a dream,
like grass that is renewed in the morning:*

*in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
in the evening it fades and withers.
For we are brought to an end by your anger;
your wrath we are dismayed.
You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your presence. [ESV]*

Other Bible texts like Isaiah 54:8; Matthew 24:36-44; Luke 17:26-27; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:17. treat the Genesis record of the Biblical Flood as historically accurate.

As we move into our study of the text itself, rather than using a western style outline, we will follow the Bible's own structure. This section follows a chiastic structure. Here is an overview so you can have it in your mind's eye as we move through the text.

- A God Purposes to Punish the World (6:11-13)
- B Noah Builds the Ark (6:14-22)
- C The Remnant Enters the Ark (7:1-9)
- D The Flood Begins (7:10-16)
- E The Flood Prevails (7:17-24)
- F God Remembers Noah (8:1a)
- e The Flood Recedes (8:1b-5)
- d The Earth Dries (8:6-14)
- c The Remnant Leaves the Ark (8:15-19)
- b Noah Builds an Altar (8:20)
- a God Promises to Preserve the World (8:21-22)

God's Person (6:8-10)

8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Noah, Righteous Before God

Given the state of mankind on earth at the time and God's plan to wipe out all living things on the land including mankind itself, the situation looked bleak. However, there was one man in whom God found favor. Noah was from the Redeemer's line outlined in chapter five.

Noah, like his great-grandfather Enoch, was considered righteous – righteous on the basis of his God given faith in the Lord. Noah had a good standing before God. He was also blameless which does not mean he was sinless but rather refers to his good standing before men. He lived a life characterized by integrity before them. The people of his generation had nothing on him – not that they particularly cared, since Noah's generation was consumed with other things – like evil all of the time (6:5).

Noah, Walking With God

Verse 9 also tells us Noah walked with God. He walked with God day-by-day and step-by-step through the horribly sinful conditions of his day. 2 Peter 2:5 says that Noah was a preacher of righteousness to a generation that wanted nothing to do with righteousness, integrity, and a relationship with God. In whatever you are facing today, does verse 9 describe you? Noah was God's man for a terrible time.

Noah's three sons (Shem, Ham, and Japheth) are mentioned in verse 10. Nothing more is said of them until after the flood. The paths they took would be consequential in the post-Flood earth. But although Shem is mentioned in the genealogy of Christ, we do not know if he or his brothers personally exercised saving faith in the Lord. If they had not, it seems quite shocking in view of what they observed and experienced in the first 100 years or so of their lives.

God's Purpose (6:11-13)

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 13 And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh,[a] for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

God's Determination

Once again, the Scriptures give us the reason for the Flood. God determined to judge the world for its sinful corruption and violence. God's purpose stands in stark contrast to the purpose given by the many pagan accounts of the Great Flood. One such account is called the Gilgamesh epic – this epic records a great flood brought by the erratic and impulsive gods to destroy all humans because they were among other things, too loud. Once they brought the flood however, and saw its disastrous effects, they were afraid and wept over the senseless destruction and even fled to the heavens. The chief god was rebuked for his hasty and ill-considered action. The reason for bringing this flood in this epic had nothing to do with the wrath of a holy God against the pervasive sin of man. Here in the Scripture though, the flood is brought about by escalating sin which led to complete corruption and an earth filled with violence.

God's determination carries a clear cause and effect; man is sinfully out of control therefore complete destruction of man is the remedy. There is no confusion over the flood's cause – no hazy view of sin. And justice is not compromised.

Note also here God's perfect diagnosis. In His sight and through His eyes, the condition of the earth was perfectly understood. Apart from perhaps Noah and some of the members of his family, no one else saw with such clarity, the plight of the earth brought about by man's sin. Jesus would later say in Matthew 24:37-39:

37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

Our world today is running the same course as the world prior to the flood. May we not be lulled into an ungodly friendship with this world that dulls our senses. May we see the world the way God does!

Man's Denial

So in verse 13, God declares to Noah His intent to destroy all flesh. The evil and wickedness is universal, so the destruction must be as well.

Now some Bible commentators argue the Flood could not be global. But they cannot make that argument from the text itself. It clearly says the destruction will extend as far as humanity has spread, and over all the earth. The words used here for flood and elsewhere in the Bible referring to this event do not use everyday words for a flood. In fact, the word used all through the Flood account is the Hebrew word *mabbul*. It is used only of this event. The word for a local flood is a different Hebrew word. The New Testament uses the word *kataklusmos* when alluding to the Genesis Flood. These are words that imply cataclysm and destruction. We can either affirm this is what the Bible plainly says and accept it as true or deny it by saying Moses was mistaken in some way. It is false to say Genesis does not teach a global flood because it does. If there was no global flood, then Moses is simply mistaken, the Bible record reflects his error, and your doctrine of Scripture is weakened. So, according to the Genesis record, God purposes to punish the world.

Keep in mind that in Genesis 9, God promises to never send another flood to destroy everything that breathes. Was He talking about a local flood? If so, God would then be a liar. Local floods have continually occurred through history (for Dayton, it was 1913). No, God meant a global, cataclysmic flood. The word meaning, the context, and the logic drawn from the text prove it.

After hearing God's plan to destroy the earth, Noah had to be relieved to hear God would make a way to save he and his family. God commands Noah to build a massive ark – a perfect vessel to save the remnant from a great flood of judgment on the earth.

God's Provision (6:14-22)

14 Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. 15 This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. 16 Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. 17 For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. 21 Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them." 22 Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

Its Amazing Design (6:14-16)

God's plan was for Noah to build an ark – a vessel designed only to float. It is hard for us to get a feel for the size of the ark. Many illustrate the ark in ridiculous shapes (see children's bible story books) and ignore the clear dimensions and size proportions given in 6:15. The ark was 450 feet long by 75 feet wide by 45 feet high. Our building is 80 feet wide and 120 feet long and around 27 feet high at the peak so the ark was almost four times as long and twice as high, as this room.

The ark had three decks; a roof with an opening all the way around, constructed with a wood not known to us today, and sealed with "pitch".

Now several objections have been raised on the design and purpose of the ark:

- No one could have built by hand a boat that large. How could Noah possibly have the technology, funds, time and man-power for such a project?
- A wooden boat that large would break in half even under normal sea and wave stresses. No wooden boat that large has ever been attempted, even in the last 200 years. Ships larger than 275 – 300 feet have broken along their spine.
- How could you possibly have a floating zoo housing two of all the species of insects, animals and birds all being cared for over a whole year? The task of feeding and cleaning the stalls would alone require an army of attendants, much less eight people.
- How would you keep carnivores from being unmanageable over that length of time in that confined a space with (presumably) little or no meat or prey?
- How could you possibly provision food and water for that many animals and humans for over a year? Imagine just the cost of procurement, much less of packaging, loading, storing and distributing the food.

Some of the objections, having to do with cost and ability, make certain assumptions about primitiveness of Noah's day. We really do not know if the ark was built by hand. Even then, it appears that Noah had up to 120 years to build it. Yes, it was a mammoth task to collect all the materials for the construction and provision of the ark. But Noah worked hard and God supplied. It was not logistically impossible, merely difficult. We also do not know if this task fell alone on Noah and his family's shoulders. It is quite possible he hired laborers to help build, farm, harvest, store and load the provisions. As is often the case, the Bible is not interested in giving us these kinds of details unless it has direct bearing on the purpose of the narrative.

The second group of objections relate to the size of the boat itself. Many studies have been done on its dimensions. The relationship of the length, height and width all would make an extremely stable craft. Studies on scale models using computers to factor the weight, mass and momentum all show that the ark would right itself, even when tipped almost to 75 degrees. It would have turned through wave and wind action into waves. As to its size making it weak along its length, therefore vulnerable to snapping in half, here the wisdom of building with wood is seen. An internal structure built with tens of thousands of small rooms all designed as an integral part of the boat's strength and flexibility would yield an extraordinarily strong vessel that would plow through most waves and be able to flex enough to deal with the stresses of wave motion.

{ Sarfati, Jonathan Article – see also page 8 slide }

Now as to some of the other objections, let's consider [space usage of the ark]. [The ark's] volume was 1.54 million cubic feet. To put this in perspective, this is the equivalent volume of 522 standard American railroad stock cars, each of which can hold 240 sheep. If the animals were kept in cages large enough for an average size the 16,000 animal [pairs] would only occupy around 14.4 stock cars. [Even including small space for insects in addition still] would leave room for five trains of 99 cars each for food, Noah's family and 'range' for the animals. Tabulating the total volume is fair enough, since this shows that there would be plenty of room on the Ark for the animals with plenty left over for food, range etc... Woodmorappe shows from standard recommended floor space requirements for animals that all of them together would have needed less than half the available floor space of the Ark's three decks. This arrangement allows for the maximum amount of food and water storage on top of the cages close to the animals... Woodmorappe [also] calculated that the volume of foodstuffs would have been only about 15 % of the Ark's total volume. Drinking water would only have taken up 9.4 % of the volume. This volume would be reduced further if rainwater was collected and piped into troughs.

[Some have objected because the animal dung and waste] would have required overwhelming man-hours [for cleaning]. It is doubtful whether the humans had to clean the cages every morning. Possibly they had sloped floors or slatted cages, where the manure could fall away from the animals and be flushed away (plenty of water around!) or destroyed by vermicomposting (composting by worms) which would also provide earthworms as a food source. Very deep bedding can sometimes last for a year without needing a change. Absorbent material (e.g. sawdust, softwood wood shavings and especially peat moss) would reduce the moisture content and hence the odor. The space, feeding and excretory requirements were adequate even if the animals had normal day/night sleeping cycles. But hibernation is a possibility which would reduce these requirements even more.¹

Its Salvation Purpose (6:17-19)

God again emphasizes the global destruction that is about to take place. He is going to bring flood waters on the earth that will destroy everything that breathes. Everything on the earth will die. This mighty global flood will wipe out all life. The earth is so corrupt that God will both punish it and purify it with the waters of His wrath.

The purpose for the ark then is to simply float and preserve those whom God had chosen to deliver. He establishes a covenant with Noah that God will deliver them. There is the promise of God to preserve Noah. Then there must be a believing of that promise in such a way that he obeys and goes about the hard work of building the ark, collecting the animals and almost a year of resting in the promise and the provision while all the rest of living, breathing life dies.

God purposes through the saving of Noah and his family, to preserve the animals as well. Once again, the close link between man and the created order is assumed. God has made us stewards to learn and to extend dominion. God does not just miraculously preserve the animals nor do a new work of creation after the flood. Noah and his family, as recipients of the promise, will also bring the animals God had sovereignly chosen to preserve with him.

Its Practical Filling (6:19-22)

God commands Noah what to bring on the ark by listing the creation groups of animals as well as identifying them according to their kinds. He was to bring a male/female set of each kind. It is reasonable to assume that all of the different kinds living in Noah's day were brought into the ark and preserved. Now, this does not mean that we can use the modern scientific categories, particularly at the species level, to say who these were. According to many texts in the Bible, a "kind" is defined by being able to reproduce and have viable offspring. So, it may well be that there were one set of dogs, one set of horses, one set of cats, etc. Many scientists have pointed out then that this means there were around 16,000 kinds of animals (including the birds) on the ark – other scientists think there were even less. The ark was capable of holding 135,000 sheep, individually penned. It is quite evident that it is fully capable to hold between 35,000 and 50,000 animals, many of whom would be very small (rats, frogs, birds, etc.). Noah was a wise man in many things and it is generally agreed, he probably would have taken on mostly very young animals as being smaller, less troublesome and more resistant to rapid climatic and environmental changes.

Noah was also commanded to provide the necessary food as well. Every sort of food necessary would need to be harvested, packaged and stored. We have already seen that the ark was of adequate size to house the animals, the eight humans and all the food necessary for them.

¹ Sarfati, Jonathan. *Creation Magazine (online)* Volume 19 Issue 2 Full acknowledgment with redaction and rewording.

Noah did what God commanded. Now stop and think about all the massive effort and labor poured into this simple sentence. Believing God in an obeying way usually leads, not to ease, but to years of hard work.

Hebrews 11:7 tells us that Noah believed God in an obeying way – he did all that God commanded. In reverent fear he built what God commanded for the saving of his household. He applied wisdom to work out the details involved with obeying every one of God’s commands. As it is recorded in the Scripture, God gives instruction on what was to be built, but seems to have left the details or the how of construction up to Noah’s wisdom and skills. This is no different for every believer throughout history.

Beyond the actual task though we need to consider the certain persecution Noah faced while building the ark. It took decades to build the ark. Imagine the questions being asked – the certain ridicule and scorn hurled his way. And remember he may been the only believer at that time. There is no record of his wife, his sons and their wives, or even his father Lamech or grandfather Methuselah sharing in Noah’s righteousness by faith. He may have been alone in believing and obeying God.

Israel would certainly have learned much from Moses’ account – they were a nation called by God but alone as a nation. A nation of individuals called to righteousness by faith – a believing of God in an obeying way. We have much to learn here as well.

Reflect and Respond

- Again, the Biblical account of the worldwide flood is true. We must defend it – the Bible only gives us enough information to make the point it is trying to make namely, that the world had become 100% wicked and God judged it preserving those with which He found favor. God’s patience and longsuffering are striking here.. over 1,600 years watching the escalation of sin. And if He had not given faith to Noah, all would have been lost
- Noah found favor because he believed God by faith. Such favor could be obtained because Jesus Christ found God’s favor with His perfect work on the cross which enabled a righteousness by faith. The path to God’s favor is the same today.
- Jesus Christ was ultimately God’s provision for Noah and for Israel to whom Moses wrote, and is our provision today.
- People considered righteous by their faith in the Lord will be characterized by obedience to Him. Noah’s example of righteousness by faith was instructive for Israel and is for us today; we live in a similar world, our faith should stand out by its obedience to the Lord even in the face of the most difficult tasks and persecution, are you distinguishable from the world or do you simply blend in?
- Worldwide destruction is coming again but not by water but rather by fire. Christian, are you faithfully working hard in God’s service today? Are you ready?
- But friend, perhaps you do not understand God’s wrath is upon you. Come for His provision today. Come for Jesus today. Join the redeemed who are resting in Christ and upon His finished work on the cross for their sins...

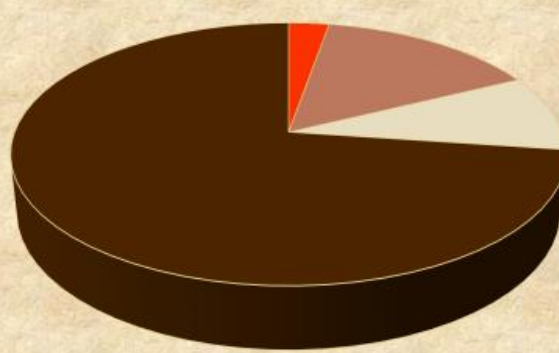
Space Usage – Noah's Ark

~103,000 SF of deck space

The range and living space across three decks would have been ~75,000 SF

Less than one-half of the overall floor space was needed for the animals

This left more than 25,000 SF of the overall floor space available for Noah and his family



- Animals Caged
- Food Stores
- Water
- Range and Living Space

Information drawn from article by Jonathan Sarfati, *Creation Magazine (online)* Volume 19 Issue 2

