

Science and the Bible and the Ark (Genesis 7:1-5)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on April 5, 2009

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How many have heard the expression “the Bible is not a science textbook”? Is that true? Yes, of course. And the next time you hear that you can reply, “You’re absolutely right, and it’s a good thing it’s not because science textbooks have errors and need to be revised and updated because they’re written by men whose theories change from decade to decade. But thankfully we have the unchanging perfect inspired Word of the God who was the eyewitness to creation and the history of the world and what He says can always be trusted and never needs revising or updating!

The Bible is not a boring textbook of science, archaeology, or history, but when it speaks in those areas it speaks accurately as we interpret it rightly in context, and our text gives a lot of precise details that correlate to those areas when interpreted rightly as well

Genesis 7:1-16 (NASB95) ¹ Then the LORD said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you *alone* I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time. ² “You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female; ³ also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴ “For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.” ⁵ Noah did according to all that the LORD had commanded him.

As part of our continuing verse-by-verse study through Genesis I want to highlight in our exposition some key elements in the text about Science and the Bible the next few weeks. For secular and skeptical and scientific criticisms of the Bible, I think it’s safe to say that what we’ve already covered in Genesis would be for mockers and scoffers of God’s Word some of their favorite ammunition against Bible-believing Christians. Up there would be the story of Jonah being swallowed by a big fish, and the idea of a recent literal 6-day creation of the heavens and earth and Adam and Eve and a talking snake and no death as Genesis 1-3 describes instead of a big bang and long evolutionary ages of millions and billions of years of death and destruction as life evolved from miniscule molecules to modern man (from goo to zoo to you). And the story of a flood and Noah and his family and all the animals cramming onto a little wooden boat makes the skeptics come of the gopher woodwork.

- “ You mean, you believe that little kids’ fairy tale, about the guy who looks like a skinny Santa Claus with the floating zoo toy boat with the giraffes heads sticking out the top? Come on ...”

- “Scientists have proven there hasn’t been a worldwide flood, and besides, there’s no way Noah could have fit all the millions of known animals on a boat? Ridiculous! It’s a myth, just a story.”

Christians themselves have done perhaps as much or more harm than skeptics, and with more damage when it comes from within the church from teachers to trusting churchgoers. I read somewhere that something like 1200 clergy agreed to commemorate Darwin Day this past February in their church as some promotion (his 200th birthday and 150 years of his evolutionary magnum opus *Origin of the Species*). The spread of Darwinian naturalism and evolution among churchgoers you could argue was done more by church than State at times. It was not only or primarily atheists who made evolutionary thought mainstream, it was done by those who believed in God religiously, a large number in Christian churches.

It was driven by theology as much as geology, not just professors of science, but those who professed Scripture, not just biologists but Bible-teachers who led so many into compromise.

You've probably heard "evolution is a faith and religion" -- and it is. But it was spread largely by men of faith, of "Christian" religion

- The changing of biblical interpretation to compromise with changing theories of science didn't stop in Genesis chapter 1.
- They kept going and in chapters 6-8, those who rejected a literal creation soon were rejecting a literal worldwide flood as those chapters equally clearly portray
- I'm not talking about liberals who admit what the text says but say we don't believe it; I'm talking about those in conservative churches who argued that the Bible is true but we need to re-interpret the language as poetic or metaphoric so that it doesn't conflict with science and so we don't look like those idiots years ago who thought the earth was flat and the center of the universe.
- Well-meaning conservative Christian publishers and coloring books communicate from children's church on that Noah's Ark is a cartoon-looking unrealistic little boat with giraffe heads out the top. Kids have their fantasy toys for Star Wars (or for my girls, Tinkerbell or Barbie's make-believe life) and then many also grow up with an even more unrealistic looking toy boat that might as well be fantasy as well.
- It's a little bathtub ark that can fit maybe 20 or so pretend animals, but you know that's how the ark looked because it has the signature -- giraffe's heads sticking out the top.
- You see it pictured in children's Bibles (giraffe's out the top) and on cute paintings on walls, or Christmas tree ornaments or jewelry, and the unintended message that can be communicated is that this is just a story or fairy tale about a floating zoo.
- As you grow older and hear the critics your faith is shaken because it's one thing for that cute little ark with cuddly fuzzy animals to float in a bathtub, but not in a horrific storm and of course there's no way to get all earthly animals on there, some intelligent professor informs you.

[SEE SLIDES OF TOY ARKS ON GCBC WEBSITE POWERPOINT 4/5/09]

Many who believe in God think of Genesis 6-9 as a fairy tale, allegory or an ancient embellishment about a local flood near the Black Sea.

Russell D. Moore, Executive Director of the C.F. Henry Institute writes: "So many evangelical children's Sunday school classes are translating biblical texts into a baptized version of Mr. Roger's Neighborhood of Make-Believe. Jesus' calling of the twelve is about the fact that 'Jesus had friends.' Jesus' multiplication of the loaves and the fish is about the idea that 'Jesus wants you to share.' Noah's Ark is now about responsible care of pets. The children are then called on to emulate the biblical 'characters' in being good boys and girls. Previous generations had a term for Bible study like this. It was called 'Protestant liberalism.' And, in case we don't remember, it didn't lead to anything good."¹

It's been well-said that now for adults, 'the majority of modern intellectuals, Noah is merely a legendary character and his Ark and its animals nothing but a story for children's coloring books. That the entire account is sober and important history is a concept too naive even to consider,

so they seem to think. The later writers of the Bible did not feel that way.

- Isaiah certainly took Noah seriously: “For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee” (Isaiah 54:9).
- Ezekiel twice mentions Noah as one of the three most righteous men in history (Ezekiel 14:14, 20).
- The writer of Chronicles, as well as Luke, includes Noah in the official genealogy of Christ (1 Chronicles 1:4; Luke 3:36).
- In the New Testament, the apostle Peter twice mentions Noah, both times obviously regarding him as a strategic figure of history (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5).
- Most importantly, the Lord Jesus Christ accepted the story of Noah and the ark as a real event (Matthew 24:37–39; Luke 17:26).
- As pointed out already, Noah was listed as one of the greatest of all the historical men of faith, in Hebrews 11:7. Note also that the ark itself was mentioned in most of these New Testament references.²

I mentioned the story of Jonah and the great fish (it doesn’t call it a whale) and that was also referred to by Jesus as historical fact that just as Jonah was 3 days in the belly of a fish, Jesus would be 3 days in the earth and then would come forth just as literally. If “days” doesn’t mean days and if Jonah was not a real historical figure then Jesus was wrong about that so what about being God?

When God Himself speaks from heaven and writes the Ten Commandments in stone in Exodus 20, listen to what He says:

“**Six days** you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work ... **For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them**, and rested on **the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day**”

God was not stuttering or being unclear in communicating to Israel that they should do all their work in six days literally and then take the seventh off because God made the entire universe in six days literally and rested as a pattern for them. If God is misleading them by making it sound like he created the world in a week when it was really over trillions of weeks or billions of years, then you have a problem bigger than Moses’ words in Gen. 1; this is God speaking.

Most of you have heard my dad’s testimony from when he was an agnostic science teacher how he mocked his young student Theresa, “You must be one of those Bible-thumpers who believes God created everything in 7 days!” By God’s grace through this 7th grade girl’s bold and gracious witness to him and giving him a book on science and the Bible and fossils and by God opening his heart, my dad is now spending his life teaching on creation which he now knows only took 6 days (and not 18 billion years).

Now science alone doesn’t save someone, there must also be supernatural grace and Scriptural truth, but general revelation in creation does declare God so that man is without excuse, and the knowledge of God is out there (even within fallen man Romans 1 says), they just have to suppress it by science, falsely so-called, by evolutionism and other “isms.”

Believers are called to be ready to give an answer, and if nothing else, studying apologetics and how the Bible can be defended from all attacks can strengthen our faith.

The battle begins in the beginning, and the floods of critics would like to capsize the ark and leave Noah and Adam and Eve to fairy tales so they don't have to take sin seriously in Genesis 3.

Morris writes: It is significant that the portion of Genesis which has been the object of the greatest attacks of skepticism and unbelief, the first eleven chapters, is the portion which had the greatest influence on the New Testament. Yet there exist over one hundred quotations or direct references to Genesis 1–11 in the New Testament. Furthermore, every one of these eleven chapters is alluded to somewhere in the New Testament, and every one of the New Testament authors refers somewhere in his writings to Genesis 1–11. On at least six different occasions, Jesus Christ Himself quoted from or referred to something or someone in one of these chapters, including specific reference to each of the first 7 chapters [recent creation, Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Noah, flood ...]

Furthermore, in not one of these many instances where the Old or New Testament refers to Genesis is there the slightest evidence that the writers regarded the events or personages as mere myths or allegories. To the contrary, they viewed Genesis as absolutely historical, true, and authoritative [even literal talking serpent, etc.].

It is quite impossible, therefore, for one to reject the historicity and divine authority of the Book of Genesis without undermining, and in effect, repudiating, the authority of the entire Bible. If the first Adam is only an allegory, then by all logic, so is the second Adam [Christ who spoke a literal Adam and Eve as the historical basis for marriage]. If man did not really fall into sin from his state of created innocence, there is no reason for him to need a Savior. If all things can be accounted for by natural processes of evolution, there is no reason to look forward to a future supernatural consummation of all things. If Genesis is not true, then neither are the testimonies of those prophets and apostles who believed it was true. Jesus Christ Himself becomes a false witness, either a deceiver or one who was deceived, and His testimony concerning His own omniscience and omnipotence becomes blasphemy. Faith in the gospel of Christ for one's eternal salvation is an empty mockery. By all means, therefore, we must oppose any effort from any source to mythologize or allegorize the Genesis record. It was written as sober history, the divinely inspired account of the origin of all things. No one, therefore, can hope to attain a true and full understanding of anything, without a basic acceptance and comprehension of the origin of everything, as recorded in Genesis.'³

The reality of Genesis 7 is so critical because Jesus and the NT bases the reality of judgment and the reality of salvation on the reality of this past judgment and deliverance.

Genesis 7:1 (NKJV) ¹ Then the LORD said to Noah, "Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen *that you are* righteous before Me ...

The Lord who will bring judgment in justice, this same Lord also in undeserved mercy will first give the invitation: "Come." He has a refuge from His wrath. The Lord who will bring judgment just as literally in the future also promised the reality of salvation if you respond to His same invitation: "Come unto me ... and I will give you rest" (a word we recognize from Gen. 5:29 "*he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will give us rest ... "*").

Actually Noah didn't and couldn't deliver eternally from the curse of Genesis 3, but he points to the Lord who gives true rest, and the ark is a picture of the vehicle that brings salvation-rest, as the NT explains. Here the Lord calls them to come to get away from these waters *that would bring death*, but later the Lord calls on sinners to come *to the waters that bring life*.

Isaiah 55:1, 3 (NKJV) ¹“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come ... Yes, come ... ³Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live

Jesus: “If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink ... living water” (Jn. 7:37)

Revelation 22:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Whosoever wills may come. But “whosoever won't” shall perish.

Genesis 7:1 at the end shows that those who are saved are those who God sees as righteous. We saw earlier in 6:8-9 that this is because God gave His favor / grace to Noah. We'll see later in Genesis 15:6 that it is those who believe in the Lord who have righteousness reckoned to them, credited to them as a gift because for a justified sinner, God looks on them and sees the righteousness of another, the Lord our righteousness. Hebrews 11 and Romans 4 makes explicit what the early readers of Genesis may not have all understood, but this is always how God saves sinners from wrath.

²“You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female; ³ also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴“For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.”

It's interesting the use of “seven” 3x here. Why 7 days in v. 4?

Seven is a complete number, here for sufficient time for animals to board and final preparations to be made, and it also gave one more week for Noah to preach God's righteousness to these people and call them to come – “come to the ark before God's wrath comes.”

The seven days also reminds us of another seven days, the seven days a few chapters earlier, the first week of the original world. This may have been a comfort to Noah and his family, reminding them that the God who made the world back in the creation week could also remake the new world after he destroyed it. It's also interesting that if I understand Daniel and Revelation correctly, there is a prophecy of a final period (also called a “week” or a “seven”) during the last great tribulation on this planet before the final day of God's wrath at the end of the age. God will once again destroy the world and recreate it to a new heavens and new earth, which 2 Peter 3 ties in by analogy to the Genesis Flood.

Why “seven” clean animals, and only one pair of unclean animals? We find out later the clean were for sacrifice after the flood (8:20). Verse 3 said these animals came “male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of the earth.” So you'd need more than just one male and female of the animals you'd sacrifice, otherwise if you cook papa bear on an altar there's not gonna be any baby bears if only mama's left with no papa.

So the unclean animals were just one pair, and the clean were apparently 3 pairs / couples and an extra for sacrifice when they got off the ark in chapter 8.

NASB (v. 3) “to keep offspring alive”

NKJV “to keep the *species* alive” – incorrect translation

Species is a modern scientific classification of taxonomy in recent centuries which was not the system used 4,500 years ago or the word used in Genesis (and many biologists disagree on how exactly to define “species.”). Depending on which scientist you talk to, there are many millions of species. What about the skeptic challenge that Noah could never get all of them on the ark?

My experience in studying the challenges to the Bible that the devil would like to use to make our faith shaken, whenever I study those questions that troubled me at first, I find there are not only answers, but in the process I actually find *my faith strengthened*.

A few verses earlier in Genesis 6:20 God actually describes the animal categories God would bring aboard (what are they)?

- “birds after their kind”
- “animals [Heb. for beasts, livestock] after their kind”
- “creeping thing of the ground after their kind” [lower creatures, less upright as we studied earlier in Genesis]

Clearly this refers to land animals, creatures of the ground as well as those that fly. Critics might say, “there’s no way Noah could have gone around trapping and rounding up all the animals on the earth.” But that’s not what the text says happened. What does it say at the end of v. 20 as to how the animals would come? (“two of every kind will come to you.”)

Noah didn’t have to go on trapping exhibitions and hunting to capture every creature on earth. God brought them in pairs by His supernatural guidance, you might call it a miraculous migration although God could have used natural means. Remember another time God brought all the animals in pairs? Genesis 2 – God brought them to Adam to see what he would call each one.

This is one of a number of indications that there was probably one connected land mass originally. Genesis 1:9-10 gives the picture of the waters (plural) were in one place and the dry land (singular) was in another place. And we know all the animals were originally in Eden because Genesis 2 has God parade all of the kinds before Adam. Some scientists who are Christians as well as non-Christians also suggest evidence they believe indicates the earth once was one massive continent (Pangea), and some creationists believe the separation and water dividing continents today was the result of the Flood or shortly thereafter. Which would beg the question: “After the Flood then how did the kangaroos get to Australia?” We’ll look at that – if you come back next time.

But for now, look at Genesis 7:14 at these creatures boarding ark

¹⁴ they and every **beast** after its kind, and all the **cattle** after their kind, and every **creeping thing** that creeps **on the earth** after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds. ¹⁵ So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh **in which was the breath of life**.

Again it's those on the earth, not sea creatures that could survive the flood, it mentions land animals such as cattle and beasts and it summarizes the creatures boarding the ark as "all flesh in which was the breath of life." This refers to those that breathe, mammals, reptiles, etc., but nothing of the many other creatures like insects which have been shown how they could survive on floating masses of vegetation and by other scientific means.

So let's take a closer look at the millions of species of animals:

SEE SLIDES ON WEBSITE

¹ <http://www.rae.org/floodfilm-update.html>

² Morris, *Genesis Record*, p. 178.

³ Morris, p. 21.