

May 18, 2014

Questions About The Flood

By Bryan Hodge

"But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriages, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left." (Matthew 24:37-41)

"A few, that is, eight souls were saved through water" (1 Peter 3:20).

"God . . . did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly (2 Peter 2:4-5).

"The world that then exist perished, being flooded with water" (2 Peter 3:6).

The flood fascinates Bible students. It serves as a type of end of the world and judgment to come. It has been the topic of multitude of books, including: *The Genesis Flood* by John Whitcomb, Jr and Henry Morris; *Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study* by John Woodmorappe; *The World That Perished* by John Whitcomb. *The Noahic Flood* by Curtis Cates; *A Study of The Biblical Flood* by Marion Fox. *The Global Flood of Noah* by Bert Thompson.

There are common questions which are asked about the flood. These questions are sometimes asked by skeptics, but many times by sincere Bible students. The writing will provide concise answers to some of these common questions.

1. Was the flood a global or local flood?

(a) It must be admitted that the language sounds like a global flood. (*Gen 6:13; 7:4; 7:19; 7:21-23; 8:9. 2 Peter 2:5; 3:3-7*). If one wanted to describe a global flood, this is the language one would use.

(b) If the flood was not global, why was an ark needed? Noah and his family could have migrated to another place. God could have directed the animals to higher ground.

(c) What flood ever lasted one year and ten days (*Gen 7:7-11 cf 8:13-19*)?

(d) If the flood was not global, then what meaning would the rainbow promise have? (*Gen 9:8-17*)

Great local floods still occur: (1) in 1931, the Yellow River of China flooded killing an estimated one million. (2) In 1887, the Yellow River flooded an area larger than Great Britain killing 900,000. (3) In 1938, the Yellow River flooded killing 500,000. (4) In 1642, the Yellow River flooded killing 300,000. (5) In 2004 a tsunami in the India Ocean killed at least 230,000 in fourteen countries. (6) In 2011, a tsunami killed 15,884 in Japan. (7) In 1900 a storm swept Galveston Island, TX killing perhaps as many as 8,000. (8) In 1889, the Johnstown, PA flood killed 2,209. (9) In 2005, hurricane Katrina killed 1,836 in New Orleans, LA.

2. Could the Ark really hold all those animals?

(a) Not all of the animals had to be on the Ark. The animals brought on board included those "in whose nostrils was the breath of life" (Gen 6:17; 7:22). Fish would not need to be on the Ark. Aquatic mammals would not need to be on the ark. Insects would not need to be on the ark. They do not breathe through the nostrils but by diffusion and some could survive upon debris. Some reptiles and amphibians may not have been on board the ark. Worms would not have needed to be on board the ark. It is possible that some seabirds were not boarded on the ark.

(b) Not every "species" of animal was boarded but every "kind" (Gen 6:19-10; 7:14). "kind" refers to animals that can reproduce, or are the results of normal reproduction, syngameons (cf Gen 1). For example: Dog is a kind (not every variety a different kind).

(c) Nothing requires that the animals had to be adults. For example: A 4 or 5 pound komodo dragon could have been aboard instead of a 200-300 pound adult.

(d) The ark was large, John Whitcomb has written, "Its capacity was equivalent to 520 modern railroad stock-cars" (The World That Perished, p. 231). Brad Harrub has written "in 1980, Ernst Mayr, a very famous evolutionary taxonomist, published a book titled Principles of Systematic Zoology. In his book he outlined every creature we knew of that was alive on the earth. According to Mayr's own numbers, Noah would have provided protection for: 3,700 Mammals, 8,600 Birds; 6,300 Reptiles, 2,500 Amphibians . . . Thus 21,000 different species. . . If we use the 'species' definition, the total number of individual animals that would need protection on the ark would be approximately 50,000. If we average these 50,000 to the size of a sheep . . . then we can ask the question: Can we get 50,000 sheep-size animals on the ark? Well consider that one boxcar is capable of holding 240 'sheep-sized' animals. Thus, we could place 125,000 sheep-sized animals into 520 boxcars - and yet we only had to get 50,000! That would have left plenty of room for Noah, his family, and all of the food necessary" (Convicted, p 262). Remember that not every "species" but every "kind" was on board.

3. How did Noah gather all the animals?

He did not have to gather them. They came to him (Gen 6:20; 7:9 cf 2:19).

4. How could all the various animals journey from the various continents? Moreover, what about the climatic differences?

The world then was radically different. The continents may have been joined (Pangaea). The species may not have been as isolated and thus so genetically diverse. The climate would not have been so extreme across the earth. Professor Alfred Wallace said, "There is but one climate known to the ancient fossil world as revealed by the plants and animals entombed in the rocks, and the climate was a mantle of spring - life loveliness which seemed to have prevailed continuously over the whole globe" (Wayne Jackson, *The Book of Job*. P 118).

5. How could the animals enter in one day (Gen 7:13-15)?

"Keil Delitzson State: Verse 13 . . . pluperfect 'had come' . . . The idea is not that Noah, with his family and all the animals, entered the ark on the very day on which the rain began, but that on that day he had entered, had completed the entering, which occupied the seven days between the giving of the command (v4) and the commencement of the flood (v10) (p.145)" (Marion Fox, pp 267-268).

6. How did Noah and his family care for so many animals.

(a) The short answer is not that we do not know the Bible does not tell us.

(b) John Woodmorappe goes into great detail about how the feeding, watering, and waste management could have been accomplished without supernatural intervention. His book *Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study* is reasonably thought out.

(c) We are told that God "remembered" Noah and his family (Gen 8:1). The Hebrew word *zakar*, translated "remember," suggests God's continued watchful care over all the occupants of the ark" (Bert Thompson and Brad Harrub, *An Examination of Noah's Ark and the Global Flood*). Some theorize that God could have put the animals into hibernation, and slowed their metabolism and stopped their reproductive abilities. This is possible. However, the Bible is silent on this subject.

(d) We know that there were "rooms" on the ark (Gen 6:14). Marion Fox writes "The Hebrew word translated "rooms" (*Gen 6:14*) is found 13 times in the Bible and is translated 'nest(s)' in the other 12 times it is found. It seems evident that this refers to cages into which the animals entered and stayed during the flood" (*A Study of The Biblical Flood*, p. 260).

7. Where did the water go?

Psalm 104:6-9: "Thou didst cover it with deep as a garment; the waters were standing above the mountains. At Thy rebuke, they fled; at the sound of Thy thunder they hurried away. The mountains rose; the valleys sank down to the place which thou didst established for them. Thou didst set boundary that they may not pass over that they may not return to cover the earth" (NASB). I believe that the earth was shaped differently. The oceans were not so deep and the mountains were not so high.

8. Why were the unclean animals saved in pairs, but the clean animals saved in sevens (Gen 7:2-3, 8-9)?

The Bible does not tell us some have suggested that it was for ecological balance. Animals to be eaten by man (*cf Gen 9:3*), used in sacrifice by man (*cf Gen 8:20*), and common prey for other animals would be in large measure clean animals. Keep in mind that the unclean animals would also have carrion (dead carcasses) for feed. We do know that Noah sacrificed one of each kind of clean animal to the Lord (*Gen 8:20*).