

Genesis 7:1-24

A Worldwide Flood?

Back in 2000 the MTA in Los Angeles was working on construction of the red line subway near Universal Studios when they made an amazing discovery. At Wilshire Boulevard and Vermont Avenue they found a treasure trove of over 2000 fossilized fish.

The LA Times reported, Entombed in layers of sandstone, shale and other rock layers were fish. In addition to those never seen before were others that were the first fossilized remains of their kind found in North America.

Many are kin to eerie, modern deep sea brethren, which have “more head than body,” or sport projections like fishing poles that dangle from the top of their heads and fearsome, toothy jaws, said Gary Takeuchi, a curatorial assistant at the county Natural History Museum.

Today those denizens of the deep are at home in 4,000-foot-deep water, or deeper, Takeuchi said.

We live on a planet that is a veritable grave yard of fossils embedded and preserved through flooding.

We’re studying the first book of the Bible, the Book of Genesis and we’ve come to an account of what the Bible describes as a universal, worldwide flood.

As we’ve seen in past weeks, God warned a righteous man named Noah of the flood 120 years before it happened. Under orders from God, Noah spent these years building a massive boat we know as Noah’s ark.

We can only image what kind of ridicule, mockery and even vandalism and violence Noah must have faced from the world of his day.

We are not told that God said anything to Noah during all those long years, although He may have. But finally Noah's work is finished and so in chapter 7 God speaks again.

Open to Genesis 7 Read verses 1-5

Almost 120 years of hard labor and sacrifice was coming to its fulfillment and Noah and his family obeyed.

We don't know how long it took to get all the animals on board but since Noah was prepared ahead of time and God supernaturally moved the animals, it probably didn't take the full 7 days to move in.

Then Noah and his family sat in the ark and waited for the rains to come.

Noah I'm sure was sort of a celebrity in his town. The ark was a landmark. No doubt people had traveled from far and wide to see this old guy and the massive boat being built far from any large body of water.

But now the day has finally come, and I can imagine literally hundreds of people, maybe thousands, gathered to see the animals and Noah, his wife and his sons families climb on board.

After a couple of days there must have been some real hooting and hollering going on outside of the ark. But the days passed and finally on the 7th day something happened. **Read verse 16**

Obviously apart from the supernatural intervention of God there couldn't have been a universal flood in the day of Noah. By a miraculous display of God's power the animals were gathered, and then as verse 11 tells us the fountains of the great deep were broken up and all the windows of heaven were opened.

The flood was obviously a supernatural event but it's interesting, as John Whitcomb points out in his book *The World That Perished*, that not every aspect of the flood was miraculous.

For example God didn't create an ark for Noah. Since Noah had the ability to build the ark, God told him to do it, even though it would have been a whole lot easier on Noah if God would have done the work.

Whitcomb points to the parallel in John 11 where Jesus raised a man named Lazarus from the dead.

There was a big stone in front of the tomb, but Jesus told other people to move it, even though He had the power to do it himself. He even had the people unwrap Lazarus' grave clothes and set him free.

The people standing around were perfectly able to accomplish those things. But the one thing they absolutely couldn't do, Jesus did, when he raised Lazarus from the dead.

This is a pattern you'll find throughout the Bible. God doesn't do miraculously what could be done through natural means. God's miracles are unique, they are significant. They are not common place.

Now when we apply this principle to the flood we see something interesting.

That while there were definite miraculous and supernatural aspects to the flood, there were also natural processes that took place. Natural processes that worked on the surface of the earth during the entire time.

This is very important because that lets us know that we can look out over our world and expect to see the results of a world-wide flood.

Because of all the implications of a world-wide catastrophe some Christians have argued for a local flood. Since the Bible clearly speaks in universal terms, they say that it's to be interpreted phenomenally, in other words, as a description of the flood as it would appear to Noah and to others who went through it. To them it would seem to be universal. They would describe it as they saw it, but the flood would not necessarily have been a world flood.

I. Noah's Flood Was A Universal Flood

A lot of arguments are given about the impossibility of it all happening but as we read the Bible it is obvious that the Bible speaks of a worldwide flood.

Lets look at a few references.

6:7

6:13

7:3

7:17-24

Henry Morris, in his book *The Genesis Flood*, points out, Expressions involving universality of the flood and its effects occur more than 30 times in Genesis 6-9. The wording of the entire record, both here and throughout Genesis 6 - 9 could not be improved upon. If the writer's intention was to describe a universal flood, as a description of a river overflowing it is completely misleading and exaggerated.

Think about what the Bible says about the nature of this flood. The rain and rising waters continued 40 days. The mountains were covered by a depth of 20 feet, or 15 cubits.

That's a stretch for a lot of people. This past week I spent some time on the web reading anti-flood sites to see what their arguments were. The idea of the great mountain ranges of the world being covered seems is a major sticking point, and that's understandable. But the truth is, we have no idea what the earth's surface looked like at this time.

Turn to Psalm 104 Page 535 Read verses 5-9

Verse 9 lets us know that this isn't talking about the original creation here, but the flood. The waters of the original creation did return to cover the earth in the flood.

Verse 8 gives us a clue to the geological changes that took place during this time.

The NKJV we're reading from translated this to mean that the water went up over the mountains and down into the valleys. But the Hebrew just says, "the mountains go up and the valleys go down."

That's why the NASB translates this, "the mountains rose, and the valleys sank down." My NKJV study Bible even has a note in the margin that says, "Or the mountains rose, the valleys sank."

According to the Bible there were immense geological changes. God supernaturally lowered the ocean basins and pushed up great mountain ranges. It's obvious to every geologist that these things happened. The only point of disagreement is when they happened and what caused them.

There had to be a tremendous amount of water on the earth and it didn't all come from the clouds. If all the water rained out of the clouds today you would only get a

few inches of water if it was evenly distributed over the whole earth. Well, back in **Genesis 7** we get a solution to that problem also.

Read Verse 11

God opened up immense subterranean sources of water, He raised the ocean basins, and then He broke down the water vapor canopy that had surrounded the earth since creation.

There was so much water in this flood that by the time the rains stopped it was 110 more days until the ark touched land.

In all, slightly over a year passed from the beginning of the flood until the waters had dried up.

A flood of that duration is not a local flood. No local flood could last that long. John Whitcomb observed, "how a flood of such depth and duration could have covered only a limited portion of the earth's surface has never been satisfactorily explained."

In his commentary on Genesis Henry Morris lists 26 reasons why the Bible is describing a worldwide flood. We've touched on several already but let me just mention a few more.

1. The ark would be totally unnecessary for a local flood.

Last week we saw that the size of the ark was tremendous. There was enough room for thousands of animals. Noah worked for 120 years on that thing. If the flood was only local God could have merely told Noah to get to higher ground and saved him an awful lot of trouble.

2. After the flood God promised never to destroy the earth with a flood again. 9:11-13

There have been thousands of local floods in human history. Millions of people have died in floods. We still have towns that are flooded in the midwest. Some will never be rebuilt. If God's promises refer to a local flood than He sure has broken his promise.

3. Later in Genesis we are told that all the people of the earth descended from Noah's 3 sons and their wives.

4. The New Testament says it was a universal flood.

Look with me at II Peter 3 Page 1081 Read verses 3-7; 10

Peter says scoffers say “there is no global judgment coming. Everything just goes on the same in life.” But they are ignorant of the fact that we already have a precedent for global judgment. *The world that then existed, perished being flooded with water.*

And when the day of the Lord comes this world will be destroyed by fire.

Obviously Peter wasn't talking about some local flood in a Mesopotamian river valley. God, at one time destroyed the world, just as God at a future date will destroy this earth.

So Noah's flood was a world wide flood. There were natural geological and hydrological forces at work. And that means that Noah's flood left its imprint on every part of the world.

Peter says the scoffers ask, “Where is Jesus second coming? All things keep on going along like they always have.”

“You Christians have been threatening us with warnings about a terrible judgment on the world. You tell us that God is going to intervene in human history, judge the wicked and destroy the earth. It's all just scare tactics so there is nothing to fear. We can live as we please. There is no evidence that God has ever intervened in history. Why should we believe that He ever will?

They come to that conclusion by reasoning that *all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation*. They say that nature invariably follows uniform laws, that there are no supernatural interventions. There's a natural explanation for everything.

This is known as the concept of uniformitarianism. Uniformitarianism means that existing processes in nature have always acted in the same manner and with essentially the same intensity as they do now and that these processes are sufficient to account for all the changes that have taken place.

There can still be events like comets hitting the earth or local floods, but not global sudden catastrophes.

Now there is a vital link between this concept of uniformitarianism and the theory of evolution. The theory of the progressive development of living organisms from pre-existing types depends on the supposition that conditions have been fairly uniform.

If this earth has been racked by cataclysms and catastrophes then some of the presuppositions of modern science such as the accuracy of radio carbon dating and the origins of fossils are obviously affected.

I think that Peter was speaking in a much deeper prophetic way than even he realized at the time. For 1800 years both science and theology recognized that God had worked on this earth in a dramatic way. But by the turn of the century what we know as uniformitarianism took hold and today it is generally assumed by anybody in the earth or biological sciences that "all things continue as they were." Well Peter reminds us that that's not true.

The world was overflowed with water and perished. Things haven't been progressing along at a sure and steady pace. God has done great and mighty things in human history in the past. Not only did He create the world but once He even destroyed it with a flood.

In the last days, Peter says, the scoffers will come.

L. Merson Davies was a prominent British paleontologist (a fossil expert) and in 1930 he read a paper before the Victoria Institute in which he said this:

"Here, then, we come fact to face with a circumstance which cannot be ignored in dealing with this subject. Namely, the existence of a marked prejudice against the acceptance of belief in a cataclysm like the flood."

"Now we should remember that, up to a hundred years ago, such a prejudice did not exist. (That would have been at the beginning of the 1800's). Belief in the flood of Noah was axiomatic. Not only in the church itself but in the scientific world as well. And yet the Bible stood committed to the prophecy that in what it calls "the last days," a very different philosophy would be found in the ascendant, a philosophy which would lead men to regard belief in the flood with disfavor, and treat it as disapproved,

declaring that all things continue as from the beginning of creation. In other words the doctrine of uniformity in all things was to replace belief in such cataclysms as the flood."

"And so after 18 centuries we find at last the ancient prophecy fulfilled before our eyes, for here is, as foretold where opposites to belief in the flood lies today. There is no mistaking the fact. It stares us in the face. Anyone, today, who argues in favor of belief in the flood, at once encounters opposition upon these long foretold lines."

Professor Davies was a Christian. And he was able to see, in his life time, the fulfillment of Peter's words. For 1800 years there was a "flood geology." But all of that changed. All things continue as they were.

Now I'm a pastor, not a scientist. And the Bible is a theology book not a text book on science. But the fact still remains that where the Bible touches on things that pertain to science it is going to be true. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God.* II Timothy 3:16 It has to be true or God's not behind it.

I. Noah's Flood Was A Universal Flood

II. Noah's Flood Has Left It's Imprint On Every Part Of The Globe

Scientific opinions and theories change but the word of God is forever settled in heaven. That means that there are times when science is going to conflict with the Bible.

Actually it doesn't shake my faith any if Sam Harris and Richard Dawkins want to teach a uniformitarian evolutionist view of the world. It doesn't surprise me that many scientists and even liberal theologians testify against teaching intelligent design in our schools.

It's not that I've buried my head in the sand and ignored the facts. It's that all of the facts haven't been presented.

Something happened on our globe that was a catastrophe of enormous proportions. The evidence is everywhere you look and science doesn't have all the explanations.

For one thing those gigantic mountain ranges we mentioned are really an enigma to geologists. No one seems to know where they came from.

This is a quote from Dr. A. J. Eardley's article "The Cause of Mountain Building, an Enigma" from American Scientist.

He says, "The internal structure of mountains is finally well understood, and the erosion processes that fashion the details of their outward appearance are no longer mysteries, yet the cause of the deformities of the earth's outer layer and the consequent building of mountains still effectively evades an explanation."

If all things are continuing as they were we're stuck. For an explanation of where mountains came from God tells us they came about through creation and then were augmented through the geological processes accompanying the flood.

During the flood great changes occurred all over the globe and the evidence is everywhere.

Probably one of the most obvious evidences is found in fossils. There are billions of animals found in fossils today. Where did they come from? When fish die in the ocean today do they become fossils? No. They're eaten up and destroyed.

2000 years ago there were lions and bears in Palestine. Do we find any fossils of lions, there today? No we don't.

In contrast to what is going on in the world today there are fossil beds all over the planet containing billions of fossils. In the western US almost perfect fossils of fish, turtles, mammals, even an alligators have been found together with huge palm leaves.

Polystrate fossil logs (tree trunks in vertical position running through several sedimentary layers) are common in the fossil layers and are clear evidence of rapid burial.

There are fossils of rhinoceros, camel, giant boar and all kinds of other animals, mixed together and laid in a stratum running horizontally through hills.

In 1909, 20 miles east of Vernal, Utah, paleontologist Earl Douglass discovered a 200-foot long sandbar that was layered with prehistoric plant and animal fossils. About 350 tons of fossils, including full skeletons and remains of some dinosaur species that were previously unknown, were excavated by Douglass and his crew. A quarry was

built on the site and it was designated a national monument in 1915. They built a visitor center over the quarry to protect the fossils but it was closed 2 years ago because of structural defects.

The Quarry at Dinosaur National Monument is filled with thousands of dinosaur fossils and bones embedded in rock.

There are Sicilian hippopotamus beds. Mammal beds in the Rockies. Scottish Devonian fish beds. And the list goes on and on.

Where did they all come from? Uniformitarianism is at a loss for an explanation.

Judging from what went on in Genesis Chapter 6 it would be very reasonable to attribute them to the flood. What about Grand Canyon?

The prevailing theory is a little water over a very long time etched out the canyon. A whole lot of water over a short period of time makes more sense to me.

Another startling illustration that a great catastrophe once struck this planet is the woolly mammoths and other large animals destroyed in the north polar regions. Some were frozen instantly and preserved whole and undamaged. In some cases they have been found standing upright.

Listen to a Russian zoologist who studied one of the mammoths brought from Siberia to the Leningrad Museum. This is what he said.

“1st - the mammoth was upright. 2nd none of its 2 foot shaggy fur was rubbed or broken off. 3rd it was fresh, the stomach contents had not begun to decompose. Finally there were buttercups on it's tongue.”

Animals as large as mammoths would require several hundred pounds of food daily just to survive and there were millions of them in a region of the world where very little vegetation grows today.

Nikolai Vereshchagin, has spent nearly a half century of research on the mammoths. In one estimate he made for one region of Siberia he suggests five million mammoths are buried.

John Whitcomb in his book "The Word that Perished" said "In order to freeze animals of this size in such a way that large crystals would not form within their body cells, temperatures of 150 below zero would have to descend upon them instantly."

Any thinking person would have to say, whenever that event happened, all things have not continued as they were from creation. Something cataclysmic happened.

If that description in Genesis of the waters above the earth meant that there was a vapor canopy surrounding the world then this earth was originally like a giant green house.

This would explain why we find mammoths in Siberia and palm leaves and crocodiles in Wyoming. We read in Genesis 7:11 *all the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened.*

God is being very careful in Genesis 7 to tell us that something happened instantly, violently, dramatically, and powerfully. The under ground storehouses opened up and water turbulently and violently flooded the land. This great vapor barrier was broken and water literally poured down upon the earth.

The temperature at the poles changed suddenly. Super powerful tides and currents stronger than anything we can imagine buried millions of animals and tons of plant life.

The evidence is around us. From coal deposits in Antarctica to sea shells on Mt. Everest. God has caused a mighty destruction of this world in the form of a universal flood. So the question comes down to who are you going to believe?

God says *the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water.*

The evidence for the great flood is overwhelming. From the testimony of geology, to the clear statements of the Bible, and even, as we saw last week the flood traditions held in virtually every culture and nation on the globe.

And yet in spite of that evidence humanity seems to have forgotten the flood of God's judgment. Maybe it's myth, a fairy tale, a children's story, but certainly not an event of history.

Where is the promise of His coming? ...all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.

Why is this? In the face of so much evidence why do people reject the idea of the flood? Some do it out of ignorance. They just haven't examined the evidence. But for others there's only one explanation. It's not because there's any shortage of evidence.

Peter said this, they *willfully forget*. They close their minds to the facts because to face up to them means that they are accountable to a God who judges sin and ungodliness.

That disturbs people, it makes them uncomfortable. But as James Boice has written, "It is better to be disturbed now in the day of God's grace, than later in the day of His wrath."

The Bible says, God is *not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance*. II Peter 3:9 That's why God so patiently waits. He wants all to come to repentance. Will you come?

Will you allow the fact of God's past destruction of the world by water to warn you to flee from the wrath to come?

Today is the day of salvation. Jesus is our ark. He suffered God's wrath and judgment on sin so that we might be saved. Will you trust Him today?

Jesus said *the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out*. John 6:37