

SESSION 51: THE EXTENT AND POWER OF THE FLOOD, PART TWO

Genesis 7:13-22

December 1, 2024

PREFACE

In our previous session we discussed the range, the scope of the Flood, and concluded that the Inundation was not local, confined to a rather limited geographical region, but global, universal. It defies logic to say we take God's word for what it says—"And the water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains under all the heavens were covered. The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered." (Genesis 7:19–20)—but then conclude from that, that the Flood was restricted to just a portion of the Middle East!

With that—the *extent* of the Flood—out of the way, we now turn to the destructive and manipulative power unleashed on this earth by the Flood—which consisted not just of rain, but also the eruptions of the subterranean vaults.

Read Genesis 7:17-22. 

What was the physical impact of the Flood on the earth?

On our property there are a number of areas where, over time, rain and the gathered running water have effectively altered the landscape. Water running from low spots in our drive toward the pond has cut channels in the slope, that then continue to erode during subsequent rains. The spillway for runoff from the pond, which began as a subtle man-made depression, has deepened to the point that I have had to fill it with concrete rip-rap to slow the erosion. All of this and more has been caused just by normal rains, augmented and worsened by the occasional "gulley-washer."

These landscape changes have been made by normal Midwest weather, without benefit of extraordinary climatic extremes.

At a point millennia ago, the corruption and evil of mankind became so bad that Yahweh God determined to both wipe out that generation of man and completely alter the earth on which it dwelt.

Read Genesis 6:11-13.

Someone could easily teach an entire multi-session class on this topic alone. So it is clear that I cannot cover every last detail, every piece of evidence in just one or two sessions. For those details I commend to you Whitcomb's book, *The Genesis Flood*, as well as any number of resources at *The Institute for Creation Research*—founded, by the way, by Whitcomb's coauthor, Dr. Henry M. Morris. Another fine example, also available at the Institute for Creation, is *Carved in Stone*, by Dr. Timothy Clarey.

In the passage before us, vv17-22 in Chapter Seven, we have Yahweh doing just that. Here is the chronicle, in condensed form, of the Inundation that will destroy all living things on land save for Noah's family and representatives for the essential species, as well as dramatically alter the terrain of planet earth. And right off the bat, v17 requires some clarification.

v17

Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water multiplied and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth.

Two words, the first noun and verb in this verse, require a closer look, for we can often think of a flood as a done deal, a relatively static thing, a body of water as the *result* of heavy rain or a dam breaking. But the word here is *mabbul*, which contains within it the idea of flowing, a deluge—that is, a flooding of water: the *cause*, not the *result*.

The corresponding verb as well can be confusingly interpreted. The KJVs “was” speaks of the result: a body of water upon the earth for forty days. Yet this contradicts v24, which speaks of “the water prevail[ing] upon the earth 150 days.” The LSB and NASB are better, with “the flood **came upon** the earth for forty days.” Best, surprisingly, are the NIVs, with “For forty days the flood **kept coming** on the earth.” That’s the idea: for forty days the flooding water fell and erupted upon the earth.

Yet vv11-12 remind us that the rain was not the first component of the Inundation. There was an earth-shattering event that began before the rain.

Read Genesis 7:11-12.

There may have been only a split-second between the two, but Scripture tells us that “the fountains of the great deep split open” *before* it began to rain.

Both of these components were of a cataclysmic nature; they are both God-managed, *destructive* events meant to depopulate the earth and radically alter the shape and terrain of the globe.

Man is a short-sighted being—always has been, always will be, this side of Glory. Humans cannot see over the horizon, and usually do not wish to. Likewise humans spend little time in retrospection; they know little of the past, and tend to imagine by default that things as they are right now are as they always have been—or if they are different, what is right now is the preferred.

Thus it is easy for us to imagine that the shape and terrain of this earth is today as it was originally created.

- The rivers that flows through or around our state have always been there;
- the trees that pepper our lawn have always had today's appearance;
- land that is today arid desert has always been arid desert;
- and the largest natural objects on earth, mountains, were initially created at the height and shape they are today.

None of these are true.

Read Psalm 104:5-9.

That passage, in poetic form, relates how the face of the earth was changed by the Flood. We seldom consider the destructive *turbulence* of the Inundation; after all, from Sunday School flannel graphs on we probably have a picture in our mind of the ark floating placidly upon a tranquil sea. That is not necessarily inaccurate, just incomplete. If just normal, seasonal rain can alter the landscape of our few acres, what would a Flood higher than the highest mountains along with violently erupting quaking and spewing from underground vaults do to the earth? Here is a great summary statement by John Whitcomb.

Whitcomb: The entire account plainly yields the inference that tremendous quantities of earth and rock must have been excavated by the waters of the Flood. Many factors must have contributed to this—the driving rains, the raging streams resulting from them, the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, the powerful tidal waves, then later the waves and other currents generated by the rising of the lands and sinking of the basins, and perhaps many other factors which we cannot now even guess.

Never since the world was formed could there ever have been such extensive erosion of soil and rock beds, on a global scale, as during the Genesis Flood. And the materials that were eroded must eventually have been redeposited somewhere, and necessarily in stratified layers, such as we find everywhere around the world today in the great sedimentary rock systems.

In other words, what “science” claims took millions of years to slowly occur, could have mostly occurred during the one year of the Flood event. And regarding the raising and lowering of the land, valleys and mountains, Whitcomb writes,

It is extremely interesting in light of the biblical suggestion of uplift of the lands at the conclusion of the Deluge period, to note that most of the present mountain ranges of the world are believed to have been uplifted (on the basis of fossil evidence) during the Pleistocene or late Pliocene... Since the Pliocene and Pleistocene are supposed to represent the most recent geological epochs, except that of the present, and since nearly all of the great mountain areas of the world have been found to have fossils from these times near their summits, there is no conclusion possible other than that the mountains (and therefore the continents of which they form the backbones) have all been uplifted essentially simultaneously and quite recently. Surely this fact accords well with the biblical statements.

His point is this: Those fossils, in number and type, found near the mountain summits, are supposed to be limited to areas considerably lower, which is evidence for dramatic—and, in geological terms—fairly recent uplift, all at the same time.

If one backs up and squints, considering the span of history from Creation to Eschaton, it is easy to see that this earth is in an almost continual—or at least repeated—state of flux and change. Whitcomb breaks this down into “five great epochs of history, each of which has produced substantial segments of the geological formations.”

- The initial Creation itself,
- the work of the subsequent six days of Creation,
- the Antediluvian period (before the Flood),
- the Deluge itself,
- the modern, post-deluge period.

Whitcomb is of course looking backward, but to this I must, looking into the future, add the cataclysmic upheaval that will occur during the Last Things, the Eschaton, which will be, in many respects, a mirror image of that which takes place during the Inundation and six days of creation. ❏

I keep coming back to the crescendo in vv18-19:

And the water prevailed and multiplied greatly upon the earth, and the ark went on the surface of the water. And the water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains under all the heavens were covered.

Here we have a picture, painted with words, of an event steadily increasing in fierce strength with an overwhelming reach. If one takes the Bible as God's inerrant word, describing the Flood as a geological catastrophe affecting the entire planet, one cannot go wobbly on its two principal components: rain and the release of subterranean water and other natural elements such as magma.

A number of commentators almost ignore the idea of underground vaults of *water*, going right to earthquakes and volcanoes spewing lava—and I think it is feasible to include all of the above. Even if Yahweh's intent was to release subterranean water, that process would certainly invoke a multitude of structural movements, the shifting of tectonic plates, and the release of more than just water.

Perhaps the best picture of this calamitous event is found in the description of the events during the opening of the Sixth Seal in the last things.

Read Revelation 6:12-17.

Two different events that include different components, but I think what we just read paints a pretty accurate picture of the same sort of cataclysmic impact on the people and structure of the earth as in the Genesis Flood. That ark may have had days of floating upon a relatively tranquil sea, but especially during the first forty days there also would have been days of rolling, surging tidal waves, vast towering waves, eddies and whirlpools throwing and spinning the ark about like a toy.

see Zechariah 14:1-10, Habakkuk 3:6, Micah 1:4, Isaiah 2:2, and of course the lengthy narrative of the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls—the tribulations and plagues with which the earth and its people are inflicted during the Eschaton, in the Revelation.

And put yourself in the place of the poor lost souls outside the ark: there would have been nowhere safe to hide. Flooding, yes, but also valleys and mountains switching places; heaving ground that had just moments before been a quiet plain; bottomless cracks in the earth suddenly swallowing everything in sight; placid mountains spewing lava and rock and ash; hot, suffocating mud competing with incessant, torrential downpours. Seek shelter anywhere—mountain cave, stone hut—only to have it collapse upon you.

Just as will happen during the end times, shake your fist at God, but He is the one in charge, and your options have run out. You are experiencing the full force of His holy wrath.

And in no time at all the continually rising surface of the water would be crammed with the corpses of humans and animals alike, along with all the floating detritus that accompanies total destruction—resulting in vv21-22:

And all flesh that moved on the earth breathed its last, that is birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, as well as all mankind. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life—of all that was on the dry land—died.

And to bring this home, I experience to this much the same reaction I did to the study of the events of the Eschaton. Yes indeed we have a loving gracious Savior in Christ Jesus, as well as a patient and merciful Father who gave Him for the salvation of our souls. But we should never—*never*—forget that our God is also God of wrath.

Man is shortsighted; we imagine by default that things as they are right now are as they always have been—or if they are different, what is right now will always be. But God's word tells us a very different reality.

Most of us remain blind to God's wrath because—dwelling in the Church Age, the age of grace—we have never experienced it, and when we read about it, it seems so far in the past or so far into the future that it cannot possibly affect us.

We should all be both encouraged and *sobered* by the fact that our God never changes. He remains who and what He has always been—and that includes His Son. There will come a day when *His* wrath will be loosed upon this earth and its rebellious people—just as it was in the Great Inundation of Noah's time.

SESSION 51

The Extent and Power of the Flood, part two Genesis 7:13-22

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