

Miracles in the Flood

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The *LSI Journal* has published multiple articles suggesting that Noah's Flood is the most likely explanation for many of the rock layers of the geologic column and the fossils they contain. One such article was titled "Geologic Column," and was published in the winter 2018 *LSI Journal*.¹ A more recent article is "Lesson 6 –Fossils" in the *LSI Lesson Book* (2nd edition).²

While many aspects and possible results of the Flood can be understood using natural means (without miracles), that should not lead us to think that God used only "natural" means during the Flood. It appears that the Flood included multiple miracles.

This article will look for clues in Scripture and speculate about times during the Flood when God may have used miracles. Our purpose in doing so is to respond to critics of Scripture who mock the Flood as a fairytale. They do not see natural means for some aspects of the flood. There are reasonable answers for these critics. While we engage in speculation about the Flood, we must always keep in mind what the late seminary professor John Jeske wrote after he spent many words estimating how many animals were on the ark [underline not in original],

The preceding paragraphs are not an attempt to prove in a lawyer-like way the truthfulness of the Genesis flood account or to somehow make it more believable. Our purpose is to try and help the earnest Bible student visualize more clearly this important chapter of world history. Finally, what God says is true whether it seems reasonable or not.³

¹ A free pdf of the winter 2018 *LSI Journal* is available at (accessed 9-6-20). www.LutheranScience.org/2018winter

² A free pdf of this 48-page Lesson book, published in summer 2020, is available at www.LutheranScience.org/LessonBook (accessed 9-6-20).

³ Carl J. Lawrence and John C. Jeske, *A Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2004) 253.

What is a Miracle?

Before defining miracles, we need to discuss how God normally upholds the universe. God is far more powerful, and far more necessary, than many Christians understand. Without God's constant care, the universe and everything in it would cease to exist. God cares for all things, including things some consider too insignificant for God's attention. Here are some Bible passages to consider:

All things hold together in him. Colossians 1:17 (EHV)

Neither is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, since he himself gives all people life and breath and everything they have. ...For in him we live and move and have our being. Acts 17:25, 28 (EHV)

He sustains all things by his powerful word. Hebrews 1:3 (EHV)

"Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without the knowledge and consent of your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all numbered." Matthew 10:29-30 (EHV)

How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all. The earth is full of your creatures. Here is the sea, great and very wide. In it creatures swarm beyond number—living things, the small with the large. There the ships go back and forth, and the leviathan that you formed to play in it. All of them wait hopefully for you to give them their food in its time. You give it to them. They gather it up. You open your hand. They are satisfied with good things. Psalms 104:24-28 (EHV)

Theologians call God's sustaining and caring for everything, "God's providence." There is much more to this than we mention here. Read more about this activity of God in *The People's Bible Teachings* book, "*God's Providence –He Cares for You.*"⁴

⁴ Mark J. Lenz, *God's Providence –He Cares for You, People's Bible Teachings* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000).

So, what is a miracle? God normally upholds everything in a predictable way, using what we call *gravity*, *momentum*, and other natural laws. When God does something another way, we call it a *miracle*. A miracle is God doing something differently than the way He normally does. Here we see that God is in control at all times, not just when He is performing a miracle. God normally works through natural laws and economizes the use of miracles. That said, God uses miracles whenever it pleases Him to do so.

What Caused the Flood?

I myself am about to bring a flood of waters on the earth, in order to destroy all flesh under the sky that has the breath of life. Everything that is on the earth will die. ... In seven days I will cause it to rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights. Every living thing that I have made, I will wipe off the face of the earth. Genesis 6:17 and 7:4 (EHV)

A primary assumption of evolutionists is that there never was a worldwide flood on Earth. They assume this to be the case, because they cannot think of a natural cause for a flood that covered the entire planet, based on their evolutionary model of a 4.54 billion-year-old Earth that solidified from molten rock, and whose water accumulated from comets crashing into the planet. Yet God tells us in the Bible that He sent the Flood: “I myself am about to bring a flood of waters on the earth, ...I will cause it to rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights.” *We need not find a natural cause for the Flood.* God caused it to happen.

Because there really was a worldwide flood on earth thousands of years ago, evolutionists’ interpretation of the fossil-filled geologic column is wrong. Their “no flood” assumption causes them to reject the possibility that a global flood quickly created most of these fossils and the water deposited sedimentary rocks in which they are buried.⁵ Evolutionists as-

⁵ *The 1980 eruption of Mt. St. Helens showed rock layers can be deposited, and then canyons up to 600 feet deep cut through them, in months. Canyons were quickly cut through soft sedimentary rock and also hard basalt rock. See pages 12-13 of the fall 2017 LSI Journal at www.LutheranScience.org/2017fall (accessed 9-6-20).*

sume the Earth's fossil-filled rock layers were slowly made over a period of 500 million years by natural events similar to what we see happening in the world today, such as local and regional floods.

We do not know whether God used natural or miraculous means to initiate the Flood. It seems to me that Genesis 6:17 and 7:4 suggest God miraculously initiated the Flood, but that is pure speculation. Near the end of this article, we will briefly discuss plate tectonics. If a single pre-flood continent rapidly split apart during the Flood, forming the Atlantic Ocean, that also seems miraculous to me.

Who Brought the Animals to the Ark?

On that same day Noah, Noah's sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons along with them, entered the ark. They went in with every animal according to its kind, all the livestock according to their kinds, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth according to its kind, and everything that flies according to its kind, flying birds of every sort. Pairs of all the animals that have the breath of life in them went to Noah in the ark. A male and female of each animal that breathes went in, just as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut Noah in. Genesis 7:13-16 (EHV)

The words I have underlined seem to make it clear that God miraculously had the animals travel to the ark and enter it on the same day that Noah and his family entered the ark. The flood began seven days later (Genesis 7:10).

Imagine if Noah had to gather the animals without God's miraculous help. First Noah would have to make a list of all the animal kinds. He would have to go around the world, collecting animals and bringing them to the location of the ark. He would have a very large zoo with a large staff to care for the animals already gathered, while he traveled to collect other animals. It would probably take many years to gather all the animals. Gathering the animals this way would be nearly as large a task as building a 450-foot-long ark!

Closing the Ark Door

Genesis 7:16 quoted above ends with the words, “Then the LORD shut Noah in.” God miraculously closed the ark door. God gave this His personal touch, even though Noah could have done this task.

Caring for the Animals on the Ark

God may have miraculously put the animals into torpor or hibernation for the duration of their stay on the ark. This seems to follow as a reasonable extension of God miraculously having the animals travel to the ark and enter it.

In Genesis 7:13-16 quoted above, we find that God had all the animals enter the ark in one day. If we spread out 1,373 animal kinds over 12 hours, that’s one kind passing through the ark door every 31 seconds.⁶ With this in mind, it seems reasonable to me that God not only had the animals travel to the ark and enter it all on their own, God probably also had each animal kind go to their proper place on the ark (into their own cage, if there were cages). Even if Noah had hired dozens of people to help put the animals into their cages, I do not think it could be done in a single day without the animals doing it completely on their own.

During this boarding process, the animals must have been very calm and cooperative, or it could not have been done in a single day. Since God had the animals unnaturally calm during boarding and up to the time they were in their cages, waiting until their cage door was closed, it seems reasonable that God may have continued this unnatural animal behavior (extreme calmness under adverse conditions) throughout the entire year of the Flood. If God miraculously had the animals calm, He may have also had them so calm and restful that they were close to or in torpor or hibernation.

⁶ There are many estimates of how many animals were on the ark. A recent and extensive research effort estimated 6,658 individuals in 1,373 kinds. (12 hours x 60 minutes x 60 seconds) / 1,373 kinds = 31 seconds per kind. The estimate of 1,373 kinds is from: Craig Froman, ed., *How Many Animals Were on the Ark – Understanding the Animal Kinds* (Green Forest AR: Master Books, 2016), 47.

This would make caring for the animals far easier, even if the animals still ate occasionally. God commanded Noah to bring food for the animals. God commanded Noah to “Take with you every type of food that is eaten, and store it for yourself, so it can be used as food for you and for them [the animals].”⁷ Animals in torpor still eat occasionally, and hibernation does not normally last a whole year.

Having eight people care for an estimated 6,658 animals⁸ for an entire year would be very difficult, unless the animals were eating and drinking very little (such as they would while in torpor or hibernation). While *Answers in Genesis (AIG)* describes how eight people could care for even 16,000 animals without the animals being in torpor or hibernation, it would be subsistence care to prevent death, not quality care. Water trays could be filled via bamboo piping. The daily tons of animal waste could be pressed through slatted floors by the animals’ feet and accumulate in central gutters, where the people could remove it for disposal. These and other ideas are put forth by *Answers in Genesis (AIG)* with the thought that God may have used hibernation, but it was not necessary.⁹ My personal opinion is that having the animals in torpor or hibernation seems more reasonable. God could miraculously have placed all the animals into hibernation, even animals that do not hibernate naturally.

Keeping Everyone Safe

We know for certain that God’s plans never fail. God would not allow the people and animals aboard the ark to be harmed. I think that may have required some miracles.

After months on the ark, conditions would be expected to be very unsanitary. Bacterial and viral infections and other illnesses could have easily killed many of the animals and people. God did not allow that to happen, and that may have involved a miracle.

⁷ Genesis 6:21 (EHV)

⁸ See previous footnote on animal counts.

⁹ John Woodmorappe, *How Could Noah Fit the Animals on the Ark and Care for Them?* in *The New Answers Book 3*, ed. Ken Ham (Green Forest AR: Master Books, 2009), 52-55. www.LutheranScience.org/ArkCareAIG (accessed 8-26-20)

No matter how well made, the ark could have been damaged as the waters first lifted it off the ground. A tsunami-like surge could have tipped the ark over before it was even off the ground. Eventually, the tallest mountains were more than 20 feet under water,¹⁰ but before that, those same mountains were only covered by inches of water. If the ark struck a partially submerged mountain, the ark may have sunk. Today we know the oceans have “rogue waves” as tall as 98 feet (30 meters).¹¹ If such a wave hit the ark broadside, the ark may have sunk. God did not allow any of these disasters to happen, and that may have involved miracles.

The ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.
Genesis 8:4 (EHV)

While coming to rest on the mountain, the ark could easily have tipped over. God did not allow that to happen, and that may have involved a miracle.¹²

The Water Recedes

God remembered Noah, as well as all the animals and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. So God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were also closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained. The waters kept receding from the earth. After the end of one hundred fifty days the waters had decreased. In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The waters receded continuously until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were visible.
Genesis 8:1-5 (EHV)

¹⁰ Genesis 7:20.

¹¹ Ship-sinking monster waves revealed by ESA satellites, European Space Agency, 07-21-2004, www.LutheranScience.org/ESAwaves (accessed 8-26-20)

¹² *Jeske called it “a miracle of divine providence” that the ark did not sink during the flood or tip when coming to rest.* Lawrence and Jeske, page 266.

God initiated the Flood, and here we see that God ended the Flood. God caused a wind, closed the fountains of the deep, and stopped the rain. This seems to be another miraculous set of actions.

Where did the water go? We can only speculate, but there is evidence to help us make that guess. It seems that the surface of the Earth is divided into large plates that are moving at speeds of 2-4 inches per year, even sliding under and over each other. This is causing continents to move in relation to each other and mountains to rise. Part of this theory of plate tectonics is that the earth once had a single large continent which split apart, forming what is now the Atlantic Ocean. *Encyclopedia Britannica* has a very detailed article about this.¹³ Evolutionists assume that these plates have been moving at these slow speeds for millions of years.

Many creationists accept plate tectonics but not the evolutionary timescale. They propose that God initiated the breakup of the Earth's single continent at the start of the Flood, and that this pre-flood continent had much smaller mountains than we have today. During the Flood, God moved the Earth's plates very quickly. To drain the flood waters, God raised the continents above the water. The waters of the Flood are the waters in the Earth's oceans, seas, and lakes. This is a reasonable claim about the means God may have used to end the Flood.

CONCLUSION

God caused the Flood. It seems He used multiple miracles in doing so. While we have proposed several miracles in this article, we should not call upon miracles to explain everything God does. God seems to normally work through natural means. That is even evident in the Flood account. God could have ended the time of grace for the pre-flood people by miraculously ending their life (without using a flood or other natural means). God instead chose to use a flood which involved many natural means.

¹³ Tjeerd H. van Andel, "Plate Tectonics—Geology," *Encyclopedia Britannica* <https://www.britannica.com/science/plate-tectonics> (accessed 7-11-20)

By faith we know that the universe was created by God's word,
so that what is seen did not come from visible things.
Hebrews 11:3 (EHV)

We accept articles of faith—such as creation, the Flood, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to eternal life—by faith, even if our sin-darkened human reason (including science) wants to deny these truths.

That said, the account of the Flood is not an illogical fairytale. The historical events of the Bible such as creation, the Flood, and the death and resurrection of Jesus, are true history. They actually took place. To deny them is to deny reality.

The all-powerful and all-knowing God of the Bible, who moment by moment sustains the universe so that it does not cease to exist, has the power to cause a worldwide flood. Since such a flood actually happened, we still see the results today: fossils of countless sea creatures (clams, trilobites, cephalopods, etc.) all over the Earth, including on the tallest mountains.

Even so, there are many things about the geologic column and its fossils that creationists cannot explain. Evolutionists have the same problem—they also cannot explain it all.¹⁴ Our acceptance of the Flood as true history is based on faith, not on reason. We confess with John Jeske, “What God says is true whether it seems reasonable or not.”¹⁵

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¹⁴ See “Fossils in the Geologic Column—Problems for Evolution,” on pages 17-32 of the spring 2018 *LSI Journal*. www.LutheranScience.org/2018spring (accessed 7-21-20)

¹⁵ Jeske, 253.