



The Flood and How It Relates to Science

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The topic involves two major and very different sources and approaches. The flood is, of course, the Flood mentioned in Genesis. The information that is given in Scripture is absolutely true. We do not need, nor do we dare, to substantiate the facts given here with science. The other part relates to science. This is always tentative. It is information inferred from what we see in nature. It tries to piece together events not mentioned in the Bible, or just vaguely alluded to. We are speculating. We are like detectives who are trying to piece together a crime scene in order to derive certain information. The scene that we are studying is ancient. Detectives will have trouble piecing together a scene that happened months or several years ago. We are trying to look at a scene that occurred thousands of years ago. We will often be wrong, even though we are careful not to contradict the inspired Word of God. We need always remember this. We are looking for things that relate to the physical aspects. Local floods, winds, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions have caused things to be lost, altered, or rearranged. God's Word is always correct in historical, scientific, anthropological, and every other study. Its purpose, however, is to relate God's plan of salvation to redeem a sinful world. It relates our only hope of forgiveness of sins and eternal life in the joys of heaven. Thank God that He has given us this infallible Word! Study it! Believe it! Defend it! Treasure it!



The question may be then asked, "Why waste time speculating about the results of the Flood on the Earth?" The answer is that the Flood had such a great effect on the Earth that ignoring its effect would keep us from understanding important concepts that would help us to get a more complete picture of the present Earth. Science is a process that uses inferences and logical deductions to find out about the unknown. If the purpose of the Bible were to be a science text, we would be able to know all the pertinent facts. As stated before, the Bible's purpose is to show God's gracious plan of salvation. We, however, rely completely upon any scientific facts that it provides. This will always be our starting point. Then we will look at nature and infer and deduce what we see that results from the actions that occurred in Genesis. These inferences and deductions, while they do not contradict Scriptures, are very tentative. They seem to be the best explanation, but there are always many facets of the picture that may be unknown. And even what we do know may be warped by our feeble human minds and/or the skewed data that we obtain from imperfect collection mechanisms. Science demands testing of hypotheses to verify, alter, or discard them. Attempts at this are being made by the Institute for Creation Research in Santee, California. While the work they are doing is important, their approach is somewhat skewed. They tend to try to substantiate Holy Scripture by using science. This is extremely dangerous. We rely on Scripture by faith. If we think that we need proof or evidence that Scripture is correct, we are no longer relying on faith. Much of what is accepted in science will soon be altered or thrown out. This seems to have happened with the Canopy Theory. Because a canopy of water vapor would so alter the climate on Earth so that it would become inhabitable, does that mean that the Bible is wrong? Never! God's Word is not accepted by reason or logic. We readily alter or discard any theory or hypothesis when it is shown to be weak or untenable. Scripture is sure. It isn't reliant on the proofs of laboratory or the logic of human minds. Use science to answer questions of the physical world, but accept by faith what Scripture says about all things.



In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1

We will divide this paper into the following parts:

The earth before the Flood
The purpose for the Flood.
The chronological events of the Flood as related in the Bible.
The effects on plants during the Flood.
The effects on animals living at the time of the Flood.
The possible effect on the geology of the Earth as a result of the Flood.

The Earth Before the Flood

To determine the changes that occurred during the Flood, we need to get as good a picture as we can of the earth before the Flood. We see the earth covered by water at the end of the first day of Creation. Then, on the second day, God separated the waters below from the waters above the expanse. The waters below the expanse covered the entire earth. There was no separation of the water from the dry land until the third day of Creation. The waters above the expanse are most likely not what we know today. The Bible seems to refer to this in several places. The word for waters below and waters above are the same Hebrew word. The expanse translated sky is to separate these two waters. Genesis 2:5-6 states: "and no shrub of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground." Did this rainlessness last until the time of the flood? We don't know. Hebrews 11:7 relates: "By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family." Although this must refer to the Flood, it may indicate that Noah had not yet even seen rain. It could be that the hydrological processes that we know today were much different before the Flood.

Another aspect that describes the climate of the early earth is that the climate must have been very mild. It was so mild in fact that Adam and Eve were completely comfortable in the paradise God created for them without clothes. This probably did not change until after the Flood, even though God provided animal skins for their modesty after the Fall. Evidence in nature shows a lush landscape in the Saharan Desert as well as the Antarctic. Apparently some type of "greenhouse effect" was in place, moderating the climate and providing a moist, warm environment for the growth of both plants and animals.

Still other variations before the Flood that come solely by observation are the land and sea areas. Perhaps the continents as we know them today were joined as one. The shapes of the land forms do fit together pretty well. All the animals came to Noah before the Flood to enter into the ark. There are evidences of land formations beneath the oceans. Formations in the middle of the ocean basins show areas of stress. Canyons along the continental shelves show evidence of flood waters. Other fossil evidence also seems to point to a single continent before the Flood. The Bible relates about the streams that watered the land: "A river watering the garden flowed from Eden, from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. (The gold of that land is good, aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the second river is the Gihon, it winds through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates." Gen. 2:10-14. The location of these rivers range from the Pishon, believed to be in the central tableland of Asia or Armenia. The name of the second river, the Gihon is associated with Ethiopia in Africa. This is on a different continent. The third and fourth rivers are in present Iraq, again in Asia.¹ This may indicate that the division of the land into continents as we know them today was not there before the Flood.

The Purpose of the Flood

In regard to the purpose of the Flood, we read in Genesis 6: “When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, ‘My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.’ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days — and also afterward — when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown. The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said. ‘I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth — men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air — for I am grieved that I have made them.’ But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.” The purpose was to not only wipe mankind from the face of the earth, but to destroy livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and the birds of the air. Again, in Genesis 6:13 God tells Noah, “I am going to destroy both them and the earth” In Genesis 6:17 we find God being more specific: “I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.” The earth itself — as it was known before the Flood — would no longer exist. Notice how emphatic God was that the devastation would be complete. In order to preserve righteous Noah and his family as the ancestors of promised Savior, God found it necessary to wipe out almost all of his original creation.

Sin was rampant. Intermarriage between the believers and unbelievers caused a degeneration of mankind. God was forsaken. Might made right. Those who were strongest were revered. Following God’s way was no longer sought. God could not allow mankind to continue along this path. But God is a God of mercy and grace. He allowed mankind 120 years to repent.



Lush, green forest before the Flood

The world-wide flood recorded in Genesis chapters 6 to 8 is the most devastating catastrophe recorded in Scripture. Its scope, purpose, and result changed the entire world from what was found before it.

This flood was miraculous. It took supernatural powers of the almighty God to accomplish it. It was a special catastrophe that is unparalleled in the history of the world. What the earth was like before the flood — what land forms existed — what oceans existed — what the firmament consisted of— is pure speculation. Because God carried out his threat to “destroy both them and the earth,” (Gen. 6:13) we simply don’t know what the earth was like at that time. We do have certain aspects alluded to before the Flood. These facts from Scripture may give us an incomplete picture of what the earth was like before the Flood.

Genesis 1:2 states: “Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” The Flood was the second time that the earth was covered with waters. Continuing with the Creation of the earth, we find that God said, “ ‘Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.’ God made the expanse to separate water under the expanse from the water above it.” (Gen. 1:6) What is meant by water below and water above is not explained. Was there a vapor canopy above the earth? We simply are not told. Many hold that the waters above the sky were more substantial than what is found in the clouds now. The “vapor canopy theory” would try to explain a universal mild climate, protection of the inhabitants of the earth from harmful radiation, and provide water for a forty-day downpour. This is pure speculation. We simply don’t know whether the water cycle as we know it today even existed before the Flood. II Peter 3:5 explains that the waters of Creation were the same waters

that provided the Deluge. It states: “by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. (II Peter 3:5-6) This indicates that God did not multiply the water as he did the food at the feeding of the 5000 and 4000. We know that the earth before the flood had mountains: “They (the flood waters) rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet.” Gen. 7:19-20 The second chapter of Genesis may be showing that the hydrology cycle of precipitation, percolation, transformation, evaporation, and condensation, were not used before the Flood. We read: “When the Lord God made the earth and the heavens— and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no man to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.” Gen. 2:4-6. Again, after Adam was created, rivers are shown watering, not only Eden, but the major regions of the pre-Flood world. Logic may surmise that some insulation was present for God did not clothe Adam and Eve before the Fall. Perhaps there was no rainbow until after the Flood. We don’t know. We do know that after the Flood the rainbow was God’s promise not to end another Flood.

The Chronological Events of the Flood

God gave the world 120 years of grace before he sent the Flood. Noah was instructed to build the ark according to God’s scale. It was to be made with cypress wood. It was to be coated with pitch inside and out. It was to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. It was to have 18 inches of ventilation space beneath the roof. It was to have three decks. Think of the assignment the God gave Noah and his family. This ark was immense! It was the largest vessel constructed until the nineteenth century.² They were to build it, in addition to providing for themselves. We are not told whether help was enlisted to hoist the beams and other heavy structures that made up the ark’s superstructure. I might guess that such was the case. When the time of grace was ended, “Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark.” (Gen 7:8,9) God directed the creatures to come to the ark during the last week. Then, when Noah was 600 years, two months, and 17 days old, “all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened.” (*Gen.7: 11*) It rained for forty days and forty nights. The ark was carried high above the earth. All the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered with over 20 feet of water. Every living thing that moved on the earth perished — birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swam over the earth, and all mankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. (Gen. 7:21,22) The waters flooded the earth for 150 days.

Critics have often questioned whether the ark was large enough to house all the animals that would be needed. To answer this question, we need only to point out that the ark was designed by God. Obviously it had sufficient size. We may also surmise that the animals of each kind would not have to be full grown. It can also be pointed out that the “kind” is not synonymous with the “species” that is used in biology today. The criterion to determine both “kind” and “species” is the same. They would be able to reproduce offspring. However genetic losses of genes when members of one created kind are isolated may not allow certain animals to reproduce even though they started as the same created kind. So there are many more species today that originated from the same created kind. How many created kinds of animals would be useless speculation. Suffice it to say that God knew what he was doing. His design was adequate.

God miraculously brought the correct number of animals to Noah. Then God himself sealed up the ark. Noah did not have this responsibility. Then the miracles continued. Genesis 7:11 states the beginning of the Flood: “on that day all the springs of the great deep were opened.” Professor John Jeske in *The People’s Bible: Genesis* writes: “In a series of gigantic convulsions the huge reservoirs of water beneath the ground and all the surface waters exploded from behind the boundaries the Creator had originally set for them and flooded the

earth. This may very well have provided the bulk of the floodwaters.”³ Whitcomb in *The World That Perished*, states: “This uplift of ocean basins, accompanied by enormous explosions of suboceanic and subterranean magmas and steam, together with a corresponding sinking of continents, continued for six weeks until the Flood attained its maximum, mountain-covering depth (7:20); and this depth was maintained for another 110 days until the waters had destroyed every living thing on the continents.”⁴

The second source of water was no less miraculous. Gen. 7 continues: “and the floodgates of heaven were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.” v 11-12 The word for rain in the Hebrew suggests a torrential downpour. The clouds in the sky today would not be capable of that kind of rain for that length of time. Do the floodgates of heaven refer to a source of rain other than from the clouds. This is probably true. Would that other source be a water vapor canopy? This hypothesis has lost favor. Was there some other source? Probably. Do I know what it might be? I haven’t a clue! If God inspired Moses to write that here was a torrential downpour for forty days and forty nights, there was.

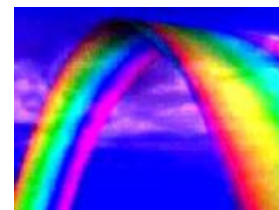
God is never limited by nature. Whatever it was, it was regulated by God in a balance of nature that He manipulated perfectly. It accomplished its purpose. “Every living thing that moved on the earth perished — birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth.” Gen 7:21-23 The rain fell for 40 days. The fountains of the deep continued to maintain the water level for 110 days after that. Then God reversed the process to bring His precious cargo out of the ark. “The springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky.” Gen 8:2 The waters below and the waters above were stopped. Winds were added to speed up the drying process. Where did all the water go? If it evaporated to the sky, it would form clouds and more rain. Perhaps the process of the fountains of the deep closing indicates that the movements of the ocean floor receded to allow the water to run off the land. Perhaps in a similar way to the separation of land and water on the third day of Creation. Ps. 104 seems to be speaking of both processes. It states: “But at your rebuke the waters fled, at the sound of your thunder they took to flight; they flowed over the mountains, they went down in the valleys, to the place you assigned for them. You set a boundary they cannot cross; never again will they cover the earth.” v 7-9 The waters receded to the ocean depths, to the aquifers deep underground. The winds added to speed up the drying process of the sedimentary rock containing the remains of the life that was destroyed.

Together with the ocean depths receding, there is scientific evidence that the mountains were forming. All the high mountains of the earth have several features in common. They have sedimentary rock, often containing marine fossils. They also have rock formed from volcanic action. This seems to indicate that their formation took place after the deposit of fossil beds and upward thrusts of the core material of the earth. Mount Ararat is no exception. It was here where the ark came to rest.

Noah sent out a raven. Several features of this bird show that it was a good choice to release. It feeds on carrion. It has the ability to effortlessly ride the air currents for long periods of time. It did not return. The next bird to be released, the dove, lives on seeds and must aggressively fly to stay aloft. This bird returned. When it was let out a second time it returned with an olive leaf. Finally, it was able to maintain itself in the wild. Then, when the ground was completely dry, God called Noah to come out of the ark.

Finally, after 371 days, God called Noah to come out of the ark. God gave Noah this special promise: “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.” Gen 8:21-22 God also gave a sign,

the rainbow, as a personal guarantee that the whole earth will not have to endure another flood as Noah had experienced. What a precious sign in the clouds. It is always seen opposite the sun when a storm has passed by. It is caused by the reflection and refraction of light in the raindrops. It is personal today. No two people see the same rainbow. This can be shown by having two people take pictures of the same rainbow at the same time when there is a background behind the rainbow. The position of the rainbow you see will be determined by the sun and you and the rain clouds. God's promise extends to you as well.



The Flood's Effect on Plants

We look next to the material blessings that God has given us by means of this devastating catastrophe. The first has to do with the plants. The plant life during the period between Creation and the Flood must have been lush. Tropical plants grew where very little grows today. Even the polar regions show a time when there was extensive plant growth. Perhaps the climate and special conditions set for the paradise of Eden remained in effect. The result of this lush growth is shown in the vast coal fields found in many parts of the world. The Britannica Junior Encyclopedia states: "From studying coal seams, both at the outcrops and underground in mines, people know that they are made of the remains of ancient trees and plants that grew in great swampy jungles in warm, moist climates."⁵ Dr. Harold Coffin, a noted biologist states: "Evidence of sea water in association with coal or with the sediments just above or below is usually present. Fossils such as seashells, worm tubes, mussels or foraminifera may lie deposited above or below."

The thickness of certain coal beds is well known. In the Latrobe Valley of Australia, coal achieves a thickness of 758 feet with only two partings of five and nine feet. In the western United States, seams of 60 to 100 feet in thickness are known. In addition to the depth, the horizontal extent is also tremendous. The Pittsburgh bed that covers parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia, an area of 2,100 square miles, averages about seven feet thick. The extent of minable coal runs into the thousands of millions of tons. The Syodak-American seam near Gillette, Wyoming is said to contain 19 billion tons. The Latrobe Valley in Victoria, Australia, is estimated to have a potential of 70 billion tons."⁶ The Powder River coal seam in Wyoming has coal packed in immense strips. Some of these measure over 200 feet thick. They are hundreds of miles long and fifty miles wide.⁷ Coal has been formed in Dr. Gentry's lab in just three weeks. Water-soaked wood or plant material is heated and compressed in the absence of oxygen. This is how coal and charcoal is formed. It is a simple chemical process, whether it takes place in a laboratory or in nature, not process that takes hundreds of thousands of years as some scientists would have us believe.



If coal was formed during the Flood from the plants, what a gift from the devastation of the Flood! The energy stored in the plants from Creation to the Flood would thus be made available to us. Coal has been used to heat homes, run factories, power locomotives, and make a myriad of products. Besides the energy that is available to us in coal, coal tar opens another whole storeroom of blessings. Dyes, solvents, plastics, medicines, synthetic rubber, and explosives are just some of the products made from coal. Even some of the clothing we're wearing today may have synthetic cloth made from the byproducts of the coal industry. May we show our thanks for His bountiful blessings. The matter that God created in the world in those first six days is what we have. We cannot create more. Whatever was created will be there when the world comes to an end. We show our thanks by using these natural resource gifts wisely.

The Effects of Animals Killed in the Flood

Another blessing that may have had its origin in the Deluge is petroleum. Like coal, petroleum formation was thought to take eons of time to make. Today we have synthetic lubricants in abundance for our automobile engines. It doesn't take all that long to make. Heat and pressure together with water and certain catalysts can produce oil in hours. The raw material seems to be again large amounts of once living matter. "To produce a large fossil-fuel deposit, a rich accumulation of organic matter (once living material) is required that is rich in hydrogen and carbon. This organic material needs to be buried quickly and air excluded if biological decay and reactions with oxygen are not to degrade the material." (*Oceans*, by Trevor Day, Facts On File, Inc. 1999, p 58) Once burial occurs, increased pressure and temperature cause chemical changes to break down the hydrocarbons into smaller molecules. "In the United States alone, petroleum products and natural gas account for more than two-thirds of energy consumption." The Flood would provide the rich source of organic matter. It would provide quick burial. It would provide the seismic activity that produces heat and pressure. That these conditions are not seen today outside of the laboratory indicates that the global catastrophe of the Flood would provide us with this rich blessing. Especially in our climate at this time of the year, we appreciate the natural gas or propane that is used to heat our homes. We will soon appreciate a meal cooked on natural gas. We run our automobiles on octane and heptane. We know that petroleum is absolutely vital to our culture. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. The byproducts produce many more of our clothes. Our ubiquitous cell phones and most plastics are made from petroleum. What special blessings have been poured down upon us from our heavenly Father. To Him be all honor and praise.



The Effect of the Flood on Geology

There are several obvious results of the flood on the study of geology. The first is that the death and rapid burial of plants and animals in a water environment produced fossils. A fossil is any evidence of something that was once living. Fossils are usually found in many sedimentary rocks. Sedimentary rock is rock material that is carried and deposited by water. Scientists use the layers of rock from the pre-Cambrian, Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic to date the fossils. We see that size, density, mobility, and other factors of the animals and plants would be a more likely reason for the fossils being in the specific rock layer in which they are found. The two main kinds of fossils are imprint fossils and replacement fossils. Imprint fossils are formed when an object, like a leaf, is trapped in sedimentary rock. Coal, limestone, and shale often have imprint fossils. Replacement fossils have minerals in the water replace the cell structure of the animal itself. These can vary from tiny creatures to gigantic trees or mammoths. The Petrified Forest of Arizona has many large trees that have fossilized. Large creatures are found near here that have turned to stone. We can generally attribute the fossils to the Flood catastrophe because so many plants and animals were killed and rapidly buried. We can find fossils all over the earth. Many times we find fossils of sea creatures at high elevations. This should not surprise us because we know mineral laden Flood waters rose above the highest mountains and remained there for many weeks. Here, too, fossil material must be buried quickly.

Another result of the Flood is the canyons that formed when dammed up water broke through its confinement barriers and washed huge gouges in the earth. These are beautiful to observe and they show many layers of the rock material. Rivers flowing through these canyons must not be the creator of these phenomena. Canyons that form today show that much more volume is needed to gouge out even small canyons of several hundred feet. Surely the humongous canyons of the western United States



must have been formed with waters of the magnitude found only during the Flood. These canyons are awesome spectacles that must be seen to be appreciated. All of the canyons show fossilization in sedimentary rock.

Conclusion

We have seen how the almighty God preserved Noah and his family, together with a breeding stock of animals, through the destruction of the sinful world. We witness God's grace each time we review this spectacular event. We have seen what science supposes were the mechanisms by which the Almighty carried out His purpose. We have seen resources that may have come to us through the devastating catastrophe of the Flood.

These material blessings pale in comparison to the miraculous benefits we have received from the Flood. First we see the need to destroy the world depraved in sin and lust to preserve the precious seed of the woman. That line of descent from which the Savior of the world would come was carried safely afloat in the ark above the death and devastation of water. That same God has chosen us to bring that precious Gospel message to a world steeped in sin. We need the faith of Noah, who labored diligently in the face of ridicule and animosity. But we need more than that. Like Noah, we need the constant hand of our heavenly Father protecting and encouraging us to be his faithful witnesses. May the words of the Apostle Peter give us hope and encouragement for our work. "First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, 'Where is this "coming" he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.' But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: with the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

"So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him." II Pet. 3:3-14 *LSI*



End Notes:

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