



What's Happening?

More Sound Reasons

Fourteen people attended our first Sound Reasons event (Oct. 2010). Attendance at last meeting (Jan. 2011) was 43 people. Needless to say, we are excited about the turnout! Due to the large turnout, we are moving to a larger room. We will also have the room until noon, so there will be more opportunity to visit.

The next chapter event is scheduled for Saturday, April 9. At that meeting, we have two exciting presentations, one from the dean of a local Christian college, the other from a person who taught at a Christian School for several years. They will be addressing the critical issue of properly grounding our young people in their Christian faith.

Mark your calendar and plan to join us at Highlands Community Church in Renton, April 9. We'll have breakfast and fellowship from 8:30-9:00, meeting from 9:00 to 10:30, and Q&A and fellowship from 10:30 to 11:30. If you plan to attend please RSVP at apologist2@comast.net.

We welcome your questions and comments. Contact us at seattle@reasons.org or our new facebook page RTB Puget Sound.



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The Genesis Flood Why the Bible Says it Must be Local

By Rich Deem

[Note: This is Part II of this article. Part I appeared in the January 2011 Chapter Newsletter.]

NEW TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

What does the New Testament tell us about the flood? As mentioned previously, the New Testament tells us that the flood was universal in its judgment.¹¹ Besides this, there is an interesting passage from 2 Peter that gives some insight into the nature of the flood:

For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the land was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. (2 Peter 3:5-6)



Peter, instead of just telling us that the entire planet was flooded, qualifies the verse by telling us that the "world at that time" was flooded with water. What was different about the world "at that time" compared to the world of today? At the time of the flood, all humans were in the same geographic location (the people of the world were not scattered over the earth until Genesis 11).⁷ Therefore, the "world at the time" was confined to the Mesopotamian plain. There would be no reason to qualify the verse if the flood were global in extent.

EARLY JEWISH INTERPRETATION

Many Christian believe that a local flood interpretation is a recent invention of those who are trying to reconcile science with the Bible. However, the first century Jewish writer, Josephus wrote about other writers who indicated that the flood was local and that some inhabitants survived by seeking higher ground:

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Misrepresented by Mike Brown

A courtroom scene: A team member representing the defendants is making his closing arguments to the jury. “Ladies and gentlemen, you must find for my clients for two important reasons. First, they told me they are innocent. Second, I know in my heart they are innocent. Thank you.”

Jurors’ thoughts: “That’s it? Those are their best arguments? The defendants must be guilty!”

It gets worse: You see, the team for the plaintiffs has spent weeks presenting arguments and evidence for their clients. While some of the material was a bit over most jurors’ heads, it sounded impressive and convincing.

But there’s more: Almost all the evidence presented consisted of lies, misleading information, generalizations, extrapolations, and unsubstantiated claims. Unfortunately, the defense was unable to rebut the claims and the small amount of “evidence” they did provide was quickly discredited.

And more: There was actually an incredible amount of evidence supporting the defense. The defense team could have spent months providing such evidence—but they never did. Instead, they kept focusing on the character of their clients and appealing to subjective feelings.

And even more! There were experts who had volunteered to testify for the defense. But due to pride, insecurity and the belief that their clients’ innocence was self-evident, they never took advantage of their expertise.

The defendants: The God of the Bible, His Son, and the Christian worldview.

The defense team: Many Christian parents, youth leaders, Sunday school teachers—and sadly, many Christian schools.

The plaintiffs: Naturalism, Darwinism and Humanism.

The plaintiffs’ defense team: Our public education system, the liberal media, ACLU and much of the scientific community.

The jury: Christian young people. Over 80% of them will side with the plaintiffs and that number will continue to grow as long as those responsible for grounding them in their faith continue to use the same old worn out techniques that have repeatedly been proven to be ineffective.

The witnesses never called: Christian apologists, like those of us at Reasons to Believe. Those of you who understand the importance of what we have to offer can help us get the message out. Talk to your pastors, parents of teens in your church, and administration of the local Christian schools to give us an opportunity to share this critically important information. Every day more young people leave the faith and it is critical that we get this information to them! But, we need your help!

A Pretty Picture Hides a Disturbing Reality.

At first glance, Christian influence in America seems to be thriving. There are more churches, ministries, programs, schools, products, Bibles, evangelism tools and study helps available today than at any other time in our history. But behind all this sophistication and style of modern-day Christianity is a shocking lack of substance. The spiritual needs among children, families and churches are going unmet and the trends are very disturbing.

- Nine percent of Christian youth believe in absolute moral truth, nearly the identical rate as non-believing teens.
- The likelihood of a high school student trusting Christ for salvation is just four percent.
- The average scores of Christian school students on tests that determine worldview have dropped by 30.3 percent since 1988. Scores for students from evangelical families have fallen 36.8 percent.

These results are merely a symptom of the decline in biblical worldview among today’s Christian adults, many of whom are not equipped to instill this worldview in young people. Just nine percent of born-again adults, seven percent of Protestants and half of Protestant pastors hold a biblical worldview of life. And only one-third of born-again adults believe in absolute moral truth and the exclusivity of Christ for salvation.

The implications of this evidence are clear.

- Children must be better prepared to follow Christ in a world increasingly hostile to our faith and values.
- Moms and dads must follow the biblical parenting blueprint and assume full responsibility for the spiritual development of their children.
- More churches must begin to effectively disciple their members and equip parents and ministry workers to reach and train young people for Christ.

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Book Review

Coffee House Chronicles

McDowell & Sterrett
Moody Press, 2011

Reviewer: Mike Brown

Here are three great little booklets ideal for teens and/or parents of teens that address critical questions about Christianity. They are written as short novels (novellas) and follow the lives of a group of college students facing the big questions of life. Each novella deals with one of the questions they ask:

- Is the Bible True...Really?
- Who is Jesus...Really?
- Did the Resurrection Happen...Really?

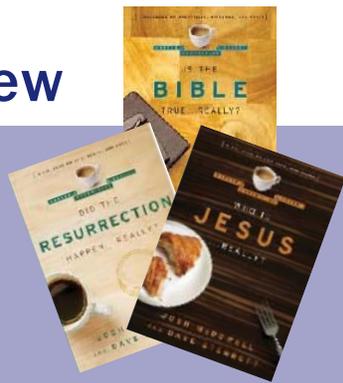
Each novella is a stand-alone work that presents the truths the students find as they explore each issue. They can be read separately, however, they are best read in the order shown above. The third in the series also deals with issues of evil and death in an interesting and thought-provoking way.

Here are a couple of excerpts from various promos for the series:

“Young people are struggling with knowing what they believe and why it is true. When they leave home for college, they’re faced with a host of new ideas and lifestyles from professors, roommates, friends, and social settings. For many, reconciling the traditional faith of their youth with this sudden influx of new-found knowledge is an incredible challenge—and often, doubt and unbelief creep in.”

“The Coffee House Chronicles are short, easily devoured novellas aimed at answering prevalent spiritual questions. Each book in the series tackles a long-contested question of the faith, and then answers these questions with truth through relationships and dialogue in each story.”

We are constantly asked by parents to recommend books for their teens. Here are three good choices. We will have a few copies of each available at our April Chapter meeting. Don't miss it!



“Now all the writers of barbarian [Greek] histories make mention of this flood and of this ark: among whom is Berosus the Chaldean... Hieronymus the Egyptian.... Nicolaus of Damascus, in his ninety-sixth book, hath a particular relation about them, where he speaks thus: ‘There is a great mountain in Armenia, over Minyas, called Baris, upon which it is reported that many who fled at the time of the Deluge were saved; and that one who was carried in an ark came on shore upon top of it; and that the remains of the timber were a great while preserved. This might be the man about whom Moses, the legislator of the Jews wrote.’”⁸

Josephus does not seek to correct their narrative. So, the idea that the flood was a local event is not just a 20th century phenomenon.

COMMON OBJECTIONS TO A LOCAL FLOOD

1) *Why didn't God just send Noah on a long trip?*

If the Genesis flood were local, why didn't God just send Noah and his family packing. Once they were out of the Mesopotamian flood plain, God could have judged the unrighteous without making Noah go to all the trouble of building a huge ark. It is true that God could have done this, although there are some good biblical reasons why He chose not to do so.

Why did God make the Israelites march around Jericho for seven days prior to the wall falling down? Why did God make the Israelite look upon the bronze serpent to be healed of snake bite in the wilderness? Why did Jesus make the blind man go to the Pool of Siloam to heal his blindness? Were any of these things actually required for God to do His work? No! God could have just wiped out all the evil people in the world, as He did later to the all the Egyptians' first-born.

Maybe God had good reasons for Noah to build the ark. God has a purpose for each person of faith to join Him in preaching His message. God's plan will be accomplished regardless of our participation in it. However, God gives obedient humans the privilege of participating in God's plans. Likewise, God had a plan for Noah, part of which was for him and his sons to demonstrate their commitment and perseverance to the Lord.

One will notice in the judgments that God renders, He almost always gives a warning to those who are being judged. For example, God sent angels to Sodom before it was to be destroyed,¹⁵ sent Jonah to Nineveh to warn them of the judgment to come,¹⁶ and will send two prophets to warn the people of the earth of the final judgment.¹⁷ The building of the ark was a great testimony of the coming judgment, since it was preached for 100 years during the building of the ark.

The New Testament states this idea directly, since it says

that Noah was a “preacher of righteousness”:

For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; (2 Peter 2: 4-5)

If God had told Noah to just migrate away from the flood area, the people would not have been warned of the impending judgment. Ultimately, they were without excuse in their rebellion against God, since the impending judgment was proclaimed to them for 100 years before it happened. Likewise, God will send two preachers for 1260 days prior to the ultimate judgment of God.¹⁷ Those who get on God’s ark (Jesus Christ) will be saved from the judgment and pass from death to eternal life.

2) *God promised no more floods like the Genesis Flood*

What about the Genesis 9:11 and 9:15. If the flood was local, did God lie, since floods have destroyed local areas since the Genesis flood.

“And I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.” (Genesis 9: 11)

and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. (Genesis 9: 15)

The first part of the verse is a promise not to exercise universal judgment by means of a flood, “all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood.” The flood, although local in extent, was global in judgment, since all humanity lived in the same locale. It wasn’t until God confused the languages (Genesis 11) that people began to spread over the earth. So, God promised to never again execute universal judgment of humans by means of a flood.

The second part, “never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth” can be explained by other verses found in the Genesis flood account.

Gen 6: 11 Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.

Gen 6: 12 And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

The passage in this instance refers to the people of the earth, since planet earth itself was not corrupt. Likewise, Genesis 9:11 is referring to the people of the earth rather than the planet itself. Ultimately, even if the flood were global, it did not “destroy the earth,” but just the people on the earth. As stated above, “people” is often understood from the Hebrew word *eret*.

3) *Why did Noah need to take birds on the ark if the Flood was local?*

If the Flood was local, why would birds have been sent on board? They could simply have flown to a nearby mountain range.

Most birds (other than a few migratory birds) have a very localized territory. They would have been killed in the local flood, since they are not designed to fly long distances. Certainly archaeopteryx was not a strong flyer. Hummingbirds would drop dead in 20 minutes or less. One thing that you will notice when there is a strong rain is that birds do not fly. Flying in heavy rain is not easy. They would have sat on their perches until they drowned.

4) *Why did God require Noah to animals on the ark if the Flood was local?*

Some animals are indigenous only to the Mesopotamian area. More importantly, it would have taken hundreds of years longer to replace the fauna if everything had been wiped out and had to migrate back in. In addition, Noah would have had a huge problem replacing his herds.

5) *How could the Flood rise 15 cubits (8 meters) above the mountains in a local flood?*

Didn’t the flood cover the highest mountains? The Hebrew word “*har*,” translated “mountains,” occurs 649 times in the Old Testament. In 212 instances, the word is translated “hill” or “hills” or “hill country”. In Genesis, it is translated “hill” in 10 out of 19 occurrences. Of course, 4 out of 9 times that it is translated as “mountain” is in the flood passage (the translators were wearing their global glasses when they did that translation!). In every instance in Genesis, the text could be translated “hill”. Since no specific mountain range is mentioned in this verse, it is likely that the word refers to the hills that Noah could see.

CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that the Bible declares the Genesis flood to be local in extent, though universal in its judgment of humans (with the exception of Noah and his family). The evidence presented here is purely

biblical, although a strong case could also be given for extra-biblical reasons. A global interpretation of the Genesis flood requires that certain non-flood-related verses of the Bible contradict each other. In addition, a global interpretation of the Genesis flood would require the Genesis text to contradict itself. The lack of global references in the book of Genesis through chapter 11 (with the exception of Genesis 1), reveals that all the early events of Genesis occurred in a small geographic area.

In addition, an examination of the original Hebrew text of the Genesis flood passage demonstrates that the global wording of our English translations misrepresents the original intent of the account. Your assignment at this point is to re-read the Genesis flood text with the words "land" or "people" (depending upon the context) substituted where for the word "earth." When you are finished, you will discover a remarkably different flood account than what you have read before.

Rich Deem is a volunteer RTB apologist. He has a Masters of Science in microbiology and is a researcher at the Cedar-Sinai Medical Center. This and other articles can be found on his website at www.godandscience.com.

Note: For the footnotes cited, please go to Rich Deem's website for the original article at www.godandscience.org/apologetics/localflood.html.

Pretty Picture Hides Disturbing Reality

- The Christian community at large must work collectively to change the culture of America before it's too late.

The stakes simply could not be higher for our kids and the future of our Church. As researcher George Barna warns, "The American Church must focus on children and children's ministry. We have virtually lost a generation. We cannot afford to lose another."

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Seattle Chapter Reasons To Believe

Who Are We?

The Seattle Chapter of Reasons To Believe is a local extension of the worldwide, interdenominational Reasons To Believe ministry. We exist to support our parent organization and foster local involvement in the ministry. We serve the Puget Sound and are composed of Christians of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, God's Word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinism and young-Earth creationism.

What Do We Do?

Our mission is to remove the doubts of skeptics and strengthen the faith of believers. We provide scientific, historical and philosophical evidence that supports the Christian worldview and helps remove barriers to a belief in God, the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission by:

- Helping people access RTB and other scientifically and biblically sound resources.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Assembling a team of local apologists to address questions about science and the Bible.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of RTB.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, to expose them to God's word.

We welcome your involvement and support. For more information, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Seattle RTB, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683.

Questions? Get Answers.

If you're looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God, the Bible, and science, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. Or call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.