

On the Beginning

14. The Flood and the Ark

NOTE ESPECIALLY Genesis 7:17 - 8:22

This part of the Bible tells one of the most amazing stories of history: the Great Flood and Noah's Ark. It is fascinating to note the details of the story, and spiritually enriching to learn the principles the story teaches.

1. The Flood Was Worldwide In Scope!

Remember that the purpose of the Great Flood was to kill "*all flesh . . . that moved upon the earth*" (v. 21—Genesis 6:7, 13 and 7:4).

"All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died." (Genesis 7:22)

The Flood covered the whole earth. It rained "*forty days*" (v. 17), and "*the waters increased.*" Soon "*the waters prevailed*" and "*increased greatly upon the earth*" (v. 18). Then "*the waters prevailed exceedingly*" and covered the mountains. As a matter of fact, they rose 15 cubits (at least 22 feet) above the highest mountains (v. 20). No flood this deep could have been *local* or *regional*. It must have been worldwide. The ark, which was thirty cubits high, floated above the mountains, the peaks of which were half that height below the surface. What God had said about the Flood came to pass. It destroyed the world as it had been before. Read about this in II Peter 3:1-7.

". . . the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished . . ."

In the judgments of the Great Tribulation and of the End of the World, sinful mankind will again be universally judged and his civilization destroyed!

2. The Flood Was Long In Duration!

Count the days! It started, according to Genesis 7:11, the seventeenth day of the second month (according to the Israelite civil calendar probably, meaning the eighth month of the religious calendar—Leviticus 23 and 25). On the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat (Genesis 8:4), which was five months or 150 days later. Genesis 7:24 and 8:3 say that the waters "*prevailed*" for 150 days, and then began to abate. On the first day of the tenth month, "*the tops of the mountains*" were seen. Noah waits and then sends birds out of the ark to check for dry land (8:5-12). On the first day of the new year, Noah uncovered the ark and found the earth dry, the flood gone. But he waited for God to tell him to disembark. This happened on the 27th day of the second month (vs. 14-16), a year and ten days after the rain started! During this long period, the earth underwent huge changes. Psalm 104 says that God . . .

". . . laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them." (vs. 5-8)

This means that the earth convulsed in such a way that the valleys and seabeds were hollowed out as the mountains and continents rose up. Remember that the Great Flood did not come from the condensation of water in the atmosphere alone. *“The fountains of the great deep”* (pockets of water under the surface of the earth) were *“broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened”* (Genesis 7:11) so that the *“waters which were above the firmament”* came down (Genesis 1:7). The waters of the Flood began to go down when . . .

“The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained . . .” (Genesis 8:2)

The new world that emerged was much different from the old world that perished. The absence of the water-vapor canopy over the atmosphere brought about more distinct seasons (See Genesis 8:22) and shorter life-spans (Genesis 11:10-26). Great oceans now covered most of the earth. Everything was different.

3. The Ark of God’s Salvation Rested.

It is a blessing to note that the ark *“rested”* or touched the top of Mt. Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month (Genesis 8:4). If Moses was using Israel’s civil calendar, this was the third day after Passover on the religious calendar, the day Jesus rose from the dead.

4. The Altar of Sacrifice Was Built.

Genesis 8 ends with the scene of a great sacrificial ceremony at the foot of Mt. Ararat, where Noah *“offered burnt-offerings”* to the LORD, and God *“smelled a sweet savour”* and was pleased. Then He made a promise not to *“curse the ground any more for man’s sake”* by a flood for the very reason that man is innately so sinful (v. 21). It is a blessing to see God’s grace in this promise. The reason we would expect God to curse the earth is the reason He won’t! Psalm 103 says that . . .

“. . . he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” (v. 14)

God’s grace is bestowed upon all men in that He doesn’t destroy us all! The sacrifices picture God’s grace in His Son dying for our sins. Those who trust in His sacrifice for their salvation find God pleased and appeased. God’s grace to all gives them the chance to seek His grace for their redemption. God’s grace to believers in Christ saves their souls from sin.