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GENESIS: FLOOD

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⁵The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

⁶And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷So the LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.”

⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

⁹These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

¹⁴Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits, its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks.

¹⁷For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. ²¹Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.”

²²Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

Genesis 6:5-22 (ESV)

GENESIS IS WRITTEN AS PART OF THE FIRST FIVE BOOKS, THE TORAH OR LAW OF MOSES, FOR THE NEWLY COVENANTED NATION TO UNDERSTAND THEIR PLACE AND ROLE IN GOD’S KINGDOM. THINK ABOUT THE CONTEXT....

¹Then the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. ²Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, ³and seven pairs of the birds of the heavens also, male and female, to keep their offspring alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.” ⁵And Noah did all that the LORD had commanded him.

⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth.

⁷And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, ⁹two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰And after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth.

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. ¹²And rain fell upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

¹³On the very same day Noah and his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark, ¹⁴they and every beast, according to its kind, and all the livestock according to their kinds, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, according to its kind, and every bird, according to its kind, every winged creature. ¹⁵They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life.

¹⁶And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him. And the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷The flood continued forty days on the earth. The waters increased and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters prevailed and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. ²⁰The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep.

²¹And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. ²²Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. ²³He blotted out every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens. They were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those who were with him in the ark. ²⁴And the waters prevailed on the earth 150 days.

Genesis 7:1–24 (ESV)

¹But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the livestock that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided. ²The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³and the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated, ⁴and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵And the waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

⁶At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷and sent forth a raven. It went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. ⁹But the dove found no place to set her foot, and she returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her and brought her into the ark with him.

¹⁰He waited another seven days, and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark.

¹¹And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a freshly plucked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹²Then he waited another seven days and sent forth the dove, and she did not return to him anymore.

¹³In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried from off the earth. And Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry.

¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth had dried out. ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶“Go out from the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁷Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—that they may swarm on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.”

¹⁸So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him.

¹⁹Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by families from the ark.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and took some of every clean animal and some of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. ²²While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”

**GENESIS 6-8 DESCRIBES A UNIVERSAL/GLOBAL FLOOD.
THE SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE DOES NOT DEMONSTRATE A UNIVERSAL/GLOBAL
FLOOD EVENT.**

- 1. THE BIBLE IS WRONG AND SCIENCE IS RIGHT.**
- 2. THE BIBLE IS RIGHT AND SCIENCE IS WRONG.**
- 3. THE BIBLE IS WRITTEN FOR US BUT NOT TO US. THE BIBLE IS
THEOLOGICAL DOCUMENT THAT DESCRIBES REAL HISTORICAL EVENTS IN
THEOLOGICAL WAYS. IT'S NOT WRITTEN TO INFORM OF HISTORY BUT TO
INTERPRET HISTORY.**

THE BIBLE USES HYPERBOLE.

Hyperbole is a form of figurative language. It exaggerates in order to produce an effect or to make a point.

²³So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.

Joshua 11:23 (ESV)

¹Now Joshua was old and advanced in years, and the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to possess. ²This is the land that yet remains: all the regions of the Philistines, and all those of the Geshurites ³(from the Shihor, which is east of Egypt, northward to the boundary of Ekron, it is counted as Canaanite; there are five rulers of the Philistines, those of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron), and those of the Avvim, ⁴in the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians, to Aphek, to the boundary of the Amorites, ⁵and the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo-hamath, ⁶all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, even all the Sidonians. I myself will drive them out from before the people of Israel. Only allot the land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you.

Joshua 13:1-6 (ESV)

⁵The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6:5 (ESV)

These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.

Genesis 6:9 (ESV)

THE ARK

As described in Genesis 6:15, the ark is about 450 feet long (300 cubits), 75 feet wide (50 cubits), and 45 feet high (30 cubits).¹

The dimensions themselves lead us to believe that they are hyperbolic numbers, in other words purposefully exaggerated for rhetorical effect to make a (theological) point. It is hard to imagine ancient readers taking this description as if it referred to an actual boat. There would have been nothing like it or even close to it in the ancient world.²

When we look into shipbuilding throughout history, the earliest vessels, rarely more than ten feet in length, were made of skin and reeds, and generally sailed in the marshes and along riverbanks. When advancing technology moves beyond boats used for fishing, sailing vessels that could navigate in the Mediterranean began to appear. Egyptian art as early as the Old Kingdom (2500 BC) depicts ships that may be as long as 170 feet. Ugaritic and Phoenician texts in the second and first millennium BC are no longer than this. Even once we move into Roman times, in the first couple of centuries AD, the most famous large vessel was the *Isis*, which sailed between Alexandria and Rome. Remarkably it was 180 feet by 45 feet by 44 feet—less than a quarter the size of the ark.

Moving to more recent times, from the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth century in the modern era, a handful of 300-plus foot wooden boats have been built. The USS *Dunderberg* is often listed at the longest at 377 feet, but 50 feet of the length is a ram, so to compare to the ark we should list it at 327. The *Wyoming*, also built in the nineteenth century, is listed at 449 feet, but this includes the jib boom; actually it is 329 feet. These modern long wooden boats are also built with iron bolts and steel supports, something not available to Noah. Even so, these modern wooden boats were notoriously unstable in the water.

Again, we raise these issues not to deny the Bible but to try to understand the truth as the ancient reader would have understood it. The original readers would have realized that we are dealing with a figurative description of the flood as intended by the author of the story. This is supported by the fact that it is characteristic of flood accounts in the ANE that the size and shape of the boat are hyperbolic and inherently not seaworthy (see proposition eight).³

¹ Walton, J. H., Longman, T., III, Moshier, S. O., & Tremper Longman, J. H. W., III. (2018). [*The lost world of the flood: mythology, theology, and the deluge debate*](#) (p. 38). Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press.

² Walton, J. H., Longman, T., III, Moshier, S. O., & Tremper Longman, J. H. W., III. (2018). [*The lost world of the flood: mythology, theology, and the deluge debate*](#) (p. 38). Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press.

³ Walton, J. H., Longman, T., III, Moshier, S. O., & Tremper Longman, J. H. W., III. (2018). [*The lost world of the flood: mythology, theology, and the deluge debate*](#) (pp. 39–40). Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press.

GOD IS A GOD OF ORDER AND LIFE. HE USES TO NON-ORDER (FLOOD) TO JUDGE DISORDER (SIN) IN ORDER TO RESTORE ORDER AND LIFE.

¹But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. ²And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. ³And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

⁴For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; ⁵if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction, making them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked ⁸(for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); ⁹then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,

2 Peter 2:1–9 (ESV)