

The Book of Genesis

Chapter 8

8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and He sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded [REB: "the water began to subside"]. (NIV)

God's Faithfulness

God is always completely faithful in fulfilling His promises. He never forgets to finish what He starts. In EXO 2:24, "God remembered His covenant with Abraham..." which He had made almost four centuries earlier.

8:2 Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. (NIV)

This apparently occurred at the same time, after 40 days.

8:3 The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, (NIV)

For the waters to have taken so long to dissipate shows that the Flood was worldwide, otherwise gravity would have carried local floodwaters away much faster.

8:4 and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. (NIV)

Length of Time

This was exactly five months from the start of the Flood. In order to begin on the seventeenth day and end on the seventeenth day 5 months later, one month must have been 29 days in length.

8:5 The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible. (NIV)

It took almost two and one-half months from the time the ark ran aground on the mountains of Ararat until mountaintops could be seen from the ark.

8:6-7 After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth [Hebrew: "fly away, return, and repeat the cycle"] **until the water had dried up from the earth.** (NIV)

Releasing the Birds: The Raven

The raven is unclean (LEV 11:15), a scavenger. It could pluck floating, decaying flesh from the water and perch on the ark to eat it, thereby proving to be of little use to Noah in determining the state of the ground.

8:8-9 Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. But the dove could find no place to set its feet because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. (NIV)

Releasing the Birds: The Dove

The dove is a clean bird, a seed eater. It was forced to come back to Noah in order to be fed, and had a homing instinct, unlike the unclean raven.

8:10-17 He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him. By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry. Then God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it." (NIV)

Preservation of Life

Skeptics argue that not all of the animals would have survived since some were from tropical areas, others from arctic regions, etc. Likewise, due to the mixing of the salt and fresh waters, many kinds of fish would have died.

We must never forget the awesome power of God. He changed the nature and digestive systems of the animals during the Flood, and will change them again during Christ's millennial reign. He could have also changed the ability of the aquatic creatures to survive in mixed waters. Another possibility is that, just as God caused the animals to come to Noah to board the ark, could He not have caused the fish to congregate in certain areas where He prevented the mixing of the fresh and salt waters?

8:18-19 So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on the earth—came out of the ark, one kind after another. (NIV)

Mythological Parallels

There are numerous secular traditions regarding the Flood:

- "The **Chaldean** tradition states: 'The God Chronus appeared to Xisuthrus in a vision, and warned him, that...there would occur an inundation, by the which the race of man would be destroyed. He therefore ordered him to build a vessel...After the flood had been upon the earth, and was in time abated, Xisuthrus sent out birds from the vessel...made an opening in the vessel, and on looking out, found that it was stranded upon a mountain, which he afterwards ascertained to be in the land of Armenia. Berosus, a Chaldean priest, who lived two hundred and seventy years before Christ, gathered from traditions existing in his region: There was one among the giants who revered the gods, and was more wise and prudent than all the rest; his name was Noa; he dwelt in Syria, with his three sons, Sem, Japet, Cham, and their wives, the great Tidea, Pandora, Noea and Noegla...the whole human race was buried in the waters, except Noa and his family, who were saved by means of the ship.'

- Among the **Persians** is the tradition of a general deluge which destroyed all. Although it does not include the preservation of any family in an ark, it does state that after the flood there was a new creation of men and animals.
- The **Egyptian** historian Manetho speaks of certain inscribed pillars, which were set up by the Thoth, the first Hermes, and the inscriptions on which were after the deluge transcribed into books. Plato also states in his *Timaeus*, that having questioned a certain Egyptian priest on the subject, he was informed that the gods, wishing to purify the earth by water, overwhelmed it by a deluge.
- **Greek** tradition preserves the story of Deucalion's deluge. Philo, the Alexandrian Jew affirms that Deucalion was Noah: The Grecians call him Deucalion, but the Chaldeans style him as Noah; in whose time there happened the great eruption of waters. Another Greek account by Lucian: The present race of mankind is different from those who first existed; for those of the antediluvian world were all destroyed. The present world is peopled from the sons of Deucalion...Deucalion alone was preserved to re-people the world. Plutarch even mentions that Deucalion sent out a dove from the ark.
- The **Chinese** believe the earth to have been wholly covered with water. The divisions of time, from which their poetical history begins, just preceded the appearance of Fohi [their first king] in the mountains of China.
- In the Hindu tradition of **India**, Vishnu appeared in the form of a small fish to a man named Satyavrata and told him, 'In seven days all creatures who have offended me shall be destroyed by a deluge; but you shall be secured in a capacious vessel miraculously formed. Take...herbs and...grain for food...together with the seven holy men, your respective wives, and pairs of all animals, enter the ark.' According to the Pauranias and the followers of Buddha, the ark rested on the mountain of Aryavarta, Aryawart, or India. After the flood, to Satyavarman, the sovereign of the whole earth, were born three sons: the eldest Sharma; then Charma; and the third Jyapeti by name.
- In **Peru**, the ancient Indians reported that they had received by tradition from their ancestors that many years before there were any Incas, at the time when the country was very populous, there happened a great flood...and all the people perished.
- Tribes in **Brazil** have the tradition of a flood: that the whole race of mankind was extirpated by this means, except one man and his own sister.
- Traditions of the Crees, a tribe of **Arctic** Indians, all spoke of a universal deluge from which one family alone escaped with all kinds of birds and beasts, on a huge raft.
- In **North America**, the Choctaw tribe had traditions of a mighty deluge from which only a small group escaped on a raft. In these North American Indian traditions, a muskrat figures as the substitute of Noah's dove.
- The inhabitants of **Tahiti** have the tradition that their Supreme God, a long time ago, being angry, dragged the earth through the sea, breaking their island off from the land and preserving it.
- Throughout the **Middle East**, Noah was called by several names: Noas, Noasis, Nusus and Nus.
- The great **Greek** warrior *Dionusos* went with an army over the face of the whole earth and taught mankind, as he passed along, the method of planting the vine, how to press out the juice and receive it in proper vessels."

In many of the ceremonies of ancient pagan religions, the ark was a very conspicuous object.

- *"The Egyptians used a boat called Baris which was used in the worship of Osiris; the ceremony "Ogdoas" consisted of eight persons sailing together in the sacred Baris.*
- *The Romans used a ship called Iris and sacred cups in the form of boats called Cymbia and Scyphi.*
- *Possibly the famous Greek Argonautic Expedition was derived from the Flood of Noah." (Noah and His Times, J.M. Olmstead, 1853.)*

8:20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. (NIV)

Mythological parallels throughout humanity are only part of the Flood's lasting impression. The incorporation of sacrifices in some form or fashion in all cultures must have originated from Noah.

8:21 The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground [TAN: "doom the earth"; REB: "put the earth under a curse"] because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood [KJV: "youth"]. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. (NIV)

Satan's Influence

According to EPH 2:2, though man is born neutral, Satan causes rebellious attitudes to quickly form in children.

8:22 "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." (NIV)

Cessation of Variation

Since vast volumes of water greatly influence temperatures, it is obvious that "*cold and heat, summer and winter*" had ceased during the Flood. Also, with the surface of the earth covered with water, there was no way sowing seed was possible, therefore, there could be no harvesting.

God's Promise

God's promise is yet another proof that this Flood was universal in scope.