

## Lesson 25

### The Flood

Genesis 7:1-8:19

#### I. INTRODUCTION

A. In the modern age of science and skepticism the truth of the Flood has been all but forgotten. Somehow its testimony to the awfulness of sin and the reality of divine retribution is so disturbingly unwelcome that men have sought at all costs to explain it away.

B. In most unbelieving circles the Flood is referred to as legend or myth; that is, they are only stories thought up in the imagination of primitive, religious men. NOTE. True Christians, who believe in the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture, should never refer to the Flood as a Bible story. It is not a story. It is historical fact that God has recorded in the Bible for men. It actually happened and is not legend or myth.

#### II. THE FLOOD

A. **“Come thou and all thy house into the ark” (7:1).** Noah and his family are invited into the ark where God is waiting for them, for God is in the ark.

B. **“Thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation” (7:1):** Noah was righteous before God because of God’s grace (6:8). The unique thing is that he was seen to be righteous. He was righteous because he believed God (Heb. 11:7), but he proved or demonstrated his salvation by obeying God. His actions (works) proved that he really did believe God. Faith is the motivation for obedience and obedience is the evidence of faith; faith and obedience can never be separated.

C. **“Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female” (7:2).** We do not know what the clean animals were exactly but seven pairs of those were taken on the ark. They were probably for sacrifice and domestication.

D. **“And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the face of the earth” (7:10).** When Noah was 600 years old (7:6), he and his family, seven days before the Flood, began entering the ark with all the animals. It was God who shut the door of the ark, not Noah (7:16). NOTE: This was a great step of faith for Noah. He had prepared for 120 years for this event. He constructed the ark in obedience to the word of God in the face of ridicule and contempt by his contemporaries. There were no physical signs of coming judgment. The skies were clear of clouds, the sun was rising and setting, as it had for generations. Business was going on as usual, people were eating, drinking and getting married. There were no physical signs of impending judgment. Yet, the Flood came as God had said it would, and Noah’s faith was rewarded. NOTE: The ark is a beautiful type of Christ. There was one door into the ark and Christ is the only way of salvation. The ark saved from physical judgment and Christ saves from spiritual judgment. The ark was entered by faith and Christ is received by faith. God closed the door of the ark, and God seals the Christian with the Spirit until the day of redemption.

E. **“... the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened” (7:11).** The skies poured down torrents of rain for 40 days and 40 nights and it rained consistently for 150 days. The “fountains of the deep” suggests the raising of the level of the oceans, and possibly the breaking up of the floors of the oceans so that waters of the sea inundated the earth with great tidal waves that swept across the land. There would also be a rising to

the surface of all deep caverns of water in the earth. There are several theories about where the great amounts of water came from:

1. Canopy Theory. The proponents of this theory say that before the Flood there was a water canopy that surrounded the earth (Gen. 1:7). They think the earth at one time was very much like the planet Saturn today, surrounded by rings, forming a canopy over the earth. Many scientists believe that the rings of Saturn are made up of ice particles, which would, of course, be water, suspended in vast, thick rings around the planet. If something like that were true of the earth of that day, then perhaps the Flood represents a collapse of that canopy of vapor, water, or ice. NOTE: This accounts for the sudden death of not just a few but large numbers of great mammoths and other animals suddenly imbedded in ice. These animals are being discovered in the Arctic regions. Evidently at one time the area was tropical, but it was suddenly plunged into sub-freezing temperatures of such intensity that animals immediately perished, frozen in a quick deep-freeze. They are discovered now with buttercups still in their mouths, unchewed, so sudden was their death!
2. Heavenly Body Theory. These proponents say that all the water can be accounted for by the near approach to earth of a heavenly body. Today scientists are watching the approach to earth of a heavenly body, one of the asteroids, a miniature planet called "Icarus" which is nearing the earth at a great speed. They are saying the earth is now safe. Yet, they admit that if Icarus deviated less than one percent from its course, it would swing into a collision with the earth. POINT: It is a possibility that the near approach of a planetary body to the earth in Noah's day upset the whole gravitational equilibrium of the earth, raised the ocean levels, created tides both of water and possibly of the solid earth itself, and thus caused the flood. Perhaps this heavenly body also had a vapor trail that turned to ice when it hit earth's atmosphere and put great sheets of ice on the earth, which we now know as glaciers.
3. Conclusion. The Canopy Theory is still the best approach to the subject of where the waters came from, and Morris comments:

Occasionally, critics say there was not enough water to cover the earth. There is an equivalent depth of water vapor in the present atmosphere of less than two inches and this would hardly suffice for such a catastrophe." But there is plenty of water in the present ocean basins if the topography were slightly redistributed. If the earth's crust were evened out to form a smooth ball the waters in the oceans would cover it to a depth of nearly two miles! These oceans now contain, of course, the tremendous quantities of water that came up from "the fountains of the great deep" and down from "the windows of heaven" during the Flood. (Henry Morris, *Science, Scripture and Salvation*)

**F. "And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged; the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained."** (8:1-2). In order for land to emerge from the waters it is obvious that a great "continental uplift" had to take place. The continents had to rise and the ocean basins had to be depressed on a tremendous scale. (cf. Psa. 104:6-9 RSV). Morris comments:

The trigger mechanism that upset the unstable equilibrium and set the uplifting forces into operation seems to have been a great worldwide storm of wind (Gen. 8:1), with attendant electrical phenomena (Psa. 104:7). The wind was probably caused by the strong difference of temperature between polar and equatorial regions, brought about by removal of the thermal vapor canopy. The resulting giant waves and piling-up of waters possibly created just enough additional unbalance of forces to cause tectonic movements to begin. Once begun, they would continue until the present equilibrium between continental and oceanic areas had been attained, (Ibid.)

G. **“And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried. And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons’ wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth”** (8:14-17): From the time the ark hit solid ground until they could depart from the ark was seven months. They were evidently in the ark slightly over a year, probably 371 days altogether. NOTE. They landed on Mount Ararat (8:4). Today some think they have discovered the ark and an expedition is ready to go. However the Turkish government is holding up the expedition.

### III. THE FLOOD: UNIVERSAL OR LOCAL?

A. Introduction. Some evangelical scholars today are questioning whether the flood was universal; that is, did it cover the whole earth? (The issue is over the meaning of “whole earth” (8:9). Some say that this can be translated “whole land” speaking of a localized flood in the Mesopotamia basin.

#### B. The Arguments Against a Localized Flood

1. Depth of the Flood. The Floodwaters went 15 cubits above the tops of the mountains (7:20). This depth was evidently the depth to which the ark sank in the water, half its height, so that it could now float freely over the highest mountaintops. NOTE: Mount Ararat, where the ark landed, is over 17,000 feet high, and it is in the Mesopotamia basin. If the waters covered that mountain alone, it could not have been a local flood.
2. Duration of the Flood. The great amounts of water over a long period of time would produce no local flood. The slow rate of decline for the water level is cited as showing that it had to be more than a local deluge.
3. Need for an Ark. If it was only a local flood, Noah and his family could have moved over to a dry area by the warning of God. He could have migrated rather than built an ark
4. Expressions of Universality (6:7,17; 7:4; 8:9,21; 9:11,15). These expressions certainly indicate that the Flood was universal.
5. Peter’s Statement. In 2 Peter 3:3-7, Peter speaks of the **“earth that then was”**, which definitely indicates that the flood was a worldwide catastrophe.
6. Testimony of Christ (Luke 17:27). He testifies to the fact of the Flood and says it **“destroyed them all.”** This is a statement of universality for all men on the earth had to be touched by the Flood, and surely men had migrated out of the Mesopotamian basin by this time.
7. Promise of God (Gen. 9:11). God promised that He would never destroy the world again by flood, and this would have little meaning if it were only a localized flood. There are many who have died in local floods since the days of Noah.
8. Ancient Records. A universal flood is mentioned in the records of almost all ancient peoples. The Sumerians, Babylonians and Egyptians all have recorded history of the Flood but most of them are distorted and are obviously not factual. But it shows that ancient men had a concept of a universal flood, for all post-Flood people descended from Noah and his sons. (cf. Morris and Whitcomb, *Genesis Flood*, pp. 38-39).