

The *global* **Flood**

A biblical and scientific look at the catastrophe
that changed the earth



Answers
IN GENESIS®

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Introduction

Should we be surprised that there are those—even those who profess to be Christians—who reject that the flood was an actual, global event when Peter told that such a day would come? In 2 Peter 3:5–6, we read

For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.

Reading the clearly described account in Genesis should leave no doubt in our minds that Moses intended to describe a deluge that covered the entire surface of the earth. In deceptive fashion, some will admit that the flood was “universal,” but really believe that it was a local flood that universally affected mankind.

We trust in a global flood based on the revealed Word of God, and we should expect such an event to leave behind a multitude of evidence. When we look at the world around us—the layers of rock with billions of dead things buried in them—we must interpret the rocks according to our worldview. If, like the scoffers mentioned by Peter insist, we look at the world through the lens of millions of years, we will come to the conclusion that a global flood is impossible. If we submit ourselves to the authority and sufficiency of the Word of God, we can see the layers as the result of the flood and interpret them properly. How have you interpreted the evidence in the rock layers? The following chapters present the evidence that supports the true and biblical account of the flood.



Was There Really a Worldwide Flood?

by Ken Ham & Tim Lovett

The account of the Genesis flood is one of the most widely known events in the history of mankind. Unfortunately, like other Bible accounts, it is often taken as a mere fairy tale.

The Bible, though, is the true history book of the universe, and in that light, the most-asked questions about the flood of Noah's day can be answered with authority and confidence.

How Could a Flood Destroy Every Living Thing?

And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, live-stock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind. Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died. (Genesis 7:21–22)

Noah's flood was much more destructive than any 40-day rainstorm ever could be. Scripture says that the “fountains of the great deep” burst open. In other words, earthquakes, volcanoes, and geysers of molten lava and scalding water were squeezed out of the earth's crust. These fountains were not stopped until 150 days into the flood—so the earth was literally churning underneath the waters for about five months! The duration of the flood was extensive, and Noah and his family were aboard the ark for over a year.

Relatively recent local floods, volcanoes, and earthquakes—though clearly devastating to life and land—are tiny in comparison to the worldwide catastrophe that destroyed “the world that then existed” (2 Peter 3:6). All land animals and people not on board the ark were destroyed in the floodwaters—billions of animals were preserved in the great fossil record we see today.

How Could the Ark Survive the Flood?

The description of the ark is very brief—Genesis 6:14–16. Those three verses contain critical information including overall dimensions, but Noah was almost certainly given more detail than this. Other divinely specified constructions in the Bible are meticulously detailed, like the descriptions of Moses’ tabernacle or the temple in Ezeiel’s vision.

The Bible does not say the ark was a rectangular box. In fact, Scripture gives no clue about the shape of Noah’s ark other than the proportions—length, width, and depth. Ships have long been described like this without ever implying a block-shaped hull.

Moses used the obscure term *tebah*, a word that is only used again for the basket that carried baby Moses (Exodus 2:3). One was a huge wooden ship and the other a tiny wicker basket. Both float, both rescue life, and both are covered. But the similarity ends there. We can be quite sure that the baby basket did not have the same proportions as the ark, and Egyptian baskets of the time were typically rounded. Perhaps *tebah* means “lifeboat.”

For many years biblical creationists have simply depicted the ark as a rectangular box. This shape helped illustrate its size while avoiding the distractions of hull curvature. It also made it easy to compare volume. By using a short cubit and the maximum number of animal “kinds,”

creationists, as we've seen, have demonstrated how easily the ark could fit the payload.¹ At the time, space was the main issue; other factors were secondary.

However, the next phase of research investigated sea-keeping (behavior and comfort at sea), hull strength, and stability. This began with a Korean study performed at the world-class ship research center (KRISO) in 1992.² The team of nine KRISO researchers was led by Dr. Hong, who is now director-general of the research center.

The study confirmed that the ark could handle waves as high as 98 feet (30 m), and that the proportions of the biblical ark are near optimal—an interesting admission from Dr. Hong, who believes evolutionary ideas, openly claiming “life came from the sea.”³ (For more details on the construction of the ark, see *Pocket Guide to Noah's Ark*.)

Where Did the Floodwaters Come From?

In telling us about the world-changing flood in the days of Noah, the Bible gives us much information about where the waters came from and where they went. The sources of the water given in Genesis 7:11 are the “fountains of the great deep” and “windows of the heavens.”

The fountains of the great deep

The “fountains of the great deep” are mentioned before the “windows of the heavens,” indicating either relative importance or the order of events.

What are the “fountains of the great deep”? This phrase is used only in Genesis 7:11. “Fountains of the deep” is used in Genesis 8:2, where it clearly refers to the same thing, and Proverbs 8:28, where the precise meaning is not clear. “The great deep” is used three other times: Isaiah 51:10, where it clearly refers to the ocean; Amos 7:4, where God's fire of judgment is said to dry up the great deep, probably

the oceans; and Psalm 36:6 where it is used metaphorically of the depth of God's justice/judgment. "The deep" is used more often, and usually refers to the oceans (e.g., Genesis 1:2; Job 38:30, 41:32; Psalm 104:6; Isaiah 51:10; Ezekiel 26:19; Jonah 2:3), but sometimes to subterranean sources of water (Ezekiel 31:4, 15). The Hebrew word (*mayan*) translated "fountains" means "fountain, spring, well."

So the "fountains of the great deep" are probably oceanic or possibly subterranean sources of water. In the context of the flood account, it could mean both.

If the fountains of the great deep were the major source of the waters, then they must have been a huge source of water. Some have suggested that when God made the dry land appear from under the waters on the third day of creation, some of the water that covered the earth became trapped underneath and within the dry land.⁴

Genesis 7:11 says that on the day the flood began, the fountains burst forth, which implies a release of the water, possibly through large fissures in the ground or in the sea floor. The waters that had been held back burst forth with catastrophic consequences.

There are many volcanic rocks interspersed between the fossil layers in the rock record—layers that were obviously deposited during Noah's flood. So it is quite plausible that these fountains of the great deep involved a series of volcanic eruptions with prodigious amounts of water bursting up through the ground. It is interesting that up to 70 percent or more of what comes out of volcanoes today is water, often in the form of steam.

In their catastrophic plate tectonics model for the flood, Austin et al. have proposed that at the onset of the flood, the ocean floor rapidly lifted by more than 3,500 feet (1,067 m) due to the new warmer ocean crust being lighter as

it formed from hot waters upwelling where the old, cold, dense ocean crust had broken up.⁵ This would spill the seawater onto the land and cause massive flooding—perhaps what is aptly described as the bursting forth of the “fountains of the great deep.”

During the flood, the world was deluged in 40 days of rain. But this was not the major source of the floodwaters.

The windows of the heavens

The other source of the waters for Noah’s flood was “the windows of the heavens.” Genesis 7:12 says that it rained for 40 days and 40 nights continuously.

Genesis 2:5 tells us that there was no rain before man was created. Some have suggested that there was no rainfall anywhere on the earth until the time of the flood. However, the Bible does not actually say this, so we should not be dogmatic.⁶

Some have argued that God’s use of the rainbow as the sign of his covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:12–17) suggests that there were no rainbows, and therefore no clouds or rain, before the flood. However, if rainbows (and clouds) existed before the flood, this would not be the only time God used an existing thing as a special “new” sign of a covenant (e.g., bread and wine in the Lord’s supper).

It is difficult to envisage a pre-flood water cycle without clouds and rain, as the sun’s heat, even in that era, must have evaporated large volumes of surface waters which would have to eventually condense back into liquid water. And droplets of liquid water form clouds from which we get rain.

The expression “windows of the heavens” is used twice in reference to the flood (Genesis 7:11, 8:2). “Windows in heaven” is used twice in 2 Kings 7:2 and 19, referring to

God's miraculous intervention in sending rain, and "windows of heaven" appears in Malachi 3:10, where the phrase is used of God intervening to pour out abundant blessings on his people. Clearly, in Genesis the expression suggests the extraordinary nature of the rainfall attending the flood. It is not a term applied to ordinary rainfall.

Where Did All the Water Go?

And the waters receded from the earth continually. At the end of 150 days the waters had abated. (Genesis 8:3)

Simply put, the water from the flood is in the oceans and seas we see today. Three-quarters of the earth's surface is covered with water.

As even secular geologists observe, it does appear that the continents were at one time "together" and not separated by the vast oceans of today. The forces involved in the flood were certainly sufficient to change all of this.

Scripture indicates that God formed the ocean basins, raising the land out of the water, so that the floodwaters returned to a safe place. (Some theologians believe Psalm 104 may refer to this event.) Some creation scientists believe this breakup of the continent was part of the mechanism that ultimately caused the flood. (See "Plate Tectonics—The Reality Behind a Theory," p. 71.)

Some have speculated, because of Genesis 10:25, that the continental break occurred during the time of Peleg. However, this division is mentioned in the context of the tower of Babel's language division of the whole earth (Genesis 10–11). So the context points to a dividing of the languages and people groups, not the land breaking apart.

If there were a massive movement of continents during the time of Peleg, there would have been another worldwide flood. The Bible indicates that the mountains of Ararat

existed for the ark to land in them (Genesis 8:4); so the Indian-Australian Plate and Eurasian Plate had to have already collided, indicating that the continents had already shifted prior to Peleg.

Was Noah's Flood Global?

And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. (Genesis 7:19–20)

Many Christians today claim that the flood of Noah's time was only a local flood. These people generally believe in a local flood because they have accepted the widely believed evolutionary history of the earth, which interprets fossil layers as the history of the sequential appearance of life over millions of years.⁷

Scientists once understood the fossils, which are buried in water-carried sediments of mud and sand, to be mostly the result of the great flood. Those who now accept millions of years of gradual accumulation of fossils have, in their way of thinking, explained away the evidence for the global flood. Hence, many compromising Christians insist on a local flood.

Secularists deny the possibility of a worldwide flood at all. If they would think from a biblical perspective, however, they would see the abundant evidence for the global flood. As someone once quipped, "I wouldn't have seen it if I hadn't believed it."

Those who accept the evolutionary time frame, with its fossil accumulation, also rob the fall of Adam of its serious consequences. They put the fossils, which testify of disease, suffering, and death, before Adam and Eve sinned and brought death and suffering into the world. In doing

this, they also undermine the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ. Such a scenario also robs all meaning from God's description of his finished creation as "very good."

If the flood only affected the area of Mesopotamia, as some claim, why did Noah have to build an ark? He could have walked to the other side of the mountains and escaped. Most importantly, if the flood were local, people not living in the vicinity of the flood would not have been affected by it. They would have escaped God's judgment on sin.

In addition, Jesus believed that the flood killed every person not on the ark. What else could Christ mean when he likened the coming world judgment to the judgment of "all" men in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-39)?

In 2 Peter 3, the coming judgment by fire is likened to the former judgment by water in Noah's flood. A partial judgment in Noah's day, therefore, would mean a partial judgment to come.

If the flood were only local, how could the waters rise to 20 feet (6 m) above the mountains (Genesis 7:20)? Water seeks its own level; it could not rise to cover the local mountains while leaving the rest of the world untouched.

Even what is now Mt. Everest was once covered with water and uplifted afterward.⁸ If we even out the ocean basins and flatten out the mountains, there is enough water to cover the entire earth by about 1.7 miles (2.7 km).⁹ Also important to note is that, with the leveling out of the oceans and mountains, the ark would not have been riding at the height of the current Mt. Everest, so there was no need for such things as oxygen masks.

In addition, if the flood were a local flood, God would have repeatedly broken his promise never to send such a flood again. God put a rainbow in the sky as a covenant between

God and man and the animals that he would never repeat such an event. There have been huge local floods in recent times (e.g., in Bangladesh), but never has there been another global flood that killed all life on the land.

Where Is the Evidence in the Earth for Noah's Flood?

For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. (2 Peter 3:5–6)

Evidence of Noah's flood can be seen all over the earth, from seabeds to mountaintops. Whether you travel by car, train, or plane, the physical features of the earth's terrain clearly indicate a catastrophic past, from canyons and craters to coal beds and caverns. Some layers of strata extend across continents, revealing the effects of a huge catastrophe.

The earth's crust has massive amounts of layered sedimentary rock, sometimes miles (kilometers) deep! These layers of sand, soil, and material—mostly laid down by water—were once soft like mud, but they are now hard stone. Encased in these sedimentary layers are billions of dead things (fossils of plants and animals) buried very quickly. The evidence all over the earth is staring everyone in the face.

Where Is Noah's Ark Today?

And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. (Genesis 8:4)

The ark landed in mountains. The ancient name for these mountains could refer to several areas in the Middle East, such as Mt. Ararat in Turkey or other mountain ranges in neighboring countries.

Mt. Ararat has attracted the most attention because it has permanent ice, and some people report having seen the ark. Many expeditions have searched for the ark there. There is no conclusive evidence of the ark's location or survival; after all, it landed on the mountains about 4,500 years ago. Also, it could easily have deteriorated, been destroyed, or been used as lumber by Noah and his descendants.

Some scientists and Bible scholars, though, believe the ark could indeed be preserved—perhaps to be providentially revealed at a future time as a reminder of the past judgment and the judgment to come, although the same could be said for things like the ark of the covenant or other biblical icons. Jesus said, “If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead” (Luke 16:31).

The ark is unlikely to have survived without supernatural intervention, but this is neither promised nor expected from Scripture. However, it is a good idea to check if it still exists.

Why Did God Destroy the Earth That He Had Made?

The 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. But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. (Genesis 6:5, 8)

These verses speak for themselves. Every human being on the face of the earth had turned after the wickedness

in their own hearts, but Noah, because of his righteousness before God, was spared from God's judgment, along with his wife, their sons, and their wives. As a result of man's wickedness, God sent judgment on all mankind. As harsh as the destruction was, no living person was without excuse.

God also used the flood to separate and to purify those who believed in him from those who didn't. Throughout history and throughout the Bible, this cycle has taken place time after time: separation, purification, judgment, and redemption.

Without God and without a true knowledge and understanding of Scripture, which provides the true history of the world, man is doomed to repeat the same mistakes over and over again.

How Is Christ Like the Ark?

*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.
(Luke 19:10)*

As God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ is like Noah's ark. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. Just as Noah and his family were saved by the ark, rescued by God from the floodwaters, so anyone who believes in Jesus as Lord and Savior will be spared from the coming final judgment of mankind, rescued by God from the fire that will destroy the earth after the last days (2 Peter 3:7).

Noah and his family had to go through a doorway into the ark to be saved, and the Lord shut the door behind them (Genesis 7:16). So we too have to go through a "doorway" to be saved so that we won't be eternally separated from God. The Son of God, Jesus, stepped into history to pay the penalty for our sin of rebellion. Jesus said, "I am the door.

If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture” (John 10:9).

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Tim Lovett earned his degree in mechanical engineering from Sydney University (Australia) and was an instructor for 12 years in technical college engineering courses. Tim has studied the flood and the ark for decades and is widely recognized for his research on the design and structure of Noah’s ark.

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- 1 John Woodmorappe, *Noah’s Ark: A Feasibility Study* (Santee, CA: Institute for Creation Research, 1996), p. 16.
 - 2 Seok Won Hong et al., “Safety Investigation of Noah’s Ark in a Seaway,” *TJ* 8 no. 1 (1994): 26–36, answersingenesis.org/tj/v8/i1/noah.asp.
 - 3 Seok Won Hong, “Warm greetings from the Director-General of MOERI (former KRISO), Director-General of MOERI/KORDI,” moeri.re.kr/eng/about/about.htm.
 - 4 Evidence is mounting that there is still a huge amount of water stored deep in the earth in crystal lattices of minerals, which is possible because of the immense pressure. See L. Bergeron, “Deep waters,” *New Scientist*, 1997, 155(2097): 22-26: “You have oceans and oceans of water stored in the transition zone. It’s sopping wet.”
 - 5 S. A. Austin, J.R. Baumgardner, D. R. Humphreys, A. A. Snelling, L. Vardiman, and K. P. Wise, “Catastrophic Plate Tectonics: A Global Flood Model of Earth History,” in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Creationism*, ed. R.E. Walsh (Pittsburgh: Creation Science Fellowship, 1994), pp. 609-621.
 - 6 Some have claimed that because the people scoffed at Noah’s warnings of a coming flood, that they must not have seen rain. But people today have seen lots of rain and floods, and many still scoff at the global flood. Genesis 2:5 says there was no rain yet upon the earth, but whether or not it rained after that in the pre-flood world is not stated.
 - 7 For compelling evidence that the earth is not billions of years old, read *The Young Earth* by Dr. John Morris and *Thousands . . . not Billions* by Don DeYoung; also see answersingenesis.org/go/young.
 - 8 Mt. Everest is more than 5 miles (8 km) high. How, then, could the flood have covered “the high mountains under the whole heaven”? Before the flood, the mountains were not so high. The mountains today were formed only towards the end of, and after, the flood by collision of the tectonic plates and the associated up-thrusting. In support of this, the layers that form the uppermost parts of Mt. Everest are themselves composed of fossil-bearing, water-deposited layers.
 - 9 A. R. Wallace, *Man’s Place in the Universe* (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co, 1903), pp. 225–226; wku.edu/~smithch/wallace/S728-3.htm.