

The Genesis Flood

“ . . . He did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people “ (2 Peter 2:5a).

An astonishing thing is happening lately in the evangelical churches of the Western world. Theologians and church leaders are abandoning belief in the Bible's origins' narrative. These intellectuals don't want to believe in a literal 6 days' *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) creation only about 6,000 years ago. They prefer Science's frothy teaching of billions of years of geologic history and then millions of years of a slow, gradual evolutionary process for life to form. But, of course, in various clever ways, these compromisers attempt to insert God into this completely atheistic scheme. And part of this new origins belief system, an essential component, is the denial of the universal Flood that's described in Genesis chapters 6-8. "It was just a local flooding of some river in Mesopotamia that got exaggerated in the Genesis narrative – if it was anything," they boldly proclaim, as if they were there to witness it.

There are two channels on TV that continuously show beautiful scenes with superimposed Bible verses, with piano playing hymns in the background as an audio component. There's almost always within any few minutes of viewing time photos of canyons, dramatic cliff faces and rock spires. Whoever took those photos and the producers of the videos must suppose that those are pretty pictures. I don't think they're pretty. All those rock layers everywhere in the world are vivid testimony to the universal Flood that really did occur as the Genesis narrative describes. They are testimony to God's having condemned to death by drowning all the people that lived back then. It happened because **“the Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time”** (Genesis 6:5). So **“ . . . the Lord said, 'I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth”** (v. 7). And that's exactly what He did, except as you know for Noah and his immediate family. The exposed faces of layered rock is the evidence of the truth of that Flood narrative.

The layers of rock are certainly NOT due to millions of years of deposition and erosion, as secular geologists allege. How do I know? Because of (at least) these four reasons: (1) Erosion is a demonstrable fact of geology, and the rate at which it occurs is quite rapid. Over the course of millions of years, there'd have been so much erosion that there'd be no layered rock anywhere. The current rate of erosion, if extrapolated back in time, means there'd be no mountains or canyons or exposed layers of rock anywhere today. Earth would be flat as a pancake. (2) The polystrate fossils, evident at certain exposed rockscapes, can be explained only by massive flood sediments. These are fossilized tree trunks sitting vertically thru layer upon layer of rock. Those trees had supposedly been growing for eons while rock deposited around them, an absurdity. Those trees were deposited by the Flood and encased in mud that then lithified. (3) Lab experiments demonstrate layering of sediments deposited under water. The superposed layers of rocks represent nothing more than an artifact of the process of lithification. So geology alone requires a great flood over all the earth. The fossils in the rocks are the remains of all the creatures that that Flood killed. The fossils are certainly not the result of millions of years of evolutionary development, as Science alleges. And (4), there's no evidence of erosion between the superposed layers!

To claim that it never happened as the Scripture says is preposterous. It not only makes God out to be a liar, it denies the textual evidence right in front of our eyes. Consider these four arguments: (1) Why build a huge boat if it wasn't a universal flood? All Noah had to do would be to relocate his family. And why save animals? (2) The promise God made afterward that He would never again destroy all humanity by means of flood (Genesis 9:11) means that every time the Mississippi River (or the Amazon, or any large river) overflows its banks, God broke His promise. (3) Jesus said in Matthew 24, **“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man”** (vv.37-39). Jesus could claim that a future terrible judgment would begin in the same way that a past flood did only if that previous one were historical. Jesus' statement would be laughable if the threat of a future judgment were based on what everyone knew to be a myth or fairy tale. Jesus and His hearers (and every reader until modern times) understood the reference was to the world-wide flood that had actually occurred as documented in Genesis. And (4), anthropologists and missiologists have discovered that all over the world, diverse people groups have a legend of a great flood that had occurred in the ancient past. This finding is consistent with and corroborates the biblical narrative but is incomprehensible otherwise.

Why is there today so much denial of the Flood? Because of its weighty moral and theological implications. No one today wants to acknowledge that we're sinners, even though it's the one empirically demonstrable church doctrine. And

the theological issue is this: God judges sinners. This creation is His and He has the right to demand moral lives and hold us responsible for how we live. But we want to be autonomous, not accountable to any supernatural Being. So we pretend God doesn't judge sin. We won't allow the Genesis Flood narrative to be true. It has to be a myth of some kind.

As pointed out in prior Sunday School lessons, almost everything in Genesis is proleptic. That is, it anticipates something similar but more extensive in scope or significance happening in the future. Thus, Peter writes, **"By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men"** (2 Peter 3:6-7). Just as God wiped out wicked humanity in the past, He will do it again in the future (although, as He promised, not by means of a Flood).

The Flood was (symbolically) a de-creation, followed by a re-creation. But that Flood in Genesis was only the first of 3 decreation/recreation events in the Bible. We're still in that 1st re-creation. And let's say it's the era of the Son. The Day of the Lord, described in Revelation, will be the next de-creation/recreation. The promised Millennial Kingdom thus will be the 2nd re-creation, and from the O.T. prophecies I suggest that'll be the era of the Spirit. Then Peter prophecies the 3rd great de-creation/re-creation event: there will be a new heavens and a new earth. That'll be the ultimate one, and from the 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 text, I suggest that will be the endless era of the Father. *The best is yet to come!*

But now let's think carefully. Exposed rock layers everywhere are dramatic and compelling testimony that God judges. If we have free will, which of course we do, then justice requires that we be accountable for what we do with it. Our consciences scream at us that judgment of wrong-doing is necessary (unless the conscience is hardened by sin). The almost universal fear of dying is because of guilt and the anticipation of post-mortem judgment. The fact of a future judgment of sin is inescapable. We need to reflect on this. God judges! Everybody knows the Scripture that God is love. But that doesn't define God, nor does it delimit God's attributes. He is love yet He also judges, and He does that in perfect justice. If we suppose that because we're Christians we're exempt from judgment, we're self-deceived. Everyone –*everyone!* – will at some point be raised from the dead to be held accountable for their life. Christ has rescued believers from the terrible Great White Throne judgment and God's wrath. But believers will nevertheless have to stand before Christ one future day to give a personal account. Justice demands that free moral agents be held responsible for their decisions and their acts of service (or lack thereof).

I'm deeply concerned that too many people in our churches are not thinking clearly about this. We seem to be in an age when the ability to think has been taken away from us. Paul puts the issue in sharp focus: **"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness . . ."** (read the whole paragraph in Romans 1, vv.18-20). Wrath? Certainly. God lovingly made and empowered us with the fulsome capacities (conscience, reasoning from the created world, and the Scriptures) to know Him and His will for us. He fully expects us to love Him, fear Him, and obey Him. And if we don't, He's not simply disappointed, He's outraged! And not just at atheists, but even at His own elect (think Israel in the O.T.). This created world is His, and He is free to cleanse it of sin and disobedience and indifference to truth as He pleases, according to His holy will. We absolutely *must* think clearly about this matter of judgment.

God evidently has deliberately allowed rock layers to be exposed for all to see the fact that in the past God judged humanity because of sin. The rocks are a warning to us. The warnings are in abundance in the Word (see Psalm 2 for just one example). But if we don't learn it from the pages of Scripture, we can learn it from the rock-faces all around us. We also can learn it from the current global outbreak of the coronavirus; God sent it as a warning that far worse calamities are soon to come. Every recovery from some illness, every remission from cancer, every near miss in perilous situations – all these are brushes with death that we should interpret as warnings from God. God is dangerous! He is greatly to be feared. His wrath can erupt at any moment. But in love He's given us warnings, lots of them. We're not little gods, free to live as we please. We're accountable and we're liable to judgment.

The Genesis Flood isn't something for the Church to hide, as if we're embarrassed by it because Science and now even our own leaders foolishly deny that it happened. To the contrary, the Flood powerfully and compellingly forces us to face the moral quandary every human must deal with (if we're honest), which is, we're condemned sinners. Satan has introduced the totally bogus narrative that the layers of rock are due to countless millions of years of geologic processes. That phony tale is so that people can see those rocks or pictures of them and say, "How pretty!" Satan doesn't want us to think. We in the Church need to be diligent and use the many warnings God has provided to rescue people from Satan's grip. We explain to people the historicity of the Flood. And the Flood narrative then is followed by presenting the Gospel. And we let God open hearts so that repentance and salvation ensue. And we ourselves repent of our failures.