

The Waters Rose and the Ark Floated on the Surface of the Water

7: 17-24

DIG: What is the evidence for a universal Flood? What are the **twenty-five** biblical reasons for a worldwide Flood? What are the **six principles** of divine judgment that are by the Flood?

REFLECT: Could you defend the concept of the universal Flood to someone? Are the LORD's judgments arbitrary? Is He consistent? Is He fair? Is He just? How so?

The previous section was the only one in **the Flood** narrative that used both of the most common names for God in the TANAKH. This section, however, omits His name entirely. The reason is clear: As soon as Noah and his family are safely in **the ark**, ADONAI unleashes the full fury of His wrath on the rest of mankind. He turns His back on them, and the floodwaters are free to do their awful work of judgment. The people outside **the ark** had sinned once too often against the LORD, and He left them to their own devices.¹²⁷ The narrative here has rightly been described as a sea captain's logbook. In this section, there are **twenty-five reasons** why Elohim's judgment is worldwide and not merely local.¹²⁸

For forty days the Flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth (7:17). The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water (7:18). The LORD's forty-day forecast was rain, rain and more rain! Exactly as God had said, **the rains** came for **forty days and forty nights** (7:12). The fountains of the deep opened up and added to the massive downpour from above. As **the waters** rose, **the ark** gradually began to float.

1. The wording of the entire account, both here and throughout **Genesis Chapters 6** thru **9**, could not be improved on if the intention of the writer was to describe a universal Flood. If it were a description of a river overflow, it is completely misleading and exaggerated.
2. Expressions involving the universality of **the Flood** and its effects occur more than thirty times in **Chapters 6** thru **9**.
3. **The Flood** poured down for **forty days on the earth**. A continual downpour lasting for **forty days**, with **all the springs of the great deep** bursting forth would be impossible under the uniformitarian position, which is the belief that geological processes have always

been of the same kind and intensity. It implies that vast amounts of geological time were needed for evolution.

4. The word for **the Flood** is a special word. In Hebrew the word is *hamabbul*, and the Greek word is *kataklysmos*. It is where we get the English words cataclysmic, catastrophic, or earth-shattering. These words are only used in connection with the Noahic **Flood**. The ordinary Hebrew words for a local flood are not used here at all.

5. The water rise was sufficient to lift **the ark high above the earth**, indicating a depth of at least twenty feet in the earliest stages of **the Flood**, since **the ark was 45 feet high** and heavily loaded. As already noted, **the ark** was far too large to accommodate a mere localized flood and was more than adequate to house two of every species of land animal in the entire world, living or extinct.

6. As **the rains** continued, they **rose and increased greatly on the earth**. This language would be quite inappropriate for a localized flood. **Job 12:15** says that **the waters overwhelmed the earth**.

7. The construction, outfitting, and stocking of **the ark**, so that it **floated on the surface of the water** would have been a total waste of time and effort if the flood were to be only a local flood. Migration would have been a far better solution to the problem, for **Noah** as well as the animals and the birds.

They **rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under all the heavens were covered (7:19 KJV)**. **The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet (7:20)**. These verses give every indication of a worldwide **Flood**. One would have to ignore the normal meanings of the words to make this a localized flood. Some of the critics of the worldwide **Flood** have calculated that this much water could not have been produced in 150 days. But we must remember that this is the same God who brought the ten plagues upon Egypt and who divided the waters of the Red Sea. Nothing is too difficult for Him! **Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6a)**.

8. **The waters covered all the high mountains and mountains**. The repetition of the word **mountains** is common in Hebrew parallelism for the purpose of emphasis.

9. **The waters** not only **greatly increased on the earth**, but they also **rose greatly on the entire earth**.

10. **All**, and by **all** the Ruach HaKodesh means **all, the mountains under the entire heavens were covered** with at least 22 or 23 feet of water (half the height of **the ark**, probably representing its depth of submergence), telling us that **the ark** could float freely

over **all the mountains**. These would clearly include at least **the mountains** of Ararat, the highest peak of which reaches 17,000 feet. A 17,000 foot **Flood** is not a local flood!

11. The mountains were covered. The Hebrew word here, *kasha*, conveys a very positive emphasis; it could well be translated **overwhelmed**, as it is translated in some instances. **The waters** not only inundated **the mountains** but also eventually washed **them** away.

12. The double superlative, **all the high mountains under all the heavens**, cannot possibly allow the use of the word **all** here in a "relative" sense, as sometimes maintained by those who believe in a localized flood.

Every living thing that moved on the earth, excluding fish life, perished - birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out, literally erased, men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth (7:21-23a). The reason for a new beginning was that sin had infected every part of life, and all other **living** creatures experienced the fatal effects of the sin of man as well.

The Flood has been included in the oral history of literally hundreds of civilizations from Babylon to Papua New Guinea to the tribes of Peru, Mexico, Greenland, Wales, China, India, to our own Native Americans, and many, many others. More than half the time, these oral histories attribute the cause of **the Flood** to the evil acts of humans. It is clear that all the accounts come from the same historical event. Although the fine points of **the Flood** accounts have been modified to fit the local culture, the historical accuracy and the moral implications are amazingly consistent.

Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark (7:23b).

13. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out. In a local flood, most of **the animals** could escape death by fleeing **the rising waters**, by swimming to dry ground or in the case of the birds, flying away. But this would be impossible with a universal **Flood**.

14. Every living man, woman and child that was not on the ark died. This was the very purpose of **the Flood**. In a local flood, most people would escape. Furthermore, there is no longer any question that ancient man occupied the entire globe at a date, calculated by anthropologists, that was much earlier than the date of any supposed local flood. A local flood would not have reached **every living thing on the face of the earth**.

15. Not only did **every living thing on the face of the earth** die, but also **every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out**. The word translated **every living thing** is one Hebrew word, *yegum*, which is translated **substance** in **Deuteronomy 11:6**. It clearly refers here to vegetation, as well as **animals**. In fact, God had said to Noah: **I am going to destroy both man and the earth (6:13)**.

16. Only **Noah** and those with **him in the ark** survived **the Flood**, so that everyone now living is a descendant of one of **Noah's** three sons (also see **9:1** and **19**). Likewise, all the earth's present dry-land **animals** come from those on **the ark**. The very purpose of God had been to destroy all other living men (**6:7**) and **land animals (6:17 and 7:22)**.

The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days (7:24). It was not until after this that **the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed**, and **the waters** began to recede. The extreme length of **the Flood** points to its universal nature.

17. No local flood continues to rise for 150 days.

18. Even after **the waters** began to decrease, and **the ark** grounded on the highest of **the mountains of Ararat (8:4)**, it was another two-and-a half months before the tops of other mountains could be seen (**8:5**).

19. Even after four months of receding floodwaters, the dove sent out by **Noah** could find no dry land on which to land (**8:9**).

20. It was more than an entire year (**7:11; 8:13-19**) before enough land had dried to permit the occupants of **the ark** to leave.

For all these reasons, it is inconceivable that anyone would believe **the Flood** was merely local. So, to the above twenty reasons I would like to add five additional biblical reasons for believing **the Flood** to be worldwide.

21. God's promise never to send such a **Flood** again (**8:21. 9:11 and 15**) has been broken repeatedly if it were only a local or regional flood.

22. The world was different after **the Flood**, including sharply defined seasons (**8:22**), the rainbow along with the rain (**2:5, 9:13-14**), and enmity between man and beasts (**9:2**).

23. Mankind's longevity began a long, slow decline immediately after **the Flood** (compare **Chapter 5** to **Chapter 11**).

24. Later Biblical writers accepted the universal Flood (Job 12:15, 22:16; Psalm 29:10, 104:6-9; Isaiah 54:9; First Peter 3:20; Second Peter 2:5, 3:5-6; Hebrews 11:7).

25. Jesus Christ Himself accepted the historicity and universality of the Flood, even making it the climactic sign and type of the coming worldwide judgment when He returns (Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27).

Thus, here are **six principles** of divine judgment that are illustrated by the Flood.¹²⁹

First, God's judgments are not arbitrary. Our God is not fickle in His decisions to judge His creatures. Divine judgment is always related to human wickedness. The LORD determined to wipe out mankind from **the face of the earth** because of their violent and corrupt behavior. Their conduct caused Him grief and filled His heart with pain so He decided to put an end to all the people on the earth, save Noah and his family (6:5-13).

Second, God always announces His judgments beforehand. Once having made a decision to judge His sinful creatures, God warns them of the impending judgment. He does not sneak up on them unawares and judge them without first telling them of His plans. Far from being a distant and hidden ADONAI who conceals His desires from His people, He proclaims to them in no uncertain terms and in a variety of ways (Hebrews 1:1-2) what He intends to do. In the case of the Flood, the LORD revealed to Noah that He was going to **destroy the earth** and every living creature on it (6:13). Although Elohim sometimes announces coming judgment directly, He more often does so through His chosen servants. While the ark was being built, Noah, a **preacher of righteousness** (Second Peter 2:5), proclaimed a message of condemnation for 120 years.

Third, God always grants time for repentance. If God merely warned sinful people of impending judgment and then immediately carried it out, the warning would be no more than a cruel joke. On the contrary, our patient and loving ADONAI is generous in giving us plenty of time to repent. Though the Holy Spirit will not contend with man forever (6:3), He will nevertheless contend and plead with him for a considerable period of time. In the case of the Flood it was 120 years, more than enough time when we think of the depths of sin that man had reached during those days.

Fourth, God always follows through on His decision to judge unless man repents. Apart from man's sincere remorse for his sinful ways and apart from his willingness to confess them, the LORD always follows through on His warnings of judgment. He said that He would **send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights** (7:4), and He did so (7:12). He said that He would **wipe out from the face of the earth every living creature He had made** (7:4), and He did so (7:23). Our God can be counted on to fulfill every promise He

makes, even when they are promises of judgment. When His people refuse to respond to His warning, ADONAI's judgments are both inevitable and irreversible. He is a promise keeper.

Five, God's judgments always result in death. His announcements of impending judgment are serious indeed and although death may not be the immediate result of His judgments, it is always the ultimate result. In the case of **the Flood**, there is scarcely room for doubt that both spiritual and physical death are intended. The animals and birds may have experienced only physical death, but wicked mankind surely experienced both physical death and spiritual death. Just as eternal life is a gift from God, so is eternal death. **The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).**

Sixth, God judges because He is just. Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows (Galatians 6:7). For the LORD not to judge sin would be to make a mockery of justice. Since God is love, He grants salvation to the righteous; because He is just, He judges the sinner. **The Flood** stands forever as a vivid reminder of this principle.