

IS GENESIS HISTORY OR MYTHOLOGY

from
 **FAITH MAKES SENSE**

The story of the Noah's Ark captures the heart and mind of many a Bible student. Yet, there are many details about the study of the Genesis Flood that rarely find their way into conversation because the story looms so large in the Christian collective conscience. Here is a brief introduction to the topic of the Genesis Flood.

IS GENESIS HISTORY OR MYTHOLOGY?

There is a large debate of what parts of the book of Genesis should be taken as history and what should be considered legend/myth. The debate generally focuses on the first 11 chapters. Some scholars view Genesis 1-11 with a different interpretative lens than the rest of the book. They suggest that the narratives prior to chapter 12 are not to be understood historically, but this changes abruptly at chapter 12 with the beginning of the story of Abraham. The patriarch narratives are considered historical, but the preceding stories are not. Before we can present information on the pre-flood world, we must determine if Genesis 1-11 are historical at all.

7 CLEAR TRUTH FROM GENESIS 1-11

- 1:** God created everything in six literal 24-hour days.
- 2:** Adam and Eve were real people.
- 3:** Corruption entered God's "very good" creation as a result of Adam and Eve's sin.
- 4:** God promised a human descendant would come to "crush the head" of the serpent.
- 5:** Noah constructed an ark on which pairs of air-breathing, land-dwelling animals were saved.
- 6:** There was a catastrophic global flood.
- 7:** The confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel produced different language groups.

7 REASONS TO VIEW GENESIS 1-11 AS HISTORY

- 1:** There is no clear change in language or literary style between chapters 11 and 12 of Genesis.
- 2:** There is over 100 references in both the Old and New Testaments referring back to Genesis 1-11.
- 3:** Jesus refers to the creation of humanity as male and female as the establishment of human marriage in Matthew 19:34-5 and the "days of Noah" as an actual historical time period in Luke 17:26-27.
- 4:** If Adam is not a historical figure, then the original sin of Eden is not real either.
- 5:** If the original sin of Eden is not real, there is no need for a savior.
- 6:** If original sin is not real, and humanity does not need a Savior, the gospel is not true and Christianity itself is false.
- 7:** There is clear scientific evidence of a catastrophic worldwide flood, exactly how Genesis describes it.

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THE PRE-FLOOD WORLD

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In order to study the Genesis Flood, we must recognize that the world we observe today is very different from both the original creation at Eden and the world as it was in the days of Noah before the flood. Here is a short introduction to the pre-flood world in Genesis.

FROM CREATION TO THE FLOOD

There is approximately **1,656** years between creation and the time of the Genesis Flood.

Adam fathered Seth after 130 years (vs. 3)
Seth fathered Enosh after 105 years (vs. 6)
Enosh fathered Kenan after 90 years (vs. 9)
Kenan fathered Mahalalel after 70 years (vs. 12)
Mahalalel fathered Jared after 65 years (vs. 15)
Jared fathered Enoch after 162 years (vs. 18)
Enoch fathered Methuselah after 65 years (vs. 21)
Methuselah fathered Lamech after 187 years (vs. 25)
Lamech fathered Noah after 182 years (vss. 28-29)
Noah was 600 years old when the Flood came (Gen. 7:6)

COPYING GILGAMESH

It is often asserted that the story of the Genesis Flood is a later copy of the Epic of Gilgamesh, a Babylonian flood story. While there are many similarities between the two, this does not require primacy of the Babylonian story. The differing details, pettiness of the Babylonian Gods, and differing details also align to the Babylonian version being the product of oral transmission of the Genesis Flood account that was changed over time.

NO NORTH AMERICAN FLOOD

One point that is often made to argue against a global flood is the absence of any evidence of a global flood within the last 12,000 years in North America. It is claimed that since it's been established humans have been living in North America for the past 12,000 years, the Genesis Flood had to be local and not global.

This line of argumentation is built on radiometric dating methods which themselves are suspect and unreliable. Radiometric dating begins with unproved assumptions which completely undermines its credibility.

THE LAND CONDITIONS

The pre-flood land was likely one single super-continent, often called Pangea or Rodinia.

Some of the mountain ranges that exist today, likely did not exist in the pre-flood world.

The Genesis Flood was a catastrophic worldwide event involving not just flooding, but plate tectonics and geophysical realignment.

Evidence for the super-continent can be seen in the transcontinental matching of rock layers from the Appalachian Mountains of North America to mountains in England, Norway, and into Russia.

NOAH AND RACIAL DIVERSITY

It has been suggested that the only way to have a global flood and today's racial diversity is if Noah had one black son, one white son, and one brown son. This idea is based on faulty assumptions and poor logic.

1: It assumes Noah was an Anglo-European man. This is not in the text of the Bible anywhere.

2: It assumes the range of skin colors in humans today had to be same in Noah's day for them to exist today.

3: It assumes the alleles for both light and dark skin were not present in early humanity.

Prior to the flood, all humanity spoke a single language and had a shared culture. This likely would have resulted in a tan or brown complexion which would have been homogeneous to all humans living in Noah's day. After the confusion of the Tower of Babel, different groups separated and began growing completely separate populations. If the allele coding for light and dark skin were present in pre-flood humanity, it would only take a few generations for visual diversity to appear.

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