

Pray

Ballard's expedition to the Black Sea, Nat'l. Geographic, May 2001

On the historicity of the flood: This really happened!

I used to not believe this because it sounds crazy and liberal theologians and intellectuals told me not to.

Many people insist today that the flood was not worldwide, but local.

Why do I believe now that there was a worldwide flood?

1. Genesis begins with a presentation of early history. The rest of the OT treats it this way. Ps. 104:5-9
2. Jesus and the apostles treat this as actual history. Matt. 24:37-38, Luke 3:36, Heb. 11:7, 1 Pet. 3:20, 2 Pet. 2:5, 3:5-6
3. Nearly every culture in the world has a flood story... more than 500 different stories, each from a different culture.
4. Fascinating stories of discoveries of the Ark... more than 15 in the past 300 years.
5. In later chapters, the Bible traces all the peoples of the earth to Noah and his three sons.
6. If the flood was not worldwide, salvation of all the animals and the promise of the rainbow would have been unnecessary.
7. The Ark, as described in Gen. 6 was perfect in size and construction for surviving the flood.
8. The Ark, as described in Gen. 6 was the minimum size for the transport of all the species on the earth.
9. Geologist agree that at some point there was a cataclysmic deluge and moving of continents.
10. In recent years (the past 200) we have discovered fossils of sea animals in many inland and mountainous regions.

After all this, I have concluded that the best of all possible explanations is that there really was a worldwide flood.

And, that there really was an Ark built by Noah by which God saved the land animals and birds.

Well, then, if this did happen... why did God do this, and why did He do it this way?

Why not just start with Noah in the first place?

The history of God and His dealing with people throughout the Bible is all here so that God can display His glory...

so that people and all His creatures (angels included) can see who He is and what He is like.

So, we are going to learn about God. But, what about God?

Specifically about how God saves and how He demonstrates His wrath.

This text serves us as a promise and description of salvation and a warning of judgment. **Rom. 11:22**

"Behold then the Kindness and Severity of God."

Are you ready to take a close look at God, who is both kind and severe... gracious and just... loving and angry?

Two things about Noah are here emphasized... each essential to God's saving of Noah.

"... to those who fell, severity" = speaking of Israel, but applicable to the others in Noah's day.

The first thing we are going to see is the kindness of God, in two different ways.

"... but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness" = Noah continues in God's kindness... now we will see how.

Gen. 7:1-16

I. God saved Noah because he was righteous.

And, right away we have some questions. We might already feel it from Romans 11:22 and the "if" that we find there.

In Gen. 7:1 there is a "for" = "because" (NIV)

God told Noah to get on the Ark "because" God saw Noah as righteous in his generation.

(in contrast to the others on earth in his day)

However, this might seem problematic. You might ask, "Isn't salvation unconditional?"

And, the answer is "No." Not for Noah. Nor, we will discover, for Abraham. Nor for you and I.

Clearly, we see here that Noah was saved BECAUSE God saw him as righteous.

This will be true for Abraham as well.

This is no less true for you and I today. In order to be saved you have to be righteous in God's eyes.

Which is a very tall order because God sees all. Nothing gets by Him.

In **Gen. 6:9** we learn that Noah's righteousness is synonymous with moral perfection.

So then the question for us becomes "How do I become righteous in God's sight?"

This actually is one of the great questions of the Bible, and one that the Bible builds anticipation for throughout the Old Testament.

The question is then explicitly answered in the New Testament.

Anyone who is made righteous by God is made righteous by faith in God who promises to take away their sin.

We learn this of Abraham, Moses under the sacrificial system, David in the Psalms, and Isaiah in the Temple...

Rom. 4:1-8 And how is it that sins are covered and a person made righteous by faith?

Rom. 3:21-26 It is by the blood of Jesus shed for those who believe. That is how you become righteous by faith.

How does this faith work? **Heb. 11:7**

And, this is the movement in the text through Gen. 6-7

Noah finds grace in the eyes of the Lord. Gen. 6:8

The grace of God enables Noah to believe in the God he cannot see and the payment for his sin that he hopes for. Faith.

As a result of his faith Noah is made righteous by God. Gen 6:9, 7:1

Because of Noah's righteousness, he obeys God. And, so, Noah is saved... like we are saved.

II. God saved Noah because he was obedient.

You cannot miss that this is emphasized in the story told to us in Gen. 7. The repetition here is instructive.

We are told of God's commands to Noah 6 times:

6:14-16 Build the Ark.

6:18-21 Fill it with animals and food.

6:22 "commanded"

7:1-4 Enter the Ark with the animals... clean and unclean. We'll see next week what's going on with this.

7:8-9 "commanded... clean and unclean animals"

7:16 "as God had commanded him"

And, we are told that Noah obeyed God 6 times:

6:9 "Noah walked with God."

6:22 "... did ALL that God had commanded him."

7:5 again Noah did all that was "commanded"

7:7 Noah entered the Ark.

7:9 The animals are being loaded onto the Ark.

7:13-16 Again we are told that they all entered the Ark... 7 days after Noah receives the warning the floods begin.

God does not want us to miss the point. Noah obeyed God by building the Ark and getting on it!

Well, if Noah had not obeyed, he would not have been saved. The Ark was God's prescribed means of salvation.

Maybe this is simply too obvious to mention, but sometimes the obvious lessons are the most important.

Noah had to get on the Ark in order to be saved. There was no other way.

Similarly, Jesus Christ is our means of salvation and the one to whom the Ark points us.

You have to get in Jesus in order to be saved. There is no other way... no plan B.

You do this by faith and that faith shows up as obedience. And, Noah's faith and obedience saved his family as well!

You have to believe in Jesus and put your life in His hands. It is not enough just to know about Jesus or think you're a good person.

It is not enough just to go to church or know your Bible and agree with all the things that I am saying.

You have to get in! And, then your life is going to be different. You won't be like everyone else... you'll be walking with Jesus.

To believe and live life in Jesus is to live a life of increasing obedience to the Lord. You want to obey. You have to obey.

This is why Jesus says over and over in the Bible, "If you love Me you will obey my commandments."

And, if you really get in, God won't let you out. You won't want to get out.

vs. 16 "the Lord closed it behind him" (NAS) = "the Lord shut him in" (ESV)

III. God utterly destroyed the disobedient unrighteous.

In 7:11-12 we read a powerful description of how the flood happened...

It seems to be the opposite of Gen. 1:6-7... an uncreation... this is what the flood was... a starting again.

Then we have a description of what happened in **Gen. 7:17-24**.

The mechanics of this, we simply do not know. Were the continents closer together? Were the mountains less high?

Did it involve the melting of icecaps? Was the land lowered?

We do know from the text that the flood was cataclysmic. This was a natural disaster of unimaginable proportion.

All flesh on the earth that breathed perished... the breath of life taken from them. We are meant to feel the deaths.

And, we are meant to feel the thoroughness of the disaster... the water everywhere... waves, rain, water, more water everywhere...

... except for one little place of salvation floating on the vast sea, surrounded by destruction.

There was Noah, his family, the animals, in the Ark... water all around... but safe, closed in by God... for 150 days.

Notice the lengths that God goes to in order to save Noah... think of the many miracles God must have worked.

To keep the water out, the animals fed and healthy, Noah and his family sane for all that time, to steer them...

"The Lord shut him in." But the Lord also shut others out!

Who knows what they thought of Noah and his righteousness. Did they mock him? Probably.

Did they think him a fool as he was building the Ark for those 100 years?

Were they thinking, "We are the great people of the earth. We are the giants! We are sons of God?"

This is what people are saying and thinking today. You want to be different from all of them.

Were they thinking, "We are free from God's commands and control. We are our own masters. We run the world?"

This is what people are saying and thinking today. You want to be different from all of them.

2 Peter 3:3-13 What's the point? Don't make the mistake that they made. They didn't think God would do anything.

Matt. 24:36-42 What's the point? Don't make the mistake that they made. They didn't think God would show up.

Be ready for Christ's judgment... when He comes to judge the world, and all the people in it who deserve His judgment.

Where do you stand with the Lord today? Are you in the Ark? Or are you in the world?

Are you living your way? Or are you living life in Jesus? The answer to this question will make all the difference for you.

Some of you know where you are. Some of you don't, you're not sure, struggling. Decide today to believe and walk with Him.

Pray