

APPENDICES TO LESSON 8

Appendix A: The Complete Text of Genesis 7:1-8:22

7 The LORD then said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. ²Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and two of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, ³and also seven of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. ⁴Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.” ⁵And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. ⁷And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, ⁹male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. ¹²And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

¹³On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. ¹⁴They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. ¹⁵Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. ¹⁶The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth.

¹⁸The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. ¹⁹They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. ²⁰The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet. ²¹Every living thing that moved on the earth perished—birds, livestock, wild animals,

all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind.
²²Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. ²³Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; men and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds of the air were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. ²⁴The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. ²Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. ³The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, ⁴and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.

⁶After forty days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark ⁷and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. ⁹But the dove could find no place to set its feet because there was water over all the surface of the earth, so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. ¹⁰He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. ¹¹When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. ¹²He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

¹³By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. ¹⁴By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶"Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number upon it."

¹⁸So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. ¹⁹All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on the earth—came out of the ark, one kind after another.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. ²¹The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. ²²“As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.”

The New International Version, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1994.

Appendix B: The Genesis Flood

In what sense was the Genesis Flood universal? Was it universal in the sense that geographically the floodwaters inundated the entire globe? Or was it universal in the sense that the Flood destroyed all of mankind?

Some Limiting Factors

Formidable scientific problems are raised by a universal flood... (1) According to the best estimates, to cover the highest Himalayas would require eight times more water than our planet now possesses. (2) The withdrawal of so great a quantity of water constitutes an almost insuperable problem, for there would be no place to which it could *drain off*. [The Hebrew verb used in Genesis 8:1, נִפְאַת, has the meaning, “to decrease,” “to abate,” “to assuage.”] The mechanics of this abatement of water would certainly be difficult, for the atmosphere could not possibly hold that much water in evaporated form, and it is doubtful if any underground cavities in the earth could receive more than a small fraction of this additional volume of water. (3) Scarcely any plant life could have survived submersion under salt water for over a year, and the mingling of ocean water with the rain must have resulted in

a lethal saline concentration, even though the mixture would have been considerably diluted. Practically all marine life would have perished, except those comparatively few organisms that can withstand tremendous pressure, for 90-percent of marine life is found in the first fifty fathoms, and many of these species cannot survive distant migration from their native feeding grounds. Presumably the fresh water fish would have died, even though the salinity might have been high enough to support saltwater fish. (4) Certain areas of the earth's surface show definite evidence of no submersion. For example, in Auvergne (France) there are reportedly cones of loose scoria and ashes from volcanoes thousands of years older than the Flood, and yet they show no signs of having been washed or disturbed by floodwaters. (Archer, pp.194-195)

Some global Flood proponents who acknowledge the problem of a grossly inadequate water supply propose that Earth's surface was "smooth(en)ed," or flattened, by the Flood, thus reducing the water requirement. More specifically, they claim that during the forty days and nights when the floodwaters rose, Earth's mountains radically eroded from their lofty heights of ten, fifteen, and even twenty thousand feet to just one or two thousand feet, perhaps less. Meanwhile, the ocean basins filled with the silt of such erosion, forcing them up from their depths of ten, twenty, and thirty thousand feet to just a few thousand feet, perhaps less.

Other global Flood advocates simply presume that previous to the Flood all the continental landmasses lay no more than a few thousand feet above sea level. While this explanation removes the appeal to extreme erosion, it requires that during the forty days and nights the ocean basins were quickly and sufficiently uplifted so as to inundate all the continents and islands.

All global Flood proponents posit that planet Earth during the eleven months following the forty days and nights of flooding was radically transformed. It changed, they state, from possessing very little vertical relief in the oceans or on the continents to its present condition of mountains reaching to 29,000 feet above sea level and ocean basins dipping down to 38,000 feet below sea level. The mechanisms driving this drastic activity, they say, included plate tectonics and volcanic eruptions. In other words, Earth's crust buckled over the course

of eleven months by tens of thousands of vertical feet as a result of gigantic earthquakes and volcanoes.

As drastic as all this vertical displacement is, it pales in comparison to the horizontal crustal plate movements global Flood proponents insist must have occurred during the several months following the Flood. Recognizing the overwhelming geophysical evidence that exists for massive movements of the continents including a supercontinent splitting into seven continents that now grace our planet's surface, they claim that much, if not all, of this continental movement took place not over hundreds of millions of years but during the eleven-month time span following the Flood. That is, depending where one resides on the earth they propose something between 3,000 and 6,000 miles of plate tectonic movement took place in under a year.

...this proposition fails the test of plausibility on several counts. First, neither Genesis nor geophysics offers a hint that such drastic upheavals took place. The primary energy source for driving tectonics and vulcanism is heat from the decay of long-lived radiometric elements, and the primary energy source for erosion is Earth's rotation rate. Neither could have been dramatically increased without scientists today being aware of such past increases. For that matter, neither scientists nor anyone else would be alive today if such events took place at the time of the Flood. Second, the ark, though seaworthy for a massive Mesopotamian flood, would have broken under the stresses of such cataclysmic events as vertical displacements of Earth's crust by more than 200 feet per day and horizontal displacements by more than 60,000 feet per day. Anything more than just one foot of erosion or one foot of tectonic uplift per day is sufficient to destroy most cities. Though the ark was floating, such movement would produce sufficient G-forces to shatter the ark and its occupants. At a minimum the atmospheric dust and debris, not to mention heat, ashes, and gases released from such catastrophic events, would shut down photosynthetic processes for many years. Further, the text explicitly states that God "sent a wind over the earth" as His primary means to disperse the floodwaters. This reference to the wind suggests that God used evaporation, rather than geologic upheaval, to return the floodwaters to their original places.

Noah and his family's post-Flood activities also argue against this geologic cataclysm hypothesis. Genesis records that Noah and his family began profitable agriculture immediately after leaving the ark—impossible if such extreme erosion and tectonics rearranged the landscape. We recall, too, that an olive leaf was available to be plucked by the dove while the floodwaters were still receding. No olive tree, let alone its leaves, would have survived tens of thousands of feet of erosion, tectonics, and vulcanism packed into a few months or even a few years.

The effects of such monstrous erosion, tectonics, and vulcanism would be easily measurable by geophysicists today if it has occurred. The fault lines scarring the earth would be many times more numerous, larger, and active than what we see. Also, the earthquake aftershocks from thousands of miles of tectonic displacement would have made cities, agriculture, and even the mere existence of human beings impossible during the decades following the Flood. Neither the Bible nor any of the other 200+ Flood accounts found in the ancient cultures of the world gives the slightest hint of such post-Flood catastrophes. (*The Genesis Question*, pp.152-154)

The Relative Use of “Whole,” All,” and “Every”

That the words “whole,” “all,” “every,” have always to be understood in the light of their context is clear from a glance at such passage as Genesis 41:56-57 and 1 Kings 10:24. (Kevan, p.84)

And the famine was over all the face of the earth; and Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt.
⁵⁷ And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all the earth.
(Genesis 41:56-57)

And all the world sought an audience with Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. (1 Kings 10:24)

Genesis 41:56 tells of the famine that struck while Joseph served as prime minister over Egypt. The *King James Version* reads, **The famine was over all the face of the earth.** We understand these words to signify that the famine devastated all the lands of the ancient Near East in and around Egypt. We do not interpret them globally, as implying that Australian Aborigines and American Indians came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph. Likewise, when 1 Kings 10:24 states, **the whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart,** we do not conclude that the New Zealand Maoris or the Patagonian natives sent yearly delegations to Jerusalem.

In the Flood account itself we find a similar example. In Genesis 8:5 the floodwaters are said to have receded enough so that the **tops of the mountains became visible.** After forty more days of the floodwaters receding still farther, Noah released a dove. Genesis 8:9 records that the **dove could find no place to set its feet because there was water over all the surface of the earth.** Clearly, this implies that all of the earth or the whole world was inundated from the perspective of the dove but not from the perspective of Noah. (*The Genesis Question*, pp.146-147)

The Use of the Term “World”

The apostle Peter made specific comment on the extent of the Genesis Flood:

*But this they intentionally forget; namely, that long ago there were heavens and an earth formed out of *the* water and in the midst of *the* water by the word of God. ⁶By those *same waters* the world of that time was destroyed, being deluged with water. ⁷And by that same word the present heavens and earth are being preserved for fire, reserved for the day of *the judgment and destruction of ungodly mankind.* (2 Peter 3:5-7)*

The Greek word translated “world,” κόσμος, has these definitions: the whole universe, the whole planet Earth, the whole of humanity, or a portion of the Earth. (*The Genesis Question*, p.147) An indication that the third definition, “the whole of humanity,” is what Peter had in mind can be seen

from the qualifying phrase he employed, he writes of **the world of that time**.

Note, too, how Peter intentionally alternates between the terms **heavens and earth** and **the world of that time**. He begins by speaking of the original creation, **long ago there were heavens and an earth formed out of *the* water and in the midst of *the* water**. He then declares, **the world of that time** was deluged by the Flood. He then goes on to warn that the heavens and earth as they exist in their present state—**the present heavens and earth**—are being preserved for the Final Judgment, which will be by fire. Peter makes the distinction between the ancient **world** being visited with God's judgment in the form of the Genesis Flood and the present **heavens and earth** being destined for God's Final Judgment in the form of fire. Peter is careful to avoid saying that the original creation, consisting of **the heavens** that then existed, and the **earth** that was **formed out of *the* water**, was consumed by the judgment of the Flood—such was not the case, for certainly the heavens that were from of old were not destroyed by the floodwaters.

Having noted the distinction Peter is careful to make between **the heavens and the earth** and **the world**, we must further acknowledge that Peter also makes something of a connection between these two entities. The destruction of **the world of that time** was, in fact, a judgment upon the original creation, for the waters of the Genesis Flood did in some sense bring to an end that original creation and caused it to be replaced by the present heavens and earth.

How are we to understand these things? The best interpretation seems to be that **the world of that time**, meaning the whole of humanity and all of the geographical area it inhabited, was representative of the entire creation. The judgment that befell that ancient world—the judgment executed by means of the Genesis Flood—was also a precursor of the universal judgment that shall befall the present creation—a judgment of fire that shall be of totally universal and cosmic proportions, consuming both the entire world of mankind as well as the present heavens and earth.

The Various Meanings of the Relevant Hebrew Words

...it needs to be pointed out that the Hebrew's **אָרֶץ**, translated consistently as “earth” in our English Bibles, is also the word for “land” (e.g., “the *land* of Israel,” “the *land* of Egypt”). There is another term, **תָּבִل**, which means the whole expanse of the earth, or the world as a whole. Nowhere does **תָּבִל** occur in this account, but only **אָרֶץ**, in all the statements that sound quite universal in the English Bible (e.g., Genesis 7:4,10,17,18,19). Thus Genesis 6:17c can be rendered: ...everything that is in the *land* shall die—that is, whatever geographical region is involved in the context and situation. If this interpretation be allowed, then the mountains whose summits were submerged by the Flood would have been the relatively lower mountains of the region surrounding Mesopotamia, rather than including the mighty Himalayas (such as Mount Everest with its nearly six mile height). Correspondingly, the word “ground” (**אָדָמָה**), which occurs in the ASV of Genesis 7:4 (KJV “earth”) can be understood as the soil surface of the same area covered by the **אָרֶץ** of the other verses. (Archer, p.194)

The phrase, **under the whole heaven**, which occurs in Genesis 7:19, (all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven were covered), can legitimately be understood as equivalent to the phrase “within (or, “under”) the whole horizon.” (Kevan, p.84)

The Floodwaters Covering “the Highest Mountains”

The reference in Genesis 7:19-20 to the inundation of all mountains “under the whole heaven” proves a sticking point in the debate over the Flood’s extent. The translators’ wording of this passage explains why so many English-speaking Christians firmly conclude that the Flood must have been global. In the *King James Version* the passage reads as follows:

And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills that *were* under the whole heaven, were covered.²⁰ Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.²¹ And all flesh died that

moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. (Genesis 7:19-21, KJV)

In the *New International Version*, the passage reads this way:

They [the floodwaters] rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered.
²⁰The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet.²¹Every living thing that moved on the earth perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind.

(Genesis 7:19-21, NIV)

The text certainly appears to claim that all land life on planet Earth was destroyed and that even Mount Everest was covered by more than twenty feet of water. A look at the Hebrew suggests that the translators may have struggled with the text, and some may have been influenced, unawares, by preconceptions about the story.

The Hebrew verb translated “covered” is **נִסַּחַת**. This “covering” can be defined in any of three ways: “residing upon,” “running over,” or “falling upon.” The distinctions among these definitions are important. **נִסַּחַת** can be interpreted to mean that more than twenty feet of water stood, that is, remained, over the high hills or mountains; or it could mean that this quantity of water either ran over them as in a flash flood or fell upon them as rainfall. The context gives no clear indication which of the three meanings to choose. Not that the choice is significant for understanding the effects of such “covering.” Any of the three scenarios would guarantee total destruction, no survivors.

Because of Hebrew’s small vocabulary, the words translated all the high mountains cover a wide range of meaning. **נִגְעָה** is used for “hill,” “hill country,” or “mountain.” It could refer to a towering peak, which requires days for skilled mountaineers to ascend, or it could mean a small hill that children climb in their playtime. Anything in between is also possible.

The Hebrew adjective **בָּשָׂרֶב** means “high,” “exalted,” “elevated,” or “lifted above.” It applies to any elevation above the plain, from a landmark hill to a Mount Ararat. Genesis 7:19 describes Noah’s inability to see anything but water, horizon to horizon, from his viewpoint on the ark’s upper deck. If the ark were floating anywhere near the middle of the vast Mesopotamian plain on water as deep as two or three hundred feet, no hills or mountains would be visible from it.

Noah would see nothing but water. The high mountain ranges surrounding the Mesopotamian valley would lie beyond Noah’s line of sight.... Those who drive through wide valleys such as California’s San Joaquin (much narrower than the Mesopotamian valley) typically cannot see from the valley’s middle the towering peaks beyond.

This interpretation that the Flood covered the essential region of the planet rather than the whole globe receives added support in Genesis 8:5:

The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month, the tops of the mountains [or hills] became visible.

The text speaks only of the region visible to Noah, not of the peaks beyond his horizon. At first, neither the raven nor the dove Noah released could fly far enough to find a landing place. A week later, when Noah sent the dove out again, it recovered a leaf from an olive tree. Olive trees do not grow at Earth’s highest elevations, and yet this tree lived. We can reasonably assume that the **נַחַת** Noah finally saw were low-lying hills or foothills.

Supporting the conclusion that Genesis 7:19 speaks only of the region visible to Noah, we have the contrast in Genesis 8 between Noah and the dove’s perspective on the receding waters of the Flood. In Genesis 8:5 the floodwaters have receded sufficiently for Noah from his perspective on the ark to see the hills and/or mountains on his horizon. A little later, in Genesis 8:9 Noah releases a dove. The text records in Genesis 8:9 that from the perspective of the dove **the waters were on the face of the whole earth**. Therefore, right in the context of the Genesis chapters describing the Flood we have a clear example

of the face of the whole earth meaning much less than the entire surface of planet Earth. (*The Genesis Question*, pp.148-150) We should also bear in mind once again that the phrase under the whole heaven may legitimately be understood to mean “under the whole horizon.” (Kevan, p.84)

The Source of the Floodwaters

Few readers seem to catch the significance of statements about the source of the floodwater. In one respect the text itself rules out the global Flood interpretation by telling us where the water came from (Genesis 7) and where it returned (Genesis 8), namely, earthly sources. The quantity of water on, in, and around our planet comes nowhere near the amount required for global inundation. According to Genesis 7:11-12, the flood waters came from the springs of the great deep and the floodgates of the heavens. ...These terms refer to subterranean reservoirs, today called aquifers, and to heavy rain clouds.

Like most desert plains, Mesopotamia has the characteristics that would favor formation of an enormous aquifer. Certain well-timed geologic events could bring all that water to the surface. And while rain as we know it virtually never falls in Mesopotamia, an “act of God” could certainly bring it to the region and sustain the 40-day torrent that Genesis records.

To describe the receding of the flood waters, the writer employs four different Hebrew words: חָסַר, שׁוֹב, שְׁכַךְ and נִלְאַת, which mean, respectively, “subsided or abated” [the waters abated, Genesis 8:1]; “returned to its original place or condition” [the waters returned, Genesis 8:3]; “diminished or lessened” [the waters diminished, Genesis 8:3]; and “lowered or flowed away” [the waters departed, or, flowed away, Genesis 8:5]. These verbs indicate that the floodwaters returned to the places from which they came, the aquifers and the clouds. Apparently, the flood waters remain on Earth to this day. God moved the water from one location on Earth to another and later returned it. To cover Mount Everest (elevation 29,029 feet, or 8,848 meters) with water would require four and a half times the total water resources of the entire planet. Furthermore, such flooding would be pointless if no one inhabited that region. (*The Genesis Question*, pp.151-152)

The Removal of the Flood waters

Genesis 8:1 describes how God removed the floodwaters from the land: He sent a wind. This removal technique perfectly suits the requirements of water removal from a gigantic flat plain such as Mesopotamia. Water even tens of feet deep would flow very inefficiently toward the ocean, but a wind would significantly speed up its movement. Wind also speeds natural evaporation. Thus, wind would prove an effective means for removing water from an expansive, low-lying plain. It would prove of little if any use, however, in removing the waters of a global Flood. Such a quantity of water could not possibly recede to any location on or around the planet by the means described in just eleven months. A Flood universal to all of humanity inhabiting one geographical region certainly could, especially with a supernatural assist. (*The Genesis Question*, pp.150-151)

The Ark's Resting Place

...nearly everyone...asserts that the ark came to rest on Mount Ararat. Given Ararat's elevation, 16,946 feet (5,165 meters) above sea level, no wonder people are convinced that the Bible teaches a global Flood.

This pervasive misconception about the ark's resting place may arise...merely from a careless reading of the text. Genesis 8:4 reports that the ark came to rest on the **mountains** (plural) of Ararat, not on Mount Ararat. The distinction makes a huge interpretive difference. The entire Ararat range, actually a complex of ranges, extends from the vicinity north and east of Mount Ararat all the way down to the foothills skirting the Mesopotamian plain. It covers more than 100,000 square miles (250,000 square kilometers).

Noah's ark could have come to rest anywhere within this enormous region. Genesis 8:4 does not require a global Flood interpretation. (*The Genesis Question*, p.151)

The Purpose of the Flood

Judgment upon Sinful Mankind

The Genesis account makes clear that the purpose of the Flood was the judgment and destruction of sinful mankind:

And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every conception of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶And Jehovah felt remorse that he had made man on the earth, and it brought grief to his heart. ⁷And Jehovah said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the ground; both man and beast, as well as creeping things, and *the birds of the heavens*; for I regret that I have made them. (Genesis 6:5-7)

Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God looked upon the earth, and, indeed, it was corrupt; for all mankind had corrupted their way upon the earth. ¹³Then God said to Noah, I have determined to bring all mankind to an end, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; surely, I will destroy them *together* with the earth. (Genesis 6:11-13)

Was the flood universal in the geographical sense of covering every square mile of the earth's surface? Or was it universal only in the sense of including everybody within it? In favor of this latter alternative it may be remarked that, viewing the subject from the standpoint of human sin and divine judgment, so long as the flood was universal in the sense of blotting out the race of man, its geographical universality was not essential. (Kevan, p.84)

The Extent of God's Judgment

Besides the account of the Genesis Flood, Scripture gives us several other instances of what may be designated as God's ultimate judgment visited upon sinful men. One such passage is Deuteronomy 11:6, a passage that recounts God's judgment upon Dathan and Abiram.

... what he did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben; how the earth opened its mouth in the midst of all Israel and swallowed them up, *together with*

**their households, and their tents, and every living thing
that belonged to them. (Deuteronomy 11:6)**

Another instance of such judgment is found in the Book of Jeremiah, a prophecy of God's impending judgment upon the nation of Israel because of its apostasy.

Therefore this is what the Lord Jehovah says: Behold, my anger and my wrath shall be poured out on this place, on man and beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn and shall not be quenched. (Jeremiah 7:20)

How long shall the land lie parched, and the grass of the whole country be withered? Because of the wickedness of those who live there, the beasts and the birds have perished. ... (Jeremiah 12:4)

What do we learn from these accounts? We learn that when God visits sinful man with the ultimate form of His judgment, that judgment befalls the men (or nation) that are the object of His righteous wrath, together with all of their possessions, their lands, and even the animal life that inhabits their land—but that judgment does not extend beyond those people and their environs.

How does this apply to the Genesis Flood? Being that it was God's purpose to bring His ultimate judgment upon the whole race of sinful mankind of that day, that judgment would accomplish its purpose if it eradicated all of mankind and all of his environs—but it need not extend beyond the environs inhabited by the sinful human race of that day.

The account of the flood is told in terms of universality. This does not necessarily mean that the flood covered the entire face of the globe. Rather, it was universal in that it destroyed all flesh. If the habitations of mankind were limited to the Euphrates valley, it is quite possible that the flood was also limited. (Young, p.55)

...if human beings had spread as far as Antarctica, the Flood would cover Antarctica, destroying the Emperor penguins along with the people, except those Emperor penguins and

people aboard the ark. If no people lived in Antarctica, God would have no reason to destroy the place or its penguins. Nor would Noah be required to take a pair of Emperor penguins aboard the ark.

The extend of the Genesis Flood, according to the principle laid out in Scripture, would be determined by the spread of human habitation. If, for example, humanity had spread throughout Africa, Asia, and Europe, only Africa, Asia, and Europe would be destroyed by the Flood. If only Mesopotamia had been settled, only Mesopotamia would be flooded. Such a geographically limited Flood would still be “universal” or “worldwide,” given that people, not the globe, defined “world” among the ancients. Any flood that exterminates all human beings, all the soulish animals with whom they have contact, and all their material possessions—except those on board Noah’s ark—would be universal and would achieve God’s purpose in pouring out judgment. (*The Genesis Question*, p.144)

Biblical clues to the geographical limits on human habitation can be found in the place-names Genesis mentions or does not mention. In Genesis 1-9 the text mentions place-names only in the environs of Mesopotamia. From Genesis 10 onward, we encounter references (by name or direction) to places beyond Mesopotamia, in fact, to places covering much of the Eastern hemisphere.

This sudden shift from narrow to wider geographical range after Genesis 10 strongly suggests that until the time of the Flood, human beings and their animals remained in and around Mesopotamia. Therefore, to fulfill the purpose in sending the deluge, God would need to flood only the Mesopotamian plain and perhaps some adjacent territories. (*The Genesis Question*, p.148)

The Ark and Its Passengers

Why an Ark?

Consideration of the Flood’s geographically limited (though universal with respect to people and their animals) destruction may cause us to wonder why God did not deal with Noah’s

situation as He did with Lot's later—rescue by evacuation. God could have instructed Noah to pack up and depart to a region far away where Noah and those with him would be out of harm's way.

Two reasons stand out... First, when God pours out judgment, He gives ample warning ahead of time. He sends a spokesperson, a prophet, and gives that prophet some kind of platform, pulpit, or focal point from which to be heard. For the antediluvians, Noah was that prophet and the scaffolding around the ark was his platform.

The efforts of a middle-aged (or slightly older) man, a distinguished patriarch, to build an enormous vessel in the middle of a desert plain that receives scant rainfall certainly would have commanded attention. Noah's persistent devotion to this immensely challenging project for one hundred years would have heightened the drama. As crowds gathered to jeer, not cheer, Noah patiently preached. He warned his listeners of impending doom if they failed to repent. He freely offered passage to anyone who would heed his warning and call upon God for mercy. Perhaps one reason for the enormous size of the ship was to demonstrate the sincerity of this offer.

The New Testament confirms that Noah gave time to being a **preacher of righteousness** (2 Peter 2:5). Noah **condemned the world**, not so much with words as by the example of his faith as he, like God, **waited patiently**. He could have built the ark much faster if he had spent less time preaching, but the magnitude of the impending disaster compelled him to give more than ample warning to his contemporaries.

Lot's circumstances contrast with Noah's in several ways. Lot was not a native to Sodom. He moved there as an adult and served for some time as a leader, or "judge," in the city-state. Thus, Lot had a ready platform from which to preach. Sodom was small by comparison with Mesopotamia, and its population tiny by comparison with the whole of humanity. One short trip would remove Lot and his family from danger and from an area nonessential to humanity's survival.... (*The Genesis Question*, p.164)

Building the Ark

Noah did not build a ship in the proper sense: it was a kind of a covered raft intended to drift steadily. It was constructed of cypress (gopher) wood and sealed with bitumen, one of the natural products of Assyria. Taking the cubit at eighteen inches, the vessel was 450 feet long and 75 feet wide. It was built with three floors and was constructed to a height of 45 feet. The *window* referred to in Genesis 6:16 is called a **נָחָת**, meaning a “light,”.... So far as it is possible to understand the construction, the **נָחָת** appears to have been an open space for a depth of 18 inches that ran round the top of the ark to let in light and air. (Kevan, p.83)

Some skepticism about Noah’s ability to construct the ark comes from the observation that until the late nineteenth century A. D., no nation had ever built such a huge vessel. No nation to this day has succeeded in constructing one from wood. The largest wooden vessels ever assembled were the clipper ships of the last century, a little more than three hundred feet long. When New England shipyards attempted to build longer vessels, they discovered they could not make them seaworthy. Their oak beams lacked the necessary tensile strength. How could Noah’s engineering capability and resources outstrip those of modern shipbuilding professionals?

Again we must look more closely at contextual details. First, Noah’s ark was not intended for sailing on the high seas. Rather, it had to be able to float on a flooded plain. The engineering requirements for a barge-type vessel differ significantly from those of a three-masted schooner. Second, Noah faced none of the economic constraints pressuring nineteenth-century shipbuilders, whose goal was to transport (across treacherous oceans) as much cargo weight for as few dollars as possible. They did not push their oak shipbuilding designs very far, for they soon discovered that for very large vessels, steel offered greater economy than oak. Unlike the New England shipbuilders, Noah could consider options other than oak and weight of materials.

According to the Genesis text, Noah used “gopher” wood to build the ark. This type of wood we cannot identify with any certainty. We do not even know all the different kinds of trees

that might have grown along the banks of Mesopotamian rivers and in the adjacent territories and mountains. We do know that hardwoods such as walnut are much stronger than oak. Some tropical timbers are denser than water with tensile strengths matching that of some metals. Woods like these would have been more plentiful, we can surmise, in the era before construction of huge buildings and palaces. Therefore, access to timbers of the necessary strength probably presented no major problem for Noah.

Both Old and New Testament passages indicate that Noah held considerable stature in his community. From these hints we can surmise that his personnel resources were abundant, certainly adequate (of course, with God's help), to complete the construction project. And possibly, Noah may have employed many more people than just his family members to assist in the building. We can easily imagine the opportunity this large workforce would provide for attracting larger crowds to hear Noah's message.

Whether he used a large building crew or not, workers were available for Noah's use, as were all the necessary materials from hard woods to a natural sealant to keep out the water. No insurmountable obstacles stood in Noah's way for successful construction of an ark of the dimensions the text delineates....
(The Genesis Question, pp.165-166)

The Ark's Cargo

Recognizing that many more birds and mammal species existed in Noah's day than exist today and that the ranges of these species were broad, we must conclude that the ark housed at least many hundreds of species, conceivably as many as several thousand. Noah was commanded by God to make provision not only for housing this zoo but also for feeding them—not just during the Flood but until post-Flood lands began producing sufficient food for them. The same went for his own family, as well. In other words, he needed to pack an eighteen-to-twenty-month food supply. Thus, the weight of food and fodder must have exceeded by several times the weight of the animals and people.

In addition, Noah's family would need to store all the supplies and tools to rebuild their homes and farms. The availability of wood might not be problematic, given the lumber in the ark itself and the olive leaf retrieved by the dove (signifying the proximity of trees). Nevertheless, the rebuilders would need tools and simple machines, ropes, precut stones, timbers, and pegs, plus materials for clothing, cooking, and sleeping.

If the ark's dimensions are converted from short cubits to feet, the ark measured 450 feet long by 75 feet wide by 45 feet high (140 by 23 by 13.5 meters). A vessel of these dimensions could easily accommodate the three decks God told Noah to build. Constructed in this way, it would offer generous cargo space, roomy pens or stalls for the animals, and adequate quarters for the human passengers. Food could be sorted and stored close to animals, fertilizer could be stored for future agricultural use, and still the ark would allow room for exercising the animals and for human recreation. At the same time, the ark would be small enough that eight people could tend to their chores without walking their legs off...

Given their hundred-year building, planning, and preparation time, Noah and his family could have adapted and installed many labor-saving devices. Dumb waiters, carts, chutes, rails, and simple plumbing could have greatly streamlined their efforts. In the course of using and modifying such things, Noah's family may have been planning and preparing for their days back on land, building better homes, farms, and industries. (*The Genesis Question*, pp.168-169)

Noah's Future

In addition to building the ark and preaching repentance, Noah's job included caring for a pair (male and female) of every bird and mammal species living in the region where human beings lived. He did not have to go out to find them and bring them in, however; God apparently intervened in some way to send the birds and animals to him. The reason for sheltering these animals probably had more to do with economics than with ecology. Few of the creatures on board would have had a habitat range as limited as the humans. Therefore, few of them faced imminent extinction from the Flood. We see that God commanded Noah to take on board

seven pairs of those birds and mammal species domesticated for agricultural and economic purposes, creatures also used as sacrificial worship.

God could have made life simpler for Noah in the short run by making him wait for birds and mammals to return to Mesopotamia. Instead, he helped Noah take a stock of birds and mammals, more of some than of others, that would allow him and his family to restore rapidly their economy, culture, and worship. (*The Genesis Question*, p.168)

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