

Was there really a Noah's Ark and Flood?

by Ken Ham, AiG-USA President

The account of Noah and the Ark is one of the most widely known events in the history of mankind. Unfortunately, like other Bible accounts, it is often taken as a mere fairy tale.

The Bible, though, is the true history book of the universe. In that light, the most-asked questions about the Ark and Flood of Noah can be answered with authority and confidence.



How large was Noah's Ark?

The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. (Genesis 6:15)

Unlike many whimsical drawings that depict the Ark as some kind of overgrown houseboat (with giraffes sticking out the top, for example), the Ark as described in the Bible was a gigantic vessel. Not until relatively recent times (in the late 1800s) was a ship built that exceeded the capacity of Noah's Ark.

The dimensions of the Ark are still impressive today, even when compared to many modern ocean-going ships: about 450 feet long, about



This "breakaway" scale-model of the Ark is displayed at AiG's future Creation Museum near Cincinnati, Ohio (open 2007).

75 feet wide and 45 feet high.¹ When you multiply these three figures together, you get a better idea of the gigantic capacity of this great ship: about 1.5 million cubic feet!

Modern container ships are loaded with standardized steel boxes that measure eight feet high by eight feet wide by 40 feet long. Noah's Ark could have been loaded with over 500 such containers.

How could Noah fit all the animals on the Ark?

In the book *Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study*, author John Woodmorappe suggests that, at most, 16,000 animals were all that were needed to preserve the created kinds that God brought into the Ark.

And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. (Genesis 6:19)

The Ark did not need to carry *every* kind of animal ... nor did God command it. It carried only air-breathing, land-dwelling animals, creeping things and birds. Aquatic life (fish,

whales, clams, etc.), insects and many amphibious creatures could have survived in sufficient numbers outside the Ark. This cuts down significantly on the total number of animals that needed to be on board.

Another factor which greatly reduces the space requirements is this: the tremendous variety in species we see today did not exist in the days of Noah. Only the parent “kinds” of these species were required to be on board in order to repopulate the earth.² For example, only two dogs were needed to give rise to all the dog species that exist today.

Creationist estimates for the minimum number of animals that would have been necessary to come on board the Ark have ranged from 16,000 to 35,000.

How could Noah build the Ark?

The Bible does not tell us that Noah and his sons built the Ark by themselves, and Noah could have hired skilled laborers. However, there is no reason to believe that they could not—or that they did not—build the Ark between themselves in just a few years.

The physical strength and mental processes of men in Noah's day was at least as great (quite likely, even superior) to our own. They certainly would have had efficient means for harvesting and cutting timber, as well as for shaping, transporting and erecting the massive beams and boards required.

If one or two men today can erect a large house in just 12 weeks, how much more could three or four men do in a few years? Adam's descendants were making complex musical instruments, forging metal and building cities—their tools, machines and techniques were not inferior to the ones we use today.³

It is evident from examining the “mysteries” of earlier civilizations that the human race has likely *lost* just as much (maybe even more) knowledge from before the Flood as it has gained since that time. The idea that ancient generations were more primitive than ours is an *evolutionary* concept.

In reality, when God created Adam, he was perfect. Today, the human intellect has suffered from 6,000 years of sin and decay—though computers (a tool designed and built in the last 60 years) are compensating a great deal for our

natural decline in mental processing power, permitting us to gather and store information as perhaps never before.

How could Noah fit the dinosaurs on board?

Most dinosaurs were not very large at all—some were the size of a chicken (although absolutely no relation to birds at all, as most evolutionists are now saying)! Most scientists agree that the average size of a dinosaur is actually the size of a sheep. All dinosaurs, of course, were relatively small at one time: when they were young.



Even a T. rex (this model above will be on display with many other dinosaurs, including animatronic ones, in the Creation Museum, open in 2007) was on the Ark, although not fully grown.

For example, God most likely brought Noah two young adult sauropods (*Apatosaurs*, for example), rather than two full-grown sauropods. The same goes for elephants, giraffes and other animals that grow to be very large. However, there was adequate room for most fully grown adult animals anyway.

As far as the number of different types of dinosaurs, it should be recognized that although there are hundreds of names for different varieties (species) of dinosaurs that have been “discovered,” there are probably about 50 actual different kinds.

How could Noah round up so many animals?

Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort *shall come* unto thee, to keep them alive. (Genesis 6:20)

This verse tells us that Noah didn't have to search for the animals, or travel to far away places to bring them on board. And on the basis of Genesis 1, most creationists believe there was only one continent before the Flood. The animals simply arrived at the Ark, as if called by a

“homing instinct” (a behavior implanted in the animals by their Creator) and marched up the ramp, all by themselves!

Though this is a supernatural event (one that cannot be explained by our understanding of nature), it is certainly within God’s ability. Even today, we are far from understanding all of the marvelous animal behaviors exhibited in God’s creation: the migration of Canada geese and other birds, the amazing flights of Monarch butterflies, the annual travels of whales and fish, hibernation instincts, earthquake sensitivity—and countless other fascinating capabilities of God’s animal kingdom.

Were dinosaurs extinct before the Flood, some 4,500 years ago?

The story of God’s Creation (told in Genesis chapters 1 and 2) tells us that *all* of the land-dwelling creatures were made on day six of creation week, the same day that God made Adam and Eve. Therefore it is clear that dinosaurs (being land animals) were made with man.

Also, two of every kind (seven of some) of land animal boarded the Ark. There is no reason

to believe any of the land animal kinds were already extinct before the Flood. Besides, the description of “behemoth” in the book of Job (chapter 40) only fits with something like a sauropod dinosaur. The ancestor of “behemoth” must have been on board the Ark.⁴

How did Noah care for all the animals?

Just as God brought the animals to Noah by supernatural means, He surely also prepared them for this amazing event. Scientists who believe in creation suggest that God gave the animals the ability to hibernate, as we see in many species today. Most animals react to natural disasters in ways that were designed to help them survive. It's very possible many animals



did hibernate, perhaps even supernaturally intensified by God.

Were we able to walk through the Ark as it was being built, we would undoubtedly be amazed at the ingenious systems on board for water and food storage and distribution. As Woodmorappe explains in his book, *Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study*, a small group of farmers today can raise thousands of cattle and other animals in a very small space. One can easily imagine all kinds of devices on the Ark that would have enabled a small number of people to feed and care for the animals, from watering to waste removal.

As Woodmorappe points out, no special devices were needed for eight people to care for 16,000 animals. But if they existed, how would these devices be powered? There are all sorts of possibilities. How about by gravity? Wind? And the motions of the Ark? Who knows what technology Noah had available to him.

How could a flood destroy every living thing?

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: All in whose nos-

trils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. (Genesis 7:21-22)

Noah's Flood was much more destructive than any 40-day rainstorm ever could be. Scripture says that the "fountains of the great deep" were broken open. In other words, earthquakes, volcanoes and geysers of molten lava and scalding water were squeezed out of the earth's crust in a violent, explosive upheaval. These fountains were not stopped until 150 days into the Flood—so the earth was literally churning underneath the waters for about five months!

Relatively recent local floods, volcanoes and earthquakes recorded by humans in more recent centuries—though clearly devastating to life and land—are tiny in comparison to the worldwide catastrophe that destroyed God's original perfect earth. All land animals (and people) not on board the Ark were destroyed in the Flood waters—billions of which were preserved in the great fossil (Flood) record we see today.

Where did all the water come from?

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the

fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. (Genesis 7:11-12)

The Bible tells us that water came from two sources: below the earth and above the earth. Evidently, the source for water below the ground was in great subterranean pools, or “fountains,” of fresh water, which were broken open by volcanic and seismic (earthquake) activity. These fountains perhaps supplied water for the rivers in the Garden of Eden, as well as the rest of the earth before the Flood.

Where did all the water go?

As even secular geologists observe, it does appear that the continents were at one time “together”



and not separated by the vast oceans of today. The forces involved in the Flood were certainly sufficient to change all of this. Scripture indicates that God formed the ocean basins, raising the land out of the water, so that the Flood waters returned to a safe place. (Some theologians believe Psalm 104 may refer to this event.) Some creationist scientists believe this break-up of the continent was part of the mechanism that ultimately caused the Flood.

Was Noah's Flood global?

Many Christians today claim that the Flood of Noah's time was only a *local* flood. These people generally want a local flood because they have accepted the widely believed evolutionary history of the earth, which interprets the fossils



under our feet as the history of the sequential appearance of life over millions of years.

Scientists once understood the fossils (which are buried in water-carried sediments of mud and sand) to be mostly the result of the great Flood. Those who now accept the evolutionary millions of years of gradual accumulation of fossils have, in their way of thinking, explained away the evidence for the global Flood. Hence, many compromising Christians insist on a local flood. Secularists deny the possibility of worldwide Flood at all. If they would think from a biblical perspective, however, they would see the abundant evidence for the Flood. As someone once quipped, “I wouldn’t have seen it if I hadn’t believed it.”

Those who accept the evolutionary time frame⁵ with its fossil accumulation also rob the Fall of Adam of its serious consequences. They put the fossils, which testify of disease, suffering and death, *before* Adam and Eve sinned and brought death and suffering into the world. In doing this, they also undermine the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ. Such a scenario also robs God’s description of His finished creation as “very good” of all meaning.

If the Flood were local, why did Noah have to build an Ark? He could have walked to the other side of the mountains and escaped!

Most important, if the Flood were local, people who did not happen to be living in the vicinity would not have been affected by it. They would have escaped God's judgment on sin.

In addition, Jesus believed that the Flood killed every person not on the Ark (Matthew 24:37-39). And what did Christ mean when He likened the coming world judgment to the judgment of "all" men (Matt. 24:37-39) in the days of Noah?

In 2 Peter 3, the coming judgment by fire is



The size of the Ark makes sense only if the Flood were global.

likened to the former judgment by water in Noah's Flood. A partial judgment in Noah's day, therefore, would mean a partial judgment to come.

If the Flood were only local, how could the waters rise to 20 feet *above* the mountains (Gen. 7:20)? Water seeks its own level. It could not rise to cover the local mountains while leaving the rest of the world untouched.⁶

There's more. If the Flood were local, God would have repeatedly broken His promise never to send such a Flood again (God put a rainbow in the sky as a covenant between God and man and the animals that He would never repeat such an event). There have been huge "local" floods in recent times (in Bangladesh, for example)—but never another global Flood that killed all life on the land.

Where is the evidence in the earth for Noah's Flood?

For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water. (2 Peter 3:5)

All over the earth, there is evidence of Noah's Flood, from sea bed to mountain top. Whether you travel by car, train or plane, the physical features of the earth's terrain clearly indicate a catastrophic past, from canyons and craters to coal beds and caverns.

Approximately 75% of the earth's crust is sedimentary rock. These layers of sand, soil and material—mostly laid down by water—were once soft like mud, but now hardened like stone. Buried in these sedimentary layers are billions of dead things (fossils of plants and animals) buried very, very quickly. The evidence all over the earth is staring everyone in the face!



A local flood is illogical.

Where is Noah's Ark today?

And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. (Genesis 8:4)

The Ark landed on the mountains (the Bible does not specify which actual mountain) in the region of Mt. Ararat in modern-day Turkey. Many expeditions have searched for the Ark there. There is no conclusive evidence of the Ark's location or survival—after all, it landed on the mountains about 4,500 years ago, and could easily have deteriorated or been destroyed.

Some scientists and Bible scholars, though, believe the Ark could indeed be preserved—perhaps to be providentially revealed at a future time as a reminder of the past judgment, and the judgment to come.

Why did God destroy the earth that He had made?

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Genesis 6:5)

This verse speaks for itself. Every human being

on the face of the earth, except Noah, his sons and their wives, refused to turn away from sin, violence and corruption. The result was God's judgment. As harsh as the destruction was, no living person was without excuse.

God also used the Flood to separate and to purify those who believed in Him from those who didn't. Throughout history, and throughout the Bible, this cycle has taken place time after time. Separation and purification. Judgment and redemption.

Without God—and without a true knowledge and understanding of Scripture, which provides the true history of the world—man is doomed to repeat the same mistakes over and over again.

How is Christ like the Ark?

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. (Matthew 18:11)

As God's Son, The Lord Jesus Christ is like the Ark—He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Just as Noah and his family were saved by the Ark, rescued by God from the Flood waters below, so anyone who believes in Jesus as Lord and Savior will be spared from the coming

final judgment of mankind, rescued by God from the fire that will destroy the earth after the Last Days.

Noah and his family had to go through a doorway into the Ark to be saved. So we too have to go through a “doorway” to be saved so we won’t be eternally separated from God. The Son of God, Jesus, stepped into history to pay the penalty for our sin of rebellion. Jesus said: “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:9).

HERE’S THE GOOD NEWS

Answers in Genesis seeks to give glory and honor to God as Creator, and to affirm the truth of the biblical record of the real origin and history of the world and mankind.

Part of this real history is the bad news that the rebellion of the first man, Adam, against God’s command brought death, suffering and separation from God into this world. We see the results all around us. All of Adam’s descendants are sinful from conception (Psalm 51:5) and have themselves entered into this rebellion (sin). They therefore cannot live with a holy God, but

are condemned to separation from God. The Bible says that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and that all are therefore subject to “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

But the good news is that God has done something about it. “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Jesus Christ the Creator, though totally sinless, suffered, on behalf of mankind, the penalty of mankind’s sin, which is death and separation from God. He did this to satisfy the righteous demands of the holiness and justice of God, His Father. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice; He died on a cross, but on the third day, He rose again, conquering death, so that all who truly believe in Him, repent of their sin and trust in Him (rather than their own merit), are able to come back to God and live for eternity with their Creator.

Therefore: “He who believes on Him is not condemned, but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed

in the name of the only-begotten Son of God” (John 3:18).

What a wonderful Savior—and what a wonderful salvation in Christ our Creator!

(If you want to know more of what the Bible says about how *you* can receive eternal life, please write or call the *Answers in Genesis* office nearest you—see inside front cover.)



¹The generally accepted measure of a cubit is about 18 inches.

²Here's one example: more than 200 species of dogs exist today, from the miniature poodle to the St. Bernard—all of which have descended from one original dog “kind.” All other types of animals—cat kind, horse kind, cow kind, etc.—have similarly been naturally and selectively bred to achieve the wonderful variation in species that we have today.

God “programmed” this variety into the genetic code of all animal kinds—even human kind! God also made it impossible for the basic “kinds” of animals to breed and reproduce with each other. For example, cats and dogs cannot breed to make a new type of creature. This is by God’s design, and it is one fact that makes evolution impossible.

³For the evidence, see *The Puzzle of Ancient Man* by Dr. Donald Chittick.

⁴For some remarkable evidence that dinosaurs have lived until relatively recent times, read “The Great Dinosaur Mystery Solved” or find some fascinating articles on the discovery of soft tissue and blood vessels found in a *T. rex* bone—wonderful evidence to show that this creature was probably alive in recent times—when you go to www.AnswersInGenesis.org

⁵For compelling evidence that the earth is not billions of years old, read *The Young Earth* by Dr. John Morris.

⁶Mount Everest is more than 5 miles high. How, then, could the Flood have covered “all the high hills under the whole heaven?” The Bible refers only to “high hills,” and the mountains today were formed only towards the end of, and after, the Flood by collision of the tectonic plates and the associated up-thrusting. In support of this, the layers that form the uppermost parts of Mount Everest are themselves composed of fossil-bearing, water-deposited layers.

Many portions of this booklet were excerpted from a pamphlet no longer in print co-authored by Ken Ham and Mark Dinsmore. Some other sections come from *The Answers Book* (see right).

The fascinating topic of Noah's Ark and the Flood are major themes of AiG's Creation Museum, to open in 2007 in Northern Kentucky (and near the Cincinnati Airport). Find out more at www.AnswersInGenesis.org



Many of the questions answered in this booklet will be treated in-depth in AiG's Creation Museum near Cincinnati.