



Resetting CREATION Through the FLOOD

BY RICH ROBSON



The Genesis flood narrative raises several questions, particularly from a modern scientific perspective, such as the universal nature of the flood, the logistics of animal transport to the ark, and the behavior of the animals. Critics often dismiss the biblical account as a fairy tale due to these queries, missing the primary theological intent of the text. The original audience in the Ancient Near East focused on understanding humanity's wrongdoing that led to the flood and God's purpose in sending it. The flood was a consequence of human moral failure, and God's intention was to renew creation, providing a fresh start for humanity to live in relationship with Him. The post-flood narrative mirrors God's original creation, culminating in His promise never to destroy the earth by water again, highlighting His desire for reconciliation and life.



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There are many questions people ask about the Genesis flood. Was it universal or local? Where did the water go after the flood? How could all the animals have fit on the ark along with all the food they would need? How did Noah get panda bears from China and giraffes from Africa? Why didn't the tigers eat the other animals? These and many other questions like them are fodder for Bible naysayers. For example, Genesis 6:19 says, "bring two of every living creature into the ark," which they assume would have included giraffes. After all, most storybook pictures of the ark depict two giraffes towering above all the other animals. But they know very well that Noah could not have gone to Africa to get the giraffes. That's all they need to render the account as nothing more than a fairy tale, concluding that it'd be a waste of time to continue reading the Bible. Looking at it from their point of view, such a conclusion would appear justified.

But are those even the right questions to ask? No; they are not the right questions to ask. They all arise from a modern scientific Western mindset. But the Bible is an Ancient Near East document. It is not a science book and therefore offers no answers to those questions. It does not address the issue of whether Noah did or did not go to Africa for giraffes or China for Pandas. It offers no explanation as to why the tigers wouldn't have eaten the other animals. The Bible is a theology book. It explains how to live in the right relationship with God. That is what the original audience, the people to whom God actually spoke, would have cared about. The people of the Ancient Near East, including the Jews, had concerns about life that were vastly different from those of the modern West. The primary things they would have gleaned from the flood account was what the people did that caused God to send the flood, as well as what God meant to accomplish by sending it. Those are the questions which the flood account addresses, and it does so in an amazing way for those with eyes to see.

What the people did to cause God to send the flood is rather obvious. Genesis 6:5 says that every thought was only evil continually. They never got anything right when it came to ensuring a just and equitable society. Everything they did only caused further damage to God's perfect creation. Ignoring God's wisdom, they were hell-bent on determining for themselves what was good and what was evil. They thought they could decide what was functional and what was dysfunctional, what would and what would not work to ensure a just and equitable society. God could have let things continue as they were, but that would mean injustice, oppression, greed, violence, sexual perversions, and other such unsavory things would not only continue, but grow at an ever-increasing rate. Life would be lost forever, and death would reign in its stead. Such a state of affairs would have made it quite impossible for God to fulfill the promise He made in Genesis 3:15 to rescue people from the disaster they themselves created.

Given the hand that was dealt to Him (God doesn't always get a royal flush), the only thing He could do was to start all over from scratch. In order to rescue mankind from the ravages of sin and death,



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He had to destroy the original creation, ruined by the actions of people, and replace it with a brand new one. Such an extreme measure was certainly not His desire, let alone His delight. Ezekiel 18:23 says that God has no pleasure in seeing even the wicked die. Verse 32 in that same chapter says the same thing. When God says something twice, it means that it is established (what is between repeated phrases is usually significant). There is no doubt that God wants all men and women to choose good over evil so that they may live and not die. But He wouldn't have forced them to turn from their evil ways. They had free will; they could make their own choices. God had nothing to do with the people burning their hands when they themselves stuck them in the fire. While true that God made the fire, He intended it to be used for cooking food, not their hands! To put it in simple terms, the people brought the flood on themselves.

That brings us to the second question the original reader of the flood account would have asked, namely, what did God intend to accomplish by sending the flood? I believe that they would have gleaned from the account that He meant to renew the ruined land He originally created in Genesis. He wanted to make it a land where people could once again live in perfect fellowship with Him. I believe those who knew the Torah would have seen the unmistakable commonalities between God's original creation activities in Genesis and those seen in the aftermath of the flood. They would have understood that despite man's depravity, God still wanted to live with them in a veritable paradise, and that He would do whatever was necessary to bring it about.

In the aftermath of the flood, the first thing God did was to restrain the waters (Gen 1:7 & 8:2) after which He caused dry land to appear (Gen 1:9 & 8:5). Next, we see the dove returning with an olive branch, the reappearance of vegetation (Gen 1:12 & 8:11). God then told Noah and his family to go into the land and to release the animals into the land so they can be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:20-26 & 8:16-17), after which God told Noah and his sons to multiply and fill the land (Gen 1:27-28 & 9:1). Finally, God provided food for them (Gen 1:29 & 9:3). I encourage you to look up these verses. I'm confident you will see the unmistakable parallels between the original creation and the renewal of the land after the flood.

However, God didn't just renew the land and call it quits. That just wasn't good enough for Him. No siree! That's just not how He rolls. He also felt compelled to make a promise that would reverberate through the ages, namely, that He would never again destroy the land by water. But, as if that weren't enough, it gets even better: Genesis 8:21 says that God made that promise to a people that He knew would be more or less just like the ones that caused the flood in the first place, to a people whose hearts imagined evil from youth.



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Genesis 8:21:

“And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for *the imagination of man's heart [is] evil from his youth*; neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.”

But that wouldn't deter God from pressing on with His plan of redeeming those people. He just loved people that much, and that was that. Case closed!

The renewal of the land after the Genesis flood was not God's end game. It was just the beginning of God showing His relentless generosity and loyalty, which was motivated solely by His deep personal care for people. Time and time again, for some 4,000 years, He persisted in demonstrating that care despite the never-ending insults He got in return. God experienced disappointment after disappointment because of the actions of those whom He so dearly loved and cared for. He pleaded with them over and over to choose life, but, with rare exceptions, they chose death instead. Nonetheless, He wouldn't give up on His plan of a new Eden, a garden of delight where He could dwell with the people He loved. That was His desire from the day He created Adam; it's never changed, and it never will change. Yahweh is the gold standard when it comes to determination.

The love story reached its zenith when He sent His only-begotten son to die on the cross in order to save us. He no more wanted to see His son suffer such a horrible death than he wanted to send the flood in Genesis. But He knew that it was the only way to redeem us from the power of darkness. Just as the corrupted land of Genesis had to be destroyed to make room for a new land, so does our flesh have to first die in order to be raised with a glorious new body.

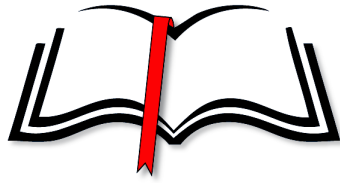
John 12:24:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it dies, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

1 Corinthians 15:36:

“[Thou] fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.”

If you are asleep when the trumpet sounds and Jesus makes his second advent in glory, God will surely raise you up from the grave with a new body, a body fashioned like unto that of the resurrected Christ Jesus. Unfortunately, as both Jesus and Paul said, we have to die in order to get resurrected. He'd rather we didn't die in the first place, but since Adam brought death to all, God had to make lemonade out of lemons. Never overstepping man's free will, God, through His infinite resourcefulness, was able to convince enough people, Noah being but one, to do what was required to accomplish His goal of a renewed Eden. Within that renewed Eden, there would be a new tree of life that will provide healing for those whom He so dearly loved.



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Revelation 22:2:

“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, [was there] the tree of life, which bare twelve [manner of] fruits, [and] yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree [were] for the healing of the nations.”

Whereas death still reigned supreme after the deluge of Noah’s time, a profound transformation is on the horizon: the sting of death will ultimately be eradicated, and life will triumphantly prevail throughout the ages. In the aftermath of the flood, though the earth was renewed, it remained populated by individuals whose hearts were still inclined to evil from their earliest days. In stark contrast, the future earth is envisioned as a place bursting with inhabitants whose hearts are filled to overflowing with the boundless love of God.

The account of the flood, as recorded by Moses, was not simply an ancient historical journey. This story serves to illuminate a path toward the ultimate realization of a renewed Eden — a place of perfect harmony and communion with Yahweh. Designed to instill hope in the hearts of believers, this narrative points toward a glorious future in which God’s presence envelops a land untainted by sorrow, devoid of tears, free from sickness, and, above all, liberated from the ultimate adversary: death itself.

When we choose to view the flood narrative through this lens, it becomes more than just a fairy tale to dismiss and close the book on; instead, it transforms into a profound invitation to delve deeper into the scriptures. This perspective encourages readers to continue exploring the Bible, seeking out the numerous other signposts scattered throughout its pages. Each of these signposts, much like the flood account, leads us toward the same magnificent conclusion: a future where God’s love reigns supreme and where life, rather than death, holds dominion over all creation. Thus, let us embark on this journey of discovery, with each page turned revealing more about the incredible promises that await us in the age to come.

