

A UNIVERSAL FLOOD?

A Meditation on Genesis 6-9

One time a little boy was attending Sunday school taught by a liberal teacher who rejected the supernatural. They came to the story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, and the teacher explained it away by saying the water was shallow when they crossed. Since the water was only about 6 inches deep when they crossed, it wasn't a miracle. The little Berean kept reading, and then raised his hand. The teacher called on him, and he said, "God drowned the entire Egyptian army in 6 inches of water, was that a miracle?"

Unbelievers don't want God intervening or interfering with their lives. Consequently, they reject the miraculous out of hand, and this certainly includes the flood, which is the ultimate example of divine interference—bringing life as the people at that time knew it to a screeching halt. The flood is an in-your-face reminder that the whole world is accountable to God, and that He has the sovereign right to judge it when ever He desires, and as He sees fit, regardless of what you or I may think or feel on the matter.

Bernard Ramm is one supposed biblical scholar who denies the universal nature of the flood. He says it was just a local flood that covered the Mesopotamian valley. He scorns the idea that land animals crossed the oceans from North America, South America and Australia to get to the ark. He also states that 6 additional miles of water on top of the existing water would have crushed most marine species. Couldn't they have simply moved upward through the water to their normal subsurface depth? He also argues that the earth as we know it has mountains 5 to 6 miles high. Therefore, to cover such mountains would require 8 times more water than we currently have. Thus, "God would have had to create that much new water, according to Ramm. Then he would have had to uncreate it after the flood in order to get the world back to normal. Moreover, the creation of that much additional water would have altered the earth's weight and disturbed the earth's orbit around the sun and the moon's orbit around the earth. Needless to say, no past effects of this nature have been detected by astronomers" (James M. Boice, *Genesis*, p. 347).

Let's address Ramm's comments by first considering what the Bible itself says. Genesis 7:19-20 says, "And the waters prevailed so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep." Moreover, everything on the earth perished: "And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind" (vs. 21; also read verses 22-23).

"As Henry Morris points out, 'Expressions involving universality of the Flood and its effects occur more than thirty times in Genesis 6-9'" (Ibid., 349).

If the flood was only local, the command to Noah to spend 120 long years of his life building an ark for all the animals is absurd. 120 years would have been plenty of time for Noah and his family to move out of that area. And that certainly would have been a lot easier than building a massive ship. God did not send Noah on a fool's errand.

We also need to question Ramm's skepticism based on God's promise. After the flood God promised never again to destroy the earth by flood waters. In fact, if the flood was only local, and only those in the flood area perished, then God has repeatedly broken His promise, since many local floods after Noah have killed many people. But the promise is, according to Genesis 8:21, "Neither will I ever again strike down *every living creature* as I have done."

Another point to consider is that Genesis 9:18-19 tells us that all the nations came from the sons of Noah. If the flood was merely local then many others nations would have developed from those people as well. But there weren't any other people to become nations and populate the earth.

Finally, Ramm's blatant rejection of God's Word is predicated on many presuppositions that science itself has disproved. Ramm assumes that the earth as we know it today was the same as in Noah's day. He assumes the continents were all separated by oceans that had to be crossed. He assumes the topographical map of the earth today is basically the same as it was in Noah's day. But the flood radically altered the earth's topography, raising mountains and lowering valleys. So that the theory of 8 times more water than we currently have being needed to cover all the mountains doesn't hold water. Let God be true and every man a liar—including the scholars.

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Website: www.foxlakechurch.org Email: wchristensen@foxlakechurch.org 847-587-1331