

FIVE BIBLICAL ARGUMENTS FOR A UNIVERSAL FLOOD

For many years now, the geographic extent of the Flood has been debated by evangelical scholars. On the one hand, there are those who argue for a geographically universal Flood (examples – Byron C. Nelson, Henry Morris, Joseph Free; this is not to imply that these all agree as the date of the Flood). Then there are others who hold for an anthropologically universal Flood which was at the same time local (as James Oliver Buswell III). Lastly, some would hold to a limited Flood, both geographically and anthropologically (like Bernard Ramm).

The weight of Scriptural evidence is heavily on the side of a deluge that not only engulfed all the inhabited earth, but also covered the entire earth. Reasoning follows.

The fact of a geographically universal Flood is seen in the purpose of the Flood – that of destroying the existing creation:

Genesis 6:5-7, 11-13 ⁵ *Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

⁶ *And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.*

⁷ *So the LORD said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ...*

¹¹ *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.*

¹² *So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.*

Genesis 7:4 *“For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made.”*

The terrible words describing the antediluvian civilization should be noted: *wickedness, evil thoughts, corruption, violence*, great and widespread sins in the earth continuous, only evil continually, open and daring before God, replete, filled and universal, *all flesh*. God’s purpose was to destroy this immoral civilization. That God accomplished His purpose is apparent from:

Genesis 8:21 *And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.*

Genesis 9:11, 15 ¹¹ *“Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”*

¹⁵ *“and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.”*

Luke 17:26-27 ²⁶ *And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷ They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.*

2 Peter 2:5 *...and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;*

Genesis 7:21-23 ²¹ *And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. ²² All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. ²³ So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive.*

There is, therefore, a tremendous weight of Biblical testimony concerning the total destruction of the human race outside the Ark. But some, while admitting this fact, would hold to a local Flood, insisting that the human race from Adam to Noah had not spread beyond the region of Mesopotamia. (Some maintain another possibility, that the antediluvians in other parts of the earth died or were driven back into Mesopotamia just in time to drown in a local Flood.) There are at least two prime proofs that the human race of Noah's time was geographically scattered.

The Longevity of the Antediluvian patriarch indicates a vast population because of the:

1. Age of the Antediluvian Patriarchs (Genesis 5)

Adam	930 years
Seth	912 years
Enoch	905 years
Kenan	910 years
Mahalalel	895 years
Jared	962 years
Enoch	365 years (translated)
Methuselah	969 years
Lamech	777 years
Noah	950 years

The spiritual message of the Bible is clear – the length of life decreased because of the entrance of sin. The scientific explanation is not so evident.

The average of these ages, omitting Enoch, is 912. Perhaps the key to such longevity lies in the canopy of water vapor (Genesis 2:5-6) surrounding the earth before the Flood, which not only provided a warm, pleasant, healthy environment, but also served as a shield against intense radiations impinging upon earth from space.

2. Large Families of Antediluvian Patriarchs (Genesis 5)

Though each has only one son named (nowhere are we told this was the first son), it is said also that each one had *sons and daughters*, (vs. 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26, 30): so that each family had at least four children, and in all probability, many more.

Observe that the age of the fathers at the birth of each of the named sons ranged from 65 (in the case of Mahalalel, v.15, and Enoch, v.21) to 500 years (Noah, v.32). Thus, we conclude that their procreative powers lasted hundreds of years.

3. Estimated Population Before the Flood – One Billion

Assuming conservatively that each family had six surviving children and that each generation from Adam to Noah required 90 years on the average, we can plot an estimate of the world population for the time of Noah. For example: Assume Adam and Eve had six children: the 3 families established here each had 6 children; the 9 families resulting from these each had 6 children, and so on. And assuming the genealogy of Genesis 5 to be strict (gaps would be in our favor), at an average age of 90 years per generation (which, too, is very high and therefore extremely conservative), one can calculate that there were some 18 generations in the 1656 years from Adam to the Flood.

Steps in Computing the Population

- Total population in the Xth generation can be calculated (on the above basis) as equal to $2(3)^X$
- Thus at the end of the 1st generation, $2(3)^1 = 6$
- Thus at the end of the 2nd generation, $2(3)^2 = 18$
- Thus at the end of the 18th generation, $2(3)^{18} = 774,000,000$

If during the 18th generation only one previous generation were alive, the total population of the earth would have been over 1,030,000,000.

4. Current Population Statistics Establish the Reliability of this Figure

1850 World population was about 1 billion. (1850 was the first year in which there was any really accurate estimate of world population.)

1930 World population was about 2 billion.

1965 World population was about 3½ billion

The present rate world population increase is approximately 2% per year; but the rate of growth we have supposed for the antediluvian period is less than 1.5% per year.

5. CONCLUSION: One billion people is a very conservative estimate of the world population in the days of Noah. A population of this magnitude would certainly have spread far beyond the plains of Mesopotamia; indeed, they could well have *filled the earth* as God had commanded in Genesis 1:28.