

Criticisms of the Flood Record

(by Bob Pulliam)

Is the record of the flood in Genesis a credible record, based on the facts it offers and reality? Some would say no. They look at that record and feel they find reason not to believe it. For example, can we reconcile the idea of all these animals being taken on board, and everyone surviving for one year? Could the waters have receded before Noah left the ark, or is too little time given?

We need to give some consideration to these criticisms. One criticism that has already been discussed is "Where did all the water go after the flood?" You will find the answer to that question in Mechanisms of the Flood.

Ability to Carry All Those Animals...

How do you get two of everything (seven of some) on earth into a boat, and keep all alive for one year? The Bible says:

"And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive." (Gen 6:19f)

Chapter seven tells us that there were to be seven of every clean animal, and two of the unclean. This would be quite a load of animals! It is easy to answer that God took care of these matters with a miracle or two; but it actually is not necessary. God gave Noah specifications for a vessel that would accomplish His aim without a grand miracle or two. After all, God could have shrunk all the animals and put Noah in a dinghy. But God gave Noah suitable directions to carry out His design!

Many people do not realize just how immense the Ark actually was. The average size of the cubit in ancient times was 18 inches. Let's use 17 ½ inches instead. The Ark was 300 x 50 x 30 cubits. This gave the ark a capacity of 1,396,000 cubic feet (we are assuming that Noah did not streamline the sides, since it only had to float, not sail). This is equal to 522 standard railroad stock cars. Based on modern taxonomy, the number of animals necessary to carry on the ark would be 35,000. Remember that many creatures are water dwelling creatures, and would not need to be in the ark. These would include: fish, clams, whales, seals, lobsters, etc... Also consider that Noah did not necessarily take adult specimens. Averaging the sizes of all creatures would yield a size comparable to that of a sheep. 240 sheep will fit in a double decked stock car. 35,000 animals would fit in 146 railroad cars, out of the 522 the ark could carry. This would leave 376 more box cars of living and storage space.

Incidentally, you might also consider the proportions of the Ark:

"And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits." (Gen 6:15)

Was it sea worthy?... The Danish barges, called *Fleutens* were actually modeled after the arks dimensions. They are not only sea-worthy, but nearly impossible to capsize. Modern day ships have an average height to width ratio comparable to the Ark.

Ability to Care for the Cargo...

How were eight people able to care for 35,000 creatures? They had to feed and water. They had to clean away the wastes. Either task being impossible alone, without having to do the rest. All eight of the people on the Ark could have worked around the clock every day of the week and still not accomplished this task! Did God work another miracle here? It is not necessary to assume He did. At the same time, we assume too much when we assume that they had to care for *all* of the animals on this voyage. A majority of the animal kingdom has the ability to hibernate when conditions dictate. Under such conditions, Noah and his family would have had little to do in caring for the animals. Could the sudden events of the deluge have caused most of these animals to have gone into hibernation? Things were definitely changing. The atmospheric pressure was dropping continually as the vapor canopy condensed and fell in the form of rain (see [Mechanics of the Flood](#)). It is not unlikely that the temperature was dropping as well. Yes, it is quite possible...

It is evident that the Bible account of an ark carrying eight humans, and the animals necessary to repopulate the earth, is within the realm of distinct possibility!...

Sequence of Flood Events...

Another criticism raised is the sequence of event outlined in the book of Genesis. Some have charged that the Bible presents the waters as receding too fast. Others would tell us that the olive tree would not have had time to have sprouted. And then, would there have been adequate time for building the ark and stocking it? The Bible says:

"that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. And the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.'" (Gen 6:2f)

How many men Noah may have hired for this task, we do not know, but he had ample time to carry it out! He had 120 years! Would forty days and nights of rain have been sufficient to produce such a flood? There would have been adequate time for the waters to cover the mountains, given the mechanisms discussed in our last lesson (see [Mechanics of the Flood](#)). The amount of time that the waters remained *without decreasing* would further verify a source of waters "above the firmament". The amount of time given for the abating of the waters would be adequate for an olive branch to sprout. The further amount of time would have been natural before Noah disembarked.

Note the time given for events:

40 days - Flood reached maximum height.
150 days - Waters began to decrease (+0)
224 days - Tops of mountains visible (+74)
278 days - Dove returns w/ leaf (+128)[4.2 mo]
371 days - Noah leaves ark (+221)[7.4 mo]

This presents an oft pondered question?... How did all of the plant life survive. It is not pondered by anyone who has done very much work with plants. Propagation of the various kinds would have easily been accomplished by seeds, and natural "cuttings".

"Cuttings are therefore almost universally used for olive tree propagation. These may be of branches several inches in diameter and five to six feet long, planted in the ground where the tree is to remain, or of shorter and smaller pieces planted in nursery rows. The large knots or ovoli which naturally grow at the base of olive trees are sometimes chiseled off and planted, their sprouts being planted as cuttings." (I.J. Condid, "Olive", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1956, Vol 16, p774)

The Bible record contains nothing to stir unbelief, if carefully studied. If one is prone not to believe there is a God, and that the Bible is His revelation to mankind, then nothing will be believed.

Conclusion...

Our study, then, reveals that the scriptural record of facts regarding the flood is quite valid, when compared to reality. There is no reason to doubt it's testimony, unless one is predisposed to unbelief in matters attached to the scriptures.