

Mechanisms of the Flood, or, Where did the Water Come From?...

(by Bob Pulliam)

One of the biggest obstacles for many when we talk about the flood is the amount of water needed to cover the entire globe. This has been answered various way, and some, I think, are unnecessary and prove little. While we cannot confidently affirm that we have all of the answers, we can give a reasonable mechanism for the worldwide deluge. Whether or not God chose to do it this way is beyond our power of knowing. We can be relatively certain about two aspects of the flood. First, that the windows of heaven were opened; and second, that the fountains of the great deep were broken up. These, we are told in Genesis six, are the means by which the world was flooded with water.

"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." (Genesis 7:11)

The windows of heaven were opened:

It is easy to assume that we have here a simple thunder shower. But there are a couple of references in scripture that cast doubt on the idea of simple rain. First, we are told of the waters above the firmament (Gen 1:6-8). Note that there were waters above the firmament. If this referred to oceans, they would be below the firmament. We also read of a phenomenon in Genesis 2:5-6. Why would Moses tell us that it did not rain, but instead a mist arose?... The next reference we have to rain is in the account of the flood (Gen 7:4). Doesn't this lead the reader to conclude that rain was not a natural occurrence in the very beginning?

So why wasn't there any rain? Some scientists who have evaluated the description of Genesis believe that the waters above the firmament refer to a [vapor canopy](#) trapped above our atmosphere. Vast amounts of water trapped in the form of vapor created a greenhouse condition on earth. Not only was the warmth of the sun evenly distributed, but moisture was as well. If this described condition existed, there would have also been a greater pressure in our atmosphere (perhaps twice what it is now). This, coupled with the uniformly warm and moist atmosphere, could explain some of the phenomenal growth found in plants in the fossil record.

The fountains of the Great deep were broken up:

That the earth has been subjected to tremendous geologic upheavals in the past is without question. Immense amounts of volcanic activity have poured hundreds of thousands of square miles of lava onto the surface of the earth, and beneath the surface of the ocean. Science has verified such upheaval from the past:

"It was once supposed that the deep oceans had remained dark, lifeless, and unchanged, save for the finest rain of sediment, since the world began; but new knowledge has quite dispelled this view. Across the ocean floor geophysicists have now traced great fractures, scarps and rifts, have found scattered volcanic peaks and ranges, and have charted canyons..." (J. Tuzo Wilson: "The Crust," in *The Earth and Its Atmosphere*, D.R. Bates, ed., (NY, Basic Books, Inc., 1957), p63)

Instead of being simple basins of water, the ocean floors show a great deal of past geologic activity. Such breaking and rifting activity would have it's effect, not only in the ocean, but on land as well. Gigantic tsunamis would be created, sweeping over land masses. Adjacent land masses would be strained by the movement of ocean floors. You'll hear many tales about the formation of present mountain ranges, but:

"The internal structure of mountains is fairly well understood, and the erosional processes that fashion the details of their outward appearance are no longer great mysteries. Yet the cause of the deformation of the earth's outer layers and the consequent building of mountains still effectively evades an explanation." (Armand J. Eardley: "The Cause of Mountain Building — an Enigma," American Scientist, Vol 45, June, 1957, p189)

The primary reason they cannot find an explanation is that they seek their answer in uniformity. They try to find a slow (gradual) force that would be in keeping with present events and knowledge. They refuse to seek a catastrophic explanation. The flood is a perfect explanation for such upheavals.

Was the Antediluvian Sea Level as it Is Now?...

It is easy to assume that it was. But there is good reason to believe that it was not. If not, we may also speculate that the highest altitudes of land were not as great. Neither can be proven, but to admit the possibility is to realize that the question of adequate water to flood the earth is moot. But what do we know?

Consider for a moment the continental shelves and the deep submarine canyons that cut through them (usually extending from the mouths of rivers on the land). What cut these canyons? Scientist try to explain them by turbidity currents and landsliding. They take this position because they cannot explain an ocean low enough to allow for such a formation above sea level. But if we reckon that drastic changes in sea level have occurred, then we can account for their formation with no trouble.

A second consideration are the sea-mounts in the ocean. Their tops were, without a doubt, above water at some time in the past, but are now over one mile under water. How do we explain an ancient sea level over 1 mile below where it is now? Where did the water come from to fill the ocean to it's present level? Tough question for a scientist who won't even consider the word "catastrophe" as a possible explanation. With that, consider this quote: "Can we, as seekers after truth, shut our eyes any longer to the obvious fact that large areas of sea floor have sunk vertical distances measured in miles?" (Kenneth K. Landes, "Illogical Geology," Geotimes, Vol. III, No 6 (March 1959), p19).

Putting the Pieces Together...

Now let's put this all together into a possible scenario for the flood of Genesis. This scenario will also need to explain where an awful lot of water has gone.

The vapor canopy above the earth (which does not now exist) begins to precipitate as rain to the earth. Torrential rain... Rain for many (40) days. Tectonic movements cause great upheavals beneath the ocean, releasing vast amounts of magma and water trapped within existing rock. As the waters rise, and these eruptions occur, great tidal waves sweep the earth, along with the normal tidal action created by the moon's force. As barometric pressure decreases, and the earth cools, immense amounts of limestone is precipitated out

of the sea water. Every inundation of land as the waters rise kills more and more creatures. Then the waters entomb their prey with limestone as it forms in the water and falls to the bottom. Layers are formed, one after the other, and some are laid down together at the same time. The rapid burial and high mineral content quickly fossilizes what would have otherwise decayed to extinction. Now the waters are over the tallest mountains, which may not have been quite as tall as they are now. It seems that there is not hope for a planet that is completely covered with water. But there is another phenomena to come.

The waters begin to descend. They are draining. But to where? The floor of the ocean is sinking. It descends to an abyss measured in miles, rather than feet. The waters follow this sinking, and the land begins to dry. Huge lakes of sea water have been trapped inland. Their exits begin as a stream. But as the soft limestone is cut, greater amounts of water can flow, and then still greater. Canyons are quickly formed in the soft strata, and become unimaginably huge (e.g. the Grand Canyon). Meanwhile, water is flowing underground as well, seeking every crevice in the newly formed rock. The vapor canopy is gone, and the earth quickly cools. The poles, which were once protected and warmed by a greenhouse effect, are now exposed to a lack of warmth and begin to freeze. As waters descend, and river levels normalize, another phenomenon is beginning. Tectonic pressure within the earth have been building. The earth's new form is not natural for it, and pressures must be removed... And so the earth begins to move. As it moves, solidified rock begins to push horizontally. But this has the effect of thrusting stone against stone, and the forces push upward. Mountains grow as if being pushed into place by infinite forces. Their heights ascend to greater heights until the pressures are relieved which acted upon them.

Is a world-wide flood a physical impossibility? No!... Given the Bible description of creation and the flood, it is a very distinct possibility. Of course, the possibility is not enough to *create* faith. But it should at least make one pause in making attacks against the Bible as a Book about an "impossible flood".