

THE EXTENT OF THE NOAHIC FLOOD

A Paper

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by

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to answer the question of whether or not the flood described in Genesis 6-9 was global or a local Mesopotamian event. I will defend the idea that it was a global catastrophe and support this from four lines of evidence; The Bible, historical writers/commentators, flood legends, and Christ's own words. I will contrast this with local flood advocates opinions and determine if their interpretation lines up with God's Word and extra-Biblical evidence. Before beginning though, it's critical to understand why this question is even posed; frankly I'm amazed it is!

The debate about the extent of the flood began in the days of Greek Philosophers like Socrates (470 BC) and Plato (428 BC) . It was originally the secularists who held that if there was a flood it was local and the Biblicists held that it was global. It remained this way consistently for 1700 years; however, several things happened in the 18th century that created the debate among evangelicals. This began in the late 1700's with the publication of James Hutton's book, *Theory of the Earth* (1795), and several decades later Charles Lyell's book, *Principles of Geology* (1830).

Hutton was a medical doctor, turned farmer, turned amateur geologist. Ironically with his lack of geologic expertise, he is considered today as the father of geology. In his book he proposed the idea of slow and gradual geologic processes, he stated that:

The past history of our globe must be explained by what can be seen to be happening now...no powers are to be employed that are not natural to the globe, no action to be admitted except those of which we know the principle.¹

Hutton is displaying his dogmatic naturalism and an outright denial of other possible explanations, such as catastrophism. Although Hutton was an atrocious writer, his book helped

¹ Dr. Jonathan Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*. (Green Forest, AK: Master Books, 2004) 246.

set the stage for Lyell's books, which were to later have a significant influence on theologians and even Charles Darwin.

Charles Lyell built upon Hutton's idea of slow and gradual processes, he too approached his works with the same dogmatic naturalism. It was his ideas that were coined as uniformitarianism.² He outrightly rejected any sort of catastrophism, such as the global flood, which was supported by many good scriptural geologists of the day. Ironically many of them were better scientists than their secular counterparts. Dr. Mortensen in his book *The Great Turning Point*, lists many scriptural geologists such as George Young, George Fairholme, and William Rhind. Dr. Mortenson notes that many of their ideas and arguments against uniformitarianism are still very applicable today. It's unfortunate that their warnings were not heeded by Christian laymen and theologians of the day.

Interestingly, the source of attacks against a global flood shifted, and historical writings began to show that the greatest opposition to a global flood started coming from Christians. These Christians who adopted the old-earth ideas were thus forced to make the flood either myth, local, or tranquil. They were forced into this corner because if Noah's flood produced the majority of sedimentary deposition and fossils, which is what you'd have in a worldwide flood, then there's no room left for the evidence to account for strata being laid down over millions of years and evolution to take place. Since the layers of strata were supposedly laid down over slow and gradual processes, the same as we see today, over vast amounts of time; then in accepting those claims they could not say that the layers were created by a singular, year-long event as described in Scripture. To their credit, the compromising theologians were being logically consistent, unfortunately they didn't side with the clear perspicuous reading of scripture

² Sarfati, 247.

and may not have fully understood the consequences of what adopting these views did to their theology as well as the consequences it has upon the authority of scripture.

Historical Interpretations

Before moving to the scriptures, it's important to note in this discussion that a local flood view is a recent belief among evangelicals. The point here is not to claim that because these men believed a global flood we should too, scripture is to remain paramount, but what it does provide is ample evidence that outside influences have affected commonly held theology. The following table provides a summary of the opinions of ancient writers, Dr. Sarfati notes that "many of them reacted strongly against local flood ideas held by all the Greek philosophers (including Plato), except for Xenophon. Only Psuedo-Justin seems to have supported a local flood."

Writer	Date	Extent of Flood		Reference
		Local	Global	
Philo	c.20 B.C-c.A.D. 50		x	<i>Abraham</i> , 41-44
Josephus	A.D. 37/38-100		x	<i>Antiquities</i> , 1.3.4 (1.89)
Justin Martyr	c.100-c.165		x	<i>Dialogue</i> , 138
Theophilus of Antioch	Wrote c. 180		x	<i>Auolycus</i> , 3.18-19
Tertullian	c. 160-c.225		x	<i>Pallium</i> , 2; <i>Women</i> , 3
Gregory of Nazianzus	330-390		x	<i>2nd Theol. Orat.</i> 18
John Chrysostom	374-407		x	<i>Genesis</i> 25.10
Augustine of Hippo	354-430		x	<i>City</i> 15.27

Table 1: The Opinion of Ancient Writers Concerning the Extent of Noah's Flood³

After extensive research into the historical writers, Bradshaw notes, "In this the fathers cannot be said to be simply parroting the commonly held views of contemporary culture, because many used it to counter the local flood view which was held by all the Greek philosophers."⁴

³ Robert Bradshaw, *Noah's Flood and the Tower of Babel*. <http://www.robibrad.demon.co.uk/Chapter6.htm> last accessed Feb. 20, 2011.

⁴ Ibid.

John Calvin (1509-1564) held the global flood view; in several remarks throughout his commentaries of Genesis 6-9 he always treated the deluge as global in scope. One example is Genesis 6:18 where he commented on the covenant God made with Noah:

Now, the sum of this covenant of which Moses speaks was, that Noah should be safe, although *the whole world should perish* in the deluge. For there is an understood antithesis, that *the whole world being rejected*, the Lord would establish a peculiar covenant with Noah alone. ⁵ [emphasis mine]

He went on to address the issue of God terminating not just all of mankind, but all creatures he created; with of course the exception of those on the ark. So, not only did he recognize the global nature of the deluge, but he never mentioned a debate about whether or not the flood was a local Mesopotamian event. This is curious, as he did often mention debates of his day throughout his commentaries; apparently this wasn't one of them.⁶ So again, the point is not an argument of ad populum, but to stress the source of the belief among compromising evangelicals.

Scriptural Support

In Genesis 6-9 Moses, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, spent an enormous amount of time describing not just the reason for the flood, but the actual events themselves. There are several things to note in these four chapters that support the idea of the flood being global, such as details of terms like “earth,” “all,” and “every;” the description of Noah’s ark along with a timeline of the sequence of events; and then maybe more importantly the Noahic covenant. I will address these topics in the following paragraphs.

⁵ John Calvin, *Commentaries on The First Book of Moses Called Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1979.) 258-259.

⁶ One example is his opining of the sons of God, he notes that “The ancient figment, concerning the intercourse of angels with so men, is abundantly refuted by its own absurdity; and it is surprising that learned men should formerly have been fascinated by ravings so gross and prodigious.” (Calvin, 238.)

Semantics

Earth

Some have said that the term *earth* used in Genesis 6-9 is used in a limited regional sense, they argue that nobody prior to our scientific knowledge of today would have understood that the term meant the entire planet.⁷ A prominent local flood advocate,⁸ states:

We moderns think of our earthly habitat as a roughly spherical astronomical body. But that's a relatively recent conception. The majority of people who have ever lived on "the earth" never knew it as a planet and never envisioned it as such.⁹

This claim has no merit because it presupposes that the Hebrews had no understanding of God's creation. This is highly unlikely based on our understanding of ancient cultures and their knowledge of astronomy.

Genesis 6 begins with the reason for the flood, that man (all of mankind, with the exception of Noah) was wicked and needed to be removed. Genesis 6:5 specifically states that it was because "the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Even the Godly line of Seth was corrupted.¹⁰ For this reason God states that man's "days shall be one hundred and twenty years." (6:3). Meaning that God was graciously going to allow Noah to preach another 120 years before the flood was to come and destroy mankind. Point being, the idea of the global nature of man's wickedness and corruption upon the earth is reiterated in not just one or two passages, but repeated many times, emphasizing the cause for the flood and its extent.

In any case, the Hebrew word עֶרֶץ 'erets' is often translated as earth, which means globe or planet. For example, Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the

⁷ Makes one wonder what the Hebrews thought of Genesis 1:1.

⁸ He says he doesn't believe a local flood but a universal one, this is just a game of semantics.

⁹ Hugh Ross, *Exploring the Extent of Noah's Flood*, <http://www.reasons.org/interpreting-genesis/noahs-flood/exploring-extent-flood-part-one> accessed Feb. 25, 2011.

¹⁰ I hold the view that the sons of God were from the lineage of Seth, not that they were angelhumans.

earth.” Here it clearly means globe as it wouldn’t make much sense to say “In the beginning God created the heavens and the local region of Mesopotamia.” While a true statement, the overall context of God creating everything in Genesis 1 makes ‘eret’ mean planet and all therein. ‘Erets has been translated as ground as in the case of Genesis 48:12 “then Joseph took them from his knees and bowed with his face to the ground (erets).” The context makes it clear that Joseph was bowing down to a point on the earth which makes it local in scope.

When scripture is unclear, and in this case I do not believe it is, it’s good exegetical practice to stick with the common meaning. When God makes statements like “They were blotted out from the earth” (7:23), “Nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood” (10:32), “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (9:7), “lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth” (11:4), we can only reasonably assume the basic meaning of the term; which is to describe the entire planet. In most cases though, the Biblical text is much clearer.

When God’s emphasis is the destruction of *all* mankind and *every* creature because it was corrupt; only Noah was found a righteous man, He means everyone to the exclusion of one. Thus in the context of the phrases like all, everything, and everywhere under the heavens (6:17) ‘eret can mean nothing other than the whole planet earth. When Jesus gave the great commission in Acts 1:8 “and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the *remotest part of the earth.*” was Jesus telling his disciples and us to spread the gospel to just the Mesopotamian region?

Beyond that, God said He was going to destroy not just mankind, but *all* creatures in whose nostrils was the breath of life. Local flood advocates often claim that all of mankind may have lived in a local region, but to think that all the animals did the same, or to say that only animals that lived in that local region died, denies common sense and the plain meaning of the

text. Point being, nothing in the context would indicate in Genesis 6-9 that ‘erets’ referred to a local region.

All Flesh and Every Creature

The words “all,” “every,” “whole,” or “everything” are used prolifically in Genesis 6-9. This repetition in scripture makes a strong case of the totality that is in view. Genesis 6-9 is emphasizing that *every* creature in existence was wiped out with the exception of *every* creature on Noah’s ark. Dr. Sarfati notes that “It’s repetition that matters, ...In Hebrew, as in any other language, repetition is a way of emphasizing the literalness of the meaning “all in this Flood account.”¹¹

For some perspective, all is used 66 times in just 4 out of 50 chapters which represents 20% of the usage in Genesis alone. 57 of the 66 usages describe nouns that represent creatures, living things, mankind, swarming things, things under the heavens, creeping things, flesh, birds, beasts, clean animals, and breathing creatures. Two times it’s used to stress that Noah did *all* that was commanded of him, not just some. Three times it’s used to describe the whole of the earth or features of the earth such as the fountains and high mountains. And twice it’s used to describe *all* that mankind could now eat. Point being is that 86% of the time it represents the whole of creatures on the earth, sometimes it’s not used with the term earth, under heaven, face of land, or ark; in those cases it stands alone.

When the term “all” is used as an adjective, it means *without exception, the whole of* or as an adverb *entirely or completely*. In every case it’s always the whole of the object or noun being described; it encompasses wholly what it refers to. So the question is; were all creatures, without exception, swept away in the flood around the entire earth, or were all creatures swept

¹¹ Sarfati, 251.

away in a local flood while leaving others outside of the region alive? Does “all” refer to a local scope or global scope?

It’s important to note an inconsistency here if one holds to a local scope. In the flood account there’s a contrast between every creature that died, and every creature that was saved. If one were to argue that every creature that died was just in the local area, and others survived outside of that region, then by all logic and exegetical consistency they would have to say that only some in the ark were saved, while others in a local region in the ark died. This is just one of many issues that arise.

To illustrate what I mean by scope, if for example I ask my children to “pick up all the toys downstairs”, I mean every toy within that scope as defined by the noun “downstairs”. But if I say, “I want all the toys picked up in the house”, I mean every toy throughout the whole of the home; in this case the scope changes with the prepositional phrase “in the house.” But if I say, “pickup all the toys” without referencing a scope, I mean every single toy in the whole of the house, not just a room or a local region in the bedroom. The term “all” sets the scope in this case, and by default, it means the whole.

Similarly, with respect to the terms all and every in Genesis, the scope of those terms is often set by the term itself and reiterated in the context of *earth* and *under heaven*. Genesis 6:17 in its use of the term “under heaven” makes the term *all* in conjunction with *earth* even more abundantly clear that the entire planet is in view. Thus, unless otherwise noted, the scope of *all flesh* is planetary even though the term may not be used in conjunction with earth.

Verses 8:16-17 illustrates the absurdity of the words *all*, or *every*, or *earth* referring only to a local region. Noah was commanded by God to leave the ark, God said “Go out of the ark...bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you...” (v8:16-17). Noah

didn't bring out just those animals that were located on the first deck, or some local region within the ark. He removed the whole of them, without exception.

If *all* and *every* in this context is limited in scope, what are the implications for passages like Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fallen short...", or was that just some of us? Or was Jesus only given partial authority when he said "all authority has been given unto me..." (Matt. 28:18)? To say that *all* or *every* in this context has a limited sense, because other passages throughout scripture may have a limited sense, is poor exegesis. New Testament scholar, Dr. Don Carson notes this is type of exegesis is an...

unwarranted expansion of an already-expanded semantic field. The fallacy in this instance lies in the supposition that the meaning of the word in a specific context is much broader than the context itself allows and may bring with the word's entire semantic range.¹²

In other words, taking the meaning of a word from one part of scripture and applying it to other areas is bad practice.

Noah's Ark & Flood Depth

Noah's ark is another striking piece of evidence that the flood was global. Not only did Noah spend 120 years building it for the purpose of saving his family and creatures of every kind,¹³ he also lived on it for over a year. Some local flood advocates have proposed that it was built for the purpose of evangelism, a platform from which to preach;

When God pours out judgment, He gives ample warning ahead of time. He sends a spokesperson, a prophet, and gives that prophet a kind of platform from which to be heard. For the antediluvians, Noah was that prophet and the scaffolding around the ark was his platform.¹⁴

¹² D.A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd Ed (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996). 60.

¹³ Genesis 8:1

¹⁴ Hugh Ross, *The Genesis Question*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2001) 164-165. Arthur Custance holds to a similar view and said that the purpose was to merely warn unbelievers not to save believers. (See *the Genesis Flood*, Whitcomb, 11-12 for more information.)

I can find no other place in scripture where any prophet has required or been given or asked to build a platform from which to preach. There is no precedent set to draw such a conclusion. It goes beyond reason to think that Noah labored to build a ship for 120 years only to use it for preaching.

The ark itself though was massive, Genesis 6:14-16 lists the following characteristics: It was made of Gopher wood, with rooms, pitch inside and out, lower, middle, and upper decks with a roof and the following dimensions: 437ft x 44ft x 73 ft. This is roughly the size of an Aegis class destroyer. This was large enough to hold an estimated 8000 pairs¹⁵ of created kinds with plenty of room and storage for supplies for the year-long journey. Dr. Whitcomb agrees:

The very size of the Ark should effectively eliminate the local flood view from serious consideration among those who take the Book of Genesis at face value.¹⁶

The detailed description of the ark only adds to the notion that the flood was global, otherwise why make something so large in order to house every kind of animal including flying things? If it was a local flood couldn't the birds and animals just have migrated to an unaffected area? For what other purpose would the ark contain every kind of creature?

In addition, the fact that a detailed timeline of events is given in Genesis is a strong indication that the purpose of the ark was to save a righteous remnant of mankind and allow earth to be repopulated by every kind of animal that God made from the beginning.¹⁷ If the flood was local, why remain on it for so long?

Below is a detailed timeline of events:

¹⁵ Woodmorappe, John. Noah's Ark A Feasibility Study. (Santee, CA: Institute for Creation Research, 2003) 47.

¹⁶ Whitcomb, John C. and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, August 1998) 26.

¹⁷ This includes giant lizards, a.k.a. dinosaurs.

Day	Event	Verse
1	Noah enters the ark	Gen. 7:6
40	Waters reach maximum height	Gen. 7:17
150	Waters being receding	Gen. 7:24
224	Tops of mountain are seen	Gen. 8:5
264	Noah sent out raven	Gen. 8:6
271	Noah sent out dove	Gen. 8:10
285	Dove sent, does not return	Gen. 8:12
314	Noah removes covering	Gen. 8:13
371	Noah leaves the ark	Gen. 8:14

One event worth mentioning is found in Genesis 8:10; “But the dove could find nowhere to perch because there was water over all the surface of the earth”¹⁸ The word dove, yonah¹⁹, represents a pigeon of the *Columbidae* bird family. Some pigeons like the homing pigeon have ranges of over 1000 miles.²⁰ The Mesopotamian region, the area that lies between the Tigris and Euphrates extends approximately 5000 miles long and 450 miles wide.²¹ Thus it’s conceivable that if the flood was local, the pigeon could have found a place to perch besides the ark. But according to Scripture, the avian did not find a place to land; yet again providing strong evidence as to the global extent of the flood.

Another evidence, that is arguably one of the strongest, comes in Genesis 7:19-20, it says:

“The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all **the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered**. The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.” [emphasis mine]

All the mountains everywhere were covered over 22 feet with water! Because of the nature of water, and how it seeks its own level, the only way all the tops of the mountains were covered is

¹⁸ Genesis 8:9

¹⁹ Robert Thomas. *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc. 1998, 1981). 3123. Incidentally this is the same Hebrew word for the messenger Jonah.

²⁰ Charles Walcott, PIGEON HOMING: OBSERVATIONS, EXPERIMENTS AND CONFUSIONS <http://jeb.biologists.org/cgi/reprint/199/1/21.pdf> accessed Feb. 22, 2010.

²¹ As measured on an ancient map of the Fertile Crescent.

if the flood was global. Dr. Whitcomb, theologian and co-author of the Genesis Flood stated the following in regards to this passage:

nearly all commentators agree that the phrase “fifteen cubits” in 7:20 must refer to how deep the Ark sank into the water when it was fully laden. Such information adds further support for a universal Flood, because it tells us that the Flood “prevailed” over the tops of the highest mountains to a depth of at least 15 cubits. If the Flood had not covered the mountains by at least such a depth, the Ark could not have floated over them during the five months in which the waters “prevailed” upon the earth.²²

This again should be clear cut evidence as to the global nature of the flood, especially for those with a propensity towards science.

The Noahic Covenant

If the evidences thus far are unconvincing as to the nature and extent of the flood, nothing comes quite as revealing as the Noahic covenant. In order to twist this covenant to mean something other than having a global extent, one must be forced to spiritualize it. The Noahic covenant is an unconditional covenant, one in which mankind has to do nothing in order for it to be fulfilled.

In Genesis 9:8-17 God makes a covenant with Noah, with all his descendants, which would include us (v. 9), and with all the creatures of the earth that came off the ark (v.10). The covenant was this; “that never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.” (v. 11). It was also “everlasting” (v.18). To further emphasize the promise made, God made a sign for Himself, the rainbow. It was not for mankind to remember God’s promise, but for God to remember His promise. Verse 18 says “When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and **every living creature of all flesh** that is on the earth”. Keywords here are “and I will remember my covenant” (v.18) and “when I look upon it” (v. 15).

²² *The Genesis Flood*, 2.

The rainbow was designated as a reminder towards God of His own everlasting promise to every creature upon the face of the whole earth and mankind, not just some in a local region.

These details are important because if we are to assume the flood was local, what was this everlasting promise all about? Did God promise to never again send a local flood, or was it just the fact that God will never destroy all the creatures of the earth again? In either case, both would be false because we see that local floods occur routinely and 2 Peter 3:10 makes it clear that the earth will be burned up. The Noahic covenant can only logically said to be global in scope, as any other interpretation would have serious logical, theological, and interpretive hurdles.

Flood Legends

One area that is often neglected is extra-Biblical evidence among various people groups that have had no affiliation with the scriptures, or intermingling outside of themselves. The only commonality among them would be the fact that they all originated from Noah and his family, and were dispersed after the tower of Babel event described in Genesis 11. In fact the table of nations in Genesis 10 shows us that we were once of one people group. While the Hebrews, through the line of Shem, carried the true events and nature of the flood, other nations carried on legends, mostly through oral tradition that have many similarities to the Bible.

Not everything in these legends is accurate, but there are too many attributes that are consistent with Scripture that provide strong evidence of the global nature of the flood. There are in fact over 270 legends from around the world; from the Toltec's to the Chinese, Indians to Polynesians. One such legend is from Hawaii:

Long after the death of Kuniuhonna, the first man, the world became a wicked terrible place to live. There was one good man left; his name was Nu-u. He made a great

canoe with a house on it and filled it with animals. The waters came up over all the earth and killed all the people. Only Nu-u and his family were saved.²³

Notice the emphasis on world and the fact that only one man was left, Nu-u, which sounds similar to Noah. All the people were wicked and died and only Nu-u and his family were saved. The similarity is striking and lends credibility to the accuracy of the scriptures. The Chinese also have a legend and they record that:

Fuhi, his wife, three sons and three daughters escaped a great flood. He and his family were the only people alive on earth. After the great flood they repopulated the world.²⁴

The Miao tribe of southwest China had a legend prior to meeting Christian missionaries:

...god destroyed the whole world by the flood because of wickedness of man, Nuah, the righteous man and his wife Matriarch, their three sons, Lo Han, Lo Shen, and Jah-hu survived by building a very broad ship and embarked on it with pairs of animals. ...The Patriarch Jahphu got the center of nations. The son he begot was the Patriarch Go-men.²⁵

Again, these accounts are strikingly similar to scripture. The following list shows a comparison of attributes of the flood legends:

1. Is there a favored family	88%
2. Were they forewarned	66%
3. Is the flood due to wickedness of man	66%
4. Is catastrophe only a flood	95%
5. Was the flood global	95%
6. Is the survival due to a boat	70%
7. Were animals also saved	67%
8. Did animals play any part	73%
9. Did survivors land on a mountain	57%
10. Was the geography local	82%
11. Were birds sent out	35%
12. Was the rainbow mentioned	7%
13. Did survivors offer a sacrifice	13%

²³ Gish, Duane T., *Dinosaurs by Design*. (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1992) 74.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ <http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/flood/ch7.asp>, accessed Feb. 20, 2011.

14. Were specifically eight persons saved 9%

Notice in the comparisons that 95% of all the legends state that the flood was global. It is highly unlikely that this would still be the case if the flood was local. It's clear then that Genesis 6-9 is consistent with extra-Biblical evidences due to the details and commonality.

Peter and Jesus

One need look no further than the very words of Christ and the apostle Peter as they both recognized the global nature of the flood when making comparisons about the events that are and that are to come. Jesus, when giving an answer to his disciples as to when He would return to setup his kingdom (not the rapture) likened his coming to the events that occurred during the days of Noah, Matthew 24:37-40 says:

"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left..."

Jesus was making a comparison of judgment. Just as the flood swept all the people away, so to his coming will sweep all the unbelievers away as well. In the days of Noah, the people taken were the ungodly, the people left were the Godly. Prior to the kingdom being setup, the same thing will occur; the ungodly will be removed, and the Godly will be left to enter into the kingdom. So again, we have a contrast between all saved and all lost. If the flood was local, people not living in that region would not have been affected, what then is the implication of Christ's second coming? Is He going to only remove the ungodly from a local region? Christ's comparison of the flood and His return wouldn't make sense if it was local, thus the flood had to have been global.

Peter, in 2 Peter 3:3-7 made a very prophetic statement, one that if it had not come true, would have made this discussion irrelevant. With respect to Christ's return and what to watch for, he said that:

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, **all continues just as it was from the beginning** of creation." For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that **by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed** out of water and by water, **through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water**. But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. [emphasis mine]

Several things to briefly mention; Peter says that mockers will come, he doesn't make a distinction between believers and unbelievers, only that people on both sides will ridicule two things; the creation and the flood. Note too that he prophesied uniformitarianism when he said that these mockers will say "all continues just as it was from the beginning". Peter underscores the importance of the issue as well as the global nature of the flood just as Jesus did when He prophesied His return.

Summary and Conclusions

Scripture is perspicuous on this issue, it is only because outside influences of secular science and naturalistic presuppositions that one would even think to interpret Genesis 6-9 as describing a local event. If we were to assume that the events described were speaking of a local event, one would have to wonder how God could have explained a Global event; what words and descriptions would He choose to use? Conversely if God wanted to teach a local flood, aren't there many other ways He could have done this like specifying that the flood took place between two regions or that it took place in the land of Shinar?

While many claim that a belief in a global or local flood doesn't matter, this discussion highlights the importance of starting points and theological consistency. When

starting from outside of scripture and using naturalistic secular scientific theories to drive your interpretation, a local flood view will be required. I argue that we cannot afford as believers to sweep this under the proverbial rug, or dismiss it as secondary in nature claiming that it doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you believe in Jesus. If we cannot trust God's word to say what it means, then the very words and miracles of Christ come into question; because on what basis can we trust scripture when it says that a man was raised from the dead after being crucified and buried for three days? Proverbs 3:5 says we are to trust in the Lord, and lean not on our own understanding.

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