

Science and the Bible, Pt 5: The Global Flood and God's Total Sovereignty (Gen. 7:17-24)
Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on May 17, 2009
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Please take the Word of our God and turn to Genesis 6. This is part 5 in a little mini-series we're doing on Science and the Bible that is a literal different than our usual studies but one I hope you are learning and enjoying from at least somewhat as much as I have been. I have read many hundreds of pages and listened to endless hours of messages on related subjects of science, scripture, the flood and the ark, not only in recent weeks but in past years to the point of even getting a headache at times with all the info to grasp on this subject. But the message I want to bring at this point in our study is a little different focus than any I have seen or read. I want us to consider the *global* flood in light of God's *total* sovereignty. This is a major message and application and overarching point of the flood narrative, but it's possible to get so bogged down in some of the details and questions of science or other subjects that we miss the forest while looking at trees (gopher wood, in this case). Let's notice in the context the emphasis on the global nature of this flood, and more than that, the total sovereignty of God over this flood.

Genesis 6 (NASB95) ¹³ *God said to Noah, "The end of **all flesh** [or "all creatures," not just man] has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, **I am about to destroy them with the earth [notice the earth is being destroyed and notice who's doing it].*** ¹⁴ *"Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.* ¹⁵ *"This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.* ¹⁶ *"You shall make a window for the ark ... finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.*

Probably that's referring to a window of about 18 inches below the roof that ran around an entire section that kept rain out but let air in (ventilation very helpful in a floating barn!)

¹⁷ *"Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.* ¹⁸ *"But I will establish My covenant with you ..."*

Notice the emphatic affirmation of God that this is something He Himself is doing (strong emphasis in Hebrew)

v. 18 *"I will establish My covenant"* – sovereign unilateral

v. 17 *"Behold, I even I am bringing the flood"*

This is a sovereign supernatural judgment of God, and therefore natural causes of today and naturalistic assumptions of science are not an adequate basis for understanding this unique unrepeatable one-time event in history of a worldwide flood. Read v. 17 again, and notice how totally the language indicates a total global flood!

¹⁹ *"And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you ..."*

Notice the reason Noah had to bring male and female of all creatures was "to keep them alive with you." Any living breathing land creatures not with them on the ark would perish.

Genesis 7:3 says at the end of the verse after again recapping all the categories of all creatures to bring on the ark it says “... **to keep offspring alive on the face of the earth.**”

Genesis 7:4: “**For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.**”

Again we see clearly total sovereignty and clearly a global flood!

⁷ Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives with him **entered the ark** because of the water of the flood. ⁸ Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground, ⁹ **there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female**

Note that Noah and his family already entered the ark – the animals went into the ark *to Noah* by twos. God brought the animals to him like God said He would earlier. This is no natural event, but is again a supernatural sovereign work of a God so sovereign He could bring a perfect pair of each kind with DNA for all creatures known today from all across the earth (probably originally 1 continent) guiding them all at the right time

¹⁶ Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed it behind him.

God is totally sovereign and in charge of this whole scene and He Himself closes the door, sealing the fate of all life outside the ark.

¹⁷ Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth. ¹⁸ The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. ¹⁹ The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that **all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered.** ²⁰ The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered. ²¹ **All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind;** ²² **of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died.** ²³ **Thus He [God] blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth;** and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark. ²⁴ The water prevailed upon the earth **one hundred and fifty days.**

We’ll see later in our study that it took more than another 200 days before the water subsided enough for the ark to settle and for the earth to be ready for them to disembark in the new world, so the whole time they were in the ark was more than a year.

1. If this was only a large local flood, why go through all that time and all that trouble when you could have just travelled with your family and the animals out of the area?
2. Why spend 100+/- years building a boat instead of moving?
3. Why would you need a boat of this huge size, the biggest wooden vessel in history and largest dimensions of any vessel till 19th century, an ark with dimensions that could hold all known creatures in less than half of its cargo space, why the huge ark if you only needed to preserve creatures that lived in the Mesopotamian area only?

4. If the flood didn't destroy the earth and all land creatures, why does God say in 6:13 that He's going to destroy the earth and all flesh, or in 6:17 "*I am bringing the flood to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish*"?
5. If God only judged part of the land and some of the living things with it, why does 7:4 say "... *I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made*"?
6. How can you explain away Genesis 7:19: "...*all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered*"?
7. There are over 200 stories of a worldwide flood from cultures on every continent and every part of the planet
8. A local Mesopotamian flood could not have lifted the ark above the mountains of Ararat in modern Turkey for over a year as the chapter 8 explains
9. Looking at Gen. 9:11, can that verse apply to a local flood?
*"I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there **again be a flood to destroy the earth.**"* That can't be a promise to never again send a local flood, which has happened many times, killing millions in history

I read a theological journal article by a conservative scholar who is not convinced the entire globe was covered by water, but he admits the best evidence for a universal flood is found comparing this flood with the original watery globe in Gen. 1. Now water...

'comes back from above the firmament and from below the earth (Gen 7:11; cf. 8:2) to again cover the earth with water. The Flood is thus described as reversing earth's creation. This is cosmic, clearly universal, not local. During the Flood, the earth virtually goes back to its pre-creation state in Gen 1:2. Evangelical OT scholars regularly make this point.

Victor Hamilton, for instance, remarks, "There is no doubt that the two sources of water are intended to recall the 'waters above and below' of 1:6-7. The Flood un-creates, and returns the earth to a pre-creation period when there was only 'waters.'

Similarly Kenneth Mathews writes, "The language of destruction in the flood narrative, such as the eruption of the 'great deep' and the 'floodgates of the heavens' (7:11), shows a reversal of creation days one through three (1:1-13). It is the *uncreation* of Adam's old world."

John Walton says, "The Flood recreates the watery chaos of Genesis 1:2 ... Bruce Waltke explains, "The earth is being returned to its precreation chaos by the release of the previously bounded waters above and by the upsurge of the subterranean waters ..."

Gordon Wenham likewise writes, "In releasing the waters pent-up below and above the earth, God is undoing his great acts of separation whereby the dry land was created and the waters were confined in the seas (Gen 1:9). The earth is going back to Gen 1:2, when the waters covered its face."

The consensus of evangelical OT scholars is that the Flood was a cosmic event, returning the earth virtually to its pre-creation condition in Gen 1:2. The Flood is thus clearly universal, not local.¹

Another clincher for me personally is 2 Peter 3:5-7 "*... by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed **out of water and by water,** ⁶ through which **the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.** ⁷ 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."*

The world was destroyed by water and it will again be destroyed by fire just as literally and just as totally. The reality and extent of the historical judgment is paralleled with the future total judgment. Why is it important we get the nature and extent of the flood right? So that we get the nature of God and His Word right. The bigger issue is the authority and clarity of Scripture overruling theories of men. The very character of God is an issue here. The glory of God is ultimately always the key issue, and one of the biblical lessons of the flood and God's creation and creatures mentioned here in our passage is to display the glory of God's total sovereignty.

Psalm 29:10 *The LORD sat as King at the flood; Yes, the LORD sits as King forever.*

Other versions say the LORD was enthroned at the flood, in other words He was sovereignly ruling over it. This is the only other place in the Bible that uses the Hebrew word for *flood* from Gen. 6-9, referring to *the flood* over the entire earth that God sits above.

Psalm 29 (NASB) ¹ *A Psalm of David. Ascribe to the LORD, O sons of the mighty, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.* ² *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in holy array.* ³ *The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; The God of glory thunders, The LORD is over many waters.* ⁴ *The voice of the LORD is powerful, The voice of the LORD is majestic ...* ⁹ *The voice of the LORD makes the deer to calve And strips the forests bare; And in His temple everything says, "Glory!"* ¹⁰ *The LORD sat as King at the flood; Yes, the LORD sits as King forever.* ¹¹ *The LORD will give strength to His people; The LORD will bless His people with peace.*

Job 38 may be the best place in all of God's Word in explaining and exalting the absolute sovereignty and supremacy of God over all things. Job 38-41 is the longest speech of God anywhere in the Bible where God speaks audibly to man, so it's pretty important. And God's ultimate self-revelation here not only includes God's sovereign power as illustrated in creation and in the flood, but also in the creatures that God preserved through the flood, creatures known to Job in the post-flood world. It's fitting in our series on Science and the Bible that we return to this passage again, because this is the most extended discussion of science and the Bible *in the Bible*. God actually has a science exam here, and the questions God begins with are also good questions for the smartest evolutionists of our time (or Christians that buy into their theories, old-universe origin of how all began, etc.).

Job 38:4 *"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding,*

"If you have understanding" has the force of "if you're really as smart as you think, let's just do a little science test here. Since you know so much, these should be easy for you. Question # 1, where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Before you determine what God did or did not do in Genesis 1-11 and whether creation was literally in six days or the flood was literally true or not, God says "where were you when it all went down? Oh, you weren't there, were you? Remember that. I was there. I alone have all-sovereign power and am all-wise. I am sovereign, you are not." Throughout the book of Job, Job and his 3 "friends" have been questioning God and assuming they know what He's doing and how things should be run here on earth, and now God comes into the conversation, and He has some questions. These questions are clearly intended to put them (and modern man) in his place. If we didn't create the world, what makes us think we know how things should be run? If God didn't need help then, He doesn't need now.

Job 38:5-7 *Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? “On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone*

Job 38 has the most questions of any chapter in the Bible, this section has over 70 questions. The point of all: God is God, you are not. Notice now how one of the first and foremost illustrations God gives of His sovereignty: the waters He created and the waters He flooded the earth with and determined their place afterwards.

Job 38:8 *“Or who enclosed the sea with doors When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; [likely reference to Gen. 7]*

Job 38:9 *When I made a cloud its garment And thick darkness its swaddling band,*

Job 38:10 *And I placed boundaries on it And set a bolt and doors,*

Job 38:11 *And I said, ‘Thus far you shall come, but no farther; And here shall your proud waves stop’?*

The exam here now moves from cosmology to flood geology, and oceanography. Who sets the tides and who determines where sea level is? Who controlled the waters of the flood? Who gave boundaries to the oceans after the flood to make sure they would never again cover the earth because of my promise? I did. Job apparently knew about the events of Gen. 6-9 (a few hundred years earlier?) as there are several allusion to the flood in the book of Job

The point is that God was sovereign over the biggest event on this planet, and therefore His sovereignty can be trusted in the smaller things in our lives. God sovereignly controls the ocean and puts it in its place, and by implication to Job, he needs to stay put in his place as well. In verse 11, the ocean is personified as being proud and God said you need to stop here, and Job needed to know his limit as well (and so do we). The Lord informs man that He really does know what He is doing, even though we may not. He is sovereign and in control of things we cannot control like floods and the mighty ocean. Get His drift? God is God and we are not.

Job 38:16 *“Have you entered into the springs of the sea Or walked in the recesses of the deep?*

Those springs or fountains of the great deep that God opened up in Genesis 7, modern man is only more recently understanding a little as modern oceanography has discovered springs deep in the ocean.

Job 38:22 *“Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, Or have you seen the storehouses of the hail ...*

Job 38:28 *“Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew?*

Job 38:29 *“From whose womb has come the ice? And the frost of heaven, who has given it birth?*

Modern creation scientists have begun to understand more about the ice age, which they believe followed after the flood, as a result of significant climate changes from the pre-flood world after the expanse or firmament of the heavens was opened or emptied at the flood. Both scriptural and scientific data suggest a warmer and more tropical early earth all-around possibly due to more moisture in the original pre-flood atmosphere as suggested by Genesis 1:6-8 (“waters above and waters beneath” which made up seas).

Henry Morris writes of these ‘hints of the post-flood Ice Age scattered through the book of Job. When the ... (waters above the firmament) rained on the earth during the flood, the greenhouse environment dissipated. Snow began to fall in the polar latitudes and eventually great ice sheets fanned out over the northern regions of Europe, Asia, and North America. The glacial period did not last for a million years or more, as evolutionary geologists believe [nor were there several, as many scientists suggest but the post-flood ice age] could have persisted for several centuries ... producing much more rain, snow, and ice than occur today in those regions [of Bible lands] known today for their heat and aridity.

Consequently, it may be significant that there are more references to cold, snow, ice, and frost in Job than in any other book of the Bible. It is possible that Job and his friends even heard tales of the glacial sheets bounding the northern lands ... in Job 38:29-30, there is perhaps an even more significant comment ... [of] Job’s awareness of the northern ice-covered lakes and seas.’²

Job 37:5 *“God thunders with His voice wondrously, Doing great things which we cannot comprehend.”*⁶ *“For to the snow He says, ‘Fall on the earth,’ And to the downpour and the rain ...”*⁹ *“Out of the south comes the storm, And out of the north the cold.”*¹⁰ *“From the breath of God ice is made, And the expanse of the waters is frozen.”*

Morris adds: ‘The picture of ice emerging from a womb seems most applicable to the slow advance of glaciers. It is possible to interpret all these passages in other ways. Nevertheless, it seems highly significant that the entire book of Job can be so easily understood in the context of a world only recently recovered from the devastation of the great flood.’³

What seems clear to me is that when God wants to demonstrate His sovereignty over all things, one of the greatest illustrations of that is found in His control over nature, including and especially including sovereign control of weather, storms, and the great flood.

Job 38:25-26b *“Who has cleft a channel for the flood, Or a way for the thunderbolt, To bring rain ...”*

Job 38:34 *“Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, So that an abundance of water will cover you?”*

Job 38:35 *“Can you send forth lightnings that they may go And say to you, ‘Here we are?’”*

If man can’t tell clouds and lightning what to do, it’s ludicrous to think we can tell God what to do. Man doesn’t determine the weather (modern man has a hard enough time predicting it!) so how arrogant to think we can determine what God should do.

Job 38:36 *“Who has put wisdom in the innermost being Or given understanding to the mind?”*

Job 38:37 *“Who can count the clouds by wisdom, Or tip the water jars of the heavens [God can and did at the great flood]”*

Only an all-wise and all-sovereign God can do all this. He not only knows all things in the universe, He sovereign rules over all things.

Job 38:12 *“Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, And caused the dawn to know its place?”*

If you haven't, God is saying, you need to be caused to know your place. God is saying essentially, how many times, have you commanded the sun to come up? You can't. I can. God says basically *“I do that every single day. I'm the only one who can order the sunrise and sunset and I'm also the only one with the right to order and command the events of your life!”*

“Stay in your place,” God is saying, *“and I'll keep doing my job. I am God, you are not! I have the answers though you do not.”*

Illustration: Choir class I took in high school and took an exam with many questions and I couldn't answer a single one! I got a big zero on the exam – the lowest grade possible. I re-took the exam later and actually answered each question differently, and you know what I got the second time I took the exam? Another zero! It was the only class I ever failed. (I intentionally didn't tell Pastor Jerry that before I became pastor here that I failed choir ... maybe if Pastor Jerry was teaching it I would have done better!

Actually maybe if I'd studied I would have done better. Not so with this exam that God gives here. Human teachers give quizzes to show *the teacher* what you know, but the point of this exam is to show *us what we do NOT know*. Everyone gets a zero on this exam, that's the whole point. The right answers to God's test is to humbly admit you don't have the answers. The only way to pass this test is to admit you can't, that you fail, then fall on your face.

That's the end result and that's what Job did in Job 42, and that's what we should do in response to God's sovereignty as well. We don't have time to go through every question of this science exam, but it would be good for you to read through Job 38-41 to see how you do on this exam, and take it again on a regular basis to keep your pride down and keep your thinking God-centered. This exam covers cosmology (creation) and flood geology and oceanography and meteorology and hydrology and astronomy and zoology, but most of all, the main point is theology – God is sovereign.

As I said in our message on this passage in our attributes series 2 years ago Job has no answers to any of the 77 questions, he doesn't even have any guesses. He can't buy a vowel, he can't phone a friend, he can't ask the audience, there's no 50/50, no lifelines, no multiple choice, no grace, this test won't be graded on a curve, there's no extra credit or bonus questions – the point is being hammered home emphatically “God is God and you are not!”

Look at the last verse of Job 41 – the climax is a rebuke to pride. Man is to humble himself before creation and give all glory to the Creator who is the only one who can pass this test. The answer to each question is the same: “No, not me. God and God alone. God does all things, I can't do anything. God is God. I am not.” Never forget that God has the sovereign right to do whatever He wants whenever He wants with whoever He wants, and He doesn't need to ask our permission! The Lord is the Potter; we are the clay. He is the Shepherd, we are the sheep, He is the Master, we are the slaves. God is God and we are not. He is sovereign, we must submit and see Him as He is, and see us as we truly are.

Job 42:1 Then Job answered the LORD and said,

Job 42:2 "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

... **Job 42:5** "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You [God in His sovereignty and all attributes];

Job 42:6 Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes."

God is God and I am not
 I can only see a part of the picture He's painting
 God is God and I am man So I'll never understand it all
 For only God is God

And the sky begins to thunder And I'm filled with awe and wonder
 'Til the only burning question that remains Is who am I

Can I form a single mountain
 Take the stars in hand and count them
 Can I even take a breath without God giving it to me
 He is first and last before all that has been Beyond all that will pass

... Oh, how great are the riches of His wisdom and knowledge
 How unsearchable for to Him and through
 Him and from Him are all things

So let us worship before the throne
 Of the One who is worthy of worship alone
 ... Only God is God.

¹ "Noah's Flood: Its Date, Extent, And Divine Accommodation," by Paul H. Seely, *Westminster Theological Journal* Fall 2004 Volume 66/2: p. 297-98.

² Henry Morris, *The Remarkable Record of Job*, p. 29-30.

³ *Ibid.*, 30.