

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES CALLED GENESIS.

GENESIS CHAPTER 8 : 1 – 22

- 1. And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged;***

8:1... wind. The uniform temperatures of the pre-flood world would have prevented the great atmospheric circulations that now prevail, so that significant wind movements were impossible. With the almost complete precipitation of the waters in the primeval canopy after 150 days, the present temperature fluctuations were soon functioning to initiate tremendous winds all over the earth. These winds, blowing on a shores ocean, would certainly generate gigantic surface waves and tidal surges.

The latter, superimposed on all the other hydrodynamic and geophysical forces at work, evidently served as the critical factor to trigger great forces that eventually would restore at least partial equilibrium to the disturbed surface of the earth. The earth's crust was in a highly instable condition, with the tremendous subterranean reservoirs of their pressurized waters and with vast depths of light sediments piling up in the sea basins.

8:1...assuaged. (Abated) As a result of the water subsiding, the phenomena described in Psalm 104:6-9 began to take place. The earth's crust collapsed deep into the previous subterranean reservoir chambers, forming the present ocean basins, causing further extrusions of magmas around their peripheries and through openings in their floors. The light sediments in the sea troughs were forced upward to form mountain ranges and plateaus. Thus the waters originally stored in the vapor canopy and the subterranean chambers are now stored mainly in the present ocean basins ***(these waters would be sufficient to cover a "smoothed" earth to a depth of almost 2 miles)*** after the topographic adjustments that terminated and followed the flood.

Note... ***"God remembered"*** does not mean God had previously forgotten and now remembered; it means ***"God decided to act."***

Note...God, the Creator of nature, is fully in command of the forces He created. Unlike the gods in other ancient flood narratives, He is able to stop the flood as soon as He wishes. By contrast, the gods of the Mesopotamian flood, like Gilgamesh, could not stop the waters they had unleashed, and they themselves became scared of what they had unleashed.

The Torah (the first five books of the Bible ascribed to Moses often referred to as “The Pentateuch”) demonstrates yet again in a central point of the early stories of Genesis: Nature, whose manifestations (the sun, the moon, rivers, springs, and so on) pagans worshipped as gods, was created by, and subservient to, God. Because the whole world worshipped nature, the Torah makes this point again and again.

The people we call pagans were not stupid. They were simply untouched by biblical ideas.

² The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;

³ And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.

8:3...continually. This expression, to some degree, suggests a cyclic tidal action but, especially suggests rapid drainage. It is significant that all the world’s oceans bear evidence (*sea mounts, submarine canyons, etc.*) of former lower levels and that all the world’s continental drainage systems (*rivers, lakes*) bear evidence of former higher water levels and quantities of flow. (*old, raised river terraces and lake beaches, vast alluvial valleys and “underfit” streams*) These worldwide evidences clearly picture a world emerging from a recent global inundation.

⁴ And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

8:4...seventeenth day of the month. This “resting” of the ark, after its labor of protecting its precious cargo against the terrible cataclysm for five long months, occupied exactly 150 days after the flood began. It may be

significant that, on the anniversary of this date many years later, Jesus Christ rose from the dead! That is, the seventh month of the civil calendar used by the Jews was later set as the first month of their religious year. The Passover was on the 14th day of the first month, and Christ rose three days after the Passover. Thus, He “*rested*” in Joseph’s tomb and then rose from the dead on the 17th day of the month of the civil calendar.

8:4...mountains of Ararat. “*Ararat*” in the Bible is the same as “*Armenia*.” The “*mountains of Ararat*” could only apply to the entire region; however, the present Mount Ararat, 17,000 feet high, is the only logical site for the ark to rest. The ark landed the very day the waters began to recede, and it was another 21/2 months until the tops of nearby mountains could even be seen. Furthermore, there have been many reported sightings of the ark, seemingly still preserved on an almost inaccessible ledge, most of the time encased in the stationary ice cap near its summit. Though none of these reports are sufficiently documented to constitute proof, the very number and variety of them is at least intriguing evidence that the ark has been divinely preserved, awaiting God’s timing for its confirmed discovery and manifestation.

Mount Ararat is a volcanic mountain, formed evidently during the early months of the flood year. (*there were no volcanoes before the time of the flood*) There is also considerable geological evidence that it was further uplifted sometime after the flood, so that it may well have been much lower and easier to access during the years immediately following the flood. That even the summit of Ararat was at one time under water, however, is evident both from the marine fossils that have been found there and the extensive pillow lavas (*lavas formed under high hydrostatic pressure*) which exist there.

⁵ *And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.*

⁶ *And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made:*

⁷ And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

8:7...raven. The raven, a hardy flyer and carrion eater, could survive indefinitely even before there was much dry land. The dove, however, required fresh plant material and dry ground.

⁸ Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;

⁹ But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

¹⁰ And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark;

8:10...other seven days. The frequent references to “seven days” in the flood account, plus the fact that Noah left the ark 371 days (**53 weeks**) after entering it, indicates that they were following a calendar based on seven-day weeks. Confined in the ark, the crew could not use the moon or stars for navigation or chronology but, could of course, count days.

¹¹ And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

8:11...olive leaf. The olive tree is extremely hardy and can grow and thrive on almost barren rocky slopes. The fresh olive leaf plucked by the dove proved that the land was beginning to produce a vegetal cover and so would soon be ready to support its human and animal residents again. Both seeds and cuttings from pre-flood plants were abundant in the sediments of the flood and could grow again as soon as adequate sunlight and dry land were available. Experiments have shown that seeds of a wide variety of plants will sprout even after many months of submergence in salt water. Actually the waters of the earth changed only gradually and slightly in salinity during the flood, certainly not so much as to prevent the survival and multiplication of all kinds of plants and marine animals after the flood.

¹² And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

¹³ And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

¹⁴ And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

¹⁵ And God spake unto Noah, saying,

¹⁶ Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

¹⁷ Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

8:17...multiply upon the face of the earth. This is a repetition of the Edenic command to the created animal kinds. (*Genesis 1:20, 22*) In order to do this, they must migrate from Ararat, each finding its proper ecological niche in the drastically changed and widely varied environments of the post-flood world. During the Ice Age following the flood, land bridges existed across the Bering Strait from Siberia to Alaska and down the Malaysian Strait into New Guinea, facilitating such migrations. Also, Noah's descendants certainly knew how to build and use boats, and some of the animals may well have been transported this way, as well as on rafts of vegetation transported out to sea during the river floods.

¹⁸ And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him:

¹⁹ Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

8:19...out of the ark. Here it is again asserted, as clearly as could be expressed, that all the present land animals in the earth have descended from those on the ark.

²⁰ And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

8:20...offered burnt offerings. Noah thus sacrificed what amounted to one-seventh of his flocks and herds of domestic animals, a real act of thanksgiving and

faith on his part. The world was far more forbidding in aspect than when they had entered the ark: rugged and desolate, cold and stormy, barren and silent. It had been purged and cleansed of its wicked and violent inhabitants, however, God had preserved His remnant through the awful cataclysm, so this was a service of both great praise and earnest petition.

²¹ And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

8:21...not again curse. The promise of God given in response to Noah's sacrificial prayer of thanksgiving and intercession, is tremendous in scope. He would never again "**curse the ground**" with a worldwide curse as He had done following Adam's sin. The Edenic curse is still in effect, of course, but, there would be no other. Noah had, indeed, brought "**comfort**" to the world concerning "**the ground which the Lord had cursed.**" (*Genesis 5:29*)

8:21...every living thing. Neither would God ever again bring a worldwide cataclysm to the earth as He had with the flood.

Note... 8:21. "The Lord smelled the pleasing odor." In the ancient world, it was commonly believed the gods ate the sacrifices offered by human beings. By noting that God smelled Noah's offering, the Torah debunks the idea God needs physical sustenance.

In other words, God "smelled the pleasing odor" means God recognized the sacrifice as the act of gratitude it was.

Note...8:21. And the Lord said to himself. "Never again will I doom the earth because of man." God vowed not to curse the earth again. (the word translated as "doom" (arur) means "curse") But there is no implication God regreted what He had done. Notice that God did not consider taking back the gift of free will. That would have certainly ended evil on earth. But that was not God's design: we humans are to choose to be good freely. Free will is what most distinguishes us from animals.

If God is not going to destroy the world again and yet allow humans free will, He was going to have to do something to prevent mankind from relapsing into evil. That something was moral revelation.

One might say that in the Hebrew Bible, God tried three things to have man do good. The first attempt was implanting a conscience in human beings. The second was revealing moral laws to Noah and his descendants. The third was revealing the Ten Commandments and the large body of laws in the Torah to a specific (or “chosen”) group.

Why isn't the conscience enough to ensure goodness?

- *Because the conscience can be easily manipulated into thinking it is doing good while doing evil. Most of those who commit evil in the name of their god or some secular ideology are at peace with their conscience.*
- *Because the conscience can be easily dulled. The more bad a person does, the more accustomed they become, and the quieter the voice of the conscience becomes.*
- *Because the conscience is usually not nearly as powerful as the natural drives. Greed, envy, sex, alcohol—any of these often overpower the conscience.*
- *Because without explicit moral laws, the conscience alone is often a poor guide to doing what is right. In instances in which only one can be saved, do you save your beloved dog or a stranger? The conscience, without an external value system, can just as easily argue for either choice.*

Note...8:21. Since the devising's of man's mind are evil from his youth. The Torah, as this verse makes apparent, does not hold that people are basically good. The idea that human beings are born good and corrupted by society is a relatively new one—largely associated with philosophers of the French Enlightenment such as Jean-Jaques Rousseau, (1712-1778) John Locke, (1602-1734) with his “Tabula Rasa.” People are born as a blank slate.

It is difficult to overstate how wrong and how morally destructive this idea has been. It is another example of the damage caused—and the foolishness generated—by Western society's abandonment of the Bible. To believe people are basically good after all the horrors committed by human beings against other human beings throughout history is to engage in a level of irrational thinking.

How can a rational person believe people are basically good?

- *Are there any parents who haven't had to teach their children to be good people? How many times has the average parent told his or her child, “Say,*

Thank you”? If people were basically good, wouldn't telling a child once or twice suffice?

- *Haven't most children been bullied—physically hurt or sadistically taunted—by other children?*
- *What percentage of children have been physically, verbally, or sexually abused by adults?*
- *If people are basically good, how does one account for all the Roman citizens who paid to watch and laugh at people eaten alive by wild animals in the Roman coliseum,?*
- *What about all the wars, few of which were morally justified, with their mass killings, barbarity, torture, and rape?*
- *If people are basically good, why did virtually every society in history practice slavery, which, in addition to its inherent cruelty, was so frequently accompanied by sadism?*

The Torah teaches that, especially in a free society, the battle for a good world is not between the individual and society but between the individual and his or her nature.

²² While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

8:22...remaineth. This dual promise would be kept as long as the earth existed in its probationary state, with man still in his sinful condition, his ***“heart evil from his youth.”*** Eventually, the earth would be renovated and the curse removed altogether. (***Revelation 22:3***)

8:22...shall not cease. The principle of uniformity is here established by God for the post-flood world. Not only would the basic laws of nature still continue in effect (***these had, of course, operated even during the flood***) but also the regular operation of its natural processes. (***these had greatly intensified during the flood***) The basic processes of earth are its rotation on its axis and its orbital revolution around the sun. These control all annual and daily processes, which in turn control practically all biological and geological processes. Absolute uniformity of the day/night cycle and the seasonal cycles assures at least general uniformity of functioning of other processes.

Thus the principle of uniformitarianism is valid, absolutely, for the laws of nature ever since the imposition of God's curse (***except for special miracles***) and is valid statistically for the processes of nature since the flood.

Note...God guarantees that He will never again be responsible for ending the world. If the world is destroyed, it will be because human beings did it, not God.