



THE GLOBAL FLOOD; REALITY OR A STORY?

May, 2019

Perry Atkinson and John Mittendorf

INTRODUCTION

Some people, Christians and non-Christians alike, find various portions of the Bible difficult to understand or believe, primarily due to ordinary unbelief and/or contradictory secular scientific arguments. Several examples are the Bible is not perceived as the inerrant word of God, Adam and Eve are just a story as secular science supports the premise that life evolved from evolutionary ancestors, God could not have created the universe, earth and man in six 24-hr days, and Jesus could not have arisen from the dead after three days in a tomb. However, the portion of Scripture that most people find either unbelievable from a Scriptural point-of-view or impossible from a scientific perspective is the biblical account of Noah's Ark and a Global Flood that destroyed the earth and all living land and air creatures that were not on the Ark.

As an example, a well-known Christian apologetics organization recently had the opportunity to staff a "*Creationist*" booth at an annual convention of the National Education Association (NEA) in Los Angeles. The NEA is one of the most anti-Christian lobby groups in the United States and is also the world's largest public education group (over 3 million members), yet the NEA had the opportunity to hear the truth regarding Scripture as found in God's inspired Word. Interestingly, the most common topic that was consistently used by

doubters to ridicule the Bible was Noah's Ark and the Global Flood. Here were some of the typical comments:

- How did Noah have the expertise to build a wooden ark?
- How could the ark carry all of those animals?
- Where's the evidence of a global flood?
- How did Noah fit dinosaurs and elephants on the ark?
- Where did the floodwaters come from, and where did they go?
- How could a boat that big be made from wood and not self-destruct in a catastrophic flood?

Not surprisingly, the modern view of Noah, the Ark and the Global Flood is presented in the secular media, many churches, and various seminaries as a cute fairy tale (Figure 1), or placed in the category of a joke. However, can the



Figure 1. Noah's Ark Is Often Presented As A Cute Fairy Tale

biblical account of the Global Flood be classified as historically accurate or just another biblical account that is often perceived as another religious story that has little credibility particularly when secular science confidently declares there is no evidence to support that a Global Flood ever happened. With these thoughts in mind, let's look at two primary facets of science – the geological and archaeological records – to see if there is evidence for or against a biblical Global Flood.

GEOLOGICAL RECORD

If the Genesis Flood really occurred, it should leave an abundance of evidence as we read in Genesis 7 that:

- The fountains of the great deep were broken up and poured out water from inside the earth for 150 days (5 months)
- It rained torrentially and globally for 40 days and nights
- The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth
- All the high hills and mountains under the whole heaven were covered
- And 2 Peter 3:6 states; *the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished*. Therefore, all air-breathing life on the land was swept away and perished

So, what evidence would we look for? Wouldn't we expect to find billions of buried fossilized plants and animals that were deposited rapidly by water in rock layers all over the earth? Additionally, shouldn't we also find altered layers of rock that show testimony of rapidly moving floodwaters? Not surprisingly, that's exactly what we find based on the description of the Global Flood as described in Genesis 7-8. As a result, let's look at six main geologic evidences that graphically testify to the Genesis Global Flood.

EVIDENCE #1: Fossils of sea creatures high above sea level due to the ocean waters having flooded over the mountains

We find fossils of *sea creatures* in rock layers that cover all the continents. For example, marine fossils are found in most of the rock layers in the walls of the Grand Canyon, including the topmost layer known as the Kaibab Limestone,¹

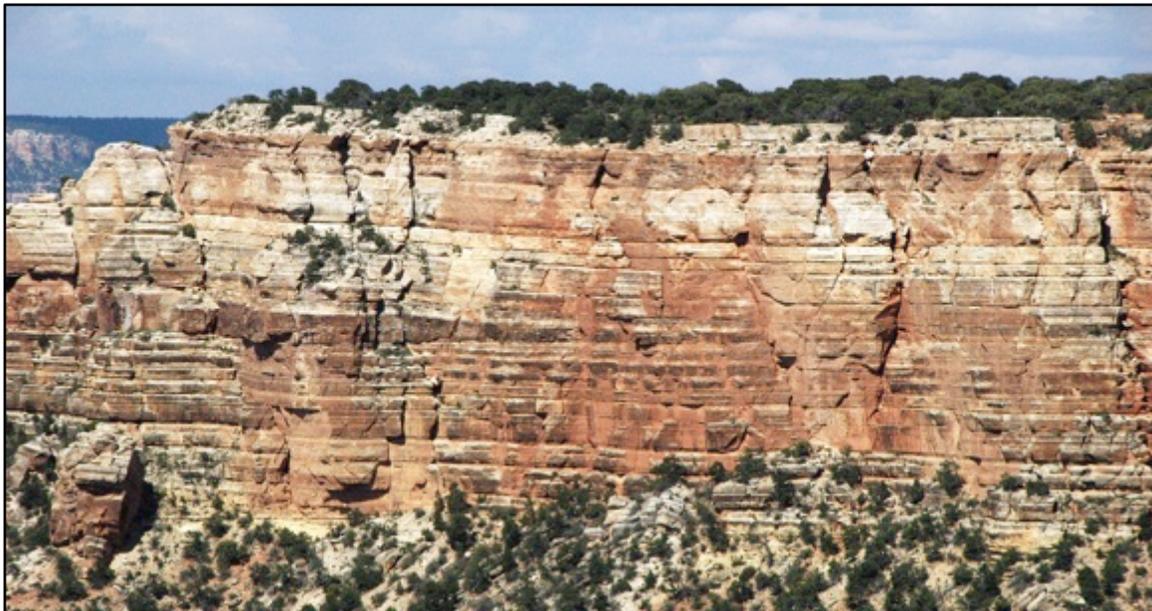


Figure 2. Kaibab Limestone, Grand Canyon

located 7,000 to 8,000-feet above sea level (Figure 2). Fossilized shellfish (ammonites) are even found in the limestone beds of the Himalaya Mountains of Nepal and other high mountains as well.² All geologists agree that ocean waters must have buried these marine fossils in the Himalayan limestone beds.

EVIDENCE #2: Rapid burial of plants and animals

We find extensive fossil graveyards (Figure 3) and exquisitely preserved fossils in massive global graveyards that indicates rapid burial on a massive scale. For example, billions of Nautiloid fossils (along with other marine creatures) are found in a layer within the Redwall Limestone of the Grand Canyon³ that



Figure 3. Fossil Graveyards Indicate Mass Burials

continues for 180 miles across northern Arizona and into southern Nevada covering an area of at least 10,500 square miles. This layer was clearly deposited catastrophically by an enormous flow of sediment (mostly lime sand and silt). Although there are many examples of these mass graveyards around the world, several other notable examples are:

- Hundreds of thousands of marine creatures are buried with amphibians, spiders, scorpions, millipedes, insects, and reptiles in fossil graveyards in Montceau-Mines, France⁴
- At Fossil Bluff on the north coast of Tasmania, many thousands of marine creatures were buried together in a broken state. This fossil bed continues across Europe to the Middle East as well as into the Midwest of the USA, forming a global-scale fossil graveyard⁵

- The immense chalk and coal beds of Europe and the United States testify of catastrophic destruction and burial

Not surprisingly, these large-scale fossil graveyards also indicate the apparent speed of burial as many creatures were buried and fossilized under catastrophic flood conditions that they were exquisitely preserved. This is evidenced by fine details such as fins and eye sockets that have been preserved, and in some cases, minute detail. Also, these fossil graveyards often consist of mixtures of marine and land-dwelling creatures indicating the waters of this global cataclysm swept over both the oceans and the continents.

EVIDENCE #3: Rapidly deposited sediment layers spread across vast areas
Rock layers can be traced all the way across continents, even between continents, and physical features in those strata indicate they were deposited rapidly. For example, the chalk beds of England (the white cliffs of Dover, Figure 4) can be



Figure 4. Chalk Beds Of England

traced westward across England and appear again in northern Ireland. In the eastward direction from Dover, the same chalk beds can be traced across France, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, southern Scandinavia and other parts of Europe to Turkey, then to Israel, Egypt and Kazakhstan.⁶ In the Grand Canyon, inclined (sloping) layers within the Coconino Sandstone are testimony to 10,000 cubic miles of sand being deposited within days by huge water currents (and also covering 200,000 square miles eastward across adjoining states),⁷ and the

Tapeats Sandstone and Redwall Limestone can be traced across the entire United States and up into Canada, and even across the Atlantic Ocean to England.

EVIDENCE #4: Sediment transported long distances

The sediments in widespread, rapidly deposited rock layers were eroded from distant sources and carried long distances by fast-moving water. For example, the sand in the Coconino Sandstone⁸ of the Grand Canyon in Arizona was eroded and transported from the northern portion of what is now the United States and Canada. Furthermore, water current indicators (such as ripple marks called Varves, Figure 5) preserved in rock layers show that water currents were



Figure 5. Varves

steadily flowing from northeast to southwest across all of North and South America, which, of course, is only possible over weeks during a Global Flood.

EVIDENCE #5: Rapid and no erosion between strata

In many places around the world there is visible evidence of rapid erosion, or even of no erosion at the boundaries between sedimentary rock layers. Flat, knife-edge boundaries between rock layers indicate rapid continuous deposition of one layer after another with no time for long periods of erosion. For example, there is no evidence of millions of years of erosion (using alleged evolutionary timescales) in the flat boundary between two well-known layers of the Grand Canyon, the Coconino Sandstone and the Hermit Formation⁹ (Figure 6). Another



Figure 6. Flat Boundary Between The Coconino Sandstone And Hermit Formation

impressive example of flat boundaries at the Grand Canyon is the Redwall Limestone and the strata beneath it. Remember that alleged slow evolutionary geologic processes would require hundreds of millions of years to deposit successive sediment layers and would show remnants of slow weathering and erosion which is not seen in Figure 6 and many other similar examples.

EVIDENCE #6: Rock layers folded, not fractured

Rocks do not normally bend as they will break loose or fracture because they are hard and brittle.¹⁰ But in many places we find whole sequences of strata that were bent without fracturing indicating that the rock layers were rapidly deposited and folded while still wet and pliable before final hardening. For example, the rock strata in Figure 7 is located in Basque Country, France, and is folded at multiple right angles (90-degrees) without evidence of breaking and/or fracturing. Yet, this folding could only have occurred after the visible strata layers had been deposited while they remained wet, soft and pliable and then folded by earth movements (uplifting).



Figure 7. Folded Rock Strata, Basque Country, France

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

A common human trait is the passing of information from one generation to the next, typically involving past events. Several examples worth mentioning is America defeating its enemies in World War II, the first American astronauts (Apollo 11) to successfully land and walk on the moon, the significance of 9/11 and even the biblical account of the Global Flood and Noah's Ark. Not surprisingly, recent archaeological discoveries have underscored the fact that the biblical Global Flood is also mentioned in numerous other cultures on earth as evidenced by a study completed by Dr. John Morris of the Institute For Creation Research.¹¹

The study indicates that there are more than 200 accounts of global floods from nearly every ancient culture on earth, and the similarities with the biblical account are astounding as a comparison of the common details are more than similar as follows:

- Was there a favored family 88%
- Were they forewarned 66%
- Was the flood due to the wickedness of man 66%
- Was the catastrophe only a flood 95%
- Was the flood global 95%

- Did the survivors land on a mountain 57%
- Were birds sent out 35%
- Was a rainbow mentioned 7%
- Did the survivors offer a sacrifice 13%
- Specifically, were eight persons saved 9%

The obvious conclusion is straightforward and applicable. A common belief points towards a root event that happened in history and the previous study by Dr. Morris demonstrates the biblical Global Flood account must be one of the most well known events in human history as similar details have been preserved by so many ancient civilizations on earth. In addition to the fact that there are numerous historical accounts of a global flood from many ancient civilizations, it should also not be surprising that modern archaeology has discovered ancient artifacts that detail a globe-covering catastrophe with parallel details to the biblical account that is not just found among the Israelites (who came on the scene some 700 years after the floodwaters receded). So, let's look at three of the most famous extra-biblical historical flood accounts from archaeological discoveries and notice the *similarities* to the biblical account.

EPIC OF GILGAMESH

The Epic of Gilgamesh is likely the most famous extra-biblical account of the



Figure 8. Tablet XI From The Epic Of Gilgamesh

Global Flood and is contained on twelve large tablets written in the Sumerian cuneiform language. The tablets were discovered in 1853 while excavations were underway at the library of the ancient Assyrian capital of Ninevah that date back to around 650 B.C. Linguistic experts believe that the account was composed well before 2,200 B.C. and was compiled from material that was much older than that date¹² as the Sumerian cuneiform writing has been estimated to go as far back as 3,300 B.C.¹³ It is the 11th Tablet (Figure 8) of the Epic of Gilgamesh that describes:

*“How the gods determined to send a flood to destroy the earth, but one of them, Ea, revealed the plan to Utu-napishtim whom he instructed to make a boat in which to save himself and his family. He orders him to take into it birds and beasts of all kinds. Utu-napishtim obeyed and when all were aboard and the door shut the rains descended and all of the rest of mankind perished. After six days the waters abated and the ship grounded. The first bird released flew to and fro but found no resting-place. A swallow likewise returned but finally a raven that had been sent out did not return showing that the waters were receding.”*¹⁴

BABYLONIAN ARK TABLET

The Babylonian Ark Tablet (also called the Ark Tablet, Figure 9) was introduced to the public in 1872 after being excavated at Nineveh in present-day Iraq. The circular tablet is inscribed in cuneiform, is dated to around 1900-1700 B.C., and



Figure 9. Babylonian Ark Tablet

is a Babylonian account of a flood in which the god Enki instructs Atrahasis (the Babylonian Noah) on how to build an ark.¹⁵ Following is a summary of the highlights of the tablet:¹⁶

- A god instructed a man to build a giant boat about two-thirds the size of a soccer field
- The boat was to be reinforced with wooden ribs (see Genesis 6:14)
- The boat was to be covered with bitumen (see Genesis 6:14)
- The animals were to board the boat two-by-two (see Genesis 7:9)
- The purpose of all of these things was to survive a devastating flood (see Genesis 6:17)

THE ATRA-HASIS EPIC

This is an eighteenth century B.C. Akkadian epic (Figure 10), and is named after its human hero and can be dated by its scribal identification to the reign of Hammurabi. The Atra-Hasis story also exists in a later fragmentary Assyrian version, the first one having been discovered in the library of Ashurbanipal and



Figure 10. Epic Of Atra-Hasis

is inscribed in Akkadian, the language of ancient Babylon.¹⁷ The epic offers many details that are similar to the Bible's Creation and Flood accounts. Specifically, the epic recounts:¹⁸

- A great flood (see Genesis 6-8)
- A hero instructed to build a boat for him and the animals to survive (see Genesis 7:1-2)
- Specifically that animals entered two-by-two (see Genesis 7:2-9)

CONCLUSION

Although there are many other applicable special and unique biblical artifacts that have excavated in recent times, the uniqueness of these artifacts, provide real, tangible, and visual confirmation to the accuracy of the biblical text. Modern archaeology continues to highlight the accurate biblical descriptions of civilization after civilization, of city after city, of personality after personality, and account after account as illustrated by the following quote:

*"It could be said that there has never been so much skepticism and doubt in the biblical account. Yet at the same time, there has never been so much corresponding proof! A vast window into real biblical history is rapidly opening up through archaeology"*¹⁹

RESOURCES

1. Kaibab Formation, Grand Canyon Geology
S.S. Beus and M. Morales
Oxford University Press, 2003
2. Exploring Earth, An Introduction to Physical Geology
The Rise and Fall of Mountain Ranges
J.P. Davidson, W.E. Reed, P.M. Davis
Prentice Hall, 1997
3. Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Creationism
Steven Austin
Creation Science Fellowship, 2003
4. The Fossils of Montceau-les-Mines
Daniel Heyler and Cecile M. Poplin
Scientific American, 1988
5. Tasmania's Fossil Bluff
Andrew Snelling
Ex Nihilo, 1985
6. The Nature of the Stratigraphical Record
D.V. Ager
Macmillan, 1973

7. Permian System of Colorado Plateau
D.L. Baars
American Association of Petroleum Geologists Bulletin 46, 1962
8. Ibid.
9. The Supai Group of Grand Canyon
E.D. McKee
U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper, 1982
10. Physics of Deformation, Elements of Structural Geology
E.S. Hills
Methuen & Co, 1970
11. www.icr.org
John D. Morris, Ph.D., 2001
12. www.watchjerusalem.co.il/98-touring-the-bible-at-the-british-museum
13. Flood Stories of the Ancient Near East
O'Brien
14. www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection
15. www.biblicalarchaeologyreview.org
16. www.answersingenesis.org/the-flood/flood-legends
17. www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/atra-hasis
18. www.watchjerusalem.co.il/98-touring-the-bible-at-the-british-museum
19. Ibid.