

Noah's flood and Ark story

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Introduction

If Moses wrote the story of Noah's flood and the building of the Ark as a theological message that the early Hebrews needed to hear, such as (a) that God would not kill so many people while saving Noah and his family and (b) that God would not do such a large flood again, then there is no problem. But if this story is considered from a scientific analysis, then there is a whole host of problems.

Problems to consider

One problem is the following. There is a wide variety of life forms that exist in or on the ground that most assuredly would have perished if there had been a worldwide flood lasting a whole year. The number of species is enormous and is believed to number three quarters of a million or more and would require Noah to traverse the world gathering and preserving them on the Ark. Some of them are:

<u>Life Form</u>	<u>Number of Species</u>
Ants	12,000
Beetles	350,000
Butterflies	17,500
Crickets	900
Earth Worms	7,000
Cicadas	3,000
Grubs	30,000
Grass Hoppers	6,800
Katydid	6,400
Locust	19
Moths	160,000
Nematodes	30,000
Snails	40,000
Soil Bacteria	60,000
Termites	2,000
Total	725,619

How would fish survive the flood? One might think that the fish in the world's seas, rivers, and lakes would easily survive a worldwide flood. Not so! There are three categories of fish:

Anadromous – Fish born in fresh water but live their adult lives in salty seas.

Catadromous – Fish spawned in the sea but live their adult lives in fresh water. The above fish are collectively referred to as Euryhaline fish as they are able to adjust to a wide range of water salinity.

Stenohaline – Fish that can live only within a narrow range of water salinity and the great majority of fish are of this type. They include fish that can survive only in fresh water and will often be unable to survive if the salinity levels of their surrounding water varies more than .05 percent, according to the National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII).

Fish that can survive only in fresh water include:
 Centrarchidae – Sunfish, bluegills Characidae – Piranhas
 Cyprinidae – Carp, Minnows, Goldfish, Koi Dipnoi – Lungfish
 Percidae – Perch, Walleye Polypteridae – Ropefish, Reedfish,
 Dichirs Siluroids.

Catfish Fish that can survive only in salt water include:
 Scombrinae – Bonito, Maceral & Tuna Thunnus – Albacore.

If the flood was worldwide, then the above species would have gone extinct due to the mixing of fresh and salt water. Yet these species are alive today testifying that the flood was not worldwide.

As said above --- all stenohaline fish that cannot tolerate salt water would have gone extinct. Such fish include blue gills, perch, carp, gold fish plus many other fish species. Noah would have had to build a tank in the Ark to hold fresh water for these fish, provide food for them, and pump oxygen into the water in the tank because such fish require oxygen to live.

All toads and frogs would have gone extinct. Presently there are the following numbers of different vertebrate animal species on Earth: mammals (5,500), birds (10,000), reptiles

(10,000), amphibians (15,000), and fishes (40,000) for a total of 80,500. On that basis, excluding fish, Noah would have needed to have put 40,500 pairs (one male and one female) of vertebrate animals on the Ark and then provided enough food and fresh water for a whole year to enable them to live plus manage to get rid of manure and urine that would have been produced by these animals. In other words, realistically, Noah's Ark could not hold this many species of animals, and Noah and his family could not have fed and taken care of them.

Let's look at the waste problem. It has been estimated that the animals aboard Noah's Ark would generate some 12 tons of manure and urine waste a day and that this waste would cause no danger of asphyxiation because the methane generated would be vented out the windows nearly 5 stories up. What people fail to understand is that there is more than lighter-than-air methane gas generated --- there is carbon dioxide and deadly hydrogen sulfide gases. Many a utility worker has descended into a sewer manhole or manure pit without an oxygen mask and suffocated after one or two breaths. The amount of 12 tons of manure and urine would make the bilge a very dangerous place. Removing 24,000 pounds of manure and urine at the rate of 40 pounds every 10 minutes would require 100 man-hours or virtually the entire Noah's family working non-stop for 12 1/2 hours. Where then would Noah and his family have time to feed and water the animals and tend to their own needs? Someone needs to revise their thinking.

Let's look at another problem of getting all of the land animals to the Ark. How do animals from all over the world somehow manage to navigate oceans, deserts, and mountain

ranges and find Noah's Ark? How do pandas find the special bamboo along the way that they require or koalas the eucalyptus leaves they require? How does Noah arrange for a fresh supply of this food for a whole year on the Ark? How did Noah store the ants and termites that anteaters require? Strange that Noah's says nothing about any exotic animals that he has never seen. Could it be that he didn't find it necessary to describe the animals because they were his livestock? In addition to some 25,500 animals Noah would have to board and care for, he would have to travel all over the world and collect 390,800 species of trees and plants and in addition several million insect species. This does not include all the microorganisms in the soil that are necessary for plant growth. He would also have to collect the seeds to plant wheat, rye, barley, and oats to supply the needs of the plants to feed his livestock, and after landing of the Ark --- he would have to wait for more than a year for enough rain to leach out the salt in the soil before such plants would even sprout and grow. Livestock cannot wait that long before such plant food is produced.

Let's look at still another problem of a Flood that is worldwide (global) that is produced in a literal reading of Genesis. The first clue that the literal reading is misleading is found in Genesis 6:7 where God supposedly is destroying all life on earth and that would include little children and infants. How does one reconcile this with Jesus who never caused the death of anyone? Why would Moses attribute the cause of the flood to God? In the era that the flood took place, it was commonly assumed that if there was a natural disaster it was God, or the Gods, punishing humanity for some transgression. The Bible however provides clues that there was a massive terrifying local

flood but not a world-wide flood and thus God did not cause the death of all humans other than Noah and his family. Evidence that there was no world-wide flood includes what is said in Genesis 8:11 in which Noah sent out a dove that returned with a fresh olive leaf. If the olive tree had been completely submerged under water, as Genesis 7:20 states, and for five months as Genesis 7:11 and 8:4 claim, the tree would simply be dead and would not produce fresh olive leaves.

Then, there is the matter of the man-hours required to feed and water the animals and plants. Any major zoo can provide information on the number of animals they have (3,000 to 5,000) and the number of people that are directly involved in their care. Such a number includes more than 1,000 people working 24/7. Simple math will show that the man-hours each of the eight humans aboard the ark would have to work to feed, water and care for the animals, trees, plants and insects far outstrips the hours in a day by a very large factor.

Conclusion

Lastly, by having God destroy all evil humans and animals on Earth, such does not illustrate the kind of God that Jesus said that God was like because Jesus said that God was like (a loving Father, Abba, daddy), and the Old Testament story makes God kill innocent women, children, and babies which is not what Jesus would want us to believe.

In other words, Noah's flood story is written to give good theology and not meant to be a story that represents what is possible scientifically. God is said to have produced the first

rainbow following the flood as a promise that God would not cause another flood that was worldwide in scale, but scientifically rainbows would have existed prior to the flood because rain must have fallen for many years to provide water that allow barley and wheat to grow. So, the supposed first rainbow is another example of good theology.

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