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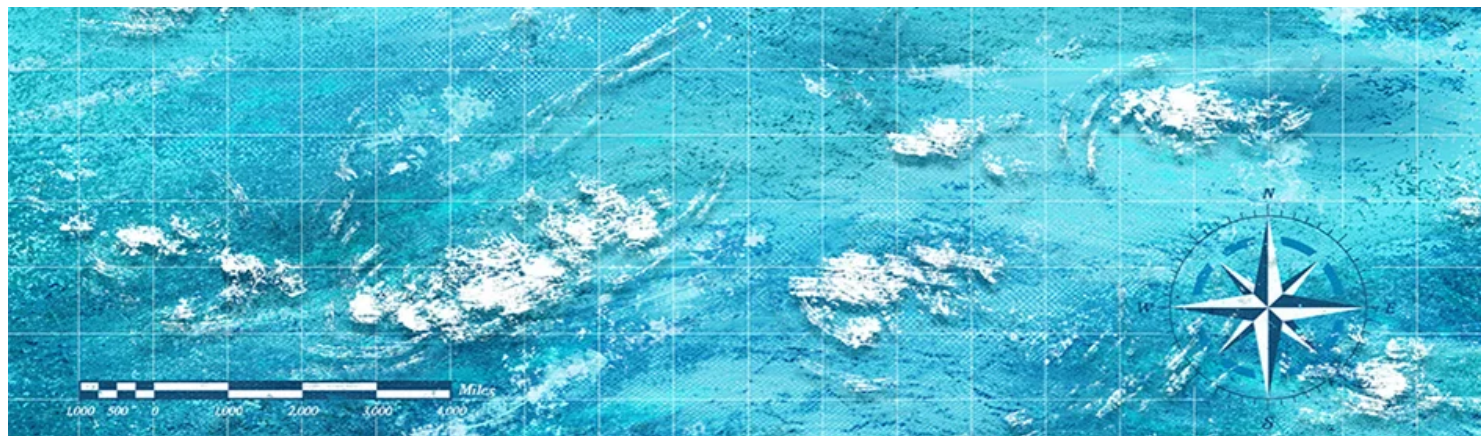


Illustration by Ben Stafford

# A Global Flood—Rising Above All Doubt

## Creation Basics

by Dr. Terry Mortenson [<http://answersingenesis.org/bios/terry-mortenson/>] on July 1, 2016

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Some Christians claim Noah's Flood was local, and it doesn't really matter what we believe about it. Does this view hold water?

Does it really matter what we believe about Noah's Flood? Isn't the message clear that **God** [<http://answersingenesis.org/god/>] hates **sin** [<http://answersingenesis.org/sin/>], whether the Flood was truly a global event, a local one, or even just a cautionary legend?

Every year, I have the privilege of helping lead a rafting trip through the Grand Canyon for **Christian** [<http://answersingenesis.org/christian/>] leaders and professors so they can consider those questions. The canyon cuts through nearly a mile of sedimentary rock layers and provides powerful evidence corroborating the global catastrophic Flood. During our last trip, a philosophy

professor told me, “I’ve been a young-earth creationist for many years, but I never realized until now that the Flood is absolutely critical to the young-earth view.”

Why is the Flood so important? The answer starts with the **Bible**

[<http://answersingenesis.org/bible/>]’s description of the Flood and the Ark.

## The Historical Fact of the Flood

Noah’s Flood really did happen, and it confronts us with the sobering reality of God’s judgment. The Genesis account is clearly written as historical narrative, not as myth. Lest we miss that important point, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jesus, and the Apostle Peter all taught that the Flood really happened (**Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14; Matthew 24:37–39; and 2 Peter 2:5, 3:3–7**). Hundreds of flood traditions around the world—with many details similar to the Genesis account—further point to the historical reality of the worldwide deluge.

## The Global Extent of the Flood

Many Christians today think Noah’s Flood was confined to the Middle East, but **Genesis 6–9** vividly describes a worldwide catastrophe. Only a global Flood could accomplish God’s purpose to destroy not only sinful mankind, but also all the land animals and birds outside the Ark, and even the surface of the earth itself (**6:7, 13**). When God sent His promised judgment, there was no safe place to run (or fly).

Universal terms such as *all*, *every*, and *under heaven* are used over 60 times in the narrative. They emphasize the global extent of the Flood (see especially **7:21–23**). The Flood’s long duration, roughly a year from start until Noah stepped out onto dry ground, also emphasizes its extent—global.

The Flood covered all the high mountains under the whole heaven (**7:19–20**), and the Ark landed on a mountaintop (**8:4–5**). Obviously, a local flood could not accomplish this. And if the Flood was merely local, the Ark would have been totally unnecessary since the humans and animals could just migrate out of the flood zone.

The commands for animals and Noah's family to repopulate the earth also confirm that all other land-dwelling life had perished (**8:17** and **9:1**). And Genesis later tells us that all post-Flood nations descended from Noah's three sons and their wives (**10:32**).

Scripture could hardly be clearer that when the waters reached the highest level, not a speck of dry ground remained anywhere on the planet.

## The Violence of the Flood

Consider again the grim purpose of the Flood: to blot out man, land animals, and flying creatures and destroy the surface of the earth (**6:7, 13**). Gently rising waters, which human beings could simply "ride out," would not accomplish this purpose. We need to treat God's Word carefully and with utmost respect as we share its truths with a lost world. The Bible describes a violent event that was unprecedented in history.

**Genesis 7:11** points to two sources of water: the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep and the opening of the floodgates of heaven.

But the rains probably were not the primary source of water. The Hebrew words translated "the fountains of the great deep were *broken up*" strongly imply earthquake activity on the ocean floor that would have released enormous amounts of subterranean water under high pressure (and likely high temperature). This would have caused massive tsunamis and volcanic activity, which occurred all over the earth as the Flood raged.

*The global Flood is key to determining the age of the earth and showing that Scripture is the authority on everything it claims about history.*

The receding waters were likewise not peaceful, as the mountains rose and valleys sank (consider **Psalm 104:6–9**) and the waters “returned continually” (the Hebrew may imply back and forth movement) from off the land (**Genesis 8:3–7**). The result would be an incredible amount of erosion and sedimentation.

From this description it is perfectly reasonable to conclude not only that the Flood destroyed all the people, land animals, and flying creatures outside the Ark, but also that it ripped up all the vegetation. Tsunamis and rising water washed billions of sea creatures onto land and buried them in the sediments carried by the surging waters. The Flood also would have eroded and redeposited massive amounts of sand, silt, clay, and rocks of all sizes. This was no tame event, but a catastrophe of unimaginable destructive power, which radically rearranged the earth’s surface.

## Why Does It Matter?

The global Flood is key to determining the age of the earth and showing that Scripture is the authority on everything it claims about history, from **Creation** [<http://answersingenesis.org/creation/>] to the Flood and Christ. Attempts to restrict Noah’s Flood to the Middle East undermine the specific details of God’s inspired, inerrant Word. They elevate the truth claims of the scientific majority to supreme authority over God’s claims about His miraculous intervention in world history.

Any Christian rafting through the Grand Canyon should realize that the Flood is critical to believing what the Bible says about the age of the earth. What other time period in biblical history could have produced so many thousands of feet of sedimentary rock layers and fossils? Secular scientists attribute those layers to gradual processes over millions of years, while the Bible speaks

of only one earth-changing catastrophe. Christians have a choice to make. They must decide whether to accept the truth of God's inerrant Word or the dogmatic pronouncements of the scientific majority.

To deny the global catastrophic Flood is to accuse Jesus and Peter of teaching error. Not only did they believe in the Flood, the Ark, and Noah, they also claimed the Flood was a warning of the judgment to come again upon the whole earth because of sin (see **Matthew 24:37–39** and **2 Peter 3:3–7**). Our hope in the **gospel** [<http://answersingenesis.org/gospel/>] is based on the words of **Jesus** [<http://answersingenesis.org/jesus/>] and His apostles. We dare not contradict their warnings—and promises—if we care about reaching the world with the glorious gospel revealed in God's Word.

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## Suggested Resources:

- **Coming to Grips with Genesis** [<http://answersingenesis.org/store/sku/10-3-121/>] by Dr. Terry Mortenson
- **Earth's Catastrophic Past: Geology, Creation, and the Flood** [<http://answersingenesis.org/store/sku/10-3-124/>] by Dr. Andrew A. Snelling

## Why Is Creation Such a Big Deal?

This magazine's passion is to spread the Creator's message about the gospel. What is the gospel? "Good news." And good news begins with bad news.

## The Bad News

Mankind's history includes the bad news that the first man, Adam, rebelled against God's command, separating us from God and bringing death and suffering into the world. Adam's

descendants (all of us) are sinful from conception (**Psalm 51:5**), and we have entered into Adam's rebellion—sin. So we can't live with a holy God but are separated from Him. The Bible says, "**All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God**" (**Romans 3:23**), and so all are subject to "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (**2 Thessalonians 1:9**).

## The Good News

But the good news is that God has done something about this problem. "**God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life**" (**John 3:16**).

Jesus Christ the Creator, though totally sinless, suffered sin's penalty on our behalf. He suffered death and separation from God, His Father, to satisfy the righteous demands of God's holiness and justice. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice; He died on a cross. But on the third day He rose again, conquering death, so that all who repent of their sin and trust Him rather than their own merit can come back to God and live with Him for eternity.

Therefore: "**He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already**" (**John 3:18**). What a wonderful salvation in Christ, our Creator and our Savior!

## Was the Flood of Noah Global or Local in Extent?

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