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FLOOD LEGENDS DROWN EVOLUTION

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FLOOD LEGENDS DROWN

EVOLUTION

“And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh...”
Genesis 6:17a

The ancient Aztecs tell a story of a catastrophic global flood that destroyed all life except one man and his wife, who survived by riding in a boat which, after the floodwaters receded, came to rest on a mountain.¹ Legends of a global flood are found in nearly every culture on earth.² What does this phenomenon mean for us? Could it mean that these stories are memories of the Biblical Flood? This paper will examine some flood legends from various cultures and times. Themes common to all flood legends worldwide will be briefly reviewed as well. The evolutionary view of flood legends and how they came to be will be examined to see whether it is plausible or not. We will then decide whether these legends are really just myths or if they have a real catastrophe behind them.

The Story of the Flood

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth...

And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast... for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD... And God said unto Noah...Make thee an ark of gopher wood ... And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life, from under heaven; *and* every thing that *is* in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the

¹ Eric Lyons & Kyle Buê, “Legends of the Flood,” <https://apologeGcspress.org/arGcles/40> (Accessed January 31, 2019).

² “Flood Legends from Around the World,” <https://nwcreaGon.net/noahlegends.html> (Accessed January 31, 2019).

ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives...

And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every *sort* shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep *them* alive with thee; they shall be male and female... And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten... Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he. And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark...

And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth... and all the high hills, that *were* under the whole heaven, were covered... All in whose nostrils *was* the breath of life, of all that *was* in the dry *land*, died... and Noah only remained *alive*, and they that *were* with him in the ark...

And God remembered Noah, and every living thing: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged... And the ark rested ...upon the mountains of Ararat... And it came to pass... that Noah opened the window of the ark: And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot... and she returned unto him into the ark, then he put forth his hand ...and pulled her in unto him into the ark. ...and again he sent forth the dove ... 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... And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that *is* with thee...that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth... And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; ... and offered burnt offerings on the altar. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth... the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.” (Genesis 7-9, selected verses.)

Two flood legends will be set forth as representative of what the majority of these stories are like. First to be examined is the flood legend of the Australian Aborigines which was recorded by anthropologists before missionary contact.³ The story states that long ago, an angry deity called The Supreme One decided to destroy the earth because of some ill-mannered children's misbehavior. However, he told one man to gather his wife, three sons and their wives, build a raft, and collect food to put on it. The man did this, and also gathered a variety of birds and a kangaroo. After the man, his family, and supplies were on the raft, The Supreme One opened the heavens and the great flood began. After floating on the raft for some time, the family noticed that the flood waters were beginning to recede. The man sent out a number of birds from his raft. After some time, all but one returned to him, the one apparently having found some dry land to rest upon. The man sent the rest of the birds out again the next day. The man, his wife, their three sons and their wives then

³ Rebecca Conolly and Russell Grigg, "Flood!," <https://creaGon.com/many-flood-legends> (Accessed January 31, 2019).

all debarked from the raft and offered the kangaroo as an offering to The Supreme One. The deity was so pleased he sent a rainbow in the clouds to “keep the rainclouds back.”⁴

This next legend is part of a much longer story called the Epic of Gilgamesh, written about 2000 B.C. by the ancient Babylonians.⁵ This flood story was told to Gilgamesh by someone who had reportedly lived before the flood and had survived it. The story goes that one angry god convinced the others that the people on earth were too noisy and should be destroyed. The other gods agreed, and began to plan what to do. However, one soft-hearted god went and whispered to one man what was about to take place and what the man should do if he wanted to survive the upcoming catastrophe. The man was instructed to build a boat and take into the boat “the seed of all living creatures,” along with his family. After the flood, the man released a dove and a swallow, but they both came back. He then released a raven out of his boat, and it did not come back. The family then knew that dry land was near. The boat eventually came to rest on a mountaintop, and the man and his family offered a sacrifice to the gods.⁶

These two examples are only a couple from nearly 600 flood legends worldwide.⁷ A study of 200 flood legends found that almost all of them specify that the flood was global. In 76% of the stories, the flood was sent as a punishment for wickedness on the earth. In almost 90% of the stories, there was one favored family that survived. Nearly 70% of the stories tell that one family was warned of the coming disaster. The survivors landed on a mountaintop in 57% of the legends. Thirty five percent of the stories mention birds being sent out to determine the level of the waters. In nearly 10% of the stories, exactly eight people were saved, and a surprising 7% of the legends mentioned a rainbow sent to promise people that a global flood would never occur again.⁸

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Jerry A. Coyne, “A Newly Deciphered Babylonian Tablet Details Blueprints for ‘Noah’s Ark,’” <https://newrepublic.com/116287/babylonian-tablet-describes-noahs-ark-pre-bible> (Accessed April 23, 2019).

⁶ “Noah’s ark and the flood: Points of similarity between the Babylonian and Noachian flood stories,” https://religioustolerance.org/noah_com.htm (Accessed January 21, 2019).

⁷ “Noah’s Ark,” <https://atheistscholar.org/CriGcism/NoahsArk.aspx> (Accessed April 3, 2019).

⁸ John D. Morris, “Why Does Nearly Every Culture Have a Tradition of a Global Flood?,” <https://www.icr.org/article/why-does-nearly-every-culture-have-tradition-of-global-flood/> (Accessed April 23, 2019).

The Evolutionary View

The view that most evolutionary scientists would prefer to believe is that the legends are totally myths and have no truth to them.^{9, 10, 11} Since there was no global flood, there could not be any legends about it. However, there are far too many global flood legends for them to be disregarded as mere coincidence. Evolutionary geologist Robert Schoch says, “Stories of a great deluge are found in every inhabited continent and among a great many different language and culture groups.”¹² Evolutionist David R. Montgomery says, “It’s always been part of human nature to be fascinated by and pay attention to the natural world. Great floods and other natural disasters were long seen as the work of angry deities or supernatural entities or powers. But now that we are learning that some of these stories once viewed as folklore and myth may be rooted in real events, scientists are paying a little more attention to the storytellers of old.”¹³

The evolutionists are forced to recognize that there must have been something behind these stories. The theory prevailing now is that the legends sprang forth from recollections of local flooding that was large enough and catastrophic enough to convince the primitive ancients that it was a worldwide disaster. Over time, the story became the story of Noah’s flood.¹⁴

According to some evolutionists, the flood story recorded in the famous Gilgamesh Epic was referring to when the Black Sea flooded and wiped out many civilizations in the Mesopotamian area. Several evolutionary authors compiled a number of essays into a book that sets forth “the possibility that the Black Sea (just north of Mesopotamia, where most of early Genesis takes place) experienced a massive catastrophic event that caused much of the Near East to suffer a flood so

⁹ Jerry A. Coyne, “A Newly Deciphered Babylonian Tablet Details Blueprints for ‘Noah’s Ark,’”

<https://newrepublic.com/116287/babylonian-tablet-describes-noahs-ark-pre-bible> (Accessed April 23, 2019).

¹⁰ David R. Montgomery, “Geomythology: Can geologists relate ancient stories of great floods to real events?,”

<https://theconversaGon.com/geomythology-can-geologists-relate-ancient-stories-of-great-floods-to-real-events-63434> (Accessed April 23, 2019).

¹¹ Benjamin Radford, “The Ark: Could Noah’s Tale Be True?,” <https://www.livescience.com/44442-noahs-ark-true.html> (Accessed April 23, 2019).

¹² Eric Lyons & Kyle BuÉ, “Legends of the Flood,” <https://apologeGcspress.org/arGcles/40> (Accessed January 31, 2019).

¹³ David R. Montgomery, “Geomythology: Can geologists relate ancient stories of great floods to real events?,”

<https://theconversaGon.com/geomythology-can-geologists-relate-ancient-stories-of-great-floods-to-real-events-63434> (Accessed April 23, 2019).

¹⁴ Jenna Millman, Bryan Taylor, & Lauren Effron, “Evidence Noah’s Biblical Flood Happened, Says Robert Ballard,”

<https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/evidence-suggests-biblical-great-flood-noahs-Gme-happened/story?id=17884533> (Accessed April 23, 2019).

gargantuan that the peoples of the region believed it to be worldwide.”¹⁵ A. J. van Loon, a geologist from a Polish university, suggested that many Native American flood stories were memories of “a devastating tsunami that destroyed the northwest Pacific coast.”¹⁶ Another evolutionist agrees with that idea, saying, “Several real ‘great floods’ are thought to have occurred in prehistory, including the flooding of the Mediterranean basin, forming the Mediterranean sea, and the breaching of the Bosphorus Strait, which resulted in the Black Sea increasing to three times its original size, flooding several shoreline communities whose foundations can still be seen today. These may have been the root of the stories of great floods which pervade Middle Eastern culture and have had an effect as far north as Scandinavia.”¹⁷

Is the Evolutionary Explanation Plausible?

The main evolutionary view that flood legends were inspired by local floods is not supportable. In 95% of the stories, the flood was specified to be clearly global, with evidence given such as waters being over the top of the tallest mountains.¹⁸ Other flood legends that are clearly stories of a small, local flood (people/animals surviving by climbing trees or fleeing the area or climbing mountains) are not to be considered with the clearly global flood legends.

To claim that the ancients did not or could not tell the difference between annual flooding, or even unusually disastrous flooding of a local area, is unreasonable. As one creationist says, “The first contradiction is the fact that water seeks its own level, and would therefore not cover mountains if only a valley were filled. To put it another way, if the water were high enough to cover the tallest mountains, then we would expect—indeed, it would be *necessary*—for the flood to be more than local. Water cannot cover the highest point on earth in one section, and then drop below that level in another section. That is impossible. It would, in fact, be necessary for the flood to reach a global scale.”¹⁹ It is clear from the available evidence that the people who passed down the flood story to their descendants knew the whole globe was totally submerged in water and that the world as they knew it was totally destroyed.

¹⁵ Stephen Caesar, “A Localized Flood?,” <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/01/A-Localized-Flood.aspx#ArGcle> (Accessed April 23, 2019).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ “Noah’s flood,” http://atheism.wikia.com/wiki/Noah%27s_flood (Accessed April 3, 2019).

¹⁸ John D. Morris, “Why Does Nearly Every Culture Have a Tradition of a Global Flood?,” <http://www.icr.org/arGcle/why-does-nearly-every-culture-have-tradition-of-global/> (Accessed April 23, 2019).

¹⁹ Charles Marshall, *Flood Legends*, 2009, MasterBooks, p. 84.

Another point that the evolutionists have not addressed is the global prevalence of flood legends. It is unreasonable to conclude that all of these stories arose totally independently from one another. The overwhelming majority of details in the stories are similar or identical (people destroyed because of wickedness, few people saved, landed on a mountain, birds sent out); thus it seems reasonable to conclude, as creationist geologist John D. Morris states, “The only credible way to understand the widespread similar flood legends is to recognize that all people living today, even though separated geographically, linguistically, and culturally, have descended from the few real people who survived a real global flood on a real boat which eventually landed on a real mountain. Their descendants now fill the globe, never to forget the real event.”²⁰ It is therefore fair to conclude that flood legends are a real memory passed down by ancestors to people today of a real happening recorded for us in the Bible, and that God punished a wicked world by sending a catastrophic global flood.

Stephen Caesar, an anthropologist and archeologist, says “The existence of highly similar flood stories from all over the world seriously weakens the arguments of [evolutionists who say that the legends are from local floods]. Large regional floods did indeed happen in the past, and there is no reason such colossal events would not have given rise to flood legends, but the sheer number of stories from all over the globe, in addition to similar details in them (a mountaintop, a boat, attendant animals) argues for a different interpretation. At some point in the distant past, the entire world must have suffered a devastating flood.”²¹

Conclusion

Flood legends are found in nearly every culture on earth, and they are memories of the Flood recorded in the Bible. Several flood legends have been shared and also some common themes. The evolutionary explanation for the flood legends has been examined and shown to be insupportable. The evidence shows these legends are stories of the Biblical

²⁰ John D. Morris, “Why Does Nearly Every Culture Have a Tradition of a Global Flood?,” <https://www.icr.org/article/why-does-nearly-every-culture-have-tradition-global/> (Accessed April 23, 2019).

²¹ Stephen Caesar, “A Localized Flood?,” <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2008/01/A-Localized-Flood.aspx#Article> (Accessed April 23, 2019).

flood passed down from generation to generation. “For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (II Peter 3:5-6).

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