CREATION VERSUS EVOLUTION

Interesting Facts About Noah's Ark
Lesson #13

The Bible says about 4,000 years ago, Noah, along with seven members of his family, built a giant boat, an ark, on dry land, at the command of God. When completed, God sent two or more of all the various kinds of animals living to board the ark. Then God closed the door of the ark and caused the floodgates of heaven and the fountains of the deep to burst forth. The earth was flooded from below and above until the entire world was covered with water, killing every creature with the breath of life in it.

This is why we find huge coal and oil deposits which are buried in sedimentary rock. The sediments were laid down by the waters of the flood. It is why we only find petrified trees that are 2,000 years old or less, because that is all the time they had to grow before the flood. It is why we only find living trees that are 4,000 years old or less, because that is all the time they had to grow since the flood.[1] It is why we find sea shells on high mountains, because those mountains were at one time low level areas that jutted up into mountain ranges from the tectonic plate shifts and continental drift that occurred as a result of the flood. The evidence of the flood can be found all over the world.

Yet the scientific community, for the most part, doesn't believe in a world wide flood. They offer no convincing explanation for the coal and oil deposits, why there is still pressure in oil pockets, natural gas pressure, etc., if in fact the oil deposits are as old as they say. They think the Grand Canyon was slowly eroded over millions of years, rather than carved out in a week or so from the receding waters of the flood. They certainly don't believe that there was an ark, built by Noah, which contained two or more of every animal that breathes. Instead they believe everything came from nothing, life from non-life, intelligent design from accidents. Their faith is indeed great!

But what about Noah's ark? Is the ark feasible? How many animals could the ark hold? Is it possible the ark could hold all the animals and the food necessary to feed them for a year? Could eight people take care of them? These are the kinds of questions that many people assume, that if answered, would reveal the ark is a myth, an impossibility, a fable that has no basis in fact.

Our purpose in this lesson is to consider some of the questions people have about Noah's ark and to also evaluate if the story of Noah, his ark and the animals that fit into it, is legitimate or a fantasy fiction propagated by naive Christians and Jews who blindly believe the Bible. Christians do believe the Bible, but not blindly. We know by faith that the story of Noah, his ark, and the worldwide flood are true. In addition to that, we have studied the subject and determined that the biblical explanation and physical evidence argue for a world wide flood.

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[1] Trees are dated by the number of growth rings. While there are a few trees, such as the Bristle cone pine, that have more than 4,000 rings, it is also known that in some years trees produce more than one ring. Therefore dating trees by their growth rings provides only a reasonable approximation.

I. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT NOAH'S ARK

A. **Gen. 6:14-22,** "Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch. 15 "This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 16 "You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. 17 "Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish. 18 "But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19 "And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. 20 "Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. 21 "As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them." 22 Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.

B. **Gen. 7:13-18,** On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark, 14 they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds. 15 So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life. 16 Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the Lord closed it behind him. 17 Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth. 18 The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water.

C. **Gen. 8:4,** In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.

D. **Lk. 17:26-27,** "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 they were eating, they were

drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

E. **Heb. 11:7** By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

F. **I Pet. 3:18-20**, For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; 19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, 20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

G. The Word of God teaches that Noah was a real person who built a giant ark as a safe haven for himself, his family, and the animal kinds that breathed air at that time. Noah and the animals entered the ark right before God judged the world with a flood. Thus to deny the truthfulness of the ark and the world wide flood is to deny the accuracy, veracity, and reliability of the Bible.

II. THE DIMENSIONS OF THE ARK

A. Josh McDowell discusses the size of Noah's ark saying:

> The biblical ark was an oblong, almost rectangular, boxlike barge. The ancient cubit measurement varied from about 18 inches to perhaps as much as 24 inches. The dimensions of the ark were somewhere between a minimum of 138 meters [436 feet] by 22.5 meters [72 feet] with a height of 13.8 meters [45 feet] and a maximum of 180 meters [591 feet] by 30 meters [98] with a height of 18 meters [59 feet].

The ark had three decks, each divided into cubicles and compartments. While the dimensions of the compartments are not given in the biblical record, we know that their function was both to separate the animals and to provide what we would today call "bulkheading" for bracing the structure of the ark. It was made of wood and coated with pitch inside and out to waterproof it. It had a door and a window that probably ran around the under edge of the roof overhang.

Noah designed and built the ark over a 120-year period (probably hiring local help as well as using his family members to help). It was a well-built vessel, the perfect design for surviving cataclysmic waves with a heavy cargo.[2]

B. Dennis Gordon Lindsay, speaking of the size and construction of Noah's ark has written:

> "Noah's Ark was the largest sea-going vessel ever built, until the late nineteenth century when giant metal ships were first constructed. One intriguing observation about the Ark's size is that it was six times longer than wide. The normal ratio of length to width of ships built in ancient times was ten to one. However, Noah used the same proportions used in modern ship construction. An interesting parallel to the size of the Ark can be seen in the famous "unsinkable" Titanic. The Titanic was 823 feet long by 98 feet wide and had a cargo capacity of 45,000 tons—or about the same as Noah's Ark, though the Titanic was somewhat longer and wider.
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> The Titanic was a marvel of modern ship construction. The Ark's dimensions closely paralleled those of the Titanic, especially in the cargo area.
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> A model of the Ark was made by Peter Jansen of Holland. His model proved that the Ark had a greater capacity than curved or shaped vessels like the Titanic, which are designed for speed and maneuverability. As a flat-bottomed barge, not designed to move through the water but simply to float, the Ark had one-third more

[2] Josh McDowell, *Josh McDowell's Handbook on Apologetics*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

carrying capacity than a ship with sloping sides of similar dimensions.[3]

III. THE ANIMALS AND THE ARK

A. Lindsay, commenting on figures taken from John Whitcom and Henry Morris gives us a good idea of the size of the ark:

> The Ark would have contained about 1.4 million cubic feet of cargo space, which is equivalent to a freight train with 522 stockcars. My father-in-law, dark Krickbaum, worked for the Union Pacific Railroad for nearly 40 years. He informed me that the average number of full-grown animals capable of being loaded in one standard stockcar is: cattle—about 25; hogs—about 75; and sheep—about 125 per deck. This means that at least 250 animals of the size of sheep could be accommodated in a standard two-decked stockcar. By using simple arithmetic, one can find the number of sheep Noah's Ark could accommodate:
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> Number of livestock cars: 522
> Average number of sheep per car: 250
>
> 522
> x 250
> TOTAL SHEEP = 130,500[4]

B. Some have objected that all the animals in the world could not fit on the ark and that it would have been too great a task for Noah and his family to gather all of the animals that existed at that time, many of which are extinct. McDowell gives three answers to these objections:[5]

1. First, Noah didn't have to take "all the animals in the world" on the ark. He didn't have to take every variety within a kind either. He

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[3] Dennis Gordon Lindsay, *The Genesis Flood : Continents in Collision* (Dallas, TX: Christ for the Nations, 1999).

[4] Ibid. (Using figures from John Whitcom and Henry Morris' book *The Genesis Flood.*

[5] Josh McDowell, *Josh McDowell's Handbook on Apologetics*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

only need to take one kind. For instance, you can take all the dogs in the world, put them in a large fenced in area, and let them interbreed. After several generations you would have one kind of dog, but that one kind of dog would have the potential of producing a almost endless number of varieties. God has created many of His creatures with the ability to produce great variety within a kind. Thus, for example, only two dogs, a male and female, would be necessary to board the ark. You wouldn't have to take all the varieties of dogs that existed then on the ark. Some have estimated the necessary space that would be needed on the ark for all the animal kinds would take up about 1/5th the space of the ark.

2. The Bible doesn't say that Noah and his family had to go gather "all the animals in the world" and put them on the ark. The Bible says in **Gen. 6:20,** "*Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind,* ***two of every kind will come to you*** *to keep them alive*." Some have objected that the animals would have had too much difficulty getting to the ark from all over the world. An answer to this is that at that time there was probably only one continent, which broke up at the flood into the many continents we have today. Also, the gathering of the animals was a supernatural act of God and God had 120 years to get them their while Noah built the ark.

3. Finally, it must be remembered that God didn't need to bring full grown animals on the ark. He didn't need to bring full grown dinosaurs, elephants, mastodons, and the like. Also, with the ark almost completely sealed it would have been dark and cooler. Many of the animal's metabolisms would have slowed down considerably. Not only that, but the entire event was accompanied by the miraculous power of God who can sustain animals without food, if He so desires, for as long as He desires. Yet even apart from the miraculous, the Genesis account of Noah's ark is well within the reasonable limits.

IV. THE SEAWORTHINESS OF THE ARK

Many have asserted that a wooden boat the size of Noah's ark would not have been sea worthy or strong enough to endure cataclysmic seas, the kind of which most certainly happened at the flood. Most assertions of this nature are from people who have not studied what the Bible says about the ark and what the

Bible says about pre-flood man. Saturated with evolutionary thinking and pride, modern man often imagines that he is more intelligent than early "cave men." When they think of early man, they think of half-ape, half-man humanoids with a very low intelligence. Yet the Bible teaches the exact opposite. Early man was far more intelligent than modern man and lived to nearly 1,000 years, accumulating vast amounts of wisdom throughout their long life. Thus Noah's ability to build the ark would far exceed and surpass what most people imagine.

A. Lindsay has noted:

> Based on its 6 to 1 dimensional ratio, the Ark would have had excellent stability, it would have been practically impossible to capsize. Placed in a testing tank, a model of the Ark was shown to be very stable. It would right itself up to 90 degrees. The test tank generated waves equivalent to 200-foot tidal waves; even in such conditions the replica of the Ark was extraordinarily stable.
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> The Ark's tremendous stability was the result of having such a low center of gravity. The heavier the cargo, the deeper it sank into the sea and thus the more stable it became. The Ark had no rudder, oars nor sails, it wasn't meant to go any place, but simply to float.
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> It is believed there were at least three decks on the Ark. The top level may have been for Noah, his family, food and for smaller creatures; the middle level, for the larger animals; and the bottom level, for ballast and waste.[6]

B. Noah's Ark was the focus of a 1993 study headed by Dr. Seon Hong at the ship research center KRISO, based in Daejeon, South Korea. Dr. Hong's team compared 12 hulls of different proportions to discover which design was most practical. No hull shape was found to significantly outperform the 4,300-year-old biblical design. In fact, the Ark's careful balance is easily lost if the proportions are modified, rendering the vessel either unstable, prone to fracture, or dangerously uncomfortable. The research team found that the proportions of Noah's Ark carefully balanced the conflicting demands of stability (resistance to capsizing), comfort ("seakeeping"), and strength.

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[6] Dennis Gordon Lindsay, *The Genesis Flood : Continents in Collision* (Dallas, TX: Christ for the Nations, 1999).

In fact, the Ark has the same proportions as a modern cargo ship. The study also confirmed that the Ark could handle waves as high as 100 ft (30 m) – tall as a 10 story building![7]

V. THE LOCATION OF THE ARK TODAY

Many have sought to find the remains of Noah's giant vessel on the icy slopes of Mt. Ararat in Eastern Turkey, whose mountains rise to over 16,000 feet. The upper regions of Mt. Ararat are usually covered with snow year around. History is full of stories of hikers, shepherds, explorers, and pilots who have claimed to see the ark and even to bring back wood from it. However, it seems that every supposed pictures of the ark is blurry. It is as if no one who sees the ark has a camera or the ability to take a decent photo, casting serious doubt upon the truthfulness of the ark actually being found. Recently a Chinese expedition claimed to have found the ark and took many pictures and samples.[8] Yet they failed to establish their location by showing where they were and though their pictures and videos look fascinating, their failure to provide clear evidence makes their claims appear to be an elaborate hoax.

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[7] Michael R. Daily, "Why study the Ark?" (An Engineering Analysis of Noah's Ark) which can be found on line at: http://gciweb.org/documents/Misc%20Studies/Teenagers/Why%20Study%20the%20Bible%20_Engineering%20Analysis%20of%20Noah's%20Ark%20-%20Mike%20Daily_.pdf

[8] http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2010/04/27/noahs-ark-found-turkey-ararat/