

The Great Flood (Part 6)

The Waters Recede

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 21-Feb-09; Sermon #924

As I have done in previous sermons, I would like to return to the background information found in the first few verses of Genesis 6, and this time I would like to start in verse 5. We are slowly proceeding through the material, and I want to pick up details that I may have mentioned before, but I did not go in to any depth. This time I want to go into Moses' description of the depths of mankind's wickedness.

Genesis 6:5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

These two clauses say quite a lot. One commentator, who I have come to respect a great deal, James Burton Coffman, writes, "It would be difficult to devise a sentence that would any more effectively portray the corruption of humanity than does Genesis 6:5." In essence, Moses is telling us here that mankind was totally depraved. Genesis 6:5 is a purposeful contrast to something that God had said earlier.

Genesis 1:31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

On the sixth day of creation, which included the creation of Adam and Eve—mankind—He looked around with a satisfied smile on His face, and He said, "This is great! This is very good! I have done the work well, everything works together, and everything is beautiful—unspoiled—beautiful."

But only 1,650 years later, mankind had degenerated into the exact opposite of what God had said about him in Genesis 1. Of course, what happened there in Genesis 1:31 was after Adam and Eve had been created, but before they sinned (chapter 3). And so, it was an unspoiled state that we see in Genesis 1.

When Eve was deceived and Adam sinned, God kicked them out of the Garden and placed the flaming sword held by a cherub to keep them from coming back in. It is an illustration of them being cut off from God—mankind's way with God blocked, as it were. Sin brought about their separation from God.

What we have in Genesis 6:5 is a glaring illustration of what results when humanity does not want contact with the God of creation. In only 1,650 years, mankind went from very good to totally depraved. That period of time is not all that long. Of course, that is from our perspective in relation to our time back to the time of Christ, which is about 2,000 years ago. But in the great scheme of things, this was not all that long—fifteen or sixteen centuries or so.

To contrast this, it is indeed stark. Notice how Moses phrases this. First it says that the Lord saw their great wickedness. The word “saw” has the force of our English word “observed,” “surveyed,” “scrutinized,” or even “examined.” As you can tell, God did not make just a quick look to see. It was something that took time with God to see. In other words, God just did not suddenly look down from on high and say, “Oh my! Look at how bad things have become,” as if God had been off doing something else, and was surprised at the situation. That is not the way that Moses wants us to understand this passage at all. It is just the opposite.

The image that Moses gives is one of God intently watching and observing mankind’s behavior over an extended period of time. God is intimately involved with His creation. He wanted to see how all of this was going to work. And of course, He saw from the very beginning within however many days that it was that Satan took to get at Adam and Eve—and they sinned. God watched their steady deterioration of mankind over those 1650 years. He never takes His eyes off mankind, ever.

This was no short-term moral decline. It did not just happen during the last hundred or two hundred years or so of this time period. This was a steadily plunging deterioration of moral character that started on a high, but ended on the lowest of lows. It never got any better from the time that Adam and Eve were thrust out of the Garden of Eden until the waters took them all away. It just steadily went downhill. And there were only a few bright spots throughout the whole period—concerning Abel, Enoch, and Noah.

The second thing we need to notice about Genesis 6:5 is that God describes man’s wickedness as “great.” There are two points in this. The first is that man was not simply naughty. “Don’t do that! You know better!” It is not like that. Nor was it that mankind was simply wayward, as if he did not know, that he was ignorant of right and wrong, and therefore going wrong because he was ignorant. It was not like that either. What God is telling us here is that mankind was evil. He was corrupt. He was immoral. He was depraved. He was wicked! God is not mincing words here.

The second point about their wickedness being great is that it is more than just being

present—being just there. The meaning is that it was multiplied; it was evil upon evil. It was not just random acts of violence, or evil happening here, or there—it was evil piled on top of evil. It was wickedness that you would never believe. The Hebrew word for “great” implies, “increase in proliferation.” It was growing steadily. We can almost say that it was growing exponentially worse as time passed. There was no chance of revival. There was no going back. Pandora’s Box had been opened, and there was no shutting it short of total human annihilation. That is how bad it was. Man was wicked, and his wickedness was multiplied.

The third thing of Genesis 6:5 is “in the earth.” This suggests very familiar terms we all know—worldwide, global, and universal—all over, and everywhere. What God through Moses is telling us is that this greatly multiplied wickedness was not just relegated to one’s own area of the globe, but rather it was the other way around. There was no area of the globe that was immune to this growing wickedness; that it had spread into every area of the earth, and was pervasive—through and through. There was no geographical area of the earth that had been spared all the destruction that sin brings. It was everywhere.

Do you see how as we add things the idea of the wickedness of mankind keeps getting worse, and worse, and more universal?

We see, then, that God’s solution to universal sin and wickedness was universal punishment. There was no other way that it could turn out, which is a great proof that this was a universal flood. If there was only one region that was bad, you could understand God destroying that one region. However, because the whole earth was covered with wickedness, He had to cover the whole earth with water to destroy that wickedness in their punishment. Universal sin had to be met with universal judgment.

The fourth thing we can learn from Genesis 6:5 is found in the second clause, “and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” This is a parallel to the first clause. Parallelism is a Hebrew way of adding description, or adding emphasis by saying the same thing in different words. What it does here is that it both intensifies and expands on the first clause. You thought the first clause was bad, the second clause is even worse. It really makes the wickedness of mankind just egregious—awful, terrible, horrible. If we thought it was terrible that mankind’s sins had corrupted everyone everywhere, the second clause magnifies all that.

God says, “every intent.” The idea of “intent” suggests “impulse,” “tendency,” “inclination,” “design,” “plan,” or even “fashioned thing.” Every intent, impulse, tendency, inclination, design, plan, and fashioned thing of their mind was evil—everything! And,

the intent is the attitudinal germ behind every thought, every word, and every action.

What God through Moses and Noah is saying here is that every attitude that they had that spurred any kind of thought, word, or deed, was only evil continually—every one of them. That is what God says!

What these attitudes did (which gives a lot of weight to Mr. Armstrong's saying that Ephesians 2:1-2 speaks of Satan broadcasting his attitudes out to mankind all the time since he is the prince of the power of the air) was they sparked thoughts and plans that drove their wicked deeds onward and downward.

What we have here is that the external violence on the earth was only the outworking of the internal corruption. In other words, they were rotten to the core. The only thing that their rottenness could produce was further rottenness. Everything they touched was corrupt or corrupted. It was like Midas in reverse. He would touch things and they would turn to gold; but these wicked men would touch things and they would turn to destruction and rottenness.

Yet now, it gets even worse. God goes on to say that, "every intent of their heart was only evil." We could think that there was somebody around somewhere (excluding Noah who found grace) who had a bit of good in him. And, even though maybe the things that he did were evil, there might be some good mixed in. However, that is not what the scripture says at all—every intent of the thoughts of their heart was only evil. There was nothing else mixed in. There was no good with it. It was only evil. You could not call it anything else. They did not even do evil things for "good" reasons.

Another way to put it is that they were altogether evil, or exclusively evil, or wholly, or completely, or entirely evil. That is the meaning of the word "only" there, evil alone. Nothing else was there with it. And still, it gets worse.

God says that it was continual. Every intent of the thoughts of his heart **was only evil continually**. It never stopped. It was ceaseless, endless, and all the time.

Would you like to live in a time like this, in which everyone you met outside of the church of God, his every intent of every thought of his heart was only evil all the time?

The Hebrew word here for continually, means, "all the day." You get the idea that it was from the time that he woke up, until the time he went back to sleep, all he was doing was thinking evil thoughts, and doing them. And that was all.

The Great Flood (Part 6) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

The thrust of God's judgment here in Genesis 6:5, putting it in one short sentence is this: "Every person, every thought was, from the outset, altogether evil, all the time." That is a bunch of universal terms, but it is right there in God's Word. Every person and every thought was from the outset all together evil, all the time.

For a shock, turn to Genesis 8:21. Here, Noah had gotten off the ark, and he had built an altar to the Lord, and he made a sacrifice.

Genesis 8:21 And the LOORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LOORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;...

Do you understand the implication of this? Shortly after Noah gets off the ark, and raises up this altar to the Lord...do you realize what God is saying here? He even uses the same words that He used in Genesis 6:5! "The imagination of his heart is evil from his youth." What God is saying is that after the Great Flood, man's heart was just as corrupt and evil as it ever was before the Flood. The Great Flood had changed nothing regarding the character in man. All it had done was execute judgment on the sinners. It had whittled the human race down to only eight people.

And those eight people—and only one of whom was converted (perhaps Noah's wife, and/or Shem)—even so, humanity was still evil and rotten to the core from his youth. I mean that only gives a very small window of goodness when kids are little. They are born with the ability to go either way. Because of their flesh, they are more than likely to go the wrong way, because man's human carnal nature is a "gimme, gimme, gimme" nature, wanting everything for himself.

The people living in Bible times, post-Flood, and down until today, have the very same sinful wicked nature. Do you realize that? It is the same nature! I am not saying less wicked. I am saying the same nature that God described in Genesis 6:5. Now it might be a matter of degrees, but can you really say—knowing what you know about sin, Satan, and human nature—that occasionally the thoughts of one's heart are good?

Satan and our flesh have a tremendous influence on us.

Let us look at something, because this is born out throughout Scripture. I do not say this to get down on people, but rather so you could realize what a wonderful thing God's calling and grace have been—what He has called us out of!

The Great Flood (Part 6) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Psalm 14:1-3 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one.

Does that sound a bit like Genesis 6:5? This next passage talks about God's people Israel.

Isaiah 1:4 Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity,...

This is like they are carrying a big pack on their back, and it is just piled up bale upon bale of iniquity and sin, carrying this around all the time.

Isaiah 1:4-5 ...a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more.

He says, "Why should I punish you anymore? You're just going to revolt! It's not going to do any good to turn you around!"

Isaiah 1:5-6 The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment.

This is Israel that God is talking about!

We will not turn to Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked! Who can know it?" We know that one. Turn to Romans 3, where Paul repeats some of what I read in Psalm 14.

Romans 3:9-18 What then? Are we better than they [the Jews?] Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is

The Great Flood (Part 6) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."

That is a pretty complete indictment of mankind! He leaves very little out of it.

Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

All the world is guilty before God!

Matthew 19:16-17 Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.

That is from the mouth of our Savior, Jesus Christ! Was He excluding Himself? No. He was God. He was good. But at this time, He still had carnal flesh. It is amazing! No one is good. That sounds like, "only evil continually," to me.

This next one is in John 3, just after the most famous verse in the whole Bible,

John 3:19-20 "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."

Right after exclaiming that God showed His love, He also shows here that there is a condemnation, because people will not turn to Him.

Like I said, that this is a matter of degrees, however in God's eyes, humans are corrupt from a very young age. Just one sin is enough to incur the death penalty—to condemn

us to death. That is all it takes.

How many of you have just committed only one sin? Is it not like the old potato chip commercial on American television, "Betcha you can't eat just one!" We pile up sins all the time, every day. We sin without knowing it, too, in our inability to see our own actions and how sinful they are. They are still sin. And that is why we have to go before the throne of grace and ask for forgiveness and mercy just for being ourselves!

Sometimes we cannot think or name the specific sin, but we know that our attitudes have been wrong, and we know that we have not approached things correctly. We know that we have been selfish about things. And so, we ask God to forgive us for being human, and being so carnal and weak. That is what we are—only evil continually.

If you were to ask me if man's sinfulness has reached the point as in the days of Noah, I would have to say, "yes." Mankind is ripe for the sickle of judgment (Revelation 14:17-20). We wait only for God to move events toward His own ends. He has the right to intervene in this world, to send the Day of the Lord whenever He wills. None of us could ever come before Him and say that we were innocent.

God has a plan, and He is working things out in His own time, and He has a perfect timing for everything. It may not be tomorrow, but it may if it works out according to His plan. He does not necessarily have to wait until everybody is clubbing his neighbor, because sin is not just violence. Sin is always destructive. It does not always occur as murder, rape, and robbery. There are many more sins than just these three.

I know that this is sobering, but I want you to understand that God has called us out of all this, and given us the means through His Son to be good, and do good. We will never be altogether good in this life, but we can learn to be good, and grow and overcome the evil that is there in our nature, because we have the power of God's Spirit. We have God backing us! We have God in us! And that accounts a great deal of good that we can do. Otherwise, we would not do any at all. We can take baby steps in learning to do good, because God has intervened in our lives, and given us His Spirit, and opened up the way and our minds to understand how to imitate His Son. Otherwise, we would be just like everyone else—altogether evil continually.

It is very sobering.

Last time we covered just a few verses at the very beginning of Genesis 8, so I hope that we can get much further along today, perhaps we will even see Noah and his family leave the ark, if I do not become too verbose!

In part 5, I spent a long time covering what it means when it said, “God remembered Noah.” That is actually the theme of the whole chapter. And this phrase concentrates on God’s loving care of Noah, his family, and all the animals. It was not that He just suddenly remembered Noah, having forgotten them for a time. It was not that way at all.

God had been taking care of Noah throughout the whole event, because He had made a covenant with Noah, not only to bring him into the ark, but then to safely see him through, and bring him out of the ark on the other side. God was fulfilling His part of the covenant. He was remembering His promises to Noah.

We also covered the fact that there was a wind that blew over the face of the water-covered earth, and we saw that it not only helped to dry the earth, but it also reminds us of God’s Spirit hovering over the face of the waters in Genesis 1:2 at that re-creation.

We also noted that the waters were stopped from both above and below—meaning that the rains pretty much ceased, except for the natural cycle put into place, and that the gushing waters spewing up from the earth were somehow stopped. It does not reveal how God did this. It just says that it was stopped. So, the waters began to recede after the 150th day, and I mentioned that it took another 220 days for the earth to dry.

Genesis 8:4 Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.

Here we have a date—the 17th day of the 7th month. Up until now, I have ignored the dates that appear in Genesis 7.

Genesis 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

Okay now, we have two dates. They are both the 17th day of the month, one in the second month, and the other one is in the seventh month. Obviously, we have a period of five months. I have kept the dates until now, to keep the Great Flood chronology in one package, one sermon. It is not all that difficult, but some make it more confusing than it is. It is straightforward in the Bible. But people just have not seen the simplicity that is there.

Exodus 12:2 "This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the

first month of the year to you.

This is the Hebrew month named Abib, or Nisan. It is in the spring. It is the first moon of spring. (I do not want to get into the calendar stuff.)

The way that God says it here is very clear, that before the Exodus, people kept the first of the year in the autumn. God was changing things so that they would begin the sacred year in the spring. He is switching things from Tishri to Nisan. This meant that the first month is now the seventh month and the seventh became the first. It seems to be confusing, but it need not be. God is switching things from the autumn to the spring.

Before the Flood, people kept the new year at the autumn equinox for those keeping a solar calendar, or else the lunar calendar's date on what we have come to know as the first day of Tishri (on which our Feast of Trumpets now falls). For the dates we are given in the Genesis we should begin counting in the autumn from Tishri 1.

The 17th day of the second month fell most likely sometime in November. If you take one month from either Tishri 1, or the autumnal equinox, and then add another 17 days, you will come to about mid-November or so. This means that when the Great Flood came, it was November, and late in the seasons of the year—what we might consider mid-autumn.

In Genesis 8:4, the ark is resting on the mountains of Ararat; five months have gone by, and it is now mid-to-late April. It is in mid-spring, in the midst of the seventh month of that time, Nisan or Abib. The ark comes to rest in the spring time.

As I have mentioned before, the period between these two time markers is five 30-day months, or exactly 150 days. That is how they counted them at that time. Each month was 30 days. Some have thought that at that time they kept six months of 30 days, and six months of 29 days. I do not know. It makes no difference to our message today. It is still 5 thirty-day months—150 days. It says in verse 3 that the waters receded from the end of the 150 days.

We have 40 days of deluge. And then, the water level stayed up until the 150 days were finished, and it says that the ark rested in the seventh month, on the 17th day of the month, which just happens to be the 150th day. What this tells us is that the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat on the first day that the waters began to recede.

During the whole period of the waters decreasing, the ark was already ensconced on

The Great Flood (Part 6) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

the mountains of Ararat. It did not move around while the waters were going back down. It had been anchored on the rock of the mountain.

This means that the ark most likely grounded on the highest peak of the mountains of Ararat, and very near the top, because it happened on the first day the waters began to recede. And the waters receded only at a certain rate. Some think it receded at a rate of 15 to 20 feet per day, while I did some calculations of my own, and got about 55 feet a day. I may show you a bit of this later. But since the draft of the ark was about 23 feet, this would mean that even if it was only 15 to 20 feet per day, the ark would have come to rest very near the top of the mountain. If you take my figure of 55 feet per day, it would be just a few feet below the peak. There is a good chance that the waters decreased fairly rapidly.

There is something interesting about this 17th day of the seventh month.

Mark 8:31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Let us do some math. The ark landed in the 17th day of the 7th month. We know that from Exodus 12 God changed the beginning of the year, so that the seventh month became the first month, Abib or Nisan. The 14th day of Nisan is Passover, when Jesus Christ was crucified. You add three days and three nights, you come to the 17th day of the first (seventh) month.

Think about this. The resurrection of Jesus Christ occurred on the same day that Noah's ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The 17th day of the seventh month to Noah equals the 17th day of the first month to Christ (as we know it today in the Jewish calendar and the churches of God). On that day, in both circumstances, salvation was assured for those who endure to the end.

He did it! He rose from the dead. The way was open for all those who would come after. He is the firstborn of many brethren. And so, if we believe, and we do more than just believe, we follow Him to the end. We have the same hope of resurrection into the family of God.

Think of this in terms of Noah—on that same day, almost 2,000 years before, he came to rest, and was wedged into the mountains of Ararat, and the waters were going down. He was assured of safety at that point. He was assured that he would inherit the earth. It

The Great Flood (Part 6) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

would only be a matter of time. He had to wait, and he had to endure, but there would come a time when God would open the door. He would open the way to life again! To living again on the earth!

It is a beautiful thought to think about. I just had to show you that there was indeed a connection there between the Great Flood, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a pre-cursor. We can learn of Christ. Remember what Jesus told the disciples? It says that He taught them things that were written about Him in the Scriptures (which were only the Old Testament at that time). I wonder if one of the things that He mentioned was that Noah was assured of his salvation and deliverance on the 17th day of Nisan? I do not know. I will have to ask him some day!

Just think about this—when Noah landed on that 17th day of their 7th month, their salvation and deliverance was assured, if they would only endure to the end. Just think about that as we go through this chapter.

The area where the ark came to rest lies near the point found on our modern globe and maps of the area where the three borders of Armenia, Turkey, and Iran come together. It is up there in a little corner. Out of this region rises two peaks, called the Greater Ararat, and Lesser Ararat. The Greater Ararat rises to a level of 16,945 feet. The Lesser Ararat rises to a height of 12,877 feet. These peaks are on the Turkish side of the border. It is believed that the Greater Ararat is where the ark came to rest, because it is higher.

Josephus, the Jewish historian who was alive and wrote his histories about 100 AD, says that the locals of his time would take travelers up there to see the ark; that they could climb up the mountain and look upon Noah's ark.

A Russian team is said to have found it, and photographed it, back in 1917. What they did, however, is they came back down the mountain, and reported their findings back to the Tsar of Russia, just about the time of the Russian Communist Revolution, and the Tsar's execution. Their report and photos were lost in the chaos that ensued. No one has seen them since. If somebody has them, they are not talking.

Today, the Greater Ararat's peak is almost year-round covered with ice and snow; it is very stormy there too. It is difficult to climb up there in summertime for its storminess. Besides all that, the area of the Ararat Mountains is near an area of unrest, a region of Kurdish insurgency against Turkey, which means the Turkish military is also there on maneuvers, and such—both sides shooting first and asking questions later. It is not safe. So, it takes a really intrepid person, first of all just to ask for the permits to get in,

and secondly to walk through the area without getting shot.

We are reduced to using aerial and satellite photos, and there have been many taken of the suspected region, but so far they have proven inconclusive. But the occasional interview with someone locally from that region says that it is still up there, and some of them have been up to see it. So, we have to take their word for it, for now.

Drop down to Genesis 8:14. I will get to the remainder, however I want to go here now, since we have been discussing chronology.

Genesis 8:14 And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried.

This is at the beginning of the second year, the 27th day of the second month. It is right after this that God tells Noah to leave the ark. So, if we total all of this, Noah, his family, and animals were in the ark 370 days. Some might say 371. It is just a little over one full year cooped up in a floating zoo.

It would be hard if we were put into this same situation, to be in an enclosed space as big as this was, but with all the bulkheads and such. Sometimes I bet it could have felt very small, especially if you had been looking out the window, seeing this huge ship like a cork on this endless sea of water—I mean, it would be very hard to keep one's sanity for 370 days, much less one's faith during these conditions for such a long time. But they did it. It was their only way of safety—to stay in that ark for as long as it took, to remain in that place of safety for 370 days—with no ballgames, no movies—I do not know, did they have decks of cards? How many diversions did they have? I am sure that they had books, or their equivalents.

They probably had something to keep them busy throughout that period of time. Maybe they were making plans and blueprints of things that they would need when they got off. Maybe they were pre-fabricating certain things that would need after they got out. I do not know. You can let your imagination go about what they did for 370 days.

Most people would say that they were kept busy tending to the animals, but if you believe that God put them into some sort of hibernation or extended sleep while they were on the ark, then there would not have been a great deal of work to do. It was probably enough to keep the eight of them hopping for several hours a day. But, there were several times when they just sat there and talked to one another.

The Great Flood (Part 6) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Who knows what kind of disagreements there might have been between them or their daughters-in-law? I do not know. You just try to think about the dynamics of eight people living cooped up together for 370 days. And they could not vote anybody off the ark, like on *Survivor*.

Just think about the kinds of trials they went through during those 370 days. It is a good picture of our converted life. Here they went through a period of trial, and storm—and then they had to wait, and they had to live together. Their salvation was assured, if they would keep it up, if they waited on God—but they had to make it all the way to the end. Otherwise, they would not live again on the earth. There are a lot of lessons we can take out of this.

Noah and his family persevered, and they waited on God, and they were eventually rewarded by being alive when no one else was, and they had a new pristine earth to inhabit, and populate, and use to God's glory.

We need to go back to Genesis 8:5 now.

Genesis 8:5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

The first part of this verse is poorly translated in the New King James Version, where it says, "the waters decreased continually." The Hebrew of this passage gives the sense of the waters "going and decreasing," suggesting considerable wave movement or waters flowing back and forth—massive sloshing over the earth. The waters were moving and decreasing. They were moving and decreasing, almost like the motion of the tides with waves going back and forth.

What some people have thought is that this might imply that the sediments carried by the water were deposited in layers all around the globe. There was a slosh and it laid down a layer, and then receded. And then you had slosh again, and it laid down another layer, and it then receded. Water is very heavy, and so it would press down on these layers of sediment, creating layers of rock as it built and grew in certain parts of the earth. It seems to give credence to the Creationist scholars (that the earth was only formed 6,000 years ago) that rock layers do not show millions of years in terms of long evolutionary processes, but rather quick and successive deposits from the Flood. That is how they explain all those layers of sedimentary rock—heat and pressure would harden them into rock over time.

The second part of verse 5 tells us that the surrounding mountain peaks (near Ararat) became discernible about two and a half months later, which would be roughly late June.

Let us think about this: If the ark landed on Greater Ararat, up near the top at just under 17,000 feet, these other mountains would be the lower peaks of the Ararat range, and highest of them, Lesser Ararat, was just under 13,000 feet. It is basically a difference of about 4,000 feet, give or take a bit. Over these two and a half months, the water decreased roughly 4,000 feet. This is where I get my 55 feet per day number, because I tried to do some math—4000 divided by 73 days gave me about 55 feet per day decrease in the waters—from the time that they settled there on their peak, until the time that they could discern the tops of the surrounding mountains.

Some people calculated that it was between 15 and 20 feet decrease per day, but this does not seem to make much sense to me. I started to do more math. (This is not my strong suit.) If you take the rate of 55 feet per day, and you multiply it by the 220 days that the waters abated (from the 150th day to the 370th day), the total height of the flood waters would be 12,100 feet.

Now we have a problem. Mt. Everest is over 28,000 feet in the Himalayas. This means that it is 16,000 feet higher than the flood waters by my calculation. How do we get around that? Well, I do not know. Either the rate the water decreased was faster at some times than others, faster than my calculations, and a lot faster than these other people have calculated, or the mountains were lower then, and at some later point, they went through some rapid uplift bringing them to their present height.

This is not impossible. I have seen documentary shows that seem to say that mountains of the Hindu-Kush rose very fast. I do not know how they seem to know this, or how they figured this out. And you never know about scientists. They claim some fantastic things sometimes. Millions of years would be fast to some scientists! I have heard this idea about the Hindu-Kush before. I do not know how to explain this. But, even at my rate of decrease, 55 feet per day, we still only get a flood that tops out at 12,100 feet.

That is something that God will have to explain to us later, I suppose. It depends upon the variables that we use, and the information at hand, and how much we do not know, or did not think of. I thought it interesting, and wanted to bring this to you, and let you mull it over, and maybe someone a lot smarter than me could tell me how it works out.

Genesis 8:6-7 So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. Then he sent out a raven,

The Great Flood (Part 6) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth.

Noah sends out a raven. The time marker here is 40 days after the tops were seen. This was not late June, but probably early August. Noah was very patient, and very cautious. Think about it. He comes to rest in April on the mountain. He looks out the window and sees water everywhere. And then, he waits 75 days (two and a half months) until he sees other mountain peaks beginning to show up out of the water. And then, he waits an additional 40 days before he decides to send out a raven.

He has waited all through the rest of April, all of May, and most of June, and sees some mountain tops peeking through. But he waits some more—the remainder of June, all of July, and half of August before he decides to send out a bird to see what it is like out there. The raven is sent out in mid-August. He waited for the waters to recede a great deal before he does anything. If we use my 55 feet per day, he waited for another 2,200 feet of water to drop before sending out the raven.

The raven goes out, and never returns. He watches it go, but it never comes back. Remember, though, that this is a raven—a carrion fowl. It was able to survive on what it found, apparently. This was very encouraging to Noah. He knew that at least one animal could survive on its own. And this meant that if one could survive, more could eventually survive also.

Genesis 8:8-12 He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.

This section describes Noah sending out the dove three separate times at seven day intervals. I found it interesting that the Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown's Commentary said, "This is a strong presumptive proof that Noah observed the Sabbath during his residence on the ark." This marking of seven days was probably a typical sabbatical week, counting from the first day until the seventh. And on the seventh, he would send

the dove out. He would mark time, and keep the Sabbath.

Most commentators believe that he sent the first dove out seven days after sending the raven out. He sent the raven out after the 40 days, which was after the mountains started appearing, and then after seven more days, once the raven did not come back, he sent the dove the first time. Seven days later, he sent the dove a second time. Seven days after that, he sent the dove out for the third time. Every seven days, the waters would abate by as much as 385 feet, which would be about 1,540 for the entire month that this passage occurred. What this means—this sending out the birds—occurred through the month of August and through September. We are getting pretty close to a full year now.

The first time the dove returns, without landing anywhere. The ground was just too wet and bare for a dove. There was nothing on the earth that she found that would attract her attention—no food for a dove. Doves are ground feeders where it is dry and clean, not mucky. So, she returned to the ark where it was dry and there was food for her, and where she was used to roosting. Noah had to conclude that though it was all well and good for the raven, but for something like the dove, the earth was not quite ready yet.

He waits seven days and sends the dove out again. This time she returns in the evening—it is interesting that it mentions that—and this suggests that she had spent all day flying about, and only came back to the ark to roost, as she was accustomed to do. There must have been something out there for her to eat. And then, she was the one that brought the fresh olive leaf, or newly sprouted olive leaf, one that had just unfolded. What this told Noah was that the waters were pretty much diminished from the earth.

How would he know that just by the olive leaf? Well, olives do not grow at high elevations. So, the dove in her day out must have descended to the lower valleys and meadows where she found one. Olives are very hardy and vigorous trees. Even if you cut them down, but leave the stump in the ground, they will sprout again, and continue to grow, starting over again. I should also mention that several sources said that it has been known for olive trees to be flooded, completely immersed in water, but they somehow continue their cycle, leafing out under water.

The olive leaf showed Noah that life had indeed began again on the earth, that there were things growing already down in the lower valleys, even the most recently uncovered areas, so it was beginning to be evident that they could leave the ark soon. I am sure that they had a big party on the ark.

But, he waits for seven days, and then sends the dove out again. This time she does not

The Great Flood (Part 6) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

return at all—not even to roost at night. Most likely what happened was that she went out, found enough food, and she found safe cover in the recovering trees or such. She did not need to return to the ark.

When she did not return, Noah realized that if the gentle, timid, and finicky dove was satisfied with the living conditions outside of the ark, then it was suitable for the rest of them too. Man and animal alike would probably be fine if they left the ark.

Genesis 8:13-14 And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried.

What we have here is Noah waits another month—29 days or so that he waits from the point where he sent out the last dove. It is now late September or early October, and what Noah does in order to get a good view is he removes the covering. What most people think is that he disassembled the roof around where the window was, so he could pop his head out, and get a really good look at the surrounding terrain. And just by looking, he could tell that the ground was dry, especially around the ark.

We can only imagine what it was like for those eight people to pop their heads out of the ark, and to look around, and feel the sun in their face, and the wind in their hair, and smell the clean fresh air for the first time in a year!

Even so, Noah waits another 57 days! I am sure that he was not doing this of his own accord. I am sure that Noah wanted to get out as much as anybody. But, Noah was a righteous man, and he was waiting for God Himself to give him the all clear signal. Only then, after God said they could go out, because He is the One who told them to go in. Noah probably thought, “If He says I'm to go in now, I'd better not leave until He says that I can go out.” That would be the smart thing.

Genesis 8:15 Then God spoke to Noah, saying,

This is the first time that God had spoken to Noah in over a year and a week.

Genesis 8:16-19 “Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh

The Great Flood (Part 6) by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.

Finally, after 370 days from God's sealing of the door, God gives Noah permission to leave the ark. This was at the end of November of the next year. They had gone through an entire year coming back around in the calendar to the week after they had gone in the year before. All the humans leave, and they bring out all the animals.

What is interesting here is that when God makes this command to go out, He uses the same words that He said to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful, and multiply."

With the use of the word "abound," there is a possibility that God may have enhanced their breeding for a time in order to replenish the earth—that He gave them special abundance in their fruitfulness and their multiplication. And so they were able to have many little ones. I am sure that when God gave this command, the ark emptied very quickly. And long lines of animals just descended out of the ark and down the mountainside into the plains down below.

The Great Flood was over.

Psalm 37:34 Wait on the LORD, And keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.

Noah and his family waited on God after the wicked were cut off—and he was rewarded with the whole earth!

We can learn from Noah's patience and endurance through this whole time. Wait for God to act. Once He is finished with His work, we, too, will inherit the earth.