

The Days of Noah
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Contributors: Samuel C. Baxter

Website: Church of God, Bismarck <https://www.church-of-god-bismarck.org>

Articles

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What Was It *Really* Like Before the Flood?

Cutting through countless theories, wild speculation, and odd ideas, there is much more to the story of Noah than most realize.

"Once upon a time, long ago..." Unless you are in primary school, this worn-out first line is usually a cue to zone out. A child's story is sure to follow. The tale will likely include cookie-cutter heroes and villains, a damsel in distress, and maybe a giant or two. It is usually a highly implausible myth, legend, or parable.

This is how most view the idea of a flood that covered the whole Earth. The storyline has captured the imaginations of nearly every culture for millennia. In Sumerian lore, imprinted on cuneiform tablets, Ziusudra rides it out in a huge boat. The ancient Babylonian tale has Utnapishtim in the lead role, with his wife and animals on the watercraft. In both instances, the main characters become immortal post-flood.

Aztec culture has a 52-year version with only one man and one woman—Tata and Nene—surviving by stowing away in a massive cypress tree. Afterward, the god Tezcatlipoca turns them into dogs for disobeying orders.

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Over the years, the tale of the Flood (also called the Deluge) has been hashed and rehashed *ad nauseam*, with nearly every culture preserving a story of waters covering the Earth, usually to destroy a wicked humanity. There is also the Greek myth of Deucalion and the Indian legend of Manu.

No two versions are exactly alike.

For those who believe in the Bible’s validity, however, just one account is accurate: the story of Noah’s ark. Summarized, the book of Genesis states that this servant of God placed his family and at least two of every animal kind (**Gen. 6:19-20**) into a mammoth boat. It then rained for 40 days and 40 nights, and a flood covered the Earth. In the end, the ark runs aground on a mountain peak and God says He will never again flood the entire globe. He uses a rainbow to symbolize His promise.

It seems that if any story deserves to start with “once upon a time, long ago,” it is this one.

But there is a problem. If something occurred *long ago*, how can one know exactly what happened? There are no eyewitnesses to ask or videos of that time to access via the Internet. This means even those who believe the Bible account quibble over what actually happened—especially regarding conditions *before* the Flood.

A major bone of contention is found in **Genesis 6**: “There were giants in the earth in those days; and also, after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown” (**vs. 4**).

Verse 2 states that the sons of God took the daughters of men as wives.

These verses have fascinated Bible readers for centuries: Who were the “giants in the earth” and the “sons of God”? What about the “mighty men”? Most important, what did they have to do with God’s decision to wipe out mankind with a universal flood?

A favorite answer is that fallen angels (sons of God) procreated with human women to create a super race of evil demon spawn. Thus, God was forced to destroy mankind.

This idea *appears* to grow legs when one reads the book of Job. In chapter 1 and **verse 6**, angels are referred to as “sons of God.”

James Moffatt favors this idea in his translation of the Bible: “The angels”—he does not even call them “sons of God”—“noticed that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any one of them that they chose” (**Gen. 6:2**).

Other sources add to this theory, such as the Book of Enoch, a controversial document written in 300 BC. Also, a big-budget Hollywood blockbuster about Noah depicts these angelic beings as 11-foot-tall giants with six arms.

Yet Jesus Christ exposes a glaring flaw in the idea of angel-human offspring: “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven” (**Matt. 22:30**).

While the context of this quote is a future resurrection, it clearly states that angels do not marry. They are sexless spirit beings, and it is impossible for them to procreate. If they could, society would be full of current examples—there are none! Therefore, the sons of God who took wives from the daughters of men cannot be angels. The Bible does record that there were giants before and in the centuries after the Flood—but they were flesh-and-blood human beings! Goliath, who was at least 9 feet tall, is one example (**I Sam. 17:4**).

Yet this is only *one* of many popular misconceptions about the pre-Flood account. To fully understand what it was like in the days leading up to it, one must mine the text of the Bible. Doing so creates a vivid picture of Noah’s day—and its crucial importance for the modern world.

Global Conditions

A picture of this time begins to emerge when continuing to read **Genesis 6**: “And God saw that the wickedness of man

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was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (vs. 5).

Every imagination of the thoughts of men’s hearts was evil *continually*. How did it get that bad?

Before the Flood, people lived for many centuries. The first man, Adam, lived for 930 years (5:5), which was a decade or two past the standard lifespan of the time.

Try to wrap your mind around living almost an entire millennium. Imagine if a person had 900 years to learn something like playing the violin. He could eventually reach and exceed what is considered a virtuoso level today.

As each person honed new skills, it was not done in a vacuum. They collaborated with others to speed the learning process. Notice: “And it came to pass, *when men began to multiply on the face of the earth*, and daughters were born unto them” (6:1).

The original Hebrew word translated “to multiply” means “increase” and “to multiply by the myriad,” according to *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*.

In other words, the Earth experienced a massive population explosion. Due to their extended lifespans, the number of people *could* have grown to between five billion and 17 billion by Noah’s time.

Knowledge and technology also rapidly increased in the 1,656 years from Creation to the Flood. Mankind built cities (4:17), had cattle ranches (vs. 20), composed and played music (vs. 21), and discovered metallurgy, including how to make alloys such as brass (vs. 22).

While each man had about 900 years to perfect various crafts, he also had the same amount of time to develop wrong attitudes and habits.

What someone thinks and does becomes part of his character. Just as a person could have become incredibly skilled at metallurgy during that time, he also could have perfected the art of lying, cheating, and stealing. Even after just a few hundred years, man would have become incredibly wicked. And, again, there are estimated to have been billions of people like this!

Those alive at the time knew how to work with metals—for both good and bad purposes. This included the development of weapons such as swords and spears. Coupled with a crowded globe, this is what resulted: “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was *filled with violence*” (Gen. 6:11).

This is the world that the Creator looked upon and said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repents [grieves] Me that I have made them” (6:7).

Yet there was one person who stood out: “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD” (vs. 8).

Noah lived a completely different way of life from those around him—one that had been known from the day Adam and Eve were created.

Two Trees

In the Garden of Eden, the first man and woman were presented with a choice between two very different life paths. Notice: “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Gen. 2:7-9).

God then gave Adam and Eve plain instructions: “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die” (vs. 16-17).

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Eating the fruit of the Tree of Life symbolized choosing to follow God’s will and allowing Him to determine how man should live. Eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented choosing to make decisions based on man’s own understanding.

Genesis 3:1-8 shows what path Adam and Eve chose. They rejected the Creator as their supreme educator and ruler. Instead, they listened to the serpent and ate from the wrong tree. From then on, human beings have been deciding for themselves what is “good” and what is “evil.” They have continued to choose between right and wrong based on their own faulty physical reasoning rather than listening to what God says.

By not eating from the Tree of Life, man cut himself off from access to divine knowledge, which included understanding God’s astounding purpose for him.

The two trees in the garden also symbolized two ways of life: GIVE versus GET.

The way of GIVE can be defined as outflowing love, care and concern for others that is equal to or greater than the love for oneself. It includes cooperation, serving and sharing. On the other hand, the way of GET is inward concern for self. It can be summarized as, “I want to take. I want to get whatever I can from you. I will let you produce, but I’ll take it away from you, rather than produce it myself.” It is materialistic, covetous, and self-centered. It involves GETTING at the expense of others—often to their hurt.

By Noah’s time, the vast majority of Earth was living the way of GET.

Way of Cain

Genesis 4 shows that Adam and Eve’s first children, Cain and Abel, exemplified these two ways of life. First-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus had access to ancient historical documents that no longer exist today. His *Antiquities of the Jews* supports the biblical account: “Now, the two brethren were pleased with different courses of life, for Abel, the younger, was a *lover of righteousness*, and, believing that God was present at all his actions, he excelled in virtue; and his employment was that of a shepherd. But Cain was not only very wicked in other respects but was *wholly intent upon getting...*” (emphasis added).

Strong’s concordance shows that the Hebrew meaning of the name Cain is “gotten.”

Cain eventually ends up killing Abel out of jealousy and is expelled from the presence of his family as punishment. In response, Cain tells the Creator, “Behold, You have driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from Your face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth...” (**Gen. 4:14**).

Cain clearly was not removed from Earth, but was driven from where Adam, Eve and their children lived. **Verse 16** states, “And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.”

Josephus states that Cain refused to learn from his punishment and instead determined “to increase his wickedness; for he only aimed to procure everything that was for his own bodily pleasure, though it obliged him to be injurious to his neighbors. He augmented his household substance with much wealth, by rapine [theft] and violence; he excited his acquaintance to procure pleasures and spoils by robbery and became a great leader of men into wicked courses. He also introduced a change in that way of simplicity wherein men lived before; and was the author of measures and weights. And whereas they lived innocently and generously while they knew nothing of such arts, he changed the world into cunning craftiness. He first of all set boundaries about lands: he built a city, and fortified it with walls, and he compelled his family to come together to it...”

Instead of always giving generously, Cain apparently introduced weights and measurements in business dealings. Almost certainly, he began to cheat others using this system to get more for himself. He negatively influenced others to live selfishly.

Josephus shows the incredible effect Cain had on others: “Nay, even while Adam was alive, it came to pass that the posterity of Cain became exceeding wicked, everyone successively...more wicked than the former. They were intolerable

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in war, and vehement in robberies...yet was he bold in his profligate [wasteful] behavior, in acting unjustly, and doing injuries for gain.”

Antiquities of the Jews singles out one of Cain’s descendants: “But Tubal, [the Bible calls him Tubal-cain] one of his children...exceeded all men in strength and was very expert and famous in martial performances [he was an elite warrior]. He procured what tended to the pleasures of the body by that method; and first of all, invented the art of making brass.”

These are all just descriptions of Cain’s descendants. Adam’s other children lived separately under a wholly different form of leadership.

Preachers of Righteousness

Recall that Abel was “a lover of righteousness,” which means he lived God’s Way. **Psalm 119:172** defines righteousness: “My tongue shall speak of Your word: *for all Your commandments are righteousness.*”

This means Abel obeyed God’s Commandments.

The way of GIVE did not die out when Cain killed his brother.

Return to **Genesis 4**: “And Adam knew his wife again; and she bore a son, and called his name Seth: for God, said she, has appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew” (**vs. 25**).

Verse 26 states: “And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: *then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.*”

The phrase “call upon the name of the LORD” could also be translated as “then men began to *preach* and *publish* the name of the LORD.”

Almost certainly, those of Seth’s line invented written language. Josephus states that they founded the study of astronomy and wrote their discoveries on stone and brick pillars to preserve the knowledge.

A passage from the New Testament sheds light on what role Seth and Enos had in the pre-Flood world: “And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, *a preacher of righteousness*, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly” (**II Pet. 2:5**).

Noah was the eighth of what are called “preachers of righteousness.” Abel was the first. The other seven were Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch and Noah. They undoubtedly taught their families to live according to God’s Commandments.

Note that the lives of many of these preachers overlapped for many hundreds of years. At one point, six of these men lived simultaneously. This would have surely compounded their positive effect.

Again, the account provided by Josephus adds more: “Now this Seth, when he was brought up, and came to those years in which he could discern what was good, became a virtuous man; and as he was himself of an excellent character, so did he leave children behind him who imitated his virtues. All these proved to be of good dispositions. They also inhabited the same country without dissensions, and in a happy condition, without any misfortunes falling upon them, till they died.”

A land filled with peace and happiness. How unlike the civilization under Cain’s rule!

Yet the sphere of influence of Seth’s line did not stop with immediate family. *Antiquities of the Jews* shows that each patriarch was in charge of the government, which meant they likely enforced God’s Law as civil laws. Josephus states that Seth’s children “continued to esteem God as the Lord of the universe” for seven generations “but in process of time they were perverted and forsook the practices of their forefathers.”

What caused the preachers of righteousness to lose influence over society?

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John Gill's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments speculates that during the time of a man named Jared (who was Noah's great-great-grandfather), there began to be an apostasy—a defection—from God's Way, which occurred as a result of Cain's children mixing with Seth's.

The Bible is clear that Jared's son Enoch “walked with God” (**Gen. 5:22**). Through Enoch, we can understand what these eight righteous men preached. Astonishingly, it was the gospel of the kingdom of God: that Jesus Christ with His saints will one day establish, a SUPER GOVERNMENT on Earth!

The New Testament book of Jude states: “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince [convict] all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed...” (**1:14-15**).

Every indication is that Enoch's son Methuselah and grandson Lamech did not continue in the teachings of the preachers of righteousness. Instead, the line skipped two generations to Noah. Almost certainly, Methuselah and Lamech maliciously led an apostasy from God's Way—and used their influence as government leaders to sway others to their thinking.

As has been the case throughout millennia, Methuselah and Lamech probably slowly introduced fraudulent beliefs to those in their charge. They likely taught counterfeit ideas that looked godly, but were really from the mind of Satan, whom II Corinthians calls the “god of this world” (**4:4**).

As marriages continued between Seth's and Cain's children, the way of GET gained traction over the entire Earth.

Preaching Campaign

Because Noah was just, the Creator warned him of the coming Flood: “And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make you an ark of gopher wood; rooms shall you make in the ark and shall pitch it within and without with pitch” (**Gen. 6:13-14**).

The Flood did not begin immediately. God gave mankind 120 years to repent (**vs. 3**), during which time Noah, as a preacher of righteousness, warned of the coming calamity for the majority of this time.

Josephus adds to the story: “But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and being displeased at their conduct, *persuaded them to change their dispositions and their acts for the better*: but seeing they did not yield to him, but were slaves to their wicked pleasures, he was afraid they would kill him, together with his wife and children, and those they had married; so he departed out of that land.”

A loving God made sure that all of mankind was told of the coming punishment and offered anyone who changed their ways a place on the ark. Additionally, Noah also certainly preached the gospel of the kingdom throughout the world as his great-grandfather Enoch had done.

To sharpen this warning, God may have increased natural disasters at that time.

While most details from the Babylonian telling of the Flood cannot be trusted, the fact that natural disasters were increasing has strong merit as it follows a common biblical pattern. A few details gleaned from the Babylonian myth include an uptick in famines and disease outbreaks in the years before the Deluge. It also mentioned attacks from lions and wolves were commonplace.

Such events should have grabbed man's attention and showed him that he was living the wrong way!

Despite Noah warning for decades, everyone ignored the patriarch. Just eight people were ultimately saved: “...when once the longsuffering of *God waited in the days of Noah*, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (**I Pet. 3:20**).

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“Days of Noah”

The story of the pre-Flood world is not just interesting from the perspective of biblical history. Jesus Himself places paramount importance on understanding this account: “But *as the days of Noah were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so, shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (**Matt. 24:37-39**).

Before the Flood, the overwhelming majority ignored the verbal warning from Noah and the warning signs all around them about what was to occur.

Luke 17 contains a parallel account: “And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all” (**vs. 26-27**).

Said another way, world conditions before Christ’s Return will mirror “the days of Noah.”

In **Matthew 24**, while talking with Jesus, some of His disciples inquired about this same topic. They stated, “Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world?” (**vs. 3**). The word “world” in this verse is better translated “age.”

Go over in your mind the global trends before the Flood: population explosion, widespread violence and warfare, incredible technological advancement, multiplying funds of knowledge, false religion, animal attacks, disease, and famine.

Now look at what Christ said would come in the last days in part of what is called the Olivet Prophecy: “For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many [in the form of false religion]. And you shall hear of *wars and rumors of wars*...For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be *famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse [various] places*” (**Matt. 24:5-7**).

All of these trends have existed throughout human history. Jesus could only have meant that they would noticeably *worsen* before the end of the age.

Daniel 12:4 adds to the picture by stating that at “the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and *knowledge shall be increased*.”

Also, **Revelation 6** contains a parallel to the Olivet Prophecy and mentions four symbolic horsemen, which ride horses that are white (connoting false Christianity), red (war), black (famine), and pale (disease). These represent conditions that will increase in the last days.

Verse 8 summarizes that the four horsemen are given power over the Earth “to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death and with the beasts of the earth.”

Be honest with yourself. Think of the incessant news reports. All of these trends exist today—and are growing more frequent **BY THE DAY**.

The end times—the “days of Noah”—are upon us now!

And just as before the Flood, a loving God is warning the nations of the Earth as well as announcing the good news of Christ’s soon-coming **SUPER GOVERNMENT**.

This was another trend Jesus highlighted in **Matthew 24**: “And this gospel of the kingdom *shall be preached in all the world* for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (**vs. 14**).

As was the case before the Flood, God offers a way of escape for those who repent and change their ways.

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Do not let yourself be lulled into thinking that everything is continuing as it always has been. Allow worsening negative world events to shake you awake and turn you toward God and His way of GIVE. Learn from the examples of those who ignored Noah's fervent warnings.

Read **Luke 17** again: “And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all” (**vs. 26-27**).

A barrage of prophetic events will soon smash into an unsuspecting humanity. You do not have to be caught off guard.

YOU CAN ESCAPE!

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