

The Biblical Flood: Local or Universal?
by Richard M. Davidson
Andrews University

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I. Introduction

The question of the historicity and extent of the Genesis flood is not just a matter of idle curiosity with little at stake for Christian faith. For those who see the days of creation in Genesis 1 as six, literal 24 hour days (see Hasel, 1994), a universal global flood is an absolute necessity to explain the existence of the geological column. A literal creation week is inextricably linked with a world-wide flood. Those who accept the conventional interpretation of the geological column must conclude that animal death and the sin of Adam have no causal connection, which contradicts the clear biblical claim that the wages of sin is death and undermines the atoning sin-forgiving power of Jesus' death (Baldwin 2000).

Three major positions are taken by scholars with regard to the extent of the Genesis flood: (1) the traditional, which asserts the universal, world-wide, nature of the deluge; (2) limited or local flood theories, which narrow the scope of the flood story to a particular geographical location in Mesopotamia; and (3) non-literal (symbolic) interpretation, which suggests that the flood story is a non-historical account written to teach theological truth (Davidson, 2004).

Against this third position, the non-historical, we must note the evidence within the biblical account affirming the historical nature of the flood. In the literary structure of the flood story (Shea, 1979), the genealogical frame or envelope construction (Genesis 5:32 and 9:28-29) plus the secondary genealogies (Genesis 6:9-10 and 9:18-19) are indicators that the account is

intended to be factual history. The use of the genealogical term *tôl'ê dôt* (“generations,” “account”) in the flood story (6:9) as throughout Genesis (13 times, structuring the whole book), indicates that the author intended this story to be as historically veracious as the rest of Genesis (Doukhan, 1978, pp. 167-220; Mathews, 1996, pp. 41, 111). Walter Kaiser analyzes the literary form of Genesis 1-11 and concludes that this whole section of Genesis must be taken as “historical narrative prose” (Kaiser, 1970).

The historical occurrence of the flood is part of the saving/judging acts of God, and its historicity is assumed and essential to the theological arguments of later biblical writers employing flood typology (see Davidson, 1981, pp. 326-327, and later discussion in this article). Thus, according to the biblical writers, far from being a non-historical, symbolical, or mythical account written only to teach theological truths, the flood narrative is intended to accurately record a real, literal, historical event. The historicity of the flood narrative will be discussed further in one of my workshops in this Conference.

For evangelical Christians who take seriously the biblical record and accept the historicity of the flood account, the question still remains whether the event described is to be taken as a local, limited flood or a universal, world-wide cataclysm.

The limited flood theories rest primarily on scientific arguments that present seemingly difficult geological, biological, and anthropological problems for a universal flood. (See Boardman, 1990, pp. 212-223; Custance, 1979, pp. 28-58; Kidner, 1967, pp. 93-95; Mitchell, 1982/1993; Ramm, 1954, pp. 232-249; Young, 1977, pp. 171-210). Since the scientific argumentation is not the subject of this paper, I can only suggest that these problems are not insurmountable given the supernatural nature of the flood. Numerous recent scientific studies provide a growing body of evidence for diluvial catastrophism instead of uniformitarianism (see

Baldwin, 2000; Brand & Chadwick 2016; Coffin & Brown, 1983; Ham & Hodge, 2016; Rehwinkel, 1951; Roth, 1985, 1986a, 1988; Saffati, 2015; Snelling, 2009; Whitcomb, 1988; Whitcomb & Morris, 1961).

The local flood theories further assert that the terminology describing the extent of the flood should be interpreted in a relative and not absolute universal sense. The various seemingly-universal terms are regarded as implying only a limited locality; they are seen to indicate universality within the writer's world-view but a limited scope in terms of our modern world view. (See Boardman, 1990, pp. 223-226; Custance, 1979, pp. 15-27; Kidner, 1967, pp. 93-95; Mathews, 1996, pp. 365, 380; Ramm, 1954, pp. 241-242.) We will take up this issue in the next section of this article.

The traditional conservative understanding of the flood narrative is that Genesis 6-9 describes a universal, world-wide deluge. It should be noted that this is also the view of the majority of liberal-critical commentators on Genesis 6-9, although they regard the biblical view as borrowed from the ANE accounts and not historical. (See Hasel 1975, p. 78, note 16 for bibliography). James Barr, former Regius Professor of Hebrew at the University of Oxford, summarizes:

So far as I know there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of Genesis 1-11 intended to convey to their readers that: (a) creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience; (b) the figures contained in the Genesis genealogies provide by simple addition a chronology from the beginning of the world up to the later stages of the Biblical story; and (c) Noah's flood was understood to be worldwide, and to have extinguished all human and land animal life except for those in the ark. (Barr, personal letter to David C. K. Watson, April 23, 1984; cited in Plantinga, 2001, p. 217).

The thesis of this presentation is that only the traditional position of a literal, universal world-wide flood does full justice to the biblical data, and this universal interpretation is crucial for flood theology in Genesis and for the theological implications drawn by later biblical writers.

II. Biblical Terminology in Genesis 6-9 Indicating Universality

Perhaps the most important kind of biblical evidence for a universal flood is the specific all-inclusive terminology found within the Genesis account itself. The late Gerhard Hasel has provided a careful treatment of this terminology in three penetrating studies in previous issues of *Origins* (Hasel, 1974, 1975, 1978), and I have examined this terminology at length elsewhere (Davidson, 2004); therefore, I need not go into detail in this paper. Eight different terms or phrases in Genesis 6-9, most echoing their counterparts in the world-wide creation account of Genesis 1-2, indicate universality.

First, the term *haʾareṣ* “the earth,” occurring 46 times in the flood narrative (Genesis 6:12, 13, 17, etc.), always without any accompanying genitive of limitation, clearly parallels the usage of the same term in the account of world-wide, universal creation in Genesis 1:1, 2, 10. (While the term may at times elsewhere may be used without a genitive and still in context be limited in scope to a certain “land,” the explicit link to creation in the flood account (see especially Genesis 6:6, 7) clearly gives a universal context for its usage in Genesis 6-9.)

Some have argued that if Moses had wished to indicate the entire world, he would have used the Hebrew term *tēbēl*, which means “the world (as a whole),” or dry land in the sense of continents. This word is never used in the flood narrative. But it should be pointed out that *tēbēl* is never used in the entire Pentateuch, including the creation account. In fact, the term appears nowhere in the narrative portions of the Hebrew Bible, but only in poetic texts (39 times) usually

as a poetic synonym in parallel with *ha^ʔareṣ* “the earth.” In Proverbs 8:26, the poetic version of creation that echoes the creation account, the term *ha^ʔareṣ* is used in poetic parallelism with the indisputably universal term *tēbēl*, thus providing further evidence that the Genesis creation and flood terminologies are to be taken as global in extent.

A second expression, “upon the face of all the earth” *ʿal-p^ēnê kol-ha^ʔareṣ* (Genesis 7:3; 8:9), clearly alludes to the first occurrence of the same phrase in the universal context of creation (Genesis 1:29; cf. Genesis 1:2 for a related universal expression), and thus implies a universality of the same dimension as in creation also here, i.e., the entire surface of the global mass. While the shortened term “all the earth” (*kol-ha^ʔareṣ*) by itself may have a limited meaning elsewhere when indicated by the immediate context (see Exodus 10:5, 15; Numbers 22:5, 11; 1 Kings 4:34; 10:24; 2 Chronicles 36:23; Genesis 41:57), the immediate context of the flood story is the universal sinfulness of humankind whom God had made and created (Genesis 6:6,7) to have dominion over “all the earth” (Genesis 1:26), and the succeeding context is the universal dispersal of man after the Tower of Babel “upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:4, 8, 9). In each of the four occurrences of the phrase “upon the face of all the earth” in Genesis outside the flood story (Genesis 1:29; 11:4, 8, 9), it clearly has the universal sense of the entire land surface of the globe, and there is nothing in the flood narrative to indicate any less universality. (It should be also noted that the one place in Genesis where in context a similar phrase “upon all the face of the earth” is not universal [the famine mentioned in Genesis 41:56], the Hebrew has a change in word order from elsewhere in Genesis [*ʿal-kol p^ēnê ha^ʔareṣ*]).

Third, the phrase “face of the ground” *p^ēnê ha^ʔadāmāh* (five times in the flood narrative, 7:4, 22, 23; 8:8, 13), occurs in parallel with universal terms we have just noted, “the earth” (7:23)

and “face of all the earth” (8:9), and this phrase “face of the ground” likewise harks back to its first usage in the universal context of creation (Genesis 2:6).

Fourth, the term *kol-bāsār* “all flesh” occurs 12 times in Genesis 6-9 (Genesis 6:12, 13, 17, 19; 7:16, 21; 8:17; 9:11, 15, 16, 17). The word *kol* “all” (which can occasionally express less than totality if the context demands), before an indeterminate noun with no article or possessive suffix, as here in Genesis 6-9, indicates totality. God's announcement to destroy “all flesh” (Genesis 6:13, 17) and the narrator's comment that “all flesh” died (Genesis 7:21-22), except the inhabitants of the ark, indicates universal destruction. The one occurrence of *kol* plus the determinate noun *hābāsār* “all the flesh” (in Genesis 7:15) likewise indicates totality as well as unity.

Fifth, the expression “every living thing” (*kol-hāḥay*) of all flesh (Genesis 6:19), is another expression of totality; in 7:4, 23, the similar term *kol-hay^eqûm* means literally, “all existence.” This term is given further universal dimensions by the addition of the clause harking back to creation—“all existence *that I have made*” (7:4)—and by the exclusive statement “Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive” (7:23). As Hasel puts it, “There is hardly any stronger way in Hebrew to emphasize total destruction of ‘all existence’ of human and animal life on earth than the way it has been expressed. The writer of the Genesis flood story employed terminology, formulae, and syntactical structures of the type that could not be more emphatic and explicit in expressing his concept of a universal, world-wide flood” (Hasel, 1975, p. 86).

Sixth, the phrase “under the whole heaven” (*taḥat kol-hāššāmāyim*, Genesis 7:19), is used six times in the OT outside of the flood narrative, and always with a universal meaning (see Deuteronomy 2:25; 4:19; Job 28:24; 37:3; 41:11; Daniel 9:12). For example, the phrase is used

to describe God's omniscience: "For He looks to the ends of the earth and sees under the whole heavens" (Job 28:24). Again, it depicts God's sovereignty: "Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine" (Job 41:11 KJV). (Note that the usage in Deuteronomy 2:25, describing "the nations under the whole heaven," is further qualified and limited by the phrase "who shall hear the report of you," and thus is potentially universal and not an exception to the universal sense.)

The universal phrase "under the whole heaven" or "under all the heavens" also universalizes the phrase "under heaven" (Genesis 6:17) in this same flood context. The word "heaven" alone can have a local meaning [e.g., 1 Kings 18:45], but here the context is clearly universal. Ecclesiastes, which contains numerous allusions to creation, likewise utilizes the term "under heaven" with a universal intention (Ecclesiastes 1:13; 2:3; 3:1; cf. the parallel universal expression "under the sun" in Ecclesiastes 1:3, 9; 2:11, 17; etc.).

In the flood account this phrase "under the whole heaven" is part of two forceful verses describing the extent of the flood: "and the waters prevailed so mightily upon the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered" (7:19, 20). Critical scholar John Skinner notes that 7:19, 20 "not only asserts its [the flood's] universality, but so to speak proves it, by giving the exact height of the waters above the highest mountains" (Skinner, 1930/1956, p. 165).

The Biblical language here simply cannot be explained in terms of a local sky, and certainly cannot refer to the local mountains being covered by snow, as some proponents of a local flood suggest. H. C. Leupold points out that the writer of vs. 19 is not content with a single use of *kol* ("all") in "all the high mountains," but "since 'all' is known to be used in a relative sense, the writer removes all possible ambiguity by adding the phrase 'under all the heavens.' A double 'all' (*kol*) cannot allow for so relative a sense. It almost constitutes a Hebrew superlative.

So we believe that the text disposes of the question of the universality of the Flood” (Leupold, 1942, pp. 301-302).

Seventh, Hasel (1974) devoted an entire scholarly article to the phrase “all the fountains [*ma^cyenoth*] of the Great Deep [*t^ehôm rabbāh*]” (Genesis 7:11; 8:2), and showed how it is linked with the universal “Deep” (*t^ehôm*) or world-ocean in Genesis 1:2 (cf. Psalm 104:6: “Thou didst cover it [the earth] with deep [*t^ehôm*] as with a garment; the waters were standing above the mountains”). The “breaking up” and “bursting forth” (i.e., geological faulting) of not just one subterranean water spring in Mesopotamia, but of *all* the “fountains” of the Great Deep, coupled in the same verse with the opening of the windows of the heavens, far transcends a local scene. Hasel perceptively concludes that “the bursting forth of the waters from the fountains of the ‘great deep’ refers to the splitting open of springs of subterranean waters with such might and force that together with the torrential downpouring of waters stored in the atmospheric heavens a worldwide flood comes about” (Hasel, 1974, p. 71).

Eighth, in another article, Hasel (1978) shows how the Hebrew Bible reserved a special term *mabbûl* which in its 13 occurrences refers exclusively to the universal Genesis flood (12 occurrences in Genesis, once in Psalm 29:10). This word may be derived from the Hebrew root *ybl* “to flow, to stream.” The term *mabbûl*, which in the flood narrative is usually associated with *mayim* “waters,” seems to have become “a technical term for waters flowing or streaming forth and as such designates the flood (deluge) being caused by waters. . . . *mabbûl* is in the Old Testament a term consistently employed for the flood (deluge) which was caused by torrential rains and the bursting forth of subterranean waters” (Hasel, 1978, pp. 92-93). This technical term clearly sets the Genesis deluge apart from all local floods, and is utilized in the Psalm 29:10

to illustrate Yahweh's universal sovereignty over the world at the time of the Noahic flood: "The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood, and the Lord sits as King forever."

Summarizing regarding the technical terminology used for the extent of the flood in Genesis 6-9, K. Mathews (1996, p. 365) writes: "This inclusive language as elsewhere in the account suggests that the cataclysm was worldwide in scope." Hasel (1975, p. 87) concurs with an even more forceful conclusion:

The Genesis flood narrative provides ample evidence of being an account which is to be understood as a historical narrative in prose style. It expects to be taken literally. There is a consistent and overwhelming amount of terminology and formulae . . . which on the basis of context and syntax has uniformly indicated that the flood story wants to be understood in a universal sense: the waters destroyed all human and animal plus bird life on the entire land mass of the globe. To read it otherwise means to force a meaning on the carefully written and specific syntactical constructions of the original language which the text itself rejects.

III. Other Biblical Evidence for a Universal Flood

Many additional lines of biblical evidence converge in affirming the universal extent of the Genesis flood and also reveal the theological significance of this conclusion (see esp. Davidson, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Ham & Hodge, 2016; Sarfati, 2015; and Snelling, 2009). We will summarize twelve points that emerge from the biblical text.

First, the trajectory of major themes in Genesis 1-11—creation, fall, plan of redemption, spread of sin—is universal in scope and calls for a corresponding universal judgment (Clines, 1976). We have already noted in reference to specific flood terminology the numerous allusions to the universal context of creation. The creation of the "heavens and the earth" certainly is not local in scope according to Genesis 1-2.

Likewise, the Fall of humanity in Adam and Eve led to the sinful condition of the entire human race (*hā'ādām*), not just the inhabitants of Mesopotamia (see Genesis 6:5, 11; Romans

3:19; 5:12). Again, the Protoevangelium (first Gospel promise) outlined in Genesis 3:15, involves the universal moral struggle between the spiritual descendants (or “seed”) of the serpent and the spiritual descendants (“seed”) of the woman, culminating in the victory of the representative Messianic Seed over the serpent (see Robertson, 1980; Ojewole, 2002). This plan of redemption is certainly universal in scope.

In a similar way, the sinful condition of humankind described at the time of the flood includes more than those living in the Fertile Crescent. From *God's* perspective, not simply from the culturally conditioned local view of the narrator, we have the results of the divine investigative judgment: “And God saw that the wickedness of man (*hā^ʔādām*, humankind) was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). Such universal sinfulness naturally calls for universal judgment.

Second, the divine purpose given for the bringing of the flood makes explicit its universal scope: “And the Lord said, ‘I will destroy man [*hā^ʔādām*, humanity] whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them’” (Genesis 6:7). Nothing less than a complete destruction of the human race (except for Noah and his family, 6:8) seems envisaged. Given the length of time from creation (over 1650 years minimum), the longevity of the antediluvians (nearly a thousand years), and God's command at creation to fill the “earth” (Genesis 1:28), it is highly unlikely that the pre-flood population would have stayed only in Mesopotamia. The destruction of humanity would thus necessitate more than a local flood.

Third, the genealogical lines from both Adam (Genesis 4:17-26; 5:1-31) and Noah (Genesis 10:1-32; 11:1-9) are exclusive in nature, indicating that as Adam was father of all pre-flood humanity, so Noah was father of all post-flood humanity. From the descendants of Noah

“the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood” (Genesis 10:32), and the Tower of Babel experience spread humanity across the globe (Genesis 11:1-19).

Striking extra-biblical evidence that all human races, and not just the nations of the Fertile Crescent, are included in the descendants of Noah, and retain memory of the universal flood, is found in the amazing prevalence of ancient flood stories throughout the world. Over 230 different flood stories are known and occur among the most diverse peoples of the earth (Belli, et al., 2023; Frazer, 1918, 1:105-361; Nelson, 1931; Ham & Hodge, 2016, pp. 31-40). A world-wide flood is by far the most frequently-given cause for past universally-destructive calamities in the folk literature of antiquity (Thompson, 1955, 1:182-194). This vast body of ancient witnesses to a world-wide deluge is powerful testimony to the historicity and universality of the biblical flood.

A remarkable number of these oral and written traditions agree upon the basic points of the biblical account: all humankind was destroyed by a great flood as a result of divine judgment against human sin, and a single man and his family or a few friends survived the deluge in a ship or other sea-faring vessel. The ANE flood stories, nearest to the area of the Dispersion at Babel are the closest in detail to the biblical account (see Belli, 2023; Heidel, 1946; Jacobsen, 1981; and Lambert and Millard, 1969). Doukhan (2016, p. 143) points out that “For all these texts, the flood affects the whole earth and aims at the destruction and, hence the ultimate restoration of humankind.”

Fourth, the same inclusive divine blessing to be fruitful and multiply fill the earth is given to both Adam and Noah (Genesis 1:28; 9:1). This is another linkage between universal creation and the flood, between the original beginning and the “new beginning.” As the human race at creation flows from Adam and Eve, so the postdiluvial humanity is populated through Noah.

Fifth, the covenant (Genesis 9:9-10) with its rainbow sign (Genesis 9:12-17) is clearly linked to the extent of the flood and includes the whole earth (Genesis 9:13-17). If there was only a local flood, then the covenant would be only a limited covenant, and the covenant rainbow sign of “the all-embracing universality of the Divine mercy” (Delitzsch, 1888/1976, 1:289-290) would be stripped of its meaning.

Sixth, the viability of God's promise (Genesis 9:15; cf. Isaiah 54:9) and the integrity of God in keeping His promise is wrapped up in the world-wide extent of the flood. This point cannot be underscored too heavily: if Genesis 6-9 describes only a local flood, then God has broken His promise every time another local flood has happened! The only way God’s promise not to send another flood to destroy every living thing (Genesis 8:21) can be seen to have been kept is if the flood was a universal one and the whole human race outside the ark was destroyed.

Seventh, the universality of the flood is underscored by the enormous size of the ark detailed in Genesis 6:14-15 (see discussion in Ham & Hodge, 2016, pp. 193 – 227) and the stated necessity for saving all the species of non-aquatic animals and plants in the ark (Genesis 6:16-21; 7:2-3). A massive ark filled with representatives of all non-aquatic animal/plant species would be unnecessary if this were only a local flood, for these species could have been preserved elsewhere in the world, and many of the species of non-aquatic animals living in the area of the flood could have simply fled beyond where the flood occurred. Yet the divine insistence in the biblical record is that the animals were brought into the ark to preserve representatives of all of the various species (Genesis 6:19-20).

As a matter of fact, if only a local flood were in view, the building of any ark at all, even for Noah and his family, would have been superfluous—God could simply have warned Noah and his family in time to escape from the coming judgment, just as he did with Lot in Sodom.

And the wicked people could also have escaped God's judgment by fleeing from the place of the local flood. But the point of the narrative concerning the ark is that there was no other escape; in the midst of the flood "only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained" (Genesis 7:23).

Eighth, the covering of "all the high mountains" by at least 15 cubits (Genesis 7:19-20; some twenty-two feet or about seven meters) could not involve simply a local flood, since water seeks its own level across the surface of the globe. Even one high mountain covered in a local Mesopotamian setting would require that same height of water everywhere on the planet's surface.

In this connection we note that it is not necessary to postulate the existence of mountains as high as Mt. Everest at the time of the flood, and thus to require waters covering the earth to a depth of six miles, as some proponents of a local flood suggest would be necessary (see Ramm, 1954, p. 242). The antediluvian mountains were very possibly much lower than at present. Passages in the book of Job and Psalms may well be referring to the process of postdiluvian mountain uplift (e.g., Job 9:5; 28:9; and Psalm 104:7-8; see Davidson, 2015).

Also in this connection we may address the objection that proponents of a local flood often raise, namely, that a world-wide flood would imply "that the earth's surface was completely renovated during the flood year" and thus "prediluvian topography would have been exceedingly different from postdiluvian topography." This implication, they claim, is in conflict with Biblical evidence which "strongly suggests that prediluvian geography did basically resemble postdiluvian geography" (Young, 1977, p. 210). Reference is made particularly to the topographical descriptions in connection with the Garden of Eden: the lands of Havilah and

Cush, and the four rivers, two of which (the Tigris and the Euphrates) were familiar to the readers of Genesis in Moses' time.

What is not recognized in these arguments, however, is that although there are some similarities between the prediluvian and postdiluvian topography, there are more differences than similarities. Two of the rivers mentioned apparently no longer existed in Moses' time: the Pishon and Gihon are mentioned in terms of where they used to flow, in the postdiluvian areas of Havilah and Cush respectively. The other two rivers—the Tigris and Euphrates—are described as coming from a common source in the Garden of Eden, certainly far different from their present courses. The topographical descriptions in the early chapters of Genesis are thus in harmony with a world-wide flood.

Ninth, the duration of the flood makes sense only with a universal flood. The deluge of rain from above and water from the fountains of the deep below continued 40 days (Genesis 7:17), and all the highest mountains were still covered five months after the flood began; the tops of the mountains were not seen until after seven months, and the flood waters were not dried up enough for Noah to leave the ark until one year and ten days had passed (see Genesis 7:11; 8:14). Such lengths of time seem commensurate only with a universal and not a local flood (Ham & Hodge, 2016, pp. 94, 169–179; Johns, 2022).

Tenth, the receding activity of the water (Genesis 8:3a, 54a) is described by Hebrew phrases which, in parallel with similar phraseology and grammatical construction for the "to and fro" motion of the raven (Genesis 8:7), should be translated as "going and retreating" (see Austin, 1990, p. 218; Hasel, 1978, p. 93) and imply oscillatory water motion lasting for 74 days (see Genesis 8:3-5). The waters rushing back and forth like in ocean tidal movement as the

overall level gradually decreased, supports a universal interpretation such as “the oceanic energy impulse model of the flood” (Austin, 1990, p. 218), but is incongruous with a local flood theory.

Eleventh, the NT passages concerning the flood all employ universal language: “swept them *all* away” (Matthew 24:39); “destroyed them *all*”, (Luke 17:27); “he did not spare the ancient *world*, but preserved Noah with seven other persons, . . . when he brought a flood upon the *world* of the ungodly” (2 Peter 2:5); “a few, that is eight persons, were saved through water” (1 Peter 3:20); Noah “condemned the *world*” (Hebrews 11:7). A local flood would not have ended the antediluvian world. As Archer (1984, p. 208) states, “we have the unequivocal corroboration of the New Testament that the destruction of the human race at the time of the flood was total and universal.”

Twelfth, the NT flood typology assumes and *depends upon* not only the historicity, but also the universality, of the flood to theologially argue for an imminent world-wide judgment by fire (2 Peter 3:6-7). Peter argues that just as there was a world-wide judgment by water causing the unbelieving antediluvian world to perish, so in the antitype there must-need-be a universal end-time judgment by fire bringing about the destruction of the ungodly (see Davidson, 1981, pp. 326-327).

IV. Conclusion

Several additional arguments for the universality of the Genesis flood will be given in the breakout session of this Faith and Science Conference, dealing with the flood viewed as a cosmic de-creation and re-creation. But from the plenitude of biblical evidence surveyed above, we may conclude with Jonathan Sarfati:

The Bible is unambiguous. The author clearly goes to immense trouble to hammer the universality of the Flood. He emphasizes how the Flood prevailed, covered everything under the whole heavens, and wiped out every land vertebrate outside the Ark. To reinforce this, the Bible states only those on the Ark were saved. Conversely, a local

flood doesn't make sense of an ocean-liner-sized Ark or God's promise never to repeat this sort of flood. . . .

That a universal Flood is taught should be obvious, and this is the traditional teaching of the Church. However, because of intimidation by secular uniformitarian geology, many conservative commentators have tried to escape by the desperate expedient of a local flood. But there is no hope for this argument. This can be shown by evidence that is two sides of the same coin: the Bible teaches *for* a global Flood, and teaches *against* a local Flood. (Safarati, 2025, pp. 525-526.)

A universal flood is crucial not only in seeking to reconcile science (the geological column) and Scripture. It is also pivotal in understanding and remaining faithful to the theology of Genesis 1-11 and the rest of Scripture. The many links with the universal creation in Genesis 1-2 which we have noted in this study not only support the aspect of universality in the flood, but serve to theologically connect protology (creation) and eschatology (judgment/salvation) in the opening chapters of Scripture (Baldwin, 2000; Gage, 1984). A literal creation week is inextricably linked with a world-wide flood. The acceptance of a literal, global flood upholds the causal connection between animal (including human) death and the sin of Adam, supporting the clear biblical claim that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and the need for the atoning sin-forgiving power of Jesus' death. In other words, the forgiveness of human sin depends (at least in part) upon the historicity and universality of the flood (Baldwin 2000).

In light of the crucial importance of a universal flood for both science and theology, there must be a concerted effort among the teachers in our schools and the pastors in our churches to uphold the universality of the flood, in opposition to the unbiblical claims of a non-historical or local flood. By doing so, we may maintain the inextricable link between Creation (in six-literal Days), Catastrophe (a global flood), and Calvary (Christ's death, bearing the wage of sin for us).

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