

Where did the Water Go?

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According to evolutionist Bill Butler, “The greatest geologic fiction that the Creationists adhere to is Noah’s Flood” (2002). The idea that water ever covered the entire Earth, including the highest hills and mountains (Genesis 7:19-20), supposedly is unthinkable (and impossible). Evolutionists (and those sympathetic to them) propose several questions in the Flood account. One such question was raised by Butler in his article, “Creationism—Willful Ignorance.” He asked: “If the earth’s surface were covered by an additional 29,000+ feet of water, how do you get rid of it?” If Mount Everest reaches a height of over 29,000 feet, then, according to the skeptic, the Bible (Genesis 7:20) would indicate that the waters of the Flood would have reached even higher—approximately 22 feet higher than the peak of Mount Everest. If such is the case, where did all of the water go?

First, the Bible is more specific about **Who** caused the waters to subside, than **where** the waters went after the Flood. Genesis 8:1,3 states that “**God made** a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.... And the waters receded continually from the earth.” Years later, the prophet Isaiah recorded how Jehovah compared a promise He made to Israel with His



promise “that the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth” (Isaiah 54:9). The psalmist perhaps provided a clue to the mystery of where the floodwaters went when he wrote:

You who laid the foundations of the earth, so that it should not be moved forever, You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At Your rebuke they fled; at the voice of Your thunder they hastened away. They went up over the mountains; they went down into the valleys, to the place which You founded for them. You have set a boundary that they may not pass over, that they may not return to cover the earth (Psalm 104:5-9).

Because the Earth was completely covered with water that stood above “all the high mountains,” obviously that water had to “go” somewhere after the Flood. God therefore “re-structured” the Earth, pushing down the ocean basins, and raising up the mountains. Just as God miraculously altered the Earth’s topography during the Creation week (Genesis 1:9-13), and just as He miraculously sent floodwaters upon the Earth, it appears that He miraculously caused the waters to subside. By making the mountains taller, and simultaneously creating deeper valleys, God would have changed the topography in such a way as to accommodate additional water. In addition, we know today that a vast amount of water is held both above and below us. Underneath the Earth’s crust is a water table that provides fresh drinking water to billions of people. Plus, scientists believe our atmosphere holds well over 40 trillion gallons of water at any given time. Every single day of the year, approximately 4 trillion gallons fall to the Earth in the form of rain.

Second, the skeptic’s assertion that there presently is not enough water on the Earth for there ever to have been the kind of flood described in Genesis 6-8, is an idea based upon quite invalid assumptions. The truth is, we do not know the exact height of the mountains that existed in Noah’s day; nor do we know the depth of the ocean valleys. We therefore cannot know with certainty how much water was on the Earth before, during, or after the Noachic Flood. In all likelihood, the antediluvian world was not like the Earth of today (cf. 2 Peter 3:6). It seems probable (and reasonable) to suggest, for example, that the mountains of Noah’s day were much smaller than peaks like, say, Mount Everest, Mount McKinley, or others that are so well known to us in our day and age. If that were the case, then the floodwaters did not have to rise to levels of 29,000+ feet to cover everything on the Earth— which means that the skeptic’s assertion is, in point of fact, much ado about nothing. The biblical text has nothing to fear from a terse examination. Truth never does.

REFERENCES

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R&R RESOURCES

THE “WINDOW” OF THE ARK

by Eric Lyons, M.Min.

After informing Noah about an upcoming worldwide flood, and commanding him to build a massive boat of gopher wood (approximately 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high), God instructed His faithful servant, saying, “You shall make a **wi-n-d-o-w** for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above” (Genesis 6:16, emp. added; NOTE: A cubit is roughly 18 inches). Upon reading about this window in the ark, many people have contemplated its usefulness (or lack thereof). Since, historically, windows have served two basic purposes (that of lighting and ventilation), inquiring minds want to know what good **one** window 18 inches square would be on an ark with a capacity of about 1,400,000 cubic feet full of animals. Dennis McKinsey, the one-time editor of the journal *Biblical Errancy* (touted as “the only national periodical focusing on biblical errors”), once asked: “How could so many creatures breathe with only one small opening which was closed for at least 190 days? [sic]” (1983, p. 1). Other skeptics also have ridiculed the idea that sufficient ventilation for the whole ark could have come through this one window (see Wells, 2001). In fact, anyone even slightly familiar with animal-house ventilation needs would be somewhat taken back by the apparent lack of airflow allowed by the ark’s design. Unless God miraculously ventilated the ark, one little window on a three-story-tall boat (which was a football-field-and-a-half long) simply would not do.

Questions regarding the “window” on Noah’s ark and the problem of ventilation have persisted largely because the Hebrew word translated window (*tsobar*) in Genesis 6:16 appears only here in the Old Testament, and linguistic scholars are unsure as to its exact meaning (see Hamilton, 1990, p. 282). Translators of the KJV and NKJV employ the word “window” to translate *tsobar*; however, according to Old Testament commentator Victor Hamilton, they “do so on the basis of the word’s possible connection with *saborayim*, ‘noon, midday,’ thus an opening to let in the light of day” (p. 282). Hebrew scholar William Gesenius defined *tsobar* in his Hebrew lexicon as simply “light,” and translated Genesis 6:16 as “thou shalt make light for the ark” (1847, p. 704). He then surmised that this “light” represented, not a window, but **windows** (plural). The ASV translators also preferred “light” as the best translation for *tsobar*. Still more recent translations, including the RSV, NIV, and ESV, have translated Genesis 6:16 as “make a roof” for the ark, instead of make a “window” or “light.”

Such disagreement among translations is, admittedly, somewhat discouraging to the person who wants a definite answer as to how *tsobar* should be translated. What is clear, however, is that the word translated “window” two chapters later, which Noah is said to have “opened” (8:6), is translated from a **different** Hebrew word (*challôwn*) than what is used in Genesis 6:16. The word *challôwn* (8:6) is the standard Hebrew word for “window” (cf. Genesis 26:8; Joshua 2:18). Yet, interestingly, this is **not** the word used in 6:16. One wonders if these were two different entities, or if in 8:6, Noah opened one of a plurality of aligned windows that God instructed him to make in 6:16?

Another assumption often brought into a discussion regarding the “window” (*tsobar*) of 6:16 is that it was one square cubit. Although many people have imagined Noah’s ark as having one small window 18 inches high by 18 inches wide, the phrase “you shall finish it to a cubit from above” (6:16, NKJV; cf. RSV) does not give the Bible reader any clear dimensions of the opening. The text just says that Noah was to “finish it to a cubit from the top” (NASB; “upward,” ASV). The truth is, the **size** of the lighting apparatus mentioned in this verse is unspecified. The text seems to indicate only the distance the opening was from the top of the ark, rather than the actual size of the window. Thus we cannot form a definitive picture of it. But we do know that nothing in the text warrants an interpretation that the “window” was just a “small opening” (as skeptic Dennis McKinsey alleged). A more probable theory, which aligns itself appropriately with the text, is that the opening described in Genesis 6:16 extended around the ark’s circumference 18 inches from the top of the ark with an undeterminable height. According to John Woodmorappe, such an opening would have provided sufficient light and ventilation for the ark (1996, pp. 37-44).

When reading the Bible, it always is important to remember that many details about the events it records often are **not** revealed to the reader. So it is with the plans recorded in the Bible regarding Noah’s ark. As Henry Morris commented, “It was obviously not the intention of the writer to record the complete specifications for the ark’s construction, but only enough to assure later readers that it was quite adequate for its intended purpose... ‘to preserve life on the earth’ ” (1976, p. 182). Truly, absolute certainty regarding the openings on the ark cannot be determined.

We know of an opening mentioned in Genesis 6:16 (*tsobar*), as well as one (*challôwn*) mentioned in 8:6. And, since Noah, his family, as well as the animals on the ark, survived the Flood, it is only logical to conclude that God made proper ways to ventilate the ark in which they lived during the Flood.

Although nothing in Scripture demands that those of us living millennia after the Flood need to know how it was ventilated, lighted, etc., it is very likely that God used the opening mentioned in Genesis 6:16.

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Q In one verse the Bible says that Noah sent out a raven, yet another verse says he sent out a dove. Is this a contradiction?

A While this question may seem almost simplistic, it is not unimportant. In the most recent *U.S. News and World Report* “special edition, in an article titled “Mysteries of the Bible,” Michelle Andrews put forth the erroneous idea that there are actually **two** flood accounts, which she believes have been “interwoven” to look like one, yet contain “a few contradictions” (2004, p. 29). One “contradiction” concerns Noah’s actions when he “sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth... [and] a dove, to see if the waters had abated from the face of the ground” (Genesis 8:7-8).

Ms. Andrews suggests that since two different birds are mentioned, this must be a composition of two different stories, since these two facts are “contradictory.” Yet, from a quick reading of the text, it is obvious that the statements do not contradict one another. Is it possible that Noah sent out a raven and “also” a dove? Absolutely. The text even includes the word also so the reader will understand that the author was aware that two different birds were released. It is a misunderstanding of the concept of a contradiction to suggest that different items must be contradictory. To illus-

trate, could a story be told in which a farmer went to the market to sell a pig and “also” sold a chicken? Certainly. To stretch the word “contradiction” to include mere differences would be to throw the word and concept into hopeless absurdity.

Why were two birds released? The full extent of the answer is not provided in the text. There is, however, a reasonable explanation. There is no indication that God told Noah which type of bird to release. It could be that Noah arbitrarily chose a raven. Yet, the raven is a scavenger that feels quite at home around dead carcasses. After releasing the raven, the texts states that the bird went “to and fro.” It could be that Noah realized he would not get the information he needed from the raven, due to its propensity for dead carcasses, some of which might have appeared in water that had not yet abated. The dove, however, would not have been comfortable landing on such refuse and would have been able to supply Noah with the needed information. No contradiction exists between the verses which state that Noah used both a raven and a dove.

REFERENCE

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Kyle Butt

IN THE NEWS

Pictorial propaganda aside, if this was the best they had, then the Darwinian theory of evolution is in worse shape than most of us imagined. The splash was big, but the story between the lines is even bigger. The November 2004, cover story for *National Geographic* was titled: “Was Darwin Wrong?” The accompanying article immediately and forthrightly answered that question in 250-point bold type: “No.” The subtitle (in 72-point bold type) declared, “The evidence for Evolution is overwhelming.”

And what, exactly, was this “overwhelming evidence?” The author David Quammen, used warmed over, antiquated arguments such as:

- horse evolution (*Eohippus* to *Equus*)
- embryologic recapitulation (bringing to mind Ernst Haeckel’s falsified embryos)
- natural selection
- *Archaeopteryx* as a reptile-to-bird transitional form
- mutating viruses and antibiotic-resistant bacteria
- vestigial organs

Interestingly, Mr. Quammen is not a biologist (nor a scientist of any sort). His specialty is—*literature* (which might explain his poor

choice of “overwhelming evidence”). *National Geographic* published and lauded an article—consuming over thirty pages of the magazine!—that is so filled with time-worn canards that long ago were discarded as “proofs” of evolution, even stalwart evolutionists must be shaking their heads in disbelief and hiding under laboratory benches out of embarrassment.

This issue of *National Geographic* was an obvious attempt to perpetuate the myth that evolution is a “fact.” However, using bigger font type and gorgeous pictures will not make the woefully weak case for organic evolution somehow “stronger.”

We have written an **extensive** response to Quammen and *National Geographic* that we invite you to read. Quammen may have flowery words and pretty pictures, but we can prove that his scientific assessment of evolutionary theory leaves much to be desired. We encourage you to read our response, and then decide for yourself.

The rebuttal can be found at: <http://www.apologeticspress.org/modules.php?name=Read&itemid=2644&cat=5>. While you’re at it, why not bring this information to the attention of friends and coworkers as well?

Bert Thompson & Brad Harrub

