

Was the Precipitating Event of the Water-Covered Earth of Genesis 1:2 Similar to the Precipitating Event of Noah's Flood?

Moses has described Noah's flood, starting just five chapters later, in terms precisely parallel to Genesis 1:2-28 as is shown in the following chart. What precipitated the flood? It was a fall of angels, "the sons of God." In the Old Testament the expression "sons of God" refers to angels (Job 1;6; 2:1; 38:7). Since the flood was triggered by God's judgment on the fall of angels to the earth (Gen 6:1-6; cf. Jude 6--7), the water covered earth of Genesis 1:2 is likely to have been the result of God's judgment on the earth when it was first invaded by Satan and the one-third of the angels of heaven (Rev 12:4) at Satan's initial fall.¹

Phases of Creation Genesis 1

Phases of the New Creation Genesis 6-9

The Precipitating Incident: A Fall of Angels

- 6:2 ...**the sons of God**² saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.
- 6:3 **Then** the LORD said, "My **Ruah**³ shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh;....
- 6:4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when **the sons of God** came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.
- 6:5 **Then** the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth....
- 6:6 The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.
- 6:7 The LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."
- 6:17 Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.

Phase 1 The Precreation Situation

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>v 2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Ruah³ of God was moving over the surface of the waters.</p> | <p>7:11 all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. (ESV)</p> <p>8:1 ...and God caused the Ruah³ to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.</p> <p>8:2a Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed,</p> |
|---|--|

Phase 2 Boundary Established between Sky (*shamayim*) and Earth

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>v 6 Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."</p> <p>v 7 God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so.</p> <p>v 8 God called the expanse heaven (Hebrew: <i>shamayim</i>).</p> | <p>8:2b and the floodgates of the sky (Hebrew: <i>shamayim</i>) were closed, and the rain from the sky (Hebrew: <i>shamayim</i>) was restrained;</p> |
|--|--|

Page 1

Phase 3 Dry Land Appeared (*ra'ah*)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>v 9 Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear (Hebrew: <i>ra'ah</i>);" and it was so.</p> | <p>8:3 and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased.</p> <p>8:4 In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month,</p> |
|---|---|

the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.

- 8:5 The **water** decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains **became visible** (Hebrew: *ra'ah*).

Phase 4 Birds Flew in the Heavens

- v 20 Then God said, "Let the **waters** teem with swarms of living creatures, and let **birds** fly **above** (Hebrew: 'al) **the earth** in the open expanse of the heavens."
- v 21 God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the **waters** swarmed after their kind, and every winged **bird** after its kind; and God saw that it was good.
- v 22 God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the **waters** in the seas, and let **birds** multiply on **the earth**."
- 8:6 Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made;
- 8:7 and he sent out a **raven**, and it flew here and there until the **water** was dried up **from** (Hebrew: *me'al*) **the earth**.
- 8:8 Then he sent out a **dove** from him, to see if the **water** was abated **from** (Hebrew: *me'al*) the face of the land;
- 8:9 but the **dove** found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the **water** was on the surface of all **the earth**. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself.
- 8:10 So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the **dove** from the ark.
- 8:11 The **dove** came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the **water** was abated **from** (Hebrew: *me'al*) **the earth**.
- 8:12 Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the **dove**; but she did not return to him again.

Phase 5 Animals Emerged on Earth

- v 24 Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth **living creatures** after their kind: **cattle** and **creeping things** and **beasts** of the earth after their kind"; and it was so.
- v 25 God made the **beasts** of the earth after their kind, and the **cattle** after their kind, and **everything that creeps on the ground** after its kind; and God saw that it was good.
- 8:17 "Bring out with you every **living thing** of all flesh that is with you, **birds** and **animals** and **every creeping thing that creeps on the earth**, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth."
- 8:19 Every **beast**, **every creeping thing**, and every bird, **everything that moves on the earth**, went out by their families from the ark.

Phase 6 Man and Woman in the Image of God

- v 26 Then God said, "Let Us make **man in Our image**, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
- v 27 God created **man in His own image**, **in the image of God** He created him; **male and female** He created them.
- 8:16 "Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you.
- 8:18 So **Noah** went out, and his sons **and his wife** and his sons' wives with him.
- 9:6 "Whoever sheds **man's** blood, By **man** his blood shall be shed, For **in the image of God** He made **man**."

Page 2

Phase 7 God Pronounced a Blessing On Man

- v 28 **God blessed** them; and God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth**, and subdue it; and **rule over the fish of the sea** and over **the birds of the sky** and over **every living thing that moves on the earth**."
- 9:1 And **God blessed** Noah and his sons and said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth**."
- 9:2 The **fear of you** and the terror of you will be on every **beast of the earth** and on every **bird of the sky**; with **everything that creeps on the ground**, and all **the fish of the sea**, into your hand they are given.⁴

End Notes

¹ The Bible does not specifically record the time of Satan's fall. If it occurred after the creation of Genesis 1:1, it was a major event

which was not mentioned in Genesis 1-2. The other possibility is that it occurred before Genesis 1:1 and that Genesis 1:2 is a description of God's judgment on an earth filled with demons. Why otherwise would the Bible begin with a dark earth, since darkness in the Scriptures symbolizes evil (e.g. John 1:4-9; 3:19-21; 12:35-36; Eph 5:8-13; 1 John 1:5-6; 2:8-11)?

² The expression "sons of God" in the Old Testament always refers to angels (Job 1;6; 2:1; 38:7). These angels fell from their position in heaven and cohabited with women. The passage that seems to confirm that this passage is speaking of fallen angels cohabiting with women is Jude 6-7. In a passage speaking of fallen angels, Jude writes, "Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these (fallen angels) indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh. . ." The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah was homosexuality in going "after strange flesh." They did this according to Jude "in the same way as these" fallen angels "went after strange flesh." What other incident would this refer to than the angels of Genesis 6 going "after the strange flesh" (Jude 7) of "the daughters of men" (Gen. 6:2)?

³ The Hebrew word *ruach* can be translated "spirit, wind, or breath."

⁴ Adapted from Bruce K. Waltke with Carla J. Fredericks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids Zondervan, 2001), 128-29.