

## The Flood

First a note on Genesis 6:3: Then the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.”

- Some take this as referring to a shortening of man’s lifespan. There is not much support for this. Notice the lifespans of those listed in Genesis 11! (And the only one to live 120 years in first five books of the Bible, as far as I can tell, is Moses – Deut. 34:7).
- I take it as another marker of God’s grace and patience. 120 years is made up of 3 sets of 40 years. 40 years in the OT is considered a generation. So God is going to wait 3 generation before sending the flood. Why? Same reason that His judgment is delayed in our age – that many would repent and be saved. Unfortunately, in the Genesis account, there is no such repentance.

Other Ancient Mesopotamian Flood Accounts Compared to Genesis:

Sumerian King List	Atrahasis Epic	Eridu Genesis	Genesis 1-11
1. Creation assumed; kingship came down from heaven	1. Creation assumed, gods create human to do their work	1. Creation; cities are instituted	1 Creation (Gen. 1-2)
2. Series of eight kings in five cities	2. Noisy humans disturb gods		2. Alienation (Gen. 3); Genealogies (Gen. 4-5)
3. The flood	3. The flood; ark	3. The Flood	3. The flood; ark
4. Kingship again; dynasties follow	4. New start	4. New start	4. New start; then genealogies

Big difference between biblical account and other accounts: REASON FOR THE FLOOD

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

Genesis 6:11 – No the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence

Genesis 6:12 – And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

Genesis 6:13 – And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy the earth.

- The biblical account advances ethical reasons for the divine action
  - In the early chapters of Genesis we are confronted with the notion of a created universe backed by ethical principles which imply a moral response.
  - The flood account asserts that there are universal moral laws which are intended to regulate the conduct of men.
  - And in case there has been any doubt up to this point – since it is God who brings the flood, we are clearly either shown or reminded that these moral laws reflect the mind of the creator God who stands behind our world.
  - “A notion of such an accountability of man for moral faults introduces into the biblical narratives ideas which would have been generalized revolutionary, in the ancient world and lends to them a theological distinctiveness.” (Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*)
- This is in stark contrast to other ANE flood accounts, where the pantheon of gods sends the deluge because they are annoyed by human noise. Further, the capricious gods then regret their decision because there is no one to feed them, so when a sacrifice is finally offered by the post-flood survivor, they gather around like flies on you know what.
- That there are these other surviving geographical disparate accounts suggests to me that a flood event took place in history. Genesis provides us the proper theological interpretation.

### Further observations on Genesis 6:11-12 – especially the wording:

- “Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.”
  - The word ‘filled’ echoes Genesis 1:28
  - ‘And God saw...and behold’ echoes Genesis 1:31. In 1:31 God saw all that He had made and “behold” it was “very good”. Now He looks and sees and “behold”, it was corrupt.
  - The word ‘violence’ (*chamas*) is nearly a technical term. It is regularly used in the OT to denote “the flagrant breach of a just order and particularly of an order divinely constituted.”
  - ‘Had corrupted their way’ – that is, perverted natural relationships. Disturbed boundaries within which natural laws had operated.
  - “Thus, what is on view in this picture of total corruption is not merely naked human aggression which may be subsumed under the general term ‘violence’, with man set against man. Rather, this is a picture of the total rupture of created relationships on the part of the creature.” (Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation, 14)
  - This is a revolt and utter disregard for God’s good created order of Genesis 1 and 2.

**Genesis 6:6:** Notice: God opens Himself up to our pain.

