

## General Comments on Genesis 7

The great Deluge occurs and destroys the wicked. It is a popular folk doctrine in the Church that this event was necessary in part because the earth had to undergo the literal ordinance of baptism because it too somehow is a living thing. This interpretation is highly speculative and based upon text that is blatantly metaphorical (i.e., poetical text anthropomorphizing the earth, e.g., Gen. 4:11-12, Num. 16:30-32, Deut. 32:22).

There is nothing Scriptural to suggest the planet earth is literally alive in any sense of the word. Even if it were, so are plants and animals as well, and they do not have to be baptized, so why would the earth need to be baptized? There is no reason why it should, as the consequences of the Fall with respect to sinning, repentance, baptism and the Atonement are strictly limited to the family of Adam. Yes, the earth and other living things were thrust into a temporal setting with the Fall and will ultimately be redeemed from it, but there is no connection for other aspects of the Atonement that are contingent upon free agency and sin, as is the case with mankind.

## Comments on Genesis 7

<sup>1</sup> And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. <sup>2</sup> Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. <sup>3</sup> Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. <sup>4</sup> For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.

v2 The seeming discrepancy here regarding seven pairs versus two pairs referred to in 6:19-10 is explained by the taking on of additional clean, especially note they are clean, animals for the purposes of sacrifice, cf. 8:20.

The animals being "clean" at this point in history suggests the selective dietary and/or sacrificial practices preceded their formalization in the Law of Moses. Or, it might simply be an explanatory anachronism within the story intended for the contemporary reader.

<sup>6</sup> And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. <sup>7</sup> And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. <sup>8</sup> Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, <sup>9</sup> There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah. <sup>10</sup> And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. <sup>11</sup> In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. <sup>12</sup> And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

v7 Note when they enter the ark, no comment is made upon personal possessions. Rather the only thing of concern presented is getting living things in pairs onto the ark.

v11 "fountains of the great deep broken up...windows of heaven", the [ancient Semitic view of the world](#) was that there heavens above in a dome, and the earth in the middle and hell beneath. The bubble dome of the heavenly sky held up a great water dome above it, so when the terrible flood came, it was seen as a result of water pouring out the great deep above and dumping onto the earth.

"great", in describing the "deep" out of which the floods are poured, it is called "great", which in Hebrew is "rabbah". This identical term appears in 6:5 when describing the wickedness of man. This suggests the flood poured out was retributive and matched equally to what incited it.

<sup>13</sup> In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; <sup>14</sup> They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. <sup>15</sup> And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. <sup>16</sup> And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in. <sup>17</sup> And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. <sup>18</sup> And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. <sup>19</sup> And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. <sup>20</sup> Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. <sup>21</sup> And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: <sup>22</sup> All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. <sup>23</sup> And every living substance was destroyed

which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. <sup>24</sup> And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

v13 Here we learn Noah has one wife and three sons only, and no daughters, only three daughters-in-law. In PofGP Moses 8:12 we are informed Noah begat Shem and Japeth by the same woman and Ham apparently by another. Unfortunately, we are not informed as to whether Noah had two wives and one had deceased or if he remarried after the first deceased.

v15 On this verse the "two and two" of all flesh is gender ambiguous and this has led some modern commentators to say that they may not necessarily have been paired males and females. This is grasping at straws, as v. 2-3 explicitly state the pairs are to be male and female.

v14-16 All of the living things that enter into the ark are presented as obedient to the command that God gave Noah. This implies that the rather unusual circumstances of putting together such a crew of animals that under normal circumstances would be in competition or a predator-prey relationship are instead subject to the command of God. Thus, we have another authority statement indicating God exercises His will over all Creation in general, and the only exception is man who more often than not uses his agency to rebel, and hence the flood.

v16 "the Lord shut him in", While Noah built the ark according to God's commands it is the Lord who seals it, suggesting an act of divine providence in making the ark fit for the upcoming task.

v18 "went upon", the Hebrew here means it had no steering gear so it simply floated about until the flood subsided.  
(Paraphrase of JPS TC)

v21-22 Obviously, marine life was exempted.

v23 The absolute destruction of all living things upon the earth indicates that man is the primary inhabitant of the planet and therefore things concerning him take precedence over other living things. It also indicates the influence man exercises over Creation around him, such that when he defiles himself he

is also defiling the creation around him by twisting it to his own selfish purposes (cf. Hosea 4:1-3), thus the need to destroy that along with him.

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