|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **col LOGO outline**  Register Number:  DATE: **22-03-2017**  **ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BENGALURU-27** | | | | | | |
| **B.Sc - GENERAL ENGLISH – IV SEMESTER** | | | | | | |
| **SEMESTER EXAMINATION: APRIL 2017** | | | | | | |
| **PSA 414 – General English : (Special paper for PSA)** | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Time- 2 1/2 hrs** | |  | **Max Marks-70** | | |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **This paper contains 6 printed pages and three parts** | | | | | | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. This paper is meant for **B.Sc students** who have opted for the **PSA Special Course**
2. The paper contains **THREE** sections and **SEVEN** printed pages
3. Answer **all** sections
4. You will lose marks for **exceeding** the suggested word-limits
5. You are allowed to use **a dictionary** during the examination
6. Please **indicate PSA-SPL COURSE** clearly on your **answer-booklet**

**I. Given below are two mutually opposed views on how the scriptural texts pertaining to the Flood in the days of Noah are to be interpreted. Read both and answer the questions that follow:**

*The Genesis Flood narrative makes up chapters 6–9 in the Book of Genesis, in the Bible. As one of many flood accounts found in human cultures, the narrative recounts God's intent to return the Earth to its pre-creation state of watery chaos by flooding the Earth because of humanity's misdeeds. Thus, the Flood was a reversal of creation. God instructs a righteous man, Noah, to build a huge ship known as the Ark and take on board his family and a pair of animals of each species. After the flood has destroyed all other beings, God uses the microcosm of Noah's ark to re-populate the earth. While quite a few religious groups consider the story to be largely allegorical, there are still many groups and individuals who believe the story to be literally true.* [from Wikipedia, slightly adapted]

**Was the Flood of Noah Global or Local in Extent?**

by Dr. Andrew A. Snelling and Ken Ham

Whether the Flood of Noah was global or local in extent is a crucial question. This is because ultimately what is at stake is the authority of all of God's Word. Indeed, if the text of Scripture in Genesis 6–8 clearly teaches that the Flood was global and we reject that teaching, then we undermine the reliability and authority of other parts of Scripture. God's Word must be trustworthy and authoritative in all that it affirms.

Secular geologists have interpreted the fossil-bearing sedimentary layers, such as those exposed in the walls of the Grand Canyon, as having taken millions of years to form. Countless sea creatures lived on shallow seafloors, for example, and were slowly buried, to be replaced by new sea creatures growing on the seafloors. The various sedimentary rock layers that we now see stacked up on top of one another thus supposedly slowly accumulated as sea creatures were progressively buried.

The guiding principle used by secular geologists to interpret the rock record is “the present is the key to the past,” which means that the geologic processes we see operating today, at the rates they operate today, are all that are necessary to explain the rock layers. While catastrophes such as local flooding and volcanic eruptions are allowable because they do occur today, any suggestion of a global catastrophic Flood as described in the Bible is totally ruled out before the geological evidence is even examined.

On the other hand, the description of the Flood in Genesis 6–8 is not hard to understand. We are told that the “fountains of the great deep” burst open and poured water out onto the earth's surface for 150 days (five months). Simultaneously, and for the same length of time, the “floodgates of heaven” were open, producing torrential global rainfall.

The combined result was that the waters destructively rose across the face of the earth to eventually cover “*all* the high hills under the *whole* heaven.” The mountains also were eventually covered, so that every creature “in whose nostrils is the breath of life” perished. Only Noah, his family, and all the air-breathing, land-dwelling creatures he took on board the ark were saved.

Based on that clear description of this real historical event, it is very rational to conclude that we should expect to find evidence today of billions of dead animals and plants buried in rock layers composed of water-deposited sand, lime, and mud all around the earth. And indeed, that's exactly what we do find—billions of fossils of animals and plants buried in sedimentary rock layers stretching across every continent all around the globe. So instead of taking millions of years to form, most of the fossil-bearing sedimentary rock layers, as seen in the walls of the Grand Canyon and elsewhere, could have formed rapidly during the year of this global catastrophic Flood of Noah.

But when we read the Flood account itself, we see this conclusion confirmed. We are immediately struck with prolific usage of universal terms such as “all,” “every,” “under heaven,” and “in whose nostrils was the breath of life.” For example, *Genesis 6:7–13* tells us why God sent the Flood judgment:

*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.”. . . God looked on the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and, behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth” (NASB).*

Note in particular God's emphasis on “all flesh” and “the earth,” not just some flesh or part of the earth. Also, note that the Flood came to destroy animals and birds, not just sinful humans. The Apostle Paul tells us in *Romans 8:19–23* that the whole non-human creation was subjected to the Curse because of man's sin, and thus the whole of creation suffers death and decay. So also in the Flood, the non-human creation suffered, regardless of whether animals or birds had come into close contact with sinful man or not.

If the Flood were only a relatively recent local event of no geologic significance, then the fossil-bearing sedimentary layers that were supposedly laid down over millions of years must have preceded the appearance of man on the earth, including Adam. After all, man only appears very recently in the fossil record. For a Christian who accepts the millions of years, this would mean that animals were living, dying, suffering disease, eating each other, and being buried and fossilized prior

to Adam's appearance in the Garden of Eden. In the geologic record we find the fossilized remains of fish eating other fish, animals eating other animals, animals with diseases like cancer, and much more, which indicates that these fossils are a record of disease, violence, and death.

However, theologically there is a big problem here. In *Genesis 1:30–31* we are told that when God created all the animals they all were vegetarians, and that God was pleased with everything that He had created because it was “very good.” This means that all of creation was perfect when measured against the goodness of God—the only standard God uses (*Matthew 19:17*).

Furthermore, it is not until after God pronounced the Curse on all of creation because of Adam and Eve's disobedience that we are told that the ground would bring forth thorns and thistles (*Genesis 3:17–18*). But the evolutionary geologists tell us that there are fossilized thorns in Canadian sedimentary layers that are supposedly 400 million years old. The Bible-believing Christian cannot accept this age-claim however.

If the plain statements of God's Word have any authority, then these fossilized thorns could only have grown after the Curse, after Adam was created by God. So the geologic record in which these fossilized thorns are found could only have been deposited after the Curse. However, the only event after the Curse that could have been responsible for burying and fossilizing these thorns, and the billions of other plants and animals we see in the vast rock layers of the earth, is the year-long Genesis Flood. This then rules out the millions of years.

If the Flood were only local in extent, why did Noah have to take birds on board the ark (*Genesis 7:8*), when the birds in that local flooded area could simply have flown away to safe unflooded areas? Similarly, why would Noah need to take animals on board the ark from his local area, when other representatives of those same animal kinds would surely have survived in other, unflooded areas?

Indeed, why would Noah have had to build the ark to the scale specified by God (*Genesis 6:15*)—300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high, or approximately 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high? With these dimensions, the total volume of the ark would have been approximately 1.45 million cubic feet, and with three decks it would have had a total deck area of approximately 98,800 square feet, equivalent to slightly more than the area of 20 standard basketball courts! The gross tonnage of the ark would have been about 14,500 tons, well within the category of large metal ocean-going vessels today.

Quite obviously, an ark of such dimensions would only be required if the Flood were global in extent, designed by God to destroy all animals and birds around the world, except for those preserved on that ark. Indeed, because the Bible implies that Noah was warned 120 years before the Flood came (*Genesis 6:3*), God could have simply told Noah and his family to migrate with any required animals and birds out of the area that was going to be flooded.

*In Genesis 1:28* we are told that God commanded Adam and Eve to fill the earth. Adam and his descendants' life-spans were hundreds of years, in which they would have had ample time to produce many children. The chronological framework from Adam to the Flood based on the genealogies given in *Genesis 5* indicates a period of 1,656 years for the human population to grow and spread around the earth in obedience to God's command.

Depending on the assumptions used for the number of children in each family, one could easily calculate, using a standard population growth equation that the human population at the time of the Flood could have been up to a billion or more people. If so, there is no question that they would have spread beyond some localized area, and thus have required a global Flood to destroy them all. God gave a similar command to Noah and his descendants after the Flood to fill the earth (*Genesis 9:1,* and in a matter of about 150 years God judged them for not obeying that command. Clearly, in the 1,656 years between Adam and the Flood, with the number of people in the pre-Flood population, the earth would have been filled, which is confirmed by God's assessment in *Genesis 6:13* that because the earth was filled with violence through man's sinfulness He would destroy them “with the earth,” obviously necessitating that the Flood judgment was of global extent.

**Reading the Flood Narrative Allegorically**

From the *Biologos* blog

The story of Noah, the ark, and the Flood in Genesis 6-9 is one of the most famous and controversial passages in the entire Bible. The story, centred on a global cataclysm and a floating wooden zoo, has captured the imagination of people for millennia. Until modern times, most Christians assumed the story referred to an actual worldwide event that happened in the relatively recent past, and this interpretation of the Flood continues to be a central feature of young-earth creationism. However, the discoveries of modern science, as well as an explosion of new knowledge about the ancient world of the Bible, have decisively challenged whether this interpretation is the best reading of the text.

The Genesis Flood story contains many literary clues that its writers (and original audience) did not intend to narrate an actual series of events. The story employs the literary device known as “hyperbole” throughout, describing a massive ark which holds representatives of “every living creature on Earth”, and a flood which flows over the tops of the highest mountains in the world. These are not meant to challenge readers to figure out the practicality of such descriptions, but rather they are important clues that we are dealing with a theological story rather than ancient journalism.

There are other clues that the writers are not intending to relate a literal series of events. One is the command given to Noah to treat “clean” animals differently than “unclean” animals, even though those categories were not given to the Hebrew people until the time of Moses, much later in the biblical story. Also, the massive size of the ark, coupled with the huge number of animals on board and the length of the flood, all indicate that the story is not to be read literally.

A final clue about how to interpret the Flood story comes from its place in the book of Genesis and specifically in the “primeval narratives” of Genesis 1-11. Biblical scholars almost universally see these chapters as having a different purpose than the rest of the book of Genesis. The primeval narratives cover a huge swath of cosmic history and are highly figurative in their language. They serve as the grand and poetic “introduction” to the story of God’s people which commences with the call of Abraham in Genesis 12. While they speak of real events (such as the creation of the universe and the special calling of humankind), they do so in rhetorical and theological ways that have more to do with the purposes of the story than a plain narration of facts. This is completely typical of how ancient people (including the Israelites) wrote historical accounts, especially concerning “primeval” events near the beginning of history.

Not only do we need to read the Flood story through the lens of ancient literature, but also ancient cosmology. Because the ancient Israelites (like all people in the ancient Near East) lacked telescopes, satellites, and other modern scientific equipment, they pictured the universe as it appeared to everyday observation. Ancient Near Eastern people thought that rain comes from an ocean above the sky (which explains why the sky is blue), and that this ocean wraps all the way around the earth (which explains why deep wells always hit water). They also thought of the “whole Earth” as simply the edges of their current maps, which mostly consisted of today’s Middle East.

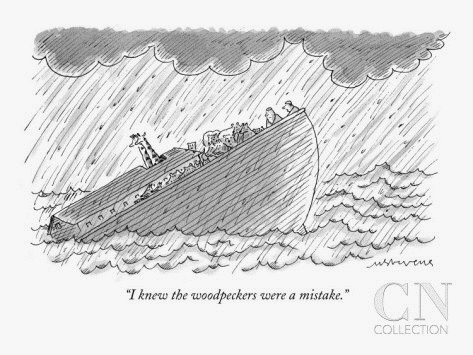
The Flood narrative relies on this same ancient understanding of the world. As the “firmament” (a solid dome in the sky which holds the cosmic ocean in place) collapses and the “fountains of the deep” explode upward, the Earth experiences a cataclysmic return to the watery chaos described in Genesis 1:2. To deal with the chaos of sin, God returns the Earth to chaos, and then restores order with a “restart” and renewal of creation.

Modern people read the Flood story with a completely different perspective on the shape of the Earth and universe. Those who say the story portrays a “global” flood, for instance, are imposing that term upon the text, because the original audience had no idea that the Earth was a globe. Similarly, any speculation about the water sources or ark buoyancy or geologic effects or post-Flood animal migrations or similar questions is missing the point of the story.  The story of Noah, the Ark, and Flood speaks an inspired and powerful message about judgment and grace that has instructed God’s people throughout the ages about God’s hatred of sin and his love for his creation.

**I. A. Answer the following questions in about 250 words each: (4x15 = 60)**

1. What items of evidence do Snelling and Ham provide in support of their claim that the Genesis text is meant to be taken literally? Do you find them convincing? Why?
2. How does the second article support its claim for a non-literal, or allegorical reading of the scriptural passage dealing with Noah and the flood? Does this argument seem plausible to you? Give reasons.
3. Which of the two perspectives appeals to you more? Explain the rationale for your choice.
4. When you look around you, do you see religious fundamentalism and scriptural literalism increasing or decreasing? Support your response with convincing evidence/illustrations.

**II. Use the following cartoons as starting points for a reflective essay of about 150 words in connection with the theme of this paper: (10 marks)**



Caption: “I knew the Woodpeckers were a mistake”

