



Noah's Flood: Literal or Figurative?

Ronald L Conte Jr

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This book considers two topics, one more important than the other. The first and narrower topic is how we should interpret the Biblical story of the Flood of Noah. The second broader and more important topic is how we should understand any passage of the Bible that seems to be contradicted by science or reason. This book examines the Flood story and its interpretation in order to shed light on the proper interpretation and understanding of other Biblical stories, especially those that pertain to history or science.

Four different scientific theories are reviewed, each proposing a different ancient cataclysmic event as the historical basis for the story of Noah and for the flood myths found in many cultures. This book also considers whether the best interpretation of the Noah story is literal, figurative, or a combination of both. The last chapter then examines several other Bible passages that might seem to be in conflict with science or reason, and suggests an interpretation that harmonizes faith with reason, theology with science.

Chapter List and Description:

1. Biblical Inerrancy - Our faith in the inerrancy of Sacred Scripture should guide our interpretation of difficult passages.
2. The Literal-only Approach - The strengths and weaknesses of a literal approach to the Noah story.
3. A Fictional Teaching Story? - A criticism of the view that the story of Noah and the Flood is entirely fictional.
4. The Black Sea Deluge Theory - A review of Ryan and Pitman's theory that the flooding of the Black Sea is the basis for the great Flood.
5. The Postglacial Flood Theory - Teller and Glennie's theory that the reflooding of the Persian Gulf after the last great glacial melt is the basis for the great Flood.
6. The Youngest Big Impact Theory - Alexander and Edith Tollmann's theory that an ancient comet impact in the ocean explains the great Flood.
7. The Flood Comet Impact Theory - W. Bruce Masse and Dallas Abbott's theory that a more recent oceanic comet impact resulted in the great Flood.
8. Noah's Rainbow - What Noah most likely saw after the Flood was not a simple rainbow, but a vast array of atmospheric optical effects, lasting many days and weeks, caused by an oceanic comet impact.
9. The Combined Approach: Literal and Figurative - A method of interpreting difficult Bible passages, by recognizing that figurative and literal elements are often woven together in the same passage.
10. Implications for Other Bible Passages - the seven 'days' of Creation, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the Tower of Babel, Samson and Delilah, David and Goliath, and several passages from the New Testament.

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Tammy Mangold:

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