

Pope Francis and the Flood

It is devastating to see the destruction that the recent floods have caused to those living in New South Wales and perhaps to a lesser extent to those living in the southeastern corner of Queensland. Our hearts surely go out to those who have lost property and possessions. It has been reported that this is the worst flooding in some areas of New South Wales since 1961. While this is sad, imagine the chaos that must have reigned during the time of the Great Flood! There was not only local devastation caused by the water but total global destruction.

Do we have to worry that another flood of biblical proportions is on its way? Well, according to a recent interview, Pope Francis thinks so. Now, we take what any person says and hold it up to the ultimate authority: the Word of God, and God's Word is clear: there will never be another flood like the flood of Genesis chapters 6-8. But if God's Word is clear, why does Pope Francis suggest another "great flood" might happen?

Pope Francis made these statements recently, so let's analyse them as they also represent a compromise that is rampant throughout non-Catholic churches.

During the interview, Pope Francis said, "The Bible says that the flood is the result of God's wrath... It is a figure of God's wrath, who according to the Bible, has seen too many bad things and decides to obliterate humanity."

Notice he calls the flood a "figure" of God's wrath - implying it wasn't a historical event, just a metaphor. He then says that because God had "seen too many bad things," He obliterates humanity. Here's what the text of Genesis says: ⁵ *The LORD saw that the people on the earth were very wicked and that every tendency of the thoughts in their hearts was nothing but evil all the time.* ⁶ *The LORD regretted that He had made mankind on the earth and felt grieved in His heart.* ⁷ *The LORD said: "I shall wipe from the face of the ground the people whom I have created, both people, cattle, creeping things and birds of the sky, because I am sorry that I have made them"* (Genesis 6:5-7).

God's judgments on sin aren't because He "sees too many bad things" - but because sin is a great offence against a holy God and must be judged. God is gracious and gives people time to repent and a way of escape (in this case, the ark, and today in Christ), but He always judges sin - and the penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23). We see that from Genesis chapter 3 onward throughout all of Scripture.

Pope Francis continues: "The biblical flood, according to experts, is a mythical tale... The flood is a historical tale, archaeologists say, because they found traces of a flood in their excavations."

Here you see who Pope Francis' ultimate authority is: man. He believes the flood must be a mythical event because "experts" (who ignore the vast evidence around us to the contrary!) say there never was a global flood. According to the Pope, it doesn't matter that Genesis teaches it and that Jesus and the apostle Peter both believed in an actual flood. But since "experts" say it didn't happen, Pope Francis doesn't believe the global flood happened. His authority isn't God and His Word - his authority is sinful, fallible man.

Right after calling the flood a "mythical tale," the Pope says it was a "historical tale" because (and again note his authority) "archaeologists say" they've found "traces of a flood." How can it be both a mythical tale and a historical tale? Well, it appears he is saying there was a local flood that was regionalised to somewhere in Mesopotamia. So it was historical in that there was a local flood, but it's mythical in that the biblical text exaggerates the (its claimed) extent of the flood to make it sound global. Again, man is his authority - not God and His very clear Word. God's Word teaches this was a global, earth-covering flood. So why the warning that another global flood might happen?

Pope Francis says, "A great flood, perhaps due to a rise in temperature and the melting of the glaciers, is what will happen now if we continue along the same path."

Two words: **climate change**. It doesn't matter that God promised no such thing would ever happen again: ¹² *God also said: "This is the sign of the Covenant that I am giving between Me and you and every living being that is with you, for all generations to come.* ¹³ *I have put My rainbow in the clouds that it may be a sign of the Covenant between Me and the earth.* ¹⁴ *Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds,* ¹⁵ *I shall remember My Covenant, which is between Me and you and every living being with every kind of flesh. Never again will the water become a flood to destroy all flesh"* (Genesis 9:12-15).

Of course, if you reject the global flood, this promise in Genesis means nothing! There have been many devastating regional floods since the time of Noah. The everlasting promise of Genesis 9 only makes sense within the context of a global flood. So, because of how he views the history in Genesis and the Word of God as a whole, the Pope can reject this promise as well.

While we must be good stewards and exercise wise dominion over creation, we don't have to worry that mankind is going to destroy earth's climate because God has promised: *"While the earth continues to exist, sowing and harvesting, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will not cease"* (Genesis 8:22).

We must not start with the thinking of our day and allow it to influence our beliefs. We must always start with the perfect, inerrant, authoritative, and clear Word of God. This clear Word of God tells us that yes, there was a global flood (about 4,300 years ago) when God judged sin, and no, there won't be another global one. When God judged sin in Noah's time, He provided a way of salvation - the ark. God will judge sin again with a global event (this time with fire, see 2 Peter 3:7), but He has provided a way of salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus has died in our place, taking the penalty of death that we deserve because of our sin upon Himself. Then He rose again, defeating sin and death, and now offers eternal life as a free gift to all who repent and believe in Him. We are saved from God's judgment on sin because Jesus has taken our judgment for us! Praise God! That warning of judgment and message of hope is what the whole world needs to hear.