

Science and the Bible, Part 8: Modern Insights in an Ancient Book (Genesis 9:1-7)

As you turn to Genesis 9, this will be the last part of our series on Science and the Bible, 2 areas that many believe to be in conflict, but that actually are not. True science actually confirms the truth of Scripture in many cases, and Scripture in some cases gives insights that were not confirmed scientifically until thousands of years later. We'll look at some of those tonight which actually I believe demonstrate the divine inspiration and truthfulness of Scripture which can only be of God and not of mere men. Science can observe and test processes in the present, but it cannot prove what happened in the distant past supernaturally and the origin of all things or the end of all things. That's the point of 2 Peter 3 in the context of God's creation, the flood, and the coming judgment. On the heels of this great judgment, we read also of God's blessing.

Genesis 9:1-7 (NASB95) ¹ *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.* ² *"The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given.* ³ *"Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.* ⁴ *"Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.* ⁵ *"Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man.* ⁶ *"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.* ⁷ *"As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it."*

In these brief verses are many things we could study in this text:

- human government's institution and enforcement, particularly capital punishment (a whole discussion itself)
- what is the biblical role and place for governing authorities, including those that may not believe in God or His law?
- What about the creation mandate repeated twice "be fruitful and multiply" - does that require having maximum number of children possible and prohibit all forms of birth control?
- what does it mean to made in the image of God and how does that make us different than animals?
- what dietary restrictions about red-blooded meat or meat in general should apply to us? Is vegetarianism "biblical"?

If you want the answers to those questions, ask Dr. Foltz, but for tonight, I want to mostly consider this text in relation to its context of what has come before. At the end of Genesis 8 we read:

²² *“While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, And cold and heat, And summer and winter, And day and night Shall not cease.”*

So in the context of this blessing, God talks about seed and heat and day and night, as governed by the sun and signs, seasons, etc. We need to go back to Genesis 1 see all these parallels to our text.

Genesis 1 (NASB95) ¹ *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* ² *The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.* [same word in Gen. 8 moving over surface of watery planet that had been dark and void again of life] ... ⁹ *Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and **let the dry land appear**”;* and it was so ...

... ¹² *The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good.* [in Gen. 8 we see this occur again beginning with olive tree and other plants re-seed and grow]

... ¹⁴ *Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the **day from the night**, and let them be for **signs and for seasons** [cf. God’s promise in Genesis 8:22]*

... ²² *God **blessed them [animals]**, saying, “**Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.**”* ²³ *There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.* ²⁴ *Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: **cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind**”;* [same creatures Gen. 8 says came forth off ark]

... ²⁶ *Then God said, “**Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.**”*

²⁷ *God created man **in His own image, in the image of God** He created him; male and female He created them.* ²⁸ *God **blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing ...***

Keep your finger here and turn back to Genesis 9:1-2. What’s the same? What’s different?

Genesis 9:1 repeats what God said to the first man in the new world: *“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth ...”*

But in v. 2 for Noah, the new man for the new world, in this new beginning, the end of that “creation mandate” is now a little different. Man’s relation to animals is no longer one of peaceful rule and responsibility and man subduing creation and its creatures as Genesis 1:28 says – work in the garden and in general is now much more difficult because of the curse in Genesis 3 and now for the animals, they will fear man and have the dread of man who will now hunt them for food and animals will hunt each other (it seems the carnivore, omnivore, predatory-prey, hunter-hunted environment is now inaugurated by God and instituted by God).

Originally lion and lamb, child and snake, man and beast could co-exist in blissful harmony in the garden – and the OT prophets describe a future earth that will in some sense restore that, a new world without sin, but that’s not the world of Genesis 9 or our world. Originally in Eden animals were not being killed; death would only come by sin. What did they eat? Look back at Gen. 1.

²⁹ *Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; ³⁰ and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so.*

So all were vegetarians originally. But you say what about “lions and tigers and bears, oh my!” (along with Dorothy). That’s what it says. Modern research has shown that even the kinds of animals most famous for meat-eating can be herbivorous in other settings.

Illustration: former co-worker in So Cal who bought into the “Genesis 1” diet as the biblical diet and reason people lived so much longer in early Genesis. What’s the problem with that?

More chapters in Bible: Genesis 9, Acts 10, 15. Jesus pronounced all foods clean. Paul said all meat and drink is permissible if our conscience is free, and is to be received with joy and thanksgiving.

³¹ *God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*

2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. ² By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

Repetition of “7 days” (Gen. 7:4, 10, 8:10, 12) suggests to many scholars “the week” was in place since the original creation week. This is the one part of our calendar that is not tied to anything in the heavens and the only plausible explanation of its origin is from God Himself in Genesis 1-2, a God who Himself created all things in six days and rested on the 7th and who designed man optimally to work 6 days and take a day off. God doesn’t need rest, we do. God never slumbers or sleeps, but we must because we’re not God

Later in Israel’s history, God in His grace gave specific Sabbath laws regarding rest on every seventh day, and what to do and not do, etc. But it’s interesting even from a scientific and empirical even physical standpoint to consider those in history who have experimented with other setups that don’t work like God’s pattern:

- During the French Revolution, a calendar was unsuccessfully introduced with a ten day week (9 days work, 10th day off). It was said that the Atheists involved departed from the biblical week pattern deliberately to abolish every vestige of Christianity, but the well-being of the population suffered to such a degree that the radical revolutionaries had to reinstate the pattern of seven-day weeks with one day off (maybe God knows physiology?)
- The Soviets tried a six day week (5 days work, 6th off) that also did not catch on (maybe God’s a better scientist, huh?)

British scientist Paul Taylor writes: ‘It seems that there is something about the way we are made that requires a seven-day week, with a rest every seven days. This should be no surprise to us, because it was God’s idea. We move away from the concept of a “six work day, one rest day” rhythm at our peril ... so many people have something wrong with them. They can’t sleep. They can’t rest. They take tranquillisers. They swallow pills by the bottle full. Cases that stem from mental and emotional instability fill vast numbers of our hospital beds. What on earth is the matter with us? We are told it is the pace of modern life. So it is. But God has directed that the pace should slacken to a stand-still once a week. But we think we know better. On we go regardless, restless and continually dissatisfied until the almost inevitable crash.’¹

There was a *TIME* magazine lead article (Dec. 17, 1990) showing the massive and growing inability of many people to sleep or relax – the title had to do with “Too little rest.” There were five suggestions for how to deal with stress and the lack of ability to relax, but it didn’t speak about the pattern God gave Israel in the Bible of taking a day of rest. It would seem God knows science and us? He knows we need to be still and know He is God often.

I prefer not to think of “7th” principle in terms of legalistic burden (which the word “Sabbath” came to mean to many), but as a loving blessing and gift to man who tends to burn himself out without regular rest and recuperation. I don’t look at Sunday as identical to OT Saturday / Sabbaths (if you want to study that further you can go online for the messages on that in Genesis 2) but for now just note that God designed the week and God designed even day and night to remind us we’re not God and we need to rest ... in Him.

Psalm 127 (NIV) *Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. ² In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat— for he grants sleep to those he loves.*

Rest is a gift from a loving God, and later OT Israel was instructed even to apply the “7th” principle to creation, to give their land a rest every seventh year (Lev. 25:4). It was centuries later learned that this was not merely of symbolic value intended by God, but has scientific value. In the booklet *Science: Was the Bible Ahead of Its Time*,² I read: ‘Today, the need to replenish soil with nutrients by crop rotation and the principle of “fallow” (resting the land) is well known. Although the command in Leviticus was written about 1500 B.C., the first evidence of this practice (other than in Israel) was its application by the Romans about 200 B.C. And it’s conceivable Rome learned of the practice from Israel.’ (p. 33).

The Bible ‘has a few surprising insights into engineering and agriculture that were not discovered until hundreds of years later. *The ark of Noah* – The detailed design of the ark of Noah is an example of an engineering design far ahead of its time [more than 4,000 years earlier!]. Naval engineers now know that the length-to-width ratio specified in the Bible (Genesis 6:15) is ideal for the stability of a barge-type craft (a non-propelled ship) designed for rough seas. It was not until the 1900s that comparably sized ships were constructed.

Other details of construction, including the waterproofing, roof and deck structure, and the design of the opening for light (18” near the roof) all display sound engineering.’ (p. 32)

When you compare the ark’s design to other non-inspired flood stories from ancient cultures (ex: Gilgamesh epic) you have boats that would never float and survive much of a storm (ex: a floating cube-shaped structure that would spin or tip with much turbulence), and that was made out of material like from a reed hut instead of the biblical account of sturdy exotic gopher wood.

In 1993 a study was done by scientists (not creationists – Dr. Hong believes life evolved from the sea) that didn’t disprove the biblical ark’s ability to weather massive storms, it actually proved it could.

An article reads: The staff of the Korea Research Institute of Ships and Ocean Engineering, Taejon, reported that the design of Noah’s Ark is highly stable. The abstract of their paper is as follows:

In this study, the safety of Noah’s Ark in the severe environments imposed by waves and winds during the Genesis Flood was investigated. Three major safety parameters—structural safety, overturning stability, and seakeeping quality—were evaluated altogether to assess the safety of the whole system.

The concept of “relative safety”, which is defined as the relative superiority in safety compared to other hull forms, was introduced and 12 different hull forms with the same displacement were generated for this purpose. Evaluation of these three safety parameters was performed using analytical tools. Model tests using 1/50 scaled models of a prototype were performed for three typical hull forms in order to validate the theoretical analysis.

Total safety index, defined as the weighted average of three relative safety performances, showed that the Ark had a superior level of safety in high winds and waves compared with the other hull forms studied. The voyage limit of the Ark, estimated on the basis of modern passenger ships, criteria, revealed that it could have navigated through waves higher than 30 metres.

... Thus, the design of Noah’s Ark was realistic and safe in contrast to the design of Utnapishtim’s model [or other extrabiblical and unbiblical stories clearly not inspired by God].³

Another summary says: ‘No hull shape was found to significantly outperform the 4,300-year-old biblical design. In fact, the Ark’s careful balance is easily lost if the proportions are modified, rendering the vessel either unstable, prone to fracture, or dangerously uncomfortable. The research team found that the proportions of Noah’s Ark carefully balanced the conflicting demands of stability (resistance to capsizing), comfort (“seakeeping”), and strength.’⁴

Scientist Tim Lovett has done some very recent research on how the design of the ark could have avoided broaching, tsunamis, etc.

There has been a tremendous amount of scientific research and supporting evidence for the flood and the viability of the ark beginning with Whitcomb & Morris’ *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications*, and the most up-to-date resource by John Woodmorappe answering every possible critic and objection to Noah’s ark; *Noah’s Ark: A Feasibility Study*

The early chapters of Genesis provide the framework for “kinds” (known by DNA, genetics, and baraminology) reasonable (if not better) explanations for the fossil record, ice age, dinosaurs, the origin of all things, why the world is the way it is (sin’s curse).

Morris writes: ‘The testimony of the Curse is found in the structure of the basic laws of science, the laws of thermodynamics. The testimony of the Flood is seen everywhere in the structure of the rocks of the earth’s crustal surface, the worldwide fossil graveyard, and the universal evidence of catastrophism. Man’s perverse and depraved nature has somehow distorted both into a system of evolution and uniformity. As Peter says, he is “willfully ignorant” (II Peter 3:5). Nevertheless the evidence is there, everywhere, for all who have eyes to see. “God is longsuffering ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (3:9).’⁵

Turn back to Genesis 9. As I pointed out last time, the very location of where the ark landed and where the ark disembarked (pardon the pun) is noteworthy. ‘Modern computer studies have shown, interestingly, that the geographical center of the earth’s land areas is located within a short distance of Mount Ararat, a “coincidence” that can hardly be other than providential’ [that the ark landed there from which God tells them to fill the earth in Genesis 9:1 and v. 7 – not just a lucky landing].⁶

For now let's just focus on the big idea in this passage in Genesis 9. The main point of these commands is all about the value and importance of life, especially life in God's image which is to be multiplied, not murdered. Notice in v.4-7 the "life/blood" emphasis

⁴ *"Only you shall not eat flesh with its **life**, that is, its **blood**.*

⁵ *"Surely I will require your **lifeblood**; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the **life** of man. ⁶ "Whoever sheds man's **blood**, By man his **blood** shall be shed ...*

From a theological standpoint, there is great truth in the fact that blood is the source of life, and from early Genesis to the end of Revelation this truth has great import that we will unpack in the future. But from a biological standpoint as well, Muncaster writes:

'Only comparatively recently has medicine recognized that blood is in fact the life source to all parts of the body. It provides oxygen and carries vital nutrients that are essential to life. The Bible indicated this fact ... [to earliest man thousands of years ago and later in Mosaic law] (Leviticus 17:11)--"the life of the flesh is in its blood." For centuries, physicians would drain blood from patients in an attempt to rid the body of poison, which resulted in death for many people (and possibly contributed to George Washington's)⁷

This chapter that records God's covenant and sign and speaks of blood will be followed in Genesis 17 with a similar covenant to Abraham also associated with a sign and blood. Circumcision (inaugurated in Genesis just a few chapters later) has been shown to have great medical value by research done in the mid-1900s and forward. Even the eighth day, as prescribed by Genesis 17:12, has particular value, even though as parents we are not legalistically required by OT law to only one day; God gave this law for good.

'Research [by S. I. McMillen in his book *None of These Diseases*) shows that newborn infants are particularly susceptible to hemorrhaging from the second day after birth to the fifth. A small cut can be deadly. Vitamin K, necessary for the production of prothrombin (the body's blood-clotting substance) is not present sufficiently until days five through seven. The prothrombin level is only 30 percent of normal on day three but skyrockets to 110 percent of normal on the eighth day before it levels off.'⁸

Turn to the book of Job 11. It's an interesting study to see how long it took science to "discover" things God's Word described in earliest times, and how many modern insights are found in the most ancient of books, the Torah, and the book of Job, which records events before Moses (living around time of Abraham).

As you turn to Job, here's a few from other parts of the Torah: 'God promised that by following His laws, the Hebrews would avoid the diseases of the Egyptians (Exodus 15:26). The Bible's ancient laws have tremendous medical insights not known until the germ research of the late 1800s. When the Black Plague was killing much of Europe prior to the Renaissance, desperate nations turned to the church for guidance. Returning to the Old Testament laws of Moses [inspired by God], they instituted principles practiced by the Israelites for dealing with diseases like leprosy [quarantine procedures in Leviticus 13], for handling of the dead [Numbers 19], and for waste disposal ... Poor waste disposal practices led to the spread of the Black Death (the Plague). The Bible provided insight regarding the burying of human waste (Deuteronomy 23:12-14) ... Desperation caused a return to biblical laws in the 1600s, and the dreaded Plague was finally controlled.'⁹

Some of the other basic sanitation and sterilization procedures we take for granted today to prevent the spread of disease and infection are in Torah but modern man only "discovered" recently.

Job 11:7-8 *"Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? "They are high as the heavens, what can you do?"*

The vastness of the heavens, the seemingly infinite size and height of the universe is something modern astronomy staggers us with. The evidence of an expanding universe is also possibly alluded to by Job 9:8, which is one of many passages that speaks of God "spreading out the heavens" (expanding out the universe)? In several passages the stars are said to be "uncountable" but before telescopes, most thought them countable (hundreds or 2-4,000)

Job 22:12 *"Is not God in the height of heaven? Look also at the distant stars, how high they are!"*

The phenomenal distance of stars in an unbounded universe was not a common ancient thought, before telescopes, astronomy, etc.

Job 28:25 says God “imparted weight to the wind And meted out the waters by measure” (NASB, KJV “weighted the water by measure”). In the book *The Remarkable Record of Job*, there’s a chapter called “Modern Scientific Insights in Job” that says:

‘We now know that the global weights of air and water must be in a critical relationship to each other, and to earth as a whole, to maintain life on earth ... If the weights of either air or water were much different than they are, life as we know it could not survive.

This passage is also significant in recognizing that air and wind have weight, a fact not obvious to the physical senses and not confirmed scientifically until about 300 years ago. The study of air flows and their relation to the weight of the air has been developed into the science of aerodynamics, eventually becoming the basis of all modern aerospace developments ... These verses ... may suggest all these future developments, but originally they applied specifically to the hydrological cycle [more recent science].¹⁰

Job 26:8 *“He wraps up the waters in His clouds, And the cloud does not burst under them.”* [how condensation forms clouds]

Job 36²⁷ *“For He draws up the drops of water, They distill rain from the mist,²⁸ Which the clouds pour down, They drip upon man abundantly.²⁹ Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds*

God can and does understand it and even revealed what those 17th century scientists like Mariotte, Perrault, and Halley “discovered”

Job 37:11 *“Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud ...”*

Job 37:16 *“Do you know about the layers of the thick clouds, The wonders of one perfect in knowledge”*

Morris’ commentary spends several pages explaining a fascinating scientific explanation of the hydrological cycle and its incredible engineering by God (also in Isaiah 55:10-11; Ecclesiastes 1:7, etc.)

Job 38:16 *“Have you entered into the springs of the sea Or walked in the recesses of the deep?”*

‘The many fresh-water springs on the ocean floor and the distinct channels and pathways in the ocean’s depths have been a surprising discovery of modern oceanography. Yet God mentioned these facts in his message to Job four thousand years ago.’¹¹

The “father of modern oceanography” in 1855 confirmed and mapped these “paths of the sea” based also on Isa. 43:16, Ps 8:8.¹²

John MacArthur writes: ‘In the seventeenth century George Hadley discovered that the winds circulate around the earth. Thousands of years earlier the book of Ecclesiastes referred to this phenomenon: [1:6-7 *Blowing toward the south, Then turning toward the north, The wind continues swirling along; And on its circular courses the wind returns. All the rivers flow into the sea, Yet the sea is not full. To the place where the rivers flow, There they flow again.*]’

Isostasy is a field of study within geology that deals with the balance maintained within the earth's crust. The differing weights of the various types of rock maintain a delicate balance; otherwise the earth would wobble in its rotation like a lopsided basketball. Isaiah 40:12 says, “[God] ... *measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and measured out heaven with the span, and measured the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.*” Psalm 104:5, 8 tells us that God “established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter ... ” (NASB). The Bible teaches that the earth is balanced.’¹³

Job 38:14 “[*the earth*] *is changed like clay under the seal*” – my Study Bible has this note: ‘The Heb. for “takes on form” is “turned.” It conveys the idea that the earth is turned or rotated like a cylindrical seal rolled over the soft clay. Such rolling cylinder seals were found in Babylon. This speaks of the earth, rotating on its axis, an amazing statement that only God could reveal in ancient days. The dawn rolls across the earth as it rotates.’

Job 26:10 “*He has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters At the boundary of light and darkness.*” [i.e., horizon – NKJV says God “drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters”]

Many even after NT times believed the earth was flat or some other shape. This Heb. word *khug*, can be translated “sphere/circle” correctly describing the shape of the earth in this text and others:

Isaiah 40:22 “*It is He who sits above the circle of the earth ...*”

Proverbs 8:27 “*When He established the heavens, I was there, When He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep*”

Job 26:7 “*He stretches out the north over empty space And hangs the earth on nothing.*”

Compare Scripture to what other ancient cultures said about earth:

- The Chinese thought the earth was square
- The Egyptians thought it was rectangular with a starry goddess arching her body over the earth while the sun and moon massaged her arms and legs
- Mesopotamians thought of the earth as a floating boat covered by an astrodome structure.
- Learned scholars in India would have said, “We all know the world is held up on the backs of giant elephants.”
- The Greeks maintained that the earth was held in place by the bulging biceps and massive shoulders of Atlas.
- South Sea islanders believed the earth was supported on the backs of giant tortoises.

The Bible, however, pictures the earth as round, rotating, and hanging on nothing in outer space. Friends, this book is inspired by God! Science and Scripture are friends, not enemies (though man’s theories can be trumped by God’s truth, we must never go the other way). Science cannot disprove any part of Genesis or any part of Scripture, and ultimately on the other hand, science alone cannot “prove” the Bible beyond the need to have faith. Mere facts and evidences alone cannot create faith in an unbeliever’s heart (that’s God’s work and He can use apologetics, of course) but these things *can* confirm and strengthen faith in believing hearts.

Trusting God and His Word does take faith, but as we conclude our study on Science and the Bible, I think it takes a lot more faith to look at all the evidence and conclude this book was just written by mere men. Those who reject the Biblical faith have to do so in spite of the evidence, and against the evidence that is so clearly seen in creation that they have to work hard to suppress (Romans 1). The heavens declare the glory of God, let’s not let ourselves hold back from doing the same. Let’s not be ashamed to tell our godless world about the glory of the Creator who can be Savior.

¹ Paul F. Taylor, *Six Days of Genesis*, p. 81.

² Ralph O. Muncaster, *Science: Was the Bible Ahead of Its Time?* Examine the Evidence series, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 2000.

³ <http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/flood/ch5.asp>

⁴ <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v2/n2/thinking-outside-the-box>

⁵ Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record*, p. 218.

⁶ Morris, p. 215.

⁷ Muncaster, 29.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰ Morris, *The Remarkable Record of Job*, 37-38.

¹¹ Morris, *The Remarkable Record of Job*,

¹² Muncaster, 40.

¹³ John MacArthur, "Science and Scripture"

<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Study+Guide+Chapter/1348>