

Science vs. The Flood

Scrutinizing the Noah's Ark Story

Copyright: Kelli Jae Baeli

ISBN: 9781301792313

Published: 20 JUN 2013

Publisher: Indie Literati Press



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Classification:

1. Atheism
2. Religion
3. Humanism
4. Christianity
5. Bible Study
6. Secularism
7. Women Authors—non-fiction
8. Bible-Science
9. Biblical Criticism

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NOTE to Reader: This Essay included in God on a Stick. Table of Contents for that collection is in the back of this publication.

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION:

This is an excerpt. This is only an excerpt. If it was the actual 1000-page book, you would have been informed, and there would have been many pages of references, indexes, footnotes, a more expansive context, and quite a few more words. Please read this out of the purview of religious zealots, as they are prone to violence when reminded that others don't always buy into their god-thing. Thank you and enjoy your beverage.

Summary:

(Excerpt from: Supernatural Hypocrisy: The Cognitive Dissonance of a God Cosmology)

Directed at agnostics and those struggling with the inconsistencies in Christianity in particular, and religion in general, an author struggles to find her own Personal Cosmology by examining and sharing her beliefs and discoveries about God, the Bible and Christianity.

In this excerpt, Baeli examines the Noah's Ark Flood Myth. "The story of the Flood has become part of our collective consciousness. Few people think to notice it with any degree of skepticism, such is the strength of religious belief. But there is something logically wrong with nearly every element in the story of Noah's Flood."



Science vs. The Flood

Scrutinizing the Noah's Ark Story

*Excerpted from Supernatural Hypocrisy:
The Cognitive Dissonance of a God Cosmology*

Kelli Jae Baeli

Author's Note

I will make no secret of the fact that, at this writing, I am, without question, a card-carrying atheist. This book is a representation of how I got there.

I am not a Bible scholar or a Ph.D.-wielding lecturer, nor a scientist. I was one semester away from a degree in Professional Writing & Editing, and intend to finish it, plus complete a Masters Degree program in writing as well, soon. The actual writing and life in general seem to have interfered with my academic pursuits. Other than that, I am just an author who is many other things, not the least of which is a voracious lifelong learner and seeker of truth. Though I have, at odd intervals, been accused of being an elitist—I think an elitist would not encourage the sharing of ideas by those without an alphabet soup after their name, a prestigious university at their back, or a mainstream publisher hawking their work. I believe everyone has something to say, and should be able to say it. It should be up to the readers whether or not the content is worthy of perusal.

This journey is a personal one. My truth may never be your truth. So take this or leave it. But understand that I embarked upon this task with the utmost sincerity and the most profound need to know myself and my place in this world.

I am only now fully recognizing the courage it will take for me to embrace this part of my identity in a world where this stance is often cause for oppression in general and ostracization in particular. But I'm no stranger to that. I have been a minority more than once and still am. I am a woman—(though not minority in number, at least minority in a patriarchy and all that entails); I am also a lesbian—though I dislike the connotation of that moniker. I am simply attracted romantically to certain other women, and never, men. I also fought disability for years, but refuse to let that define me, currently. And last, and most sobering: I am also now an atheist.

Let's see...what more could I do to achieve the permanent status of pariah?

In this work, I do not seek to denigrate other great thinkers or respected persons, but to ferret out the facts and, as much as possible, put it down in words.

The act of composing the volumes of this book led me to some conclusions, or verified those I suspected along the way, and so there will be an unavoidable slant in that direction throughout the text, in that I won't always be equitable when I speak of religion. I believe that political correctness has done more harm than good, and we ought to stop being a nation of whiners. We ought to speak our truth, as respectfully as possible, but with no regard for the toes that might be metaphorically mashed due to the honesty of the content. If we spend all our time coddling adults as if they were children, we create a nation of puerile adults who cannot make mature and rational decisions, nor function in a way that is at all beneficial to humanity in general.

I didn't stumble on this project after a random thought waltzed through my head. I began the project to refine the ideas and questions that have always niggled

at my brain; questions about belief, mortality, morality, reason, religion, human nature and my place in this world. I seek peace with those things I know which might at first appear daunting, and clarity about those things I sense on some intuitive level to be true, especially when bolstered by the overwhelming evidence.

I seek my own personal cosmology

Dedication

To everyone who ever dared seek the truth, in spite of the ostracization it may cause from those who do not choose reason over myth.



Science vs. The Flood

Scrutinizing the Noah's Ark Story

"Since the Bible and the church are obviously mistaken in telling us where we came from, how can we trust them to tell us where we are going?"

~ *Anonymous*

The story of the Flood has become part of our collective consciousness. Few people think to notice it with any degree of skepticism, such is the strength of religious belief. But there is something logically wrong with nearly every element in the story of Noah's Flood.

I covered the material about antecedents in a previous volume: many flood stories existed before the time of the Noah story, and they were all similar in content. But what about the logistics of the story itself? Let's look at it in more detail.

The Animals

In Genesis, we are told that Noah was instructed to collect animals and put them into the Ark.

You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female; also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the Earth....male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah (7:2-3).

Deuteronomy 14 lists all the clean and unclean animals, and lo, there was no mention of dinosaurs.

*Not only that, but there are no penguins and kangaroos? Why? They were not indigenous to the area, that's why. God would have known about them if he was really God and really existed, but those who wrote the Bible would not have known about them, and so they were not listed. Also, of humorous, if embarrassing note, is that God told them they couldn't eat rabbits because they "chew the cud." We know that rabbits don't chew a cud, and God should have known that, but really, it was an illiterate man from millennia ago who actually wrote these things.

But, how did Noah collect the insects? The jellyfish? The sharks? (they weren't mentioned either). How did he get the animals indigenous to those other areas — like polar bears, penguins, kangaroos, and pandas?

Ad hoc assumption: God had the animals migrate there and get on the Ark, directed by some trance induced by God.

Rationally, how did all the animals get there, be loaded and situated inside, in only seven days?

Current estimates of total species vary, depending on source, but range from 5 to 100 million (Science Daily). Total species ever, might be around 300 million. Almost 2 million have been named, but many more have not. There are over 300,000 species of beetles alone.

Ad Hoc Assumption: the Bible says he only collected “kinds” which means a male and female beetle. So he wouldn’t have to have 300,000 beetles on the Ark.

Again, rather convenient that Creationists can go along behind their own information and add details and suppositions to make it sound plausible. But what inevitably happens is that it remains implausible because there has to be an endless supply of falsehoods to answer the countering details which have been proven true.

How did Noah keep the birds from eating the insects, and the carnivores from eating the smaller animals? How did Noah and his family manage to feed and care for all these animals each day?

I’ve had many animals at a time, at different periods of my life, and it took half the day to care for them. How did they do this for the (conservative estimate) thousands that were there?

Ad hoc assumption: God placed all the animals in hibernation.

How convenient that is.

How did Noah find room for the whales and elephants? Dinosaurs were supposed to have existed, too, at the same time as humans, according to Creationists. How did Noah fit T-Rex’s and Brontosaurus on the Ark? And the Brachiosaurus was so big, Noah would come to about the height of his knee. Did he put the Brachiosaurus near that one solitary window, so he could stick his long neck out? If so, what did they do to get fresh air?

Ad Hoc assumption: Noah took only the babies, and only a pair of dinosaurs.

Anyone who knows anything about genetics, knows how absurd this postulate is. Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis, says that “there are perhaps only 55 different ‘kinds’ of dinosaurs.”

So what do Creationists mean when they use the word kind? “Kind” occurs 45 times in 32 verses in the KJV. The Hebrew word for kind is *min*.

The biblical use of the Hebrew word *min* ('kind') and also its usage in post-biblical Hebrew suggest that the word *min* is most likely a word of biological origin. Words historically connected with *min* in other languages and the way *min* was translated in early Bible translations may also be used to understand its meaning.

The key question, however, that Creationists need to consider is not just what *min* means, but whether when it is used the life-form that it follows is said to occur in one *min* or many. Whereas one would probably think from previous Creationist research, such as that by Jones, that *min* is a word that denotes a constant taxonomic level, this view cannot yet be substantiated. Thus in using the term *baramin* to represent the concept of 'created kind', baraminologists should not understand themselves to be making a statement about the meaning of the Hebrew word *min* (Williams).

Yet, the arguments the Creationists make refer to both *genus* and *species*. There are many, many KINDS of species, that are all in the same genus. For instance, the dog has many species, but are all dogs (genus). A Chihuahua is not the same KIND as a Saint Bernard.

General consensus among scholars is that the word *min* may refer to either genus or species, with most agreement on the belief that it is genus. If it is genus, then there are other problems with the interpretation which have to do with biology.

The dictionary defines "kind" as "a class or group of individual objects, people, animals, etc., of the same nature or character, or classified together because they have traits in common; category."

If by kinds, Ham means *genus*, then the actual number for the genera of dinosaurs is about 500, with another 100 being ambiguous due to lack of data. (Enchanted Learning). So to take two of each "kind" of dinosaur, meant that Noah took about 1000. Whether dinosaurs were considered "clean" or "unclean" remains an unanswered question.

(1) Evidence has accumulated that, whether we understand *min* as a collective of collective, or *le-min*-suffix as a distributive singular, several types of life may be denoted when *le-min*-suffix is used. (2) more evidence seems to point to the distributive use of the phrase rather than its use as a collective of collectives. It is possible however, that the phrase is distributive sometimes, and not distributive at other times. (3) *min* may well be a word of biological origin because its earliest occurrences have this meaning. (4) the basic meaning of 'division' which is suggested by etymology may support Creationist views of biological taxonomy as involving major discontinuities (Williams).

In this case, the implication by Creationists is that Noah had a male and female dinosaur on the Ark, and from these, all other species of dinosaur emerged over a period of several thousand years. Noteworthy, is the biological fact that the presence of alleles would be fewer in a pair of *genus* animals, than in a pair of *species*.

*Allele- One member of a pair (or any of the series) of genes occupying a specific spot on a chromosome (called locus) that controls the same trait (Biology Online).

Now to understand this, you have to understand alleles. At most, 14 alleles would have been present for clean animals, and four alleles for unclean animals, if we follow the information given in Genesis.

The problem is, even considering cross-overs, producing all of the modern species and the genetic alleles in them from representative genera within a few thousand years would involve a burst of Evolution more dramatic and rapid than even Evolutionists allow. Moreover, YECs have no plausible mechanism for it (Kuban).

The gist of it is, there is no plausible way that the species we know of today, could have come from such a limited stock of alleles, according to the Noah's Ark story.

Another problem with the Ark story, is that on the Ark, there was no sunlight or water or soil, presumably. How did Noah care for the thousands of species of plants and other flora? And what about plants that were not indigenous to the area? How did he keep them alive when they were in the wrong climate? Same goes for the animals. Many would have died before they even made it to the Ark.

The Water

According to the Bible, it rained for 40 days and nights, enough to cover the highest mountains.

The water prevailed more and more upon the Earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered (Genesis 7:19).

Calculations have been made by Scientists which tell us that would mean it would have to rain 6 inches per minute for that time. Even at this astronomical rate, it would not have covered the highest mountain, which is Mount Everest, which is 29,026 feet high. According to Ferrell Till, that meant,

...a height of 348,336 inches. For enough rain to fall in a period of 40 days to reach the peak of this mountain, the cloud formations would have to drop 8,708 inches of rain per day uniformly over all the Earth. This would amount to 363 inches per hour or six inches per minute (Till, 5-7).

Even if this were possible, it doesn't account for the fact that *water seeks its own level*, the principles of fluid dynamics show us that because of gravity, and the weight of water, it—like any other liquid—would settle to the lowest place first.

The Bible also mentions the water coming up from the ground, but for that amount of water to rise from the ground, there would have to be tremendous pressure pushing it. Creationists will then respond that the force pushing it was God.

Again, too convenient.

When a modern news reporter writes that everyone died in an airplane crash, readers are expected to understand that "everyone" does not apply to the entire planet. Likewise when the narrator of the flood story wrote in Genesis 7:21 that "every man" died, the reader is expected to understand that the scope of "every" applies only to the flooded region. People living outside the flooded region were not included in "every" and were not mentioned, because they were not affected by the flood and were beyond the scope of the story.

Many ranchers in the flooded region survived the river flood by climbing to hills or buildings that were higher than 15 cubits, but most of their livestock drowned. In contrast "every beast according to its kind, and all the cattle" that Noah owned or were in his custody were saved in his river barge. In other words, Noah did not leave any of his animals behind.

The scope of Genesis 1-11 is not all global. Genesis 2:14 refers to the river "which flows east of Assyria and the fourth river is the Euphrates." This limits the scope of the story to a local region, the Tigris-Euphrates valley (Best, 214-15).

The solution is more likely found in the text of the Bible itself: the word used, and translated as mountain, is *harîm*. This Hebrew word actually means hill. The flood was more likely a localized event, and as such, it wasn't worldwide, but only as far as Noah could see. "*And the waters prevailed so mightily on the Earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered.*" (Genesis 7:19). "Under the whole heaven" really just seemed that way to Noah.

Noah's encounters with deep water were in two phases: a river flood phase that lasted less than a week and a deep water phase that lasted a year. The river flood floated Noah's barge down into the Persian Gulf and the barge floated about the deep water of the Gulf for a year. The deep water that Noah experienced for a year was not a flood; it was the deep water of the Persian Gulf. The "tops of hills" above the water surface are commonly called islands. If only islands could be seen after the water became more shallow for 74 days, it means only that Noah's barge was still several miles or more from the shore and dry land beyond the horizon. Deep water in the Persian Gulf for more than a year is consistent with a local river flood (Best, *ibid*, 2).

So, then as Genesis tells us, after 150 days, the water began receding. Where did it recede to? If the Earth was covered, there were no dry places in which the water could go.

Water is not endless. There is only a certain amount available from all sources. The water found in the oceans and streams, the atmosphere and ice are still not enough to cover the Earth.

Ad Hoc assumption: God took the water away magically.

Aside from the obvious impossibility of that much rain falling, if it had, it would have produced a greenhouse effect and other conditions which would jettison the temperature to such a degree that everything would boil and melt.

Marty Leipzig, PhD, "a professional oil field geologist...with extensive experience in the Middle East, and who has the indisputable facts of the matter at his very fingertips," has calculated, "using the Stefan-Boltzman 4th-Power Law" that the temperature would have been 2,780.33 Fahrenheit. This also means that water could not exist in liquid form (Gillette) so there would be no flood. Only steam. And lots of it. It would be a sauna on a cosmic scale.

The Ark

It was built in the desert, where there were no trees. If Noah did this by himself, or at best, with the help of his family members, where did they get the wood and how did they transport it across many miles of desert?

How did Noah build this Ark, when the Bronze Age only had hand tools, and very crude ones at that? Nails, at the time, had to be hand-made by a blacksmith and were expensive. How did Noah afford all those nails? And where did he find the person to make so many?

Augustine, for example, argued that the biblical "cubit" was really more like 9 feet long, rather than the 1.5 feet that we usually accept. But John Wilkins put the brakes on that when he applied this new cubit to other biblical passages, pointing out that if Augustine and others were correct, it would also make Goliath's head nine feet tall, simply too big for David to carry (Skeptic mag).

I've already mentioned in a previous volume that a wooden boat the size of the Ark would collapse under its own weight. Modern shipbuilders know that wood is not a good material for large seafaring vessels, since the pressures of the water tend to cause breaches in the structure. Repeatedly, on Internet forums I saw references

to Isambard Kingdom Brunel's *SS Great Britain*, the largest ship ever built up until that time (1843) as an argument for the seaworthiness of such a large vessel. The *SS Great Britain* was claimed to have been built to the same specifications as the Ark.*

*I could find no evidence of the *SS Great Britain* being the same dimensions of the Ark. According to the details of the former, it was smaller.

But one detail gets missed in these arguments: the *SS Great Britain* was made of IRON.

The practical limit on the length of a wooden-hulled ship is about 300 feet, after which the phenomenon of hogging—the flexing of the hull as waves pass beneath it—becomes too great. Iron hulls are far less subject to hogging, so that the potential size of an iron-hulled ship is much greater.

The *SS Great Britain* was 322 feet long, 50 feet 6 inches wide, and the Ark was 450 feet long and 75 feet wide. So the Ark was larger, and also made of the weaker material of wood, and held together with still weaker construction and fastening methods.

As adults, we smile and indulge the young when they enjoy fairy tales, knowing that the fantastical details are quaint and entertaining, but not at all a representation of the truth. Why do adults insist on believing these religious myths, in spite of their own common sense?

NOTE to Reader:

This Essay included in God on a Stick:
An exhaustive investigation into Christianity and why I decided it made no damn sense

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kelli Jae Baeli

Even after 54 books, Kelli Jae Baeli always tries to write the sort of book she would want to read. She says her favorite thing to do in her novels is take a common trope and turn it on its ear. Where you expect a zig, she gives you a zag. In her pages, you will find strong female characters, ethical dilemmas, realistic romantic storylines often filled with adventure and intense pacing, tempered by witty dialog, and happy endings. All are hallmarks of her work.

Indie publisher and author of 22 bestsellers, Baeli enjoys a sales position in the top 5% of lesbian authors, also penning numerous essays, short stories and silly, serious and vitriolic Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. She and her wife, Melissa, a budding author in her own right, are on their way to a memoir-worthy *Life Everywhere*— traipsing around America in their travel trailer for a year, taking pictures and enjoying all the beautiful things life has to offer.