

## **The Fiction of Noah's Ark and the Flood**

by Evan Murri

This is a very small excerpt from a book that I have been working on for a very long time—way too long.

It started as a letter to my children in the mid 90's; a majority of it was written around 1999-2000. Then because of family issues, I put it on the shelf and neglected it. From time to time, I have dabbled with it, but always in fits and spurts.

One of the things I wrote about was Noah and the flood. However, a couple months ago, while visiting my family, one of my brothers got into yet another discussion/ exhortation with me, re the Church. He mentioned that on his mission, a prospect told him he could never believe in a God who would drown all of his children [in the flood]. My brother said it bothered him until later, in the temple, he received inspiration that God had many spirits to send to earth and didn't want to send them into the wickedness that existed at that time, so He [God] decided to start over.

When I returned home, I pulled out what I had written about Noah (it had been so long ago that I had to refresh my memory). Coincidentally, Hurricane Harvey [Texas] happened about the same time, so I updated what I had written, including a comparison of Noah's flood to Hurricane Harvey.

While I was at it, I threw in a comment about Creationist Ken Ham, the mastermind behind the alleged "life-sized" wooden Ark Encounter theme park in Williamstown, Kentucky, which exhibits of animals (as imagined on the Ark). Mr. Ham claims that dinosaurs also roamed the earth at the time of Noah, and the Ark carried all the dinosaurs as well. I wish I knew how to get in touch with Bill Nye the Science Guy, who toured the Ark Encounter and had a big debate with Mr. Ham about Noah and the flood (but I digress).

Aside from my revision re Noah, my progress on the book has more or less stalled; even though it is nearly completed, it seems I no longer have the enthusiasm nor the energy to finish it.

Maybe I could get this published on MormonThink?



## The Fiction of Noah's Ark and the Flood

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Another problem for Mormonism, is the literal interpretation of the Bible. Notwithstanding Joseph Smith's caveat "as far as it is translated correctly,"<sup>1</sup> for all intents and purposes, Joseph Smith taught, and Mormons embrace—the literal truth of the miracles in the Bible: Moses parting the Red Sea, Jesus walking on water and all of the miracles and supernatural occurrences therein.

In modern-day revelation, Joseph Smith validated the story of Noah's Ark and the flood as fact—that it literally happened. In the *Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses, Chapter 7, Joseph Smith records:

"43 Wherefore Enoch saw that Noah built an ark; and that the Lord smiled upon it, and held it in his own hand; but upon the residue of the wicked the floods came and swallowed them up."<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, Mormons accept as the word of God (verified by modern revelation), that Noah and his sons built an Ark, gathered 2 of every creature into it and lived within its bowels (during the flood) and thereby saved every living creature on earth.

Noah's Ark is a time honored and wonderful story (emphasis on "story")—but the problem is: Joseph Smith, in modern-day revelation, declared it to be true. And Mormons believe, and teach, that the story of Noah and the flood, actually occurred—that it literally took place.

### It Wasn't Just Forty Days

However, when examined more closely, from a rational empirical basis, the story reveals itself to have big, Big problems.

Popular belief is that Noah was on the Ark for forty days. However, an examination of Genesis reveals that the scripture very specifically states that the inhabitants of the Ark were confined on it for more than a year—not just the 40 days and nights that it allegedly rained.<sup>3</sup> Genesis sets out specifically the day that Noah and his sons and their wives entered the Ark:

"In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day (i.e., Feb. 17)...In the selfsame day entered Noah,

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Smith, *Articles of Faith*, in 1842, in response to a request from a newspaper editor, John Wentworth, Joseph wrote a letter which has become known as the "Wentworth Letter" in which he penned 13 principles of faith, now known as the "Articles of Faith."

<sup>2</sup>Joseph Smith, *Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses 7:43 (as of this writing, can be found online).

<sup>3</sup>*King James Bible*, Old Testament, Genesis 7:4 (can be found online).

and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark<sup>4</sup>...They, and every beast after his kind<sup>5</sup>...as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in."<sup>6</sup>

Genesis further tells the specific day they finally disembarked:

"...in the six hundredth and first year<sup>7</sup>...in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month"<sup>8</sup> (i.e., Feb. 27, 375 days later)...Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his son's wives<sup>9</sup> ..."Every beast...went forth out of the ark."<sup>10</sup>

According to Genesis, they were in the Ark with all of its occupants for **three hundred and seventy-five (375) days** (Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> of the six hundredth year until Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> of the six hundredth and first year—375 days later). I will grant that inasmuch as the Ark story was supposedly written at the time the Hebrew Lunar Year was only 354 days, said calculation would set the time at 371 days;<sup>11</sup> however by either accounting, Noah's family and all the animals were allegedly cooped up in the Ark for more than an entire year.

Mormons believe, and teach, that the waters of the "flood" literally covered **all the face of the earth**, including every mountain top ("all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered....and the mountains were covered,")<sup>12</sup> To Mormons, that isn't simply allegory, Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe stated:

"Latter-day Saints...look upon the flood as a baptism of the earth, symbolizing a cleansing of the impurities of the past, and the beginning of a new life. This has been repeatedly taught by the leaders of the Church. The deluge was an immersion of the earth in water..."<sup>13</sup>

Apostle Bruce R. McConkie further asserted:

"In the days of Noah the Lord sent a universal flood which completely

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 7:13.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 7:14.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 7:16.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 8:13.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 8:14.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 8:18.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 8:19.

<sup>11</sup>Robert A. Moore, article entitled "The Impossible Voyage of Noah's Ark," published in *Creation Evolution Journal*, Vol. 4 No. 1, Winter 1983, p. 16.

<sup>12</sup>*King James Bible*, Old Testament, Genesis 7:19-20 (can be found online).

<sup>13</sup>John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations*, Bookcraft, 1960, pp. 127-128; also see *Journal of Discourses*, 1854, 1959, Vol. 1, Brigham Young p. 274, Orson Pratt p. 331 (as of this writing, all 26 volumes can be found online).

immersed the whole earth and destroyed all flesh except that preserved on the ark. ... This flood was the baptism of the earth; before it occurred, the land was all in one place, a condition that will again prevail during the millennial era."<sup>14</sup>

### **Impossible Volume of Water**

However, I have never heard or seen it considered in any Mormon lesson or text, the extraordinary amount of water the flood ["baptism of the earth"] would have required. Let's apply a little critical analysis to the Noah's Ark saga. For comparison, I will refer to a recent flood experienced as a result of Hurricane Harvey, which reached landfall on the southeast coast of Texas on Aug. 25, 2017, creating the greatest downpour ever recorded in the United States since the National Weather Service started keeping records. In a 5 day period, parts of the Houston area received up to 50 inches of rainfall. According to the National Hurricane Center, some areas received a drenching of nearly 20 inches in a 24 hour period. That's almost an inch of rain per hour for a whole day, and 50 inches in 5 days—rain is always intermittent.

By comparison, the Bible states that the 40 days and nights of rain covered even the mountains.<sup>15</sup> Since we know that Mount Everest is a little more than 29,000 feet high, if Genesis (and Mormon doctrine) is valid, the forty days and nights of rain would have had to drop more than 29,000 feet of rain in that period. (I'm aware that there are some "creationists" that assert the earth was level before the flood—but that flies in the face of millions of geologic evidences that prove the earth's mountains, including Everest, have existed for millions and millions of years). So, a little elementary school arithmetic (29,000 feet, divided by 40 days times 24 hours) tells us that the flood would have resulted in a deluge of **over 30 feet of rain per hour, every single hour, continuously, for forty days and nights.**

So let's compare, Hurricane Harvey: almost a full inch of rain per hour over a 24 hour period; Noah's flood: over 30 feet of rain per hour continually for 960 hours straight (that should make those true believing Christians in Texas feel better).

It's far beyond my intent here to "get into the weeds" of atmospheric science—but K through 12 science classes teach us that the process of rain is the evaporation of water into the air (atmosphere), primarily off of the oceans, and subsequently, as a result of conditions of temperature and atmospheric pressure, the moisture in the air (water vapor in the atmosphere) condenses back into droplets of water that fall to the earth. It can easily be found on the Internet, that the earth's atmosphere is physically incapable of containing the amounts of water vapor required to produce 30 feet of rain per hour. And even if it were possible, the air would be so saturated

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<sup>14</sup>Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, Second Ed., Bookcraft (owned by LDS Church) 1966, p. 289 (as of this writing, can be found online).

<sup>15</sup>*King James Bible*, Old Testament, Genesis 7:20 (can be found online).

with moisture that it would be virtually unbreathable; animals, and humans, would drown from breathing in so much moisture.

Furthermore, the amount (volume) of water required to cover even the mountain tops, did not then, and does not now, exist on earth. Here again, science “rains on Noah’s parade;” science teaches us that matter, including water, can neither be created nor destroyed. So the additional volume of water required to cover the entire earth to a depth of approximately 5½ miles above sea level (the height of Mount Everest), would multiply the existing volume of water on the earth by several times. There simply does not exist on the earth, anywhere near the amount of water required for the story of Noah’s Ark to be true. In order for there to be enough water for “the mountains were covered,”<sup>16</sup> God would have to have brought the water from some other sphere, and take it away afterward—if He (God) didn’t take away the water after the flood, the world would still be covered with water—the mountain tops would still be submerged.

Science shows that the story of the flood (and Mormon doctrine, including Joseph Smith’s revelation) cannot be true.

### **Gathering ALL the Animals**

But the volume of water required is merely one of many evidences that reveal the story of Noah to be impossible. The account in Genesis is a little thin on details about gathering the animals. In Genesis 6:19-20 we find:

“19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.

“20 Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.”<sup>17</sup>

The scripture is a little vague regarding the process of “gathering,” Verse 19 says “shalt thou bring” suggesting that Noah had to go get them, then Verse 20 says “two of every sort shall come unto thee” suggesting that the animals would come to Noah. Verse 19’s “every living thing” would seem to be all inclusive, yet “of all flesh” could imply a more restricted category.

Be that as it may, what is indisputable is the fact that there were a great many animals. In fact, the numbers were prodigious; current estimates place the number at approximately 8.7 million (8,700,000) species of animals, with 6.5 million

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 7:20.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 6:19-20.

(6,500,000) species on land and 2.2 million (2,200,000) species in the seas.<sup>18</sup>

So even if God miraculously influenced the animals which were able to traverse the extraordinary distances, to “come” to Noah (rather than Noah having to go get them)—the reality is, millions of species didn’t have the ability to go to Noah—and therefore, in order to “keep them alive,”<sup>19</sup> Noah would have had to travel great distances to go get them, a task that would take 8 individuals, hundreds of lifetimes to accomplish, especially considering the mode of transportation of the day (normally, to identify each species would require thousands of experts to recognize, let alone organize, all of the various species that must be saved). And there being so few individuals to accomplish so much gathering, it seems likely that the animals which were gathered early, waiting for years and years and years for Noah and his sons to collect more of the millions required to be collected, would most likely die of old age or get tired of waiting—and wander off.

And can you imagine the difficulty of keeping track of all of them? Taxonomy is the science of defining and naming animals and biological organisms and arranging species into larger groups. It seems that Adam was the original taxonomist; Chapter 2 of Genesis tells us that Adam named “every living creature:”

“19 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. (Emphasis added)

“20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field...”<sup>20</sup>

If Adam had the task of naming them all, Noah, responsible for keeping all of them from being “destroyed off the face of the earth”<sup>21</sup>—surely must have had to keep track of them.

The Bible is woefully inadequate in describing what a monumental task naming “every living creature” was for Adam. However, modern taxonomy makes it clear that it was a little more complicated than “lions and tigers and bears, oh my.”

### **Every Living Substance**

It’s curious that virtually no religion that accepts the Bible as scripture, including the Mormon Church, teaches the enormity of what allegedly took place as a result of the flood. Genesis 7:4 makes clear that (outside the confines of the Ark) it wasn’t

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<sup>18</sup>Article entitled “How many species on Earth? About 8.7 million, new estimate says,” published in ScienceDaily, 24 August 2011.

<sup>19</sup>*King James Bible*, Old Testament, Genesis 6:20 (can be found online).

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:19-20.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 7:4.

just every human and every animal, God makes it clear that His purpose for the flood was to destroy “Every Living Substance.” Genesis 7:4 states:

“4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and **every living substance** that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.”<sup>22</sup> (Emphasis added)

and that’s not a typo; those exact words: “every living substance” are again repeated in Genesis 7:23:

“23 And **every living substance** was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.”<sup>23</sup> (Emphasis added again)

“Every living substance” is very specific, and **very** inclusive. If Noah’s task was to save every living substance, then he and his family certainly had their work cut out for them. Genesis 6:20 says “every creeping thing of the earth,” but Genesis 7:4 as well as 7:23 make it clear that Noah had to save **every** animal of **every** species, **every** insect of **every** species (about 10 million of them), **every** bacteria of **every** species (in the millions) even **every** virus of **every** species (far more doable—viruses only number in the hundreds of thousands).

### **All Marine Animals As Well**

It seems that it’s never pointed out in Sunday School that we’re talking fish here too [**every** creature that lives in water]. Because Genesis 6:19 says: “every living thing of all **flesh...**,” some people think “flesh” doesn’t include fish, let alone every creature that lives in water, however “every living substance”<sup>24</sup> most certainly includes all marine species as well, both salt water and fresh.

So we see that the Ark not only had to accommodate two (or fourteen) of all the beasts of the field, but also had to have water tight tanks for every species of aquatic creature; imagine the whale tanks! It’s hard to understand why the account of Noah’s Ark overlooks the challenge of rounding up every creature in the sea (how did Noah transport them to the Ark?), let alone build water tight compartments for whales and sharks and crustaceans, etc. And snakes would probably require pretty sophisticated cages as well, especially the venomous ones.

Genesis completely neglects explaining how whales were boarded. And piranhas—who would have volunteered for that task?

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 7:4.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 7:23.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 7:4 and 7:23.

## Why Do We Forget the Plants?

The Ark story, as commonly understood, also doesn't contemplate that Noah was responsible for saving all of the earth's plants as well. But the Bible states clearly that every living substance (outside the Ark), **which certainly includes all vegetation**, was destroyed.

Scientists count approximately 391,000 vascular plants currently known, not including algae, mosses, liverworts and hornworts, that all have specialized tissues to transport food and water.<sup>25</sup> It should be apparent that gathering up plants from all over the world, may have been an even bigger task than gathering all the animals (presumably many of the animals could travel on their own accord to the Ark); plants on the other hand, have no means of travel and therefore would require being gathered by Noah and his family from every corner of the earth, a task, given the means of transportation of the day, that would take thousands of years, even assuming God showed them each exact species of plant to be gathered (here again, to identify each species would normally require thousands of experts to recognize, let alone organize, all of the various species that must be saved); not to mention the additional space in the Ark required by the hundreds of thousands of plants to be preserved.

And that doesn't even include the vast quantities of plants that had to be stored for a year's worth of food for the animals, and humans, for the voyage.<sup>26</sup>

## Feeding the Animals

Then, of course, there's the problem of carnivores versus herbivores. The Lord may have had to undo about 70 million years of evolution to prevent the lions and tigers from eating the zebras and water buffalo. For Noah to have stored up more than a year's worth of food for every living creature, requiring a year's worth of meats for the carnivores, and a year's worth of plants for the herbivores (an extraordinary variety and enormous quantity), not to mention refrigeration for all the foods that would spoil (another detail that Genesis omits), likely would have required exponentially more than three hundred cubits by fifty cubits by thirty cubits<sup>27</sup>—likely far more than eight men and women could have built in their lifetimes.

Additionally, the Ark had to carry enough fresh water for all the animals and all the plants; drinking salt water would have killed the animals and watering with salt water would have killed the plants as well. Can you imagine how much fresh water would be required for an entire year? Fresh water is so essential that ships that carry large numbers of passengers for more than a few days, have their own desalination equipment to produce the quantities of fresh water necessary—it's

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<sup>25</sup>Report entitled "State of the World's Plants" published by researchers at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in the United Kingdom, in 2016.

<sup>26</sup>*King James Bible*, Old Testament, Genesis 6:21 (can be found online).

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 6:15.

pretty certain that the Ark didn't have that capability.

As a side note, when I was a kid growing up in Idaho, we called them "chores": our daily routine of feeding the animals that we had on our farm. And we only had a horse, some cattle, some sheep, some pigs, and chickens (and various pets at various times). I thought I had it bad. But I didn't have to feed lions and tigers and every other predator known to man, in addition to elephants and giraffes and buffalo and a few thousand other mammal species, not to mention alligators and sharks and sea turtles and ten thousand varieties of birds, each species with its own diet. I suspect feeding the whales was particularly problematic; depending on the type of whale, they might eat either dolphins or seals (it would definitely be a task to store a year's worth of those), while other types of whales consume millions of pounds of small fish in water (even more of a task to store a year's worth of those).

And what to do with all that poop? You farm folk know what I'm talking about! If you think changing the water in a goldfish bowl is a chore, those whale tanks had to be a bitch. I can't even imagine the daily chores of Noah and his sons, feeding two of every animal on earth; seems to me, a single day's worth of chores could take eight people a hundred years! I'm thinking hungry and cranky (actually dead) animals!

Another side note: Creationist Ken Ham, the mastermind behind the supposed "life-sized" wooden Ark Encounter theme park in Williamstown, Kentucky, which exhibits cage/compartments of supposed "life-sized" animals; Mr. Ham claims that dinosaurs also roamed the earth at the time of Noah, and that the Ark carried all the dinosaurs as well. The Ark Encounter actually has an exhibit of a cage containing two supposed model dinosaurs (they're only about the size of large steers, except with long necks and tails)<sup>28</sup>—curious why they didn't try to depict a couple of titanosaurs, which weighed as much as 70 tonnes each. Can you imagine Noah carrying and feeding all the dinosaurs, in addition to every other living thing on earth? Talk about [Ken Ham] ignoring science! All the dinosaurs too??? At least that's one ridiculous Ark claim that can't be attributed to Mormons (on the other hand, dinosaurs get us into "the earth was made in 7 days" dilemma; but I digress).

### **Not to Mention Repopulating the Earth**

Of course there's also the problem of Noah re-populating every living creature and every living plant on the various continents after the flood, and not just the continents but every one of the thousands of islands all over the Earth. Mormons seem to have forgotten that in order to re-populate the whole earth, Noah and his sons would have had to sail a sea-worthy craft (the Ark had no sails), to each continent and each tiny island and re-introduce the extraordinary numbers (millions and millions) of animals, birds, even insects—all of the appropriate creatures and all

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<sup>28</sup>Go online and search for Ark Encounter, and consider Creationist assertions regarding the Ark, in light of what it actually says in Genesis.

of the appropriate plants, in all of the appropriate places, in order for the story of Noah to be valid. After all, they [plants and animals] didn't just swim there by themselves.

And then there's the problem of all the land being saturated with salt. It is well known that salt prevents plants from growing, it leaches into the ground and essentially sterilizes the ground, preventing growth of vegetation by the process of desiccation (absorbing moisture, stealing it from the roots of the plants and preventing growth). There is more than sufficient salt in the seas that, even if diluted, when the waters receded and left their salts, Noah and his animals would have walked out of the Ark onto a barren earth.

As with other topics, regarding the impossibilities of Noah's Ark, we have really only scratched the surface. It was merely the intent here to address some problems that the average highschool student should be able to understand. There are literally hundreds more issues, when researched in depth, that further dispel the reality of the Ark and the flood. There's far more than geology and archaeology that prove it didn't happen; science and/or engineering disciplines as wide ranging as: genetics (regarding both animal and human diversity), naval engineering (shipbuilding), wood preservation, animal husbandry, animal transportation, veterinary medicine, botany, farming, cross-pollination, symbiosis (parasites and hosts), requirements of reproduction and even survival (many species require far more than a pair, many insects, birds and fish require swarms, flocks and schools in order to survive), aquatic organisms, animal migration, hibernation and nutrition, species climate requirements (some species require arctic conditions, others tropical environs, still others can only survive in the desert); bacterial and viral sciences and hosts and symbiotic relationships.

Sanitation would have been a "biggy," and ventilation also a major issue. Additionally, all animals, birds and aquatic creatures require exercise—keeping all those animals cooped up in small cages for an entire year is a recipe for failure—even if they did survive the Ark, they wouldn't be able to survive on land once they were released from the Ark. How would Noah exercise a grizzly, or a crocodile? And who would protect the prey from the predators once they left the Ark? Eight souls seems woefully inadequate relative to the millions and millions of species that needed to be protected.

Has a zookeeper ever written a book about the Ark? Their perspective would be invaluable.

For a deeper dive into many of the scientific issues of the Ark, I suggest an article entitled "The Impossible Voyage of Noah's Ark." It covers many more issues. For instance, regarding some of the botanical challenges of gathering plants for the journey, the article observes:

"...No premonition, however urgent, could cause a pine cone to commence rolling toward the ark; someone would have to go get it. Our biblical botanists would have to be able to identify fertile seeds

and spores, find them at the proper season, and make sure that the storage area aboard ship would be suitable. In the damp depths of the ark, most seeds would either rot or sprout and then die for lack of nutrients and light. How did Noah prepare and maintain the special low-humidity containers necessary to ensure their dormancy? How did he control insects, rodents, and fungi? Seed storage is a complex technology and, without proper techniques, "no seed can maintain its viability for long"...God told Noah to gather food for the various animals (Genesis 6:21), many of whom...have highly specialized diets. Hence, even if the animals could reach the ark unaided, an overwhelming burden would be placed upon our heroes [Noah and his family] with regard to the plant kingdom."<sup>29</sup>

The improbabilities and impossibilities of the Ark and the flood, are endless.

### **Did the Flood Really Happen?**

Why is it, that discussions in Sunday School classes never examine the account of Noah to its logical conclusions? The obstacle of course is our testimonies. Since we know that Joseph Smith was a prophet, we therefore know that the story of Noah is true—if reason or logic contradicts our "knowledge," we either reject it out of hand, or more typically, simply fail to pursue any course of inquiry that might contradict our faith. In fact, according to Church authorities, there could be great harm in pursuing such questions—they might undermine one's faith and cause them to stray from the only true Church.

In considering the reason that God supposedly gives for the flood, it is incomprehensible that: "...the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."<sup>30</sup> Since all the children on earth were also destroyed, supposedly their hearts were "only evil continually" also. Evil continually? Really? Even mothers had evil thoughts in their hearts toward their children—continually? Really? And children had evil thoughts in their hearts toward their mothers—continually? Seriously? Millions of innocent children being drowned for the supposed sins of their parents (which seems ludicrous on its face—yet apparently the animals were evil too).<sup>31</sup> For my money, I'll go with Jon Stewart's perspective (quoted at the beginning of this book), that: "Evil is relatively rare. Ignorance is epidemic."<sup>32</sup>

In regard to God destroying "every living substance," don't say to yourself: "well that's just allegory." How do you choose which scriptures are allegory and which

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<sup>29</sup>Robert A. Moore, "The Impossible Voyage of Noah's Ark," published in *Creation Evolution Journal*, Vol. 4 No. 1, Winter Quarter 1983, p. 21.

<sup>30</sup>*King James Bible*, Old Testament, Genesis 6:5 (can be found online).

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 6:7.

<sup>32</sup>Jon Stewart, in an Interview with PBS host Charlie Rose which aired on PBS Nov. 12, 2014 (as of this writing, video can be found online).

ones are not? If you can suppose that “every living substance” is just allegory, why then can’t the whole Noah story be just allegory? Of course, for Mormons, the biggest problem with allegory is Book of Moses 7:43.<sup>33</sup> That the whole story is just allegory, is my contention from the outset—which the facts obviously bear out.

Why is it not apparent that the whole entire account of Noah’s Ark is a myth, an empirical impossibility? Even if you accept the premise that God was willing to destroy all life on earth—shouldn’t it be obvious that the proverbial “olive branch” brought back by the dove<sup>34</sup> could not have existed—not only was it supposedly submerged in salt water for over a year, but “every living substance” (including that olive branch) had allegedly been destroyed.<sup>35</sup> Even the most cursory application of logic to the data reveals virtually every aspect of the Ark and the flood, from the amount of rain/water to the overwhelming impossibility of gathering all living creatures into a single location, let alone into a single vessel, is too fantastical to seriously consider as a possibility, let alone a reality.

(Note—for some very interesting insights into the Noah’s Ark myth, see PBS documentary “NOVA, The Secrets of Noah’s Ark,” which chronicles the origins and development of the mythical legend of Noah’s Ark.)<sup>36</sup>

Many things about “revelation” can be rationalized; not so with Noah’s Ark and the flood. With Noah, the dichotomy between the story and the scientific evidence could not be more clear—you either put your [blind] faith in the scripture (including Joseph Smith’s verification), which cannot be proven, or you accept the scientific evidence, which can be proven. The numbers make it overwhelmingly apparent that the story of Noah simply impossible. While at first blush, the religious symbolism of the “baptism of the earth by water” may seem profound, especially when it is stated as fact by modern-day Apostles who have been ordained as prophets, seers and revelators. Regardless of their prophetic sounding utterances, the scientific reality is: the flood and Noah’s Ark is an empirical impossibility; it’s a myth; **it simply didn’t happen.**

If Joseph Smith was really a prophet, he would have dispelled the myth of Noah’s Ark, rather than confirm it to be a fact. For Joseph to have asserted (as modern-day revelation) that the story of Noah and the flood is true, is yet another proof that he did not receive revelation, but simply made it up. This is yet another example of how what we “know to be true” can be so profoundly different if it is based upon the emotional appeal of faith and “testimony,” or if we actually follow the facts to their logical and verifiable conclusions.

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<sup>33</sup>Joseph Smith, *Pearl of Great Price*, Book of Moses 7:43 (as of this writing, can be found online).

<sup>34</sup>*King James Bible*, Old Testament, Genesis 8:11 (can be found online).

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 7:23.

<sup>36</sup>Public Broadcasting Service [PBS] documentary “NOVA, The Secrets of Noah’s Ark” Season 42, Episode 15, which first aired Oct. 7, 2015 (as of this writing, can be found online).