

Jarno Moilanen

From Flood to Fallen Kingdoms

A Biblical-Creationist History of the Ancient Near East: New Short Introduction

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K I N G D O M S**

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of the Ancient Near East

New Short Introduction

By

Jarno Moilanen Th.M.

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INTRODUCTION

Everyone should understand the fact that ancient history cannot be observed. The events from long time ago are already gone and will never repeat themselves. Past times just do not exist anymore. Can we observe and experience, that is to say, really prove something that does not exist anymore? Of course we cannot. That is why we are totally dependent on trusting our own interpretations and the external authorities that we choose for ourselves.

Trusting, or believing, is a human limit above which no student of ancient history can rise. In other words, history can be grasped only through faith — to have a view of history means to have an unprovable belief of history, no matter how well-reasoned the view is. To interpret/reconstruct/imagine historical events inside a head is not the same thing as seeing to the past and proving it. Unfortunately many people do not understand this, and they deceive themselves and others by continually claiming that their historical views are not beliefs but scientific facts that no reasonable person should deny.

But what should we believe then? History does not exist anymore for us, but it still does exist for the eternal God, the almighty Creator of the universe, who is above time. If we wish to get a good understanding of the ancient times, and especially the ancient times of the Near East, we must found our interpretations and views on His own testimonies which are recorded in the Holy Bible, the inspired and inerrant book of God who cannot lie. Being grounded in this solid starting point I have now written a brief introduction to the history of the ancient Near East that is in agreement with the biblical timeline according to which the world was created about 6,000 years ago. I have tried to draw up a clear narrative which begins with the creation of the world and the great flood of Noah and then flows through the post-flood centuries to the end of the Old Testament time. The biblical storyline serves as the main road of history along which, as the journey progresses, the most important archaeological and cultural periods are explained in a simple and understandable way and set in their right chronological places. I have made use of the best available scholarly literature,

Christian as well as secular, and argued that ancient history and archaeology are not in conflict with the Bible as long as they are understood and dated correctly.

Perhaps not many nonbelievers will be immediately convinced, but I am sure that this book will strengthen the faith of numerous believing readers who take the Holy Scriptures seriously. They will also be surprised to see how well the first five post-flood centuries, from Ararat to Abraham, which until now have been in great darkness, can be elucidated through proper interpretation of biblical and archaeological evidence.

My work would not have been possible without the previous contributions of many great scholars from whom I have learnt a lot and whose works I often refer to. Many thanks to them, and great praise to God for leading me to the best sources. When I started my research many years ago I had no idea that I would someday complete a book like this. I have been very blessed. But still many things need more investigation, and errors correction. I strongly believe, however, that the overall picture of the ancient Near Eastern history (from the biblical-creationist perspective) is already very secure.

Finally, as an important advice to the reader, I suggest that he or she will always keep the chronological charts, appended to the end of this book, at their fingertips while they are reading through the chapters. But without waiting any longer, let's now begin our journey on a road of history during which we will learn a lot of new things about the ancient Near East. Dear Lord, please give light to our way and lead us to the truth; thank You for leading us to the truth. Amen.

Your word *is* a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.

Ps 119:105 NKJV

CHAPTER 1: FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE FLOOD

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the whole universe. He created everything in six days approximately 6,000 years ago, or 4000 B.C.¹ The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were created on the sixth day (Gen 1:26–27).

The whole creation was very good (Gen 1:31), and the life of Adam and Eve was perfectly happy in the garden which God had planted for them (Gen 2:8). Death or any suffering did not exist yet. After a while, however, Adam and Eve ate from a tree which God had forbidden (Gen 2:16–17; 3:6, 11, 17). In this manner the first man and woman violated God's will, that is to say, they sinned for the first time. This tragic event is known as "the fall of man/humankind".

The sin broke the perfect relationship and friendship that had been between the human couple and God. As a result of the fall man (including both man and woman) became mortal (Gen 2:17; 3:16–19). Death and suffering became now the reality for animals too. Because of the sin the original perfect purity and goodness of mankind was corrupted. Since the fall all kinds of evil things, errors and sufferings have entered the world: hatred, envy, theft, murder, idolatry, witchcraft, atheism, drunkenness, adultery, fornication, war, oppression, slavery, hunger, sickness, sorrow, depression, loneliness. Indeed the world has changed a lot from the original good condition that was in the beginning.

After the fall Adam and Eve began to have children. At first their children had to marry with each other because there were no other people in the world.² During the following centuries the number of people increased substantially (Gen 4; 5). But as the number of people increased so increased also the amount of sin, and the earth was

¹ A more precise estimate is 4004 B.C. See Floyd Nolen Jones (2015), *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, ix, 26–29, and Chart 1 and Chart 6 in the CD-ROM; see also Sarfati 2003; Freeman 2008; Cosner 2013; Hardy & Carter 2014; Sexton 2015; 2018. Floyd Nolen Jones' chronology strongly supports Archbishop James Ussher's chronology which is presented in his classic 17th-century work *The Annals of the World* (new updated edition published in 2003). In this book I have adopted Jones' year numbers for the important persons and events of the Old Testament.

² God gave the law forbidding intermarriage between close relatives only much later, at the time of Moses about 2,500 years after the creation of Adam and Eve. Even Abraham (about 2,100 years after the creation) was married to his half-sister, Sarah (Gen 20:12). In those early times the number of genetic defects was still very low, so there was no real danger of biological problems in the offspring of brother-sister unions.

filled with corruption and violence (Gen 4:8, 23; 6:1–4, 11–12). Then God grieved greatly that he had created man and decided to destroy the land everywhere and to wipe off all its inhabitants, including animals (Gen 6:5–7, 13). Of all the living people only Noah, a righteous believing man who found grace before God (Gen 6:8–9; 7:1), and his family would get deliverance.

God told Noah to build a wooden ark, a kind of large covered boat approximately 450 feet (137 meters) long, 75 feet (23 meters) wide and 45 feet (14 meters) high, inside which Noah's family and selected animals could survive through the determined devastation, the great flood (Gen 6:14–21). Noah's family consisted of his wife, his three sons and their three wives, eight persons altogether. God also caused seven pairs from each ritually clean animal kind and a pair from each ritually unclean animal kind, males and females, to come to Noah and go inside the ark. These were all air-breathing, land-dwelling animals (including birds) which could not have survived over the flood by themselves. The total number of animals inside the ark was probably only a few thousand.³

The flood started approximately 1,656 years after the creation of the world or 2348 B.C. when Noah was 600 years old (Gen 7:6):⁴

Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils *was* the breath of the spirit of life, all that *was* on the dry *land*, died. So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who *were* with him in the ark remained *alive*. And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days. (Gen 7:17–24 NKJV)

³ See Jonathan D. Sarfati (2015), *The Genesis Account*, 516; Ken Ham & Bodie Hodge (2016), *A Flood of Evidence*, 209–217; Froman (ed.) 2016. How could Noah's family and all the animals inside the ark stay alive during and immediately after the flood? For a comprehensive study answering this and related questions see John Woodmorappe (1997), *Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study*. See also Laura Welch (ed.) (2016), *Inside Noah's Ark: Why It Worked*.

⁴ See Jones 2015, ix, 278 and Chart 6 in the CD-ROM.

From Flood to Fallen Kingdoms (FFFK) is the first truly authoritative, detailed and coherent, young-earth creationist overview of the post-flood history of the ancient Near East (and the land of Israel), for laypersons and scholars alike. It is a unique work which does not have any serious rivals in the biblical-creationist book market. The lack of a good and comprehensive introductory book was the main reason why I started to write the book in the first place.

I have made use of the best available scholarly literature, Christian as well as secular. The book contains a lot of my own research, but it is also in very good agreement with the archaeological articles written by A. J. M. Osgood (can be read at creation.com) and the books of David Down (Unwrapping the Pharaohs and Unveiling the Kings of Israel), for example. FFFK follows the absolute chronology of Floyd Nolen Jones' The Chronology of the Old Testament. As a Bible-faithful narrative introduction to the history and archaeology of the ancient Near East, From Flood to Fallen Kingdoms is far better than the existing apologetic works that come towards the genre of FFFK (Evidence for the Bible by Clive Anderson and Brian Edwards; Ancient Post-Flood History by Ken Johnson; The World's Story I: The Ancients by Angela O'Dell, for example).

From Flood to Fallen Kingdoms will strengthen the faith of numerous believing readers who take the Holy Scriptures seriously. They will also be surprised to see how well the first five post-flood centuries, from Ararat to Abraham, which until now have been in great darkness, can be elucidated through proper interpretation of biblical and archaeological evidence.



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