
INTERPRETING THE GENESIS FLOOD NARRATIVE AN INTEGRATION OF EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS AND CLIMATE SCIENCE PERSPECTIVES (GENESIS 6.5-8)

**Alexander Cap*, Štefan Pružinský Sr., Ján Husár, Ľuboš Savčák,
Štefan Pružinský Jr. and Milan Petrisko**

*University of Presov in Presov, Eastern Orthodox Theological Faculty, Masarykova 15,
Prešov, 080 01, Slovakia*

(Received 1 February 2024, revised 28 February 2024)

Abstract

This study re-examines the biblical flood narrative in Genesis 6.5-8 through an interdisciplinary lens, integrating historical-critical exegesis with insights from Archaeology, Geology, comparative mythology, and Social sciences. By exploring archaeological evidence of ancient floods in Mesopotamia and their potential influence on the Biblical flood narrative, the manuscript delves into the scientific plausibility of such an event. Comparative analysis with other ancient flood myths, including the Gilgamesh Epic and Greek mythology, is conducted to understand common natural phenomena that may have inspired these narratives. This interdisciplinary approach also considers the psychological and sociological impacts of catastrophic events on societies, both ancient and contemporary. The manuscript aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the flood narrative, balancing theological interpretation with scientific inquiry, thereby contributing to a deeper appreciation of this pivotal biblical event in both theological and scientific communities.

Keywords: prehistory, sin, purification, faith, godliness

1. Introduction

In the annals of biblical prehistory, we encounter the profound words of Moses, the scribe, who vividly portrays humanity's deep-seated depravity. He paints this bleak picture in stark hues, in line with the Yahwistic tradition, to convey a profound sense of pessimism about the moral decay of humankind - a decay that necessitated immediate and radical divine intervention [1]. To use a modern analogy, it was as if God had to apply the 'handbrake' to a bus recklessly speeding down a hill, with mankind at the helm, heedlessly steering toward destruction. Understanding God's plans and accepting His methods can often be challenging for us. Who are we, after all, to question or dictate what God should do?

*E-mail: alexander.cap@unipo.sk

Echoing the timeless wisdom of Ecclesiastes (3.1), “there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens”, it was as if the cup of God’s patience and forbearance had reached its brim. The Earth, awash in violence (Genesis 6.13), faced a pivotal moment in human history: a time marked for the ‘first’ and monumental judgment of God. The ‘small’ - or to some extent, chamber court, occurred immediately in Paradise with the grandparents after their fall. In other words, this was unlike the more immediate judgment that befell our first ancestors in Paradise after their fall.

The scribe in the Hebrew Masoretic text (Genesis 6.5-8) says:

1. Hebrew translation (Genesis 6.5-8): *“But when the Lord saw that the depravity of the people on Earth was great and that all the thoughts of their hearts were always evil, the Lord regretted that He had made man on the Earth and His heart ached. And the Lord said: I will wipe out from the face of the Earth the man whom I created, men and animals, even the creeping things and the birds of the sky, because I regretted that I had made them. But Noah found mercy in the eyes of the Lord”.*
2. LXX translation (Genesis 6.5-8): *“And the Lord God, having seen that the wicked actions of men were multiplied upon the Earth, and that everyone in his heart was intently brooding over evil continually, then God laid it to heart that He had made man upon the Earth, and He pondered it deeply. And God said, ‘I will sweep away man whom I have made from the face of the Earth; man along with animals, creeping things, and birds of the sky; for I am angered that I have made them’. But Noe found grace before the Lord God”.*

The statement that the depravity of the people was great, and the thinking of their hearts was always evil, places them at the dawn of history in the position of incorrigible beings who are not able to do anything good, nor can they repent of what they did wrong. This was not the case with Adam and Eve, who, according to the liturgical tradition of the Orthodox Church, repented of their rebellion against God after being expelled from the Paradise. It is also mentioned in the apocryphal Life of Adam and Eve [2], which describes their repentance. The expression that ‘God regretted that He made man’ greatly evokes a human’s reaction to when someone disappoints him so much that he is unable to forgive him. However, it is necessary to realize that the Omniscient God already knew everything that would happen on the Earth before the creation of the world, that there would be a fall and how things would quickly go downhill for humanity. At that time, only the descent of Seth swam against the current, and it is mentioned that they were God-fearing people who paid due respect to God. In the biblical prehistory, they are called “the sons of God” (Heb. *benéhá-elohím*) (Genesis 6.2). After the great decline of mankind, caused by the descent of Cain, named in the Bible as “the daughters of men” (Heb. *benóthá-ádám*) (Genesis 6.4), finally only one family remained on Earth, namely Noah’s family and the daughters-in-law. Only they, as the only ones in the world, preserved the true faith in the only God. That was their uniqueness.

An essential aspect of our exploration is the aforementioned passage from Genesis 6.5-8, which encapsulates three profound declarations: (1) the Lord's regret over creating man, (2) His resolve to erase humankind from the Earth, and (3) Noah finding favour in the Lord's eyes. Our intention is to delve into these statements with a fresh perspective, endeavouring to analyse, translate and interpret them in a manner that sheds new light on the narrative. This approach is about reiterating what has been said but also about peering deeper into the essence of these words, recognizing their potential as mythical-poetic expressions employed by the scribe.

2. Methodology

When it comes to methodology, this study adopts an interdisciplinary one, combining theological exegesis with scientific inquiry to unravel the multifaceted layers of the Genesis flood narrative. This approach attempts to be integrative, seeking a synthesis that respects the integrity of both theological insight and scientific evidence. Our theological analysis is grounded in the historical-critical exegesis tradition. This involves a solid examination of biblical texts in their historical, cultural and linguistic contexts. Through this lens, we explore the narrative's theological motifs and their implications for understanding the divine-human relationship and divine action in history. In addition, we conduct limited probes into the realms of Archaeology, Geology and Anthropology. We do this as we seek to uncover the historical and physical realities that may underpin the biblical narrative, from archaeological evidence of ancient floods in Mesopotamia to geological analyses of sedimentary layers and fossil records. Our study aims to weave together these theological and scientific strands to offer a richer, more nuanced understanding of the flood narrative. We believe that this kind of integrative analysis promises to shed new light on traditional interpretations, challenging and enriching our contemporary understanding of this ancient text.

3. Historical and social context of the researched biblical text

Human existence is defined by a call to responsible and meaningful action under divine providence, where free will permits divergence from divine and ecclesiastical guidance. Deviation into malevolence distorts the divine likeness into a base or even diabolical reflection. The Genesis account, supported by historical consensus [1, p. 38-39], situates humanity's origins in Mesopotamia, near the confluence of the Euphrates and Tigris, a region foundational to early civilizations due to its fertile conditions, amplified by beneficial river floods, as seen in ancient Egypt's reverence for the Nile and the Sun. This interplay between humanity and Nature is a recurrent theme across ancient belief systems.

Archaeological findings, such as the flood layers at Kish, Ur and Fara, dated to the 4th and 3rd millennia BC [3], lend historical credibility to the biblical flood narrative, intertwining with the theological concept of sin reintroducing

primordial chaos, contrasting with the order imposed by Yahweh in the Hebrew tradition. This narrative is enriched by the global prevalence of flood myths, documented by ethnographers [4], suggesting a universal human experience of cataclysmic floods. The biblical text's composition, potentially influenced by Moses' Egyptian education, might incorporate Semitic-Sumerian and Egyptian mythological elements [5], repurposing these within a monotheistic framework to facilitate the transition from polytheism to the Israelite religion's monotheism. This adaptation highlights the Israelite God's uniqueness within a polytheistic context. Furthermore, natural disasters have historically been interpreted as divine expressions, a view persisting in modern language and paralleled in various cultures' ritualistic purity practices, such as the Israelite Temple rites and the Hindu Ganges bathing. This interpretative tradition extends to the flood narrative in Genesis, believed to derive from multiple sources (the so-called Jahvist Tradition 'J' and Priestly Tradition 'P'), indicative of a post-exilic editorial synthesis of theological and literary traditions. This hypothesis is supported by the differing use of divine names - YHWH in the J source and Elohim in the P source. Further evidence of this dual sourcing is found in the instructions given to Noah regarding the ark, where he is directed to take seven (or fourteen) of each type of clean animal and a pair of each unclean animal (Genesis 6.19). This blending of sources suggests an editorial process that occurred post-exile, reflecting a composite theological and literary tradition.

4. Exegetical analysis of the most important expressions

4.1. *The Lord regretted that He had made man on Earth*

God's relationship with humanity is in contrast with radical human corruption and wickedness. We would expect a report of anger. But surprisingly, it is stated that the Lord was sorry and troubled. God's witness speaks about the Lord in human words to highlight God's sorrow over human sin. God appears to be affected (hurt) when people rebel against Him and hurt each other. When He must judge and punish, it touches Him and hurts Him, it is unpleasant for Him. When He makes such a decision, He is not guided by anger or severity, because His grace and love prevail over everything. Mankind will have to be exterminated, but in Noah and in his descendants, man will be saved [6].

The Hebrew verb 'to regret' has the meaning of *consolation* in some texts. The mourner allows himself to be comforted at the death of a loved one (Genesis 24.67, 37.35). The word 'regret' can also be used to express *mourning for someone* (Judges 21.6, 15). It is also possible to express *compassion and pity* (Deuteronomy 32.36, Psalm 90.13), but also to appease anger (Genesis 27.42, Isaiah 1.24). This is anthropopathism, where the scribe attributes human qualities (such as anger, jealousy and malice) to God, which He, as a spiritual and perfect being, does not actually have. This testifies to the very ancient text of the Scriptures [7].

In biblical narration, God's pity is often articulated in human terms as a reflection of His divine holiness, an essence that inherently cannot tolerate sin. This concept is elaborated in 1 Samuel 15.29, which cautions against a too literal interpretation of divine regret. The depiction of God's 'regret' in human language serves to underscore the notion that the Lord is revoking something He had previously entrusted and promised to mankind.

The grief caused by human sin is a significant theme in biblical theology. Ephesians 4.30 admonishes believers not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, who seals them for redemption. This concept of divine grief is not exclusive to the Hebrew tradition; it is also found in Mesopotamian mythology. In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the gods express sorrow, albeit for different reasons compared to the biblical narrative [8].

4.2. I will wipe out man from the face of the Earth (v. 7)

Just as dust and dirt are wiped from the surface of objects, so must the Earth be cleansed, which has become perverted by the pride, malice and violence of man. Since there is radical corruption, there must also be radical cleansing. That is why God also judges what man was given to rule over (Genesis 1.28), i.e. animals, reptiles and birds. In Numbers 5.23, the priest must wipe the curse written on a piece of material with water. Similarly, the erasure of the name is described in Exodus 17.4, 32.32-33. In 2 Kings 21.13, erasing the name is compared to wiping the bowl after eating.

Humans, but also animals (Hebrew: *behemah*), reptiles and birds of the sky - enumeration of all created things in the opposite order, as described in the story of the creation of the world, highlights God's creative power, this time in the reversed meaning of returning to nothingness. Sea animals are not mentioned, because they can be included under the name "everything that was alive" (Genesis 6.19). They could survive outside the ark. The rabbinical commentary on Genesis 7.21 mentions only terrestrial animals, thus indicating that God reprieved the fish that did not share in the sins of the people (*Zevachim* 113b according to the Chumash, i.e. the Jewish Torah). The decline of human behaviour was firstly manifested in depravity, when immorality and idolatry were practiced in secret, known only to God. Later the Earth was filled with robberies evident to all men (*Zohar*, i.e. Kabbalah, a mystical commentary on Torah from 13th century Spain). The depravity was also manifested in sexual perversion, which, according to the Talmud, was joined by the mating of animals between different species (*Sanhedrin* 108a), therefore, except for fish, all living creatures were killed.

I really regret making them - it's a repetition of the line from the beginning of the section. This is a stylistic figure known as inclusion. It usually emphasizes a repeated statement. In Hebrew poetry, a similar form is called 'parallelismus membrorum', which we find countless times in the Old Testament. We find an echo of this in 2 Peter: "And didn't spare the ancient

world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood on the world of the ungodly.” (2 Peter 2.5)

4.3. Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord (v. 8)

The only one who stood firm was Noah. Even though he is spoken of as righteous, it is emphasized here that it was not by his merit, but by the grace of God. Therefore, he was exempted from this judgment of God. That is why God is called Elohim as the one who liberates and saves. That is why Jesus also compares the days of Noah to the days of the Son of Man (Luke 17.26), just as the apostle compares baptism to the flood (1 Peter 3.20-21).

Noah stands before God in the opposite position to the humanity just described. The expression ‘find favour’ in the Bible describes the attitude of a supplicant towards a superior (Genesis 33.8) or in the case when a higher-ranking person wants to help a person without a social status (Genesis 39.4). A praying person is also described in the same way (Genesis 18.3, Exodus 33.12). However, the whole sentence of finding favour in God’s eyes can only be found in Exodus 33.17, where God speaks to Moses. Noah, in translation, means ‘peace’ or ‘bringer of peace’, comfort and joy. He was a just and pious man, who lived according to the will of God and “walked with God” like Enoch (Genesis 5.22). Noah’s godly life was in a strong contrast to the wickedness of the lives of his contemporaries. However, this description of Noah does not mean that he was sinlessly perfect.

5. Biblical and extra biblical context of the researched text

Analysing biblical prehistory through the lens of pagan myths offers profound insights into spiritual narratives, addressing core questions of existence, sin and divine interaction. Genesis details a global flood, sparing only Noah’s family, highlighting divine sorrow over humanity’s moral decay and establishing the inaugural divine-human covenant (Genesis 8.20-9.7) [9], a precursor to subsequent covenants culminating in the New Covenant with the Church of Christ, signifying a pivotal shift in divine-human relations.

The closest ancient literary counterparts to the narratives found in Genesis 1-13 are predominantly rooted in Mesopotamian tradition. Among these, the *Enúma Elish*, which chronicles the ascendancy of Marduk to supremacy within the Babylonian pantheon, bears notable similarities to the Genesis creation narrative in certain aspects, despite being heavily imbued with elements of pagan mysticism and a polytheistic worldview. Some features of the Sumerian kings’ lists are strikingly similar to the genealogies of Genesis 5. The eleventh tablet from the *Gilgamesh* epic resembles the account of the flood in Genesis 6-8. Several major events of Genesis 1-8 are told in the same order as similar events in the *Atrahasis* epic. In fact, the same creation-alienation-flood motif is presented in this epic as in the biblical account. Clay tablets found in 1974 in the

ancient (2500-2300 BC) site of Ebla, in today's Tell Mardich in northern Syria, may also contain interesting parallels.

The Gilgamesh epic and other Mesopotamian narratives like the Atrahasis and the tale of Ziusudra introduce flood stories with notable similarities and differences to the Genesis account, such as the duration of the flood, the ark's dimensions and the nature of the deities involved. These contrasts highlight the unique monotheistic perspective of the biblical flood narrative, suggesting an ancient, unified tradition possibly known to early world inhabitants, including the Israelites through Abraham [8, p. 362-365].

In Gilgamesh and Utanapishti's story about the flood of the world, it is said: "Gilgamesh, I will tell you a secret of the gods" - Utanapishti begins his story. "The city of Shuruppak on the banks of the Euphrates, which you yourself know, is my birthplace. The city is old, and the gods dwelt in it. My father Uharatutu was king in it for 18,600 years... And the hearts of the great gods were seized with a desire to send a flood to the world and exterminate mankind." [10]

Further comparisons with Near Eastern mythology, such as the Chaldean poem about Izdubar, reveal thematic resonances with biblical stories, including the motif of a divine flood as divine retribution for human noisiness and the narrative of Moses, which bears similarities to the myth of Sargon of Akkad. These intertextual parallels underscore the biblical narrative's engagement with and divergence from contemporary mythological frameworks.

The biblical flood's scope, defined by terms like 'eres', 'shamayim' and 'dama', allows for interpretations ranging from a localized to a universal catastrophe, with scholarly consensus yet to be reached. This ambiguity serves to emphasize the narrative's theological rather than geographical focus, underscoring the enduring debate over the flood's extent and its implications for understanding divine judgment and mercy.

6. Climate science and ancient floods

Important questions are being raised about the relationship between faith and reason, and the role of scientific inquiry in interpreting sacred texts. While Biblical archaeology, Geology, Zoology and Botany can offer valuable insights and help contextualize biblical stories, they do not necessarily diminish the spiritual and moral teachings of the Bible. Rather, they can enhance our understanding of these ancient texts, situating them in their historical and cultural contexts, and inviting a more nuanced reading of these timeless narratives. Having explored the various historical testimonies regarding Noah's ark, such as accounts of its remnants and interpretations of the flood narrative, we now shift our focus to the realm of scientific inquiry. This transition takes us from the domain of historical and theological interpretations into the rigorous analysis provided by Climate science and paleoclimatology. We believe that it is essential to consider these scientific perspectives, as they offer potential explanations for the massive floods described in ancient texts and traditions. By examining the evidence from Climate science, we can gain insights into the

environmental conditions of ancient times and how they might have contributed to the events described in biblical and other historical narratives.

We will first turn our attention to the role of paleoclimatology. Paleoclimatology, the study of past climates, has made significant contributions to our understanding of ancient massive floods. Studies such as those by Wilhelm et al [11] and Munoz et al [12] have employed available paleoclimatic data sources to reconstruct past climate conditions and hydrological events. These reconstructions have illuminated the frequency and severity of ancient floods, shedding light on their potential causes and impacts. Corresponding archaeological and geological investigations have revealed evidence of catastrophic floods in various regions and periods. For instance, research at Xinzhengmen in China has uncovered stratigraphic sequences indicating severe Yellow River floods around AD 1642 and AD 1841, providing a near-continuous record of sedimentation from the Song to the Qing dynasties [13]. Such findings corroborate historical accounts and demonstrate the impact of these events on human settlements.

Furthermore, research by Baker has explored the relationship between climate variability and flooding [14]. This includes analysing sedimentary layers and fossil records to understand the frequency and magnitude of floods in relation to climatic changes over millennia. For example, studies have shown that periods of climatic instability often correspond with increased flooding activity, suggesting a close link between climate and hydrological extremes. Modern hydrological models, such as those discussed in the works of Stedinger & Griffis [15] and England et al. [16], provide a framework for understanding ancient flood dynamics. By applying contemporary scientific knowledge to ancient contexts, researchers can better interpret the climatic conditions that might have led to historic flood events.

There are other works supporting this view. In his seminal work on paleoflood hydrology, Baker delves into the intricate study of ancient flood events through the meticulous analysis of slack water deposits and paleostage indicators [17]. This ground-breaking research not only underscores the pivotal role of hydraulic flow modelling in deducing the magnitudes and frequencies of paleofloods but also illuminates the profound implications these historical flood events hold for contemporary flood risk assessments. Baker's methodical approach to reconstructing the hydraulic dynamics of past floods offers invaluable insights into the natural variability of flood events over geological timescales, thereby enhancing our understanding of flood risks in a changing climate. In addition, the pioneering research conducted by Koltermann and Gorelick employs large-scale process simulation to meticulously reconstruct the geologic and climatic history of an alluvial fan located in northern California [18]. Their study meticulously demonstrates the significant impact of paleoclimatic trends on sedimentary deposits, thereby shedding light on the intricate relationship between climate variability and flooding phenomena. This research provides a comprehensive understanding of the geological processes that shape our landscapes. In addition, it highlights the critical influence of

climatic changes on hydrological events, offering valuable perspectives for interpreting past and future flooding events in relation to climatic shifts. Furthermore, in their revised study of Lake Albert's history, Beuning, Talbot and Kelts integrate new geochemical, palynological, and sedimentological data to offer a nuanced interpretation of the paleoclimatic and paleohydrologic conditions of northwest Uganda over the last 30,000 years [19]. Their findings reveal periods of markedly reduced inflow to the Nile River system, providing a detailed portrayal of the climatic fluctuations and their profound effects on regional hydrology. This comprehensive revision significantly enriches our understanding of East Africa's climatic history. It also underscores the complex interplay between climatic forces and hydrological systems, contributing significantly to our knowledge of regional water dynamics in a paleoclimatic context. More corroborative evidence comes from Bar-Matthews, Ayalon and Kaufman [20]. These scholars embark on an analytical journey through the stable isotope analysis of speleothems in Soreq Cave, Israel, to decipher the continental paleoclimate of the eastern Mediterranean during the past 25,000 years. Their meticulous research unveils significant climatic oscillations, marked by periods of cool, moist climate interspersed with frequent El Niño events, which are closely correlated with the occurrences of extraordinary floods. This exploration into the climatic annals of the eastern Mediterranean enriches our understanding of the region's climatic past. But it does more than that as it highlights the pivotal role of climatic anomalies in shaping hydrological extremes, offering valuable insights into the natural climatic drivers of flooding events. Finally, the investigative study by Leigh and Feeney on the flood plain of the middle Ogeechee River in southeast Georgia uncovers the existence of large meandering paleochannels, which serve as compelling evidence of wet paleoclimate conditions during the late Pleistocene and early Holocene periods [21]. Their findings challenge the conventional understanding of eustatic sea-level influences by demonstrating a lack of significant downcutting in response to lower sea levels, suggesting that climatic factors played a predominant role in shaping the region's flooding patterns. This research provides a detailed account of the region's hydrological history and offers a broader perspective on the climatic determinants of flooding, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between climatic conditions and hydrological processes.

In light of these scientific insights, our understanding of biblical narratives such as the story of Noah's flood can be enhanced. While these narratives have primarily been interpreted through theological lenses, integrating scientific findings allows for a more holistic understanding. For instance, the possibility of a catastrophic flood during the Quaternary Ice Age, as suggested by geological studies, could offer a plausible scientific explanation for the biblical account. The Quaternary Ice Age, a period in Earth's history, began about 2.6 million years ago and extends to the present day. It is characterized by several glacial (cold) and interglacial (warm) periods. Geological studies have revealed evidence of massive floods, often termed 'megafloods', which were likely caused by the sudden release of meltwater from ice-dammed lakes or the

breaching of natural ice dams. Revealingly, the biblical flood, as described in the Book of Genesis, aligns broadly with the timeline of the late Quaternary period. The scale of the flood described in these texts could correspond with the massive floods resulting from glacial melting. It is reasonable to assume that cultural memories of these catastrophic events might have been passed down through generations, eventually influencing the flood narratives found in various cultures, including the biblical account.

Of course, the use of these scientific studies for in theological discourses is limited and must be approached with caution. While these studies do not seek to prove or disprove the biblical accounts, they provide valuable context and a deeper understanding of the environmental conditions that shaped human history and culture.

7. Discussion

The quest to understand the spiritual essence within Genesis 6-11 spans linguistic, historical and theological realms, necessitating a scholarly approach and contemplative interaction with the text to unearth its embedded spiritual truths. These passages present a narrative rich in theological significance and symbolic complexity, demanding a multifaceted analytical approach for a comprehensive understanding. Central to biblical exegesis is the crucial need to master the original languages of Biblical Hebrew and Koine Greek, as this proficiency unveils the subtle meanings and linguistic intricacies obscured in translation, thereby providing deeper insights into the text's cultural, theological, and philosophical contexts.

The evolution of biblical texts from their ancient origins to contemporary translations is a testament to the dynamic nature of scriptural interpretation. A comparative analysis of these translations, set against the backdrop of their historical and cultural contexts, reveals the shifting paradigms of theological thought and the diverse ways in which these sacred narratives have been understood over millennia. This diachronic study not only highlights the textual variances but also sheds light on the underlying theological, doctrinal and ethical evolutions that have shaped the biblical canon. The Genesis flood narrative, situated within the broader tapestry of ancient Near Eastern literature, shares thematic and mythological resonances with a multitude of pagan myths. This intertextuality invites a nuanced exploration of the shared human preoccupation with divine judgment, human morality, and cosmic renewal. Understanding these parallels and divergences enriches the interpretation of Genesis 6-11, situating it within a wider religious and mythological discourse.

Adding to this complexity is the integration of Climate science, particularly the study of ancient floods. Recent advancements in paleoclimatology offer invaluable insights into possible natural events that could correlate with the biblical narrative of the flood. Understanding the climatic conditions of the Quaternary Ice Age and the evidence of massive floods during this period can provide a scientific framework for interpreting the biblical

account. This perspective complements the theological and historical analysis and enriches our overall understanding of these ancient texts. Indeed, incorporating Climate science into biblical studies invites a more holistic view, where natural history and human narrative intertwine. It allows modern readers of the Scriptures to recognize the spiritual legacy of these texts and their potential connections to historical climatic events. This approach underscores the need for an interdisciplinary methodology in biblical studies, one that embraces both the spiritual depth and the scientific complexities of ancient texts.

8. Conclusions

Our comprehensive analysis, encompassing isagogic, exegetical and hermeneutic-theological approaches, leads us to conclude that the prehistoric record of the flood, as portrayed in the Bible, is both narrative and figurative in nature. It represents a memory passed down orally through generations from the dawn of history, eventually finding its definitive written form in the Old Testament around the 5th century BCE. It appears that the original scribe of the narrative (in our view, Moses), in composing this account, was influenced by the prevailing religious and scientific worldviews of advanced ancient cultures such as those of Mesopotamia, Babylon, Egypt and Sumer.

The biblical message aims to promote religious and moral development, leading individuals towards faith in the Creator, with free will being pivotal in this journey. Turning from God's commandments leads to sin, necessitating repentance to avoid divine consequences. The narrative underscores salvation, with God aiding humanity against spiritual decline. The Old and New Testament Churches, allegorically represented as Noah's Ark, offer protection and hope for redemption. This Ark symbolizes God's constant presence across millennia, providing solace to those seeking mercy. In modern times, the emphasis is on aligning with God, recognizing our divine lineage and His care, as reflected in the Lord's Prayer. This theological interpretation helps contemporary readers grasp the Holy Scriptures' depth, facilitating translators and scholars in making these texts accessible and relevant today. In addition to these theological reflections, the integration of Climate science into our study brings a new dimension to understanding ancient biblical narratives. The potential correlation of the biblical flood account with geological events during the Quaternary Ice Age adds a layer of scientific plausibility to these ancient stories. This interdisciplinary approach not only enriches our theological understanding but also bridges the gap between science and spirituality, offering a holistic perspective on these timeless narratives.

Acknowledgment

This article is the result of the solution of the Grant Agency of the University of Prešov (GaPU No. 20/2021). The contribution of the authors is as

follows: A. Cap - 70%, Š. Pružinský Sr. - 5%, J. Husár - 5%, Ľ. Savčák - 10%, Š. Pružinský Jr. - 5% and M. Petrisko - 5%.

References

- [1] S. Lach, *Księga Rodzaju, T. 1-11 (Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-11)*, Pallottinum, Poznań, 1962, 254.
- [2] Z. Soušek (ed.), *Knihy tajemství a moudrosti II. Mimobiblické židovské spisy: Pseudografy (Books of Secrets and Wisdom II: Non-Biblical Jewish Writings: Pseudepigrapha)*, Vyšehrad, Praha, 1998, 349-359.
- [3] J. Douglas and A. Koželuhová, *Nový biblický slovník (New Bible Dictionary)*, Návrat domů, Praha, 1996, 803.
- [4] Z. Ziolkowski, *Nejtěžší stranky Bible*, Kostelní Vydří, Praha, 2001, 170.
- [5] D. Duka, *Úvod do Písma Svatého Starého Zákona (Introduction to the Old Testament Holy Writings)*, Editio Sti. Aegidii, Praha, 1992, 73.
- [6] M. Bič (ed.), *Výklady ke Starému zákonu I. Zákon: Genesis-Deuteronomium (Expositions to the Old Testament I. The Law: Genesis-Deuteronomium)*, Kalich, Praha, 1991, 52.
- [7] M. Peter, *Wyklad Pisma Swietego Starego Testamentu (Exposition to the Old Testament Holy Scriptures)*, Pallottinum, Poznań, 1959, 122.
- [8] J. Lemanski, *Księga Rodzaju (Book of Genezis)*, vol. 1, Wydawnictwo WAM, Czenstochowa, 2013, 350.
- [9] S.B. Spoločnosť, *Študijná Biblia*, Slovenský ekumenický preklad, Banská Bystrica, 2015, 19.
- [10] V. Zamarovský, *Na počiatku bol Sumér*, Mladé letá, Bratislava, 1976, 67-68.
- [11] B. Wilhelm, J.A. Ballesteros Cánovas, N. Macdonald, W.H. Toonen, V. Baker, M. Barriendos and O. Wetter, *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Water*, **6(1)** (2019) e1318-e1320.
- [12] S.E. Munoz, L. Giosan, M.D. Therrell, J.W. Remo, Z. Shen, R.M. Sullivan and J.P. Donnelly, *Nature*, **556(7699)** (2018) 95-98.
- [13] M. Storozum, P. Lu, S. Wang, P. Chen, R. Yang, Q. Go, J. Cao, J. Wan, H. Wang, Z. Qin, H. Liu and E. Park, *Sci. Rep. - UK*, **10(1)** (2020) 3765, online at: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-60169-1>.
- [14] V.R. Baker, *Geomorphology*, **101(1-2)** (2008) 1-13.
- [15] J.R. Stedinger and V.W. Griffis, *J. Hydrol. Eng.*, **13(4)** (2008) 199-204.
- [16] J.F. England Jr., M.L. Velleux and P.Y. Julien, *J. Hydrol.*, **347(1-2)** (2007) 229-241.
- [17] V. Baker, *J. Hydrol.*, **96(1)** (1987) 79-99.
- [18] C. Koltermann and S. Gorelick, *Science*, **256(1)** (1992) 1775-1782.
- [19] K. Beuning, M. Talbot and K. Kelts, *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology*, **136(2)** (1997) 259-279.
- [20] M. Bar-Matthews, A. Ayalon and A. Kaufman, *Quaternary Res.*, **47(1)** (1997) 155-168.
- [21] D. Leigh and T. Feeney, *Geology*, **23(1)** (1995) 687-690.