John Whitcomb is a world class theologian and Bible scholar who teamed up with the late Christian geologist Henry Morris (father of modern creationist movement) in the 1960s to write a landmark book *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications* (500+ pages of exegetical and empirical study, seeking to combine good science with good theology, what Morris would later call scientific creationism / creation science. Many godly scientists have followed in their footsteps and based on a high view of the text of Scripture, studying the Hebrew as well as hydrology, and other disciplines, have been suggesting for decades things like

- the result of the firmament or floodgates above collapsing resulted in global major climate changes that probably led to the extinction of various creatures
- that our planet experienced unprecedented energy in this hydraulic holocaust, seismic cataclysmic catastrophic breakup of earth’s crust as it opened up, burst forth water, possibly contributing to later breakup of the continents
- valleys sunk lower and mountains once underwater rose higher (Psalm 104), which also fits with the evidence of sea fossils on the high mountain ranges all around the globe
- the fountains of the great deep all breaking forth included volcanoes on land and underwater with flows of magma and lava and liquid burying everything below while above there would have likely been ash that would have darkened the sky, toxic torrential rain, affects on water chemistry, etc.
- a global cooling (rather than global warming) likely resulted soon after due to atmospheric changes to a world that was originally a perfect tropical paradise, as evidenced by so many warm tropical animals and plants buried in areas that are now arctic, and the events of Genesis 7 are the best explanation for the ice age (secular scientists continue to struggle with plausible theories for how the ice age started)
- billions of things died in a short period of time, and though the Scripture doesn’t say explicitly, it seems reasonable that marine creatures and slow-moving simpler ones would have been buried first and deepest, and the bigger and more mobile the other creatures the longer they could have survived on higher land before being buried (ex: big dinosaurs you’d expect in a different mud layer, etc.)

Those are some of the things Christian writers were suggesting in the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s … I want to now read you an article from evolutionary scientists in 2001 (who I’m pretty sure weren’t getting their theories from Genesis). An *LA Times* article dated 2-23-2001 is devoted to the scientific controversy over what caused:

‘Earth’s greatest mass extinction--an Armageddon that wiped out nearly all life on the planet 250 million years ago … [there’s] a long-standing debate over whether single dramatic events like asteroid impacts are largely at fault … or whether slower processes, such as volcanoes run amok, climate change and toxic shifts in sea water chemistry, should shoulder much of the blame. For decades, scientists have puzzled over what could have caused the Permian-Triassic catastrophe 250 million years ago [their name and dating given to fossil evidence of massive sudden death of millions of creatures]. The extinction is called "The Great Dying," because it wiped out 90% of ocean species and 70% of those on land. "This was the mother of all extinctions," said Luann Becker, a geochemist at the University of Washington and lead author of the study published in today's issue of the journal Science. "What makes it so remarkable is that virtually all marine life and a good portion of land life forms were eliminated in a very short period time." …
But no telltale traces of a meteor had been found for the Permian extinction event and the team that produced the paper still has no direct evidence of an impact. [Still one of the paper authors, earth scientist Robert Poreda, insisted that such a massive cataclysm occurred which] “…of this size releases an amount of energy that is **basically about 1 million times the largest earthquake recorded during the last century**. It was like a magnitude 12.0 earthquake,” he said.

… the issue of how important the asteroid was in the extinction process is far from resolved among scientists. "Just because there's an impact doesn't mean everyone drops dead,” said Nan Crystal Arens, the curator of fossil plants at the UC Berkeley Museum of Paleontology and an expert on how plants survive times of **massive environmental stress** … she says the fossil record is far from clear on the biological cost of [meteors].

A recent analysis of the impact crater from 65 million years ago suggests it was not large enough to kill off so much life. A large number of scientists agree with a theory put forward by Dewey M. McLean, a professor emeritus of geology at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, that **massive volcanic activity at the time of both the dinosaur and the Permian extinctions caused the demise** of species. It did so by spewing **floods** of lava, **darkening the sky with ash and severely altering the climate**, according to the theory … During the Permian extinction, **volcanoes in Siberia unleashed enough lava to cover the entire Earth** with 10 feet of rock--making it the most massive volcanic event ever … to a planet already weakened by extensive volcanism and a **drop in sea level caused by the configuration of the continents at the time**.

… One estimate suggests that **the entire extinction occurred in less than 8,000 years**--a geological eye blink--but that analysis remains unconvincing to many scientists … There are also traces in the geological **record that show massive climate change occurred at the times** of both extinctions … [ex: massive tropical creatures, mammoths, dinosaurs in areas that are now frozen but once had tropical plants and creatures, etc.]

"I have always been suspicious of single causes for mass extinctions; **history doesn't usually work that way,**" said Doug Erwin, a Smithsonian Institution paleontologist and an expert on mass extinctions … he suspects the cause lies with the extensive volcanism of the time and some complex set of factors involving global warming and **acid rain**. "Killing off perhaps 90% to 95% of all species in the ocean is actually really tough to do," he said, "and there is no paleontological reason to think that the explanation will be a simple one."

We’ve got news for the newspaper, don’t we? You’re not going to find a “simple” explanation in secular paleontology or evolutionary geology for what this article said “wiped out nearly all life on the planet.” But it’s right here “simply explained” in the earliest pages of the earliest book!

The article says “For decades, scientists have puzzled over what could have caused the … ‘The Great Dying,’” … [where so many] life forms were eliminated in a very short period of time." No need to puzzle anymore, guys. It was a **very short** period of time, less than 8,000 years, probably less than 5,000 years ago. Let’s read it:

Genesis 7:4 (NASB95)

*For after seven more days* [God says], *I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.*” … *It came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth.* **11** In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened … **21** All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; **22** of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died.
Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark. The water prevailed upon the earth 150 days.

We don’t need modern discoveries to know the flood happened, even something as spectacular as finding Noah’s ark up on the mountain, although there have been some in ancient and modern times that claim to have discovered it (we’ll look at those later). It’s not ultimately essential to have extra-biblical evidences to believe what we just read, but there are some there that we’ve already discussed in past weeks (ex: sea creatures fossilized near mountain peaks, ex: Everest; over 200 stories of people groups all around the world of a global flood that a boat with one family escaped that they descended from; massive canyon formation that fits a flood catastrophe model far better than secular gradualism theories; fossil record of billions of dead things buried in rock layers laid down by water rapidly all over the earth, and so on).

There are other evidences outside geology of a flood that changed the world and a “new start” to the world approx 5,000 years ago:

- The origin of civilization is generally agreed to be in the Middle East, which is where Noah's Ark landed. The Middle East just "happens" to be a good, centrally located place from which to repopulate the world.
- The oldest written materials date back 5-6K years ago
- The oldest known living things, the Bristlecone pine trees in California, date to about 5,000 years ago.
- Study of the build up of human population makes it clear that humans have only existed for a few thousand years (not millions), even when the maximum likely effects of war, disease, disaster, and other population-reducing factors are considered.
- An analysis of 30,000 radiocarbon dating results published in the "Radiocarbon" journal shows an unmistakable spike in the death of living things about 5,000 years ago.

Those things confirm the faith I have in this record, but they don’t create my faith in Genesis. That’s an important distinction we’ll come back to later. My faith is not created by or dependent on any of these things (today’s research may change with tomorrow’s experts), it’s based on what God has to say. I don’t need science to prove the true story of Noah and the Ark (even if I could, which I can’t) but none of us should be intimidated into thinking the world has ever or can ever disprove anything in this book. And there is value in studying evidences to be ready to give an answer, and to show those who challenge they are without excuse (cf. Rom. 1). Apologetics doesn’t cause faith in others but it can strengthen ours.

Genesis 8 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided. Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained; and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased. In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat. The water decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible. Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made:
and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth. Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land; but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself. So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark. The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth. Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again.

Let’s look at some of the details in this text pointed out by commentators:

- Apparently the window must have been in the roof of the ark; at least it did not allow Noah to see the waters receding, which is why he resorts to sending out the birds. Gispen notes that before the electronic era sailors used to use birds in this way to discover if land was close.
- The raven in seeking food settles upon every carcass it sees, but the dove will only settle on what is dry and clean.
- The dove, when first sent out, “found no rest for the sole of its foot;” for a dove will only settle upon such places and objects as are dry and clean. It returned to the ark and let Noah take it in again (vv. 8, 9). The second time it returned in the evening, having remained out longer than before, and brought a fresh (freshly plucked) olive-leaf in its mouth. Noah perceived from this that the water must be almost gone, had “abated from off the earth,” though the ground might not be perfectly dry, as the olive-tree will put out leaves even under water.

In modern times olive trees have been studied for their incredible ability to survive long periods of time underwater. We read earlier there are scientists who study plants surviving massive environment stress.

Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up. In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.

So where exactly did the ark land and is there any good evidence as to its survival in ancient and modern times?

The first thing to note is that verse 4 does not say “Mount Ararat,” which is a modern mount by that name. What does it say? The text actually says mountains of Ararat (prob. a range of mountains that covers hundreds of miles and parts of Armenia / modern Turkey).

Archaeological Encyclopedia: The Jewish, Christian and Moslem traditions sought the ark on the highest peak of these mountains, south of the town of Erivan, or on a mountain … in Phrygia.

I read the Kurds still regard Jebel Judi, a mountain on the boundary between Armenia and Kurdistan, as the place where the ark rested.
New American Commentary summary: ‘Attempts to identify which particular mountain the ark rested on are as old as the apocryphal book of Jubilees (5:28; 7:1), which specifies Mt. Lubar (?). The Aramaic and Syriac translations of [Gen.] 8:4 render … “Ture Kardu,” that is, the mountains of Kurdistan (Jebel Judi) southeast of Lake Van … the Gilgamesh Epic [has the] boat landing on Mt. Nisir, about 9000 feet in elevation, and considerably to the south and east of Ararat.’6

‘A unique coin, now on display at the Israel Museum, presents new evidence for the antiquity of the tradition associating the mountains of Ararat in Turkey with the landing place of Noah’s ark … Its use shows that, in the third century B.C., the Jewish people of Apameia associated their town with the ark. "Kibotos" [Grk word for ark] is inscribed on the coin. The coin depicts events of the story of Noah’s ark (Gen. 6–8), the only coin known to bear biblical scenes. Three events are depicted on one side of the coin. In the center, the ark, depicted as a box with an open lid, floats on water. The heads and shoulders of Noah and his wife protrude from the ark while the lid shelters them from the rain. The side of the ark is inscribed with the three Greek letters NOE … Above the ark’s lid, a dove with an olive spray in its beak is landing on the cover of the ark, symbolizing the subsidence of the Flood. The third event is shown to the right of the ark. Noah and his wife are standing with arms upraised in an attitude of grateful prayer for their salvation.’7

I’ve met 2 of the men who have written on the search for Noah’s ark and participated in the search are, John Warwick Montgomery and John Morris. Tim Lahaye has also written about the history of the ark with him and whether some physical evidence may still be “left behind.” Maybe you’ve seen some films or TV specials about it – there will probably always be for this ark and ark of covenant.

James Montgomery Boice, who wrote before that more recent discovery of the coin, gives a list of other possible evidences:8

‘There are some interesting indications that the Ark may be on Ararat … It is hard to know what credence to give them, but … it is worth listing what the chief lines of evidence are.9

1. First on the list is that Mt Ararat in Turkey has been the traditional site of the ark's resting place throughout known history (cf Gen 8:4) and that significant numbers of ancient travelers and writers claimed to have seen it. Berosus, the historian of Babylon, wrote in approximately 275 BC, "But of this ship that grounded in Armenia some part still remains in the mountains of the Gordyaeansin Armenia, and some get pitch from the ship by scraping it off and use it for amulets." Josephus, the Jewish historian, wrote of the ark a generation after the time of Christ. He said that the Armenians show relics of the ark "to this day." He also claimed that the ark is mentioned by all who have written histories of the barbarians: Hieronymous the Egyptian, Nicholas of Damascus, and Berosus. In AD 180, Theophilus of Antioch wrote that “the remains[of the ark] are to this day to be seen in the Arabian mountains.” Scores of church figures wrote along similar lines, including the great John Chrysostom[3].

[The trans. works of early church historian Philostorgia, ca. 425 AD describes “Armenia, where Mount Ararat is. The mountain is still called by that name by the Armenians. It is where, according to scripture, the ark came to rest, and they say that considerable remnants of its wood and nails are still preserved there.]10
2. The second line of evidence is the monastery of St. Jacob, several miles up the Ahora Gorge on the higher reaches of Mt Ararat. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 1840, but its existence goes back to the early centuries of the Christian era, when it was reportedly established to mark the site of and preserve relics from the ark. Some evidence of an even earlier occupation of the site remains in the form of ancient inscriptions and eight crosses carved into the stone. The crosses, whether from the earliest times or later, may stand for the eight who survived the flood: Noah and his three sons, his wife and his sons' wives ...

3. An elderly Armenian named Haji Yearam, who later came to America, told of visiting the ark on Ararat in 1856 in the company of his father (who himself had gone there often as a boy) and three atheistic scientists. Their goal in visiting Ararat was to disprove the ark's existence. According to Yearam, the scientists were so enraged at discovering the ark that they tried to destroy it at first. But since they could not (it was too big and had petrified) they swore to keep silent about their find. This was the story Yearam told. The man to whom he told it adds the following corroborative detail. "One evening (I'm pretty sure it was in 1918) I sat reading the daily paper in our apartment in Brockton. Suddenly I saw in very small print a short story of a dying man's confession. It was a news item one column wide and, as I remembered it, not more than two inches deep. It stated that an elderly scientist on his deathbed in London was afraid to die before making a terrible confession. It gave briefly the very date and facts that Haji Yearam related to us in his story."

4. In 1876 a distinguished British statesman and author, Viscount James Bryce, climbed Ararat and reported finding a four-foot-long piece of hand-tooled lumber at a height of over 13000 ft.

5. In 1883, after an earthquake that caused huge quantities of rock and ice to be dislodged from the mountain, the British paper *Prophetic Messenger* carried the following story: "We have received from our correspondent in Trebizond news of the return of the commissioners appointed by the Turkish government to inquire into the reported destruction of Mosul, Ashak and Bayazid by avalanches.... The expedition was fortunate in making a discovery that cannot fail to be of interest to the whole civilized world, for among the vastness of one of the glens of Mt Ararat, they came upon a gigantic structure of very dark wood, embedded at the foot of one of the glaciers, with one end protruding, and which they believe to be none other than the old ark in which Noah and his family navigated the waters of the deluge. The place where the discovery is made is about five days journey from Trebizond, in the Department of Van, in Armenia, about four leagues from the Persian frontier."

6. Excluding those who lived on the mountain or authorities of the Turkish government, the first actual explorer to have visited Ararat was a youthful archdeacon of the church of Babylon named Prince Nouri. He claimed to have discovered the ark in 1887. He ... made at least three climbs, discovered the ark (according to his own testimony) and later presented his claims at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, where the World Parliament of Religions was assembled. His story convinced a group of Belgians to launch an expedition to transport the ark to America, but the Turkish Government refused the necessary permits.

7. Six Turkish soldiers claimed to have climbed Ararat and to have spotted the ark in 1916.

8. In 1936 a young British Archaeologist named Hardwicke Knight was hiking across Ararat on a walking trip when he discovered interlocking hand-tooled timbers at a height of 14000 ft.
[… In 1935 a story appeared in Life Digest, an Australian publication, in which a Russian Aviator named Vladimir Roskovitsky claimed to have discovered Noah's Ark. He had been stationed in a temporary Russian outpost in southern Russia just across the border from Turkey near Mt Ararat and had been told to test one of the Russian air force planes. In the course of these tests he and his copilot flew over Ararat and discovered what he later described as a boat comparable in size to many modern battleships. He wrote that "It was grounded on the shore of a lake with about one-fourth of the rear end still running out into the water, and its extreme rear was three-fourths under water. It had been partly dismantled on one side near the front, and on the other side there was a great door nearly twenty feet square, but with the door gone." Roskovitsky reported his find to his commanding officer, and an expedition was dispatched to Ararat which, according to the story, subsequently found the ark and photographed it. Accounts were forwarded to the Czar. Unfortunately, a short time after receiving this report the government was overthrown and the photographs and reports perished[1]. Is this story ... true? … hard to say. But one thing is certain: it was the launching point for many subsequent investigations and expeditions to Mt Ararat as a result of which much information (but no conclusive proof) came to light.]

9. During the second world war American aviators often flew over Ararat enroute from the U. S. airbase in Tunisia to the Soviet airbase in Erivan. According to a story in the U. S. Armed Forces newspaper Stars and Stripes in 1943, two pilots saw and photographed something they believed to be the ark. That issue of Stars and Stripes has not been preserved, but many people claim to have seen it and the accompanying photograph....

10. In 1948 an Associated Press correspondent, Edwin Greenwald, announced from Istanbul that a Kurdish nomad named Resit had seen the ark. He wrote, "The petrified remains of an object which peasants insist resembles a ship has been found high up on Mt Ararat, biblical landing place of Noah's ark. Apparently hidden for centuries, it came to light last summer when unusually warm weather melted away an ancient mantle of ice and snow. While various persons from time to time have reported objects resembling a 'house' or a 'ship' on the mountain, Turks who have seen this new find profess it to be the only known object which could actually be taken as the remains of a ship." This report stimulated a number of organized attempts to locate the ark, beginning with expeditions of the Oriental Archaeological Research Expedition, founded by Dr. Aaron J. Smith, dean of the People's Bible College in Greensboro, North Carolina.

11. Between 1952 and 1955 (and again in 1969 as guide to an expedition sponsored by the SEARCH foundation) a wealthy French industrialist, Fernand Navarra, not only saw, but also brought back pieces of hand-tooled lumber said to have come from the ark. This wood has been examined, but the results are inconclusive. Navarra's claims have been disputed even by members of the SEARCH expedition[4].

12. The last of these significant finds was by an oil and pipeline geologist named George Greene. He had a helicopter at his disposal and used it to find and photograph the ark in the summer of 1953. Greene enlarged the photos, returned to America and tried to interest various business associates in financing an expedition to study the craft from the ground. He was unsuccessful. Later his work took him to Utah, Nova Scotia, Texas and finally British Guiana where he was killed in 1962. His photos perished with him or at least have not been found. It should be evident to a careful reader, even more so if the original accounts of these "discoveries" are studied, that *proof* of the existence of Noah's ark on Mt Ararat has not been forthcoming, in spite of many expeditions and much work extending backward in time for more than a century...
AiG statement: ‘There is little doubt that the genuine discovery of certain objects would be both exciting and a powerful witness to the truth of the biblical record. However, we need to be careful not to become like some medieval pilgrims, keen to have relics to supplement (or supplant) the worship of the living God … No doubt such fanciful claims as discussed here will always be with us, made by those seeking either profit, fame, the fulfillment of some deep psychological needs, or any combination of these. The ‘discoverers’ will often appear completely sincere, saying all the ‘right Christian things.’ Perhaps at some point they have even persuaded themselves. The Bible does not say we should ‘believe all things,’ but rather that we should ‘prove all things’ (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Neither does it encourage a gullible approach toward those claiming the name of Christ. Rather, it warns about wolves among the flock, and also teaches that the heart of man is deceitful and depraved (Jeremiah 17:9). As in other areas, extraordinary claims carry an extraordinary burden of proof. There is already a huge amount of archaeological and other evidence consistent with the truth of the Bible. Bible-believing experts exist in many fields … They are always glad to assess and publicize actual evidence of genuine finds (there have been many over the years) supporting the historicity of the Bible.’

Some think if we could prove the Genesis Flood happened scientifically, if we found the Ark on Ararat, if someone rose from the dead and unbelievers saw it, wouldn’t that make them believe in Christ more than just reading in the Bible from Moses in Genesis 7 or Elijah / the prophets?

Jesus said, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.” (Lk. 16:31)

When Jesus rose from the dead, did the guards and Pharisees convert when they heard what happened at the tomb? No, they paid off the guards. When the 2 witnesses in Revelation die and rise again and it says all eyes see it, will all people trust in Christ? No. When the events of Revelation unfold, will all trust in Christ? No. It’s not just a matter of evidence or scientific proof or knowing God or His truth. Romans 1 says since creation man knows God in his heart but suppresses the truth in unrighteousness in his life.

So even if I could prove scientifically that everything in Genesis 1-11 happened as it says, that doesn’t increase the number of Elect in the Book of Life. But apologetics is our duty and strengthens us (and God’s gospel does have power to save, not by might or power or human means, but by the Spirit of God). I hope this brief study has strengthened you and that we will be faithful to defend the faith and proclaim the gospel, but knowing God’s power does the saving.

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1 http://emporium.turnpike.net/C/es/ark/tsld008.htm
6 Matthews, NICOT, 301
7 Wilmington's Bible Handbook, p. 887
8 These are taken from Boice, Genesis, chapter 45 ?? including these footnotes

9 These are taken from Boice, Genesis, chapter 45 ?? including these footnotes

10 http://www.arcimaging.org/ArcImagingWeb_files/frame.htm
11 http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v21/i2/ark.asp