

Skeptics Guide to the Universe

Week One: Fantastical Events



Let's face it. Many of the events recorded in the Bible are hard to swallow. As we begin an examination of the flood of Noah, we look first at the flood-event itself. Where did the water come from? Was it global or local? How did the animals fit? There are so many questions to ask! In this study, we will focus on how to engage dialogue surrounding these matters in a healthy and productive way, regardless of the conclusions we draw. Begin by reading the account in **Genesis 7:6-24** (ESV).

What Do You Think?

- When conversations arise about fantastical or miraculous events from the Bible (*like the flood, creation, or the Red Sea parting*), are you the kind of person who loves to research and dive in headfirst, or are you the kind of person who isn't that interested? Why?
- Why do you think some people get offended or become defensive when someone else challenges their understanding of events from scripture? Have you ever felt this way?

What Does God Say?

Conversations with Believers

- Read 1 Timothy 1:1-8.** Paul is writing to the pastor of a church where people are debating both essential and nonessential beliefs. What can we learn from this passage about what we discuss with each other and where our focus should be?

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,” 2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV)

- Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.** What does this tell us about the purpose of scripture and how does it help guide our discussions about disputable matters?



“Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, ‘We will hear you again about this.’” Acts 17:32 (ESV)

Conversations with Non-Believers and Skeptics

- **Read Acts 17:16-34.** Paul is standing before non-Christian skeptics and trying to convince them to accept Christ and the scriptures. Answer the following questions based on this event. Discuss how each applies to interactions with non-believers and skeptics.
 - What motivated Paul to start the conversation? (Verses 16-17)
 - What was the initial response of the listeners? (Verses 18-21)
 - Do you notice any specific techniques Paul used? (Verses 22-31)
 - What were the different responses to what Paul said? (Verses 32-34)

What Will You Do?

- Do you know a skeptic? Maybe it is you. Every new belief requires a faith-leap, but sometimes it happens at the end of a long journey. Discuss with your group how you can begin and maintain a productive dialogue that leads to a decision of faith.
- Do you feel prepared to have a dialogue like this? What will you do to get ready?

