

Parallels between the Creation and Flood Stories in Genesis

The story of Noah and the Flood occupies a very important place in the book of Genesis, a dividing line between the time of Adam/Eve and the time of the Patriarchs. The Flood story demonstrates God's grace in providing for humanity despite the corruption of God's original cosmic design. In this sense, the Flood story is a parallel to the creation story where God graciously provided for Adam and Eve after the Fall. While Genesis 1-2 focuses on God organizing the functions of the world, the Flood story is the re-creation of the world to "reset" the divinely created order. **This perspective is a major interpretive lens for the Flood story.**

Here are some other ways in which Noah's story references the original creation in Genesis 1-2.

Item	Creation Story	Flood Story
Beginning of Creation / Flood	1:5 – "And there was evening and there was morning, the first day." (Sunday)*	7:4 – "For in 7 days' time I will make it rain upon the earth, 40 days and 40 nights..." (announcement on Sunday)* 7:11 – "In the 600 th year of Noah's life, in the 2 nd month, on the 17 th day of the month..." (Sunday)*
Nonfunctional world	1:2 – "...the earth was unformed and void."	6:13 – "I have decided to put an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with lawlessness."
Presence of watery chaos	1:2 – "...with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water..."	6:17 – "I am about to bring the Flood – waters upon the earth – to corrupt (Hebrew: <i>shachet</i>) all flesh under the sky..."
Presence of a wind / Spirit to overcome watery chaos	1:2 – "...a wind from God sweeping over the water..."	8:1 – "...and God caused a wind to blow across the earth, and the waters subsided."
World made functional	1:31, et al – "And God saw all that he had made and found it very good."	8:22 – "So long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest...shall not cease."
Water separated and dry land appears	1:9 – "Let the water below the sky be gathered into one area, that dry land may appear." (Wednesday)*	8:5 – "...in the 10 th month, on the 1 st of the month, the tops of mountains became visible." (Wednesday)*
Completion of Creation / Flood	1:31 – And there was evening and there was morning, the 6 th day." (Friday)*	7:12 – "The rain fell...for 40 days and 40 nights." (Friday)* 8:4 – "...in the 7 th month, on the 17 th day of the month, the ark came to rest..." (Friday)*

Completion of Creation / Flood	1:31 – And there was evening and there was morning, the 6 th day.” (Friday)*	8:13 – “In the 601 st year, in the 1 st month, on the 1 st of the month, the waters began to dry from the earth.” (Friday)* 8:14 – “...in the 2 nd month, on the 27 th day of the month, the earth was dry.” (Friday)*
Divine blessing of world nonfunctional	2:5f – “...when no shrub of the field was yet on earth...because there was no man to till the soil.”	7:23 – “All existence on earth was blotted out – man, domesticated animals, wild herds, and birds of the sky.”
Divine blessing of world made functional	2:8f – “The LORD God planted a garden in Eden and placed there the man whom he had formed.”	9:15 – “I will remember my covenant between me and you and every living creature among all flesh.”
Instruction to multiply	1:28 – “Be fertile and increase, fill the earth.”	9:1 – “Be fertile and increase, and fill the earth.”
Diet Instructions	1:29 – “I give you every seed bearing plant that is upon the face of all the earth...” (plants that grow wild)	9:3 – “Every creature (<i>remes</i>) that lives shall be yours to eat...” (<i>remes</i> refers to wild herd animals such as deer and antelope, not domesticated cattle, etc)
Plant connected with Fall	3:6 – “...she took its fruit and ate...”	9:21 – “He drank of the wine and became drunk...”
Naked and unaware	2:25 – “The two of them were naked...yet they felt no shame.”	9:21 – “...he uncovered himself within his tent.”
Offense related to blessing boundaries	3:3 – “It is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said...”	9:22 – “Ham... saw his father’s nakedness and told his two brothers outside.”
Eyes were opened and knew	3:7 – “Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked.”	9:24 – When Noah woke up...and learned...he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan...’”
Pronouncement of Curse	3:17 – “Cursed be the ground because of you.”	9:25 – “Cursed be Canaan...”

* This is based on using the lunar calendar (364 days per year) such as is found in ancient texts like the Book of Jubilees (2nd c. BCE). In a lunar calendar, each special day, such as New Years, falls on the same day of the week each year. Thus, the religious feasts would be observed at the same time, on the same day each year. This does assume that Genesis is aware of a lunar calendar schedule. The focus on dates in the Flood story indicates an awareness of such calendar issues.

Scripture passages from Hebrew and Jewish Publication Society English translation, 2 ed.