

NOAH GILGAMESH MESH

VERSUS

is the biblical flood an

epic
rip-off?

Then he called to the man Gilgamesh, he called to the child of the gods: 'Why have you come so great a journey; for what have you travelled so far, crossing the dangerous waters; ...'"

The Epic of Gilgamesh – The Search for Everlasting Life



CoffeeScribe.ca
mail@coffeescribe.ca



is the biblical flood an epic rip-off of the epic of gilgamesh?

The epic of Gilgamesh was written before Genesis, so the flood at the time of Noah is a complete hoax!— at least, so the argument goes...

The epic of Gilgamesh is a story that closely parallels the biblical story of “Noah’s Ark.” Because the story of Gilgamesh is so strikingly similar to the story of the Genesis flood, this prompts people to think that whoever wrote Genesis plagiarized ancient myths and incorporated them into his own story. Exactly what are the similarities between the Biblical flood and the flood in the epic of Gilgamesh?

Similarities

- Flood occurs in the Mesopotamian plain
- Main character is warned to build a boat to escape the flood
- Main character is told to save himself, his family, and a sampling of animals
- The boats were sealed with “tar”
- The boats came to rest on a mountain
- Birds were released to determine if the waters receded
- Main character sacrificed an offering

So what do we do with this evidence?

Did the events of Genesis 6-9 not really happen? What does this say about biblical inerrancy, and divine inspiration? How could God and why would God inspire the writer of Genesis to write something down that didn't occur? Why would God have Moses plagiarize an ancient myth?

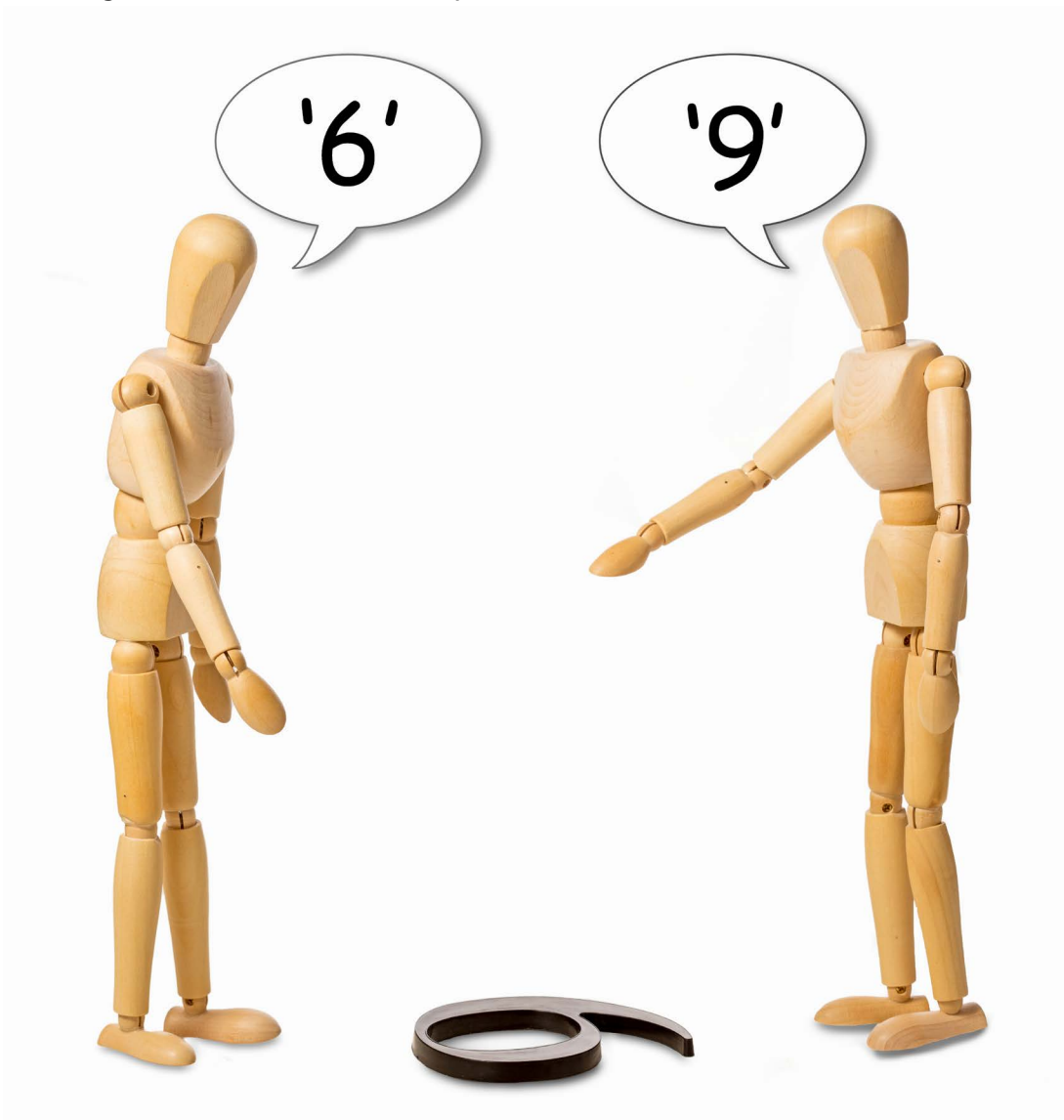
Perhaps there is a better question we could ask

“Does the post-dated writing of the Genesis flood account from the Gilgamesh epic mean that the events in Genesis did not happen?”

To say that because the Gilgamesh epic was written before Genesis, seems to be a bad argument against the historicity of Noah's flood. Saying that Noah's story was copied from the epic of Gilgamesh because it predates the writing of Genesis in no way proves that Genesis is a myth; and yet, that is the assumption that people make when looking at the dates of their written texts as the proof. Even though Gilgamesh postdates the book of Genesis, it could be that the **events** of Genesis predate both and here's how:

If the Genesis flood actually occurred, it could be that the Gilgamesh epic was a distorted version of the Genesis flood after being unreliably passed down through oral traditions (in cultures that didn't have the same tips and tricks that Jews had in which they preserved oral tradition). Who's to say that Genesis copied from Gilgamesh. Maybe it was Gilgamesh who copied from Genesis?

If you presuppose that the Bible is false, then you already believed that the story of Noah's flood was a bunch of bull. You already believed that it was a myth, so you're more likely to interpret Gilgamesh as evidence of Biblical plagiarism. But if you believe The Bible is true (like I do) or if you're at least open to the possibility of it being true, you might interpret this as evidence that something like the flood of Noah's time actually happened, and that two different sources are telling the same story in different ways. Gilgamesh actually could be used as corroborating evidence for the flood. It all depends on how you interpret the evidence. And it also depends on what your presuppositions are as we all have them. In other words, if the Genesis flood actually happened in real life, then I think it's entirely possible that, if any borrowing were done at all, Gilgamesh and Atrahasis copied from an actual historical event.

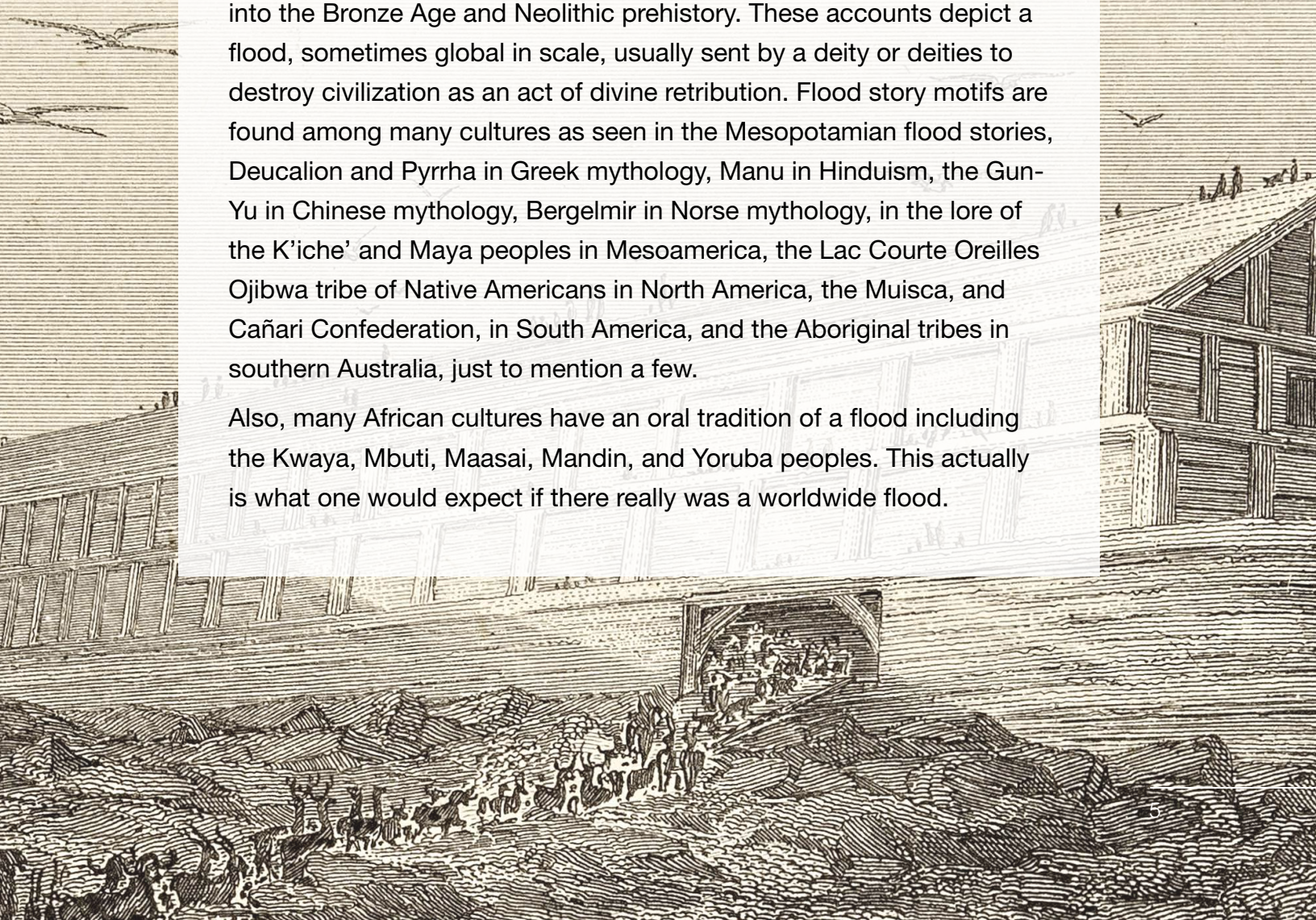


what would we see if the flood event did happen?

Would there be other flood-type stories?

The fact that we have so many flood stories around the world is actually more evidence for a worldwide flood—not against. The epic of Gilgamesh was written first, and it was after that time that the Book of Genesis was written, and might I add, many, many others as well. Flood myths are common across a wide range of cultures, extending back into the Bronze Age and Neolithic prehistory. These accounts depict a flood, sometimes global in scale, usually sent by a deity or deities to destroy civilization as an act of divine retribution. Flood story motifs are found among many cultures as seen in the Mesopotamian flood stories, Deucalion and Pyrrha in Greek mythology, Manu in Hinduism, the Gun-Yu in Chinese mythology, Bergelmir in Norse mythology, in the lore of the K'iche' and Maya peoples in Mesoamerica, the Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa tribe of Native Americans in North America, the Muisca, and Cañari Confederation, in South America, and the Aboriginal tribes in southern Australia, just to mention a few.

Also, many African cultures have an oral tradition of a flood including the Kwaya, Mbuti, Maasai, Mandin, and Yoruba peoples. This actually is what one would expect if there really was a worldwide flood.



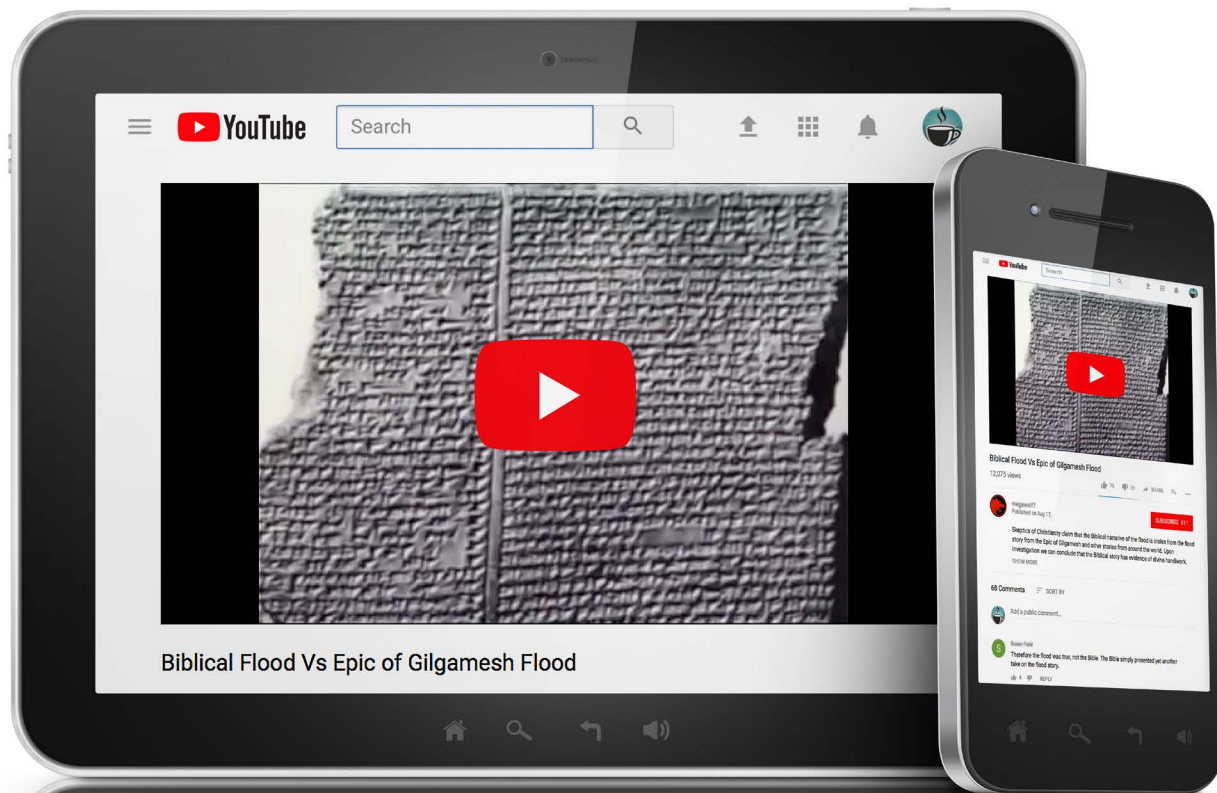
take a further look

Just because the epic of Gilgamesh was written first, is not proof that the event of the Genesis flood did not happen due to the fact that the Genesis account was written at a much later date. Please watch the video for a broader explanation of this topic.

Biblical Flood vs. Epic of Gilgamesh Flood

Skeptics of Christianity claim that the Biblical narrative of the flood is stolen from the flood story from the epic of Gilgamesh and other stories from around the world. Upon investigation, we can conclude that the Biblical story has evidence of divine handiwork.

YouTube Video: <https://youtu.be/C8iR7p5eSbQ> [PLAY VIDEO →](#)



Even though it is perfectly understandable for people to make the over simplified claim that since the Gilgamesh epic was written down first that Noah must be a copy—this assumption does not take into account the superiority of the Genesis version found in certain details such as the sending of the dove and especially the superior structure to Noah's ark itself to Gilgamesh's boat. Also, the fact that the two stories do not show literary dependence to each other also suggests that there is no charge of plagiarism.