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The separation of the water masses



And God said, "Let there be space between the waters to separate the waters." And so it happened, God created that space to separate the waters above and below it. And God called the space "heaven." It became evening and morning: the second day. (Genesis 1:6-8)

I have the devotion on the second day to the "dividing of the waters." We now disagree on what the water looked like in the sky. I imagine clouds. As we know them now. But my brother thinks there were no clouds before the Flood and it was a layer of water in the sky. Can you help us there? What did the water in the sky look like?

Answer

What the earth and its surroundings might have looked like before the flood can only be speculated. Therefore, let's start from the things that are known to us today:

- The distribution of water on Earth shows that a 40-day continuous rainfall would not be possible today
- The profile of the earth shows that the available water is not sufficient to rise above the highest mountains, as was the case during the Flood.
- Since the Flood, the rainbow can be observed, but possibly not before.
- There is no known water system on the earth today that can be identified with the "fountains of the great deep" (cf. Genesis 7:11).
- The garden in the landscape of Eden with its four rivers (cf. Genesis 2) can no longer be located. The geology and geography there must have changed.
- The life expectancy of the people before the flood and after the flood decreased drastically.
- Many animal species became extinct.
- Today's animal species are not evenly distributed across the earth.
- Humans have also been allowed to eat meat since the flood (Genesis 9:3).

Were there clouds before the flood?

In fact it is now the case that clouds are only mentioned after the flood (Genesis 9:13ff). This does not have to mean that there were no clouds before. In this passage it is not claimed that there were clouds only from that moment on, but that God set his bow in the clouds as a "covenant sign" for all mankind (W. between me (God) and the earth). So the focus is on the bow as a covenant sign and not on the bow. Purely from this fact, therefore, it is not certain to me whether there were clouds or not. But what I cannot imagine is that the earth was covered by visible clouds. Because of that the view would have been limited to the "signs" to determine the times (Genesis 1,14ff). Therefore I think, one cannot equate the vault, which separates the two water masses from each other, with "clouds".

What could the "water of heaven" have looked like?

Based on the fact that it is impossible for us to know how it looked like at that time, simply times a conjecture, which is shared today by many researchers who are based on the biblical foundation: One assumes thereby a completely different hydrology (water doctrine) in the antediluvian time. The core elements of this are a "water vapour belt" or a "vapour bell" and a different system of underground water reservoirs and springs. This "water vapor belt" may have also been a shield against cosmological radiation. Light and thermal radiation would pass through and be reflected, creating a greenhouse effect. This would result in a temperate climate on Earth. So there would not have been extremely warm and cold zones and storms, or thunderstorms could not have formed also or much less, because these presuppose different cold and warm fronts. (Source: Creatio "biblical doctrine of creation")

An indication of God's greatness

Maybe it is unsatisfactory at first that we do not get a clear answer to this. But I would like to point out one last thing. So these questions are not new at all. On the contrary, these questions are among the oldest of all, and surprisingly, God Himself asks these questions. These questions are indicative of God's greatness, wisdom and sovereignty:

The book of Job comes to a close with God speaking beginning in chapter 38. God speaks to Job out of the storm, and there he asks him questions upon questions:

Who are you to doubt my plan, to speak of things you do not understand? Very well Stand up and show thyself a man! I want to ask you, you let me know! Where were you when I made the earth? If you know, then tell me! Who decided how big it should be? Who decided how big it should be with the measuring string? You know everything Don't you? On what pedestal do her pillars stand? Who laid the foundation of her building? Yea, then all the morning stars sang, the sons of God exulted with joy! Who shut the sea with gates when it burst forth from the bosom of the earth? It was I, I wrapped it in thick clouds, as a swaddling-cloth I gave it the dark mist. I gave it its appointed boundary, Locked it secure with gate and bolt. I said to it: 'So far and no further! Here the arrogance of thy waves ceases!' Hast thou ever commanded a day to come up, appointed its place for the dawn, and told it to take hold of the hem of the earth, and to shake off all the wicked from it? In its light the mountains rise, like folds of clothing they come forth. But to the wicked the light brings no happiness; it puts an end to the abuse of their power. Have you been down to the springs of the sea? The bottom of the sea, have you roamed it? Have you stood at the gate of the world of the dead, where eternal darkness begins? Do you know how far the earth stretches? If you know all this, tell me! Do you know the way to the place of origin of light? From what place does darkness come? Will you lead it to the end of its path and then bring it back to its place? You must be able to, for you are so old, you were born long ago then! Have you seen the storehouses where I keep the snow and hail? I keep them ready for days of calamity; with them I engage in battle and war. Where is the way to the rising of the sun, And where is the place from whence the east wind cometh? Who dug gutters in the sky for the rain? Who made the storm's path? Who makes it rain on the barren steppe, on the land where there are no men? Who quenches the thirst of the parched earth, that it may sprout green grass? Think of the rain: Has he a father? And look at the dew: did someone father it? Where does the ice come from? Who is its mother? And what womb gave birth to the hoarfrost and frost that turns stream and river into hard stone, freezes the sea motionless? Canst thou bind the seven stars together? Canst thou unbind the belt of Orion? Dost thou march up the zodiacal images, that each may be seen in its time? Dost thou direct the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper? Knowest thou the order which the heavens follow, and dost thou make it valid for all the earth? Dost thou call orders to the clouds there, that they may pour rain upon thee? Dost thou send down lightning upon the earth? Do they command thee when thou callest them? Who tells the

ibis that the Nile rises? Who tells the cock that rainy weather is coming? Who counts the right number of clouds? Who empties heaven's water jars when all the clods of field are caked solid, the earth has become hard as stone? Dost thou drive the lioness to her prey? Dost thou quench the hot greed of young lions when they crouch in dens, lie in wait in thick bushes? Who is it that gives food to the ravens when their young find nothing to eat, and cry aloud to me their hunger?"

Of course, many more questions follow. Job already knew that a man having a trial with God would be asked by Him a thousand questions and not know an answer to them (Job 9:3). This was exactly the case when God asked him these questions. Sure the questions seem very poetic. But that does not mean we can dismiss them as "worthless". Many of these questions still occupy us today, even with our level of knowledge and technology. By far not all of them have been solved. In fact, I dare say that we do not have a comprehensive answer to many of these questions that is without a doubt sublime.

For example, how is rain formed? Seems simple: Water vapor collects around a dust particle and then, as a result, when enough water vapor has accumulated, a drop of water is formed. But many years ago it was found out that this process would take about 30 years naturally. Today it is assumed that updrafts accelerate this process, although this fact has not yet been definitively proven. Or how is the light transmitted? Is it particles or is it waves? Today one refers to waves and particles, but is both possible? This is an area of disagreement in science. And what does God ask Job several thousand years before our time? Around the time of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob)? "Do you know the way to the place of the origin of light (Job 38:19)?" Isn't that fascinating: God is asking him a question that is still on our minds today.

Maybe we also have to be content with the fact that we are at a point here where we can only speculate. God's wisdom far exceeds our little minds. We can answer God to a thousand questions, not one. That seems to me to be the case with the parting of the waters right now. Where were we when God created the earth? Where were we when he set the measuring rod and determined how big it should be?

An indication of God's love

And maybe we should just ask the question another way. We might ask what now this water looked like, or we might also ask: Why did God make this bulge and separation of the water masses in the first place? To this question we get an answer:

Thank the Lord, for he is good to us! - His love never ceases! Give thanks to him, the most high God! - His love never ceases! Give thanks to him, the mightiest of lords! - His love never ceases! He alone does great wonders - His love never ceases! ***Artfully he has arched the heavens. - His love never ceases!*** *Over the seas he has spread the earth. - His love never ceases! He has made the great lights:****His love never ceases! The sun to rule the day - His love never ceases! The moon and stars to rule the night. - His love never ends! He killed the firstborn of the Egyptians. - His love never ends! He led Israel out of there. - His love never ends! He did it with his strong hand. - His love never ends! He cut the Reed Sea in two. - His love never ends! He led Israel right through it. - His love never ends! He plunged Pharaoh and his army into the floods. - His love never ends! He led his people through the wilderness. - His love never ends! He defeated great kings. - His love never ends! He killed mighty kings. - His love never ends! Sihon king of the Amorites - His love never ends! and Og king of the land of Bashan - His love never ends! Their lands he gave to Israel. - His love never ends! He gave them to his servants as an inheritance. - His love never ends! He thought of us when we were oppressed... - His love never ends! He delivered us from our enemies. - His love never ends! He feeds all creatures - His love never ends! Give thanks to him, the God of heaven! - His love never ceases! (Psalm 136)***

The mark of all that God did is His love toward creation, love toward His people, and love toward each individual. And our mark toward God should be gratitude for all these things.

Sources

- **Cover photo:** Rowdy2008 / pixelio.de

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