

Aim: Many people have memories of the flood or trace their heritage back to Noah.

Last week we talked about the different groups of people splitting off after Babel. We talked about how some groups who had teachers, doctors, builders and other skilled people in their groups built towns and cities, but the groups that didn't, lived a much more primitive lifestyle. Some of the groups probably had books, or had people who knew how to make books, but those who didn't have teachers or books, or who didn't have the time to teach the children, soon forgot how to read and write and they had to rely on teaching by telling stories.

Have you noticed what happens sometimes when you tell a story to someone, and they tell it to someone else, and they tell it to someone else? The story changes as it gets retold; sometimes people can't remember exactly what happened; sometimes they change it to make it easier to understand.

So although people from all over the world remember the great flood, many of them have forgotten the exact details. Here are some bits out of some of the stories:

The Hawaiians say that the God Kane decided to destroy the earth because man's wickedness had spoiled it. He allowed Nu the righteous man to escape by building a canoe with a house on it. Nu took his wife and six other people and some animals. All mankind perished in the great flood. When the waters subsided the rainbow became a token of forgiveness. (The Killing of Paradise Planet by Jonathan Gray, TEACH services 2005)

That sounds a lot like the Bible story, except they changed the ark into a canoe, which seems really ridiculous to us, but probably made it easier for the children who have never seen a ship to understand; I guess it's like the pictures we see of the ark as a little boat with the animal's heads sticking out of it.

Here are some other versions of the story from around the world:

China: *The hero escaped the great flood with his wife, his three sons and three daughters*

Australian Aborigines: *A great flood was sent because of man's wickedness. The rainbow serpent came and told some people to climb on its back to be saved.*

Alaskan: *The father of the tribe was warned that a flood would devastate the earth so he built a raft to save his family and all the animals. (The Killing of Paradise Planet by Jonathan Gray, TEACH services 2005)*

(You might take a few minutes to imagine how Noah's story might have gradually been changed into these stories, like a game of Chinese whispers – one fact at a time)

Similar stories are found from all over the world.

Genealogy was very important to the people of the Bible; they kept very accurate records which you can read some of them in Genesis 5; 10 and 11:10-30. *(Read out a few lines to see how they work)*

We can use the Bible to trace the generations from Adam through Noah and on to Jesus.

Challenge Question: *Which of Noah's sons was the ancestor of Jesus? Find the answer in Genesis 11 & Matthew 1*

Genealogy was important to many other people too. The ancient Irish kept accurate records and trace their ancestry back to Magog, a son of Japheth.

Indians, Greeks, British and some Chinese also claim that they descended from Japheth.

If there is time, have a look at the genealogies from Bill Cooper's "After the Flood" available from <http://ldolphin.org/cooper/contents.html>

As you can see, other people who had nothing to do with the Bible still remember at least a little bit of what happened during the flood, even if their stories have become a bit mixed up. Luckily for us, God had the Jews keep a written record and God was with Moses and the other Bible writers as they wrote, to make sure that what they wrote was accurate.

Read the first part of 2 Tim 3:16

How else can a book written more than 2000 years ago still be so accurate?