

# Does a “Recently Deciphered 4,000-Year-Old Tablet” Discredit the Genesis Account of Noah's Ark?

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The design of the full-sized Ark planned for the [Ark Encounter](#) theme park south of Cincinnati incorporates several features of ancient ship building, including a [bow fin](#).

“But forget all those images of a long vessel with a pointy bow—the original Noah’s Ark, new research suggests, was round.”<sup>1</sup> Those words highlight the AP article discussing the tablet that just went on display at the British Museum on January 24.

Over the weekend, media outlets from around the world ran a story about a “recently deciphered” tablet that bears strong resemblance to the biblical account of Noah, the Ark, and the Flood. We have been asked by many people (especially those who visit the Fox News website) to respond to yet another Ark report attempting to undermine the historicity of the Genesis account.

This recent assault on God’s Word comes from Irving Finkel, the assistant keeper of Ancient Mesopotamian script, languages, and cultures at the British Museum. According to reports, Finkel received the tablet a few years ago from the son of an amateur historian named Leonard Simmons, who had acquired it in the Middle East following World War II. The cell-phone-sized tablet is also the subject of Finkel’s new book, *The Ark Before Noah*.

## The Claims Against Noah’s Ark

So what’s the big deal about this tablet, which Finkel calls “one of the most important human documents ever discovered”? And how does it supposedly discredit the Bible’s account of Noah’s Ark and the global Flood?

First, Finkel and the journalist who wrote the AP story push the long-discredited “[documentary hypothesis](#),” meaning that they believe Genesis and much of the Old Testament was largely composed during the time of Ezra following the Babylonian exile. Therefore, they automatically assume that the author (or compiler) of Genesis merely copied the Flood account from the Babylonians. Thus, for those that cling to the documentary hypothesis, any flood story from the Middle East that apparently predates the fifth century BC will naturally be touted as one of the sources of the biblical account. Since Finkel’s tablet is reportedly dated to approximately 2000 BC, these individuals assume that it is more original and therefore more reliable than the biblical account. Finkel even jokes about the revelation of finding “Holy Writ”—namely, Ark-building instructions—chiseled on a tablet that looks like a piece of wheat cereal.

Second, the primary difference between the flood account on this tablet and the biblical account is that the Mesopotamian tablet describes the “ark” as being a “round boat.” The article states that a round boat makes sense because “coracles were widely used as river taxis in ancient Iraq and are perfectly designed to bob along on raging floodwaters.” A coracle is a small, round boat used primarily for fishing or transportation in the United Kingdom and India. Finkel states that a coracle is the “perfect thing” because “it never sinks [and] it’s light to carry.”

## Our Response: Defending the Testimony of God’s Word

Assuming for the moment that the tablet is authentic and the translation is accurate, do these claims stand up to scrutiny? Our [detailed article on the documentary hypothesis](#) demonstrates the many errors of this view. The documentary hypothesis is based on discredited evolutionary assumptions about...

*To read this article in its entirety, go to:*

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2014/01/27/4000-year-old-tablet-noahs-ark>