



Genesis: 1-11

Introduction
Part Two



Review

- I. **Why** is the Study of Genesis Important?
- II. **How** Did the Book Get its Name?
- III. **What** are our Starting Assumptions?
- IV. **Who** Wrote this Book?
- V. **When** was the Book Written?
- VI. **Where** Did Moses Get His Information?

III. What are our Starting Assumptions, i.e. of a Biblicist?



A. The Bible is infallible and inerrant. God is truth and His revelation in the original manuscripts is likewise truthful, and must therefore, be of necessity without error. If we allow for errors as some do, how do we decide what is truth and error? *Ultimately the one deciding is then more authoritative than the Word itself.* If one allows for errors, how can it (God's Revelation) be trusted to be completely authoritative in all it addresses? This issue is of paramount importance in the age of relativism in which we live (where a correspondence view of truth is denied). Kurt Wise says: [*The Bible*] *does not seek evidence for the veracity of God or Scripture, because such evidence would then have a higher status than God and His Word.* (*Faith, Form, and Time*, p. xv).

The title of Francis Schaeffer's book: *He is There, and He is not Silent*, is a great summary!

- B. Science is fallible. The scientific method is an invaluable tool to mankind, but utilized by fallible man makes it a fallible tool.
- C. Special Revelation is preeminent over General Revelation. *The natural world is not the 67th book of the Bible!* There is revelation in the natural world. We can know that God exists and that He is powerful (Rom. 1:19-20; Psalm 19), but nature is not on the same level as Holy Scripture.
- D. If a proclamation of Scripture appears clear but is contrary to what scientific establishment says, I will hold to the word of Scripture and assume there must be something wrong with the science. Why do this? Because Scripture, God's Revelation to man, is the beginning of knowledge; it holds the position of supreme authority.

E. If God meant for the Bible to be read and understood by the average person, it must be understandable. This is known as the doctrine of **the Perspicuity of Scripture**. God expects ordinary people, by using common principles of interpretation, to be able to understand the basic message of the Bible! This does not deny the role of the Holy Spirit, or the benefit of studying the original languages and culture, etc. (II Tim 3: 15-17).

F. The Bible is timeless and meant for all.

VII. The Discovery of Ancient Creation and Flood Accounts





A. The Discovery of ancient Clay Tablets



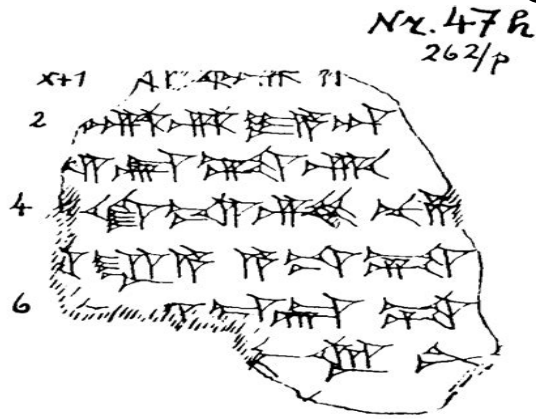
George Smith 1840-1876



11th Tablet

B. Facts About this Ancient Flood Story:

1. It was written in the Akkadian Language in cuneiform script.



2. Gilgamesh was the Mesopotamian King of Uruk (Erech in (Gen.10:10).
3. The Epic was on a total of 12 tablets.
4. They were found in Nineveh in the ruins of the library of Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria (668-627 B.C.).
5. They were found in 1848-58 by Turkish archaeologist Hormuzd Rassam who worked with Sir Henry Layard. (25,000 tablets!)

B. The Effects of the Discovery

1. It was immediately concluded that the Biblical stories of The Creation and Flood were dependent on it, and none other than a monotheistic version.
2. Shortly after this discovery, versions not only of an ancient deluge, but also creation stories were found.
3. Scholars were astounded by the similarities to the Biblical version of the Flood. (Wenham lists 17).
4. Later a Sumerian version was found and dated 18th Century B.C. *Enuma Elish*
5. Hence, The Trend began to interpret Genesis as just another ANE document.

C. Concluding remarks about the discovery and the sources of Genesis:

1. If we believe in the supernatural and Divine Inspiration, we must remember that God is the Co-Author!
2. We are not compelled to conclude that Genesis was dependent on these documents even if it was written later.
3. It is just as reasonable to assume that both these ANE Flood accounts and Genesis go back to the same ancient source, **or historical event**.

Both came out of the same common ancient tradition and so both possess similarities. The Babylonian account represents the tradition freely corrupted by human imagination; the Hebrew account is that which was kept chaste and pure through divine providence and then revealed through divine inspiration. B. Ramm



4. Is there any evidence that there was an early common source for the Flood stories?
 - a. Perhaps the easiest explanation is that the stories independently refer to an actual historical event!
 - b. But there is a Jewish tradition of a document being on the Ark. Seems to be one in Gen. 5:1. *This is the book of the generations of Adam.*

c. An intriguing discovery of a clay tablet found in 1889-1900 which has seemingly monotheistic language and uses some of the same words as the Genesis account. It was translated by Herman Hilprecht professor at U. of Penn. It was found at Nippur (southern Mesopotamia, Iraq). Since it was found at the lowest strata, it was dated at 2100 B.C. This was before Abraham had left the area!



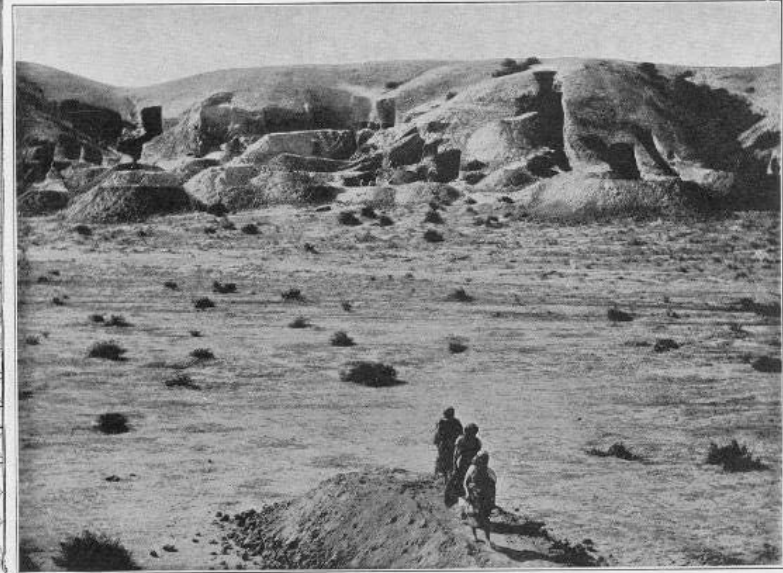
Herman Hilprecht

THE OLDEST VERSION OF THE STORY OF THE FLOOD: THE DELUGE TABLE.

PHOTOGRAPH BY COURTESY OF PROFESSOR H. V. HILPRECHT.

<p>The Stone Version of the Story of the Flood.</p> <p>1. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>2. . . . "It shall . . ."</p> <p>3. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>4. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>5. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>6. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>7. . . . "I will . . ."</p>	<p>The Stone Version of the Story of the Flood.</p> <p>8. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>9. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>10. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>11. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>12. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>13. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>14. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>15. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>16. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>17. . . . "I will . . ."</p>		<p>The Stone Version of the Story of the Flood.</p> <p>18. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>19. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>20. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>21. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>22. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>23. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>24. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>25. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>26. . . . "I will . . ."</p> <p>27. . . . "I will . . ."</p>
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WRITTEN AND BROKEN BEFORE ABRAHAM HAD LEFT HIS BABYLONIAN HOME IN UR OF THE CHALDEES: THE CUNEIFORM FRAGMENT, FOUND AMONG THE REMAINS OF THE TEMPLE LIBRARY OF NIPOUR, WHICH GIVES THE OLDEST ACCOUNT OF THE BABYLONIAN DELUGE STORY EXTANT.



WHERE THE FRAGMENT WAS FOUND: "TABLET HILL," THE SITE OF THE OLDEST TEMPLE LIBRARY OF NIPOUR.

By the courtesy of Professor Hilprecht, of the University of Pennsylvania, we are able to illustrate here a remarkable cuneiform fragment, which contains the oldest account of the Babylonian Deluge story extant. It was discovered among the remains of the Temple Library of Ni-pour (the modern Niffer), and was so covered with layers of mud and other sediments that as first only a few scattered characters could be recognized. The word "A-bu-shi" ("deluge") was also. Professor Hilprecht cleaned the tablet, uncovering the cuneiform characters after another year; he had discovered the oldest version of the Babylonian Deluge story thus far known—about 1500 years older than similar fragments known from the library of Ashurbanipal (600-525 B.C.). The fragment has passed to the University of Pennsylvania, and the fragment is known as the Hilprecht Deluge Tablet; an honorifically paid to him, who sacrificed his life in assisting it to the University, together with the other treasures of the Temple Library. We also give some of the cuneiform characters from a fragment in the "Times." An authoritative article on the subject appears elsewhere in the number.

VIII. What Kind of Literature is Genesis 1-11?



Is it poetry, allegory, myth, legend, narrative, history, prophecy, fiction, parable, etc.

- A. Our method of interpretation is dependent on the genre of literature.
- B. Usually, the key to finding out what kind of literature a document purports to be, is found internally. The author gives us clues.
- C. Since we are Biblicists, we can also ascertain how it is treated in the rest of Scripture.
- D. We can also inquire as to how it has been treated by the early church fathers.

- E. As much as we are able, we should try to discern how the original readers saw it.
- F. The prevailing view among scholars (particularly Old Testament scholars) who still call themselves *Evangelical*, is that Genesis 1-11 is not a narrative of actual historical events as we usually define history (something that actually happened in time and space). Gen. 1-11 is seen as the equivalent of ancient near eastern creation and flood myths (cosmologies) but devoid of most of the elements of paganism.

G. Why not take it as it is?

When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense; therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise. D.L. Cooper

H. An Important key in determining the kind of literature is to discover its purpose.

IX. What was the Author's Purpose?

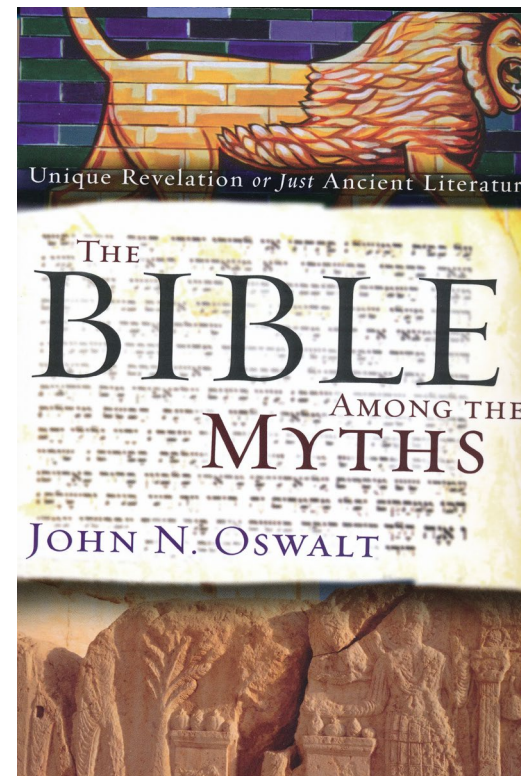
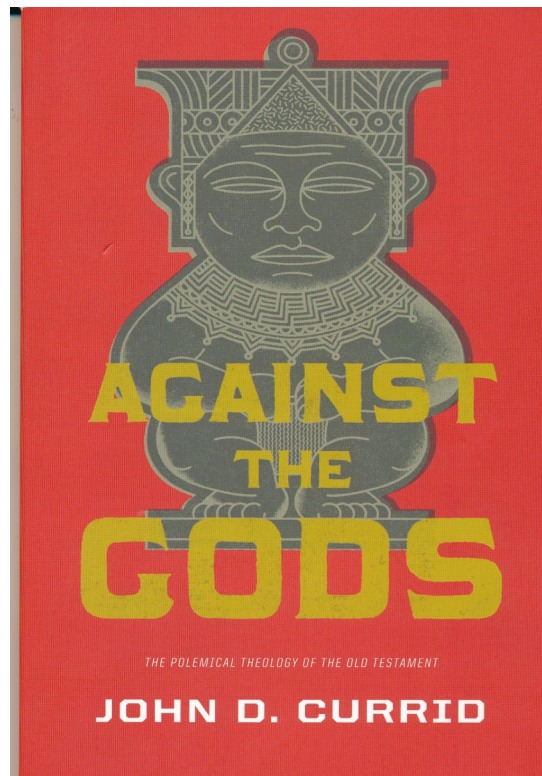


A. The time of its composition might be a clue. Moses wrote Genesis (the Pentateuch) just before the Israelites entered into the Promised Land. We must seek to get inside the Author's head!

1. They are about to encounter the Canaanites. Who are they, and what do they believe? Genesis may have had a polemical purpose. H. Morris notes that Genesis one refutes: Atheism, Pantheism, Polytheism, Materialism, Humanism, and Evolutionism.

John D. Currid, believes the author of the Torah is a master of polemical theology. He writes:

Polemical theology is the act of the biblical author in using thought-forms and stories common in the ancient Near-Eastern culture and filling them with radically new meaning. In other words, the biblical writer takes well-known concepts from the ancient setting and applies the Yahweh and his work, and not to the other gods of the ancient Near-East. Polemical theology rejects any encroachment of false gods into true belief; there is an absolute intolerance. The purpose of polemical theology is to demonstrate the essential distinctions between Old Testament teachings and those of the ancient Near East. P.41.



2. They are about to be settled into their own land. They need laws and structure to be established as a nation.
3. Genesis, the first book, is foundational to God's plan of redemption. Every detail is important.

X. The Problem of Interpretation of Gen. 1-11: What Ideas in the 19th Century Changed Everything?

