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THE HEBREW STORIES OF THE DELUGE:
GENESIS VI-IX.

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The contents of the present article.—Some literary peculiarities of Genesis 6-9.—The proposed analysis of the material.—Objections to this analysis.—Considerations in opposition to the objections.—The arguments in favor of the theory of two accounts.—The linguistic and stylistic arguments in favor of the analysis.—An examination of the material.—The theological ideas of the narrators.—A summary of the narratives.—The details considered.

In the preceding article we considered the nature of the causes which, according to our writer, led to the deluge. The earth had become full of vileness; men had become utterly wicked. There was no hope of improvement for the race. The infamous conduct of angels and the terrific deeds of giants had made it necessary that a new order of things be introduced.

In the present article we shall attempt a very brief examination of the Hebrew material. This is no easy task in view of the large amount of the material—nearly four entire chapters, and its importance as being the second starting point of the world's history.

In the following article we shall undertake to examine the outside material bearing upon this subject, to make a comparison between this material and the Biblical material, and to furnish an estimate of the Biblical material in view of this comparison.

I. *A Critical Examination of the Biblical Material.*

* The Literature: *Dods*, Genesis; *Kalisch*, Genesis; *Dillmann*, Die Genesis; *Delitzsch* (Franz), Genesis; *Lange*, Genesis; *The Pulpit Commentary*, Genesis; *Lenormant*, Beginnings of History, Chap. XVIII; *Schrader*, The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament; *Harper and Green*, The Pentateuchal Question, Genesis i-xii, Hebraica, Vol. V; *Ewald*, History of Israel, Vol. I; *Budde*, Die biblische Urgeschichte; *Geikie*, Hours with the Bible, Vol. I; Articles in Smith's Bible Dictionary, Brit. Encyc., on Deluge; Other articles and books will be found indicated in these references.

1. The result of the examination of Gen. 1-6 has shown that there are two distinct accounts: one containing a story of creation and a genealogical table; the other containing a story of creation, a story of the fall, a story of Cain and Abel, a genealogical table showing the origin of civilization, and a story of the Sons of God. Each of these accounts was found to show distinct linguistic usage, style, material, and theology. In this material complete stories were joined together by the writer.

2. One cannot read Genesis 6, 7, 8 and 9 without recognizing certain peculiarities. Some of these are the following:

1) The large element of repetition, as seen in the comparison of 7: 4 with 6: 17-18, 7: 2-3 with 6: 19-21, 7: 5 with 6: 22, 7: 23 with 7: 21-22.

2) The strange use of the names for God—Jehovah and Elohim (God). One section, e. g., 6: 9-22, showing the word "Elohim;" another section showing the word "Jehovah." It is difficult to account for the interchange of these words. Attempts have been made to explain this interchange, but no attempt thus far seems to have been satisfactory. It can hardly be shown that the writer had a particular idea in mind which determined in either case his choice of the divine name.

3) The double representation concerning the animals, according to one of which they were to enter the ark two by two, according to the other seven by seven, see 6: 19-20, 7: 2-3, 7: 8-9.

4) The difficulty of explaining the dates of the passage. If the reader will begin with 7: 10 and note on a slip of paper through the seventh and eighth chapters all expressions containing dates, and then attempt to systematize them, he will appreciate the difficulty to which reference is made.

3. In explanation of these and many other difficulties it has been assumed by some that Gen. 6-9 contained two distinct accounts of the deluge joined together. The reader may acquaint himself with the details of the analysis by distinguishing in some way the following divisions:

1) To the priestly narrative is assigned 6: 9-22, 7: 6, 11, 13-16a, 18-21, 23b, 24; 8: 1, 2a, 3b-5, 13a, 14-19; 9: 1-17, 28, 29.

2) To the prophetic narrative (J) is assigned 6: 1-8; 7: 1, 2, 3 (in part), 4, 5, 7 (in part), 8, 9 (in part), 10, 12, 16b, 17 (in part), 22 (in part), 23 (in part) 8: 2b, 3a, 6-12, 13b, 20-22; 9: 18, 19 (or R), 20-27 (see below).

3) Of the material assigned to J, 6: 1-4; 9: 20-27 are probably incorporated from another writer.

4) The editor who combined the accounts has introduced changes in 6: 4, 7; 7: 3, 9, 23; 9: 18, 19 (?).

5) Critics differ among themselves in reference to certain minor details.

4. At first sight such a division seems to be upon its very face absurd.

1) If such an analysis really exists, why was the world so long in discovering it?

2) Such patch-work is inconceivable because the author would be a fool to put together two accounts so different from each other, and also because in doing so he would be fampering with the original material.

3) "The divisive hypothesis is now getting into deeper waters, of which the narrative of the deluge is at once a symbol and an occasion. Hitherto it has been ostensible ground for partition in distinct sections, determined either by alternation of divine names or by change of subject or by both combined. Now this resource forsakes it, and it must venture on the open sea, destitute of chart or compass, and this is but a premonition of the reefs and shallows, cross-currents and whirlpools, fogs and storms, and every peril known to navigators, which must be encountered in its hazardous course."¹

4) It is based upon assumed evidence which a moment's examination shows to be wholly unworthy and insufficient.

5. There are, however, some considerations which offset this charge of absurdity.

1) It may be asked why the world has been so long discovering the large amount of truth which has first come to light in the present century. The fact that this analysis was not recognized in the past does not argue against its reality.

¹ Professor Green, *Hebraica*, Vol. V., No. 2.

2) Two things are to be considered as involved in such a combination of different accounts: (a) The author finds the two accounts. He does not wish to choose between them. In fact, he is not the author; he is the compiler. He gives us the original documents with some changes. This is just what we find in the stories of Saul and David and throughout the Books of Chronicles and Kings. (b) The supreme veneration for the sacredness of the text which is urged as an argument against such treatment of the text was, it must be remembered, something comparatively late. In the earlier periods no such regard for the letter of the text existed.

3) It would be more true to say that the analytical hypothesis instead of getting into deeper water, finds material through which it is able to vindicate itself.

4) There is absolutely nothing in this analysis for which there is not found analogy in other books. Here may be compared the duplicate Psalms, for example, the fourteenth and fifty-third; the parallel accounts in Samuel and Kings and in Chronicles.

5) It may fairly be urged that the evidence for this analysis is not assumed; it is gathered by legitimate methods from the text itself, and up to date has withstood every effort to explain it away.

2. *The Arguments in Favor of the Theory of Two Accounts.* The theory of the two accounts is based upon the fact that when the material has been divided, upon the basis of either language, style, contents, or theology, the division is found to be practically the same, and when thus divided there are found to exist two distinct stories, each complete, and each quite different from the other.

1) The priest-writer uses the word "God." Among other favorite expressions are: "in his generations," "all flesh," and "I, behold I!" The prophetic writer uses the word "Jehovah"; employs a different expression for the idea of establishing the covenant; uses "Man and his wife," even when speaking of animals, instead of "male and his mate"; refers constantly to the altar-service which the priest does not do previous to the Mosaic legislation, etc.

2) The style of the priest-writer is (a) systematic, as is seen in the five months of thirty days of increase of flood, the five months of decrease, the introductory phrase "these are the generations," etc.; (b) statistical, as seen in the calculation of Noah's age 7:6-11; 9:28-29; the notice of the kind of wood of which the ark was made, 6:14, its exact dimensions, its window, door, rooms, its three stories, the provision for food, the rigid classification in 6:18, the classes of animals in 6:20, the local phraseology in 9:4-6; (c) rigid, stereotyped, as seen in the many formulas employed, the prosaic command to Noah to leave the ark; 8:15-16, as compared with the poetic representation of the dove and raven, 13b, the lack of rhetorical perspective, the smallest detail receiving as much attention as the most important matter; (d) verbose and repetitious, as seen in the repetition of 5:32b by 6:10, 6:11 by 6:12. 8:8-17b as compared with 8:21-22, the phrase "all flesh," "I have established the covenant."

3) The style of the prophetic writer is (a) free and easy, as even a hasty perusal of the material indicates; (b) characterized by the introduction of outside pieces, e. g., the story of Noah's drunkenness 9:20-24, the story of Noah's blessing and curse 9:25-27; (c) picturesque and poetical as seen in the use of poetical terms throughout; his introduction of the poetic as in the story of the dove and the raven; (d) anthropomorphic, since he represents Jehovah as repenting that he has created man at all, 6:7, as closing the door after Noah has entered the ark (7:16b), as smelling the sweet odor of the sacrifices (8:21), as repenting that he has wrought great destruction among men (8:22), as promising never to do so again (8:22).

4) In an examination of the material several points deserve consideration. Among others may be noted:

a) The large duplication of material, as is seen in the comparison of 6:5-8 with 6:9-22; 7:7, 10, 12, 16b with 7:6, 11, 13-16a; 7:22, 23 with 7:21; 8:2b and 3a with 8:2a, 3b; 8:13b with 8:13a-14; 8:20-22 with 9:1-17. This large element of duplication seems to furnish evidence of two distinct accounts.

b) The duration of the deluge, of which, if the material is divided in accordance with the data already indicated, there are found two calculations.

(a) ACCORDING TO J.

7:4, Yahweh speaks: yet 7 days and I will cause it to rain 40 days and 40 nights	Announcement.
7:10, after the 7 days the waters of the flood came	1st day.
7:12, 8, 2b, 3a, the rain was on the earth 40 days and 40 nights, and the rain was restrained and the waters returned from off the earth continually	40th day.
8:6, at the end of 40 days,* Noah sent out a raven	80th day.
8:8, (after waiting 7 days)† he sends a dove which returned	87th day.
8:10, after another 7 days, he sends the dove again, and it returns at even, with an olive leaf, and he knows that the waters have diminished	94th day.
8:12, 13b, he waits another 7 days, and sends forth the dove, takes off the covering and looks, and the ground is dry	101st day.

(b) ACCORDING TO P.

	Year	Month	Day
7:6, 11, 13, in Noah's 600th year, 2d month and 17th day, on this selfsame day, the sluice-gates of heaven are broken up; on this selfsame day Noah and his family enter the ark	600	2	17
7:18-20, 24, the waters prevail 150 days (5 months)		7	17
8:3, 4, at the end of the 150 days the waters begin to decrease and gradually diminish until the tops of the mountains are seen in the 10th month and 1st day (about 2½ months)		10	1
8:13a, the waters have entirely disappeared	601	1	1
8:14, the earth is again dry (after nearly 2 months)	601	2	27
Time,		1	0
			10

This is a total of 12 lunar months, which with the 10 intercalary days, make a year of 365½ days.

c) The form of the ark which, according to one account, has a "window system," "light" all round it (and so can be opened); likewise a "door in the side"; while according to the other account there is a "window" which opens and shuts and a "cover," apparently on top.

d) Of the two accounts thus separated one makes no

*It is, of course, a question whether two periods of forty days are referred to in the text or only one, cf. Hupfeld, *Die Quellen der Genesis*, p. 135; Schrader, *Studien sur Kritik und Erklärung der Biblischen Urgeschichte*, p. 152; Dillmann, *Die Genesis*, p. 139.

†To be supplied in accordance with 8:10.

reference whatever to "clean" and "unclean." The other, however, makes the distinction, and directs the clean beasts to be taken seven by seven.

e) The General Conception. According to one account the deluge seems to be the result of an exceptionally long and heavy rain, local and limited; and at the end the waters run off and dry up. In the other account it is of a miraculous nature, and universal, reaching to the tops of the highest mountains which are under the heavens.

4) The Theological Ideas of the Narrative. Here again, if a division is made such as is indicated above, there will be found two quite distinct conceptions:

a) In the priestly account the representation of God is lofty and dignified. The only man who is to be saved is one who is perfect and blameless. There is nowhere reference to altars, sacrifices, clean and unclean. The destruction comes because of man's wickedness. The great purpose of the destruction is the establishment of the covenant and the revelation of divine law. Here is the second step corresponding to the covenant with Adam and the institution of the Sabbath, which have already been studied. In this account the supernatural is magnified and dignified; everything takes place in accordance with the direct and specific command of God.

b) In the prophetic narrative, on the other hand, the idea of God is not so lofty; the conception being more limited, and the whole narrative, full of anthropomorphisms. For instance, God repents that he has made man (6:6); the closing of the door of the ark (7:16 b); the satisfaction resulting from the "sweet smell" of the sacrifice, and the resolve not again to curse the ground (8:20-22). Here the relation of man to Jehovah is very close. In the introduction women are even accepted as wives by angels; Jehovah himself closes the door of the ark; the distinction between clean and unclean is marked; the references to the altar, the sacrifice of the clean, the burnt offering, are in direct conflict with the conception of the priest who understands that these things were first introduced in the time of Moses. Here, too, the heroes seem to act independently.

It is only proper to say that many think it possible to avoid the difficulties that are here presented. It is, for example, maintained,

(a) That chap. 6:5-8 belong to a section which closes with a statement of the divine determination to destroy man; while 6:9-13, called a "duplicate" upon the theory of the analysis, is necessary to introduce an entirely new section.

(b) The variation in divine names furnishes no criterion for distinguishing documents. Each word for divinity has a significant meaning. The change from Elohim to Jehovah in 7:1 is intended to show that God now appears as the covenant-God.

(c) In 7:16 the use of Elohim and Jehovah presents an evident contrast: Elohim giving command concerning the beasts; Jehovah, the covenant-God, ensuring the man's safety by closing the ark.

(d) With respect to the alleged discrepancy in reference to the number of animals it should be noted that when the command was first given one hundred and twenty years before the catastrophe, the number indicated was a general one; when the time for action arrives an additional detail is given, viz., that of the few clean beasts seven should be taken.

(e) The repeated statements, concerning the entering in of the ark (7:5, 13, 15), only lend vividness to the narrative and heighten its dramatic effect.

An examination of these representations will show that in most cases they are untenable.

III. We may now go a step farther, and endeavor to present in condensed form the substance of each account.

1. *The Priest's account:* Noah in his time was a most pious man; all flesh was corrupt. God reveals to Noah that he will destroy the earth by a flood, and commands him to build an ark in which he shall take his wife, his three sons, their wives, a pair of every kind of animals in order to preserve life upon the earth. In Noah's 600th year the deluge comes, in part from the subterranean depths, in part from the windows of heaven. He enters the ark with his family and the animals. The water increases; the ark swims; it reaches a height of 15 cubits above

the highest mountains; everything upon land perishes; for 150 days the water increases. Then the subterranean sources are restrained, the windows of heaven are closed, and after the 150 days the water begins to subside. On the 17th day of the 7th month the ark rests upon the mountains of Ararat. On the 1st of the 10th month the tops of the mountains are seen. In the 601st year, 1st month, 1st day of the month, the water has subsided; on the 27th day of the 2d month the earth is dry. Noah leaves the ark. God blesses Noah (cf. 1:28), appoints him lord over the beasts of the earth, and authorizes him to eat flesh; but forbids the eating of blood, and warns against the slaying of men. God makes a covenant; promises that there shall not be another deluge, and gives the rainbow as a sign of the covenant. The covenant is the *goal* of the whole story.

2. *The Prophet's account:* (The announcement to Noah of a deluge, of a command to build the ark is omitted.) Jehovah calls Noah and his family to enter the ark, together with animals, the clean by sevens, the unclean by twos, because within seven days he will bring a forty-day rain upon the earth to destroy all life; Noah obeys. After seven days, the rain begins; it falls forty days and forty nights. Jehovah closes up Noah in the ark. In the forty days the ark rises above the earth. All living beings except Noah perish. Then the rain stops; Noah opens the window of the ark and sends a bird to ascertain the condition of the water, first a raven, then a dove, and seven days later the dove again, who this time brings an olive leaf; then, after another seven days, the dove is sent but does not return. Then he takes off the covering of the ark and finds that the earth is dry. (The statement concerning the departure from the ark is also omitted.) Having left the ark, he builds an altar, offers of the clean animals and fowls an offering to Jehovah, who accepts it and declares that, in view of the fact that man's heart is evil from his youth, he will not again interfere with nature's order and laws.

IV. *The Contents in Detail of the Deluge Stories.*

1) *Noah and his Age, 6:9-12.* Noah is represented as a just man, relatively upright; a righteous man in contrast with his

contemporaries. He is one who, like Enoch, walks with God. His times are corrupt and full of violence.

2) *The Announcement of the Deluge.* The end of all flesh is decreed. Because of the violence which man is doing in the earth, God will destroy him. One family, however, will be saved, and to secure this deliverance instructions are given for the building of an ark (6:14-16). The ark is not a ship, for there are no sails or oars; it is a chest, and is intended to float. It is to be of cypress or gopher wood, a material hard and durable; it is to be five times longer and twice broader than Solomon's temple. The inside arrangement for light is not clear. According to Delitzsch "a window extended along every side of the ark downwards under the roof, and the opening for light ran around the ark, only interrupted by the rafters of the roof, at the height of a cubit." There are three stories or cells. The directions are explicit as to who and what shall be saved: Noah and his family, a pair of every living thing, and the necessary provisions. It is impossible not to ask one's self how an ark of the size described could contain two of every living being of all flesh, including fowl, cattle, creeper, and seven of every clean beast. When it is remembered that the species of mammals are numbered by the hundreds, the different kinds of birds by the thousands, reptiles and insects by the tens of thousands; when calculation is made for the food of various kinds, including animals required, and for the attendants who should prepare this food and take care of the animals which were to serve as food,—one may well doubt whether it was really the purpose of the writer to express the thought which has been commonly taken from his words.

3) *The Coming of the Deluge.* In Noah's 600th year, at the beginning of the year, he is commanded to enter the ark, and the deluge comes. After the entrance the door is closed by Jehovah himself.

4) *The Extent and Duration of the Deluge.*—For a presentation of the argument which shows conclusively that the deluge was not universal, the reader is referred to the article in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, which is easy of access. No commentator of

repute who has written within twenty-five years would for a moment endeavor to teach a universal deluge. The strong language of the writer, for example, "every beast," "every living thing," "every fowl," "all the high mountains under the whole heavens were covered," "fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered," "all flesh," etc. (7:21-23) are explained by some as oriental hyperbole, by others as indicating the writer's own opinion that the deluge was universal. The table on page 25 presents a statement of the narratives concerning the duration of the deluge and the explanation of these statements will turn upon one's decision as to the single or double account.

5) *The Exit from the Ark*.—The place of the stranding of the ark is in the district of Ararat. The condition of things is discovered by sending out birds. The similarity of the Assyrian account is here very striking. When it has at last been discovered that the deluge has subsided, the command is given (8:15-17) to leave the ark, and the departure takes place (vs. 18, 19).

6) *The Covenant*.—This is the climax in the priestly narrative. An altar is built, clean animals are taken and offered as burnt offerings. Jehovah smells the odor of pacification and promises not again to inflict such a curse upon the ground for man's sake. "The order of the world shall not again be so completely interrupted. Man's imagination is evil from his youth; perfect conduct cannot be expected from him. Whoever sins is to be visited with immediate destruction, and the world can go on." Then follows the blessing of Noah in the familiar phraseology of Gen. 1:22. The original covenant is renewed, and the entire world is placed for the second time in subjection to man. In connection with this covenant permission is given to eat flesh. If flesh has been eaten before it has been eaten without divine warrant. But a limitation is established: flesh with its life, its blood, shall not be eaten. The law of emphasis also is placed upon the value of man's life by the establishment of the law for murder, and in connection with all this the covenant is entered into. A sign is given, viz., the rainbow. It is interesting to compare the rainbow among other nations. It will be remembered that it was the

path which Iris traveled from heaven to earth; a sign, according to Homer, of war or icy winter; a weapon, according to the Hindus, in the hands of Indra who hurled darts upon impious giants; an indication among the Chinese of troubles and calamities; a bridge among the Scandinavians to unite heaven and earth. Had the rainbow existed beforehand? Yes. What significance is attached to it in this connection? "It is a reminder of God's merciful promise never to destroy again earth's inhabitants." "Shining upon a dark ground which just before broke forth in lightning, it represents the power of the light of love over the fiery darkness;" "originating from an effect of the sun upon a dark cloud, it typifies the willingness of the heavenly to pervade the earthly;" "stretched between heaven and earth it is a bond of peace between both, and spanning the horizon it points to the all-embracing universality of the divine mercy."

For lack of space we must omit the consideration of the later history of Noah, which would include (1) the introduction of the vine and Noah's disgrace (9:18-22); (2) the prediction of Noah concerning his sons (9:24-38).

The reader will remember that the next paper will contain (after a brief presentation of the deluge stories of other nations, and a comparison of these with the Hebrew stories) an estimate, from various points of view, of the biblical narrative.