

APPENDIX

Appendix A Ancient Mythology

Myths, sagas and legends are not mere fables or fairy-tales, designed purely for entertainment. They are spiritually and culturally important stories, depicting divine-cosmic-human relationships, whereby man attempts to understand and explain his origins and destiny, the world in which he lives and the big ‘why’ questions; for example, why we exist and why we die. While *myths* focus on the divine and timeless element, in pictorial language; *sagas* focus on the human element or event, in a geographical and historical context, but mostly without historical foundation; and *legends* are essentially sagas with an edifying thrust or moral to the story.¹ For the purpose of this exercise, sagas and legends will generally be classified under myths.

Passed down from generation to generation, from mouth to mouth, with each retelling, ancient myths grew and changed, embellished by man’s vivid imagination. The original story and source were inevitably lost in antiquity. Eventually, however, they were committed to art form and writing, initially on clay or stone, and later on leather or papyrus.

Although often interpreted literally, the primary purpose of myth is to convey an essential understanding of reality. When we tell our children about Santa Claus, for example, we do so because of the reality behind the Christmas myths. As our children grow, they learn the difference between the reality and the myth. We smile knowingly at the gullibility of the child who believes in Santa Claus; and too of the ancient Greeks who believed in their Apollo or Zeus. When it comes to the Bible, however, many of us are like children clinging to a literal Santa Claus; ignorant of the fact that the Biblical stories and notions of the nature and origins of

¹ Otzen B, Gottlieb H, Jeppesen K. *Myths in the Old Testament*. SCM Press, London; 1980: 1-13.

the cosmos and of mankind merely reflect far more ancient myths. Furthermore, many fundamentalists stubbornly refuse to accept modern historical and scientific research that has exploded all these old myths.

World View – The Cosmos

The ancients generally regarded their small universe to be comprised primarily of water, separated above and below by a solid dome like sky protecting a flat earth below. This dish-like earth floated, with the support of pillars, on a boundless cosmic sea in which were all kinds of mythic monsters² dangerous to man, especially where the mirror-like vault of heaven rested on the ‘ends of the earth’. The gods, sitting on thrones above the vault, would open louver-like windows to allow the waters above to pour down as rain. The winds were kept in storehouses, at the Four Corners of the Earth, and released through gates in the vault. The small sun and ever-renewing moon gods, and tiny stars [angels] would faithfully enter the vault at their appointed times, through eastern gates, and move westward just below the vault before exiting through western gates. They would then quickly skirt around the exterior of the vault to obediently await their next circuit. Meteors were disobedient or falling angels. Lightning and thunder occurred when the gods were angry or fighting.

² **Psalm 74:13-14** Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces,

Psalm 104:25-26 . . . this great and wide sea, wherein [are] things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts . . . that leviathan, [whom] thou hast made to play therein.

Isaiah 27:1 In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that [is] in the sea.

With minor variations, this was, according to Joseph Campbell,³ an authority on mythology, “an infinitely old notion, going back to the early Bronze Age. It appears in Sumerian cuneiform texts of about 2000 BCE and is the image authorized in the Bible.”

In an excellent article on *The Flat-Earth Bible*, Schadewald⁴ comments: “The Biblical cosmology is never explicitly stated, so it must be pieced together from scattered passages. The Bible is a composite work, so there is no *a priori* reason why the cosmology assumed by its various writers should be relatively consistent, but it is. The Bible is, from Genesis to Revelation, a flat-earth book.

“This is hardly surprising. As neighbours, the ancient Hebrews had the Egyptians to the southwest and the Babylonians to the northeast. Both civilizations had flat-earth cosmologies. The Biblical cosmology closely parallels the Sumero-Babylonian cosmology, and it may also draw upon the Egyptian cosmology.

“The Babylonian universe was shaped like a modern domed stadium. The Babylonians considered the earth essentially flat, with a continental mass surrounded by ocean. The vault of the sky was a physical object resting upon the ocean’s waters (and perhaps also upon pillars). Sweet (salt-free) waters below the earth sometimes manifest themselves as springs. The Egyptian universe was also enclosed, but it was rectangular instead of round. Indeed, it was shaped much like an old-fashioned steamer trunk. What was the Hebrew view of the universe?

“The Genesis creation story provides the first key to the Hebrew cosmology. The order of creation makes no sense from a conventional

perspective but is perfectly logical from a flat-earth viewpoint. The earth was created on the first day, and it was ‘without form and void’ (Genesis 1:2). On the second day, a vault, the ‘firmament’ (*raqiya*, which comes from *riqqua*, meaning ‘beaten out’) of the King James Version was created to divide the waters above the vault from those below. Only on the fourth day were the sun, moon and stars created, and they were placed ‘in’ (not above) the vault.”

Oriental versus Occidental Myths

According to Campbell,⁵ “The geographical divide between the Oriental and Occidental ranges of myth and ritual is the tableland of Iran. Eastward are the two spiritual provinces of India and the Far East; westward, Europe and the Levant.

“Throughout the Orient the idea prevails that the ultimate ground of being transcends thought, imaging, and definition. It cannot be quantified. Hence, to argue that God, Man, or Nature is good, just, merciful, or benign, is to fall short of the question. One could as appropriately – or inappropriately – have argued, evil, unjust, merciless, or malignant. All such anthropomorphic predications screen or mask the actual enigma, which is absolutely beyond rational consideration; and yet according to this view, precisely that enigma is the ultimate ground of being of each and every one of us – and of all things.

“The supreme aim of Oriental mythology, consequently, is not to establish any of its divinities or associated rites, but to render by means of these an experience that goes beyond: of identity with that Being of beings which is both immanent and transcendent; yet neither is nor is not. Prayers and chants, images, temples, gods, sages, definitions, and cosmologies are but ferries to a shore of experience beyond the categories

³ Campbell J, *Myths To Live By*. Penguin Books, New York; 1972:4

⁴ Schadewald RJ, *The Flat-Earth Bible*, 1995:1

<http://www.lhup.edu/~dsimanek/febible.htm>

Reprinted from *The Bulletin of the Tychonian Society* #44 (July 1987).

⁵ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology*. Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:3-6

of thought, to be abandoned on arrival for, as the Indian Kena Upanishad states: ‘To know is not to know, not to know is to know.’ . .

“In the Western ranges of mythological thought and imagery, on the other hand, whether in Europe or in the Levant, the ground of being is normally personified as a Creator, of whom Man is the creature, and the two are not the same; so that here the function of myth and ritual cannot be to catalyse an experience of ineffable identity. Man alone, turned inward, according to this view can experience only his own creaturely soul, which may or may not be properly related to its Creator. The high function of Occidental myth and ritual, consequently, is to establish a means of relationship – of God to Man and of Man to God. Such means are furnished, furthermore, by institutions, the rules of which cannot be learned through any scrutiny of nature, whether inward or outward. Supernaturally revealed, these have come from God himself, as the myth of each institution tells; and they are administered by his clergy, in the spirit of the myth.

“However, certain exclusively Occidental complications result from the fact that, where two such contradictory final terms as God and Man stand against each other, the individual cannot attach his allegiance wholly to both. On the one hand, as in the Book of Job, he may renounce his human judgment in the face of what he takes to be the majesty of God: ‘Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer thee?’ Or, on the other hand, as in the manner of the Greeks, he may stand by his human values and judge, according to these, the character of his gods. The first type of piety we term religious and recognize in all traditions of the Levant: Zoro-astrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The other we term, in the broadest sense, humanistic, and recognize in the native mythologies of Europe: the Greek, Roman, Celtic, and Germanic. . . .

“Much of the complexity and vitality of the Occidental heritage must be attributed to the conflicting claims – both of which are accepted – on the one hand, of the advocates of what is offered as the Word of God, and, on

the other, of the rational individual. Nothing quite of the kind has ever seriously troubled the mentality of the Orient east of Iran, where the old Bronze Age cosmology of the ever-circling eons – static yet turning ever, in a round of mathematical impersonality, from everlasting to everlasting – endures to this day as the last word on the universe and the place of man within it. All, according to this vision, though in apparent tumult, is harmony at root, as a manifestation of the all-supporting, all-suffusing mystery of being, which transcends thought, imaging, and definition; that is to say, transcends the search of science. Like a jewel, ever turning facets to the light, apparently in change but actually unchanging, this Bronze Age image of the cosmos, still intact in the Orient, renders a fixed world of fixed duties, roles and possibilities: not a process but a state; and the individual, whether man or god, is but a flash among the facets. There is no concept, or even sense, of either will or mind as a creative force.”

While the Bible draws from both Oriental and Occidental sources, it is primarily from the latter, with its more linear – as opposed to circular – view of time, with a beginning and an ending, that we find parallels in the scriptures.

Creation Myths

Creation myths can be broadly classified into two types: those in which the creation is essentially in the mind of the creator before it is spoken into existence, and those (the majority) in which the creation emanates from the active involvement of the creator(s), from their doing or being, often as a result of a struggle or conflict. Both types are found in the Book of Genesis. In the first chapter of Genesis, a transcendent God in the heavens speaks each aspect of creation into existence with the words ‘let there be . . . and it was so’. In the second creation account, in Genesis chapter two, the more personal God, Yahweh, actively forms man from the earth, as a potter molds clay, and then breathes life into his nostrils. From around the world, come some creation myths of the first type, bearing a striking resemblance to those found in Genesis; for example in

the Mayan 'Popol Vuh',⁶ we see creation by the word of the Creator, in the same order as in Genesis:

*"Admirable is the account of the time in which it came to pass that all was formed in the heaven and upon earth . . . by the Creator and Maker . . . that one by whom all move and breathe . . .
'Let it be thus done. Let the waters retire and cease to obstruct, to the end that earth exist here, that it harden itself and show its surface . . . and that the light of day shine in the heavens and upon the earth . . . until human beings exist, endowed with sentience.'
Thus they spake while the earth was formed by them. . .
'Earth,' they said, and immediately it was formed."*

From the Maori of New Zealand, we have the creation myth of "Io (Iho), the Supreme Being . . . regarded as eternal, omniscient, and the creator of the universe, of the gods, and of man:

*'Io dwelt within the breathing-space of immensity.
The Universe was in darkness, with water everywhere.
There was no glimmer of dawn, no clearness, no light.
And he began by saying these words,-
'Darkness become a light-possessing darkness.'
And at once light appeared.
(He) then repeated those self-same words in this manner,
'Light, become a darkness-possessing light.'
And again an intense darkness supervened. . . .
(Io) then looked to the waters which compassed him about,
and spake a fourth time, saying:
'Ye waters of Tai-kama, be ye separate.
Heaven be formed.' Then the sky became suspended.
'Bring forth thou Tupua-horo-nuku.'
And at once the moving earth lay stretched abroad.'"⁷*

⁶ Eliade M.: *Gods, Goddesses, and Myths of Creation*. Harper & Row, N.Y.;1974:92-94

⁷ Eliade M.: *Gods, Goddesses, and Myths of Creation*. Harper & Row, N.Y.;1974:86

Such similarities, of course, lend neither credence or otherwise to the first chapter of Genesis, but merely illustrate a common attempt by man to explain his origins. There is good evidence, however, that the creation myths of Genesis have been adapted from those of their neighbours. As early as 2850 BCE, there was an Egyptian myth of creation by the power of the word. Everything that exists was once in the mind of the god Ptah, who spoke those things into existence by his tongue. At the completion of creation, he also rested and was satisfied.

And from the time of Abraham (around 2000 BCE) comes the very long Mesopotamian creation story, the *Enuma Elish* ('From on high'), which was recited annually in the temples at Ur and Haran. As the world began in seven days, in Genesis, and ends with seven seals and the blast of seven trumpets, in Revelation, so the *Enuma Elish*, in the words of Romer,⁸ "ordered its story in seven units, in seven generations of a family of gods. And the convergence runs far beyond this magic number. Just as in the first three days of Genesis' Creation, Jehovah makes the elements of the world, so, in the *Enuma Elish*, the first three generations of gods are the gods of water, silt, and sky, the elements of the Mesopotamian world. And just as in the fourth, fifth and sixth days of Genesis' Creation, God makes the animate world, so, in the *Enuma Elish*, the fourth, fifth and sixth generation (sic) of gods are gods of moving things. Jehovah makes the sun, moon and stars of the calendar on the fourth day; so the male deity so the fourth generation of *Enuma Elish* is Anu, the god of heaven. Just as Jehovah rests [after making man on the sixth day], so the god Marduk too of the sixth generation of *Enuma Elish*, creates man so that the Mesopotamian gods might rest. The two stories, the two universes are built of the same bricks."

In the first biblical creation story, we thus find a unique blend of the Egyptian concept of god speaking creation into existence, using the Babylonian order of creation (minus the grotesque personal involvement of the gods in the *Enuma Elish*). And we also find elements of the local

⁸ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:35

Canaanite creation myths. In the Canaanite religion, established long before the Hebrew tribes invaded the land of Canaan, the supreme god, El, was the ‘creator of the created’, ‘father of man’, and ‘father of years [time]’. In one of their Ugaritic myths, the fertility god Baal attacks and defeats the fearsome sea dragon Lotan, representing Yam, the god of chaos.⁹ In Genesis 1:2, El’ohim conquers and divides the chaotic waters: the spirit [wind] of God [Elohim] hovered [blew] over the face of the waters [Hebrew *tehom* ‘the deep’, closely related etymologically to *tiamat*]. As Baal subdued Lotan, and Marduk conquered Tiamat in the *Enuma Elish*, so too did Yahweh the sea monsters Rahab¹⁰ and Leviathan.¹¹

The myth-like Genesis narratives reflect an old Israelite mythological tradition, the final version of which has been censored and structured in accordance with the ideas of those [priests] who, in post-exile Judah, had the responsibility for this final retouching.¹² Although the creation account of Genesis 1 retains the ancient mythology of a plural god [El’ohim] bringing forth plants and animals out of Mother Earth, it is all done by the word of an aloof transcendent sky god who neatly orders everything in six days (by combining earth and plants on day three and animals and man on day six) and brings order out of chaos. God thus separates [as do priests the clean from the unclean] the light from dark, the waters above from those below, plants from land, man from animals and, finally, sacred from secular time. It was not until the Babylonian captivity that the sabbath assumed prominence and was, therefore, given

⁹ Otzen B, Gottlieb H, Jeppesen K. *Myths in the Old Testament*. SCM Press, London; 1980:16-17

¹⁰ Psalm 89:9-10 Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.

Isaiah 51:9 Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, [and] wounded the dragon?

¹¹ **Psalm 74:13-14** Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces

¹² Otzen B, Gottlieb H, Jeppesen K. *Myths in the Old Testament*. SCM Press, London; 1980:23-24

an unshakable foundation in the creation myth; given to tell Israel not so much *how* the world came into being, but of their God’s intentions in imposing order on the world. All of this suggests a priestly imposition on an older creation myth. We shall now examine parallels between the second biblical creation account and other ancient myths.

Mother Earth, the Serpent’s Bride, & the Sky God

Neolithic man’s earliest deity (from 7500 BCE in the Levant) was the bountiful goddess Earth, as the wise, benign and benevolent mother, sustainer of life and receiver of the dead for rebirth.¹³ Beside her, as consort, the phallic Serpent Lord was revered, presumably because of the serpent’s wonderful ability to shed its skin and renew its youth, and so master the mystery of rebirth.

In the creation account of Genesis 2, we find the personal god, Yahweh, forming man also from Mother Earth, again copied from Israel’s neighbours. “Egyptian paintings show us how the god Khnum fashioned man from clay on a potter’s wheel, and the verb which in Gen. 2.7 is used of the creation of man (sic) usually designates the activity of the potter (*yasar*). . . Side by side with the notion we meet in *Enuma Elish*, according to which man was formed from the blood of the rebel god Kingu, we find in other Babylonian texts the idea that man was fashioned out of clay. In the words of the epic of Gilgamesh:

*Aruru washed her hands,
Pinched off clay and cast it on the steppe,
[on the steppe] she created valiant Enkidu.*”¹⁴

As man was formed from the blood of Kingu, mixed with clay,¹⁵ so Adam received the divine breath of life into his lifeless form; and so too was Eve created from Adam’s rib.

¹³ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana; 1991:7

¹⁴ Ibid pp42-43

¹⁵ Heidel A. *Babylonian Genesis*, p65.

Eve, however, was not the original and supreme goddess mother. For, around 1250 BCE in the Levant, this goddess (the Babylonian Tiamat, the Greek Demeter, the Biblical Eve) was radically transformed, reinterpreted, and, in a large measure suppressed by those suddenly intrusive patriarchal tribesmen whose traditions have come down to us chiefly in the myths of Babylon and Greece, and in the Bible.¹⁶

The Babylonian ‘*Enuma elish*’, according to Eliade,¹⁷ tells of:

“a chain of events beginning with the very first separation of order out of chaos, and culminating in the creation of the specific cosmos known to the ancient Babylonians. As the gods are born within the commingled waters of their primeval parents, Apsu and Tiamat, their restlessness disturbs Apsu. Over Tiamat’s protests, he plans to kill them; but the clever Ea learns of his plan and kills Apsu instead. Now Tiamat is furious; she produces an army of monsters to avenge her husband and to wrest lordship from the younger generation. The terrified gods turn to Ea’s son Marduk for help. Marduk agrees to face Tiamat, but demands supremacy over them as compensation. They promptly assemble, declare him king, and send him forth, armed with his winds and storms. The battle is short; the winds inflate Tiamat’s body like a balloon and Marduk sends an arrow through her gaping mouth into her heart. He then splits her body, forming heaven and earth with the two halves. After putting the heavens in order, he turns to Ea for help in creating, out of the blood of Tiamat’s demon-commander Kingu, the black-haired men of Mesopotamia.”

In Greece, according to Campbell,¹⁸

“The counterpart for the Greeks was the victory of Zeus over Typhon, the youngest child of Gaea, the goddess Earth - by which deed the reign of the patriarchal gods of Mount Olympus was secured over the earlier Titan broods of the great goddess mother. The Titan’s form, half man, half snake, we are told, was enormous. . . . And this terrible thing would have become the master of creation had not Zeus gone against him in combat.”

¹⁶ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:7

¹⁷ Eliade M.: *Gods, Goddesses, and Myths of Creation*. Harper & Row, N.Y.;1974:98

¹⁸ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:22

The Biblical account likewise reflects the conquest of the matriarchal order by invading patriarchal nomads, utilizing the priestly device of mythological defamation. Man [Adam] does not come from mother Eve, but Eve from Adam. And it is not Adam whom the serpent deceives, but Eve, through whom paradise is lost. Why is it a serpent that is so closely associated with Eve in this biblical story?

The Garden of Eden

Among the earliest Akkadian seals and figurines, from the third millennium BCE, the tree of life, the goddess of the tree, the serpent lord, the lion-birds (cherubim), the Garden of Immortality and the four rivers that flow from it to water the earth are all found depicted.¹⁹ The Canaanite god Baal, and even the Greek Zeus were often iconographically represented in serpent form. “It is a common characteristic of many oriental mythologies that the tree of life grows in a paradisaal (sic) garden inhabited by the gods, and that they retain their immortality by eating its fruit.”²⁰ In the Babylonian epic, Gilgamesh is deprived of eternal life by a serpent that steals his plant of immortality.²¹ In the Bible, Adam is deprived of immortality by a serpent that deceives Eve into giving him a forbidden plant to eat.

In the Biblical myth of the fall, these earlier myths and symbols are present but radically reinterpreted and turned one hundred and eighty degrees. No longer gods, the woman and the serpent are cursed and placed under the dominion of man; and the uniquely Hebrew tree of knowledge of good and evil deprives man of the tree of eternal life.

¹⁹ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:7-20

²⁰ Otzen B, Gottlieb H, Jeppesen K. *Myths in the Old Testament*. SCM Press, London; 1980:47

²¹ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:92

As Campbell points out, “No one familiar with the mythologies of the goddess of the primitive, ancient, and Oriental worlds can turn to the Bible without recognizing counterparts on every page, transformed, however, to render an argument contrary to the older faiths. In Eve’s scene at the tree, for example, nothing is said to indicate that the serpent who appeared and spoke to her was a deity in his own right, who had been revered in the Levant for at least seven thousand years before the composition of the Book of Genesis.”²²

The tree of knowledge of good and evil, found in no other religion¹³, has strong sexual connotations. It was at this tree that the serpent [Canaan’s fertility god, Baal] induced Mother Eve to seduce Adam [man] with fruit [perhaps Canaan’s fertility fig], whereupon they became ashamed of their nakedness and covered their sexuality with fig leaves. When Adam consequently ‘knew’ Eve, she conceived Cain, and the race was immortalized at the expense of personal immortality, the pain of motherhood, patriarchal dominance, and reduced fertility of the land. Yahweh appeared to be particularly threatened by man’s acquisition of this knowledge, and his potential immortality [Genesis 2], especially through intermarriage with the sons of God [Genesis 6], and the threat of man invading heaven [Genesis 11]. The Hebrew God was not prudish, but he could bear no rivals, especially from among the Canaanite fertility gods.

Cain and Abel

The conflict between Israel and Canaan, and their respective gods, is also reflected in the conflict between Cain, the original cultivator of the land, and the favoured Abel, representing the younger nomadic Israel. This conflict too had its mythological source in antiquity: “It is perhaps possible to glimpse, far down in the oldest stratum of the narrative of

²² Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:9

Cain, reminiscences of an ancient ritual murder in which a shepherd was sacrificed to ensure the fertility of the fields.”²³

The conflict between those who revere Mother Nature, as the eternal, all-wise and benign originator of the mythical paradise, and those who recognise a darker side of nature – the poison in the serpents fangs, the thorns and thistles – and the need for man to dominate and control her, continues today.

Tower of Babel

The Babylonian ziggurat, of which there were many, was undoubtedly the basis for this myth. The Bible, however, “reverses the meaning of the ziggurat, which was not meant to storm and threaten heaven, but to provide a means by which the gods of heaven might descend to receive the worship of their slaves on earth.”²⁴ Like the Indian’s Sanskrit, the Hebrews believed (until very recently) that theirs was the original language at creation, the very language that God spoke, and that all other languages were secondary and inferior.²⁵

The Flood

Around 2000 BCE, long before the Genesis stories were written, a number of legends about a great flood and a man who made an arc to save the animals circulated in the ancient Near East, from Mesopotamia to India.²⁶ One of these, found in certain Akkadian texts discovered in 1853 in the library of Ashurbanipal, in Nineveh, is the Gilgamesh Epic²⁷, the eleventh tablet of which contains the following account:

²³ Otzen B, Gottlieb H, Jeppesen K. *Myths in the Old Testament*. SCM Press, London; 1980:57

²⁴ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:113

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Benson A. Facts About Noah’s Flood.

<http://www.prudentialpublishing.com/Noah.htm>

²⁷ Eliade M.: *Gods, Goddesses, and Myths of Creation*. Harper & Row, N.Y.;1974:145-150.

*Tear down [your] house, build a ship! . . .
 Aboard the ship take thou the seed of all living things.
 The ship that thou shalt build, her dimensions shall be to measure . . .
 Ten dozen cubits the height of each of her walls,
 Ten dozen cubits each edge of the square deck.
 I provided her with six decks . . .
 Three sar [measures] of bitumen I poured into the furnace,
 Three sar of pitch I also poured inside . . .
 All my family and kin I made go aboard the ship.
 The beasts of the field, the wild creatures of the field,
 All the craftsmen I made go aboard.
 Shamash had set for me a stated time:
 When he who orders unease at night
 Will shower down a rain of blight,
 Board thou the ship and batten up the gate!
 That stated time had arrived: . . .
 A black cloud rose up from the horizon. . . .
 For one day the south-storm blew,
 Gathering speed as it blew, submerging the mopuntains . . .
 Six days and six nights
 Blows the flood wind, as the south-storm sweeps the land.
 When the seventh day arrived . . .
 The sea grew quiet, the tempest was still, the flood ceased.
 I looked at the weather: stillness had set in,
 And all of mankind had returned to clay . . .
 I opened a hatch, and light fell on my face . . .
 On Mount Nisir the ship came to a halt . . .
 When the seventh day arrived,
 I put forth and set free a dove.
 The dove went forth, but came back;
 There was no resting place for it and she turned round. . . .
 Then I sent forth and set free a raven.
 The raven went forth and, seeing that the waters had diminished,*

*He eats, circles, caws, and turns not round.
 Then I let out [all] to the four winds
 And offered a sacrifice,
 I poured out libation on top of the mountain . . .
 The gods smelled the sweet savour, . . .
 As soon as the great goddess arrived,
 She lifted up the great jewels which Anu had fashioned to her liking:
 ‘Ye gods here, as surely as this lapis
 Upon my neck I will not forget,
 I shall be mindful of these days, forgetting [them] never.’*

One does not need to be a genius to see the similarities between this story and that in Genesis, both of which were probably copies of an even earlier saga or legend. In both, there are the divine revelations of an impending flood, commands to build a vessel, the use of pitch in its construction, the beasts of the field going aboard, the release of both a dove and a raven, the landing on a mountain, the subsequent sacrifice, a sweet odour and the divine rainbow (jewels) of promise. There are, of course, significant differences, such as the plurality of gods and the duration of the rain. But even here, the six days of rain and seventh day of rest in the Gilgamesh Epic reminds us of the Genesis creation story, which also has many parallels with the flood myth: the divine power over the waters of chaos to produce land, a garden and a vineyard, the nakedness of Adam and Noah, animal sacrifice and a covenant between God and man. The reason for the flood also has some similarities and important differences. In the Gilgamesh Epic, Enlil, the author of the whole affair, upset that a remnant of mankind had survived, was questioned by the wise Ea:

*Thou wisest of gods, thou hero,
 How couldst thou, unreasoning, bring on the deluge?
 On the sinner impose his sin,
 On the transgressor impose his transgression!*

In a parallel version, the epic of Atrahasis, the gods are said to have sent the flood because men multiplied so much that their noise disturbed their

sleep! In Genesis 6:1-5, it was the sexuality and multiplication of mankind, and intermarriage with the gods that prompted Yahweh to send the flood. “The remarkable story about the ‘sons of God’ who become attracted to the daughters of men, mix blood with them, and so produce the race of giants, is commonly regarded as one of the most mythological texts in the OT.”²⁸

From other flood myths come even more similarities. Maurice’s history of Hindustan contains the following account. “It is related in Padmapooran that Satyvrat, whose miraculous preservation from a general deluge is told at large in the Matsya, had three sons, the eldest of whom was Jyapeti, or Lord of the Earth; the others were Charma and Sharma, which last words are in the vulgar dialects usually pronounced Cham and Sham.” One cannot but notice the similarity of the names of these three sons to Japheth, Ham and Shem, the sons of Noah.

That there are similar and antecedent flood myths to that of Noah could, of course, mean that they were all based on an actual event, the exact details of which had long been lost and overlaid with myth. As we shall see in Appendix B, the Babylonian myth probably was based on fact. But it was not a universal flood of Noahic proportions, for which there is no geologic evidence, and the Biblical account is by no means the original.

Moses

Around 2350 BCE, at least a thousand years before the legendary Moses, Sargon of Agade became the first of a series of strong men from the Syro-Arabian desert to invade Mesopotamia and establish a kingdom.²⁹ He, or his chronicler, left us the following legendary biography, which has all the

hallmarks of Otto Rank’s³⁰ *Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, common to the Greek Erichthonius, the Hindu Vyasa, and to the Hebrew Moses:

“Sargon am I, the mighty king, Monarch of Agade. My mother was of lowly birth; my father I knew not; the brother of my father is a mountain dweller; and my city, Azupiranu, lies on the banks of the Euphrates.

My lowly mother conceived and bore me in secrecy; placed me in a basket of rushes; sealed it with bitumen, and set me in the river, which, however, did not engulf me. The river bore me up. And it carried me to Akku, the irrigator, who took me from the river, raised me as his son, made me a gardener: and while I was a gardener, the goddess Ishtar loved me.

Then I ruled the kingdom . . .”³¹

Although bitumen or pitch was commonly used in Babylon, it was not used in Egypt until Ptolemaic times, well after the time of Moses, when it was introduced from Palestine.³² The lovely story of Moses in a basket lined with pitch is therefore a myth, based, very likely, on this and other myths. There is the Egyptian legend of the god Horus, who is hidden in the Nile delta by his mother Isis to protect him from the wrath of his uncle Seth.³³

The legendary Moses was also associated with the mythical serpent, magically creating one from Aaron’s rod. “And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent.”³⁴ He was even

²⁸ Otzen B, Gottlieb H, Jeppesen K. *Myths in the Old Testament*. SCM Press, London; 1980: 58.

²⁹ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:72

³⁰ Rank O. *Der Myths von der Gebuert des Helden* 2nd edition, Franz Deuticke Verlag, Leipzig and Vienna; 1992

³¹ King LW. *Chronicles Concerning Early Babylonian Kings*, Vol. II. Luzac and Co., London;1907: 87-91

³² Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:55

³³ van Biema D. In Search of Moses. TIME Magazine, TIME AUST., Sydney; Dec. 14, 1998:62

³⁴ Exodus 7:10

commanded by Yahweh to create a brazen image of a serpent, to which but a look would cure snakebite. “And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.”³⁵ This image of a serpent (or two) on a pole has been found on Sumerian vases, and Syro-Hittite and Akkadian seals from before 2000 BCE.³⁶ It was associated with Asclepius, the Greek god of healing, and is still the icon of the medical profession today.

As we have seen, the serpent and goddess earth were symbols of rebirth. It is no surprise or coincidence, therefore, that the Gospel of John links an experience of being born again, not only with the wind or spirit that blows on the waters at creation, and at the crossing of the Red Sea, but also with Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness.³⁷ Nicodemus, as a learned man, was expected to understand the origin and meaning of these motifs. It was at a mythical burning bush that *El’ohim* revealed himself to Moses³⁸ and informed him of his real name, *Yahweh*, which is thought to come from the Arabic root *hwy*, “to blow”.³⁹

God the Father

Amongst the almost ubiquitous polytheistic mythology from ancient times throughout the world, there are some with remarkable similarities to the Biblical myths. The Kikuyu, a Bantu-speaking tribe of East Africa, have believed in one God, *Ngai*, the Creator and giver of all things, and the Isoko people of Southern Nigeria, in a Supreme Being who created the world and who is spoken of as “Our Father.” To the Pawnee Indians, Tirawa atius is “the Father above.”

³⁵ Numbers 21:8

³⁶ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:9-13

³⁷ John 3:3-14

³⁸ Exodus 3:2-15

³⁹ Meek T.J. *Hebrew Origins*. Harper Torchbook edition, N.Y.; 1960:108-109

After an extensive study of Australian Aboriginal legends, Mircea Eliade⁴⁰ states: “It seems quite clear that *Nurrundere*, *Nurelli*, *Bunjil*, *Mungan-nagaua*, *Daramulun*, and *Baiame* all represent the same being under different names. . . This supernatural being, by whatever name he is known, is represented as having at one time dwelt on the earth, but afterwards to have ascended to a land beyond the sky, where he still remains, observing mankind. As *Daramulun*, he is said to be able to ‘go anywhere – and do anything.; He can be invisible; but when he makes himself visible, it is in the form of an old man of the Australian race. He is evidently everlasting, for he existed from the beginning of all things, and he still lives.”

One can see parallels with the Gospel of John in one of the longest and best preserved of the extant Sumerian narrative poems, ‘Enki and the World Order’:⁴¹

*“My father, the king of the universe,
Brought me into existence in the universe . . .
I am the first born son of An,
I am the ‘great storm’ . . .
I am the lord of the Land . . .
I am the father of all the lands . . .
I am the record keeper of heaven and earth,
I am the ear and the mind of all the lands,
I am he who directs justice with the king An on An’s dais,”*

Dying & Rising Gods / Sons of God

The earliest recorded mythology of Sumer was of the dead and resurrected god Dummuzzi-absu.⁴² A dominant Ugaritic myth is the struggle between Baal and Mot, the god of death. Baal dies and descends

⁴⁰ Eliade M.: *Gods, Goddesses, and Myths of Creation*. Harper & Row, N.Y.;1974:5

⁴¹ Eliade M.: *Gods, Goddesses, and Myths of Creation*. Harper & Row, N.Y.;1974:22

⁴² Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:48

to the underworld, whereupon his sister, Anat, also descends into the earth, defeats Mot and revives Baal, who then overthrows the kingdom of Mot and declares himself the 'King of the gods.'⁴³

The Greek demigod, Hercules [Heracles], was conceived by Zeus, father of the gods, in the womb of Alcmena. After his birth, Hera sent two serpents to destroy the babe. But he overcame the serpents and, later, numerous other demons, before being betrayed by Deianira, who hanged herself in remorse. Though feeling forsaken, he nevertheless went willingly to be sacrificed on Mount Oeta, watched afar off by a close friend, whereupon he ascended as immortal god to heaven in a cloud. Again by Zeus, the virgin, Persephone, conceived the ever-dying, ever-living god of bread and wine, Dionysius, who was torn to death and resurrected.⁴⁴ Apollo, patron god of the *Iliad* and the light god of the world, was required to go down into the world as a man to drive away diseases and serve Admetus, to expiate a murder, after which he was exalted to Mount Olympus, heaven of the Greek gods.

His son, Asclepius, born to a woman Coronis, healed a man's crippled fingers in a temple, a boy's muteness, a woman's failing vision, and a soldier's blindness (by anointing with an eye-salve). He even raised a man from the dead, and would have raised all of mankind but Zeus, father of the gods, slew him with a thunderbolt, whereupon he was himself raised, in a cloud of fire, from a demigod to full deity.⁴⁵ Originating in the 5th century BCE, the cult of Asclepius, the great healer and saviour, was celebrated in hundreds of temples across the Roman empire until at least the 2nd century CE, after which it was stamped out by Christianity. The Christian apologetic, Justin Martyr admitted: "When we say that He [Jesus] cured the lame, the paralytics, and those blind from birth, and

⁴³ Hvidberg F. *Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament* Leiden: Brill, and Copenhagen; 1962: 22-40

⁴⁴ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:27

⁴⁵ Benson A. The Era When Men Became Saviors and Gods.

<http://www.prudentialpublishing.com/Culture.htm>

raises the dead to life, we seem to attribute to Him actions similar to those said to have been performed by Aesculapius."

The great Roman historian, Titus Livius, wrote of the myth of Romulus, one of the cofounder of Rome, how that he was taken up from earth in a dense cloud "to be a god, the son of God." Both Julius Caesar and his successor, Augustus, bore the titles, son of God (Divi filius). The time of Christ and his apostles was an age of ready deification of people, as attested to in passages in Acts 12 and 28, where Paul himself was proclaimed a god. It was also an age of transcultural syncretism, especially in the Greek world of thought, out of which came the New Testament. It is not difficult to see how the Hellenistic church fathers 'Christianised' most of these Greek myths, embodying them in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; and his mother Mary, the 'Mother of God', who finds her origins in the goddess Isis.⁴⁶ As Campbell says, "the great and little heroes of the world act irresistibly as magnets to those floating filaments of myth that are everywhere in the air."⁴⁷ In the course of the development of the Christian legend, "Jesus the Nazarene disappeared and gave place to the glorified Christ."⁴⁸

The difficulty for the church fathers was the incorporation of the divine Christ into a Hebrew monotheism. It took several centuries of controversy culminating in the Council of Nicea to achieve this; and yet even this complicated formula of multiplicity in unity [trinity] found its origins in the multiple manifestations of Zeus.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, however, this resulted in an even more exclusive, closed, ethnic monotheism than that found in the Old Testament. Not only were all other gods declared to

⁴⁶ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:42-43

⁴⁷ Ibid:347

⁴⁸ Guignebert C. *Jesus*, translated from the French by Hooke SH. University Books, NY; 1956:43

⁴⁹ Campbell Op. Cit. pp148-149

be false, or demons, but there was only “one name”⁵⁰ given under heaven whereby man could be saved, and only one “narrow way” of finding and articulating this “God manifest in the flesh.”⁵¹ And all this by a church that even adopted the date of the annual resurrection of the Greek god Adonis⁵² (slain by a boar) on which to celebrate its Easter. Christianity thus adsorbed, consumed and systematically destroyed all the myths (and libraries of books) on which it was built. Campbell⁵³ states: “Comparative cultural studies have now demonstrated beyond question that similar mythic tales are to be found in every quarter of this earth. When Cortes and his Catholic Spaniards arrived in Aztec Mexico, they immediately recognized in the local religion so many parallels to their own True Faith that they were hard put to explain the fact. . . There was a High God above all, who was beyond all human thought and imagining. There was even an incarnate Saviour, associated with a serpent, born of a virgin, who had died and was resurrected, one of whose symbols was a cross.

“Modern scholarship, systematically comparing the myths and rites of mankind, has found just about everywhere legends of virgins giving birth to heroes who die and are resurrected. India is chock-full of such tales, and its towering temples, very like the Aztec ones, represent again our many-storied cosmic mountain, bearing Paradise on its summit and with horrible hells beneath. The Buddhists and the Jains have similar ideas. And, looking backward into the pre-Christian past, we discover in Egypt the mythology of the slain and resurrected Osiris; in Mesopotamia, Tammuz; in Syria, Adonis: and in Greece, Dionysos: all of which

⁵⁰ Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

⁵¹ 1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

⁵² Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:138

⁵³ Campbell J, *Myths To Live By*. Penguin Books, New York; 1972:9-12.

furnished models to the early Christians for their representations of Christ.

“Now the people of all the great civilizations everywhere have been prone to interpret their own symbolic figures literally, and so to regard themselves as favored in a special way, in direct contact with the Absolute . . . each in its own way, the navel of the universe, connected directly – as by a hot line – with the Kingdom of Light or of God.”

Perhaps we need to replace our exclusive ethnic monotheism with the syncretic concept beautifully illustrated in a few stanzas from “The Universal Prayer” by Alexander Pope:

*Father of All! In ev'ry Age,
In ev'ry Clime ador'd,
By Saint, by Savage, and by Sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!*

*Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land,
On each I judge thy Foe.*

*To thee, whose Temple is all Space,
Whose Altar Earth, Sea, Skies,
One Chorus let all Being raise,
All Nature's Incense rise!*

Appendix B

Science and Creation

According to modern science, the earth is at least 4.5 billion years old; a tiny spinning spec orbiting the sun at over 100,000 km/hr in solar system which, itself, revolves at over 70,000 km/hr around the center of a galaxy, containing 200 billion stars in an unimaginably vast universe, containing billions of such galaxies. The still expanding universe is so old and so vast that the light from the most distant of these galaxies has taken billions of years to reach earth.

Such is the power of fundamentalism, that members of the “Flat Earth Society” still prefer to believe the Bible rather than the evidence, not only

of science, but even of their own senses. Not even pictures of a beautiful spherical earth taken from outer space or of world events instantaneously transmitted across the world via satellites orbiting the earth can convince them that the world is round. Adherents to “Creation Science” are little better. They go to great lengths to try to prove that the world was recently created in six days and deluged by a universal flood, as the Bible says, while conveniently ignoring a vast body of scientific evidence to the contrary. One of their authoritative texts on the subject is the book, *In the Beginning*, by Walt Brown, which I shall now critique.

Brown, Walt. *In The Beginning: Phoenix: Centre for Scientific Creation, 1995.*

Speed of Light and the Age of the Stars:

Walt Brown argues (p. 158) that the speed of light is not constant, but is slowing down for some inexplicable reason. Based on 164 separate measurements over the past 300 years, he believes that the speed of light has slowed by an amazing 1% in that time; and quotes the Russian cosmologist, Troitskii, as concluding that “the speed of light was ten billion times faster at time zero”. He further argues that this would have resulted in the initial light from the most distant stars traveling to earth in a much shorter time.

But Brown does not believe in time zero being 4.5 billion years ago! Rather, he believes that the earth and stars were formed only around 6,200 to 7,300 years ago (p. 193). If we accept his premise that the speed of light has slowed at the rate of 1% every 300 years, the speed of light 7,300 years ago would have been at least 78% of its present speed,

making almost no difference to the apparent age of the stars. Thus, his argument falls flat on its face, unless you accept that the universe is indeed very old. You cannot base your arguments on the very premise you are attempting to destroy.

Assumptions and Nonsense

In attacking the concept of an old earth, Brown makes numerous groundless assumptions and comes up with nonsense arguments, often against straw men; a molten earth, for example. “If the earth was initially molten, it would have cooled to its present condition in much less than 4.6 billion years” (p. 28). So what! Maybe it reached its equilibrium long ago. So, he concludes: “The known temperature pattern inside the earth is only consistent with a young earth”. Where is the logic or evidence for that statement?

Uniformity and Catastrophe

Throughout his book, Brown picks and chooses between uniformity and catastrophe, whichever best suits his purposes, as the basis for his recent creation thesis. For example, he applies the principle of uniformity to the shrinkage of the sun, by about 0.1% over the last century or so, to argue that “had the sun existed several million years ago, it would have been so large that its heat would have destroyed all life on earth.” (p. 30). On the basis of uniformity, he admits that it would take at least thirty million years for the current rate of erosion to deposit the amount of sediment now on the ocean floor (p. 26). But, he is quick to emphasize, the great flood would have greatly hastened that deposition. And how does he explain that catastrophe?

He first assumes an old world-view that “the earth had a large amount of salty, subterranean water – about half of what is now in the oceans. . . . The increasing pressure in the subterranean water stretched the overlying crust [which] . . . reached its failure point. Failure began with a microscopic crack . . . its rapid propagation . . . circling the earth in several hours. Water exploded with great violence out of out of the ten-mile-deep ‘slit’, which wrapped around the earth like the seam of a baseball. All along this globe-circling rupture, a fountain of water jetted supersonically into and above the atmosphere . . . This produced torrential rains such as the earth has never experienced – before or after. Some jetting water rose above the atmosphere where the droplets froze . . . [and] fell at certain locations where it buried, suffocated and froze many animals, including some mammoths.” (pp. 87-88). And he accuses evolutionists of having a good imagination! I wonder why, since “the world’s population at the time of the flood was in the billions” (p. 193),

not a single human was found among the frozen mammoths. Of course, there have been numerous catastrophes that have rocked this planet, asteroid strikes, ice ages, floods, and violent upheavals in the earth’s crust, to name just a few. And we have no guarantee that there won’t be more.

Distinct Types of Animal

The platypus, Brown points out, is a very unique animal, found only in Tasmania and Eastern Australia, with mammalian, reptilian and bird-like features that makes it difficult to place logically on the evolutionary tree. He completely misses the significance of this, however. There could be no more powerful evidence against the universal yearlong flood that he assiduously argues for, than the existence of unique animals like the platypus in isolated pockets of the globe. I would be interested in his explanation as to how they were transported to the Arc, in the Middle East, and back again after the flood.

Amazing Design

Brown quite rightly points out, I believe, that the evolution of even the most basic living cell by pure chance is a mathematical impossibility (p. 12). He then goes on to ponder the amazing living technology found in nature, such as “the sonar systems of dolphins, porpoises, and whales; the frequency-modulated radar and discrimination system of the bat,” as evidence for a Creator. But he fails to see the significance of the fact that such designs had only one purpose: death! Would the Creator have made these predatory abilities if death were not part of God's plan? Surely the existence of these, and many more remarkable predatory abilities in nature, is evidence that death has always been a partner to life on earth.

Speech and Language

Brown, who has apparently never heard a talking parrot, claims that “speech is uniquely human” and so is language (p. 8). He admits that chimpanzees (who are unable to vocalise) have been trained to communicate using sign language, but incorrectly states that they “do not pass their skills on to other chimpanzees”. He correctly reports on studies of feral children, and those born deaf, indicating that human speech (like that of the parrot) is not automatic but learned from other humans. Therefore, he says, speech could not have evolved. Apparently, Adam

was very different from the rest of us, if God could teach him to speak fluently in less than one day, to the extent that he was able to name every living creature! Likewise with language; typical of his approach throughout the book, he begins with an assumption, that if language evolved “the earliest languages should be the simplest”, and then uses this premise to disprove evolution, because ancient languages are more complex. If one began with the opposite premise, would that prove evolution? The English language has certainly evolved towards simplicity rather than complexity.

Noah's Flood

There is absolutely no archaeological support for a universal flood that reduced the world's population to only eight people at around 2456 BCE (according to Ussher's Biblical chronology). From archeological excavations and radiocarbon dating, we know that Jericho, Catal Huyuk and Hactar were continuously inhabited from around 6000 BCE until well after 2000 BCE, with no evidence of a destruction by flood or of an interruption to their civilization.⁵⁴ Thebes contains tombs from the 6th Dynasty, indicating that it was a prominent Egyptian metropolis from 2755 BCE. Likewise, there was a flourishing civilization in China, the Yang-Shao Culture, from 3900 to 1700 BCE, in India, at Mohenjo-Daro, and Pakistan, at Harrapan, from 2500 to 1700 BCE. The Chinese were in existence long before Noah, and so were the African Negroes depicted over 2000 BCE, as they are today, on Egyptian granite.

There is good archeological and geological evidence for a massive local flood along the River Euphrates, the origin of the great flood myths. Excavations at Ur, in southern Babylonia, by Leonard Wooley in 1929, revealed an eight-foot thick stratum of clay, laid down about 3200 BCE, separating, above and below, artifacts representative of two different civilizations. A similar discovery was made by Professor Stephen Langdon at Kish, another Sumerian city. As Benson points out, "This flood was local. It covered a strip of 400miles long and 100 miles wide in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. It wiped out the current local Mesopotamian civilization along the banks of the river Euphrates and assumed great importance in the minds and the tradition of the Babylonians who came afterwards. This Akkadian tradition was eventually handed to the Jews by some of their ancestors. (The legendary Abraham supposedly came from the area of the flood, from the city of Ur. He would have been the one to perpetuate this tradition among the Hebrews.)"⁵⁴ *ibid*

If Abraham was 60 years old when Noah died, as the Bible says, there is no indication in the scriptures that they knew each other. Nor was either of them apparently known to contemporary historians. As Andrew Benson aptly concludes: "Supposedly, Noah died during a period of history in which Sumerian and Egyptian inscriptions abound. Yet the ancestor of mankind lived his final years in anonymity."⁵⁴ *ibid*

The earth has witnessed numerous and enormous local floods. One does not need to postulate a universal flood for the formation of coal. In America's Grand Canyon, successive floods have laid down layer upon layer of trees, many thousands of years old, each layer separated by thick silt. The presence of sea-life fossils on tall mountains does not prove a mountain-high flood. The geological evidence rather points to massive uplifting of these mountains millions of years ago, which accords with the age of the fossils thereon.

One does not need modern science to disprove Noah's flood. When Sir Walter Raleigh saw all the new animals in America, he immediately understood how impossible it would have been for Noah to pack every species on earth into any arc, however large.

⁵⁴ Benson AD, Facts About Noah's Flood
<http://www.prudentialpublishing.com/Noah.htm>

Appendix C History of the Old Testament

On the western edge of the Middle East, sandwiched between the East Coast of the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, descending steeply from the Sea of Galilee in the north down into the Dead Sea, is a tiny strip of coastal plains and hinterland hills. Linking Egypt and Mesopotamia, Africa and Eurasia, this vital trade route was the land in which the Bible was born during the first millennium BCE.

In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, we are told of the origins of man. Adam [man] and Eve [mother] had two sons: Cain, a horticulturist, and Abel, a nomadic shepherd. When God rejected Cain's offering, preferring that of Abel, Cain slew his younger brother and was consequently driven out to a land in the east. In Genesis 4, he becomes the father of Enoch and, in the seventh generation, Lamech. In Genesis 5, however, Enoch and Lamech, the father of Noah and so of the entire human race, came through Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve. The significance of this will become evident later.

In Genesis 10, we find a very neat and concise account of the origins of the nations and cities from the islands of the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. From the latter came 'the isles of the Gentiles.' From Ham came Canaan (the father of Sidon, the Jebusite and the Amorite), Mizraim (father of the Philistines) and Cush, who begat Nimrod, who, we are told, established kingdoms, along the River Euphrates, at "Babel [Babylon], and Erech [Uruk], and Accad [Akkad], and Calneh in the land of Shinar [Sumer]." ⁵⁵ Noah's descendants must have been extremely fertile for his great-grandson to have four populated cities to reign over, unless, of course, the flood had not wiped out the remainder of the human race. But why this special interest in kingdoms a thousand kilometers to the east of Israel?

⁵⁵ Genesis 10:10

Genesis 11 then deals with the brick Tower of Babel in the land of Shinar [Sumer] where, it is supposed, human languages originated. ⁵⁶ We have already shown (Appendix B) that there is good historical evidence for a huge local (but not universal) flood in this region. Can we find historical support for Genesis 10 and 11?

The Bible refers to Nimrod as "a mighty one in the earth," ⁵⁷ and yet his name, as such, does not occur in secular history. At Urfa, a city in southern Turkey, local tradition holds that Abraham was thrown into a fiery furnace by a wicked king Nimrud of Chaldea. And there is today the city of Nimrud in Iraq, but there is no Nimrod. We do know, from cuneiform tablets dating back to 3300 BCE, that Sargon of Agade [Akkad] was the first great Semitic monarch, around 2350 BCE, ⁵⁸ and he called himself "the mighty king." He was followed by a dynasty of ten descendants, just as there are ten generations from Adam to Noah, and another ten from Noah to Abraham. This first Sumerian dynasty ended in 2150 BCE, when it was overthrown by an incursion of barbarians from the northeast. ⁵⁹ A century later, Sumerian culture was restored for a time by the pious king Gudea of Lagash.

It was during this brief period of the Third Dynasty of Ur that the old Sumerian epics were committed to numerous cuneiform tablets, and a number of enormous ziggurats [temple towers] were built at Babel, Ur and elsewhere in Mesopotamia [modern Iraq]. These were still in use when the Greek historian Herodotus visited Babylon, in about 450 BCE, after Ezra and his people were there. He described the Tower of Babel as

⁵⁶ Genesis 11:2-3

⁵⁷ Genesis 10:8

⁵⁸ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana; 1991:116

⁵⁹ Scharff A, Moortgat A. *Agypten und Vorderasien im Altertum*. Verlag F Bruckman, Munich; 1950:269-71

an enormous brick ziggurat with a central staircase on which priests were constantly ascending and descending, ministering to a blue-glazed brick shrine, the ‘Gate of Heaven’, at the top. This undoubtedly provided the inspiration for the Biblical account of the Tower of Babel. A Babylonian inscription translated by Sayce⁶⁰ reads in part:

“Babylon corruptly to sin went and small and great mingled on the mound . . . to their stonghold in the night entirely an end he made. In his anger also the secret counsel he poured out to scatter (abroad) his face he set, he gave a command to make strange their speech. . . Violently they wept for Babylon.”

Abraham

It would have been during this Third Dynasty of Ur that the legendary Abraham [Abram] was said to have left Ur of the Chaldees,⁶¹ with his father Terah and wife Sarah [Sarai], for Haran, a thousand kilometers up the river Euphrates. Lot, the son of Abraham’s deceased brother Haran, also went with them.⁶² In 1875 BCE,⁶³ at 75 years of age, according to the Bible, he then left his father in Haran and, set out with servants, sheep, cattle and camels⁶⁴ on another 1,000 kilometer trek down through Canaan and Philistia to Egypt. On his way, he gathered considerable wealth through the beauty of his wife who, in her seventies, attracted the attention of the Phillistine king, Abimelech,⁶⁵ and of the Egyptian Pharaoh.⁶⁶

One would have thought that secular history would be strewn with references to this illustrious ‘father of many nations’ who traversed the entire known world of his day, rubbing shoulders with aristocracy. But he

doesn’t rank a whisper anywhere. No trace of him or his family has ever been found.⁶⁷

There are also a number of anachronisms in this romantic Biblical tale. Neither the term Chaldea [Chaldees] nor domesticated camels were in use in Abraham’s day, or for more than a millennium afterwards. The reason traders and nomads traveled the long way from Ur through Haran (Semitic for ‘Crossroads’ - an unlikely name for Abraham’s brother) was that short cuts through the desert depended on the much later use of camels. Finally, the Philistines⁶⁸ first came to the southern shores of Palestine from Crete around 1196 BCE,⁶⁹ well after Abraham. From the Israel Stela,⁷⁰ we know they were not yet at Askelon or Gezer in 1207 BCE. These anachronisms, therefore, indicate quite late additions or modifications to an earlier legend.

The purpose of the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Israel were political rather than historical. The various Hebrew tribes that had invaded and occupied Canaan needed to be legitimised, as God’s ‘chosen people’, and welded together by a common Semitic ancestry from the line of Shem. So important was racial purity that wives for Isaac and Jacob had to be found among Abraham’s incestuous relatives back in Mesopotamia,⁷¹ a journey of over 1,600 kilometers! Lot’s daughters, likewise, could not have children to the local but cursed *Hamites*, so they slept with their father.⁷² Incest served the interest of racial purity and the Old Testament, therefore, has no problem with it.⁷³

⁶⁰ Sayce AH. *Records of the Past*, Vol VII, p 131 (in) Courville DA. *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications*, Vol. II. Challenge Books, Loma Linda, CA.: 1971:141

⁶¹ Genesis 11:31

⁶² Genesis 11:27

⁶³ Courville DA. *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications*, Vol. II. Challenge Books, Loma Linda, CA.: 1971:88

⁶⁴ Genesis 24:10

⁶⁵ Genesis Chapters 20, 21 and 26

⁶⁶ Genesis 12:15-20

⁶⁷ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:26

⁶⁸ Genesis 26:8 And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac [was] sporting with Rebekah his wife.

⁶⁹ Kenyon KM. *Archeology in the Holy Land*. Frederick A. Praeger,N.Y.; 1960:194

⁷⁰ see page 5

⁷¹ Genesis 11:29, 22:23, 24:15, 29:5-10

⁷² Genesis 19:31-36

⁷³ The only scriptural injunction against incest (a word not used in the Bible) is found in 1 Corinthians 5:1, where Paul acknowledges that this ethic comes from the Gentiles!

The Canaanite farmers on the other hand were descendants of Ham, cursed and destined to be either driven out of the land, as Cain was, or become servants to the Hebrew shepherds, as foretold in Genesis 9:22-25:

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid [it] upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces [were] backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed [be] Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

Other nations from whom Israel took their land, the Amalekites and Jebusites in the south, and the Hittites in the north, were also descendants of Ham, as were their arch enemies, the Philistines invading from the south west. Nations to the east, however, through which the Hebrew tribes had traversed but not settled, were regarded as relatives. Midian⁷⁴ was a son of Abraham, Edom was from Esau,⁷⁵ and Moab and Ammon were Lot's sons.⁷⁶

To further legitimise their claim on the land, father Abraham had long ago traversed the length and breadth of Canaan, bought a field at Hebron⁷⁷ in the heart of Palestine, and dug wells at Gerar.⁷⁸ To Abraham and his seed, God had promised this land forever,⁷⁹ “all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession.”⁸⁰ This divine promise was repeated to his son, Isaac, at Gerar,⁸¹ and to his grandson, Jacob [Israel] in a dream involving

⁷⁴ Genesis 25:2

⁷⁵ Genesis 25:30

⁷⁶ Genesis 19:37-8

⁷⁷ Genesis 23:16-18

⁷⁸ Genesis 26:15

⁷⁹ Genesis 12:7, 13:14-17

⁸⁰ Genesis 17:8

⁸¹ Genesis 26:3

a ladder [ziggurat] at Bethel, the biblical “gate of heaven.”⁸² His seed would be as the dust of the earth, and Yahweh would give to them all the land to the north, south, east and west of Hebron. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had all been buried there.⁸³ They belonged there and the land was rightfully theirs. Why then had they not occupied Palestine since that time?

Israel in Egypt

There was a famine in Canaan so, we are told, Israel sought refuge in Egypt, where he discovered his long-lost son, Joseph, was now “ruler over all the land of Egypt.”⁸⁴ Consequently, an unnamed Pharaoh invited Israel and his tribes to move to Goshen, about 1660 BCE according to biblical chronology,⁸⁵ where they would live off the fat of the land.⁸⁶ But they multiplied so greatly that “the land was filled with them” and a “new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph,” became alarmed that they had become “mightier than we,” and forced them into slavery. “And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses.”⁸⁷ After they had sojourned there for 430 years,⁸⁸ God remembered them in their suffering and brought them back again out of Egypt, the house of bondage, by the strong arm of Moses, to give them the Promised Land of Canaan, flowing with milk and honey.⁸⁹

⁸² Genesis 28:12-19

⁸³ Genesis 25:9, 35:27-29, 49:31, 50:13

⁸⁴ Genesis 41:43

⁸⁵ Since Abraham was 100 at the birth of Isaac (Gen. 21:5) who was 60 at the birth of Jacob (Gen. 25:26) who was 130 when he entered Egypt (Gen. 47:28), this event was 290 years after the birth of Abraham, or 215 years after his entry to Canaan at 75, in 1875 BCE. (1875 – 215 = 1660). See Courville DA. *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications*, Vol. II. Challenge Books, Loma Linda, CA.: 1971:88

⁸⁶ Genesis 45:9-18

⁸⁷ Exodus 1:7-11

⁸⁸ Exodus 12:40-41

⁸⁹ Exodus 3:8

This story has a ring of truth about it. Numerous nomads and Bedouin traversed the 'Way of Horus' seeking pasture and trade, and many foreigners came to live and work in Egypt. An Egyptian painting in the tomb of Khumhotep, from about 1890 BCE, depicts a family of nomads, the men bearded and dressed like Joseph in 'coats of many colours', going down into Egypt to trade. The eastern Nile Delta was a regular haven for nomads in time of famine. The Bedouin, from *The Red Land* of Edom (Biblical descendants of *red* Esau, who sold his birthright for Jacob's *red* pottage), would regularly bring their herds down to the Nile Delta to escape the dry summer heat.⁹⁰

Here too, in the heart of the eastern Delta, excavations at the mound of Tell el Dab'a, an ancient city built by governor Khnumhotep, have revealed a rich mixture of Egyptian and Canaanite cultures. Many of the houses were of square design, typical of Syria and Canaan at this time, but otherwise unknown in Egypt. Canaanite temples and pottery, and even an Egyptian scarab bearing the name of a prince called Jacob, have been unearthed in this "part of Canaan in Egypt."⁹¹ And from this city, sure enough, we find a Semitic people from western Asia overrunning all of northern Egypt during the seventeenth century BCE.

These northern invaders established the dynasty of the Hyksos, or 'shepherd' kings. They were not the Israelites, but they would have accepted Israel more readily than would the indigenous Egyptians, who disdained shepherds. The Hyksos ruled over most of Egypt until the 1530s BCE, when the southern Theban princes, who established a new dynasty of Pharaohs, expelled them. If the Israelites were to fulfill their scriptural 430 years of sojourning, and build the cities of Pithom and 'Raamses', they would have to remain a further 300 years, when, low and behold, a 'Pharaoh who knew not Joseph' appears in history at exactly the right time and place. It was Rameses II who built the Delta cities of Pithom and Rameses (near Tell el Dab'a) during his reign from 1279 to

⁹⁰ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:44

⁹¹ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:47

1212 BCE.⁹² Unlike his predecessors, who ruled from sites far to the south,⁹³ his palace was, consistent with the scriptures,⁹⁴ in close proximity to the enslaved Israelites. Furthermore, his firstborn son had died before him, his grave being found as recently as 1995.⁹⁵ Everything, therefore, appears to substantiate the Biblical account, and we should expect to find extensive historical and archeological evidence for the presence of Israel in Egypt, from around 1660 BCE until the Exodus 430 years later.

The history of Egypt, from the time of the building of the pyramids a millennium before this exodus, has been indelibly recorded on stone in considerable detail. According to Romer,⁹⁶ "so accurate are the records of ancient Egyptian history that labels such as 'Bronze Age' and 'Iron Age' have long been as redundant as a flint axe. At ancient Thebes, historians often talk in individual years, sometimes even in months and days." And yet there is not a single solitary reference to Joseph, Moses or any Hebrew slaves in Egypt at that time, even on the gigantic monuments of Rameses II.⁹⁷ Indeed, slavery on such a scale of the type described in the Book of Exodus did not exist in ancient Egypt.⁹⁸ Not a word is recorded, either, about ten great plagues,⁹⁹ culminating in the death of all firstborn sons in Egypt.¹⁰⁰ This would have been not only an enormous tragedy, but also a terrible curse to the Egyptians, who believed that, by careful attention to the cult of the dead, the eldest son ensured a continuity between this world and the next. That such a calamitous event could escape the attention of Egyptian historians is inexplicable.

⁹² Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:57

⁹³ Courville DA. *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications*, Vol. II. Challenge Books, Loma Linda, CA.: 1971:94-95

⁹⁴ Exodus 2:1-9

⁹⁵ Kent Weeks. The Lost Tomb. In van Biema D. In search of Moses. TIME Magazine. TIME AUSTRALIA, Sydney; Dec.14, 1998:60-68

⁹⁶ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:73

⁹⁷ van Biema D. In search of Moses. TIME Magazine. TIME AUSTRALIA, Sydney; Dec.14, 1998:60-68

⁹⁸ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:62

⁹⁹ Exodus chapters 7-12

¹⁰⁰ Exodus 12:29-30

The Exodus

Is there any historical evidence for the exodus recorded in the book of that name? This was no small event: “*And they spoiled the Egyptians. And the children of Israel journeyed from Raamses to Succoth, about, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also **six hundred thousand on foot [that were] men with them; and flocks, and herds, [even] very much cattle.***”¹⁰¹ We are subsequently given the more precise figure of 603,550¹⁰² men aged 26 or older; and exactly the same number again a year after the exodus, when the twelve tribes are individually numbered.¹⁰³ If we add the women, children, youth and mixed multitude to the 600,000 men, there would have been at least two million people, a quarter¹⁰⁴ or more of the population of ancient Egypt, comparable to the population of Sydney. Can you imagine the chaos caused, even today, or the logistics and resources required in relocating a community the size of Sydney? It is hard to believe that such a massive exodus of slaves, taking the spoils of Egypt with them, could have occurred, literally overnight, without leaving a trace in Egypt of either their existence or their exit. “The only foreign mass-migration, an Exodus from ancient Egypt, for which there is any evidence in the archeological records,” says Romer¹⁰⁵ was the expulsion of the Hyksos, three centuries earlier. Surely, if they recorded nothing else, Egyptian historians would have recorded the remarkable drowning of Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea [a mistranslation for the *Sea of Reeds*].¹⁰⁶ Again, dead silence!

In contrast to the rapid and smoothly organized clandestine escape from Egypt, the Bible tells us that the journey to the Promised Land, barely 400 kilometers away, took forty disastrous years of wandering in the Sinai

wilderness.¹⁰⁷ Now, one would imagine that several million people tramping around the preserving deserts of the Sinai for forty years would have left a trail of evidence. “Although its climate has preserved the tiniest traces of ancient bedouin (sic) encampments and the sparse 5000-year-old-villages of mine workers,” says Romer,¹⁰⁸ “there is not a single trace of Moses or the Israelites: and they would have been by far the largest body of ancient people ever to have lived in this great wilderness. Neither is there any evidence that Sinai and its little natural springs could ever have supported such a multitude, even for a week. Several nineteenth-century vicars realized this fact within a day or two of the start of numerous expeditions in search of Moses’ footsteps . . . they quickly realized that the biblical Exodus was logistically impossible and that the Bible was a most ambiguous guide to that desolate region. The biblical description of the Exodus, then flies in the face of practical experience; indeed, the closer you examine it the further it seems removed from all of ancient history.”

There are also many geographical anomalies and ambiguities in the story of the Exodus. One encounters, for example, more than one Mount Sinai,¹⁰⁹ also called Horeb, the mountain of God¹¹⁰ on which the law was given. “Indeed,” says David van Biema¹¹¹ “there are at least eight spots that could have inspired the tale that grips us all.”

But the greatest difficulty we have with the Exodus story, and especially with the above chronology, is the evidence that Israel was already well established in Palestine during the reign of Rameses II. The evidence for this comes from the hieroglyphics on a large granite block discovered by the famous archeologist, Flinders Petrie, at Thebes in 1905. This Israel

¹⁰¹ Exodus 12:36-37

¹⁰² Exodus 38:26

¹⁰³ Numbers 1:1-46

¹⁰⁴ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:57

¹⁰⁵ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:48

¹⁰⁶ Exodus 14:18-28

¹⁰⁷ Exodus 16:35, Numbers 14:33, 32:13, Deuteronomy 2:7, 8:2-4, Joshua 5:6, Acts 7:36

¹⁰⁸ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:58

¹⁰⁹ Exodus 19:23, 31:18

¹¹⁰ Exodus 3:1, Deuteronomy 5:2

¹¹¹ van Biema D. In search of Moses. TIME Magazine. TIME AUSTRALIA, Sydney; Dec.14, 1998:60-68

Stela, as it is now called, tells us that Merneptah, son of Rameses II, plundered Canaan in the 5th year of his reign (1207 BCE). It boasts:

*Canaan has been plundered
and every sort of woe,
Askelon has been overcome,
Gezer has been captured,
Yano'am made non-existent,
Israel is desolate; it has no seed left.*

Corroborating evidence was found, in the 1970s, on a memorial to Merneptah on the wall of a temple courtyard in Thebes. Three badly damaged scenes portray his attack on Askelon and the two other foreign fortresses, while a fourth and somewhat different scene depicts “no fortress, merely a melee of corpses lying on a plain, abandoned before Pharaoh’s army. . . . This, then, would appear to be the oldest known picture of the Israelites while they yet roamed Canaan.”¹¹²

The Israel Stela thus tells us that, in 1207 BCE, the Philistines had not yet arrived at Askelon or Gezer in Canaan; and, more importantly, Israel was already established in Canaan. This, says F.F. Bruce,¹¹³ “is the earliest reference to the Israelites in any record outside the Old Testament.” The earliest Egyptian record we have of Israel, therefore, is not of Joseph, “ruler over all the land of Egypt”, or of Moses, Pharaoh’s adopted son, nor of the Hebrew slaves, the ten plagues, or the Exodus from Egypt, but of Israel back in Palestine! And it puts the whole Exodus story into question:

1. If we date the Exodus after 1247 BCE, then Israel could not have wandered for 40 years in the wilderness before becoming established in Palestine, and then defeated in 1207 BCE.

2. If the Exodus occurred in the first 30 years of the reign of Rameses II, the young city would have been far too small to contain anywhere near the millions of Israelites (according to the scriptures) who left from there.
3. If we attempt to overcome this problem by dating the Exodus much earlier, in the fourteenth or fifteenth century BCE, as do Courville¹¹⁴ and others,¹¹⁵ then the Israelite slaves could not have built the city of Rameses, or have left from it, for it did not yet exist. Scriptural references to ‘Raamses’ would have to be later anachronisms. Also, as already outlined, Courville’s biblical chronology, which puts Abraham’s entry to Canaan at 1875 BCE, is inconsistent with an Exodus before 1230 BCE. There is, of course, a big question about the accuracy of biblical chronology. Dr. Kathleen Kenyon,¹¹⁶ eminent excavator of Jericho, the world’s oldest known city, writes: “It is certain that one cannot build up a chronology on the spans of years attributed to the Patriarchs, nor regard it as factual that Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left Haran and a hundred when Isaac was born and that Jacob was a hundred and thirty when he went into Egypt, for the evidence from the skeletons in the Jericho tombs shows that the expectation of life at this period was short. Many individuals seem to have died before they were thirty-five, and few seem to have reached the age of fifty.”

Whichever way you look at it, the Biblical account, copied, edited and translated numerous times onto parchment and paper, does not fit the rock-hard facts from Egypt. The Exodus story, portraying the birth of a

¹¹⁴ Courville DA. *The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications*, Vol. II. Challenge Books, Loma Linda, CA.: 1971:308

¹¹⁵ Jack JW. *The Date of the Exodus in the Light of External Evidence*. T&T Clark, Edinburgh; 1925.

¹¹⁶ Kenyon KM. *Archeology in the Holy Land*. Frederick A. Praeger, N.Y.; 1960:145

¹¹² Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.; 1988:73

¹¹³ Bruce FF. *Israel and the Nations*. W.B. Eerdmans, Michigan; 1969:13

nation is, therefore, either a myth or a saga, a gross exaggeration of a real event. But, if Israel did not come out of Egypt as the Bible says, what were the origins of this great nation? And what do we make of the Biblical conquest of Canaan?

Israel in Canaan

After forty years of wilderness wanderings, and the death of Moses on Mount Nebo, Joshua led the people of Israel across the Jordan into the Promised Land. The conquest of Canaan began, we are told in Joshua 6, with the total destruction and burning of Jericho, whose walls fell down at the sound of some trumpets and a shout.

What do the archeologists tell us about this small and ancient city that now stands as a barren and torn up tell at the edge of an oasis on the western banks of the Jordan as it approaches the Dead Sea? We find not one fallen wall, but dozens, in concentric circles like the rings of a tree, spanning a period of at least 4,000 years of conquest and rebuilding. At its zenith, the population of Jericho could have reached 3,000. The only time it had been destroyed by fire was around 2200 BCE, and its final destruction had occurred in about 1500 BCE.¹¹⁷ If Joshua and his Israelite army were responsible for this, they could not have been the children of the slaves who built Pithom and Rameses nearly 300 years later!

Their next conquest, we are told, was the city of Ai, some 25 kilometers west of Jericho. The first assault on Ai apparently failed, not because of the ill-advised and inadequate army that was sent to take the city, but because an individual, Achan, had sinned by taking a ‘goodly Babylonish garment’ from Jericho. After Achan and his entire family were suitably punished and disposed of, Joshua outsmarted the inhabitants of Ai and savagely slaughtered all 12,000 of them in accordance with God’s command.

“And [so] it was, [that] all that fell that day, both of men and women, [were] twelve thousand, [even] all the men of Ai. For Joshua drew not his hand back, wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. Only the cattle and the spoil of that city Israel took for a prey unto themselves, according unto the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua. And Joshua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, [even] a desolation unto this day. And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until eventide: and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, [that remaineth] unto this day.”¹¹⁸

When the archeologists dug up the gates of Ai, they did not find a hanged king under a heap of stones. But they did find that the large city had been deserted for over a thousand years before the beginning of the Iron Age (around 1200 BCE).¹¹⁹ It had been a pile of ruins long before Abraham passed that way.

We are told, in Joshua chapter 9, that the children of Israel then journeyed about 20 kilometers southwest of Ai, and came on the third day to the cities of Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim. But the kings of these cities had tricked Israel into swearing an irrevocable oath that they would not destroy them. And so, as foretold by Noah, these Canaanites happily became Israel’s servants, their ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’. After this, Joshua and all the people, several million of them, continued to march southwest, crisscrossing and conquering the Promised Land as they went, all the way back to Goshen, east to Mount Seir, then north through Gilead, east of Jordan, all the way to Mount Hermon in Lebanon.¹²⁰ In all, they defeated 31 kings and decimated their

¹¹⁸ Joshua 8:25-29

¹¹⁹ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y., 1988:86

¹²⁰ Joshua 10-13

¹¹⁷ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y., 1988:69

31 cities including Jerusalem,¹²¹ a city that apparently required the children of Judah to again sack and burn it after the death of Joshua,¹²² and yet still remained a stronghold of the Jebusites until David took it centuries later.¹²³

*And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe. . . . There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all [other] they took in battle. For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, [and] that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses. And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained. So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD said unto Moses; and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land rested from war.*¹²⁴

Only after this whirlwind campaign and savage conquest of Canaan, is the land divided among the tribes of Israel and settled.¹²⁵ Is there any archeological evidence for this? The late Bronze and early Iron Age was a period of extensive pillaging and sacking of the cities of the plains, the highways along which northern invaders came and retreated before the

¹²¹ Joshua 12:7-24

¹²² Judges 1:8

¹²³ 2 Samuel 2:5-9

¹²⁴ Joshua 11:19-23

¹²⁵ Joshua chapters 14-24

Egyptian armies. At Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer, black bands of ash tell of numerous sackings. If Joshua was responsible for one of these, we might expect to see above it an abrupt change of culture, as Hebrew architecture and artifacts replaced those of the Canaanites. But we do not. Mingled throughout the layers are artifacts which could be Mesopotamian, Egyptian or Canaanite; and the pottery and architecture is distinctively Canaanite throughout, as are the temples and religious rites. The tell of Megiddo has been extensively excavated right down to bedrock, and there we find 5,000 year-old temples, with courts, water basins and altars made of ‘unhewn stone’, exactly as God commanded Moses in the Book of Exodus.¹²⁶ In northern Canaan, the rich coastal city of Ugarit, where the 26-letter alphabet was invented and numerous inscriptions made on clay tablets, was destroyed by northern invaders around 1200 BCE. Excavated Ugaritic temples reveal the same ritual lay out as the biblical Temple of Solomon: three-roomed buildings, with shrines in the innermost chambers. Their unique method of construction from stone and timber, moreover, was precisely the same as that used by Solomon centuries later.¹²⁷

To quote Romer:¹²⁸ “Contrary to the biblical story that a savage Israelite army destroyed Canaan’s wicked old cities and established a new faith and a new nation in their place, archeology shows that the reality of change between Bronze and Iron Age Palestine was a gradual transformation in which the traditional forms of worship were maintained.

“Just as the faith of biblical Israel was housed inside the traditional architecture of Canaan so some of the Old Testament’s oldest passages, its liturgy and Psalms are also rooted in Canaanite literature. Indeed, at first glance the connections of the Old Testament and some of Ugarit’s literature are so obvious that it is easy to imagine that this city had special links with ancient Israel. This, however, is not so. Ugarit’s texts are

¹²⁶ Exodus 20:25

¹²⁷ 1 Kings 6:6

¹²⁸ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y., 1988:75-9

much older than Israel, since the city itself was destroyed at the ending of the Bronze Age. Its literature was Canaanite and it is the traditions of that society that influenced the Old Testament. Even so, the scribes of Ugarit knew of the city Jerusalem and its nearby holy Mount Zion; for the hill was known by that name, which in Ugaritic means ‘the seat of a god’. Many Old Testament characters, too, have typically Canaanite names: Absalom and Solomon even hold in them the name of the Canaanite god of the evening star, Solom, just as does the name of Jerusalem itself. . .

“The sacred texts of Ugarit have even been helpful in deciphering some biblical passages that have been scrambled through millennia of copying. David’s lament for his friend Absalom (2 Samuel 1:21), for example, contains the famous, if enigmatic, lines ‘let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings’: an Ugaritic lament has supplied its true meaning, ‘[let there be] no dew, no rain, no surging up of the lower depths’. . . Similarly, those splendidly enigmatic notations which often accompany the Psalms . . . also have direct parallels in Ugaritic Psalms where similar words are placed like the directions on a musical score . . . [and] hint at the strong musical tradition in Canaanite ritual, which biblical Israel took to with enthusiasm.

“Most interesting of all, perhaps, is that these Ugaritic texts have not merely illuminated small details of the Old Testament but have shown us the origins of some of its style. . . Both Ugarit’s great God Baal and Jehovah ‘mount to the clouds’ in their respective chariots, both ‘utter voice’ in thunder and storm, and both stand ‘at the head of the assembly of gods’. And that most striking of Old Testament devices, the list of robust contrasts piled one upon the other, was also used first by Canaanite scribes. [E.g. 1 Kings 19:11] . . . Here, then, in Bronze Age Canaan are the origins of Israel’s sacred liturgy, both of its architecture and of its written word.”

As Andrew Benson¹²⁹ points out, the Ugaritic god *El* was the ‘Creator of heaven and earth [and] of created things’, the ‘father King El’ of creation. In the Ugaritic V text, *El* is the ‘Eternal King’ [*melek olam*], as in Jeremiah 10:10, with gray hair (Daniel 7:9) whose ‘wisdom is eternal’ (Job 12:13) and who is ‘the kindly one, El, the compassionate’ (Exodus 22:27) and who ‘descends from the throne’. Like Yahweh, El had a council or assembly in heaven:

<p>Ugaritica V: “And all the sons of El, and the great council of all the Holy ones with oaths of Heaven . . .”</p>	<p>Psalms 89:5-7: “. . . in the congregation of the saints [holy ones]. For who in the heaven . . . among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints [holy ones] . . .”</p>
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“The major function of the council (or assembly) of the Canaanite and Babylonian gods was to make and carry out the decrees with which they ran the world. Certain members of the assembly were angels, that is, messengers to the world. In Canaanite texts from Ugarit the major gods are depicted as dispatching messengers. From time to time Yahweh sent messengers to punish or to inform. The Canaanite divine messengers were called ml’t, t’dt, and glm. Their Hebrew counterparts are spelled: ml’k, t’d, ‘Im. (The original Hebrew Old Testament text does not contain vowels. Canaanite writing, too, did not contain vowels.)”

Just to the north of Ugarit, was the city of Alalakh, also destroyed around 1200 BCE and now a lonely tell in southern Turkey. Here Richard Wooley discovered the “palace archives which still held the state’s tablets, all written in Mesopotamian cuneiform in the local dialect. The decrees of Alalakh used exactly the same opening formula as the Israelite laws of the Book of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 26:16), ‘This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and

¹²⁹ Benson A. The True Origins of Christianity and the Bible. <http://www.prudentialpublishing.com/inspired.htm>

judgements’.”¹³⁰ Idrimi, a prince of Alalakh, we know from an inscribed statue of him, while dispossessed of his throne for six years, traveled south into central Canaan and lived with the *Habiru*. These nomadic tribes, considered by many scholars¹³¹ to be the Hebrews, entered Canaan from various directions over a period of time, as suggested in the Book of Joshua,¹³² and settled in the western hill country. From their natural fortresses, they would periodically raid the coastal plains, and gradually extended their territory.

The Hurrians

These people, originating in Caucasus, north of Ararat, invaded Mesopotamia about the time of Abraham, establishing the kingdom of Mitanni (1500 – 1250 BCE) in the region of Haran, and subsequently invaded Syria and Palestine, where they displaced or mingled with the settled western Semites.¹³³ The modern Turkish city of Urfa, very close to ancient Haran, has a cave where, according to local tradition, Abraham was born.¹³⁴ It does make more sense to have Abraham born here than at far away Ur of the Chaldees, near the Persian Gulf. Could this father of the Hebrews [Habiru] have been Hurrian [Caucasian]? Certainly, the Israelites liked to think of themselves as ethnically different from most Mesopotamians, regarded as descendants of Ham.

“It has long been noted by scholars,” states Professor Meek,¹³⁵ “that there are certain details in the stories of the early Hebrew patriarchs that do not fit into a purely Semitic background because we have no Semitic parallels, but with or enlarged knowledge of the Hurrians we now have

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Meek TJ. *Hebrew Origins*. Harper Torchbook edition, N.Y.; 1960: 7-18 ff

¹³² Joshua 18:2 And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance.

¹³³ Campbell J. *The Masks of God: Occidental Mythology* Penguin Books, Arkana;1991:121

¹³⁴ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:18

¹³⁵ Meek TJ. *Hebrew Origins*. Harper Torchbook edition, N.Y.; 1960: 7-18 ff

exact Hurrian parallels.” Esau’s selling of his birthright,¹³⁶ for example, was an unparalleled episode until the same sort of exchange was found among the Hurrians. And Rachel’s theft of her father’s household goods and gods,¹³⁷ which had long been a puzzle to scholars, became clear when it was found that, according to Hurrian law, her possession of these ensured for her husband, Jacob, title to her father’s property. “These and similar analogues between the early Hebrews and the Hurrians, along with the occurrence of Hurrian names and references to the Old Testament, indicate quite clearly that the two migrations went together. Hurrians and Habiru, or Hebrews, were found together in Mesopotamia, and it is likely that they would be found together in the west.”¹³⁸

The origins of the Israel, therefore, although obscured in antiquity, are more or less as the Bible says. Far from being a pure race of ‘chosen people’ with a pure faith, however, Israel was almost certainly the product of the amalgamation of many races and many cultures that came together in the melting pot of Palestine at that time. There remains just one puzzle, one piece of the jig saw: the origin of monotheism in Israel. We know that the pleural god ‘El’ [Elohim, El Shaddai] was Canaanite, but when and whence did the Hebrews derive their jealously monotheistic and austere Yahweh [YHWH], usually translated as Lord? This name was foreign to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as Exodus 6:3 plainly tells us:

And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by [the name of] God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

Although it is highly improbable that all the tribes of Israel were ever in Egypt, there is good evidence that part of Israel, probably one of the

¹³⁶ Genesis 25:31-34

¹³⁷ Genesis 31:19

¹³⁸ Meek TJ. *Hebrew Origins*. Harper Torchbook edition, N.Y.; 1960: 15-16

tribes, did come up out of Egypt, and that they may have brought monotheism and, perhaps, the name of Yahweh with them.

Egypt in Israel

Not only do the Genesis stories of Joseph, Potiphar and his wife, Pharaoh and his dreams, sound authentically Egyptian;¹³⁹ but we also find many Egyptian names, myths, spiritual concepts and sayings in the Bible. The Egyptian influence is such that, if Israel had not been in Egypt, as the Bible says, then some of Egypt had to be in Israel.

As in the Genesis creation, so the Egyptian text *The Theology of Memphis*, tells us that everything that exists found its origin in the thought of the mind of the god Ptah, and these thoughts became objects by being pronounced by his tongue. Ptah even ‘rested after he had made everything’ and was satisfied. The concept of the creation of man from dust or clay is Egyptian.¹⁴⁰ The name of ‘Seth’, the younger brother to Cain and Abel and the father of the race through Noah, is Egyptian, and found in Egyptian mythology. The name ‘Moses’ is Egyptian, meaning ‘child’. It is often prefixed by the name of a god as in Ra-Moses [Rameses] or Ah-Moses.

Paralleling Jacob’s dream in Genesis 28:13, a young Egyptian prince also had a dream, as he lay sleeping in the noonday shadow of the Sphinx, in which his god said: “I am your father who will give you my kingdom.” Years later, the dream being fulfilled, this prince, now Pharaoh Tutmosis IV (1400 – 1390 BCE), recorded his vision on a great granite block set between the Sphinx’s paws, beside the great doors of the Egyptian ‘gates of heaven’. Again, quoting from Romer:¹⁴¹ “Just as some Old Testament texts have obvious Mesopotamian origin, so others are clearly Egyptian. Passages in the Books of Genesis and Exodus and the Book of Proverbs, and in some of the Psalms as well, show direct connection with well-

known ancient Egyptian texts. One especially famous poem, the ‘Hymn to Aten’, reputedly written by the heretic Pharaoh Akhenaten about 1345 BC, shows clear and subtle parallel with Psalm 104.

¹³⁹ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:48-51

¹⁴⁰ See Appendix A

¹⁴¹ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:51-53

Hymn to the Aten

When thou dost set in the western horizon
The earth in darkness, like to death.
Men sleep in a bed-chamber, their heads covered,
One eye unable to behold the other.
Were all the goods beneath their heads stolen,
They would be unaware of it.
Every lion has come forth from his lair; All the reptiles bite.
Darkness prevails, and the earth is silence,
Since he who made them rests in his horizon.

Ships sail up and down stream alike,
Since every route is open at thine appearing.
The fish in the river leap before thee,
For thy rays are in the midst of the sea.

How manifold is that which thou hast made, hidden from view,
Thou sole god, there is no other like thee!
Thou didst create the earth according to thy will, being alone.

“The biblical story of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife was also a well-known Egyptian tale that first appears in the ancient literature about 1200 BC.” The Egyptian story is a ‘Tale of two Brothers’, one of whom, Bata, like Joseph, is an estate manager. When the wife of his master attempts to seduce him, but is rejected, as was Potiphar’s wife, she unjustly denounces Bata, and his master, who is also his brother, intends to kill him. At this point the Genesis 39 story diverges from the Egyptian tale, which has Bata indignantly upbraid his brother in a very long speech, and then cut off his own penis and feed it to a fish; reflecting, says Romer, “a mythic combat between two brother gods, Osiris and Seth, in which Osiris’ penis suffers the same fishy fate.”

Psalm 104:20 ff

Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep [forth].
The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

Psalm 104:25-26

[So is] this great and wide sea, wherein [are] things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.
There go the ships: [there is] that leviathan, [whom] thou hast made to play therein.

Psalm 104:24

O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

“Such biblical borrowings from ancient pagan literature, the constant use in the Book of Genesis of ancient myth and language serves above all else to set these Bible stories into the ancient world and at the very beginning of civilization. To believe that such concordances as the stories of Noah and the Babylonian Flood, or the Tale of Two Brothers and the story of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife serve to cast doubt upon the authenticity of the Book of Genesis, is to misunderstand its true purposes. Genesis, in common with most of the Old Testament, is not vulgar history. When the Old Testament decorates itself in the details of local colour, be they Mesopotamian or Egyptian, when stories like that of Bata and the flood are retold, they are always put at the service of an overriding theme: the slow-developing relationship of Israel and Jehovah and this is an unfolding revelation: the definition of a god.”

Monotheism in Egypt

Pharaoh Akhenaten [Amenhotep IV], grandson to the visionary Tutmoses IV, was a heretic who attempted to stamp out Egyptian polytheism and replace it with monotheism. Closing the temples of the powerful priesthood of Amon, he established the state cult of a godhead embodied in the sun disk, or Aten.¹⁴² In *Moses and Monotheism*, Sigmund Freud, the Jewish psychiatrist, speculated that Moses was actually an Egyptian who passed Akhenaten's monotheism on to the Jews. Other scholars, such as Jan Assmann, author of *Moses the Egyptian*, also believe Moses and Hebrew monotheism are a memory of Akhenaten, whose name was purged from all lists of rulers when the priests of Amon retook power.

This theory has recently been challenged, however, by Kent Weeks, in his new book *The Lost Tomb*, in which he describes Akhenaten's monotheism as full of grotesque images and semi-divine, yet vaguely sexual earthbound relationships. Although it does appear an odd ancestor to the austere religion of Yahweh, it is very likely that, if this cult did persist after Akhenaten lost power in 1336 BCE, it would have been refined in the fires of persecution.

“Moses' active nature,” wrote Freud,¹⁴³ “conceived the plan of founding a new empire, of finding a new people, to whom he could give the religion that Egypt disdained. It was, as we perceive, a heroic attempt to struggle against his fate, to find compensation in two directions for the losses he had suffered through Akhenaten's catastrophe. Perhaps he was at the time governor of that border province (Goshen) in which – perhaps already in “the Kyksos period” – certain Semitic tribes had settled. These he chose to be his new people. A historic decision!”

Another theory, put forward by the German scholar, Ernst Knauf, is that the story of Moses could have been built around a Syrian named Bay,

¹⁴² van Biema D. In search of Moses. TIME Magazine. TIME AUSTRALIA, Sydney; Dec.14, 1998:60-68

¹⁴³ Freud S. *Moses and Monotheism*. Alfred A, Knopf, N.Y.; 1939:39-40

who had served as Egypt's chief treasurer. Chancellor Bay flourished after Rameses II, and briefly ascended the throne as Ramose-khayemnetjeru. Civil war ensued, leading not only to his exile but also to that of his followers.

The Levites

As alluded to in Jacob's descriptions of his sons in Genesis 49, the various tribes of Israel had their peculiar characteristics. But the tribe of Levi was quite different from the others. The name 'Levi' is etymologically related to leviathan, referred to in Psalm 104, which parallels the Egyptian Hymn of Aten. The Levites were neither listed nor numbered among the tribes in the first chapter of the Book of Numbers, and they were allocated no parcel of territory in the newly conquered Canaan.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, one gets the impression, from chapter 21 of the Book of Joshua, that they were late arrivals in Palestine, dispersing themselves among the other tribes. They were the priestly clan, the officiators of the sacrifices and the guardians of the law. They wrote much of the Old Testament; and their champion, who led them out of Egypt, was Moses.

Moses

The Book of Exodus tells us that Pharaoh, in an attempt to control the Israelite population, ordered all newborn males to be thrown into the river.¹⁴⁵ As every breeder knows, there is something strangely illogical about this, especially as the Israelites were not yet monogamous. The disposal of the females and/or castration of the males would surely have provided a slave-master with a better alternative. But it would not have provided the storyteller with a suitable introduction to the birth narrative of the most important figure in the Old Testament.

And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took [to wife] a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he [was a] goodly [child], she hid him

¹⁴⁴ Joshua 18:7

¹⁴⁵ Exodus 1:22

*three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid [it] in the flags by the river's brink.*¹⁴⁶

The birth of Moses was not unlike that of the god Horus, who, in the Egyptian legend, is hidden in the Nile delta by his mother to protect him from the wrath of his uncle Seth.¹⁴⁷ It was also that of the mythical hero. Like the mighty Sargon of Agade [Akkad], he was an exile, threatened at birth, exposed as an infant (in a basket lined with pitch), adopted (by Pharaoh's daughter) and later rose to fame, wonderfully humbling those responsible for the exile. We know, of course, that pitch was not used in Egypt until introduced from Palestine many centuries later.¹⁴⁸

“Pharaoh's daughter”, we are told, “called his name Moses [Hebrew *Mosheh*]: and she said, ‘Because I drew him out [Hebrew *mashah*] of the water’.”¹⁴⁹ But, as we have said, the name Moses is Egyptian, meaning “child”, often prefixed by the name of a god as in Ra-Moses. It has been suggested that such a prefix may have been dropped from Moses' name to obscure his real Egyptian origin.¹⁵⁰

According to the Book of Exodus, Moses slew an Egyptian slave-master, just as Levi, the father of his tribe, had slain a man in anger,¹⁵¹ and fled for his life, as Jacob had before him, to the land of Midian. There he married one of the daughters of the desert priests, called Reuel in Exodus 2:18 and Jethro in Exodus 3:1. And it was there in the Arabian desert that God [Elohim] revealed himself to Moses as Jehovah [YHWH or Yahweh]

¹⁴⁶ Exodus 2:1-3

¹⁴⁷ van Biema D. In search of Moses. TIME Magazine. TIME AUSTRALIA, Sydney; Dec.14, 1998:60-68

¹⁴⁸ Romer J. TESTAMENT: The Bible and History. Henry Holt & Co., N.Y.;1988:55

¹⁴⁹ Genesis 2:10

¹⁵⁰ Meyer E. Geschichte des Altertums, Vol II, Part 2J G Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, Stuttgart-Berlin;1937:208

¹⁵¹ Genesis 49:6

and commanded him to return to Egypt, to set his people free and take them to the promised land. The primary function of the story of the exodus and wilderness experience was the Law of Moses. As shown in the appendix on literary sources, however, the so-called laws of Moses borrowed heavily from the Code of Hammurabi (1750-1350 BCE), as well as the Middle Assyrian and Eshnuna codes.

The Books of Moses

Many Christians today still believe the old Hebrew tradition that Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible: the ‘Five Books of Moses’, the Pentateuch (from the Greek, meaning ‘five scrolls’), the Torah (Hebrew for ‘instruction’) or simply ‘the Law’. Apart from the anachronisms already referred to, there are many problems with this. It should be perfectly obvious that Moses could not have written the following texts from the Pentateuch:

Deuteronomy 1:1 These [be] the words which Moses spake unto all Israel on *this side Jordan* in the wilderness . . .

Deuteronomy 34:5-10 *So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses [was] an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping [and] mourning for Moses were ended. . . And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses . . .*

Numbers 12:3 (*Now the man Moses [was] very meek, above all the men which [were] upon the face of the earth.*)

In the following passage from Exodus 3, the J text is in roman type and the E text is in Italics:

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, [even] to Horeb. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush [was] not consumed. 3. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here [am] I. 5. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest [is] holy ground. 6. Moreover he said, I [am] the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. 7. And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which [are] in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. 11. And Moses said unto God, Who [am] I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? 12. And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this [shall be] a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. 13. And Moses said unto God, Behold, [when] I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What [is] his name? what shall I say unto them? 14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this [is] my name for ever, and this [is] my memorial unto all generations. 16. Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and [seen] that which is done to you in Egypt: 17 And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the

Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. 18. And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.

19. And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand. 20. And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go. 21. And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: 22. But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put [them] upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.