

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Week 3: Genesis 6-8

SOURCE CRITICISM

Source Criticism is an attempt to disentangle and identify the various written sources and traditions that have been interwoven to create a literary work.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS

The Documentary Hypothesis claims that the Pentateuch is a composite of four separate, complete, and coherent documents or traditions. Those traditions are:

- **J — the Yahwist.** J gets its name because it uses and allows humans to use the name YHWH (JAHWE in German) before Israel exists (see Genesis 4:26; cf. E and P, below). J appears to have developed in Judah, perhaps during Solomon's day, around 950 B.C.E.
- **E — the Elohist.** The name is derived from E's use of Elohim (Hebrew for "God") rather than YHWH in the early period. E reserves the name Yahweh for the time from Moses on (see Exodus 3:13-15). E appears to have developed in the north, around 850 B.C.E.
- **P — the Priestly source.** P is especially concerned with stories and laws relevant for priests. Like E, it reserves the name YHWH for the period from Moses on (see Exodus 6:3). Many scholars date the development of P to the exile (6th century B.C.E.) or shortly after (5th century B.C.E.).
- **D — Deuteronomist.** D is essentially the book of Deuteronomy. It is not mingled with J, E and P.

J, E and P are either placed end-to-end or intertwined throughout the first four books of the Bible. The major strength of the hypothesis is that it accounts for the differences in ideas and terminology between various sections and stories in the Pentateuch. In particular, it provides a good explanation for the peculiar character of the material labeled P, by suggesting that P reflects the perspective and concerns of Israel's priests. The general consensus among scholars is that the Yahwistic source was the earlier tradition and that a Priestly tradent in the postexilic period, working under greater Mesopotamian influence, added their own details to that tradition.

Biblical scholars have been able to identify two different sources or traditions for the flood story that have been interwoven to create the story found in Genesis 6-8. But before we get to them, let's look at two flood stories from the ancient world that might have served as sources from which the ancient Israelites reacted.

THE YAHWIST TRADITION (J)

The textual tradition known as the Yahwist (J) was so named by academics because of its consistent and unequivocal use of the god of Israel's name, Yahweh. Even though the divine name appears approximately 1,800 times in the Pentateuch alone, the other Pentateuchal sources (Elohist, Deuteronomist, and Priestly) restrain from using it prior to its revelation to Moses in Exodus: at 3:14-15 in the Elohist tradition and at 6:2-8 in the Priestly tradition. Only the Yahwist text, in other words, affirms and acknowledges—in contradiction to the claims of the later Priestly source—that the name Yahweh was known to and frequently invoked by the patriarchs prior to its revelation. According to this tradition, it was known right from the first generation of mortals (Gen 4:26). The Yahwist text itself is most likely a compilation of stories, traditions, and archival material that was shaped into a continuous narrative by a southern Judean scribe or scribes. It is difficult to say when these traditions and stories were shaped into the larger narrative we call the Yahwist, but it could not have been earlier than the 8th century BC. Many of the Yahwist's stories display knowledge of the geopolitical world as it was in the 9th-8th centuries BC. The final form of the Yahwist text was probably fixed sometime in the 7th century BC and continued to be revised into the exilic and post-exilic periods (6th-5th centuries BC).

THE ELOHIST TRADITION (E)

The Elohist source (E), so-named on account of its use of the Hebrew *elohim* ("god/s") to designate the deity prior to Yahweh's revelation to Moses in Exodus, clearly orients itself around the traditions, cultic sites, and patriarchs of the northern kingdom, and is thus accredited with the north as its place of composition. E's date of composition has variously been assigned to the 9th century BC reign of Jeroboam, as a counter narrative to the pro-Solomonic Judean narrative of J, to any time prior to the northern kingdom's fall in 722 BC. It is the shortest in length of the Pentateuchal

sources making its first appearance midway through the book of Genesis (20:1)—presenting itself as a doublet to J—and extending itself into the book of Exodus where it has its strongest showing. Both in the book of Genesis and in the book of Exodus, E is often presented as narrating the same story as J, however, with contrasting narrative details and theological emphases to those of J. These differences might be accounted for by similar traditions being absorbed and modified in different geographical and political contexts, and the varying historical circumstances of its audiences. Or, as a growing number of recent scholars contend, E was added to J in a manner to supplement the J narrative, in an attempt to reinterpret and moralize the J narrative, especially with respect to J's characterization of Jacob as a trickster and usurper. Of course, there are passages where E does not double J at all. These include E's stories about the origins of northern cultic centers such as Bethel and Shechem, E's plague and Passover narratives, which will receive contradictory interpretive insertions by the later Priestly writer, and E's covenant ceremony and the giving of the law at mount Horeb—although here the Yahwist tradition does record a variant and contradictory covenant ceremony, but at Sinai and with a completely different set of Ten Commandments! Contrary to the Yahwist, the climatic event in the narrative of the Elohist is the Moses story. In fact, the Elohist's primary hero is Moses, and this may account for the fact that the Elohist was most likely written by Levites or at least scribes sympathetic to Levite concerns. This is brought out in episodes like the golden calf narrative.

The north had particular cultic practices that, although strongly condemned by the southern writers, particularly the Deuteronomist, were most likely more ancient than the Yahweh-centered cult at Jerusalem in the late 8th century BC. In the north, Yahweh was strongly identified with El and his cultic symbol, the bull. Additionally, a number of E texts speak of El and/or Yahweh at Shechem, Beth-El, or with Jacob in general. In all likelihood the body of literature known as the Elohist is rather a collection of traditions from the north which had a preference for non-anthropomorphic depictions of God, prophecy and divine revelation, and a penchant for moralizing tales. Additional features of the Elohist include its emphasis on the figures Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua, on prophetic traditions of the north and prophecy in general, on divine providence and dreams as the mode of divine communication, and moral propriety often portrayed through the fear-of-god motive.

THE PRIESTLY TRADITION (P)

The Priestly literature, which most likely once existed as an individual scroll, now makes up the largest portion of the Pentateuch and is by far the most represented of the four Pentateuchal sources. It is the Priestly source that provides the main voice and interpretive framework for the first four books of the Torah. Its creation account not only opens the book of Genesis, but its formulaic inserts of genealogies, dates, land settlements, and marriage records provide a chronological framework to the JE material throughout Genesis and into the book of Exodus. It is in Exodus, however, that we first encounter large blocks of Priestly material. Exodus chapters 25-31 and 35-40 are entirely from the Priestly writer. All of the book of Leviticus is likewise from the Priestly pen,¹ and approximately 75% of the book of Numbers as well. In fact, excluding Exodus 32-34, which is a compilation of JE material, the literature spanning Exodus 25:1 to Numbers 10:28, including the entire book of Leviticus, is all from P. In other words, a total of 50 consecutive chapters of Priestly material now occupy the central position of the Pentateuch, and the following texts make up an additional 70% of Priestly material. Excluding the book of Deuteronomy which was amended to the PJE text at a later period, the Priestly source makes up 55% of the first four books of the Pentateuch!

BABYLONIAN MYTHS

THE EPIC OF ATRAHASIS

Atrahasis is the name of this story's Noah figure. Why did the flood happen in the story of Atrahasis? The high god and god of weather, Enlil, wanted to destroy humans for making too much noise. Atrahasis, with the help of the water god Ea, escaped the wrath of Enlil by building a large boat in which to save humanity.

Tablet II begins with more overpopulation of humans and the god Enlil sending first famine and drought at formulaic intervals of 1200 years to reduce the population. In this epic Enlil is depicted as a cruel, capricious god while Enki is depicted as a kind, helpful god, perhaps because priests of Enki were writing and copying the story. Tablet II ends with Enlil's decision to destroy humankind with a flood and Enki bound by an oath to keep the plan secret.

Tablet III of the Atrahasis Epic contains the flood story. It tells how the god Enki warns the hero Atrahasis (“Extremely Wise”) of Shuruppak, speaking through a reed wall (suggestive of an oracle) to dismantle his house (perhaps to provide a construction site) and build a boat to escape the flood planned by the god Enlil to destroy humankind. The boat is to have a roof “like Apsu” (a subterranean, fresh water realm presided over by the god Enki), upper and lower decks, and to be sealed with bitumen. Atrahasis boards the boat with his family and animals and seals the door. The storm and flood begin. Even the gods are afraid. In tablet III iv, lines 7-9 the words “river” and “riverbank” are used, which probably mean the Euphrates River, because Atrahasis is listed in WB-62 as a ruler of Shuruppak which was on the Euphrates River.

After seven days the flood ends and Atrahasis offers sacrifices to the gods. Enlil is furious with Enki for violating his oath. But Enki denies violating his oath and argues: “I made sure life was preserved.” Enki and Enlil agree on other means for controlling the human population.

THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH

In the epic of Gilgamesh, Gilgamesh (the king of Uruk who lived around 2,500 BC) was two-thirds god and one-third human and had regular dealings with the gods. After the death of his dear friend Enkidu, Gilgamesh takes a journey to find the secret of immortality. This quest leads him to Utnapishtim, this story’s Noah figure. He had obtained immortality from the gods and Gilgamesh hoped he could tease the secret out of him. But he tells Gilgamesh that his immortality came through special circumstances: he was the sole survivor of a great flood. We aren’t told in this story specifically what led to the flood, but we are told that the god Ea had second thoughts and told Utnapishtim to build a boat with specific dimensions and get as many animals on board as possible. He did and survived the flood, by the grace of Ea.

Some of the similarities between these two stories and Genesis are striking: the building of a large boat according to precise instructions and dimension; bringing animals on board as well as the family; sealing the door with pitch (tar); the boat coming to rest on a mountain; releasing birds to see if the waters had subsided.

Genesis looks so much like these other stories, especially Gilgamesh, that some sort of borrowing is not a far-fetched idea—the biblical writer may very well have taken some specific ideas from Gilgamesh and tweaked them for his story.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLICAL FLOOD STORY

Bernhard Anderson suggested the following structure for the flood story, and many commentaries include it. The structure is a chiasmus, a common literary form in the Old Testament. A chiasmus is composed of a series of parallel (mirror-image) phrases in the following format, where A’ parallels A—B’ parallels B—and C’ parallels C, as follows:

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A
  B
    C
      D
    C'
  B'
A'

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In a chiasmus, the movement proceeds in one direction until it reaches a center-point (D in the above example), and then it reverses. The chiasmus focuses our attention on this center phrase. That phrase is the hinge upon which the story turns—the key to understanding the story. The chiasmus for the Noah story is as follows:

- A. Violence in creation (6:11-12)
 - B. First divine speech: resolve to destroy (6:13-22)
 - C. Second divine speech: “enter ark” (7:1-10)
 - D. Beginning of flood (7:11-16)
 - E. The rising flood (7:17-24)
 - F. God remembers Noah

- E' The receding flood (8:1-5)
- D' Drying of the earth (8:6-14)
- C' Third divine speech: "leave ark" (9:1-17)
- B' God's resolve to preserve order (8:20-22)
- A' Fourth divine speech: covenant (9:1-17)

In this chiasmus, the focus is on the center statement, "God remembers Noah." That is the hinge upon which this story turns—the key to understanding Noah's story.

PARALLELS BETWEEN NOAH AND ADAM:

Scholars have noted a number of parallels between Noah and Adam—parallels that depict Noah as the new Adam, the new father of all humankind:

- In the creation story, God made a dome to separate "the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse" (1:6-7)—but in the flood story, "all the fountains of the great deep were burst open, and the sky's windows were opened" (7:11)—effectively reversing the creation narrative.
- In the creation story, "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (1:31)—but in the flood story, "God saw the earth, and saw that it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth" (6:12).
- In the creation story, God created animals and humans (1:20-30). In the flood story, God saves animals and humans (8:1-19).
- In the creation story, God blessed the man and woman, and said, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it" (1:28). In the flood story, "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth'" (9:1; see also 8:17).
- In the creation story, God gave the man and woman dominion "over every living thing that moves on the earth" (1:28). In the flood story, God gives Noah responsibility for insuring the survival of all the animals (6:19-21).
- In the creation story, Adam and Eve had three sons, Cain, Abel, and Seth (4:1-16; 5:3). In the flood story, Noah has three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth (6:10).
- In the creation story, one of Adam's sons was cursed for murdering his brother (4:1-16). In the flood story, one of Noah's sons is cursed for dishonoring his father (9:22, 25).
- In the creation story, in response to Adam's sin, God cursed the ground, saying, "In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life," effectively making him a tiller of the soil (3:17). In the flood story, Noah becomes the first person to plant a vineyard (9:20).
- In the creation story, the man and woman sinned by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree (3:1-7). In the flood story, Noah gets drunk on the fruit of a vine (9:21).
- In the creation story, God invited the man and woman to, "fill the earth, and subdue it" (1:28)—but in the flood story, "the earth was filled with violence" (6:11).
- In the creation story, the man and woman became "one flesh" (2:24)—but in the flood story, "all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth" (6:12).
- In the creation story, God created "swarms of living creatures" (1:20)—but in the flood story, "All flesh died that moved on the earth, including birds, livestock, animals, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man" (7:21).
- In the creation story, "God's Spirit was hovering over the surface of the waters" (1:2). In the flood story, "God made a wind to pass over the earth. The waters subsided" (8:1).
- Also, Noah is "the first man born after Adam's death (a fact available to those with patience to add up the figures in 5:3-29)" (Towner, 85).

PARALLELS BETWEEN NOAH AND MOSES

In like manner, scholars have noted a number of parallels between Noah and Moses, and consider Noah to be a prototype for Moses. In both accounts, there are references to:

- Clean and unclean animals (Genesis 7:2; 8:20; Leviticus 10:10; 11:32, etc.). The Genesis account preceded the Mosaic dietary laws, so clean and unclean in the earlier account had to refer only to the suitability for ritual sacrifice.
- Burnt offerings (Genesis 8:20; Exodus 10:25; 20:24; 24:5; 32:6).
- Lifeblood restrictions (Genesis 9:4-6; Exodus 23:18; 34:25; Leviticus 3:17).

- The number seven (Genesis 7:2-4, 10; 8:10, 12; Exodus 7:25; 12:15, 19; 13:6-7; 22:30; 23:15; 25:27; 29:30, 35, 37; 34:18; 37:23; 38:24-25, 28).
- The number forty (Genesis 7:4, 12, 17; 8:6; Exodus 16:35; 24:18; 26:19, 21; 34:28; 36:24, 26).
- The establishment of a covenant by God (Genesis 6:18; Exodus 6:4).
- Signs of a covenant, the rainbow (Genesis 9:12, 17) and the sabbath (Exodus 31:16-17).
- Teba, translated “ark” in the Genesis accounts (6:14-16, 18-19; 7:1, 7, 9, 13, 15, 17-18, 23; 8:1, 4, 6, 9-10, 13, 16, 19; 9:10, 18) and “basket” in the Exodus accounts (2:3, 5). These are the only places where the word teba is found in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word used for the Ark of the Covenant is aron—notteba.
- God commanding a person to build an ark (Genesis 6:14-16) and a tabernacle (Exodus 25-27) and providing elaborate specifications.
- The use of pitch to seal the ark (Genesis 6:14) and the basket (Exodus 2:3).
- The exacting obedience of Noah (Genesis 22) and Moses (Exodus 40:16).
- The flood that drowned most humans (Genesis 7) and the waters that drowned the Egyptian army (Exodus 14).
- Dry land (Genesis 7:22; Exodus 14:21).
- The covering of Noah’s ark (Genesis 8:13) and the covering for the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 26:14).
- But most especially, Noah was the agent through whom God worked to save humankind from sin, and Moses is the agent through whom God worked to save Israel from slavery.

READING THE FLOOD STORY PRESENTED IN GENESIS

In order to isolate the differences between these versions of the story:

1. **bold** the names for God used in the two stories (already done);
2. underline the descriptions of God's thoughts, words and actions;
3. **highlight** all the numbers of animals taken into the ark, as well as all statements of dates and lengths of time.

Then answer the following questions:

1. How do the names for God differ in the two stories?
2. How does the portrayal of God differ in the two stories?
3. What differences do the stories show in the number of animals that accompany Noah in the ark?
4. What differences exist between the stories in their report of the length of the flood?

In the NRSV version below, the various traditions are represented as follows: Normal Text – Yahwistic (J) Source
Italic Text – Priestly (P) Source

THE FLOOD STORY Genesis 6:5–8:22 (NRSV)

⁵ The **Lord** saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. ⁶ And the **Lord** was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ So the **Lord** said, “I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” ⁸ But Noah found favor in the sight of the **Lord**. ⁹ *These are the descendants of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with **God**.* ¹⁰ *And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.* ¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in **God’s** sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² And **God** saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. ¹³ And **God** said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶ Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above; and put the door of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷ For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring **two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.** ²⁰ Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, **two of every kind shall come in to**

*you, to keep them alive.*²¹ *Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them.*²² *Noah did this; he did all that **God** commanded him.*

¹ Then the **Lord** said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation.”² Take with you **seven pairs of all clean animals**, the male and its mate; and **a pair of the animals that are not clean**, the male and its mate;³ **and seven pairs of the birds of the air also**, male and female, to keep their kind alive on the face of all the earth.⁴ For in seven days **I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights**; and every living thing that I have made **I will blot out from the face of the ground.**⁵ And Noah did all that the **Lord** had commanded him.⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came on the earth.⁷ And Noah with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood.⁸ Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground,⁹ **two and two**, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as **God** had commanded Noah.¹⁰ And after seven days the waters of the flood came on the earth.¹¹ *In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.*¹² The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.¹³ *On the very same day Noah with his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons entered the ark,*¹⁴ *they and every wild animal of every kind, and all domestic animals of every kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every bird of every kind—every bird, every winged creature.*¹⁵ *They went into the ark with Noah, **two and two of all flesh** in which there was the breath of life.*¹⁶ *And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as **God** had commanded him; and **the Lord shut him in.***¹⁷ The flood continued forty days on the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth.¹⁸ *The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters.*¹⁹ *The waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered;*²⁰ *the waters swelled above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep.*²¹ *And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all human beings;*²² *everything on dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died.*²³ **He blotted out every living thing** that was on the face of the ground, human beings and animals and creeping things and birds of the air; they were blotted out from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those that were with him in the ark.²⁴ *And the waters swelled on the earth for one hundred fifty days.*

¹ *But **God** remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And **God** made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided;*² *the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, **the rain from the heavens was restrained,***³ *and the waters gradually receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred fifty days the waters had abated;*⁴ *and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat.*⁵ *The waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.*⁶ *At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made*⁷ *and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.*⁸ Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground;⁹ but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him.¹⁰ He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark;¹¹ and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth.¹² Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more.¹³ *In the six hundred first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth;* and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying.¹⁴ *In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.*¹⁵ Then **God** said to Noah,¹⁶ “Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you.”¹⁷ *Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.”*¹⁸ *So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives.*¹⁹ *And every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out of the ark by families.*²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the **Lord**, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.²¹ **And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord** said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done.”²² *As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.”*

YAHWISTIC TRADITION

Genesis 6:5-8; 7:1-10, 12, 17; 8:2-3, 8-12, 13b, 20-22 (NRSV)

⁵ The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. ⁶ And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷ So the Lord said, "I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created—people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸ But Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord.

¹ Then the Lord said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation. ² Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and its mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and its mate; ³ and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive on the face of all the earth. ⁴ For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." ⁵ And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him. ⁶ Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came on the earth. ⁷ And Noah with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸ Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of birds, and of everything that creeps on the ground, ⁹ two and two, male and female, went into the ark with Noah, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰ And after seven days the waters of the flood came on the earth.

¹² The rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

¹⁷ The flood continued forty days on the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth.

² the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed, the rain from the heavens was restrained, ³ and the waters gradually receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred fifty days the waters had abated;

⁸ Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; ⁹ but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. ¹⁰ He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; ¹¹ and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹² Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more.

^{13b} and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying.

²⁰ Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹ And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done. ²² As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."

PRIESTLY TRADITION

Genesis 6:9-22; 7:11, 13-16, 18-21, 24; 8:1, 3-7, 13a, 14-19 (NRSV)

⁹ *These are the descendants of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God. ¹⁰ And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ¹¹ Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹² And God saw that the earth was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon the earth. ¹³ And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth. ¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶ Make a roof for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above; and put the door of the ark in its side; make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷ For my part, I am going to bring a flood of waters on the*

earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸ But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹ And of every living thing, of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground according to its kind, two of every kind shall come in to you, to keep them alive. ²¹ Also take with you every kind of food that is eaten, and store it up; and it shall serve as food for you and for them." ²² Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.

¹³ On the very same day Noah with his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons entered the ark, ¹⁴ they and every wild animal of every kind, and all domestic animals of every kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every bird of every kind—every bird, every winged creature. ¹⁵ They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. ¹⁶ And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.

¹⁸ The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters. ¹⁹ The waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered; ²⁰ the waters swelled above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. ²¹ And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all human beings;

²⁴ And the waters swelled on the earth for one hundred fifty days.

¹ But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided;

³ and the waters gradually receded from the earth. At the end of one hundred fifty days the waters had abated; ⁴ and in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵ The waters continued to abate until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared. ⁶ At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷ and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth.

^{13s} In the six hundred first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth;

¹⁴ In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. ¹⁵ Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶ "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁷ Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." ¹⁸ So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. ¹⁹ And every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out of the ark by families.