

CHAPTER 2: GENESIS 1-11 AS HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

A) CREATION AND A REVOLT AT THE DAWN OF TIME

While the age of the earth will remain a topic of fierce debate in the evangelical world,¹ it has become increasingly difficult to deny that the earth is an old planet.² While roughly half of the evangelical world has come to defend an old earth perspective,³ few evangelicals have thought through the theological and practical implications of such a position.⁴ If the earth was created long ago, a great deal of time passed between the earth's formation and the creation of God's garden in Eden. While the Biblical account had rather little to say about the long ages before God created Eden, there were a few passages that did seem to point back to the dawn of time. One of these passages was recorded in Job 38 where Yahweh quizzed Job about creation. Yahweh reminded Job that the morning stars had once sung together as all the sons of God shouted for joy. The sons of God in this context would seem to be angels. A somewhat more recent time period may have been described in Ezekiel 28:14. This passage described Satan's original revolt in heaven. Satan had been Lucifer, the "Light Bearer." He had been the glorious anointed cherub who had once covered God's throne and had walked amid the heavenly stones of fire. Yet the blameless covering cherub had corrupted his own heart with pride, had become filled with unrighteousness, and had revolted against his Creator. The glorious cherub was cast as profane from the mountain of God. Ezekiel suggested that Satan's primal revolt was reenacted later both in Adam's fall and in Tyre's apostasy.⁵ Along the same lines, Isaiah claimed that Satan's fall was later reenacted in God's judgment on Babylon. Isaiah mourned that the "star of the morning" and the "son of the dawn" was fallen from heaven to earth. In Luke 10:18, Jesus declared that He had seen this happen. Jesus declared that He had seen Satan falling from heaven like lightning. This implied both Jesus' divinity and His pre-existence.

1) A RULER OF THIS WORLD

If the earth was created either millions or billions of years ago, Satan was probably cast from heaven a long time before God created Adam and Eve. It is quite striking that Satan did not appear to Eve as a

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Three Presbyterian Church in America presbyteries now refuse to ordain those who defend an old earth. Far too often, evangelical supporters of a young earth have accused of heresy evangelical supporters of an old earth. Emotions in this debate have at times run rather high.

Dating methods used to determine an absolute date for the earth's origin are problematic. It is one thing to recognize great antiquity from the geological evidence. It is something very different to assign numbers to the evidence. An age of four billion years for the earth would not seem intrinsically impossible from either the geological or Scriptural evidence.

Roughly half of the author's Evangelical students have defended a young earth perspective and half have defended an old earth perspective. There are a wide variety of old earth positions including Schofield's gap theory, various day age perspectives, and several structural views.

An old earth position requires not only some explanation for the genealogy of Gen. 5, but also an explanation for Paul's claims about the origin of sin and death. In Rom. 5:12, Paul noted that sin had entered the world through Adam's fall, and death had come because of sin. So death spread to all men who shared the sin of the race. In I Cor. 15:21, Paul added that death came because of Adam's sin. "Death" in this context may have been related to technical treaty usage. Gen. 5 is especially problematic for an old earth perspective. An old earth view must see similar genealogies as theological statements that are not intended to record every member in the line of descent. Some Biblical genealogies clearly did not include every person in the genealogical line. However, Gen. 5 traced the number of years before and after the next descendant was born. This is problematic for an Old Earth view. Paul's statements are not as difficult. They could simply refer to the appearance of sin and death within the human community instead of the animal kingdom or the angelic realm.

Merrill Unger explained this passage in a slightly different way. Unger argued that Lucifer was the first being created by God. Unger argued that Satan was the real king behind the earth's emperors. So Unger explained Ezekiel 28 by the fact that Satan was the king behind Tyre. Merrill F. Unger, "The Old Testament Revelation Concerning Eternity Past," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 114 (1957): 133-40

glorious spiritual being in Genesis 3:1. Instead the devil spoke to Eve through a serpent. Before Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden, Satan was already present within God's creation, corrupting creation, and using it as an instrument for evil. It is fair to ask why Satan may have chosen the earth after being cast from heaven. While the answer to that question can not be known with any certainty, it is at least possible that Satan's choice of the earth was related to Scripture's eschatological promises. The prophets promised that God had chosen Jerusalem and the earth as His eternal throne room.⁶ If this had been Yahweh's plan from eternity, Satan may have seized for himself Yahweh's dwelling place within creation.⁷ The earth may have been the jewel of God's creation. Having failed in his attempt to replace the God of heaven, Satan may have decided instead to replace Yahweh as the ruler of this world.

The New Testament noted the strength and antiquity of Satan's rule over the earth. In Ephesians 2:2, Paul reminded his readers that they had once walked according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who was at work in those who also rebel against God. In John 14:30, Jesus referred to Satan as the ruler of this world. In John 16:11, Jesus noted that the ruler of this world had been judged. In John 12:31, Jesus spoke about His coming death. He promised that His death would guarantee that the ruler of this world would be cast out. John 12:31 has at times been interpreted as a promise that Satan would be cast out of heaven at Christ's death. This interpretation would seem out of step with Jesus' claim in Luke 10:18 that He had already seen Satan fall from heaven. John 12:31 would seem instead to be Jesus' promise that Satan would be cast from his throne on earth.⁸ This expulsion from earth would only occur at the eschaton, but the outcome was determined and inevitable as soon as Christ rose from the dead.

While Satan may have become the ruler of this world long before Adam was created, Yahweh never permanently surrendered sovereignty over the jewel of His creation. Yahweh simply allowed Satan to exercise limited and temporary power over the earth. In the fullness of time, Yahweh planted a garden in Eden and placed Adam there. In Genesis 1:28, God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful, to multiply, to fill the earth, and to rule over it. This command was given despite the fact that Satan was the prince of this earth. God's command to fill and rule the earth may have amounted to a plan to regain control of the world from Satan. By creating Eden, God may have exercised His eternal rule over His creation. In Genesis 2:15, Yahweh placed Adam in the garden both to cultivate it and to *shamar* it, or to "guard" it.⁹ Adam may have been called to defend Yahweh's throne room from the prince of the power of the air. If Adam and Eve had remained faithful to their calling, God may have given them a vassal's sovereignty over the earth for all time. Satan's power might have been broken and he might have been driven out from the earth. This model for understanding pre-history is speculation, but it may not be inconsistent with the fossil evidence, the character of the ancient earth, and the Biblical account.

2) YAHWEH AS THE ETERNAL KING

Despite Adam's rebellion, the Old Testament prophets promised that God was always in control of His world, and that He would assert His sovereignty over His earth when He chose to do so.¹⁰ The

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Stager noted the Garden of Eden imagery in descriptions of Jerusalem. Lawrence E. Stager, "Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden," *Eretz-Israel* 26 (1999): 183*-94*.

Such a seizure may have been based on a misconception. God Himself was the ultimate dwelling place. Looking back at Eden, Ps. 90:1-2 declared, "Lord, You have been a habitation for us generation (to) generation. Before the mountains were born, or You gave birth to the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, You are God." Ps. 93:1-2 noted that Yahweh's throne was established from of old and linked the establishment of Yahweh's throne with the creation of the earth. This at least suggests that the earth was created to be Yahweh's throne room.

Rev. 2:13 is interesting in this light. John claimed that Pergamum was the location of Satan's throne. This verse should be understood in terms of the Roman culture at Pergamum, and it is probably going too far to suggest that the city was the literal location of Satan's rule over the earth. However, the verse does imply a demonic reign from an earthly royal throne of some kind. It depicts Satan as the current king of the earth.

The Hebrew verb *shamar* is one of the most common words in the Old Testament. It has the general range of meaning of keep, watch, guard, protect, and preserve. Its use in Gen. 2:15 could just mean that Adam was called to till, value, and preserve the Garden. However, it would be closer to the heart of this verb's range of meaning to suggest that Adam was called to guard the Garden from outside attack. That threat of attack may have come from the demonic realm.

¹⁰ For a discussion of God as king in the ancient Near East, see Gary V. Smith, "The Concept of God / the Gods as King in the Ancient Near East and the Bible," *Trinity Journal* 3 (1982): 18-38

prophets promised that God would one day rule in peace over the whole earth and the devil would be cast out from it forever. Then even the animal kingdom would find the peace and righteousness for which it was intended. Isaiah 11:6-9 promised that the wolf would dwell with a lamb in the eschaton. The leopard would also lie down with a kid, and the lion with a calf. Isaiah promised that the bear would graze with a cow, and a young child could place his hand in a viper's den. None of these dangerous carnivores would continue to hurt and destroy on God's holy mountain. Instead, all of the earth would be filled with the "knowledge" of God.¹¹ Isaiah 65:25 promised that the lion would eat straw like an ox in the eschaton. The wolf and lamb would graze together, and they would do no harm on God's holy mountain. While the Garden of Eden may have seen similar conditions, these promises were jarringly different from the situation recorded in the geological record. The fossils recorded nearly endless violence between species in the animal kingdom.¹² For long ages before Adam appeared on earth, carnivores had been killing and eating other animals. God created thousands of species that arose on the earth, lived out their span of years, fell into extinction, and were replaced by other species. The fossil record was by its very nature a record of continual death and often of violent death. This age old violence would come to an end when God descended to earth with a trumpet call, and when His Spirit was poured out on the earth like a mighty flood. Scripture's eschatological promises pointed to a future Eden that would accomplish the lost task for which Adam's Eden had been created.

B) EDEN AND THE CLIMATE HISTORY OF THE NEAR EAST

Evangelical theology has assumed quite properly that the Biblical accounts of the Garden of Eden and Noah's flood are historically correct. While agreeing with that assumption, evangelicals have disagreed endlessly on the chronology and character of these events. Noah's flood especially has fallen victim to rather unlikely explanations. The improbability of these suggestions has encouraged the academic mainstream to question both the accuracy of the Biblical text and the academic competency of evangelical scholarship. This result has been unfortunate because recent climatological research provides a rather good explanation for both the appearance of a garden in Eden and Noah's flood.¹³ These climatological studies have taken a careful look at changes in vegetation after the end of the last Ice Age.¹⁴

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"Knowing" was a technical treaty term that referred to membership in the covenant or treaty. When the whole world was filled with the "knowledge" of God, everyone in the world would keep God's covenant faithfully.

¹² Several flood geology schemes have tried to explain the fossil record as a result of Noah's flood. However, none of these schemes would actually produce the kind of record seen in the rocks. For a conservative and evangelical old earth interpretation of the geological evidence, see Daniel E. Wonderly, *Neglect of Geological Data: Sedimentary Strata Compared with Young-Earth Creationist Writings*, (Hatfield: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1987).

¹³ Sauer noted in 1994 that many archaeologists still denied that the climate of the ancient Near East had changed significantly in the last 10,000 years. Sauer gave several lines of evidence for climate change in different time periods. James A. Sauer, "A New Climatic and Archaeological View of the Early Biblical Traditions," 365-98 in Michael D. Coogan, et al, eds. *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984), 367-69

¹⁴ Plant materials used in climate change studies have included tree rings and pollen grains found in ancient sediments. Most plants grow only within a limited range of climate conditions. So the kind of pollen found in a soil core testifies to the climate when the soil was formed. Grace S. Brush, "Pollen Analyses of Late-Glacial and Postglacial Sediments in Iowa," in E. J. Cushing and H. E. Wright Jr., eds. *Quaternary Paleoecology*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 99-115. S. I. Saad and S. Sami, "Studies of Pollen and Spores Content of Nile Delta Deposits (Berenbal Region)," *Pollen et Spores* 9 (1967): 467-503. Pollen studies are often used to study soil core layers. These soil cores may be taken from dryland, peatbogs, lake bottom sediments, or ocean floor sediments. Evidence for climate change has also been found by studying plankton in ocean bottom sediment layers. The kind of plankton that appears in sediment cores gives strong evidence for the ocean temperature when that kind of plankton lived. Different forms of plankton are found in different ocean temperature regions. Thomas M. Cronin, *Principles of Paleoclimatology*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 210-11. Another popular form of climatological evidence has come from isotope studies from Greenland and Antarctica. E. J. Steig, et al, "Synchronous Climate Changes in Antarctica and the North Atlantic," *Science* 282 (1998): 92-5. Many other kinds of evidence have also been used to study ancient climates. All such evidence has value but is also somewhat problematic. Climate change studies have only limited appeal to those who are committed to a very young earth on the basis of their Old Testament exegesis. However, climate change studies may provide an interesting model for those who are willing to entertain one of the "old earth" options for interpreting Gen. 1-3.

To understand the significance of this evidence, it is important to look briefly at the end of the last glacial period. At the height of the last glacial around 18,000 BC, nearly a third of the earth's surface was covered with ice.¹⁵ Both the oceans and the Mediterranean Sea were around 120 meters shallower than they are today.¹⁶ All the north Mediterranean region was cold and dry during the last glacial while much of Europe was covered by tundra plants like *dryas* that resembled current vegetation in northern Siberia.¹⁷ At the end of the last glacial period, the great ice sheets melted in a series of warm and cold periods.¹⁸ During warm periods, the ice melted very rapidly and the sea levels rose. During cold periods, ice fields began to form once more. These alternating warm and cold periods had a remarkable impact on plant life in the northern hemisphere.¹⁹ During warm periods, tundra plants were replaced by forests over a wide area. During cold periods, the forests died and were replaced again with tundra plants.²⁰

The sequence of warm and cold periods is one key for understanding the relationship between Genesis 1-11 and ancient Near Eastern history. Between 14,000 BC and 11,000 BC, the polar weather front and the winter sea ice limit had formed a thick band of shoreline ice from the center of Spain northward.²¹ During these years, the mountains of Eden were a barren land. Andrew Goudie argued that the Zagros Mountains were covered with glaciers before the end of the last glacial era, and the snow line

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Karl W. Butzer, "Patterns of Environmental Change in the Near East During Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene Times," in Fred Wendorf and Anthony E. Marks, eds. *Problems in Prehistory: North Africa and the Levant*, (Dallas: SCM Press, 1975), 389. A decade ago, it was popular to see the first warm period somewhere between 13,000 and 11,000 BC. This warm period was followed by a cold era called the Older Dryas. This cold period ended in renewed warmth and rapid glacial melt. This warm period was called the Allerød Fluctuation. It ended around 9000 BC and was followed by a thousand years of full glacial cold called the Younger Dryas. Neil Roberts, *The Holocene: An Environmental History*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 53. After a thousand years, the climate warmed for the last time at the beginning of the Preboreal period. K. D. Bennett, "The Last Glacial-Holocene Transition in Southern Chile," *Science* 290 (2000): 325-28. Roberts, *The Holocene: An Environmental History*, 53, 325-28. After a thousand years, the climate warmed for the last time at the beginning of the Preboreal period. In recent years, this pattern has been called into question. While a few authors still defend the older chronology, others now merge the two cold periods. They date the beginning of the Younger Dryas anywhere between 13,000 and 9000 BC instead of dating the Older Dryas at this time. Now authors who write about the Younger Dryas are likely to propose start dates for this climate period anywhere within a 4,000 year time span. That is a very wide time span since full glacial cold lasted until 15,000 BC. In general, it is much easier to defend a linkage between the Younger Dryas and Biblical history if the Younger Dryas is dated between 9000 and 8000 BC. While pollen and isotope studies can be argued either way, a Younger Dryas at 9000 BC can be supported by the archaeological record since there is little evidence for settled village life before 9000 BC.

17 François Doumenge, "The Mediterranean Crises," *UN University Lecture*, #16.

Wright argued that oak pollen appeared no earlier than 9000 BC in the Zagros mountains north of Mesopotamia. H. E. Wright Jr. "Climatic Change in the Zagros Mountains-Revisited," in Linda S. Braidwood, et al, eds. *Prehistoric Archaeology Along the Zagros Flanks*, (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1983), 506-07. H. H. Lamb argued that regions north of the Mediterranean Sea were a treeless dry steppe before 13,000 BC. Steppe vegetation covered northwest Spain, northern Italy, and Macedonia. Pine forests covered parts of Texas and New Mexico that are now arid high plains. H. H. Lamb, *Climate: Present, Past and Future*, 2 vols. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1977), 352-54.

Barry argued that most of the glacial ice melted in two warm periods: 14,000 BC to 11,000 BC, and 8000 BC to 5000 BC. Roger G. Barry, "The Significance of Global Snow and Ice Cover for Global Change Studies," *GeoJournal* 27 (1992): 294.

The trigger mechanism for this change seems to be changes in the "Great Conveyor" system of deep ocean currents. However, the presence of evidence for the Younger Dryas across the world may point to an underlying difference in solar output. For a discussion of solar variability, see Gordon Newkirk Jr., "Solar Variability on Time Scales of 10⁵ to 10^{9.6} Years," in R. O. Pepin, et al, eds., *The Ancient Sun*, (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980).

This perspective is common among climatologists, but it is not accepted by everyone. For example, Roger Matthews supported a different perspective from the archaeological evidence. Matthews claimed that Mesopotamia was covered by treeless steppe environment during the last ice age. Matthews argued that the region saw warmer and wetter conditions from 12,000 to 4500 BC. This claim presupposes that the Younger Dryas did not occur. Matthews argued that there is no evidence that the climate of prehistoric Mesopotamia through the Holocene differed substantially from the present climate. Roger Matthews, *Subartu IV: The Early Prehistory of Mesopotamia 500,000 to 4,500 BC*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 8.

William F. Ruddiman and Andrew McIntyre, "The North Atlantic Ocean during the Last Deglaciation," *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 35 (1981): 145. Their evidence for this claim came from the difference between polar and subpolar varieties of plankton found in sea bottom cores.

was somewhere between 1200 and 1800 meters lower than it is today. The mountains below the snow line were cold with bleak steppe conditions. Goudie argued that the mountains were too cold to be occupied before 11,000 BC. Goudie's evidence for this transition came from pollen and lake bottom sediment studies. Emmer and barley also first appeared in the region at this time.²² Ruddiman and McIntyre argued that after 11,000 BC, the polar weather front retreated north to a line loosely from Labrador to Iceland. This brought a very warm period to Europe and the Near East. This warm period has been called the Alleröd Fluctuation.

1) EDEN AND THE ALLERÖD

The Alleröd Fluctuation may be an ideal candidate for the time period when God created a garden in the land of Eden for the man that He had created.²³ The Garden of Eden was probably located in the mountains north of Mesopotamia since the Tigris and Euphrates rivers flowed out of Eden.²⁴ Before 11,000 BC, these mountains had been barren tundra incapable of supporting a human population. After 11,000 BC, the Alleröd brought warmth to the region, and the area began to resemble a garden. Forests spread rapidly through the mountains north of Mesopotamia, and into southern Europe.²⁵ A wide variety of pollen types appeared in soil cores from the Alleröd in the region that the Bible called Eden.²⁶ If the world is an ancient planet, this could have been Yahweh's garden in the land of Eden. When this fertility and abundance appeared in the mountains north of Mesopotamia, God may have created Adam and may have placed him in the garden. It is fair to ask what role Eden may have played in God's struggle with Satan for the earth's destiny. Could conditions in Eden have reflected God's original intent for the planet?

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Andrew Goudie, *Environmental Change*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 141. Goudie argued that the transition between cool steppe and warm oak-pistachio savannah should be dated somewhere around 9000 BC.

²³ The origin of mankind is depicted quite clearly in the Biblical text. Those who are committed to the literal truth of Scripture simply assume that Adam and Eve were the first humans. The archaeological evidence for the origin of humanity is highly problematic. If the earth is assumed to be a very old place, a variety of hominids clearly did exist before the rise of settled village culture around 9000 BC. Some of these hominids appeared in the geological record. Some may even have had rudimentary elements of culture. Crude stone tools may have been used by the Acheulian hominids and by the Neanderthals of the Mousterian cultures depending on how the evidence is interpreted. Mainstream archaeology argues for the rise of the Neanderthal culture around 200,000 BC, while the Evangelical world interprets the Neanderthal culture as recent, fully human, and post-Adam. The presuppositions brought to the evidence largely determine the conclusions reached from it. Perhaps the most important question is the nature of man. If man is simply an animal, mankind could have been the result of a long evolutionary or developmental process. However, Scripture depicts man as something very different from an animal. The Bible claims that man has a soul that survives for eternity. Among the animal kingdom, only man is an eternal being with a unique vassal relationship with God. Only man is destined for heaven or hell. That kind of being can not be the result of an evolutionary process. It can only be the result of a miracle. If man is assumed to be an eternal being, the simplest explanation is to accept the Genesis account as history. At one point in time, God took what was not eternal, breathed into it the Spirit of life, and created Adam and Eve. Any other explanation for man's eternal character requires far more faith and must be highly speculative. For a discussion of stone tools in the Acheulian at Ubaidiya between 700,000 and 1,100,000 years ago, see Ofer Bar-Yosef, "Research on Stone Age Archaeology in Israel Since 1948," 3-23 in Hershel Shanks and Benjamin Mazar, eds. *Recent Archaeology in the Land of Israel*, (Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1981), 4-5.

²⁴ There has been quite a debate about whether the rivers of Eden flowed into or out of Eden. While both may be possible interpretations of the text, the Hebrew text would more naturally be understood to mean that the rivers flowed from Eden.

²⁵ During the Alleröd, the ocean surface was still around 40 meters below its current sea level. The Dover Strait between England and France was still dryground. The flow of sea water from the Atlantic Ocean into the Mediterranean Sea was reduced by 30%. Lamb, *Climate: Present, Past and Future*, 346-48.

²⁶ It was once popular to translate the name Eden as "steppe." "This would argue against the interpretation suggested here. Ottosson derived the name Eden from the root 'dn and argued that 'dn should be translated as an area of abundance. He argued that Eden was the created land instead of the land that had no water. He justified this interpretation by the use of 'dn on an inscribed statue of king Gusan from 850 BC. This statue contained a text written in both Assyrian and Aramaic. In this text, 'dn was the Aramaic equivalent of an Assyrian word that described abundance. Magnus Ottosson, "Eden and the Land of Promise," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 40 (1986): 178.

Could Eden have been intended as Yahweh's sanctuary on earth?²⁷ Could Eden have been intended as the beginning of God's campaign to recover the earth from Satan's rule? If an old earth perspective is accepted, it is striking that Adam was told to rule the earth when it had long been Lucifer's kingdom. Was Adam intended to recover the earth from Satan's control? There is no simple answer to these questions

Adam and Eve began a tradition that ran throughout Scripture. Adam and Eve were the first human members of a tradition called the Angel/Messenger of Yahweh. Both the Hebrew word *malak* and the Greek word *aggelos* could be translated either as angel or messenger. The Angel of Yahweh, or the Messenger of Yahweh, was a very special person in the Bible. He was a person who stood in God's presence, who heard God speak, and who declared God's Word. The Angel/Messenger of Yahweh was more than just a reporter of God's words. He was a person with some degree of God given authority. The Angel/Messengers of Yahweh were God's representatives and they administered His kingdom on earth. The Messenger's authority was reflected in the claim that those they blessed were blessed (by God), and those they cursed were cursed (by God).²⁸ The angel/messengers were sometimes real angels like Gabriel in Luke 1:19. They were often human prophets like Malachi whose name meant "my angel" or "my messenger." All of the Bible's true prophets were Messengers of God. The angel/messenger was also sometimes a theophany. The word theophany described an appearance of God in history. Theophanies were times that God Himself was seen by man. An example may be Judges 13:22 where Manoah and his wife declared that they had seen God. The messenger motif was at the heart of the Bible's Messianic theme since Christ was the greatest of God's Messengers. He was the Word of God incarnate. The Biblical text was in part an extended history of these Messengers of God. There were many Messengers of God. They were often contemporaries, and at times angels, prophets, and a theophany could take part in the same narrative.

If Eden was located in the Alleröd Fluctuation, there is no way to date when Adam and Eve revolted against God or how long they lived near Eden before the Alleröd came to a close. Adam's descendants seem to have spread across the region at a very early time.²⁹ Evidence for human occupation of northern Europe during the Alleröd may come from the Laacher See volcano in the Rhineland. This volcano erupted during the late Alleröd covering the Alleröd era vegetation with ash and pumice. Two human skeletons and several hearths were found below this ash but the site contained no evidence for permanent human settlement.³⁰ The Alleröd Fluctuation may also have seen the beginning of Neolithic cultures in the Near East.

The descendants of Adam and Seth continued to live in a way that resembled Adam's life in Eden. While cut off from access to the tree of life, Genesis 4:9 and 4:14 implied that Adam and his family still had access to God's presence. They could see Him and speak with Him. Genesis 4:2 noted that Adam's sons continued the kinds of work that Adam and Eve had done in the garden. They planted crops and raised animals. All of this changed when Cain murdered his brother. Cain was jealous and angry when God blessed Abel's sacrifices. The basic issues in Cain's revolt seem to have reenacted Satan's primal revolt against God, and Cain chose Satan's violence. In judgment, God declared that the earth would no longer grant its abundance to Cain. Instead, he would be driven from God's face to become a wanderer in Satan's domain. Cain founded the earth's first urban center in the land of Nod east of Eden. Cain had been a member of Satan's kingdom. Genesis 4:16-17 noted that Cain named his city after his son Enoch which demonstrated his seizure of Yahweh's land. Cain's violence against his brother was repeated by his descendants. Genesis 4:23-24 noted that Lamech bragged that he was avenged 77 fold on his enemies

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Several recent authors have argued that Eden was God's first sanctuary on earth, and that later sanctuaries in the believing tradition drew on Eden imagery. See for example, Gregory K. Beale, "Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48 (2005): 5-32. Robert Starke, "The Tree of Life: Protological to Eschatological," *Kerux* 11 (1996).

²⁸ Gen 27:27-40; 48:9-20; Num. 22:6; 23:3-8; 23:20; Ps. 37:22

²⁹ Matthews discussed an occupation level of the Shanidar cave that radiocarbon dated to 8650 BC plus or minus 300 years. Matthews noted that the site had been unoccupied since the Neanderthal burials around 45,000 BC. Matthews, *The Early Prehistory of Mesopotamia 500,000 to 4,500 BC*, 32. If the 8650 BC date is correct, which is always a question with radiocarbon dating, it is unclear whether this occupation level would have been made before or after the flood.

³⁰ "Younger Dryas Forces Human Choices," *Geotimes*, (April, 1999): 10. Michael Baales, and Martin Street, "Hunter-Gatherer Behavior in a Changing Late Glacial Landscape: Allerod Archaeology in the Central Rhineland, Germany," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 52 (1996): 281.

while his ancestor Cain had only been avenged sevenfold on his brother. So the urban culture founded by Cain was violent from its inception. Genesis 6:4 noted that family lives among Cain's descendants became completely corrupted. Then Genesis 6:11-13 noted that the whole earth had become filled with violence. As Cain became a part of Satan's kingdom, his descendants filled the earth with the fear and rage of their demonic king.

In contrast, Genesis 4:26 noted that Seth's son Enosh began the tradition of calling on God's name. Adam, Seth, and their descendants had walked within God's kingdom and His covenant. They lived by faith in God's promise of a future deliverer who would give them restoration from the curse brought by sin. Genesis 5:22-24 noted that Seth's descendant Enoch walked with God. Enoch stood in the tradition of divine messengers who stood in God's presence and declared His word. Jude 14-15 recorded his prophecy that the Lord would come with many thousands of His holy ones to execute His judgment. Hebrews 11:5 noted that Enoch was taken to heaven without seeing death because he was pleasing to God. Genesis 5:29 noted that Noah's parents had hoped that Noah would be the promised son who would give them rest from their toil on the land that God had cursed. Noah also lived in the tradition of messenger who stood in God's presence and declared His Word. II Peter 2:5 called him a preacher of righteousness. Messengers like Enoch and Noah were outposts of God's kingdom in Satan's world, although their faith and life were inadequate to prevent the kingdom from being nearly destroyed by the devil's violence and revolt.

After Cain's revolt, several theological motifs remained at the heart of human history, culture, and religion. These motifs included the identity of the earth's true ruler, the nature of the kingdom, the history of kingdom battles, and Yahweh's promises for the future of His kingdom. Much of Biblical history can be understood as the out working in history of the struggle for human, divine, and demonic rule on earth, and the different characters of their rules and their kingdoms.

In Genesis 4:12, God cursed the ground because of Cain's violence. God warned Cain that he would no longer succeed in growing crops. Despite his efforts, the ground would not yield its strength to him. Yahweh was the earth's natural sovereign, even though the planet had been seized by Lucifer for a time. While the devil promised abundance and a kingdom, he lacked the power to keep his promises. Agricultural abundance remained in God's control, and He granted it to whom He wished. Yahweh decreed that the abundance of Eden would not be found again for a population that had chosen Satan's kingdom instead of Yahweh's reign.

Abel was replaced in Adam's family by the birth of Seth whose descendants included Enoch in the seventh generation. Genesis 5:21-24 claimed that Enoch walked with God until he was taken by God. Hebrews 11:5 noted that Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death. Before he was taken to heaven, Hebrews claimed that Enoch had obtained a testimony that he pleased God. Jude 14-15 recorded Enoch's prophecy.³¹ Enoch promised that the Lord would come with many thousands of His holy ones to execute judgment on all. These would convict the ungodly of their sins and rebellion against god. Enoch seemed to be looking forward to the eschaton. Enoch's words would also have provided a warning to his own generation that God's judgment would come. After Adam and Eve were driven from Eden, a time of terrible suffering and judgment did fall on the whole world.³²

2) VIOLENCE DURING THE YOUNGER DRYAS

After the end of the Alleröd, climatological evidence suggests that the earth resembled a cursed and desolate place. The Alleröd was followed by the Younger Dryas when full glacial cold returned for a thousand years. The Younger Dryas period has been a subject of constant research and debate among climatologists, although archaeologists have often not become involved in the discussion preferring

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The relationship between these words and 1 Enoch has been an ongoing problem. The relationship between Jude and 1 Enoch could be explained in several different ways. An evangelical view of Scripture would almost require accepting these as valid words of Enoch despite the extreme historical discontinuity. However, that position does have rather serious problems. It can only be hoped that future research on the problem may prove helpful.

³² Timothy Cole argued that Enoch's example also provided a message for the wilderness community. Cole argued that Moses wrote the Enoch account to give Israel hope. Enoch's lesson was that life came from walking with God. Cole argued that Israel needed Enoch's example as they approached Canaan. An entire generation had died in the wilderness. They had died because they had ignored the lesson that life with God comes from walking with God. Timothy J. Cole, "Enoch, a Man Who Walked with God," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 148 (1991):293.

instead to defend cultural continuity throughout the Holocene Age.³³ Chronology has been especially problematic in the climatological debate. Start dates for the Younger Dryas have ranged in the academic literature from 9000 BC to 13,000 BC, and the chronological debate is not yet settled.³⁴ In general, the earlier that the Younger Dryas period is dated, the easier it is to reconcile the climatological evidence with the current understanding of the archaeological evidence, and the harder it is to use the Younger Dryas to provide a model for the interpretation of Genesis 1-11.

During the Younger Dryas, much of the forestland north of Palestine died out and was replaced by tundra vegetation once more.³⁵ Having rejected God's kingdom and His abundance, Adam's descendants learned the true nature of Lucifer's kingdom instead. They suffered and died in a truly cursed earth devoid of Yahweh's abundance. The villages that had been formed by Cain's descendants gradually disappeared because of the drought. The Iranian Plateau saw a break in human occupation during the Younger Dryas as did regions like the Azraq basin and the oasis at El Kum. Europe was depopulated during the Younger Dryas. Beida in Southern Jordan lost its population during the Younger Dryas and was resettled after 7,500 BC.

Human occupation continued in the Levant clustered around areas that still had water.³⁶ Harvey Weiss argued that the Younger Dryas brought a change to the nature of human culture. Weiss argued that before the Younger Dryas, only a hunter/gatherer culture existed. Weiss argued that during the Younger Dryas, it became much harder for people to find food. So they were forced to adapt by developing simple agriculture.³⁷ The Younger Dryas may have marked the start of "basin irrigation" agriculture in the Near East, although the first date for this agricultural practice has been debated.³⁸ Spring snow melt flowed down river valleys across the Near East. This spring run off was saved in ponds and behind dikes. The water was used later in the summer to irrigate crops. It is not hard to understand why this kind of culture could produce violence.³⁹

C) NOAH'S FLOOD AND THE YOUNGER DRYAS / PREBOREAL TRANSITION

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Archaeologists have often been skeptical about climatology, and Near Eastern archaeologists still often see a continuity of occupation from the Old Stone Age down to the present time instead of seeing a cultural disruption across the region caused by the Younger Dryas. Some Archaeologists defend an overview of Holocene history similar to that proposed by Watson in 1965. See Patty Jo Watson, "The Chronology of North Syria and North Mesopotamia from 10,000 B.C. to 2000 B.C." 61-100 in Robert W. Ehrich, ed. *Chronologies in Old World Archaeology*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965). For a young earth depopulation, see Douglas C. Comer, "Environmental History at an Early Prehistoric Village: An Application of Cultural Site Analysis at Beidha, in Southern Jordan," *Journal of GIS in Archaeology* 1 (2003).

Recently, Burroughs argued for Younger Dryas dates between 10,900 and 9,600 BC. William James Burroughs, *Climate Change in Prehistory: The End of the Reign of Chaos*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2005), 44.

H. H. Lamb argued that during the Alleröd Fluctuation, birchwood became common in England. Pines spread through Germany. Oak and hazel trees became common in France. Lamb argued that during the Younger Dryas, tundra stretched from northern England to the German plain. Lamb argued that areas of birch and pine may have survived in southern Germany. Lamb, *Climate: Present, Past and Future*, 371.

Jonathan Adams, "Did Indo-European Languages Spread before Farming?" <http://sarasvati.simplenet.com/aryan/Indo2.html>.

Harvey Weiss, "Beyond the Younger Dryas: Collapse as Adaptation to Abrupt Climate Change in Ancient West Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean," in G. Bawden and R. Reyecraft, eds. *Confronting Natural Disaster: Engaging the Past to Understand the Future*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000). Weiss was perhaps oversimplifying the evidence. Genesis recorded that Cain and Abel were already engaged in agriculture shortly after their parents were driven from Eden.

For example, Karl Butzer argued that basin irrigation agriculture was mastered by the fourth millennium BC. This would be long after the end of the Younger Dryas by any proposed date for it. Karl W. Butzer, *Environment and Archaeology: An Introduction to Pleistocene Geography*, (Chicago: Aldine, 1964), 463.

Since life depended on water ponds, life could be threatened by leaking ponds, ponds of insufficient size, or unusually low spring run off levels. All could lead to the choice of violence or death. Leaving the region in search of greener pastures would not have been an option in drought conditions.

The Alleröd Fluctuation and the Younger Dryas periods greatly affected climate conditions across a surprisingly wide area, although not all areas were affected at the same time or in the same way.⁴⁰ While the ultimate cause of the Younger Dryas has been debated at length, it is striking how rapidly the transitions between climate periods occurred. Several recent studies have noted that the earth's climate system remains relatively stable until pushed beyond some threshold. Then the whole climate system changes radically and very abruptly indeed.⁴¹ In 1989, Dansgaard, White, and Johnsen studied the transition from the Younger Dryas to the subsequent Preboreal period. Dansgaard, White, and Johnsen argued that this transition appeared as a sudden shift in all of the parameters that they studied including heavy isotope studies, chemical trace element studies, acidity studies, and continental dust studies.⁴²

It is important to note how fast this transition occurred. It is truly striking how rapidly the Younger Dryas began and ended. Bard et al described the transition between the Younger Dryas and the subsequent Preboreal period as being "instantaneous."⁴³ Alley et al studied the duration of the Younger Dryas/Preboreal transition from different kinds of evidence. They argued that dust concentrations in the ice core suggested that the Younger Dryas might have shifted to the Preboreal climate in less than twenty years. Then they studied snow thickness evidence from the ice cores. The evidence from snow thickness suggested that the Younger Dryas/Preboreal transition may actually have occurred in as little as a year or two. After this transition, the amount of annual snowfall doubled. They added that the same kind of ice core evidence suggested that the earlier transition from the Oldest Dryas to the Bölling/Alleröd warm period may also have occurred extremely rapidly.⁴⁴

Recent studies have suggested that the beginning and ending of the Younger Dryas may have been triggered by changes in the "Great Conveyor," the broad system of deep and shallow ocean currents

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Cockcroft, Wilkinson, and Tyson argued that even South Africa knew much colder temperatures between 10,000 BC and 8000 BC. M. B. Cockcroft, M. J. Wilkinson, and P. D. Tyson, "The Application of a Present-Day Climatic Model to the Late Quaternary in Southern Africa," *Climate Change* 10 (1987): 171. Evidence for the Younger Dryas has been found in Africa, China, New Zealand, the South Atlantic, South America, North America, the Near East and Europe. Mel A. Reasoner, and Margret A. Jodry, "Rapid Response of Alpine Timberline Vegetation in the Younger Dryas Climate Oscillation in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, USA," *Geology* 26 (2000): 51. Rewi M. Newnham, and David J. Lowe, "Fine-Resolution Pollen Record of Late-Glacial Climate Reversal from New Zealand," *Geology* 28 (2000): 759. Rainer Zahn, "Fast Flickers in the Tropics," *Nature* 372 (1994): 621-22. L. G. Thompson, et al, "A 25,000-Year Tropical Climate History from Bolivian Ice Cores," *Science* 282 (1998): 1858-864. Mark A. Maslin, and Stephen J. Burns, "Reconstruction of the Amazon Basin Effective Moisture Availability over the Past 14,000 Years," *Science* 290 (2000): 2285-287. David B. Madsen, "A High-Elevation Alleröd-Younger Dryas Megafauna from the West-Central Rocky Mountains," *Intermountain Archaeology* 122 (2000): 100-13. Zicheng Yu, and Ulrich Eicher, "Abrupt Climate Oscillations During the Last Deglaciation in Central North America," *Science* 282 (1998): 2235-238. Atle Nesje, "Younger Dryas and Holocene Glacier Fluctuations and Equilibrium-Line Altitude Variations in the Jostedal Bre Region, Western Norway," *Climate Dynamics* 6 (1992): 221-27. D. Kroon, et al, "Century-to-Millennial-Scale Sedimentological-Geochemical Record of Glacial-Holocene Sediment Variations from the Barra Fan (N.E. Atlantic)," *Journal of the Geological Society* 157 (2000): 643. W. Shotyk, et al, "History of Atmospheric Lead Deposition Since 12,370 ¹⁴C yr BP from a Peat Bog, Jura Mountains, Switzerland," *Science* 281 (1998): 1635-640.

41 W. H. Berger and L. D. Labeyrie, eds. *Abrupt Climatic Change: Evidence and Implications*, (Boston: D. Reidel, 1987).

42 They argued that this transition may have occurred at 8770 BC plus or minus 150 years. This is more than 700 years earlier than the date suggested by Ruddiman and McIntyre for the same transition. W. Dansgaard, et al, "The Abrupt Termination of the Younger Dryas Climate Event," *Nature* 339 (1989): 532.

43 By this they meant that the transition took less than 400 years. This was the finest chronological resolution that their dating methods could provide. Edouard Bard, et al, "Retreat Velocity of the North Atlantic Polar Front during the Last Deglaciation Determined by ¹⁴C Accelerator Mass Spectrometry," *Nature* 328 (1987): 791-94. Bard et al dated the Younger Dryas between 9010 BC and 8390 BC.

44 Alley et al discussed the transition between the Younger Dryas and the Preboreal periods. They used as their evidence a study of the GISP2 ice core from Greenland. Alley et al noted that there was a sharp change in ice layer thickness at a depth of 1,678 meters. They dated these layers at 11,640 ± 250 years before 1950. They identified this date as the end of the Younger Dryas. They noted that this depth also marked a major change in the ice isotope concentration and dust concentration. R. B. Alley et al, "Abrupt Increase in Greenland Snow Accumulation at the End of the Younger Dryas Event," *Nature* 362, #6420, (1993): 527.

that carry warm equatorial water into the North Atlantic basin.⁴⁵ Only minor changes in the sea's salinity and temperature may have had a catastrophic impact on the direction of the deep ocean's currents,⁴⁶ and these changes in current direction can occur in as little as a year's time. These ocean currents in turn have an enormous impact on climate conditions worldwide.⁴⁷

1) NOAH AND THE YOUNGER DRYAS

If the transition between the Younger Dryas and the Preboreal occurred in a very short time period, this transition may be a good candidate for the source of Noah's flood. Transitions from cold to warm periods have often been accompanied by substantial rainfall.⁴⁸ Massive flooding may have struck the ancient Near East during the Younger Dryas/Preboreal transition. This flooding would have been caused by the "North Atlantic Oscillation," or the "NAO." Cullen and deMenocal studied the relationship between the NAO and the amount of water that flowed through the Tigris and Euphrates valley. Cullen and deMenocal concluded that the Atlantic Ocean was the primary source for the moist air which eventually fell as rain and flowed down the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.⁴⁹ Atlantic Ocean temperature variations had a direct impact on weather patterns across the ancient Near East. Even relatively mild changes in North Atlantic Ocean temperature can send flooding down the Tigris and Euphrates basin. The Younger Dryas/Preboreal transition may have been accompanied by far more than normal flooding. The Great

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Dan Seidov, et al, eds. *The Oceans and Rapid Climate Change: Past, Present and Future*, (Washington DC: American Geophysical Union, 2001).

Broecker argued that the earth's climate system resists change until it is pushed beyond some threshold. Then it leaps suddenly into a new pattern. Broecker discussed especially how the great ocean currents could change their course. Wallace S. Broecker, "The Biggest Chill," *Natural History* 96 (1987): 74-82. Wallace S. Broecker, "Global Warming on Trial," *Natural History* 4 (1992): 6-14. R. Muscheler, et al. "Changes in Deep-Water Formation during the Younger Dryas Event Inferred from 10Be and 14C Records," *Nature* 400 (2000): 567. Carsten Ruhlemann, et al, "Warming of the Tropical Atlantic Ocean and Slowdown of Thermohaline Circulation during the Last Deglaciation," *Nature* 402 (1999): 511.

Seidov, *The Oceans and Rapid Climate Change: Past, Present and Future*. Broecker argued that around 9000 BC, the ocean currents stopped bringing warm water north. Almost immediately, the average temperature in Europe dropped by 12 degrees. Broecker argued that this resulted in the Younger Dryas, which Broecker argued lasted for 800 years. Broecker, "Global Warming on Trial," 6-14.

The Ohm and Wetter rivers in Germany saw annual flooding at the end of the Younger Dryas. Hanneke Bos, "Aspects of Late Glacial-Early Holocene Vegetation Development in Western Europe," www.bio.uu.nl/~palaeo/Research/Lateglac/lateglac.htm. It is clear that the Younger Dryas brought severe drought to Sub-Saharan Africa. The end of the Younger Dryas brought much rainfall to the region. Lake levels in Ethiopia and Afar reached their highest levels around 600 years after the end of the Younger Dryas, then fell rapidly. David Neev and K. O. Emery, *The Destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah, and Jericho: Geological, Climatological, and Archaeological Background*, (New York: University Press, 1995), 115.

Cullen and deMenocal noted that weakening high pressure near the Azores sent warm moist air into Europe and the Mediterranean basin. In the winter, this warm moist air created strong rains in the Mediterranean region. These rains moved as far east as the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and greatly increased streamflow through Mesopotamia. Heidi M. Cullen and Peter B. deMenocal, "North Atlantic Influence on Tigris-Euphrates Streamflow," *International Journal of Climatology* 20 (2000): 853-63. D. Pozo-Vázquez, et al, "An Analysis of the Variability of the North Atlantic Oscillation in the Time and the Frequency Domains," *International Journal of Climatology* 20 (2000): 1675-692. The name "North Atlantic Oscillation" describes the permanent year round presence of a low pressure region in the atmosphere near Iceland, and high pressure regions near the Azores and the eastern Mediterranean basin. These pressure zones tend to strengthen and weaken at the same time. They give the climate of the North Atlantic a bipolar structure. As these pressure zones strengthen, weaken and wander, they have a great impact on climate conditions in eastern North America, Europe, the Mediterranean basin, and the Near East. This climate system can still be seen in the Near East today. Rainfall in Israel occurs largely in the winter. Israel sees an average annual rainfall between 500 and 900 mm of rain. Less than 1 mm of rain falls during the summer months and only in the northern part of the country. During the summer months, the "Persian Gulf Trough" dominates the region. This is a low pressure region that extends from the Asian Monsoon low through the Persian Gulf and northward through the Aegean Sea and Turkey. Hadas Saaroni and Baruch Ziv, "Summer Rain Episodes in a Mediterranean Climate, the Case of Israel: Climatological-Dynamical Analysis," *International Journal of Climatology* 20 (2000): 191-94.

Conveyor currents brought warm water into the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean basin.⁵⁰ This warm water may have produced clouds of evaporated water. These clouds may have struck the cold air masses in the northern hemisphere, and dropped as rain.⁵¹ Vast amounts of rain may have fallen on the whole region until Europe and the Near East warmed up enough to stabilize the climate system. If the Genesis flood account is assumed to be correct, it might have taken 40 days and 40 nights for the climate system to stabilize.⁵²

This suggestion can not be proven correct, and it may sound rather unlikely. Yet there has been surprising evidence to support it. A number of studies have been done in recent years about "sapropel" layers in sediment on the floor of the eastern and western Mediterranean Sea basins. A total of 12 sapropel layers have been found in cores from the sea floor. The Mediterranean Sea sapropel layers were discovered in 1952.⁵³ One of the more interesting studies of sapropel layers in the eastern Mediterranean basin was written by M. Rossignol-Strick et al. They described a thick sapropel layer that appeared in eastern Mediterranean core samples that radiocarbon dated at the transition between the Younger Dryas and the Preboreal period.⁵⁴

Rossignol-Strick et al suggested a model for explaining the formation of sapropel layers. They noted that sapropel layers were layers of black pelagic mud that contained a great deal of marine organic material. Rossignol-Strick et al suggested that these layers were formed in transitions from cold to warm periods when large amounts of fresh water flowed into the sea. The fresh water created a low salinity water layer that remained on top of the normal sea water instead of mixing with it. This happened because the heavily salted water had greater density. During the summer months, the surface water evaporated. This thinned the water layer. The two layers eventually mixed in the winter when the surface water cooled. This increased its density and it down welled into the heavily salted layer.

The layer of low salinity surface water prevented oxygen from being transported into the heavily salted water on the sea floor. When the deep salt water layer was cut off from oxygen, it eventually stagnated. Many marine organisms died and were replaced with high salt tolerant and stagnation tolerant species. The water's oxygen depletion prevented decomposition, and a thick black layer of sediment was created. Rossignol-Strick et al suggested that the thick sapropel layer was created at the end of the Younger Dryas because the transition to a warmer climate regime caused great river floods to pour water into the Mediterranean Sea.⁵⁵

François Doumenge also discussed the most recent sapropel layer on the Mediterranean floor. He associated this sapropel layer with Noah's flood. He argued that heavy rains fell in the Middle East, in the

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⁵¹The "Great Conveyor" is the system of deep ocean currents that circles the globe.

⁵²Gen. 7:11 claimed that the flood occurred because the fountains of the great deep burst open and the windows of heaven were opened. The "windows of heaven" motif was a common mytho-poetic expression for rain. The image was of a storm god's heavenly temple. The windows of this temple dwelling were opened when the storm god poured rain on the earth. Yahweh was the true God of storms, and of all creation. The ancient world saw any spring or river as a manifestation of the primal deep. So rising river water was to the ancient mind an opening of the primal deep. Flood geology has often interpreted this verse in improbable ways. The association of the primal deep with weather can be seen in Ezek. 31:15. This verse described Egypt with the metaphor of a felled tree. God closed the deep over it, held back its rivers, and its many waters were stopped. So the trees of the field wilted. This verse associated the outbreaking of the primal deep with high river water levels.

⁵³This is a local flood model for the Genesis text although it assumes that the flooding destroyed a very wide area. For a recent defense of a local flood, see Carol A. Hill, "The Noachian Flood: Universal or Local?" *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 54.3 (2002): 170-83. Hill would strongly disagree with this explanation for Noah's flood.

⁵⁴As is always true with "hot" topics, the sapropel layers have been interpreted in a number of ways. See the discussion in Gert. De Lange, et al, "Sapropels and Palaeoceanography (SAP): Palaeoceanographic, Palaeo-climatic, Palaeo-environmental and Diagenetic aspects of Sapropel Formation in the Eastern Mediterranean (MAS3-CT97-0137), <http://www.geo.unimib.it/Conisma/SAP1.htm>.

⁵⁵Whether radiocarbon dating actually supports this claim depends on how the chronology of postglacial climate change is understood.

Rossignol-Strick, et al. dated the Younger Dryas/Preboreal transition sometime between 8500 and 8000 BC. They noted that this sapropel layer was formed at the beginning of the "African rainy period" which lasted from 8000 to 6000 BC. Martine Rossignol-Strick, et al. "After the Deluge: Mediterranean Stagnation and Sapropel Formation," *Nature* 295 (1982): 105-10.

Nile River basin, and in the East African Rift valley. These heavy rains increased the Nile River run off until it resembled the current flow of the Amazon River. Doumenge argued that so much rain fell in the region that a surface layer of low salinity water between 15 and 20 meters deep covered the surface of the Mediterranean Sea. He argued that all life below this low salinity layer died for lack of oxygen.⁵⁶

Basin irrigation cultures living on the valley floors could have been destroyed when flash floods struck the river valleys. Such floods would have occurred simultaneously in many places, and they could have brought an end to the entire culture. At least in Mesopotamia, this flooding would have lasted for a long time. Mesopotamia is a broad and flat valley. For example, the stretch from eastern Babylonia to the Persian Gulf only drops 34 meters in a length of 350 kilometers. This is a very gradual drop and it results in slow drainage. A memory of this time may well have been preserved in flood accounts both in Genesis and across the region. The account may also have been preserved in Job 22:15-17. This passage may describe rebels who lived before Noah's flood.⁵⁷ It noted that their foundations were washed away by a *nâhâr*, or a river.⁵⁸ The massive floods would have destroyed evidence of previous human habitation across much of the ancient world.

The evidence is not strong enough to prove that massive flooding occurred at the end of the Younger Dryas. The climatological evidence can always be interpreted in a number of ways. The Mediterranean sapropel layers can also be explained in several ways. So this can be at best only an interesting possibility. If Noah's flood occurred at the end of the Younger Dryas, the flood occurred thousands of years before the earliest written records from the ancient Near East.⁵⁹ It is reasonable to believe that a memory of these events was handed down to future generations. However, it is impossible to reconstruct the process by which the story of the flood was preserved. It is quite possible that the story was preserved more accurately among some populations than others, and it is likely that the story was completely lost in many areas. The presence of a flood account in any culture is poor evidence that the culture preserved a memory of Noah. Floods struck river valley cultures throughout history.⁶⁰ The more

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Doumenge claimed that the heavy rainfall lasted between 40 and 60 years. Doumenge, "The Mediterranean Crises."

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This argument could be countered with Ps. 104:1-9. If these words described Noah's flood as Barker argued instead of creation, these verses might point to a vast deluge. David G. Barker, "The Waters of the Earth: an Exegetical Study of Psalm 104:1-9," *Grace Theological Journal* 7 (1986): 57-80.

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Several translations interpret *nâhâr* in this passage as "flood." This is not impossible since rivers do flood. However, *nâhâr* is a common word for "river" or "stream," and it would seem a stronger translation to take it simply with that meaning. When Genesis spoke about Noah's flood, Moses used a different word. Moses used the word *mabbûwl*. The only other place in the Old Testament where this word was used was Ps. 29:10. The exact meaning of this word is unclear. It may be related to Brown, Driver, Briggs' proposed root *yâbâ* which refers to a watercourse or stream. Nouns from this root usually mean "stream" rather than "global flood." The closest parallel to *mabbûwl* may be an East Semitic (Akkadian) word that came to mean "destruction." The unusual nature of this word may reflect the great antiquity of the flood account. The word itself may be at least compatible with a local flood interpretation of the Genesis account, although that interpretation can not be proven correct.

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Literacy developed by a complex process. It began with tokens that were used in counting. These tokens were then pressed into clay. These tokens were used many centuries before the beginning of literacy as such. The earliest counting tokens have been found in deposits from as early as 8000 BC. Damerow and Englund discussed the process by which the use of these tokens developed into literacy. Hans J. Nissen, Peter Damerow, and Robert K. Englund, *Archaic Bookkeeping: Early Writing and Techniques of Economic Administration in the Ancient Near East*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 11-29. Richard Rudgley, *The Lost Civilizations of the Stone Age*, (New York: Touchstone, 2000), 48-65. Josef Bauer, Robert K. Englund, and Manfred Krebernik, *Mesopotamien: Späturuk-Zeit und Frühdynastische Zeit*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 46-51. Schmandt-Besserat demonstrated that the earliest written texts simply depicted these counting tokens. Denise Schmandt-Besserat, *Before Writing: Volume I: From Counting to Cuneiform*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 129-53. This explanation for the origin of literacy is based on archaeological data. There is a Biblical aspect to this question that can not be addressed from the archaeological evidence. As surprising number of passages like Ex. 32:22 mentioned "books" in heaven. These passages may have been based on symbolism or imagery. It is unclear whether anything comparable to literacy actually exists in the heavenly realm. If literacy of some kind does exist in the heavenly realm, it is not impossible that the rise of literacy may have involved revelation. However, this suggestion can be no more than speculation.

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Evangelical web sites often argue for the reality of Noah's flood by noting that flood accounts have been found throughout the world. While this claim is often exaggerated, it is not untrue. Flood accounts are common in the world, but so are floods. Almost every flood plain in the world is struck by occasionally severe flooding, and these floods are often

severe floods were often interpreted as judgments from the gods. An example of such a flood judgment can be seen in Ershemma #160. This Ershemma may first have been composed during the Ur III period, although the oldest surviving copy of it dated to the Old Babylonian period. So this text dated very loosely to Israel's Patriarchal Age. Ershemma #160 read in part,

What does the lord have in his heart? What does he have in mind? What does he have in his pure mind? He had destroyed the land. He has poured the waters of destruction into the canals. He has caused ... plants to sprout in the steppe. He has placed the black-headed people in the steppe like (scattered) seeds.⁶¹

While this text sounds somewhat superficially like a description of Noah's flood, it actually depicts a much later flood as a divine judgment. A similar example might be seen in the king lists of Mesopotamia, although that is a difficult problem.⁶² The king lists are famous for listing kings who reigned in Mesopotamia both before and after the flood, and for giving these kings surprisingly long reigns.⁶³ Evangelicals have often seen the king list as a historical record of Noah's flood. Yet the king lists depicted rulers before the flood reigning in the same cities that existed after the flood. That might suggest that the great flood recorded in the king lists was a terrible flood that struck Mesopotamia somewhere around 3000 BC. It is not impossible that early memories from the Younger Dryas might have been merged with memories of later valley floods, but that can not be proven.⁶⁴

The account of Noah's flood may have been handed down within the believing tradition as a warning against sin. If so, there is no way to know how long the story was handed down in oral tradition or when it was first written down.⁶⁵ When the Ebla texts were discovered, claims were circulated that the texts contained either one or two flood accounts. The Ebla texts were written between 2400 and 2250 BC. In reality, these texts are notoriously difficult to translate and no flood accounts have been identified

interpreted as a divine judgment. So grounding these flood accounts in Noah's flood is at least hazardous. For a link to Noah's flood to be credible, significant parallels with the Genesis text are required.

⁶¹ Mark E. Cohen, *Sumerian Hymnology: The Ershemma*, (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1981), 1, 129.

⁶² Thomas Hartman noted Jacobsen's explanation for the Sumerian king list. He claimed that the Sumerian king list was written at the beginning of the Neo-Sumerian period as a political fiction. It was written to claim that Mesopotamia had always been ruled by one king throughout its history even though the kings ruled from different cities. Jacobsen argued that Mesopotamia was often not ruled by one city. Thomas C. Hartman, "Some Thoughts on the Sumerian King List and Genesis 5 and 11b," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 91 #1 (1972): 26-27.

⁶³ The Sumerian King List has been the subject of much academic debate because of its loose similarity to the genealogies in Genesis. One of the most striking features of the Sumerian King List is the enormous length of reigns attributed to the kings. Typically, the Sumerian King List will claim that the kings before the flood reigned for 36,000 years or similar time spans. There has been a lot of discussion about the kind of numbering system that the Sumerians used. R.K. Harrison noted that many of the numbers listed as the lengths of kings' reigns were really multiples of 60. He noted that the Sumerians divided hours into 60 minutes, and minutes into 60 seconds. So perhaps they used the number 60 more widely in calculating the lengths of king's reigns. R.K. Harrison, "Reinvestigating the Antediluvian Sumerian King Lists," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 36 (1993): 3-8. Patrick Miller argued that the pre-flood portion of the king list was actually added later from the "Eridu Genesis." Miller suggested that the king list may actually have been a city list which recorded the succession of cities through which kingship passed. It began with the construction of Eridu and ended with the destruction of Isin. Patrick D. Miller Jr., "Eridu, Dunnu, and Babel: A Study in Comparative Mythology," 143-68 in Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura, eds., *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994).

⁶⁴ The king lists could also be interpreted in a different way. It is not clear that the pre-flood sections of the king lists were actually a part of the king lists in their earliest forms. It is also striking that the first city ruled after the flood in the king lists could be argued to be the first city ruled in Mesopotamia after Noah's flood. So it is hard to know how the king lists should be related to the Genesis account. For a discussion of the relative accuracy of the Assyrian King List, see Shigeo Yamada, "Notes on the Genealogical Data of the Assyrian King List," *Eretz-Israel* 21 (2003): 265*-75*.

⁶⁵ During the third millennium BC, literacy developed from earlier roots in both Egypt and Mesopotamia. The relationship between these forms of writing is not completely clear. It is not impossible that they may have been linked by an earlier form of writing has not survived, but that is just speculation.

among them.⁶⁶ Flood accounts in Mesopotamia began to appear in the Isin-Larsa and Old Babylonian periods.⁶⁷ Civil argued that the main body of Sumerian texts did not contain a flood story. Instead, Civil argued that the flood story became popular during the Isin-Larsa period. Lambert and Millard argued that there has been very little evidence that a flood account occurred in any form among the Sumerians before 2000 BC. However, they noted that this is simply an argument from silence. Rather little literature has been preserved from before 2000 BC, so the Sumerians may well have had an early flood account which has simply not been preserved.⁶⁸

If Lambert, Millard, and Civil were right, there would seem little reason to insist that the Genesis flood account must have been based on Sumerian versions of the story. The existing Sumerian flood account was only about a quarter as long as the later Atra-Hasis Epic and the Gilgamesh Epic. It included the gods' decision to bring a flood and the god Enki's decision to reveal the gods' plans to a man. It also described the end of the flood and the way that the hero of the flood became immortal. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to date this flood account. Lambert and Millard argued that in its current form, it could not be very much older than 1600 BC and may be more recent than that. M. Civil argued that the Sumerian account contained quite a few artificial grammatical forms and unusual words. Civil suggested that this odd grammar testified to the fact that it was written at a rather late date instead of being an early text.⁶⁹ The text included the following lines.

Zi-ud-sura, standing at its side, heard: "Side-wall standing at my left side,....Side-wall, I will speak words to you; take heed of my words, pay attention to my instructions. A flood will sweep over the...in all the...A decision that the seed of mankind is to be destroyed has been made. The verdict, the word of the divine assembly, cannot be revoked.

All the windstorms and gales arose together, and the flood swept over the....After the flood had swept over the land, and waves and wind-storms had rocked the huge boat for seven days and seven nights, Utu the sun-god came out, illuminating heaven and earth.

More and more animals disembarked onto the earth. Zi-ud-sura the king prostrated himself before An and Enlil.⁷⁰

Whenever this text was actually written, it was probably pre-Mosaic. While the Sumerian flood account clearly resembled the Genesis text in some ways, it was also quite different in other ways.⁷¹

One of the most important flood accounts in the ancient Near East was the Atra-Hasis Epic. Lambert and Millard suggested that the Atra-Hasis Epic was first written down during the Isin Larsa period in Mesopotamia. Among other things, the Atra-Hasis Epic claimed that a god had been sacrificed to create man. The god's blood was mixed with clay, and man was formed. This was done so that men would have the spirit of a god. Men were created simply because the gods had been working too hard. The god Enlil had been forcing the minor deities to dig rivers and canals for forty years. Eventually, the minor deities revolted at this forced labor. They burned Enlil's tools and surrounded his house at night. It was planned

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Claims made about the Ebla flood accounts in Evangelical web sites far exceed the textual evidence from Ebla. Jack Finegan claimed that the flood accounts at Ebla resembled accounts found later in Mesopotamia more closely than the Genesis text. However, Finegan's claims were unfounded. Jack Finegan, *Archaeological History of the Ancient Middle East*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1979), 43, 365. Pettinato claimed that the Ebla texts contained two copies of the Gilgamesh Epic. One reflected the oldest version of the poem while the other reflected a newer version that dealt with the relationship between Uruk and Aratta. Giovanni Pettinato, *The Archives of Ebla: An Empire Inscribed in Clay*, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1979), 238. Pettinato's claims also went rather far beyond the textual evidence from Ebla, and many of his claims are no longer widely accepted in the field.

⁶⁷ For a discussion of the texts, see W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-Hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood with The Sumerian Flood Story by M. Civil*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

⁶⁸ Lambert and Millard, *Atra-Hasis*, 16, 138-39.

⁶⁹ "The Sumerian Flood Story," <http://ragz-international.com>

⁷⁰ Jeremy Black, et al, *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*, (Oxford University Press, 2004), 214.

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For a discussion of the similarities and differences, see A. R. Millard, "A New Babylonian 'Genesis' Story," *Tyndale Bulletin* 18 (1967): 3-18.

that men should work for them. However, as men multiplied on the earth, they made too much noise for Enlil and the other gods to sleep. Enlil decided to destroy mankind. He tried to do so with a plague and a drought. When these failed, Enlil decided to destroy mankind with a great flood. The god Enki appeared to a man named Atra-Hasis in a dream, and warned him to build a boat so that he could survive the flood. Enki had helped create the first men, so he remained sympathetic to them. Enki told Atra-Hasis to build a boat with a roof and to seal it with thick pitch. Atra-Hasis brought animals into his boat, along with the craftsmen who had built it. The flood came, and it killed everyone who was not in the boat.⁷² Several different versions of this account were in circulation. A small fragment of the Atra-Hasis Epic was also found at ancient Ugarit from perhaps the 14th century BC. This small fragment only contained a few lines from the flood account. It noted that the gods had brought a flood onto the world.⁷³

The Gilgamesh Epic has been the subject of constant academic discussion. When the Gilgamesh texts were first discovered, many authors depicted them as the source of the flood account in Genesis. Gilgamesh stories of one kind or another are as old as ancient Near Eastern literature. Andrew George noted that three fragments of the Gilgamesh story were found at the old Hittite capital at Bogazköy. A tablet containing part of the story was found at Megiddo, and another tablet was found at Ugarit.⁷⁴ A variety of Gilgamesh stories have also been found in Mesopotamia. These Gilgamesh stories have sometimes been seen as fragments of the Gilgamesh Epic. At other times, they have been seen as simply early Gilgamesh stories that were later merged into the Gilgamesh Epic around the Mosaic Age. Whichever way the early Gilgamesh accounts are understood, it is striking that the early Gilgamesh stories lacked a flood account. The flood story in Gilgamesh was also rather tangential to the account since Gilgamesh was not the hero of the story. The later Gilgamesh Epic also had a complex history. A. R. George argued that the flood story in Gilgamesh was not a part of the epic itself.⁷⁵ Lambert and Millard argued that the flood account in tablet 11 of the Gilgamesh Epic was originally derived from the Atra-Hasis Epic.⁷⁶ That origin for the Gilgamesh Epic has now been widely accepted.

There are striking similarities between these accounts and the Genesis text, but there are also marked differences.⁷⁷ The extent that the account had changed by the time that Gilgamesh was written can be seen in translations of the account. The Gilgamesh Epic recorded in part,

I watched the look of the weather: the weather was frightening to behold; I went into the boat and sealed my hatch.

To the man who sealed the boat, the shipwright Puzur-Enlil, I have the palace with all its goods.

At the very first light of dawn-there came up from the horizon a black cloud, within it Adad did bellow continually.

Shullat and Hanish were going at the fore, "throne-bearers" travelling over mountain and land.

Errakal was ripping out the mooring-poles; Ninurta, going (by), made the weirs overflow.

The Anunnaki bore torches aloft, setting the land aglow with their brilliance.

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⁷³ Lambert and Millard, *Atra-Hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood*, 6-14, 43-115.

The earliest surviving texts at Ugarit may have been written in the mid 14th century BC during the reign of Niqmaddu II. Adrian Curtis, *Cities of the Biblical World: Ugarit*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 42-3.

⁷⁴ Andrew R. George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, (London: Penguin Press, 1999), 134-40.

⁷⁵ Andrew R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts*, 2 vols. (Oxford: University Press, 2003) I: 18-9, 702 ff.

⁷⁶ Lambert and Millard, *Atra-Hasis*, 11-4, 133.

⁷⁷ Similarities between Genesis and the Gilgamesh Epic included the fact that both brought animals into the ark and both depicted worship on a mountain after the flood. Holloway argued that the arks in both Genesis and Gilgamesh were also structured in ways that resembled temples. Holloway argued that the structure of Noah's ark resembled Solomon's temple, while the structure of Gilgamesh's ark resembled a ziqqurat from Mesopotamia. Holloway argued that the account of Noah's flood was written after Solomon's temple had been built. Steven W. Holloway, "What Ship Goes There: the Flood Narrative in the Gilgamesh Epic and Genesis Considered in Light of Ancient Near Eastern Temple Ideology," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 103 (1991): 328-55. While Evangelicals would disagree with this claim, there is validity to part of his suggestion. The ark participated in a broad theological motif of temple theology that ran throughout Scripture. Gilgamesh's ark participated in a broad temple theology motif than ran through Mesopotamian literature. While the temple motif in each case may have similarities, they reflect the different cultures within which the accounts were preserved.

The still calm of the Storm God passed across the sky, all that was bright was turned into gloom. Like an ox [he] trampled the land, he smashed [it *like a pot,*] ⁷⁸

For one day the south wind blew: it gathered speed, stormed, submerged the mountains. Like a war it swept over everything: brother could not see brother; from heaven, the people could not be sighted. The gods themselves were terrified by the Flood: they shrank back, fled upward to the heavens of Anu. Curled up like dogs, the gods lay outside [his door]. ... Six days and seven nights the wind shrieked, the stormflood rolled through the land. On the seventh day of its coming the stormflood broke from the battle which had labored like a woman giving birth. The sea grew quiet, the storm was still; the Flood stopped. I looked out at the day. Stillness had settled in. All of humanity was turned to clay. The ground was like a great, flat roof. I opened the window and light fell on my face. ⁷⁹

When the seventh day arrived, I sent forth a dove, let her free - the dove flew away, but come again, because no resting place caught her eye, she returned again. ... Then I sent forth a raven, let it free - the raven flew away, saw that the waters had (now) run away, found food, fluttered around (?), cawed (?) and did not return. Then I let out (all) to the four winds, offered a sacrifice (and) poured a drink offering on the summit of the mountain. ... The gods smelled the sweet savour, like flies the gods crowded round the sacrificer. ⁸⁰

It is striking that the Mesopotamian texts like the Atra-Hasis Epic and the Gilgamesh Epic that resembled Genesis most closely were written after the East Semitic ruler Sargon came to power in Mesopotamia and after the East Semitic language had become the common language of the people. So it is at least reasonable to believe that they may have reflected Semitic influence on Mesopotamia. As such, these epics might reflect the memory of the truth as it was slowly lost in the valley. ⁸¹

2) NOAH'S "NOW AND NOT YET" THEOLOGY

It is important to think about how Noah's flood fit into the developing ideas of kingdom and covenant in the Bible. Seth's descendants had eventually given rise to Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah. When Noah was born, his father Lamech named him, saying, "This one shall give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the Lord has cursed." Genesis 6:9 recorded that Noah grew to be a righteous and blameless man. In Genesis 6, God warned Noah that the time for His judgment had come. Yahweh declared that He was about to destroy all life in the land. ⁸² Yet God promised in Genesis 6:18 that God would establish His covenant with Noah and his family. God warned Noah to build an ark to preserve his family and all of life. In II Peter 2:5, Peter called Noah a preacher of righteousness. Hebrews 11:7 claimed that Noah's obedience in building the ark condemned the world and Noah became an heir of the righteousness that comes from faith.

⁷⁸ George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, l:708-15.

⁷⁹ John Gardner and John Maier, *Gilgamesh*, (New York: Random House, 1985), 235.

⁸⁰ Walter Beyerlin, ed. *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, (London: SCM, 1978), 97.

⁸¹ It is impossible to pin down how much true faith in God survived among Shem's descendants. One important Semitic god was named "El," or "Il." Roberts noted that El was associated with mountains in divine names like *Sadu-ilum* which he translated as "The-God-Is-A-Mountain." J. J. M. Roberts, *The Earliest Semitic Pantheon*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 12-3, 31-6, 57-8, 125. El, or Il, appeared in compound names that were strikingly similar to Biblical names like El-Shaddai and El-Elyon. Helmer Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1973), 53. William F. Albright, "The Names Shaddai and Abram." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 54 (1935): 173-204. Frank Moore Cross Jr. "Yahweh and the Gods of the Patriarchs," *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962): 225-59. Eric Burrows, "The Meaning of El Shaddai," *Theological Studies* 41 (1940): 152-61.

⁸² Carnazzo argued that the flood was a "decreation" that returned the earth to Gen. 1:2. Then God began a new creation. Carnazzo noted that the ark rested on Mount Ararat which alluded to the mountainous location of Eden. Carnazzo noted that God repeated the commands of dominance and fruitfulness given in Eden. Sebastian Carnazzo, "Genesis and Salvation History: Part 3," *Eastern Churches Journal* 10 (2003): 67-74

Throughout the Younger Dryas, Adam's descendants had not forgotten that Eden had been God's holy mountain.⁸³ Holy mountain theology had been passed on to Noah. As soon as Noah left the ark, he built a mountain top altar and sacrificed to Yahweh. God met Noah on the mountaintop.⁸⁴ At Yahweh's direction, Noah sacrificed a sin offering from each variety of clean animal that had survived the flood. Then God responded to Noah's sin offering by promising that He would never destroy the land with a flood again. Yahweh promised in Genesis 8:20-22 that He would never again curse the ground because of man's sins.⁸⁵ Yahweh's promise of preservation was an important part of the flood's theology. In Genesis 9:8-17, God established His covenant both with Noah's family and with all living creatures. God promised never to cause a flood again that would destroy the earth or the land. God decreed that the sign of His covenant would be the rainbow of glory that appeared both in the storm and above God's throne. Noah's flood had been a "now and not yet" fulfillment of Enoch's promise of divine judgment. It was a picture pointing forward both of the final judgment and the eschaton when sin's curse would be forever removed. Noah had been a "now and not yet" deliverer and a partial fulfillment of God's promise in Genesis 3:15.⁸⁶ Yahweh's curse on the earth was lifted.⁸⁷ Yahweh promised that as long as the earth remained, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter would never cease. History has born out the truth of this promise. After the flood, climate conditions have been rather unstable at times. Several cold and dry

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The Genesis text recorded little about the continuity of worship traditions before Noah's flood. Sacrifice had been a part of worship since the days of Cain and Abel. Gen. 5:24 noted that Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took him. This suggests some kind of continued access to God's presence similar to that reflected in Gen. 4:16. Heb. 11:5 noted that Enoch pleased God.

It is impossible to locate this hill top or mountain top location. Carol Hill noted that Agri Dag, or Mount Ararat, has only been associated with Noah's ark since the 11th or 12th centuries AD. Hill noted that eight places have been associated with the ark through the years. Hill noted that neither olives nor grapes grew on Mount Ararat. They also did not grow on the valley floor of Mesopotamia. Olives and grapes did grow in the foothills. Hill noted that the existence of an olive leaf when Noah left the ark demonstrated that olive trees survived beyond the flood zone. This implied that the flood waters had a limited height. Hill, "The Noah in Flood: Universal or Local?" 175-77. Bill Crouse and Gordon Franz recently argued that Noah's ark came to ground on Mount Cudi instead of Agri Dag. Mount Cudi is located on the edge of the Mesopotamian plain. Crouse and Franz noted that this site has been identified as the ark's resting place at least since the 3rd century AD. Bill Crouse and Gordon Franz, "Mount Cudi-True Mountain of Noah's Ark," *Bible and Spade* 19 (2006): 105-06. Friedrich Bender defended this site as well. He noted that wood from Cudi dag has been radiocarbon dated to 4500 BC. He noted that parts of Mesopotamia were flooded at this time but not Mount Ararat. Bender noted that the Gilgamesh Epic claimed that the boat landed between the Tigris River and the Zab River at the mountain of Nisir which Bender suggests was Cudi. Bender noted that he had found a piece of wood at this site what was covered with tar. The wood radiocarbon dated to 6635 BP with a margin of error of 280 years. Bender argued that this may have been wood from the ark. Friedrich Bender, "Wood Remains from the Landing Site of Noah's Ark Nearly 6500 Years Old," *Bible and Spade* 19 (2006): 112-13. Responding to Bender et al, Richard Lanser noted the evidence for Mount Ararat as the ark's resting place. He argued that several people had claimed to have seen the ark on Ararat. Lanser noted that Mount Ararat is a volcano. He argued that volcanic ash may have buried the ark and may preserve it for many years. Richard Lanser, "The Case for Ararat," *Bible and Spade* 19 (2006): 114-15. It is fair to ask if any of these cases are likely to convince those who are not already committed to a recent global flood.

The covenant sign of Noah's covenant was the glory rainbow in Gen. 9:12-17. This glory bow reappeared in Ezek. 1:28 as the glory that surrounded God's throne. So the sign of God's covenant may be God's presence in His creation. This rainbow has been interpreted in various ways. See: Laurence A. Turner, "The Rainbow as the Sign of the Covenant in Genesis IX 11-13," *Vetus Testamentum* 43 (1993): 119-24.

"Now and not yet" theology appears throughout the entire Biblical account. It differs markedly from the theology of other nations in the ancient Near East because of its eschatological character. Jan Assmann discussed an aspect of Egyptian theology that was somewhat parallel. Assmann noted that Egyptian theology was based on two kinds of chronologies. The first was timeless and eternal. The second was cyclical. The timeless and eternal reality gave the cyclical reality its character. Jan Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt*, (New York: Henry Holt, 2002), 18.

Yahweh's curse on the earth may have been in part the terrible drought at the end of the Younger Dryas that had lasted for a millennium. Life on earth may have been very difficult because there was so little water. In that context, the destruction of mankind by a flood of water was theologically significant. The threat of a flood would have seemed silly for a race surviving by basin irrigation agriculture in a dry and barren land. Noah's construction of an ark must have seemed insane to his neighbors. The flood brought destruction to Noah's world, but it also brought a complete end to the Younger Dryas and the cursed earth that it caused. Warm weather, rainfall, and abundance returned to the earth, and a new earth had begun for Noah's descendants.

periods have occurred, but the earth has never again fallen into a full glacial cold like the Younger Dryas. Spring has always followed winter as God promised.

God then restored to Noah the calling that He had given Adam. In Genesis 9:1-2, God told Noah to be fruitful, to multiply, and to fill the earth. Then God told Noah to dominate the animal world. These were the same commands given to Adam in Genesis 1:28. Then in Genesis 9:1, Noah passed on to his sons the calling that he had received from God. In Genesis 9:3-4, God decreed that Noah could eat animals, but he could never eat them with their blood. Noah could eat their flesh, but not their life. The life of every man and animal belonged to God who had placed His breath of life within them. Then in Genesis 9:5-7, God addressed the violence that had led to His judgment on the world. God decreed that any man who took another's life would forfeit his own life. This would happen when community support and justice would allow the brother of a murdered man to become the avenger of blood and to execute God's judgment on the murderer.

D) POST-FLOOD HISTORY

After the end of the Younger Dryas, human populations slowly spread rapidly across the world.⁸⁸ Noah's family established an agricultural life style. They lived in a tent and grew grapes. Noah became drunk on the wine of his vines, and acted in a shameful way before his family. Noah's son Ham mocked his father, while his sons Shem and Japheth treated him with respect and covered his nakedness. When Noah became sober, he knew what had happened. He made a prophecy that would shape Israel's history until the end of time. Noah pronounced a curse not on Ham's son Canaan rather than Ham himself.⁸⁹ Noah decreed that Canaan's descendants should serve Shem's descendants, and that Japheth should dwell in Shem's tents. So Shem was given rightful authority over all of Noah's descendants. Shem's descendants became the East and West Semitic peoples. For much of their history, Shem's descendants followed a semi-nomadic life style. They founded rather few cities, although they often lived in cities founded by others. The West Semitic peoples would eventually give rise to Abraham and the Israelites. The conflict that Noah began in Genesis 9:25-27 would lead eventually to Israel's conquest of Palestine.

If Noah's flood was associated with the end of the Younger Dryas somewhere before 8200 BC, it is not surprising that this period was followed by a millennium of relative silence in the archaeological record. It took time for the human population to grow large enough to spread across the region and to leave significant archaeological remains. Perhaps not surprisingly, the great river valleys were only very sparsely settled for a millennium after the great floods. This period has been called the "Pre-Pottery Neolithic" by archaeologists.

1) POST-FLOOD RESETTLEMENT

A limited number of settlement sites have been identified in the ancient Near East that radiocarbon date between 10,000 and 8000 BC. These sites may have been in use before, during, or shortly after the Younger Dryas depending on how the Younger Dryas period is dated. When reading academic discussions of this period, it is important to realize that climatologists are very interested in evidence for the Younger Dryas while archaeologists are more likely to assume cultural continuity throughout the period. It is also important to realize that dates offered for these sites are uncalibrated radiocarbon dates which differ greatly from chronological dates at this horizon.⁹⁰ Matthews discussed the Natufian hunter/gatherer culture in the Levant. He argued that this culture lasted roughly from 10,000 to 8,000 BC. He argued that a Natufian house at Jericho was burned at an uncalibrated radiocarbon date of 9,250 BC. Matthews argued that the Natufian culture in the Levant disappeared as the region dried out.

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Kimball Banks suggested that the Central Sahara was inhabited after 8000 BC. This period marked the beginning of the period of greatest rainfall in the Sahara. Kimball M. Banks, *Climates, Cultures, and Cattle: The Holocene Archaeology of the Eastern Sahara*, (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1984), 2.

Ham's sons would become the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, the Levant, Egypt, and Africa. Ps. 78:51 preserved the tradition that Egypt was derived from Ham.

⁹⁰ For a discussion, see Gordon W. Pearson, "How to Cope with Calibration," *Antiquity* 61 (1987): 98-103.

Matthews did not interpret this aridity as the result of the Younger Dryas. He argued that rest of the Near East experienced wetter conditions at this time.⁹¹

Matthews noted that a single uncalibrated radiocarbon date at Zawi Chemi Shanidar gave an occupation date of 8,920 BC plus or minus 300 years. This site was occupied exclusively in the Early Holocene. Matthews argued that this site showed the presence of architecture. Matthews claimed that the site provided evidence for sophisticated ritual behavior. Matthews claimed that the site also contained evidence for animal exploitation that would lead eventually to the domestication of animals. However, Matthews also noted that the evidence from Zawi Chemi Shanidar is not strong enough to determine if this site was only used seasonally or if it was a permanent settlement. A cemetery in the Shanidar cave near this site produced an uncalibrated radiocarbon date of 8,650 BC plus or minus 300 years.⁹² Matthews also described houses found at M'lefaat in the western Zagros foothills. An uncalibrated radiocarbon date of 8300 BC was obtained from one of these houses. Matthews noted that a settlement at Qermez Dere on the northern Mesopotamian plain was occupied in the centuries around an uncalibrated radiocarbon date of 8000 BC. Matthews also discussed Nemrik in northern Mesopotamia. This site was located on the bank of the Tigris River roughly 340 meters above sea level. Matthews noted that a large number of radiocarbon dates have been taken from this site. They suggest that Nemrik was occupied for roughly 1,500 years between uncalibrated radiocarbon dates of 8200 BC and 6550 BC. Matthews noted that Nemrik was the cultural climax of the Early Holocene in northern Mesopotamia.⁹³

Matthews noted that pottery was found at Ganj Dareh in the Iranian Zagros. This pottery was found at a level was assigned an uncalibrated radiocarbon date before 7000 BC. Matthews noted that this was the oldest pottery found anywhere in the ancient Near East.⁹⁴ Several authors have noted that by 7000 BC, farming was becoming common in many areas of the ancient Near East.⁹⁵ Wild wheat and barley were being planted in Turkey. Between 7000 BC and 6000 BC, farming communities in southwestern Anatolia and Greece were raising sheep, goats, and pigs.⁹⁶ The earliest farming villages in northern Iraq appeared between 7000 and 5000 BC. Çatal Hüyük in Anatolia (modern Turkey) may have been occupied as early as 6700 BC, although that date has been debated.⁹⁷ Jarus Zarins argued that pastoral nomadism had appeared in the ancient Near East by the end of the 7th millennium BC. It appeared in semi-arid regions that he claimed had been largely empty of population for three millennia. Zarins argued that these pastoral nomads contributed strongly to the settlement of Akkad, the Semitic region of northern Mesopotamia. Zarins suggested that these pastoral nomads may have begun their rise to political dominance in northern Mesopotamia as early as the Protoliterate period.⁹⁸

W. G. Lambert made an interesting point about the religious artifacts found at Çatal Hüyük. He noted that objects found there resembled a mother goddess figure and possibly a bull god. Lambert argued that religious myths did not develop gradually in the ancient Near East. Instead, they existed at the earliest settlement levels. Lambert argued that the history of the ancient Near East recorded the gradual

⁹¹ Matthews, *The Early Prehistory of Mesopotamia 500,000 to 4,500 BC*, 41.

⁹² In 1955, Rubin and Suess claimed a radiocarbon date of 10,410 BC plus or minus 412 years for the Lower Zarzian level at Shanidar. In 1960, Rubin and Alexander defended a date of 8968 BC ± 309 years for the Upper Zarzian level. Watson, "The Chronology of North Syria and North Mesopotamia from 10,000 B.C. to 2000 B.C." 84.

⁹³ Matthews, *The Early Prehistory of Mesopotamia 500,000 to 4,500 BC*, 31-8.

⁹⁴ Matthews, *The Early Prehistory of Mesopotamia 500,000 to 4,500 BC*, 50.

⁹⁵ Doeke Eisma, "Stream Deposition and Erosion by the Eastern Shore of the Aegean," 67-81 in William C. Brice, ed. *The Environmental History of the Near and Middle East Since the Last Ice Age*, (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 76. Alfred Haldar, *Who Were the Amorites?*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 33-5. Haldar discussed evidence raised by Mortensen, Raikes and Dyson on the subject. P. Mortensen, "On the Chronology of Early Village Farming Communities in Northern Iraq," *Sumer* 63 (1961): 73-80.

⁹⁶ Eisma, "Stream Deposition and Erosion by the Eastern Shore of the Aegean," 76. See also the discussion in Davis A. Young, "The Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race Revisited," *Christian Scholar's Review* 24 (1995): 380-96.

⁹⁷ Finegan suggested 6700 BC in *Archaeological History of the Ancient Middle East*, 85. On the other hand, Robert Ehrich claimed that the earliest dated level at Çatal Hüyük radiocarbon dated to 6385 BC, give or take 101 years. Robert W. Ehrich, *Chronologies in Old World Archaeology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 124.

⁹⁸ Juris Zarins, "Early Pastoral Nomadism and the Settlement of Lower Mesopotamia," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 280 (1990): 54-6.

running down of an ancient mode of thinking that dated all the way back to the prehistoric era.⁹⁹ While Lambert did not intend this claim to be understood from a Biblical perspective, his position has merit. The history of the ancient Near East did see the gradual loss of truth that was originally known among Noah's earliest descendants. Already at Çatal Hüyük, human culture was descending into idolatry.

Around 6000 BC, human cultures changed in three ways across the Near East. The first change was that by 6000 BC, villages had spread across the Near East. The second change was that this horizon marked the first widespread use of pottery in the archaeological record. So this was the beginning of a period that archaeologists call the "Pottery Neolithic." Third, 6000 BC saw the first large scale resettlement of the great river valleys like Mesopotamia, the Nile valley, and the Indus valley. It is unclear why the river valleys were only sparsely settled before this time. If the Biblical account of Noah's flood referred to river valley flooding at the end of the Younger Dryas, it may not be impossible that memories of the great floods had made people hesitate to inhabit the flood plains. Other explanations are equally possible. Recent climate change studies have suggested one possibility. The years between 6200 BC and 6000 BC saw a brief return to cold dry conditions, and marginal areas like the Iranian plateau were emptied of population at this time.¹⁰⁰ The river valleys may have been settled after 6000 BC simply because water could be found there. This may have been the time when Ham's descendant Nimrod became a mighty hunter in Mesopotamia. Genesis 10:9-12 claimed that Nimrod founded the earliest settlement levels at Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar.¹⁰¹ Other explanations for the rise of river valley cultures are also possible. It is popular to link the settlement of river valleys with the rise of irrigation.¹⁰²

The earliest settlements in Mesopotamia belonged to the Hassuna and Samarra cultures. Little is known about the ethnic background of these earliest inhabitants of Mesopotamia, and it is unclear whether specific ethnic groups had even developed in the ancient Near East at this time. If the Tower of Babel account in Genesis 11 is interpreted as involving the whole human race, the Tower of Babel could not have to have been built after this time.¹⁰³ After these cultures, human occupation was common across the ancient Near East. The Indus Valley culture in India and the Nile Valley cultures in Egypt were established by 6,000 BC. Archaeological artifacts from those cultures demonstrate cultural diversity at their earliest levels. So a Tower of Babel civilization that involved a consistent human culture would have to have been earlier. One problem with such an early date for the tower is that there is no archaeological evidence for either a temple tower or a complex human culture this early in the history of Mesopotamia. It is always possible that all archaeological evidence for the Tower of Babel culture was destroyed as the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers meandered across the valley. Yet it is quite disturbing that the surviving evidence from this period seems so inconsistent with the depiction of the Tower of Babel culture. Any later date for the tower would require that the Tower of Babel culture involved only Mesopotamia and not the whole world. The Hassuna and Samarra cultures were Neolithic cultures using obsidian weapons and pottery.¹⁰⁴ Neolithic settlements were not uncommon across the ancient Near East at this time. Wreschner discussed a Neolithic settlement in Palestine near Newe Yam. Wreschner argued for a 5000 BC date for the

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W. G. Lambert, "Old Testament Mythology in its Ancient Near Eastern Context," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 40 (1986): 124-43. Lambert was not an evangelical. He saw the Old Testament accounts as containing mythical material. Yet his basic point had some validity.

¹⁰⁰ D. C. Barber et al., "Forcing of the Catastrophic Drainage of Laurentide Lakes," *Nature* 400 #6742 (1999): 344-48. Barber et al. suggest that this drought happened in the North Atlantic region because the Laurentide glacial lakes began draining into the Hudson Strait instead of draining southeast into the St. Lawrence estuary. This change had a rather brief but profound impact on the northern hemispheric climate system. M. H. Ganji, "Post-Glacial Changes on the Iranian Plateau," 149-63 in William C. Brice, ed. *The Environmental History of the Near and Middle East since the Last Ice Age*, (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 156.

¹⁰¹ This period may have been recorded in the Sumerian King List, although it is difficult to evaluate the extent that the King List merged early memories of a valley flood with the accounts of later flooding in Mesopotamia.

¹⁰² Matthews argued that the heat and variable rainfall in lower Mesopotamia prevented the region from being inhabited until the rise of irrigation. Matthews, *The Early Prehistory of Mesopotamia 500,000 to 4,500 BC*, 8.

¹⁰³ It is fair to ask if a unified human culture can even be found in the archaeological record as early as this.

¹⁰⁴ Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient East: The Archaeological Background of the Hebrew-Christian Religion*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 13-4.

settlement although that date is at best somewhat uncertain.¹⁰⁵ The Hassuna and Samarra cultures were followed by the Ubaid culture after 5200 BC.¹⁰⁶

2) FAITH DURING THE UBAID

If Noah's faith was handed down among Shem's descendants after the flood, at least a remnant of faith may have been present among the Ubaid culture. Yet the dominant religion in the valley may already have become idolatry. Kramer argued that the population of Mesopotamia believed that each city was protected by only one god. He argued that the city deity was originally worshiped at a small shrine with a table and altar.¹⁰⁷ The ethnic makeup of the Ubaid culture has been a topic of endless academic debate. Samuel Kramer argued that Semitic nomads from Syria and Arabia immigrated into Mesopotamia during the Ubaid period. Kramer argued that these immigrants entered Mesopotamia with an established religious tradition. However, the date that Semitic people first entered Mesopotamia has been interpreted in a number of other ways as well.¹⁰⁸

Ubaid period settlements in Mesopotamia were built on virgin soil, so they were the earliest settlements at their sites.¹⁰⁹ Michael Roaf argued that the earliest Ubaid settlement in Mesopotamia was occupied around 5900 BC.¹¹⁰ The Ubaid culture survived for quite a long time. It was a sparsely settled, rural, agricultural culture that included small villages and scattered settlements.¹¹¹ The Ubaid culture was also very wide spread although it was not the only culture in the ancient Near East. Ubaid settlements have been found throughout Mesopotamia.¹¹² Since it was so long, it has become popular to subdivide the Ubaid into smaller time periods. The earliest part of the Ubaid period is represented by the Halaf culture in the northern part of Mesopotamia. The Halaf culture in the north spread rapidly across a large part of Mesopotamia, Anatolia and the Levant (which is Syria and Palestine). It was a high culture with beautiful and detailed pottery. It also used rather advanced forms of agriculture.¹¹³

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Ernst E. Wreshner, "The Submerged Neolithic Village "Newe Yam" on the Israeli Mediterranean Coast," 325-33 in P. M. Masters and N. C. Flemming, eds. *Quaternary Coastlines and Marine Archaeology: Towards the Prehistory of Land Bridges and Continental Shelves*, (London: Academic Press, 1983), 329. The uncertainty of dating Neolithic sites can be seen in C¹⁴ dates from Tell Hammam et-Turkman. Charcoal from phase IVB at this site has produced C¹⁴ dates of both 4160 BC and 8330 BC. For the data, see Peter M. M. G. Akkermans, "An Updated Chronology for the Northern Ubaid Periods in Syria," *Iraq* 50 (1988): 130.

¹⁰⁶ Matthews noted that the prehistoric cultures of Mesopotamia from 6000 BC are labeled in order as the Hassuna, Samarra, Halaf, Ubaid, Uruk and Ninevite 5 cultures. Matthews noted that substantial overlap both in chronology and geography occurred in the pottery sequence for these cultures. So there was not a clear chronological break between these cultures. Matthews, *The Early Prehistory of Mesopotamia 500,000 to 4,500 BC*, 57. It could be argued that the earliest Ubaid settlements might have been dated as early as 5900 BC. Michael Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*, (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 51.

Samuel Noah Kramer, *From the Poetry of Sumer: Creation, Glorification, Adoration*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 54-5.

¹⁰⁷ There has been debate about the origin of the Ubaid culture. Frankfort, Akkerman, and Le Mière argued that the Ubaid people came originally from Iran. Oates argued strongly against this explanation for their origin. Henri Frankfort, *Archaeology and the Sumerian Problem*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), 18-9. Peter M. M. G. Akkerman and Marie Le Mière, "The 1988 Excavations at Tell Sabi Abyad, a Later Neolithic Village in Northern Syria," *American Journal of Archaeology* 96 (1992): 1-22. Joan Oates, "Eridu and the Sumerian Problem," 126-33 in Tom Jones, ed. *The Sumerian Problem*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1969), 129.

¹⁰⁸ Uruk was a very important site. It was the Erech of Gen. 10:10. It is called Warka today.

¹⁰⁹ Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*, 51.

Robert McC. Adams and Hans J. Nissen, *The Uruk Countryside: The Natural Setting of Urban Societies*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), 6-9.

¹¹⁰ Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*, 53.

¹¹¹ N. Y. Merpert and R. M. Munchaer, "The Earliest Levels at Yarim Tepe I and Yarim Tepe II in Northern Iraq," *Iraq* 49 (1987): 1-36. Akkerman, "An Updated Chronology for the Northern Ubaid and Late Chalcolithic Periods in Syria: New Evidence from Tell Hammam et-Turkman," 109-46.

After 4800 BC, the Halaf culture in Mesopotamia was replaced by a later phase of the Ubaid called the Eridu culture. With the rise of the Eridu culture, the center of population and civilization moved from the northwest end of the valley to the southeast end of the valley.¹¹⁴ Nissen argued that southeastern Mesopotamia had been inundated before this time and was largely uninhabitable.¹¹⁵ The population shift to the southeast end of Mesopotamia would seem to be consistent with Genesis 11:1-2. Genesis recorded that men moved east into the land of Shinar before the Tower of Babel was built.¹¹⁶ This occurred as the Eridu culture moved east to the region of Shinar.¹¹⁷ When the Eridu population settled in the land of Shinar, villages like Uruk, Ur, and Eridu became more important. Jarus Zarins argued for the presence of a Semitic population of semi-nomadic people in Mesopotamia at this time.¹¹⁸ If Shem's descendants were already present in Mesopotamia at this time, they may have been influenced by the rising idolatry in Mesopotamia which was demonstrated by artifacts found in the earliest level of the ziqqurat at Eridu.¹¹⁹

While the center of population was moving toward the southeast in Mesopotamia, a wide spread and peaceful culture appeared in the Levant. It was a Chalcolithic culture. The Ghassulian culture may have benefited from a period of increased rainfall in the region.¹²⁰ While the inhabitants of wadi Ghassul continued to use stone tools, they also began making beautiful objects from copper. They did not yet make

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The movement of Semitic people from western Mesopotamia to the east has been defended for many years. In 1909, A. T. Clay argued that Northern Babylonia was originally called *ûri*. Clay argued that Southern Babylonia was called *Engi*. Clay argued that the name *ûri* was probably derived from the name *Amurru*. Clay argued that the Amorite population of Northern Mesopotamia was Semitic while the population of Southern Mesopotamia was Sumerian. Clay argued that the Semitic population of Northern Mesopotamia had come from the west. Albert T. Clay, *Amurru: The Home of the Northern Semites*, (Philadelphia: The Sunday School Times Co., 1909), 13-5.

Nissen argued that the Persian Gulf sea level was 3 meters higher in the middle of the 4th millennium BC. He argued that rainfall levels were also much higher. Consequently, the southern part of Babylonia was covered by water. The water retreated until lower sea levels than present were reached by the end of the 3rd millennium BC. Nissen argued that the earliest settlements in Babylonia dated to a time when large parts of the country were covered with water. Hans J. Nissen, *Mesopotamia Before 5000 Years*, (Rome: Universita Degli Studi di Roma, 1986), 40-1. Since Nissen wrote this study, many climatological studies of sea level change have appeared in print. Few climatologists today would interpret the evidence in exactly this way.

The name Shinar was in use as a geographical term in the Mosaic age. The victory tablet of Amenhotep III claimed Egyptian victories in Shinar, Naharin, Kadesh, Tunip, Ugarit, Carchemish, Asur, and over the Hittites. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt*, II:342-43.

When the center of population in Mesopotamia moved east, Shem's descendants may have been split into East and West Semitic cultures. The East Semitic culture developed a Semitic dialect called Akkadian while the West Semitic population developed a group of languages that included Eblaite, Ugaritic, and Hebrew. The split between East and West Semitic populations may explain the differences between Gen. 1-11 and Mesopotamian texts like the Gilgamesh Epic. It is possible that Gen. 1-11 was grounded in a tradition of truth handed down from Shem while the Mesopotamian traditions reflected the gradual loss of the truth as it was handed down in an idolatrous culture.

Zarins argued that the Akkadians were a Semitic population of semi-nomads. Zarins suggested that they had entered the valley from the western desert in the late 4th or early 3rd millennium BC. Zarins, "Early Pastoral Nomadism and the Settlement of Lower Mesopotamia," 54-6.

The great Eridu ziqqurat would later rise on the site of a small temple built in this age. The bottom temple layer of the ziqqurat at Eridu contained fragments of pottery called Eridu ware. This kind of pottery was in common use in Mesopotamia between 5000 BC and 4300 BC.

Sauer noted evidence for this moist period from his excavations at wadi al-Jubah. This site was located along the trade route between Timna and Marib in Yemen. Sauer noted a thick, dark, organic layer of soil on the bottom of the wadi. This layer could be seen on the surface in a few locations where the overburden had eroded away. Sauer noted that this black layer reminded him of the remains of a once marshy lake bed at Ghab in Syria. It also brought to mind the former lake beds in the empty quarter of Saudi Arabia. Uncalibrated radiocarbon dates for the dark soil layer at wadi al-Jubah lasted from 9520 to 5270 BP (7514 to 3264 BC). Sauer noted that the end of the moist period that produced this dark soil layer corresponded with the end of the Ghassulian culture in the Levant. Sauer argued that this moist period explained the evidence for wetter conditions at Teleilat el-Ghassul in Jordan and Beer-sheba in Israel. Sauer, "A New Climatic and Archaeological View of the Early Biblical Traditions," 367-68.

bronze by adding tin to copper.¹²¹ This Chalcolithic population is called the Ghassulian culture because evidence for it was first found at wadi Ghassul. In Palestine, this Chalcolithic culture disappeared for unknown reasons around 3200 BC.¹²² It continued in Syria and was merged with the later Early Bronze culture, although the Early Bronze had a very different character. The Chalcolithic culture in the Levant was not out of touch with the Uruk culture in Mesopotamia, and Moorey noted that several Uruk settlements have been found in Syria.¹²³

E) URUK AND A TOWER TO HEAVEN

1) A TOWER DURING THE URUK

The next phase in Mesopotamian history after the Ubaid lasted from 3500 BC to 3100 BC. This period established the foundation for the Early Bronze Age. In Mesopotamia, this culture sprang originally from the city of Uruk. While evidence for the earliest Uruk period settlements has proven difficult to interpret, the Uruk period seems to have begun when climate conditions improved in southeast Mesopotamia. Oak forests spread through the mountains north of Mesopotamia, and severe floods struck cities in the valley.¹²⁴ During the Ubaid period, the earliest occupation levels at sites around Uruk had been small, scattered villages that were only occupied for a short time. The earliest settlements around Uruk suggest that the population of the region was very sparse and widely scattered.¹²⁵ The pre-historic sites around Uruk also had a highly consistent culture. This should not be surprising. If Noah's flood is associated with the end of the Younger Dryas, human populations were still being re-established during the Ubaid. The population of the whole ancient Near East may have still been somewhat limited. Also, the center of population during the Ubaid period was in the northwestern part of Mesopotamia rather far from Uruk. All of this changed during the Uruk period. The Early Dynastic I period at Uruk saw the largest city population ever to exist at Uruk. The city and the settlements that it controlled grew at the expense of the countryside. Whole districts around Uruk were depopulated as people poured into the cities.¹²⁶ The increased urbanization at cities like Uruk produced the first centrally administered kingdoms in Mesopotamia. Sites near Uruk saw this increase in urbanization earlier than sites near Ur or Eridu.

There has been endless debate about whether there was an ethnic shift in the population of Mesopotamia at this time. Perhaps the most popular position today is to interpret both the Ubaid and Uruk as Sumerian, although that is not universally claimed. However the ethnic identity of the Ubaid and Uruk

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Gen. 4:22 suggests that the use of metal was almost as old as the human race itself. The Chalcolithic Age is simply the earliest culture in which the use of copper can be demonstrated from the evidence.

¹²² Several dates have been proposed for the end of the Ghassulian. Kaplan argued that it ended around 3150 BC. J. Kaplan, "The Archaeology of Tel Aviv-Jaffa," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 35 (1972): 66-80. Kelso noted that the earliest occupation of Bethel occurred near the end of the Chalcolithic Age. Bethel contained a "high place" at this time. James L. Kelso, *The Excavation of Bethel*, (Cambridge: The American Schools of Oriental Research, 1968). If so, holy mountain theology was already important in Palestine at this time. Recent excavations at Tell Hamoukar in northeast Syria demonstrate that the city was destroyed in a violent confrontation around 3500 BC. The city was destroyed in a confrontation between cities in northern and southern Mesopotamia. The city walls were destroyed by heavy bombardment by clay balls. John Noble Wilford, "Archaeologists Unearth a War Zone 5,500 Years Old," *New York Times*, 12/16/05. This suggests that the Chalcolithic cultures across the region might have been ended by the threat of military aggression.

¹²³ Moorey noted that architecture similar to the Uruk culture of Mesopotamia has even been found at Buto in the western Nile delta. Moorey, "From Gulf to Delta in the Fourth Millennium BCE: the Syrian Connection," 62*, 67*. For a discussion of the limits of the Uruk culture, see Guillermo Algaze, *The Uruk World System: the Dynamics of Expansion of Early Mesopotamian Civilization*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

¹²⁴ Alan D. Crown, "Climatic Change, Ecology and Migration," *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 1 (1971): 15.

¹²⁵ McC. Adams and Nissen, *The Uruk Countryside*, 6-9. Nissen argued that Uruk was first settled around 6000 BC, but he also argued that there was no evidence for dense settlement until two or three centuries before 3000 BC. Nissen, *Mesopotamia Before 5000 Years*, 43-5.

¹²⁶ Nissen argued that during the Jemdet Nasr, a belt from 12 to 15 km wide surrounded Uruk that was empty of settlements. Nissen, *Mesopotamia Before 5000 Years*, 57.

cultures are understood, there was a distinct change in pottery style between the Ubaid and the Uruk. Pottery from the Uruk was made on a rapidly turning wheel. This change began in Babylonia and spread outward from there.¹²⁷

Irrigation agriculture was the economic base for civilizations like the 1st Dynasty at Uruk.¹²⁸ Irrigation allowed high intensity agriculture to develop. With a large food supply, it was possible for large populations to exist within a reasonable distance of a central worship and administrative site. Archaeological and historical evidence links the rise of irrigation agriculture to the rise of social stratification and to the development of complex economies.¹²⁹ A strong central government was needed to create and maintain the irrigation systems that supported the city economies.¹³⁰ A memory of this time might have been preserved in Genesis 10:25. Moses described Shem's descendant Peleg. Moses noted that in his days, the land was either "divided," "irrigated," or "canalled" depending on how the verb *palag* is translated.¹³¹ Irrigation required both political organization and social differentiation. These factors produced economic prosperity and led to the rise of a centralized culture.¹³² Moses might have chosen to record the advent of irrigation in Peleg's time because it marked a parting of the ways either between the East and West Semitic cultures or between the settled population descended from Ham and a semi-nomadic population descended from Shem.¹³³ Either is possible but speculative.

The construction of the Anu ziqqurat at Uruk was well underway by this time.¹³⁴ A total of two dozen ziqqurats was eventually built throughout Mesopotamia. Falkenstein argued that these ziqqurats

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A change in pottery style might indicate an ethnic change or it might simply be a technological advance. Falkenstein argued that the population was Sumerian because later texts from the Jemdet Nasr period can be shown to be Sumerian. Adam Falkenstein, *The Sumerian Temple City*, (Malibu: Undena, 1974), 5. Algaze noted that a pottery style appeared at the beginning of the Uruk at Warka that disappeared shortly after that time. Algaze, *The Uruk World System*, 16.

Nissen argued that the first canals simply followed the older water courses. Only subsequent canals were straight and artificial. Nissen, *Mesopotamia Before 5000 Years*, 50-3. The strong administrative control of the Uruk culture may have been reflected as far away as Beth Shean in Palestine. Mazar noted that the late Early Bronze I period at Beth Shean was occupied during the late 4th millennium BC. Mazar noted that this city level may have seen a central authority that regulated the storage and redistribution of food. Amihai Mazar, "The Excavations at Tel Beth Shean During the Years 1989-94," 144-64 in Neil A. Silberman and David Small, eds. *The Archaeology of Israel*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 148. Of course, neither Nissen nor Mazar would completely agree with the general reconstruction of ancient Near Eastern history presented here.

From this beginning, urban culture spread rapidly across the world. Roger Atwood argued that a complex urban culture had developed by 2700 BC at Caral near the coast of Peru. This site included pyramids and a dense urban culture. Caral was preceded by the culture at Aspero on the Pacific coast of Peru. Aspero was occupied by 3022 BC. The dates for Caral and Aspero are based on radiocarbon dating and there has been a debate about the accuracy of these dates. See the discussion in Roger Atwood, "A Monumental Feud," *Archaeology* 58 (2005): 18-25.

Karl W. Butzer, "Perspectives on Irrigation Civilization in Pharaonic Egypt," in Denise Schmandt-Besserat, ed. *Immortal Egypt*, (Malibu: Undena, 1978), 13. McC. Adams and Nissen, *The Uruk Countryside*, 11, 87-8. Elizabeth F. Hendrickson, "The Early Pastoralism in the Central Zagros Highlands (Luristan)," *Iranica Antiqua* 20 (1985): 41.

Gen. 10:25 has often been translated to suggest that in Peleg's day the "earth was divided." This translation has been interpreted in unusual ways including allusions to continental drift. The Hebrew noun *'erec* can mean either "earth" or "land." The verb *palag* can mean "divide," but a survey of the cognate languages reveals that the verb was also used to mean "engrave" or "dig canals." In the cultural environment of the ancient Near East, it makes far more sense to suggest that in Peleg's day the land was canalled or irrigated than to suggest that the earth was somehow divided. See the discussion in David M. Fouts, "Peleg in Gen 10:25," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41 (1998): 17-22.

¹³³ Butzer, "Perspectives on Irrigation Civilization in Pharaonic Egypt," 13-8.

¹³⁴ See the discussion in Fouts, "Peleg in Gen 10:25," 17-22.

McC. Adams and Nissen, *The Uruk Countryside*, 11, 87-8. Ziqqurats were continually rebuilt and enlarged. When they were rebuilt, a wall was erected around the old structure. The area within this wall was filled with dirt. The resulting structure was then used as the base for a much larger temple. The process resulted in a stepped temple tower. The ziqqurat at Eridu was rebuilt and enlarged in this way 18 times. As they were enlarged, they were rebuilt according to the laws and ordinances of the ziqqurat at Eridu. E. Douglas Van Buren, "Foundation Rites for a New Temple," *Orientalia* 21 (1952): 293-306. During the Ubaid 4 period, the temple at Eridu was built on a platform that was only a meter high. So the temples may theologically have been heaven on earth, but the temples were still rather far from being man made mountains.

were more than religious institutions. He argued that the temple towers owned much of the city property, and they may originally have owned all of the property. Falkenstein argued that cities like Uruk were "temple cities."¹³⁵ Jack Finegan suggested that the ziqqurat at Uruk was the earliest of these ziqqurats.¹³⁶ The ziqqurats were great centers of both worship and education. The Uruk period was approaching literacy.¹³⁷ The earliest text was found at the Uruk 4 level though it is impossible to determine that language that it represented. Texts became more common in the Uruk 3 level. Between 500 and 600 tablets have been found that were written after 3200 BC.¹³⁸ W. F. Albright suggested that the similarities between East and West Semitic poetry might date back to this time period.¹³⁹ Up to 70% of the signs used in these texts cannot be interpreted. So the texts cannot be read, and they do not yet constitute literature.¹⁴⁰ This was the historical setting of Genesis 11:1-9 when the population of Mesopotamia moved east across the valley to the land of Shinar in southeastern Mesopotamia. The rise of an empire and tower in Shinar was a reasonable description of the 1st Dynasty at Uruk when rural populations were being replaced by organized city cultures.¹⁴¹ The early sanctuary at Uruk was being rebuilt into one of the first ziqqurats in Mesopotamia.

During these years, the agricultural village culture of Mesopotamia was replaced by a centrally governed urban culture. Cities like Uruk (or Erech) grew at the expense of the countryside. The villages, towns, and whole districts around Uruk were depopulated as the people poured into the cities. Urban areas near Uruk saw this great increase in urbanization much earlier than cities near Ur or Eridu. A strong central administration was necessary to create and maintain the canal systems that supported the city economies.¹⁴² Irrigation canals drained the swamps, limited floods, provided drinking water, allowed high

¹³⁵ Falkenstein, *The Sumerian Temple City*, 7.

¹³⁶ Finegan, *Light from the Ancient East*, 19-20.

Roaf discussed the process by which literacy appeared. He argued that the earliest evidence for literacy was found at Eanna. Roaf added that during the Uruk IV period, a script appeared that Roaf claimed was pictographic. Roaf noted that the script can not be read although some of the pictographs can be identified. In the Uruk III, this pictographic script became more abstract and the arrangement of the signs on the tablets became more complex. This language may have been Sumerian. Roughly 3,240 tablets from the Jemdet Nasr period have survived that were written in this script. These tablets were found at Uruk, Jemdet Nasr, Tell Uqair, and Eshnunna. At this time, the earliest Proto-Elamite tablets were also being written in a different script in Iran. The next stage in the development of the text occurred during the Early Dynastic period between 2900 and 2334 BC. This period began with the rise of a more linear script. By the middle of this era, cuneiform script had come into use. Roaf noted that there are several possible forerunners to the Uruk script. He noted that it is not known if the writing system developed over a long time period or resulted from a rapid breakthrough. Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*, 60, 69. Schmandt-Besserat argued that this explanation for the origin of literacy was incorrect. Schmandt-Besserat noted that counting tokens first appeared in the ancient Near East at the same time that extensive agriculture appeared around 8000 BC. Counting tokens have been found at 115 archaeological sites, and over 7000 tokens have been found. The counting tokens were baked clay objects of various shapes. The clay tokens were eventually pressed into clay to create a baked record. Later the shapes of the clay tokens were written in clay and baked. Schmandt-Besserat demonstrated that the earliest texts at Uruk and similar sites did not use pictographs. Instead, the written signs were depictions of the counting tokens. Schmandt-Besserat noted that the earliest examples of complex tokens have been found at Uruk. This was an important step in the development of literacy. Schmandt-Besserat, *Before Writing*, 1-13, 130-42.

Oates, "Ur and Eridu, the Pre-History," 32-50. Bauer et al noted that the Proto-cuneiform script at Uruk was found in levels Uruk IV, Uruk III, and the first levels of the Early Dynastic period. The texts span the years from 3200 to 2700 BC. Bauer et al noted that over 5000 archaic texts have been found at Uruk. Bauer, Englund, and Krebernik, *Mesopotamien: Späturuk-Zeit und Frühdynastische Zeit*, 16, 32.

William F. Albright, "The Role of the Canaanites in the History of Civilization," 328-62 in G. E. Wright, ed. *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961), 339. Alfred Haldar had argued that an immigration of Semitic people had entered Mesopotamia either at the same time as the Sumerians, or earlier. Haldar, *Who Were the Amorites*, 4-5.

¹⁴⁰ See the discussion in "The Sumerian Flood Story," <http://ragz-international.com>.

¹⁴¹ It is unclear how much of the earth's human population was gathered around the tower. Dale DeWitt argued that the Hebrew word *eret* can mean "land" as easily as "earth." If translated as "land," perhaps only the inhabitants of Mesopotamia were gathered at the tower. Dale S. DeWitt, "The Historical Background of Genesis 11:1-9: Babel or Ur?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 22 (1979): 15-26.

¹⁴² McC. Adams and Nissen, *The Uruk Countryside*, 87-8.

intensity agriculture to develop, and simplified the transportation of agricultural produce. With an increased food supply, it was possible for large populations to exist within a reasonable distance of a shared political and religious center. Archeological and historical evidence has linked the rise of irrigation agriculture with the rise of social stratification and complex economies.¹⁴³ International trade may also have begun at this time. Uruk colonies stretched to Syria, and Uruk artifacts have been found as far away as the Nile delta.¹⁴⁴

Holy mountain imagery was an important element of the Uruk culture. During Uruk I period, the small elevated shrines of the Ubaid period were being enlarged into brick temple mountains called ziqqurats.¹⁴⁵ These were "heaven on earth" sites. Jack Finegan argued that the Anu ziqqurat at Uruk was the earliest ziqqurat built in Mesopotamia. Finegan noted that the name ziqqurat meant "top of the mountain." He added that the top of the ziqqurat contained a temple which was understood to be the dwelling place of a god. Finegan noted that two dozen ziqqurats were built after the ziqqurat at Uruk.¹⁴⁶ R. E. Clements echoed Finegan's perspective. Clements suggested that the ziqqurats in Mesopotamia were human attempts to build artificial holy mountains which served as dwelling places for the gods. Clements suggested that the ziqqurats were a transition between real holy mountains and man-made temples.¹⁴⁷

While there are problems with any identification of the Genesis Tower of Babel,¹⁴⁸ the ziqqurat of Anu at Uruk might have been the "Tower of Babel" described in the Genesis text.¹⁴⁹ Meredith Kline argued that the Tower of Babel was intended to create a man made link between heaven and earth.¹⁵⁰ The Tower was a revolt against God that established a pattern for future temple towers in the region.¹⁵¹ If so, Ham's

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Butzer, "Perspectives on Irrigation Civilization in Pharaonic Egypt," 13.

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P. R. S. Moorey, "From Gulf to Delta in the Fourth Millennium BCE: The Syrian Connection," *Eretz-Israel* 21 (1990): 63*-9*.

¹⁴⁵

Roaf noted that excavations beside the Ur-Nammu ziqqurat at Eridu found a series of superimposed buildings from the Ubaid period. The earliest of these was a building with only one room. It dated to the Ubaid I period. Later levels at this site were clearly worship places. Roaf, *Cultural Atlas of Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East*, 52.

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Finegan, *Light from the Ancient East*, 19-20.

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Ronald E. Clements, *God and Temple*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 3.

¹⁴⁸

The early layers of ziqqurats in Mesopotamia were not made with burned brick as Genesis suggested. Burned brick layers of the ziqqurats were made at a much later date. This could be seen as an anachronism in the text. It could also be argued that all existing ziqqurats were built in a tradition started by an earlier tower. The problem with that solution is that the tower of Babel then left no clear archaeological remains. Of course, ziqqurats in this period were not yet large structures, and all evidence of the first tower could have been lost. As the Tigris and Euphrates rivers meandered through the valley, the earliest tower could have been washed away. For a discussion of later ziqqurat dimensions, see D. J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, (Oxford University Press, 1985), 68-73. Dating the Tower of Babel in the Uruk requires belief that the account described events in Mesopotamia while several cultures had already appeared in the rest of the ancient world.

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Seely noted that archaeologists would not date the Tower of Babel before 3500 BC. He noted that Shinar was uninhabited before 6000 BC. In the southern part of Shinar, the cities of Ur and Eridu were uninhabited before about 5600 - 5000 BC. The northern region of Shinar around Babylon was settled later than this. Cities around Babylon were settled between 4750 and 4000 BC. Paul H. Seely, "The Date of the Tower of Babel and Some Theological Implications," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 63 (2001): 15-6. The most famous of the ziqqurats has been the temple tower at Babylon. Many authors have suggested that this may have been the original Tower of Babel because the name "Babel" in Gen. 11:9 was assumed to refer to the city of Babylon. A Sumerian creation account called the *Enuma Elish* was a parallel account to Gen. 11:1-9. In the *Enuma Elish*, a temple tower was constructed that was named Esagila. It was the ziqqurat at Babylon. However, Gen. 11:1-9 did not necessarily claim that the first ziqqurat in the land of Shinar was built in the city that would become Babylon. Gen. 11:9 simply noted that either the tower or the culture was called "Babel" because of the confusion of languages. The *Enuma Elish* was a relatively late text, and it was written for a polemical purpose. So it is not strong evidence for the Tower's original location. The original tower may have been at Uruk, Babylon, or elsewhere.

¹⁵⁰

The phrase "up to heaven" was often used to describe anything unusually tall. Even grain could grow "up to heaven" in a good year. So Gen. 11:4 might not have suggested a link between heaven and earth. On the other hand, the prevalence of holy mountain imagery suggests that it may have had this meaning. Theodore Hiebert argued against this kind of interpretation in "The Tower of Babel and the Origin of the World's Cultures," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126 (2007).

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Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, (Hamilton: Meredith G. Kline, 1993), 167-69.

descendants at Uruk might well have been building their own versions of mount Eden, and they might have been dedicating their man made holy mountains to the service of their own gods.¹⁵²

As cities grew in Mesopotamia, the ziqqurats were enlarged. In the distant future, they would rival the size of the Old Kingdom pyramids in Egypt.¹⁵³ Each ziqqurat was the holy mountain dwelling place of a different god, as Mesopotamia was given over to idolatry. The theology of these ziqqurats was recorded in a series of 30 temple hymns. The collection of these hymns was attributed to the daughter of Sargon of Akkad in 2300 BC. Sargon of Akkad was Mesopotamia's first East Semitic ruler. The attribution to Enheduana has been debated. The current collection of temple hymns was copied during the Ur III and Old Babylonian Periods, although the hymns clearly were written in an earlier time.¹⁵⁴ The temple hymn from Eridu read in part,

Eunir, which has grown high, (uniting) heaven and earth,
Foundation of heaven and earth, 'Holy of Holies', Eridu,
Abzu, shrine, erected for its prince,
House, holy mound, where pure food is eaten,
Watered by the prince's pure canal,
Mountain, pure place, scoured with soap,
Abzu, your tigi belongs to (your) me's,
Your great ...wall is kept in good repair,
Into your ...,the place where the god dwells,¹⁵⁵

Another of the temple hymns reads in part,

House with a lofty name, high mountain of heaven,
Your base (and) your great foundation are mighty..¹⁵⁶

Enlil's temple was called E-kur, or "mountain house." The temple was described in these words.

In the city, the holy settlement of Enlil, in Nibru, the beloved shrine of father Great Mountain, he has made the dais of abundance, the E-kur, the shining temple, rise from the soil; he has made it grow on pure land as high as a towering mountain. Its prince, the Great Mountain, Father Enlil, has taken his seat on the dais of the E-kur, the loft shrine. No god can cause harm to the temple's divine powers. Its holy hand-washing rites are everlasting like the earth. Its divine powers are the

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The Tower of Babel account has also been understood in several other ways. For a survey, see Theodore Hiebert, "The Tower of Babel and the Origin of the World's Cultures," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126 (2007): 29-58. Hiebert saw the tower's significance in the differentiation of human culture.

The architecture of these ziqqurats was discussed in some detail in a tablet that originally came from either Uruk or Babylon. D. J. Wiseman, "A Babylonian Architect?" *Anatolian Studies* 22 (1972): 141-47. The stepped pyramid shape of the ziqqurats resembles the eroded shape of stepped dolomite and hard limestone mountains. Dov Nir, *Geomorphological Map of the Judean Desert*, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1965), 10. So the shape of the ziqqurats could have been influenced by the holy mountain imagery of the temples. It is equally possible that the stepped shape of the ziqqurats simply reflected the fact that they were rebuilt several times. When a temple was rebuilt, the old temple was contained within a wall. The wall was filled with dirt, and the new temple was built on the platform that was thus produced. This could easily result in a stepped structure.

¹⁵⁴ See the discussion of the Abu Salabikh hymns in Åke W. Sjöberg and E. Bergmann, *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns*, (Locust Valley: J. J. Augustin, 1969), 5-7.

¹⁵⁵ Sjöberg and Bergmann published a translation of a collection of 30 temple hymns that were sung in the Mesopotamian ziqqurats in the 3rd millennium BC. The collection of these hymns was attributed to the daughter of Sargon of Akkad a couple of centuries before Abraham's birth. It is hard to know if that attribution was correct. These hymns illustrated the great antiquity of the holy mountain theme. Sjöberg and Bergmann, *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns*, 17. A hymn to Inana attribute to Enheduana was printed in Black, *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*, 315-20.

¹⁵⁶ Sjöberg and Bergmann, *The Collection of the Sumerian Temple Hymns*, 24.

divine powers of the Abzu: no one can look upon them. Its interior is a wide sea which knows no horizon.¹⁵⁷

The cities that developed in Mesopotamia represented a human culture in revolt against God. They were the empire of man opposed to God's kingdom. This culture was based on a denial of God's decree in Genesis 9:1 that the human race should multiply and fill the earth. Rather than obey, Genesis 11:4 noted that the city and tower were built so that they would not be scattered across the world. In response, God sent His special presence down to Shinar to see the city and temple tower that the Uruk culture had built.¹⁵⁸ God exercised His eternal sovereignty over man's empire by visiting the site of man's rebellion and judging it. By confusing their language, God limited man's ability to found an empire opposed to Him, and God scattered the population.¹⁵⁹

If the Uruk culture was the tower of Babel population, the empire at Uruk was on the brink of becoming a literate culture. Finegan noted that between 500 and 600 texts have survived from this age.¹⁶⁰ If the tower of Babel culture was becoming literate, it should not be surprising that a corrupted version of the tower account was preserved in a later Sumerian text. This text has recently been called *The Epic of Enmerkar*. Kramer's translation of this text reads in part,

Once upon a time there was no snake, there was no scorpion,
There was no hyena, there was no lion,
There was no wild (?) dog, no wolf,
There was no fear, no terror,
Man had no rival.
In those days, the lands of Shubur (and) Hamazi,
Harmony-tongued (?) Sumer, the great land of the decrees of princship,
Uri, the land having all that is appropriate (?)
The land of Martu, resting in security,
The whole universe, the people in unison (?)
To Enlil in one tongue....
Then a-da the lord, a-da the prince, a-da the king

Enki, the lord of abundance, (whose) commands are trustworthy,
The lord of wisdom, who understands the land,
The leader of the gods,
Endowed with wisdom, the l[ord] of Eridu,
Changed the speech in their mouths, [brought(?)] contention into it,
Into the speech of man that (until then) had been one.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Black et al, *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*, 321.

¹⁵⁸

Miller noted that Gen. 11:1-9 differed in an important way from Mesopotamian texts where the gods decreed the construction of cities. In Genesis, God opposed and prevented the rise of cities. Genesis interpreted the first city as a direct revolt against God's decree. Miller "Eridu, Dunnu, and Babel: A Study in Comparative Mythology," 143-68.

¹⁵⁹ It is difficult to determine how the language at Babel was confused. Did a new population enter the region? Did God change the language being used? It is also difficult to determine what happened as a consequence of this event. It is interesting that Uruk style architecture appeared at Buto in the western Nile delta. Moorey, "From Gulf to Delta in the Fourth Millennium BCE," 62. Did this point to international trade during the Uruk as Moorey suggested, or did it point to the dispersion of the Uruk culture? Any attempt to link the Tower of Babel account with ancient Near Eastern history involves substantial difficulties.

¹⁶⁰ Finegan noted that the oldest Mesopotamian text so far found was a tablet from ancient Kish that was written around 3500 BC. It contained lines of pictographs. After this, level IV at Erech contained 500 to 600 inscribed clay tablets that were written between 3200 and 3100 BC. Finegan noted that the language written on these tablets can not be determined. However, by the Jemdet Nasr period (3100 to 3000 BC), the language being written had clear similarities with Sumerian including the names of the most important Sumerian gods. Finegan, *Archaeological History of the Ancient Middle East*, 8-20.

¹⁶¹ Samuel N. Kramer, "The 'Babel' of Tongues': A Sumerian Version," 278-82 in Richard S. Hess and David T. Tsumura, eds. *I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood*, (Eisenbrauns: Winona Lake: 1994), 279-81.

This text remembered a time when all men spoke one language in peace.¹⁶² The epic claimed that the gods confused human language and caused dissention between men. *The Epic of Enmerkar* also gave a striking place to holy mountains. It described a time before even the land of Dilmun existed.¹⁶³ At this primordial time, the text commanded that a holy mountain be built in Unug. This holy mountain would be a temple built by the people of Aratta. It would also be a temple brought down from heaven. It would be a holy place and god's abode. The text required that the *abzu* grow like a holy mountain. These features could be understood as resembling the Genesis account of the Tower of Babel. The text also differed from Genesis in several ways. For example, the text required the primal mountain temple to be built with stones taken from the mountains.¹⁶⁴ So this text may point back in a corrupted and distorted form to the same period as the Tower of Babel account.

The Uruk culture paralleled the Genesis account of the Tower of Babel in several ways. However, an identification of the Tower with the Uruk culture presupposed that Genesis was only describing events in Mesopotamia rather than the world as a whole. Genesis 11:1 claimed that *kol eretz* spoke one language. *Kol eretz* is usually translated as "the whole earth" in this verse. However, the Hebrew could as easily be translated as "the whole land." The Hebrew word *eretz* is commonly translated both as "world" and "land" in the Old Testament. It was often used for the land of Israel. In Genesis 45:20, *kol eretz* clearly referred only to the land of Egypt. In Genesis 41:57, *kol eretz* came to Egypt to purchase grain from Joseph. This limits *kol eretz* in this verse to Egypt, the Levant, and possibly northeast Africa.¹⁶⁵ Understanding *kol eretz* in Genesis 11:1 would be necessary for the Tower to be the Uruk culture because human civilization was already wide spread by this time.¹⁶⁶

Other than possible references in the genealogical records, the Biblical text fell silent for a thousand years after the Uruk Period. The Uruk period in Mesopotamia was followed by the Jemdet Nasr culture around 3100 BC. This was the beginning of the Early Bronze Age in Mesopotamia. This culture added tin to copper to make bronze. It also made wheel turned pottery. The Early Bronze culture in Palestine appeared at approximately the same time.¹⁶⁷ The Early Bronze culture was centered in rather large urban areas that were heavily fortified. Cities like Megiddo appeared during the Early Bronze. Hoerth noted that the walls built around Early Bronze cities were the widest ever built in Palestine. The walls measured up to 25 feet thick.¹⁶⁸ The peace of the Ghassulian era had given way to danger as the pattern created at Babel was replicated throughout the region. The Early Bronze was a high culture with well developed artistic skills. The Early Bronze was a literate age, as the Uruk period had been before it.

2) THE WEST SEMITIC TRADITION OF FAITH

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If the Tower of Babel culture is associated with the Uruk, it is interesting that Nissen described a significant number of changes in the archaeological record between the end of the Uruk and the beginning of the Jemdet Nasr period. Nissen interpreted these changes as evidence for the arrival of a new culture in the region. Nissen, *Mesopotamia before 5000 Years*, 85-90.

¹⁶³ The Sumerians claimed to have come from Dilmun. This region was a quasi-spiritual realm. It has been equated with several locations in the ancient Near East.

¹⁶⁴ In the *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*, this mountain is called Kulaba, the mountain of great me. It is striking that a text called *Lugalbanda in the Mountain Cave*, Kulaba was called "brick-built Kulaba." See the text online at The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature.

¹⁶⁵ Deut. 28:10 promised that all of the peoples of the *eretz* would hear that Israel was called by Yahweh's name and fear them.

¹⁶⁶ The great river valleys like the Nile were settled roughly three millennia earlier and their population spoke different languages.

¹⁶⁷ Dating is tenuous. Published dates for the beginning of the Early Bronze may differ by a century or two depending on the author.

¹⁶⁸ Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1998), 87.

The Tower of Babel account described the division of *kol eretz* into language groups.¹⁶⁹ The historical process by which language differentiation occurred may be as difficult to reconstruct as the archaeological evidence for the end of the Uruk period in general. During the Ubaid and Uruk cultures, Mesopotamia probably included the descendants of all three of Noah's sons. During the Uruk, the center of population in Mesopotamia had moved from the western end of the valley down to the southeast. As this occurred, Shem's descendants in Mesopotamia were split into two factions. Shem's sons were divided into East and West Semitic ethnic groups. The Semitic people who remained in the West followed a largely semi-nomadic lifestyle. The population in the West included both Semitic and non-Semitic factions. The total population of western Mesopotamia and the eastern Levant has often been called Amorite. In the ancient Near East, these "Westerners" were called the *Amurru* in the East Semitic language and the *MAR.TU* in the Sumerian language. These semi-nomadic Westerners were often a threat to more settled agricultural populations. This threat can be seen in a later Mesopotamian myth called *Lugalbanda and the Anzud Bird*. In this myth, Enmerkar claimed,

Where there was a marsh then in Unug, it was full of water. Where there was any dry land, Euphrates poplars grew there. Where there were reed-thickets, old reeds and young reeds grew there. Divine Enki who is king in Eridu tore up for me the old reeds, drained off the water completely. For fifty years I built, for fifty years I was successful. Then the Martu peoples, who know no agriculture, arose in all Sumer and Akkad.¹⁷⁰

This suggests that the Westerners troubled southeastern Mesopotamia at some point after the agricultural settlements were well established.

It is important to understand the identity of the *MAR.TU* or the Westerners. Zarins argued that the Amurru, the Akkadians, and the Kishites are all populations that had existed in Mesopotamia since the end of the 7th millennium BC. Zarins argued that after the Sumerian invasion, the kings of Kish had continued to be Semitic rulers. The Semitic people retained substantial influence north of Abu Salabikh. Below this frontier, the valley was controlled by Sumerian rulers.¹⁷¹ The Sumerian rulers of southern Mesopotamia had nothing but contempt for the older culture in the northwest, and especially for the semi-nomadic elements of that culture. That contempt may be reflected in the fact that Amorite names were rather uncommon in early Sumerian texts. Alfred Haldar noted that the name *MAR.TU* first appeared in a Sumerian text from Tell Fara that was written around 2600 BC. The *Amurru* man named in this text was a traveling merchant or caravaner. Haldar argued that he may have been an envoy or emissary, since such envoys often traveled the caravan routes. Haldar noted that the Amurru names were not common in Mesopotamia at this time. Even the man described as a *MAR.TU* in the Fara text had a Sumerian name. Haldar also noted that *Amurru* names only began to appear in texts from Mari shortly before Sargon's rise to power.¹⁷²

Alfred Haldar noted that Sumerian texts described the Amurru as being nomadic groups of this kind. The *Amurru* were described as people who knew not a city, a house, grain, or agriculture. They were claimed to live in mountains. They were claimed to reject authority, to eat uncooked meat, and to leave their dead unburied. Haldar noted that these claims were also made about the god Martu in the Sumerian myth of the marriage of the god Martu to the daughter of the god Numusda. Haldar noted Kupper's interpretation of these claims. Kupper argued strongly that they only reflected Sumerian contempt for other nations, and for the worshippers of other gods. He argued that these claims were not actually true of the Amorites. Haldar noted that several other ancient texts also bore witness to the Sumerians' contempt for the *Amurru*. Haldar suggested that the god of the *Amurru*, who was named Martu, was never incorporated into the Sumerian pantheon. Instead, the god Martu was treated with contempt in Sumerian literature.

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The Hebrew words *kol eretz* may mean either "all the world" or "all the land." The words could refer either to Mesopotamia or the entire world depending on the presuppositions brought to the account.

¹⁷⁰ The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk>.

¹⁷¹ Zarins, "Early Pastoral Nomadism," 55.

¹⁷² Haldar, *Who Were the Amorites?* 4-8, 77.

Haldar suggested that Martu was a god created in Sumer by the *Amurru* who had settled in Mesopotamia.¹⁷³

Before Abraham's time, worship of the true God was probably handed down by a remnant of Shem's descendants who were found within the broader *MAR.TU* community.¹⁷⁴ The Sumerian name *MAR.TU* was written in Semitic languages as *Amurru*. This was the name that stood behind the Biblical name Amorite. Uses of the name Amorite can be confusing. Genesis 10:16 claimed that the Amorites were the descendants of Ham through Canaan. While Genesis 10:16 is not incorrect, it is an oversimplification.¹⁷⁵ Most of the time, in both the Bible and the ancient Near East, the name *Amurru* did not refer to one specific ethnic group.¹⁷⁶ It referred to the total population of northwestern Mesopotamia, Syria, and eastern Palestine.¹⁷⁷

Alfred Haldar noted that the names *Amurru* and *MAR.TU* were often used to describe a geographical region as well as an ethnic group. Texts from Mesopotamia described the "land of the *Amurru*," the "mountain of the *Amurru*," or the "city of the *Amurru*." Haldar argued that the people living in the "land of the *Amurru*" were called *Amurru*, or "Westerners." Haldar argued that the term *Amurru* included peoples from many different ethnic groups.¹⁷⁸ Haldar also noted that there has been a lot of

¹⁷³

Haldar, *Who Were the Amorites?* 52-5, 68.

This suggestion is less popular today than it once was. Fleming noted that a significant number of mobile pastoralists were part of the population of ancient Mari. They had a life style similar to Abraham. Their presence at Mari suggested that it was not necessary to find a background for Abraham in the Westerners. Daniel Fleming, "Genesis in History and Tradition," 193-232 in James K. Hoffmeier and Alan Millard, eds., *The Future of Biblical Archaeology*, (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2004), 205. A connection between Abraham and the *MAR.TU* may still be valuable to those who seek a linear connection between the faith traditions of Noah and Abraham. Such a line of faith is not sought by modern archaeology.¹⁷⁵

This kind of Biblical statement usually gives only a general relationship between peoples and often oversimplifies the historical process. A good example of this principle can be seen in Gen. 36:1-9. Esau's descendants became the Edomites of Seir. However, the historical reality was more complex than that, and the Biblical text itself bore witness to that complexity. Gen. 36:15-19 listed Esau's descendants who became leaders of Edomite groups. Then Gen. 36:20-30 lists the Horite leaders of other Edomite groups. These Horite leaders were descendants of Seir the Horite. Gen. 14:6 noted that the Horites of Mount Seir had already been firmly planted in the region when Abraham fought Chedorlaomer. The Horites remained in Edom long after Esau entered the region. Deut. 2:12 explained that Esau's descendants were eventually able to dispossess the Horites, and destroy them. Yet even then, Seir was not completely Edomite land. In Num. 24:18, Balaam prophesied that Edom would become Israel's possession. Balaam then prophesied that Edom's enemy Seir would also become Israel's possession. While God may have given Seir to Esau's descendants as Josh. 24:4 claimed, the Edomites did not occupy Mount Seir in Moses' day. Deut. 2:1-5 noted that Israel had circled Mount Seir for many days while they were still in the wilderness. They had circled Mount Seir continually before they set out north toward Edomite territory which Deut. 2:4 also identified with Seir. At least part of the land of Seir may have been occupied by the Amalekites at this time. The Amalekites occupied the region around Kadesh as early as Chedorlaomer's invasion in Gen. 14:7. The Israelites fought the Amalekites twice while they were in the wilderness, in Ex. 17:8-16 and Num. 14:39-45. So some Biblical texts claim that Seir was Edomite land in the Mosaic age, while other Biblical texts claim that Seir was not Edomite land at the same time. This is not really a contradiction. Biblical names like Seir, Edom, Canaan, and Amorite were used in a variety of ways both in the Bible and in the ancient Near East. Some names had both a narrow and broad meaning. The narrow definition of these names referred to specific ethnic groups descended from Seth or from Ham's son Canaan. The broad definition of the same names referred to large geographical regions, and to the total population of those regions.¹⁷⁶

H. Tur-Sinai argued that the name "Amorite" in Scripture never referred to a people or tribe that ever actually existed in history. Tur-Sinai argued that the name "Amorite" was applied to several different ethnic groups who are also identified by other names. H. Tur-Sinai, "The Amorite and the Amurru of the Inscriptions," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 39 (1948-49): 253.¹⁷⁷

There is no really good name to describe the area occupied by Israel. The term "Levant" applies to the entire east shore of the Mediterranean basin. The term "Canaan" does not seem to have been used before the Egyptian New Kingdom. It seems to have applied to the coastal plains while the highlands and the region east of the highlands were Amorite territory instead of Canaanite territory. This study will use the term "Palestine" to describe the region that Israel inhabited. This term is both anachronistic and inaccurate. It is a modern term derived originally from the name "Philistine." However, it has the benefit of being widely understood by the readers of this study.¹⁷⁸

He noted Kupper's claim that there were five nomadic peoples in the ancient Near East that he called the: *Hanéens*, *Sutéens*, *Habiru*, and *Amorrhéens* and the *Yaminites* (or perhaps Benjaminites). Haldar argued instead that the first four

debate about how nomadic the *Amurru* normally were. He argued that some *Amurru* were nomadic and some were not. Haldar noted that there were a number of settled *Amurru* groups who lived in cities or towns ruled by Amorite kings or minor rulers.¹⁷⁹ Kathleen Kenyon argued that some of the *Amurru* were nomads, while some were only semi-nomads. For example, the ruler Ibbi-Sin of Ur referred to the *Amurru* as vagabonds who had never known a town.¹⁸⁰

While the *Amurru* included people from several ethnic backgrounds, many descendants of Shem may have been found among this population. It is striking that Kupper identified the *Habiru* as one of the ancient parts of the *Amurru* population. In Genesis 10:21, Shem was called the father of all the sons of Eber, or Heber.¹⁸¹ The title "sons of Eber" refers to more than genealogical descent. It refers to membership in a recognized population. The name Heber may be identified with the names *Habiru* and Hebrew, although that has been debated.¹⁸² Genesis 10:21 may imply that the name *Habiru* was originally applied to Shem's descendants. By Moses' time, the name was applied to people from many different ethnic backgrounds. While the Israelites called themselves Hebrews, there were also many Hebrews in the ancient Near East who were not Israelites. Archaeological and textual evidence from the ancient Near East witnessed to the fact that these *Amurru* included a large population of Semitic people. Part of the semi-nomadic, *Amurru* population may have remained in northwest Mesopotamia when the center of population for the Eridu culture had moved east toward Shinar in Genesis 11:1-2. These Westerners may have included the remnant of the believing tradition handed down from Noah and Shem. Abraham Malamat went so far as to suggest that the *Amurru* were made up of various Semitic groups that centered on the ancient city of Mari. Malamat suggested that these Semitic groups should be related directly to the origin of Israel.¹⁸³ Malamat suggested that the *Amurru* at Mari included both a settled and a nomadic component. He suggested that the *Hanéens* at Mari were a relatively settled people who were associated

were subgroups of the *Amurru*, or the Amorites. Haldar, *Who Were the Amorites?* 2-5, 54-5.

¹⁷⁹Haldar, *Who were the Amorites?* 57-9.

¹⁸⁰Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Amorites and Canaanites*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 34.

¹⁸¹While it is not probable, it is possible that the Biblical Eber might have ruled the ancient city of Ebla. Gen. 10:21 suggests that Eber was an important and well known figure. One of the six kings who ruled Ebla was named *eb uruum*. Finegan noted that this was linguistically similar to the names Eber and Hebrew. Finegan, *Archaeological History of the Ancient Middle East*, 43.

¹⁸²Wiseman claimed that it is unclear whether the *Habiru* should be equated with the Hebrews either linguistically or functionally. D. J. Wiseman, "Abraham Reassessed," 141-60 in A. R. Millard and D. J. Wiseman, eds. *Essays on the Patriarchal Narratives*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 146.

¹⁸³Abraham Malamat even claimed that both the Israelites and other West Semitic groups were originally derived from the Amorites found at Mari. Abraham Malamat, "Mari and Early Israel," *Biblical Archaeology Today*, (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1985), 236. Haldar noted the academic debate about the location of the Amorites' homeland. He noted that authors like Samuel Kramer had argued for an *Amurru*'s homeland in Arabia, although Haldar argued that this is linguistically not very tenable. Haldar and Juris Zarins noted that the *Amurru* homeland was associated in Sumerian texts with the mountain ridge called Jebel Bishri west of the Euphrates. Haldar noted that Arabic was Southwest Semitic instead of Northwest Semitic which was a different language group. He also noted that Amorites whose personal names appeared in ancient Near Eastern texts sometimes had Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, or Hurrian names. However, no one described as an Amorite in the ancient texts had an Arabic name. Haldar argued that Arabs did not enter the historical record until the 1st millennium BC. Haldar, *Who Were the Amorites?* 6-9. Zarins, "Early Pastoral Nomadism," 55. E. Dhorme argued that the *Amurru* homeland was the whole region between the Euphrates River and the Mediterranean Sea. J. Tracy Luke echoed Dhorme's conclusion, claiming that the *Amurru* homeland was the Syrian uplands between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea. Luke then added that the ancient city of Mari was an *Amurru* city in the 18th century BC during the 1st Dynasty of Babylon. Malamat noted that 20,000 tablets have been found at Mari from the Old Babylonian period in the 18th century BC when Mari came under West Semitic control. Abraham Malamat, "Mari and Early Israel," 235-43. Luke noted that the term *Amurru* was also used to describe areas further west than Mari. J. Tracy Luke, "Your Father Was an Amorite' (Ezek 16:3, 45): An Essay on the Amorite Problem in OT Traditions," 221-37 in H. B. Huffmon, et al, eds. *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 221-29. Num. 13:29 claimed that the Amorites lived in the highlands of Palestine. The same claim was made in Deut. 1:7, 19-20, 44. Luke added that the Old Testament regarded the whole Transjordan region as Amorite land. Luke suggested that *Amurru* groups like the Yaminites were established tribal confederations with many subdivisions, and with long established claims to specific villages and pasture lands. The Old Testament depicted the area west of the mountains as Canaanite instead of Amorite.

with the northern part of the Levant. Malamat suggested that the Yaminites remained nomadic. Malamat suggested that these nomadic *Amurru* lived in Palestine,¹⁸⁴

Juris Zarins argued for the great antiquity of these *Amurru*. He argued that the *MAR.TU* (or *Amurru*), the East Semitic Akkadians, and the Kishites had all lived in Mesopotamia since the end of the 7th millennium BC. Zarins argued that Semitic groups would retain substantial influence in Mesopotamia north of Abu Salabikh even after the Sumerians gained control of southeastern Mesopotamia.¹⁸⁵ The Sumerian rulers of southern Mesopotamia would treat the older *Amurru* culture with contempt. Haldar noted that Sumerian texts described the *Amurru* as being nomadic groups who knew not a city, a house, grain, or agriculture. They were claimed to live in mountains. They were claimed to reject authority, to eat uncooked meat, and to leave their dead unburied. It is difficult to determine how accurate the Sumerian depictions of the *Amurru* really were. Clearly, such a life style would be out of keeping with God's commands to Noah in passages like Genesis 9:4.

One connection between the western *Amurru* and the early Semitic population can be seen in the fact that the West Semitic language was spoken in some form from western Mesopotamia, through Syria, and south into Palestine. Alfred Haldar noted that the Northwest Semitic language family included Amorite, Canaanite, and Hebrew. So the Amorite language was a West Semitic language.¹⁸⁶ The relationship between these West Semitic languages has been studied at length. From the beginning of the Uruk period on down, large written archives have been preserved in the ancient Near East. This is striking in light of Genesis 11:8 which noted how God scattered those who had been building the Tower in Shinar. After this time, Uruk style artifacts appeared across the ancient Near East.

This is also interesting in the light of I. J. Gelb's argument that the *Amurru* homeland came to be Syria and Palestine. Gelb argued that the early Ghassulian culture of Palestine disappeared around the time that the Uruk period began in Mesopotamia. Palestine had been completely emptied of population. Gelb argued that Palestine was resettled largely by West Semitic people. Gelb argued that West Semitic people had inhabited Palestine and the Phoenician coast long before they inhabited Syria. Gelb concluded that Palestine and perhaps the Phoenician coast may very well have become the homeland of the West Semitic peoples. Gelb went on to observe that the West Semitic peoples originally had lived a nomadic life. He suggested that they were probably related closely to the *Habiru* who appear so often in the ancient texts. Gelb suggested that this may explain why the Canaanites and the *Habiru* appear together in the

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Abraham Malamat, "Pre-Monarchical Social Institutions in Israel in the Light of Mari," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 40 (1986): 165-76.

¹⁸⁵ Zarins, "Early Pastoral Nomadism," 31-65.

¹⁸⁶ Haldar, *Who Were the Amorites?*, 2-5, 54-5.

letter of Yasmah-Adad at Mari.¹⁸⁷ Abraham Malamat disagreed with Gelb's approach to the evidence. Malamat argued that the *Amurru* land included Syria but not Palestine.¹⁸⁸

3) EGYPT AND THE LEVANT

During Mesopotamia's Jemdet Nasr culture, the land of Egypt was divided into two kingdoms that occupied the Nile delta and the Nile River valley. Around 3000 BC, Egypt's 1st Dynasty rulers united Egypt into a single kingdom for the first time. Already by this time, sea trade between Egypt and Syria was well under way. Egypt's first two dynasties constituted Egypt's Proto-Dynastic Age. During these years, there was a strong Egyptian presence in southern Palestine. A great deal of Egyptian style pottery has been found from this time period in Arad, the Negev, and the Shephelah in Palestine. At some sites, 90% of the pottery found was produced in an Egyptian style. Egyptian clay seals were also found in Palestine at this time. This Egyptian pottery has been explained in several different ways.¹⁸⁹ It was once popular to claim that the Egyptians had an empire in Palestine at this time. Recently, it has become popular to claim only a large Egyptian settlement in the region. Amnon Ben-Tor argued that the kind of pottery found in southern Palestine was not the kind of pottery exchanged in trade. It was instead the kind of pottery used by families in preparing meals. He noted that this kind of pottery was found most often at Tel ell-Erani, Tell

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Gelb's case was problematic. Most of his evidence came from the Egyptian Execration Texts that were written at the end of Israel's patriarchal period. Even if he interpreted the Execration Texts correctly, they would still be poor evidence for events that happened over a thousand years earlier. The Egyptian Execration Texts were written after Jacob moved south to Egypt. Egypt's political and military power was disintegrating as Egypt slid downhill into the 2nd Intermediate Period. Since Egypt could no longer impose its will on other nations, the Pharaohs tried to use magic to control their enemies in Palestine and Syria. The Egyptians would write the names of their enemies on figurines and bowls. They then smashed the figurines and bowls in the hope of smashing their enemies with magic. Many of the smashed pieces of pottery still contain the names of rulers from Syria and Palestine at the end of the Egyptian 12th Dynasty and the beginning of the 13th Dynasty. I. E. Gelb observed that the Execration Texts recorded only West Semitic names for rulers in Canaan. All personal and place names in Palestine at that time reflected a West Semitic culture. Gelb argued that the Execration Texts show no hint of a Hurrian presence in Palestine at this time. The Egyptian Amarna Letters, which were written several centuries later, clearly do refer to people in Palestine who had Hurrian names. Gelb argued that the original, Ghassulian population of Syria was neither Semitic nor Hurrian. This original population was augmented during the Early Bronze Age by a new West Semitic culture. Then still later, this West Semitic culture was augmented by the arrival of Hurrian peoples into the region. Gelb argued that the history of Palestine was quite different from the history of Syria. In Palestine, the earliest culture was a West Semitic culture. This was true because the Ghassulians had completely disappeared from Palestine before the Semitic population arrived. This West Semitic culture was later augmented by the Hurrian immigration. There are rather serious problems with Gelb's position. Gelb assumed that the Egyptian Execration Texts can be used to determine the nature of the population of Palestine. Actually, the Execration Texts only indicated city states in Palestine had been opposed to Egypt's interests. The Hurrians may not have been among Egypt's enemies. Genesis testified to the presence of Hurrians in Palestine during the patriarchal age, and Hurrians may have joined the Hyksos government in Egypt. I. J. Gelb, "The Early History of the West Semitic Peoples," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 15 (1961): 27-47. Albright concurred that all of the names in the Execration Texts were Semitic and most were Northwest Semitic. William F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1968), 112.

Malamat argued that during the Old Babylonian period, Mari had formed a treaty with Hazor and Laish in Palestine. However, Palestine was not within the bounds of the "Land of *Amurru*" as depicted in the Mari texts. According to the Mari texts, the "Land of *Amurru*" was located north of Damascus in the Levant. Abraham Malamat, "Northern Canaan and the Mari Texts," 164-77 in James A. Sanders, ed. *Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century*, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1970).

Ram Gophna and Dan Gazit, "The First Dynasty Egyptian Residency at 'En Besor," *Tel Aviv* 12 (1985): 9-16. Ram Gophna, "Egyptian Immigration into Southern Canaan during the First Dynasty," *Tel Aviv* 3 (1976): 31-7. Itzhaq Beit-Arieh, "New Evidence on the Relations between Canaan and Egypt during the Proto-Dynastic Period," *Israel Exploration Journal* 34 (1984): 20-3. Ruth Amiran, "A Preliminary Note on the Synchronisms between the Early Bronze Strata of Arad and the First Dynasty," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 179 (1965): 30-3.

Maahaz, and Tell Halif.¹⁹⁰ During the Proto-Dynastic Age, the Egyptians also had armed conflicts with the bedouin on Egypt's northeast frontier.¹⁹¹

The Proto-Dynastic Age was followed by the Egyptian Old Kingdom which began around 2700 BC. The Old Kingdom was Egypt's pyramid age. Egypt's rulers built colossal stone pyramids which enabled the deceased king to function in the afterlife. The Old Kingdom was composed of the 3rd to 6th Dynasties. It was in power roughly from 2700 to 2200 BC. During the Old Kingdom, Egypt's relationship with Palestine changed completely. The Egyptian occupation of southern Palestine came to a complete end. No Egyptian artifacts have been found in southern Palestine from the Old Kingdom, and no artifacts from Palestine have been found in Old Kingdom Egypt.¹⁹² During the Old Kingdom, several Pharaohs also had armed conflicts with bedouin in the northeast.¹⁹³

The Old Kingdom pyramids were decorated with hieroglyphic texts called the Pyramid Texts. These have limited importance for Biblical studies. They are magic spells intended to assist the deceased ruler in the afterlife. They were written roughly 500 years before Abraham and 1,000 years before Moses. One theme in the Pyramid Texts deserves far more attention than it has received. That is the claim that the blessed dead lived in a spiritual region located in the northern sky. This was largely an Old Kingdom claim, although Old Kingdom traditions did tend to be copied for many centuries after the close of the Old Kingdom. By the Middle Kingdom, the Egyptian realm of the dead had largely moved either to the horizon zone or the underworld. The Egyptian Middle Kingdom was the age of Israel's Patriarchs. The Old Kingdom's northern spiritual realm reflected an ancient tradition that would become very important in Canaanite theology, and it would eventually have an impact on Israelite thought.

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Amnon Ben-Tor, "The Relations between Egypt and the Land of Canaan during the Third Millennium B.C." *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 3-18.

¹⁹¹ Three 1st Dynasty Pharaohs carried on military campaigns against them. Pharaoh Djer boasted that he had attacked the land of Setjet that was northern Sinai. Pharaoh Den was depicted as executing a kneeling bedouin with a mace. Pharaoh Qa owned a carved figure of a bound bedouin captive. John MacDonald, "Egyptian Interests in Western Asia to the End of the Middle Kingdom: An Evaluation," *Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology* 2 (1972): 72-98.

¹⁹² Ben-Tor, "The Relations between Egypt and the Land of Canaan during the Third Millennium B.C." 6.

¹⁹³ These conflicts were over control of the turquoise mines in the Sinai. Texts written by Pharaohs Snefru, Sahure and Nuxerre have been found on the rock walls of Wadi Mughara. These texts depict the Old Kingdom Pharaohs attacking Bedouin in the Sinai. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents*, I: 75, 108, 114, 120.