

The Primeval History: Genesis 1-11

1. Genesis 1-3, continued.

2. Genesis 1-11 according to the Documentary Hypothesis

	“P” Source	“J” Source
Cosmogony and Anthropogony	1:1-2:4a – Story of Creation in six days	
		2:4b-3:24 – Creation + Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden
The Lines of the First Humans		4:1-16 – Cain and Abel
	5:1-32 – Genealogy, from Seth to Lamech + birth of Noah from Lamech	4:17-26 – Genealogy, from Cain to Lamech + Birth-notice of Seth from Adam
The Flood, its Causes, and its Effects		6:1-4 – “sons of God” and daughters of men
	6:5-9:29 – The Flood and the survival of Noah and his sons	
Spread and Diversification of Humankind	10:1-32 – Genealogy, from Noah’s sons (Shem, Ham, Japheth) and Table of Nations	
		11:1-9 – Story of the Tower of Babel
Lines Leading to Abraham	11:10-32 – Genealogies, from Shem to Abraham	

3. Before the Flood

Themes: progressive separation of humankind from God and earth; improper mingling of the categories of divine and human; corruption of creation.

- Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)
- Arts of civilization invented by Cain’s sons (Genesis 5)
- Sons of God and daughters of men (Genesis 6:1-4)

4. The Flood

- Genesis 6-9 as an interweaving of J and P (see attached chart + Friedman pp. 54-59)

Flood as un-creation followed by re-creation:

Creation to Noah (10 Generations)	Flood to Abram (10 Generations)
A. Creation (1-2) - Deeps (1:2); Blessing (1:22); Mandate (1:28); Food (1:29-30); Adam worked the ground (2:15)	A. Re-creation (8:1-9:17) - Deeps (8:2); Blessing (8:17); Mandate (9:1-2, 7); Food (9:3); Noah worked the ground (9:20)
B. Adam and Eve ate fruit of the tree (3) –Fruit of the tree (3:1-7); Nakedness exposed (3:7)	B. Noah drank fruit of the vine (9:18-28) - Wine (9:20-21); Nakedness viewed (9:21-23)
C. Cain sinned and was cursed (4)	C. Ham sinned and Canaan was cursed (9:25-27)
D. Genealogy: Adam to Noah (5)	D. Genealogy: Sons of Noah (10)
E. Divine-human mix (6:1-4)	E. Human attempt to be divine: Tower of Babel (11:1-9)
F. Flood (6:5-7:24)	F. Genealogy of Shem (11:10-26)
Result: Undoing of creation	Result: God focuses on Abram and makes his name [Heb. <i>shem</i>] great (12:2)

5. Two accounts of the spread of humankind and the diversification of languages

Genesis 10 (Table of Nations): Some elements of J, but set out as an explanation of humankind’s diversification by P; e.g., P’s refrain “these are the sons of X, by their families, their languages, their lands, and their nations” and P’s conclusion: “These are the families of Noah’s sons, according to their genealogies, in their nations; and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood.”

Genesis 11 (Tower of Babel): J’s story of how all people, who lived together and spoke one language, came to be dispersed by God after they worked together in the city Babel to try to build a high tower to reach heaven (contrast the story about the city Babylon and its high tower in *Enuma Elish*).

6. The Structure of Genesis 1-10 as a redacted whole

Toledot – Hebrew word meaning “generations” or “descendants.” *Toledot* notices provide structure to the combination of different material in Genesis and are marked below in italics.

Main Figures	Aetiological Information	Humankind and God
1:1, In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth...		
	Light; darkness; earth; seas; firmament; plants; sun, moon, stars; birds; animals; humankind; week and Sabbath	
2:4, <i>These are the generations [toledot] of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens...</i>		
2:4b-3:24, Adam and Eve	Man; plants; animals; woman; farming; rain; marriage; serpent crawling on its belly; women’s antipathy to serpents; women’s pain in childbirth; women’s subordinate position to men in social hierarchy; men’s need for difficult labor to grow food from the earth; clothing	The first act of human disobedience to God: Eve and Adam eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden of Eden; moreover, both are punished (see left), and <i>ground is cursed</i>
4:1-16, Cain and Abel, first two sons of Adam and Eve	Cain = first farmer Abel = first shepherd	The first murder: Abel killed by Cain; <i>Cain cursed and banished from the ground</i> that opened its mouth to receive Abel’s blood; he is fated to wander
4:17-24, Progeny of Cain	Cain’s progeny invent cities, tents, animal husbandry, music, metalworking	
4:25-26, Birth of Seth		
5:1, <i>This is the book of the generations [toledot] of Adam/man/humankind....</i>		
5:1-32 - Line of Adam, through Seth, leading to Noah		
		6:1-4, “Sons of God” mate with daughters of men; disruption of boundaries between heaven and earth embodied by hybrid “Giants”
		6:1-5, Wickedness multiplies such that God is sorry that he created humankind; only Noah finds favor in God’s eyes.
6:9, <i>These are the generations [toledot] of Noah....</i>		
6:9-11, Noah and his sons		
		6:11-9:29 – The Flood destroys the earth, only the righteous Noah and his family saved.
10:1, <i>These are the generations [toledot] of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth ...</i>		
10:1-32, Sons of Noah and their descendants		
		11:1-9, Tower of Babel, disruption of boundaries between heaven and earth (on human initiative; cf. “Sons of God”) resolved through God’s scattering of humankind
11:10, <i>These are the descendants [toledot] of Shem...</i>		
11:10-32, Line leading to Abram/Abraham		

Ancient Near Eastern Texts with Parallels to Genesis 1-11: The Flood

SELECTIONS FROM *GILGAMESH*, TABLET XI (final, canonical form = 7th century BCE)

For full text, see <http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/>

...Utanapishtim spoke to Gilgamesh, saying:

"I will reveal to you, Gilgamesh, a thing that is hidden, a secret of the gods I will tell you!
Shuruppak, a city that you surely know, situated on the banks of the Euphrates,
that city was very old, and there were gods inside it.

The hearts of the Great Gods moved them to inflict the Flood.

Their Father Anu uttered the oath (of secrecy), Valiant Enlil was their Adviser,
Ninurta was their Chamberlain, Ennugi was their Minister of Canals.

Ea, the Clever Prince(?), was under oath with them so he repeated their talk to the reed house:

'Reed house, reed house! Wall, wall!

O man of Shuruppak, son of Ubartutu:

Tear down the house and build a boat!

Abandon wealth and seek living beings!

Spurn possessions and keep alive living beings!

Make all living beings go up into the boat.

The boat which you are to build,

its dimensions must measure equal to each other:

its length must correspond to its width.

Roof it over like the Apsu.

I understood and spoke to my lord, Ea:

'My lord, thus is the command which you have uttered

I will heed and will do it.

But what shall I answer the city, the populace, and the Elders!'

Ea spoke, commanding me, his servant:

'You, well then, this is what you must say to them:

"It appears that Enlil is rejecting me

so I cannot reside in your city,

nor set foot on Enlil's earth.

I will go down to the Apsu to live with my lord, Ea,

and upon you he will rain down abundance,

a profusion of fowl, myriad fishes.

He will bring to you a harvest of wealth.

in the morning he will let loaves of bread shower down.

and in the evening a rain of wheat!"...

On the fifth day I laid out her exterior.

It was a field in area, its walls were each 10 times 12 cubits in height,
the sides of its top were of equal length, 10 times 12 cubits each.

I laid out its (interior) structure and drew a picture of it.

I provided it with six decks, thus dividing it into seven (levels).

The inside of it I divided into nine (compartments).

I drove plugs (to keep out) water in its middle part.

I saw to the punting poles and laid in what was necessary.

Three times 3,600 (units) of raw bitumen I poured into the bitumen kiln,

three times 3,600 (units of) pitch ...into it,

there were three times 3,600 porters of casks who carried (vegetable) oil,

apart from the 3,600 (units of) oil which they consumed

and two times 3,600 (units of) oil which the boatman stored away.

I butchered oxen for the meat, and day upon day I slaughtered sheep.

I gave the workmen ale, beer, oil, and wine, as if it were river water...

The boat was finished by sunset. The launching was very difficult.

They had to keep carrying a runway of poles front to back,

until two-thirds of it had gone into the water.

Whatever I had I loaded on it:

whatever silver I had I loaded on it,
whatever gold I had I loaded on it.

All the living beings that I had I loaded on it,
I had all my kith and kin go up into the boat,
all the beasts and animals of the field and the craftsmen I had go up.
Shamash had set a stated time:

'In the morning I will let loaves of bread shower down,
and in the evening a rain of wheat!
Go inside the boat, seal the entry!'

That stated time had arrived.

In the morning he let loaves of bread shower down,
and in the evening a rain of wheat.

I watched the appearance of the weather-- the weather was frightful to behold!
I went into the boat and sealed the entry...

Just as dawn began to glow
there arose from the horizon a black cloud.
Adad rumbled inside of it, before him went Shullat and Hanish,
heralds going over mountain and land.
Erragal pulled out the mooring poles,
forth went Ninurta and made the dikes overflow.
The Anunnaki lifted up the torches, setting the land ablaze with their flare.
Stunned shock over Adad's deeds overtook the heavens,
and turned to blackness all that had been light....

All day long the South Wind blew ...
blowing fast, submerging the mountain in water,
overwhelming the people like an attack.

No one could see his fellow,
they could not recognize each other in the torrent.
The gods were frightened by the Flood,
and retreated, ascending to the heaven of Anu.
The gods were cowering like dogs, crouching by the outer wall.
Ishtar shrieked like a woman in childbirth,
the sweet-voiced Mistress of the Gods wailed:

'The olden days have alas turned to clay,
because I said evil things in the Assembly of the Gods!
How could I say evil things in the Assembly of the Gods,
ordering a catastrophe to destroy my people!!
No sooner have I given birth to my dear people
than they fill the sea like so many fish!'

The gods--those of the Anunnaki--were weeping with her,
the gods humbly sat weeping, sobbing with grief,
their lips burning, parched with thirst.

Six days and seven nights
came the wind and flood, the storm flattening the land.
When the seventh day arrived, the storm was pounding,
the flood was a war--struggling with itself like a woman writhing (in labor).
The sea calmed, fell still, the whirlwind (and) flood stopped up.
I looked around all day long--quiet had set in
and all the human beings had turned to clay!
The terrain was as flat as a roof.
I opened a vent and fresh air (daylight!) fell upon the side of my nose.
I fell to my knees and sat weeping,
tears streaming down the side of my nose.

I looked around for coastlines in the expanse of the sea,
and at twelve leagues there emerged a region (of land).
On Mt. Nimush the boat lodged firm,
Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
One day and a second Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
A third day, a fourth, Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
A fifth day, a sixth, Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.

When a seventh day arrived

I sent forth a dove and released it.

The dove went off, but came back to me;

no perch was visible so it circled back to me.

I sent forth a swallow and released it.

The swallow went off, but came back to me;

no perch was visible so it circled back to me.

I sent forth a raven and released it.

The raven went off, and saw the waters slither back.

It eats, it scratches, it bobs, but does not circle back to me.

Then I sent out everything in all directions and sacrificed.

I offered incense in front of the mountain-ziggurat.

Seven and seven cult vessels I put in place,

and (into the fire) underneath (or: into their bowls) I poured reeds, cedar, and myrtle.

The gods smelled the savor,

the gods smelled the sweet savor,

and collected like flies over a (sheep) sacrifice.

Just then Beletili arrived. She lifted up the large flies (beads) which Anu had made for his enjoyment:

'You gods, as surely as I shall not forget this lapis lazuli around my neck,

may I be mindful of these days, and never forget them!

The gods may come to the incense offering,

but Enlil may not come to the incense offering,

because without considering he brought about the Flood

and consigned my people to annihilation.'

Just then Enlil arrived.

He saw the boat and became furious,

he was filled with rage at the Igigi gods:

'Where did a living being escape?

No man was to survive the annihilation!'

Ninurta spoke to Valiant Enlil, saying:

'Who else but Ea could devise such a thing?

It is Ea who knows every machination!'

La spoke to Valiant Enlil, saying:

'It is yours, O Valiant One, who is the Sage of the Gods.

How, how could you bring about a Flood without consideration

Charge the violation to the violator,

charge the offense to the offender,

but be compassionate lest (mankind) be cut off, be patient lest they be killed.

Instead of your bringing on the Flood,

would that a lion had appeared to diminish the people!

Instead of your bringing on the Flood,

would that a wolf had appeared to diminish the people!

Instead of your bringing on the Flood,

would that famine had occurred to slay the land!

Instead of your bringing on the Flood,

would that (Pestilent) Erra had appeared to ravage the land!

It was not I who revealed the secret of the Great Gods,

I (only) made a dream appear to Atrahasis, and (thus) he heard the secret of the gods.
 Now then! The deliberation should be about him!

Enlil went up inside the boat
 and, grasping my hand, made me go up.
 He had my wife go up and kneel by my side.
 He touched our forehead and, standing between us, he blessed us:
 'Previously Utanapishtim was a human being.
 But now let Utanapishtim and his wife become like us, the gods!
 Let Utanapishtim reside far away, at the Mouth of the Rivers'....

Similarities & differences between Genesis 6-9 and the account of the Flood in *Gilgamesh*

See further <http://origins.swau.edu/q&a/bible/questions/gilgamesh.html>

Similarities	Differences
human population multiplying	the world bellowed like a bull
divine investigating mankind	a great god and many other gods
unhappiness at man's condition	anger --man's noise keeps gods awake
decision to bring a flood	intent to wipe out mankind entirely
one man warned	warning given against great god's will
the man told to build a boat	words whispered to his reed house
boat measurements given	a square measure -- as wide as long
seed of land animals to be on board	Seed of all living creatures
the man obeying the warning	told to say it would rain a rich harvest
boat built and pitched	built in seven days, with feasting
many cubits long	120 cubits square
several decks	6 decks below, divided into 9 sections
living things came aboard	also gold and other supplies
his family came aboard	also other kin and all the craftsmen
he came aboard	he boarded after the rain started
the storm was terrible	the gods of the storm rode on
the land was affected	the land was smashed like a cup
the people were overcome	they could not be seen from heaven
the flood overwhelmed the world	the gods were terrified, and cowered
	Ishtar lamented over the dead people
	the great gods of heaven and hell wept
the storm raged for many days	the flood was stilled the seventh day
the sea stretched flat on every side	a mountain appeared 14 leagues away
the boat grounded and held fast	on the mountain of Nissir
he opened a hatch	the same day
he released a few birds	he waited only 7 days
a raven and a dove	also a swallow
at intervals	all in one day
the raven did not return	it was the last bird sent out
dove found no resting place, returned	he sent her out first, and not again
the bird saw the waters had retreated	the raven (not the dove)
he opened all the boat coverings	that same day
he made a sacrifice on the mountain	he set up 14 cauldrons on stands
Divinity smelled the sweet aroma	the gods came like flies and swarmed over the sacrifice but Ishtar kept the great god away
Divinity promised to remember	Ishtar said she'd remember this day
by a colorful crescent	by the blue jewels around her neck
	the gods rebuked the great god
the man survived the flood	the great god gave him immortality