

ARTICLES

A COMPARISON OF NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIAN CREATION-FLOOD STORIES WITH GENESIS 1-9*

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WHAT THIS ARTICLE IS ABOUT

Numerous comparative studies have been made between an isolated extra-biblical creation or flood text and its related biblical narrative. In this article, Dr. Shea states that isolated stories from the first millennium B.C. do not provide adequate parallels to the consecutive biblical narrative in Genesis 1-9 and instead recommends comparisons with similar Mesopotamian texts from the second millennium B.C. Such "Creation-Flood texts" include three elements in a tripartite, chronological sequence: a view of the mode of creation employed by the gods, reference to antediluvian life, and a recital of events which occurred during the great Flood. Two Creation-Flood texts are examined: the Sumerian Eridu Genesis and the Babylonian Atra-hasis Epic.

The Eridu Genesis describes man's nomadic and uncultured condition which was remedied by the birth goddess Nintur's instructions for building cities as centers of culture and worship. As the humans prospered, their great noise caused sleeplessness among the gods. The god Enlil's plan to eradicate mankind through a flood was thwarted by the god Enki, who warned Ziusudra, the king of Shuruppak, to build an ark to save his family and the animals. After the Flood, Ziusudra appeased the gods by offering sacrifices and in turn was granted immortality and an eternal home.

According to the Atra-hasis Epic, mankind was created solely as drudges to appease the younger gods who rebelled against their tasks of digging rivers and canals. Fashioned from a mixture of clay and the blood of a sacrificed god, man was a combination of the divine and the human. A major step in this creation process occurred on sabattu/sabbat, and thus a possible link between man's creation and the Sabbath is found in an extrabiblical source from the first half of the second millennium B.C., and probably is derived from even earlier written or oral traditions.

In three cycles of antediluvian adversities, Enlil attempted to squelch the human population and their noise through an episode of plague and two successive periods of drought and famine. Each time, Enki averted the intended destruction. Enlil's final plan — to use water to eradicate mankind — was supported by the gods in council, but Enki saved a portion of humanity by warning Atra-hasis to build a boat to save himself, his family, and some animals.

Deprived of both their drudges and the agriculture which provided their food and drink, the gods regretted their decision to send the Flood. Though angered because some humans had escaped the destruction, Enlil was persuaded to accept their existence. Population controls were enforced to maintain human noise at a tolerable level.

*The general outline of this paper was first presented on Sept. 24, 1983, at a Geoscience Research Institute field conference, and its abstract appears in section 9 of the conference syllabus. On Dec. 21, 1983, at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Dallas, Texas, C. Sinclair of Chapman College presented a similar comparative study entitled "A Near-Eastern Prototype for the Primeval History." Though Sinclair noted some of the same comparisons among the Eridu Genesis, the Atra-hasis Epic, and Gen 1-2 that have been noted in this present study, his conclusions were quite different. He retained a standard literary critical approach to Gen 1-2 while this study has used these comparisons to question seriously such an approach.

A comparison of the contents of the Mesopotamian Creation-Flood texts leads to the conclusion that both follow a distinct chronology or linear time line, with successive events relating logically to each other as cause and effect. Known as mytho-historical accounts, this form of literature is highly unusual in the ancient world. A primary difference in content between these stories and the Genesis Creation-Flood story is the contrast between Mesopotamian polytheism and biblical monotheism, but in form, the biblical Creation-Flood story fits best in this mytho-historical category. All contain three sections discussing Creation, antediluvian life, and the Flood.

Although the biblical Creation-Flood story should be categorized with the Mesopotamian Creation-Flood stories described above, biblical scholars have treated the former differently. Those adhering to the documentary hypothesis have interpreted Genesis 1-9 to be a patchwork quilt of literary fragments that were composed centuries apart and later edited into its final form in the 6th or 5th centuries B.C. Dr. Shea shows the arbitrary and artificial distinctions these scholars have made. For example, the P source for Genesis is credited with specializing in genealogies and chronologies, while J is credited with a descriptive narrative style. The same argument would appear applicable to the Atrahasis Epic which also contains a series of chronological references within its text; yet, Assyriologists have not attributed this epic to several sources. To consider the former as a complete unity while separating and attributing the first two chapters of Genesis to different sources written centuries apart is not logical. The same argument is also applicable for the biblical Flood story in Genesis 6-9.

Dr. Shea points out that some of the initial criteria for literary criticism in the 18th-19th centuries arose from Homeric criticism in Greek literature, the then-known oldest available literature for comparison. Biblical scholars alone have retained these criteria, completely ignoring the contributions made by the much older cuneiform literature of Mesopotamia and the hieroglyphic literature of Egypt which is now available.

In conclusion, the biblical Creation-Flood story fits best in the age in which mytho-historical accounts were written. Thus from the parallels in form and content as compared with Mesopotamian Creation-Flood stories, it is most likely that one person (i.e., Moses) recorded the book of Genesis in the 15th (or 13th) century B.C. Certainly someone from his age is a better candidate for the authorship than is an obscure and anonymous priest/redactor in exile in Babylonia a millennium later.

INTRODUCTION

Most comparisons between Genesis and ancient Creation or Flood stories can be classified as comparative religious studies. They generally involve one text isolated from its original historical context (e.g., the Babylonian creation myth *Enuma Elish* or the Flood tablet of the Gilgamesh Epic)¹ and one related biblical narrative.² On the basis of currently available evidence, their earliest-known written form can be dated only to the first half of the first millennium B.C.³

By using only isolated, solitary Creation or Flood stories, such comparisons have neglected the corpus of literature termed "Creation-Flood texts" which include all three elements in a chronological sequence: a view of the mode of creation employed by the gods, reference to some aspects of life in the antediluvian world, and a recital of events which occurred during the great Flood. Our study, will emphasize the special contribution of these Creation-Flood texts to the literary critical problem of Gen 1-9.

Two such texts or cycles of texts have survived from antiquity. One was originally written in the Sumerian language and the other in Akkadian (the

Semitic language of Babylonia). We shall first elucidate the details of these texts to provide a basis for later comparisons with Gen 1-9.

THE SUMERIAN CREATION-FLOOD STORY: THE ERIDU GENESIS

I. Texts

While the three major fragments of tablets comprising the Eridu Genesis have long been known and treated separately, only recently have they been united to form their original Creation-Flood story⁴ which began with a reference to Creation, continued with a description of antediluvian life, and ended with the story of the Flood. The reconstructed story formed by the tablets from Nippur, Ur, and Nineveh follows below.

II. Antediluvian Life

The first thirty lines of the Nippur text are missing. The first available column recites the birth goddess Nintur's remedy for the nomadic and uncultured condition of mankind. She gave instructions for the building of the antediluvian cities not only as centers of culture and civilization, but especially for the worship of the gods, including herself:

"May they come and build cities and cult-places,
that I may cool myself in their shade;
may they lay the bricks for the cult-cities in pure spots, and
may they found places for divination in pure spots."
She gave directions for purification, and cries for quarter,
the things that cool (divine) wrath.
She perfected divine service and the august offices,
she said to the (surrounding) regions:
"Let me institute peace there."⁵

Then follows a summary statement on the initial creation:

When An, Enlil, Enki, and Ninhursaga [Nintur]
fashioned the darkheaded (people)
they had made the small animals (that come up) from (out of)
the earth come up from the earth in abundance,
and had let there be, as befits (it), gazelles,
(wild) donkeys, and fourfooted beasts in the desert."⁶

Enki (the god of wisdom) and Nintur were particularly active in creation. The reference to the fashioning of the "darkheaded people" (the Sumerians' name for themselves) and the making of the animals indicates that a creation account probably preceded this passage.

It is probable that the missing section of text related the development of mankind's plight. This idea is confirmed by the text from Ur which refers to a time when there was neither agriculture nor weaving of cloth. While these conditions produced poverty among the people, they lived in relative safety because there were no dangerous beasts, insects, or serpents, and "as there was no fear of attack, man had no opponent."⁷

The next legible portion of the text discusses the establishment of kingship which was believed to be a gift from the gods. As the chief agent responsible for carrying out the gods' commands, the king directed the construction of cities and provided cult places and services for the gods. He also guided the people in the irrigation and growth of crops. Each city received half-bushel baskets from the harvest. Nintur assigned a patron deity to each of the five cities.⁸

At the top of the next column another break occurs. The legible portion contains the end of the list of kings who reigned in these cities. The rest of this information has been preserved in the first portion of the Sumerian King List.⁹ Antediluvian kings had remarkably long reigns. Two cities had one king each, and one city was listed as having had three kings. The longest length of reign — 64,800 years — was listed for three different kings. Three more kings supposedly ruled 36,000 years. The shortest length of reign is 10,800 years. The scribe of this source totaled the dominions of all the cities to 352,800 years for the duration of kingship during the antediluvian world.

Although attempts have been made to relate this king-list to the antediluvian patriarchs listed in Gen 5, there is no linguistic correspondence.¹⁰ Neither have precise correspondences been found between the figures given for the lengths of reign and the lengths of life in these sources.¹¹ Both convey, however, a similar picture of a relatively small number of long-lived antediluvian generations. The biblical list leads to a much shorter overall time span for this period.

III. The Flood Story

The great noise from the increasing human population prevented the gods from sleeping. Angered by this noise the god Enlil decided to eradicate mankind. Unfortunately, the text is broken at this point and resumes where the gods decided to send the Flood.¹² Nintur mourned, but Enki foiled the plan by warning Ziusudra, the last king of Shuruppak:

“May you heed my advice:

By our hand a flood will sweep over (the cities of)
the half-bushel baskets, and the country.

The decision that mankind is to be destroyed has been made,
a verdict, a command by the assembly, cannot be revoked.

An order of An and Enlil is not known
ever to have been countermanded.

Their kingship, their term, has been uprooted,
they must bethink themselves (of that).”¹³

The remainder of Enki's advice is missing in the break at the top of column four. Parallels in other Flood stories indicate that Enki instructed Ziusudra to build an ark and load it with his family and the animals. The text resumes with the storm:

All evil winds, all stormy winds gathered into one
and with them, the Flood was sweeping over (the cities of)
the half-bushel baskets for seven days and seven nights.

After the flood had swept over the country,
after the evil wind had tossed the big boat about on great waters
the sun came out spreading light over heaven and earth.¹⁴

The final scene records a speech by Enki who apparently obtained the agreement of the gods to accept the survival of Ziusudra and his family. When Ziusudra sacrificed to An and Enlil, they responded by offering him immortality and an eternal home:

And An and Enlil did well by him,
were granting him life like a god's,
were making lasting breath of life, like a god's,
descend into him.
That day they made Ziusudra,
preserver as king of the name of the small animals
and the seed of mankind,
live toward the east over the mountains in Mount Tilmun.¹⁵

IV. Interpretation

T. Jacobsen was the scholar who synthesized the text of these fragments into a coherent story. He has selected three main themes to explain the significance of this text. In the first theme the culture that developed from Nintur's directions is considered to be superior to man's nomadic state. In the third theme Jacobsen holds that the Flood story was well-preserved and known in the ancient world because it is a story of *survival* rather than one of destruction.

The second theme is important for our literary critical study. For the section of the Eridu Genesis which deals with the antediluvian kings and their cities, Jacobsen has noted:

*In style this section is clearly modeled on the great Sumerian King list and its formulaic language and arrangement. As to its import one is somewhat at a loss. ...the closest one can come is probably to credit the inclusion of this section in the tale to pure historical interest on the part of its composer.*¹⁶

Since similar passages in Genesis also can be viewed historically, Jacobsen's conclusion about this section of the Eridu Genesis is significant for comparative purposes.

Next, Jacobsen compares the Eridu Genesis with the biblical parallel found in Gen 1-9. The tripartite divisions of both narratives obviously correspond. The first two sections deal with Creation and the antediluvians, especially through lists of the leading figures of that period. Both conclude with a story of the Flood.

Jacobsen has further noted that both sources have arranged these main segments along a linear time line, rather than grouping them around a folk hero as is more common in such literature. This arrangement allows the successive events to relate logically to each other as cause and effect. Such arrangements in literary compositions from the ancient world are so unusual that Jacobsen was compelled to suggest a new designation:

... [this arrangement] is very much the way a historian arranges his data, and since the data here are mythological we may assign both traditions to a new and separate genre as mytho-historical accounts.¹⁷

An additional component is their unusual interest in chronology:

*In both [traditions] we are given precise figures for respectively the length of reigns and the lifespans of the persons listed, and in both traditions the figures given are extraordinarily large....This interest in numbers is very curious, for it is characteristic of myths and folktales that they are not concerned with time at all.*¹⁸

Jacobsen believes that “interest in numbers of years belongs elsewhere, to the style of chronicles and historiography.”¹⁹ His best analogy for this literary style is in historical documents such as the royal annals which have provided further confirmation for categorizing the Eridu Genesis in the mytho-historical literary genre.

Jacobsen’s study offers valuable contrasts. In the Eridu Genesis man’s lot improved from his original wretched state while in the biblical account man’s condition, along with his environment, worsened through his sinfulness which led to the Flood. This element of moral judgment is both absent in the Sumerian story and conveys a more pessimistic view of man’s nature. Jacobsen urges caution in interpreting myths and their relationships because myths are fluid, relative and changeable in different cultural contexts, thus prohibiting easy generalizations.

Unfortunately Jacobsen’s further comparisons follow a flawed literary critical model. He attributes much of the corresponding sections of Gen 1-9 to the so-called P source, a writer or school of writers who supposedly wrote during or after the Babylonian exile. Jacobsen uses this geographical location to suggest that the Eridu Genesis influenced the writing of the biblical Genesis in some features, but such a dependence is unlikely.

Jacobsen provides considerable evidence that the passages in Gen 1-9 which have been attributed to P have been misdated. Unfortunately, he has missed an important point suggested by his parallels: Gen 1-9 actually belongs to a much earlier source which parallels in content the entire tripartite literary unit that he has found in the Eridu Genesis. Also, Jacobsen did not deal with the other similar Babylonian source which comes from approximately the same time as far as extant copies are concerned — the Atra-hasis Epic. We will examine next this Creation-Flood story for possible literary structural and critical parallels to Gen 1-9.

THE BABYLONIAN CREATION-FLOOD STORY: THE ATRA-HASIS EPIC

I. Texts

The Atra-hasis Epic is named after its human hero who served as the Babylonian Noah. Several whole and partial copies of the cuneiform tablets comprising this series are known. All tablets and fragments have been edited

together in a definitive edition of the textual series by W. G. Lambert & A. R. Millard.²⁰

II. Creation

The commencement of the Atra-hasis Epic is set in a time before the creation of man, a time when Enlil forced the younger gods to dig rivers and canals. After forty years the junior gods rebelled, burned their work tools, and marched on the house of Enlil:

“Let us confront the chamberlin,
That he may relieve us of our heavy work.
The counsellor of the gods, the hero,
Come, let us unnerve him in his dwelling!”²¹

Awakened and warned by a servant, Enlil called an assembly of the gods to deal with the situation. To satisfy the younger gods, Enki proposed that man should be created to be drudges. They agreed to this suggestion and summoned Nintu, the mother goddess, to cooperate with Enki in the project. Made from clay mixed with the blood of a sacrificed god (We-ila), man would be a mixture of the divine and human. We-ila’s identity and nature remain obscure, and perhaps his name is a deliberate distortion of the word for man, *awilum*.

Enki opened his mouth
And addressed the great gods,
“On the first, seventh, and fifteenth day of the month
I will make a purifying bath.
Let one god be slaughtered
So that all the gods may be cleansed in a dipping.
Let Nintu mix clay,
That god and man
May be thoroughly mixed in the clay.”²²

These instructions were then carried out, as is related in an almost word-for-word repetition of the instructions.²³

The date of man’s creation has not previously attracted much attention. Purifying baths for the god to be sacrificed took place on the 1st, 7th, and 15th days of the lunar month. Though not exactly chronological weeks, these quarters of the moon are relatively close in length. The god’s execution and the Creation of man apparently followed directly after the purifying bath on the 15th day of the month. This places man’s creation at the *end* of one lunar quarter or “week.” Similarly the biblical creation of man took place on the 6th day of a 7-day week.

Although the name for the 7th day of the lunar month was derived from the number seven, the name for the 15th day of the lunar month — the day of the full moon — was derived independently from this numerical cycle: *sa-pa-at-tu* or *sapattu*.²⁴ Since the second sign in this word can also be read as *ba*,²⁵ this word can be read either as *sapattu* or as *sabattu*. The significance of this resemblance to the Hebrew word *šabbat* (the final case ending vowel has been lost in Hebrew) has long been debated.²⁶ While there is no serious phonetic

problem in linking these words, it has been unpopular because this word — if it is the same — has been applied to different objects in the two cultures. The Hebrews applied it to a rest day which recurred at the end of a 7-day week, while the Babylonians applied it to the day of the full moon which recurred monthly.

By linking *sabattu/šabbat* to the creation of man, the Atra-hasis Epic supports the idea that the names for these institutions may have been derived from the same source. *Sabattu* appears to have been the day in which We-ila was killed and his blood mixed with clay. This was the great initiating point in man's creation, though more steps in this process remained to be accomplished. The clay/blood mixture ensured that man would be a combination of the divine and human. In a sense, therefore, man was created on *sabattu*. In Genesis man was created on the day before *šabbat*, but this difference is much less important than the over-arching connection between *sabattu/šabbat* and the creation of man. It is unlikely that such a specific linkage occurred in both accounts by chance. Both accounts can be traced to the same basic conception which was known to both cultures.

Therefore the idea of the link between Sabbath and the Creation of man can now be found in an extra-biblical source from the first half of the second millennium B.C., and as is commonly believed by Assyriologists, many elements in this type of story undoubtedly derived from still older written or oral traditions. From the biblical point of view the differences involved in the Babylonian account would have been introduced by gradual corruption from polytheistic conceptions.²⁷

The second phase in the process of Creation involved Enki, Nintu, and some assistant birth goddesses who broke bits of clay from the central stock and formed these pieces into inert statuettes of seven men and seven women. These were located adjacent to the birth “bricks,” the place of parturition for Babylonian women in labor. The womb broke open in the 10th month and mankind was born. At this point Nintu diverges to give advice on marriage and obstetrics. Evidently the reading of this story served as a good-luck omen at the time of childbirth.

III. Antediluvian Life

The next major segment of the Atra-hasis Epic concentrates upon antediluvian adversities. With a brief introduction to the post-creation works of man, the story considers three major episodes of adversity. Before 1200 years had passed, Enlil brought a plague to reduce the population and squelch their noise.²⁸ Enki circumvented this plan by instructing Atra-hasis to offer sacrifice to Namtara, the goddess of the plague. This Atra-hasis and the people did, and the effects of the plague were averted.

After another 1200 noisy years, Enlil developed another plan to reduce the human population by starvation through drought and famine:

“The noise of mankind (has become too intense for me),
(With their uproar) I am deprived of sleep.

Cut off supplies for the peoples,
Let there be a scarcity of plant-life to satisfy their hunger.
Adad should withhold his rain,
And below, the flood should not come up from the abyss.
Let the wind blow and parch the ground,
Let the clouds thicken but not release a downpour,
Let the fields diminish their yields.²⁹

Again Enki instructed Atra-hasis to lead the people in offering sacrifice to Adad, the storm god. Thus satisfied, Adad yielded his rains and the fields bore grain.

The third plan also involved drought and famine. Frustrated by his failures, Enlil added the extra insurance of posting divine guards at every level of heaven and earth to prevent water from reaching the fields. There is no indication of another 1200-year interval,³⁰ and it seems somewhat unlikely because this episode is cast in different terms than the first two. The text enumerates and describes the successive years of famine, estimated to have continued for seven years or some similar period of time.

The black fields became white,
The broad plain was choked with salt.
For one year they ate couch-grass (?);
For the second year they suffered the itch.
The third year came
(And) their features (were altered) by hunger
(Their faces) were encrusted, like malt,
(And they were living) on the verge of death.³¹

Although the tablets at the end of this episode are badly damaged, it appears that Enki removed the bar which held back the subterranean waters. Man was thus saved from drought and famine. Dissatisfied with Enki's attempt to explain away his interference, Enlil determined to use water — which had been a savior — to eradicate mankind. The gods in council agreed to Enlil's plan.

IV. The Flood

This portion begins with Atra-hasis communing with his divine protector Enki through the walls of his house. Enki told Atra-hasis to tear down these walls and use them to construct a boat in which to save himself, his family, and some of the animals:

Reed wall, observe all my words!
“Destroy your house, build a boat,
Spurn property and save life.
The boat which you build...
Roof it over like Apsu,
So that the sun shall not see inside it.
Let it be roofed over above and below.

The tackle should be very strong,
Let the pitch be tough, and so give (the boat) strength.”³²

Atra-hasis then informed his people that he would be forced to leave because his god Enki was disputing with Enlil.³³

The damaged portion of the tablets contain the story of the building of the ark and the collection and loading of the animals which follows. Atra-hasis’ family went aboard the boat while he attended a farewell banquet with his people. Overcome with horror at the prospect of the destruction ahead, he was unable to eat. The storm came and Atra-hasis entered the ark. He sealed its door, cut its hawser and set sail.³⁴

The next clear section of text describes the reactions of the gods to the Flood. Enki was distraught, and Nintu mourned and wept at the destruction of mankind. The destroyed agriculture deprived the gods of food and drink. They concluded that the Flood was not a very good idea.³⁵

Unfortunately there is another gap, but the story resumes as Atra-hasis promptly reinstated offerings for the gods. Given the mental and physical condition of the gods, it was a religiously astute procedure. Meanwhile Enlil was enraged upon hearing that some humans had escaped the Flood:

(The warrior Enlil) saw the vessel,
And was filled with anger at the Igigi (gods),
“All we great Anunnaki (gods)
Decided together on an oath.
Where did life escape?
How did man survive in the destruction?”³⁶

Enki received the blame, but in further negotiations in the divine council Enlil was cajoled into accepting the existence of mankind on earth. To limit the population and maintain the noise at a tolerable level, the gods agreed that some classes of women, e.g., priestesses, would not bear children. Further details have been lost in damage to the tablet copies.

This focus upon human reproduction provides a direct link between the first and last main sections of the Atra-hasis Epic. The Creation story ends on the note of assistance to women who were to bear children. The Flood story ends with an explanation for women who would not bear children or who were to lose their children.

The book of Genesis has a similar link. At Creation Adam and Eve were told to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen 1:28). The same instructions were repeated to Noah’s family as they left the ark (Gen 9:1). The more negative biblical note (which comes the closest to the statements at the end of the Atrahasis Flood story) occurs in the sentence upon Eve regarding the greater difficulty of childbirth after the fall (Gen 3:16). Since no moral fall is present in Mesopotamian texts, this biblical negative side of childbearing appears to have been transposed to follow the Flood story. Atra-hasis’ “curse” upon the Babylonian Eves differs in content.

V. Comparisons

Comparisons can now be drawn between the contents of the two tripartite Creation-Flood stories: the Atra-hasis Epic and the Eridu Genesis.

While comparisons between individual segments are possible, it is difficult to compare the Creation stories of the Eridu Genesis and the Atra-hasis Epic, because that portion of the Eridu Genesis is missing and its contents can only be inferred from later passages. Both Flood stories are somewhat fragmentary but appear to be relatively close in content.

The greatest difference comes in the middle segment dealing with antediluvian life. The Sumerian source — the Eridu Genesis — provides a relatively optimistic view of this period, and its duration is framed in a long chronology. In contrast, the Semitic source — the Atra-hasis Epic — takes a more pessimistic view of man's physical environment and frames its duration in a short chronology. While there is no unified and monolithic view of Creation, antediluvian life, and the Flood in these Mesopotamian sources, it is clear that both had a distinct chronology or length of time for the antediluvian period. Both sources provide a number of points for comparison with relevant biblical passages that deal with these events.

THE HEBREW CREATION-FLOOD STORY: GENESIS 1-9

I. Comparisons

In this section we will presume that most readers of this study are familiar with the biblical narratives about Creation, antediluvian life, and the Flood. A comparison of Gen 1-9 with the Creation-Flood stories discussed above will be approached on the bases of literary form and thought content. Each of the three main elements in the tripartite accounts can be compared individually with its counterpart in Genesis. We will also compare the tripartite accounts as a corpus with all of Gen 1-9.

II. The Creation Story

A. Content

We cannot compare the Creation narratives of Gen 1-2 with the Eridu Genesis, because the latter's portion is badly damaged. The main comparison therefore must come between Atra-hasis and Genesis.

In Atra-hasis several gods were involved in the project of Creation. When the lesser gods rebelled against Enlil after forty years of labor, man was created to remedy the conflict. The book of Genesis describes creation as the sole and undisputed work of the sovereign God Yahweh who rested from his work of creating, not from dredging rivers and canals. All the earth was fitted for man during the same week in which he was created.

There are also similarities. The relationship between the creation of man and *sabattu/šabbat* has already been described above. Further comparison can be made between other aspects, e.g., the substance from which man was made. Both were formed essentially from the same material — dust of the

ground, or clay, and in both cases an element of the divine was incorporated into man at his creation. The modalities were different, but a similar purpose was served.

Both accounts emphasize the creation of woman at the same time as man's creation. In both cases male and female were made from the same material, but in the biblical account the Creation of woman was mediated through a part taken from man. The Creation story in the Eridu Genesis is more fragmentary, but we can infer that the animals were created with man. The same relationship holds true for the biblical Genesis.

B. Form

Literary critics maintain that Genesis contains two quite different accounts of creation, one in the second chapter of Genesis that derives from the so-called J source in the 10th century B.C., and the other in the first chapter that derives from the so-called P source in the 6th or 5th century B.C.³⁷ It is therefore of interest to note the form in which the Atra-hasis Creation story appears.

The entire Atra-hasis Epic is tripartite, i.e., it divides into three sections that deal with Creation, antediluvian life, and the Flood. Its Creation segment is also tripartite, i.e., it narrates the events that necessitated the gods' decision to make man, describes the substance form which man was made (including plans for the preparation and execution of the god whose blood was to be mixed with the clay), then concludes with the formation and gestation of the seven male and seven female statuettes.

General parallels can be drawn between Atra-hasis and Gen 1, Gen 2A, and Gen 2B. Both tell the story of man's creation in more than one segment. This parallelism extends to the smaller units of the story. In Atra-hasis the divine council decided to make man, and the way in which Enki and Nintu were to accomplish this task was outlined specifically. This was repeated almost verbatim in the story of their accomplishment of the task.

Such repetition in Atra-hasis is another example of the Semitic parallel writing style that is also found in Gen 1-2. It is particularly prominent in the Gen 1 account of the acts of Creation on the first six days. This parallelism can be seen either in terms of smaller literary units, as is the case with Atra-hasis or Gen 1-2. When judged by the literary standards of its time and place, separating Gen 1 from Gen 2 and attributing them to different sources written down centuries apart appears artificial and arbitrary.³⁸

III. The Flood Story

A. Content

The incompleteness of the Flood stories in the Atra-hasis Epic and the Eridu Genesis limits the extent of comparisons. More direct comparisons have already been made between the biblical Flood story and the Flood tablet of the Gilgamesh Epic, because extant editions of its story are in a much better state of preservation.³⁹ Our attention is directed mainly to Flood stories within the Atra-hasis Epic and the Eridu Genesis.

Table 1 itemizes the various parallels between these Flood stories according to the sources in which they are present. It is evident that these sources refer to the same central event, though differing in details. More specific aspects of the Flood story (e.g., the dimensions of the ark, or the sending of the birds from the ark before the more general disembarkation) cannot be compared because of damage to the tablets.

TABLE 1

	BI	ER	AT
1. The Flood was brought upon mankind by a decision of the God/gods	+	+	+
2. This information was relayed to the Flood hero by God/a god	+	+	+
3. The Flood hero was selected because he was righteous or a devotee of the gods	+	+	+
4. The purpose of the Flood was to destroy mankind in general	+	+	+
5. The Flood hero was given instructions on how to build his boat for escape	+	[?]	+
6. After completing the boat, the hero took his family and animals aboard	+	+	+
7. The boat was caulked with pitch	+	[?]	+
8. The boat was roofed over in such a way that it limited the amount of sunlight admitted to it	+	+	+
9. A special period of 7 days occurred just before or right at the beginning of the Flood	+	+	+
10. Upon exiting from the boat the hero sacrificed to God/gods and his sacrifice was accepted	+	+	+

BI = Biblical Genesis; ER = Eridu Genesis; AT = Atra-hasis Epic

In minor differences between the biblical and the Mesopotamian Flood stories, the latter appear to limit the entire Flood to seven days and nights and also emphasize strongly the winds accompanying the Flood. According to Gen 7:10, the last seven days before the Flood only demarcated the time until the Flood came, and Gen 7:11-12 emphasizes the rain and the effects of the subterranean waters. The reference to the animals in the ark is the most general in the Eridu Genesis, on an intermediate level of specificity in Atra-hasis (clean and unclean),⁴⁰ and most specific in Gen 7 where even their numbers are given.

A major difference between the Flood stories involves the contrast between biblical monotheism and Mesopotamian polytheism. In Gen 6 the decision to bring the Flood was the sole, undisputed decision of the one and only God who was sovereign over man and all aspects of nature. In Mesopotamian sources this decision was debated in the council of the gods.

According to the Atra-hasis Flood story the majority of the gods regretted their decision. Enki and Nintu mourned the loss of their creatures, but the other gods had more self-centered motives, having lost their drudges. In sharp contrast as recorded in Gen 6, God was sorry that he had made man because man had turned to such a great degree of wickedness.

The biblical Flood was morally motivated, being sent as a judgment upon the wicked antediluvians. No such motivation appears in the Mesopotamian

sources. In stark contrast, the Atra-hasis Epic gives the reason for the Flood as being basically a whim of one of the more powerful gods, Enlil.

There is also a difference over the preservation of the human race. The biblical God intended that a righteous seed of mankind should be preserved through the Flood, while the Babylonian god who brought the Flood intended all mankind to be destroyed and was enraged when he learned that some had escaped.

B. Form

Contrary to the view of literary critics who have divided the biblical Flood story into some 20 fragments of J and P, Gen 6-9 stands as one unified, consecutive whole.⁴¹ This unity stands in contrast to the bipartite biblical Creation story, as has been discussed above. The fragmentary nature of the two Mesopotamian Flood stories makes it difficult to judge their full literary form. As far as we can determine from the surviving portions of their texts, they also consisted of one solitary and consecutively narrated unit each.

IV. The Story of the Antediluvians

A. Content

The central segment of these Creation-Flood stories deals with antediluvian life. This portion of the texts has been preserved to the greatest extent and is also an area having some of the greatest contrasts.

The Eridu Genesis framed its optimistic view of this period in a long chronology oriented around the cities of that time, Atra-hasis framed its more pessimistic view of that period in a short chronology without focusing much attention on the cities. The biblical account focused its pessimism upon the spiritual nature of man and framed the outworking of these effects in a short chronology that paid minimal attention to the cities.

B. Form

Both Mesopotamian stories lack parallels to the moral elements in Gen 3, 4, and 6A, but there are two main sections for comparison: the story of the development of cities and culture before the Flood (Gen 4B, cf. especially v 17 and 20-22), and the list of the long-lived personages before the Flood (Gen 5). Both the biblical Genesis and the Eridu Genesis follow the same order in their arrangement of these materials, the narrative first and the list second.

The biblical account seems to stand between the two sources, e.g., its list is similar to the Eridu Genesis but its resultant chronology resembles Atra-hasis. In other ways (e.g., its picture of the development of wickedness) it goes beyond both or gives a different picture or emphasis to the story.

V. The Creation-Flood Story as a Whole

Our final section will deal with the literary structure and criticism of these Creation-Flood stories, especially focusing upon the biblical Creation-Flood story and the illumination shed upon it by the two Mesopotamian Creation-

Flood stories. We will begin our discussion with the way that literary critics have dealt with them.

The following outline is very general and does not take into account all the individual variations of each critic.⁴² The Creation story in Gen 1 has been assigned to P, while the Creation story in Gen 2, the story of the fall in Gen 3 and the story of antediluvian life in Gen 4, have been assigned to J. The genealogical list of Gen 5 has been assigned to P. The Flood story of Gen 6-9 was supposedly edited together from more than twenty different individual pieces of J and P. The Table of Nations in Gen 10 has been divided into four sections attributed to P and three sections attributed to J. The Tower of Babel story at the beginning of Gen 11 is assigned to J while the rest of the chapter dedicated to another genealogy is attributed to P.

This interpretation makes Gen 1-11 supposedly a veritable patchwork quilt of literary fragments that were composed four centuries apart during the first half of the first millennium B.C. None should have been written earlier than the time of J in the 10th century B.C. It is only supposed to have reached its final form at the hands of P who wrote during or after the Babylonian exile, in the 6th or 5th centuries B.C. A Mosaic authorship in the second half of the second millennium B.C. is not considered for any of it. Doubtless such literary criticism of these passages has had a major impact upon the way that scholars have viewed the (non-)historicity of the contents of these narratives.

The past criteria for literary criticism have been derived either from features of the text itself, or from presuppositions brought to the text. Some of these criteria and presuppositions came from Homeric criticism in Greek literature⁴³ which during the last half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century A.D. was the most ancient literature available for comparison. Although the much older cuneiform literature of Mesopotamia and the hieroglyphic literature of Egypt now have been opened through the work of scholars over the past century and a half, biblical criticism still retains the Greek tradition, especially in dividing the present unified canonical form of the Pentateuch into multiple original sources. It is as if J, E, D, and P wrote in a cultural vacuum without receiving any literary influences from their environment.

One basis upon which the documentary hypothesis sorts its sources is from their use of divine names. Thus the name Yahweh is found in passages attributed to J, standing as it does for that divine name, while P is thought to have used Elohim along with other divine epithets. Not only are certain words and phrases said to be characteristic of each source; their authors are also credited with special interests, theological and otherwise. Though P has centered more on God in heaven while J has emphasized man on earth, neither excludes the alternate idea. P is thought to have been especially interested in purity of line and thus the genealogical material in these texts has been attributed to him. Many of the chronological statements in these passages are also attributed to P, because he is credited with being especially interested in dates. The sources differ in writing styles. P is credited only with a leaden hand that did not make its scenes come to life. In contrast, J has been called one of the greatest

descriptive narrative writers of the Bible because of his succinct and vivid word pictures.⁴⁴

Of many criticisms that can be leveled against this scheme, we shall mention only two. First, a certain amount of circular reasoning is evident in these critical conclusions. The characteristics of these sources are supposedly derived from the text and then reapplied to the text to determine their source. Second, judging writing styles is also a subjective procedure. Authors have been known to employ different writing styles for different types or genres of literary materials.

The reason why P was considered the only source having any particular interest in chronology or genealogy is not only obscure; it is also contradicted by comparative data from the Babylonian text. The Atra-hasis Epic contains a series of chronological references: 40 years for the junior gods to work on the canals, 9 months for the gestation of man after his conception on the 15th day of the lunar month, 1200 years until the plague and the drought occurred, another 7 years for the second drought and famine, 7 days for the preparation for the Flood, and 7 days for the Flood itself. Assyriologists have not sorted these chronological details and attributed them to a source different from that responsible for the main narrative.

All three Creation-Flood stories discussed above contain chronological details of this type; hence, it is evident that the practice of placing the progression of events narrated in Creation-Flood stories upon such a chronological framework was common in the Ancient Near East. It was not exclusive to the biblical Hebrews, and thus such a sorting in the biblical narrative is quite arbitrary and artificial.

In our study, we will first compare the critical source distribution model of Gen 1-11 with similar subject matter in extra-biblical texts from the 1st millennium B.C. J is dated at the beginning of that millennium and P is dated in its middle. Both the Enuma Elish Creation story and the Flood story in the Gilgamesh Epic date, in terms of presently extant copies, to the 8th or 7th centuries B.C. This locates them almost equidistant between the dates estimated for J and P. Table 2 serves to demonstrate these relationships.

The most glaring discrepancy is the way in which the Flood story of the Bible has been treated as compared to the Assyriologists' treatment of the Flood story of the Gilgamesh Epic. The former has been fragmented into more than twenty different literary units derived from two major sources that were supposedly written four centuries apart and finally edited together in its present canonical form. This has been considered a parade example of the applicability of the documentary hypothesis to the biblical text. As we have already seen, such a dissection of the biblical Flood story is an artificial academic exercise unrelated to literary practice in the ancient world.

A comparison of the Creation stories yields a similar point. Enuma Elish is a much more complex literary creation than Gen 1-2, having at least five main themes, but Assyriologists have not divided it into different literary sources. Its complexity is already seen superficially from the fact that seven tablets were used to record the story.⁴⁵

TABLE 2

I. Babylonian Creation Story, ca. 700 B.C.

Enuma Elish -----
Creation Story

II. Assyrian Flood Story, ca. 700 B.C

----- Gilgamesh Epic
Flood Tablet

III. Biblical Creation-Flood Story, critical view, 10th-5th century B.C.

Gen 1	Gen 2-4	Gen 5		Gen 6-9
P	J	P		
Creation Story	Creation, Antediluvian World	Antediluvian Genealogy	6:1-8, J 6:9-22, P 7:1-5, J 7:6, P 7:7-10, J 7:11, P 7:12, J	7:13-16, P 7:17, J 7:18-21, P 7:22-23, J 7:24-8:2, P 8:2b-3a, J 8:3b-5, P
				8:6-12, J 8:13a, P 8:13b, J 8:14-19, P 8:20-22, J 9:1-17, P 9:18-27, J

Beyond these individual comparisons, we should note especially that these extrabiblical sources deal with an individual Creation story and an individual Flood story in relative isolation from any other events. These individual episodes only play a part of what is described in full in the successive narratives of the biblical text.

Regardless of how many fragments into which Gen 1-9 is broken, the cumulative collection still reads as one continuous narrative starting from Creation and ending with the Flood. Between these events are found further narratives that deal with antediluvian life on earth. They are not as well paralleled on an individual basis in extra-biblical texts.⁴⁶

Thus these solitary, isolated stories from the first millennium B.C. do not provide an adequate parallel to the consecutive biblical narrative that is found in Gen 1-9. For this larger comparison one must turn to the earlier, similar Mesopotamian texts from the first half of the second millennium B.C. The two main texts involved in this comparison have been examined in some detail above, the Eridu Genesis and the Atra-hasis Epic. Their pattern resembles that which is found in the biblical narratives of Gen 1-9. Table 3 depicts the similarities of these three texts. A black box indicates the overall literary unit in all three texts. As this major literary unit is tripartite, the three main sections of these texts are divided by a red line. Subsections have been indicated by the dashed blue line. The major overall literary unit is the same, and the three main sections and the principal levels are present in all three texts. It is mainly on the lowest literary level, the subsections, that the most variation is found between their contents.

From presently extant written sources, it is not evident, though possible, that either one or both Mesopotamian Creation-Flood texts used various sources, oral or written. Regardless of the sources that were employed, they

TABLE 3

I. The Sumerian Creation-Flood Story; the Eridu Genesis, ca. 1600 B.C.

CREATION	ANTEDILUVIAN WORLD		FLOOD
	Culture	King-List	

II. The Akkadian Creation-Flood Story; the Atra-hasis Epic, ca. 1600 B.C.

CREATION	ANTEDILUVIAN WORLD			FLOOD
	Plague ¹	Plague ²	Plague ³	

III. The Hebrew Creation-Flood Story; Genesis 1-9

CREATION	ANTEDILUVIAN WORLD			FLOOD
	Fall	Culture	Genealogy	

Gen 1 2

3

4

5

6-9

had already been unified into one concrete overall literary unit by the mid-second millennium B.C.

Since the individual stories from the first millennium have been taken out of context and used for other purposes, the best available parallels to the biblical Creation-Flood story come from the first half of the second millennium B.C. These correlations therefore suggest that this biblical narrative originates from the same period. To date the Mesopotamian Creation-Flood stories at 1600 B.C. and the biblical Creation-Flood story (which is similar in content and style) at 600 B.C., with cases of individual Creation and Flood stories intervening between them, would be quite exceptional and unlikely. The biblical Creation-Flood story fits best in the age in which this type of literature was written.

Historiography may also be a factor. There is a good analogy to this situation in the Hellenistic age. When Hellenism made its impact upon the culture of the Near East, the many changes caused nostalgia for the golden age. Three Hellenistic historians — Manetho of Egypt, Berossus of Babylon, and Philo of Byblos — attempted to recapture in words the great past history of their respective cultures.

Likewise, perhaps different historians from the late 17th century B.C. attempted simultaneously to record the Creation-Flood story in their presently available form. If parallels from the ancient world are relevant to understanding biblical materials of a similar nature (and they appear to have proved themselves useful in this regard in a number of instances), then the biblical Creation-Flood story should belong to the same era in which these Mesopotamian Creation-Flood stories were written. They should not be separated by a millennium as has been done by the documentary hypothesis.

Thus from these parallels in form and content it is more likely that someone (i.e., Moses) recorded such a work in the 15th (or 13th) century B.C. rather than to attribute them to a collection of fragments that were distributed through the first half of the first millennium B.C. This does not prove, of course, that Moses wrote the biblical Creation-Flood story, but certainly someone from his age makes a much better candidate for the author of this work than does an obscure and anonymous priest in exile in Babylonia a millennium later. To modify an old saying, one might observe that if Moses did not write these chapters of Genesis, then we would have to invent someone who lived in his times to have done so.

ENDNOTES

1. For a translation of these two texts see: Pritchard JP, editor. 1955, *Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p 60-72 for the *Enuma Elish* Creation myth, and p 93-95 for the Flood story in the Gilgamesh Epic.
2. For individual comparisons between the biblical and Babylonian Creation stories, see (a) Heidel A. 1963a. *The Babylonian Genesis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; (b) O'Brien J, Major W. 1982. *In the beginning: creation myths from ancient Mesopotamia, Israel and Greece*. American Academy of Religion Study Series No. 11; (c) Davis JD. 1980. *Genesis and Semitic tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, p 1-22. Note that O'Brien & Major have extracted the creation of man from the Atrahasis Epic for consideration in this connection, but they have not dealt with the text as a larger whole, p 69-88. For individual comparisons of biblical and Babylonian Flood stories, see (d) Heidel A. 1963b. *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament parallels*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p 1-2; and (e) Davis 1980, p 110-124 (Note 2c). These references are not meant to be exhaustive; they simply illustrate what is true of the more extensive corpus of literature on this subject: that comparisons between these stories have been made on an individual basis.
3. Heidel (1963a), p 1 (Note 2a). See also Pritchard, p 60 (Note 1). Tablets I-III and X of the Gilgamesh Epic are known from copies of the Old Babylonian version from the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C. From the same period comes a Sumerian version of Tablet XII which shows that the Akkadian version of this tablet was translated from the Sumerian. Tablets V and VI are known from the Akkadian version which was in use in the Hittite capital of Hattushash in the mid-2nd millennium B.C. Some fragments of the story are even known from tablets that were written in Hurrian (biblical Horite), which shows how far and wide the story of Gilgamesh spread in ancient times. The Flood tablet (Tablet XI), however, is only known from the 8th or 7th century edition found in Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh. Pritchard, p 72-73 (Note 1). See also Heidel (1963d), p 1-2 (Note 2d).
4. Two of the tablets, written in Sumerian, are dated to the late Old Babylonian period (ca. 1600 B.C.) and come from Nippur and Ur. The third fragment, bilingual in Sumerian and Akkadian, comes from Ashurbanipal's library in Nineveh and dates to the 7th century B.C. T. Jacobsen synthesized these tablets and fragments into one whole and complete story in his study: (a) 1981. *The Eridu Genesis*. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100:513-529. Previously the third tablet in particular was known as the Sumerian Flood story. For earlier translations of this text, see (b) Pritchard, p 42-44 (Note 1), and (c) M. Civil's translation in: Lambert WG, Millard AR. 1969. *Atrahasis: the Babylonian story of the Flood*. NY: Oxford University Press, p 138-145.
5. Jacobsen, p 515 (Note 4a).
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p 516.
8. *Ibid.*, p 518.

9. For the Sumerian King-List as a whole, see Pritchard, p 265-266 (Note 1). For its use in this text for the antediluvian period, see Jacobsen, p 519-521 (Note 4a).
10. Hasel GF. 1978. The genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 and their alleged Babylonian background. *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 16:361-374.
11. Walton J. 1981, The antediluvian section of the Sumerian King List and Genesis 5. *Biblical Archaeologist* 44:207-208.
12. Jacobsen, p 522-523 (Note 4a).
13. *Ibid.*, p 524.
14. *Ibid.*, p 525.
15. *Ibid.*, p 526.
16. *Ibid.*, p 528.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. Lambert & Millard (Note 4c). The best-preserved edition was copied on three tablets by a scribe named Ku-Aya in the 12th year of king Ammi-Saduqa of Babylon (ca. 1635 B.C.) and came to the British Museum from Sippar which was located in the vicinity of Babylon. The second tablet in this series, also dated to the same time and thought to have come from Sippar, is known from the museum at Istanbul. Three more fragments are known from other Old Babylonian pieces of approximately the same date. Two Middle Babylonian fragments which include only portions of the Flood story are known from Nippur and from Ras Shamra on the coast of Syria. Fourteen Neo-Assyrian tablet fragments from this textual series have come from the excavations of Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh.
20. *Ibid.*, p 43, lines 41-44.
21. *Ibid.*, p 57-59, lines 204-213.
22. *Ibid.*, p 59.
23. *Ibid.*, p 58, line 221 for this reading of this Akkadian word in transliteration.
24. Labat R. 1976, *Manuel d'Épigraphie Akkadienne*. Paris:Paul Guethner, p 135, sign no. 295.
25. For two convenient collections of the literature on this subject, see: (a) Andreasen N-E. 1972, *The Old Testament Sabbath*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 7:1-16, and (b) Hasel GF. 1982. *The Sabbath in the Pentateuch*. In: Strand KA, editor. *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*. Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, p 21-22, 37-38.
26. Modern terminology would call this a functional shift in mythology. Note Jacobsen's comparison between Gen 1-9 and the Eridu Genesis (Jacobsen, p 529; Note 4a). Yet this source reflects a recognition of a similar relationship as the original conception behind this aspect of both accounts. For one example in the ancient world and an observation on the nature of this occurrence, see: Shea WH. 1977. *Adam in ancient Mesopotamian traditions*. Andrews University Seminary Studies 15:27-41.
27. Jacobsen, p 529 (Note 4a).
28. Lambert & Millard, p 67, lines 352-359 (Note 4c).
29. *Ibid.*, p 73, II, lines 5-18.
30. As do Lambert & Millard in *Ibid.*, p 20.
31. *Ibid.*, p 79, IV, lines 7-14.
32. *Ibid.*, p 89, III, lines 21-33.
33. *Ibid.*, p 91, lines 40-44.
34. *Ibid.*, p 93, lines 43-55.
35. *Ibid.*, p 99, V, lines 37-45.

36. Ibid., p 101, VI, lines 5-10.
37. For a somewhat standard approach to the application of the documentary hypothesis to the narratives of Genesis, see: Speiser E. 1964. *Genesis*. Anchor Bible, vol. 1. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, p xxii-xxxvii and 3-81.
38. For my own approach to the literary criticism of Gen 1-2, see: Shea WH. 1978. The unity of the Creation account. *Origins* 5:9-38.
39. For a useful comparison of the Gilgamesh Flood story and that of Gen 6-9, see Heidel 1963a (Note 2d).
40. For the reference to the “clean” animals in the Ark of Atra-hasis, see Lambert & Millard, p 93 (Note 4c).
41. For the unified nature of the narratives of Gen 6-9, see my study: Shea WH. 1979. The structure of the Genesis Flood narrative and its implications, *Origins* 6:8-29.
42. See Note 38 above for a rather standard approach to this subject. For more detailed analyses with variations, see the discussion in Eissfeldt O. 1965. *The Old Testament: an introduction*. Ackroyd PR, translator. NY: Harper & Row, p 158-211.
43. For a useful discussion of the relationships between biblical and Homeric criticism and their respective fates, see: Yamauchi E. 1965. Do the Bible’s critics use a double standard? *Christianity Today* 10:179-182.
44. Speiser, p xxvii (Note 37).
45. For the seven tablet division, see the translation in Pritchard, p 60-72 (Note 1).
46. While the antediluvian portion of the Sumerian King-List might provide isolated information about the antediluvians, as a whole it already included the reference to the Flood and the post-Flood dynasties by the time it was edited together in the 18th century B.C. The antediluvian portion was also utilized in the Eridu Genesis, as has been described above. There is a Sumerian composition which deals with the activities of the god Enki and the goddess Ninhursag in a paradise-like setting, but no human actors are involved, as S. N. Kramer (1963) has noted in *The Sumerians*, University of Chicago Press, p 148. The Sumerian text known as “Enki and the World Order” refers to Enki’s establishment of various features in the world, but it also contains references to “post-Flood” people such as the Martu and the Elamites, and it discusses rituals conducted by the spiritual leaders in the temple of Enki known at the time this composition was written.

For a comparison between the literary forms of another Sumerian Creation story and the biblical Creation story, see: (a) Kikawada IM. 1983. The double creation of mankind in “Enki and Ninmah,” “Atra-hasis I, 1-351,” and “Genesis 1-2,” *Iraq* 45:43-45. Concerning parallels between biblical and Sumerian views on the antediluvians, Kramer once concluded that “no Sumerian parallels to the story of the Garden of Eden and the Fall of Man have yet been found” (p 293). Since then he thought that he found a text which referred to paradise and the later corruption of human language (Kramer SN. 1968. The “Babel of Tongues”: a Sumerian version. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88:108-111). Subsequently B. Alster has more correctly connected this text with a Sumerian literary cycle known as “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta” (Alster B. 1973. An aspect of “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta.” *Revue d’Assyriologie* 67:101-110). No satisfactory example of an isolated story of antediluvian human existence has yet been located in either Sumerian or Akkadian sources.