

Session 2 Handout

The Tree of Knowledge – Three Possibilities of Interpretation

1.

2.

3.

The Curse of Sin

1. Snake:

2. Woman:

3. Man:

The Consequence of Sin

Cain & Abel

Flood Take-Aways

J (The Jahwist)

⁵And YHWH saw that the evil of humanity was great on the land, and the whole thrust of his thoughts was only evil continually. ⁶And YHWH was sorry that he had made humanity on the land, and it made him sad in his heart. ⁷And YHWH said, "I will wipe humanity which I created from the face of the ground, from human beings to cattle, to creeping things, to the birds of the heavens, because I'm sorry that I made them!" ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of YHWH.

Notes

The **J** introduction is short, and includes a severe statement made by God.

P includes the genealogy of Noah and detailed instructions for building the ark.

P (The Priestly Account)

⁹These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, who was perfect in his generation. Noah walked with Elohim. ¹⁰And Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. ¹¹Now the earth became corrupt before Elohim, and it was filled with violence. ¹²And Elohim saw that the earth was corrupt, because all flesh had corrupted its behavior upon the earth.

¹³And Elohim said to Noah: "The end of all flesh has come before me, because the land is filled with violence because of them, so I'm going to wipe them off the earth. ¹⁴Make for yourself an ark of gofer wood, with rooms shall you make it, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵You are to make it this way: The ark will be 300 cubits long and 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high. ¹⁶You will make a roof for the ark and complete it a cubit above, and you shall make a door of the ark in its side. Make it with a lower, second and third deck. ¹⁷And as for me, I am bringing the flood of water upon the land to destroy all flesh that has in it a living spirit under the whole heavens. Everything that is on the earth shall die.

¹⁸And I will raise up my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark, you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives.

^{7:1}Then YHWH said to Noah, "Go, you and all your household into the ark, because you I have seen righteous before me in this generation. ²From all the clean beasts take seven pairs, each with its mate, and from the beasts which are not clean take two, each with its mate. ³Also from the birds of heaven, seven pairs, male and female, so there will be seed on the face of all the land. ⁴Because in seven days I will make it rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe out all that lives that I have made from upon the face of the ground." ⁵And Noah did all that YHWH commanded him.

{7:7}So Noah, his sons, his wife and his son's wives went to the ark, from the face of the flood, {7:16b} and YHWH shut him in.

⁸From the clean beasts and from the beasts which were not clean and from the birds and from everything that creeps on the ground ⁹two went in to Noah into the ark, male and female as YHWH commanded Noah.

The **P** account and the **J** account differ in the number of animals Noah is instructed to take on the ark

J includes a seven day warning.

P has detailed information about the dates of the flood.

In the **J** account, the flood is a **simple matter** of too much rain falling for "forty days and forty nights," a Hebrew idiomatic phrase meaning "long enough."

In the **P** account, the flood is a **complex matter** involving the undoing of creation. In referring to the fountains of the Tehom and the windows of the heavens, the **P** account is describing the dome that divided the waters above the Earth from the waters below the Earth. This dome part of the creation story and it is severely threatened when water comes down from above, and comes up from below

¹⁹And from all life, from all flesh, you shall bring two from all of them into the ark, to let them live with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰From the birds according to their kinds and from the cattle according to their kinds, from all things that creep on the ground according to their kinds, two from every kind shall come to you so they may live. ²¹And as for you, take for yourself from all the food which is eaten, and gather it to you and it will be for you and for them to eat. ²²And Noah did according to all that Elohim commanded him.

^{7:6}Now Noah was 600 years old when the flood of water was upon the earth. ¹¹In the 600th year of the life of Noah, in the second month, in the 17th day of the month, in that day the fountains of the great Tehom were split and the windows of heaven were opened. ¹³In that very day Noah, and with him Shem, Ham and Japheth (sons of Noah), and Noah's wife, and his three sons' wives, went into the ark. ¹⁴They and every living creature according to its kind and all the cattle according to their kinds, and all the creeping things that creep on the earth according to their kinds, and all the birds according to their kind, each bird and each winged creature. ¹⁵And they came to Noah into the ark, two by two from all flesh which had in it a living spirit. ¹⁶And those who came in were male and female from all flesh, as Elohim commanded Noah.

for one hundred fifty days.

{7:10} And the rain was upon the land forty days and forty nights, ¹⁷And the flood was upon the land for 40 days and the waters surged up and carried the ark, and the ark rose above the land.

²²Everything that had living breath in its nostrils, from all which was on the dry land perished. ²³So he [YHWH] wiped out every living thing which was on the face of the ground, from man to beast to creeping thing to the birds of the heavens, and they were wiped out from the land. Only Noah and those who were with him remained.

{8:6a} At the end of forty days {8:2b} the rain ceased from the heavens. {8:3a} And the waters went away steadily from upon the land {8:6b} and Noah opened a window of the ark that he had made.

The **P** account and the **J** account differ in the length of time that the flooding continues.

There is again no detailed chronology and no reference to the length of time the waters were over the earth in the **J** account, while the **P** account covers this in great detail.

In the **J** account, the ark lands in an unknown location while in the **P** account, the ark lands in the mountains of Upper Mesopotamia

¹⁸And the waters became great, and grew very, very much on the earth, and the ark was carried along on the waters. ¹⁹And the waters increased very greatly on the land, and the covered all the high mountains which were under all the heavens. ²⁰The waters rose till they were 15 cubits above the mountain tops.

²¹And all flesh that creeps on the earth, and birds, and cattle, and living creatures and from all swarming creatures that swarm on the land, and all the people died. ²⁴And the waters rose greatly against the land for 150 days.

¹And Elohim remembered Noah, and all the living creatures, and all the cattle which were with him in the ark, and Elohim made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters receded. ²And the fountains of the Tehom and the windows of heaven were closed.^{3b}After 150 days the waters had receded. ⁴And the ark rested in the seventh month on the seventeenth day of the month on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵The waters were going and receding until the 10th month; in the 10th month, on the 1st day of the month, when the tops of the mountains were seen.

⁸Then Noah sent forth the dove from him to see if the waters had ceased from upon the face of the ground. ⁹But the dove could not find rest for her feet, and she returned to him at the ark, because the waters were upon the face of the whole land. And he reached out his hand and took her, and brought her unto him in the ark. ¹⁰And he tried again seven days later, and he again sent forth the dove from the ark. ¹¹And the dove returned to him at the time of evening, and behold, an olive branch torn off was in her mouth, and Noah knew that the waters had ceased from upon the land. ¹²And He tried again seven days later, and he sent forth the dove, and she no longer returned to the ark.

And Noah put aside the covering of the ark, and he saw, and behold the face of the ground was dry.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar to YHWH, and he took from all the clean beasts and from all the clean birds, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

The **P** description of sending out a raven until the waters dried up is different from the specific stories about the dove in **J**.

The length of time spent on the ark is different in **J** and **P**

⁷and he sent forth a raven, and it went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

¹³And in the 601st year, at the beginning, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from upon the land.

²¹And when YWHW smelled the pleasing odor, he said to himself, "I will not again curse the ground because of human beings, because the inclination of a human being's mind is bad from youth, so I will never again smite all living things as I have done. ²²

While there are still days on earth

Planting and harvesting,

Cold and heat,

Summer and winter,

Day and night,

Will not stop.

The priestly source doesn't really conclude until chapter 9. Here it just leaves us with Noah, his families, and all the animals leaving. J concludes with a simple scene of sacrifice.

¹⁵And God spoke to Noah, saying, ¹⁶"Leave the ark, you, your wife, your sons, and your daughters-in-law. ¹⁷Bring out with you all the living creatures from among the birds and the beasts, and from all the crawling things that crawl on the ground, and let them swarm out across the land and be fruitful and multiply on the land. ¹⁸So Noah left, along with his sons, his wife, and his daughters-in-law. ¹⁹Every living creature, every crawling thing, every bird, everything that moves about on the land according to their families left the ark.