

## Lecture #5 Genesis (Continued)

The Flood Story – Oral History and understandings of God

There are many ancient flood stories in virtually every culture. As for the Middle East area two great flood stories exist:

The Noadic Flood story and the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic (circa 2100-1500BCE)

### Similarities between the Bible and the Gilgamesh Epic

- A Ship was built (Gen. 6:14).
- Bitumen used on the Ship (Gen. 6:14).
- Food was stored (Gen. 6:21).
- Animals put onto the Ship (Gen. 7:7).
- A family was on the Ship.
- Waters covered the Mountains (Gen. 7:20-22).
- The Ship had a window (Gen. 6:8).
- A boat landed on a Mountain (Still different).
- Birds sent out (not in order of the Genesis story nor was a swallow mentioned in Genesis).
- An altar was used in the sacrifice (Gen. 8:20-22).
- A God/god was pleased with the altar sacrifice (Gen. 8).

### Differences between the Bible and the Gilgamesh Epic

- The gods (Polytheism) made the flood.
- The gods had a Counselor.
- Noah figure (Utnapishtim) was instructed to leave his gods.
- The Utnapishtim Ark was cube shaped unlike Noah's which was barge-shaped.
- The Ark was launched and moved into position unlike Noah's Ark that was lifted by the waters.
- On lines 17-37 there is either no parallel or lines are missing.
- Noah's Ark had 3 decks and not 7, the interior of the vessel was divided into 9 parts unlike Noah's Ark.
- Noah's Ark did not have a Ships Captain, the Gilgamesh Epic does.
- Noah's Ark did not have Craftsmen onboard but the Gilgamesh Epic does.
- The Bible does not give a clue what time of the day that the Flood occurred but the Gilgamesh Epic does (Evening).
- Utnapishtim (Noah ?) closes the Ark door. God closes the door in the Bible.
- A Sailor was onboard (Puzur-Amurru).
- A black cloud signaled the start of the Deluge.
- The gods participated in the Ships removal from its anchor and flood preparations.
- The gods were frightened by the flood and fled.
- A Battle occurred.
- 6 days and 7 nights was the length of the Deluge. Biblically, 150 days was the length of the Deluge (Gen. 7:24).
- After 12 days land appeared.
- Mount Nizir not Ararat was the landing place.
- A Raven was sent out of the Gilgamesh Epic Ark instead of the dove of the Bible.
- Utnapishtim (Noah figure?) And his wife become like gods.

The differences between these stories point out a key difference between Israel's religion and the religions of their neighbors. While most ancient cultures followed a number of gods, Israel followed one God, the all-powerful Creator of the world, who chose them and acted in history to save them.

## **Covenant Theology in the Book of Genesis**

**A covenant**, in its most general sense, is a solemn promise to engage in or refrain from a specified action.

Five general Characteristics:

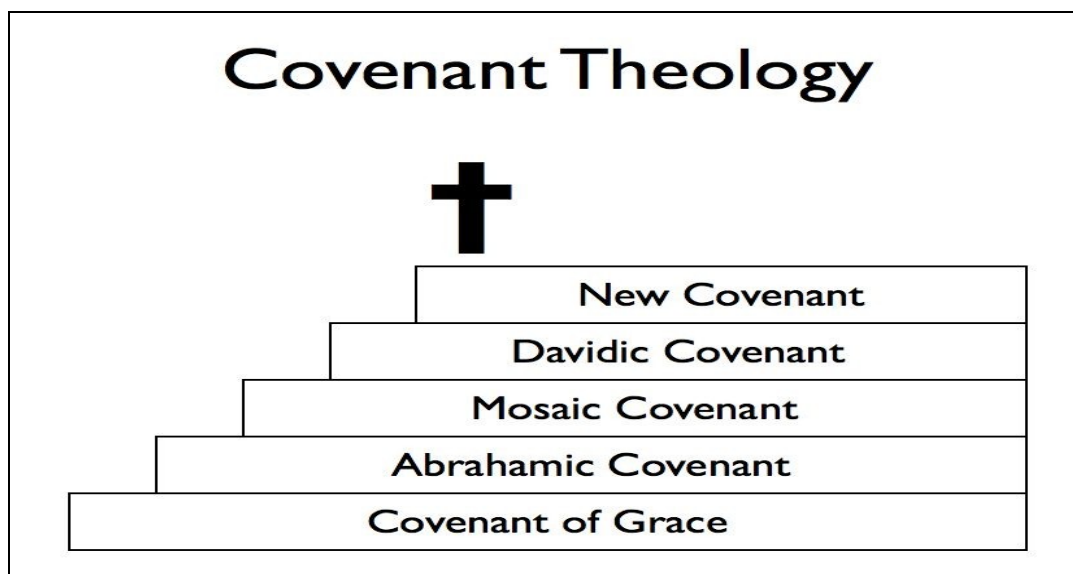
1. The agreement of terms
2. The swearing of an oath
3. The offering of a sacrifice
4. The Witness
5. The Feast

Three major types:

1. **Royal Grant:** A king's grant of land or some other benefit to a loyal servant for faithful or exceptional service. The grant was normally perpetual and unconditional, but the servant's heirs benefitted from it only as they continued their father's loyalty and service.
2. **Parity:** A covenant between equals, binding them to mutual friendship or at least to mutual respect for each others interests.
3. **Suzerain-vassal:** As in a king and his subjects. The great king claimed absolute right of sovereignty, demanded loyalty and service and pledged to protect the Vassal conditional on the vassal's faithfulness and loyalty.

Genesis Covenants:

1. Noah (Genesis 9.8-17) **ROYAL GRANT** – God promises never again to destroy the earth by flood. The sign is the rainbow
2. Abrahamic A (Genesis 15.9-21) **ROYAL GRANT** – Grant of Land
3. Abrahamic B (Genesis 17) **SUZERAIN-VASSAL** - Conditional divine promise to Abraham and his decendants forever requiring total devotion symbolized by circumcision.
- 4 Jacob and Laban (Genesis 29) **PARITY** – Jacob promises 7 years labour in exchange for Rachael.



The Old Testament (better translated as Old Covenant) flows with the history of the people of Abraham and the working out of God's Covenant with Abraham. Other covenants (Mosaic and Davidic) of major importance in understanding the Old Testament are also part of the Bible.

Both the people of Israel and Christians are the people who understand their relationship with God as Covenantal. Israel relates to the covenant of the *Torah*. Christians relate to the New Covenant initiated by Jesus at the Last Supper.

## **An Outline of the Book of Genesis**

### **Prologue**

- I. The stories of Creation and the Fall 1:1–3:24
  - A. Creation: the seven days 1:1–2:3
  - B. Creation: the making of man and woman 2:4–25
  - C. The fall of humankind and God's judgment on Adam and Eve 3:1–24
- II. The family of Adam and Eve 4:1–5:32
  - A. Cain and Abel 4:1–25
  - B. The family history of Adam and Eve 5:1–32
- III. The Flood 6:1–9:29
  - A. The sons of God and the daughters of men 6:1–4
  - B. The choosing of Noah 6:5–22
  - C. The arrival of the Flood 7:1–24
  - D. The abating of the waters 8:1–22
  - E. The aftermath 9:1–29
- IV. The early nations and the Tower of Babel 10:1–11:32

### **Main Section**

- I. Abram and Sarai (Abraham and Sarah) 12:1–25:34
  - A. Abram and Sarai and their early experiences in the land of Canaan 12:1–15:21
    - 1. God's call and blessing on Abram (God's promise, part 1) 12:1–3
    - 2. Abram's journey of obedience to Canaan 12:4–9
    - 3. Abram's stay in Egypt 12:10–20
    - 4. Abram's return to Canaan and separation from Lot (God's promise, part 2) 13:1–18
    - 5. Abram's rescue of Lot from the kings of the east 14:1–17
    - 6. Abram's encounter with Melchizedek of Salem 14:18–20
    - 7. Abram's rebuke of the king of Sodom 14:21–24
    - 8. God's covenant with Abram (the Abrahamic covenant, part 1) 15:1–21
  - B. Abram and Sarai's search for a son 16:1–22:24
    - 1. The birth of Abram's son Ishmael by Hagar 16:1–15
    - 2. The renewal of the Abrahamic covenant (the Abrahamic covenant, part 2) 17:1–27
    - 3. The renewal of the Abrahamic covenant (the Abrahamic covenant, part 3) 18:1–15
    - 4. God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah 18:16–19:38
    - 6. Abraham's mistake in Gerar 20:1–18
    - 7. The birth of Isaac 21:1–7
    - 8. The banishment of Hagar and Ishmael 21:8–21

9. Abraham's covenants with Abimelech 21:22–34
10. The binding of Isaac (the Abrahamic covenant, part 4) 22:1–19
11. Interleaf: the family of Nahor (Abraham's brother) 22:20–24
- C. Abraham and Sarah's last days 23:1–25:34
- II. Isaac and Rebekah 26:1–27:45
  - A. Isaac and Abimelech 26:1–33
    1. The relationship between Isaac and Abimelech 26:1–22
    2. Isaac, heir to the Abrahamic covenant (the Abrahamic covenant, part 5) 26:23–25
    3. The covenant between Isaac and Abimelech 26:26–33
    4. Interleaf: Esau's wives 26:34, 35
  - B. Isaac's blessing on his two sons Jacob and Esau 27:1–45
- III. Jacob and Esau 27:46–36:43
  - A. The sending of Jacob to Laban 27:46–28:5
  - B. Esau's marriage to a daughter of Ishmael 28:6–9
  - C. God's self-revelation to Jacob at Bethel 28:10–22
  - D. Jacob's family 29:1–30:24
  - E. Jacob's dealings with Laban in Padan Aram 30:25–31:55
  - F. The reconciliation of Jacob and Esau 32:1–33:20
  - G. Dinah and her brothers 34:1–31
  - H. The last days of Isaac 35:1–29
    1. Jacob's return to Bethel 35:1–8
    2. The renewal of the Abrahamic covenant with Isaac (the Abrahamic covenant, part 6) 35:9–15
    3. The death and burial of Rachel 35:16–20
    4. Reuben and Bilhah 35:21, 22
    5. Jacob's twelve sons 35:23–26
    6. The death and burial of Isaac 35:27–29
  - I. The family records of Esau 36:1–43
- IV. Joseph (with two interludes) 37:1–50:26
  - A. Joseph's dreams and a family nightmare 37:1–36
  - B. Interlude 1: Judah and Tamar 38:1–30
  - C. Joseph's humiliation in Egypt 39:1–40:23
  - D. Joseph's exaltation in Egypt 41:1–57
  - E. Joseph's reunion with his family 42:1–47:31
  - F. Interlude 2: Jacob's last days 48:1–50:14
- G. Joseph's last days 50:15–26<sup>1</sup>

**undatable**

Creation, the Flood, the Tower of Babel

**c. 2167 B.C.**

Abraham is born in Ur of the Chaldeans

**c. 2109 B.C.**

Abraham is called to set out for Canaan

**c. 2066 B.C.**

Isaac is born to Abraham and Sarah

**c. 2006 B.C.**

Jacob is born to Isaac and Rebekah

**c. 1991 B.C.**

Abraham dies in Canaan

**c. 1915 B.C.**

Joseph is born to Jacob and Rachel

**c. 1886 B.C.**

Isaac dies in Canaan

**c. 1876 B.C.**

Jacob and his family move to Egypt

**c. 1859 B.C.**

Jacob dies in Egypt

**c. 1805 B.C.**

Joseph dies in Egypt