

CHAPTER VI

The Deluge

Gen. 6, 7, 8

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Hints to Bible Study

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Denver, 1920.

The Elohist and Jehovistic accounts of creation are distinct documents, but some enterprising editor has so woven together the two accounts of the Deluge that to the lay mind they read as one narrative. Should the reader desire to follow this more closely than is possible in this condensed course, he is referred to Lyman Abbott's "Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews." He will find here in detail the Elohist and Jehovistic accounts, and the original Assyrian Account, from which both were evolved.

The Hebrew saw in all natural phenomena the approval and disapproval of God, whose reward and punishment of his children were unfailing. We are too young yet in spiritual discernment to know how far the thoughts in the race mind affect the natural elements. That they do is the belief of many spiritual students. Let us be careful, however, not to branch out into theories that we are unable to prove. Let us keep our feet on terra firma, even though we walk through the sky. Washington Gladden has left us the legacy of a beautiful idea in his sermon, "Where Does the Sky Begin?" It begins at the surface of the earth. We walk in the sky all of the time. Were we merely earth creatures like the moles we should have to burrow in the ground. We are creatures of the sky, air and heavens, and we walk through the sky always.

"The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose." Only he who can unite the spiritual and the natural is on safe ground. This is merely a plea that as we study this great Book, we be careful that we read the truth out of it, instead of reading our own preconceived ideas into it.

The Deluge story is beautiful in its spiritual significance. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." God will never cease to strive with us until we cease to resist the spiritual guidance, and cease to identify ourselves with the flesh man. Our text-book tells us, "Man is either drawn or driven by Love to his final destiny." God in our final destiny "rests" in man, His finished creation.

If one's life be true as was that of Moses, at an hundred and twenty years, the natural vigor should not be abated. Spiritual man knows no age, for he transcends human limitations, he belongs to another order. There must, however, be a distinction made between natural man, and mortal man. Mortal man is like Satan, he comes from nowhere and to nowhere is he doomed to return. He is a false concept, and all false

concepts die when the true are born. Natural man is legitimate, he is the forerunner of spiritual man.

"But Noah (rest) found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations and Noah walked with God." If we do not perfectly fulfill our natural life we cannot come into the life of the Spirit. Natural life is the life of "generations." It is the chaste, normal expression of all of our natural life in all true functioning. There must be no perversions, no sense of repression. There is never a sense of repression to a perfectly directed life, hence the spiritual law fulfills the moral law. The Botanist tells us that every successive stage of the plant life is the transmuted lower one. The blade is the transmuted root, the stalk and leaf the transformed blades, the leaf is lost in the blossom, the blossom is found again in the fruit, while all are culminated in the seed. If at any stage it becomes defective then progress ceases. To be perfect in our generations is to have in ourselves the power to be transmuted into the life of regeneration.

Everything that hath the breath of life from "under heaven" will always be destroyed. It is impossible to save it, it is eternally doomed to destruction. Only that into which God breathes the breath of His own life can come into the ark of safety, for it is all that *has* life.

The covenant is established with the one who is true, he alone will find "rest" in God. Forty is the number four multiplied by ten. The Hebrews wrote under a system of numerical symbolism, and when they desired to emphasize a truth they added another cipher. One is unity, totality; two is duality, complements; three is the trinity, continuity; four is perfection, of time or condition; five is law, orderly sequence; six is finished, the way a thing is; seven is completion.

"Forty days and forty nights" used in this sense means the full time until the destruction is complete and all that is untrue and unreal is destroyed in the downpour of the divine perfection. Noah's six hundred years is another instance of numerical symbolism. It is doubly emphasized, for did not Jehovah make a covenant with Noah, something that He never could do with Adam? Noah's "six hundred years" means that he had come into another cycle than that occupied by Adam.

"And God made a wind to pass over the earth and the waters assuaged." The wind and spirit are the same in Hebrew. A new cycle is commenced, a higher one, the earth is to be reinhabited by Noah's descendants. The beauty of the whole allegory is the immunity of the ark to which one may always flee and find safety, and the Bow of Promise, the token of the covenant between God and man. Its beauty transcends any earthly beauty and it promises us the beauty of a kingdom of which this earth is but an imperfect reflection. It is the symbol of infinity for we never reach the rainbow's end; like the ideal it recedes and recedes, luring us onward and upward into that world that hath "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."