

Genesis 6-11; Moses 8 Podcast Notes

1. The Sons of God and the daughters of men – Genesis 6.1-4.
 - a. This is the backdrop to so much material in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.¹
 - b. The Watchers run counter to the ideas that the scribes who produced these texts believed in.²
 - c. Genesis 6.1-4 is a polemic, or an attack against Babylon.³
 - d. The Watchers can be juxtaposed with the Apkallu (Sumerian: Abgal). Mesopotamia had several versions of the flood story, complete with a large boat that saves humans and animals. These stories include a group of sages –the *Apkallu*, possessors of great knowledge, that lived prior to the flood. These *Apkallu* were divine beings. After the flood, *Apkallu* mated with humans and produced **semi-divine offspring, giants**.⁴ Gilgamesh was considered one of them, a giant, a descendant of the *Apkallu*.⁵
 - e. The Watchers and their covenant is directly related to Jesus' statement in Matthew 16.⁶

¹ Genesis 6.1-4 has deep Mesopotamian roots... Jewish literature like 1 Enoch retold the story (of Gen. 6.1-4) and shows a keen awareness of that Mesopotamian context. This awareness shows us that Jewish thinkers of the Second Temple period understood, correctly, that the story involved divine beings and giant offspring. That understanding is essential to grasping what the biblical writers were trying to communicate. (Michael Heiser, [The Unseen Realm: Recovering the supernatural worldview of the Bible](#), p. 102)

² Because the content of Genesis 1-11 has so many deep, specific touchpoints with Mesopotamian literary works, many scholars believe that the scribes that produced these texts wanted to make clear that certain religious ideas about the gods were misguided or false.

³ Polemic: An aggressive attack on or refutation of the opinions or principles of another. –*Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, 2003. Michael Heiser wrote, "Genesis 6.1-4 is a polemic; it is a literary and theological effort to undermine the credibility of Mesopotamian gods and other aspects of that culture's worldview. Biblical writers do this frequently. The strategy often involves borrowing lines and motifs from the literature of the target civilization to articulate correct theology about Yahweh and to show contempt for other gods. Genesis 6.1-4 is a case study in this technique." (Michael Heiser, *The Unseen Realm*, p. 102.)

⁴ It is no understatement that, for Mesopotamians, the entire repository of knowledge that was to prove indispensable for civilization-and thus their own greatness- "was traced back to the wisdom of apkallus in its entirety." This role is precisely parallel to the Watchers of 1 Enoch, who taught humanity forbidden knowledge by which they became wicked and depraved (1 Enoch 8.1-4; 10.7-8). See: . Amar Annus, On the Origin of Watchers: A Comparative Study of the Antediluvian Wisdom in Mesopotamian and Jewish Traditions, *Journal for the study of the Pseudepigrapha*, (Vol. 19.4 (2010): 277-320), p. 289.

⁵ Babylonian priests presumed that civilization had been handed down to them from before the flood to them by their gods. They connected themselves and their achievements with knowledge from before the flood. The *apkallus* were the great culture-heroes of pre-flood knowledge. They were divine sages from the past. Babylonian kings claimed to be descended from the *apkallu* from before the flood. The writers of the biblical texts disagreed. They saw Babylonian knowledge as having demonic origins.

⁶ Remember that **the forces of darkness covenant at Mount Hermon as related in 1 Enoch**: And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: 'Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children.' And Semjaza, who was their leader, said unto them: 'I fear ye will not indeed agree to do this deed, and I alone shall have to pay the penalty of a great sin.' And they all answered him and said: 'Let us all swear an oath, and all bind ourselves by mutual imprecations not to abandon this plan but to do this thing.' **Then swore they all together and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it.** And they were in all two hundred; who descended in the days of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon, and **they called it Mount Hermon**, because they had sworn and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. ([1 Enoch 6.2-7](#)) Later in 1 Enoch 13, Enoch has a vision: And I went off and sat down at the waters of Dan, in the land of Dan, to the south of the west of Hermon: "I read their petition till I fell asleep. And behold a dream came to me,

- f. Jesus is declaring war on the forces of evil.
 - g. Jesus is a war-time general.
2. The “Sethite” interpretation of Genesis 6.1-4.
- a. The Sethite interpretation is the one taught most commonly in Christian churches, and is the dominant position since the late fourth century AD, when the texts of Enoch were systematically rejected and lost to us.⁷
 - b. What is the Sethite Interpretation of Genesis 6.1-4? It is that human beings, men from the line of Seth, Adam and Eve’s son who was born under the covenant, intermarried with those outside of the covenant, meaning those who descended from Cain.⁸
 - c. What are the arguments against the “Sethite Interpretation”?⁹
 - i. The Nephilim are still an issue that must be dealt with. Intermarriage of human beings in no way explains this issue.
 - ii. The text never calls the women in this episode “The daughters of Cain.”
 - iii. There is not a link to Cain in this part of the text.
 - iv. There is not a command against intermarriage of Cains seed or anyone else at this point in the Biblical narrative.
 - v. There are no “Jews” or “Gentiles” at this point in the narrative.
 - vi. Genesis 6.1-4 does not identify Seth and his seed as “The Sons of God.”
 - d. What does the JST do with this text? Joseph Smith flips the script!¹⁰

and visions fell down upon me, and I saw visions of chastisement, and a voice came bidding (me) I to tell it to the sons of heaven, and reprimand them...” (see [1 Enoch 1.13.7-8](#))

⁷ Heiser, *The Unseen Realm*, p. 94. I am combining Heiser’s ideas with Dr. Hugh Nibley and what he says about the systematic rejection of Enoch materials in the fourth century. For Nibley’s ideas, see [“A Strange Thing in the Land: part 1.”](#) Nibley explains the rejection: “In his recent study of Hellenistic Judaism, H. F. Weiss comes to the point: It was as inspired or revealed writings that such great apocalyptic works as Enoch, Fourth Esdras, and Baruch “were by the ‘official’ rabbinic-pharisaic Judaism systematically suppressed and removed, ostensibly on the grounds of their apocalyptic content.” They did not just fade out; they were deliberately and systematically destroyed.”

He continues: “Thus, until recently, the only surviving fragments of Enoch have come from Christian copyists, and not a single Jewish text of the Twelve Patriarchs, which draws heavily on Enoch, survives; **moreover, not a single picture of Enoch has ever been identified in either Jewish or old Christian art.** The trouble was, says Charles, that in Enoch the “apocalyptic or prophetic side of Judaism” was confronted by the rabbinical or halachic, i.e., by the “Judaism that posed as the sole and orthodox Judaism ... after 70 A.D. “which damned it forever as a product of the Essenes.

It was the **same story with the Christians**; it was “such **authorities as Hilary, Jerome and Augustine” who put the book of Enoch “under the ban.**” They were all learned schoolmen steeped in the rhetorical and sophistic education of the time, admitting quite freely that the Christians of an earlier time held ideas and beliefs quite different from theirs. **They also knew that Enoch was treasured as a canonical book by the early Christians, but they would have none of it.** The transition is represented by the great Origen, another product of Alexandria, who lived a century before them: he quotes Enoch, but with reservation, finding that he cannot agree with the teachings of the book, no matter how the first Christians may have venerated it.

⁸ Heiser, *Unseen Realm*, p. 94-95.

⁹ This list of arguments is coming from Heiser, p. 94-95.

¹⁰ It is the Joseph Smith Enoch which gives the **most convincing solution**: the beings who fell were not angels but men who had become sons of God. From the beginning, it tells us, mortal men could qualify as “sons of God,” beginning with Adam. Moses 6:68 How? By believing and entering the covenant. Moses 7:1 Thus when “Noah and his sons hearkened unto the Lord, and gave heed ... they were called the sons of God.” Moses 8:13 In short, the

- i. Moses 8.13-14 states that Noah and his sons listened to the Lord, and they were called “The sons of God.” (Moses 8.13). These men then had daughters and these daughters were then married to “the sons of men” (Moses 8.14).
 - ii. In Moses 8.20-21 Noah calls on these ungodly men to repent. Many reply, “we are the Sons of God; have we not taken unto ourselves the daughters of men?” To me, this puts Joseph Smith in the place of recontextualizing Enoch materials (which he in no way had access to in 1830 – even Thomas Jefferson, with his vast library, did not have access to Laurence’s translation of 1 Enoch) in a way to combine the Watchers with mortals, thus “softening” the text of 1 Enoch to create a version of the history whereby the mythological aspects of 1 Enoch are less fantastical and brought down to earth. These Watchers become mortals who are merely men, in need of repentance.
- 3. Make thee an ark! לָךְ תִּבְרַת עֲשֵׂה Genesis 6.5-22.
 - a. Why is God repenting in Genesis 6.6-7?
 - b. וַיִּנְחַם יְהוָה כִּי-עָשָׂה אֶת-הָאָדָם “And it *nāham* Yahweh that he made ha-Adam.” Joseph works this through the JST to render a different meaning. This is how the Yahwist, or J portrayed Yahweh: very much the God who weeps in Moses 7. Unlike some of the other authors of the text that portrayed him as remote, this portrayal of God in J has him up close and in the mix with the sons of men. He is “there,” present, and experiencing real emotion. Naham נָחַם can mean “to be sorry,” or to be filled with grief, to repent, or to be comforted. Joseph Smith said: “As it read [Genesis 6:6], ‘It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth’; also [Numbers 23:19], ‘God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the Son of man, that he should repent’; which I do not believe. But it ought to read, ‘It repented Noah that God made man.’”¹¹
- 4. The Destruction of Societies – “Because” Statements
 - a. Reading this story can help modern students of scripture to see how God works with broken societies and how they reach the fulness of iniquity. Patterns exist in scripture to help us learn and see how this can be understood.
 - i. The Fulness of Iniquity – Moses 8.28-30.
 - ii. Secret Combinations – Ether 8.18, 20-23.
 - iii. Being “without civilization” – Moroni 9.7-14.
 - iv. Casting out the righteous – Alma 10.22-23.
 - v. Acceptance and perversion of sexual behavior – Jude 1.7-8.
 - vi. Fascination with and delight in evil – Deuteronomy 18.9-12.
 - vii. Worship of false gods – Deuteronomy 8.19-20.
 - viii. Refusal to repent – Mormon 2.8.
- 5. The **ark as a prototypical temple** – this story can be related back to creation and the Garden of Eden. The story of Noah not only repeats the stories of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, and the Fall of Adam and Eve. This story also reiterates many of the temple themes in those

sons of God are those who accept and live by the law of God. When “the sons of men” (as Enoch calls them) broke their covenant, they still insisted on that exalted title: “Behold, we are the sons of God; have we not taken unto ourselves the daughters of men?” Moses 8:21 ([Hugh Nibley, “A Strange Thing in the Land: The Return of the Book of Enoch, Part 8,” Ensign, Dec 1976, 73](#))

¹¹ [Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith](#), p. 327.

accounts. These themes are especially apparent in the stories of the Ark and the tent, both of which foreshadowed the later tabernacle of Moses.¹²

- a. One of the first clues that something else may be going on in this story are the things surrounding the description of the ark. Morales notes, “while popular depictions of the ark often mislead one into viewing it as a boat, the vessel, having no sails, rudder, oarsman, etc., was no boat, and Noah was no “captain,” steering his own fate.”¹³
- b. Jeffrey Bradshaw states: It is significant that, apart from the tabernacle of Moses¹ and the temple of Solomon, (1 Chronicles 28:11-12, 19) Noah’s ark is the only man-made structure mentioned in the Bible whose design was **directly revealed by God**.¹⁴
- c. The **ark could represent the world**, with its three component sections as they relate to Hebrew cosmology.¹⁵ Harper writes: “The three divisions of *tēbāh*, tabernacle and temple have then been correlated again since earliest times to the concept of a three storied universe. As the temple was envisaged as a microcosm of the universe so the *tēbāh*, quite understandably, was seen as a mini-cosmos which contains all living things. The *tēbāh* certainly becomes a divinely provided dwelling space which replaces the *ādāmā*.”¹⁶
- d. Like the tabernacle, Noah’s ark “was designed as a temple.” The ark’s **three decks suggest both the three divisions of the tabernacle and the threefold layout of the Garden of Eden**.¹⁷ Indeed, each of the three decks of Noah’s ark was exactly “the same height as the Tabernacle and three times the area of the Tabernacle court.”¹⁸

¹² Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, [The Ark and the Tent: Temple Symbolism in the Story of Noah](#), *Interpreter*: 44 (2021), p. 106, accessed 1.5.2022.

¹³ Michael Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured: Cosmic Mountain Ideology in Genesis and Exodus*, University of Bristol, 2011, p. 178-179.

¹⁴ Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, [The Ark and the Tent: Temple Symbolism in the Story of Noah](#), *Interpreter*: 44 (2021), p. 95, accessed 1.5.2022. Genesis 6:14-16. Cf. E. A. Harper, *You Shall Make*, pp. 55-56; L. M. Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, pp. 147-149.

¹⁵ Gunkel notes that in Israelite thought the world also had three stories or components (heavens, earth and either netherworld or seas. See: Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*. Trans. Mark E. Biddle, 3rd ed., Mercer University Press, 1997, p. 144.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Harper, p. 58. She continues: “It is a place separated from the *ādāmā*, lifted up towards the heavens not quite belonging to either realm. If, as Genesis 1 and the flood story suggest, living creatures have existence only where *eretz* and dry land exist, the *tēbāh* becomes an alternative *eretz* where humanity can survive when *ādāmā* loses its battle with the waters. It is the place of safety while the *eretz* is cleansed and renewed. As one removes all items from a room that is about to be washed clean, so pairs of all living things, representative of all that exists are removed to an alternative space, for the duration of the cleansing process. Finally as on the Day of Atonement, all living things emerge from the *tēbāh*/tabernacle reconciled with God (8:21-9:19).”

¹⁷ Bradshaw, *The Ark and the Tent*. See also: J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes*, pp. 77-87. Cf. Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, p. 53; A. S.-M. Ri, *Caverne Syriaque*, p. 208. See the discussion in Elizabeth Harper, [You Shall Make a Tēbāh](#), p. 50 of readings of Genesis 6:16 in the Targums and the Septuagint, and for a description of parallels in 1 Kings 6:6 and Ezekiel 41:7. I appreciate the words of Elizabeth Harper: “**Nothing so far ... alerts the first-time reader to the fact that the *tēbāh* will need to float. The instructions would still fit a large house or temple.** The first-time reader might wonder if Noah is to build the first temple to YHWH and thus bring comfort to the world.”

¹⁸ J. D. G. Dunn *et al.*, *Commentary*, p. 44. Following B. Jacob, Wenham further explains:
... that if each deck were further subdivided into three sections [cf. Gilgamesh’s nine sections (A. George, *Gilgamesh*, 11:62, p. 90)], the Ark would have had three decks the same height as the Tabernacle and three sections on each deck the same size as the Tabernacle courtyard. Regarding similarities in the Genesis 1

Strengthening the association between the Ark and the Tabernacle is the fact that the Hebrew term for Noah's ark, *tevah*, later became the standard word for the ark of the covenant in Mishnaic Hebrew.¹⁹ In addition, the Septuagint used the same Greek term, *kibotos*, for both Noah's ark and the ark of the covenant.²⁰ The ratio of the width to the height of both of these arks is 3:5. (See: Genesis 6:15 and Exodus 25:10.)

- e. Gopher wood.
 - i. Bradshaw notes: The meaning of the Hebrew term for “gopher wood” — unique in the Bible to Genesis 6:14 — is uncertain... The possibility of **conscious rhyming wordplay in the juxtaposition of the Hebrew terms gopher and kopher** (“pitch”) within the same verse cannot be ruled out. As Elizabeth Harper notes, the word *kopher* might have evoked for the ancient reader, “the rich cultic overtones of *kaphar* ‘ransom’ with its half-shekel temple atonement price, (Ex. 30.11-13) *kapporeth* ‘mercy seat’ over the Ark of the Covenant, (Ex. 25.17-22) and the verb *kipper* ‘to atone’ associated with so many priestly rituals.”²¹ Some of these rituals involve the action of smearing or wiping, the same movements by which pitch is applied.²² Just as God's presence in the tabernacle preserves the life of His people, so Noah's ark preserves a righteous remnant of humanity along with representatives of all its creatures.
- f. **The Divine Feminine** involved in the creation of the *Tēbāh*?
 - i. Elizabeth Harper writes: The instructions finish with (you shall make it) i.e. with a third feminine singular suffix. (The beginning of Genesis 6.15 reads as follows: אֵתָּהּ אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶתָּהּ — literally: “And this which you will make (is a)... תַּבְּחָה *Tēbāh*” Some rabbis, working with an unpointed text, read this as 'it shall make itself' so that the *tēbāh*, like the animals who seem to gather of their own accord, gives Noah a helping hand.²³
- g. The dry land of creation.

account of Creation, the Exodus 25ff. account of the building of the Tabernacle, and the account of the building of the ark, Sailhamer writes (J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 82, see also table on p. 84): **Each account has a discernible pattern: God speaks** (*wayyo'mer/wayedabber*), **an action is commanded** (imperative/jussive), **and the command is carried out** (*wayya'as*) **according to God's will** (*wayehi ken/kaaser siwwah 'elohim*). The key to these similarities lies in the observation that each narrative concludes with a divine blessing (*wayebarek*, Genesis 1:28, 9:1; Exodus 39:43) and, in the case of the Tabernacle and Noah's ark, a divinely ordained *covenant* (Genesis 6:8; Exodus 34:27; in this regard it is of some importance that later biblical tradition also associated the events of Genesis 1-3 with the making of a divine *covenant*; cf. Hosea 6:7). Noah, like Moses, followed closely the commands of God and in so doing found salvation and blessing in his covenant.

¹⁹ Bradshaw, *The Ark and Tent*. See also: L. M. Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, p. 170.

²⁰ Ibid. See also: C. Dogniez et al., *Pentateuque*, p. 150 n. Genesis 6:14, pp. 314-315 n. Exodus 2:3.

²¹ Ibid. Exodus 29-30; Leviticus and Numbers *passim*.

²² Ibid. See also: See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, Endnote 3-57, p. 211; Elizabeth Harper, [You Shall Make](#).

²³ Elizabeth Harper, *You Shall Make a Tēbāh*, p. 53. She continues: “Thus they heighten the miraculous and fantastic in the narrative but also echo the creation account where that which is created (earth, trees, living creatures) join God in the creative process bringing forth from within.” See also: Freedman H. and M. Simon (translator), *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis 1*. London, The Soncino Press, 1931, p. 245. Freedman (1939) p.245. Quite why the rabbis or the Masoretes made this final verb different in pointing to the four other occurrences is unclear.

- i. There are rich thematic connections between the emergence of the dry land at the Creation, the settling of the Ark atop the first mountain to emerge from the Flood, New Year's Day, and the temple. In ancient Israel, the holiest spot on earth was believed to be the foundation stone in front of the ark of the covenant within the temple at Jerusalem:²⁴ "It was the **first solid material to emerge from the waters of Creation**, (Psalm 104.5-9) and it was upon this stone that the Deity effected Creation." **The depiction of the ark-temple of Noah perched upon Mount Ararat would have evoked similar temple imagery for the ancient reader of the Bible.**
- h. The resting upon a mountain, the altar, and the covenant.
 - i. Harper writes: "Of course temple/tabernacle links do not begin and end with 6:14-16 and once readers become alert to such a reading they will find other connections in the narrative: the day the earth is dry and Noah removes the 'covering' (8:13) is also the day the tabernacle is dedicated (Ex 40:2): New Year's day with all its cultic and symbolic new beginnings. **The *tēbāh* holds fast upon a mountain, a high place, with cultic overtones.** The first response of Noah is a priestly one, to sacrifice thereupon. In various rabbinic, as in ANE and Greek stories, **the mountain of the temple mound was considered the first mound to appear both from the waters of the creation and from the flood. Noah's altar is stated to be Adam's altar reclaimed from the flood and in turn becomes the altar of the temple.** Moreover, the temple or its altar now acts as a stopper to prevent the flood waters again overwhelming the world. The temple links in the chapter thus provide a later generation with fertile ground for creative theological reflection."²⁵
- i. The Timing of the Event.
 - i. Note that it was "in the six hundred and **first year** [of Noah's life] in the **first month, the first day** of the month" that "the waters were dried up." (Gen. 8.13) The specific wording of this verse would have hinted to the ancient reader that there was ritual significance to the date. Note that it was also the "**first day of the first month**" (Ex. 40.1) when the tabernacle was dedicated, "while Solomon's temple was dedicated at the *New Year* festival in the autumn." (1 Kings 8.2)²⁶ Wyatt writes that "the same symbolism was thus applied to all three."²⁷

²⁴ Jeffrey Bradshaw, [The Ark and the Tent](#). See also: J. M. Lundquist, *Meeting Place*, p. 7. Ancient temples found in other cultures throughout the world also represent — and are often built upon — elevations that emulate the holy mountain at the starting point of Creation (see, e.g., E. A. S. Butterworth, *Tree*; R. J. Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*; R. J. Clifford, *Temple*).

²⁵ Harper, p. 59.

²⁶ Nicolas Wyatt, "Water, water everywhere ...': Musings on the aqueous myths of the Near East." In *The Mythic Mind: Essays on Cosmology and Religion in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature*, edited by Nicolas Wyatt, 189-237. London, England: Equinox, 2005. pp. 215-216, emphasis added. Wyatt remarks that the expression about the New Year festival comes from S. W. Holloway, noting that "[m]any scholars regard the search for the New Year festival to be something of a futile exercise" (N. Wyatt, *Water*, p. 235 n. 129).

²⁷ Wyatt, p. 216.

- j. Both stories (creation/Adam/Eve & Noah/Flood/Ararat) contain **instructions about what to eat**. (see Moses 2.28-30, 3.9, 16-17; Gen. 9.2-4)
- k. Both stories emphasize **nakedness and the importance of being covered**. (Moses 4:27; Genesis 9:21-22)
- l. Both stories mention that the heroes are to be “Lord over the whole earth.”²⁸
- m. **“Her tent”** in Genesis 9.21.
 - i. Bradshaw²⁹ offers the following: Although the English translation says “*his* tent,” the Hebrew text features a feminine possessive that would normally mean “*her* tent.”³⁰ (The end of verse 21 reads אֶהְלֵה בְּתוֹךְ אֶהְלֵה “and he was uncovered within *his* tent.” The *Midrash Rabbah* explains this as a reference to the tent of Noah’s wife,³¹ and both ancient and modern commentators have often focused on this detail to imply that Ham intruded on his father and mother during a moment of intimacy.³²
 - ii. The tent of the vineyard, or the tent of the Shekinah.³³ A very intriguing alternative explanation, however, is offered by Rabbi Shim’on in the *Zohar*, who takes the *he* of the feminine possessive (from the word אֶהְלֵה) to mean “the tent of that vineyard,’ namely, the tent of *Shekinah*,” the term for “the divine feminine” that was equated to the presence of Yahweh in Israelite temples. In a variant of the same theme, at least one set of modern commentators takes

²⁸ Gordon J. Wenham, *World Biblical Commentary, Vol. 1: Genesis 1-15*, 1987, p. 198. Wenham writes that Cassuto suggests that “the man of the land” עֶבֶד אֲדָמָה is an unusual phrase (see Gen. 4.2). He continues, “Cassuto suggests it (the man of the land) really means “master of the earth,” because Noah as the head of the family on earth was the ipso facto lord of the whole earth.” I would add that Genesis 1.26 helps to bring Cassuto’s argument into a position of greater strength. This verse states that Adam and Eve are to have dominion, וְיָרְדוּ בְּדָגַת הַיָּם “let them have dominion over the fish of the sea...” When God speaks to Noah (Gen. 9.2) he says, speaking of the things of the earth, וְכָל הַיְדָבְרִים אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדְךָ “into your hands they are given.” These verses demonstrate that Noah is a second Adam, a lord over the things of this world. I would concur with Cassuto’s argument, that both Noah and Adam are to have dominion as kings upon the earth and this is part of what these verses are communicating, although obliquely.

²⁹ Bradshaw, *The ark and the Tent*, p. 99-100.

³⁰ I.e.: “In the biblical text the final letter of *oholoh*, his tent, is a *he*, rather than the normal masculine possessive suffix (*vav*). The suffix *he* usually denotes the feminine possessive, her” (D. C. Matt, *Zohar 1*, 1:73a-b, p. 434 n. 700). I would note that from my reading the he would have usually a dagesh contained within it to denote the tent being “her” tent. This text does not contain the dagesh.

³¹ J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah 2*, 36:3, p. 30: “The word for ‘his tent’ is written as if it were to be read ‘in her tent,’ namely , in the tent of his wife.”

³² For example, Cohen, having explored the “symbolic meaning of wine in ancient cultures,” concludes that Noah’s actions in this regard have been completely misunderstood, the result of “biblical scholarship’s failure” in explaining the meaning of the enigmatic incident. Summarizing Cohen’s view, Haynes writes (S. R. Haynes, *Curse*, pp. 188-189; see H. H. Cohen, *Drunkness*, pp. 8, 12): Cohen explores Israelite and other traditions to elucidate a complex relationship between alcohol, fire, and sexuality. Drawing on this connection, he surmises that Noah’s drunkenness is indicative not of a deficiency in character but of a good-faith attempt to replenish the earth following the Flood. Indeed, Noah’s “determination to maintain his procreative ability at full strength resulted in drinking himself into a state of helpless intoxication.” How ironic, Cohen notes, that in acceding to the divine command to renew the earth’s population, Noah suffered the opprobrium of drunkenness. In Cohen’s view, he “deserves not censure but acclaim for having played so well the role of God’s devoted servant.”

³³ Bradshaw, p. 100.

the *he* as referring to *Yahweh*, hence reading the term as the “Tent of *Yahweh*,” the divine sanctuary.³⁴

6. The Flood narrative: A composite text – Genesis 6-9.
 - a. A complete color-coded rendering of the two flood narratives from J and P can be read [here](#).
 - b. Rain or the undoing of creation? Gen. 7.4 versus 7.11.
 - c. Do these people “die” מוֹת or do they “expire” נָפַח? Gen. 7.22 versus 7.21.³⁵
 - d. Things worthy of note: J sets **the age of man** at 120, something that other authors ignore or are unaware of. See: Genesis 6.3: “My spirit shall not always strive with man... yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.” In J, the Yahwist informs readers that mankind will not exceed this time length.³⁶
 - e. **The deity** is referred to by name (YHWH – יהוה – translated LORD) in the J flood narrative – for a total of ten times; and is referred to as “God” (Elohim אֱלֹהִים – translated God) in the P account of the flood, sixteen times.
 - f. The **number of animals** on the ark is seven pairs of pure and one pair of impure in Genesis 7:2,3 (J); but it is only one pair of each, whether pure or impure, in 6:19-20; 7:8,9,15 (P). This fits with the fact that in J Noah will offer sacrifices at the end of the flood, so he needs more than two of each animal – or else his sacrifice would end a species forever! But in P, there are no sacrifices in the story until the establishment of the Tabernacle in Exodus 40, so there is no need for any excess animals because Noah doesn’t offer sacrifices in P.³⁷
 - g. In P Noah sends out a raven. In J he sends a dove (three times). In the Epic of Gilgamesh, the hero of the flood sends out a raven, a dove, and a swallow.
 - h. The **length of the flood varies** in each account. In P the flood lasts a year (or a year and ten days). In J it is the more recognizable story of forty days and forty nights.

³⁴ Bradshaw, p. 100. I find Bradshaw’s providing these sources intriguing. Set alone they do not offer much. But in the context of all the references to the divine feminine in creation and the temple, this adds just one more piece of evidence to the feminine principle involved in fertility and creation that is continuously in the background of the Hebrew Bible. See also: D. C. Matt, *Zohar 1*, 1:73a-b, p. 434 n. 700. Cf. related references in the *Zohar* to the same concept in the story of Abraham (ibid., 1:80a, p. 18, 184a, p. 34).

³⁵ A small thing, perhaps- but these kinds of textual variants give readers clues into the composite nature of the text. In P, the author uses the word נָפַח *gava*, or “expired,” a word that is used eleven times throughout P, but never in J, E, or D.

³⁶ P’s genealogical lists, however, display no knowledge of J’s claims about the limitation on the life-span of mankind, or else it just ignores it. From in the Priestly textual tradition, Noah lives 950 years (Genesis 9:29), Shem 600 years, Arphaxad 438, Salah 433, Eber 473, Peleg, 239, Reu 239, Serug 230, Nahor 148, Terah 205 (Genesis 11:10-32), Sarah, 127 (Genesis 23:1), Abraham 175 (Genesis 25:7), Isaac 140 (Genesis 35:28), and Jacob 147 years (Genesis 47:28). All these life-spans come from the Priestly composition. I have read works of a couple of scholars who have suggested that these ages in the narrative come from the influence of Mesopotamian antediluvian kings’ list on the Priestly writer. For a discussion on this and other issues relating to reading texts like the Old Testament critically and how to view the ages of these individuals, I highly recommend the book [God’s Word in Human Words](#) by Kenton L. Sparks.

³⁷ In J’s narration of events, Noah had seven pairs of each of the pure (sacrificeable) animals, so now he is able to sacrifice some of these. P has no stories involving animal sacrifice until the establishment of the Priesthood and the Tabernacle to Jehovah as found in Exodus 40 under the prophetic rule of Moses. For this reason, P has no use for sacrifice at this time, as it hasn’t been introduced to mankind yet in the story. See: Richard Elliot Friedman, [The Bible with Sources Revealed](#), Harper One, 2003, pages 42-47.

7. The Epic of Gilgamesh
 - a. Utnapishtim as Noah in this epic story.
 - b. Epic tales like this demonstrated to Biblical scholars that Noah's flood story had elements that were contained in other cultures and in other time periods.
8. The main points
 - a. This text is a polemic against Babylon and all that it represents to the descendants of Israel. This text has clear evidence of editing and structuring that reflects the views of a people that had clear disagreements with Babylon's religious ideas. We see this exhibited again in Genesis 11 with the Tower of Babel narrative.
 - b. The good people, what about them? Moses 7.27 tells us that they were just fine.³⁸
 - c. The nature of God. This God is an individual who suffers. See Moses 7.28-33.
 - d. This story is the story of a recreation. God is creating a space whereby the sons of Noah will gain an established covenant, divide, and come into being in the persons of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 12.
 - e. Literal³⁹ versus figurative⁴⁰. How Christians as well as Latter-day Saint Christians read this text.⁴¹
 - f. Temple themes in this narrative abound (see slides).
9. The curse אָרַר put upon Canaan... a servant of servants shall he be – Gen. 9.20-29.⁴²
 - a. Canaan is cursed although he is not even present in the story! See: Gen. 9.20-24.
 - b. This story could be about boundaries.
 - c. Noah's drunkenness, an alternate explanation.

³⁸ During the nearly 700 years from the translation of Enoch to the flood of Noah, it would appear that nearly all of the faithful members of the Church were translated, for 'the Holy Ghost fell on many, and they were caught up by the powers of heaven into Zion.' (Moses 7:27.)" Elder McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 804.

³⁹ Donald Parry takes the position that the flood narrative is literal. See: [The Flood and the Tower of Babel, Ensign, January, 1998](#). He also gives statements from Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie that give this same opinion. See: Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 2:319.

⁴⁰ John A. Widstoe made this statement: "The fact remains that **the exact nature of the flood is not known. We set up assumptions**, based upon our best knowledge, but can go no further. We should remember that when inspired writers deal with historical incidents they relate that which they have seen or that which may have been told them, unless indeed the past is opened to them by revelation. **The details in the story of the flood are undoubtedly drawn from the experiences of the writer.** Under a downpour of rain, likened to the opening of the heavens, a destructive torrent twenty-six feet deep or deeper would easily be formed. The writer of Genesis made a faithful report of the facts known to him concerning the flood. In other localities the depth of the water might have been more or less. In fact, the details of the flood are not known to us." Widstoe, 1943, [Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Volume 2](#), MacMillan Publishing, 1992, p. 432. The statement is under the heading "Earth."

⁴¹ John Taylor took this account literally in all its detail. See JD 26.74-75. James E. Talmage did not. See *Deseret News*, 12 November 1931. Biblical scholar John Walton made this statement: **Would this text have meant something different if we could read it with an ancient Near Eastern mindset?** ... In the Mesopotamian worldview the known world was comprised of a single continent fringed with mountains (such as the Zagros mountains in the east and the mountains of Ararat in the north) and ringed by the cosmic sea. The fringe mountains were believed to hold up the heavens and have roots in the netherworld. In the east, the mountain primarily associated with this role is Mount Masu. ... What happens if we try to read the Flood narrative against the background of this sort of worldview? ... See: John Walton, [NIV Application Commentary](#), Zondervan, Grand Rapids MI, 2000, p. 326-328.

⁴² וַיֹּאמֶר אֱרֹר כְּנָעַן עֶבֶד עֲבָדִים יְהִיָּה לְאֶחָיו Trans: "And he said, cursed is Canaan, a slave of slaves he will be to his brothers." There is a distinction in the LXX where Canaan will be cursed to be a οἰκέτης, a household servant as opposed to a δούλος, a slave. This is something I will want to explore further. The LXX also uses the word ἐπικατάρατος for curse. This word is connected to ideas of being exposed to divine justice, or being accursed.

- i. Bradshaw offers the following: **How are we to understand the mention that Noah “was drunken”?** Most rabbinical sources make no attempt to explain or justify but instead roundly criticize Noah’s actions.⁴³ The difficulty with that explanation is the fact that the scriptures offer no hint of condemnation for Noah’s supposed drunkenness. Is there a better explanation for Noah’s unexpected behavior?⁴⁴ Yes. **According to a statement attributed to Joseph Smith, Noah “was not drunk, but in a vision.”**⁴⁵ This agrees with the *Genesis Apocryphon* which, immediately after describing a ritual drinking of wine by Noah and his family, tells of a divine dream vision that revealed the fate of Noah’s posterity.⁴⁶ Koler and Greenspahn⁴⁷ concur that Noah was enraptured in a vision while in the tent, commenting that “this explains why Shem and [Japheth] refrained from looking at Noah even after they had covered him, significantly ‘*ahorannît* [= Hebrew “backward”] occurs elsewhere with regard to avoidance of looking directly at God in the course of revelation.”
- ii. Noah’s fitness to enjoy the presence of God is explored in detail by Morales.⁴⁸ “In every sense,” he writes, “Noah is defined as the one able ‘to enter’⁴⁹ into the presence of the Lord. He concludes:⁵⁰ As the righteous man, Noah not only passes through the [door] of the Ark sanctuary,⁵¹ but is able to approach the mount of Yahweh for worship.... Noah stands as a new Adam, the primordial man who dwells in the divine Presence ... As such, he foreshadows the high priest of the Tabernacle cultus who alone will enter the paradisiacal holy of holies....

⁴³ Bradshaw, p. 101. See: E.g., M. J. B. bin Gorion et al., *Mimekor*, 1:24; J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah 1*, 36:3, pp. 28-29.

⁴⁴ Remarking on the odd inconsistency implied by the common understanding of Noah’s actions, Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. 198 n. 21 writes:

So striking is the contrast between Noah the saint who survived the Flood and Noah the inebriated vintner that many commentators argue that the two traditions are completely incompatible and must be of independent origin.

⁴⁵ Joseph Smith, Jr., as reported by William Allen to Charles Lowell Walker (C. L. Walker, *Diary*, 12 May 1881, 2:554).

⁴⁶ J. A. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 13:8-15:20, pp. 89-93. You can read the text [here](#). Scroll down to 13.8 where it says “I offered praise to the Lord of Heaven, to God Most High, to the Great Holy One who delivered us from destruction [... ..] and to all [... ..] of his fathers, they drank and [... ..] and I poured upon [... ..] and the wine [... .. remainder of column, approximately 11 lines, missing ...]” It is noteworthy that Noah’s vision contains an olive tree that increases in height and that Noah “ marvels greatly ” at the vision.

⁴⁷ Koler and Greenspahn, quoted in W. Vogels, *Cham Découvre*, p. 567 n. 31.

⁴⁸ L. M. Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, pp. 171-203.

⁴⁹ Morales, p. 185.

⁵⁰ Morales, p. 171, 203.

⁵¹ Given the analogy between the Garden [of Eden] and the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle/temple, and that between the Ark and the Tabernacle/temple, Noah’s entrance may be understood as that of a high priest ... ascending the cosmic mountain of Yahweh — an idea “fleshed out,” as it were, when Noah walks the summit of the Ararat mount. The veil separating off the Holy of Holies served as an “objective and material witness to the conceptual boundary drawn between the area behind it and all other areas,” a manifest function of the Ark door. See: Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, p. 185.

- iii. Wine was part of the First Israelite Temple. We find greater detail about an analogous event within the *Testament of Levi*. There we read that as Levi was being made a king and a priest, he was anointed, washed, and given “bread and holy wine” prior to his being arrayed in a “holy and glorious vestment.” Note also that the themes of anointing, the removal of outer clothing, the washing of the feet, and the ritual partaking of bread and wine were prominent in the events surrounding the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Apostles. Indeed, we are told that the righteous may joyfully anticipate participation in a similar event when the Lord returns: “for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth.”⁵²
 - d. This story is an etiological tale, explaining aspects of Canaanite culture.⁵³
10. Genesis 10 – The division of the land and peoples of the Hebrew Bible.
11. Genesis 11 – The Tower of Babel.
- a. The **ziggurat as cosmic mountain**.
 - i. The temple is the embodiment of the cosmic mountain.⁵⁴
 - ii. **Babylonian Ziggurats were Cosmic Mountains.** If this interpretation of the attachment to sacred mountains may be regarded as valid, it must certainly also be applied to the great Ziggurats, or stage-towers, of Sumeria. These were an attempt on the part of men to build artificial mountains which could then serve as divine dwelling-places. They formed a transition stage between the veneration of real mountains as divine abodes, and the building of man-made temples. The great temple of Marduk in Babylon was an example of this kind of

⁵² Bradshaw, p. 101. See also: H. C. Kee, *Testaments*, Levi 8:4-6, p. 791; John 13:4 (see J. M. Smith, *She Hath Wrought*, pp. 32-35 for a discussion of the royal and priestly context of this and related biblical anointings); John 13:4-17 (cf. John 12:3); Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:14-20; and D&C 27:5.

⁵³ See: Aaron, David. “Early Rabbinic Exegesis on Noah’s Son Ham and the So-Called ‘Hamatic Myth.’” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63.4 (1995): 721-59.

Bergsma, John Seitze and Scott Walker Hahn. “Noah’s Nakedness and the Curse of Canaan (Genesis 9:20-27).” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121 (2005): 25-40.

Hayes, Stephan. *Noah’s Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Johnson, Sylvester A. *The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-Century American Christianity: Race, Heathens, and the People of God*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Koltun-Fromm, Naomi. “Araphat and the Rabbis on Noah’s Righteousness in Light of Jewish-Christian Polemic.” In *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Exegesis*. Edited by Judith Frishman and Lucus van Rompey, 52-72. Leuven: Peeters, 1997.

Steinmetz, Deborah. “Vineyard, Farm and Garden: The Drunkenness of Noah in the Context of Primeval History.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113 (1994): 193-207.

⁵⁴ This theme is extremely common in ancient Near Eastern texts. From the time of Sargon II onwards, the cult room of Assur in the temple of Assur, ÉdAssur, was “House of the Great Mountain of the Lands.” This perception is very common in the Old Testament, as is seen in such passages as Isaiah 2:2 and Psalm 48:2. These conceptions of Zion as a holy mountain go back ultimately to the inner-Israelite experience at Sinai. The temple of Solomon would seem ultimately to be little more than the architectural realization and the ritual enlargement of the Sinai experience. See: John Lundquist, “What Is a Temple? a Preliminary Typology,” in Donald W. Parry, ed., *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbols*, Deseret Book, 1994] 84-5. See also: Othmar Keel, “Temple and Mountain” in Chapter III The Temple: Place of Yahweh’s [Jehovah] Presence and Sphere of Life in *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (1997), pp. 144-155.

stage-tower construction, and shows how the Babylonian culture had inherited much from the earlier Sumerians.⁵⁵

- b. An attack/polemic against Babylon.⁵⁶
 - i. Morales writes, "The scattering from the Tower of Babel may be interpreted, via an "anti-gate liturgy" pattern, as a further removal from the Presence of God whose own deliberate plan for allowing re-entrance into the divine Presence begins with the call of Abraham and culminates in the divine in-filling of the tabernacle, Babel and the tabernacle being antipodes in the narrative arc."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997, 113. See also A. Wiercinski, "Pyramids and Ziggurats," 71-87; S. Paas, "He Who Builds His Stairs into Heaven... (Amos 9.6a)," *UF* 25 (1993) 319-25; W. F. Albright, "The Babylonian Temple-Tower and the Altar of Burnt-Offering," *JBL* 39.3/4 (1920) 141-42; N-E. Andreasen, "The Heavenly Sanctuary in the Old Testament," pp 63-79 in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, F. B. Holbrook, ed., Silver Spring, MD: BSI, 1989, p. 64. Michael Morales relates, "As an example of the ubiquitous nature of the cosmic mountain idea, not only across cultures but ages, the Aztec ziggurat, Pyramid of the Sun, considered the heart of Teotihuacan ("city of the gods"), possesses a grand staircase signifying this man-made mountain was meant to be ascended so that sacrifices might be offered upon its apex, the counterpart to the mountain-summit abode of the gods." See: Michael Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-figured*, p. 10.

⁵⁶ Babel is a pun on the word or idea for confusion. בָּבֶל means to "mix" or "confound," and בְּבֶל Babel, as used in Gen. 11.9 is connected to Babylon, and can also mean "confusion (by mixing)." Nahum Sarna offers this explanation: "Babylon, Hebrew *Babel*, was pronounced *Babilim* by the Mesopotamians. The name is apparently non-Semitic in origin and may even be pre-Sumerian. But the Semitic inhabitants, by popular etymology, explained it as two separate Akkadian words, *bab-ilim*, meaning "the gate of the god." This interpretation refers to the role of the city as the great religious center. It also has mystical overtones connected with the concept of "the navel of the earth," the point at which heaven and earth meet. **The Hebrew author, by his uncomplimentary word-play substituting *balal* for Babel has replaced the "gate of the god" by "a confusion of speech," and satirized thereby the pagan religious beliefs.**" See: Nahum M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis: The Heritage of Biblical Israel*, Schocken Books, 1966, p. 69-70.

⁵⁷ Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-figured*, p. 295.