

The Deluge

By
Rev. Seth Adamson



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THE development of sin, after the fall of our first parents, was such that God determined to sweep the offending race from the face of the earth by a mighty deluge. This was consummated sixteen hundred and-fifty-six years after the creation of Adam, or two thousand two hundred and sixty-two years by the chronology of the Septuagint. The Bible contains the only historical record of this great event; but traditions, said to be found in almost all parts of the world, confirm the fact that a destructive deluge once occurred. It is hard to account for the universality and similarity of these traditions, supposing them to exist, without granting them an historical basis. Cuneiform inscriptions on clay tablets in Assyria and at Babylon corroborate the Mosaic account.

The object of the flood was to destroy the race of Adam. It was the wickedness of " the Adamite " that God saw was great in the earth," and "it repented God that he had made the Adamite on the earth."

"And the Lord said, I will destroy the Adamite whom I have created from the face of the earth." I give here the translation "the Adamite," instead of "man," for, whether "ha-Adam" can generally be translated "the Adamite" or not, it is plain that in these two texts it refers to the descendants of Adam.

To perpetuate the race God resolved to save Noah and his family. This pious patriarch is described as "a just man and perfect in his generations" that is, in his genealogy: his family history proved him to be of unmixed blood running back to Adam.

In the sixth chapter of Genesis the inspired writer assigns the cause of the universal depravity that prevailed. In this connection he relates that "there were giants in the earth in those days." This does not necessarily mean giants in physical stature and strength, but may mean violent men, "monsters," "prodigies," or giants in crime. The only reason assigned for the great ungodliness of the world is recorded in these words: "And it

came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." Who were "the sons of God" and "the daughters of men" from whom sprung this degenerate progeny?

Difficult as it may be to interpret the peculiar language employed, it seems clear that the marriages referred to were the union of different races.

The expressions, "sons of God" and "daughters of men" are placed in antithesis. The orthodox interpretation is that "the sons of God" were the descendants of Seth, who still worshiped the true God, and that "the daughters of men" were the ungodly race of Cain. But it is not easy to understand how the descendants of Seth, if pious enough to be called the sons of God, which this interpretation would seem to require, could have been so universally disobedient, depraved and regardless of God's will as to enter into these unlawful marriages; and it is clear they did not adhere to God, for Noah was the only righteous man.

Certainly "the sons of God" were not so called because they were righteous, for their sins were so great as to call for the vengeance of God. The supposition I adopt is that our translation is incorrect, and that instead of "the sons of God" the expression should be rendered "sons of the gods," meaning worshipers of false gods, the idolatrous and inferior black and yellow races with whom the descendants of Adam were in contact, and who were on the earth when Adam was created, and who, therefore, were not made in the image of God, and were without the spiritual nature of our first parents. The Chaldean version gives "sons of the eminent ones," and may refer to superior men of the inferior races. This may be the true meaning, even if "the sons of God" be the true translation; for, according to the Hebrew idiom, the name of God is often used to express something great, beautiful or good, and so the expression may refer to men of great stature, strength or renown amongst the inferior races. But, if "the sons of God" is the correct rendering, it may be that the writer designates them as "the sons of God" because created by God. The expression "sons of God" has different meanings. In Job xxxviii 7, it is used to designate unfallen angels; but in Genesis vi 2, it cannot have that meaning. It is true, some

have supposed that angels did really come down from heaven, assume the form of men, and take to themselves wives of the daughters of men; but this is simply preposterous. Such a thought or unholy desire entering the minds of unfallen angels would have consigned them to Tophet, ordained of old for the devil and his angels. If angels, they were spiritual beings, and it is difficult to conceive how they could have perished in the flood; but the supposition is too absurd to merit consideration. Some think "the sons of God" were Adamites, and that "the daughters of men" belonged to the lower races, the practical conclusions from which are the same as herein maintained.

It seems clear that "the daughters of men" were women of the Adamic race. The expression, "children of men," in Genesis xi. 5 plainly refers to the Adamic race. In Genesis vi we may translate, "When the Adam (some render it "the Adamite") began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them," etc. If this be admitted, as it must be, "the daughters of men" were Adamites. Literally "the daughters of Adam" The earth was corrupt, says the record, and all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth, and the earth was filled with violence. The corruption was not only the ordinary fruit of sin, but it was corruption of blood: it was the degradation. of Adam's race by intermixture with the lower races. The "violence" that filled the earth was more than lawlessness and oppression: it was that unholy miscegenation that did violence to God's order of things and the implied command to keep separate races that He had made diverse. It was a mongrel race that God destroyed. The union was unnatural and forbidden, and the fruit monstrosities in nature and in sin. The offspring of such unions as the mixed white and black races are notoriously more vicious and immoral than either parent stock, inheriting the vices without the virtues of their progenitors. The marriage of white men to women of the inferior races was sufficiently offensive to merit the destruction of such a people; but when the men of these races "took to them wives" of Adam's posterity, when white women descended to such shocking and beastly degradation as to submit to the embrace of Africans or Mongolians, and men of renown though they may have been, no wonder God said: "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them." Is not this

disgusting and degrading sin as offensive to God now as it was in Noah's day?

This amalgamation of races, the intermarriage of the Adamite with the pre-Adamite is the only union we can conceive of that is reasonable and sufficient to account for the corruption of the world and the consequent judgment. Doubtless, Noah preached against it, but the people, like very many of the present day, could perceive no difference in races but skin colour, and approved of, and entered into, the unholy alliances that ended in their destruction. In this latter respect the world seems to be now very much as it was then. It is true, there is not at present the general corruption of Caucasian blood, although it exists to some extent; but the sentiment of the world concerning the diversity of races is probably the same. White men and women intermarry with Mongolians, and Negroes, and the public opinion of the world approves, or fails to condemn unreservedly, the outrage against decency, race, nature and Divine law. This sentiment is almost universal outside the Southern States, and is pregnant with evil: the evil leaven of fanaticism has leavened the whole lump. Is it not a sign of the times, a feature of the predicated corruption of the latter day, foreshadowing the second coming of our Lord?

If the lower races are not Adamites, how did they escape the deluge? One answer to this question is, that they were saved in the ark with Noah, but are not mentioned apart from animals, because not created in the image of God, as Adam was, and, therefore, not men in the highest sense of the word. Another answer is, that the deluge was not universal, but only partial, covering that portion of Western Asia occupied by the descendants of Adam, who had become degraded and corrupted by the marriages already mentioned, and who could not have spread over any considerable portion of the earth. As the purpose was to destroy the corrupt descendants of Adam, there was no necessity for a universal deluge. The Bible, intended as it was for the common people, does not employ the language of science or philosophy, but describes phenomena as they appeared to eye-witnesses. The Mosaic account was probably given by Shem to his descendants, and to him and all in the ark the flood seemed to be universal, and to have destroyed every living thing on the face of the earth outside the ark. The ancients and people of the East, where the Bible was

written, did not write with the cold exactness of people of the present day, but employed a great deal of hyperbolic language. When they speak of the whole world they mean the world known to them, or the Roman empire. They sometimes speak of the whole heaven, when they mean only the visible canopy above. Moses relates that in the days of Joseph all countries came unto Egypt to buy corn, when he meant only a great many of the neighbouring nations. It is also related that God "put the dread and fear of the children of Israel upon the nations that were under the whole heavens," which has a similar meaning to the above. The same usage of hyperbole is frequent in the New Testament; as where it is said there were Judeans assembled at Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost, "out of every nation under heaven," and where St. Paul says, "The gospel was preached to every creature which was under heaven." As Hugh Miller says: "It is well known to all students of the sacred writings that there is a numerous class of passages, in both the Old and the New Testaments, in which, by a sort of metonymy common in the East, a considerable part is spoken of as the whole, though often greatly less than the moiety of the whole." It is strictly consistent with Bible usage to interpret the deluge as destroying the whole race of Adam, but, at the same time, confined to the limited portion of the world inhabited by his ungodly race: they were the sinners for whom the judgment was intended. Indeed, they were the only sinners in the world; for sin came by Adam, and is the sad heritage of his family.

God's covenant with Noah, which was that He would not again cut off all flesh by a flood, was extended to the lower animals, "from all that go out of the ark to every beast of the earth;" that is, not to those that go out of the ark alone, but to all others upon the earth; from which it appears that all animals were not destroyed by the flood, and, of course, that the flood was not universal.

On the supposition that the flood was universal some perplexing questions are suggested. It has, for instance, been asked, whence came the waters necessary to cover the whole earth to such a great depth, and whither did they go when they disappeared? Such a submersion would require a vast deal more water than was on and in the earth and in the atmosphere that surrounds it. How did animals in distant regions and

beyond great oceans make their way to the ark? It is objected that animals and fowls gathered from all lands could not endure the change of climate. It is said there are animals now living in South America and New Zealand of the same type as the fossil animals which lived and died there before the creation of man, and it is asked, "Is it conceivable that all should have been gathered together from their original habitats into the ark of Noah and have afterwards been redistributed to their respective homes?" Different animals, such as the marsupials in Australia, or the sloths in America, have for ages kept to a limited region, and could scarcely be conceived as travelling across oceans, or other obstacles, to the ark in Western Asia and back again." It is simply impossible, on natural principles, that the animals collected in Noah's ark could have restocked the earth. Again, trees have been found in Senegal, in Africa, and in Mexico, thirty feet in diameter, and which show by their rings that they are five thousand two hundred and thirty-two years old, or six hundred and fifty years older than Noah's flood. If the deluge overwhelmed them, how did they survive? Of course, all such questions may be replied to by saying that it was all God's work. and nothing is impossible to Him, and we readily accept this solution wherever the intervention of miracles is necessary.

The theory of a partial deluge is not free from scientific difficulties, and we must fall back on the supernatural. It accomplished God's purpose in a miraculous way and against the ordinary operation of natural laws, the possibility of which will not be questioned by those who believe in a personal Deity.

The proof depends not on science, only.

The antecedent probability of a miracle is determined by the answer to this question: Has the condition of man, at any time, required the immediate interposition of his Creator in order to prove His existence, manifest His superintending care and make known His will to His intelligent creatures? This question the instinctive belief of mankind has always answered affirmatively.

Another argument against the universality of the flood is the existence of volcanoes older than Noah's deluge, whose condition shows that they could not have been subjected to the action of water about five thousand years ago.

It has been asked, if the deluge was not universal, what was the necessity of an ark? Why did not God remove Noah and the tenants of the ark to a locality beyond reach of the flood, and save them in that simple way? To this I know of, nothing better that can be said than the remarks of the Bishop of Ely, in Note A on Genesis viii., "Speaker's Commentary" "If it be inquired why it pleased God to save man and beast in a large vessel, instead of leaving them a refuge on high hills, or in some other sanctuary, we, perhaps, inquire in vain. Yet surely we can see that the great moral lesson and the great spiritual truths exhibited in the deluge and the ark were well worth a signal departure from the common course of nature and Providence. The judgment was far more marked, the deliverance far more manifestly Divine, than they would have been if hills or trees or eaves had been the shelter provided for those to be saved. The great prophetic fore picturing of salvation from a flood of sin by Christ and in the church of Christ would have lost all its beauty and symmetry, if merely earthly refuges had been sufficient for deliverance. As it is, the history of Noah, next after the history of Christ, is that which most forcibly arrests our thoughts, impresses our consciences, and yet revives our hopes. It was a judgment signally executed at the time. It is a lesson deeply instructive for all time."

Those who believe that the deluge was universal think the existence of the traditions already referred to strengthens their view.

They argue that these traditions amongst races so remote and dissimilar must have had a common origin; that they are all derived from Noah and his family, and are proof of the common origin of races. But may not these traditions be accounted for by the intercourse of trade and travel? Many years before Christ, those enterprising Hamites, the Phoenicians and Carthaginians, had reached almost all portions of the world, including, very probably, the American continent. Who can tell how many shipwrecked seamen were driven to distant and unknown lands, whence

they never returned, and communicated knowledge to barbarous tribes? Some of these traditions are probably of very recent growth, and they may refer merely to local inundations. Indeed, it is a matter of doubt if a single genuine tradition of the flood exists among barbarous tribes. But supposing the flood did literally cover the whole earth—a belief which is rapidly becoming a thing of the past—may not God have saved some out of the inferior races, in other parts of the world, in a way similar to that by which he preserved Noah? No reasonable objection can be made to this hypothesis, and it accounts for the similarity of traditions supposed to exist. The Bible makes no such allusion, but its history is limited to the posterity of Adam.

It is singular that, if the deluge was universal, the Egyptians, that ancient and civilized people, should have no traditions and no records of its occurrence. The sources of Egyptian chronology, which is derived from monuments, tablets, and historical writings gathered by Manetho, an Egyptian priest, about 250 B. C. are confessedly scant and unreliable; but dates that may be relied on carry the history of that ancient empire back to about the period of the flood. Egyptian history is generally admitted to begin with Menes, the first king. The date of that era is fixed by Marlette at 5004 B. C. A still later Egyptologist, Villiers Stuart, arrives at the conclusion that this event was not less than 4124 B. C. Marlette is very high authority, and is said to have spent a lifetime in exploring Egyptian antiquities; but Prof. Sayce thinks he has fallen short in his estimates rather than gone beyond them. Block fixes the conquest of Egypt by Menes at 5702 B. C.

The date usually assigned to the flood is 2348 B.C. The calculation from the Septuagint gives a longer period, 3200 B. C. Thus it will be seen that the era of Menes antedates the deluge. In this department of learning no one is more distinguished, or regarded as more reliable, than Prof Lepsius, who assigns the latest date (3892 B. C.) as the beginning of Egyptian history. Scholars who believe that all the people on the face of the earth, with the exception of those in the ark, were destroyed by Noah's flood, and that all now living are descended from Noah, and that his descendants had peopled the earth and had become differentiated into the now existing types of humanity between the deluge and the earliest history, have been

obliged to bring the era of Menes to a much later date. The lowest calculation brings it down to 2515 B. C., but even this is anterior to the Usherian date of the deluge. This latter date, as derived from the Septuagint text (3200 B. C.), affords a longer period to those who make their calculations to suit their theories. M. Virey, a distinguished French archaeologist, has lately translated Egyptian writings estimated to be more than six thousand years old, and they show an advanced state of morals, culture and civilization at a period further back than the Usherian date of Adam's creation. The "Book of Prahhotep" was discovered in A. D. 1847, and owes its preservation to the custom of placing copies of their books beside dead scribes. How did they and the mummies with which they were preserved in their sepulchres escape the flood? Some of these mummies were embalmed more than five thousand years ago. No unprejudiced mind can reasonably doubt that Egyptian history runs back to a period anterior to the flood, and if this wonderful judgment had been visited upon that land at the date assigned by the Bible, these old relics would not be in existence. The fair conclusion is that there was no flood in Egypt.

Whether the deluge was universal or limited, it will not be questioned that it destroyed the whole of Adam's descendants, with the exception of Noah and his family. If it was not universal, the races whom it did not reach were not of Adam's family. If the flood was universal and all perished except those in the ark, then the lower races were in the ark in a different capacity from Noah's family, or Noah's family degenerated into the yellow and black races in a period too brief to be admitted by science. It is impossible to show relationship between Noah's descendants and the Negroes of Africa, or any other inferior race. If it was possible to trace such relationship, it would seem most probable to exist between the ancient Egyptians and Negroes; but all efforts to show any racial connection between them have failed, and it is admitted that no such connection can be traced.

It will be said that the usually received Bible chronology is not authoritative, and that the flood may have occurred at a much earlier date than it allows. This is discussed elsewhere, but it may be said here that its date cannot be throw back very far without destroying all confidence in

Hebrew genealogy. I prefer to retain a chronology consistent with the Bible, and not sacrifice it to support theories without foundation in truth and offensive to reason instinct and common sense.



**"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the
Word of the Lord from Jerusalem"
(Isaiah 2:3)."**

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