

Round Table Discussion: Aquatic Chaos

Set Texts

Genesis 6:9-9:17

King James Version (KJV)

⁹ These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

¹⁰ And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹ The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

¹² And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

¹³ And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

¹⁴ Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

¹⁵ And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

¹⁶ A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

¹⁷ And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

¹⁸ But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

¹⁹ And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.

²⁰ Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.

²¹ And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

²² Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

7 And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

² Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.

³ Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.

⁴ For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.

⁵ And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.

⁶ And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

⁷ And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.

⁸ Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth,

⁹ There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.

¹⁰ And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

¹¹ In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

¹² And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

¹³ In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;

¹⁴ They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort.

¹⁵ And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life.

¹⁶ And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.

¹⁷ And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.

¹⁸ And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.

¹⁹ And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.

²⁰ Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

²¹ And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:

²² All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.

²³ And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.

²⁴ And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

8 And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged;

² The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained;

³ And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.

⁴ And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

⁵ And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

⁶ And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made:

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

⁸ Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground;

⁹ But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

¹⁰ And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark;

¹¹ And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

¹² And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

¹³ And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

¹⁴ And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

¹⁵ And God spake unto Noah, saying,

¹⁶ Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

¹⁷ Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

¹⁸ And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him:

¹⁹ Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

²⁰ And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

²¹ And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

²² While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

9 And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.

² And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

³ Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

⁴ But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.

⁵ And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

⁶Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

⁷And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

⁸And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying,

⁹And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you;

¹⁰And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth.

¹¹And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

¹²And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations:

¹³I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

¹⁴And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:

¹⁵And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

¹⁶And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.

¹⁷And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

That all would come to pass of which the voice 100
 Had given forewarning, and that he himself
 Was going then to bury those two books:
 The one that held acquaintance with the stars,
 And wedded soul to soul in purest bond
 Of reason, undisturbed by space or time;
 The other that was a god, yea many gods,
 Had voices more than all the winds, with power
 To exhilarate the spirit, and to soothe,
 Through every clime, the heart of human kind.
 While this was uttering, strange as it may seem, 110
 I wondered not, although I plainly saw
 The one to be a stone, the other a shell;
 Nor doubted once but that they both were books,
 Having a perfect faith in all that passed.
 Far stronger, now, grew the desire I felt
 To cleave unto this man; but when I prayed
 To share his enterprise, he hurried on
 Reckless of me: I followed, not unseen,
 For oftentimes he cast a backward look,
 Grasping his twofold treasure.--Lance in rest, 120
 He rode, I keeping pace with him; and now
 He, to my fancy, had become the knight
 Whose tale Cervantes tells; yet not the knight,
 But was an Arab of the desert too;
 Of these was neither, and was both at once.
 His countenance, meanwhile, grew more disturbed;
 And, looking backwards when he looked, mine eyes
 Saw, over half the wilderness diffused,
 A bed of glittering light: I asked the cause:
 "It is," said he, "the waters of the deep 130
 Gathering upon us;" quickening then the pace
 Of the unwieldy creature he bestrode,
 He left me: I called after him aloud;
 He heeded not; but, with his twofold charge
 Still in his grasp, before me, full in view,
 Went hurrying o'er the illimitable waste,
 With the fleet waters of a drowning world
 In chase of him; whereat I waked in terror,
 And saw the sea before me, and the book,
 In which I had been reading, at my side. 140

Full often, taking from the world of sleep
 This Arab phantom, which I thus beheld,
 This semi-Quixote, I to him have given
 A substance, fancied him a living man,
 A gentle dweller in the desert, crazed
 By love and feeling, and internal thought
 Protracted among endless solitudes;
 Have shaped him wandering upon this quest!
 Nor have I pitied him; but rather felt
 Reverence was due to a being thus employed; 150
 And thought that, in the blind and awful lair
 Of such a madness, reason did lie couched.
 Enow there are on earth to take in charge

Their wives, their children, and their virgin loves,
Or whatsoever else the heart holds dear;
Enow to stir for these; yea, will I say,
Contemplating in soberness the approach
Of an event so dire, by signs in earth
Or heaven made manifest, that I could share
That maniac's fond anxiety, and go 160
Upon like errand. Oftentimes at least
Me hath such strong entrancement overcome,
When I have held a volume in my hand,
Poor earthly casket of immortal verse,
Shakespeare, or Milton, labourers divine!

Secondary reading:

THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH, TABLET XI (THE STORY OF THE FLOOD)

Translated by Maureen Gallery Kovacs

Gilgamesh spoke to Utanapishtim, the Faraway:
"I have been looking at you,
but your appearance is not strange--you are like me!
You yourself are not different--you are like me!
My mind was resolved to fight with you,
(but instead?) my arm lies useless over you.
Tell me, how is it that you stand in the Assembly of the Gods,
and have found life!"
Utanapishtim spoke to Gilgamesh, saying:
"I will reveal to you, Gilgamesh, a thing that is hidden,
a secret of the gods I will tell you!
Shuruppak, a city that you surely know,
situated on the banks of the Euphrates,
that city was very old, and there were gods inside it.
The hearts of the Great Gods moved them to inflict the Flood.
Their Father Anu uttered the oath (of secrecy),
Valiant Enlil was their Adviser,
Ninurta was their Chamberlain,
Ennugi was their Minister of Canals.
Ea, the Clever Prince(?), was under oath with them
so he repeated their talk to the reed house:
'Reed house, reed house! Wall, wall!
O man of Shuruppak, son of Ubartutu:
Tear down the house and build a boat!
Abandon wealth and seek living beings!
Spurn possessions and keep alive living beings!
Make all living beings go up into the boat.
The boat which you are to build,
its dimensions must measure equal to each other:
its length must correspond to its width.
Roof it over like the Apsu.
I understood and spoke to my lord, Ea:
'My lord, thus is the command which you have uttered
I will heed and will do it.
But what shall I answer the city, the populace, and the
Elders!'
Ea spoke, commanding me, his servant:
'You, well then, this is what you must say to them:
"It appears that Enlil is rejecting me
so I cannot reside in your city (?),
nor set foot on Enlil's earth.
I will go down to the Apsu to live with my lord, Ea,
and upon you he will rain down abundance,
a profusion of fowl, myriad(!) fishes.
He will bring to you a harvest of wealth,
in the morning he will let loaves of bread shower down,
and in the evening a rain of wheat!"'
Just as dawn began to glow
the land assembled around me-

the carpenter carried his hatchet,
the reed worker carried his (flattening) stone,
... the men ...
The child carried the pitch,
the weak brought whatever else was needed.
On the fifth day I laid out her exterior.
It was a field in area,
its walls were each 10 times 12 cubits in height,
the sides of its top were of equal length, 10 times 12 cubits each.
I laid out its (interior) structure and drew a picture of it (?).
I provided it with six decks,
thus dividing it into seven (levels).
The inside of it I divided into nine (compartments).
I drove plugs (to keep out) water in its middle part.
I saw to the punting poles and laid in what was necessary.
Three times 3,600 (units) of raw bitumen I poured into the
bitumen kiln,
three times 3,600 (units of) pitch ...into it,
there were three times 3,600 porters of casks who carried (vege-
table) oil,
apart from the 3,600 (units of) oil which they consumed (!)
and two times 3,600 (units of) oil which the boatman stored
away.
I butchered oxen for the meat(!),
and day upon day I slaughtered sheep.
I gave the workmen(?) ale, beer, oil, and wine, as if it were
river water,
so they could make a party like the New Year's Festival.
... and I set my hand to the oiling(!).
The boat was finished by sunset.
The launching was very difficult.
They had to keep carrying a runway of poles front to back,
until two-thirds of it had gone into the water(?).
Whatever I had I loaded on it:
whatever silver I had I loaded on it,
whatever gold I had I loaded on it.
All the living beings that I had I loaded on it,
I had all my kith and kin go up into the boat,
all the beasts and animals of the field and the craftsmen I
had go up.
Shamash had set a stated time:
'In the morning I will let loaves of bread shower down,
and in the evening a rain of wheat!
Go inside the boat, seal the entry!'
That stated time had arrived.
In the morning he let loaves of bread shower down,
and in the evening a rain of wheat.
I watched the appearance of the weather--
the weather was frightful to behold!
I went into the boat and sealed the entry.
For the caulking of the boat, to Puzuramurri, the boatman,
I gave the palace together with its contents.
Just as dawn began to glow
there arose from the horizon a black cloud.
Adad rumbled inside of it,

before him went Shullat and Hanish,
heralds going over mountain and land.
Erragal pulled out the mooring poles,
forth went Ninurta and made the dikes overflow.
The Anunnaki lifted up the torches,
setting the land ablaze with their flare.
Stunned shock over Adad's deeds overtook the heavens,
and turned to blackness all that had been light.
The... land shattered like a... pot.
All day long the South Wind blew ...,
blowing fast, submerging the mountain in water,
overwhelming the people like an attack.
No one could see his fellow,
they could not recognize each other in the torrent.
The gods were frightened by the Flood,
and retreated, ascending to the heaven of Anu.
The gods were cowering like dogs, crouching by the outer wall.
Ishtar shrieked like a woman in childbirth,
the sweet-voiced Mistress of the Gods wailed:
'The olden days have alas turned to clay,
because I said evil things in the Assembly of the Gods!
How could I say evil things in the Assembly of the Gods,
ordering a catastrophe to destroy my people!!
No sooner have I given birth to my dear people
than they fill the sea like so many fish!'
The gods--those of the Anunnaki--were weeping with her,
the gods humbly sat weeping, sobbing with grief(?),
their lips burning, parched with thirst.
Six days and seven nights
came the wind and flood, the storm flattening the land.
When the seventh day arrived, the storm was pounding,
the flood was a war--struggling with itself like a woman
writhing (in labor).
The sea calmed, fell still, the whirlwind (and) flood stopped up.
I looked around all day long--quiet had set in
and all the human beings had turned to clay!
The terrain was as flat as a roof.
I opened a vent and fresh air (daylight!) fell upon the side of
my nose.
I fell to my knees and sat weeping,
tears streaming down the side of my nose.
I looked around for coastlines in the expanse of the sea,
and at twelve leagues there emerged a region (of land).
On Mt. Nimush the boat lodged firm,
Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
One day and a second Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing
no sway.
A third day, a fourth, Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing
no sway.
A fifth day, a sixth, Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing
no sway.
When a seventh day arrived
I sent forth a dove and released it.
The dove went off, but came back to me;
no perch was visible so it circled back to me.

I sent forth a swallow and released it.
The swallow went off, but came back to me;
no perch was visible so it circled back to me.
I sent forth a raven and released it.
The raven went off, and saw the waters slither back.
It eats, it scratches, it bobs, but does not circle back to me.
Then I sent out everything in all directions and sacrificed
(a sheep).
I offered incense in front of the mountain-ziggurat.
Seven and seven cult vessels I put in place,
and (into the fire) underneath (or: into their bowls) I poured
reeds, cedar, and myrtle.
The gods smelled the savor,
the gods smelled the sweet savor,
and collected like flies over a (sheep) sacrifice.
Just then Beletili arrived.
She lifted up the large flies (beads) which Anu had made for
his enjoyment(!):
'You gods, as surely as I shall not forget this lapis lazuli
around my neck,
may I be mindful of these days, and never forget them!
The gods may come to the incense offering,
but Enlil may not come to the incense offering,
because without considering he brought about the Flood
and consigned my people to annihilation.'
Just then Enlil arrived.
He saw the boat and became furious,
he was filled with rage at the Igigi gods:
'Where did a living being escape?
No man was to survive the annihilation!'
Ninurta spoke to Valiant Enlil, saying:
'Who else but Ea could devise such a thing?
It is Ea who knows every machination!'
La spoke to Valiant Enlil, saying:
'It is yours, O Valiant One, who is the Sage of the Gods.
How, how could you bring about a Flood without consideration
Charge the violation to the violator,
charge the offense to the offender,
but be compassionate lest (mankind) be cut off,
be patient lest they be killed.
Instead of your bringing on the Flood,
would that a lion had appeared to diminish the people!
Instead of your bringing on the Flood,
would that a wolf had appeared to diminish the people!
Instead of your bringing on the Flood,
would that famine had occurred to slay the land!
Instead of your bringing on the Flood,
would that (Pestilent) Erra had appeared to ravage the land!
It was not I who revealed the secret of the Great Gods,
I (only) made a dream appear to Atrahasis, and (thus) he
heard the secret of the gods.
Now then! The deliberation should be about him!'
Enlil went up inside the boat
and, grasping my hand, made me go up.
He had my wife go up and kneel by my side.

He touched our forehead and, standing between us, he
blessed us:
'Previously Utanapishtim was a human being.
But now let Utanapishtim and his wife become like us,
the gods!
Let Utanapishtim reside far away, at the Mouth of the Rivers.'
They took us far away and settled us at the Mouth of the Rivers."
"Now then, who will convene the gods on your behalf,
that you may find the life that you are seeking!
Wait! You must not lie down for six days and seven nights."
soon as he sat down (with his head) between his legs
sleep, like a fog, blew upon him.
Utanapishtim said to his wife:
"Look there! The man, the youth who wanted (eternal) life!
Sleep, like a fog, blew over him."
his wife said to Utanapishtim the Faraway:
"Touch him, let the man awaken.
Let him return safely by the way he came.
Let him return to his land by the gate through which he left."
Utanapishtim said to his wife:
"Mankind is deceptive, and will deceive you.
Come, bake loaves for him and keep setting them by his head
and draw on the wall each day that he lay down."
She baked his loaves and placed them by his head
and marked on the wall the day that he lay down.
The first loaf was dessicated,
the second stale, the third moist(?), the fourth turned white,
its ...,
the fifth sprouted gray (mold), the sixth is still fresh.
the seventh--suddenly he touched him and the man awoke.
Gilgamesh said to Utanapishtim:
"The very moment sleep was pouring over me
you touched me and alerted me!"
Utanapishtim spoke to Gilgamesh, saying:
"Look over here, Gilgamesh, count your loaves!
You should be aware of what is marked on the wall!
Your first loaf is dessicated,
the second stale, the third moist, your fourth turned white,
its ...
the fifth sprouted gray (mold), the sixth is still fresh.
The seventh--suddenly he touched him and the man awoke.
Gilgamesh said to Utanapishtim:
"The very moment sleep was pouring over me
you touched me and alerted me!"
Utanapishtim spoke to Gilgamesh, saying:
"Look over here, Gilgamesh, count your loaves!
You should be aware of what is marked on the wall!
Your first loaf is dessicated,
the second stale, the third moist, your fourth turned white,
its ...
the fifth sprouted gray (mold), the sixth is still fresh.
The seventh--at that instant you awoke!"
Gilgamesh said to Utanapishtim the Faraway:
"O woe! What shall I do, Utanapishtim, where shall I go!
The Snatcher has taken hold of my flesh,

in my bedroom Death dwells,
and wherever I set foot there too is Death!"
Home Empty-Handed
Utanapishtim said to Urshanabi, the ferryman:
"May the harbor reject you, may the ferry landing reject you!
May you who used to walk its shores be denied its shores!
The man in front of whom you walk, matted hair chains
his body,
animal skins have ruined his beautiful skin.
Take him away, Urshanabi, bring him to the washing place.
Let him wash his matted hair in water like ellu.
Let him cast away his animal skin and have the sea carry it off,
let his body be moistened with fine oil,
let the wrap around his head be made new,
let him wear royal robes worthy of him!
Until he goes off to his city,
until he sets off on his way,
let his royal robe not become spotted, let it be perfectly new!"
Urshanabi took him away and brought him to the washing place.
He washed his matted hair with water like ellu.
He cast off his animal skin and the sea carried it oh.
He moistened his body with fine oil,
and made a new wrap for his head.
He put on a royal robe worthy of him.
Until he went away to his city,
until he set off on his way,
his royal robe remained unspotted, it was perfectly clean.
Gilgamesh and Urshanabi bearded the boat,
they cast off the magillu-boat, and sailed away.
The wife of Utanapishtim the Faraway said to him:
"Gilgamesh came here exhausted and worn out.
What can you give him so that he can return to his land (with
honor) !"
Then Gilgamesh raised a punting pole
and drew the boat to shore.
Utanapishtim spoke to Gilgamesh, saying:
"Gilgamesh, you came here exhausted and worn out.
What can I give you so you can return to your land?
I will disclose to you a thing that is hidden, Gilgamesh,
a... I will tell you.
There is a plant... like a boxthorn,
whose thorns will prick your hand like a rose.
If your hands reach that plant you will become a young
man again."
Hearing this, Gilgamesh opened a conduit(!) (to the Apsu)
and attached heavy stones to his feet.
They dragged him down, to the Apsu they pulled him.
He took the plant, though it pricked his hand,
and cut the heavy stones from his feet,
letting the waves(?) throw him onto its shores.
Gilgamesh spoke to Urshanabi, the ferryman, saying:
"Urshanabi, this plant is a plant against decay(!)
by which a man can attain his survival(!).
I will bring it to Uruk-Haven,
and have an old man eat the plant to test it.

The plant's name is "The Old Man Becomes a Young Man."
Then I will eat it and return to the condition of my youth."
At twenty leagues they broke for some food,
at thirty leagues they stopped for the night.
Seeing a spring and how cool its waters were,
Gilgamesh went down and was bathing in the water.
A snake smelled the fragrance of the plant,
silently came up and carried off the plant.
While going back it sloughed off its casing.'
At that point Gilgamesh sat down, weeping,
his tears streaming over the side of his nose.
"Counsel me, O ferryman Urshanabi!
For whom have my arms labored, Urshanabi!
For whom has my heart's blood roiled!
I have not secured any good deed for myself,
but done a good deed for the 'lion of the ground'!"
Now the high waters are coursing twenty leagues distant,'
as I was opening the conduit(?) I turned my equipment over
into it (!).
What can I find (to serve) as a marker(?) for me!
I will turn back (from the journey by sea) and leave the boat by
the shore!"
At twenty leagues they broke for some food,
at thirty leagues they stopped for the night.
They arrived in Uruk-Haven.
Gilgamesh said to Urshanabi, the ferryman:
"Go up, Urshanabi, onto the wall of Uruk and walk around.
Examine its foundation, inspect its brickwork thoroughly--
is not (even the core of) the brick structure of kiln-fired brick,
and did not the Seven Sages themselves lay out its plan!
One league city, one league palm gardens, one league lowlands, the open area(?) of
the Ishtar Temple,
three leagues and the open area(?) of Uruk it encloses.

For a balanced comparison between the Genesis and Gilgamesh narratives, see
http://www.religioustolerance.org/noah_com.htm.

Deucalion's Flood

DEUCALION'S Flood, so called to distinguish it from the Ogygian and other floods, was caused by Zeus's anger against the impious sons of Lycaon, the son of Pelasgus. Lycaon himself first civilized Arcadia and instituted the worship of Zeus Lycaeus; but angered Zeus by sacrificing a boy to him. He was therefore transformed into a wolf, and his house struck by lightning. Lycaon's sons were, some say, twenty-two in number; but others say fifty.

b. News of the crimes committed by Lycaon's sons reached Olympus, and Zeus himself visited them, disguised as a poor traveller. They had the effrontery to set umble soup before him, mixing the guts of their brother Nyctimus with the umbles of sheep and goats that it contained. Zeus was undeceived and, thrusting away the table on which they had served the loathsome banquet—the place was afterwards known as Trapezus—changed all of them except Nyctimus, whom he restored to life, into wolves.

c. On his return to Olympus, Zeus in disgust let loose a great flood on the earth, meaning to wipe out the whole race of man; but Deucalion, King of Phthia, warned by his father Prometheus the Titan, whom he had visited in the Caucasus, built an ark, victualled it, and went aboard with his wife Pyrrha, a daughter of Epimetheus. Then the South Wind blew, the rain fell, and the rivers roared down to the sea which, rising with astonishing speed, washed away every city of the coast and plain; until the entire world was flooded, but for a few mountain peaks, and all mortal creatures seemed to have been lost, except Deucalion and Pyrrha. The ark floated about for nine days until, at last, the waters subsided, and it came to rest on Mount Parnassus or, some tell, on Mount Aetna; or Mount Athos; or Mount Othrys in Thessaly. It is said that Deucalion was reassured by a dove which he had sent on an exploratory flight.

d. Disembarking in safety, they offered a sacrifice to Father Zeus, the preserver of fugitives, and went down to pray at the shrine of Themis, beside the river Cephissus, where the roof was now draped with seaweed and the altar cold. They pleaded humbly that mankind should be renewed, and Zeus, hearing their voices from afar, sent Hermes to assure them that whatever request they might make would be granted forthwith. Themis appeared in person, saying: 'Shroud your heads, and throw the bones of your mother behind you!' Since Deucalion and Pyrrha had different mothers, both now deceased, they decided that the Titaness meant Mother Earth, whose bones were the rocks lying on the river bank. Therefore, stooping with shrouded heads, they picked up rocks and threw them over their shoulders; these became either men or women, according as Deucalion or Pyrrha had handled them. Thus mankind was renewed, and ever since 'a people' (laos) and 'a stone' (loas) have been much the same word in many languages.

e. However, as it proved, Deucalion and Pyrrha were not the sole survivors of the Flood, for Megarus, a son of Zeus, had been roused from his couch by the scream of cranes that summoned him to the peak of Mount Gerania, which remained above water. Another who escaped was Cerambus of Pelion, whom the nymphs changed to a scarabaeus, and he flew to the summit of Parnassus.

f. Similarly, the inhabitants of Parnassus—a city founded by Parnasus, Poseidon's son, who invented the art of augury—were awakened by the howling of wolves and followed them to the mountain top. They named their new city Lycorea, after the wolves.

g. Thus the flood proved of little avail, for some of the Parnassians migrated to Arcadia, and revived Lycaon's abominations. To this day a boy is sacrificed to Lycaean Zeus, and his guts mixed with others in an umble soup, which is then served to a crowd of shepherds beside a stream. The shepherd who eats the boy's gut (assigned to him by lot), howls like a wolf, hangs his clothes upon an oak, swims across the stream, and becomes a werewolf. For eight years he herds with wolves but if he abstains from eating men throughout that period, may return at the close, swim back across the stream and resume his clothes. Not long ago, a Parrhasian named Damarchus spent eight years with the wolves, regained his humanity and, in the tenth year, after hard practice in the gymnasium, won the boxing prize at the Olympic Games.

h. This Deucalion was the brother of Cretan Ariadne and the father of Orestheus, King of the Ozolian Locrians, in whose time a white bitch littered a stick, which Orestheus planted, and which grew into a vine. Another of his sons, Amphictyon, entertained Dionysus, and was the first man to mix wine with water. But his eldest and most famous son was Hellen, father of all Greeks.

.....

1. The story of Zeus and the boy's guts is not so much a myth as a moral anecdote expressing the disgust felt in more civilized parts of Greece for the ancient cannibalistic practices of Arcadia, which were still performed in the name of Zeus, as 'barbarous and unnatural' (Plutarch: Life of Pelopidas). Lycaon's virtuous Athenian contemporary Cecrops, offered only barley—cakes, abstaining even from animal sacrifices. The Lycaonian rites, which the author denies that Zeus ever countenanced, were apparently intended to discourage the wolves from preying on flocks and herds, by sending them a human king. 'Lycaeus' means 'of the she-wolf', but also 'of the light', and the lightning in the Lycaon myth shows that Arcadian Zeus began as a rain-making sacred king—in service to the divine She-wolf, the Moon, to whom the wolfpack howls.

2. A Great Year of one hundred months, or eight solar years, was divided equally between the sacred king and his tanist; and Lycaon's fifty sons—one for every month of the sacred king's reign—will have been the eaters of the umble soup. The figure twenty-two, unless it has been arrived at by a count of the families who claimed descent from Lycaon and had to participate in the umble-feast, probably refers to the twenty-two five-year lustra which composed a cycle—the 110-year cycle constituting the reign of a particular line of priestesses.

3. The myth of Deucalion's Flood, apparently brought from Asia by the Hellads, has the same origin as the Biblical legend of Noah. But though Noah's invention of wine is the subject of a Hebrew moral tale, incidentally justifying the enslavement of the Canaanites by their Kassite and Semitic conquerors, Deucalion's claim to the invention has been suppressed by the Greeks in favour of Dionysus. Deucalion is, however, described as the brother of Ariadne, who was the mother, by Dionysus, of various vine-cult tribes, and has kept his name 'new-wine sailor' (from deucos and halieus). The Deucalion myth records a Mesopotamian flood of the third millennium BC; but also the autumnal New Year feast of Babylonia, Syria, and Palestine. This feast celebrated Parnapishtim's outpouring of sweet new wine to the builders of the ark, in which (according to the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic) he and his family survived the Deluge sent by the goddess Ishtar. The ark was a moon-ship and the feast was celebrated on the new moon nearest to the autumnal equinox, as a means of inducing the winter rains. Ishtar, in the Greek myth, is called Pyrrha—the name of the goddess-mother of the Puresati (Philistines), a Cretan people who came to Palestine by way of Cilicia about the year 1200 BC; in Greek, pyrrha means 'fiery red', and is an adjective applied to wine.

4. Xisuthros was the hero of the Sumerian Flood legend, recorded by Berossus, and his ark came to rest on Mount Ararat. All these arks were built of acacia-wood, a timber also used by Isis for building Osiris's death-barge.

5. The myth of an angry god who decides to punish man's wickedness with a deluge seems to be a late Greek borrowing from the Phoenicians, or the Jews; but the number of different mountains, in Greece, Thrace, and Sicily, on which Deucalion is said to have landed, suggests that an ancient Flood myth has been superimposed on a later legend of a flood in Northern Greece. In the earliest Greek version of the myth, Themis renews the race of man without first obtaining Zeus's consent; it is therefore likely that she, not he, was credited with the Flood, as in Babylonia.

6. The transformation of stones into a people is, perhaps, another Helladic borrowing from the East; St. John the Baptist referred to a similar legend, in a pun on the Hebrew words banim and abanim, declaring that God could raise up children to Abraham from the desert stones.

7. That a white bitch, the Moon-goddess Hecate, littered a vine-stick in the reign of Deucalion's son Orestheus is probably the earliest Greek wine myth. The name Ozolian is said to be derived from ozoi, 'vine shoots'. One of the wicked sons of Lycaon was also named Orestheus, which may account for the forced connection which the mythographers have made between the myth of the umble soup and the Deucalionian Flood.

8. Amphictyon, the name of another of Deucalion's sons, is a male form of Amphictyonis, the goddess in whose name the famous northern confederation, the Amphictyonic League, had been

founded; according to Strabo, Callimachus, and the Scholiast on Euripides's Orestes, it was regularized by Acrisius of Argos. Civilized Greeks, unlike the dissolute Thracians, abstained from neat wine; and its tempering with water at the conference of the member states, which took place in the vintage season at Antela near Thermopylae, will have been a precaution against murderous disputes.

9. Deucalion's son Hellen was the eponymous ancestor of the entire Hellenic race: his name shows that he was a royal deputy for the priestess of Helle, or Hellen, or Helen, or Selene, the Moon; and, according to Pausanias, the first tribe to be called Hellenes came from Thessaly, where Helle was worshipped.

10. Aristotle (*Meteorologica*) says that Deucalion's Flood took place 'in ancient Greece (Graecia), namely the district about Dodona and the Achelous River'. Graeci means 'worshippers of the Crone', presumably the Earth-goddess of Dodona, who appeared in triad as the Graeae; and it has been suggested that the Achaeans were forced to invade the Peloponnese because unusually heavy rains had swamped their grazing grounds. Helle's worship seems to have ousted that of the Graeae.

11. The scarabaeus beetle was an emblem of immortality in Lower Egypt because it survived the flooding of the Nile—the Pharaoh as Osiris entered his sun-boat in the form of a scarabaeus—and its sacral use spread to Palestine, the Aegean, Etruria, and the Balearic Islands. Antoninus Liberalis also mentions the myth of Cerambus, or Terambus, quoting Nicander.