

BOX 4.1 Two Versions of the Flood Story

The present text of Genesis relating the story of a universal deluge combines two Flood accounts, attributed, respectively, to the Yahwist writer (J) and the priestly writer (P). Each of the two accounts stands alone as a complete and independent narrative in this translation from the Jerusalem Bible. (In this version, the translator uses the divine name Yahweh.)

The Flood—Genesis 6:5–8:22

(Priestly text in **boldface** capitals and small caps, J text in regular type)

GENESIS 6

- 5 And Yahweh saw that the evil of humans was great in the earth, and all the inclination of the thoughts of their heart was only evil all the day.
- 6 And Yahweh regretted that he had made humans in the earth, and he was grieved to his heart.
- 7 And Yahweh said, "I shall wipe out the humans which I have created from the face of the earth, from human to beast to creeping thing to bird of the heavens, for I regret that I have made them."
- 8 But Noah found favor in Yahweh's eyes.
- 9 **THESE ARE THE GENERATIONS OF NOAH: NOAH WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN, PERFECT IN HIS GENERATIONS. NOAH WALKED WITH GOD.**
- 10 **AND NOAH Sired three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.**
- 11 **AND THE EARTH WAS CORRUPTED BEFORE GOD, AND THE EARTH WAS FILLED WITH VIOLENCE.**
- 12 **AND GOD SAW THE EARTH, AND HERE IT WAS CORRUPTED, FOR ALL FLESH HAD CORRUPTED ITS WAY ON THE EARTH.**
- 13 **AND GOD SAID TO NOAH, "THE END OF ALL FLESH HAS COME BEFORE ME, FOR THE EARTH IS FILLED WITH VIOLENCE BECAUSE OF THEM, AND HERE I AM GOING TO DESTROY THEM WITH THE EARTH.**
- 14 **MAKE YOURSELF AN ARK OF GOPHER WOOD, MAKE ROOMS WITH THE ARK, AND PITCH IT OUTSIDE AND INSIDE WITH PITCH.**
- 15 **AND THIS IS HOW YOU SHALL MAKE IT: THREE HUNDRED CUBITS THE LENGTH OF THE ARK, FIFTY CUBITS ITS WIDTH, AND THIRTY CUBITS ITS HEIGHT.**
- 16 **YOU SHALL MAKE A WINDOW FOR THE ARK, AND YOU SHALL FINISH IT TO A CUBIT FROM THE TOP, AND YOU SHALL MAKE AN ENTRANCE TO THE ARK IN ITS SIDE. YOU SHALL MAKE LOWER, SECOND, AND THIRD STORIES FOR IT.**
- 17 **AND HERE I AM BRINGING THE FLOOD, WATER OVER THE EARTH, TO DESTROY ALL FLESH IN WHICH IS THE BREATH OF LIFE FROM UNDER THE HEAVENS. EVERYTHING WHICH IS ON THE LAND WILL DIE.**

- 18 **AND I SHALL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT WITH YOU. AND YOU SHALL COME TO THE ARK, YOU AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR WIFE AND YOUR SONS' WIVES WITH YOU.**
- 19 **AND OF ALL THE LIVING, OF ALL FLESH, YOU SHALL BRING TWO TO THE ARK TO KEEP ALIVE WITH YOU, THEY SHALL BE MALE AND FEMALE.**
- 20 **OF THE BIRDS ACCORDING TO THEIR KIND, AND OF THE BEASTS ACCORDING TO THEIR KIND, AND OF ALL THE CREEPING THINGS OF THE EARTH ACCORDING TO THEIR KIND, TWO OF EACH WILL COME TO YOU TO KEEP ALIVE.**
- 21 **AND YOU, TAKE FOR YOURSELF OF ALL FOOD WHICH WILL BE EATEN AND GATHER IT TO YOU, AND IT WILL BE FOR YOU AND FOR THEM FOR FOOD."**
- 22 **AND NOAH DID ACCORDING TO ALL THAT GOD COMMANDED HIM—SO HE DID.**

GENESIS 7

- 1 And Yahweh said to Noah, "Come, you and all your household, to the ark, for I have seen you as righteous before me in this generation.
- 2 Of all the clean beasts, take yourself seven pairs, man and his woman; and of the beasts which are not clean, two, man and his woman.
- 3 Also of the birds of the heavens seven pairs, male and female, to keep alive seed on the face of the earth.
- 4 For in seven more days I shall rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I shall wipe out all the substance that I have made from upon the face of the earth."
- 5 And Noah did according to all that Yahweh had commanded him.
- 6 **AND NOAH WAS SIX HUNDRED YEARS OLD, AND THE FLOOD WAS ON THE EARTH.**
- 7 And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him came to the ark from before the waters of the flood.
- 8 **OF THE CLEAN BEASTS AND OF THE BEASTS WHICH WERE NOT CLEAN, AND OF THE BIRDS AND OF ALL THOSE WHICH CREEP UPON THE EARTH,**
- 9 **TWO OF EACH CAME TO NOAH TO THE ARK, MALE AND FEMALE, AS GOD HAD COMMANDED NOAH.**
- 10 And seven days later the waters of the flood were on the earth.
- 11 **IN THE SIX HUNDREDTH YEAR OF NOAH'S LIFE, IN THE SECOND MONTH, IN THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE MONTH, ON THIS DAY ALL THE FOUNTAINS OF THE GREAT DEEP WERE BROKEN UP, AND THE WINDOWS OF THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED.**
- 12 And there was rain on the earth, forty days and forty nights.
- 13 **IN THIS VERY DAY, NOAH AND SHEM, HAM, AND JAPHETH, THE SONS OF NOAH, AND NOAH'S WIFE AND HIS SONS' THREE WIVES WITH THEM CAME TO THE ARK.**