

The Story of the Flood

Situation out of which it arose:

The two accounts of the Flood have a common source and are "obviously related to the account of the Gilgamesh epic" (178)

The Yahwist and Priestly writers did not invent the symbolism they used to express the divine activity, but took it from what lay ready to their hand and what they had inherited as part of their earlier cultural contacts (179)

The Hebrew form of the myth is closely related to the Sumerian and Babylonian forms of the myth. The main Babylonian version is found in the Gilgamesh Epic. The Flood story is probably of independent origin and is a later insertion in the Gilgamesh Epic (183).

The Hebrew story depends either directly upon the Mesopotamian form, or upon some earlier Semetic source underlying both. Hooke says the former alternative is the more probably (185). The difference between the two Hebrew versions suggests that the Priestly writer is using a different recension of the story from that of the Yahwist, and that his recension is in some respects closer to the Mesopotamian sources.

Document in which it is placed@

J and P

When it was composed:

J - 10th cent. (175)

P - after the exile (178)

Purpose of the composition:

J's story of the Flood is symbolic picture of the inevitable consequences of the rejection of the rule of God (185)