

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

Part II. The Deluge.

Chapter I.

The Destruction Of Atlantis Described In The Deluge Legends.

Having demonstrated, as we think successfully, that there is no improbability in the statement of Plato that a large island, almost a continent, existed in the past in the Atlantic Ocean, nay, more, that it is a geological certainty that it did exist; and having further shown that it is not improbable but very possible that it may have sunk beneath the sea in the manner described by Plato, we come now to the next question, Is the memory of this gigantic catastrophe preserved among the traditions of mankind? We think there can be no doubt that an affirmative answer must be given to this question.

An event, which in a few hours destroyed, amid horrible convulsions, an entire country, with all its vast population—that Population the ancestors of the great races of both continents, and they themselves the custodians of the civilization of their age—could not fail to impress with terrible force the minds of men, and to project its gloomy shadow over all human history. And hence, whether we turn to the Hebrews, the Aryans, the Phœnicians, the Greeks, the Cushites, or the inhabitants of America, we find everywhere traditions of the Deluge; and we shall see that all these traditions point unmistakably to the destruction of Atlantis.

François Lenormant says (*Contemp. Rev.*, Nov., 1879):

"The result authorizes us to affirm the story of the Deluge to be a universal tradition among all branches of the human race, with the one exception, however, of the black. Now, a recollection thus precise and concordant cannot be a myth voluntarily invented. No religious or cosmogonic myth presents this character of universality. It must arise from the reminiscence of a real and terrible event, so powerfully impressing the imagination of the first ancestors of our race as never to have been forgotten by their descendants. This cataclysm must have occurred near the first cradle of mankind, and

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before the dispersion of the families from which the principal races were to spring; for it would be at once improbable and uncritical to admit that, at as many different points of the globe as we should have to assume in order to explain the wide spread of these traditions, local phenomena so exactly alike should have occurred, their memory having assumed an identical form, and presenting circumstances that need not necessarily have occurred to the mind in such cases.

"Let us observe, however, that probably the diluvian tradition is not primitive, but imported in America; that it undoubtedly wears the aspect of an importation among the rare populations of the yellow race where it is found; and lastly, that it is doubtful among the Polynesians of Oceania. There will still remain three great races to which it is undoubtedly peculiar, *who have not borrowed it from each other*, but among whom the tradition is primitive, and goes back to the most ancient times, and these three races are precisely the only ones of which the Bible speaks as being *descended from Noah*--those of which it gives the ethnic filiation in the tenth chapter of Genesis. This observation, which I hold to be undeniable, attaches a singularly historic and exact value to the tradition as recorded by the Sacred Book, even if, on the other hand, it may lead to giving it a *more limited geographical and ethnological significance*. . . .

"But, as the case now stands, we do not hesitate to declare that, far from being a myth, the Biblical Deluge *is a real and historical fact*, having, to say the least, left its impress on the ancestors of three races--Aryan, or Indo-European, Semitic, or Syro-Arabian, Chamitic, or Cushite--that is to say, on the *three great civilized races of the ancient world*, those which constitute the higher humanity--before the ancestors of those races had as yet separated, and in the part of Asia they together inhabited."

Such profound scholars and sincere Christians as M. Schwœbel (Paris, 1858), and M. Omalius d'Halloy (Bruxelles, 1866), deny the universality of the Deluge, and claim that "it extended only to the principal centre of humanity, to those who remained near its primitive cradle, without reaching the scattered tribes who had already spread themselves far away in almost desert regions. It is certain that the Bible narrative commences by relating facts common to the whole human species, confining itself subsequently to the annals of the race peculiarly chosen by the designs of Providence." (Lenormant and Chevallier, "Anc. Hist. of the East," p. 44.) This theory is supported by that

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eminent authority on anthropology, M. de Quatrefages, as well as by Cuvier; the Rev. R. p. Bellynck, S.J., admits that it has nothing expressly opposed to orthodoxy.

Plato identifies "the great deluge of all" with the destruction of Atlantis. The priest of Sais told Solon that before "the great deluge of all" Athens possessed a noble race, who performed many noble deeds, the last and greatest of which was resisting the attempts of Atlantis to subjugate them; and after this came the destruction of Atlantis, and the same great convulsion which overwhelmed that island destroyed a number of the Greeks. So that the Egyptians, who possessed the memory of many partial deluges, regarded this as "the great deluge of all."