

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

Part II. The Deluge.

Chapter III.

The Deluge Of The Chaldeans.

We have two versions of the Chaldean story--unequally developed, indeed, but exhibiting a remarkable agreement. The one most anciently known, and also the shorter, is that which Berosus took from the sacred books of Babylon, and introduced into the history that he wrote for the use of the Greeks. After speaking of the last nine antediluvian kings, the Chaldean priest continues thus.

"Obartès Elbaratutu being dead, his son Xisuthros (Khasisatra) reigned eighteen sares (64,800 years). It was under him that the Great Deluge took place, the history of which is told in the sacred documents as follows: Cronos (Ea) appeared to him in his sleep, and announced that on the fifteenth of the month of Daisios (the Assyrian month Sivan--a little before the summer solstice) all men should perish by a flood. He therefore commanded him to take the beginning, the middle, and the end of whatever was consigned to writing, and to bury it in the City of the Sun, at Sippara; then to build a vessel, and to enter it with his family and dearest friends; to place in this vessel provisions to eat and drink, and to cause animals, birds, and quadrupeds to enter it; lastly, to prepare everything, for navigation. And when Xisuthros inquired in what direction he should steer his bark, he was answered, 'toward the gods,' and enjoined to pray that good might come of it for men.

"Xisuthros obeyed, and constructed a vessel five stadia long and five broad; he collected all that had been prescribed to him, and embarked his wife, his children, and his intimate friends.

"The Deluge having come, and soon going down, Xisuthros loosed some of the birds. These, finding no food nor place to alight on, returned to the ship. A few days later Xisuthros again let them free, but they returned again to the vessel, their feet fall of mud. Finally, loosed the third time, the birds came no more back. Then Xisuthros understood that the earth was bare. He made an opening in the roof of the ship, and saw that it had grounded on the top of a mountain. He then descended with his wife, his daughter, and his pilot, who

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worshipped the earth, raised an altar, and there sacrificed to the gods; at the same moment he vanished with those who accompanied him.

"Meanwhile those who had remained in the vessel, not seeing Xisuthros return, descended too, and began to seek him, calling him by his name. They saw Xisuthros no more; but a voice from heaven was heard commanding them piety toward the gods; that he, indeed, was receiving the reward of his piety in being carried away to dwell thenceforth in the midst of the gods, and that his wife, his daughter, and the pilot of the ship shared the same honor. The voice further said that they were to return to Babylon, and, conformably to the decrees of fate, disinter the writings buried at Sippara in order to transmit them to men. It added that the country in which they found themselves was Armenia. These, then, having heard the voice, sacrificed to the gods and returned on foot to Babylon. Of the vessel of Xisuthros, which had finally landed in Armenia, a portion is still to be found in the Gordyan Mountains in Armenia, and pilgrims bring thence asphalt that they have scraped from its fragments. It is used to keep off the influence of witchcraft. As to the companions of Xisuthros, they came to Babylon, disinterred the writings left at Sippara, founded numerous cities, built temples, and restored Babylon."

"By the side of this version," says Lenormant, "which, interesting though it be, is, after all, second-hand, we are now able to place an original Chaldeo-Babylonian edition, which the lamented George Smith was the first to decipher on the cuneiform tablets exhumed at Nineveh, and now in the British Museum. Here the narrative of the Deluge appears as an episode in the eleventh tablet, or eleventh chant of the great epic of the town of Uruk. The hero of this poem, a kind of Hercules, whose name has not as yet been made out with certainty, being attacked by disease (a kind of leprosy), goes, with a view to its cure, to consult the patriarch saved from the Deluge, Khasisatra, in the distant land to which the gods have transported him, there to enjoy eternal felicity. He asks Khasisatra to reveal the secret of the events which led to his obtaining the privilege of immortality, and thus the patriarch is induced to relate the cataclysm.

"By a comparison of the three copies of the poem that the library of the palace of Nineveh contained, it has been possible to restore the narrative with hardly any breaks. These three copies were, by order of the King of Assyria, Assurbanabal, made in the eighth century B.C., from a very ancient specimen in the sacerdotal library of the town of Uruk, founded by the

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monarchs of the first Chaldean empire. It is difficult precisely to fix the date of the original, copied by Assyrian scribes, but it certainly goes back to the ancient empire, seventeen centuries at least before our era, and even probably beyond; it was therefore much anterior to Moses, and nearly contemporaneous with Abraham. The variations presented by the three existing copies prove that the original was in the primitive mode of writing called the *hieratic*, a character which must have already become difficult to decipher in the eighth century B.C., as the copyists have differed as to the interpretation to be given to certain signs, and in other cases have simply reproduced exactly the forms of such as they did not understand. Finally, it results from a comparison of these variations, that the original, transcribed by order of Asshurbanabal, must itself have been a copy of some still more ancient manuscript, it, which the original text had already received interlinear comments. Some of the copyists have introduced these into their text, others have omitted them. With these preliminary observations, I proceed to give integrally the narrative ascribed ill the poem to Khasisatra:

"I will reveal to thee, O Izdhubar, the history of my preservation-and tell to thee the decision of the gods.

"The town of Shurippak, a town which thou knowest, is situated on the Euphrates--it was ancient, and in it [men did not honor] the gods. [I alone, I was] their servant, to the great gods--[The gods took counsel on the appeal of] Ann--[a deluge was proposed by] Bel--[and approved by Nabon, Nergal and] Adar.

"And the god [Ea], the immutable lord, repeated this command in a dream.--I listened to the decree of fate that he announced, and he said to me:--" Man of Shurippak, son of Ubaratutu--thou, build a vessel and finish it [quickly].--[By a deluge] I will destroy substance and life.--Cause thou to go up into the vessel the substance of all that has life.--The vessel thou shall build-600 cubits shall be the measure of its length--and 60 cubits the amount of its breadth and of its height. [Launch it] thus on the ocean, and cover it with a roof."--I understood, and I said to Ea, my lord:--[The vessel] that thou commandest me to build thus--[when] I shall do it,--young and old [shall laugh at me.]--[Ea opened his mouth and] spoke.--He said to me, his servant:--[If they laugh at thee] thou shalt say to them:--[shall be punished] he who has insulted me, [for the protection of the gods] is over me.-- . . . like to caverns . . . -- . . . I will exercise my judgment on that which is on high and that which is below . . . -- . . . Close the vessel . . . -- . . . At a given moment that I shall cause

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thee to know,--enter into it, and draw the door of the ship toward thee.-- Within it, thy grains, thy furniture, thy provisions, thy riches, thy men-servants, and thy maid-servants, and thy young people--the cattle of the field, and the wild beasts of the plain that I will assemble--and that I will send thee, shall be kept behind thy door."--Khasisatra opened his mouth and spoke;--he said to Ea, his lord:--"No one has made [such a] ship.--On the prow I will fix . . . --I shall see . . . and the vessel . . . --the vessel thou commandest me to build [thus] which in . . ."

"On the fifth day [the two sides of the bark] were raised.--In its covering fourteen in all were its rafters--fourteen in all did it count above.--I placed its roof, and I covered it.--I embarked in it on the sixth day; I divided its floors on the seventh;--I divided the interior compartments on the eighth. I stopped up the chinks through which the water entered in;--I visited the chinks, and added what was wanting.--I poured on the exterior three times 3600 measures of asphalte,--and three times 3600 measures of asphalte within.--Three times 3600 men, porters, brought on their beads the chests of provisions.--I kept 3600 chests for the nourishment of my family,--and the mariners divided among themselves twice 3600 chests.--For [provisioning] I had oxen slain;--I instituted [rations] for each day.--In [anticipation of the need of] drinks, of barrels, and of wine--[I collected in quantity] like to the waters of a river, [of provisions] in quantity like to the dust of the earth.--[To arrange them in] the chests I set my hand to.-- . . of the sun . . . the vessel was completed.-- . . strong and--I had carried above and below the furniture of the ship.--[This lading filled the two-thirds.]

"All that I possessed I gathered together; all I possessed of silver I gathered together; all that I possessed of gold I gathered--all that I possessed of the substance of life of every kind I gathered together.--I made all ascend into the vessel; my servants, male and female,--the cattle of the fields, the wild beasts of the plains, and the sons of the people, I made them all ascend.

"Shamash (the sun) made the moment determined, and he announced it in these terms:--"In the evening I will cause it to rain abundantly from heaven; enter into the vessel and close the door."--The fixed Moment had arrived, which he announced in these terms:--"In the evening I will cause it to rain abundantly from heaven."--When the evening of that day arrived, I was afraid,--I entered into the vessel and shut my door.--In shutting the vessel, to Buzurshadi-rabi, the pilot,--I confided this dwelling, with all that it contained.

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"Mu-sheri-ina-namari--rose from the foundations of heaven in a black cloud;--Ramman thundered in the midst of the cloud,--and Nabon and Sharru marched before;--they marched, devastating the mountain and the plain;--Nergal the powerful dragged chastisements after him;--Adar advanced, overthrowing;--before him;--the archangels of the abyss brought destruction,--in their terrors they agitated the earth.--The inundation of Ramman swelled up to the sky,--and [the earth] became without lustre, was changed into a desert.

"They broke . . . of the surface of the earth like . . . ;--[they destroyed] the living beings of the surface of the earth.--The terrible [Deluge] on men swelled up to [heaven].The brother no longer saw his brother; men no longer knew each other. In heaven--the gods became afraid of the water-spout, and--sought a refuge; they mounted up to the heaven of Anu.--The gods were stretched out motionless, pressing one against another like dogs.--Ishtar wailed like a child, the great goddess pronounced her discourse:--"Here is humanity returned into mud, and--this is the misfortune that I have announced in the presence of the gods.--So I announced the misfortune in the presence of the gods,--for the evil I announced the terrible [chastisement] of men who are mine.--I am the mother who gave birth to men, and--like to the race of fishes, there they are filling the sea;--and the gods, by reason of that--which the archangels of the abyss are doing, weep with me."--The gods on their seats were seated in tears,--and they held their lips closed, [revolving] future things.

"Six days and as many nights passed; the wind, the water-spout, and the diluvian rain were in all their strength. At the approach of the seventh day the diluvian rain grew weaker, the terrible water-spout--which had assailed after the fashion of an earthquake--grew calm, the sea inclined to dry up, and the wind and the water-spout came to an end. I looked at the sea, attentively observing--and the whole of humanity had returned to mud; like unto sea-weeds the corpses floated. I opened the window, and the light smote on my face. I was seized with sadness; I sat down and I wept;--and my tears came over my face.

"I looked at the regions bounding the sea: toward the twelve points of the horizon; not any continent.--The vessel was borne above the land of Nizir,--the mountain of Nizir arrested the vessel, and did not permit it to pass over.--A day and a second day the mountain of Nizir arrested the vessel, and did not permit it to pass over;--the third and fourth day the mountain of Nizir arrested the vessel, and did not permit it to pass over;--the fifth and sixth day the mountain of Nizir arrested the vessel, and did not permit it to pass over. At

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the approach of the seventh day, I sent out and loosed a dove. The dove went, turned, and--found no place to light on, and it came back. I sent out and loosed a swallow; the swallow went, turned, and--found no place to light on, and it came back. I sent out and loosed a raven; the raven went and saw the corpses on the waters; it ate, rested, turned, and came not back.

"I then sent out (what was in the vessel) toward the four winds, and I offered a sacrifice. I raised the pile of my burnt-offering on the peak of the mountain; seven by seven I disposed the measured vases,--and beneath I spread rushes, cedar, and juniper-wood. The gods were seized with the desire of it--the gods were seized with a benevolent desire of it;--and the gods assembled like flies above the master of the sacrifice. From afar, in approaching, the great goddess raised the great zones that Anu has made for their glory (the gods). These gods, luminous crystal before me, I will never leave them; in that day I prayed that I might never leave them. "Let the gods come to my sacrificial pile!--but never may Bel come to my sacrificial pile! for he did not master himself, and he has made the water-spout for the Deluge, and he has numbered my men for the pit."

"From far, in drawing near, Bel--saw the vessel, and Bel stopped;--he was filled with anger against the gods and the celestial archangels:--

""No one shall come out alive! No man shall be preserved from the abyss!"--Adar opened his mouth and said; he said to the warrior Bel:--"What other than Ea should have formed this resolution?--for Ea possesses knowledge, and [he foresees] all."--Ea opened his mouth and spake; he said to the warrior Bel:--"O thou, herald of the gods, warrior,--as thou didst not master thyself, thou hast made the water-spout of the Deluge.--Let the sinner carry the weight of his sins, the blasphemer the weight of his blasphemy.--Please thyself with this good pleasure, and it shall never be infringed; faith in it never [shall be violated].--Instead of thy making a new deluge, let lions appear and reduce the number of men;--instead of thy making a new deluge, let hyenas appear and reduce the number of men;--instead of thy making a new deluge, let there be famine, and let the earth be [devastated];--instead of thy making a new deluge, let Dibbara appear, and let men be [mown down]. I have not revealed the decision of the great gods;--it is Khasisatra who interpreted a dream and comprehended what the gods had decided."

"Then, when his resolve was arrested, Bel entered into the vessel.--He took my hand and made me rise.--He made my wife rise, and made her place herself at my side.--He turned around us and stopped short; he approached

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our group.--"Until now Khasisatra has made part of perishable humanity;--but lo, now Khasisatra and his wife are going to be carried away to live like the gods,--and Khasisatra will reside afar at the mouth of the rivers."--They carried me away, and established me in a remote place at the mouth of the streams."

"This narrative," says Lenormant, "follows with great exactness the same course as that, or, rather, as those of Genesis; and the analogies are, on both sides, striking."

When we consider these two forms of the same legend, we see many points wherein the story points directly to Atlantis.

1. In the first place, Berosus tells us that the god who gave warning of the coming of the Deluge was Chronos. Chronos, it is well known, was the same as Saturn. Saturn was an ancient king of Italy, who, far anterior to the founding of Rome, introduced civilization from some other country to the Italians. He established industry and social order, filled the land with plenty, and created the golden age of Italy. He was suddenly removed to the abodes of the gods. His name is connected, in the mythological legends, with "a great Saturnian continent" in the Atlantic Ocean, and a great kingdom which, in the remote ages, embraced Northern Africa and the European coast of the Mediterranean as far as the peninsula of Italy, and "certain islands in the sea;" agreeing, in this respect, with the story of Plato as to the dominions of Atlantis. The Romans called the Atlantic Ocean "Chronium Mare," the Sea of Chronos, thus identifying Chronos with that ocean. The pillars of Hercules were also called by the ancients "the pillars of Chronos."

Here, then, we have convincing testimony that the country referred to in the Chaldean legends was the land of Chronos, or Saturn--the ocean world, the dominion of Atlantis.

2. Hea or Ea, the god of the Nineveh tablets, was a fish-god: he was represented in the Chaldean monuments as half man and half fish; he was described as the god, not of the rivers and seas, but of "the abyss"--to wit, the ocean. He it was who was said to have brought civilization and letters to the ancestors of the Assyrians. He clearly represented an ancient, maritime, civilized nation; he came from the ocean, and was associated with some land and people that had been destroyed by rain and inundations. The fact that the scene of the Deluge is located on the Euphrates proves nothing, for we will see hereafter that almost every nation had its especial mountain on which, according to its traditions, the ark rested; just as every Greek tribe had its own

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particular mountain of Olympos. The god Bel of the legend was the Baal of the Phoenicians, who, as we shall show, were of Atlantean origin. Bel, or Baal, was worshipped on the western and northern coasts of Europe, and gave his name to the Baltic, the Great and Little Belt, Balesbaugen, Balestranden, etc.; and to many localities, in the British Islands, as, for instance, Belan and the Baal hills in Yorkshire.

3. In those respects wherein the Chaldean legend, evidently the older form of the tradition, differs from the Biblical record, we see that in each instance we approach nearer to Atlantis. The account given in Genesis is the form of the tradition that would be natural to an inland people. Although there is an allusion to "the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep" (about which I shall speak more fully hereafter), the principal destruction seems to have been accomplished by rain; hence the greater period allowed for the Deluge, to give time enough for the rain to fall, and subsequently drain off from the land. A people dwelling in the midst of a continent could not conceive the possibility of a whole world sinking beneath the sea; they therefore supposed the destruction to have been, caused by a continuous down-pour of rain for forty days and forty nights.

In the Chaldean legend, on the contrary, the rain lasted but seven days; and we see that the writer had a glimpse of the fact that the destruction occurred in the midst of or near the sea. The ark of Genesis (*têbâh*) was simply a chest, a coffer, a big box, such as might be imagined by an inland people. The ark of the Chaldeans was a veritable ship; it had a prow, a helm, and a pilot, and men to manage it; and it navigated "the sea."

4. The Chaldean legend represents not a mere rain-storm, but a tremendous cataclysm. There was rain, it is true, but there was also thunder, lightning, earthquakes, wind, a water-spout, and a devastation of mountain and land by the war of the elements. All the dreadful forces of nature were fighting together over the doomed land: "the archangel of the abyss brought destruction," "the water rose to the sky," "the brother no longer saw his brother; men no longer knew each other;" the men "filled the sea like fishes;" *the sea was filled with mud*, and "the corpses floated like sea-weed." When the storm abated the land had totally disappeared-there was no longer "*any continent*." Does not all this accord with "that dreadful day and night" described by Plato?

5. In the original it appears that Izdhubar, when he started to find the deified Khasisatra, travelled first, for nine days' journey, to the sea; then secured the services of a boatman, and, entering a ship, sailed for fifteen days

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before finding the Chaldean Noah. This would show that Khasisatra dwelt in a far country, one only attainable by crossing the water; and this, too, seems like a reminiscence of the real site of Atlantis. The sea which a sailing-vessel required fifteen days to cross must have been a very large body of water; in fact, an ocean.