

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

Part II. The Deluge.

Chapter IV.

The Deluge Legends Of Other Nations.

A collection of the Deluge legends of other nations will throw light upon the Biblical and Chaldean records of that great event.

The author of the treatise "On the Syrian Goddess" acquaints us with the diluvian tradition of the Arameans, directly derived from that of Chaldea, as it was narrated in the celebrated Sanctuary of Hierapolis, or Bambyce.

"The generality of people," he says, "tells us that the founder of the temple was Deucalion Sisytus--that Deucalion in whose time the great inundation occurred. I have also heard the account given by the Greeks themselves of Deucalion; the myth runs thus: The actual race of men is not the first, for there was a previous one, all the members of which perished. We belong to a second race, descended from Deucalion, and multiplied in the course of time. As to the former men, they are said to have been full of insolence and pride, committing many crimes, disregarding their oath, neglecting the rights of hospitality, unsparing to suppliants; accordingly, they were punished by an immense disaster. All on a sudden enormous volumes of water issued from the earth, and rains of extraordinary abundance began to fall; the rivers left their beds, and the *sea overflowed its shores*; the whole earth was covered with water, and all men perished. Deucalion alone, because of his virtue and piety, was preserved alive to give birth to a new race. This is how he was saved: He placed himself, his children, and his wives in a great coffer that he had, in which pigs, horses, lions, serpents, and all other terrestrial animals came to seek refuge with him. He received them all; and while they were in the coffer Zeus inspired them with reciprocal amity, which prevented their devouring one another. In this manner, shut up within one single coffer, they floated as long as the waters remained in force. Such is the account given by the Greeks of Deucalion.

"But to this, which they equally tell, the people of Hierapolis add a marvellous narrative: That in their country a great chasm opened, into which all the waters of the Deluge poured. Then Deucalion raised an altar, and

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

dedicated a temple to Hera (Atargatis) close to this very chasm. I have seen it; it is very narrow, and situated under the temple. Whether it was once large, and has now shrunk, I do not know; but I have seen it, and it is quite small. In memory of the event the following is the rite accomplished: Twice a year seawater is brought to the temple. This is not only done by the priests, but numerous pilgrims come from the whole of Syria and Arabia, and even from beyond the Euphrates, bringing water. It is poured out in the temple and goes into the cleft, which, narrow as it is, swallows up a considerable quantity. This is said to be in virtue of a religious law instituted by Deucalion to preserve the memory of the catastrophe, and of the benefits that he received from the gods. Such is the ancient tradition of the temple."

"It appears to me difficult," says Lenormant, "not to recognize an echo of fables popular in all Semitic countries about this chasm of Hierapolis, and the part it played in the Deluge, in the enigmatic expressions of the Koran respecting the oven (*tannur*) which began to bubble and disgorge water all around at the commencement of the Deluge. We know that this *tannur* has been the occasion of most grotesque imaginings of Mussulman commentators, who had lost the tradition of the story to which Mohammed made allusion. And, moreover, the Koran formally states that the waters of the Deluge were absorbed in the bosom of the earth."

Here the Xisuthros of Berossus becomes Deucalion-*Sisythes*. The animals are not collected together by Deucalion, as in the case of Noah and Khasisatra, but they crowded into the vessel of their own accord, driven by the terror with which the storm had inspired them; as in great calamities the creatures of the forest have been known to seek refuge in the houses of men.

India affords us an account of the Deluge which, by its poverty, strikingly contrasts with that of the Bible and the Chaldeans. Its most simple and ancient form is found in the *Çatapatha Brâhmana* of the Rig-Veda. It has been translated for the first time by Max Müller.

"One morning water for washing was brought to Manu, and when he had washed himself a fish remained in his hands, and it addressed these words to him: 'Protect me, and I will save thee.' 'From what wilt thou save me?' 'A deluge will sweep all creatures away; it is from that I will save thee.' 'How shall I protect thee?' The fish replied, 'While we are small we run great dangers, for fish swallow fish. Keep me at first in a vase; when I become too large for it, dig a basin to put me into. When I shall have grown still more, throw me into the

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

ocean; then I shall be preserved from destruction.' Soon it grew a large fish. It said to Mann, 'The very year I shall have reached my full growth the Deluge will happen. Then build a vessel and worship me. When the waters rise, enter the vessel, and I will save thee.'

"After keeping him thus, Mann carried the fish to the sea. In the year indicated Mann built a vessel and worshipped the fish. And when the Deluge came he entered the vessel. Then the fish came swimming up to him, and Mann fastened the cable of the ship to the horn of the fish, by which means the latter made it pass over the Mountain of the North. The fish said, 'I have saved thee; fasten the vessel to a tree, that the water may not sweep it away while thou art on the mountain; and in proportion as the waters decrease thou shalt descend.' Manu descended with the waters, and this is what is called the *descent of Manu* on the Mountain of the North. The Deluge had carried away all creatures, and Mann remained alone."

There is another form of the Hindoo legend in the *Purânas*. Lenormant says:

"We must also remark that in the *Purânas* it is no longer Manu Vaivasata that the divine fish saves from the Deluge, but a different personage, the King of the Dâstas--*i. e.*, fisher--Satyavata,' the man who loves justice and truth,' strikingly corresponding to the Chaldean Khasisatra. Nor is the Puranic version of the Legend of the Deluge to be despised, though it be of recent date, and full of fantastic and often puerile details. In certain aspects it is less Aryanized than that of Brâhmana or than the *Mahâbhârata*; and, above all, it gives some circumstances omitted in these earlier versions, which must yet have belonged to the original foundation, since they appear in the Babylonian legend; a circumstance preserved, no doubt, by the oral tradition--popular, and not Brahmanic--with which the *Purânas* are so deeply imbued. This has already been observed by Pictet, who lays due stress on the following passage of the *Bhâgavata-Purâna*: 'In seven days,' said Vishnu to Satyavata, 'the three worlds shall be submerged.' There is nothing like this in the Brâhmana nor the *Mahâbhârata*, but in Genesis the Lord says to Noah, 'Yet seven days and I will cause it to rain upon the earth;' and a little farther we read, 'After seven days the waters of the flood were upon the earth.' . . . Nor must we pay less attention to the directions given by the fish-god to Satyavata for the placing of the sacred Scriptures in a safe place, in order to preserve them from Hayagriva, a marine horse dwelling in the abyss. . . . We recognize in it, under

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

an Indian garb, the very tradition of the interment of the sacred writings at Sippara by Khasisatra, such as we have seen it in the fragment of Berosus."

The references to "the three worlds" and the "fish-god" in these legends point to Atlantis. The "three worlds" probably refers to the great empire of Atlantis, described by Plato, to wit, the western continent, America, the eastern continent, Europe and Africa, considered as one, and the island of Atlantis. As we have seen, Poseidon, the founder of the civilization of Atlantis, is identical with Neptune, who is always represented riding a dolphin, bearing a trident, or three-pronged symbol, in his hand, emblematical probably of the triple kingdom. He is thus a sea-god, or fish-god, and he comes to save the representative of his country.

And we have also a new and singular form of the legend in the following. Lenormant says:

"Among the Iranians, in the sacred books containing the fundamental Zoroastrian doctrines, and dating very far back, we meet with a tradition which must assuredly be looked upon as a variety of that of the Deluge, though possessing a special character, and diverging in some essential particulars from those we have been examining. It relates how Yima, who, in the original and primitive conception, was the father of the human race, was warned by Ahuramazda, the good deity, of the earth being about to be devastated by a flood. The god ordered Yima to construct a refuge, a square garden, *vara*, protected by an enclosure, and to cause the germs of men, beasts, and plants to enter it, in order to escape annihilation. Accordingly, when the inundation occurred, the garden of Yima, with all that it contained, was alone spared, and the message of safety was brought thither by the bird Karshipta, the envoy of Ahuramazda." ("Vendûdid," vol. ii., p. 46.)

This clearly signifies that, prior to the destruction of Atlantis, a colony had been sent out to some neighboring country. These emigrants built a walled town, and brought to it the grains and domestic animals of the mother country; and when the island of Atlantis sunk in the ocean, a messenger brought the terrible tidings to them in a ship.

"The Greeks had two principal legends as to the cataclysm by which primitive humanity was destroyed. The first was connected with the name of Ogyges, the most ancient of the kings of Bœotia or Attica--a quite mythical personage, lost in the night of ages, his very name seemingly derived from one

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

signifying deluge in Aryan idioms, in Sanscrit *Angha*. It is said that in his time the whole land was covered by a flood, whose waters reached the sky, and from which he, together with some companions, escaped in a vessel.

"The second tradition is the Thessalian legend of Deucalion. Zeus having worked to destroy the men of the age of bronze, with whose crimes he was wroth, Deucalion, by the advice of Prometheus, his father, constructed a coffer, in which he took refuge with his wife, Pyrrha. The Deluge came; the chest, or coffer, floated at the mercy of the waves for nine days and nine nights, and was finally stranded on Mount Parnassus. Deucalion and Pyrrha leave it, offer sacrifice, and, according to the command of Zeus, repeople the world by throwing behind them 'the bones of the earth'—namely, stones, which change into men. This Deluge of Deucalion is, in Grecian tradition, what most resembles a universal deluge. Many authors affirm that it extended to the whole earth, and that the whole human race perished. At Athens, in memory of the event, and to appease the manes of its victims, a ceremony called *Hydrophoria* was observed, having so close a resemblance to that in use at Hierapolis, in Syria, that we can hardly fail to look upon it as a Syro-Phoenician importation, and the result of an assimilation established in remote antiquity between the Deluge of Deucalion and that of Khasisatra, as described by the author of the treatise 'On the Syrian Goddess.' Close to the temple of the Olympian Zeus a fissure in the soil was shown, in length but one cubit, through which it was said the waters of the Deluge had been swallowed up. Thus, every year, on the third day of the festival of the Anthestéria, a day of mourning consecrated to the dead—that is, on the thirteenth of the month of Anthestérion, toward the beginning of March—it was customary, as at Bambyce, to pour water into the fissure, together with flour mixed with honey, poured also into the trench dug to the west of the tomb, in the funeral sacrifices of the Athenians."

In this legend, also, there are passages which point to Atlantis. We will see hereafter that the Greek god Zeus was one of the kings of Atlantis. "The men of the age of bronze" indicates the civilization of the doomed people; they were the great metallurgists of their day, who, as we will see, were probably the source of the great number of implements and weapons of bronze found all over Europe. Here, also, while no length of time is assigned to the duration of the storm, we find that the ark floated but nine days and nights. Noah was one year and ten days in the ark, Khasisatra was not half that time, while Deucalion was afloat only nine days.

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

At Megara, in Greece, it was the eponym of the city, Megaros, son of Zeus and one of the nymphs, Sithnides, who, warned by the cry of cranes of the imminence of the danger of the coming flood, took refuge on Mount Geranien. Again, there was the Thessalian Cerambos, who was said to have escaped the flood by rising into the air on wings given him by the nymphs; and it was Perirrhoos, son of Eolus, that Zeus Naios had preserved at Dodona. For the inhabitants of the Isle of Cos the hero of the Deluge was *Merops*, son of Hyas, who there assembled under his rule the remnant of humanity preserved with him. The traditions of Rhodes only supposed the Telchines, those of Crete Sasion, to have escaped the cataclysm. In Samothracia the same character was attributed to Saon, said to be the son of Zeus or of Hermes.

It will be observed that in all these legends the name of Zeus, King of Atlantis, reappears. It would appear probable that many parties had escaped from the catastrophe, and had landed at the different points named in the traditions; or else that colonies had already been established by the Atlantians at those places. It would appear impossible that a maritime people could be totally destroyed; doubtless many were on shipboard in the harbors, and others going and coming on distant voyages.

"The invasion of the East," says Baldwin ('Prehistoric Nations,' p. 396), "to which the story of Atlantis refers, seems to have given rise to the Panathenæ, the oldest, greatest, and most splendid festivals in honor of Athena celebrated in Attica. These festivals are said to have been established by Erichthonis in the most ancient times remembered by the historical traditions of Athens. Boeckh says of them, in his 'Commentary on Plato:'

"In the greater Panathenæ there was carried in procession a *peplum* of Minerva, representing the war with the giants and the victory of the gods of Olympus. In the lesser Panathenæ they carried another *peplum* (covered with symbolic devices), which showed how the Athenians, supported by Minerva, had the advantage in the war with the Atlantes.' A scholia quoted from Proclus by Humboldt and Boeckh says: 'The historians who speak of the islands of the exterior sea tell us that in their time there were seven islands consecrated, to Proserpine, and three others of immense extent, of which the first was consecrated to Pluto, the second to Ammon, and the third to Neptune. The inhabitants of the latter had preserved a recollection (transmitted to them by their ancestors) of the island of Atlantis, which was extremely large, and for a long time held sway over all the islands of the Atlantic Ocean. Atlantis was

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

also consecrated to Neptune." (See Humboldt's "Histoire de la Géographie du Nouveau Continent," vol. i.)

No one can read these legends and doubt that the Flood was an historical reality. It is impossible that in two different places in the Old World, remote from each other, religious ceremonies should have been established and perpetuated from age to age in memory of an event which never occurred. We have seen that at Athens and at Hierapolis, in Syria, pilgrims came from a distance to appease the god of the earthquake, by pouring offerings into fissures of the earth said to have been made at the time Atlantis was destroyed.

More than this, we know from Plato's history that the Athenians long preserved in their books the memory of a victory won over the Atlanteans in the early ages, and celebrated it by national festivals, with processions and religious ceremonies.

It is too much to ask us to believe that Biblical history, Chaldean, Iranian, and Greek legends signify nothing, and that even religious pilgrimages and national festivities were based upon a myth.

I would call attention to the farther fact that in the Deluge legend of the Isle of Cos the hero of the affair was Merops. Now we have seen that, according to Theopompus, one of the names of the people of Atlantis was "Meropes."

But we have not reached the end of our Flood legends. The Persian Magi possessed a tradition in which the waters issued from the oven of an old woman. Mohammed borrowed this story, and in the Koran he refers to the Deluge as coming from an oven. "All men were drowned save Noah and his family; and then God said, 'O earth, swallow up thy waters; and thou, O heaven, withhold thy rain;' and immediately the waters abated."

In the bardic poems of Wales we have a tradition of the Deluge which, although recent, under the concise forms of the triads, is still deserving of attention. As usual, the legend is localized in the country, and the Deluge counts among three terrible catastrophes of the island of Prydian, or Britain, the other two consisting of devastation by fire and by drought.

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

"The first of these events," it is said, "was the eruption of Llyn-llion, or 'the lake of waves,' and the inundation (*bawdd*) of the whole country, by which all mankind was drowned with the exception of Dwyfam and Dwyfach, who saved themselves in a vessel without rigging, and it was by them that the island of Prydian was repopled."

Pictet here observes:

"Although the triads in their actual form hardly date farther than the thirteenth or fourteenth century, some of them are undoubtedly connected with very ancient traditions, and nothing here points to a borrowing from Genesis.

"But it is not so, perhaps, with another triad, speaking of the vessel *Nefyddnaf-Neifion*, which at the time of the overflow of Llyn-llion, bore a pair of all living creatures, and rather too much resembles the ark of Noah. The very name of the patriarch may have suggested this triple epithet, obscure as to its meaning, but evidently formed on the principle of Cymric alliteration. In the same triad we have the enigmatic story of the horned oxen (*ychain banog*) of Hu the mighty, who drew out of Llyn-llion the *avanc* (beaver or crocodile?), in order that the lake should not overflow. The meaning of these enigmas could only be hoped from deciphering the chaos of barbaric monuments of the Welsh middle age; but meanwhile we cannot doubt that the Cymri possessed an indigenous tradition of the Deluge."

We also find a vestige of the same tradition in the Scandinavian Ealda. Here the story is combined with a cosmogonic myth. The three sons of Borr--Othin, Wili, and We--grandsons of Buri, the first man, slay Ymir, the father of the Hrimthursar, or ice giants, and his body serves them for the construction of the world. Blood flows from his wounds in such abundance that all the race of giants is drowned in it except Bergelmir, who saves himself, with his wife, in a boat, and reproduces the race.

In the *Edda* of *Sœmund*, "The Vala's Prophecy" (stz. 48-56, p. 9), we seem to catch traditional glimpses of a terrible catastrophe, which reminds us of the Chaldean legend:

"Then trembles Yggdrasil's ash yet standing, groans that ancient tree, and the Jötun Loki is loosed. The shadows groan on the ways of Hel (the goddess of death), until the fire of Surt has consumed *the tree*. *Hym steers from the*

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

east, the waters rise, the mundane snake is coiled in jötun-rage. The worm beats the water and the eagle screams; the pale of beak tears carcasses; (the ship) Naglfar is loosed. Surt from the south comes with flickering flame; shines from his sword the Valgod's sun. The stony hills are dashed together, the giantesses totter; men tread the path of Hel, and heaven is cloven. The sun darkens, *earth in ocean sinks*, fall from heaven the bright stars, fire's breath assails the all-nourishing, towering fire plays against heaven itself."

Egypt does not contain a single allusion to the Flood. Lenormant says:

"While the tradition of the Deluge holds so considerable a place in the legendary memories of all branches of the Aryan race, the monuments and original texts of Egypt, with their many cosmogonic speculations, have not afforded one, even distant, allusion to this cataclysm. When the Greeks told the Egyptian priests of the Deluge of Deucalion, their reply was that they had been preserved from it as well as from the conflagration produced by Phaëthon; they even added that the Hellenes were childish in attaching so much importance to that event, as there had been several other local catastrophes resembling it. According to a passage in Manetho, much suspected, however, of being an interpolation, Thoth, or Hermes Trismegistus, had himself, before the cataclysm, inscribed on stelæ, in hieroglyphical and sacred language, the principles of all knowledge. After it the second Thoth translated into the vulgar tongue the contents of these stelæ. This would be the only Egyptian mention of the Deluge, the same Manetho not speaking of it in what remains to us of his 'Dynasties,' his only complete authentic work. The silence of all other myths of the Pharaonic religion on this head render it very likely that the above is merely a foreign tradition, recently introduced, and no doubt of Asiatic and Chaldean origin."

To my mind the explanation of this singular omission is very plain. The Egyptians had preserved in their annals the precise history of the destruction of Atlantis, out of which the Flood legends grew; and, as they told the Greeks, there had been no universal flood, but only local catastrophes. Possessing the real history of the local catastrophe which destroyed Atlantis, they did not indulge in any myths about a universal deluge covering the mountain-tops of all the world. They had no Ararat in their neighborhood.

The traditions of the early Christian ages touching the Deluge pointed to the quarter of the world in which Atlantis was situated.

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

There was a quaint old monk named Cosmos, who, about one thousand years ago, published a book, "Topographia Christiana," accompanied by a map, in which he gives his view of the world as it was then understood. It was a body surrounded by water, and resting on nothing. "The earth," says Cosmos, "presses downward, but the igneous parts tend upward," and between the conflicting forces the earth hangs suspended, like Mohammed's coffin in the old story. The accompanying illustration (page 95) represents the earth surrounded by the ocean, and beyond this ocean was "the land where men dwelt before the Deluge."

He then gives us a more accurate map, in detail, of the known world of his day.

I copy this map, not to show how much more we know than poor Cosmos, but because he taught that all around this habitable world there was yet another world, adhering closely on all sides to the circumscribing walls of heaven. "Upon the eastern side of this transmarine land he judges man was created; and that there the paradise of gladness was located, such as here on the eastern edge is described, where it received our first parents, driven out of Paradise to that extreme point of land on the sea-shore. Hence, upon the coming of the Deluge, Noah and his sons were borne by the ark to the earth we now inhabit. The four rivers he supposes to be gushing up the spouts of Paradise." They are depicted on the above map: O is the Mediterranean Sea; P, the Arabian Gulf; L, the Caspian Sea; Q, the Tigris; M, the river Pison; "and J, the land where men dwelt before the Flood."

It will be observed that, while he locates Paradise in the east, he places the scene of the Deluge in the west; and he supposes that Noah came from the scene of the Deluge to Europe.

This shows that the traditions in the time of Cosmos looked to the west as the place of the Deluge, and that after the Deluge Noah came to the shores of the Mediterranean. The fact, too, that there was land in the west beyond the ocean is recognized by Cosmos, and is probably a dim echo from Atlantean times.

Map Of Europe, After Cosmos

The following rude cut, from Cosmos, represents the high mountain in the north behind which the sun hid himself at night, thus producing the

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

alternations of day and night. His solar majesty is just getting behind the mountain, while Luna looks calmly on at the operation. The mountain is as crooked as Culhuacan, the crooked mountain of Atzlan described by the Aztecs.

The Mountain The Sun Goes Behind At Night