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THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE IN THE STORY OF THE FLOOD IN GENESIS 6-9

by Peter Harland

Dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the
University of Durham, 1992.

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The Value of Human Life in the Story of the Flood in Genesis 6-9

by Peter Harland

Abstract for a Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1992.

The aim of the thesis is to explore the question of the value of human life in the story of the flood in Genesis 6-9. It is here that the command not to take human life comes for the first time in the Bible, and its placing in the account of the deluge is suggestive for ethical considerations.

There has been considerable debate over method in study of the Old Testament in recent years, particularly with regard to the Pentateuch and its documentary analysis. This dissertation does not aim to offer a thorough study of source critical issues, but having noted that there are probably two sources in Gen 6-9 (J and P), there is an examination of the text first at the level of J and P separately, and then secondly a study of J and P together, with a focus on the extra resonances which are created by reading the text as a whole at its canonical level. Little has been done on a reading of the text with J and P together, and the originality of this work lies in its analysis of both historical sources and of the complete text.

The dissertation examines the causes of the flood, in particular, **בְּדֹף**, the righteousness of Noah, God's repentance in Gen 6:6, the theme of creation, uncreation and re-creation, the post-diluvian promises of 8:20-22, 9:8-17, the commands of 9:1-7, and the imago Dei in the context of the flood. The imago Dei is interpreted in terms of man as vice-regent of creation. The thesis argues that human life finds its value in its relation to God.

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This dissertation conforms to the word limit for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It does not exceed 100,000 words.

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Abbreviations

An Bib	Analecta biblica Rome
<u>ANET</u>	<u>Ancient Near Eastern Texts</u> ed J.B.Pritchard
<u>ASTI</u>	<u>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</u>
<u>BA</u>	<u>Biblical Archaeologist</u>
<u>BASOR</u>	<u>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</u>
<u>BDB</u>	Brown Driver Briggs <u>Lexicon</u>
<u>Bereishis</u>	Art Schroll Tanach Sereis <u>Genesis 1</u> ed M.Zlotovitz
<u>BJRL</u>	<u>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</u>
<u>BTB</u>	<u>Biblical Theology Bulletin</u>
<u>BWANT</u>	<u>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament</u>
<u>BZ</u>	<u>Biblische Zeitschrift</u>
<u>BZAW</u>	<u>Beihefte zur ZAW</u>
<u>CBQ</u>	<u>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</u>
<u>CD</u>	<u>Church Dogmatics</u> by K.Barth
<u>CQR</u>	<u>Church Quarterly Review</u>
<u>CRB</u>	<u>Cahiers de la Revue Biblique</u>
<u>DLT</u>	Darton, Longman and Todd London
<u>EQ</u>	<u>Evangelical Quarterly</u>
<u>ET</u>	<u>Expository Times</u>
<u>EvT</u>	<u>Evangelische Theologie</u>
<u>FRLANT</u>	<u>Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments</u>
<u>GK</u>	The Grammar of Gesenius ed Kautzsch
<u>HTR</u>	<u>Harvard Theological Review</u>

HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual
ICC International Critical Commentary
IDB Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
IDBS Supplement to IDB
IKZ Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift
JAAR Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JAARS Supplement to JAAR
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
JETS Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JJS Journal of Jewish Studies
JNES Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JNSL Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages
JPS Jewish Publication Society
JQR Jewish Quarterly Review
JSNTSS Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSS JSOT Supplement Series Sheffield Academic Press
JSS Journal of Semitic Studies
JTS Journal of Theological Studies
KD Kerygma und Dogma
LXX Septuagint
NEB New English Bible
NIV New International Version
NRT La Nouvelle Revue Théologique
OTS Oudtestamentische Studiën
OUP Oxford University Press
RB Revue Biblique

RSV	Revised Standard Version
SCM	Student Christian Movement Press London
<u>SJT</u>	<u>Scottish Journal of Theology</u>
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge London
<u>ST</u>	<u>Studia Theologica</u>
<u>TB</u>	<u>Tyndale Bulletin</u>
<u>TDNT</u>	<u>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</u> ed G.Kittel and G.Friedrich
<u>TDOT</u>	<u>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</u> ed G.J.Botterweck and H.Ringgren
<u>TG</u>	<u>Theologie und Glaube</u>
<u>THAT</u>	<u>Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament</u> ed E.Jenni and C.Westermann
<u>TQ</u>	<u>Theologische Quartalschrift</u>
<u>TP</u>	<u>Theologie und Philosophie</u>
<u>TTZ</u>	<u>Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift</u>
<u>TZ</u>	<u>Theologische Zeitschrift</u>
<u>VD</u>	<u>Verbum Domini</u>
<u>VT</u>	<u>Vetus Testamentum</u>
<u>VTS</u>	<u>Supplements to VT</u>
<u>WMANT</u>	<u>Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament</u>
<u>WTJ</u>	<u>Westminster Theological Journal</u>
<u>ZAW</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</u>
<u>ZTK</u>	<u>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</u>

INTRODUCTION

Prof S.Hauerwas in his book A Community of Character writes, "It is my contention that Christian opposition to abortion on demand has failed because, by attempting to meet the moral challenge within the limits of public polity, we have failed to exhibit our deepest convictions that make our rejection of abortion intelligible". /1/ He argues that Christians have shared too much in the moral presuppositions of our modern liberal culture; instead of arguing on the basis of our most deeply held theological convictions, we have debated the issue in the context of the assumptions of our society. For the Christian being opposed to abortion is the outcome of being a particular kind of people with their special beliefs, but we have failed to make clear of what that necessary reorientation consists. We know that we should oppose abortion, but we are not clear why. Hauerwas continues, "I am suggesting that if Christians are to make their moral and political convictions concerning abortion intelligible we must show how the meaning and prohibition of abortion is correlative to the stories of God and his people that form our basic conviction. We must indicate why it is that the Christian way of life forms people in a manner that makes abortion unthinkable". /2/

The present study aims to some extent to meet the challenge made by Prof Hauerwas. The dissertation will not discuss abortion nor the many issues it raises. Rather the task will be to explore the idea

of the value of human life in the Old Testament. The story of the flood in Gen 6-9 puts the question in a suggestive light and these four chapters will form the subject matter for our study. The aim will be to provide a reading of the narrative which brings out this important, but so far largely neglected, aspect of the story.

A special note needs to be made concerning terminology. In English we frequently speak of the "sanctity" of human life. Hebrew does not use the root שׁוֹפָר in this respect and it would probably be better to talk of the "value" of life.

The main question which we shall try to answer is, what is it that the story of the flood tells us about the value of human life in the eyes of God? Several important themes and aspects of the story will be dealt with in the course of the discussion. The introduction will deal with the nature of the material, source critical questions and methodology, since in the last few years there has been much discussion as to appropriate ways of reading the Old Testament. The first chapter will focus on the causes of the deluge, in particular סִדְדָן , since the topic of our dissertation is presented at the outset of the story. The next chapter asks to what extent is Noah exempt from the general depiction of humanity in these verses; that is how Noah's relationship with God is correct in contrast to the situation of the rest of humanity which we described in the opening chapter. Having looked at the human side of the story, Chapter 3 discusses God's regret at the creation of man (Gen 6:6). Both chapters 2 and 3 examine how God relates to people. The following chapter will move on to a study of the flood itself, and will contain a detailed analysis of the theme of creation, uncreation and re-creation, which

demonstrates the absolute sovereignty of God over human life. After describing the punishment, Chapter 5 examines the promises of God never to send another deluge which are found at the end of the story, and which are the basis for the future safety of humanity. These promises are not without implications for human behaviour, and Chapter 6 will examine how the new era seeks to safeguard human life. Finally in Chapter 7 we shall examine the imago Dei in this context. This will be the climax of the study, and it is the most important question which we are facing. The conclusion will bring together the various themes which have been discussed. The originality of the study will be found in its examination of the question of the value of human life in Gen 6-9, and in the particular way in which the text, with its J and P elements, is handled.

1) The Nature of the Material

Until comparatively recent times the flood was regarded as the record of an historical event which occurred in the early history of the world. The story was taken at face value; Noah was an historical figure and the events of the deluge occurred as the text describes them. With the rise of the Enlightenment and our greater knowledge of history and science, in particular the antiquity of man, our understanding of the first few chapters of Genesis has changed. Only a small minority now see Gen 6-9 as a non legendary historical account.

Typical of those who try to save some kind of historicity for the flood is B.Ramm. /3/ He gives a discussion of the details of the ark and argues that such a vessel is credible. For him the flood is not

a myth; critical views ought to be eschewed. He argues that a universal flood would be impossible and that the events which are recorded in Gen 6-9 narrate a local inundation. He points out that for a universal flood, one which would cover the Himalayas (29,000 feet), 8 times all the water the earth has now would be required. The Bible gives no hint of the creation of the extra water. If the earth were under 6 miles of water where would it all drain? The enormous pressure of such water as well as the salt, would destroy all marine and plant life. How could kangaroos and polar bears have come to Noah, and how could the inhabitants of the ark have cared for all these creatures? There would also have been astronomical disturbances caused by the increased mass of the earth, so as to send it on a different orbit around the sun.

In addition to these points which Ramm notes there are other problems with the story of the flood. The dimensions of the ark are too small for the transport of all those animals as well as sufficient food for them for more than a year. The survival of other races shows that the flood did not encompass the entire globe; the civilizations of China and India reveal no sign of interruption.

The problem with Ramm's approach is that he is trying to read back a modern scientific view of the world into the Bible. The reason he fails is that like so many fundamentalists he is trying to prove Scripture infallible and he does not appreciate the fact that the story of the flood is not a scientific account. The text speaks of a universal, not a partial flood: 6:17, 7:4, 21, 23, 8:21. ALL flesh died. As we shall see in Chapter 4 there is also the specific undoing of the universal creation of Genesis 1. Ramm's attempt to

explain this by universality of experience, (compare Gen 41:57, 1 K 18:10) does not work. The passage is emphatic. In Gen 7:4 the writer would hardly have thought that everything which God had made included only part of the world. As noted, a truly universal deluge would have been impossible.

Ramm has tried to assimilate a modern scientific outlook to the Bible. Yet the text remains impervious to the questions which have been raised and it would seem to be describing a different sort of reality, that is the primeval era where events do not conform exactly to the nature of our world. Ramm's approach is typical of those who seek to establish a doctrine of inerrancy in the conflict with modern critical approaches to the Bible. He wrongly assumes that the Biblical writers could only interpret the account of the flood as a piece of history. As we shall see the truth of the story of the flood does not lie in whether or not it happened, but in what it teaches about God and man.

There is limited evidence from archaeology to support the occurrence of even a local flood, despite what some have claimed. Bright argues that as far as Syria and Palestine are concerned, there is no proof at all of a major flood. He discusses Jericho which was founded near the beginning of the later stone age, and which shows a continuous existence without any sign of flooding. /4/

Evidence from Mesopotamia is likewise inconclusive. Excavations in 1922 and 1934 by Woolley found in the Obeid Layer (a section of earth for the first half of the fourth millennium) a stratum of river mud 10 feet thick. Was this Noah's flood? Almost certainly not, since the evidence was only partial; only two of the 5 pits which

were dug, yielded this information. The mud could have been caused by a small local flood or earthquake. At Ur there is no evidence of a break in the continuity of the culture which one would have expected had there been a deluge. Local floods caused by events such as the Euphrates bursting its banks, were a common feature of life at that time, and it is easy to see how a story of a universal flood could arise. Needless to say stories of the remains of the ark on Ararat are unfounded. Hence it appears unlikely that there is any historical recollection even of a local flood behind Gen 6-9.

Having claimed that the events of Gen 6-9 are not the record of an historical event, what is the nature of the material? Is it saga, legend or myth? The problem is especially acute since there are no generally agreed definitions for these terms. Prof Rogerson notes that it is virtually impossible to come to an accurate meaning of the term myth, and to distinguish it from other words such as saga and legend. /5/ In the conclusion of his book he discusses 12 suggested meanings of the term myth. Some he dismisses as false; others seek to understand myth in terms of its origin, others in the light of its function. Furthermore there is a large cultural gap between the twentieth century and the time of the Old Testament, which must not necessarily lead us to regard more primitive cultures as inferior. He suggests that we should develop a literary and functional understanding of myth, but he provides no watertight answers. He concludes by noting the complexity of the question and the need to handle it with care.

For the purposes of our study we shall adopt the following definition. Myth is probably best described as a genre of universal

stories which are set in a different era, the primeval time, and which are charged with ideological significance. Legend on the other hand relates to an historical figure, such as Abraham, whose magnetic personality attracts various stories. Legend attaches itself to a particular person or place, whereas myth is universal. /6/ Gen 1-11 does not tell of historical individuals, and its events are universal in character since they concern the origin of mankind.

J. Macquarrie also notes some characteristics of myth, and these can be seen in the account of the flood. Myth is dramatic, evocative, immediate (in the sense that there is a distinction between those who thought mythically and those like us who can perceive the nature of myth), alogical, supernatural, remote in time and space and finally it is related to a community which helps to constitute its identity. /7/

Unfortunately "myth" has in popular language taken on a pejorative sense in the modern world, and its use could be seen as devaluing the material. If we call the stories of Gen 1-11 myth, it might suggest that God did not create the world, that man is neither made in the image of God nor fallen, that God does not sustain the world and that human life is of little value in his eyes. On the other hand as we have seen, Genesis is not a scientific textbook which deals with questions of geology, geography or astronomy. Richardson remarks, "It is not the literal truth of the actual observation of measurable things and events; it is ultimate truth, which can be grasped only by the imagination, and which can be experienced only by image and symbolism". /8/

As an alternative Richardson suggests that we read the stories as

parables. Of course this is a loose use of the word "parable", since the parables of the New Testament usually have one main point, and that cannot be said so easily of the narratives of Gen 1-11. Furthermore the parables of the New Testament are set in the age in which they are told, whereas the stories of Gen 1-11 are accounts of the primeval era. The events of Gen 1-11 contain mythical aspects alien to the parables of the New Testament, which describe typical events within the experience of the ordinary person. It would perhaps be better to describe the stories of Gen 1-11 as "parabolic" rather than as parables. To express the truths told by these accounts in philosophical or bare theological concepts would be to depersonalize them. Rather these stories, especially Gen 6-9, convey to man personal knowledge about himself, his personal existence and his dependence on God, his alienation from him and his need for deliverance. Thieliicke calls these passages "parabolic symbolism" - an exposition of human life itself. "Their purpose is to show what it means for me and my life that God is there at the beginning and at the end, and that everything that happens in the world - my little life with its cares and its joys, and also the history of the world at large extending from stone-age man to the atomic era - that all this is, so to speak, a discourse enclosed, upheld, and guarded by the breath of God". /9/

Whilst the story of the flood is myth, this does not mean that its message, nor the theological truths which it conveys, are to be treated as any less valuable. It is what the flood teaches about the relationship between God, man and the world which is important. In the sense that it conveys truths such as these it is parabolic. The

message of the account of the deluge will form the substance of the thesis.

The significance of this material can be seen in the way a well known traditional Ancient Near Eastern myth of a flood was retold by the Israelites in the light of their own particular beliefs; the story of Gen 6-9 is imbued with the theological outlook from which it is told. Mythical material is particularly useful for understanding the beliefs of Israel since by comparing the accounts of Genesis with those of her neighbours, the scholar can see more clearly how Israel presented her own understanding of reality. Israel's understanding of her covenant God caused her to repudiate some of her neighbour's mythological concepts. /10/ By taking familiar stories Israel could demonstrate to the world that her beliefs were unique.

There have been many discussions concerning the relationship between the account of Genesis and similar stories in Israel's neighbouring cultures, in particular The Epic of Gilgamesh and The Atrahasis Epic. /11/ A full discussion of this aspect of the story of the flood must lie outside our field of vision for the present study. What is important to us, and we shall note this as we proceed, is that the Hebrew account manifests the distinctively Israelite theological perspective. For example there is the practical monotheism of Genesis and the ethical cause of the deluge: human sin. "Whatever be its literary history, the Flood story of the Torah stands out as an authentic, original expression of the religious genius of Israel. Conceptually, spiritually and morally, it stands in striking contrast to all other versions", writes N.M.Sarna. /12/

2) The Source Critical Questions of Gen 6-9

J.Skinner in his commentary on Genesis states that the hypothesis that Gen 6-9 is a composite narrative of two sources which have been woven together, is one of the most brilliant achievements of literary criticism. /13/ The critical orthodoxy of the division of the Pentateuch into its 4 sources has been the consensus since the time of Wellhausen.

S.R.Driver is typical of those who seek to divide Gen 6-9 into two stories. In Gen 6-9 he argues that P consists of 6:9-22, 7:6, 11, 13-16a, 17a, 18-21, 24, 8:1-2a, 3b-5, 13a, 14-19, 9:1-17, 28-29 and the rest belongs to the Yahwistic source. /14/

Most scholars follow this division and claim that the two accounts have been thoroughly integrated. The strands can be disentangled by distinguishing the different names for God: in J יהוה and in P אלהים. Source criticism argues that there are two different chronologies in the flood: J held that the flood lasted 40 days and was preceded by a week of waiting and followed by a two week period afterwards: 8:10, 12. P on the other hand spreads the flood over a longer period of time, and all the references to dates and the 150 day period come from him. There also seems to be a contradiction over the number of animals which entered the ark: in 6:18-20 Noah is instructed to take one pair of each species into the ark, but in 7:1-5 he must have 7 pairs of clean and one pair of unclean animals. There are doublets: the command to enter the ark (7:1-5, 6:15-22); the coming of the flood (7:10, 11); the increase of the waters (7:17b, 18); the abatement of the flood (8:1, 2b, 3a); the drying of

the earth (13b, 14) and the promise never to send another deluge (8:20-22, 9:8-17). If the two sources are separated they form all but continuous narratives, with the cause of the flood, the entry into the ark, the rise and fall of the waters and the promise not to destroy the earth again. Hence Von Rad treats J and P separately in his commentary. /15/ Westermann notes that we have here the very rare case that two narrative threads "have been preserved with all parts intact, both containing the same event with the same division and only the slightest variations. The conclusion therefore is that the narrative was already well fixed in form before it came to J and P". /16/

It is usually said that P is precise, formal and lacking in vivid detail, whereas J is viewed as a graphic popular tale with descriptive genius (8:6-12) and anthropomorphism (6:6,(see Chapter 3) 7:16b). The P account does not have the command to enter the ark, the closing of the door, the opening of the window and the sending of the birds. J does not describe the building of the ark, the landing of the vessel nor the exit of the passengers. The omission of the sacrifice in P is thought to be due to the desire to emphasize that the cult began with Moses on Sinai. In P it is God's word (8:14-17), which tells Noah what he discovers by experiment in J (8:6-12).

More recently this consensus has come in for considerable criticism. There have been those like Rendtorff /17/ and Whybray /18/ who have challenged the whole basis of the documentary hypothesis. More specifically there have been some who have argued that the attempt to separate two sources in the flood has failed; there is one coherent account which is the work of one mind. Cassuto

/19/ and Wenham /20/ argue that there are no discrepancies in either chronology or the number of animals. For example Wenham claims that the 40 days are part of the 150 day period of 7:24 and that the commands of 7:1-5 are a more specific form of the command to take one pair of animals in 6:19. Cassuto /21/, Anderson /22/ and Wenham /23/ also attempt to find a complete palistrophic structure in the whole text.

Yet, as Emerton has shown, these arguments have failed to convince. /24/ For example, to make his palistrophe work Wenham has to omit 6:5-8 which is a quite arbitrary move as the verses are an integral part of the story. The statement of 6:22 that Noah performed all the commands of 6:14-21, including the taking of one pair of each species of animal, fits awkwardly before the order of 7:1-4. Emerton notes that the 40 days of 7:4, 12 are hard to fit with 8:2, 3. Did 110 days elapse between the end of the 40 days of rain and 8:2? The chronological system which speaks of 150 days sees that period as elapsing between the start of the flood and the beginning of the decreasing in 8:3. If the story is a unity, 8:2 refers to the end of the rain 40 days after it had started (7:4, 12). Are we to suppose that 110 days elapsed between 8:2 and the beginning of the process of decreasing? That seems unlikely given the statement of 8:1 and 8:3 where God makes a wind pass over the water. It is more likely that God sent a wind and stopped the surging of water and the rain, and the process of decreasing began at once not 3 months later. It is improbable that 110 days are meant to elapse between 8:2 and 3. There is thus a discrepancy between 150 days and 40 days. /25/

Another issue which needs our attention is whether the Priestly layer was ever a self standing document, or whether its material represents the final editorial work of the Pentateuch. Naturally this may be of some relevance since much of the subject matter for our thesis, in particular with regard to the question of the value of human life, is found in the Priestly layer. Amongst all that has been said on the matter two arguments are of particular note for the story of the flood. /26/

First, there are some striking omissions from P. There is no account of the primordial rebellion; the first mention of sin is found in Gen 6:11ff. There is no description of the making of the covenant on Sinai, /27/ and the Patriarchal narratives are slender. /28/

Yet this argument is less than convincing. P does make sense as a complete text in the primeval history, where there are large blocks of material. It may have been the case that P was not intended to have been a narrative document like J; he may have taken some knowledge on the part of his readers for granted (e.g. "the fall"). /29/ Indeed P does see a major disturbance through sin in Gen 6:11ff. /30/ He may have omitted the covenant at Sinai because he wished to emphasize the covenants of Gen 9 and 17 all the more. /31/ Cross seeks evidence by arguing that Gen 9:6 refers to Gen 4. /32/ On a joint reading we shall see that this allusion is apt, but even on the level of P it fits his themes and purpose (1:26ff, 6:11ff). Hence P need not be editorial.

Secondly, there is the formula **אלה תולדות**, which some have argued is evidence for Priestly redaction since it introduces a J section in

2:4. /33/ E.Blum has also made a similar point, as he argues that a direct link between 2:4a and 5:1 is awkward, as is the connection between 5:32 and 6:9ff, and 7:6 and 11. Each of these texts recapitulates after a JE section. P he claims is a "Bearbeiter oder Redaktor"./34/

Yet their case is less than convincing. There is no reason why these verses could not have been inserted by the redactor who put the two sources together. Cross demonstrates the present context without showing that the text always had that context. /35/ Against Blum it should be noted that it is not so awkward to read 7:6 and 11 together, since 7:11 is a more specific statement with regard to the start of the flood, which relates it not just to the year but also to the date and month, and which gives more detail as to the physical causes of the deluge. Likewise 6:9ff links Noah's righteousness to his offspring (as is often done in the Old Testament e.g. Jb 1:2, 42:13, Pss 127, 128), and therefore does not fit so awkwardly with 5:32. These repetitions are not just reiterative but each adds to our knowledge. Finally we do not know what has been left out from P, and this makes the question to some extent unanswerable.

Yet in the story of the flood the various inconsistencies would seem to suggest that the account is more likely to be the result of the combination of two sources by the redactor than of one strand being the editing of the other. Contradiction would seem more likely in the former than in the latter. /36/ There is enough material in P's account of the deluge to produce a complete narrative, in contrast to P in Gen 18-19. If P were editorial why was it not integrated more thoroughly? For example one would expect a closer

integrating between 6:5ff and 6:11ff. Editorial activity might explain some of P's material, especially in the Patriarchal stories, but this seems unlikely for Gen 1-9 where the material which belongs to P is more substantial. There could have been a basic Priestly document which was put together with J by a redactor who had a Priestly frame of mind. Hypotheses such as those which have been expounded by Cross could suggest that P did not contain material which preceded its composition. As Childs has noted, Cross has made too sharp a distinction between source and redactor; it is possible that P was partly source and partly redaction. In some parts it is dependent on J, in others it has an integrity of its own. /37/

Further the fact that there appear to be two accounts of the story of creation in Gen 1-2, suggests that there are two stories of the flood which have been put together, since, as we shall see in Chapter 4, the accounts of creation and flood are intimately connected. As Koch has noted Gen 2:5 fits awkwardly with 1:26ff, as does 2:7 with 1:26. Could man be created without breath? Surely if P were editorial such problems would be removed? /38/

This does not mean that P did not know of J's story, /39/ (though this is hard to prove since both accounts naturally follow the same structure) but it does suggest that P was not a reworking of J in the account of the deluge. The two sources were probably placed together by a redactor who seems to have given precedence to P, since it is preserved in large blocks, and it is rare for an individual sentence from P to be placed in the J material. Even in the middle of the story there is a tendency for P to have substantial sections (e.g. 7:13-16a, 18-21, 24-8:2a, 3b-5, 14-19). /40/ Hence we shall assume

that there are two sources, rather than there being a priestly redaction of the J material.

Finally the question of the dating of the sources needs a mention. The problem is vast, and a thorough study of this issue lies outside the scope of this dissertation. With few exceptions /41/ a date for J in the late 10th or early 9th century has been maintained. The Yahwist of Gen 1-11 offers no direct evidence of a date, though 4:17-26 with its interest in cultural achievements could point to the time of David or Solomon. The broad view of J which envisages different and extensive epochs also suggests this time. /42/ It also seems that aspects of J's primeval history share some of the concerns of the Succession Narrative such as the pattern of sin, disaster and grace. For example there is the possible parallel between the restoration of David's kingdom after Absalom's revolt and the renewal of creation in Gen 8:20-22. /43/ It seems possible that J dates from this era.

The date of P has commanded far less unanimity of opinion. Some push the date into the post-exilic era, /44/ whilst Jewish scholarship has tended to see P as pre-exilic. /45/ It is certainly correct to say that Lutheran presuppositions, in particular the negative attitude to law, have led some scholars to give P a late date on the grounds that it contains much legal material -a symbol to them of formality not of spontaneity. As we shall see in Chapter two this is to read back alien ideas into the Old Testament. Positive or negative assessments should in principle be entirely independent of dating and genre. We need to be aware of the presuppositions which have influenced decisions of dating.

Unfortunately references in the Old Testament to the account of the deluge are tantalizingly few. Second Isaiah refers to the deluge (54:9ff) /46/, and Ezekiel tells of Noah's righteousness /47/, but it is hard to know for certain that they knew of P. It has even been suggested that Zeph 1:2-3, Hos 4:1-3 and Jer 4:19-27, might be referring to P's account of creation and flood, /48/ but the allusions are too slender to draw any firm conclusions.

In effect it is impossible to give a date to the story of the flood, and this dissertation will have to avoid the issue. P's account of the flood could have come into existence at any time from between 10th century and post-exilic times; it is impossible to be precise. Neither can we be any more precise as to when J and P were joined together. Most argue that the Pentateuch was finally compiled at the time of the exile or in the period of the restoration, but this is impossible to prove, and it is possible that J and P were joined in the primeval history at an earlier date. It is appropriate, however also to ask in what context a reading of the story of the flood would be especially appropriate. The story is a paradigm of sin, judgment and mercy, a sequence which was well known to Israel but was demonstrated as never before in the exile. It is hardly surprising that some scholars have interpreted the flood, especially P's version of it, in this context. Gen 6-9 was a paradigm of Israel's own experience of judgment and deliverance. /49/ For example the statements of 1:28, 9:1,7 would show that God's will is for blessing which cannot be thwarted by exile. /50/ The doctrine of the imago Dei is a sign that people are not just prisoners of war but are the vice-rulers of creation. Gen 9 is a guarantee of the future

stability of the world. /51/ Whilst we cannot prove such a date, there is no doubt that the story of the flood expressed some of Israel's most profound beliefs, and would be well suited to an exilic context.

Given these considerations it does seem likely that there are two sources which have been put together in Gen 6-9. There are major problems with the documentary hypothesis which this dissertation cannot examine and it does seem that the source critical problem of the Pentateuch may be insoluble. The consensus has been badly damaged in recent years, but no one has come up with an adequate solution which is acceptable to all. The formation of the Pentateuch was a long and complex process which took place over hundreds of years and involved numerous additions and editings. Yet it does still seem that there are two sources, J and P, in the account of the flood as has been maintained during the last 100 years.

3) Method for the Thesis

It appears that there is a fairly clear dichotomy between the presuppositions of the scholars who are involved in the debate. Those who prefer literary readings, such as Wenham, are predisposed to adopt harmonized readings of the text, whereas those who are more concerned with the history of tradition are much less concerned to see unity in the text. Unfortunately the tendency has been to go exclusively in one direction or the other. At one end of the spectrum there are those who insist that the appropriate way to approach the text is by historical-critical methods (source, redaction and form criticism), which place the emphasis on the

history of tradition, and who argue that the text can only be understood in the light of its historical context and date. At the other end, there are a considerable number of studies which are concerned with the text itself as a piece of literature, and with readers' concerns being the major factor in assessing the Bible.

The relationship between both these approaches is unclear, and what is even less obvious is how a fully theological approach is to be developed with them. Scholars sometimes push the argument too far in one direction or the other; Wenham is unclear as to how far he relates historical and literary issues, and Emerton never attempts to offer a reading of the whole text. As we have seen, Wenham and Cassuto sometimes offer contrived solutions to apparent problems. Some difficulties are relatively easy to harmonize, other harmonizing readings do violence to the text. The present thesis cannot expect to analyze the whole question of the source critical question of the Pentateuch and the observations of all those who have grappled with its intractable problems. It is hoped that by focusing on the account of the flood useful observations can be made for further study of this question.

This particular dissertation hopes to offer an original perspective on the debate over the sources in Gen 6-9. Both Friedman /52/ and Oberforcher /53/ have written on J and P and the final form of the text, but much more work needs to be done on this, especially with regard to the story of the flood. It is hoped that this dissertation will help to fill the gap. Instead of focusing exclusively on either J or P, or entirely on the final form of the text, our study will examine the two sources separately, and then

consider how they relate when they are put together to form a single story. It is hoped that by studying earlier and final forms of the text our work will shed light on their meaning more clearly than if only one aspect is studied. The originality of the study will be found in its attempt to move beyond the debate as posed by Wenham and Emerton, to a reading of the text which is sensitive both to its early history, and to its complete form. By avoiding either extreme a balanced view of the text should emerge.

There is value in historical analysis of the text. First, analysis of sources helps to explain discrepancies in the text as the result of a complex history of compilation -a problem which we have noted in Gen 1-11.

Secondly, source criticism makes it easier to define genre and to enquire as to the nature of a text. It can help specify where a collection of myths ends and where legend or genealogy replaces it; each may come from different traditions or backgrounds. For example the genealogies in Gen 1-11 might come from a separate source which was a book of genealogies. By understanding the form of the text in this way its meaning might be more apparent. By showing that a particular source with its own genre was introduced, the purpose of the text can be seen with greater clarity.

Thirdly, the theological importance of working at J and P can be found in anchoring them in particular historical circumstances. For example if it can be shown that J belongs to the tenth century then this might to some extent explain why, and under what circumstances it was written. By taking the original meaning of a text and removing it from its context in the canon, it can be seen how

Israelite theology developed, and what influences from outside Israel have been brought to bear on the text. Source analysis can enable us to see how different generations brought distinctive perspectives to the text, and how what was authoritative for one generation had to be modified for another. For example it is frequently noted how J stresses the personal nature of God (e.g. Gen 6:5-8), whereas P places greater emphasis on God's sovereignty and power in creation, to the extent that he almost totally excludes anthropomorphism (Gen 1:1-2:3). In the flood P was especially concerned with the issue of the value of human life (e.g. Gen 9:1-7). Attempts to find the supposed concerns of the writers and their historical context have been found in the studies of the kerygma of the Yahwist, Elohist and Priestly writers. H.W.Wolff in a study of E aimed to find "an originally independent documentary source, with its own technique of composition and an independent message" so as to "consider toward what situation in Israel this new proclamation of the canonical tradition might have been directed". /54/ Source criticism can illuminate the purpose of the writers, and anchor the text in its era. The danger with some modern literary criticism is that it sometimes seeks to sever the text from its historical roots, by claiming that it is what the reader makes of the text, rather than the concerns of the writer and his thought-world, which are all important. To some extent source criticism can prevent such subjectivism and the dangers which it entails, since instead of freeing the text from historical concerns it seeks to enter a particular thought-world.

Fourthly, by source criticism we can see why the two sources were

placed together, and what influenced the redactor as he compiled the text which we now have before us. It may have been that one source could have been misunderstood on its own and needed to be balanced by the outlook of another. For example the strong personal understanding of God in J was balanced by the picture of the sovereign omnipotence of God which is portrayed in P. On their own neither offered a total view of God but their combination presented a balanced whole perspective. By source criticism we can see the final stage of the tradition and the purposes of the redactor.

Study of J and P then can enable us to understand the final form of the text with greater precision. If as in Gen 6-9 the redactor kept so much of both J and P that there is considerable repetition, it would seem that there must be good reason for him to keep what he did. If we have analyzed the individual parts and their concerns, it becomes apparent why a redactor wished to keep the two together. The meaning which the texts may have had once is not necessarily the same as that which it has now. By looking at the sources we can see what constitutes normative Yahwism and how it has changed from its earlier forms. Having looked at the sources the nature of normative Yahwism is placed in much clearer perspective. By normative Yahwism we refer to that expression of Israel's tradition which was set down for posterity in the present form of the Old Testament, as opposed to its earlier versions such as J and P. This normative form was preserved by the religious community as the definitive statement of its beliefs.

There are also on the other hand good reasons for focusing on the final form of the text. First, none of these sources survive outside

the Pentateuch, which means that source criticism remains hypothetical; theology based on hypothesis could be fragile. Not too much should then be made of such methods, and it must always be born in mind that dating of sources is extremely difficult. Likewise the division of sources is open to question, whereas the extent of the complete text is not in doubt, even though the division of its units has at times been questioned (for example the extent of the primeval history). B.W.Anderson writes,

"Since efforts to recover preliterate stages lead us away from the givenness of the text itself into the realm of hypothesis, it is not valid to regard the reconstructed *urform* as normative for interpretation or as having some superiority to Scripture itself. Whatever excursions into the prehistory of the text are possible or necessary, the beginning and end of interpretation is a "free encounter with a writing in its final form" (Wilder)". /55/

Secondly, the text which we have forms a permanently valid theological witness. The ultimate locus of theological meaning is to be found in the final form of the story since the present form of the text is the classic expression of normative Yahwism. This final form of the text is not simply the view of the redactor, but represents what subsequent generations of the community of believers have come to regard as the definitive statement of their belief. It was put together for a definite theological purpose and it was held to be normative for church and synagogue. What it means now is different from what it meant as either J or P, and it is the whole which is central for both Jewish and Christian communities. The complete text is more than the sum of its parts, and cannot be appreciated fully by reading only J and P. The combination of the two sources creates new contexts of meaning; we shall see many examples of this throughout our discussion. This is by no means to eschew source criticism and

investigation into the prehistory of the text, but rather to place it in perspective. The problem is how to integrate the historical reading into a fully theological one so that both bear upon each other. /56/

The present form of the story of the flood is the normative expression of Israel's interpretation of the Near Eastern tradition. There is a difference between a text being wholly consistent and one which hangs together coherently. The story of the flood has several inconsistencies in its details, but does seem overall to have some coherence. A coherent plot emerges with the causes of the deluge, the rise and fall of the waters, and creation, uncreation and re-creation, even if the details within it are obscure. These minor inconsistencies should not prevent a study of the whole story.

Thirdly, the emphasis on literary methods in the last twenty years has shown the value of reading texts as they stand. The complete text shows a range of techniques which would be missed if the sources alone were studied. Literary scholars, are inclined to read the text as a whole, rather than to focus on a hypothetical original. They are concerned with structure and all the resources of prose and poetry. The Bible's theology is bound up with its value as literature. The writers seek to reveal the enactment of God's purposes by the means of story with its full range of techniques: choice of particular words, repetition, dialogue and development of plot. Narrative is a discourse on God's purposes in history and his requirements of humanity. If repetition is just regarded as evidence for the existence of more than one tradition, then its deliberate use by the writer to express a point might be missed if a holistic

reading is not undertaken. By reading the text as a story, the truth it teaches will come alive. /57/

For example there are often compelling reasons for two accounts of one event. In the Biblical narrative it seems that the method of incorporating multiple perspectives does not appear to have been by the fusion of ideas, but by the montage of viewpoints arranged in sequence. Such formulae cannot account for all the perplexities of the Old Testament, but the writers clearly wished to encompass the abiding complexity of their subjects. It would seem that this is probably the case for Genesis 6-9, where the placing together of two traditions enables the reader to receive a fuller perspective of the subject matter. If such blocks of material are just regarded as evidence of sources then this literary device and what it teaches will be missed. /58/

In order to be clear about our methodology we shall read the text at both levels, as two sources and as a complete text. By doing this we shall not push the argument too far in any one direction. On the one hand we shall accept the heuristic value of J and P, and analyze the two sources. On the other we shall see what happens when the two are read as a unity, and what new contexts of meaning are to be found. Of course we are not entirely neutral, but a reading which is sensitive to the various levels, canonical, source critical, form critical and literary is likely to be more illuminating than one which focuses on only one aspect of the text. We are concerned to avoid absolutising one methodology. There is a danger of becoming obsessed with correct method. Each of these approaches has something of value, but none can be used to the exclusion of all others.

Attempts to find a correct method could lead to placing the text in a straitjacket and make us process it rather than hear what it has to say at the various levels. We must be aware of each kind of reading and the particular questions which it raises. /59/

Naturally the conclusion will help us to judge how successful we have been and how well the text hangs together. It may be that by then the need to speak of sources will not be so appropriate. Yet the depth dimension will be used to understand the final form of the text. We do not reject historical approaches to the Bible, but we also guard ourselves against the tendency of some literary scholars who put forward a view of the meaning of texts which is irrespective of the date of composition and authorial intention. This approach is to be eschewed. /60/ Consequently the literary critic needs to be open to the possibility of historical problems and the source critic needs more awareness of the completed text. Both sides need to be prepared to modify their positions. Often fine judgments need to be employed; for example over whether a repetition is evidence of two sources or of a deliberate stylistic device.

Perhaps more important than method is our purpose in reading the text. Different scholars come to the text with different concerns, but not all penetrate the meaning of the text. I do not just come to the text as a linguist who is concerned with source critical and literary issues, but also as a theologian in the Anglican tradition who is seeking to apply the Old Testament to contemporary issues. My purpose is not just to understand the source critical issues, but to use my knowledge of these to read the text in such a way that it can be applied to the modern world. I am concerned to bridge the gap

between study of the Old Testament and Christian ethics.

Even if one is concerned with contemporary issues, the historical integrity of the text has to be respected. The study needs to be aware of the kinds of meaning appropriate to Hebrew thought and language. The story of the flood has been told from the perspective of normative Yahwism. The thesis will examine how the author has shaped and formed the story, which is set in a different era, the primeval time. We shall note as we continue, how Israel projected into the primeval era some of her most profound convictions. /61/

We are as concerned as much with what the text means as with what it meant. The present writer does not wish to detach himself from the present community of believers. Above all the Bible is sacred scripture which functions in both church and synagogue. The texts grew out of a religious community which sought to follow God in worship and service. I see it as my duty to continue this process.

Footnotes

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CHAPTER 1

THE CAUSES OF THE FLOOD

E.M. Good has suggested that the theme of Gen 1-11 is the failure of man to live up to the aims of creation. The motif of sin is played out against the backdrop of Gen 1:31 "And God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good". There is ironic incongruity in these chapters between man as he now is and man as he ought to be, between the purpose of creation and how he now acts. /1/ This failure of mankind is the cause of God's decision to send a universal deluge as a means of punishment for humanity's evil. The first chapter of this dissertation will examine the cause of the flood in both J and P, before seeing how a combined reading of the text enhances our understanding of the story. From the outset Gen 6-9 places the question of the value of human life in a suggestive light.

1) THE YAHWIST

Before moving to a detailed analysis of Gen 6:5-8, it will be necessary to analyze the stories of Cain, Lamech and the angel marriages, to see if they have any bearing on the causes of the deluge.

i) Cain and Abel

Not all the issues of the story of Cain and Abel can be examined here, and we shall return to the story in Chapter 6. /2/ Yet it is

worth noting that in J's account of the primeval world before the flood, the taking of human life is given special emphasis. It seems significant for J that in chapter 4 the two sins described are murders (4:8-16,23ff).

The context of Cain's killing of his brother is the jealousy which is aroused by God's acceptance of Abel's sacrifice and his rejection of Cain's. The relationships between men break down in the horror of bloodshed and hatred. Cassuto writes, "Cain, who took his brother's life, is the prototype of the murderer, for all human beings are brothers, and whoever sheds the blood of man sheds his brother's blood". /3/ Cain has rejected all necessary and appropriate responsibilities, which are due to his brother. The defiant cry "Am I my brother's keeper?" is an arrogant rejection of the moral demands which are made on all human beings. Having described the breakdown in relationships between man and woman in chapter 3, there is now enmity between brothers. The fabric of the first human community falls apart with the ensuing loss of social responsibility, since Cain's cry of 4:9 is a rejection of the care which is due in the family. Cain is unable to hide his deed because the victim's blood is crying to God from the ground. If Cain ignores his neighbour, God will not. As a punishment Cain is condemned to be a wanderer and a fugitive; the land will no longer yield its fullness (4:11ff). Cain is expelled to face the possibility of death. Yet even in his sin there is mercy: Cain the outcast is placed under God's protection by a special sign which wards off all would be avengers (4:16ff). Cain stands under God's curse but no one has the right to intervene in God's decision. As Vawter writes,

"Man who will not respect the limits set on his existence by his Creator God will also not respect the limits set on his activity by the rights of his brother and fellow. It is also

brought out that the assault of one human person upon another is an assault upon the divine law which makes men answerable to God". /4/

The idea of rights is a modern concept, which seems to be alien to the Old Testament, (and we shall discuss this further in Chapter 6) but the point is clear: man has a duty to his neighbour. Herein lies Cain's failure.

ii) Lamech

The story of Lamech is in many ways similar to that of Cain. No details of the incident are given to us, but the song of 4:23-24 expresses Lamech's arrogance.

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
you wives of Lamech, hearken to what I say:
I have slain a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.
If Cain is avenged sevenfold,
truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold." (RSV)

It is unlikely that we have here a condemnation of Lamech taking two wives. Polygamy is described in the Patriarchal stories but is uncondemned there; only with Deuteronomy is it criticized. /5/ What is more pertinent is that we have a song which tells of Lamech's pride, with his refusal to suffer any hurt without exaggerated and dire revenge. /6/ ילד in 4:23 is unlikely to mean a warrior as it seems to in 1K 12:8, 14, since as Miller notes "boy" is more likely as killing a boy is more savage revenge than killing a man. ילד in the sense of a young man is rare in Hebrew and it is usually found in late passages. A non traditional word pair emphasizes the extent of the revenge; the comparison with Cain is one of degree (4:24). /7/ As Von Rad notes, "Lamech's defiant demand reaches into Yahweh's own

domain". /8/

As R.Alter has shown, the literary structure of these verses brings out the extent of Lamech's revenge. The second line of each couplet mirrors and intensifies the theme of the first. Every component of the first half of 4:23 is mirrored in the second: Adah and Zillah / wives of Lamech, hear / give ear, my voice / my speech. The word order in each half line exactly mirrors that in the second.

Further 4:24 shows a striking chiasmic structure "If sevenfold avenged is Cain / Lamech seventy seven". The literary structure emphasizes the contrast between Cain and Lamech as regards vengeance. There is intensification of the theme of the first half of the verse. The same is also the case for 4:23b; it is not any man whom I have killed but a boy. /9/ Vengeance has increased to a disproportionate and destructive potential.

The barbarity of Lamech is emphasized by the repeated use of "I" and "me" in the two verses. Lamech's seventy sevenfold vengeance is in marked contrast to the rules of 9:5ff and Ex 21:23ff. All are at the mercy of this cruel man /10/ for whom the slightest offence brings blood revenge. The arrogant and powerful slaughter at whim, and the passage yearns for strict justice. /11/ The song asserts Lamech's own ego.

The other important feature of Gen 4 is that the increase of human capability and potential also has a dark side to it. With the growth of man's ability and the complexity of civilization, the likelihood of killing is increased. The forging of instruments of bronze and iron has a double edged potential, since it can lead to the manufacture of weapons as well as of tools.

Some argue that the song is to be interpreted apart from its

context. Gunkel claims it is a song of the desert which is unconnected with the inventions of Lamech's house. The song is a boast of exaggerated vengeance for slight hurts. /12/

It may have been the case that the song was originally unconnected with its present context, and there is no doubt that it is an example of boasting, but the fact that the story is set beside a description of human achievement tells us that technical advance and morality are not the same. The power of self assertiveness has grown to such an extent that even the smallest offence leads to disproportionate retribution. The text has shown both the positive and the negative aspects of the growth of civilization. /13/ Cassuto notes,

"In such circumstances, the Judge of the whole earth could not but execute judgment. All the achievements of material civilization are not worth anything without moral virtues, and cannot protect man from retribution. We have here a kind of prelude to the decree of the flood." /14/

iii) The Angel Marriages

The next incident in J is the bizarre story of Gen 6:1-4. In view of its proximity to the flood it might be suggested that the behaviour of the sons of God and the daughters of men was a direct cause of the deluge.

First, the identity of the **בני האלהים** has been discussed at length. Wenham notes that there are three possible interpretations: first, that they are non human angels or spirits; secondly that the sons of God are superior men such as kings or rulers, or thirdly they are godly men, the descendants of Seth as opposed to the godless line of Cain. It is not possible to give a full analysis here, but it seems more likely that divine beings are described, since in 6:1 **אדם** refers to all mankind and it is hard to see how in 6:2 a more specific sense is required for **בנות האדם**. There does seem to be an

explicit אלהים / אדם contrast in these verses. Elsewhere in the Old Testament בני האלהים usually refers to heavenly creatures Ps 29:1, Jb 1:6. /15/

Secondly, it is by no means clear that the writer saw the beings of 6:1-4 as committing a sin. Both Cassuto /16/ and Wenham /17/ observe that nothing immoral is described since the phrase לקח אשה is the usual expression for a normal marriage; Gen 6 offers no hint of rape or polygamy. Neither is Westermann correct to see here parallels with Gen 12:10-20 and 2 Sam 11 where someone in a position of superior power selects a beautiful woman. /18/ He is right as far as there is a parallel between the superior position of the king and the בני האלהים, but there is no hint of adultery in Gen 6 as there is in the story of David and Bathsheba. The word מכל need only mean "from among", and not necessarily "whomsoever" in a condemnatory sense. /19/ The text offers no condemnation and there is no hint of adultery.

Thirdly, it has been suggested that there is here the idea of the breaking of bounds between the respective realms of heaven and earth; a concern of particular interest in view of the importance of separation in the account of creation in Gen 1. /20/ Clines speaks of the boundary between the divine and human worlds being broken. /21/ Wenham argues that it is this breaking of bounds which is reprehensible in the Old Testament, in view of the condemnation of the crossbreeding of species, the growing of different crops in one field and the use of more than one material in the making of a garment: Lev 19:19, Deut 22:9-11. /22/ It was a transgression for the two realms, heavenly and earthly, to mix in this way thereby breaking the boundaries which were established by the creator.

I question whether this is an issue, as there seems to be no condemnation at all of these relationships. The statement of 6:3a has perplexed commentators for some time /23/ but it need be no more than a straightforward statement that man will not live for ever. Cassuto is right to see no rebuke here. /24/ Rather it is stated that the children born of these unions will not live for ever; all men whether born of mortal or immortal parents will die. Gen 6:1-4 gives rise to many different interpretations and we do not fully understand what it means, but there is insufficient evidence to link it to the sin of the flood.

Finally, I should like to suggest that Gen 6:1-4 has no direct connection with the story of the flood. /25/ If it were a sin which is described, would not 6:3 be ample punishment? R.S.Hendel argues that Gen 6:1-4 tells of the original cause of the flood, which was later moved by the Yahwist to give a more ethical motivation for the deluge. /26/ Yet the concerns of 6:1-4 are not taken up in the rest of the story of the flood. As Skinner notes, 6:1-4 contain no hint that the flood is to follow. /27/ The sons of God are not mentioned in the account of the deluge, and if they were instrumental in bringing the flood would we not hear of them again? The author of 6:1-4 seems unaware that the Nephilim would be destroyed in the flood and neither is he aware of their reappearance in Num 13:33. /28/ Keil and Delitzsch argue that the angel marriages were not the cause of the deluge, since it was man whom God had created who was sinful. If the angels' marriages caused a flood why did the rest of humanity have to die? /29/ In short we have here an isolated unit of obscure meaning, which does not help us to understand the cause of the flood.

One might still ask about the juxtaposition of 6:1-4 with the rest

of the story of the flood. Perhaps one reason why the two are placed together is in order to develop the idea of humans multiplying "on the face of the ground". Gen 4:17 - 26 has already set this theme in motion and it is not unnatural that a story of angelic and human marriages should be placed here; human increase was helped by angelic beings. Nor would a section speaking of the Nephilim be inappropriate in a context dealing with the origins of mankind. The theme of human increase is set in fuller perspective if J and P are read together. 6:1 echoes 1:28 and comes immediately after a long genealogical section in Gen 5. 6:1-4 would seem to illustrate that alongside the multiplication of humans there was also intermingling of human and divine beings in the antediluvian world. By placing 6:5 after 6:1-4 the writer showed that despite human increase and the angel marriages, man had made no moral advances.

iv Genesis 6:5

J introduces the story of the deluge in 6:5-8:

"The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground, man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them". But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord." RSV

God's repentance will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 3, and Chapter 2 will explore 6:8 and the extent to which Noah is exempt from the sinful generation. The present chapter will focus attention on 6:5ff, whereas God's reaction to the situation will be discussed

more fully in the following two chapters. God reacts to the situation with sorrow and pain, yet even in the midst of despair there is hope (6:8).

The Yahwist sees the cause of the flood as the evil of man's heart, and provides a reflection on the state of sin which has overtaken man. The heart לב in Hebrew thought was the seat of understanding and will which encompasses the entire inner life of man. /30/ H.W.Wolff writes of

"The wide range and fine shades of meaning with which "heart" in Hebrew describes the seat and function of the reason. It includes everything that we ascribe to the head and the brain - power of perception, reason, understanding, insight, consciousness, memory, knowledge, reflection, judgment, sense of direction, discernment"./31/

In Gen 6 the word לב is set in conjunction with the words

וכל יצר מחשבת

The root יצר has various nuances of meaning: it can be used of forming an object (Is 29:16), or creating a living being (Gen 2:7), or it can be used with reference to psychological and moral forming (Deut 31:21, Gen 6:5). /32/ In Gen 6:5 יצר and מחשבת have virtually the same meaning - Luther translated "planning and striving". /33/ Humanity's state consisted in striving after רע for כל היום. The passage portrays man as dedicating his whole life to evil for the whole time. What God forms in Gen 2:7 is for good; what man forms is for evil in Gen 6.

רע is a comprehensive general term for wickedness and few texts are so explicit and all embracing in their description of sin as Gen 6:5. /34/ The verb רעע means to be bad; רע, in contrast to all other words for sin, describes a state and does not refer to a wicked action, as does חמס. A state of wickedness of great magnitude has moved God to take drastic action. /35/ As Driver wrote, "The

corruption had seized their whole mind and purpose: it was complete (only evil i.e. nothing but evil), and continuous". /36/ The producer, the production and the product were all evil.

"God saw", **וַיַּרְא** is used in other passages for a decisive divine intervention (6:12, 29:31). /37/ The phrase does not mean mere noticing but rather introduces an action. /38/ God's response is to blot out man **מִחַה** (6:7, 7:4, 23). Those who sin will be annihilated. **מִחַה** can even be used of wiping a dish (2 K 21:13), and it provides a graphic description of the destruction which is to ensue.

Some scholars have seen in J a description of the intensification of sin in the primeval era. Von Rad argues that sin had grown like an avalanche up to 6:5. The Yahwist has portrayed increasing alienation from God; sin expanded and grew since the expulsion from the garden, through the stories of Cain, Abel, Lamech and the angel marriages, until it reached a climax in Gen 11. In these chapters the chasm between God and man has widened. The first chapters of the Yahwist provided the etiology for the events of 12:1-3. Israel's redemption is linked to world history. /39/

As we noted, the episode of the angel marriages is not a description of a sin. Furthermore we should agree with Westermann who argues that these chapters do not portray a growth of sin, but rather the different ways in which humans can defect from God's ordinances. The variety and scope of alienation is set out. There is no apparent surge in wickedness; rather the sins of Cain and Lamech are described before the total wickedness of 6:5. There is insufficient evidence for a theme of the spread of sin, but what is new is that wickedness has enveloped a whole generation. The fratricide and the killing which was perpetrated by Lamech were not

enough to induce a universal punishment. Punishment must fit the crime; total depravity leads to total destruction. "He (J) does not intend in his explanatory sentence v5b to describe a general sinfulness which is concretized in individual acts, but that God-created people are capable of the utterly horrifying". /40/ As Westermann's more existential interpretation shows, these chapters are concerned to treat universal human reality, and are not just tied to the primeval era. As we noted in the introduction these stories have a parabolic function.

To summarise: Gen 3-6 depicts different ways in which humans can defect, from the rebellion in the garden to the evil of a whole generation. 6:5 specifies no particular sin, but the total evil of humanity is put in general terms. Throughout there is usurpation of God's prerogatives, destruction of community and confrontation with God.

2) THE PRIESTLY SOURCE

The Priestly writer describes the sin which caused the flood more specifically than J does.

6:11-13: "Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold I will destroy them with the earth". (RSV)

M.Zipor has tentatively suggested an emendation for Gen 6:13. The text is difficult and reads **והנני משחיתם את הארץ**. Most modern commentators render **את** as "with", "God will destroy them with the

earth". Zipor argues that ארץ is a metonym for the civilization in 6:11, 12a (See Lev 19:29). He therefore argues that we read

והנכם משחיתים את הארץ "And they are corrupting the earth", which follows "the earth is filled with violence through them". /41/

Zipor is less than convincing since there is no textual evidence to support his position. The text makes good sense as it stands, since the motif of creation and uncreation which we shall discuss in Chapter 4, does involve the destruction of the earth, as the barriers between dry land and water are removed. As man breaches the moral law so also the physical world is broken. There is no need to emend the verse.

A few words about the structure of Gen 6:11 - 13 are required. The verses are held together by repetition: ארץ is used six times and שחת four times. The Priestly writer has used a close symmetry and palistrophe:

A the earth became corrupted before God (11a)

B the earth was filled with violence (11b)

C all flesh had corrupted (12b)

C' the end of all flesh is coming (13ab)

B' the earth was filled with violence (13ac)

C' about to corrupt the earth before them (13b). /42/

The palistrophe is not perfect but it does show that there is a carefully planned structure.

Prior to these verses the Priestly writer portrays Noah as an exemplary model of piety (6:9, 10); he is righteous, blameless and walks with God. The next chapter will describe Noah's righteousness in greater detail, but it is important to note here the stark contrast between him and the rest of humanity which is utterly

corrupt. It is because of this difference that Noah is instructed to build the ark (6:14-22) so as to deliver him from the destruction (שחַת) which is about to overtake the rest of corrupt (שחַת) humanity. It is through the one righteous man that humanity is delivered.

i) Corruption

The Priestly source also has a general term for the state of sin which has overtaken man. He sees it in terms of שחַת - a word which is used 7 times in the story: 6:11, 12, 12, 13, 17, 9:11,15, but does not occur elsewhere in P. The root שחַת occurs over 160 times in the Bible. The Niphal of the root means "to be marred", "spoilt" or "destroyed" (Jer 13:7, Ez 20:44). The Piel usually means "destroy" (Ez 20:17) but it is sometimes used of corruption (Ex 32:7). The Hiphil can be used to mean "destroy" (Gen 6:12. 18:28) or "act corruptly" (Deut 4:16. 31:29). Through all these forms of the root there seem to be two meanings: "destroy" and "corrupt". What is the relationship between these two translations and how do they coalesce into one root?

The root שחַת has various nuances of meaning. The basic idea is of destruction; e.g. Gen 6:13 where God will annihilate all living beings. The root can be used for human activity, such as the breaking down of a wall (2 Sam 20:15), the ravaging of a city (2 Sam 11:1) and the verb is used of the destruction of Judah (2 K 8:19). A glance at the words used in parallel with שחַת confirms this analysis: אכל (Jer 2:30), בלע (2 Sam 20:20), כרת (Deut 20:19), שמד (Ps 106:23), חרם (Is 37:11ff), הרג (Is 14:20) and שרד (Jer 48:18). /43/

Unfortunately the root does not occur in P again but it is used several times in the book of Ezekiel - a book which has much in

common with P . A glance at the use of the verb here shows how it is given a strong moral implication which can be seen in two ways.

First, destruction is often a punishment for sin. Ez 5:16 employs the root for destruction as punishment for evil (5:1-12), a judgment which is described in 5:13-17. **שחח**, destruction, is the appropriate response to sin and similar uses are found in Gen 6:13, and in some J passages (18:28, 31ff, 19:13, 14, 29, Ex 8:20). As far as the Old Testament is concerned, sin renders a man liable for drastic punishment which brings with it the threat of destruction. Disobedience brings wrath and death.

Secondly, **שחח** is given moral significance by its use as a term to describe the corruption of humans. Ez 28:17 speaks of corrupting wisdom, 20:44 of corrupt deeds. Ez 23:11 tells of harlotry "corrupting" Oholbah which brings the terrible judgment depicted in 23:22-35 especially 23:35, "Because you have forgotten me and cast me behind your back, therefore bear the consequences of your lewdness and harlotry" (RSV). Corrupt deeds ruin those who commit them.

Further examples of this can be seen from other passages in the Old Testament. Jer 18:4 speaks of the potter's clay being "spoiled"; the clay fails to turn itself into the desired object becoming fit only for breaking up and reworking. Jer 13:7 speaks of a waistcloth which is spoiled and becomes **לא יצלח לכל**. Transferred to the moral sphere these examples illustrate how **שחח** is used of sin: it leads to corruption and spoils or destroys those who commit it. Deut 4:16, 25 employ **שחח** in the context of graven images; to use such a means of worship corrupts the worshipper and leads to annihilation (4:26). Prov 6:32 speaks of adultery destroying a man not because of some punishment inflicted by another, but because the act per se is

corrupting and self destroying. Prov 11:3 clearly shows that sin is ultimately destructive. There is, it would appear, an automatic link between sin and death - a notion of cause and effect. It can then be seen how the same root can be used of both corruption and destruction. The outcome of sin is punishment in the form of destruction. Corruption leads to destruction but as far as the Hebrew mind was concerned the two are almost inseparable. Num 32:15 parallels turning from God with destruction; departure from God brings inevitable ruin and death. Is 1:4 illustrates the destruction which corruption brings. The first chapter of Isaiah presents a devastating picture of a ruined, desolate land with few survivors - all as a consequence of "the sons who deal corruptly".

Coupled with this, there is also the belief that man is not worthy of life due to his own sin. Israel deserves destruction but it is only the mercy of God which prevails (2 K 8:19, 13:23). Other passages see man as unworthy of life due to his sin: Ps 143:2, Jer 10:24, Ez 18:27.

A comparison between Gen 6 and Ex 32 (J) illustrates the semantic link between corruption and destruction, as seen in the root **תהו**. The two stories depict quite different sins, **תהו** and idolatry, but both share the fundamental view outlined above that sin is corrupting and that its consequences, both in and of itself and by God's judgment, are destruction. In Gen 6 this corruption is "something massive, contagious, poisonous; it affected whatever place a person inhabited. The subject "the earth", is saying that the whole of a people's area of operation was corrupted with them", writes Westermann. /44/ The acts of **תהו** have led to a state of corruption which makes destruction inevitable. Those who destroy will destroy

themselves.

The semantic point is clear: to act corruptly and to destroy are one concept in Hebrew thought. Both the generation of the flood and those at Sinai have brought their own ruin upon themselves. What God destroys in the flood has already destroyed itself./45/ Zenger notes, "man either survives with the created order by living in harmony with it, or goes under with the created order by living against it." /46/ Sarna observes that in the story of the flood there is a basic universal moral law which must not be undermined. If it is man's fundamental existence is destroyed. /47/ Ruin and destruction are of man's own making and his irresponsible behaviour has brought disaster upon himself. Whilst human life is of value in God's eyes, sin makes that life unworthy of continued existence and liable to the ultimate sanction. As far as the Old Testament is concerned, God is justified in taking the life of the sinner, since man has made himself unworthy of life. The renunciation of **שחית** in the future in Gen 9:11 is a testimony to the mercy of God in the face of persistent human sinfulness.

There is some dispute over **כל בשר** as to whether or not animals are included in this picture of moral corruption as well as humans. Driver notes that the phrase is found thirteen times in P and in Gen 6:11-13 it refers to men only. /48/ Hulst cautiously argues that in 6:12,13 mankind is referred to, since in prophecy **כל בשר** means only humans when it occurs in a context of guilt and punishment (Jer 25:31). However P uses the term in different ways: animals only in 6:19, 7:15, 16, 8:17, 9:15, and for humans and animals in Gen 6:17, 9:11, 16, 17. /49/ Westermann thinks that only humans are referred to here since animals are never the subject of **חמס** and the

broad notion of כל בשר is similar to that of the earth in 6:11, 12.

/50/

It is hard to be certain, but as Wenham notes this narrow sense is hard to justify since the covenant of 9:9-17 is made with both man and beast. /51/ Further, there is no reason why the animals should not be seen as having some moral responsibility given the statement of 9:5 that animals are liable for punishment. If they have that obligation there it seems as though they are included in the judgment of 6:11ff. It seems that כל בשר includes the animals in Gen 6:11ff. Indeed on a joint reading with J this is clearer (7:23).

Not only was all flesh corrupt, but they had corrupted "their way" (6:12). "Way" refers to a person's way of life, lifestyle or direction that their life leads them. Ex 32:8 describes Israel as departing from the דרך which God had commanded them. In Deuteronomic literature דרך is equated with the commands which are laid down by God (Deut 8:6ff). /52/

Gen 6 is set in a quite different context from these two passages. To what does the way refer in this pre Sinai era? The only preceding passage which would seem to echo 6:11ff is Gen 1:26-30. It would seem probable that the way which these people have corrupted is that ordained in 1:26ff. There man is told to have dominion over creation, to be fruitful and multiply, and to subdue the earth. It would appear that in Gen 6 man has corrupted and abused this dominion. He has transgressed the boundaries which were established by the creator. In the course of our discussion we shall see how the flood demonstrates the absolute sovereignty of God over all life. It is for him to establish man's rule over creation as God's vice-regent, but that rule has strict limits to it which must be

observed. When man oversteps these boundaries he is guilty of corrupting the way of 1:26ff. According to P חַמְסָה is the primary cause of the deluge and this is a major abuse of the dominion entrusted in Gen 1. The taking of human life (and possibly also animal life in this apparently vegetarian context) is a major corruption of the way which is outlined in Gen 1. Man is not supposed to exercise the power of life and death - that lies outside his prerogatives and is reserved for God alone. This suggests that חַמְסָה means more than "unrighteousness". As Skinner wrote of Gen 6, they had "violated the divinely appointed order of creation". /53/ As they have done so shall it be done to them; they have destroyed their way, God shall annihilate them; those who spoil the way of God shall be ruined themselves. The moral decay of Gen 6 is total. A similar picture of moral collapse is found in Pss 11 and 53./54/ Perhaps the animals are included in the judgment because they had rebelled against human authority. Though this can only be conjecture one gets the impression that the whole created order had gone astray and had rejected the dominion which was given in 1:26ff.

ii) Violence

The Priestly source focuses on one sin in particular חַמְסָה. The root חַמְסָה is rarely found outside the Hebrew Bible but in the Old Testament the noun occurs 60 times the verb 8. Only in Jb 19 is it predicated of God, elsewhere it is used of humans both Jew and Gentile alike. /55/ חַמְסָה is an action (פִּעֵל Is 59:6, עָשָׂה 53:9), and can even be caused by speech (Gen 16:5). /56/ It can, as in the previous example, be used of a woman but is usually done by a man. In parallel to חַמְסָה אִישׁ is set אָדָם רָע (Ps 140:2), אִיב (Ps 18:49) and

אִישׁ לִשְׂרֹן (140:12). Set in contrast to חַמְסָה we find בְּרִכּוֹת (Prov 10:6), טוֹב (13:2) and מִשְׁפָּט (Is 59:6, 8). /57/

There is considerable disagreement over the translation of the term. H.J.Stoebe writes, "חַמְסָה becomes a comprehensive general term for sin". /58/ Speiser translates "lawlessness" /59/ as does Vawter who adds, "The author has offered no hint of the transgression of divine prohibitions, no hint of murder or violence, no instance of hubris or disorder. And now all this is changed in the twinkling of an eye, and what was once all good is now suddenly all bad". /57/ Cassuto claims that חַמְסָה can mean anything that is not righteous since it is in parallel with other words for sin such as רָע, רָשָׁע, עוֹלָה and אָרָן: Is 59:6, Jon 3:8, Ps 58:3, 140:2, 5, Prov 4:17. /61/ The LXX is no more specific in its renderings of חַמְסָה: ἀδικία, τὸ ἀδικὸν ἀσεβεία and for אִישׁ חַמְסָה we find ἀνὴρ κακός or ἀνὴρ ἀδικός. /62/

In contrast others have suggested a more specific translation is required. RSV, NEB and NIV render the word as "violence". We shall argue that the latter position is nearer the essence of חַמְסָה.

We shall take as our starting point an important statement of Robert Alter in his discussion of parallelism in Hebrew poetry where he offers a useful rule of thumb:

"In the abundant instances, however, in which semantic parallelism does occur in a line, the characteristic movement of meaning is one of heightening or intensification....of focusing, specification, concretization, even what could be called dramatization....The rule of thumb....not invariable law - is that the general term occurs in the first verset and a more specific instance of the general category in the second verset".

He quotes Jb 41:16, "His heart is as solid as stone, / as solid as the nether millstone". /63/

This principle suggests that חַמְסָה may be a more specific term than "unrighteousness" in some cases. For example Cassuto quotes Is 59:6

as evidence that חמס is a general term since it is set in parallel with און. But if Alter is right, then since חמס is in the second half of the verse it may be a more specific term and may possibly be better rendered as "violence". We shall discuss this verse further below. The same is so for Ps 140:2, where אדם רע is specified as איש חמסים and 140:5 where רשע is paralled to איש חמסים. Ps 58:3 offers a similar parallel:

אף בלב עולת הפעלון בארץ
חמס ידיכם תפלוסון

Proverbs 4:17 does not offer us a specific context to determine the meaning of חמס:

כי לחמו לחם רשע
ויין חמסים ישחו

Once more the parallelism suggests more than general unrighteousness. It should be noted that the plural does not seem to suggest a significant difference of meaning. Perhaps it means violent deeds, but in Ps 140:2 man of violent deeds is the same as a violent man. (See Köhler Baumgartner Lexicon p113)

The main problem is to find the common connotation of the word; what sort of company does it keep? H.Haag has come closest to the essence of the meaning:

"Thus חמס is cold-blooded and unscrupulous infringement of the personal rights of others, motivated by greed and hate and often making use of physical violence and brutality" /64/

The notion of rights is perhaps alien to the Old Testament, in that it is a modern concept, which does not appear to be found in the Bible. The importance of Haag's definition lies in his understanding of חמס as an attack on people which leads to an infringement of their dignity. "Violence" is probably the best rendering of the term but this needs some qualification since in English the word includes harm

to property as well as to people. **עוֹנֵן**, we would suggest, is used primarily of people, with the connotation of oppression. Several factors seem to indicate this.

First, there are some passages which use **עוֹנֵן** in a prominent way, e.g. Hab 1:2,3. **עוֹנֵן** is one of the wrongs which caused the prophet to cry out to God for help, not just for himself but for Israel. The opening paragraph speaks of the perversion of justice, strife, contention, destruction, violence and trouble. **עוֹנֵן** is picked up again in 1:9, where the Chaldeans come to inflict violent punishment on Israel. 2:6-11 speak of plundering and violence, in particular bloodshed is described in 2:8, 17. 2:12-14 condemn those who build a town by bloodshed i.e. by killing. The first two chapters, amongst other matters, seem particularly concerned with violence and oppression. Chapter 3 continues by describing the punishment which is to come as a result of this sin. Given these important themes in the book and the prominent place given to **עוֹנֵן**, the word would seem to be more accurately rendered as "violence", rather than "unrighteousness".

As we have already seen Ps 140:1ff uses **עוֹנֵן** in a similarly prominent way. Once more the context suggests that the term is more likely to be "violence". The men of violence stir up wars, lay a trap and try to trip up the psalmist's feet. As a translation of **עוֹנֵן** "unrighteousness" would not do justice to the content of the psalm.

Secondly, there are uses of **עוֹנֵן** where the context speaks of the threat to life. The examples which have been quoted from Habbakuk illustrate this well. Ju 9:24 refers to the killing of the seven sons of Jerubbabai by Abimelech. In Job 19:7, Job cries out **עוֹנֵן**. The siege vocabulary of the passage suggests that he is suffering

physical attack of some sort (19:8-12).

Thirdly, and even more pertinently there is a close association between חַמַּס and the spilling of blood, e.g. Gen 49:5. חַמַּס is often employed with דָּמִים or דָּם and this relationship between the two words would suggest that חַמַּס means more than unrighteousness and refers more particularly to violence. Hab 2:8, 17 describe the shedding of blood as doing violence to the earth - a reference probably to pollution (Compare Num 35:29-34). The link between the two terms can be seen in Ezekiel where 7:23 speaks of the land as "full of bloody crimes and the city is full of חַמַּס". חַמַּס can take on such large proportions that the earth can be filled with it. מְלֵא חַמַּס is found frequently in Ezekiel: 7:23, (where חַמַּס and דָּמִים are synonyms) 8:17, 28:16. Violence can take on such proportions that severe punishment is inevitable. /65/. חַמַּס can also be employed in cultic contexts, yet the translation "violence" is probably still appropriate since social abuse is often linked to misuse of the cult and worship (Ez 22:26ff cf Jer 19:4, Ps 106:38). Indeed, given the role of blood in the cult and the importance of ritual purity, it is hardly surprising that חַמַּס is spoken of in connection with the worship of Israel.

Further examples show the link between חַמַּס and blood. Joel 4:19 describes the חַמַּס which was done to Judah in terms of the shedding of innocent blood. Is 59:6 puts this in a clear perspective and confirms what was said earlier. 59:2 speaks of iniquities separating man from God and in particular it is the taking of life which is singled out: 59:3 "your hands are defiled with blood"; 59:7 "they make haste to shed innocent blood"; 59:8 "the way of peace they know not". As will be noticed below, talk of unjust law in 59:4 could be for the purpose of seeking another's destruction. Hence חַמַּס in Is 59

would seem to be more appropriately rendered as "violence".

Some passages speak of חַמַּס as coming (בָּרָא) upon (עַל) the doer, returning to punish: Ju 9:24, Ps 7:17. As Jer 51:35 shows, we have here the same kind of expression as blood being on the head of the offender. /66/ "The violence done to me and to my kinsmen be upon Babylon"; let the inhabitant of Zion say, "My blood be upon the inhabitants of Chaldea" (RSV). Like blood חַמַּס can stick to somebody's hands - compare Is 1:15 and Jb 16:17. /67/ The importance of clean hands and innocency is stressed in Ps 24:3ff and this lies behind such statements as 1 Chron 12:18. /68/ Both blood and חַמַּס defile the land (Ez 7:23).

Fourthly, חַמַּס is often employed in connection with false accusation and unfair judgment. The writer of Ps 58:2ff speaks of unjust judges dealing out violence. /69/

More specifically חַמַּס is often linked to עֵד. עֵד can mean a plaintiff rather than witness. In Deut 19:16 the false accuser is making an attempt on his opponent's life; if the witness has lied, he is to die (19:18ff). חַמַּס means much more than lying: the point at issue is that false accusation is being used to destroy another person. /70/ The basic idea of חַמַּס as oppression re-emerges (compare Micah 6:11ff, Ps 35:11) with the word being in connection with those who actively seek the destruction of others. As the false accuser has sought the death of the accused he has to suffer as he had wanted to do to his brother". Of course in the court someone should experience the exact opposite of חַמַּס. חַמַּס can then become a cry for help of someone who is attacked and can see no way of escape. Jb 19:7 is the cry of one who knows he is in the right and cries for just judgment. (See also Jer 20:8) /71/

It can then be seen that "the primary context of חַמַּס is society".
 /72/ It is the arbitrary exploitation and infringement of one's fellow man, in which brute force and bloodshed are employed. For example Am 3:10 accuses the rich of storing up חַמַּס in their houses i.e. treasure gained from exploitation. It is here that we encounter an example of the frequent combination of חַמַּס and שׁוֹד, and this will be of considerable help in determining the meaning of חַמַּס.

Despite Haag's doubt about the distinction between the two words, /73/ Wolff is right to observe in the context of Am 3:10, that חַמַּס means (attempted) murder, or at least assault on life and limb. שׁוֹד on the other hand tends to refer to damage to material goods. The word pair conveys the idea of murder and robbery, /74/ and can be almost a single concept (Hab 1:3). I.L.Seeligman writes,

"חַמַּס וְשׁוֹד ist eben eine feste Verbindung; sie findet sich noch in Am III:10, Hab I:3, Ez XLV:9. Stellen wie Ob 5, wo die לִילִיָּהּ שׁוֹדֵדִים den Dieben גַּנְבִּים parallel stehen (vgl auch Mi II:4) legen es nun nahe, in der genannten Verbindung שׁוֹד als die an Gut und Besitz verübte Gewalt zu betrachten, חַמַּס würde dann ursprünglich den Angriff auf das Leben, den Mordversuch bedeuten. Für diese Annahme spricht, dass sich blosses חַמַּס (זַעֲקָה) קָרָא erhalten hat, nicht blosses שׁוֹד קָרָא, in חַמַּס läge also wohl die direktere körperliche Bedrohung". /75/

Other uses of שׁוֹד suggest that it is primarily a word for attack on physical objects: destruction in battle (Is 13:6), of Jerusalem (Is22:4) of despoiling (Ps 12:6). The verb שׁוֹדֵד can be used of the taking of life (Ju 5:27) but more often refers to property, in the sense of destroying or laying waste (Is 15:1, Jer 4:20).

Perhaps the apparent overlap between the two terms is due to the fact that the destruction of physical objects and the taking of life often come together in war or similar situations: Is 59:7 where those who destroy also shed blood; Jer 6:7 in the context of a siege, where there is both the taking of life and the destruction of property. Indeed the fact that the two words are used together so often,

suggests that they have different points of reference.

Whilst the two terms are often closely associated with each other in contexts of punishment, it does appear that **חַמַּס** is used primarily of humans and **שָׂדֵה** of property. Indeed damage to people's property can include harm to others since it is an infringement of their dignity as humans. In one sense the word **חַמַּס** is broader than the English word "violence" since it includes false testimony in court but it is also narrower in that its primary focus is on people. Consequently even in passages where the context is not specific, we should render **חַמַּס** as "violence" (e.g. Prov 3:31, 26:6).

Ultimately **חַמַּס** is a crime against God which provokes him to judgment. Yahweh hides his face (Is 59:2), sends Israel to exile (Am 6:7), destroys (Ob 10) and turns the land over to a curse (Mi 6:13-15), plunder (Am 3:11ff) and desolation (Ez 12:19).

"That Yahweh binds the human conscience to his will and responds to obedience or disobedience in sovereign freedom with life or death, blessing or curse, is a fundamental pillar of Yahwistic theology", writes Haag. /76/

iii) Violence in Gen 6

In relating the above discussion to Gen 6 it would seem that the translations of **חַמְסָה** offered by Cassuto "unrighteousness" and Vawter "lawlessness" are inadequate. The cumulative case of the above points shows that **חַמְסָה** is best translated as "violence". The English word "violence" is rather too broad; **חַמְסָה** refers to attack on people rather than on property, though there is some overlap between **חַמְסָה** and **שׂוּד**. The Hebrew word is more specific than the English and there is no exact equivalent in our language.

Naturally this fits our interpretation of the corruption of the way in 6:12. Violence is a deliberate breach of the way ordained by God in Gen 1:26ff. God does not permit the oppression of one's fellows. Von Rad calls **חַמְסָה** in Gen 6 "the violent breach of a just order". /77/

חַמְסָה in Gen 6 covers all violent crime, bloodshed and oppression. /78/ The image of God is reversed, since instead of faithfully exercising his role as God's representative (**צֶלֶם**) and vice-regent, man grasps at powers which are not rightfully his. Instead of using the dignity and power which is entrusted to the image at creation for the benefit of the world, man assumes an arbitrary, false authority, which brings evil. The world is not just corrupt but is corrupted by violence. It can then be seen why the image of God is given such prominence both in the creation and in the flood. Having severed himself from God by the sin of **חַמְסָה**, man has made himself liable for drastic punishment - death. Humanity which commits **חַמְסָה** destroys itself.

In contrast Noah is the faithful man of God who appears to be free from the sin of violence. He has not corrupted the way of Gen 1, and

because of this, he is chosen to be the means whereby humanity is delivered from annihilation. By faithfully obeying God in 6:14-21, he provides an example of the appropriate stewardship of creation, which is so clearly lacking in the corrupt generation. The life which is saved is the one which most resembles the image of God. It seems that human life is of value in its relation to God, not just in its own right.

This more specific translation of **בדם** in Gen 6 is supported by the commands given at the end of the deluge in Gen 9:1-7. We shall discuss these in greater depth in Chapter 6. It would seem probable that the commandments given there would bear a close relationship with the sin which caused the flood. It would be a little odd if these commands were chosen at random, without any reference to their context. There murder is prohibited and human dominion over the animal world is defined more precisely; man may eat meat so long as he abstains from the blood of animals. The fact that the commands at the end of the deluge single out violence as of special concern, would suggest that this was the primary cause of the flood.

A parallel from outside P is of help here. The story of the Golden Calf focuses on the particular sin of idolatry which placed Israel in jeopardy. Ex 34:17-26 gives a series of cultic laws with particular emphasis on the eradication of idolatry: 34:17 echoes 32:1-6. The commands at the end of the story deliberately focus on the particular cause of judgment. There is a link between commandment and sin.

In view of this parallel, is it not probable that the stipulations of 9:1-7 are directly related to 6:11ff? In both stories God's mercy brings the demand for obedience. Given that murder is prohibited

after the flood, is it not likely that this was the major sin which caused the deluge?

It is also worth recalling that murder pollutes the land as well as having consequences for individuals. If our interpretation of **חַמַּס** is correct, the flood is not just a punishment but a means of getting rid of a thoroughly polluted earth and starting afresh with a clean one. **חַמַּס** can be used in a physical way, covering hands (Jb 16:17) and clothes (Mal 2:16). Israel believed that murder, sexual abomination and idolatry polluted (Jer 2:6^{ff}, Ez 36:18), and the problem of blood guilt was especially acute (Num 35:31-34 Deut 21:7ff). T.Frymer-Kensky concludes that the writer of Genesis has interpreted the early history in the light of the pollution caused by these three sins. /79/

I should like to agree with T.Frymer Kensky in that the context of the story of the flood needs to be taken seriously in exegesis, but I want to push the argument a stage further by suggesting that murder was the primary cause of the flood. Whilst the writer may have envisaged sexual sin and idolatry before the deluge, the story does not appear to regard these as the evil which led to the flood. It was **חַמַּס** the infringement of others which is the writer's chief concern and this, in view of the commands in 9:1-7 and the concept of pollution, was seen most especially in the taking of life.

Having noted the above points it does seem noteworthy that P does not use his usual vocabulary for sin. **חַמַּס** and **חַטָּאת** are never used by P again since he prefers terms such as **חַטָּאת** and **עֲוֹן**. /80/ K.Koch argues that this was because in P's view sin was only possible when holiness had been established in the cult.

"Wie es nämlich keine Heiligkeit vor Aufrichtung des sinaitischen Kultes gibt, so auch keine Sünde (und darüber hinaus keine Unreinheit). Die dafür entscheidenden Wortstämme

חטא und עון (sowie נטא) werden vor Ex 25 nie gebraucht, während sie sich von da an häufen. Wohl gibt es zuvor unter den Menschen Aufbegehren gegen Gott, gibt es Vergewaltigungen (חטא) auf Erden, die so hoch anwachsen, daß dadurch die Sintflut heraufgeführt wird (Gen 6:11ff); ja selbst Israel murren gegen Gott (Ex 16) – aber es gibt noch keine Sünde! Sünde ist erste möglich im Strahlungsbereich des Heiligen und angesichts der vollendeten Offenbarung" /81/

Koch's basic point seems useful. The establishment of the cult and the laws concerning the behaviour appropriate to its holiness, effected a profound change in Israel's attitude to sin. P presents a cultic centered concept of ethics; sin before the establishment of the cult on Sinai was seen in a rather different light, and hence we have the more general term of שחא instead of חטא or עון. In Gen 6, sin concerns the corruption of the ordinances of creation, not the rules of the cult.

Koch's point should not be pushed too far. It is not that sin is not envisaged before Sinai but rather a particular type of sin which is associated with the cult and which is not found before Sinai. The pre-Sinai material in P is not vast and it would be inappropriate to deduce too much from the one passage in Gen 6, since the omission of עון and חטא could have been coincidental. Perhaps the reason for these distinct terms is that the context of the flood is universal, and that the crime of חטא and the corruption of the way of Gen 1 were not crimes to which only Israel was prone, in the way that disobedience to the covenant stipulations was. There is always the temptation to infringe the dignity of others. Koch's theory cannot be proved, but it does suggest that the writer is aware of the differences between pre- and post-Sinai times, and he reflects this in his vocabulary.

It must also be noted that Koch is arguing at the level of P, not of the completed text. If the text is read as a whole his point

loses its significance; 4:7 employs **השאה**.

L. van der Wijngaert argues that P in Gen 6 is referring to the paradise myth of Ez 28. He notes the use of parallel phraseology: Gen 6:17, Ez 28:7-8 **הגני סביא על**, Gen 6:9, Ez 28:15 **חטים**, 6:11 -13 and Ez 28:17 **שתח** and **מלא חטס**. /82/ There might be a link but the text offers us no direct evidence for this assumption and similarity of phraseology could be no more than mere coincidence. The narrative contains no explanation of the change in the world. /83/

In summary, P is more specific about the sin which caused the flood: it was corrupting the way which had been ordained by God in 1:26ff. In particular it was the sin of **חטס** violence, or more precisely the oppression by brute force and bloodshed of one's fellows that forced God to send a deluge.

3) READING J AND P TOGETHER

Our understanding of the flood is enhanced considerably by reading the two sources together, as well as at the level of J and P. Gen 6:11ff echoes other passages in the primeval history in Gen 1-5. One has to be a little careful in reading the text as a whole since there appears to be some unevenness in the juxtaposition of passages and doubts might be raised as to the validity of such an approach. There are certain inconsistencies in the narratives of Gen 1-11, some of which have been discussed in the Introduction. For example the events of 4:17-26 do not seem to envisage a flood interrupting the line of descent, and it might be questioned whether these events have any bearing on the deluge. /84/ Care needs to be taken when the text is read even on the level of J, but all the more so when it is taken as a whole. It is doubtful whether such problems should be taken too

seriously in a primeval context, as we are not dealing with historical narrative. The various texts do not fit together evenly, but as far as the final form of the passage is concerned, it is suggestive that there are two accounts of the taking of life before the deluge.

If the exegete is to accept the heuristic value of the sources in the story of the flood it seems that it is only whilst describing the actual course of the deluge itself that the redactor has combined his two strands, so that the introduction (6:5-8, 7:1-5, 7-9 J and 6:9-22 P), and the conclusion (J 8:20-22 and 9:1-17 P), remain unaltered. Westermann observes that this is probably deliberate, since the meaning of the story lay mainly in these two sections, and it was necessary to allow each to speak for itself. As far as this thesis is concerned the focus of study will be on these verses particularly in Chapters 1-3, 5-7, since it is here that the value of human life is given considerable attention. /85/

J.Emerton writes, "I cannot find in VI:11-12 anything substantially new in relation to VI:5". /86/ As we have argued in the introduction to the thesis, there probably are two sources here, but the discussion cannot stop there. Both sources offer a distinct perspective on their subject matter, and P specifies that the flood was caused by **חַטָּאת**. Both sources ascribe the cause of the flood to human sin, though P is more specific as to the nature of the wrongdoing, and J offers a more anthropomorphic description of God's reaction to it. Against Emerton it is to be noted that 6:11ff adds a great deal to 6:5ff.

Whilst two sources may have been behind Gen 6, the repetition may have been used quite deliberately as a literary device. By

repetition the writer of Gen 6 can develop the motif of human sin more effectively. In 6:5 it is introduced in a general way, and the motif is expanded and developed in 6:11ff. The repetition is not simply reiterative, since the second passage intensifies and develops the first, so as to underline the significance of חַמָּס and the corruption of the way in Gen 1:26ff.

As we noted in our introduction, it seems that for the writer of the flood (and also for the authors of passages like Gen 1-2 and 1 Sam 16-17), the method which was used in incorporating multiple perspectives was not a fusion of views, but rather a montage of viewpoints which were arranged in sequence. In Chapter 5 we shall observe how this works for the conclusion of the story of the flood. Here it is important to see how the compiler of the story of the deluge has placed two descriptions of the deluge beside each other, so that the latter yields a more precise definition of the sin which led God to bring a deluge. The repetition is not superfluous or redundant. The writer wishes to indicate how evil that particular generation had become -a fact emphasized all the more by כָּל הַיּוֹם and כָּל בֶּשֶׂר. P is more specific than J, but he also extends the sin to cover the animal kingdom as well (6:11ff).

By these methods the writer uses his powers of persuasion to make us form a negative judgment on the generation of the flood and as a corollary, a high view of Noah who stands in contrast to them.

There are also important resonances between Gen 6:11 and other J passages prior to it. First, the corruption of Gen 6:11 involves to some extent a development of the sin of Gen 3. There the transgression was hubris; by disobeying God the couple were attempting to be like him, to grasp at the prerogatives which should

belong to God alone: the knowledge of good and evil. 3:5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God knowing good and evil". (RSV) Not satisfied with this, humanity seeks to be like God and exercise the prerogative of life and death, which rightly belongs to the creator alone (6:11ff). Whilst murder is a crime against one's fellow human, it is also an inappropriate attempt to be like God which oversteps the boundaries which are set up by God in 1:26ff. From Gen 3 onwards man attempts to distort the image which has been entrusted to him, by his arrogant attempt to be like God in ways which are strictly forbidden.

Secondly, this is developed in the stories of Cain and Lamech. There the taking of life is an inappropriate use of the dominion which is given in Gen 1:26ff. Man is not permitted to rule over his fellows to the extent of killing. Cain and Lamech deliberately mar the image of God which is placed in all of humanity. They provide clear illustrations of **דָּבַח** and the corruption of the way which is described in 6:11ff. Before the flood the taking of life is given a special emphasis, and Gen 4 deals with this question in considerable depth. The increase both of humanity and its technical ability do not result in moral advance (4:17-22, 5:1-32).

Further, Gen 4:10 gives us an example of blood polluting the land, in the same way which **דָּבַח** seems to do: "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground". Life is in the blood, and blood is a polluting substance; murder pollutes the ground. Abel's blood cries for vengeance. **קָוָה** is the cry of men who are without food and desperate (Gen 42:55), or who are oppressed by enemies (Ju 4:3). It is the plea of a woman who is being raped (Deut 22:24, 27) and the cry of those who suffer injustice (Ex 22:22). As Gunkel

writes, "Cain had tilled the land. He had offered the fruit of the land, and given the land his brother's blood to drink: but from the land the blood cries against him, for which the land refuses him its fruit, so he is banned from the land". /87/ Cain cannot hide the deed since the blood cries out to God for vengeance אֵלַי "to me". God always hears the victim's blood even if no human does.

This will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6, but here we should note that as God hears the crime of Cain, so too he also observed the world which is full of חַמַּס. He is not indifferent to oppression, and intervenes to punish as is necessary.

Gen 6 also picks up the theme of אֲדָמָה which is prominent in Gen 1-11 especially in J where it occurs 23 times (it only occurs 4 times in P but only in expressions such as רָמַשׁ הָאֲדָמָה 1:25). In 3:17, 23 the relationship between man and the ground (2:7) is broken by human sin. Cain's fratricide causes the ground to yield him hardship (4:12) and the generation of the flood is removed from the ground (6:7, 7:4, 23). /88/ Sin puts in jeopardy that which is so essential to human existence: the ground. Not only is murder a crime against one's fellow man but like חַמַּס it also disrupts and pollutes the environment, so that hardship comes to those who work it. Sin has its effects on the physical world.

Further, חַמַּס echoes Cain's words "Am I my brother's keeper?". As Cain abrogated his responsibilities to his brother, so also the wicked generation used חַמַּס as a means of destroying social responsibility.

4) LATER EXEGESIS

Some slight evidence from later tradition is suggestive for our

case. In the Sybilline Oracles Noah preaches a sermon to his contemporaries chiding them for their sins, especially murder. Book 1 lines 109-119 describe the generation of the flood as a warlike people who shed much blood. Noah declares, "Be sober, cut off all evils, and stop fighting violently with each other, having a bloodthirsty heart, drenching much earth with blood", 154-156. Jubilees 7:20-24 states that the flood came because of fornication, pollution and injustice. 7:23ff reads, "And everyone sold himself in order that he might do injustice and pour out much blood, and the earth was full of injustice....And they poured out much blood upon the earth. And all the thoughts and desires of men were always contemplating vanity and evil. And the Lord blotted out everything from the face of the earth on account of the evil of their deeds. And on account of the blood which they poured out in the midst of the land, he blotted out everything." /89/ It is interesting that these writers should single out murder as being a particular concern for the ante-diluvian generation.

Jewish tradition tends to see **עוון** as more than "unrighteousness". Some suggest robbery since it shows man as a selfish being concerned for himself at the expense of others. /90/ Ha Chaim sees **עוון** as including idolatry, robbery and murder. /91/ In contrast we have argued that **עוון** is more specific.

5) CONCLUSION

One of the significant differences between the Genesis account of the flood and the Mesopotamian versions is found in the cause of the deluge. In the Atrahasis Epic man is created to relieve the burden of the gods' work, but mankind multiplies so much that Enlil

cannot sleep:

"The noise of mankind [has become too intense for me]
[With their uproar] I am deprived of sleep". /92/

The Gilgamesh account gives no ethical cause for the flood:

"Their heart prompted the great gods to bring a deluge" /93/
Tablet 11 line 14. This illustrates the failure of Israel's
polytheistic neighbours to have a clear distinction between right and
wrong. /94/

In Genesis, on the other hand, the cause of the flood is
attributed to man's evil, in particular the corruption of the way by
כִּסְּף. Evil had encompassed man totally.

Both sources parallel each other but each offers a distinct
perspective, and the second is by no means a simple repetition of the
first, though they do have aspects in common. There are possibly two
sources here but the repetition is not redundant. Further, the
resonances between the sources in Gen 1-6 which we have discussed,
show that there are important new aspects which can be observed if
the two accounts are read as a unity. Significant points are omitted
if the scholar remains at the level of J or P. By reading the two
sources separately and then jointly, our understanding of the text
has been enhanced significantly.

It is clear from the outset that the flood places the question of
the value of human life in a suggestive light. Not only does 9:1-7
devote significant attention to it, but also the introduction sets
out the question of the value of human life as a motif for the whole
story. It was the oppression of fellow humans which was the cause of
the flood. Man does not have authority over life and death; that
prerogative belongs to God alone. Yet כִּסְּף involves more than the

taking of life; it is the infringement of the dignity of others. It then becomes evident that the story is concerned for more than the value of human life in and of itself. It is human personhood which is of value, that is people in relationship to each other and above all to God. God has entrusted to man the dignity of a relationship to himself in the form of his image, to be his vice-regent. וְדָן is a degradation of this image and thereby an attack on God's authority in the world. Human life attains its value not in and of itself, but in its relationship to God through the image. The remainder of the thesis will explore how the story develops the question of the value of human life in its relation to God.

FOOTNOTES

- /1/ E.M.Good Irony In The Old Testament Almond Press Sheffield 1981 p81-89.
- /2/ See the commentaries especially Westermann p279-320 and Wenham p92-118.
- /3/ Cassuto Genesis 1 p185.
- /4/ Vawter Genesis p94.
- /5/ Westermann Genesis p330ff.
- /6/ P.D.Miller "YELED in the song of Lamech" JBL 85 1966 p477ff.
- /7/ "Ibid" p478.
- /8/ Von Rad Genesis p108.
- /9/ R.Alter The Art Of Biblical Poetry T and T.Clark Edinburgh 1990 p5-18 esp p7.
- /10/ Wenham Genesis p114,117.
- /11/ Vawter Genesis p99ff.
- /12/ Gunke1 Genesis p51.

- /13/ Westermann Genesis p334-6.
- /14/ Cassuto Genesis 1 p244.
- /15/ Wenham Genesis p139ff. For further discussion see Westermann Genesis p371ff, Driver Genesis p82ff, Cassuto "The Episode Of The Sons Of God And The Daughters Of Men (Gen VI:1-4)" in Biblical and Oriental Studies Magnes Press Jerusalem 1973 p17 - 28 and Genesis 1 p290ff, Von Rad Genesis p109ff and Clines "The Significance Of The "Sons Of God" Episode (Genesis 6:1-4) In The Context Of The Primeval History (Genesis 1-11)" JSOT 13 1979 p33 - 46.
- /16/ Cassuto Genesis 1 p295, "The Episode" p24.
- /17/ Wenham Genesis p141 contrast Ramban Bereishis p182 who argues it was unrestrained passion.
- /18/ Westermann Genesis p370ff.
- /19/ Cassuto Genesis p295.
- /20/ See chapter 4.
- /21/ Clines "The Significance" p36.
- /22/ Wenham Genesis p141, 146 and Vawter Genesis p110ff.
- /23/ see Wenham Genesis p141ff and Westermann Genesis p373-376 for a discussion.
- /24/ Cassuto "The Episode" p26.
- /25/ Ibid p24.
- /26/ R.S.Hendel "Of Demigods And the Deluge: Toward An Interpretation Of Genesis 6:1-4" JBL 106 1987 p13 -26.
- /27/ Skinner Genesis p141 and Driver Genesis p82 in contrast to D.Poulet "The Moral Causes Of The Flood" CBQ 1942 p293-303 who argues that these marriages were the cause of the deluge.
- /28/ Driver Genesis p82.
- /29/ Keil-Delitzsch Genesis p139.

- /30/ Von Rad Genesis p113.
- /31/ H.W.Wolff Anthropology Of The Old Testament SCM 1974 p51 and see p51-55.
- /32/ P.Humbert "Emploi et portée bibliques du verbe yasar et de ses dérivés substantifs" BZAW 77 1958 p82 -88.
- /33/ Quoted in Westermann Genesis p410, from Die Bibel Britische und Auslandische Bibelgesellschaft Berlin 1925.
- /34/ Wenham Genesis p144.
- /35/ Westermann Genesis p410.
- /36/ Driver Genesis p86.
- /37/ Wenham Genesis p143ff.
- /38/ Westermann Genesis p410.
- /39/ Von Rad Genesis p105, 113, 148ff. See also Childs Introduction p154ff.
- /40/ Westermann Genesis p409.
- /41/ M.Zipor "A Note on Gen VI 13" VT 41 1991 p366-8.
- /42/ McEvenue The Narrative Style Of The Priestly Writer An Bib 50 Rome Biblical Institute Press 1971 p29.
- /43/ See D.Vetter "שָׁרַי" THAT 2 p891-894.
- /44/ Westermann Genesis p415.
- /45/ Clines "Theology of the Flood" p134ff.
- /46/ Zenger Bogen p179, translated by Rogerson Genesis p24.
- /47/ Sarna Understanding Genesis p52.
- /48/ Driver Genesis p87.
- /49/ A.R.Hulst "kol Basar in der priesterlichen Fluterzählung" OTS 12 1958 p28-68.
- /50/ Westermann Genesis p416.
- /51/ Wenham Genesis p171, and see Oberforcher "Flutprologe" p461-478.

- /52/ For a discussion of קָרָן see K.Koch TDOT III p270 - 293.
- /53/ Skinner Genesis p159.
- /54/ P.D.Miller Genesis 1-11 Studies in Structure and Theme JSOTSS 8
1978 p33ff
- /55/ H.Haag "חֹסֶן" TDOT IV p478 - 487, p478 - 482.
- /56/ Ibid p482.
- /57/ Ibid p481.
- /58/ Quoted in Westermann Genesis p416 from Stoebe "חֹסֶן" THAT 1 p587.
- /59/ Speiser Genesis p51.
- /60/ Vawter Genesis p116ff.
- /61/ Cassuto Genesis 2 p52.
- /62/ Haag "חֹסֶן" p481.
- /63/ R.Alter Biblical Poetry p19.
- /64/ Haag "חֹסֶן" p482.
- /65/ L. van der Wijngaert "Die Sünde in der priesterschriftlichen Urgeschichte" TP 43 1968 p35-50, p40-43.
- /66/ Haag "חֹסֶן" p485ff.
- /67/ H.W.Wolff Joel And Amos Fortress Press Philadelphia 1977 p194.
- /68/ I.L.Seeligmann "Zur Terminologie für das Gerichtsverfahren im Wortschatz des biblischen Hebräisch" VTS 16 1967 p251-278 p258.
- /69/ Haag "חֹסֶן" p483ff.
- /70/ Ibid p484 and see also H.Boecker Redeformen des Rechtslebens im A.T. WMANT 14 1964 p57 - 66 for the relation of חֹסֶן to legal material.
- /71/ S.Marrow "Hamas ("violentia") in Jer 20:8" VD 43 1965 p241-255.
- /72/ Haag "חֹסֶן" p483.
- /73/ Ibid p480.
- /74/ Wolff Joel and Amos p194.

- /75/ Seeligman "Zur Terminologie" p257.
- /76/ Haag "כדק" p486 and see discussion p485ff.
- /77/ Von Rad Theology 1 p157.
- /78/ Westermann Genesis p416.
- /79/ Tikva Frymer-Kensky "The Atrahasis Epic And Its Significance For Our Understanding Of Gen 1-9" BA 40 1977 p147-154 esp p152ff.
- /80/ McEvenue The Narrative p42.
- /81/ K.Koch "Die Eigenart der priesterschriftlichen Sanaigesetzgebung" ZTK 55 1958 p36-51 especially p45ff.
- /82/ L van der Wijngaert "Die Sünde" p35-50.
- /83/ Westermann Genesis p415.
- /84/ See Wenham Genesis p97ff, for the problem of 4:17 see p111 and Cassuto Genesis 1 p194ff, 235, 246.
- /85/ Westermann Genesis p424ff.
- /86/ Emerton "An Examination" p412.
- /87/ Quoted in Wenham Genesis p107 from Gunkel Genesis p45, and see the discussion there and Westermann Genesis p304ff.
- /88/ Miller Studies p37-42.
- /89/ Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 1 ed J.H.Charlesworth London DLT p337ff and 2 p70.
- /90/ Bereishis p225ff.
- /91/ Ibid p226. See also Lewis A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature Brill Leiden 1968 p127ff.
- /92/ See lines 358ff in Atrahasis: The Babylonian story Of The Flood W.G.Lambert and A.R.Millard Clarendon Press Oxford 1969. See also W.L.Moran "Atrahasis: The Babylonian Story Of The Flood" Biblica 52 1971 p51 -61.

/93/ Quoted from A.Heidel The Gilgamesh Epic And Old Testament
Parallels University of Chicago Press 1946 p80.

/94/ Sarna Understanding Genesis p51.

CHAPTER 2

IS NOAH EXEMPT FROM THE GENERAL DEPICTION OF HUMANITY AS DESCRIBED IN THE STORY OF THE FLOOD?

The account of the deluge presents Noah as an exemplary model of piety. In the entire Old Testament, he is the only man who is described as צדיק. In 6:8 (J) Noah found favour with God, and in 7:1 (J) his righteousness is seen in faithful obedience to God's command. P describes Noah as righteous, blameless and as walking with God in 6:9ff. There does however seem to be a strange paradox: 6:8-10 seem to exclude Noah from the general depiction of humanity, whilst 8:21 includes him in the statement that man's heart is evil from his youth upward because only Noah and his family are then alive. The problem is how do these statements relate? The present chapter will explore Noah's relationship with God, and will relate the question to the value of human life in the story of the flood.

1 Righteousness in the Old Testament

In order to understand our text, a careful study of the root צדק is necessary. A man was either righteous or not, there could be no intermediary stages. /1/ There is no precise English equivalent to terms such as צדקה and צדק, and the reader of the Bible needs to be careful not to understand צדקה according to the western tradition of Roman law, where an individual's proper conduct was judged over and against an ethical norm. /2/ For example the Vulgate renders צדקה as "iustitia" i.e. man's conduct in comparison to a standard from which came absolute demands. Von Rad writes,

"The mistake lay in seeking and presupposing an absolute ideal ethical norm, since ancient Israel did not in fact measure a line of conduct or an act by an ideal norm, but by the specific relationship within which the partner had at the time to prove himself true". /3/

Perhaps Von Rad's distinction between absolute ethical norms and relationships is not really justified since, as we shall see, moral standards are central to the concept of righteousness, but Von Rad is right to note that at the heart of the Old Testament concept of צדקה is the idea of a relationship. A righteous person was someone who measured up to the claims which the relationship laid upon him. Each relationship, whether between individuals or God's covenant with Israel brings demands upon the conduct of the participants. The fulfilling of the claims of the relationship results in צדקה. צדק refers to a relationship between persons rather than to the relationship of an object to an idea. /4/ The most pertinent of these relationships was that between God and Israel. צדקה denotes the duties of each party arising out of the relationship. Von Rad writes in discussing Gen 6, "According to the Old Testament the ṣaddiq ("righteous person") does justice to a relationship in which he stands". /5/ If a man is in a right relationship with God he is צדיק.

Any discussion of righteousness in the Old Testament must be wary of modern, in particular Lutheran, presuppositions colouring our view of the text. Luther taught that law and gospel were two concepts which were in antithesis to one another: /6/ the gospel is viewed positively the law negatively. In addition there is a noticeable anti-Semitism in Luther's writing, particularly in his later works. /7/ It can come as no surprise that scholars from Germany have been particularly influenced by Luther in their treatment of צדקה and we need to be aware of this in our discussion.

Consequently Jewish writers have reacted against some aspects of the understanding of צדקה as expounded by such scholars as Von Rad and Eichrodt, who not only came from Lutheran backgrounds, but were also influenced by the events in Germany in the 1930s. Levenson points out that there is a tendency for both of them to adopt a negative attitude to law and an unnecessary eagerness to see a dichotomy between faith and works in the Old Testament. /8/ Eichrodt wrote that in Judaism, "The living fellowship between God and man.... shriveled up into a mere correct observance of the legal regulations". /9/ Von Rad in a similar way says that the law became an absolute quantity which ceased to be understood as the saving ordinance, but became "a dictate which imperiously called into being its own community", /10/ Of course there can be legalism in religion, but this does not necessarily follow from the Old Testament in the way they supposed, and legal observation in both Old Testament and Judaism can bring great benefit to its adherents. Naturally the position of Von Rad and Eichrodt is notably different from that of Calvin and Barth, which sees a much closer relationship between law and gospel, and thus a greater place for sanctification in the process of redemption.

Whilst agreeing with Von Rad and Eichrodt that צדק is primarily a relational term, care needs to be taken with other aspects of their understanding of the concept, since they pay insufficient attention to the role of human action in the idea of righteousness. To a certain extent righteousness was a gift, and the word צדקה can denote God's saving acts in history: Ju 5:11, 1 Sam 12:7, Mi 6:5, Ps 103:6, Is 45:8, 46:13. /11/ Yet righteousness also incorporated human obedience and was not simply a gift from God. God's action was

paramount, but he also drew on an active human response. Righteousness was God's saving work but it also demanded and included human obedience to Torah which played a central role in the life of the people of God. The righteous man is one who keeps the moral law, and who "does what is lawful and right" as Ezekiel puts it in Ez 18: 5. (We shall discuss this chapter in greater detail later.) The whole chapter envisages a clear link between human action and a person's status whether righteous or wicked: "Therefore I will judge everyone according to his ways" (18:30). Westermann notes that someone is צדיק if he conducts himself in accordance with the ordinances of his community. /12/

Consequently righteousness appears to be both the abundant divine gift of God and faithful response to the moral law. The Old Testament is by no means averse to merited favour. God draws people into fuller obedience and righteousness by his commandments, not just by the law, but also by the example of individuals from the past, such as Noah.

Abraham in Gen 22 gives a supreme example of living according to Torah and his response is normative for all Israel. /13/ Here is a good example of the connection between the divine promise and human obedience. The promises of 22:16ff which elsewhere are a unilateral and unconditional gift on God's part, are here related to Abraham's obedience. Abraham does not qualify to receive blessing by obedience since the promises have already been made. (12:1-3, 15:1-6, 17:1-8) Rather the terms of reference have changed in Gen 22, in that the promise is based not just on God's will, but also on Abraham's obedience (22:16-18). Israel owes its existence both to God and to Abraham. As Moberly notes, "Theologically this constitutes a

profound understanding of the value of human obedience - it can be taken up by God and become a motivating factor in his purposes towards man". /14/ In Gen 6-9 the existence of the whole world is at stake and in Gen 22 and Ex 32-34 it is Israel which is placed in jeopardy, but on each occasion deliverance is safeguarded by the faithful response of a man to God. Each case shows the potential and significance of the human factor in relation to God. /15/

It is essential to realize that in the Old Testament actions have moral and religious consequences. Von Rad writes, "Israel was convinced that there was a definite and even clearly recognizable connexion between what a man does and what happens to him, such that the evil deed recoils banefully upon the agent, the good one beneficially." /16/ Righteousness leads to an enhanced quality of life (Ps 72:1ff, Is 11) and can also bring life to others (Gen 6:9, 7:1). Deut 6:25 sees obedience as righteousness, and blessing is the outcome of obedience (Deut 28:1-14). Human righteousness brings divine approval for the deed (Deut 24:13) and there is a link between *ברכה* and *צדקה*. As Moberly writes with respect to Gen 15:6, "The semantic point that it can be difficult to distinguish between *צדקה* as behaviour of man and as action of God reflects the theological point that when man lives in full obedience to God there is a convergence between human and divine action". /17/

2 THE YAHWIST

"But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord" Gen 6:8.

"Then the Lord said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation". 7:1 RSV.

צדיק is central to the Yahwist's portrayal of Noah in Gen 7:1. Perhaps the closest analogy to its use here is צדיק in Gen 18:22-33, and its contrast to the wicked (רשע). Clark notes that there are similarities between the story of the flood and Genesis 18-19. Both concern non Israelites and the complete destruction of a people by a natural event. Each account portrays the deliverance of one man and his family, though they also include a description of a breach of sexual mores and drunkenness. There is repopulation from a single hero, and the question of righteousness is central to both, since punishment is based on moral grounds (6:5-7, 18:23ff). In both one individual finds favour in the sight of another: 6:8, 19:19. /18/

The problem on which Gen 18 focuses is whether or not God does justice in his dealings with the world, in particular with regard to the problem of communal responsibility. Will the righteous suffer the same fate as the wicked? The story tells the reader that the destruction of Sodom and Gommorah was a just action, which was directly related to the sin of these places. The passage aims to dispel any doubt as to God's just dealings with man; he rewards the pious and punishes the wicked. There is a strict correlation between how God himself acts and the way he expects men to behave. The problem arises when God judges the whole world, and it was vital to show that he acts justly in history. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" The righteous will not be treated as are the wicked and God is fair in his ways. In this case the small number of guiltless are of such importance that judgment can be averted. /19/ In this story it is Lot, his wife and daughters who are delivered from the destruction of the city. They are spared because they do not partake of the gross immorality of Sodom.

The same problem of whether or not God deals justly with the world is found in the story of the flood. There the wickedness of man is so great that God needs to destroy the whole world. The wicked deserve their fate, but what of the righteous man who has found God's favour? Will he too be swept away? Will the Judge of the world do justice? The same concern for justice is evident in both stories since like Lot Noah is also saved. Innocent life is spared; those who are צדיק do not deserve death.

i) מצא חן

"The basic meaning of the root hnn is grace", writes Freedman. /20/ The verb חנן has the sense of the bestowal of a kindness which could not be rightfully claimed (e.g. 2 Sam 12:22). /21/ חנן in the Qal means "be gracious", "show favour" and the Hithpael means "seek favour" - usually of God. On two occasions it has an aesthetic meaning (Prov 22:11, 26:25), but elsewhere is used of the favour shown in personal relationships; the positive disposition of one person towards another.

The noun חן is used 67 times in the Old Testament, often in the phrase מצא חן as found in Gen 6:8. In contrast to חסד, which must be practised by both parties, חן is a free gift, usually from a person in a superior to one in an inferior position, which is given only so long as the giver so desires and it may be withdrawn at any time. /22/ מצאתי חן בעיניך is a common deferential phrase in secular use, which can be an elaborate "please" (Gen 30:27) or "thank you" (2 Sam 16:4). Whilst favour is a gift it can be given in response to merit (Prov 13:15). /23/

The theological uses of the term are not dissimilar. Our concern

in this chapter is God's favour to humans. God is described as חַנּוּן, an adjective used mainly of God (Ex 34:6, though it is used of a righteous man in Ps 112:4) who dispenses grace according to his sovereign authority (Ex 33:19). Only God is said to give favour and he never seeks it of humans. /24/ Dan 9:3, 17, 18, 20, show that God's favour is his to give or withdraw and cannot be claimed as a right.

Whilst God alone grants favour, the Old Testament is by no means averse to the idea of correct human behaviour gaining divine approval. There are many passages which see a link between moral behaviour and divine pleasure. The Psalms contain pleas for divine favour sought either in terms of integrity (Ps 26:11), walking uprightly (86:2ff, 112:4), righteousness or humility (119:29), or in terms of righteousness coupled with repentance: 25:16, 41:5, 51:1 (compare 2 Sam 12:22, 1K 8:33, 47). Passages in other contexts show a connection between action and finding favour: Num 11:11, 15, Am 5:15, Mal 1:9, Prov 3:4, 24, 28:23 . /25/ It can then be seen that there is a direct relationship between what a person does and the favour accorded to, or at least requested for that person.

It is not the case however, that favour is always connected with human action, nor is it wholly dependent on what man does. For example Ex 34:6 describes God as gracious in a situation where Israel has sinned and not shown any repentance for her transgression of Torah. (See Chapter 5) Consequently the picture presented is not one of a neat system of human action always meriting God's favourable disposition, but rather of a God who freely bestows favour and this may or may not be in response to human merit. God's sovereignty in granting grace is paramount, but it can also take up man's obedience

in the process of giving favour. If someone is described as finding favour it may be due to merit or repentance on their part or it may only be grounded in the free mercy of God.

ii) Gen 6:8 and 7:1

It is in the light of the above that we are to understand Gen 6:8. The only other explicit statement of an individual finding favour in the Old Testament is that of Moses in Ex 32-34. The emphasis of Gen 6:8 is on God's pity and mercy in delivering Noah. It does not say that Noah is righteous but rather shows God's grace, which is based on his plan for mankind. /26/ Von Rad writes,

"To the reader of the Yahwistic work Noah is known only by name (ch5:29), i.e., not in such a way that God's choice could be made comprehensible. That choice finds its explanation only in God's gracious will, who even before the frightful judgment has chosen the man in whom some day his work of salvation can again be resumed." /27/

In order to understand what is meant by Noah finding favour with God, it is necessary to integrate 6:8 with 7:1 and the story as a whole.

No discussion of Gen 7:1 can afford to omit reference to W.M.Clark's interpretation of the verse. He notes that the problem revolves around the relationship between 7:1 and 6:8. He rejects the three standard interpretations of the text. The first is that of Skinner who holds the view that Noah found favour because he was righteous. The second is Von Rad's who argues that Noah is declared just as a result of having found favour. The building of the ark is a test: God knows Noah's righteousness by it. The third is the position of Schmid who sees 7:1b as the repetition of 6:8 - the finding favour is a gift of righteousness. Clark argues there is a distinction between J and P at this point, in that for P Noah was

righteous before the flood but for J Noah is only exempt from the judgment.

Clark argues that the favour of God is not motivated by the prior righteousness of Noah. Elsewhere in the Old Testament finding favour and righteousness are not equated. Neither is 7:1b to be translated, "I have seen on the basis of what you have done". He gives a grammatical discussion from which he concludes that Noah's righteousness is a prospective reality which becomes actual when Noah realizes it by obedience, possibly only at the end of the flood, when the sacrifice is accepted. The reason is not the past merit of Noah but is grounded in the purposes of God. Clark compares 1 Sam 16:1 which he argues parallels Gen 7:1, and claims that **רָאָה** is used of election. 2 K 8:13 also has this prospective idea of election. He deduces that J has interpreted the righteousness of Noah from the perspective of the election traditions of the early monarchy. Noah is chosen that he may be Yahweh's **צַדִּיק**, not because of any particular moral advantage. He is a potential **צַדִּיק** whose actions will save the world and like David is not chosen because of his merit. The concern in Genesis, as Clark claims, is not the salvation of a righteous man from a wicked generation but rather with the purpose of God for man, when an entire generation is evil and destined for judgment.

Clark qualifies this by arguing that Noah's present righteousness is not entirely absent since he has already built the ark, but the basic orientation is still towards the future. The matter rests on the electing grace of God. /28/

Clark's interpretation lacks plausibility. It does not suit the context and the link to royal vocabulary of election is strained. The most natural way to take the word "see" is in its usual sense as

found in Gen 1:4 and 6:2. In 1 Sam 16 God's decision has already been made and it is unwise to place too much emphasis on the prospective nature of this verse. It may be that there is some orientation to the future in God's words, but Clark has failed to prove a meaning which looks to the future from other uses of צדִיק. /29/ Perhaps the real problem with Clark's paper is his apparent eagerness to read back Protestant theological concerns. As noted, the Old Testament is not averse to human righteousness winning divine approval.

There is an important source critical assumption here: in J the account of the order to build the ark and its construction have been omitted by the final compiler of the story. If it is assumed that J had a short passage describing the order to build and the construction of ark, then whilst 6:8 is God's choice of Noah, Noah completed the task without knowing why the vessel was to be built. He passed a test of faith similar to that of Abraham in 12:4. P asserts Noah's righteousness, J describes it. /30/

If as we have argued the Old Testament is not averse to divine approval of human action, to what extent is Noah's finding favour with God a response to his righteousness? As we have noted with Gen 18, deliverance was accorded to the man who was innocent, and in the story of the flood the righteous man is saved (7:1).

In both J and P Noah's obedience is given great emphasis: 7:5-9 (J), 6:22, 7:16, 8:16 (P). The task of building the ark and of filling it with animals is no small one, yet he fulfils it and carries out God's instruction. Noah is not described as a heroic figure, as are Atrahasis or Utnapishtim, but rather we are told again and again that Noah obeyed God. He never speaks but just obeys God. He acts on all

the divine warnings and patiently waits in the ark until the earth is dry. His obedience is what counts. "Human greatness is to be found neither in heroic feats nor in an exalted social station but in faithfully obeying God's word", writes Wenham. /31/ As with many narratives in the Old Testament, (Though 1 Sam 16:12 is an exception.)and unlike descriptions of Greek heroes, we are not given a description of Noah's physical appearance. /32/ All we are told is that he was righteous, that he found favour with God and in P that he walked with his maker. The chief concern of both J and P in the story of the flood is man's relationship with God rather than with other aspects of characterization. The emphasis of Gen 6-9 is not so much on the drama of the flood, but on how people react to the situation and their moral evaluation. Perhaps Noah never speaks because the writer wishes to stress Noah's obedience and submissiveness to God.

Given the emphasis on Noah's obedience and the statement of 7:1 "For I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation", it would appear that Noah's righteousness and obedience is a factor in his finding favour with God. As noted, Von Rad rightly speaks of God's choice of Noah for the deliverance of mankind, but Noah's obedience is taken up and becomes a motivating factor in God's attitude to him. As in Gen 22 Abraham's obedience is a factor in God's choice of him, (See above), so in Gen 6-9 Noah's right response to God is a factor in his deliverance from the flood. To some extent Noah has deserved the favour which is shown to him. On its own the statement of 6:8 need not mean that Noah necessarily deserves this favour, but when it is read with 7:1 and the story as a whole, Noah does merit this grace. Noah seems to be exempt from both

the general depiction of evil humanity, and the judgment. Exemption from judgment both here and in Gen 18 is linked to upright behaviour.

On the other hand the translation of NEB of Gen 6:8 "Noah had won the Lord's favour" is inappropriate./33/ We would not deny that Noah merits this favour, but the idea of winning favour implies that Noah gained it entirely on his own initiative, whereas the translation "find" preserves the unity of both human and divine action.

A further point needs to be made; it should be noted that in J righteousness is specifically linked to the building of the ark and the obedience of Noah during the flood. 7:1 comes after what must have been J's description of the construction of the ark. The emphasis is on God seeing Noah as righteous in terms of his obedience in the story of the flood. Consequently the statements of 6:8 and 7:1 are relative to this particular episode, whereas P offers a more general assessment of Noah's character, which covers the pre- and post-flood world. /34/

The problem then arises as to the precise relationship between 6:8, 7:1 and 8:21: "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth". The problem is, how does Noah who is righteous in 7:1 relate to this statement? Noah is not said to be excluded from the depiction of humanity in 8:21 as he is in 6:5. Since Noah and his family are the only people who are left, 8:21 must apparently be applicable to them. Moreover the statement is made in an account of Noah offering a sacrifice, thereby displaying an exemplary model of piety. This appears awkward.

It is important to notice the words **בְּדֹרֹתָא הַזֹּאת** in 7:1, since they indicate that Noah is righteous with respect to that particular generation whose wickedness "was great in the earth" and whose every

imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." The words בְּדֹר הַזֶּה indicate that Noah falls outside this category of humanity. He does not belong to the class of people whose every action is wicked. It may be that the writer was suggesting that Noah was only righteous with respect to this generation, since דָּר is singular, and that had he lived at another time without such a group of people to compare him with, he would not have appeared so good. As suggested J sets the description of Noah's righteousness in terms of the flood, whereas P offers a more general assessment in 6:9ff.

Further there is a difference in wording between 6:5 and 8:21, since the latter no longer speaks of man's great wickedness, nor does it suggest that human thought is only evil continually. Rather the יִצְר ("imagination", "intention") of man is evil from his youth. Man is still inclined to evil and his mind is orientated that way; in that sense he is unchanged from 6:5 and still has the capacity to return to the gross evil which is described there. The reason why the verse does not speak of the great wickedness of man is because that generation has been wiped out, and in any case Noah, who was exempt, is the only man left. It is the total wickedness of that generation from which Noah is exempt, but that does not mean that he is free from the evil tendencies which are common to all. Every human shares this fundamental disposition to evil, and the potential for great wickedness, but Noah displays the possibility of rejecting temptation and living in accord with God's ways. The text does not say that Noah is no longer righteous but that he shares the human inclination to evil. He does not live in accord with this and is free from complete wickedness. As far as J is concerned all have a fundamentally evil disposition but it is possible for humans to rise



above it and follow God's ways. Human nature is unchanged after the flood, but the capacity for righteousness remains unaltered as well.

iii) Noah's Drunkenness

What is the relationship between the story of the flood, in particular the statements of 6:8,7:1 and 8:21 and the account of 9:20-27? First, it should be noted that this is on a different level from the account of the flood. Gen 9:18-19 marks the conclusion of the deluge, and 9:20 is the start of another episode in the primeval era. Indeed the story suggests that these events took place some time after the flood. The concerns of the text are somewhat different, since the issues raised concern a breach of sexual standards and the destiny of various peoples. 9:20-27 is part of the story of Noah but not of the flood. Nevertheless the juxtaposition of the texts is of some significance.

Some have doubted whether Noah is being condemned for his behaviour. The passage probably refers back to 5:29 in that the cultivation of the grape brings comfort and amelioration from the curse. Von Rad notes that Noah must be the first to learn of the mystery of wine and he is completely overpowered by the force of the fermented fruit. He is not to be condemned. /35/ Brueggemann argues that the Old Testament was not preoccupied with the issue of drunkenness and that Noah's inebriation is simply a context for what follows. /36/ Vawter thinks it is a statement of fact not moral judgment; drunkenness was a social gaff not a crime. /37/

Certainly Old Testament tradition elsewhere warns of the over-indulgence of drink (Is 5:22, Prov 21:17, 23:20-21, 29-35), as well as self exposure (Hab 2:15). The problem is whether what is

said here has any bearing on J. Even though Noah is the first to produce wine, it would be hard to see how readers in ancient Israel would have viewed the incident with anything other than disapproval. Given the fact that the Israelites were particularly concerned to avoid nakedness and its subsequent indiscretions (Ex 20:26), it would seem likely that a scene in which Noah lies both drunk and naked would be viewed with disapproval. Further, in Gen 19 over-indulgence of drink causes a breach of sexual standards, and it would be strange if J were to view the situation in Gen 9 with indifference. It is the dangers to which excessive drinking can lead, of which J seems to warn.

The conduct of Noah's sons has also raised problems. How should the statement that Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father" be taken? Is it a mere sighting of a naked man or does it involve a sexual act, since seeing somebody's nakedness can imply this (Lev 18). Some argue that there is a case of incest here. A. Phillips sees an act of seduction on the basis of Deut 23:1. /38/ F.W. Bassett argues that as the text stands the action of Ham hardly merits the curse which is given. Lev 18 makes clear that seeing someone's nakedness denotes sexual intercourse: Ham slept with Noah's wife and the product of the union was Canaan. This would explain why Canaan is cursed for Ham's action (compare Gen 35:22, 49:3-4.). Such a sin is rebellion against the father similar to Absalom's in 2 Sam 16:22. /39/

We are reluctant to read so much from the text. The fact that covering was an adequate remedy for the crime suggests that the sin consisted of seeing. /40/ Ham's sin lay primarily in the realm of disrespect; he should have covered his father and not spoken to his

brothers about the incident, thereby adding gossip to disgrace. /41/ In the ancient world respect for elders was of great importance since the continuity of the group was dependent on a constant stream of tradition passing through generations. Regard for parents was needed for the maintenance of harmony in the group. In the pre-flood world the relationships between husband and wife, brother and brother, were placed in jeopardy. Now father and son suffer similar difficulties. Basic family values are in trouble and this is the primary thrust of 9:20-27. The same principles are at work in the fourth commandment and similar legislation (Ex 21:15, Deut 27:18-26). Another aspect of human society is introduced: a brother is to be a slave of his brother, "There breaks into the family structure another social structure that is foreign to it - slavery". /42/

Consequently the story emphasizes that man still has sinful tendencies. Gen 8:21ff primarily looks back to 6:5, but by placing the story of disrespect here, the final compiler illustrated the dissonance between Noah the righteous and the man who lies drunk and naked in his tent. Even the great men of the Old Testament can commit misdemeanors. Nevertheless Noah's misbehaviour is minor in comparison with the sin of the wicked generation of 6:5, and the text neither sees a comparison, nor offers a hint that Noah is now totally corrupt.

In summary, for J Noah's finding favour with God is God's choice which is made to some extent in response to Noah's righteousness. He is not part of the wicked generation, but he does share the basic human inclination for evil (8:21). By being righteous he does not follow the way of his contemporaries, but as 9:20-27 shows, everyone can do wrong at some stage. He is exemplary to all.

3 THE PRIESTLY SOURCE 6:9.

The Priestly source lays special emphasis on Noah's piety and the part which that played in the salvation of the world. It is because of him that humanity survives the deluge. Noah is a paradigm of a blameless pious man in the midst of a corrupt generation.

There are different ways of taking 6:9. Cassuto argues that תמים is an adverb which qualifies צדיק "Noah was a wholly righteous man" on the basis of Jb 12:4, Num 19:2, Prov11:5. /43/ The problem of the relationship between the two words was felt by Vulgate and The Samaritan Pentateuch which appear to read ותמים. /44/ Literally the Hebrew reads, "Noah, a righteous man, blameless he was among his generations; with God walked Noah". The word תמים can mean "complete" or "full", but it is also reasonable to take the word as an adjective which describes Noah and contrasts him with his contemporaries. 6:9 contains three clauses in apposition, the second and third of which specify the nature of Noah's righteousness: he is blameless and walks with God. /45/ Both renderings seem feasible but we should prefer to take the latter as does RSV: "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generations; Noah walked with God". LXX is similar: Νωε ἄνθρωπος δικαίος, τελειός ὢν ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ αὐτοῦ and most modern interpreters follow.

i) Noah as Righteous

A useful parallel for our discussion of righteousness in P is the passage in Ez 18. It has already been noted that there is similarity of thought between Ezekiel and P; Ezekiel himself was a priest (Ez 1:3). /46/ There are important aspects of צדקה in Ez 18 which are relevant for our discussion of Gen 6.

First, Ez 18 places great emphasis on human responsibility. It has often been argued that the chapter concerns individual responsibility. For example Von Rad argued that Ez 18 encountered the complaint that Yahweh lumped the generations together in wholesale acts of judgment. In contrast Ezekiel claims that each individual stands in a direct relationship to God, who was not indifferent to his fate. Every one is judged individually and on his own merits. /47/

We cannot pursue a full study of this issue or of Ez 18, but it does seem that Von Rad et al have overstated their case. Rather, as Joyce argues, Ez 18 is an uncompromising account of the responsibility of the nation before Yahweh. Israel is responsible for her guilt, and the judgment is the just punishment of the righteous God on the sinful people of Israel (Compare 7:23ff). The events of the exile are punishment for the sins of the people who are now suffering.

The question at stake is whether or not God is a righteous judge. The people feel that they are being judged unjustly for the sins of previous generations: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge". So tied are they to this, that they would rather claim that God is unjust than admit their own fault. Ezekiel tries to demonstrate that they are guilty, and that God's ways are just. Ezekiel is not concerned for the moral independence of contemporary individuals, since the legal practice takes this for granted. (e.g. Deut 24:16) The question is rather one for the whole community which is suffering for its own wrongdoing. Ez 18 places a heavy responsibility on Israel for the exile, which is a catastrophe of her own making. /48/

The account of the flood has a similar emphasis on man's responsibility for the deluge. Those who committed the sin of חַמַּס and corrupted the way ordained by God in Gen 1:26ff, were fully responsible for what overtook them. "The earth is filled with violence through them."; those who corrupted (שָׁחָה) their way (6:12) must be destroyed (שָׁחָה). It was their fault entirely. Humans are morally responsible for their own actions in Gen 6 and Ez 18. In both passages God is a righteous judge because he punishes the guilty and spares the innocent. Retribution is exact and in fair measure.

Secondly, Ez 18 gives a clear indication of what it means to be righteous. Zimmerli argues that the phrase צַדִּיק הוּא (18:9) echoes the priestly declaration which was customary at the gate of the temple. /49/ It is possible that such statements had their origin here (Compare Ps 15:1-2, 24:3-4, 118:19ff and Ez 44:5), but this cannot be demonstrated with certainty. /50/ What is clear is that there is a clear link between a man's action, and his status whether righteous or wicked. A man is righteous if "he does what is lawful and right". Ez 18:6-9 specifies what this involves: keeping God's ordinances. Every one is responsible for his actions, "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself". (18:20) Fulfilling the commands is righteousness.

Eichrodt argues that the man who is righteous in Ez 18 is not necessarily sinless, nor has he necessarily conformed perfectly to a legal system, but rather he is a willing member of the cultic community whose overall orientation is in accord with God's will. /51/ Again Lutheran concerns seem to be coming to the fore and it is doubtful if his assertion is justified. There are aspects of

righteousness in Ez 18 which are non cultic, such as the avoidance of robbery. Moreover there is great emphasis on the fulfilment of individual commandments, not just on an overall orientation of life. 18:19 says that the righteous must observe all God's statutes, and nothing less than the best will suffice. Such an emphasis on keeping the law is also found in P: Lev 18:4, 26:3,14ff.

The statement of Gen 6 that Noah is righteous stresses that his relation to God is essentially correct. In this primeval, pre-Sinai era, Noah's standing needs to be seen in terms of Gen 1:26ff, where man's role in the world and his relation to God are defined. Noah is righteous in that he faithfully fulfils the role of dominion as outlined there, and he refrains from grasping at unjust exploitation, oppression and above all the sin of **עוֹבְדֵי עֵשֶׂת**. He is righteous because he has not corrupted his way on the earth (6:12). Further, Noah's obedience is also emphasized; that too is central to his standing as it was in J. To be righteous is to obey God. The formula of obedience is a common trait in P: Gen 6:22, 17:23, 21:4, Ex 7:6,10, 20, 12:28, Lev 8:4. /52/

It is here that the above statements that **צְדִיקָה** is relational come to the fore. The relationship between God and man is defined by the imago Dei (See Chapter 7) and man's stewardship of creation. It is within these terms that Noah is righteous since he fulfils the demands and obligations of this relationship. Later this was to be set out in God's covenant with Israel, with obligations such as those of Ez 18 being added. The wicked generation however had broken their relationship with God by their breach of the limits of Gen 1 and by their use of unjust dominion.

Thirdly, the call to obedience and repentance is bound up with the

promise of life in Ez 18. God willed human obedience and the life which it brought; he took no pleasure in anybody's death: 18:9, 13, 18, 22-24, 26-28, 30-32. The wicked deserve death and are punished by it, but the righteous live. God's will is for life and for the people to obey him. Life is granted to the righteous, death to the wicked. What a man does determines his fate and God summons the people to life (Ez 18:30-32).

Moreover it is not just life which God wants, but life in full obedience to himself. Life is not supposed to be a mere isolated existence, but is meant to be lived in full communion with God. Ez 18 emphasizes that all life belongs to God and that he has sovereignty over it (18:4). God is the dispenser and source of all life. Further, there is an emphasis on the shedding of blood in these verses which suggests that this was a particularly evil crime in the eyes of the author. (18:10 cf 7:23ff, 22:3ff, 23:45, 33:25)

Similar concerns are to be found in Gen 6. In Gen 1 God created man to live in a relationship with him. Righteousness is also bound up with life in the story of the flood, since it is the righteous man who is delivered from the catastrophe. Both Ezekiel and P show that God desires not just life, but life in full accord with himself, in an ethically correct relationship. Both stories show an intimate connection between life and righteousness; the two concepts are inseparable, as are wickedness and death. The purpose of life is righteousness.

Fourthly, the issue of repentance which is so central to Ez 18, is not explored at all in the story of the flood. This may be because the writer of Gen 6-9 regarded the decision to send a flood as a firm decision. Furthermore, neither human repentance nor intercession are

involved because the writer had to accept the genre of an Ancient Near Eastern popular myth, where there was little scope for such questions. Nevertheless the call to repentance emphasizes human responsibility for sin in Ez 18.

The text of Gen 6 assumes that the patriarchal head of the family saves his sons as well. This seems to be the case with Caleb in Deut 1 and with Abraham, who alone is credited with being righteous (Gen 15:6). Ez 14, 14, 20 on the other hand say that Noah, Daniel and Job would only deliver themselves by their own righteousness, and not their families. Consequently it seems that the principle of responsibility is applied with new rigour in Ezekiel. /53/

Naturally this interpretation of righteousness in Gen 6:9 indicates that Noah's essential relation to God is correct. The point of the verse is to stress that Noah seems to be exempt from the complete corruption of his time. P does not talk of sinlessness and we should be wary of such terms which are not used by the text. Whether Noah never did anything wrong in his life is not explored, but the text does emphasize his fulfilment of the injunctions of Gen 1:26ff. Gen 1:26ff provides the terms of reference for צדקה rather than a notion of ethical perfection.

It may be that the writer of P was thinking of the standards of his own day in post-Sinai Israel. Today if we judge a person from the past we often apply the criteria of our own time. It would appear that there are two levels of reading the text: one is in terms of the primeval history, and the other with reference to the standards of later Israel. No doubt readers from Israel would have measured Noah by the standards of their own time and by such obligations as those found in Ez 18. Noah is portrayed as one would

have expected a godly Israelite to behave.

ii) Noah as Blameless

There are certain similarities between the roots תמים and צדק. תמים is primarily a cultic term, common in P, which is used of a sacrificial animal without blemish - "Free from defect" as Skinner translates. /54/ (cf Lev 1:3, 10). A priest must be free from physical deformity (Lev 21:17ff). The idea is one of wholeness or completeness but is used of humans less than צדיק. The word could mean "complete" or "full" (Lev 23:15), and could also be used of God whose ways are perfect (Deut 32:4, 2 Sam 22:31).

Transferred to the human sphere the word had strong moral overtones and can be used for moral conduct. It denoted behaviour which was well pleasing to God. Abraham in Gen 17:1 is commanded to walk before God and be blameless. He must be free from moral defect as is befitting one with whom God makes his covenant. As a sign of this covenant he is to practice circumcision and this he dutifully does. The ethical aspect of תמים can be seen more clearly in Deut 18:13 where blamelessness is linked to the rejection of abominable cultic practices and in Josh 24:14 where it involves the repudiation of idolatry. 2 Sam 22:24 parallels blamelessness with avoidance of guilt, and verse 25 speaks of righteousness and cleanness. We noted in the last chapter that there might be some link between Gen 6:9 and Ez 28. In particular Ez 28:15 speaks of Tyre as blameless "until iniquity was found in you". Blamelessness involves the avoidance and rejection of sin.

The word תמים is particularly common in the Psalms and the wisdom traditions. God's law is perfect (Ps 19:8) and the criterion for

dwelling in the Lord's house is being blameless (Ps 15:2). Ps 37:18ff contrasts the fate of the wicked who perish with that of the blameless whose inheritance will last for ever.

Other uses of the root תָּמַם bear out this analysis. Gen 20:5,6 use the word תָּם with the sense of "innocence", "integrity". There is another aspect of תָּמַם which is worth exploring. The word can be used in the sense of "peaceful". In Gen 25:27 Jacob is described as a "quiet man" (RSV) אִישׁ תָּם in contrast to his brother. Ps 37:37 sees a blameless man in terms of peace and Prov 29:10 speaks of men of violence hating the man who is תָּם. The evidence is not especially strong, but it may be that תְּמִים in Gen 6 is used in a similar fashion to these different contexts. Seen in this way it may be that Noah is set in contrast to the men of חָמָס around him by his peaceful dealings.

Like צַדִּיק, תְּמִים emphasizes Noah's right ethical conduct with regard to the ordinances of 1:26ff. He fulfilled the responsibilities of the imago Dei blamelessly, without overstepping the boundaries which were assigned to him.

Noah is portrayed as an archetypal legendary figure whose piety is also of a legendary nature. He is an ideal who shows the way for all to follow. Job is also portrayed in a similar fashion. He is described as תָּם וְיֶשֶׁר וִירָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מֵרָע. Blamelessness incorporates the fearing of God and the repudiation of all that is evil. Blamelessness involves submission to God and eschewal of evil. Both Noah and Job are paradigms of a correct relationship with God.

Von Rad sees the description of Noah as צַדִּיק and תְּמִים not as being sinless or perfect in an absolute moral sense, but rather in a sacral context. The words refer to a man's condition which conforms to the

cult and is pleasing to God. /55/

Certainly it is true that תמים is the form of the root which is used in connection with sacrifices which are without blemish, but Von Rad has again let his Protestant presuppositions come to the fore. As we have noted, צדק and תום appear to denote right ethical behaviour, and it is important to realize the significance of human involvement.

Further Noah is set in a pre-Israelite context where there is no cult, and at the level of the story תמים does not refer to the cult. The question again arises to what extent does the writer take his pre-Sinai, pre-Israelite context seriously? An Israelite reader would have judged Noah by the standards of his own day and these would no doubt have included cultic acceptability. Once more there appear to be two levels of reading the text. Noah can be judged blameless with regard to the context of Gen 1, but also by the standards of later Israel. Were Noah to have partaken of cultic activity, he would have been an accepted member of the cultic community.

Do these statements mean that Noah was sinless in that he never did anything wrong? To what extent is righteousness the equivalent of moral perfection in a man's lifestyle? Eichrodt for example raised the issue of the relationship of sinlessness and righteousness:

"But such being in the right in one's relationship with God does not, to Israelite thinking, in any way rule out sin so long at any rate as this sin does not issue in insolent arrogance but leads to humble submission to God's punishment or alternatively to readiness to make use of the means of atonement provided by God". /56/

Eichrodt speaks of the distinction between the righteous and the wicked as being an overall orientation of life which is pleasing to

God.

The difficulty is that the text does not spell out exactly what it means by Noah's righteousness. Later Jewish exegesis senses the problem here and tends to see Noah's righteousness as relative. Talmud Sanhedrin notes that in 6:5-8 God's regret extended to all including Noah, but that a special exception was made for Noah. /57/ Midrash Aggadah writes, "And were it not for this special grace Noah would have perished too". /58/ The Midrash on 6:9 writes:

וְאֲנִי כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ כֵן עָשִׂיתִי וְטָהַר בִּינִי לְבֵינֵם

"And as for me, What they (the sinful generation) have done, I have done equally; what is the difference between me and them?". /59/ The Zohar states that Noah sinned in not chastising his fellows and had he done so the waters may never have come. Noah fulfilled the minimum requirements but he could have done more and great people can be dealt with severely for not doing right as much as for doing wrong. It is sinful to withhold speech when it is beneficial to others. /60/

The text of Gen 6-9 does not add any of these qualifications, but it does show that Noah's relationship with God was felt to be a problem by the Rabbis. The difficulty with Eichrodt's statement is that it could suggest that human behaviour did not play a major role in the divine-human relationship, and as we have seen this is not the case. There is one word which helps our understanding of this problem.

It is possible that the statements of Gen 6:9 are relative. It is stated that Noah was righteous *בְּדִרְתָּיו*, and this could be taken two ways. Resh Lakish wrote, "He was righteous even in his age; how much more so would he have been righteous in other ages". It is much

harder to be righteous when violence and deceit are rampant. In contrast Rabbi Jochanan wrote, "Noah was blameless only in *his* age, but in other ages he would not have been considered righteous". /61/ In other words in a bad generation a good man will stand out all the more.

In a nutshell is Noah righteous only with respect to his contemporaries i.e. the wicked generation, or was he righteous in an absolute sense? The problem is similar to that in Gen 7:1. דור can take various nuances of meaning, but often it meant generation in the sense of the people who collectively became a man's contemporaries: Ex 1:6, Is 53:8, Jer 7:29. Often the word is used of the moral evaluation of people: Nu 32:13, Deut 1:35ff, 2:14, 32:20, Jer 2:31./62/ Westermann translates בדרתיו "among his contemporaries". /63/ J.Skinner says that the word covers the successive generations of Noah's lifetime. /64/ Of Gen 6:9 BDB says בדרתיו means "his own generation and those immediately before and after". Deut 1:35-40 seems to see Caleb exempt from the corrupt generation round about him, and this would seem to suggest the possibility of an individual separating himself from the sin which surrounds him. Caleb, though, is not described as צדיק or תמים.

The text of Gen 6 is too brief for a definite conclusion, and does not seem bothered with these issues. What it emphasizes is that Noah is righteous in a generation which is totally corrupt. He falls outside the category of 6:11-13 and does not partake of their corruption. That does not mean he is necessarily sinless but that he does not partake of gross corruption. In a time of widespread evil the good stand out all the more. בדרתיו emphasizes that Noah stands apart from the corruption of his contemporaries. The word sets Noah

in contrast to those around, rather than links him to future times.

Whilst the word does relate Noah's righteousness specifically to his time, we would argue that it is absolute. In 7:1 J Noah is judged righteous before God in "this generation" בְּדֹר הַזֶּה i.e. the wicked generation of 6:5-7. Noah's righteousness is then linked specifically to a particular generation. In P Noah is righteous בְּדִרְתָּיו, and as דֹר is in the plural, that presumably includes ante- and post-diluvian contemporaries. The fact that he lived 950 years suggests a considerable number of generations. Noah is a righteous man even after the destruction of the corrupt generation. He is a good man par excellence, regardless of those around him. Consequently P's description is more general than J's, and offers an absolute assessment of Noah, which is not dependent solely on a contrast with others; it even omits the tale of the misdemeanor in 9:20-27. Further if readers were judging Noah according to their own standards, then the description of Noah is not simply a contrast to those around.

The text describes Noah as walking with God. It gives him a close fellowship with God and he is put on the same level as Enoch (Gen 5:22, 24). Noah enjoys the special blessing of God's presence.

Noah may have been an ideal, righteous man, but P tells us that he died (9:28ff). He went the way of all flesh except for Enoch. Even the righteous do not escape death.

4 Reading J and P Together

If the two stories are read together several points of interest emerge. First, both sources place great stress on Noah's obedience: J= 7:5, 7-9, 8:20; P= 6:22, 7:14-16, 8:16-19. Repetition hammers

home the point. If the two sources are read together as a continuous narrative, then this is given special emphasis. Both sources are keen to stress the diligence and faithfulness of Noah in a seemingly impossible task. In both accounts he is faithful: 7:7-9 =J, 13-16=P. Further if the two stories are placed together, the point which was made earlier that in J Noah did not know the precise reason for the building of the ark until 7:4 is now invalid, since 6:17 states the purpose of the construction of the vessel.

Secondly, we noticed a difference between J and P in terms of Noah's righteousness. For J righteousness was understood with particular reference to the flood, its wicked generation and the building the ark (7:1). For P the description of Noah as righteous was a general assessment which covered several generations. If the two are placed together then P's assessment predominates. Noah is not just צדיק in terms of the flood, but in general terms over many years. He proves it in his response to God, in such a way that he demonstrates the meaning of righteousness for all to see. 7:1 following 6:22 makes clear that obedience is an essential part of righteousness.

Thirdly, if 6:8 and 6:9 are placed together, Noah gains God's favour because he is righteous. This is the only place in the Old Testament where righteousness and finding favour are equated. In the combined reading we have both God's saving act and Noah's obedience playing crucial roles in the deliverance of the world. Consequently Noah's obedience is taken up into God's plan of salvation and is a motivating factor within it, as in Gen 22. Both sources give prominence to the obedience of Noah, but to different degrees. When placed together, the J account is subsumed into that of P. 7:1

confirms 6:9 in that Noah is still righteous in spite of the difficult task which is set before him and the corruption round about him.

Fourthly, there is the considerable problem of relating 8:21 and 6:9. Presumably Noah who is righteous, blameless and who walks with God, is to be included in the description of 8:21, since only he and his family are left. We have seen that this is a problem for J but it is more acute for a joint reading. Is it possible to be צדיק and תמים, and yet part of the evil generation? A couple of points can be made.

In the first place, as we shall see in Chapters 5 and 6, this problem is not absent from P. The fact that P lists a number of commands in 9:1-7, would suggest that man is still inclined to evil, since otherwise such injunctions would be superfluous. Again it is only Noah and his family who remain.

Perhaps one way out of the difficulty, we would suggest, is to distinguish between the unchanged, evil nature of man, as found in 8:21 and the actions which issue from it. We discussed this with regard to J. All share this basic nature, but not all act in accordance with it. Despite this basic inclination of humans to evil, there is the possibility of living in accord with God's law. This included obedience, repentance and expiation. The fact that righteousness was an act of both God and man would seem to suggest that man was both corrupt by nature and yet capable of obeying Torah. This reinforces what was said about J. It is also worth comparing Ez 18 again, which clearly envisages the possibility of the righteous losing their righteous status. A righteous man can fall away and commit abominations: 18:24ff. Similarly a wicked man can turn and

repent: 18:21ff. It is clear that the צדיק is capable of evil and it is possible it would seem, to hold together the statements of Gen 6:9 and 8:21. What a man does determines his status. All are inclined to evil but it appears that all can also resist it.

Further, it may be that the writer is not taking his context entirely seriously. He is writing in a different era from the events which are described, and it may be that at 8:21 he is making a statement about his own time as much as about the time of Noah. The narrator's mask may have slipped for a moment. For a while he forgets his imaginative context of Noah and the immediate family, since the purpose of 8:21 is to tell of humanity at the point of writing. The story as we noted in our introduction is parabolic. God is as justified in sending a flood now as he was 3000 years earlier, since man is as sinful as ever. The point of 8:21 is to explain why God does not send a flood even though man is wicked. It is because of this sinfulness and God's subsequent mercy that the writer wishes to tell the story. Hence perhaps he does not take his context entirely seriously. The text can then be read at two levels: the imaginative context of the primeval era, and the parabolic level of the writer's own time.

Fifthly, the passage of 9:20-27 seems to suggest that despite Noah's righteousness he is still capable of becoming involved in misdemeanors. The text never says that Noah's righteousness is lost, but Noah does still share the tendency of all men to become involved in disgrace. Nevertheless the misdeed is trivial in comparison with the evil of his contemporaries.

Finally, there is a comparison between Noah, Abraham and Phineas. R.W.L.Moberly in an article on Abraham's righteousness discusses the

interpretation of Gen 15:6 and compares it with Ps 106:31. Not only did God's promise guarantee to Israel her existence, but also Abraham's faithful and obedient response to God was a central factor in the setting up of the covenant. The same phrase "reckon as righteousness" is found in Ps 106:31, where the zeal which Phineas showed for God had an enduring effect for later Israel, in the establishment of the priesthood which owes its existence to him. As the Psalmist wrote of the priesthood and relates it back to the account of Phineas' zeal, so too the writer of Genesis works from the perspective of later Israel as Yahweh's people and relates it back to the stories of Abraham's faithfulness. The priesthood owes its status to Phineas, Israel owes its covenant to Abraham.

The term "reckon as righteousness" can now be understood as an idiom for human obedience and what can be expected to issue therefrom. The phrase indicates both the divine recognition of the quality of the actions of Abraham and Phineas, and the positive response which brought blessing. For both there was an outstanding example of faithfulness to God to which Yahweh replied in such a way that lasting blessing was bestowed on Israel. The blessing was connected with and grew out of human obedience. Consequently human behaviour has profound significance in the purposes of God./65/

It is here that we wish to push Moberly's argument a stage further by pointing to the parallels with Noah. Noah as צדיק is not merely a statement that he had faith in God, but also testimony to his obedient response to God. Noah as צדיק is the outcome both of God's gracious action and his obedient response. What has been said of Gen 15 and 22 of Abraham is true also of Noah. The actions of Noah, Abraham and Phineas have enduring significance for the world, Israel

and the priesthood respectively. These are in different traditions but there is a pattern of concentric circles which focuses in on the priesthood. In all three cases it was not just the promise, but also the faithful response of an individual to God, which mattered. Noah's righteousness led to the setting up of an eternal covenant and this is due, in part, to Noah's blameless life. As the world owes its life to Noah, so Israel owes its existence to Abraham, and the priesthood is based on Phineas' zeal. The Israelite idea that there is a clear link between what a man says or does and what happens to him, is clearly illustrated in Noah. Similarly righteousness as a divine and human attribute is hard to distinguish in the flood. Both are clearly present. Noah's צדקה brings blessing for the world and is also enduring for humanity, since without it there could not have been an eternal covenant. God recognizes the quality of the actions of Noah, and by his deeds, seen most especially in the carrying out of God's commands, he sets an outstanding example of human piety. In the flood there is a strong sense of moral or immoral acts determining results. Evil brings destruction, piety deliverance.

5 Righteousness and the Value of Human Life

The above discussion has an important bearing on the subject matter of this thesis. There is important evidence here for the way the Hebrews understood God's regard for humanity. He clearly sees a distinction between the righteous and the wicked, and in the flood humanity is divided into these two classes of individuals: those who have corrupted the way of 1:26ff and the righteous man Noah. Herein lies their fate: the wicked are punished by death; the righteous live. Those who have destroyed (שׁוּתוּ) themselves and the way ordained

by God (6:12), are themselves to be destroyed (שָׁחָה). That is how God views mankind, and he judges justly. It is life in accord with God and his ways which is deemed worthy of preservation. Consequently the value of life is to be seen in its relationship with God rather than in any intrinsic property of its own. When man breaks his relationship with God he forfeits his life. The unjust deserve death. That does not mean that the death of the wicked causes God pleasure (Gen 6:6, Ez 18:32), or that their life is of no value. Rather Man's destiny is to follow the way of his creator. This testifies to God's sovereignty over life; it must be lived in accordance with him and his will, or not at all.

Again it is worth comparing Ez 18. There the authority of God over all life is affirmed: "Behold all souls are mine" (18:4). God has sovereign control over the life of man, but that sovereignty is not used arbitrarily. The punishment of death is imposed in accordance with principles of righteousness and justice. The righteous live; the wicked die (18:9, 13, 20). God imposes punishment justly in contrast to the wanton oppression of man in Gen 6:11ff.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, Noah is portrayed as an exemplary pious man, who lives as God intended humanity to live (1:26ff). It seems that he shares the tendency of all people to do evil (8:21), but instead of succumbing to it he remains faithful to God. In contrast to those around, he is a model of life as God intended it to be. Life's value is found in righteous living with God.

FOOTNOTES

/1/ See Childs Old Testament Theology In A Canonical Context SCM 1985 p209. See also Eichrodt Theology 1 p239 - 249.

/2/ Childs Theology p208.

/3/ Von Rad Theology 1 p371. See also Koch THAT 2 "צדק" p507-530.

/4/ Von Rad Theology 1 p371 and see discussion there p371ff.

/5/ Von Rad Genesis p116.

/6/ For a discussion of the relationship between law and gospel see E.Jungel Karl Barth A Theological Legacy Westminster Press Philadelphia 1986 p105-126.

/7/ R.L.Rubenstein and J.K.Roth Approaches to Auschwitz The Legacy of the Holocaust SCM 1987 p52-65.

/8/ See Levenson "Why Jews Are Not Interested In Biblical Theology" in Judaic Perspectives On Ancient Israel Ed J.Neusner, B.A.Levine and F.S.Freirichs, Fortress Press Philadelphia p281-307, 1987 "The Hebrew Bible, The Old Testament And Historical Criticism" by J.D.Levenson in The Future Of Biblical Studies: The Hebrew Scriptures ed by R.E.Friedman and H.G.M. Williamson, Scholars Press Atlanta, Georgia, 1987 p19-59 especially p37ff, and Von Rad "Faith Reckoned As Righteousness" in The Problem Of The Hexateuch And Other Essays SCM 1951 p125.

/9/ Eichrodt Theology 1 p168.

/10/ Von Rad Theology 1 p201.

/11/ Childs Theology p208, and Von Rad Theology 1 p372ff.

/12/ Westermann Genesis p414.

/13/ R.W.L.Moberly "The Earliest Commentary On The Akedah" VT 38 1988 p302-323 p304ff.

- /14/ Ibid p321.
- /15/ Ibid p318 - 322. See Chapter 3 For the significance of Human action in relation to God in terms of נחם.
- /16/ Von Rad Theology 1 p384.
- /17/ R.W.L.Moberly "Abraham's Righteousness (Genesis XV:6)" VTS 41 1990 p103-130 p126.
- /18/ W.M.Clark "The Flood and the Structure of Pre-patriarchal History" ZAW 83 1971 p184-211 p195ff.
- /19/ Westermann Genesis 12-36 p283-293, Von Rad Genesis p204-210 and Davidson The Courage to Doubt: Exploring an Old Testament Theme SCM 1983 p45-49. For a further discussion of Gen 18 see T.D.Alexander "Lot's Hospitality: A Clue To His Righteousness" JBL 104 1985 p289-291; S.P.Jeansonne "The Characterization of Lot in Genesis" BTB 18 1988 p123-129; L.A.Turner "Lot as Jekyll and Hyde: A Reading of Gen 18-19" in D.Clines, S.Fowl and S.Porter The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield JSOTSS 87 1990 p85-101, and G.W.Coats "Lot as Foil in the Abraham Saga" in J.T.Butler, F.W.Conrad and B.C.Ollenburger Understanding the Word Essays in Honour of B.W.Anderson JSOTSS 37 1985 p113-132.
- /20/ Freedman and Lundbom "חנן" in IDOT V p22-36 p22. See this article for a full discussion of חנן and its various meanings. See also D.R.Ap-Thomas "Some Aspects of the Root HNN in the Old Testament" JSS 2 1957 p128-148.
- /21/ W.F.Lofthouse "Hen and Heseḏ in the Old Testament" ZAW 51 1933 p29-35, p29.
- /22/ Freedman "חנן" p25.
- /23/ Ibid p27ff.

- /24/ Ibid p30ff.
- /25/ Ibid p31ff.
- /26/ Vawter Genesis p114.
- /27/ Von Rad Genesis p114.
- /28/ W.M.Clark "The Righteousness Of Noah" VT 21 1971 p261-280.
- /29/ Westermann Genesis p426ff.
- /30/ Von Rad Genesis p116.
- /31/ Wenham Genesis p166.
- /32/ J.Licht "Storytelling" p31.
- /33/ For a discussion see A.N.Barnard "Was Noah A Righteous Man?"
Theology 74 1971 p311- 314.
- /34/ Westermann Genesis p427.
- /35/ Von Rad Genesis p132ff.
- /36/ Brueggeman Genesis p89.
- /37/ Vawter Genesis p139.
- /38/ A.Phillips "Uncovering The Father's Skirt" VT 30 1980 p38-43.
- /39/ F.W.Bassett "Noah's Nakedness And The Curse Of Canaan: A Case Of
Incest?" VT 21 1971 p232 -237.
- /40/ Cassuto Genesis 2 p151ff.
- /41/ Westermann Genesis p488 and Wenham Genesis p199ff.
- /42/ Westermann Genesis p494. A full discussion of the different
peoples involved in Gen 9 lies outside our scope but see Phillips
"Skirt", Bassett "Nakedness", Cassuto Genesis 2 p149, Westermann
Genesis p490ff and 493ff.
- /43/ Cassuto Genesis 2 p48ff.
- /44/ See Westermann Genesis p390.
- /45/ Wenham Genesis p152.
- /46/ P.Joyce Divine Initiative and Human Response in Ezekiel JSOTSS

51 1989 p25.

/47/ Von Rad Theology 2 p266, 230ff and 1 p393ff. See also Eichrodt Ezekiel SCM 1970 p237.

/48/ Joyce "Divine Initiative" p35-60, 76ff.

/49/ W.Zimmerli A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel Chapters 1-24 Fortress Press Philadelphia 1979 p376.

/50/ Joyce "Divine Initiative" p40ff.

/51/ Eichrodt Ezekiel p239, 242.

/52/ J.Blenkinsopp "The Structure of P" CBQ 38 1976 p275-292 esp p283ff.

/53/ Joyce "Divine Initiative" p70-76.

/54/ Skinner Genesis p159.

/55/ Von Rad Genesis p122.

/56/ Eichrodt Theology p394 and discussion p394-400.

/57/ Quoted in Bereishis p194, Babylonian Talmud 108a.

/58/ Ibid p194.

/59/ Ibid p202.

/60/ Ibid p203.

/61/ See The Torah: A Modern Commentary ed G.Plaut Union of American Hebrew Congregations New York 1981 p61.

/62/ See "דָּרַךְ" TDOT III Freedman and Lundbom p169-181.

/63/ Westermann Genesis p388.

/64/ Skinner Genesis p159.

/65/ Moberly "Abraham's Righteousness" p126 and discussion p103-130.

CHAPTER 3

A DISCUSSION OF GOD'S REPENTANCE IN GENESIS 6:6

"And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart."

The God of the Old Testament is one who relates personally to mankind. He is not cold or indifferent to the needs and circumstances of man but is deeply involved in the affairs of the world so that when creation rebels, he is grieved at the rejection of his purpose and at the judgment which he will have to bring. Nowhere is this shown more poignantly than in Gen 6:6ff where the wickedness of man is so great that God repents of having made him. Such a situation leads God not to rage but to regret and grief. The following chapter will examine the theology behind this statement of God's repentance, i.e. the full personal involvement of God in creation before doing a thorough study of Gen 6:6 itself. Such statements about divine repentance raise problems of religious language, and we shall need to be aware of these in our study.

1) The Problem of Religious Language

Verses from the Bible such as Gen 6:6 beg the question of the nature of religious language. Is it appropriate to speak of God in such a way? Does he repent, and do such expressions need to be modified? Ian Ramsey points to the "oddity" of religious language, since it has to be

"appropriate currency for such an odd situation as religious people claim to speak about. Here... is a discernment which provokes a commitment; a claim to which a religious man makes an appropriate response. Here is a discernment which is perceptual and more; whereupon situations become distinctively different, a difference we have tried to describe by speaking of the light dawning, the ice breaking, the penny dropping.

Further, when such a discernment occurs, it provokes... a total commitment to what is discerned; we yield ourselves in religious loyalties as conscience yields to the claims of duty, and our religious devotion has similarities to that devotion which we show to persons, communities and nations". /1/

The language of the Bible in particular is odd since, like all religious situations, it is about something odd and elusive. We always need to be careful about talking of God in straightforward language.

"The Bible is *not* the "words of God", which a slight grammatical variant might suggest, but its "words" make the light to dawn, make situations come alive, evoke that kind of situation which demands the word "God"". /2/

The central problem is how do we use and qualify observational language in theology so that it can be appropriate for what far exceeds it? /3/ How can we talk of God who is ultimately indescribable, in terms of human language which is finite? Ramsey sums up the problem:

"Christian doctrine will never give us a blue-print of God. It will talk of God as best it can, but never in terms of more than models, metaphors, key ideas and the rest;... in particular, the language of Christian doctrine is likely to bristle with improprieties. In surveying Christian doctrine, we must therefore be constantly on the look out for logical oddities, for language that is working oddly". /4/

Talking about God is quite different from talking about other things and it needs a special kind of language. At the heart of religion lies something which language cannot express in a totally adequate manner, since God transcends anything which our mind can grasp. /5/

In religious language there is a heavy dependence on metaphor.

J.F.Béthune-Baker writes in a discussion of the Arian controversy,

"All attempts to explain the nature and relations of the Deity must largely depend on metaphor, and no one metaphor can exhaust those relations. Each metaphor can only describe one aspect of the nature or being of the Deity, and the inferences which can be drawn from it have their limits when they conflict with the inferences which can be truly drawn from other metaphors describing other aspects". /6/

These questions and problems arise in Gen 6:6, since the idea of God repenting is itself a metaphor, which, as we shall see, works in

the way B ethune-Baker describes. However defining a metaphor is not easy and there have been several attempts at reaching a precise definition. /7/ J.M.Soskice has perhaps put forward the most satisfactory definition: "Metaphor is that figure of speech whereby we speak about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another". /8/ She rejects the idea that metaphor is simply another way of saying what can be said literally, as well as the suggestion that its force is primarily emotive. Rather metaphor is not just a matter of comparison, nor of pairing similars, but rather the bringing out of similarities in what previously might have seemed to be dissimilar. Metaphor is not just substitution for literal speech, nor is it strictly emotive, but expresses what can be said in no other way. In metaphor, Soskice argues, there is unity of subject matter which draws upon two sets of ideas, and does so by the use of models./9/

There is great dependence on metaphor in religious language, especially when we speak of God. Yet not all talk of God is metaphorical; sometimes analogy is used. Analogy is language which is stretched to fit new applications i.e. applying an old word in a new way. "Riding" is not only appropriate to horses but also to bicycles. Analogical relations all refer to the same thing but in different ways, and the terms are of sufficient generality to be appropriate to their new context. Analogy involves stretched not figurative uses. For example if we speak of God as "infinite" or "perfect", that is analogy. /10/

Further, it should be noted against philosophers who argue that all talk of a transcendent God has no significance, that to say that a statement is metaphorical, is a statement of its manner of

expression not of the truth expressed. It is particular uses rather than facts which are metaphorical. Neither are there two kinds of states of affairs- one literal the other metaphorical- but rather two ways of expressing that state. /11/ The fact that there is great use of imagery in the Old Testament is a sign that the Hebrew writers felt that no image was really adequate, and there is no reason to believe that the Hebrews were unaware of the nature of figurative language. For example Jer 2:13 describes God as a fountain of living waters. /12/ Clearly God was not a fountain, but he was to Israel a source of life in the same way that water was a means of livelihood to a people who lived in a hot climate. If God is rejected, the people die as if they had no water. The truth of a metaphor however is seen at the level of the intention of the speaker and of the complete utterance. For example when we talk of the arm of God, we do not mean that God has a physical arm but that he has power and might. In that way metaphorical and literal senses combine. Metaphor can also be used because something new and radical is being talked about and can be spoken of in no other way. For example "Jesus is the lamb of God" is one of the most effective ways of describing his soteriological role in the New Testament. /13/

Neither should we think of a metaphor as having two distinct subjects. The statement "The man is a wolf", shows that "wolf" does not refer to an animal; the man is the subject of the sentence. Consequently metaphor is not just dependent on words, but on words which are used in speeches and sentences, outside which they have no function; that is what makes metaphor possible. One thing is spoken of in terms of another. /14/

Given the fact that no one has ever seen God, the theological

application of religious language must rest on the fact that we are causally related to God through religious experience. In order to point to God we need to use metaphor. The theist however need not make an exhaustive description of God; language is reality-depicting without any claim to making a complete assessment of God. Metaphors can never be exhaustive or absolute when they point to God. We need awareness of the inadequacy of our language. /15/

2) Anthropomorphism and God's Personal Action in the World

When we turn to the Old Testament we find that it is quite happy to use human language when it speaks of God and does so with little reticence, which later generations found hard to cope with and understand. Indeed the Old Testament does not seem to see any need to qualify these kinds of metaphor, by offering such statements as "God is a jealous God but not in terms of human jealousy".

Basically anthropomorphism seeks to interpret God in terms of everyday human experience -God is portrayed after the manner of men. Parts of the body can be ascribed to him (1 Sam 5:11), as can physical actions (Ps 2:7) or emotions (Gen 6:6, Is 61:8). It would seem that the immanence of God threatens to overshadow his transcendence in passages which contain such metaphors and consequently later interpreters have had great difficulty with these passages. Is this naivete or metaphor for spiritual experience? The Septuagint translators in the later period of the Greek speaking world, where there was not such a strong sense of the personal nature of God, took offence at many of these as did Philo. Often it was felt that such anthropomorphic statements threatened God's transcendence and power. Such expressions which are metaphorical, were regarded as

inappropriate and could be misunderstood. This shows the problem of religious language and its dependence on metaphor, since metaphor can never be exhaustive, and it can be taken too far in its application. Talk of God needs to be revised and reapplied. That was the problem which was felt by LXX and later generations. What is significant is that it all depends on what type of metaphor and analogy people prefer. At the time of LXX metaphors of transcendence took precedence over those of immanence.

For example LXX softens Gen 6:6 "και ἐνεθυμηθη ὁ θεος ὅτι ἐποίησεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς και διενοηθη". ἐνθυμεομαι means "lay to heart", "consider well", be concerned at", "form a plan" and διανοεμαι "to think over". Philo too found these passages hard. He wrote,

"Again, some on hearing these words suppose that the Existent feels wrath and anger, whereas He is not susceptible to any passion at all. For disquiet is peculiar to human weakness, but neither the unreasoning passions of the soul, nor the parts and members of the body in general, have any relation to God". "All the same the law-giver uses such expressions, just so far as they serve for a kind of elementary lesson, to admonish those who could not otherwise be brought to their senses". /16/

In Gen 6:5-7 he notes that careless inquirers will think that the creator repented of the creation of man; such an idea is rejected: "For what greater impiety could there be than to suppose that the Unchangeable changes?"/17/ Both LXX and Philo have misunderstood the full implications of anthropomorphism due to philosophical influence from the Greek world. Later theology has also had trouble with such language. St Ignatius writes in the letter to Polycarp 3:2 "Be on the alert for him who is above time, the Timeless, the Unseen, the One who became visible for our sakes, who was beyond touch and passion, yet who for our sakes became subject to suffering and endured everything for us". /18/ The first of the 39 Articles reads

"There is but one living and true God, everlasting without body, parts or passions".

Another way of explaining anthropomorphism is to see it as belonging to the primitive stages of religion, later to be replaced by a more refined concept of God. Some, like Rowley, would regard it as metaphorical, "Most of the anthropomorphisms we find in the Bible are mere accommodations to human speech, or vivid pictures used for psychological effect rather than theological in significance". /19/ This is disappointing from Rowley. Such statements are metaphorical, but they are not just "mere accommodations" to humans nor, as we have seen, are they only for psychological effect. It is impossible to undertake theological discussion without a heavy reliance on metaphor. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church combines both interpretations "Scripture, especially in the earlier books of the Old Testament (e.g. Gen 3:8, 32:24ff, Ex 4:24) in order to be intelligible to less developed minds, frequently uses anthropomorphic language, which is in most cases clearly metaphorical". /20/

Such approaches to the problem are unsatisfactory. Clines points out that anthropomorphisms are not confined to the earlier books of the Bible (Is 42:14, 63:1). (N.B. also Ex 31:17 "refreshed" in P) He notes that these expressions are not parts of the Bible for which excuses have to be made but rather are an essential element in the biblical understanding of God; a positive evaluation is required. In contrast to those who wish to see God as free from limitation, anthropomorphic language wants to speak of God as expressing himself through his self limitations. As when a poet chooses to express himself in the form of a sonnet or a composer in the form of a sonata, he takes up various limitations so as to make that self

expression possible, so God uses anthropomorphism in the same way.

/21/

The fundamental key to understanding anthropomorphism lies in the personal nature of God who relates to people in a personal way. Anthropomorphism seeks to interpret the multi faceted nature of God in terms of human personality. Vischer notes

"He empties himself, and lays by the form of his divinity; he humbles himself and assumes the form of man. He appears to men not as distant conception or lofty idea, not as the absolute, the incomprehensible, the infinite, but as one who is truly closest to all, as supremely the personal friend or foe of that humanity in which he reveals himself". /22/

In particular the prophets were aiming to portray the personal God who is not indifferent to his people's cold rejection of him. Anthropomorphism anchors God in the realm of human experience. Köhler summarizes well by stating that the meaning of the human descriptions of God in the Old Testament is,

"not in the least to reduce God to a rank similar to that of man. To describe God in terms of human characteristics is not to humanize Him. That has never happened except in unreasonable polemic. Rather the purpose of anthropomorphisms is to make God accessible to man....They represent God as person. They avoid the error of presenting God as a careless and soulless abstract idea or fixed Principle standing over against man like a strong silent battlement. God is personal. He has a will, He exists in controversy ready to communicate Himself, offended at men's sin yet with a ready ear for their supplication and compassion for their confession of guilt: in a word God is a living God". /23/

Man begins with the familiar situations of home and community and moves from these to illuminate the activity of God so that the application of these terms and phrases to God establishes an absolute ideal. Man can then become more like God and anthropomorphism can help him attain that goal. G.B.Caird writes, "Anthropomorphism is something more than the imposing of man's preconceived and limited images on the divine. There is something that answers back in perpetual dialogue and criticism". /24/

One of the most important aspects of Old Testament theology was the strong emphasis on the personal nature of God. The individuality of the Old Testament concept of God is to be seen here and it is the foundation of Old Testament faith. The Old Testament sees a God who is alive and fully personal in his dealings with the world. /25/ By personal involvement we describe a God who engages with humans and their history, and is committed to their well-being and existence. He interacts with humans on their own terms as we would with each other. To some extent the use of the divine name illustrates this, by showing God as distinctive, definable, individual and not a remote, nameless deity or blind natural force. /26/ The name presents us with an individual and Clines argues that the use of the divine name guards against philosophical abstractions./27/ God is a deity who enters into a personal relationship with man.

There is in the Old Testament both a monarchical understanding of God which emphasizes his transcendence and the discontinuity between God and the world, and an organismic view which stresses the intimacy between the divine and human realms. In the flood both these aspects are clearly present; on the one hand there is the power of God who creates, uncreates and re-creates, on the other there is his engagement with individuals on a personal basis: 6:6,8, 7:1 (J), 6:9, 8:1 (P). God becomes fully involved in the world so that events have an effect on him, as much as they do on other people. The possibility of intercession in other narratives such as Gen 18 and Ex 32-34, suggests that God has so entered the human condition that he allows humanity a part in his decision making. There is genuine divine openness to the future, since human action plays a major role in determining God's attitude to people. (See Chapter 2) /28/

God is transcendent in his relationship with the world but is not remote from it. He is the lord of time but has also chosen to be bound up with human history. God is unchangeable but also changes in the light of what occurs in the world. When we speak of God and the world we are talking of a relationship and, as Fretheim notes, in any relationship God will have to give up some freedom, since any commitment involves promise. God has exercised freedom in making promises and thereafter his freedom is truly limited. God will be faithful and this involves not a freedom FROM the world but a freedom FOR it in which, as we will see below, there is some power sharing.

/29/

The God of the Old Testament is not a static timeless being but, as we have seen, is in constant interaction with people and events. God does have a history - future and a past. "His eternity is infinite duration, not a quality of existence; his changelessness so called is simply his faithfulness to his promises, for he does change in response to the conversion of the Ninevites or the repentance of Israel. He is acted upon and he reacts", notes D.Clines /30/.

All this shows a God who relates to the world in such a way that he has passion and emotion. The divine pathos shows the high worth of man. God is not indifferent to man's cold rejection of him. "The repentance of God...grows into the assured conviction that human development is not for Him an empty, indifferent spectacle...He is not an unconscious natural force, which pours out its fullness in utter indifference", writes H.Schultz /31/. In other words God does not rule with the majesty of remote omnipotence but reacts emotionally to the life of the world with all its suffering and tragedy. He is not cold nor aloof and can feel the full

repercussions of every turn of the human drama.

Despite the fact that God relates to man in a personal way there is still a strong sense of the otherness of God. Care was taken to ensure that human limitations were not too easily applied to him. This can perhaps be seen in the flood where despite the anthropomorphism of Gen 6 there is still a great emphasis on the majesty of God in his sovereignty over creation. The divine nature was infinitely superior to that of man as can be seen from such epithets as "The Lord of Hosts" and exilic passages such as Is 40-43 where God is portrayed as the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth -the imperishable ruler of the universe who is set in contrast to the non-existent gods of the heathen. There are also explicit denials of limits to the divine nature (Is 49:15). /32/ Another example of limiting a metaphor is found in Ps 121:4. The Psalmist is stressing the power of God to protect and care for the individual. In order to underline his point he refrains from human metaphor since God does not slumber or sleep. The analogy between a human and divine keeper is not absolute. Nevertheless the Old Testament does seem to find it easier to tolerate the danger of lessening God's greatness and absoluteness than to run the risk of giving up God's lively personal nature and participation in things earthly. /33/

3) Etymological Considerations

Now it will be necessary to do a detailed study of the word נָחַם. The piel and pual yield the uniform translation "comfort" or "console": 53 times (e.g. Is 40:1, 49:13, Lam 1:2). It is however the niph'al and hithpael which are more complex giving "repent", "regret", "change one's mind" as well as "comfort": Am 7:3, 1 Sam

15:11, Jer 18:8, 31:15. The hithpael can mean "be sorry", "comfort" "oneself", "repent" or ease oneself by taking vengeance: Gen 37:35, Num 23:19, Deut 32:36, Ez 5:13./34/ The root **נחם** is not found in P which seems to prefer more formalized language, though occasionally it does use anthropomorphic talk: Gen 8:1, Ex 31:17.

Naturally linguists have attempted to find the semantic link between the different uses of this root. D.Winton Thomas drawing on comparative Semitic philology argued that the Arabic root nahama, to "breath hard", is the primary meaning of the Hebrew word. /35/ From this he argues that the idea is developed into "comfort", since that is what is gained from drawing a deep breath as in Is 1:24, Ez 5:13, Ps 119:52. N.Snaith also follows this method, pointing out that the root is used of the breathing of a horse. /36/

The etymological approach does not really help in understanding Gen 6 and its methodology is highly questionable. Prof Barr describes the arguments of this method as "patently absurd"./37/ It is wrong to assume that use in Arabic is determinative for the meaning of a word in a religious Hebrew context. There is a danger of making an accidental etymological connection decisive for the interpretation of a root in a different context. It is not etymology but context and usage which determine meaning.

Another attempt to discern the exact nature of **נחם** is represented by H.Van Dyke Parunak /38/ who argues that the semantic link between the meanings "comfort" and the execution of wrath is located in the fact that anger is an expression of relief of emotional tension. When God has promised blessing or judgment and when the conduct of the intended recipient has rendered such treatment inappropriate, an emotional tension is built up which is relieved by retracting the

blessing or judgment. Van Dyke Parunak concludes that "comfort" is the basic meaning of נחם and that the niphal and hiphil describe the release of emotional tension.

Yet again this approach is not particularly helpful. A more effective method is to examine context, usage and the theology of the Old Testament to understand the basic meaning of נחם. Ultimately for our inquiry more will be gained from theology than etymology.

4) The Repentance of God in the Bible

All the above factors provide the theological grounding for understanding נחם. We have discussed at some length the personal nature of God and his deep involvement in the world. נחם is a good example of the various issues raised such as the use of metaphor and anthropomorphism. Talk of God's repentance is a classic example of God's flexible response and divine self limitation for the sake of a relationship.

The traditional rendering of נחם as "repent" is not entirely satisfactory since the English has moral overtones not suitable for use with God. On the other hand "regret", "relent" or "change one's mind" do not really suit נחם. The rendering "repent" is conveniently flexible. /39/ When we talk of God repenting it is not in the sense of God having been at fault. Rather it is man who has changed usually because of sin. /40/ It must also be noted that the Old Testament does recognize important limits with regard to talk of divine repentance. Usually נחם is used of God repenting and שׁוּב of human repentance. The two can be juxtaposed: Jer 18:8, Jon 3:10. The distinction is not absolute since נחם can be used of a man changing his mind or having compassion (Ex 13:17, Ju 21:6,15) and sometimes of moral repentance (Jer 8:6, 31:19, Jb 42:6). שׁוּב is also

employed of Yahweh (Jer 4:28, Jon 3:9); when it is, it never has the idea of moral repentance but rather of responding flexibly to a set of circumstances as with נָחַם. /41/ Hence there is a limit to the metaphor which is not to be exceeded; God does not repent because he has sinned.

These usages of נָחַם illustrate that God is not unchangeable and that he does respond to the happenings of the world in a personal manner. Behind statements of God repenting there lies the basic idea of God's relation to the world and, as noted above, God limits himself for the sake of man by entering into human activity and responding accordingly. God does hear prayer and responds, as he shows concern for temporal events. As Brunner notes, "God is not the unchangeable. He is not Unchangeable because, and in so far as, He has created Time, and takes part in temporal happenings". /42/

Jer 18 is perhaps the best example of the use of נָחַם in the Old Testament and gives us a norm for its occurrence elsewhere. Verses 7-10 enunciate a principle which is followed in other parts of the Old Testament. Human deeds can move God to modify his actions. Sin can make God punish (Gen 6:5-7, 1 Sam 2:17,30, 1 Sam 15:11,23,26) but on the other hand repentance can avert disaster: Jon 3:7-10, Jer 26:18-19. /43/. All these passages underline the Old Testament's view that the relationship between God and man is profoundly personal, involving and committing both man and God. Hebrew thought does not shrink from bold anthropomorphisms. /44/

Jer 18 illustrates this well by displaying a strong notion of contingency as God reacts to the deeds of men. Feinberg puts it well, "In short, with God repentance is not a change of mind but is his consistent response according to his changeless nature to the

change in the nation's conduct. So in this parable the prophet is holding out the opportunity for Judah to repent"./45/ God is changeless in the sense that there are fundamental, absolute standards which God does not revoke. These are the norms of the relationship with Israel and are the means by which he measures his response to his people's doings. God's nature is changeless and it is in accord with this that he reacts to people.

The parable of the potter becomes a good illustration of the principle enunciated in verses 7-10. The potter can do with the clay whatever he sees fit but the point is not that he will continue to work patiently until the vessel is worthy but, as verse 4 shows, the clay can frustrate the potter's intention and force him to discard it. The quality of the people determines what God will do with them whether for judgment or for mercy. /46/ The clay is not passive but exerts a centrifugal force which presses against the hands of the potter. Yahweh is sovereign but the people have a will of their own. Consequently God can change his mind according to the response of the people. The parable of the potter presents us with a picture of divine sovereignty alongside human freedom. Verses 7-10 naturally explain the parable. /47/ R.P.Carroll summarizes well,

"The principle is a symmetrical one:if the deity wills good for a nation or kingdom...and it does evil, then the deity will repent (תָּנַח) of the good intended for it. National changes bring about changes in the deity, and the future of any nation or kingdom is not predestined but determined by its preparedness to change (for good or evil). National turning is matched by divine repentance". /48/

Consequently Jeremiah preaches repentance so that turning may be possible (26:2-6). Sadly his word is in vain (18:12, 17:1).

It should be noted that the language of the potter and clay implies a less personal and interactive language than that which is taken from the sphere of human relationships. The emphasis of Jer 18

is as much on the sovereignty of God to do as he wishes, as on human freedom to respond. Nevertheless even in this context what man does determines what God will do.

5) Divine Constancy

The question then arises as to what we are to make of texts such as Num 23:19 "God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should repent", and 1 Sam 15:29 "And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent"./49/ (RSV) There needs to be some limit to this metaphor of repentance. Neither denies what we have been saying so far but rather each makes the point that God is not untruthful but stands by what he says. Both passages show that God does not repent in parallel to statements that he does not lie: לֹא אִישׁ אֵל וְיִכְזֹב (Num 23:19), לֹא יִשְׁקֶר (1 Sam 15:29). The essential element to grasp is that both texts focus on the issue of God's faithfulness to his word (Num 23:19). For Num 23:20-24 it is God's blessing of Israel and for 1 Sam 15 the choice of David which are at stake. In both these cases God's purposes of redemption can never be revoked. The idea of God not repenting in the sense of not being false to his word is fundamental to the Old Testament. Even the lament Psalms 44 and 89 which point to the apparent failure of God to honour his promises do not seriously entertain the possibility that God is false to his word. Neither Psalm resolves the problem. They do not question but rather affirm the promises of God and appeal in the end to God's steadfast love (Ps 44:26,89:49)./50/ There is no hint of capriciousness or whimsical passions. /51/ The point is then clear that God is fundamentally consistent in his dealings with people.

When he does repent or change his mind it is in response to human fickleness and wrongdoing, and God's reaction to sin is always in accord with his righteousness and his faithfulness to his people. God is constant in his opposition to sin and that causes him to regret creating man. His regret is always in accord with these absolute values. In short we must hold a balanced view of God which allows for his sovereign purpose and faithfulness, and also one which takes into account his flexible response to the deeds of men.

Ultimately it is important to see a distinction between being unchanging in principle and immutable over a particular issue. The Old Testament does not portray God as unchanging but as faithful to his word and to himself. God, as noted above, is unchanging in that he never lies but that does not mean that he is inflexible on everything. (compare Ps 110:4, Jer 4:28, Mal 3:6) This goes some way in responding to R.P. Carroll's assertion that Jer 18:7-10 presents us with an unreal predictable deity which is mechanical and lacks depth. /52/ This misses the point. The aim of the passage is to underline the divine consistency in God's relationship with the nations. God is consistent and can be relied upon to act in a way which excludes unfairness.

To say that God repents is to deal primarily with the idea of reversal and change. The term is not exhaustive since there is no one to one correlation between the way people and God repent. Yet the metaphor makes the idea of God's involvement in the world vivid. Such metaphors anchor God in the realm of human experience and communicate our encounter with him. /53/

Naturally this touches on the question of providence and its relation to freedom. The Old Testament does see the divine will

determining the life of Israel and the world. There is a divine energy which is all pervading; it directs lives in accord with God's will. For example God causes Absalom to reject the advice of Ahithophel (2 Sam 17:14). He stirs up David to a disastrous census (2 Sam 24:1) and hardens the heart of both Pharaoh (Ex 4:21) and of Israel (Is 6:10). Yet the Bible does not give a simplistic determinism. If man were to have no responsibility then the whole ethical teaching of the Bible would be rendered meaningless. The concept of moral freedom is found alongside the belief in God's effective rule in all things. Strange though it may seem to us the Old Testament does not seem to see a tension here in the way that modern theology would. Both realities are found with no attempt to resolve them. Ultimately it is left to the mystery and majesty of God. /54/

The above discussion shows that the God of the Old Testament is passionate and cares for man deeply. "The Old Testament does not present us with a God whose personality is essentially simple and whose every action may be readily integrated with the basic tenor of his personality, but with one whose judgments are unsearchable and ways ultimately inscrutable", notes Clines. /55/

6) Gen 6:6-7

In Gen 6:6 we are allowed into the innermost heart of God and are granted a view of his deepest feelings. M.Sternberg speaks of the omniscience of Biblical narrators; they speak from a privileged position, with the knowledge of past, present and future, as well as of the thoughts of those who partake of the drama both of God and of man. The narrator shows all the privileges of knowledge which transcend the human condition. The Bible postulates a narrator with

such free movement through time and space, the public and private arena, that "he invests his dramatizations with the authority of an omniscience equivalent to God's own". /56/ This omniscience is an established principle, which can view past, present and future, give judgment, and even view the heart of God, without challenging his authority. By so doing he evokes reverential obedience amongst his readers.

It seems that Sternberg has overstated his case. It would be better to speak of the writer's privileged position with his insight and knowledge, rather than omniscience. The narrator makes no claim to know all, and Sternberg's assertion does not accord with the discrepancies which we have noted in Gen 6-9, and are to be found elsewhere in the Bible. Narrators often show their fallibility. /57/ Nevertheless Sternberg's insight is useful since it shows that the narrator of the flood had a unique insight into the ways of God, not only in Gen 6:6 but in other aspects of the account such as the rise and fall of the waters and the judgment on the people involved.

Having outlined the basic tenets of the Old Testament understanding of God, it is now time to consider Gen 6:6 in detail./58/ Here we encounter the basic issues which have been discussed above. Gen 6 shows God, who is deeply personal, responding flexibly to the situation of the world. The principle of Jer 18 is well illustrated here, with God repenting of the good he has done in the creation of the world because humans have rebelled. Anthropomorphism is used to underline the personal nature of God's relationship with the world.

Gen 6:6 then is a testimony to the personal relationship between God and man. God cannot disassociate himself from people. By using

anthropomorphism the text seeks to come to terms with the apparent contradiction that God first creates then destroys man. God's regret is set in the context of the decision to destroy. Unlike the Epic of Gilgamesh, there is no plurality of gods, one of whom wills destruction, another life. The regret of God emphasizes the monotheistic nature of the text by placing the dissension between gods in the one God. The one God in reality wills life for his creation, but man is now so irredeemably wicked that God is left with no option but to send a drastic punishment. It is clear that in Gen 6 it is man who has been inconsistent not God. The J account then emphasizes the horror of what is about to take place. Since the will of God is for the good of his creation then the impending doom causes him anguish, sorrow and regret. Dillmann writes of 6:6, "A very human way of speaking of God, characteristic as it is of the author's very lively descriptive power". /59/ F. Delitzsch writes,

"God feels repentance when He sees His original design of His love rendered vain...He feels grief when His holy love is rejected. He is the living God, upon whom the sight of fallen man, of the deeply corrupted world, does not fail to react".
/60/

This is so important that J repeats the statement (6:6,7).

The pain of God relates both to the general sin of humanity as well as to the divine decision to destroy. Some argue that the sorrow and repentance of God are connected with the general sinfulness of man. Gunkel notes, "At base there is a deeply pessimistic reflection on human sinfulness". /61/ Skinner calls it a "pessimistic estimate of human nature". /62/ Naturally there is truth in these statements. 6:5-8 offers an assessment of the state of man. Nonetheless the primary thrust of the text is, as Westermann observes, not a general statement but rather the attempt of J to come to terms with the decision to destroy. 6:5 should be seen in the

context of 6:5-8. The words are not simply a reflection on the state of sin. A whole generation has been corrupted with sin and the drastic decision taken by God, that destruction is the only possible response, causes him to repent of making man -something which brings grief to God. J is attempting to come to terms with this.

עצב ויחעצב אל לבו further emphasize the grief which comes to God. עצב is used to express some of the deepest human emotions: the feeling of the brothers of Dinah after her rape (Gen 34:7); of Jonathan after hearing of Saul's plan to kill David (1 Sam 20:34); and of David on hearing of Absalom's death (2 Sam 19:3) and of a deserted wife (Is 54:6). /63/ Consequently this is the pain and love of a God who cares deeply about man and is spurred to take drastic action. /64/ God suffers in the judgment which he will have to bring.

Not only do we see a God who repents at creating man but we also see the divine constancy in this story. Despite the repentance of God the narrative ultimately testifies to God's promise to uphold creation in spite of continuing human sin. He promises not to respond to such complete corruption by the sending of a flood to kill all. God both repents and ensures survival. God limits himself in his dealings with man by excluding universal deluge from the possible range of punishments. God has opened himself to the possibility of further suffering with the resolve to abide with man as he is (8:20ff). /65/ The change in God assures his fundamental consistency. In the flood we see the immutability of God and his dependability in the preservation of the created order. That does not rule out the possibility of God sending punishment by other means but the basic structure of creation is upheld. The flood then becomes a good example of the Old Testament's belief in God's

consistency and his flexible response to man. The Old Testament can hold these two together without tension.

7) Reading Gen 6:6 with P

Talk of God's repentance is found in the J stratum but not the P, which seems to avoid anthropomorphic expression. In what way is the text enhanced by a joint reading and how is P altered by adding to it talk of God's repentance?

First, if the two sources are read together it is corruption of the way ordained by God in Gen 1:26ff, in particular by **סָמָח**, which causes God so much grief. The filling of the earth with violence made God regret the creation of the world; that brought the necessity of the deluge. God seems to be most especially grieved at the crime of killing. We shall suggest in Chapter 6 that God is bringing the punishment of life for life in line with 9:5ff. Yet even though this is a just punishment since humans have set themselves on sin, God still feels pain at the decision to destroy. Even though destruction (**שָׁחַח**) is the appropriate response to the people who have destroyed themselves (**שָׁחַח**), this is still a horrific prospect for God and he is filled with regret at destroying even a corrupt (**שָׁחַח**) humanity. In reading the two together God is especially grieved at the sin of **סָמָח** and the necessity of punishment which follows. Read by themselves the statements of 9:5ff could appear to state a mechanical notion of retribution. The fact that God does not decide on punishment with cold indifference, and that he is appalled at loss of life, adds a solemnity to the charges of 9:5ff.

Secondly, the point that in P there is almost complete silencing of anthropomorphism is no longer valid when the two sources are read together. When P is added to J the whole account is anthropomorphic.

Further 8:1 (P) is to some extent anthropomorphic so the point should not be pressed too far. If J is added to P there is a stronger sense of the personal involvement of God in the world. The corollary is also true; the addition of P with its emphasis on God's sovereignty in creation to J, forms an appropriate limit to these metaphorical statements.

Thirdly, a joint reading helps us resolve the apparent contradiction as to why did God create man if he knew that he would cause trouble? /66/ This has been explained in part by the above discussion in that God takes risks as he makes himself vulnerable to man and is prepared to suffer grief. There is also a partial answer in 6:8 where God preserves just one man. The one who is grieved at heart is also the one with whom a single human being finds favour. God is no pitiless destroyer. Despite widespread evil, his creation is made worthwhile by the righteous. The original world was very good (1:31) and that goodness made it worthy of creation. It is man not God who is responsible for its collapse.

If the two sources combine there is another answer to this problem. Not only is there this presence of God in the world but there is also a divine power sharing (Gen 1:26-30) so that in God's ongoing creation there is an element of intermediacy: Gen 1:28, Ps 8:5-8. God's continuing work is shared with humans. In the context of this power sharing there is a divine enabling and empowering which helps the creature to move freely. When God relates to man he shares power with him in a vital relationship of cooperation which involves God taking risks. Consequently God has to accept what people do with the power they are given even if, as in Gen 6, things go badly wrong. The cooperation between God and man is not always successful and God

may have to compromise. The Old Testament speaks of God's vulnerability as he limits himself by the creation of man. Consequently traditional language concerning divine omnipotence must be used with care. God has immersed himself in the world of time making himself available in vulnerability. God is ready to take risks with his creation. /67/

Naturally this is important for the flood. Not only does God take a risk with the world, by opening himself up to vulnerability, but the flood then becomes a most suitable place for a discussion of the Imago Dei. It can then be seen why this is placed in this context by the writer of the story. If the story is read as a whole then the placing of the image of God in man in the same story as a description of the frustration of God at the failure of his creation, makes good sense. The story is an account of the way in which the power sharing between God and man has gone badly wrong. Man has overstepped the limits set by God and has taken power which should rightly belong to God by oppressing his fellows, and most especially by taking human life -something only God has the authority to do. Consequently we have an interesting perspective when J and P are read together. God has given man freedom and responsibility, seen most especially in the Imago Dei, and is pained when he sees that image marred by human sin. A combined reading of the text adds a fuller perspective to **וַיִּנְחַם** and consequently it can be seen to be God's repentance at giving man not only a part but also authority in his creation. Again the prohibition of murder is apt here since the taking of life can then be viewed as an assault on the power of God delegated in the world. That power is to be used and not abused by man and when it is misused God is grieved and forced to repent of the making of humanity.

8) Gen 6:6 and the Value of Human Life

The above material is also significant for the main subject matter of our thesis. Gen 6:6 illustrates the horror which God has at killing; the taking of life is something which causes God pain and regret and is only to be used as a last resort when there is total corruption. God is so bound up with humans that anything which happens to them has a deep effect on him. God does not just exist for himself, but he reacts personally to people. /68/ Consequently it is not just life as mere existence which is of value to him, but life in relation to God which is valuable. If God regrets the destruction of life, even corrupt life, then it must be of value to him. When man abuses the responsible position which he holds in creation God is saddened. We quoted G.B.Caird who noted that anthropomorphism summons man to act like God. Man must be as reluctant to kill as God, and he ought to share the same horror at death. Man is to feel the same responsibility to his fellows as God does to humans. Even if man is to execute (9:5ff) he is to show great reluctance to take life.

Further, Gen 6:6-7 emphasizes God's absolute sovereignty over life: "for I am sorry that I have made them". As we shall discuss in the next chapter only God has the authority to take life, because he has made it.

Conclusion

We have seen how Gen 6:6 speaks of God's personal love, care and concern for man by the metaphor of repentance. Punishment is used only reluctantly and in spite of this, the passage is ultimately a

testimony to the value of human life and provides a suggestive context for a discussion of the Imago Dei. Man should be as reluctant to destroy as God.

Footnotes

/1/ I.T.Ramsey Religious Language: An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases SCM 1957 p90, see also p91ff.

/2/ ibid p151.

/3/ ibid p38.

/4/ ibid p164.

/5/ J.Macquarrie God-Talk: An Examination of the Language and Logic of Theology SCM 1967 p24.

/6/ J.F.Béthune-Baker Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine Methune London 1933 p160.

/7/ See J.M.Soskice Metaphor and Religious Language Clarendon Press Oxford 1985 p1-14.

/8/ ibid p15.

/9/ ibid p24-53.

/10/ ibid p64-66.

/11/ ibid p67-71.

/12/ ibid p77.

/13/ ibid p89ff.

/14/ ibid p135ff.

/15/ ibid p140ff.

/16/ Philo On the Unchangeableness of God (Quod Deus Immutabilis Sit)

XI 53 Loeb vol 3 William Heineman London 1930 p37.

/17/ ibid V 20 p21ff.

/18/ Translation in T.E.Pollard "The Impassibility of God" SJT 8 1955

p353-364 p357 and see the discussion therein. Compare Calvin Genesis p249 Banner of Truth Edinburgh 1965. For a detailed discussion of the issues raised from a systematic point of view see Barth CD vol II Part 1 p490-505; K.J.Woolfcombe "The pain of God" SJT 20 1967 p129-148; Pollard "Impassibility" p353-364; L.J.Kuyper "The Suffering and the Repentance of God" SJT 22 1969 p257-77 and Brunner The Christian Doctrine of God Dogmatics 1 Lutterworth London 1949 "The Eternity, Unchangingness, Faithfulness and Righteousness of God" chapter 20 p266-281.

/19/ Rowley The Faith of Israel: Aspects of Old Testament Thought SCM 1956 p75ff.

/20/ The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church Oxford University Press Londoned F.L.Cross and E.A.Livingstone 2nd ed 1974 p63.

/21/ D.Clines "Yahweh and the God of Christian Theology" Theology 83 1980 p323-330 p326.

/22/ Quoted in Eichrodt Theology 1 p212.

/23/ L.Koehler Old Testament Theology Lutterworth London 1957 p24ff.

/24/ G.B.Caird The Language and Imagery of the Bible Duckworth London 1980 p182 and discussion therein p172-182.

/25/ See Eichrodt Theology vol 1 p206-220.

/26/ ibid p206-210.

/27/ D.Clines "Yahweh and the God" p324ff.

/28/ T.E.Fretheim The Suffering God: An Old Testament Perspective Fortress Press Philadelphia 1984 chapter 3 "God and the world :Basic Perspectives".

/29/ See note 28.

/30/ Clines "Yahweh and the God" p326.

/31/ H.Schultz Old Testament Theology 2 T and T Clark Edinburgh 1892

p109.

/32/ ibid p213-220.

/33/ Von Rad Genesis p114.

/34/ See BDB נחם p636ff and Lisowsky's Concordance.

/35/ D.Winton Thomas "A Note on The Hebrew Root נחם" ET 44 1932-3
p191-192.

/36/ N.H.Snaith "The Meaning of the Paraclete" ET 57 1945-1946
p47-50.

/37/ J.Barr The Semantics of Biblical Language Oxford University
Press London 1961 p116ff.

/38/ For a full discussion of נחם and its various nuances of meaning
and details of usage see H. Van Dyke Parunak "A Semantic Survey of
NHM "Biblica 56 1975 p 512-532 and H.Stoebe "נחם" in THAT p59-66, and
J.Jeremias Die Reue Gottes: Aspekte alttestamentlicher
Gottesvorstellung Neukirchen Verlag, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1975 p15-18.

/39/ R.W.L.Moberly "Did the Serpent Get it Right?" JTS 39 1988 p1-27
p10.

/40/ Rowley "Faith" p67.

/41/ Moberly "Serpent" p11.

/42/ E.Brunner The Christian Doctrine of God p269.

/43/ For a detailed discussion of Ex 32:11-14 see Davidson The
Courage to Doubt p69-79. See also Am 7:1-6. For the only use of נחם
where there is no human influence on God see 2 Sam 24:16 but even
here the theology is not that different: see Moberly "Serpent" p11.

/44/ Moberly "Serpent" p10ff

/45/ C.F.Feinberg Jeremiah a Commentary Zondervan Grand Rapids Michigan
1982 p135.

/46/ Bright Jeremiah Anchor Bible Doubleday New York 1965 p125ff.

/47/ W.L.Holladay A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25 Herminaia Fortress Press 1986 p512-518. There are many other aspects of Jer 18 which cannot be discussed here but for fuller details see E.W.Nicholson Preaching to the Exiles. A Study in the Prose Tradition in the Book of Jeremiah Blackwell Oxford 1970 p80ff, W.McKane Jeremiah vol 1 I-XXV I.C.C. T and T Clark Edinburgh 1986 p420-8, Thompson The Book of Jeremiah Eerdmans Michigan 1980 p433ff, C.Brekelmans "Jer 18:1-12 and its redaction" in P.Bogaert Le Livre de Jérémie Le Prophète et son Milieu Les Oracles et Leur Transmission Leuven University Press Leuven 1981 p343-350.

/48/ R.P.Carroll Jeremiah SCM 1986 p372 and discussion therein p371-375.

/49/ We shall not undertake a detailed analysis of 1 Sam 15 since it raises many difficult problems of its own. It is fundamentally different from the story of the flood since in the former Saul is replaced by David but in the latter the same humanity is reinstated (Gen 6:5,21). For a full discussion see the commentaries, Fretheim "Divine Knowledge, Divine Constancy and the Rejection of Saul's Kingship" CBQ 47 1985 p595-602 and D.Gunn The Fate of King Saul: an Interpretation of a Biblical Story JSOTSS 14 1980, and Jeremias "Reue" p27-35.

/50/ Moberly "Serpent" p11-12.

/51/ Eichrodt Theology 1 p216.

/52/ Carroll Jeremiah p373ff.

/53/ Fretheim Suffering p5ff.

/54/ Eichrodt Theology vol 2 p177-181.

/55/ Clines "Yahweh and the God" p328.

/56/ M.Sternberg The Poetics Of Biblical Narrative: Ideological

Literature and the Drama of Reading Indiana University Press 1985
p90. See also chapter 3 "Ideology of Narration and Narration of
Ideology".

/57/ D.M.Gunn "Reading Right: Reliable and Omniscient Narrator,
Omniscient God and Foolproof Composition in the Hebrew Bible" in The
Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of
Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield JSOTSS 87 1990
p53-64.

/58/ See Jacob Das Erste Buch der Tora Berlin 1934 p179 -182.

/59/ Quoted in Westermann Genesis p407, from Dillmann Genesis p125.

/60/ Delitzsch Genesis p234.

/61/ Quoted from Westermann Genesis p408 from Gunkel Genesis p60.

/62/ Skinner Genesis p150.

/63/ Wenham Genesis p145.

/64/ ibid p147.

/65/ Fretheim "Suffering" p112ff.

/66/ see Westermann Genesis p411.

/67/ Fretheim "Suffering" chapter 5 "God and Power: Presence and
Power" esp p72-76. See also chapter 6 "God in Human Form".

/68/ Westermann Genesis p407ff.

CHAPTER 4

CREATION, UNCREATION AND RE-CREATION

C.Westermann writes, "The Flood narrative of chs 6-9 is so closely connected with the narratives of the Creation of the world and of man that each can only be correctly understood with the other". /1/ The story of the flood presents the reader with an almost complete reversal of the account of creation in Gen 1-2 - a "*bouleversement*" as Clines puts it. /2/ The sovereignty of God is eloquently portrayed in the primeval history, as he creates, uncreates and re-creates. H-P. Müller points out that this combination of the accounts of creation and flood is not unique to Israel, and can be found in both the Sumerian and Atrahasis epics. /3/ The present chapter will examine the motif of creation and uncreation which is found more clearly in P than in J, but is especially striking on a joint reading of the text. Such a theme provides a suggestive context for discussion of the value of human life.

For the sake of argument we shall adopt Driver's division of sources: J= 2:4b-4:26, 5:29, 6:1-8, 7:1-5, 7-10, 12, 16b, 17b, 22-23, 8:2b-3a, 6-12, 13b, 20-22; P=1:1-2:4a, 5:1-28, 30-32, 6:9-22, 7:6, 11, 13-16a, 17a, 18-21, 24, 8:1-2a, 3b-5, 13a, 14-19, 9:1-17, 28-29. /4/ We shall be focusing on the first two chapters of Genesis, and shall be comparing them with Gen 6-9.

1) Israel's Understanding of Creation

Before doing a detailed exegesis of the story, a few comments need to be made about Israel's understanding of creation. Both the narratives of creation and deluge presuppose a belief in a majestic, omnipotent God, who is the source of all that is created. Gen 1

invites comparison with other texts where the mystery and wonder of God's work in creation are expounded: e.g. Jb 38-42, Prov 8:22-31. God alone is the sovereign Lord of all that exists and since he is the sole creator, so too he can become the uncreator of the world. Israel, in contrast to the surrounding cultures, had one God who ruled without the slightest hindrance from lesser deities. /5/

Levenson on the other hand postulates, for the purposes of comparison, a hypothetical alternative to the traditional understanding of the flood, where there is only the activity of one God. He suggests that the story can be read as a conflict between two gods. One held high hopes for creation, would not tolerate evil, and sent a flood to destroy the world with the exception of one family of righteous people. He was overcome by a more realistic deity who was prepared to bear with man despite his evil inclination, and made sure that such a flood would not come again. Levenson argues that this polytheistic story is little different from that of Gen 6-9 where God changes his mind twice (6:7,13, 8:21). Where then is the continuity? /6/

There are weaknesses in this approach. First, Levenson has not seen that the story is a testimony to the abundant mercy of God. The point of the narrative is that the one God does change his mind about humanity and the reason for both punishment (6:5) and mercy (8:21b) is not a rivalry between two gods, but rather one God deciding not to punish man in such a way again. As we shall discuss in the next chapter, God changes his policy towards humanity.

Secondly, though it is not uncommon to see suffering as the result of the activity of rival deities or as the influence of angels, spirits and demons (see Jb 1 - 2), the story of the flood makes no

mention of any other forces operating in the destruction and remaking of the world besides God. The text only speaks of the Lord in these verses and no other deity is mentioned. If one were to read at the level of the present text, as it stands before us, then there is no room for polytheism. It may be that J inherited a polytheistic account from a non Israelite source, but he has purged it of any such tendencies. Both at the level of J and of the complete text, there is only one God who operates in the flood.

It can then be said that the early chapters of Genesis portray God as the sovereign Lord and creator who has no rival. All created things stem from his unbounded, undivided will and authority. Israel experienced God as a unified will of incomparable strength which left no room for polytheism. When God was acknowledged as creator, creation could not be founded on whim, nor could it be subject to hostile powers which sought to subvert God's rightful rule. Creation was given stability, rationality and meaning by God. In contrast to Enuma Elish and other ancient cosmologies, there are no stories of the emergence of gods; how God came into being was not a question for Israel; she did not know a time when God was not, and there is no question of a theogony. By rejecting such concepts the Old Testament expresses a world-view established unconditionally on the will of God. Eichrodt writes that creation is, "The free institution of a will which contains its own norm". /7/ Gen 1 is a testimony to the one sovereign God to whom all in heaven and earth owe their existence.

The idea of God's sovereignty is reinforced by the notion of creation by word. Everything which happens proceeds from God's word of command which assumes a radical distinction between creator and

that which is created. Creation is not a part of God but proceeds from his personal will (e.g. Gen 1:3). /8/ The idea of creation by the word is different from that found in Genesis 2 where man is formed out of the dust, and it emphasizes more clearly the complete otherness of God. Eichrodt comments, "By shifting the act of creation to the word, the origin of the creature is attributed entirely to the miracle of the transcendent creative will". /9/ Creation by word expresses the freedom and authority of God. The word moves out forming the individual and calling into being that which does not exist. /10/ Here ברא achieves its significance - a word used exclusively with God as its subject. When the verb is used there is never any mention of material from which something is created /11/

Gen 1 sets out the majesty of God in his creative work by giving a basis for worship and praise. (We shall discuss cultic concerns later) Westermann describes Gen 1 as a "solemn overture to P". /12/ Wenham writes, "Though at first sight Gen 1 is far removed from the cultic concerns that figure so prominently in P, it does serve to reinforce the significance and privilege of worship". /13/ The God whose laws Israel obeys is the sovereign creator. Language of creation is used in a liturgical setting as grounds for praising God. The earth and all the creatures in it belong to Yahweh. His power upholds the world (cf e.g. Ps 95:1-5), and its extremities are in his control - he made them and they are his. To believe in God as creator is to acknowledge him as Lord absolutely (cf e.g. Ps 95:6-7).

B.W.Anderson writes,

"The doctrine evokes in man an understanding of who he really is: a transient and contingent being who, together with all that exists, is dependent upon the God who alone is Lord. Man's life on earth derives its meaning from relationship to the God whose creative purpose has initiated the whole

historical drama". /14/

Like Gen 1 the Psalms express wonder at being alive and God's mindful care of man. It is a wonder of wonders that God who spread out the heavens cares for humanity; in comparison to the world's splendour "What is man?" Weiser commenting on Psalm 8 calls it "incomprehensible grace". /15/ In this respect Gen 1 and Psalm 8 parallel each other well but there are also significant links to the account of the deluge. Like the accounts of creation the flood is also a clear demonstration of God's power, majesty and sovereignty. As with the writer of Psalm 8 it is a matter of wonder, in view of the awesome power made manifest in the destruction and re-creation of the flood, that God should care for man and that he is worthy of salvation. The story of the flood should move people to humble praise, as do Genesis 1 and Psalm 8.

This brings us to one of the most important aspects of Israel's theology of creation: contingency. This word must be used with some care since it has achieved significance in the debate about the relationship between theology and the natural sciences (see especially the work of Prof T.F.Torrance). R.W.Hepburn writes, "In the sense most relevant to the philosophy of religion, an event or an entity may be called "contingent", if it could have *not* happened or *not* existed; if it is conditional (or dependent) on some other event's occurring or some other entity's existing"./16/ There is a distinction between that which is necessary and that which is contingent. Naturally the Old Testament does not speak in such terms but it does see the created order as conditional upon God, and the fact that in the flood God destroys what he has created, illustrates that the world does not have an automatic right to exist; it is entirely dependent on the sustaining care of God. God's goodness is

seen not just in creating but also in his daily sustaining and preserving of the created order. God holds the world in being in the face of potential disaster. Von Rad remarks, "Man has always suspected that behind all creation lies the abyss of formlessness; that all creation is always ready to sink into the abyss of the formless; that the chaos, therefore, signifies simply the threat to everything created. This suspicion has been a constant temptation for the faith". /17/ God lifted the world from formlessness and he sustains it from these dangers. Creation and preservation are two aspects of the one God who sustains, loves, and upholds his work. The world lives in the presence of God whose will is to preserve it as a good creation. "Israel did not see the world as an ordered organism in repose, for on the one hand she saw Jahweh as much more directly at work in all that goes on in the world, and on the other, man on his side recognized that he had a share in this, because he too continually determined the reactions of the world about him by his actions whether good or bad", notes Von Rad. /18/ In the context of the Psalm of creation 104, Von Rad notes that its intention is

"to show how the whole world is open to God - in every moment of its existence it requires to be sustained by God, everything "waits" on him vs 27; and it also receives this sustenance all the time. Were Yahweh to turn away from the world even for just one moment, then its splendour would immediately collapse (v29)". /19/

Psalm 104 offers us a clear example of contingency; we do not have here a simple cause and effect but rather God's continued care for the world. The cosmos is not autonomous but is governed by God. כָּרָא is not simply a once for all act but it denotes the continuing process of God's will for life. The forces of destruction are not destroyed but are set within bounds and controlled. /20/ In the flood God releases these powers but they remain under his authority

to do his bidding.

The sovereignty of God is seen particularly in his lordship over the waters. The sea as in other ancient cosmologies was regarded as a life threatening force. Throughout the Old Testament the waters are restive, eager to reclaim dominion and reassert their primordial status. God's ability to contain the waters is a sign of his sovereignty; e.g. in Ps 74:12-17 Yahweh is king because he has triumphed (cf e.g. Pss 18:9-15, 29:1-4,10, 89:9, 93:1-4, 104:5-9). Through God's breath or voice he shows his dominion (Is 40:7, Nahum 1:4). Wind can stir up, agitate or subdue at God's command - it is the instrument by which he works. There has been much debate over the precise translation of רוח in Gen 1 as to whether it should be rendered "wind" or "spirit". It is hard to know, but as Luyster points out, "wind" would accord with the texts just cited. In other words God subdues the waters ready for creation. /21/ Certainly this would fit in well with 8:1ff where wind is an agent passing over the waters causing them to subside. It seems that Gen 8:1ff echoes 1:2ff.

1) Israelite Cosmology

The Israelites did not think of heaven as immaterial but understood it to be a massive structure. At creation it is called the רקיע - that which is stamped down (Greek στερεωμα, Latin firmamentum). It was as hard as a molten mirror (Jb 37:18) and rested on pillars (Jb 26:11); Is 40:22 likens it to a tent. The function of the רקיע is to separate heavenly and earthly waters which if allowed to flow together would bring destruction as occurred in the flood (Gen 1:7, 7:11, cf Ps 104:3, 148:4). The flood returned

the world to the pre-creation state of one large ocean. Interestingly the רָקִיעַ is not mentioned in the flood as its function appears to have been temporarily suspended.

As with the heavens so too with the earth, which was likened to a well constructed building which rested on pillars that were sunk into waters underneath: Ex 20:4, Ps 104:5, Jb 9:6, 38:6. The earth rests on a lower ocean which also surrounds it on all sides: Ps 46:3, 104:6ff, 136:6, 139:9. The earth is connected to this lower ocean by streams and springs (Gen 7:11). The world is surrounded on all sides as well as from above and below by forces hostile to it, and which threaten to destroy it if they are unleashed. It is God's will that these waters are set a statutory boundary: Gen 1:7 (cf Jer 5:22). /22/

It is here that we need to return to the question of the interpretation of religious language. In a discussion of 2 Sam 22 and Ps 18 Robert Alter, writes, "The Hebrew imagination, we might note, was unabashedly anthropomorphic but by no means foolishly literalist". /23/ How far is this poetic language of the cosmos to be taken literally? This is hard to answer, but as such statements are found in prose passages such as Gen 1 and Ex 20, it would seem that they were taken at face value. It appears that the flood envisages such a world-view.

ii) Gen 1 and Mythology

There has been considerable discussion as to the extent of mythological influence on Gen 1, and it would seem that such dependence has been exaggerated. Gunkel played the most significant role in this debate when in 1895 he published "Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit" where he argued that the Babylonian account of

creation with its battle between the god who creates and the forces of chaos, was the source of mythopoeic imagery in the Old Testament. Gen 1 was not a free composition but rather showed the influence of the Babylonian tradition with such terms as תְּהוֹמִים, and תְּהוֹם וְכִהּוֹם. This influence is strong but has been toned down to make it acceptable to the Hebrew frame of mind. There has been a strong judaicised reworking of the material in the following stages:

- 1) The Babylonian myth was brought over into Israel.
- 2) There it lost its mythological and polytheistic character.
- 3) In Gen 1 the myth was as fully judaicised as possible. /24/

In order to assess Gunkel's proposition a careful study of the vocabulary of Gen 1 is required. It seems that with תְּהוֹמִים Gunkel has overstated his case. Heidel has noted that there is no trace in Genesis of a cosmic fight with a dragon. /25/ In Hebrew תְּהוֹם is masculine but in Babylonian it is feminine /26/.

Tsumura has taken up a similar position, and has pointed to further weaknesses in Gunkel's position. Whilst he notes that תְּהוֹם is related etymologically to the Akkadian Tiamat and the Ugaritic Tahamu, this is not sufficient evidence to link it to a Babylonian divine name which has been demythologized. He points out that the root is used in both languages in mythological contexts without personification. The Hebrew he argues should be taken as a common noun. The lack of a definite article which could betray influence of a divine name, presents no problem since there are other nouns in Gen 1 which do not possess it e.g. יָם, אֵרֶץ and חֹשֶׁךְ. The use of this word in its plural form with the article (+בְּ) in Is 63:13 and Ps 106:9 reinforces the view that תְּהוֹמִים is an ordinary noun as it is also in Ugaritic, Akkadian and Eblaite, meaning "sea" or "ocean". In Hebrew

the word refers to a flood or to the subterranean waters. It never appears as the third element in the threefold division of heaven, earth and sea - that is always ים. Tsumura also rejects the Canaanite dragon myth as the origin of Gen 1 pointing out that there the sea dragon is Yaham and not Taham, and that ים does not appear until 1:10 in Gen 1. He concludes that there is no link between Gen 1 and the chaos myth. /27/ Both אר in Gen 2:6 and תהום refer to the subterranean waters./28/ תהום and ארץ are a word pair which contrasts השמים and points to everything under heaven which was unproductive. (Compare Ps 71:20,148:7) /29/

Westermann takes a similar stance. A look at the uses of the word תהום in the Old Testament confirms his observation that it means "deep" or "waters of the deep" in its 36 occurrences.

"תהום can be said to belong to God's creation inasmuch as it can be called upon to praise God; it can be a phenomenon of nature too and Job can speak of the freezing over of the deep. The evidence does not allow us to speak of the demythologizing of a mythical idea or name as do many commentaries. When P inherited the word תהום, it had long been used to describe a flood of water without any mythical echo". /30/

There is no sign of any struggle between Marduk and Tiamat. /31/

J.Day has criticized Tsumura's study of תהום. He agrees that there is not a direct borrowing but says that to deny that the divine conflict with the sea and dragon, which is attested elsewhere in the Old Testament, ultimately lies behind Gen 1:2 "savours of special pleading". "The fact that tehom regularly lacks the definite article in the Old Testament suggests that a mythical name underlies the word, and in Ps 104, which is closely related to Gen 1 and appears to be older, we actually read of a divine conflict with the waters (vv6-9) including תהום (v 6)". /32/

Given allusions in the Psalms such as this it might seem that Tsumura's position is in jeopardy. The fact that the Psalms

functioned in a way not dissimilar to a hymn book, might suggest that it is unlikely that the readers of P would have been unaware of such allusions. Nor should we overreact to the history of religions school, and assume that Israel existed in a vacuum cut off from her environment. One could perfectly well accept the presence of such mythological influence without adopting Gunkel's method in toto.

Whilst such echoes may be present in both Psalms and Isaiah (e.g. Is 51:9ff) it does not necessarily follow that they are also found in Gen 1. The fact is that the word תְּהוֹם need not necessarily mean anything other than deep water, and there is really no allusion to a chaos myth in Gen 1. It is also to be noted that the article is sometimes omitted in Hebrew where one might have expected it, (e.g. Gen 2:4b, 14:19b; see Waltke and O'Connor 13:7a) especially in poetry where תְּהוֹם often occurs. Prov 8:27 uses תְּהוֹם in the context of creation without any reference to dragons or mythology and despite Day's claim, Ps 104 need not necessarily refer to Babylonian tradition but may just be expounding Israelite cosmology concerning the depths. Consequently, following the work of Heidel, Westermann and Tsumura we should wish to play down the extent of Babylonian influence on Gen 1. As such allusions to mythology are not found in the account of the flood which is seeking to make a parallel between creation and uncreation, it would seem unlikely that there is strong Babylonian influence on Gen 1.

The other important aspect is the word pair תְּהוֹם וְרֵבָב which is usually taken to refer to the life threatening chaos. Cassuto argues that these words refer to the terrestrial state in which "The whole material was an undifferentiated, unorganized, confused and lifeless agglomeration" - a watery chaos. Water was "above and solid matter

beneath, and the whole a chaotic mass, without order or life". /33/
Wenham notes, "The dreadfulness of the situation before the divine
word brought order out of chaos is underlined". /34/

It is doubtful that this is a correct representation of the
situation in Genesis 1. A glance at all the occurrences of **תהו**
suggests that the meaning "desert" is better than chaos. In Is 24:10
R.S.V. translates "city of chaos", but in a context which speaks of
devastation, the translation emptiness seems more suitable. In
almost all the other occurrences of the word, "chaos" is not an apt
rendering. We would agree with Westermann who divides the 20
occurrences of the word (11 in Isaiah) into three groups:

1) The desert: e.g. Deut 32:10, Jb 6:18, 12:24.

2) A desert or devastation which is threatened: Is 24:10, 34:11,
40:23. The state which is opposed to and precedes creation: Gen1:2,
Is 45:18, Jb 26:7.

3) Nothingness 1 Sam 12:21, Is 29:21, 40:17.

From this analysis Westermann translates Genesis 1:2 as "a desert
waste"./35/

Similarly Tsumura claims that the idea of desert is more apt. The
Arabic parallel means "be empty" and the Ugaritic TU A BI conveys
what is unproductive rather than a chaotic state. /36/ The earth in
Gen 1 is a bare state without life; only in 1:11 does life appear.
Tsumura argues that the earth is being described as an uninhabited
and unproductive place - the author was conveying to his readers that
the earth was not as it was known to the people of Israel: it was
emptiness. /37/ **תהו ובהו** is the opposite of creation (Is 45:18 "He
did not create it a desert"). The evidence is, in our view, in
favour of Tsumura's conclusion that both in Gen 1 and 2 the earth was

not yet normal, but was a desert, and the water there was not in itself a destructive force, since תהום is not destructive on its own.

/38/

Consequently mythical influence on the text does not appear as great as some have suggested. The whole debate is similar to that over etymology, on which Barr has had such an influence. It may be that at one time the word תהום was derived from Tiamat, but even at the level of P there seems to be little indication of such mythology. If one wishes to understand the text in its present form there is little need for such references; תהום simply means deep. Further there is no allusion to the myth in the flood where תהום (7:11) means deep. Study of myths is pertinent if the scholar's primary concern is the history of traditions, but if the focus of study is on the present form of the text, indeed even of P, then such questions are less urgent. Allusions to myth have only survived in passing in Psalms and Isaiah. If one wishes to move to an understanding of the present form of the text, then one has to go beyond the history of religious thought.

2) The Yahwist

The theme of creation and uncreation is not so clear in J as it is in P. The account in Gen 2 is shorter than that of the first chapter. Nevertheless there are certain points which do seem to establish a link between creation and uncreation.

There is the theme of the waters, which is so central to the account of the flood. Gen 2:6 speaks of the אַר "mist" or "flood" rising from the ground and watering the whole earth. אַר probably refers to the subterranean waters which inundated the earth. Since

the land was not irrigated properly, there could be no vegetation, and there was no proper control of the waters. /39/ In the creation this water is controlled in such a way that plants can grow and rivers can flow (2:10ff). In the flood this appropriate regulation of the waters is ruined, and the waters overwhelm creation: 7:1-4, 7-10, 12, 17b, 22, 23.

In J the flood is attributed to rain (7:4, 12), rather than to the surge of these underground waters. The pattern of creation and uncreation does not seem to be developed fully in this respect, but the flooding of the earth does undo the control of the waters of Gen 2.

Most obviously the flood is uncreation by death. In creation man is created a living being who is destined for life: **נִפְשׁ חַיָּה** (2:7). In the flood death is first employed as a punishment though it is threatened in 2:17. Creation is undone. Man is created from the land and he returns to it at death (2:7, 3:19); the flood is a means of returning man to his origin in the ground; the play on the words **אֲדָמָה** and **אָדָם** emphasizes this. As Jacob notes concerning man's relation to the ground, "It is his cradle, his home, his grave". /40/ **עֶפְרָה** in Gen 2:7 indicates that whilst humans are destined for life, they are made of perishable material. As Westermann writes, the relationship between **אֲדָמָה** and **אָדָם** is that humans and the earth belong together, the earth is there for humanity, and humans are there to populate it. /41/ In the flood the earth returns to a pre-creation state and becomes antagonistic to man. Westermann also notes that besides speaking of the frailty of man and his limitations, the words show us that he is directed to the earth in his work and also the earth to him. /42/ As Gunkel observes, "Man is created from the ground and he

is called to till the ground; his dwelling is on the ground and he returns to the ground when he dies". /43/ This does not mean that he is created solely as a farmer but rather that his powers include those of agriculture. There is a deep bond between man and the earth. Not only is man killed in the flood but his environment is destroyed so that he is separated from the necessities of life.

Man is much more than mere breath; he has the breath of life which is given by God himself (Gen 2:7, cf Ez 37:9). It is only the divine breath which gives life (cf Ps 104:29ff, Jb 34:14ff). Of course breathing is an essential characteristic of all life (Gen 7:22) but it is only man who receives his breath direct from God and this makes a distinction between human and animal life. This does not mean that there is a separation of body and soul, but rather a distinction between body and life. /44/ As Westermann notes, this is not that something of the divine was imparted to humans but that the gift of life was given. /45/ A person is not implanted with a soul but is made a living being. The term **נפש** has a wide range of meanings /46/ which include throat, appetite, person and soul, but in essence means the life of a person, and it is not a detachable component.

This aspect of uncreation is evident if we compare Gen 2:7 and 7:22: **ויצר יהוה אלהים את האדם עפר מן האדמה ויפח באפיו**

2:7 נשמת חיים ויהי האדם לנפש חיה

7:22 כל אשר נשמת רוח חיים באפיו מכל אשר בחרבה מתו

It can easily be seen from the parallel vocabulary that the flood is a reversal of creation. Instead of man living as he ought he dies and the breath which causes life and which in the case of man is given by God is, removed by him (cf Ps 146:4).

The above demonstrates the profound care God has for human life.

Passages such as Gen 2 demonstrate the value of man's bodily and physical existence. As Bonhoeffer notes, "The man who renounces his body renounces his existence before God the creator. The essential point of human existence is its bond with mother earth, its being as body". /47/ The use of anthropomorphic language emphasizes the personal involvement of God in the world with God fully involved in the creation of man - a warm intimate relationship. The flood tells of a complete reversal of this with the very constitution of man falling apart.

Animal life also suffers the fate of death (7:22, 23). 2:9 specifically mentions the growth of vegetation on the earth; presumably this was destroyed in the flood since 8:21ff speaks of the restoration not just of the seasons but also of seedtime and harvest. In the flood man's stewardship of creation, as seen in the tilling of the garden, (2:15ff,19) is ruined. The supply of food is also disrupted.

The flood also uncreates the community of men. Humanity is destined to live in community, and the man of Gen 2 is only fully human when he is given a companion to correspond to him and to be his counterpart. Whilst community is not the issue of 2:18ff, the passage does show that man is not to lead a solitary existence: "It is not good for man to be alone". /48/ As Westermann writes, "This reflection sets solitary existence against community and states clearly that what is characteristic of being man cannot be found in mere existence as man, but that only in a community is man truly man". /49/ Man as community, together with his task of reproduction, is destroyed in the flood.

The writer of J in Gen 6-9 may have seen the flood as a reversal

of human achievement. There is inconsistency in the text in that Gen 4:20-22 do not appear to be aware of a deluge which interrupts the line of descent. The juxtaposition of tradition has been far from coherent at this point since the descendants of the people in Gen 4:17-22 could hardly all be descended through Noah. Yet it may be that the text possibly sees the flood not only as uncreation of God's creation but also as the sweeping away of all human achievement by the water. This is a vague allusion but presumably human endeavour had to start afresh after the flood.

As we have seen in our first Chapter, the uncreation is really due to man's evil. He is responsible for the disaster, since he was not created wicked. The flood is not a penalty chosen at random by God but sin and punishment fit together. Prof Clines notes that with regard to Gen 3 with the attempt there to be independent of God, there is success for which man did not bargain: expulsion from the garden and true alienation (compare Is 59:2). Punishment fits criminal: serpent, Adam and Eve are given appropriate penalties concerned with movement, child rearing and work. Likewise Cain the manslayer, is driven from human society (4:14). /50/ The same principle of retribution operates in the flood. As Westermann notes in the context of 2:17,

"The primeval prohibition which, without any further refinement, recalls a taboo, indicates that neither community among humans nor any sort of relationship with God can exist without such limits. Where human freedom means utter lack of restraint and hence complete arbitrariness, then human community and relationship with God are no longer possible".
/51/

For man to step outside the limits set by Torah is to bring disaster upon himself. At the heart of Hebrew thinking there is a recognition that freedom entails acknowledging the limits of Torah. When such limits are transgressed man makes himself liable to punishment. The

generation of the flood refused to acknowledge limits on their behaviour. Now that humans have decided to live without limits, God removes the restrictions and controls on the created order, and allows man to be engulfed. Man who seeks to live against God finds his life is destroyed.

The theme of uncreation is rounded off by a restoration. This will be discussed further in the next chapter, but it is important to note that as the waters come onto the earth so they recede (8:3, 6ff), vegetation returns (8:11), and seedtime and harvest are restored, so that humans can dwell in security (8:20).

To summarize, the theme of creation and uncreation is not developed as clearly as one might expect, but there are important resonances between the two accounts, such as man's revolt, death, and the surge of waters.

3) The Priestly Account of Creation and Flood

Von Rad has argued that there are two strands to the P account of the flood: A= 7:6,18, 20bβ, 23a, 24, 8:5, 13; B=7:11, 19, 20abα, 21, 8:4, 14. /52/ As we shall see in the following chapter, it is doubtful if this division will work, and it should be recalled that repetition is an important literary device. His distinction between 7:6 and 11 does not necessarily imply two sources; 7:6 is a statement of Noah's age with regard to the flood; 7:11 gives the exact date with regard to the bursting forth of the deep. 7:18 speaks of the floating of the ark; 7:19 of the covering of the mountains with water, and this is not a doublet. 7:20 specifies 7:19; the mountains were covered to a depth of 15 cubits. It may be that Ararat was regarded as the highest of the peaks (8:4) and it was a little time before the others were seen (8:5). It is doubtful if there is a doublet between 8:13 and 14 since **הֶרֶב** means "to dry out" and **יִבֹּשׁ** "to be dried out" (cf Is 19:5). /53/

i) The Concept of Separation

The concept of separation is one of the most important aspects of the account of creation and by inference of the story of the flood as well. The separation of light and darkness sets in motion a rhythm of time which is good and proper 1:4. There is also separation of water and dry land (1:6-9), day from night (14), and plants and animals are each created according to their kind (11, 21, 24). As Prof Clines has pointed out, "There is a fundamental concept of the binary nature of created existence: there is heaven and earth, light and darkness, day and night, upper and lower waters, sea and land, plants and trees, sun and moon, fish and birds, animals and man, male and female, sacred time and non sacred time". /54/ The flood reverses

some of these by bringing a reversal of creation. The world returns to the watery mass from which it rose, with these distinctions (except for the division of day and night, sun and moon, light and darkness) being obliterated.

Separation is also an important concept in the rest of the Priestly material, underlying as it does the very being of the chosen people. The root **בדל** is often employed in this respect and the same word is found in Gen 1:4,6,7,14,18, but not in the flood, not even in the account of re-creation, possibly because such barriers are broken. The root is found in a number of contexts which speak of separation: Lev 10:10 uses **בדל** for distinguishing between clean and unclean, holy and common; 20:26 speaks of God's holy people being separate to him. Consequently for P whether in creation or in the choosing of Israel, there is a strong sense of order with everything given its rightful place. As man has separated himself from God by sin in Gen 6, so the appropriate boundaries and divisions of creation are destroyed. The flood is a breaking down of order and life, which reduces the world to a pre-creation state where boundaries do not exist.

P attributes the source of the flood to the bursting forth of the subterranean waters and the opening of the windows of heaven (Gen 7:11, 8:2). J speaks of rain but P tells of an inundation rather like water pouring constantly from a tap or bucket. The point is that P unlike J does not speak of rain. It may be that P intended the opening of the windows as a metaphor for rain but this is not obvious. Since the word is frequently used for the windows of buildings (e.g. Is 60:8, Hos 13:3, Ec 12:3), it would seem that P understood there to be openings in the sky through which water

poured. The word אַרְבוֹת is used of the opening of the vaults of heaven (Gen 8:2, 2 K 7:2,19, Is 24:18, Mal 3:10), which are opened at divine behest. As E.Sutcliffe has shown, what was so devastating in the flood was that water flowed down without the intermediary function of clouds. /55/ These apertures were not just intended for rain (Ps 78:23) but when water was allowed to flow out unchecked the effect was devastating, with the result that the whole world was flooded. (A theme picked up in Is 24:18ff) The destructive power of water can be seen from Ps 18:16, 65:5-8, 69:1,93:3ff, and this is portrayed clearly in the story.

By allowing the earth to flood the appropriate divisions of Gen 1 are broken down in a way that brings destruction. The תְּהוֹם is not in itself a destructive force but when released by God onto the earth it becomes a threat to life. God still remains in control of it and he can use it as he wishes (Gen 7:11, 8:2); there is no hint of God struggling with chaotic powers. At the beginning of creation the תְּהוֹם covered the earth; in the flood these waters return with horrific consequence. God who lifted the earth from a watery mass returns it to that same state with the divisions between dry land and water being broken.

In view of this it is perhaps surprising that the writer does not employ the term תְּהוֹם וְבָהָר to describe the flood's effect. Perhaps this was because the flood did not effect a complete reversal of creation, in that for a return to a pre-creation state, a destruction of the heavenly bodies, light, day and night, would have to ensue. Nevertheless in so far as תְּהוֹם וְבָהָר means a desert it is true that in the deluge the world was reduced to a lifeless waste.

It is also worth comparing Ps 104:5-9 which speaks of the waters

being assigned to their appropriate place so that mountains and valleys appear. God assigns a boundary which they are not to pass:

104:9. בל ישובון לכסות הארץ

For both Gen 1 and Ps 104 one of the most important aspects of creation was the separation of the land from the water and it can come as no surprise that the story emphasizes this aspect of the uncreation by use of repetition. It is twice stated that the water covered the mountains (7:19, 20).

ii) Destruction of Animal and Plant Life

P takes a great interest in animal and plant life repeating several times that representatives of each species entered the ark: 6:19ff, 7:14ff, as well as describing the death of the rest in detail (7:21). It seems that the writer of the story is unconcerned about the status of the fish. They seem exempt from judgment, and the writer does not explore whether or not they are sinless as does Jewish tradition. The story is mythical and one should not press all its details or implications. Moreover the land animals' natural habitat is harmed (1:24ff), and they are separated from the territory assigned to them in the opening chapter: cattle, creeping things and beasts are removed from the ground.

Consequently plant life which was granted to man in 1:29 and created by God in 1:11ff, suffers. The interest in plants seems to be in the way that they effect humans since Noah is commanded to take food (which was then apparently vegetarian) into the ark. While it is flesh and not plant life which is corrupt, both suffer in the flood; human sin effects the environment as well as man's fellow beings.

Further, it should be noted that 7:19ff follows the approximate order of creation: 7:21 "All flesh died... birds (1:21b), cattle (1:24), beasts (1:24), all swarming creatures (1:25)...., and every man (1:26ff)". All flesh perishes. /56/

iii) Uncreation of the Imago Dei

Death undoes other intentions of creation. Humanity is created in the Image of God and when dead can no longer fulfill this function, since he is unable to exercise the role of dominion conferred on him; neither can he have a relationship with God (cf e.g. Ps 30:9). Service of God has become impossible and man's destiny to praise his maker fails at death (cf e.g. Ps 147:1). Man who was made for an obedient living relationship with God, is now corrupt, and is in the flood finally cut off from his creator. The world overpowers the one who is supposed to have dominion over it.

Connected with this is the reproduction of the species: humanity is to be fruitful and multiply, to fill the earth and have dominion in it. All that is set back in the flood. The emphasis on Noah and his family in the story indicates that for him this was not reversed; he still enjoys the blessing which was given in 1:28ff. It is God's will that humans should continue the process of creation and the power of fertility is granted to them so that man can be part of the ongoing creative will of God. God is not Lord of an unchanging world but wills the continuation of life - indeed life in its essence is life creating. The verb ברא is often used in close proximity to ברך which indicates that creation and blessing go together: 1:21, 22, 27, 28, 2:3.

iv) Reversal of Blessing

Since God renews his blessing after the deluge it would seem that the author saw the flood as a reversal of the blessings given at creation. Westermann offers us a helpful definition of blessing. He sees a distinction between God's acts of deliverance (i.e. his direct intervention) and blessing as the continuing constant activity of God. Both affect each other and are part of contingency but besides God's mighty acts there is also activity that cannot be dated with precision, but which still has historical reality: for example the sending of rain (Jer 14:21ff), provision for human need and birth, and preservation of life. Westermann argues that Is 2:1-5 describes a state of blessing but Is 7 proclaims deliverance from foes i.e. a direct intervention. /57/ God's blessing is his providential care in sustaining and supporting life.

The opening chapters of Genesis provide us with the widest application of the theme of God's blessing where all creatures are blessed. God's blessing is one of the great unifying themes of Genesis with animals (1:22), man (28), sabbath (2:3), Adam (5:2), Noah (9:1) and the Patriarchs (12:3=J, 17:16, 20=P) all receiving God's benediction. Most especially this is seen in the gift of children and God's promise guarantees success. Blessing is a continuation of God's activity, and Genesis is a book of the fulfillment of divine blessing: 1:28, 9:1, 17:16, 20, 28:3, 48:4=P, 41:52=J. /58/

Perhaps it would be unwise to push this distinction of Westermann's too far, but it does help us to see how the flood reverses the creation in this respect. In the deluge blessing was withdrawn leaving death and disaster.

v) The Heavenly Bodies and Cultic Concerns

It is important to notice that we do not have a complete reversal of creation in the narrative. There is no destruction of the heavenly bodies nor talk of their functions being nullified. It is surprising that more is not made of darkness in the flood story so as to echo 1:2. /59/ It may be that by describing such a heavy downpour the writer was indicating that the normal functions of giving light were impaired. There can be no proof of this but it does remain a possibility and it would be appropriate for judgment to be accompanied by darkness, perhaps caused by heavy clouds. Time, day and night, are not broken by the deluge.

There may even be a vague allusion to 1:14 in the story of the flood. The translation of **והיו לאות ולמועדים** is difficult. /60/ What is clearer is that the bodies have four functions: "to separate, to indicate, to give light, to rule". /61/ Naturally they played an important role in determining the fixed times of cultic celebration. /62/ **מועד** can mean a place appointed (Josh 8:14) and is often used of the tent of meeting (Lev 1:1) as well as of appointed times (Num 10:10, Is 33:20). Certain times of year were set aside for particular cultic acts and celebrations: Ex 13:10, 34:18. Whilst Gen 1 has a more general reference the basis for cult is established there. There was no formal cult at the time of Noah as found after Sinai, but the creation does allow for its later provision, and the flood does seem to suggest that this potential might not be realized. In this respect the writer seems to have allowed for a pre-Israelite context. This aspect is not made explicit but it may well have been apparent to an ancient Israelite reader that under these

circumstances all cult would cease, despite the continued presence of the sun, the moon and the stars, since the seasons as they effect man were disrupted. Given the fact that the calendar was at first synchronized with the agricultural cycle, that this was not removed and that religious faith was brought into line with the realities of life, summer and winter, seedtime and harvest (Ex 23, Lev 23, Deut 6), /63/ disruption of the farming seasons would also interrupt worship. Flooding would disrupt agriculture, which in turn disrupted the seasons and the cult which was dependent on them. In this pre-Israelite context, though worship is not a major issue, an ancient reader may have realized that the appropriate conditions for cultic practice had been removed.

A similar question is raised when we ask in what way the flood reverses the passage of 2:1-3. Can it really be said that this is undone in the flood? Perhaps it is the intention of the sabbath which is reversed here. Westermann writes of Gen 2:2, "The conclusion of creation creates a rythm which will effect the whole of creation". /64/ The verb שָׁבַת conveys the idea of separation: the seventh day is set aside from the other six and becomes a day of rest. Days of rest are a gift of the creator to his people: Ex20:11, Jer 17:21, Ez 20:22ff. Yet this is more than a day of rest since it receives God's blessing - a bestowal of power which makes it fruitful for human existence, to stimulate, to enrich, to give fullness of life. "It is not the day in itself that is blessed, but rather the day in its significance for the community", writes Westermann. /65/ Von Rad observes, "Thus Gen 2:1ff speaks about the preparation of an exulted saving good for the world and man". /66/ In the flood this saving good and its accompanying blessing is changed into punishment.

The sabbath is no longer fruitful for human existence, since the world is engulfed in water. Fullness of life, the aim of the sabbath, is now nullified by the flood. By destroying life, an institution which is life giving is undone. This is not an explicit resonance between creation and flood but it may nonetheless have occurred to readers of the text in their ancient context.

vi) Reversal of the Goodness of Creation

All the aspects of creation discussed so far can be seen as a reversal of the goodness of creation as intended originally by God. In 1:31 God declares that the newly created world is very good and corresponds to his will. At the onslaught of the deluge most of this is undone. But it is man not God who is really to blame for the disaster. In Gen 6 instead of talk of the goodness of God in creation we hear of חמס, שחת and human rebellion. /67/ Man has destroyed the goodness of creation by his wickedness and the sending of the flood is a logical outworking of human sin, seen most clearly in חמס. As the world has destroyed (שחת) itself through sin 6:11ff, God sees that it is destroyed (שחת). What God destroys has already set itself on the road to destruction and by its corruption has virtually destroyed itself. The punishment is measure for measure. The breakup of divisions as discussed above is suitable retribution. "As man removes all limits in an attempt to achieve autonomous existence, God removes the limits placed at the beginning. The world will just not bear this limitless kind of life - it is not that kind of world", writes J.Blenkinsopp. /68/ Man has nullified the purpose of creation by his actions and death is no more than the consequence of his behaviour. Man brought the catastrophe on himself. As man

has corrupted the way ordained by God in Gen 1:26ff and abused his position in creation by grasping at unjust dominion; as he has exceeded his limits, so too the waters burst their bounds and destroy everything. There is a clear connection between right human behaviour and the functioning of creation.

Mercifully there is re-creation; the second half of the story parallels the first: the waters subside (8:1ff), the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven are closed (8:2) the mountains reappear, the seasons return, vegetation regrows, God's blessing is given again (9:1), and man retains the *imago Dei* (9:6). The ark contains the continuity between the pre- and post-flood worlds.

4) Reading J and P Together

As we have noted the theme of creation, uncreation and re-creation is developed more fully in P than in J. This is partly because P's description of creation is fuller than J's, though we did note some allusions between Gen 2 and J in 6-8. When the text is read at its canonical level the theme which we have been discussing is more obvious since J adds to P's motif in a number of ways.

First, it is important to notice how repetition is used in Gen 6-9 to underline the theme of the reversal of the creation of the opening chapters of the Bible. A casual glance might suggest that there is a great deal of redundant repetition in the account. /69/ A closer look at the texts reveals that this repetition serves a particular purpose, especially with regard to the theme of our discussion in this chapter. The retention by the redactor of so much of J could appear superfluous, unless one notes that it reinforces the concept of creation, uncreation and re-creation which is so evident in P.

This is well illustrated by the destruction which we see in the story. At the outset 6:7 states that God will blot out man and beast and creeping things and birds of the air; a list which reverses the order of creation in 1:20, 24, 26. Further, the verse stresses that it is God who has made them; God blots out what he has made. He is the subject of the verbs in these verses. As Gen 1 portrays a majestic omnipotent creator, so Gen 6:7 contains the message that God can uncreate what he has created. Just because God has made the world does not mean that ruin cannot come. Likewise the removal of man from the face of the ground in 6:7 illustrates that the boundaries of dry land and sea which were established in Gen 1 are to be broken.

Having asserted at the start that God will blot out what he has created, the narrative as a whole works out the implications of this. Time and again the destruction is underlined (6:13, 17, 7:4, 23), and conversely at the end the promise never to return the earth to such a state is similarly emphasized (8:21ff, 9:11, 15). Throughout God is in control; he is the maker (7:4) who can reverse his creative process. The repeated reference to God's power to destroy underlines the point that only he has authority over life; it belongs to no other. Hence the commands of 1:26ff and 9:1-7 which are so concerned with life's value and appropriate human dominion, are set in a context which demonstrates God's absolute sovereignty over life in a way matched by few other passages in the bible. He is sovereign because he has made life on the earth, and as such only he has the right to take it away (6:7, 7:4). Hence a joint reading with its repetition brings this central matter to the fore.

Similarly the means whereby God blots out is also stressed by the

employment of repetition, which again emphasizes his sovereignty. מים is a leitwort which runs through Gen 6-9, and points to the undoing of the boundaries of Gen 1. Time and again we are told that the waters increased (7:7, 10, 11, 17-24). By the end of chapter 7 the reader can be left in no doubt that there has been a reversal of creation. On a joint reading not only is Gen 1 echoed, but so is the אר of Gen 2, and the irrigation which was established there for the benefit of flora and fauna. All that is reversed in the deluge, and we return to the situation of Gen 2 where there was no life on the earth. Similarly the decrease of the waters in Gen 8 highlights the return to normality by narrating the process of the drying of the earth.

Despite such repetition monotony is avoided since it is not merely reiterative, but often each time a statement is repeated we are told something new. For example, both 7:18 and 19 add to the information of 7:17 by noting that not only did the water prevail mightily upon the earth, but that it also covered the mountains to a depth of 15 cubits. The reader is left in no doubt as to the destruction of creation. Whybray writes,

"The dramatic effect of this portentous constant repetition in the text as it stands cannot be denied. The terror of this most crucial disaster in the history of the world and the sense of relief when at last the danger began to recede are both expressed *through* the solemn repetitions which run through the whole story". /70/

There are other aspects of the theme of creation and uncreation which are clearer on a joint reading. First, death is described in terms of the removal of the breath of life which was given by God in 2:7. The verb גרע which is used by P in 6:17 and 7:21, does not just mean "die" but rather "expire" or "breath one's last" (Gen 25:8, 17, 35:29); the word is employed elsewhere in the context of breathing

(Ps 104:29, Jb 34:14ff). The theme of the breath of life is played out in other parts of the story (7:15, 22), and the horror of drowning is conveyed. God who gives breath removes it; we return to the theme of sovereignty.

Secondly, there is linked with this the uncreation of the human community as found most especially in male and female (1:26ff, 2:18-25). The role of human reproduction as seen in Gen 1 and in Adam and Eve, is nullified in the deluge. Only Noah is left and he is the key to the human race's survival. The apparently prolix passages concerning Noah's family (7:1, 7, 13, 8:16, 18) echo the command of God in Gen 1:26ff. Hence the story of creation and flood develops the significance of the human community through creation, destruction and reconstitution.

Thirdly, the theme of uncreation by death also develops the idea of the wiping out of all human achievement as initiated in 4:17-22. P's account of the construction of the ark is the continuity of this human ability into the post-flood era (6:14-16). By a joint reading man's ability to use the resources of the earth is placed in fuller perspective. Not only is the ark the means of humanity's survival, but it is also the symbol of his ability to maintain technical mastery and dominion after the deluge.

Fourthly, there is also the destruction of animal and plant life. The death of the animals (7:22ff) evokes recollection of 1:24ff since 7:23 reverses the order of creation as found in Gen 1. The references in J to seedtime and harvest in 8:22, and the journey of the dove (8:11), suggest that the creation of plant life is undone (1:11ff). Human sin can have terrible consequences for the environment.

Fifthly, we saw in chapter 1 that human sin is placed in a clearer

light by focusing on the text as a whole. The statements of human wickedness at the start of the story form an appropriate introduction to the events of Gen 7, and the breakdown of the created order there. Man has not only broken the bounds which were set by God in Gen 1:26ff and 2:15ff, but he has now added to his earlier sin (Gen 3,4) by the total depravity of Gen 6. Gen 1-9 illustrate how human sin has consequences for the environment. Central to Gen 1 and 2 is the idea of command and limitation on humanity, as well as freedom. In Gen 3:14-24 there are physical effects due to sin, as there are for Cain in Gen 4:12. In the flood this idea is developed; total depravity leads to total destruction (6:11-13). On a joint reading the theme of human sin and its consequences is much clearer. Man refuses moral limits at his own peril; first on a local scale in the garden, then in the whole of creation. Man's rejection of moral limits entails the removal of physical boundaries. Hence after the flood more limits are placed on him (9:1-7).

Sixthly, if the two strands are placed together the origin of the flood is put in a fuller perspective. P speaks of subterranean waters and the opening of the windows of heaven, but J tells only of rain (7:11,12). P on its own implies that the water cascaded down from heaven rather like water pouring from a tap, rather than the flow of raindrops. On a joint reading this water which comes through the windows is to be interpreted as rain. The rain passes through the windows of the sky.

Seventhly, by implying that there was such heavy rain (7:11) the writer might be suggesting that the heavenly bodies and light were blotted out (1:3ff, 14ff), with the subsequent disruption of the seasons. This point which we tentatively suggested in our section on

P, is clearer on a joint reading of the text, though it is still not made explicit. Nevertheless the promise of 8:22, the fixing of an established order for all time, shows that the pattern of the seasons as they impinge on man in seedtime and harvest was disrupted, and that in re-creation this would not occur again. If the seasons were disrupted (8:22), then the provision for cult and its calendar was also interrupted, since the cultic calendar was so closely integrated with the agricultural seasons. As Noah is portrayed by J as a pious Israelite, the joint reading might suggest that his religious life was disrupted by the deluge. The sacrifice of 8:20 implies that offerings to God ceased during the flood.

Finally, we noted in our third chapter that J has a strong sense of the personal nature of God both in creation and flood (2:7, 6:6). P places greater emphasis on the sovereignty and majesty of God, which leads to a description of creation which is more cosmic in its dimensions than that of J. P focuses on the entire universe, whereas J is concerned primarily with the earth and those who dwell therein. In the flood J tells merely of rain, while P has a catastrophe of cosmic dimension with the surging of the deep and the opening of the windows of heaven. P portrays God in grander terms than the more personal J. The combination of the two means that both the sovereignty and personal nature of God are held in balance, in a way which would be lost if we remained at the level of the sources. /71/ God is the universal creator, uncreator and re-creator, who in his sovereignty controls the very boundaries of creation (7:11), but who is also so deeply immersed in the life of humanity that his personal relationship with man remains uncompromised (6:6) by his lordship over the created order.

5) Creation, Uncreation and the Value of Human Life

Uncreation puts the main topic of our thesis in a suggestive light. First, it was noted how the world depends on God to prevent it from lapsing back into the pre-creation state. The fact that God does sustain the world and human life is a sure sign that both are valuable to him. It is God's will for the world to be kept from the forces of destruction: life is good and to be preserved. (see 8:21ff, 9:1-17)

Secondly, it was noted that the Israelites believed in the absolute sovereignty of God in creation. As he has created so he can also uncreate. In the light of this it is only for God to create and destroy. He is sovereign in creating and is the lord of life and death (cf Deut 32:39, Ps 104:29). This is again picked up in 9:1-7, and by placing the command not to kill in the context of a demonstration of God's sovereignty in creation, the value of human life is put in a suggestive light. Before the flood man had overstepped the limits of Torah by committing **רצח** and usurping God's control over life and death. Humanity by virtue of the Imago Dei has dominion in the world but that does not include the right to take life. To take human life is an assault on God's rightful authority in creation. Man's life is a gift from God and he has control over it (cf e.g. Ps 104:29ff, Jb 34:24ff). The word which creates is also the word which sets man limits and if these are transgressed God will take the appropriate action. As 6:7 emphasizes "Man whom I have created"- God is sovereign.

Thirdly, the flood shows the opposite of God's will for humanity. God wants man to live and enjoy the fullness of life in a safe secure

world, in which he shares in the dominion. Destruction and death are not God's original plan but something carried out reluctantly and only when man has destroyed himself (6:6, 11ff).

Finally the fact that there is not complete annihilation shows that by the provision of survival for a chosen few God cares for humanity. If he is prepared to start again with his people then human life is of great value to him despite human sin. As mentioned in connection with Ps 8 it is a marvel that the God who created and uncreated should care for insignificant man.

Conclusion

The account of the flood is a clear but not total reversal of creation, which is seen more clearly in P than J. The theme is put in a much fuller perspective when the two are read together. The theme of creation, uncreation and re-creation is ultimately a testimony to God's grace. Talk of God's sovereignty provides an ideal place to discuss the value of human life.

Footnotes

/1/ Westermann Creation SPCK London 1974 p22.

/2/ Clines "Theology of the Flood" p136.

/3/ H-P. Müller "Das Motiv für die Sintflut. Die hermeneutische Funktion des Mythos und seiner Analyse" ZAW 97 1985 p295-316.

/4/ Driver Genesis pIV.

/5/ See Wenham "Genesis" p10.

/6/ Levenson Sinai and Zion Winston Press New York 1985 p57ff.

/7/ Eichrodt "Theology" 2 p99 and the discussion therein p98ff.

/8/ Von Rad "Genesis" p50.

/9/ Eichrodt "Theology" 2 p100.

/10/ Bonhoeffer Creation and Fall A Theological Interpretation of Gen 1-3 SCM London 1959 p19ff.

/11/ see Zimmerli Theology p35. For a full discussion of ברא see Westermann "Genesis" p86ff, 98-100. The question of creatio ex nihilo also arises in the first chapter of Genesis but it is doubtful if this really was an issue for the writer of the first chapter of the Bible. The idea of creation from nothing is not found until 2 Macc 7:28. There has been a great deal of debate over the translation of the first verse of the Bible, see Wenham "Genesis" p11-14, Westermann "Genesis" p108-110, Eichrodt "Theology" 2 p101-106 and Heidel "Babylonian Genesis" p89ff.

/12/ Westermann "Genesis" p93.

/13/ Wenham "Genesis" p10.

/14/ B.W.Anderson Creation Versus Chaos Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1987 p81 and discussion in his third chapter on creation and worship p78-109.

/15/ Weiser The Psalms SCM 1962 p143.

/16/ Hepburn "Contingency" The New Dictionary of Christian Theology ed by A.Richardson and J.Bowden SCM 1983 p121.

/17/ Von Rad "Genesis" p49.

/18/ Von Rad "Theology" 1 p152.

/19/ Ibid p361.

/20/ Anderson "Mythopoeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith". In Creation in the Old Testament ed B.W.Anderson SPCK 1984 p1-24 esp p13ff.

/21/ See R.Luyster "Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament". ZAW 93 1981 p1-10 for details. For an excursus on Gen

- 1:2b see Westermann "Genesis" p106-108 and Wenham "Genesis" p16-17.
- /22/ Eichrodt "Theology" 2 p93-96.
- /23/ R.Alter "Biblical Poetry" p36.
- /24/ See Anderson's essay "Mythopoeic and Theological" and Gunkel "The Influence of Babylonian Mythology Upon the Biblical Creation Story" 1895 in Anderson "Creation in the OT" p1-24 and 25-52.
- /25/ Heidel "Babylonian Genesis" p111-114.
- /26/ Ibid p100.
- /27/ D.Tsumura The Earth and the Waters in Gen 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation JSOTSS 83 1989 chapter 3.
- /28/ Ibid chapter 8.
- /29/ Ibid chapter 4.
- /30/ Westermann "Genesis" p105 and see Wenham "Genesis" p16.
- /31/ Westermann "Genesis" p105.
- /32/ J.Day review article EI 101 1990 p211.
- /33/ Cassuto "Genesis" 1 p23.
- /34/ Wenham "Genesis" p16.
- /35/ Westermann "Genesis" p102ff.
- /36/ Tsumura "The Earth" chapter 2.
- /37/ Ibid p43 and 156.
- /38/ Ibid p167ff.
- /39/ Tsumura ibid Chapter 7.
- /40/ Quoted in Wenham "Genesis" p59 from Jacob Das Erste Buch der Torah p83.
- /41/ Westermann Genesis p206.
- /42/ Ibid p206.
- /43/ Quoted in Ibid p206 from Gunkel Genesis p6.
- /44/ Von Rad "Genesis" p75.

- /45/ Westermann "Genesis" p207.
- /46/ Wolff Anthropology of the Old Testament SCM London 1974 p10-25.
- /47/ Bonhoeffer "Creation and Fall" p44ff. He also discusses Michelangelo's famous painting from the Sistene Chapel of God creating Adam p45. The finger of God's does not quite touch Adam's. This shows the influence of Greek thought, by placing a greater distance between God and man than that found in Gen 2.
- /48/ For a discussion see D.Clines What Does Eve Do To Help? And Other Readerly Questions to The Old Testament JSOTSS 94 1990 p25-48.
- /49/ Westermann Creation p83.
- /50/ Clines "Theology" p135.
- /51/ Westermann "Genesis" p224.
- /52/ Von Rad Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch, literarisch untersucht und theologisch gewertet BWANT 1934 p7-10.
- /53/ P.Humbert "Die literarische Zweiheit des Priester-Codex in der Genesis (kritische Untersuchung der These von von Rad)" ZAW 58 1940-41 p40-42.
- /54/ Clines "Theology" p136. See also the Discussion in P.Beauchamp Création et Séparation: Étude Exégétique du Chapitre Premier de la Genèse Desclée, Paris 1969. Beauchamp's Structuralist approach is discussed in Barton "Reading" p122-127.
- /55/ For a full discussion see E.Sutcliffe "The Clouds as Water Carriers in Hebrew Thought" VT 3 1953 p99-103; Westermann "Genesis" p434; Wenham "Genesis" p181 and S.E.Loewenstamm "Die Wasser der biblischen Sintflut: ihr Hereinbrechen und ihr Verschwinden" VT 34 1984 p179-194.
- /56/ See for a further discussion of lists of animals W.M.Clark "The Animal series in the Primeval History" VT 18 1968 p433-449.

- /57/ Westermann Blessing in the Bible and the Life of the Church in Overtures to Biblical Theology, Fortress Press Philadelphia 1978 esp p1-14. For a discussion of "Be fruitful and multiply" see Chapter 6.
- /58/ Wenham "Genesis" p24.
- /59/ See Wenham "Genesis" p16 for Gen 1:2.
- /60/ Wenham "Genesis" p22-23.
- /61/ Westermann "Genesis" p127.
- /62/ Wenham "Genesis" p22-23.
- /63/ Childs "Theology" p162 and see Eichrodt "Theology" 1 p119-133.
- /64/ Westermann "Genesis" p170 and discussion p167 -173.
- /65/ Ibid p172.
- /66/ Von Rad "Genesis" p61.
- /67/ W.H.Schmidt Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift zur Überlieferungsgeschichte von Geni. 1-2,4a und 2:4b-3:24. WMANT 17 1973 p63.
- /68/ Quoted in Clines "Theology" p136.
- /69/ For a discussion of repetition see Whybray "Pentateuch" p72-91; J.A.Emerton Review of ibid in VT 39 1989 p110-116; Alter "Biblical Narrative" Chapter 5 "The Techniques of Repetition" p88-113, and J.Licht "Storytelling" p113.
- /70/ Whybray "Pentateuch" p83.
- /71/ Friedman "Exile" p122ff.

CHAPTER 5
RESTORATION

Prof Clines writes, "The story of the Flood is therefore an affirmation of the story of creation, and speaks ultimately not of divine punishment but of God's faithfulness to the work of His hands". /1/ Both J and P testify to the mercy of God, who promises never again to send a universal deluge, even though man has achieved no moral improvement. The J account puts this in sharp focus in 8:21, where the reason for God's mercy seems to be that man's heart is evil from his youth. The P account gives no hint of any improvement in the human condition, yet God still pledges never to send another flood and guarantees this assurance by the covenant. The present chapter will explore how the two sources present the theme of God's commitment to the world in the post flood era.

1) God's Maintenance of the World

In order to understand both the J and the P accounts of restoration it is important to grasp the Old Testament's belief in God's personal maintenance of the world. In Chapter 3 we discussed the personal involvement of God in the events of the world; the created order is not detached from its creator. Eichrodt writes,

"On the one hand, by the concept of the creature, which is inseparable from the idea of creation, it presupposes the permanent dependence of the world on God, with no room for a detachment of the created thing from from him who created it; and on the other it shows that a necessary consequence of the act of creation is an historical process which finds its forward motive power in the permanent life-relationship of the creature with the Creator". /2/

Given this involvement of God in the world, there was an inherent

regularity in the events of nature with God's law being manifested in the natural process. The forces of nature do not have lives of their own, but are subject to God's rule and command. Through his omnipotence God controls both nature and history.

God's personal care can be seen in the provision of food, rain and fertility (e.g. Ps 65:9-13, 107:35ff and 147:15ff). The events of nature are the outcome of God's action; he fashions and forms each individual (e.g. Ps 139:13ff, Jb 10:8-12). The gifts of the seasons, day and night, seedtime and harvest, all come from God's care. In everything God's wonders can be seen. The verb **ברא** can be used for both creation and preservation, which shows that creation is not just a single act but is part of the continuing sustaining process - "creatio continua" as Eichrodt calls it. /3/

Eichrodt observes that in P nature receives attention for its own sake as a work of God's creating and sustaining power. Gen 1 regards creation as a suitable object for man's joy and wonder. Both Gen 8:20-22 (J) and 9:8-17 (P) fit in with this belief in God's care for the world, by witnessing to the stability of creation. Clear in all this was the "the element of the unfailingly permanent, that which in spite of all flux and change possesses stability in itself and recurs in accordance with a regular system", writes Eichrodt. /4/ The Priestly story of creation makes a distinction between creation and preservation, by concluding the account of the making of the world with the day of rest (2:1-3), which affirms the continuity and constancy of the divine creative will. Creation is not a matter of caprice, but it is given a mandate to exist by God. The creative act is seen as God's constant, purposeful will; his maintenance of

creation is a demonstration of his $\tau\theta\mu$ (Ps 136:4-9).

It is this understanding of God's personal sustaining care of the world, which underlies both Gen 8:20-22 and 9:8-17.

2) Genesis 8:20-22

"Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odour, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease". (RSV)

i) Gen 8:21

In the story of the flood the promise to meet sin with mercy is set in Gen 8:21, where God promises not to curse the ground further for the same reason as he introduced the universal judgment in 6:5. The verse is difficult to interpret and has caused some controversy over its precise meaning. Rendtorff has made a significant contribution to the debate and translates 8:21, "I will never again declare the earth to be cursed (as I have done hitherto) on account of humanity because the imagination of the heart is evil from one's youth". /5/ He adds "Von jetzt an regiert nicht mehr der Fluch die Welt, sondern der Segen. Die Zeit der Fluches ist zu Ende, der Zeit des Segens bricht an". /6/ From now on blessing not curse will rule the world.

Rendtorff argues that the verse does not mean that God will not again curse the earth, but rather that the period of the curse which was inaugurated in 3:17ff "cursed be the ground because of you", is now over. W.M.Clark follows Rendtorff to some extent, "The power of that initial curse to work further disruption is limited". /7/

There are however problems with Rendtorff's translation. First, his interpretation depends on the distinction he wishes to make between קלל and ארר. He understands קלל in its declarative sense and notes that the word can often mean "view as accused", "revile", "insult". But as Petersen has observed, there are problems with this rendering. There is some overlap between the two words; for example in Deut 28:15, 45 the nominal form קללה is used to summarize the covenant curses as they follow in the standard ארר formula. Both verbal and non verbal forms of קלל can be used in parallel with ברך, as is also the case for ארר. /8/ As Westermann points out, קלל is not declarative in 12:3, its only other occurrence in J. /9/ But whilst there is indeed overlap between the two terms, קלל is somewhat broader in meaning than "curse" and includes the idea of contempt and dishonour, /10/ whereas ארר means curse in the more restricted sense. /11/ Whilst the two are not quite synonymous it would be straining the evidence to suggest that קלל has a declarative sense in Gen 8.

Secondly, it is important to notice the position of עוד in 8:21a; it comes after לקלל not after אסף (לא אסף לקלל עוד), in contrast to the parallel clause 21b:

לא אסף עוד להכות "I will never again smite".

Rendtorff has ignored the importance of the nuances of the יסף + infinitive clause. /12/ It designates repeated activity which is

either continuous or discontinuous. Because of his interpretation of קלל Rendtorff assumes that the construction of 8:21 refers to a continuous viewing of the earth as accursed, i.e. that God will no longer regard the earth as accursed.

Rendtorff has failed to see that יסף + infinitive + עוד can convey the sense of "not to do further"; which would mean in Gen 8:21 "I shall not curse the earth further". That would suggest the curses of Gen 3 are still in force, but God is promising not to add to them. God will not curse the earth further so as to increase what is already in place, (that is the curses of Gen 3) as he did in the flood. It is hard to distinguish between the meanings "further" and "again" even in English. For example Deut 3:26 uses the construction יסף + infinitive + עוד:

אל תוסף דבר אלי עוד.

The words could have the connotation of "Speak no further to me" i.e. in addition to what you have already said. Yet it does seem reasonable to argue that in Gen 8:21 the verse means that God will not curse the earth over and above the curses of 3:17. The clue to the meaning of 8:21 must be determined by its context.

For example Moberly notes that here the position of עוד must mean that the curse remains valid but will not be augmented. In 8:21b עוד qualifies אסף (לא אסף עוד להכות), and means that God will not act in the same way again for a second time, that is to bring a universal deluge onto the earth as he did in Gen 6-8. Never again will everything be wiped out by God. Only if in 21a עוד were qualified by אסף (לא אסף עוד לקלל), could the verse bear the meaning Rendtorff wants. /13/

Consequently Rendtorff's claim that the curses of 3:17 are lifted after the flood cannot stand. Wenham's translation catches the idea "I shall not curse the soil any further". /14/ It is worth noting that this interpretation is taken up in Jewish tradition. Ibn Ezra writes, "I will not add any more to the curse which was pronounced against the ground because of Adam; neither will I ever again smite with a flood". /15/ The curse is not lifted but God promises not to add to it. The punishment of the deluge was over and above that in 3:17. The curses pronounced there, weeds, toil, pain, death, are still part of present reality after 8:21, and it is not said that they are lifted. /16/ As the curse of Gen 3 is unaltered, Rendtorff's translation cannot stand. Whilst the introduction to the story does not designate the flood as an act of cursing, the verb "destroy" in 8:21b parallels "curse" in 21a, which suggests that the two refer to the same event, and that the flood was a means of cursing the earth over and above the curses in Gen 3.

That is not to say that the words אָדָם and אֲדָמָה do not recall Gen 2-3, but 8:21 refers primarily to 6:5. This is brought out by the כִּי clause, כִּי יִצַר לֵב הָאָדָם רַע מִנְעֻרָיו, which parallels 6:5,

וְכָל יִצַר מַחֲשַׁבַת לֵבָו רַק רַע כָּל הַיּוֹם.

Rendtorff has tended to minimize the theological significance of the כִּי clause; it is retrospective, dealing with a human state in the past as a cause of judgment, and does not represent a post-diluvian assessment of man. But an interpretation of the clause which minimizes its significance, is unlikely. Moberly has noted that if the כִּי clause is omitted Yahweh's speech forms two lines of 3:3 rhythm:

לֹא אִסַּף לְקַלֵּל עוֹד אֶת הָאָדָמָה בְּעִבּוֹר הָאָדָם

וְלֹא אִסַּף עוֹד לְהִכּוֹת אֶת כָּל חַי כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי

The probable deliberate insertion of the clause makes the theologically minimalist interpretation improbable. /17/ The point is that if the clause is omitted, 8:21 most naturally refers to Gen 3. If it is included, it refers to 6:5ff and the whole perspective is altered. By arguing that the verse refers to 3:17 and the curses there, Rendtorff has underestimated the significance of the כִּי clause and given it insufficient attention. If the verse refers to 6:5, then the כִּי clause is of enormous significance. There was a time once when God decided to curse the אָדָמָה on account of אָדָם; this will never occur again. God has decided to put up with human evil. /18/

Thirdly, there is another weakness in the approach which Rendtorff is advocating. Clark develops Rendtorff's argument by saying that 9:20-27 is "a verification that the curse has been lifted off the ground which can henceforth produce vineyards, a symbol of fertility". /19/ Yet this misunderstands the relationship between 9:20-27 and 5:29 - the relief promised is the making of wine. The curse is not lifted, but there is the possibility of comfort for humanity in the fruit of the vine.

Finally, the post-diluvian world can hardly be an era of blessing since 9:25ff describes the curse of Canaan. Even though there is blessing for Shem and Japheth, the focus of the story is on the curse and the servitude of Canaan /20/

Neither can it be said that Rendtorff is right to see here the end of J's primeval history i.e. the end of the period of curse. /21/ His claim that 8:20-22 marked the end of the curse is inseparable

from his belief that the primeval history ended there as well. His arguments fail to convince, since if there is no end to an era of the curse in Gen 8, the case for an end to the primeval history there is also weakened. It is the threat of another flood which is removed. The development of Gen 1-11 demands an end to the primeval history in Gen 11 not 8, since in Gen 11 we move from mythological, universal stories of the origin of mankind, to focus on Israel and Abraham in particular. 12:1 marks the beginning of Israel's history and the end of primeval reality. J did not see the primeval history as one of curse, which was detached from an era of blessing. The close of the account is not described as the start of an era of blessing, and it is better to see 8:21 as the end of the story of the flood rather than the close of the primeval history as a whole. The verse is an abrogation of the decision to destroy. /22/

ii) A Comparison with Ex 34:9

R.W.L.Moberly has observed that there are striking parallels between the story of the deluge and the account of the Golden Calf in Ex 32-34. /23/ This can be seen most especially in the relationship between Gen 8:21 and Ex 34:9, where a theological paradox is expressed. The following discussion will draw on the parallel in order to explore this aspect of Israelite theology.

In neither story is there any hint of repentance on the part of those who have committed either the sin of the wicked generation or idolatry. In the flood destruction is decreed but in the later story total punishment is withheld, though a plague is sent and 3000 men are put to death (Ex 32:28). The people mourn in Ex 33:4, but that

could be a reaction to the loss of their gold rather than any sorrow for what they had done. Neither the root נחם nor שׁוּב is used with human subjects in either story. The mercy shown by God is all the more striking in that it is in no way due to human repentance. /24/

Both stories speak of the persistently stubborn nature of the people:

Gen 6:5: וְכָל יִצְרַח מַחְשַׁבַת לְבוֹרָק רַע כָּל הַיּוֹם

8:21 כִּי יִצְרַח לֵב הָאָדָם רַע מִנְעֲרִיו is only slightly different. /25/

In a more specific reference Ex 32-34 speaks of the Israelites as stiff necked עֲרָף קָשָׁה (32:9, 33:3, 5, 34:9). This phrase is found only six times in the Old Testament (twice in Deuteronomy). The combination of עֲרָף and קָשָׁה in its various forms is predicated only of Israel in the entire Old Testament, except for the general remark of Prov 29:1. Israel's nature is to be stiff necked and stubborn; a concept deeply embedded in her tradition. /26/ The story of the flood whilst using different but related phraseology, represents the same idea of human perversity to do evil. Instead of confining the judgment to Israel alone, the whole of humanity is diagnosed as intrinsically evil in J. In Chapter 7 we shall discuss how this relates to more positive statements about humanity such as the imago Dei.

It is the כִּי clause of Gen 8:21 which states the precise relationship between divine mercy and the human condition. The particle כִּי has many nuances of meaning and a diversity of function in its 4500 occurrences in the Old Testament. The word is a deictic particle, and sometimes points the way forward in a sentence. Often it is used for emphasis. Muilenberg notes that the particle is used

with a sense of motivation and this can be seen in the motive clause in Old Testament law (e.g. Ex 20:3-6, Deut 15:7-11). /27/ The use of כִּי for introducing motivation for statements is common in the Old Testament. (Gen 17:5, Hos 1:4) כִּי in this sense is found in oracles of assurance (Jer 1:8). The emphatic character is almost always present and such motive clauses are a central part of Israel's faith; they show the ways of God with humans and contain the impetus for inspiration, obedience, and serve to warn or admonish. They illustrate that the ways of God are not arbitrary, but are good and right./28/

In Gen 3:5 כִּי is employed as a particle of motivation, as it is in 3:14, where it is used to express the reason for the curse on the snake. In 3:17 the ground is cursed (אָרֶר) because (כִּי) Adam has obeyed his wife rather than God. In these cases which are all from J, כִּי introduces the specific reason for the curse and is rendered "because". It is then likely that in 8:21 כִּי also means "because" since it introduces the reason for God not cursing. Likewise in 6:7 כִּי is used with the sense of motivation: כִּי נִחַמְתִּי. God plans to destroy the earth because he regrets creating it. Human sin has caused God regret. Given these usages of כִּי elsewhere in J's primeval history, it seems likely that כִּי in Gen 8:²¹ should be rendered as "because"; it expresses the specific reason for God's mercy.

Hence we should prefer not to use the concessive meaning for כִּי "although" as found in Is 1:15, 54:10 and Jer 14:12. Such a rendering would not convey the emphatic and paradoxical nature of the verse. /29/ The same problem is found in Ex 34:9. The particle כִּי is problematic there as well; three translations are possible:

"because", "although" or "however much". In Ex 34:9 RSV chooses "although" but Moberly rejects this arguing that it evades the paradox. He opts for either the first or the third since these emphasize the paradoxical nature of the statement and the motivation for God's mercy. /30/

The ^ו clause is then of great significance. Its importance is brought out all the more by the fact that it is placed in one of the soliloquies, which reveal the essence of the Yahwist's thinking. /31/

It is here that we encounter the crucial paradox in both stories. In Ex 32:9ff, 33:3, 5 "stiff necked" is the reason for God's judgment. In contrast, not only is 34:9 set in a statement of God's mercy, but it is also the reason for that same grace. Israel's sin, which causes judgment also brings mercy. To the sinful who ought to be destroyed, God's mercy is given - a bold concept, which verges on the contradictory. Ex 34:9 is an excellent parallel to Gen 8:21, where the same reason is given for mercy 8:21 as for judgment 6:5. /32/

The story of the flood makes it clear that man is answerable for his actions and that he has only himself to blame for the terrible catastrophe which overtook him. Man is unchanged. God decides that he will not be bound by the simple equation of act and consequence, i.e. always responding to human sin by the punishment of death, but promises instead to uphold creation. Even though man is still sinful there will never be a universal flood again. Man's permanently evil nature will be met by God's unfailing mercy. God may still punish individuals or groups, but there will never be another all destroying deluge. The change is grounded in the free decision of God and the

relationship between deed and punishment is altered. God assumes responsibility for man and sin cannot threaten the world again. In contrast to other Near Eastern flood myths, there is a clear ethical perspective, not only in the origin of the deluge, but also in God's response to the continued situation of man. /33/ The focus of the flood is on the change wrought in God. From now on he will approach the world with patience and will not allow human sin to sway him from his plans. /34/ "Having regard to man's now innate propensity for evil, God will not again be moved by men's evil deeds to a judgment such as the flood had been, but will exhibit forbearance (Rom iii:25), and long suffering", writes Driver. /35/ J.Skinner writes, "The pledge of Yahweh's patience with humanity is the regularity of the course of nature, in which good and bad men are treated alike, (Matt5:45)". /36/ God lets things be in patient forbearance. F.Delitzsch writes, "A time of patience ἀνοχη, is now to begin (Rom 3:25)". /37/ The change in approach is based on the one God - "no power can shake this promise". /38/

Does this make God inconsistent? A superficial reading of the text could suggest this but it need not be so. But does God's failure to meet sin with punishment in Ex 32-34 prove him erratic?

To take such a view would be to see consistency in the wrong terms, since it does not rest in God always doing the same thing all of the time, in every set of circumstances, but is seen rather in his constant purpose for his people and his faithfulness to them. God may react to sin in different ways at different times, with varying degrees of punishment but he is fundamentally consistent in that he wills and works for the continued existence of his people and of the

world even though that may be through a remnant and judgment. God is consistent but there is a mystery about his ways. The point is that God's mercy cannot be presumed upon or taken for granted.

Neither does the text mean that Israel is to sin in order that she may obtain mercy. No one could seriously suggest that the Old Testament encourages sin. Ex 34:9 in its immediate context presents a theology of grace which is unsurpassed: the people receive from God the judgment they deserve and the mercy they do not. It is the character of God to show mercy, even to a persistently sinful people. /39/ This is reinforced in 34:6ff, where the forgiving nature of God is given one of its clearest expressions.

This paradox can be seen elsewhere in the Old Testament. There are other examples of a כִּי clause being used in a similar way to that in Gen 8 and Ex 34, i.e. to express the view that God shows mercy because of human sin. 2 Sam 24:10 employs כִּי in David's prayer for mercy despite his foolish action. "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, I pray thee, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly". Unlike the people of Ex 32-34 he is penitent, but the כִּי clause still emphasizes God's mercy and gives the reason for it. 24:14 confirms that his mercy is undeserved. All he can do is appeal to the mercy of God. Similarly in Ps 51 there is a juxtaposition of a plea for forgiveness (51:1-2,(3-4)) with a confession of sin כִּי פִשְׁעֵי אָנֹכִי אָדָּע (51:3ff (5ff)). Perhaps the most famous example is Dan 9:9 "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness; because we have rebelled against him". God is merciful because of human sin. It can then be seen from these examples that the basic concept of God's consistent

faithfulness and mercy despite human sin is one of the fundamental aspects of Israelite thought in several of her traditions. Forgiveness was often granted because of human sin.

It is this paradox which we find in Gen 8:21ff, where God promises not to curse the ground again, even though man's heart is evil from his youth upward. Petersen argues that the Yahwist had realized that the flood had not fulfilled God's intentions; it had destroyed neither mankind nor his propensity for evil. Mesopotamian narratives could explain this as a conflict between two gods, but that explanation was not possible for the Yahwist. For P, Petersen argues, man had changed drastically, since after the flood God makes a covenant with Noah. For the Yahwist there was no change; the flood was an ineffectual ploy. The Yahwist saw God's plan as inappropriate and incongruous and he viewed it with ironic detachment. The flood solved nothing. /40/

Yet as Moberly notes, such criticism of Yahweh would be without parallel in J or any other part of the Old Testament. That is not an absolute criticism, but a theologically congruent explanation which does justice to the text and echoes with emphases of J elsewhere is to be preferred. /41/ The examples which we have cited above, show how deeply Israel felt the mercy of God which had been shown to her and to individuals. Given that human sin was the reason for God's forgiveness in some cases, it would seem more likely that a writer who was writing from an Israelite perspective, would understand the verse in this way, rather than as a criticism of an ineffectual ploy on the part of God. Further, in the context of a document which speaks of the power of God to create, uncreate and re-create (Gen

2-8), it would be strange if at the close of the flood, God were to be portrayed as weak and ineffective. He is never portrayed as impotent in the rest of the Old Testament, even though some laments complain of the power of evil.

Indeed it is doubtful if as Petersen suggests, P was much different from J at this point. The fact that P supplies man with basic commandments could indicate that the tendency for wrong is still there. We shall discuss this further below.

Ex 34:9 provides an excellent parallel with Gen 8:21ff. ^ו is used in the same way in both stories and each account presents a pattern of sin, judgment and restoration. /42/ Furthermore in both Gen 6-9 and Ex 32-34 the future of the world and the future of Israel are in the balance. Both the world in its infancy and the newly constituted Israel have incurred God's wrath. The crucial issue for both is how can a sinful people, even the chosen race, live before God without being destroyed? In both the answer is given that if sin is met by judgment there is no hope; but there is also God's mercy which depends exclusively on his grace. /43/

iii) The Role of Noah as Mediator

Moberly writes with reference to the narrative as a whole,

"Both narratives (Gen 6-9, Ex 32-4) display the same theological tension that on the one hand God's mercy is shown to continuously sinful man and is dependent upon himself alone, and on the other hand this mercy is shown through a man who is chosen by God and whose right response to God, whether through sacrifice or prayer, constitutes the necessary medium through which this mercy is shown." "God's mercy does not override man, but man is given an indispensable role within God's purposes. Such is the understanding of Yahweh's dealings with his people expressed by Ex 32-34". /44/

The role of Moses as intercessor is developed much more than that of

Noah, even to the point of arguing with God. As Davidson writes,

This human protest is rooted in the ambiguous nature of the experience of God, in the struggle to comprehend the relationship between God's anger and his saving purposes, between promises made and decisions which seem to threaten, to annul these promises." /45/

Through human prayer judgment is averted and God's presence is restored.

The whole question of intercession is wholly lacking in the story of the flood. It is surprising that in contrast to Abraham in Gen 18 and Moses in Ex 32 and many other leading figures such as David and Amos, Noah seems to make no attempt at intercession. Indeed Noah says nothing throughout the entire story. It seems that in contrast to Ex 32-34 and the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, the question of human intercession is not on the agenda. Noah is a much more passive figure and it may be that the question as to why he never intercedes is inappropriate. Intercession may have been thought unnecessary if the writer regarded God's decision to destroy as irreversible. One possible way of reading the text is that the sin of the wicked generation was so bad, perhaps even worse than the sin of the calf, that Noah could offer no defence of them. Proof is impossible but the text leaves open several possibilities.

What is the significance of Noah's sacrifice? Unfortunately commentators give widely differing views on the matter. Gunkel writes, "He offers sacrifice because God, who hitherto has been so terribly angry with humanity, is still at enmity with it; he wants to silence what remains of the anger". /46/ Procksch writes, "The earth is now freed from the burden of the curse by means of the 'olot....the sacrifice of Noah is a means of propitiation". /47/

Cassuto takes the opposite point of view. There is no atonement

since the suffering and death in the flood have taken away all human iniquity. Noah's sacrifice is one of thanksgiving and deliverance. /48/ Westermann takes a similar line; those who leave the ark must celebrate the extraordinary deliverance which they have undergone. The sacrifice of Noah is made in response to deliverance and salvation - a constant theme in worship. The phrase "Yahweh smelled" is a figurative term meaning that God acknowledged Noah's sacrifice. /49/

The problem is that there is a loose relationship between the sacrifice and God's response, since the purpose of the sacrifice is not spelled out. /50/ How was the **עֹלָה** understood in the Old Testament? It is hard to be certain about the precise meaning since though Lev 1 describes the ritual; it presumes that the meaning was so well known that it has been left without explanation. Even though this is a P passage, we can be fairly certain that its traditions antedate the time of the exile. Milgrom is probably right to see the **עֹלָה** as a sacrifice for a broad spectrum of need. **חַטָּאת** and **אָשָׁם** expiate for the limited sins of pollution and desecration of sanctuaries, but the **עֹלָה** is used for a wider range of sin, thanksgiving (Lev 22:17-19), as well as petition (1 Sam 13:12). The **עֹלָה** was an all encompassing sacrifice, which responded to the whole range of a worshipper's needs. Originally it was the sole expiatory sacrifice, since the earliest sources do not mention the **אָשָׁם** or **חַטָּאת**. /51/

Earlier traditions also seem to employ **עֹלָה** with the sense of expiation (Josh 8:31). 2 Sam 24:22-24 seems to suggest that the sacrifice bears an expiatory function, even though it is accompanied

by supplication. God heeds David's prayer and sacrifice, and the plague is averted. The sacrifice is unlikely to be one of thanksgiving since it is not until 24:25 that God responds favourably; it seems that this is in part owing to the sacrifice. In J in Genesis the only other use of *עלה* is in Gen 22, but the expiatory purpose of sacrifice is not developed here since the emphasis of the passage is on the testing of Abraham.

Whilst there is an element of thanksgiving in Noah's sacrifice, we would suggest that there is atonement here as well. Both the above points of view should be adopted. Neither thanksgiving nor atonement are exclusive. Lev 1:4 speaks of atonement and there are many passages which speak of a burnt offering appeasing God's anger: Num 15:24, Jb 1:5. It could also be offered for thanksgiving Ex 18:11ff. The burnt offering brought reconciliation between God and man as well as expressing thanks. /52/

"Soothing aroma" is the regular term for the smell produced by burning sacrifices Lev 1:9. "Soothing" *נִיחָה* sacrifices have a pacifying effect on God; he is soothed by the sacrifice. /53/

In Gen 8 it would seem that the sacrifice operates as a means of atonement between God and man. God's attitude to humanity is altered by the pleasing aroma. The offering does not change man but it does make fellowship between God and sinful humanity possible. /54/ The fact that the offering precedes the promises suggests that it has some expiatory function. If it were one of thanksgiving, it might seem more natural to place it after the promises of 8:21ff. If J is examined as a whole, then as God is moved to regret at creating man and to punishment of human sin 6:5ff (See Chapter 3), so too at the

end of the flood he is moved to restoration by the right response of Noah to God. What Noah does is significant in the purposes of God and to some extent the world owes its existence to his faithfulness. God reacts personally to man and interacts with the world in dialogue. As Moses' intercession saves the Israelites from disaster, Noah's sacrifice ensures the continuation of the world-order, a peaceful coexistence between God and man. "Thus God resolves on a self-limitation of his punitive holiness", writes Von Rad. /55/

iv) Genesis 8:22

The promises of 8:22 guarantee the future stability of the world, and they are given in the context of persistent human sin. Humanity is protected by this promise for as long as the earth will last. Not even the wickedness of man can disrupt this security, since God has accepted responsibility for preserving the created order. Man stays evil; God remains merciful, /56/ with his forbearance being seen in the natural orders. /57/ The whole of time is set under the guarantee that the world order will be upheld. Through catastrophe it has achieved permanence with a steady mighty rhythm of time: seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night. /58/

The alternation of day and night, summer and winter is essential to all life. A rhythmical pattern of life is set up, in which God's blessing is made effective. Biblical time is not exclusively linear. /59/

This picks up a theme from chapter 4. It would appear that the flood disrupted the seasons and the pattern of day and night. Rashi

argued that the distinction between day and night was not visible during the deluge and that the heavenly bodies did not function as normal. Radak deduces that the cycles of 8:22 did cease; there were no seasons and it was impossible to distinguish day from night. /60/ It seems reasonable here to argue from 8:22 to an apparently implied aspect of the preceding flood.

In Ex 32-34 the story makes clear the nature of God by giving him a series of attributes: אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנוּן אֲרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב חַסֵּד וְאֵמֶת. The nature of God is not described in such terms in Gen 6-9 but the text does suggest that God displays these attributes. Both passages illustrate God's חסד. This is a difficult term to render but it signifies God's abiding loyalty, his unshakable will to sustain his purpose. As Sakenfeld has written,

חסד "was a particularly useful word for speaking of God's relationship to his people, collectively and individually, because it held together in a single expression an emphasis on divine freedom on the one hand and divine commitment on the other, an emphasis on divine power on the one hand and divine care on the other, an emphasis on human need and weakness on the one hand and human responsibility to trust in God alone on the other." /61/

In Ex 32-34 the fulness of God's חסד is seen in his refusal to give up his people even when they have sinned and refused to repent. חסד would also be an apt word for Gen 8 since God pledges to maintain the world and never send another flood, even though man has not changed. The fulness of his חסד is his persistent faithfulness to the undeserving, in the face of human fickleness. He is gracious, slow to anger and true to his word.

But can it be said that God is רחום in Gen 6-9 in view of all the destruction? Certainly God's grief and pain at the impending judgment is shown in 6:5-8 and the promise of deliverance for Noah

demonstrates a merciful disposition. Yet God is still prepared to take the ultimate step of judgment should that prove necessary. Whilst he punishes in the deluge, his ultimate purpose is for life and mercy. It is his mercy which prevails. /62/

Childs writes of Ex 34,

"The faith which Israel learned to prize was not a proud tradition that once in the past God had singled out a people, but rather that God had continued to sustain his original purpose with a sinful nation both in mercy and judgment". /63/

The same was as true for the world as for Israel.

3) THE PRIESTLY ACCOUNT OF RESTORATION

a) "And God Remembered Noah"

Gen 8:1 is the turning point in the narrative. Chapters 6-7 describe the coming of the flood, the destruction and the deliverance of Noah. Amidst the devastation there is only one small ray of hope: the ark, in which is contained the person by whom the promise of 6:18 will be fulfilled. Chapter 8 speaks of the subsiding of the waters and the leaving of the ark on the mountain. Thereafter normality returns and the covenant is renewed. The account displays a pattern of sin, judgment and mercy and 8:1a is the first statement of the section wherein punishment is withdrawn. God's memory of Noah is given a crucially important place by the writer of the story and it is the catalyst for the rescue of Noah. By its position, זכר is paradigmatic for its use elsewhere in the Old Testament.

a:i) זכר in the Old Testament

The verb זכר "serves primarily to express an intellectual activity that is relational and personal", writes Eising. /64/ It is used 73 times with God as subject and is a favourite expression of P. /65/

It would be wrong to see זכר as remember simply in the sense of recall. In English, for example, when we speak of a man remembering his wife's birthday, we do not mean that he just recalled the date, but that he also did something to mark the occasion, such as buying a present. In Hebrew the relationship between thought and action is closer than that in English. Often זכר implies an action e.g. Jer 14:10 where זכר is placed with פקד; compare also Num 15:39ff. The

parallel of זכר and פקד in Jer 15:15 is of special note. Schottroff calls it "das tätige Eingehen Gottes auf den Menschen, die personal zuwendung, welche die Situation des Menschen, dem sie gilt, ändert, da nun Gott sein Lage überprüft und ihm Abhilfe schafft". /66/

There is not time to analyze the debate between Barr and Pedersen over the relationship between Hebrew mentality and linguistic structure. The point to note is that whilst there is a close relationship between memory and action in Hebrew, Pedersen has overstated his case when he says that the two were identical to the Israelite mind. The point is semantic not psychological; in Hebrew memory usually did not only imply recollection but the putting into effect of an action. /67/

Whilst זכר can denote intellectual activity (Jb 40:32), it usually entails an action of some kind. This is especially so with God as subject. Schottroff comments,

"Inhaltlich geht es dabei nicht bloß um einen intellektuellen Bezug (Sich - Entsinnen) der Gottheit zu ihrem Verehrer (kreis), sondern um ein tathaftes Eingehen des Gottes auf den Menschen, dessen Inhalt Segen und Heil ist". /68/

When he remembers, God intervenes. Passages such as Gen 8:1 emphasize the personal action of God in the world. /69/

Many examples of this can be given. /70/ The problem of childlessness is apt. Fertility is seen as a sign of God's blessing and infertility leads to disgrace - a stigma of God's disfavour. When God remembers the woman's plight, he grants blessing. In Gen 30:22 (P) God's memory is seen in terms of opening the womb. /71/ God's memory can also involve rescue from enemies or the granting of strength in times of trouble (Ju 16:28).

a) ii) זָכַר in Genesis 8:1

"But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind blow over the earth, and the waters subsided".(RSV)

The essence of God's memory is his action towards man. The nearest example in P is Gen 19:29, where God remembers Abraham and delivers Lot from the city and the destruction which ensues. As Noah saves his family by his righteousness, so Abraham delivers Lot by his upright behaviour. As Noah and his family are delivered from the punishment of the flood, so too God's gracious turning to Abraham ensures Lot's survival. Gen 8:1 becomes a paradigmatic example of God remembering an individual in distress and delivering him from need. God does not just recall Noah but has compassion on him through which life is renewed.

As Schottroff points out there is a correspondence with Jb 14:13-15. Both passages speak of the suspending of the relationship between God and man during a period of punishment. When the punishment is complete and God's anger abated, then God renews his relationship with man. /72/

Not only does God remember Noah but he also remembers all on board the ark, which shows that animal life is also of value. By remembering Noah God shows that man is destined for life not death, and that he wills to live in a relationship with humanity. What God does not remember is destined for death (Ps 88:6) and the dead lie outside the range of God's salvation. For God to forget is the same as the ending of life. The opposite of זָכַר in Ps 88 is not שָׁכַח but גָּזַר "cut off", which shows that זָכַר is not just bare recollection but

also the sustaining of life. /73/ God's memory brings life. As Von Rad has written of Gen 8:1, "The bold anthropomorphism makes the freedom of the divine resolve for salvation especially impressive".

/74/

There is also a moral element in the use of זָכַר. In the flood the wicked perish but the righteous man is remembered by God. It is the righteous who are remembered. In Lev 26:42ff (P) God promises to remember the land if the Israelites humble themselves before God. If they are obedient God will remember the land and bring prosperity. This theme is found elsewhere: Jer 14:10, Ez 33:13, 16, Hos 7:2, 2 Chron 6:42, Neh 5:19, Lam 3:19. God's remembering of Noah looks forward to the covenant of Gen 9 and picks up the promise of 6:18.

Vawter argues that 8:1 either means God responded to a prayer or that he acknowledged some action of Noah's. /75/ In the absence of any reference to prayer one must assume that Noah is saved by God's mercy working through his righteousness. This stands in contrast to a reading of Gen 19:29, since in Gen 18-19 God's remembering is linked to intercession.

Another passage which forms an interesting parallel to Gen 8:1 is Ps 9:12 (13). As we discussed earlier, the flood was caused by חַמְסָה. Ps9:12 speaks of God being mindful (זָכַר) of the cry of the afflicted, and he who remembers them avenges blood. God shows his concern by punishing those who afflict others. Both passages illustrate God's care and concern for human life; those who commit חַמְסָה will be punished but the innocent are preserved.

All these uses of זָכַר are summarized in Ps 8:4ff. The Psalm speaks of the glory and majesty of God and his work in creation. In

spite of all this he is mindful of frail insignificant man:

76/מה אנשׁ כּי תזכּרנוּ וּבן אדם כּי תּמקדנוּ

In the awesome power displayed in the flood, it is a wonder that God should be concerned about the only life which is left on the earth. Even in the context of the overwhelming forces of uncreation God remembers man. In Gen 8:1 God is mindful of man in the same way as in Ps 8. Both texts highlight the value of humanity.

b) The Covenant with Noah (Gen 9:8-17)

The covenant of Gen 6:18 is the first of about 290 occurrences of the word ברית in the Old Testament. Despite the prominence of this term in the flood, little attention has been paid to Gen 9 by scholars. Not even Eichrodt, for whom covenant was so important, has a long discussion of Gen 6-9. The reason for this is that scholars have tended to be dominated by historical concerns. They have focused their attention on the study of earlier covenants such as those with David or Abraham or with Israel at Sinai, and have claimed that as P is a late document, the covenant with Noah is a retrojection of Israel's covenant back into the primeval era. Even if it was written relatively late in Israel's history, and was a reflection of her covenantal beliefs, it is still given a literary position of immense importance. In one sense it is a retrojection of Israel's belief, yet if one reads at the level of the canonical form of the Old Testament, as opposed to attempting to reconstruct a history of Israel's religious thought, the covenant of Gen 9 is of vast importance, since it is the first in the Old Testament, and it forms the framework for all others.

b i) Literary Structure

Von Rad noticed that there are certain repetitions in the narrative of Gen 9, and concluded from this that there were two recensions, not just here, but in the entire Priestly strata. Gen 9 contains two streams of tradition: A 9:11a, 13, 16, 17; B 9:9, 10, 11b, 12, 14, 15. The covenant is announced twice 9:9, 11 as is its sign 9:12, 17 and the bow 9:13, 14. /77/

Von Rad's analysis is not convincing primarily because P uses repetition a great deal: 1:27, 2:2-3, 7:14-16, 9:5, 23:17-20, 49:29ff. /78/ This need not be evidence of two recensions in P and as McEvenue writes, "It must be called simply love of detail and of complete enumeration". /79/ When read as a literary whole, the passage drives home its teaching by means of repetition.

There are other weaknesses in Von Rad's analysis. 9:11a is a fitting conclusion to 9:9, 10 and it is not pleonastic; never again will all flesh be cut off; that is the content of the covenant in Gen 9:9,10. 9:11 resumes 9:9 after the list of covenant partners in 9:10. In 9:11b **לשחת הארץ** specifies **מי המבול** of 11a, and also picks up **שחת** of Gen 6. Neither need there be a distinction of sources in 9:12 and 17 over the sign of the covenant. 12 introduces the sign, 17 is the conclusion to the narrative as a whole, and **כל בשר** in the latter verse specifies verse 12. The word "this" in 9:17 refers back to the previous statements, (compare Num 7:17b) and in 12 it points forward as it does in 5:1 and 6:15. 9:12 and 17 form an homogeneous whole. Von Rad sees in 9:13 and 14 a doublet over the rainbow. This seems a little forced since 9:14 and 15 explain the

role of the rainbow which is placed in the clouds in 9:13. 9:16 encapsulates 13-15. 9:8-17 can be read as a whole and there is no compelling reason to see two strands here. /80/

Westermann seeks to distinguish between repetitions of the same thing and those which are stylistically conditioned. In Gen 9 verses 14, 15 and 16 are genuine doublets: one aspect of which is described in successive verses. Verse 11 is also a doublet. Two formulations were at hand to P and he wanted to keep both. The other repetitions are stylistic:

9:13 as the sign of the covenant between me and you.

9:15 between me and you and all living beings.

9:16 between God and all living beings, flesh of every kind that are on the earth.

9:17 between myself and all flesh that is on the earth. /81/

It is surprising that Westermann does not note a fifth reference to the partners of the covenant in 9:12 as does Wenham. /82/ Westermann's basic point that there is a distinction between genuine doublets which say the same thing and those which are stylistically conditioned is useful. Certainly he is right to point to the stylistic repetitions which he lists. Yet he seems to have forced his case a little in Gen 9. As we have pointed out in our discussion of Von Rad's theory, verses 11,14,15 and 16 are not simple doublets which say the same thing, but serve as a means of inculcating the message of Gen 9. The slight variations show that P has a purpose: he wishes to hammer home the message of this passage. Given the significance of the event and P's use of repetition elsewhere, it can hardly come as any surprise that so much emphasis is placed here.

On the other hand it is unwise to push the literary argument too far. Wenham argues that there is a concentric arrangement to the chapter:

- a) 9-11 "confirm the covenant".
- b) 12a "sign of the covenant".
 - 12b covenant "for the farthest generation".
 - 13-16 "my bow".
 - 16 "eternal covenant".
- c) 17 "sign of the covenant".
 - 17 "confirm" the covenant".

The first speech (9-11) introduces the future stability of the world and the covenant. The second speaks of the sign confirming the ברית. The final speech 9:17 sums up the whole episode. /83/

Whether this was in the mind of the writer is difficult to prove, but it would seem unwise to select certain words and build up a pattern on them. It is rather unbalanced: 3 verses for the first section, one for the third. In 9:11 the actual promise never to send a flood is not repeated in 9:17.

Yet Wenham is right to note that the structure seems to hinge on the three speeches "and God said": the first announces the setting up of the covenant, its beneficiaries and content; the second focuses on the sign assuring man of the promise and the third provides a succinct summary of the whole passage. Each section serves to inculcate a particular point but the repetition of key phrases from other passages, links the whole together in a unity. As Gross has shown, the first and third speeches form an inclusion to the second, which is the longest and most comprehensive, as it includes the

establishment of the covenant, its sign, its function, the partners, and the promise never to send another deluge. /84/ The whole passage is held together by the theme word "covenant". 9:9-11 announce it, the partners and the promise; 9:12-16 describe the sign which guarantees it, and 9:17 is the conclusion which sums up the entire discourse. The passage contains unity of theme and purpose. The repetition in each serves as an assurance after the destruction of the flood, that all life will be safe from further universal punishment.

b ii) The Translation of הקים

The distinctive term in P for the setting up of the covenant is הקים. The translation of the hiphil is difficult; it can mean either "set up" i.e. for the first time or "confirm" i.e. referring to something which exists already. The meaning needs to be determined by the context

As far as the flood is concerned, evidence for a prior covenant needs to be found if the latter position is to be adopted. If Wellhausen is followed then the problem could be resolved. He argued that for P history was divided into three phases with four covenants. The first was with Adam in Gen 1:28-2:4, of which the sign was the Sabbath; the second with Noah, the third with Abraham, of which the sign was circumcision (Gen 17) and the fourth the Mosaic covenant. /85/ If Wellhausen is followed it could be that God is "confirming" his covenant with Adam in Gen 9.

However Wellhausen's scheme has found little support, and despite the similarities to covenant formula in 1:28-2:4, such as the

blessing to be fruitful and multiply, it is doubtful if it can work, since P does not describe creation as a covenant. Wellhausen is right to see the importance of covenant in P, but that pattern of covenant began in Gen 9 and continued with the narrower covenant of Gen 17. /86/ There were only two covenants in P: one with Noah and one with Abraham. /87/

Of crucial importance is the relationship between Gen 6:18 and Gen 9. Wenham argues that **הקים** is never used of initiating a covenant in P. **כרת** is the term for initiating a **ברית** and **הקים** is always used to ratify pre-existing words (e.g. Deut 9:5), promises (e.g. 2 Sam 7:25), oaths (e.g. Gen 26:3), threats (e.g. Jer 30:24) and vows (e.g. Num 30:14). In Gen 6:18 he translates **הקים** as "confirm"; Noah is already in a covenantal relationship with God, the chief consequences of which are deliverance from the flood. The covenant is confirmed in 9:8-17. The perfect + **ל** consecutive in 6:18 refers to 9:8-17. /88/ Of course talk of Noah as righteous could indicate a covenant relationship but the text nowhere speaks of a covenant already established with Noah prior to Gen 9. Wenham's theory fails to convince.

De Boer also argues that the translation "keep" "maintain" is better than "set up". The covenant was not something new but was the maintaining of an already existing relationship. He argues that there was an old myth which ended with a treaty between God and the living creatures, whereby God guaranteed to maintain the laws of nature against the powers of destruction. /89/ In the absence of any explicit reference to this in the text of Genesis, such a proposal cannot be followed. /90/

A look at the other uses of **הקים** in the Old Testament shows that both Wenham and de Boer have oversimplified the case. The hiphil of **קום** bears several meanings which include "set up" "establish" (Lev 26:1) as well as "fulfill" and "maintain". Ez 26:8, 34:23,29 seem to use the hiphil of **קום** with the sense of "establish". Ez 16:60 might be using the hiphil of **קום** in the same way to refer to the establishment of the new covenant, which is everlasting in contrast to the last one which had failed. The Hebrew word not only refers to the setting up of the covenant but also to its maintenance and fulfilment. The promise is not just to establish but also to maintain the covenant. The covenant is perpetual in Gen 9 and does not need just establishment but also maintenance. Hence Speiser renders the hiphil of **קום** as "establish" in verse 9 and "maintain" in verse 11. /91/ Had P used the word **כרת** then he would have restricted himself primarily to the act of covenant making, whereas the other term also includes the idea of future maintenance. The connotation of **הקים** is more important than the precise translation. That connotation includes both the setting up and future fulfilling of the covenant.

The most important point against Wenham et al. is that a key element of the story is the promise not to send a further deluge. That suggests something new is being created, since before there was the possibility of universal flood. As far as Gen 6 and 9 are concerned it is better to render the hiphil of **קום** as "establish". Not only is the covenant to maintain the world in a way different from that prior to Gen 9 set up, but it is also assured for ever. For P the difference between pre- and post-flood worlds is found in

this promise which the covenant guarantees. Something has changed and a new world order is inaugurated. Given this, Gen 6:18 most naturally looks to chapter 9. The sign is also new, suggesting that something fresh is being set up. קום is best rendered "establish" here.

A glance at the other Priestly covenant seems to confirm this. There the word נתן is used suggesting that a new order is being established (17:2). The covenant is new and cannot refer to anything previous. Whilst 17:7 הקיטתי could mean "confirm", it is also likely that it could be rendered "establish", since it is not referring to any covenant set up in the past, and it is set near Gen 17:2 where the word נתן is used. This word indicates that the covenant is being inaugurated. The sign of circumcision is also new. Likewise Ex 6:4 is more likely to be rendered "established" because the covenant was set up with Abraham. The fact that elsewhere in P הקים is used of setting up or erecting suggests that "establish" is an appropriate rendering. One must not be over dogmatic since in Lev 26:9 (P) the idea is of confirming an already existing covenant. The hiphil of קום takes several meanings but as far as Gen 9 is concerned "establish" is the most suitable. /92/

b iii) The Content of the Covenant

ברית in Gen 6:18 focuses on the saving act of God in delivering Noah. Westermann calls this "a theological explanation of what is happening". /93/ Delitzsch writes, "The covenant consists in God on the one hand preserving Noah through the flood, and on the other expecting obedience to his orders". /94/ The act of salvation

initiated here makes possible what is said in 9:8-17. /95/

Having delivered Noah, the content of the covenant in Gen 9 can then be revealed. The promise is clear: there will never again be a universal judgment to destroy everything; this is the essence of the covenant. The world will henceforth dwell in safety from deluge. God pledges himself to the world - "Verpflichtung" as Kutsch renders בריתה here. /96/ Westermann calls בריתה a "solemn assurance". /97/ (Compare Is 54:9) The sovereign creator who uncreated the world now re-creates it and pledges never to return it to a state of uncreation. As Lambert writes,

"Dieu était libre de faire de ses créatures et de l'ensemble de sa création ce qui lui semblait bon: lui seul était juge, l'homme n'avait qu'à s'incliner devant les jugements divins, même il était incapable de les comprendre"./98/

The character of Genesis 9 is mainly one of promise, with God making a pledge not to destroy the earth again. This marks Gen 9 off from the covenant in Gen 17 where there is greater human involvement with the command to be circumcised.

By making this pledge the natural orders are fixed by God's word. He graciously pledges to support his world by giving it the stability it needs to prosper. Had God not given these promises then the blessing of 9:1,7 would have been jeopardized. /99/ In chapter 4 we discussed the notion of contingency and it is here that it can be seen again in God's promise to uphold the natural order. Creation is reaffirmed. An atmosphere of trust and security is created wherein life has goal and meaning. Life is affirmed and God demonstrates his authority over the whole world.

The covenant appears to be a gift on God's part which is bestowed unilaterally. There is an address by God to Noah but Noah does not

respond. Gen 9 describes what God prescribes and lays down and the assurances which he gives. /100/ W.Gross writes of both Gen 9 and 17, "Die berit wird allein von Gott verheissen, sie ist und bleibt YHWH's berit, nicht der Menschen berit". /101/ The initiative lies with God and is not bilateral. The fact that it is designated "my covenant" shows that it stems exclusively from God's initiative. /102/ The covenant of P is "eine reine Gnadenbund". /103/ In contrast to the J account there is no sacrifice on the part of Noah. Legitimate sacrifice is only possible after Sinai. /104/ The promises are made to the one righteous man who survives the flood.

These promises are made in spite of human sinfulness and to some extent P shares the same paradox as J does in 8:21. The commands of 9:1-7 suggest that man is still inclined to evil even though this is not stated explicitly. The commands of 9:5ff suggest that man is still prone to **עוון**, as he was in 6:11, and his violence needs to be curbed as never before. The covenant is truly merciful in that it is made in spite of continued human sin. Even if all flesh were to become corrupt (**שחח**), God will not destroy (**שחח**) the world again. Though man still deserves this, it will not happen.

Given that the paradox of 6:5 and 8:21 is the probable reason for J wishing to tell the story, why would P wish to tell it if the point about continued human sin is less explicit? Part of the reason may have been that he wanted to incorporate a well known Near Eastern tradition into his account. More importantly it seems that the story of the flood develops the themes of creation as set out in Gen 1: Gen 6:11ff unfolds aspects of 1:26-30, as does 9:1-7, and the uncreation of the flood echoes Gen 1. It then seems that a major theme of P is

the value of human life and its relation to God and the animal world. We shall discuss this further in Chapters 6 and 7. J's account is written as a striking affirmation of God's mercy. This is not absent from P, but he seems more concerned with questions regarding the value of human life than does J. P tells the story as an affirmation of human life and its appropriate function in the world.

What is the relationship of the commands of Gen 9 to the covenant? Is the covenant conditional upon their observance? The relationship is somewhat loose since they precede the covenant itself, unlike the commands of Ex 34 which follow the granting of the covenant. On the other hand the blessing of fertility as seen in 9:1, 7 is an integral part of the covenant with Abraham in Gen 17:6ff. But as was noted earlier, similar promises are given to Adam in Gen 1 and there does not appear to be a covenant there.

Sforno argued that the covenant was conditional on the observance of the command not to shed blood. If murder became widespread, another deluge would arrive to wipe out mankind. /105/ The link to 6:11ff is important, but the promises of Gen 9 are unconditional. Under no circumstances will there be a universal flood. The commands are a means of controlling human impulses and ensuring that the stability of the world which God has pledged to maintain, is not disrupted further. Man is obliged to obey but not in such a way that a universal flood will come if he fails. The covenant is not conditional on obedience to these commands. Zimmerli writes, "It is striking that the "Noachian laws" recorded in Gen 9:1-7 precede the promise of the covenant totally independent of it, and have no conditional significance for the covenant." /106/ "Totally

independent" is perhaps an exaggeration, since the commands are relevant to the covenant, but the covenant is still unconditional. God has pledged a safe created order. Man must do his part by ensuring that his fellow men dwell in safety. In renewing the earth God renews his demand on man. The fact that man is to carry out punishment on an individual basis for each murder (9:5ff) ensures that violence can be contained. From now on man will enact the punishment. In a post Sinai context there seems to be a greater emphasis on obedience in order to maintain the covenant (Lev 26:3, 9). As far as the universal context is concerned, the covenant is unbreakable.

Finally the covenant will endure for ever. **ברית עולם** is a phrase characteristic of P: 17;7, 13, 19, Ex 31:16. God's promise cannot be thwarted. /107/ It is eternal and not dependent on human obedience.

b iv) The Sign of the Covenant

God sets his bow in the clouds as a sign of the covenant and of its enduring validity. There has been considerable discussion of **קשת** in Gen 9 and several scholars have suggested that the bow is a weapon of war as opposed to a rainbow. Gunkel writes,

"The original meaning of the sign derives from the word **קשת** which is the bow that takes aim.....Yahweh is a mighty warrior who carries bow and arrow.....When Yahweh has become tired of shooting arrows he lays his bow aside and so the rainbow appears in the sky after the storm". /108/

The problem is that Hebrew uses the same word for both bow and rainbow.

But, as Westermann observes Gen 9 has nothing to do with bows and arrows. /109/ Jacob notes that when **קשת** means "rainbow" **בענן** is always added to clarify, as in Gen 9:13, Ez 1:28. /110/ God has

taken a simple natural phenomenon which happens to be called קשת, and uses it as an ארת.

M.V.Fox divides the uses of the word ארת into three categories: 1) proof signs which convince of a truth which may be in doubt; 2) symbol signs which represent something, and 3) cognition signs which arouse knowledge of something. The final section is divided into two subsections: identity signs and mnemonic signs which bring to consciousness something already known. The latter are not identity signs since they do not say x is y. Fox sees the rainbow as a mnemonic sign, which reminds God of his covenantal promise.

"The rainbow neither imparts new knowledge by identifying something as belonging to a certain class, nor does it in itself symbolize the non-destruction of the world, nor does it even serve as evidence that God will not again bring a destroying flood (this is the usual interpretation), for it is explicitly stated that it is God who observes the sign (Gen 9:16), and evidence is not intended to convince the one who makes a statement, but the one who hears it." /111/

All the ארתות in P (except for Ex 7:3) are cognition signs: luminaries, rainbow, blood of paschal lamb, sabbath, altar-cover, Aaron's rod and circumcision. The ארת is a permanent sign whose purpose is to stir up cognition, so that a covenant, promise or commandment is maintained. In Gen 9 the ארת is a sign which recalls the covenant and reminds God!

There may also be cultic allusions here. Memory plays an important part in P's cultic observances and of the 22 uses of זכרון in the Old Testament, 12 are found in P. 9 refer to cult objects, 2 to cultic activity and one to a festival. All these except for Ex 12:14 and Num 17:5, are reminders to God to actualize his grace to the community. Cultic rites and objects guarantee for the community that the covenant is not forgotten and serve to maintain and ensure

the relationship between God and his people. For example Ex 28:12 uses זכרון in connection with the High Priest's breast plate; it is to bring the sons of Israel to remembrance before God. The twelve stones remind God. God's memory is a catalyst which makes salvation possible. As Childs notes the concern of P is not to relive past history but rather to maintain a reality centered on that history. /112/ Klein writes, "If God's memory of Israel was her hope in exile, then his memory of her, stimulated by numerous cultic activities, was grounds for ongoing confidence in the restoration". /113/

Certainly we would agree with Fox that the bow is there to remind God but the fact that man can see it as well is also an assurance for him too. The impersonal statement "the bow is seen" (9:14) suggests that the bow also serves to remind the world. The assurance is that there will never be another universal flood.

It is remarkable that the sign is there to remind God. P does not seem bothered by this anthropomorphic statement. It shows God's personal involvement in the world and its events. If God were to deal with man according to his deserts a regular flood would be needed. If God were to react to the dictates of strict justice then man would deserve to die. The rainbow reminds him not to react to the requirements of the justice of simple cause and effect, but to remember his promise of mercy.

The ארת causes God to remember his covenant. The phrase זכר ברית occurs eight times in P: Gen 9:15,16, Ex 2:24, 6:5 Lev 26:42, 45. It is used of God alone; man is not said to remember the covenant. The phrase speaks of the preservation of the covenant and since it is

used of God alone, it shows that the initiative lies with him. It is most often employed when people are in danger whether through natural phenomena (e.g. Gen 9:15), through enemies (e.g. Ex 2:24, 6:5) or through Yahweh himself when he punishes (e.g. Lev 26:40-42). Memory of the covenant ensures that God will not bring destruction. /114/

As with our discussion of **זכר** above, this is not bare intellectual thought but represents activity on God's part. The opposite of remembering the covenant here is not **שכח** but **הפר ברית** (e.g. Lev 26:44). /115/ God's memory ensures that the covenant is not just a past event but that it is actualized in the present. The relationship is ensured and safeguarded. **זכר ברית** is a demonstration of God's **חסד**. Lev 26:44 shows the opposite of **זכר**: **טאם**, **כלה** and **געל**.

/116/ As Schottroff writes,

"**זכר ברית** ist kein bloßes Nicht Vergessen des Bundes, sondern der Erweis Verbundenheit (**חסד**), die stets neue Aktualisierung der Tatsache, daß der Bund gegeben wurde: **לעולם**"

"Man muß daraus schließen, daß **זכר ברית** nicht nur ein "Berücksichtigen des Bundes zugunsten".. "sondern die Zuwendung der Gottheit zum Menschen in Rettung und Heil ist, wie es sich in der Wahrung des Bundes äußert". /117/

When the clouds appear man may think that he is in jeopardy but the rainbow marks a boundary beyond which God will not go; if he did the covenant would be broken. /118/ The preservation of humanity is entirely in God's hands and it is for him to ensure its survival. The divine will of healing forbearance is at work in the natural orders, guaranteeing God's involvement with the world. /119/ God's memory is not a re-creating of the past but a continuation of his own purpose. **זכר** testifies to the Priestly writer's concern to present history as a witness to the unfolding of the purpose of the covenant God. /120/

As Westermann notes of Gen 9, the safeguarding of man is in God's

hands as he promises to remember it. "All flesh, all life on the earth, every living being in the millennia of the history of nature and of humanity is preserved in God's affirmation of his creation".

/121/

"The unconditional approval that God gives to his creation is the basis of the history of nature and of humanity. It is the basis of all life which can be shaken neither by natural catastrophes of any sort nor - and this is most important for P - by the transgressions, corruption or revolt of human beings".

/122/

b v) Genesis 17.

Brief mention needs to be made of the other covenant in P: Gen 17. A detailed discussion is impossible here but one feature is worthy of mention. The covenant with Noah is with all of humanity; that with Abraham with Israel alone. There are "two concentric circles". /123/ The covenant with Abraham is only fulfilled in the context of the universal covenant with Noah. Within the stability of the whole world order, God can work out his sovereign purpose with his own people. The promises to the Patriarchs are a specific form of those given to the whole world in Gen 9. As L.Dequeker writes, "The covenantal promises given to the forefathers of Israel are relevant, theologically speaking, only in the context of the preservation - solemnly conferred by God - of all human life on earth". /124/ The covenant with Noah is the theological context of the covenant made with Israel. Israel could read the history of mankind as her own salvation history. /125/

Another point of interest here is the question of the land - an important concept in Priestly thought. It is part of the covenant promise (17:8). In Lev 26:40-45 God promises to remember the land.

The stability of the natural world promised in Gen 9 safeguards the land of Israel, so that future life and fertility is given its necessary security. God's concern for the land of the chosen people is a particular example of his sustaining care of the world.

It is easy to see why the blessing of fertility is bestowed in this context (9:1,7). Given the re-creation of the world, the stable environment enabled man to reproduce in safety. Man's efforts to repopulate the earth will not be frustrated on such a large scale again.

Yet both the Priestly covenants look to Sinai and God's fuller disclosure of himself there. Both remained valid for all time. The primeval story of P provides the universal setting in which humanity develops.

4) Reading J and P Together

In our introduction we noted how frequently Hebrew narrative places a series of perspectives in sequence. Instead of meshing the sources into one section, the final compiler places two descriptions of God's promise at the end of the story. Each offers a distinct perspective on God's post-flood commitment to the world. If read together 8:20-22 forms a brief statement of the nature of man and God's corresponding promises, the implications of which are developed in 9:1-17.

First, it is made clear that the pledges of Gen 9 are purely unilateral on God's part. 8:21 states that man is unaltered and it is in the face of this statement that God makes the covenant. The saying of 8:21 is then grounded in a covenant. 8:21 and 9:8-17

complement each other well. The promise of 8:21 is guaranteed by the covenant of Gen 9:8-17 and the rainbow, which reminds God of this solemn pledge. The joint reading emphasizes this unilateral promise.

Secondly, the pledges which are made after the flood are more specific if the two strata are read in conjunction. The P version specifies that the curse of 8:21 involves the cutting off of all living creatures by water (9:11). The cursing of the ground in 8:21 refers to the sending of the waters to destroy the earth. Gen 9 does not revoke the curses of Gen 3, nor does it say that they are not in force. The joint reading is an even more amazing statement of God's mercy, since God makes a covenant with a persistently wicked humanity. Likewise the withholding of the waters ensures that the seasons of 8:22 can continue as normal. This is guaranteed by the sign of the covenant. Read together 8:20-22 and 9:8-17 form an effective surrounding for 9:1-7. God's blessing of fertility can only make sense when the world has been assured that there will not be another deluge. Even though the pledges of 8:20-22 come before the commands of 9:1-7, there is no hint that these promises are dependent on the fulfilling of the commands. The promises are unilateral, and are not qualified in any way.

Thirdly, it seems that our understanding of Noah's sacrifice is altered if the two sources are read together. J seems to believe that God's attitude to humanity is altered by the sacrifice, but if the text is read as a whole, God has already been gracious to Noah in the promise of 6:18 and through 8:1 and 17. It would then seem that the sacrifice is merely one of thanksgiving when the text is read as a whole. A sacrifice to appease God is unnecessary when God has

already turned to Noah. This need not rule out all expiatory elements in Gen 8:20ff, since it might be that Noah is making the sacrifice on behalf of other men. /126/ Yet the most likely interpretation on a joint reading is that the sacrifice is one of thanksgiving.

Fourthly, a joint reading emphasizes what was said earlier about כִּי. In 6:13 כִּי is used to express the reason for God's decision to destroy the earth: כִּי מלאה הארץ חמס. As כִּי is used as a particle of motivation here for the reason for the flood, it is likely that in 8:21 it means "because" since it is there used to introduce the reason for God's decision not to bring a flood.

Finally Chapter 6 will discuss the relationship between 8:21ff and 9:1-7, and Chapter 7 will examine the imago Dei in the light of Gen 8:21.

Conclusion

Life is given a goal and purpose after the flood with the earth being granted an atmosphere of trust and security. The covenant in Gen 9 impressed a special character on human life which gave it purpose and direction. As B.W.Anderson writes,

"This Noachic covenant opens up the horizon of the future by predicating the hope of the human and nonhuman creation on the unconditional commitment of the Creator to humankind, to nonhuman creatures, and to the order and regularity of "nature"". /127/

The verses which we have discussed present a striking commitment of God to human life, which God affirms, not simply by promising no further deluge, but by assuring the stability of the created order. The text as a whole provides a most suitable context for commands which affirm the value of human life. Gen 8:20 - 9:17 is God's "yes"

to life.

Footnotes

- /1/ Clines "Theology of the Flood" p140.
- /2/ Eichrodt Theology 2 p151 and discussion p151-162.
- /3/ Ibid p154.
- /4/ Ibid p155.
- /5/ Quoted in Westermann Genesis p454. See Rendtorff "Genesis 8:21 und die Urgeschichte des Yahwisten" KD 7 1961 p69-78 esp p73ff.
- /6/ Rendtorff "Gen 8:21" p74.
- /7/ W.M.Clark "The Flood and the Structure of Pre-Patriarchal History" ZAW 83 1971 p184-211 p207. See D.Clines Theme p70-72 for a discussion of Rendtorff's argument.
- /8/ D.L.Petersen "The Yahwist on the Flood" VT 26 1976 p438-446" p442.
- /9/ Westermann Genesis p455.
- /10/ See BDB p886.
- /11/ Ibid p76. See also Scharbert TDOT1 "ארר" p405-418.
- /12/ See Joüon "Grammaire" 177b for a discussion of this construction.
- /13/ Moberly At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32-34 JSOTSS 22 1983 p113ff.
- /14/ Wenham Genesis p190.
- /15/ Bereishis p280.
- /16/ Wenham Genesis p190 and Westermann Genesis p455. See also Cassuto Genesis 2 p120.
- /17/ Moberly "Mountain" p113ff.
- /18/ Westermann Genesis p456.
- /19/ Clark "Flood and Structure" p208.

- /20/ Clines "Theme" p72.
- /21/ Rendtorff "Gen 8:21" p75-78.
- /22/ Westermann Genesis p455.
- /23/ R.W.L.Moberly "Mountain" p91-93, 113-115.
- /24/ Ibid p60, 90.
- /25/ See Chapters 1 and 2.
- /26/ Moberly "Mountain" p185ff.
- /27/ See Gemser "The Importance of the Motive Clause in Old Testament Law" VTS 1 1953 p50-66.
- /28/ For a discussion of ׀ see J.Muilenberg "The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle ׀ in the Old Testament" HUCA 32 1961 p135-160 and T.C.Vriezen "Einige Notizen zur Überstzung des Bindewort ki" BZAW 77 1958 p266-273.
- /29/ Contra U.Wölller "Zur Übersetzung von ki in Gen 8:21 und 9:6" ZAW 94 1982 p637-638.
- /30/ Moberly "Mountain" p89.
- /31/ Ibid p114.
- /32/ Ibid p89ff.
- /33/ V.Fritz ">>Solange die Erde steht<< von Sinn der jahwistischen Fluterzählung in Gen 6-8" ZAW 94 1982 p599-614 especially p608-612.
- /34/ Brueggemann Genesis p80ff.
- /35/ Driver Genesis p95.
- /36/ Skinner Genesis p158.
- /37/ Delitzsch Genesis p281.
- /38/ Westermann Genesis p456.
- /39/ Moberly "Mountain" p89.
- /40/ D.L.Peterson "The Yahwist" p438-446.

- /41/ Moberly "Mountain" p114. For a discussion of Levenson's suggestion for 6:5 and 8:21 see chapter 4.
- /42/ For other parallels between Ex 32-34 and Gen 6-9 see Moberly "Mountain" p91ff.
- /43/ Ibid p90ff.
- /44/ Moberly "Mountain" p92ff.
- /45/ R.Davidson The Courage to Doubt: Exploring an Old Testament Theme SCM 1983 p72. For a discussion of Moses' intercession see p70-79 and Moberly "Mountain" p50.
- /46/ Quoted in Westermann Genesis p452 from Gunkel Genesis p65.
- /47/ Quoted in Westermann Genesis p452 from Procksch Genesis p69.
- /48/ Cassuto Genesis 2 p117.
- /49/ Westermann Genesis p453. Jewish interpretation is similar. Hirsch explains that the purpose is to bring about closeness between God and man not appeasement Bereishis p278.
- /50/ Von Rad Genesis p118.
- /51/ Milgrom IDBS "OLA" p769. See also Wenham Leviticus Eerdmans Michigan 1979 "The Burnt Offering" p48-66. For a different approach see Levine In the Presence of the Lord: a Study of Cult and Some Cultic Terms in Ancient Israel Brill Leiden 1974 p22-27.
- /52/ Wenham Leviticus p57-63, Genesis p189.
- /53/ Ibid p189.
- /54/ Wenham Leviticus p57.
- /55/ Von Rad Genesis p118.
- /56/ Fritz "Solange die Erde" p611ff.
- /57/ Von Rad Theology 1 p156.
- /58/ Westermann Genesis p457.

- /59/ Westermann Genesis p458.
- /60/ Bereishis p282ff.
- /61/ K.D.Sakenfeld The Meaning of HESED in the Hebrew Bible: a New Inquiry Harvard Semitic Monographs Scholars Press Missoula Montana 1978 p149.
- /62/ The question of the date of the story of the calf is discussed in Moberly "Mountain" chapter 5.
- /63/ B.S.Childs Exodus SCM 1974 p612.
- /64/ Eising "זכר" TDOT iv p65.
- /65/ Childs Memory and Tradition in Israel SCM 1962 p31.
- /66/ W.Schottroff "Gedenken" im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament (Die Wurzel ZAKAR im semitischen Sprachkreis) WMANT 15 1967 p190.
- /67/ See J.Pederson Israel its Life and Culture I-II OUP London 1926, p106-107. Childs "Memory" p17-19, p29ff. J.Barr The Semantics of Biblical Language OUP 1961 Chapter 3.
- /68/ Schottroff "Gedenken" p183.
- /69/ For God's personal action in the world see chapter 3.
- /70/ See Schottroff "Gedenken" p183-197.
- /71/ Ibid p187ff, compare 1 Sam 1:11, 19.
- /72/ Schottroff "Gedenken" p186.
- /73/ Ibid p184.
- /74/ Von Rad Genesis p124.
- /75/ Vawter Genesis p127.
- /76/ Schottroff "Gedenken" p192-195.
- /77/ Von Rad Die Priesterschrift im Hexateuch, literarisch untersucht und theologisch gewertet BWANT 65 1934 p1-11.
- /78/ M.V.Fox "The Sign of the Covenant: Circumcision in the Light of

- Priestly 'OTH Etiologies" RB 81 1974 p557-596, p571.
- /79/ McEvenue Narrative Style p74.
- /80/ P.Humbert "Die literarische Zweiheit des Priester-Codex in der Genesis. (kritische Untersuchung der These von von Rad) ZAW 58 1940/41 p30-57, especially p43-45. See also W.Gross "Bundeszeichen und Bundesschluss in der Priesterschrift ITZ 87 1978 p98-115, p106.
- /81/ Westermann Genesis p472.
- /82/ Wenham Genesis p195.
- /83/ Ibid p194.
- /84/ Gross "Bundeszeichen" p104.
- /85/ Wellhausen Prolegomena to the History of Israel A and C Black Edinburgh 1885 p338ff.
- /86/ F.M.Cross "The Priestly Work" p295ff.
- /87/ E.Kutsch ">>Ich will euer Gott sein<< berit in der Priesterschrift" ZTK 71 1974 p361-388 p362.
- /88/ Wenham Genesis p175.
- /89/ De Boer "Quelques Remarques sur l'Arc dans la Nuée Gen 9:8-17" in Questions Disputées d'Ancien Testament Méthode et Théologie Leuven University Press ed C.Breckelmans 1974 p105-115.
- /90/ See further C.J.L.Kloos "The flood on Speaking Terms with God" ZAW 94 1982 p639-642.
- /91/ Speiser Genesis p57ff.
- /92/ Westermann translates הקים as "setting up" Genesis p460, Driver as "establish", Genesis p97.
- /93/ Westermann Genesis p422.
- /94/ Delitzsch Genesis p261.
- /95/ Westermann Genesis p423.

- /96/ Kutsh "Ich will euer Gott sein" p369ff.
- /97/ Westermann Genesis p601.
- /98/ G.Lambert "Il n'y aura jamais de déluge Gen IX:11" NRT 77 1955 p581-601, 693-724 p721.
- /99/ Rashi in Bereishis p292 speaks of Noah as being fearful of being fruitful and of multiplying in the face of God sending another flood.
- /100/ Westermann Genesis p471.
- /101/ Gross "Bundeszeichen" p115.
- /102/ Schottroff "Gedenken p203ff.
- /103/ Zimmerli "Sinaibund" p279.
- /104/ Ibid p273.
- /105/ Bereishis p293.
- /106/ Zimmerli Theology p56. Compare Skinner Genesis p173 who argues that 9:1-7 is supplementary within P itself. Its aim is to bring under the time of Noah the elementary universal obligations. There can be no proof of this and further subdivision of sources is precarious.
- /107/ For a discussion of P and Davidic covenant see R.E.Clements Abraham and David: Genesis XV and its Meaning for Israelite Tradition SBT 5 SCM 1967 p70-78.
- /108/ Quoted in Westermann Genesis p473 from Gunkel Genesis p150ff. Compare Von Rad Genesis p129ff, Brueggemann Genesis p83ff and the discussion of the Rabbis as to whether or not the bow existed before the flood, Bereishis p295ff. See also Cassuto Genesis 2 p139ff. De Boer in contrast argues that the bow is taught ready for conflict against the טבול. "Quelques Rémarques" p105-115. See also Zenger "Bogen" p125-131.

- /109/ Westermann Genesis p473.
- /110/ Quoted Ibid p473 from Jacob "Buch" p253ff.
- /111/ Fox "Circumcision" p563ff and see discussion p557-596.
- /112/ Childs "Memory" p68ff.
- /113/ Klein "The Message of P". For a discussion of memory and cult see Childs "Memory" p74-80.
- /114/ See discussion in Schottroff "Gedenken" p202-206.
- /115/ Ibid p206.
- /116/ Ibid p209.
- /117/ Ibid p209 and 208.
- /118/ Ibid p211.
- /119/ Von Rad Genesis p129ff.
- /120/ Childs "Memory" p42.
- /121/ Westermann Genesis p474.
- /122/ Ibid p473.
- /123/ Procksch Genesis p518 quoted in Eichrodt Theology 1 p58.
- /124/ Dequeker "Noah and Israel: The Everlasting Divine Covenant with Mankind" in Breckelmans "Questions Disputées" p115-129, p127.
- /125/ Ibid p128.
- /126/ Wenham Genesis p190.
- /127/ B.W.Anderson "Creation and Ecology" in Creation in the Old Testament ed B.W.Anderson p152-171 p169.

CHAPTER 6
AN EXEGESIS OF GENESIS 9:1-7

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image. And you, be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it". Gen 9:1-7 RSV

The chief focus of Gen 9:1-7 is on the sovereignty of God over all life. As we have seen, especially in Chapter 4, the story as a whole is a testimony to God's supreme authority in the created order and this is further emphasized in the solemn charges of 9:1-7. It is only by God's permission that man is allowed meat, provided he abstains from blood. Murder is put under an absolute ban, but where it does occur, man is given the authority to enact capital punishment, life for life. Gen 9 is a supplementing and development of 1:26ff, and aims to prevent a return to the violence of Gen 6. Further, in contrast to humanity before the flood which was set on QDN, man is blessed and told to breed on the earth. The total

authority of God is emphasized and man's limits are defined clearly.

As we argued in Chapter 1, these regulations are closely related to the sin which caused the flood. In Gen 6 it was noted that **חַמְסָה** was the specific reason why God sent a deluge, and the commands of Gen 9 focus on the tendency of man towards violent acts. The cause of the flood is met head on in the commands of Gen 9:1-7. As we saw in Chapter 5, God gives stability by promising no further deluge and man in response, is to obey his command. The fact that God blesses humanity and promises freedom from further universal deluge, does not mean that man is set free from all constraints so that he can do as he pleases. In the context of blessing God gives regulations to curb the particular tendencies of man which caused the flood. In being given a new start man is placed under God's command and life is to be respected in a way which did not occur before the flood. The corruption of 6:11ff means that man must now be placed under law. In Gen 2:16-17 man is given commands concerning the garden, but in Gen 9 we have regulations for the whole of humanity after the "fall".

In accordance with our procedure the P material will be examined first, verse by verse, before seeing how it combines with the J material which immediately precedes it.

An important question is raised here about the Priestly source: what is the relationship between law and narrative in this document? Gen 9 provides an example of the mixing of these two aspects of P. For the Priestly source Israel came into existence at Sinai where God gave the law and established the cult. The continuity of world history and Israel's part in it is developed more in this source than in the others owing to its precise dating and the use of the formula **אלה תולדה**. The chronology is carried without a break from creation

to the Exodus, but the narrative is spread broadly and unevenly. Usually it deals with legal principles: Gen 1:1-2:4 (sabbath), 6-9 (commands to Noah), 17 (circumcision), Ex 12 (the introduction of Passover and Unleavened Bread) and the giving of the law at Sinai (Ex 25-31, 35-40). When P is not associated with divine law it rarely goes beyond genealogies and short notes. On the other hand J is narrative in character with the legal material being found mainly at Sinai. J speaks of the derivation of customs and practices (e.g. Gen 32:33) but the legal material lies in the background. In P the opposite is the case and we are given the impression that the narrative is only a thread on which the legal material may be hung. What P does emphasize is that the history of Israel is bound up inseparably with that of the whole world. Her origins are the same as all people everywhere and the narrative sets out God's eternal ordinances for each generation. /1/

Gen 9 looks to the fuller revelation of the law to the chosen people at Sinai. An interesting question is then raised: to what extent has P allowed for a pre-Sinai context? For P Sinai was the inauguration of the people of Israel and it would seem that whilst the author is writing from an Israelite standpoint, he has made some allowance in the way he tells the account for the pre-Sinai, pre-Israel context of the primeval story in his work. The statements of Gen 9 are of a general nature since they apply to all of humanity, and they lack the specific nature of the commands of the Mosaic era. Gen 9 sets forth an agenda for the whole world, which is then developed more specifically for Israel. Israel's law becomes a more detailed form of the divine law for the whole world. P has taken the primeval context imaginatively in his work.

Consequently care needs to be taken when Gen 9 is compared with later legal material, since the perspective is different. Gen 9 certainly points to the law of Sinai, with its institution of sacrifice, lex talionis and laws of asylum, but each of these raises large issues of its own and it will be impossible to deal with them fully in this dissertation. Instead we shall focus on Gen 9:1-7 and see how what is said there bears upon the story as a whole, though Chapter 7 will examine the imago Dei in greater detail.

1) 9:1,7

We shall not be accepting the proposed emendation for 9:7b which Westermann advocates, to change רבו to רדו on the basis of 1:28, since the text makes good sense as it now stands. /2/

The blessing on man after the flood to be fruitful and to multiply is given in the context of a pledge that there will never be another universal flood. Now that the human race is no longer under threat it can safely breed upon the face of the earth. The same blessing which was given over a world which was pronounced very good (1:28, 31), is repeated. The blessing is effective in begetting, conception, birth and the succession of generations. This is more than mere preservation; ברך "does not describe the maintenance of a state, but a continuous, ever present power, effective into the future". /3/

As the story shows, God alone is creator and master of the universe. As the blessing of 1:29 was reversed in the flood, so now it is conferred again. Having destroyed the world by flooding, God in the merciful post-flood dispensation confers the effective power which makes a secure future possible. This blessing is the force

behind the history of the world, which will continue without interruption.

These verses testify to the abundant mercy of God and afford a striking example of divine forgiveness. God's memory of Noah (8:1) is seen in giving man a completely fresh start. The blessing works out in subsequent chapters culminating in the blessing to Abraham in Gen 17. As in Gen 1 it is again linked to the Imago Dei. Westermann notes, "There is no other life but that which continues generation after generation and expands over the earth. Gen 10, The Table of Nations, unfolds this: humanity, preserved from the flood, increases into the future and expands over the earth". /4/ The comment of Rashi that Noah feared to beget more offspring until God promised not to destroy the world, again illustrates the suitability of this blessing in the present context. /5/ From now on people will be able to live securely under the care of God, which is guaranteed by the covenant.

This concept of being fruitful and multiplying is found elsewhere in the Priestly source: Gen 17:2,6-7,16, 28:3-4, 35:11-12, 47:27, 48:4-5, Ex 1:7, Lev 26:9. (Compare also Gen 12:1-2, 13:14-16, 16:10, 41:52, Is 54:1-3, Jer 3:16, 23:3-4, 29:5-6, Ez 36:11.) The formula אלה תולדות also bears out this theme: Gen 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 25:19, 36:1,9, 37:2. In these passages we see the promise of Gen 9 working out amongst the chosen people. Noah and his sons are to be the basis of a new humanity in the same way that Jacob is to be the originator of a nation (Gen 35:11,48:4ff). In the former Noah is the forefather of humanity, in the latter Jacob is the ancestor of Israel. /6/

Noah, Abraham and Jacob are all paradigmatic figures in the Old

Testament, in that they are forefathers, Noah of the World, Abraham and Jacob of Israel in particular. It is through them that the outworking of the blessing takes place and Israel comes into being. As we saw in Chapters 2 and 5 there are two concentric circles which are operating; the outer in Gen 9 includes the whole world and is the blessing which is given to Noah. The smaller of the two circles is the specific blessing and promise to Israel through Abraham, and Israel's existence is dependent on that of the whole world.

It is important to notice that in almost all instances of the command to be fruitful and multiply, survival is at risk to some extent. For Noah the repopulation of the earth after the flood seemed an impossible task. In the case of Abraham and the Patriarchs the blessing was a guarantee that despite the weakness of their present position as wanderers, God would grant to them not just their own survival, but also growth for their descendants. Noah in Gen 9 is in a similarly precarious position, faced with the possible extinction of humanity after the flood. God gives an unconditional "yes" to life. /7/

It is worth noting that Gen 9:1,7 stand in stark contrast to other Ancient Near Eastern traditions. In Genesis the flood is not caused by overpopulation and the disturbance thereby caused to the gods, but by human sin. On the contrary Genesis encourages man to breed upon the earth. /8/

There is in these two verses a striking affirmation of the value of human life. Instead of the corruption, bloodshed and oppression of 6:11ff, humanity must dedicate itself to the wellbeing and growth of the species. Not only is there the command not to kill but there is also the positive side to that command; man is to ensure increase

and spread of life on the planet. Humanity is commanded to work for life.

2) 9:2,3

As in Gen 1 the command to be fruitful and to multiply is linked to the dominion over the animal world. This time that rule has taken on a different connotation with animals going in the fear and dread of man, in contrast to the responsible care of 1:26ff. /9/ Blessing is then put in an unusual light since it is set in the context of the permission to kill for food. **סוראכם ויהתכם** is distinctive military terminology (Deut 1:21, 11:25, 31:8), which refers to the fear which falls on Israel's enemies so that she can take the land. The words reflect the animosity between man and the animal world. Israel to some extent shared the ancient world-view that animals were the enemy of man (e.g. Gen 37:33, 1 K 13:24, Jer 50:39-40). If animals are let lose against the state there is destruction (Deut:32:24). "Into your hands they are delivered", shows that man now has the power of life and death over animals, and can now kill them for food. /10/ Cassuto likewise stresses the submissive attitude of the creatures towards man by suggesting that it may be due to the fact that they were saved from the flood by humans and that consequently they should recognize the superiority of the human species. /11/ The text does not allow for this particular interpretation but rather suggests that the fear is due to man being granted meat for food (9:2b,3).

The formula **נתתי הנה** occurs in P in Ex 31:6, Num 18:8, 21 where a portion is allotted to the priests. The formula is found here in 9:3 but without **הנה** (compare Gen 17:20, 23:11, Lev 6:10). The words signify a bestowal, an assignment or conveyance, which is a public

act of provision.

In a section on the use of the perfect in Hebrew, GK 106m notes that the perfect can be used, "To express *future* actions, when the speaker intends by an express assurance to represent them as finished, or as equivalent to accomplished facts...Gen 23:11. Especially in promises made by God, Gen 1:29...17:20." Consequently in 9:3 נָתַתִּי לָכֶם signifies a definite arrangement.

The כֹּל at the start of the verse is picked up at the end; everything living which moves has been given by God (like the provision of green plants in 1:29) for food לְאֹכְלָהּ. This seems to be a fixed formula in P: Gen 1:29, 6:21, 9:3, Lev 11:39, 25:6./12/

There is then a clear distinction between pre- and post-flood worlds in that man's mastery over the animals is extended to the point of consuming them for food. This ties in with 6:12 and the corruption of the way of 1:26ff which was perpetrated by all flesh, including the animals. As we saw in Chapter 1 man is guilty there of inappropriate, unjust use of the dominion which was granted in Gen 1:26-30. In Gen 1 humans are to eat grain and fruit, and animals are to consume grass and plants. The difference between humans and animals on the one hand and plants on the other, is that plants have neither נֶפֶשׁ nor רֵם. Though there is no explicit prohibition of meat eating it is implied that it is not for human consumption. It would seem that the generation of the flood violated this ordinance (6:11ff).

The vegetarian state of man is then ended in 9:2,3. The imago Dei is extended to include the power to slaughter animals for food. Man to some extent images God's authority over life, but not to the extent of taking the life of his fellows. God makes a major

concession to man in permitting this and to some extent he is abiding with the sinful tendency of humans as found in 6:11ff. It seems likely that part of the sin of that generation was the inappropriate dominion over animals and in order to curb human sin God grants man permission to eat meat. As we argued in Chapter 1 animals also partook of the corruption and presumably this took the form of either rebelling against humans or attacking each other. It may be because of the corruption of the animals that God now allows humanity meat for provender. Man's authority in the created order needed to be increased owing to corruption amongst animals. Hence the commands of Gen 9 are a way of rectifying the disorder of 6:11ff. Naturally this is conjecture to some extent, but it does fit the sense of the story.

From now on there is a degree of enmity between man and beast. In 8:17, whilst God desires that animals multiply, he does not bless them as he does man in 9:1,7. The blessing of 1:22 is not renewed. This is probably because humans can now eat meat. This enmity is echoed in Lev 26:6,22 where there is a threat to humans from the animal world, and this, as suggested, may lie behind Gen 6:11ff and 9:2ff. For his own safety man can kill animals. Meat eating corresponds to God's order but not to the original order, and the "Messianic" age seems to see a return to this vegetarian state (Is 11:6-9, 65:25, Ez 34:25). Similarly, in contrast to the Mesopotamian view that humanity is to provide food for the gods, in Genesis God gives man food.

"Every moving thing that lives" excludes the consumption of animals which have died from natural causes (Lev 11:40, Deut 14:21). Surprisingly the text gives no rules concerning the eating of clean and unclean meat. Was Noah unrestricted and is P stressing there was

no cult before Sinai? Wenham suggests the distinction between clean and unclean may have been taken for granted in view of the passage's concern to prohibit the consumption of blood -a more serious crime than the eating of the wrong meat (Lev 17:10)./13/

Wenham may be right, but if the story is read at the level of P, we are in a pre-Israelite context. The dietary laws are according to P a means by which Israel consecrates herself and shows that she is the holy people of God Lev 11 (especially 11:44-45). By refraining from eating certain types of meat Israel demonstrated that she was the holy people who had been set aside by God for a special purpose. In the primeval era when Israel did not exist, such laws would be irrelevant. The laws in Gen 9 are for humanity as a whole, not just for Israel.

Of course questions as to whether carnivorous animals were created in Gen 1, are inappropriate to the primeval reality of Gen 1-11 which is not subject to the conditions of present experience. Attempts to rationalize misunderstand the nature of the material in Gen 1-11. What it does suggest is that humans have undergone a development of some kind.

Some have even suggested that Gen 1:29 contradicts 1:26, in that there can be no dominion without the ability to kill for food. Gunkel claims it is a later insertion. /14/

This may be so and certainly there is much in Gen 1-11 which does not appear to tie up satisfactorily. Yet it would be wrong to assume that dominion can only be associated with killing animals for food. In Gen 2 (J) man exercises dominion without the need to slay any of the creatures. Perhaps the writer is influenced by his present context, but animals can be used for labour, food such as milk, and

man's rule can be exercised for their general wellbeing without the taking of life. We must not force the primeval history too literally.

It is perhaps worth noting that unlike the Babylonian versions, the central character of Gen 6-9 does not gain immortality and it may be that the eating of meat is a substitute for this./15/

3) 9:4-6

S.E. McEvenue argues the case for 9:4-6 being an interpolation. His point appears reasonable since 9:1,2,3,7 can read well without 9:4-6, which he claims interrupts the flow of the narrative. Verse 4, he argues, comes as a shock and is the result of misreading 9:3 as law where the context is not legal but one of blessing, as it is in Gen 1. The word וְכִן is foreign to Pg since it chiefly functions in legal contexts not to introduce law, but to change direction in the middle of a series of laws. It is a colloquial expression used only twice outside dialogue in the Pentateuch (Gen 7:23, 27:30). The natural use of וְכִן in Gen 9 would lead us to expect a law such as "but corpses you shall not eat", in connection with 9:3a. A dietary law is unexpected here, since there is nothing like it in Gen 1. 9:4 corresponds to nothing earlier in the way that 9:8-17 relates to 6:13 or 9:2-3 to 6:11. In 9:4 דָּמוֹ is a gloss and שֶׁרֶץ is not found elsewhere in Pg. There is no connection between the thought of 9:4 and 5.

As far as 9:6b is concerned, whilst McEvenue notes that motives are often added to maxims (Prov 22:9, 17-18, 22-23, 23:6-8, 25:6-17), he claims that no theological motive of the sort found in Gen 9:6 is added elsewhere and therefore the hand who wrote it read 9:6a as law. The glossator breaks with the whole context by speaking of God in the

third person singular. The style of 9:6a he claims is proverbial rather than law since there is a tight six word chiasmic structure ABC-CBA- the first three words are repeated in reverse order. The literary technique emphasizes the punishment. McEvenue argues that this rhyming quality and chiasmic structure lean more towards proverbial style, though the distinction between law and proverb is not always great. A Hebrew proverb is usually a simple observation made interesting by a clever comparison (Prov 26:14) or a striking word arrangement such as chiasmus (Prov 15:22) or rhyme, rhythm or repetition (Prov 11:22, 12:1, 13:12). Laws are not generally marked by these characteristics. Hence Gen 9:6 is more of a proverb than a law.

On 9:6a McEvenue writes, "From the point of view of style, this jingling chiasmus is not similar to the more discreet and prosaic chiasms of the priestly writer". /16/ He notes that if one examines the ancient classic form of talion law as found in Deut 19:21 and Ex 21:13-25 then it is less similar in form to Gen 9:6 than the late form of the same law in Lev 24:19-20. The ancient form parallels only nouns but the later pairs both nouns and verbs and consequently the claim of Von Rad that 9:6 is ancient is unproven. There is no link to 9:1-3 or to J and consequently it cannot be proved that 9:6a was ever taken over by P. McEvenue concludes that 9:4-6 belong to Ps and are clearly glossed.

McEvenue's case needs considerable qualification. Stylistic grounds are not sufficient evidence for deleting these verses. Westermann observes that 9:3 in no way excludes any limitation and he compares 2:16-17, where God grants man food but restricts the scope of his diet. "This limitation implies no restriction of the bounty

of the giver....; it serves rather to preserve what has been conceded. Were there no limitation, what was conceded would no longer come under the blessing". /17/ Man is not given over to the unrestrained taking of life. McEvenue has not seen this nor the tension between the granting of the diet with meat and killing. The whole passage 9:4-6 is seen as a restriction of the concession of 9:3 and this is underscored by the twice repeated לֹא (9:4,5). 9:4-6 are not to be understood apart from 9:3. They are an integral part of the command to eat meat; man is not allowed to consume the whole animal but must abstain from the blood. As these verses fit their context it is hard to demonstrate that they are secondary.

There are two other reasons why 9:4-6 need not be seen as an addition. First, as we have seen, the commandments of 9:4-6 resonate well with $\text{לֹא$ in 6:11,13. 9:4-6 correspond to 6:11ff. In view of the fact that violence was the cause of the flood, it is entirely appropriate that at the close of the story there should be regulations concerning the value of human life. Further, these are appropriate in the context of 9:1-7 and the granting of meat for food. Even though 9:6 may be a proverb it is certainly apt in its context. As noted above, 9:4-6 is the corollary of 9:1,7; on the one hand man is commanded not to take life, on the other he is told to work for human wellbeing.

Secondly, McEvenue's statement that the context is one of blessing is not sufficient to rule out the introduction of law at this point. It is certainly apt for the story to be used to inculcate the fundamental tenets of Israel's law and there is no reason to suppose that legal concerns should be excluded. Whilst the covenant of Gen 9 is unconditional it is of no surprise to find לֹא accompanying it.

As humans are sinful they need to have the urge to **חמס** controlled. In the context of a description of the dire state of human sin, the introduction of law at this juncture is entirely appropriate.

4) 9:4

In 9:4 the eating of blood is prohibited. There has been some dispute over the nature of the prohibition here. Westermann /18/ argues that the sentence is to be taken literally in that one is not to eat animal flesh with the blood still pulsating. The verse is not a prohibition of the eating of blood per se, nor is it concerned with blood as such, but rather blood in so far as it is the life of the flesh. The original object of the prohibition is **נפש** and **דם** is added by way of clarification. B.Jacob notes, "It is therefore the pulsating...life-blood of which it is forbidden to partake, immediately after wounding or killing". /19/ **נפש** is only identical with pulsating blood not with blood itself. It is prohibited to eat the life of the animal together with its flesh; i.e. when it is still alive. The problem of translation lies in the laconic nature of the verse.

Westermann's position is also found in Jewish tradition. Radak argues that the verse prevents the tearing of a limb from a living animal because that is an act of gross barbarism and if allowed people would learn cruelty. Similarly Rashi argues that here both flesh and blood are prohibited from a living animal—**בנפשו** refers both to the beginning and the end of the sentence, flesh with its soul and blood with its soul. Sforno sees here only a prohibition of eating meat from live animals and that Noah's generation were permitted blood from dead animals. Ramban disagrees with Rashi since if the

verse included a separate prohibition against eating blood then דם would be preceded by ו, i.e. בשר בנפשו ודמו. He suggests, "But flesh with its soul, that is, its blood, you shall not eat".-compare Lev 17:14 /20/

Nevertheless, whilst Westermann is right to see a prohibition against eating from a living animal it would seem to us that the prohibition is more general. Several passages stress that blood should be drained before the animal is eaten: Lev 3:17, 7:26-27, 19:26, Deut 12:16-25, 1 Sam 14:32-34. It might be that despite the pre-Israel context Genesis is placing a rule so fundamental to Israel's life back in the primeval era./21/ The horror of eating blood was so strong that it was regarded as a universal rule for the whole world rather than just for Israel, in contrast to the way that the dietary laws were solely for the people of God. In view of the enormous significance of blood elsewhere in the Old Testament it is likely that there is an absolute ban on it here. The verse not only prohibits the eating of living animals but also blood in and of itself. By ensuring that blood was never eaten there could be no question of eating living creatures. It is also worth noting the seriousness with which the eating of blood is viewed in Ez 33:25-26. There it is associated with idolatry, homicide and adultery and ranks as a grievous sin.

The passage then leads to the reason for this absolute ban on blood which was unparalleled amongst Israel's neighbours. First, blood signified life -indeed it was the life itself. This is by no means surprising in view of the fact that a beating heart and pulsating blood are signs of life. The נפש was believed to be the life and vitality of men, their life force. Originally the word

meant throat and by extension that which comes out of the throat, breath. /22/ The נפש was held to have its seat in the blood which in no circumstances was to be eaten (Lev 17:11, Deut 12:20ff). /23/ The נפש is simply equated with life and is bound up with the body. Seen in this way the blood is the נפש and consequently loss of blood is loss of life. /24/ G.K.131k sees דם in Gen 9:4 defining the previous substantive so as to prevent misunderstanding (compare Is 42:25). In Lev 17:11 we may well have an example of Beth Essentiae (G.K. 1191) which would identify דם and נפש here. /25/ (See also Lev 11:4 and LXX of 17:11 ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ πάσης σαρκὸς αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐστίν).

Secondly, in a story which is so concerned for the value of human life, it is not surprising that the prohibition of blood is introduced at this point. The whole story emphasizes the absolute authority of God over all life. The prohibition of blood shows that life is the exclusive property of God and that wherever slaughter is carried out the ban on eating blood serves as a reminder of God's sovereignty over living beings. This applied to the whole world not just to Israel. Von Rad comments, "Even when man slaughters and kills, he is to know that he is touching something, which, because it is life, is ⁱⁿ a special manner God's property; and as a sign of this he is to keep his hands off the blood". /26/ Life is seen as a gift of God, and man, though he is given dominion over creation, must respect and acknowledge this by showing that the blood, which contained the life, belonged to God.

This leads us to a third aspect of the prohibition of blood: it prevents unwarranted cruelty and downgrading of life in man's desire for mastery over the created order. Life is not to be tampered with indiscriminately. Westermann is right to see here a qualification on

the dominion over the animals. Killing carries with it the danger of blood lust i.e. killing for the sake of killing: e.g. Hos 4:2. As B.Jacob writes, "Die Gründe für das Blutverbot liegen auf dem Gebiete der Sittung und Sittlichkeit." /27/ The prohibition then becomes a preventative measure against brutality. B.Jacob argues that it led to a horror of blood and forestalled barbarity./28/ This is important because barbarity is hard to control by law, and the prohibition of blood is linked to human conduct towards animals, which is linked with conduct towards people. In Gen 9 commands concerning animals naturally lead to those concerning humans. Whilst we wish to qualify Westermann's precise interpretation of 9:4 he is right to see here a restriction of man's overweening power. The prohibition is a reminder of the original vegetarian state of man. /29/ By refraining from blood the sanctity of life was upheld and it is only by God's express sanction that life could be taken and even then limits were set. /30/

It can then be seen why blood is given such a prominent place in the story. One of the key issues of Gen 1-11 is the imago Dei and man's rule over creation. That dominion has been extended to include the eating of meat, but the rule which humanity exercises on behalf of God needs to be defined precisely to avoid abuse of that power. Only God has authority over the lifeblood and man must never partake of it. Given the **QD** of Gen 6:11ff and the corruption of the way of 1:26-30 which occurred, it is of special importance that the post-flood world is given clear guidance as to its appropriate and necessary rule over life. All life comes from God, and the abstention from blood is a means not just of respecting life but also of exercising the appropriate dominion which has been entrusted to

humanity. Again this is of universal significance and does not just refer to Israel.

Fourthly, the question of blood as a pollutant was discussed in Chapter 1 and will be examined further later.

Lastly, Gen 9:4 has links with cult and sacrifice. This can be seen in Lev 17:11 in the context of the **שְׁלֵמִים**, the only sacrifice which is partially eaten by the offerer. This non expiatory sacrifice does bear an expiatory function since if one does not slay an animal in the correct way blood guilt is incurred (17:3-4). The slayer is a murderer unless he first offers the creature's blood on the altar: 17:11. All are enjoined to avoid the blood of an animal by draining it, thereby returning it to the creator (17:13-14). The blood had to be drained on an authorized altar to ransom the life of the one who slays. /31/

Consequently in sacrifice blood was the chief medium of power especially in expiation and atonement. The blood was endowed with power which could remove the stain of sin. It was sprinkled on doors, altars and other cultic objects. The sacrifices of the Day of Atonement, which included the sprinkling of the altar and the mercy-seat with blood, illustrate its sacred power in purifying and consecrating. The smearing and sprinkling with blood represent the giving to God of the most important part of the victim -that is the life of the animal- which made a correspondence between the life of the sinner and that of the animal. /32/ It is not blood but blood in so far as it contains the life that makes expiation -Lev17:11 and because it fulfills this function its consumption is prohibited, /33/ something which was peculiarly Israelite. /34/ It is not possible in this paper to do a thorough study of Israelite sacrifice and the

role of blood in it, but it is important to observe in passing the highly significant part it played in cultic procedure. P has placed in the primeval time a major aspect of later cultic law.

Yet as far as the pre-Sinai world of Gen 9 is concerned these aspects are undeveloped. All that we have here is the command to abstain from blood; the institutions of sacrifice must wait for the setting up of the cult at Sinai. By not developing the sacrificial implications the writer has allowed for a pre-Sinai context. Yet by making this prohibition here the way is opened up for reconciliation between God and the world. The slaughter of animals in 9:2ff conveys the possibility of sacrifice and all that that implies, but there is only a faint hint of that in Gen 9. A new aspect of the divine human relationship is opened. In a world which has seen the total corruption of a generation (6:11ff), the way is now open for reconciliation without recourse to punishment.

5) 9:5

The prohibition of blood naturally leads to a command concerning the value of human life (Contra McEvenue). The statement of 9:5 that God will require a reckoning for the blood of man reinforces the belief that murder deprives God of something which belongs to him exclusively. Homicide shows utter contempt for life. Animal blood may be shed but not consumed; human blood may not be shed at all. This was not just because blood pollutes the land but because God is the unique source of life (compare Deut 32:39, Jer 38:16). The blood of the deceased had passed to the control of the murderer and he had to die as the only means of expiation so that the control over the blood went back to Yahweh. (Num 35:33ff) /35/

The word דרש "seek", "require" is used three times placing emphasis on God's sovereignty over human life. The command not to kill is unconditionally binding on all men without qualification. דרש has the meaning here "to demand account for" (Compare 2 Chron 24:22, Ez 33:6, Ps 9:13). Cassuto interprets לנפשתיכם after Ibn Ezra, "Of your souls that is your own blood". ל indicates dative of possession i.e. your blood that is you yourselves. /36/ God claims the right to human blood for himself and consequently denies man the right to dispose of his own blood.

מיד כל חיה: there is also retribution against all wild animals who kill men -compare the punishment for the goring ox in Ex 21:28-29. Westermann argues this is only meaningful because man has cared for and provided for the animal so that it is part of the community. /37/ Yet this is not what Gen 9 has in view since all animals will be held responsible if they kill humans.

Gen 9:5 demonstrates further the link which is frequently found in the Old Testament between נפש and blood (Deut 27:25 Ps 72:14, 94:21). It can then be seen how appropriate the command of Gen 9:4 is in the same context as Gen 9:5. Having described the powerful and mysterious nature of blood, it is then appropriate to continue by discussing human blood and the law of homicide. This is particularly apt when the context of the flood speaks of חמס.

When a man took the life of another he was understood to have become liable for the blood (2 Sam 4:11), which if not released by the execution of the killer cried out to God for deliverance (Gen 4:9ff, Jb 16:18, Ez 24:7). The power released when blood was shed brought about and demanded vengeance (Is 1:15, 59:3). Shed blood is also a sphere of danger which moves with power against the murderer

and seeks to alight upon him: 2 Sam 16:8, 1K 2:33, Ez 35:6. When the blood passes out of God's control he actively seeks its return (Gen 42:22, Ez 3:18,20). The murderer could even be called a thief in this respect (Jb 24:14). But where there was a need to execute someone the victim's blood did not pass to the hands of the executioner but it remained on the criminal (Lev 20:9,11ff, 16, 27, Josh 2:19). /38/ All blood belonged to God, to whom it also had to be returned and who also actively sought it. Gen 9 reiterates the ancient Israelite prohibition of murder.

The text also makes it clear that murder disrupts the community of men. Morality in Ancient Israel was heavily orientated towards relationships among people and to the creation of a society in which all would act in a way which is conducive to the community. In Gen 9 God imposes his absolute authority on humanity, but man himself is then charged with a solemn duty towards his neighbour. Human obligation to God brought about a moral imperative to other people whom God had created. The taking of life was not just a crime against God but also against one's fellow men. It was the breakdown of responsibility to the dignity of those around which lay at the heart of **הַמִּסָּד** and the corruption of the way in Gen 6. Gen 9:1-7 focus on human duty to preserve life in the community and to work for its benefit, not its detriment.

The murder of one by another is fratricide. **אָחִיךָ** means "brother" -mankind is knit together in a close relationship like that of brothers and murder is a violation of the human community. B.Jacob notes, "The relationship of murderer and murdered is that of **אִישׁ וְאָחִיךָ**" and U.Cassuto sees the link to 4:2-16, "Whoever takes human life is like Cain". /39/ P explains in principle what J expounds in

story.

It is clear that, "Murder initiates a baneful process which, before overtaking the murderer himself, first of all brings the community into the gravest danger", writes Von Rad./40/ In later time the community had a great interest in identifying the killer and eliminating him. In difficult cases a formula could be used, "let his blood (that is his blood guilt) be upon..." (1K 2:33, 37, Josh 2:19, Ju 9:24) or a prayer could be said (Deut 21:8). By catching the criminal the blood guilt was turned back upon his own head i.e. he was executed thereby saving the community from disaster (2 Sam 16:8, 1 K 2:5,31ff). Bloodshed carries along with itself its own retribution (Ju 9:22ff) -blood is laid on the culprit. Malign consequences which follow the shedding of blood attach themselves to humans e.g. 1K 2:28-34 where Joab's דְּמֵי חַנּוּם, wanton bloodshed (2:31) has lead to blood taint. The putting to death of Joab removes the blood from Solomon (2:32). /41/ Ultimately the killer knew that the crime would catch up with him.

Later Jewish tradition saw here a reference to the prohibition of suicide. Rashi saw in לִנְפֹשְׁתֵיכֶם a reference to death where blood is not spilled e.g. hanging. This is a pertinent issue when many Jews have preferred death at their own hands to apostasy. /42/ The text itself does not specify this but rather stresses that no human life is to be taken, thereby ruling out suicide.

Consequently this raises the interesting possibility as to whether in the flood God punishes humanity on the basis of life for life i.e. that the deluge is God's way of requiring a reckoning for the crimes of חַסְדֵי committed by that generation. The wholesale corruption caused by the violence called for total destruction. God used the flood as

a just punishment for the infringement of human life which had occurred earlier. This cannot be proved but if there was a great deal of murder before the flood then punishment of this nature was due. The placing of the solemn charge of Gen 9:5 in the context of the deluge might suggest that the flood was the means whereby God sought the blood of the slain. The fact that **דם** was the sin of the pre-diluvian world does suggest that the punishment of death did fit the crime. The people who sinned by killing, received their due punishment. As there was no law whereby man executed the murderer, as found in Gen 9, then God took it upon himself to deal out justice.

6) 9:6

There is a problem over the exact rendering of 9:6. Instead of RSV's rendering of **באדם** as "by man", N.E.B. gives, "For that man his blood shall be shed", after LXX $\delta\upsilon\tau\iota\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \alpha\acute{\iota}\mu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$. The difference between the two is that the former authorizes man to enact capital punishment, but the latter reserves the execution to God alone.

Whilst the text does suggest that God himself will punish, it seems likely in our view, that man is being authorized to execute the murderer and we would keep the traditional rendering favoured by R.S.V. "By man shall his blood be shed". (See also G.K.116w, 121f.) The preposition **ב** takes several meanings, and it is hard to translate it exactly, but in view of the fact that Hebrew law so strongly emphasizes the death penalty for murder and that these verses deal with the authority of man over life, it would seem natural to render 9:6 as "by man". **באדם** is placed in a prominent position, which would seem to suggest that something major is being said i.e. that man

shall carry out the execution. "By man" is stronger than "for man" and fits the emphasis of the sentence better. Likewise the passive construction might suggest that an agent is more likely here. (See BDB p89 III 2c) If the verse were referring to a non human agent one would have expected this to have been specified either by "God will pour out" or "I will pour out". Further, the preposition ל would have been more appropriate if NEB's translation were to be adopted. If the text were not authorizing capital punishment to be enacted by humans, one would expect less ambiguity. The authority to execute is hereby given.

Similarly there is a discussion over כִּי in Gen 9:6. Wöller writes "Das würde die Übersetzung des ki mit <<obgleich>> aufdecken, weil die Gottebenbildlichkeit auch des Mörder gesehen würde". /43/ The rendering "although" would mean that humanity is allowed to enact the death penalty even though man is made in the image of God. If the translation "for" or "because" is employed then the passage gives the reason for the prohibition of killing and the need for the drastic use of capital punishment.

We noted in the previous Chapter the difficulties of translating כִּי and it is hard to be certain which is most apt. Yet we should still wish to retain the RSV's rendering. It may be that both are to some extent intended. BDB lists fewer examples of the concessive sense of כִּי and Gen 6:11ff use כִּי with the meaning of "for". Further the motive clause is common in Hebrew -compare Ex 20:8-11 and many examples in P (e.g. Lev 11:44, 19:2). /44/ Consequently we would suggest that the RSV's translation is to be retained.

A further point needs clarification; could it be that Gen 9:6 is speaking of the threat to humans from animals and that man is being

empowered to kill animals rather than humans, because they have been attacking him? Does 9:6a mean that every beast which kills a human is to be put to death by man; after all the context does speak of the right of man to take animal life?

In our view this seems unlikely and the usual interpretation that the subject of הַמַּשְׁחֵט in 6a is man (See 9:5), is much more plausible. Given the significance of the death penalty in Israel, it would seem that the verse is speaking of the authority of humans to enact the death penalty. Further 9:5 envisages the death of the manslayer and the immediate context suggests that 9:6 is the bestowal of the authority to enact the death penalty.

We have already noted the poetic structure of this verse. The chiasmic formula of 9:6a underlines the due punishment for murder. Each word in the first clause is repeated in reverse order emphasizing the strict correspondence between act and punishment. There have been various attempts to classify the passage. Gunkel suggests it could be "an old legal saying". Skinner describes it as, "possibly an ancient judicial formula which had become proverbial". Von Rad says it is "an old statement from sacred legal terminology". Jacob calls it a "prophetic admonition". McEvenue, as we saw above, describes it as proverbial but not ancient. /45/

It is hard to know to what kind of genre this verse belongs. Its date cannot be determined, but probably the best solution is to see it as a legal formula which has been expressed in poetic, proverbial style.

Once more 9:6 emphasizes that human life belongs to God and that he has complete sovereignty over it. It is only by God's express permission that man is allowed a limited share in that authority, to

take the life of the manslayer. The protection given to man is grounded in the divine image. Zimmerli notes, "Because the murder of a person strikes at the image of God, it is forbidden unconditionally". /46/ An attack on the image is an assault on God's rightful dominion: murder confronts God and is a revolt against him. The story singles out murder from all the sins of the decalogue as being particularly wicked, emphasizing that God will exercise the ultimate sanction in this matter. This is not just a command for Israel but is binding on all peoples wherever they may be, in a world where the murder of one's fellow is a choice which faces man./47/

It is because of this special status of man that the death penalty for murder is obligatory. In a world where man is sinful, the divine image has taken on the more powerful aspect of the authority of humans over each other. The avenger and the executioner are both in the divine image. /48/ Human dominion has broadened since the flood with sombre potential. Von Rad, notes that humanity has been authorized to punish this crime. /49/

Westermann on the other hand argues that the text does not speak of authorization but rather there is a form of law underlying the verse which postulates that the punishment be executed by humans. 9:6 illustrates what was said in 9:5 in that what is there asserted is dealt with in the human sphere by law. There is no trace of authorities, executioners and representatives in this text, in contrast to those who see here their institution as representatives of God. In contrast, Westermann claims that 9:6 is universal and states that the execution of the death penalty is an outworking of the command of God. /50/

Westermann has overstated his case. Of course we do not find here

the judicial system of later Israel, but there is empowering in 9:6. This is the first time in the Bible that the death penalty is introduced and it would seem probable that the verse is not only a statement of what occurs in practice, but also an authorization for man to enact capital punishment for murder. In a context where man is commanded to eat meat, to be fruitful and multiply, to abstain from blood and has further authority over the animal world conferred on him, it follows that 9:6 offers another authorization. The rest of 9:1-7 is about command and the granting of authority and there is no reason why 9:6 should be any exception. The passage limits humanity but also makes provision for breach of those limits.

What is most important to note is that 9:6 stresses that life belongs to God and that man can only kill if God has so authorized him. No one may dare to take the life of another as though they were God and if somebody does, the community must act on God's behalf and execute the man slayer. However the executioner is not guilty of a crime because the murderer has brought the punishment on himself (Ez 18:13).

The Old Testament sees a distinction between killing which does serve the cause of life (e.g. capital punishment for murder or death in war) and killing which does not.^{/51/} There does appear to be a distinction between warfare and the death penalty on the one hand and acts of unjustified violence on the other. But does this not contradict the sixth commandment which is so sweeping and seems to rule out all taking of human life? Is the Pentateuch self-contradictory? Does the command to execute the death penalty not contradict the statements on the value of human life as found in the story? The answer to this dilemma, as Harrelson argues, is that

the last five commandments in Ex 20 focus on crimes which could ruin the community; consequently the prohibition needs to be broad. The commandments in the decalogue need to be wide in order to cover large areas of human conduct in laconic form rather than setting specific punishments as a guide for judges./52/

Perhaps another answer to the question of why the law permits capital punishment is found in the suggestion by some scholars that the murderer has expunged the image of God from himself. Cassuto notes this is implied in Gen 9 and the idea is found in the Midrash /53/. Yet the text does not go as far as this and no text in the Old Testament speaks of the loss of the image for any reason. What would appear to happen is that the relationship between God and the killer is set in jeopardy by his actions, but to say that the image is then lost would be to go too far.

The key to the answer to our question of why the law permits execution and war is to be found in the notion of the absolute sovereignty of God over human life. The sixth commandment is dependent upon the earlier list where the claims of God over all life are absolute and must be acknowledged. There are no rival deities and the sovereignty of God is unrivalled./54/ Similarly in the account of the deluge the command not to kill is set in the context of a demonstration of God's power over all life -to create, uncreate and re-create, as we saw in Chapter 4. Only he has the power and authority to dispose of life and the commands of 9:1-7 reinforce this.

Consequently both Ex 20:13 and Gen 9:6 emphasize belief in the rule of God over all life. The life of the murderer could be taken since he might take the life of another.

"There was in ancient Israel no notion of the sanctity of human

life in and of itself. The sanctity of human life lies in the action and will of Yahweh as these are revealed to the people of Israel. God himself protects human life, and Israel is required to follow the path of God in protecting human life. Human life has its basic meaning in relation to God's own purpose for life and not in the sheer fact of life itself". "No abstract statement about the sanctity of human life can be derived from the sixth commandment. Life belongs to God - that is an understanding different from the view that life is itself sacrosanct", notes Harrelson./55/

Gen 9:6 does not teach the absolute sanctity of human life but rather that life belongs to God and can only be taken when God permits i.e. to execute the murderer. The flood speaks of God's sovereignty over life more than the absolute protection of that life.

"A community is only justified in executing the death penalty insofar as it respects the unique right of God over life and death and insofar as it respects the inviolability of human life that follows therefrom. The death penalty carried out by the organs of state can also be murder. Every single violation of this limit, be it based on national, racial, or ideological grounds is here condemned", writes C.Westermann. /56/ Similarly Zimmerli, "It would likewise be wrong to interpret this commandment (Ex 20:13) as embodying the notion of the absolute sanctity of human life. What is protected is not life itself, but the life accorded a person by Yahweh. The Yahweh war, in which Israel goes forth into battle against its foes, presents no problems for the Old Testament; neither does the judicial execution of a criminal. This means that the faith of the Old Testament sees human life under the hand of God, whose will stands superior to any human life in preserving the people of Yahweh from their foes and maintaining the justice enshrined in his decrees. Of the self-sacrifice of someone who is perfectly righteous on behalf of a sinner, which will one day begin to cast doubts on war and capital punishment, the Old Testament contains only a faint hint in Is 53". /57/

The point is that all threat to life, whether from criminals or enemies, had to be eradicated and it was sometimes necessary to take life in order to preserve the community and its well being. /58/

Consequently the community must not take life unless it is acting on behalf of God and it is done in the most just manner. God's claims are sovereign. This is also tied up with Israel's existence in the land, which has been given to them by God. Killing is a challenge to God and his gift of life in the land for the individual. /59/ This is well illustrated in the universal context of Gen 9:1-17

where God has provided, as a gracious undeserved gift, a stable world in which man can be fruitful, multiply, prosper and live safely. By taking life, a killer is denying this to his fellows and jeopardizing the stability and prosperity of the world. Both the generation after the flood and the people of Israel had been given a future safeguarded by God in a secure land. Murder disrupts this stability.

/60/

Given the above considerations the story offers an important perspective on the value, not simply of human life, but also of human personhood i.e. humans in relation to each other and to God. The latter is more specific and significant than the former, since it does not see people on their own but in relationship with each other and with God. The use of the Imago Dei as the reason for the prohibition of murder emphasizes that it is much more than human life in and of itself which is valuable, but rather humanity in its relationship with God. It is this relational aspect which makes human life sacred and life is seen as valuable in relation to others. Here we see the vast difference between human and animal life.

The concept of the absolute sovereignty of God over human life fits well with an observation which we made in Chapter 1. It was mentioned there that the modern idea of rights is alien to the Old Testament. It seems that there is a striking difference between the focus of attention of modern human rights and the law of the Old Testament. In the latter there is the command from God, a direct address from him to the individual, but in the former there is a right which attaches itself intrinsically to the human person. There is an important difference between the command not to kill and the right to life. In the former life is set in its relation to God who

has complete sovereignty over it, but the idea of the right to life need not be associated with any religious view since it is a human centered idea. In the story human life is declared valuable because of its relation to God and God's authority over life is declared to be inviolable. Consequently in Gen 9 the command not to kill is grounded in God's sovereign will and purpose, not in human life per se. Biblical commands are theonomous, human rights anthroponomous. Rights are based on the value of freedom to which a human has a right. Given that freedom is a supreme value, certain moral imperatives have to be expressed to prevent exploitation. In the Bible ethics are based not on freedom but on the direct command of God, as seen in Gen 9.

The case must not be pushed too far since the word **דָּשַׁן** does sometimes have the connotation of the modern word "right": Deut 21:17, Jer 32:7,8. The poor seem to have some claim to a right: Ex 23:6, Deut 24:17. Yet there is a difference here from the modern idea of human rights; the Bible grounds these claims of the poor in the express command of God and his redemptive purpose, which brings about a moral duty to the neighbour.

Of course some of the commands of the Bible reflect customs and regulations from other cultures (e.g. Ex 21:28ff), and it cannot be said that Israel was the only society in the Ancient Near East which viewed murder as unacceptable. Consequently many of the ethical norms were accepted and brought into Israelite society. There was however a crucial difference: God placed his absolute authority behind these rules. The punishment of life for life was common in the time in which the Bible was written, but what the writer of Genesis does, is to take the concept and place it under the authority

of God as a decree for all people. /61/

7) Gen 9:1-7 and Wider Aspects of Israel's Law

i) Death and Pollution

Purity and purification were fundamental aspects of Israel's cult and it was the duty of the priest to enforce regulations concerning pollution. Murder, idolatry and sexual abomination were particularly serious in this respect and could have severe effects on Israel's history; blood was so polluting because it was the bearer of the life. It is said of the Canaanites that they lost the land on account of these practices (Lev 18). By the time of the Exile the land of Israel is seen as thoroughly polluted (1 K 14:24, 2 K 16:3, 21:2, Jer 2:7, 23:10, Ez 36:4, Hos 6:8), and the people had to be destroyed and sent to Exile. Both flood and Exile, Frymer-Kensky notes, were necessitated by the state of the land. The story is told in the light of Israel's conception of pollution. Without laws man would ruin the world by his immoral acts. /62/ After the flood a rule of law was inaugurated for the whole world to control these impulses and to prevent pollution. The fact that the flood singles out **DDN** as the chief cause of the flood shows a special concern with pollution resulting from murder. (See Chapter 1)

It was in part owing to this that the law so strongly opposed payment of money as punishment for murder. Only the death or banishment of the murderer ensured purity. The commands of Gen 9 seek to safeguard the purity of the land as well as the sacredness of life. The whole idea of clean and unclean was important in a society

which believed its land to be holy (Am 7:17), and that it belonged to Yahweh (Lev 25:23). Consequently the society had to take careful precautions to ensure safety from pollution from blood, life for life (Num 35:33ff, Deut 21:22ff). For P pollution cannot be removed by ransom since the offender pollutes the land in which he lives. In this respect the life of the whole cultic community was at stake. Gen 9 projects back into the primeval time one of the most important precepts of Israelite purity. /63/

This concept of purity was also found in the law of asylum which in part was designed to protect the High Priest from impurity by the presence of a killer in his city. Only after the Priest's death could the killer return, since his presence caused impurity. Execution or banishment removed the cause of the offense. The laws of homicide may have originated in a code of discipline for the priests. /64/

ii) The Lex Talionis

The punishment for murder as found in Gen 9 reflects the lex talionis (Ex 21:23ff, Lev 24:17ff, Deut 19:21) which shows the deep concern of the Israelites to match punishment with crime. There could be no whim or caprice; punishment must correspond to crime precisely. Life was so sacred that no monetary compensation could be paid for homicide (Ex 21:12, 28ff), and this was only allowed in the case of the goring ox (21:30). /65/ Even an ox that killed a man had to be put to death. Life and property were incommensurate with each other. Property offenses were not punishable by death though in extreme cases such as Achan's breach of the covenant the ban operated with its own set of rules (Josh 7). Since money could not be paid in

compensation for death, the system did not favour the rich. Neither was death used as a punishment for theft and the whole system is, in this respect, quite different from the rest of the Ancient Near East. The scale of punishment in Israel was in no way connected with social class. /66/ Even where death was accidental there could still be the possibility of judicial execution (Num 35:9-34). Blood shed unintentionally could result in blood guilt. /67/ There is not time here to discuss the whole concept of the **גאל הדם**, the avenger of blood but that was a means of enforcing the principle of 9:6. /68/ If murder was committed by persons unknown propitiation still had to be made to God (Deut 21:1ff).

Nevertheless a system of refuge was established where a person who had committed an act of homicide, whether intentional or not, could flee to a safe city (Num 35:9-34, Deut 19, Josh 20). The details must be omitted here /69/ but it was in this context that the **גאל הדם** operated. P could not envisage someone taking part in Temple worship if they were not ritually pure, and only the death of the High Priest could make way for his return (Num 35:25, 28). /70/

Yet all this expansion of the principle enunciated in Gen 9 is undeveloped because the writer is taking his pre-Sinai, pre-Israel context seriously. There can be no cities of refuge in an era when there is no priesthood. Similarly the writer seems to understand that the primeval era is a less developed time since there is no provision for the **גאל הדם** or of courts for the dispensation of justice. All we have in Gen 9 are the basic principles, and the further ramifications are left for the detailed giving of the law on Sinai. The writer has taken his pre-Sinai context imaginatively.

8) The Relationship Between Gen 9:1-7 and J

It is now time to see how Gen 9:1-7 relates to the J material of the primeval history. The story concludes with a brief statement from (J 8:20-22), the various implications of which are developed in 9:1-17.

P gives a special emphasis to the close of the story. Gen 9:1-17 is divided into two parts each beginning with almost the same sentence: 9:1=9:7 and 9:9=9:17b. Both sections have their own message but they are part of one conclusion to the account. Westermann /71/ argues that 8:21 corresponds to 9:8-17 and 8:22 to 9:1-7.

The matter, we would argue, is not so clear cut. The implications of 8:20-22 are developed throughout 9:1-17. 8:22 speaks of the stability of the created order which is echoed in 9:8-17 especially in verses such as 9:11. Likewise 8:21 has an important link to 9:1-7 in that man who is still sinful needs **תורה** to control his impulses. The correspondence between the two passages is not as neat as Westermann suggests. There are many resonances between the conclusions to the flood of J and P. Read together the two sources of 8:20-9:17 fit well as an integral whole.

Wenham notes that if read on its own chapter 9 gives no reason for the change in God's attitude./72/ Without the passage of 8:20-22 we would have no idea as to the reason for the commands. If there were such a gap in P, there would be a non sequitor.

Perhaps Wenham has pushed his case too far, since as we saw that God remembers Noah in 8:1, and that is where God turns from anger to mercy. The text can be read without 8:20-22, but it is enhanced considerably if these verses are included in a joint reading of the text. 8:20-22 is an entirely appropriate preface to 9:1-17. A

statement on the wickedness of man is suitable before the actual commands which regulate man's tendencies. The blessing of human fertility 9:1,7 is apt when favourable conditions have been promised and no further flooding will happen: 8:21,22,9:11. Both the conclusions of J and P tell the same message but emphasize different aspects of the promise never to send another flood.

The final word of the story of the deluge is one of grace. The world is restored but not to a state of complete perfection since man is still sinful (8:21), in a world where sin is a permanent feature. /73/ The flood has not improved humanity and the reason for the punishment is still there. On the contrary there has been a change in God's attitude, as he pledges another course of action. God's grace is free and unconditional but that does not imply that humanity is released from all moral obligation and God gives regulations to limit human desire for evil. In being given a new start humanity is placed under Torah so that life is to be respected in a way which did not happen before the flood, and man is set free to safeguard the life of his fellow. The world is placed under God's command in a way quite different from that before the flood.

This is set in sharp focus if Gen 9:1-7 is read with 8:20-22. Man's heart is evil from his youth upward and laws must be given to curb his evil nature, so as to ensure the safety of others. Man is not to live by his instincts but by laws which are the sine qua non of human existence. One way in which God responds to human sin is to grant laws and this goes some way to help us resolve the paradox that human evil both causes the flood and ensures that it will never happen again. Man's heart is evil and his impulses need to be restrained. /74/

Further if the text is read as a whole, McEvenue's argument that 9:4-6 is an interpolation loses its significance to some degree. If laws are needed to curb human sin, it is certainly apt for 9:4-6 to follow 8:21, especially if man's sin before the flood was **DDN**.

If the two stories are read together the question of clean and unclean animals is set in a different perspective. J presupposes that Noah observes these distinctions (7:2,8, 8:20) and the complete text might presume that the command of 9:2ff is only for clean meat. This fits a little awkwardly with the idea that the dietary laws are a mark of Israel's unique status as the holy people of God, since Israel did not exist in the primeval era. It seems that J does not take his context as seriously as P does, and is more concerned to present Noah as a pious Israelite. In the final form less attention is given to the primeval context.

The perspective on eating meat might be altered by the combination of the two sources. It may be that meat eating is envisaged from the time of "the fall"; Adam was given garments of skin; Abel sacrificed sheep. If the two sources are read together 9:2ff might be ratifying the "post-fall" practice of eating meat.

/75/

Cassuto discusses these three texts which seem to contradict 9:3. On 3:21 he doubts that there is any contradiction since there is no necessity to suppose that the verse refers to the skin of cattle which had been slaughtered for human consumption. For 4:2 he notes that sheep could be kept for wool and milk, and the conduct of the brothers need not have been in accord with absolute standards, as the fratricide shows. For 4:4 he suggests that the fat and blood were placed on the altar but not necessarily eaten. /76/

Whilst these explanations are plausible, proof is impossible since there are many aspects of the story which do not fit together (e.g. the number of animals and the chronology). It does seem that Cassuto's points are a little forced. Can sacrifice and animal skin be disassociated from the killing of living creatures? We are in a mythological genre and not every problem is to be solved. Before the flood man may have overstepped the boundaries given to him. What does seem apparent is that the completed text is a little less clear on this matter than P by itself.

The rule of blood in 9:4 fits Noah's sacrifice well. Since man is still sinful (8:21), it is necessary that there should be sacrifice to effect reconciliation between God and humanity. (See Chapter 5) Given that sacrifice is part of the divine-human relationship, it is natural that a law concerning the abstention from blood is placed here. In a world where human sin is a permanent feature, blood will take on the power not just of life but of expiation as well. Man must never partake of it. Again J differs from P in that he envisages sacrifice before Sinai and unlike P does not treat it as a phenomenon which belongs solely to the holy people of God, but of the whole human race. When the two texts are put together, it is J's understanding which prevails. Furthermore human life must be of considerable value to God, if he has provided the means of reconciliation between himself and the world.

The command to abstain from blood resonates with the story of Cain and Abel, which we discussed in Chapter 1. The commands of Gen 9 are a way of ensuring that such pollution and killing do not happen again. Not only do these verses inculcate that blood is sacred and to be treated with reverence, but the rule whereby the death penalty

is decreed, is a means of preventing further killing such as that committed by Cain. The threat of life for life is there to act as a deterrent to further bloodshed and the pollution which results from it.

Similarly Gen 9 resonates with the story of Lamech and his boast of exaggerated vengeance for small hurts. (see Chapter 1) By laying down the strict correspondence of life for life, excessive, unfair revenge is outlawed. Lamech should not have slain a young man for wounding him; life should only be taken as punishment for murder. Gen 9:1-7 seeks to prevent the tyrannical, egotism of those who, like Lamech, seek to abuse power and oppress the weak.

The comparison of Gen 9 and Gen 4 brings out another important aspect of reading J and P together. It would seem that as far as the world of Gen 1-11 is concerned the demand for the death of the manslayer is new after the flood. Cain and Lamech are not treated in the way that is required in Gen 9 for the manslayer; neither die for their deeds. /77/

The question of the death penalty for murder is not an issue for J in this primeval context; it is only taken up by P. When the text is read together the question of the death penalty for the manslayer becomes an issue after the flood. Naturally this cannot be pushed too far since there are examples in the Old Testament such as the killing of Abner by Joab, and Amnon by Absalom, where the principle is not applied. Obviously Old Testament ethics are complex with many traditions from several eras bringing different perspectives, but as far as Gen 1-11 is concerned, it does seem that Gen 9 marks a new departure in the way that murderers are to be treated, even if this standard was not always applied rigorously.

There has been much discussion as to why Cain does not receive the death penalty. Some try to rationalize; the Midrash for example writes, "Cain's judgment shall not be as the judgment of other murderers for Cain had no one from whom to learn". /78/ Cassuto notes that capital punishment served not just as a penalty but also as a preventive measure. Since Adam, Eve and Cain were the only people in the world, only they could learn the lesson. On the other hand people yet to be born would see the bitter fate of Cain and draw the moral from him. Further, it would not have been right for God to have inflicted further loss on Adam and Eve. /79/

Yet Westermann is surely right to note that the problem of other people in the world besides Cain is not really an issue. Such speculation goes beyond the scope of the text and ignores its context and genre. The criteria of historical thought should not be applied in the primeval era and questions like this ought not to be asked. There is much in these chapters which does not tie up. /80/ Further, this does not explain why Lamech seems to escape the consequences of his deed.

Some have noted that banishment can be an alternative form of punishment for murder (2 Sam 13:34-24:24). /81/ Schottroff for example argues that God is here playing the role of the avenger of blood and to expel is a special form of blood vengeance. /82/ Expulsion can be as severe a punishment as death. (Compare 2 Sam 16:7ff) Pedersen writes, "To be cursed is as good as losing one's life Jb 3:3". /83/ "Cursed from the ground" does not just mean banishment from a particular region but also cutting Cain off from the means of his livelihood. /84/ Despite the fact that he is cursed, Cain is given a mark to protect him from blood revenge; no

human has the right to step in and execute God's judgment. It is only when God institutes the death penalty in 9:6 that the manslayer is to die.

The story may be an attempt to reduce blood revenge to a minimum by showing that the death penalty was not part of the original order. It is only to be used sparingly. Only the Judge of the whole world and judges who judge in his name have the authority to pass sentence on the murderer. /85/ Von Rad writes

"The conclusion of the story, according to which Cain then goes forth "away from the presence of the Lord", completely sharpens the riddle of his future existence: because of his murder he is cursed by separation from God and yet incomprehensibly guarded and supported by God's protection. Even his life belongs to God, and he does not abandon it". /86/

Isaac Schapera has tried an anthropological approach by noting that in Israel fratricide was often treated leniently. Abimelech killed all his 70 brothers but one and then governed Israel for many years before dying in the siege of Thebez (Ju 9). Absalom killed Amnon, fled, was recalled and forgiven (2 Sam 13,14). Solomon had Adonijah slain and ruled many years before dying peacefully (1 K 2:13-25, 12:43). Jehoram killed all his brothers but was later smitten by God (2 Chron 21).

Some anthropologists argue that killing in the kinship group is treated differently either because it meant further loss to that group or because they preferred to leave vengeance to God. Neither of these points is entirely satisfactory since 2 Sam 14:5-7 indicate that the usual vengeance might be applied to one who sheds his brother's blood. There was apparently no legal distinction between the killing of relatives and non relatives. How then do we account for Cain and those like Solomon?

Schapera argues that there was in kin groups a greater desire to

end blood feuds so that peace could be restored to the family as soon as possible. Cases of fratricide he argues, were determined not by fixed rules but by contingent factors such as the size of family, or the circumstances of killing. This was particularly acute when the duty of punishment lay with relatives. Perhaps Cain was spared because he was the only surviving son. (Compare the importance of offspring in Israelite society, Deut 25:5ff, Ju 9:56, 2 Sam 14:7.)

/87/

Schapera may be right, but the other examples of fratricide which he quotes and their subsequent lenient treatment may be due to the abuse of power and the due processes of the law which those in authority are not unknown to perpetrate so as to further their own ends. Further Schapera has not taken Lamech into account. We must remember that we are dealing with primeval reality which is larger than life and matters like this are not easily settled.

I should like to suggest that the answer to the problem is to be found in Gen 9:1-7. It seems that the death penalty was not part of God's original intention even after Gen 3, and it is only when the earth has become full of ~~DOM~~ and humanity has corrupted its way, that God decides to institute the means whereby murder is to be punished. There has been a major change in God's attitude to man not just in abiding with his sin, but by instituting a new means of punishment. Cain and Lamech's deeds, though terrible, were isolated events, and it was not until the utter corruption of Gen 6 that God decided to introduce the drastic means of curbing violence. There does appear to be a reluctance on God's part to introduce the death penalty, and it is only in extreme circumstances that he does so. As man has not changed, the death penalty is needed for a deterrent.

In addition to these points the command to be fruitful and multiply echoes important themes in Gen 1-11. The theme of God's blessing in 1:28 is worked out in subsequent chapters. 3:16 shows that this blessing might be jeopardized by child bearing. 4:1, 17-26, 5:1-32 continue the blessing, but alongside this there are the crimes of Cain and Lamech which show a darker side to human multiplication. The theme is continued in Gen 10 and 11. /88/ In the flood humanity receives its greatest threat and there is here the possibility that the human race will be wiped out. Hence 9:1,7 pick up the theme of 1-11 which is developed in both sources.

9) The Noah Commandments

Jewish tradition has developed these commandments of Genesis 9 into a list of seven which were regarded as being binding on both Jew and non Jew alike: the prohibition of eating the flesh of animals still living, of murder, idolatry, blasphemy, sexual sin, theft, and finally the command to establish a legal system. /89/

Yet though this takes the pre-Israel context seriously, it goes far beyond the original intention of the chapter which focuses on the authority of man over life, in particular the power to kill. The elaboration from later time must not be allowed to hide the striking emphasis of these verses on the value of human life. It is perhaps a little surprising that there are not more commandments, for example prohibition of robbery and assault. Yet the laconic nature of these rules emphasizes the great importance which is attached to the value of human life in these verses, and the protection which is thereby to be accorded to it.

10) Conclusion

Gen 9 reaffirms the value of human life in its relation to God. It is worth noting that until the book of Daniel there is no explicit reference to life after death in the Old Testament. Hence life was one of the greatest values; it was to be lived to the full in a way undiminished by oppression, hunger and sickness. Protecting it was an obligation of the first order. God's will for humanity was life in security and peace Gen 8:20-9:17. All threats to life were to be eliminated, including the manslayer. God is the source of all life, and he had absolute sovereignty over it. (Compare Deut 30:19, Jb 33:4, Ps 36:9, Jer 2:13) /90/

There are many aspects of the Israelite prohibition of murder which are not discussed here but we have shown that the command is well suited to its context in Gen 9. The new age must not be marred by murder as before the flood. God has given his "yes" to life and man must respond by safeguarding humanity. God, in the pledge never to destroy the world, increases his demands on man. Von Rad writes that there, is "a strong legal tone accompanying the gracious Noahic dispensation". /91/

Footnotes

/1/ O.Eissfeldt The Old Testament an Introduction Blackwell Oxford 1965 p205ff; G.Fohrer Introduction to the Old Testament SPCK 1976 p183 and Wellhausen Prolegomena p7.

/2/ Westermann Genesis p460 and 469, Wenham Genesis p155 and U.Rappaport "The Poetic Structure of Gen IX 7" VT 21 1971 p363-369.

/3/ Westermann Genesis p161. See also Chapter 4.

/4/ Ibid p462.

- /5/ Quoted in Bereishis p292.
- /6/ Jacob "Buch" p241.
- /7/ For a full discussion of 1:28 and parallel texts see M.Gilbert, "Soyez Feconds et Multipliez (Gen 1:28)", NRT 96 1974 p729-742.
- /8/ Frymer-Kensky "The Atrahasis" p150, see A.D.Kilmer "The Mesopotamian Concept of Overpopulation and its Solution as Reflected in the Mythology" Orientalia 41 1972 p160-177.
- /9/ Clines "Theology" p138.
- /10/ Wenham Commentary p192. See Zenger Bogen p117-123. The Zohar claims here that the animals lost their fear of man as they no longer saw in him the sacred impress of the divine image. After humans sinned it was man who dreaded the animal world. In 9:2 God blessed man and restored his dominion. Bereishis p285. The text does not support this interpretation.
- /11/ Cassuto Genesis vol 2 p125.
- /12/ Westermann Genesis p161-165.
- /13/ Wenham Genesis p193.
- /14/ Gunke] Genesis p114.
- /15/ Fisher "Gilgamesh" p394.
- /16/ S.E. McEvenue The Narrative Style p71 see discussion p67-71.
- /17/ Westermann Genesis p463.
- /18/ Westermann Genesis p464ff.
- /19/ Quoted in Ibid p465 from Jacob "Buch" p244.
- /20/ Bereishis p286-288.
- /21/ Wenham Genesis p193.
- /22/ For a discussion of אדם see Wolff "Anthropology" p10-25.
- /23/ Noth Leviticus SCM 1977 p132.
- /24/ Eichrodt Theology vol 2 p135ff.

/25/ Milgrom "A Prolegomenon to Lev 17:11" JBL 90 1979 p149-156.

/26/ Von Rad Genesis p128.

/27/ Jacob "Buch" p250ff.

/28/ See ibid for a discussion p247-252.

/29/ Cassuto Genesis vol 1 p58ff.

/30/ Milgrom "The Biblical Diet Laws as an Ethical System" in Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology Brill Leiden 1983 p104-118.

A possible connection with the dietary laws emerges here. The Talmud, much more so than the Old Testament, goes into great detail in its instructions concerning the slaughter of animals. The aim was to cause the minimum of suffering by using razor sharp instruments and by draining the blood. Milgrom argues that the dietary regulations follow from here in that they restrict the choice of meat the Jew may eat, so that he may aspire to a higher way of life- the holy (קדש). It is in the dietary laws that Israel is commanded to be holy with the most urgency. Milgrom argues that the restrictions give the Jew a system whereby he is taught reverence for life by a reduced choice of meat, humane slaughter and the prohibition of blood. Food is used to inculcate the inviolability of life.

The problem of the dietary laws is complex. Unfortunately we do not know their original significance and origin. There is also a strong tendency in Jewish tradition to develop moral aspects of regulations. If Milgrom is right then we may have the reason why there is no distinction between clean and unclean in Gen 1, since the world was vegetarian. However caution should be urged since Lev 11 gives no real clue as to the origin of these particular laws. Milgrom may be right but his case cannot be proved. What is important to note from his paper is that Israel did not allow

indiscriminate taking of animal life.

/31/ See Milgrom "Sacrifices and Offerings in the Old Testament" IDBS p770, Milgrom "A Prolegomenon", Von Rad Theology 1 p250-272 for a discussion of sacrifice in Israel.

/32/ For a full discussion see Eichrodt Theology vol 1 p158-172.

/33/ Von Rad Theology vol 1 p269ff.

/34/ See D.J.McCarthy "The Symbolism of Blood and Sacrifice" JBL 88 1969 p166-176.

/35/ See A.Phillips Ancient Israel's Criminal Law Blackwell Oxford 1970 p95ff. The translation of כִּיד אִישׁ אֶחָיו is difficult; see GK 139c, Skinner Genesis p170ff and Davidson Hebrew Syntax T and T. Clark Edinburgh 1902 11d p13. The precise rendering is disputed, but the idea is reasonably clear; God will hold men accountable for taking the lives of their fellows and the killing of others is equivalent to fratricide.

/36/ See Cassuto Genesis 2 p127 Westermann Genesis p466 and see the discussion there.

/37/ Ibid p466.

/38/ Phillips "Criminal Law" p85ff and see also B.Kedar-Kopfstein ם TDOT III p234-250.

/39/ Cassuto Genesis 2 p127 and Jacob Buch p246.

/40/ Von Rad Theology 1 p385.

/41/ For a full discussion of this difficult passage see McKeating "The Development of the Law on Homicide in Ancient Israel" VI 25 1975 p46-68 p56ff. For a discussion of the idea of blood returning on the head of someone see H.G.Reventlow "Sein Blute komme über sein Haupt" VI 10 1960 p311-327 and K.Koch "Der Spruch "Sein Blut bleibe auf seinem Haupt" und die Israelitische Auffassung vom vergossenen Blut"

VT 12 1962 p396-416.

/42/ Bereishis p288ff

/43/ U.Wöller "Zur Übersetzung von ki in Gen 8:21 und 9:6" ZAW 94
1982 p637-638.

/44/ See B.Gemser "The Motive Clause" p50-66. In the Law of Holiness
there are 77 motive clauses.

/45/ Gunkel Genesis p149, Skinner Genesis p171, Von Rad Genesis p128,
Jacob "Buch" p247, McEvenue "Narrative" p70.

/46/ Quoted in Westermann Genesis p468, from Zimmerli Genesis p332.

/47/ Westermann Genesis p468ff and see Chapter 7.

/48/ Clines "Theology of the Flood" p139.

/49/ Von Rad Genesis p129.

/50/ Westermann Genesis p468.

/51/ Harrelson The Ten Commandments and Human Rights Fortress Press
Philadelphia 1986 p108-110.

/52/ Ibid p111-113.

/53/ Cassuto Genesis vol 2 p127 and Bereishis p291.

/54/ Harrelson The Ten Commandments p113ff.

/55/ Ibid p116.

/56/ Westermann Genesis p469.

/57/ Zimmerli Theology p135.

/58/ D.A.Knight "The Ethics of Human Life in the Hebrew Bible" in
Justice and the Holy: Essays in Honor of W.Harrelson ed D.A.Knight
and P.J.Paris Scholars Press Atlanta Georgia 1989 p65-88.

/59/ Harrelson The Ten Commandments p117.

/60/ Ibid p117ff.

/61/ See for a discussion J.Barr "Ancient Biblical Laws and Modern
Human Rights" in Justice and the Holy p21-33.

- /62/ T.Frymer-Kensky "Pollution, Purification and Purgation in Biblical Israel" in The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth. Essays in Honour of D.N.Freedman ed C.Meyers and M.O'Connor American Schools of Oriental Research 1983 p399-414 esp p409 and discussion therein.
- /63/ Von Rad Theology 1 p272-279.
- /64/ R.Westbrook Studies in Biblical and Cuniform Law CRB 26 Paris 1988 p77-83.
- /65/ A.Phillips "Another Look at Murder" JJS 28 1977 p105-126.
- /66/ C.Wright Living as the People of God Inter-Varsity Press Leicester 1983 p163-168.
- /67/ See Zimmerli Theology p134.
- /68/ For a full discussion concerning the identity of the גאֵל הַדָּם and his function see: Phillips "Another Look"; H.McKeating "The Development"; Eichrodt Theology vol 2 p237, 366ff; De Vaux Ancient Israel p10-12. For a full discussion of this and other aspects of Israel's judicial process see Phillips "Criminal Law" chapter 8 p83-109.
- /69/ For a discussion of asylum see McKeating "The Development"; Phillips "Criminal Law" p99ff and Greenberg "The Biblical Conception of Asylum" JBL 78 1959 p125-132.
- /70/ Phillips "Criminal Law" p107-109.
- /71/ Westermann Genesis p461.
- /72/ Wenham Genesis p188.
- /73/ Clines "Theology of the Flood" p138.
- /74/ Frymer-Kensky "The Atrahasis" p151.
- /75/ Wenham Genesis p34.
- /76/ Cassuto Genesis vol 1 p171, 203, 206.
- /77/ Frymer-Kensky "The Atrahasis" p153.

- /78/ Quoted in Bereishis p154.
- /79/ Cassuto Genesis 1 p221ff.
- /80/ Westermann Genesis p310ff.
- /81/ Wenham Genesis p108.
- /82/ Quoted in Westermann Genesis p303.
- /83/ Pedersen Israel I-II p451ff.
- /84/ Ibid p310.
- /85/ Cassuto Genesis 1 p184ff, 225.
- /86/ Von Rad Genesis p103.
- /87/ I.Schapera "The Sin of Cain" in Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament ed B.Lang SPCK 1985 p26-42.
- /88/ L.A.Turner Announcements of Plot in Genesis JSOTSS 96 1990 p21-49.
- /89/ Frymer-Kensky "The Atrahasis" p152, Lewis Interpretation p186-189.
- /90/ Knight "The Ethics" esp p82-88.
- /91/ Von Rad Genesis p129.

CHAPTER 7

THE IMAGO DEI IN THE STORY OF THE FLOOD

Few texts in the Old Testament have aroused as much interest and discussion as Gen 1:26ff, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the ground" (RSV). References in the Old Testament to the Image of God in man are tantalizingly few: Gen 1:26ff and 9:6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image" (RSV). Man is in some way like God and is the most important creature in the world, but his status is still less than that of a god. The doctrine assumes the worth and dignity of humanity, and is central to all discussion of the value of human life. In the story of the flood this is given special attention: Gen 9 grounds the prohibition of murder in the creation of man in God's image.

In what does the image consist? This question has exercised the minds of theologians from New Testament times onwards, and many interpretations have been proposed, which have often reflected the concerns of particular generations. Von Rad writes, "It is natural that the ineffability of the divine being should draw a veil on this Godward side of man". Hence there is little in the Old Testament on this issue. /1/ Either the significance of the image was well known or the writer did not want to be specific. Others have argued that

the image is central to the thought of the Old Testament. Vriezen writes, "The Old Testament message is founded upon the certainty of the relationship between the holy God and man. The representation of man as the imago Dei is the symbol of this certainty". /2/

A general consensus seems to have developed recently that the functional aspect of the image, (i.e. the rule over creation) is the central feature of the creation of man in the divine image, but there have been some notable dissenters from this view such as Westermann. /3/

The present chapter wishes to explore an aspect of the imago Dei which has received comparatively little attention: its relationship to the account of the deluge. Why is the imago Dei placed in this particular context, and what does that tell us about the value of human life? How does the imago Dei relate to the rest of the story of the flood and the issues which we have discussed so far? We shall consider the question of the image in the context of the Priestly source, and ask what aspects of the divine-human relationship are manifested in its account of the flood, to see if they give any clue as to the essence of the image of God in man, and the prohibition of murder which follows therefrom. We shall examine the meaning of צלם, דמות and the two prepositions ב and כ, and their use in Gen 1:26 and 9:6. Having examined the question from the context of P, we shall in the final section ask what difference is made when the two sources J and P are read together.

1) צלם

Central to Gen 9:6 is the word צלם though its translation is by no

means straightforward. The word and its cognates are primarily used in the literal sense of three dimensional objects which represent gods, men or animals. /4/ In the Old Testament over half the uses of צלם refer to physical objects- 9 times in 6 contexts: of gods 2 K 11:18 (= 2 Chron 23:17), Num 33:52, Am 5:26, Ez 7:20; of men Ez 16:17; of mice 1 Sam 6:5 (twice), 11. Only 8 uses in 5 contexts could be understood as not referring to three dimensional objects, and this is further reduced since צלם in Ez 23:14 refers to a drawing or representation, and Gen 5:3 speaks of physical likeness. Gen 1:26ff and 9:6 are problematic. Hence only in Pss 39:7 and 73:20 could the word possibly refer to something non physical, and these two occurrences are the hardest to analyze. Koehler has suggested that in these two passages we have a different root meaning "be dark", but this seems unnecessary. /5/

RSV renders Ps 73:20 as "They are like a dream when one awakes, on awaking you despise their phantoms" (צלום). Whilst צלם is here the image in a dream, it is still the shape or form of something. Briggs calls it an "image of the imagination". /6/

Ps 39:7 is more difficult; RSV renders "Surely man goes about as a shadow" (בצלם probably uses both essentiae here). Given the parallelism of צלם with הבל in 39:7, Clines suggests that we translate verse 7 as "Surely man goes around as a dream image", -"as an insubstantial will-o'-the-wisp, which has appearance and form, but not much else". /7/ Briggs writes that this is "an image rather than the thing itself....a shadowed likeness,...an insubstantial vaporous body". /8/

Both these are references to insubstantial images from dreams, but

in both cases צלם means "representation", in the sense that an image in a dream reflects its referent. These two cases do not speak of the non physical, but rather of the ephemeral nature of human existence. In all these uses the idea of physical shape or form is present. But is the meaning more subtle than this?

Further help can be found from other terminology of idols and images: צלם, דמות, מראה, תמונה, תבנית, פסל, מסכה and סטל. Barr observes a distinction between words which have transparent meanings, i.e. one can see through them to see why they have that meaning, and those which are opaque. For example מסכה is transparent since it is linked to the root נסך which means "pour". In contrast צלם is opaque. Some see here a word meaning "cut" but the basis for this is thin; the Arabic verb is not used of forming an image but of cutting off an ear or nose. צלם lacks a reference to a verb in common use, and is of unknown derivation. /9/

Hence some words were unacceptable to the writer of Genesis: מראה would have suggested that God could be seen; תבנית points to human activity of building; פסל and מסכה could be neutral but were usually used of objects designated as evil, and would be inappropriate for the creation of man since they pointed to carving or metalwork; סטל was invariably negative, and תמונה was too closely associated with seeing (Deut 4:12, 15, 16). צלם was somewhat more ambivalent. It does not stand in the pre-Priestly laws against idols, not even in Deut 4:16 where terms are piled up. It is not used in the negative way of other terms; צלם in 1 Sam 6 offers no hint that the object is evil. Given the nuances of צלם, it was more suitable than any of the other terms for the divine-human relationship. Had the writer

written in Aramaic, where צלמא is much more closely associated with "statue", "image" or "idol" he would have chosen another term. The language of P must be seen in its context. /10/

J. Miller has rejected Barr's study as inadequate, since he claims that צלם is no better than any of the other words cited. Outside Gen 1-11 P only uses צלם in Num 33:52 (כל צלמי מסכתם) where צלם is used of evil objects which are used in idolatry. /11/

However we should wish to accept Barr's analysis. It is certainly true that there is some ambiguity over the term but of all the words it has the least negative connotations, particularly in view of Pss 39 and 73. Against Miller it is to be noted that צלם is not used on its own in Num 33:52 but is qualified by מסכות, which suggests that there is some ambiguity in the term; it had to be specified by מסכה to indicate the precise nature of the word. Had צלם alone been used it would not necessarily have had the negative connotation it does if joined to מסכה. Whilst צלם can refer to an idol, it does not have to take this meaning, and its context always needs to be taken into account in translation. Just because it is used in Num 33 of an idol, does not mean that its referent is always negative in every context. As we shall see it can bear a positive meaning.

Consequently צלם must be physical to some extent in Gen 1:26ff and 9:6, but the word is more subtle and particular; connotation rather than precise translation is more important. The essence of צלם would seem to be the portrayal and representation of something rather than a simple effigy, and this understanding of the term covers all its uses. צלם means concrete representation. Schmidt notes, "The word does not have to be restricted to "material form", but rather means a

"representation"". /12/ צלם is not the technical term for a god, though it can have that meaning in some places. If the primary meaning is "representation" there is no need to look for a second root "be dark" for Pss 39 and 73. The translation "representation" is apt for all cases. /13/ A צלם represents and points to that which is represented whether by model, picture, human or dream. Man is created as the representation of God. God is the prototype of the image who represents him. Man is not a simple copy of God but rather is in some way a representation of him.

It is here that we ought to discuss extra Biblical parallels, since these seem to show that the image is a representation of someone or something. Statues of kings would seem to have some spiritual connection with the rulers whom they represent. Assyrian kings set up statues of themselves in conquered territory, not just out of pride, but to represent their presence in the occupied area.

/14/

There are frequent references in texts to humans, usually the king, being the image of God. Esarhaddon is addressed as the image of Bel, "The father of the king, my lord, was the very image (šalmu) of Bel, and the king, my lord, is likewise the very image of Bel". In Egypt the idea was much more frequent. In the 18th Dynasty of the 16th century B.C. Pharaoh was entitled "image of Re". Such terminology was used right up to the Greek period. Ammon Re says to Amenophis III, "You are my beloved son, who came forth from my members, my image, whom I have put on earth. I have given to you to rule the earth in peace". The king not mankind as a whole is the image, and the image is bound up with dominion. The king as image of

God is his representative. /15/ One passage of special note is an Egyptian text of the 22nd century B.C., the Instruction for Meri-ka-Re, "Well directed are men, the cattle of the god. He made heaven and earth according to their desire, and he repelled the water monster. He made the breath of life (for) their nostrils. They who have issued from his body are his images". /16/

W.H.Schmidt has argued that this is a democratization of the concept of the image. /17/ Wildberger also claims that this democratizing had occurred in Egypt at an early date. It is Egyptian influence which is most important in Gen 1, and the first chapter of the Bible reflects royal ideology. /18/ These two scholars have given special emphasis to extra Biblical texts and have argued that the concept of the image is derived from non Biblical sources./19/

However it is doubtful if the democratization of the concept from the king to all mankind antedates the Bible. The text just cited comes from a time several centuries before the regular use of the term "image of god" for the king. In Egypt only the king was in the image; in Israel all were, rich and poor, powerful and weak, male and female, but the title was never used of the king, not even in Is 9 or Ps 45. /20/ It seems that Israel was deeply influenced by such non Israelite concepts, but she adapted them in the light of her own distinctive beliefs.

In both Egypt and, it would seem in the light of our discussion of צלם, Israel, the image represents God on earth. W.H.Schmidt observes,

"If the phrase means that the king is the living image or representative of God on earth, then wherever the king appears, the divinity appears. So in the Old Testament, wherever a human being is, God is proclaimed. The person represents, attests God on earth. So the person as such, created by God,

is God's witness...it is of the nature of an image to allow what it represents to appear; so where the person appears, God also appears./21/

Israel could never erect a statue of wood, stone or metal. There is only one legitimate representative of God: man. /22/

Westermann has raised objections to this line of argument. First, he argues that where the king represents God on earth, the concern is with the representation of an individual in relation to the community. This cannot be so for mankind since he is a species not an individual. Man does not represent God before creation.

Secondly, such thinking is out of place in the context of the Priestly source. "Wherever a human being is, God is proclaimed", is foreign to P since his theology is dominated by the thought of God's holiness and the revelation of himself at the holy place. P is concerned for the manifestation of God in his כבוד; that takes place before, not in man. P could only think of the manifestation of God as a holy event outside the range of the ordinary.

Thirdly, we should look for texts which are concerned with the creation of humanity in God's image. Westermann argues that the concept of the image is not about the nature of man but about the act of creating humanity, which makes man different. Wildberger and Schmidt are concerned with the idea of the image, not with creation in the image of God. Wildberger quotes two texts concerned with creation in the image of God (p255, p489), but does not consider them especially important. /23/

Undoubtedly extra Biblical parallels should be used with great care, but Westermann's objections are less than convincing. Wenham has pointed out that he has misunderstood Biblical symbolism. Frequently in P a class of objects can represent individuals, e.g.

sacrificial animals represent the people of Israel. Of course man cannot be equated with God too easily, but his mediatory position between God and creation is in line with the rest of the Old Testament; the High Priest represents God to Israel and Israel to God. The ritual system of the Old Testament is concerned to bridge the gulf between God and man. /24/ The fact that man does have dominion conferred on him by God means that he represents God in the world. Further, just because in the cult God is manifested in his **כבוד**, does not mean that he cannot be represented outside the cultic realm. As for Westermann's last point, the image is part of man's essence, not of his creation, since the context of Gen 9:6 would seem to suggest that the image has abiding significance, rather than being tied to the creation in Gen 1.

2) דמות

This understanding of **צלם** as a representation of something is further specified in Gen 1:26 by the term **דמות**. The noun **דמות** occurs 25 times in the Old Testament and is derived from the verb **דמה** which means "be like". In 2 K 16:10 it means the replica of an altar; in 2 Chron 4:3 it is the representation of cucumbers. In Is 40:18 **דמות** seems to have a concrete meaning and the root is used in the chapter to express the concept of the incomparability of God. In Ez 23:15 the representations of the Babylonians (discussed above) are described as **דמות**. Ezekiel frequently uses the term for "something which is like" e.g. Ez 1:26 "likeness as it were of a human form".

/25/

דמות is an amplification and specification of **צלם**. The term is

not a strengthening of צלם for how can the meaning "image" be strengthened? Eichrodt wrote that צלם is both limited and weakened by כדמותו; it excludes the idea of copy and limits it to similarity. In Ez 1 the term is used to emphasize the approximate nature of the correspondence between his description and the reality. /26/

There may well be some attempt to avoid any misunderstanding of humans as an exact copy of God. But if צלם is a reference to man as the image of God i.e. his concrete representation in the world, rather than God's effigy, then we need not be so concerned about the physical resemblance so long as that includes the spiritual dimension. Hence כדמותו is not so much a weakening as a specification of צלם - it is a likeness image, "representational not simply representative". /27/

Those who deny any distinction between the two terms such as Schmidt /28/, are aware of the error made by some of ascribing the two words to two different things. Ramban argued צלם referred to a man's body, דמות to his soul. /29/ This error was helped by LXX inserting και between the two terms κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν και ὁμοιωσιν, which was followed in the Vulgate -ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram. /30/

As far as Genesis is concerned דמות refers entirely to צלם, not to different parts of man. Man is not just God's representative but he is to express his Lord's character. Man's likeness to God is found in the sense that an image is like one that it images. /31/

Why are the terms reversed in Gen 5:3? Perhaps it was because P was no longer talking of the divine image but of the likeness of Adam to Seth. He probably also wanted to avoid hardening and

systematizing his language. /32/ When he speaks of the divine likeness he reverts to צלם (9:6).

3) The Prepositions

There has been much discussion as to the nature of the prepositions in Gen 1:26ff, particularly as to whether כ should be rendered as Beth essentiae both here and in 9:6. Certainly the above discussion leaves open the possibility of translating בצלםנו as "as our image", since if man is God's representation that could mean that he has a functional role. כ could be beth of essence meaning "as", "in the capacity of" (GK 119i). Instead of being made according to the image of God (i.e. the image being a standard of measurement [BDB p90:8] or of comparison [GK 119h] i.e. beth as the origin of a mould), he is created to be the image of God. If beth essentiae is to be understood man is created not as an imitation of the divine image but as the image of God. A good example is found in Ex 6:3 (P).

וַאֲרָא בְּאֵל שַׁדַּי

"I appeared as El Shaddai" i.e. in the capacity of El Shaddai. There are other possible uses of this construction in P: Nu 18:26, 26:53, 34:2, 36:2, and possibly Lev 17:11, 14. It is found elsewhere in the Pentateuch: Ex 18:4, Deut 1:13, 10:22, 26:14, 28:62, 33:26; as well as in Ezekiel: 20:41,45:1, 46:16, 47:14, 22, 48:29. (See BDB p88) Often the construction follows the pattern of verb + noun + כ + noun as in Gen 1 (e.g. Ez 45:1).

The number of occurrences would at least seem to allow for the possibility of beth essentiae in Gen 1. A number of objections could be raised but as we shall see, they are by no means conclusive.

First, it is pointed out that in other examples of עשה + כ + noun, the noun prefixed by כ is the standard according to which something is constructed. There are two occurrences of this in P: Ex 25:40 "And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain" בתבניתם; Ex 30:32 "You shall make no other like it in composition" כמותכנתו. (RSV) /33/

Mettinger for example argues from this that God created man according to his צלם, according to his דמות (the prepositions are interchangeable), and the passage refers to a relation between man and a heavenly pattern. Both man and the tabernacle are made according to the heavenly pattern; man is created according to a divine prototype. The similarity between man and the divine beings lies in offering praise to God. For P the two great events are the creation of man and the erecting of the tabernacle. /34/ Man is created to resemble both God and the angels.

Barth, whilst not seeing man as created in the image of the angels, has a similar interpretation, "Man is not created to be the image of God,... he is created in correspondence with the image of God". God creates a being to correspond to his own self; כ indicates the origin of the mould. /35/

Yet, as Clines points out, the meaning of כ in such phrases as Gen 1:26 or Ex 25:40 depends on the meaning of the noun and context. There is nothing in the phrase עשה + accusative + כ which fixes the translation of the preposition. Ju 21:15 provides an example of עשה + accusative + כ but the preposition has its usual meaning of "in" "And the people had compassion on Benjamin because the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel".

Admittedly there are no examples of עשה + noun + beth essentiae in the Old Testament. The usual construction is either two accusatives after עשה or one accusative followed by ל (see Gen 27:9, Ju 8:27). Yet both of these contain the idea of making an already existing object into something else. נעשה אדם לצלמנו would suggest that man already existed in some form. The construction used in 1:26 is the most suitable for its purpose.

There are however examples of beth essentiae with similar verbs: Num 18:26 "When you take from the people of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them as your inheritance" נתתי לכם מאתם בנחלתכם; Deut 1:13 "I will appoint them as your heads" ואשימם בראשיכם. (Compare also Ps 78:55). /36/ Furthermore there is also the idea of purpose; the men are appointed for a function, as the image in 1:26 is for the purpose of dominion.

A further objection to Mettinger's theory is that in Ex 25 the model is revealed, but this is not so with the creation of man in Gen 1. Indeed P knows nothing of heavenly beings. /37/

The second objection to beth essentiae in Gen 1:26 is that it is followed by כדמותנו which means "like us" and would not be strictly equivalent to בצלמנו. כ is comparative and it is claimed that ב must bear a similar meaning. But as Clines replies, there is no reason why בצלמנו and כדמותנו should be equivalent. It is perfectly satisfactory to take בצלמנו as "to be our image" and כדמותנו not as synonymous but as explicatory; it is an image made "according to our likeness". /38/

A third objection is that no real difference can be established between ב and כ in the late Hebrew of P. There is, it seems,

considerable freedom of expression in the use of such terms in P:

1:26 בצלמנו כדמותנו

27 בצלמו בצלם אלהים

5:1 בדמות אלהים

3 בדמותו כצלמו

9:6 בצלם אלהים

From which it is argued by some, including Schmidt, that it is impossible to draw any conclusions from these prepositions. /39/

Certainly there is some overlap of usage but, as Clines observes, just because the meanings of the two words overlap does not mean that they are synonymous and that differences of meaning cannot be analyzed. Gen 5:1ff does not talk of the transmission of God's image, since it belongs to humanity as such and cannot be transmitted. It is Seth's likeness to Adam which is discussed here. Seth is not Adam's image but only has a shape like his father's; 5:3 has כצלמו not בצלמו. When the text speaks of the image of God, the preposition with צלם is always ב. Indeed the kaph of 1:26 could be kaph essentiae: (BDB 454) Gen 2:18, Jb 10:9, Is 40:23, Ps 104:2-4. "Sometimes כ is used in partic. to compare an object with the class to which it belongs, and express its correspondence with the idea which it ought to realize" (BDB 454 1d). G.K. 118x notes that כ is not always used to indicate a similarity, but simply to introduce the predicate (e.g. Neh 7:2 i.e. in the nature of a faithful man). If this is correct man is to be the likeness of God. But this is less well attested than beth essentiae. Further, the date of P and the material in it is open to some question. Indeed Gen 9:6 might be ancient legal terminology and we must be cautious about saying that

it is late i.e. exilic Hebrew. /40/

The final objection to beth essentiae comes from Babylonian parallels where man is created according to the image of God. Enuma Elish reads:

"Yea, Anshar's first born, Anu, was his equal.

Anu begot in his image Nudimmud" /41/

Yet this is the creation of a god not man. Further the extra-Biblical parallels show that the King is made as the image of God, not according to the image of God /42/

The translation of בצלמנו as "as our image" remains a possibility; it cannot be proved, but there is no cause to rule out beth essentiae. If this is correct man is not made in the image of God, nor does he have the image, but he is himself the image of God. /43/ Man is made to be God's representation. We shall be developing a functional notion of the imago Dei, and this would seem to make the use of beth essentiae more likely in Gen 1:26. It is man's role in creation which is significant; he is created to be something -God's vice-regent. We shall now proceed to analyze the imago Dei in Gen 6-9.

4) Is the Image a Corporeal Resemblance to God?

Given the above discussion it might be suggested that man bears a physical resemblance to God. Gunkel wrote, "This being made in the image of God refers in the first place to the body of man, without indeed excluding the spiritual". He points to Gen 5:1ff in support of his case; the image is continued by physical reproduction. /44/

After a linguistic study of the words צלם and דמות, L.Koehler

developed Gunkel's position by arguing that man's likeness to God lay in his ability to walk upright. He renders צלם as "Gestalt" in Gen 1-9. God does have an observable, outward form, as can be seen from such texts as Ex 33:23, Is 6 and Ez 1:26ff. Man is made after the upright posture of God. The term דמותו weakens the resemblance; man and God are not precisely the same. /45/ In his Theology he goes further and claims that the creation of man as male and female precludes too close an identification between God and man. /46/

Yet there is nothing in the account of the deluge nor Gen 1 which suggests that this could be an accurate interpretation of the divine image. Gen 6-9 offers no suggestion of a bare corporeal resemblance between God and man. But does God have a body? The Old Testament frequently speaks of God in anthropomorphic terms; he has eyes and hands, he can feel emotion and perform physical actions such as smelling. Other Ancient Near Eastern religions may have taken such statements about their gods quite literally, (though this is a moot point) but as far as Israel was concerned, Yahweh is portrayed in human terms, not because he has a body, but because he is a person and is thought of in terms of personality. (See Chapter 3)

The Old Testament gives us some statements about the form of God (Deut 4:12, Is 40:18) but it is reluctant to describe God's appearance. Ez 1:26-28 is elusive about God's likeness: "likeness as it were a human form", "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh". In Is 6 there is no real description of God. Even Num 12:8 and Ps 17:15 which speak of the דמותו of God show reluctance to describe him. When God does appear in human form (e.g. Gen 18) it is clear that this is a form assumed for a temporary manifestation.

When God does appear the human form is the natural one for him to assume. J.Barr writes "thoughts of God appearing in human shape are by no means naturally reversible into thoughts of man sharing the shape of God". /47/ Further, the prohibition of images must have exerted a powerful influence in encouraging a non physical view of God. As God is formless, no images can be made (Deut 4:15-18). Pointing against a physical interpretation is the fact that both male and female are made in the image of God. Would God's צלם also include female characteristics? Whilst the evidence is a little ambiguous it does suggest that the Old Testament viewed God as having no physical form. /48/

H.H.Rowley puts forward a completely different understanding of the image. He writes, "In the teaching of the Old Testament God is nowhere conceived of as essentially of human form. Rather he is conceived of as pure spirit, able to assume a form rather than as having in himself a physical form". /49/ Perhaps the notion of "pure spirit" is difficult to read out of the Old Testament, but he is right to see that the Old Testament does not view God as having a human form. If God has no physical form and no image may be made of him, it is hard to see how any Biblical writer, least of all the Priestly author, would have understood the צלם אלהים as representing a corporeal resemblance to God. P plays down anthropomorphism in his theophanies, and he also excludes mediatory beings such as angels. Furthermore he veils the manifestations of God by the concept of the כבוד. /50/ Rowley continues his discussion by interpreting the divine image as man's spiritual nature; that is what distinguishes him from the lower creation. The animals do not share in a kinship

with God. /51/

Near Eastern parallels also indicate that the divine image is not to be found in a corporeal likeness to God. There the image describes the king's function not his appearance. /52/

It is highly unlikely that the image of God in Gen 1 is intended as a corporeal likeness i.e. man's appearance is the same as God's. There is only one way that God is imaged in the Old Testament and that is through man. God is not imaged in a fixed object but in living persons; images which God has himself set up. /53/

Yet the argument for either spiritual or physical interpretations should not be pushed too far in either direction, whether one sides with Gunkel or Rowley. The whole person mind, body, soul and spirit is in the image. Man is not an animated body, a soul enclosed in a shell, as found in some Greek thought. In Hebrew thought man is a psychosomatic unity, a totality of which, mind, body, soul and spirit are different aspects. The body is the living form of the self, the expression of our existence and medium of our spiritual and personal life. /54/ The whole man is in the image. /55/ Von Rad writes, "The marvel of man's bodily appearance is not at all to be exempted from the realm of God's image". /56/ A far higher value is set on the body in Hebrew than in Greek thought. God's representative in the world is a unity of both the spiritual and physical aspects of humanity.

As it would seem unlikely that the human body is a direct likeness to God, it is probable that the image consists in man's function. There are however other interpretations of the imago Dei which seem to fit awkwardly with Gen 6-9.

First, the suggestion of S.R.Driver that the image of God is found in humanity's intellectual powers, in particular self conscious reason, /57/ is plausible in view of Noah's construction of the ark, but as we noted the image includes the whole of man not just his mind.

Secondly, the claim that the image consists in moral likeness is also open to doubt, especially in the context of the flood, /58/ even though the emphasis in Gen 6-9 on the contrast between human sin and the righteousness of Noah, might suggest an ethical interpretation of the image.

The chief problem with this is that the entry of sin into the world does not seem to annul the image. Gen 9:6 envisages no loss, and moreover it is mentioned in the context of a story about the total corruption of creation. Gen 1-9 sees the whole human race in the divine image. **אדם** refers to the species not just to the first pair.

It must be recalled that the image is something possessed by all mankind, not just the chosen people who are called to be God's holy race. We would agree that correct moral behaviour is a part of the image; man is to exercise dominion in accord with God's law, as he failed to do in the flood (Gen 6:12b), but it would appear that the essence of the image is to be found elsewhere.

Thirdly, cultic interpretations also seem unlikely. Given the importance of holiness in P, is the Imago Dei to be found in the cultic sphere? Mettinger writes, "The similarity between man and his prototype must lie in the common function of offering songs of praise to the Creator in the earthly and heavenly Temple". /59/ Like man,

angels are depicted as ruling over creation (Deut 32:8), and man is made for communion with God.

Mettinger's analysis is not without difficulty. W.Groß describes the parallel between the creation of man and the sanctuary as a modern abstraction foreign to P. Moreover P does not use the word תבנית in Gen 1, which he does in Ex 25. /60/ The context of Gen 1 is universal whereas the cult was a specifically Israelite phenomenon. As far as P is concerned there is no cult in the period between Adam and Sinai; the cult is for Israel not all mankind. The key to the image is not to be found in the cultic sphere. /61/ Worship is only possible through the revelation of God at Sinai, where cult with all its trappings begins. For P there is no cultic activity between God and Noah. There are of course cultic aspects to P in Gen 1-11: 1:14, 2:1-3, 9:4, but these are not developed until Sinai. Furthermore there are no appearances of angels in P. Whilst cultic activity between God and Israel may be a part of the image, we would suggest that it is not the most significant factor.

A fourth possibility which has commanded attention in recent times is that the image is found in man's personal relationship with God. It might be suggested that this is true for P in the flood; Noah is God's counterpart in dialogue. Of all the creatures in the story it is only man with whom God communicates face to face. Noah receives his instructions directly from God and it is through him that the covenant of Gen 9 is set up. He receives specific moral commands, and of all the creatures which are made in Gen 1, he is the only one who is addressed directly by God (1:28) "And God blessed them and said to them...". In 1:22 God blesses the birds and aquatic animals,

but he does not speak to them directly. The statement is part of blessing not direct address. In 1:28-30 the animals are referred to in the third person plural. In 1:28ff man is summoned to a special relationship with God, which the non-human world does not share.

There have been many who have argued that the essence of the divine image is to be found in a personal relationship with God, not in any human quality. Procksch stated that the divine image consisted in the personality of man and his unique ability to comprehend the person of God: both God and man share personhood as a character trait. /62/ It is Barth who has had such a major emphasis with this interpretation. Man is created to correspond to God, to stand before him in the relationship of an I-Thou. /63/

With such a body of opinion backing this interpretation, it might seem attractive. But there are problems. Gross has argued that it is not in accord with the intentions of the Priestly writer in his ancient context. He rejects the idea that the image is man's ability to answer God, since in P men do not speak to God before Gen 17:18. It is when God reveals his name that people respond: 17:1, 35:11, Ex 6:2. /64/ Indeed Noah never speaks to God!

Barth is right to say that the image is found in male and female, but whether the relationship between male and female is paralleled in the I-Thou in God is more doubtful. We shall discuss this further below.

J.F.A.Sawyer has noted that the word כנגד, used of the relationship between husband and wife in 2:18, 20, would have been suitable for Barth's interpretation of the image. But it is not the word used; כנגד means "what is in front of", "corresponding to"

(BDB 617 2a) and it is unlikely that this is the same as בצלם. /65/

It is also true that covenant plays an important part in the story. Could it be that man is created to be God's covenant partner? Is it significant that after the making of the first covenant the term image of God is not used? Before 9:8 the Bible talks of imago Dei, after that covenant is the concept which is employed. Is it the case that once man is in the covenant the term צלם אלהים is redundant?

The problem with this rather attractive idea is that the covenant in Gen 9 is made with all the created order and not just man. It cannot be said that covenant is exclusively human.

Attractive though the above views are, they do not seem to be quite in accord with P.

5) Man's Dominion Over Creation

Each of the above interpretations may reflect an aspect of the image but none are free from difficulty in explaining its essence. The one aspect of the divine-human, and human-animal relationship which is stated in the context of the image is the dominion over creation. This is more closely associated with the image than anything else in the Priestly document. But is man's authority over creation a consequence of the image, as Barth and Horst /66/ have argued, or is it the essence of the image?

Given the importance of dominion in Gen 1:26ff, it is hardly surprising that there have been those who have argued that the image consists in human rule over creation. It does seem that וַיִּרְדּוּ in 1:26 has final force. There are two possible ways of taking the word. First, there is the translation of W.Gross "so that they..", man is created to rule. He argues that the functional meaning is the only one known to P. Man is not God's image because of the possession of a quality, but he is God's image in so far as he is empowered to rule over the created order. In the era of creation and deluge the focus is not on the divine-human relationship, but on man's relation to the animal kingdom. The phrase image of God is functional. /67/

This seems possible but secondly, וַיִּרְדּוּ could also be a jussive "Let them rule", though as Clines notes it probably still has a final force. Clines argues that dominion is so immediate that it is almost a constitutive part of the image. He renders Gen 1:26 as "Let us make man as our image.....so that they may rule" (waw joining two jussives with final force for the second). /68/ The discussion of

dominion in the context of blessing in 1:28 does not mean that dominion is merely consequential. 1:6 "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters" (Two coordinating jussives and a single waw). There are two commandments but not two acts of creation. The firmament in being a firmament is already separating the waters. The second part of 1:6 is not just a consequence of 1:6a but draws out its permanent significance. Compare 1:16ff "And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate light from darkness". We do not have here an initial act and its consequences, as though the making preceded the setting. The act of creation of the sun and the moon includes within it the purpose which they are to serve. Their function in giving light is not the same as their creation and placing them in the heavens, but they cannot be defined without their role as lights. No definition of the image is complete without rulership. /69/

Both Gross' and Clines' interpretations are possible, and it is hard to know which is more likely. Perhaps it does not matter which one we choose so long as we retain a final force for לְרָדוֹ . Man is created as the image so that he may rule. The text of both creation and flood focuses on human dominion, and as far as P is concerned this is the most significant factor of man as the image of God.

As above it is highly likely that the Ancient Near Eastern description of the king is in the background. As I. Engnell has

argued, in line with his interest in sacral kingship, Adam is enthroned as ruler of the cosmos in Gen 1. /70/ The king for Israel was Yahweh's representative, through whom blessing was mediated to the people (2 Sam 7:14). The title "God" was even used for the king (Is 9:5) - a functional not ontological idea, which reflected man as God's representative. Man like the king is entrusted with God's authority. /71/ There are clear parallels between man's rule and that of the king. Man only has dominion because he is in the image and being in the image means he is ruler. In both flood and creation God is presented as the sovereign creator and Lord of all that exists, but he establishes man as his vice-regent, his representative (צלם). Man is king of the earth.

This differs enormously from other Ancient Near Eastern cosmologies, in which man is created to be a servant of the gods to do his work. The Atrahasis Epic puts it like this:

"Create a human to bear the yoke.

Let him bear the yoke, the task of Enlil,

Let man carry the load of the gods". /72/

In Genesis on the other hand man is created to be God's image, as Clines writes:

"to depute in the created world for the transcendent God who remains outside the world order. That man is God's image means that he is the visible corporeal representative of the invisible, bodiless God; he is representative rather than representation, since the idea of portrayal is secondary in the significance of the image". "The image is to be understood not so much ontologically as existentially: it comes to expression not in the nature of man so much as in his activity and function. This function is to represent God's lordship to the lower orders of creation." /73/

There is a tension between God's immanence in the world and his transcendence. God stands over and above the world, which he has

brought into existence. He manifests his presence in the world through man who is his image. God's immanence and transcendence are held together without divinizing man. Man is the continuity between God and his world. /74/ Man the image, images the creator's use of power.

Human existence is not for harsh labour nor for hedonism; man is to find the development for his powers in useful labour. Work is not a curse but a gift from God. Like God, man may rejoice in his work; he is not to sink to the level of a slave. /75/

The nature of human rule over creation can be seen in the two verbs רדה and כבש. The expressions are strong: רדה means "tread", כבש "stamp". /76/ In 1 K 9:23 רדה is used of forced labour; in Joel 4:13 it is employed for the treading of a winepress. In Lev 26:17 and Nu 24:19 the verb means subdue; and is used of the king's dominion in 1 K 5:4, Ps 72:8, 110:2 and Ez 34:4. Man's rule over the animals reflects Israel's theology of kingship. /77/

The verb כבש also belongs to this area of subordination and domination. It is used of slaves (Jer 34:11, 16, Neh 5:5), and of land brought under subjugation (Num 32:22, 29, Josh 18:1).

This does not mean that the animals are put at man's disposal for exploitation, rather man is to rule over them justly. Concern for animals is found in many parts of the Bible: Deut 25:4, Is 11, Hos 2:18ff, Ps 36:6, Jon 4:11 and Prov 12:10; man is to appreciate nature which is inherently good, and humans are to partake of God's ongoing work. It must be remembered that man is vegetarian in Gen 1 (We discussed this in Chapter 6), and permission to eat meat is given later in 9:2ff. The primary meaning of רדה is "govern"; not too much

attention should be given to the harsh contexts in which the word appears. Gen 1 sees no place for exploitation but rather a role for man's just and gentle rule within the parameters of Gen 1:26ff. The context rules out wrong use of authority. **כבש** is indeed a strong term, but it is used of the earth in Gen 1 not of the animals. The idea is of agriculture and settlement. /78/

Why is there mention of the animals only in Gen 1 and not of the rest of creation? Dominion can only be exercised over living creatures. As 1:29ff shows the relationship to plant life is different. The rest of creation is at human disposal, as the feminine suffix on **כבש** shows. /79/

The theme of human dominion is picked up in Ps 8 which seems to offer a commentary on Gen 1. The term **צלם אלהים** is not used and it is hard to tell which is the earlier text. The idea of dominion is clear: "Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honour. Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the sea" (RSV). Opinion is divided over whether this is an earlier or later stage in the tradition: Prof Barr thinks Ps 8 is earlier but Snaith thinks it is a commentary on Gen 1. /80/ It is impossible to tell who is right but the important thing to notice is the exalted status of man in relation to the power and splendour of God. Man is God's vice-regent who rules over creation. Interestingly judgment is sometimes seen in the letting loose of animals against man (Lev 26:21ff, cf Deut 7:22, 2 K 17:25, Is 34:11, Ez 14:15), hence

undermining his authority.

At a much later stage this theme is taken up in Sirach 17:1-14. Again man's authority in creation is given special emphasis 17:2 "He gave to men few days, a limited time, but granted them authority over the things upon the earth". But under Hellenistic tendencies he develops the idea beyond that found in Genesis. 17:6ff "He filled them with knowledge and understanding, and showed them good and evil" - somewhat different from Gen 3!

In short P sees human dominion over creation as the most important aspect of the image of God in man. All humanity partakes of it. Man is God's vice-regent on earth. Given this functional interpretation, it seems that *beth essentiae* is more likely in 1:26. The concept of the image appears to be describing man's role, what he is created to be and do. Man is made as the image of God rather than in the image.

This interpretation of the *imago Dei* seems to be supported by the story of the flood. We have noted that authority over life and man's proper place in the world is a theme in these chapters. Gen 1:26 defines the appropriate nature of man in the world. Gen 6-9 demonstrates misuse of the rule which the image confers on man. In 6:12 all flesh had corrupted their way by *רע*; they had abused the dominion which was entrusted in 1:26ff. Man had overstepped the boundaries which had been set by God, and the cause of the flood is a marring of the image. The theme of creation, uncreation and re-creation testifies to God's authority over life, which is his alone, and is not to be seized by man. The image confers authority but not total authority. In the post-diluvian world man's dominion is specified still further by defining his authority over life: he

may eat meat but not the blood, and the killing of humans is outlawed except as punishment for murder. Consequently man's powers as vice-regent and image are strengthened. In a context where dominion is so important it is not surprising that the imago Dei is introduced, since that is the classic expression of man's rule in creation. If the image is in essence man's rule over creation, it is right for it to be placed as the basis for the prohibition of murder, and the authority which is conferred by God to execute the manslayer, since the power to take the life of one's fellows is not entrusted to man. Further Noah, the righteous man, provides an excellent example of right dominion by his taking of the animals into the ark, and his refusal to partake of oppression.

Whilst human reproduction continues the species, it would be unwise to see the image as being handed down physically. Gunkel interpreted it this way on the basis of 5:1ff. /81/ There is a difference between creation by God and begetting by Adam. Seth is born in Adam's likeness not God's. Rather it is the whole of humanity which partakes of the divine image. Man as man is the image. /82/ For a fuller discussion of human procreation see Chapter 6.

Finally, Gen 6-9 still envisages the whole of humanity male and female, as being in the image of God. In the flood it is not just Noah who is saved but his family, wives as well as husbands. The deliverance through the flood is worked out not just through Noah but through his whole family (6:18). Humanity's existence is grounded in mankind as male and female in both creation and flood. The term אָדָם "man", "mankind" in 9:6, is generic and is never used in the plural.

The significance of the image is worked out through both sexes.

The plural verbs וַיַּרְדֵּה and וַיִּבְרָא 1:26, 28 show that it is not just one man but the whole human race, male and female, which is included in the image and its dominion. There can be no question of an androgynous being: the duality male and female is there from the start, in harmony not antithesis. There does not appear to be any sense of subordination of woman and any possible difference in roles is not explored, as it is in chapter 2. /83/

On the other hand the text does not speak of sexuality in God. The Old Testament and especially the accounts of creation and flood (see Chapter 4) portray God as different in kind from his creation and the beings whom he has made. God is not mortal, and he does not reproduce in the way that humans do. Whilst terms such as Father and King are common designations for God, this does not mean that he is thought of as an exclusively male deity. Indeed the Old Testament can at times employ female metaphors for God: Deut 32:18, Is 42:14 and Ps 123:2. /84/ The image of God is found in both men and women.

6) Does Gen 6-9 Help Us Understand the Divine Plural in Gen 1:26?

There have been several explanations of the unusual plural נַעֲשֶׂה in Gen 1:26.

First, it has been suggested that there is here a fragment of myth. The text could be read as the address of one god to another.

An Assyrian text runs:

"What (else) shall we do?

What (else) shall we create?

Let us slay (two) Langa gods,

With their blood let us create mankind." /85/

Yet this is a highly unsatisfactory interpretation for Gen 1; all other traces of polytheism are removed, and the passage places a great emphasis on the sovereignty and majesty of God in creation. Surely in view of the monolatry of Israel the writer knew that he was using the plural? This is not a piece of discarded mythology; /86/ God's sovereignty rules out lesser deities.

Secondly, there have been some such as Kimchi and Maimonides, who have argued that God is addressing the earth so that it would bring forth man out of the dust. Naturally this would form a good parallel to Gen 2, but is awkward for Gen 1. The earth is spoken of in the third person in 1:24, and in 1:27 God alone is the creator. /87/

A third possibility is that it is a plural of majesty. (See GK 124 g-1) Driver opts for this interpretation as the idea is to convey a solemn occasion. /88/ Yet there are no certain examples and Jolion 114e rejects the idea. Gen 11:7 "Come, let us go down and there confuse their language" is a possibility, but it could be ironic mockery of 11:4 "Come, let us build ourselves a city". The plural in Is 6 probably refers to the heavenly court. Some see a plural of majesty in Ezra 4:18, "the letter which you sent to us has been plainly read before me", but "us" probably refers to the court and "me" means me personally. Sometimes אלהים takes a plural verb. Gen 20:13 "God caused me to wander" והתעור, but this could be out of deference to Abimelech's polytheistic views. The lack of parallels makes a plural of majesty unlikely. /89/

A fourth interpretation is to see 1:26 as an address to the divine beings in the heavenly court as found in Is 6 and 1 K 22:19ff. Von

Rad takes this line arguing that the plural prevents too close an identification between the image and God, since there is likeness to the angels as well. /90/

Sawyer notes that a reference to angels would not be out of place in a fifth century document. He renders 1:27 as "So God created man with a resemblance to himself; with a resemblance to divine beings He created him". /91/

Yet this interpretation seems unlikely. Man would be made in the image of the angels and also he would have been created by them - something which the singular verb of 1:27a rejects. There has been no reference to the heavenly court in the chapter, and there is no other part of P where either it or angels are mentioned. In Is 6 and Jb 1,2 a description of the court is given, but this is not found in Genesis 1. /92/

The Old Testament consistently portrays creation as an act of God. The sequence of creation, uncreation and re-creation in the story of the flood shows that it is God alone who is the sovereign creator. There are no intermediary beings of any sort; in 6:5-9:19. Gen 9:6 uses a singular verb; God made man in his own image. In 1:26 those addressed are summoned to act and create, but they are not angels. Even if Ps 8 does refer to a heavenly court this does not mean there has to be one in Gen 1. /93/ It is therefore doubtful that the plural is used for avoiding too close an identification between God and man.

There is a fifth interpretation which is possible, but hardly free from problems: duality in the Godhead. Barth has given a classic interpretation along these lines which is not far removed from a

Trinitarian interpretation. He writes, "An approximation to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity....is both nearer to the text and does it more justice than the alternative suggested by modern exegesis in its arrogant rejection of the exegesis of the early church". /94/ Between the persons in the Deity there is an I-Thou relationship which corresponds to the I-thou between man and woman. "It is not palpable that we have to do with a clear and simple correspondence, an *analogia relationis*, between this mark of the divine being, namely that it includes an I and a Thou, and the being of man male and female". /95/

Barth's interpretation is, as Stamm has pointed out, out of step with the Old Testament. He is reading back Trinitarian beliefs. /96/

A more plausible suggestion is that of Clines who argues that God is addressing his Spirit. The Spirit is at work in 1:2 (and in other passages which speak of creation such as Ps 104:30 and Jb 33:4) as an agent of creation. The Spirit is sometimes depicted as separate from Yahweh (e.g. the Spirit of the Lord in Judges), but is not the personal Spirit of the New Testament. The Spirit is also God and this is why there is a transition from singular to plural in 1:26ff. /97/

This interpretation is open to the same criticism as that of Barth's, but it is also undermined if *רוח* in 1:2 is rendered "wind", which suits the parallel with 8:1. /98/

A sixth interpretation is that God is addressing himself - a self deliberation. Gen Rabbah 8:3 "He took counsel with his own heart". /99/ In English we have a first person plural "Let's go". /100/ Jolion Grammaire 114e gives several examples including Gen 11:7,

37:17, Deut 13:3 and Ps 2:3. Westermann compares the oscillation between singular and plural in 2 Sam 24:14 "let us fall into the hand of the Lord for his mercy is great, but let me not fall into the hand of man". He concludes that the plural of deliberation in the cohortative is a sufficient explanation. /101/ Clines compares Song of Songs 1:9ff where the lover speaks in the first person plural "Let us make ornaments". /102/ "Let us" in Gen 1 is an idiomatic way of expressing self deliberation. Whilst it is not without problems (not least because the examples cited by Jolion, Westermann and Clines take plural subjects), this option is to be preferred because it is comparatively free of disadvantages. We believe that the likely interpretation of the plural is one of self deliberation, particularly in the light of the various indications from the account of the flood. (See GK 108 and 124g p398 note 2) This option is not free from difficulty, but it has fewer problems than the others.

At best we can only be agnostic on this point. Nevertheless whatever option we choose, it does not greatly alter our interpretation of the image.

7) God, Man and the Animals

There are other comparisons between the properties of God, man and the animals in Gen 1-9 which help specify the divine-human relationship, in particular man's part in creation. Humanity is still different from God. Man dies but God does not; God creates and re-creates but humans do not. Both God and man see, hear and speak. The word **ברא** is used of God alone, but **עשה** is used of both humans and God. Man eats and reproduces (9:1-7) but God does neither. Both God

and man rest on the 7th day. /103/

Further, the flood makes a clear distinction between man and the animals. His rule over them is seen in gathering them into the ark. Man's technical ability is supreme and he responds to language and instruction, as well as the comprehension of moral values (9:1-7). It is through man that the purposes of God are worked out in history; it is by Noah that the world is delivered from disaster. /104/

Nevertheless it should be recalled that humanity is still rooted in nature. Like the creatures he has sexual differentiation, he can reproduce himself, is herbivorous and has a body. Both have the breath of life (7:15) and man is created on the sixth day after the animals. Yet are animals portrayed as sentient beings in the Old Testament with a conscious purpose as R. Baukham has suggested: Gen 3:1-5, Num 22:28-30 and Jb 39:16-18? Writers even speak of animals as conscious of God: Jb 38:41, Ps 104:21,27. /105/

Whilst we must be wary of reading back modern day rationalism, the examples Baukham takes are not all that clear. Gen 3 and Num 22 are legendary and it would be unwise to handle them too rigidly. The ostrich of Jb 39 does not partake of wisdom at all. The statements of Jb 38:41, Ps 104:21, 27 are made from the perspective of the writer who understands God as the provider of all things necessary for life. Consequently this is not necessarily conscious prayer as understood by humans. The writer may have observed animals crying for food and likened it to prayer. There is also the distinctive way in which man is created. The waters bring forth living creatures (1:20), as does the earth (1:24), but man is created from the divine realm. As Jobling notes, "Gen 1 and Ps 8 in their present form

present a dialectical tension between humanity's supreme dignity over and radical oneness with the rest of creation". /106/

Yet it must also be recalled that, according to the flood, morality seems to be a part of the animal world as well as of the human (6:11ff): all flesh was corrupting its way before God. Moral restraint is also expected from the beasts 9:5 "of every beast I will require it and of man" - compare Ex 21:28-36. It is the image of God which distinguishes man from the animals and not just moral responsibility; this makes moral interpretations of the image unlikely.

8) Genesis 9:6

It is the doctrine of the imago Dei which forms the basis of the prohibition of murder in Gen 9. J.M. Miller has asked what the connection is between being made in the image and shedding blood. He notes the assonance between דם and אדם. If דמות is substituted for צלם there is a further assonance to דם. He argues that in the pre-Priestly text there was an old saying which prohibited murder on the grounds that man is made in the דמות of God. צלם was later substituted for דמות and placed alongside דמות in Gen 1. צלם clarifies the primary term דמות.

The reason for this, Miller argues is to do with the similarity of דם and דמות. According to the Mesopotamian view man was created with divine blood. /107/ There is only a slight change if בדמות is changed to בדמי or בדמו. The term צלם was more useful because it is a more concrete word than דמות and, as far as Gen 9 is concerned, it removed any hint of divine blood flowing in human veins. The stages

in the tradition were as follows:

- 1) There was an old legal saying which prohibited the shedding of human blood on the grounds that man is made in the likeness of God.
- 2) Second Isaiah and Ezekiel use the word דְמוּת with reference to God's appearance.
- 3) The Priestly account was markedly different from other Ancient Near Eastern stories. Man is not derived from divine blood but from divine likeness, which is passed from generation to generation. There is a radical rejection of the idea that God made man in his own blood.
- 4) To avoid the confusion of דָם and דְמוּת, the term צֶלֶם was introduced and added to Gen 9. /108/

Miller's suggestion is purely hypothetical. No doubt P wished to eschew any idea that man was made with God's blood, but there is no real evidence to suggest that דְמוּת was the prior term. Both צֶלֶם and דְמוּת could have been used simultaneously, and this is all the more likely in view of the fact that the latter clarifies the former in 1:26. Moreover we are bound to interpret the text as it now stands, rather than on the basis of a highly uncertain hypothesis. As we have seen, if man is to be God's representative in the world, it is צֶלֶם rather than דְמוּת which is the more significant term.

The prohibition of murder is grounded in the fact that God made man in his own image. It declares that God has sovereign control over human life and it is because of this sovereignty that the issue is raised in the story of the flood. By murder, man affronts the authority of God and grasps at what is not his to take. Man does not have the right to take the life of his fellows; that belongs to God

alone, Homicide reverses the creator's will for the continuation of life on earth (9:1,7). The image of God is the living, personal representative of the true and living God. It is in life not death that the image is manifest, and that God is presented to the world. God cannot be represented in a lifeless object (Ex 20:4, 34:17), but only in a living human being. To kill is to destroy the image which God has set up.

It is here that we come to the crucial point. The story of the deluge does not teach that human life is valuable in and of itself. Rather the value of human life is found in its relation to God. Human existence is much more than bare life; it is the representation of God in the world and interaction with other people. It is because man is made in the image of God that life is never to be taken; it is people who are sacred not life itself. /109/ The relationship between God and man must not be broken. It is the image of God that is to be preserved; this can only be done through a living person.

Many of the suggestions concerning the image contained elements of truth. If man is killed, he is unable to have a relationship in dialogue with his maker. Nor is he able to have spiritual communion or respond in cultic or ethical obedience. If man dies he loses his relation with God. But, as we saw above, it is the notion of dominion which is central to the Priestly writer's thought. If man is killed, the proper government of creation is jeopardized. Creation can only be governed by living humans.

QD is the infringement of the dignity of others— violence against people rather than property. The imago Dei confers on man dignity and authority in contrast to the created order. Murder is an attack

on the dignity of the **צלם אלהים - חמס** is an affront to the image of God, not just to human life.

9) Reading J and P Together

Is our understanding of the imago Dei altered at all by reading both the sources of Gen 1-11 as a unity?

First, the notion of dominion is put in a particular light with Noah sending forth the raven and the dove (8:6-12). The idea of human rule is emphasized by the mention of seedtime and harvest in 8:22. The rest of Gen 1-11 also develops this theme: Gen 2 shows man naming the animals; technological advance and mastery can be seen in Enoch's building a city, in tent making, cattle rearing (4:20), music (4:21), the forging of bronze and iron (4:22), and Noah's wine making (9:18-27). Conversely there is also the attempt of humanity to grasp too much power to itself as it tries to go beyond the bounds allotted by God: Cain and Lamech kill; Noah becomes inebriated, and those at Babel try to build a tower to the heavens for their own self glorification. The whole narrative, both J and P, works out the significance of how man is to function in the world.

Secondly, the complete text gives more support to the interpretations of Barth, Horst and Westermann. Not only does God address man but man also replies. Gen 3 contains a dialogue between God, Adam and Eve and the following chapter records a conversation between God and Cain. The use of **נחם** in Gen 6 (See chapter 3) shows God responding personally to the events of the world. Further there is sacrificial and cultic activity with God responding, whether positively or negatively, to the sacrifices of Cain, Abel and Noah.

Both sources speak of Noah as in a special relationship with God (6:8, 9). (See chapter 2)

Whilst Barth's interpretation becomes a stronger possibility in a holistic reading of the text, it still remains difficult to prove, and the dominant theme remains the idea of dominion, since that is what is mentioned in the specific context of Gen 1:26ff, and which is developed in the flood. Further, even on a joint reading Noah never speaks, which suggests that Barth's interpretation of the image is probably out of step with the context of the Old Testament. Dominion is the most significant factor in the divine image for the writer of Genesis. Man is to represent God and have authority in creation and this is worked out in the complete text.

Thirdly, Gen 3:5, and 22 also provide material of interest. "Behold the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil". In rebellion the first couple have reached out beyond the limits imposed by God to the divine prerogatives of knowledge of good and evil and of eternal life. They have disrupted their relationship both with God and with the environment by trying to be like God in a way which is not permitted. "Like us"- disobedience is a threat to the whole heavenly world, as well as to God. Like J, P also wishes to limit the likeness to God; dominion needs to be exercised correctly. In both Gen 1 and 2 there are restrictions on man's likeness to God, which are abused thereafter. If read together the two texts show that there is a narrow gap between divine likeness and human arrogance. The likeness of Gen 1 is given by God, that of Gen 3 is grasped at by human pride. There is a boundary beyond which man must not go. /110/

Gen 11 is also an account of human arrogance, as man tries to grasp at what is not supposed to be his. There is in Gen 1-11 the problem of the dividing line between the divine and human worlds. P seeks to exalt as well as limit man, as does J. When the two are placed together the correct balance is put into clear focus. Man is like God but the nature of this likeness is determined by God. If put together it would seem that the image of God does not consist in moral awareness of the difference between right and wrong. Man is made in the image of God before he knows the difference between good and evil (3:22), but even when he does become like God in this respect he still retains the image (9:6). On a joint reading it is unlikely that the image consists in man's ability to distinguish between right and wrong.

This is further clarified by the juxtaposition of 9:6 and 8:21. As we have seen 8:21 states that man's basic inclination is for evil, yet this does not seem to alter man's status as the image of God. In P there is no description of what has later come to be called "the fall" (Gen 3), but by the time of the deluge in both accounts man has failed to live up to the demands, which were placed upon him in the creation, whether in Eden or in 1:26ff. Despite human failure the image seems to remain intact (9:6). If man remains as God's image whilst being evil, it is unlikely that the image is to be found in either man's spiritual or moral likeness to God. Nor can it be said that knowledge of good and evil is the basis of the image since humans have the image before and after Gen 3. The image is positive but the knowledge of good and evil is negative. Human dominion which seems to be the basis of the imago Dei, has to be exercised in a

morally responsible way (as it was not by the wicked generation of Gen 6), so that there is no exploitation and the taking of human life. But such righteous behaviour is an outworking of the role of dominion rather than of the image itself. Humans are capable of right moral conduct (See Chapter 2), but this should characterize the way they function, rather than be the essence of the image. Finally the fact that God still preserves humanity in the image even after the terrible events of the flood, and despite man's evil nature, is a testimony to his mercy and enduring faithfulness. Even though man is wicked he is still granted a major part in the ordering of the world.

When man tries to be too much like God his dominion goes badly wrong. Fertility, a blessing freely bestowed in Gen 1, now becomes a painful process (3:16). Agriculture will be hard work and the ground will not always respond favourably (3:17-19). The attempt to grasp at unacceptable likeness to God ends with expulsion from his presence (3:24). Finally the flood is the response to humanity which has ruined its own dominion.

Fourthly, a joint reading of the text means that we must qualify Von Rad's statement that the imago Dei plays no important role in the Old Testament and stands only at the margin of its message./111/ Von Rad was working out his theology in the context of a confrontation with Nazism and natural theology. He wished to disassociate himself from any view which sees the image in terms of spiritual endowments. /112/ Of course we must all be aware of our presuppositions, and the church in England has never faced the kind of persecution which Barth and Von Rad confronted in Nazi Germany.

Another quite different factor in Von Rad's thinking, is the

historical point that P is a document written late in Israel's history at the time of the Exile. J antedates P. The Imago Dei is of little significance because it came late in the religion of Israel. Read in historical perspective the image of God in Man stands at one end of Israel's history.

Yet if one were to read the text as we now have it, the creation of man in the image of God is far from insignificant. The first mention of man in the Bible describes him as the **צֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים**, and if read canonically the whole Old Testament can be seen in this light. The fundamental characteristic of man is that he is made in the divine image. Everything else which is said about man, is read in this light. /113/

10) Conclusion

To some extent the question of the Image of God remains elusive. It is impossible to be dogmatic as to the precise nature of the image of God in man, but if our understanding of the story of the flood is correct, it would seem that man is created as the image of God to have dominion over creation. It is this rule over the world which is the most important aspect of the doctrine of the image in the Old Testament, not just in Gen 1, but also in the story of the flood.

Later Christian Theology has tended towards two contrasting views of the image. One has argued that the image is something within the substantial form of human nature - man is the image of God - that is a being ontology. In contrast there have been those who have rejected this in favour of a functional, relational interpretation. The image is man's position before God, rather like a mirror

reflecting something. There have also been attempts to synthesize these two interpretations. /114/

The Old Testament does not talk in terms of an *analogia entis* or *analogia relationis*, and the exegete needs to be able to distinguish between the modern and ancient context. Yet if our discussion is correct the latter seems to be more in line with the Old Testament. Man himself is the image of God and he stands with him in a relationship of shared dominion. Man relates to God by being his representative in the world.

Finally, the image of God in humanity speaks of the dignity and value of human life in its relation to God. God wills the divine-human relationship to continue. Despite the punishment in the flood, which was brought because man, by committing **עוון**, had corrupted the way laid down in 1:26-30, the account of the deluge reveals God as one who wills to maintain, encourage and prosper human life, in relation to the fullness of his personal will.

Footnotes

- /1/ Von Rad "The Divine Likeness in the Old Testament" TDNT II "εἰκὼν" p390-392, p392.
- /2/ T.C.Vriezen An Outline of Old Testament Theology Blackwell Oxford 1958 p145.
- /3/ G.A.Jónsson The Image of God Gen 1:26-28 in a Century of Old Testament Research Almqvist and Wiksell International Lund 1988 p219-225. This book offers a history of the interpretation of the image, as does D.Cairns The Image of God in Man Collins London 1973.
- /4/ L.Koehler "Die Grundstelle der Imago Dei Lehre Gen 1:26" IZ 4 1948 p16-22, where p17-19 he gives a discussion of Ancient Near Eastern Cognates. See also Schmidt "Schöpfungsgeschichte" p132ff.
- /5/ Clines "The Image of God in Man" TB 19 1968 p74 and Wildberger "Das Abbild Gottes Gen 1:26-30" IZ 21 1965 p245-259, 481-501, p251ff.
- /6/ Briggs The Book of Psalms 2 T and T Clark Edinburgh 1909 p146.
- /7/ Clines "Image" p74ff.
- /8/ Briggs Psalms 1 1906 p347.
- /9/ Clines "The Etymology of Hebrew SELEM" JNSL 3 1974 p19-25.
- /10/ Barr "The Image of God in the Book of Genesis: a Study of Terminology" BJRL 51 1968 p11-26. See also J.F.A.Sawyer "The Meaning of בצלם אלהים (In the Image of God) in Gen 1-11" JTS 25 1974 p418-426, p420.
- /11/ J.M.Miller "The "Image" and "Likeness" of God" JBL 91 1972 p289-304, p298ff.
- /12/ Cited by Westermann Genesis p146 from Schmidt "Schöpfungsgeschichte" p133.
- /13/ Westermann Genesis p146.

- /14/ Clines "Image" p82ff.
- /15/ Quoted in *ibid* p83ff and see discussion Schmidt "Schöpfungsgeschichte" p137ff and Wildberger "Abbild" p484-491.
- /16/ ANET 417b.
- /17/ Schmidt "Schöpfungsgeschichte" p139, 143.
- /18/ Wildberger "Abbild" p489.
- /19/ Jónsson "Image" p135-144.
- /20/ Clines "Image" p93ff.
- /21/ Quoted in Westermann Genesis p153 from Schmidt "Schöpfungsgeschichte" p144ff.
- /22/ Wildberger "Abbild" p495.
- /23/ Westermann Genesis p153ff.
- /24/ Wenham Genesis p31.
- /25/ Westermann Genesis p146ff.
- /26/ Eichrodt Theology 2 p123ff.
- /27/ Clines "Image" p91ff.
- /28/ Schmidt "Schöpfungsgeschichte" p143.
- /29/ Bereishis p70.
- /30/ Westermann Genesis p148ff.
- /31/ Clines "Image" p91ff.
- /32/ Barr "Image" p24ff.
- /33/ Wenham Genesis p29.
- /34/ T.N.D.Mettinger "Abbild oder Urbild >>Imago Dei<< in traditions-geschichtlicher Sicht" ZAW 86 1974 p403-424, esp p406-411.
- /35/ Barth CD III/1 p197.
- /36/ Clines "Image" p76-77.
- /37/ Zenger "Gottes Bogen" p85ff.

- /38/ Clines "Image" p77.
- /39/ Schmidt "Schöpfungsgeschichte" p133.
- /40/ Clines "Image" p78ff.
- /41/ ANET p61a Enuma Elish.
- /42/ Gross "Die Gottebenbildlichkeit des Menschen im Kontext der Priesterschrift" TQ 161 1981 p244-264, p247-250.
- /43/ Clines "Image" p80.
- /44/ Quoted in Clines "Image" p58, from Gunkel Genesis p112.
- /45/ Koehler "Grundstelle" p16-22.
- /46/ Koehler Theology of the Old Testament Lutterworth London 1957 p147.
- /47/ J.Barr "Theophany and Anthropomorphism" VTS 7 1960 p31-38, p38.
- /48/ Clines "Image" p71ff.
- /49/ Rowley Faith of Israel p75ff.
- /50/ Eichrodt Theology 1 p408, 2 p124.
- /51/ Rowley "Faith" p78ff.
- /52/ Wenham Genesis p30.
- /53/ Brueggemann Genesis p31ff.
- /54/ Eichrodt Theology 2 p149.
- /55/ Von Rad Genesis p56. See also Vriezen "La Création de l'Homme d'Après L'Image Dieu" OTS 2 1943 p87-105 p99.
- /56/ Von Rad Genesis p56.
- /57/ Driver Genesis p15ff.
- /58/ Dillmann Genesis p32 is similar to Driver but he argues that part of the image consisted in man's capacity for the good and the true.
- /59/ Mettinger "Abbild" p411 as translated by Jónsson "Image" p155.

- For a discussion of cult in P see Von Rad Theology 1 p232-279.
- /60/ Gross "Gottebenbildlichkeit" p254.
- /61/ *ibid* p256ff.
- /62/ Jónsson "Image" p31 and Procksch Die Genesis p449.
- /63/ Barth CD III/1 p95ff. A similar position is adopted by Horst "Face to Face: the Biblical Doctrine of the Image of God" Interpretation 4 1950 p259-270 p264, Eichrodt Theology 2 p125ff, Bonhoeffer "Creation" p35ff and Westermann Genesis p142-165.
- /64/ Gross "Gottebenbildlichkeit" p57.
- /65/ Sawyer "The Meaning" p422.
- /66/ Horst "Face" p262ff, Barth CD III/1 p187ff, Von Rad Genesis p57, Westermann Genesis p155ff.
- /67/ Gross "Gottebenbildlichkeit" p259ff.
- /68/ Clines "Image" p96, see also Schmidt "Schöpfungsgeschichte" p142.
- /69/ Clines "Image" p96ff.
- /70/ I.Engnell "'Knowledge" and "Life" in the Creation Story" VTS 3 1955 p103-119 esp p112. See also Jónsson "Image" p126-131.
- /71/ Wildberger "Abbild" p256ff.
- /72/ Quoted in Clines "Image" p99, and see the discussion there.
- /73/ *ibid* p101.
- /74/ *ibid* p88.
- /75/ Eichrodt Theology 2 p127ff.
- /76/ Von Rad Genesis p58.
- /77/ Wildberger "Abbild" p259.
- /78/ Barr "Man and Nature: the Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament" BJRL 55 1972 p9-32, p21ff. For discussions of the link between Gen 1 and ecology see Jónsson "Image" p178-191 and Anderson

"Creation and Ecology" in Anderson Creation in the Old Testament p152-171.

/79/ Westermann Genesis p158ff.

/80/ Barr "Image" p12, Snaith "The Image of God" ET 91 1979-1980 p20.

/81/ Gunkel Genesis p112.

/82/ Horst "Face" p263 after Barth CD III/1 p 193,198; Contrast Von Rad "εικων" p391.

/83/ For discussions from a feminist perspective see P.A.Bird "'Male and Female He Created Them': Gen 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation" HTR 74 1981 p129-159; P.Trible God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality Fortress Press Philadelphia 1978 Chapter 1, and M.C.Horowitz "The Image of God: is Woman Included?" HTR 72 1979 p175-206.

/84/ Tribble Rhetoric esp p22ff.

/85/ Heidel Babylonian Genesis p69ff.

/86/ Clines "Image" p64.

/87/ ibid p64ff.

/88/ Driver Genesis p14.

/89/ Clines "Image" p65ff.

/90/ Von Rad Genesis p57.

/91/ Sawyer "The Meaning" p423.

/92/ Schmidt "Schöpfungsgeschichte" p129, Clines "Image" p66.

/93/ Clines "Image" p66ff.

/94/ Barth CD III/1 p192.

/95/ ibid p196.

/96/ J.J.Stamm "Die Imago-Lehre von Karl Barth und die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft" in Antwort Fest K.Barth ed E.Wolff

- Zollikon, Evangelische Verlag Zurich 1956 p84-98, p93.
- /97/ Clines "Image" p69.
- /98/ Wenham Genesis p28.
- /99/ Quoted in Clines "Image" p68.
- /100/ Discussed by Koehler "Die Grundstelle" p22.
- /101/ Westermann Genesis p145.
- /102/ Clines "Image" p68 cf Schmidt "Schöpfungsgeschichte" p130.
- /103/ Sawyer "The Meaning" p424ff and Wenham Genesis p32.
- /104/ See a more general discussion in Creager "The Divine Image" in Light unto My Path ed Bream p103-118.
- /105/ R.Bauckham "First steps to a Theology of Nature" EQ 58 1986 p229-244 esp p231ff.
- /106/ Jobling "Dominion Over Creation" IDBS p247-8 p248.
- /107/ See W.G.Lambert "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis" JTS 16 1965 p285-300.
- /108/ Miller "Image" p299-304. See also S.Abir "Denn im Bilde Gottes machte er den Menschen (Gen 9:6 P)" IG 1982 p79-88.
- /109/ For a discussion of the ethical implications of this see C.Berry The Rites of Life: Christians and Bio-Medical Decision Making Hodder Stoughton London 1987 p146.
- /110/ Miller Genesis 1-11 p20-22.
- /111/ Von Rad "εικων" p390.
- /112/ Jónsson "Image" p213.
- /113/ For the image of God in the New Testament see Clines "Image" p101-103, Horst "Face" p268ff, Barth CD III/1 p201-205.
- /114/ P.Ramsey Basic Christian Ethics SCM 1953 p249-284.

CONCLUSION

The story of the flood in Genesis 6-9 contains a paradox. On the one hand God destroys humanity, with the exception of one righteous man and his family; on the other the account speaks of the value of human life in its relation to God, and the prohibition of murder which ensues. Our discussion has attempted to show how the Priestly source in particular is concerned with the question of life's value, and how this is enhanced by reading the J material with P.

Our thesis has shown that the combination of the two accounts results in a product which is more than the sum of its parts. Our study has focused on both J and P before moving to a united reading of the text. Whilst historical analysis has been helpful, it has been shown that remaining at the level of J and P is inadequate, since new aspects of meaning, especially with regard to the value of human life, have been demonstrated when the text is read as a whole. Despite minor inconsistencies in the narrative it does make sense as a unity, and there are many aspects which have been enhanced by reading the story in this way which would have been ignored at the level of the postulated sources. Our study has shown the need to move beyond analysis of sources to a holistic reading of the text, which is sensitive to its literary, source critical, theological and canonical aspects.

It has been argued in this dissertation that the story of the flood puts the question of the value of human life in a suggestive light. At the outset the flood is caused by **כַּסְפַּת**, the infringement and oppression of others, in particular by the taking of life. Those

who are corrupt (שחח) are destroyed (שחח); there is strict justice since God destroys what has ruined itself. God's mercy results in the deliverance of one individual who is righteous; what a man does is significant in the sight of God. God wills a special relationship with humanity so that it may live in line with his standards. God's judgment is fair; the wicked are destroyed but the righteous are saved, which makes an intrinsic link between life and righteousness. Human life is not only about existence but about life in accord with the fullness of God's purpose. Yet Judgment is not given in cold indifference; God's pain at destruction shows how precious people are to him (6:6). The theme of creation, uncreation and re-creation demonstrates that God is sovereign over what he has created, as only he has the right to take life. Whilst he pledges to uphold life by not sending another deluge (8:20-22, 9:8-17), he increases his demands on man particularly with regard to the safeguarding of life (9:1-7). Throughout the story there is the theme of dominion over life, and man's place as God's vice-regent and image in the world, which is in itself a statement of the worth of humanity.

The story then becomes a parable of God's dominion, and man's appropriate relation to God with regard to this. The value of human life is affirmed, but its value is set in relation to God, rather than in any aspect of human existence. Human life finds its purpose and value in its relation to God. To take up the point which was raised by Prof Hauerwas at the start of our study, this is where the specific Judaeo-Christian understanding of the worth of human life finds its basis. It is this relational understanding of life's value before God which needs to inform our understanding of modern ethical

issues such as abortion, the just war, the death penalty and ecological concerns. /1/. The story of the flood repudiates exploitation. God is supreme over all, and man is placed under his authority. Man may kill animals but not his fellows. The story underlines the vast difference between human and animal life. The non human world is there for the benefit of man, and is not to receive as much respect as humanity, though it is not to be exploited.

Yet this surely begs the question as to why God destroys so many, if human life is of value to him. Does the destruction of the story make its claims about life's value a nonsense? We should like to argue that the story does not in any way undermine the worth of human life. Three points should be noted in answer to this question.

First, it must be remembered that the story of creation, uncreation and re-creation in Gen 1-11 shows that God is sovereign; he can destroy what he has created, since creation is his to do with as he sees fit: "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground" 6:7 (RSV). God is Lord of life and death in Gen 1-11. This is not something which he does arbitrarily; the righteous are delivered (6:8,9, 7:1), but the wicked, who through sin have corrupted (שחית) themselves, are destroyed (שחית). If man separates himself from God by corrupting the way which was laid down in Gen 1:26ff by חמס (6:11-13), he deserves to die. As humanity's value is set in terms of its relation to God, particularly in terms of the imago Dei, then if man breaks that relationship by wickedness and corruption, he merits only death. There is no reason why man should live if he forsakes God. This does not cause God pleasure, and the

choice to punish is taken with great reluctance (6:6). Human life is utterly dependent on God for its maintenance (8:20-22, 9:8-17).

Secondly, the world is corrupt and there is a need to coerce man. If God did not exert his authority even to the extent of taking life, then the notion of justice would appear meaningless. If God did not take steps to rectify a world which was full of **עוון**, then one would have to ask if he himself was just. As God is to uphold the value of life by punishing those who oppress, so man is to take part in that role after the flood (9:5ff). God demands that his law be obeyed; there is a clear injunction to control the world by law which is backed up by force. Fundamental to the story is the distinction between right and wrong; the right will be compelled. Order, peace and justice are to be upheld. If necessary God will uphold his standards against a humanity which rejects its own moral responsibility. God's judgment is just.

Thirdly, the story does not end with judgment. In his mercy God decides to act with long suffering mercy and patience. Once God decided to respond to sin with a universal flood but that is a course of action which he now rejects. Mercy overrides judgment. The story is not one of a God who takes delight in killing (6:6), but of God who decides that mercy will be the basis for his dealings with the world. As God decides to sustain life, humanity is of value to him. Man should emulate God's reluctance to kill. Hence God's decision to destroy is ultimately a sign of the value of life in his eyes, since it shows his rejection of oppression, and in the end it points to his mercy. The deluge does not negate the statements of Gen 9:1-7.

Whilst this is not the place to go into the hermeneutical

implications of this work, what we have suggested does have considerable importance for contemporary debate. Once we see life's value in terms of its relation to God rather than in any intrinsic human property, we enter the realm of personhood. Gen 6-9 teaches the value of human personhood in its relation to God and other people, rather than insisting on the absolute sanctity of life. Modern debate on various related issues must not focus exclusively on the presence or absence of life, but must move to the value of the person and his relation to those around and to God. Perhaps if this perspective is brought to bear some discussion of modern issues can be enlightened. It is hoped that the above may illuminate the teaching of the church.

Footnotes

/1/ See Zenger "Gottes Bogen" for a study of P which is sensitive to ecological issues. See also Lord Jacobowitz "Judging Man's Judgment" The Times 2 10 1989 p20. For a discussion of the flood and the nuclear question see R.Baukham "The Genesis Flood and the Nuclear Holocaust: a Hermeneutical Reflection" Churchman 99 1985 p146-155.

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