
Oguaa Journal of Religion and Human Values
(OJORHV) Vol. 6 Issue 2 (December 2021) Article 3

**Mesopotamian Reverberations in the Genesis
Account of Creation**

Dr. O. N. Shogunle

Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts
Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye
Tel: +234-8067648881
seyishogunle@yahoo.com
sey.ishogunle@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng

&

Dr. Babawale, Solomon Taiwo

Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts
University of Lagos
Tel: +234-7039394265
taiwobabawale@yahoo.com
bstaiwo@unilag.edu.ng

Abstract

The influence of Mesopotamia cannot be overemphasized in biblical studies especially as it concerns the study of creation story. This goes a long way to recognize some similarities between the Mesopotamia narratives and the biblical account. Most comparisons had been carried out between the Genesis narration and ancient creation narratives to the flood stories and the purpose is to discover the basis and to affirm the authenticity of biblical narration. This work therefore examines the 'reechoing' role of the location known as Mesopotamia, and its place in historical narratives of creation stories and associated stories. The paper adopted the historical-critical method and textual analysis. The

paper concluded that the biblical creation account and associated stories had their origin in the Mesopotamia and among the city-States that inhabited her prior to the emergence of biblical Israel.

Keywords

Mesopotamia, Reverberations, Genesis, Creation

Introduction

It is clear that nations in the ancient Near East are important in the Old Testament studies but more emphasis is given to the documents traceable to Mesopotamia as it has a lot of parallels to the account of the Bible about creation. These parallel accounts had broadened the understanding of modern readers of the Old Testament accounts to have a clear view of the important role played by creation stories in the ancient times.

Mesopotamia is understood to be one of the earliest or the earliest city to be civilized and as such, the effect of the city cannot but be examined in exploring early documents about creation and ancient practices of cultural differences. The understanding of this can help to infer into or to infer from Mesopotamia, in order to have a valid proposition of the components of ancient period.

Being an early place of civilization, Mesopotamia is seen to be of greater prominence than biblical Israel, which appears to be a relative late comer. But an examination of Mesopotamia's narratives and the Hebrew narration is interpreted by some theologians as more significant of the younger gaining superiority than the older as in the case of Joseph, Jacob, and David among others. Only a brief focus was related from the Mesopotamia environs when major emphasis was given to the Israelites' history which came as a 'junior' to Mesopotamia.¹ The early writings which are based on the creation and flood narratives are attributed to two sources; J and P. These two sources are traced to have been responsible for the availability of the biblical source of the stories. Thus, the composition of the story is perceived to have been paralleled with the Mesopotamian narratives.

This paper attempts to establish the necessity of Mesopotamia in the composition of creation story(ies) as found in

¹Shea, W. (1984) "A Comparison of Narrative Elements in Ancient Mesopotamia Creation-flood stories with Genesis 1-9". In *Geoscience Research Institute* Vol. 11, Pg. 9-29 Accessed on July 10, 2019.

the Genesis account, with special focus on the narratives stated in Genesis 1-9.

The scope to be covered is as a result of the similarities found in the prescription of God in the creation narrative to Adam about being fruitful and multiplying the earth which also reads the activities of creation. As a matter of fact, many scholars have discovered the relativity of Genesis narration with some other ancient documents and these events are almost directed towards Mesopotamia as the place of occurrence.²

Geographical Location of Mesopotamia

The study of Mesopotamia is very significant as stated above and a proper understanding of the subject would be important in driving home the purpose of this work. In view of this, the geographical location of Mesopotamia will be briefly examined in this section of the paper. The word 'Mesopotamia' is from a Greek root which is interpreted as "between the rivers". The rivers, Tigris and Euphrates are traced from Genesis 2:11-14 in the narrative of Garden of Eden.³

Both rivers are located in the modern day Iraq, Turkey and Syria. The name 'Mesopotamia' appeared first in the fourth century BC, and it referred to the land located in the northern part of Syria, east of Euphrates. After a very long time, the nomenclature of the location was changed to Iraq and it became an Islamic dominated area when the Muslims conquered the area after 630's. The location of Mesopotamia is characterized with the following geographical attributes.

Water Bodies: The Mesopotamia region was well understood for the availability of water which actually comes from several natural water bodies. As the interpretation of the name implies, Mesopotamia, which means between rivers. In other words, it is a land located between water bodies. The water bodies, Tigris River on the Northern boundary and the River Euphrates on the southern boundary are basic sources of water and components of the city. Both rivers are discovered to flow from those two cardinal points to

²Kramer, S.N. (1971). *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*. University of Chicago Press.

³Waters, T.K. (n.d) "Mesopotamia: Geography and Climate"

the Persian Gulf which forms the eastern boundary of Mesopotamia.⁴

Political Geography: The availability of water bodies in the land is a very important factor for the fertility of the land. And as a result, ancient civilization decided to inhabit the land. The most prominent civilization occupying the land was the Akkadians (occupied the middle of Mesopotamia), Sumerians (they occupied the southeastern end of the city) and Assyrians. As a result of the civilization of the occupants of Mesopotamia, they gained more prominence and each of this civilization had great influence whose effect and contributions is effective even in the modern age.

As a result of the instability of the rivers, irrigation systems were adopted as a method of preventing the occurrence of flood and to generate water for their land. The only source of food for the people was to grow crops for themselves and since there was little or no rain at the time which preceded Noahic era. As a result of this factor, the farmers needed to water their plant by all means which made them connect to the rivers and dig canals to draw water for their farm lands. In ensuring that things go on smoothly in the farms, the farmers adopted various means in regulating and controlling the water on their farm.⁵The occupants of Mesopotamia were known for occupations based on the art of the land they occupied. Bottero,⁶ reiterated that the land is divided into two geographical classifications basically; Northern Mesopotamia and Southern Mesopotamia.

Northern Mesopotamia: The upper part of Mesopotamia also known as Northern Mesopotamia is a very fertile part of the land as a result of the frequent rain and rivers flowing down from the mountains. The flow of water from the northern arm provided more chances of irrigation.⁷

Southern Mesopotamia: The lower parts of the Mesopotamia known as Southern Mesopotamia is recognized for its marshy land

⁴Waters, T.K. (n.d) "Mesopotamia: Geography and Climate"

⁵Leick, G. (2002). *Mesopotamian: The Invention of the Cities*. Scarecrow Press.

⁶Bottero, J. (2001). *Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* John Hopkins Press.

⁷Shea, W. (1984) "A Comparison of Narrative Elements in Ancient Mesopotamia Creation-flood

Stories with Genesis 1-9". In *Geoscience Research Institute* Vol. 11, Pg. 9-29 Accessed on July 10, 2019.

Shea, 1984

and there are many flat barren plains. The settlers in this part of the land had to make contact with residents of other parts for the purpose of trading and gathering foods to support their homes, according to Kramer.⁸ The Southern Mesopotamia was known to be a place for Chaldean marshes, the river of Babylon, the inland freshwater sea of Naja and the area is surrounded by red cliff standing far above the ground.

Fortunately, the first permanent settlements were being discovered in the lower part of Mesopotamia, which is the reason for being referred to as the cradle of civilization.⁹ After some time, the land of ancient Mesopotamia increased in population and size that the movement of people to the land caused the land to take a new face, as even the lower part of the land was later understood to be fertile. The modern day Mesopotamia location is traced to current Iraq. In the 1980s one of the many conflicts that were recorded in the area was the Iran-Iraq war. But there is the possibility for the area which had been the cradle of civilization, to have rejuvenation and regain its lost glory of being a centre of attraction.

Occupants of Ancient Mesopotamia

Archaeological excavations that started around 1840s CE revealed human settlements dating to 10,000 BCE in Mesopotamia that indicate that the fertile conditions of the land between two rivers allowed an ancient hunter-gatherer people to settle in the land, domesticate animals, and turn their attention to agriculture. Trade soon followed, and with prosperity came urbanization and the birth of the city. It is generally thought that writing was invented due to trade, out of the necessity for long-distance communication, and for keeping more careful track of accounts.¹⁰

The land of Mesopotamia, known for its characteristic of civilization, was understood to be a very populated area and a place of great prominence. The influence of the land was felt across other nations and their culture was of vast effect on the cultural practices of other nations, as other nations looked unto them as the model for advancement, welfare, development, commerce, and technology. Mesopotamia, according to Kramer, was occupied by

⁸Kramer, S.N. (1971). *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*. University of Chicago Press.

⁹Shea,

¹⁰Jacobsen, T. (1978). *The Treasures of Darkness*. Yale University Press.

varieties of nations but dominated by the Sumerians, Akkadians, Persians, Babylonians and Assyrians, who are all ancient civilizations. The land was really home for some of the world's most ancient famous States with highforms of development.¹¹

The influence of the occupants of the land was across board as their effect lasted into the modern days. The Akkadians' language was used in writing great ancient materials whose literary works are used in the modern day. One of the great literary works traced to be documented by their language is the Epic of Gilgamesh. The Sumerians were known as the earliest civilization and they are very pronounced for their creation of wheel and the base-60 numerical that is used today. The Assyrians were known for their military strength and one of the greatest empires in world history.¹²

The Mesopotamians were also known for the development of new technologies, some of the technologies includes; glassmaking, food control, metalworking, textile weaving, and water storage/irrigation.¹³ They were also part of the early Bronze Age people in the world. This shows the existential distance of its existence. The people made use of copper, bronze, iron and gold in constructing various items, especially weapons of war as other neighbours depended on them for these weapons and they were ready to patronize them. Basically, these expensive items were used in large quantities to decorate their palaces, in order to show the strength of their activities.¹⁴

Being the cradle of civilization, Mesopotamia, unlike Greece and Egypt, was a combination of various cultures and people as they were bonded only by their gods (though, the names of each gods varied according to location and period), scripts or writings and the way they treated women according to Mark.¹⁵ Despite the fact that they lived in the same land, they had different customs, laws and even languages, as those paraphernalia of the Akkad did not merge with those of Babylon. It could therefore be deduced

¹¹Kramer, S.N. (1971). *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*. University of Chicago Press.

¹²Shea, W. (1984) "A Comparison of Narrative Elements in Ancient Mesopotamia Creation-flood Stories with Genesis 1-9". In *Geoscience Research Institute Vol. 11*, Pg. 9-29 Accessed on July 10, 2019.

¹³Jacobsen, T. (1978). *The Treasures of Darkness*. Yale University Press.

¹⁴Bottero, J. (2001). *Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* John Hopkins Press.

¹⁵Mark, J. J. (2018). "Mesopotamian" in *Ancient History Encyclopedia* Accessed on July 10, 2019

that, Mesopotamia encapsulated multiple empires and civilizations rather than being a single civilization. Mesopotamia was referred to as 'cradle of civilization' because of great developments that occurred in the part of the land occupied by the Sumerians in 4th BC (4000BC).¹⁶

Mesopotamia was known in the ancient time as a place of learning. Their influence was not limited to the creation of weapons of war only but also they were vast in education, it is believed that Thales of Miletus, who is known as the first philosopher studied there. A Babylonian saying about 'water' is traced to Thales and his fame was dominant in the area.

Furthermore, Mark held that there were over a thousand deities in the pantheon of the Mesopotamian gods in the multiple cultures and many stories concerning the gods (which includes, the creation myth, the Enuma Elish). It is generally accepted that biblical tales such as the Fall of Man and the Flood of Noah among many others originated in Mesopotamian tradition, as they first appear in Mesopotamian works such as The Myth of Adapa and the Epic of Gilgamesh, the oldest written story in the world.¹⁷ The Mesopotamians believed that they were co-workers with the gods and that the land was infused with spirits and demons (not the modern Christian understanding of demon).¹⁸

Creation Accounts in Ancient Near East

There are lots of creation narratives from the occupants of Mesopotamia which are much related to the content of the Hebrew narrative as recorded in the Bible. The occupants, as already noted in the previous section, were highly civilized people and they must have needed responses to the origin of the world and Man which is a very important reason for the establishment of a creation story. This section thus, presents the creation-flood narratives of the residents of Mesopotamian (Sumerians) and the Babylonians as submitted by Shea.¹⁹

¹⁶Kramer, S.N. (1971). *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*. University of Chicago Press.

¹⁷Mark, J. J. (2018). "Mesopotamian" in *Ancient History Encyclopedia* Accessed on July 10, 2019 Mark, 2018

¹⁸ Mark,

¹⁹ Shea, 1984

The Sumerian Creation Story: The Eridu Genesis

i. Texts

There are three major fragments of tablets comprising the Eridu Genesis and they have been known for long and treated separately, only recently have they been united to form their original Creation-Flood story which began with a reference to Creation, continued with a description of antediluvian life, and ended with the story of the Flood. The reconstructed story formed by the tablets from Nippur, Ur, and Nineveh follows below the three narrations.

ii. Antediluvian Life

The first thirty lines of the Nippur text are missing. The first available column recites the birth goddess Nintur's remedy for the nomadic and uncultured condition of humankind. She gave instructions for the building of the antediluvian cities not only as centers of culture and civilization, but especially for the worship of the gods, including herself. The narration is as stated below in a poetic tone:

May they come and build cities and cult-
places,
that I may cool myself in their shade;
may they lay the bricks for the cult-cities in
pure spots, and
may they found places for divination in pure
spots."
She gave directions for purification, and cries
for quarter,
the things that cool (divine) wrath.
She perfected divine service and the august
offices,
she said to the (surrounding) regions:
"Let me institute peace there".

When An-Enlil, Enki, and Ninhursaga [Nintur] fashioned the dark headed (people) they had made the small animals from (out of) the earth come up from the earth in abundance and had let there be, as befits (it), gazelles, (wild) donkeys, and four-footed beasts in the desert". Enki (the god of wisdom) and Nintur were

particularly active in creation. The reference to the fashioning of the "dark headed people" (the Sumerians' name for themselves) and the making of the animals indicates that a creation account probably preceded this passage.

It is probable that the missing section of the text related the development of humankind's plight. This idea is confirmed by the text from Ur which refers to a time when there was neither agriculture nor weaving of cloth. While these conditions produced poverty among the people, they lived in relative safety because there were no dangerous beasts, insects, or serpents, and "as there was no fear of attack, man had no opponent".

The next readable portion of the text discusses the establishment of kingship which was believed to be a gift from the gods. As the chief agent responsible for carrying out the gods' commands, the king directed the construction of cities and provided cult places and services for the gods. He also guided the people in the irrigation and growth of crops. Each city received half-bushel baskets from the harvest. Nintur assigned a patron deity to each of the five cities. At the top of the next column another break occurs.²⁰

The legible portion contains the end of the list of kings who reigned in these cities. The rest of this information has been preserved in the first portion of the Sumerian King List. Antediluvian kings had remarkably long reigns. Two cities had one king each, and one city was listed as having had three kings. The longest length of reign 64,800 years was listed for three different kings. Three more kings supposedly ruled 36,000 years. The shortest length of reign is 10,800 years. The scribe of this source totaled the dominions of all the cities to 352,800 years for the duration of kingship during the antediluvian world.

Although attempts have been made to relate this king-list to the antediluvian patriarchs listed in Genesis 5, there is no linguistic correspondence. Neither have precise correspondences been found between the figures given for the lengths of reign and the lengths of life in these sources. Both convey, however, a similar picture of a relatively small number of long-lived antediluvian generations. The biblical list leads to a much shorter overall time span for this period.²¹

²⁰ Shea, 1984

²¹Waters, n.d.

Jacobsen was the scholar who synthesized the text of these fragments into a coherent story.²² He has selected three main themes to explain the significance of this text. In the first theme the culture that developed from Nintur's directions is considered to be superior to man's nomadic state. In the third theme Jacobsen holds that the Flood story was well-preserved and known in the ancient world because it is a story of survival rather than one of destruction.²³ The second theme is important for literary critical studies. For the section of the Eridu Genesis which deals with the antediluvian kings and their cities, Jacobsen has noted:

In style this section is clearly modeled on the great Sumerian King list and its formulaic language and arrangement. As to its import one is somewhat at a loss the closest one can come is probably to credit the inclusion of this section in the tale to pure historical interest on the part of its composer.²⁴

Since similar passages in Genesis also can be viewed historically, Jacobsen's conclusion about this section of the Eridu Genesis is significant for comparative purposes. Next, Jacobsen compares the Eridu Genesis with the biblical parallel found in Gen 1-9. The tripartite divisions of both narratives obviously correspond. The first two sections deal with Creation and the antediluvians, especially through lists of the leading figures of that period. Both conclude with a story of the Flood.²⁵

Jacobsen has further noted that both sources have arranged these main segments along a linear time line, rather than grouping them around a folk hero as is more common in such literature.²⁶ This arrangement allows the successive events to relate logically to each other as cause and effect. Such arrangements in literary compositions from the ancient world are so unusual that Jacobsen was compelled to suggest a new designation.

²² Jacobsen, 1978

²³ Jacobsen

²⁴ Jacobsen

²⁵ Jacobsen

²⁶ Jacobson

The Babylonian Creation Story: The Atra-Hasis Epic

i. Texts

The Atra-Hasis Epic is named after its human hero who served as the Babylonian Noah (Noah is the biblical hero who escaped the flood solely with his family). Several whole and partial copies of the cuneiform tablets comprising this series are known. All tablets and fragments have been edited together in a definitive edition of the textual series by W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard.

ii. Creation

The commencement of the Atra-Hasis Epic is set in a time before the creation of man, a time when Enlil forced the younger gods to dig rivers and canals. After forty years the junior gods rebelled, burned their work tools, and marched on the house of Enlil:

Let us confront the Chamberlain,
That he may relieve us of our heavy work.
The counselor of the gods, the hero,
Come, let us unnerve him in his dwelling!

Awakened and warned by a servant, Enlil called an assembly of the gods to deal with the situation. To satisfy the younger gods, Enki proposed that man should be created to be labourers. They agreed to this suggestion and summoned Nintu, the mother goddess, to cooperate with Enki in the project. Made from clay mixed with the blood of a sacrificed god (We-ila), man would be a mixture of the divine and human. We-ila's identity and nature remain obscure, and perhaps his name is a deliberate distortion of the word for man, Awilum.²⁷

Enki opened his mouth, and addressed the great gods, "On the first, seventh, and fifteenth day of the month I will make a purifying bath. Let one god be slaughtered so that all the gods may be cleansed in a dipping. Let Nintu mix clay, that god and man may be thoroughly mixed in the clay". These instructions were then carried out, as is related in an almost word-for-word repetition of the instructions.

²⁷Metz, H.C. (2004). *Iraq A Country Study* LLC: Kessinger Publishing

The date of man's creation has not previously attracted much attention. Purifying baths for the god to be sacrificed took place on the 1st, 7th, and 15th days of the lunar month. Though not exactly chronological weeks, these quarters of the moon are relatively close in length. The god's execution and the creation of man apparently followed directly after the purifying bath on the 15th day of the month. This places man's creation at the end of one lunar quarter or "week." Similarly, the biblical creation of man took place on the 6th day of a 7-day week.²⁸

Although the name for the 7th day of the lunar month was derived from the number seven, the name for the 15th day of the lunar month – the day of the full moon was derived independently from this numerical cycle: *sa-pa-at-tu* or *sapattu*. Since the second sign in this word can also be read as 'ba', this word can be read either as *sapattu* or as *sabattu*.²⁹ The significance of this resemblance to the Hebrew word *abbat* (the final case ending vowel has been lost in Hebrew) has long been debated. While there is no serious phonetic problem in linking these words, it has been unpopular because this word – if it is the same – has been applied to different objects in the two cultures. The Hebrews applied it to a rest day which recurred at the end of a 7-day week, while the Babylonians applied it to the day of the full moon which recurred monthly.³⁰

By linking *sabattu/abbat* to the creation of man, the Atrahasis Epic supports the idea that the names for these institutions may have been derived from the same source. *Sabattu* appears to have been the day in which *We-ila* was killed and his blood mixed with clay. This was the great initiating point in man's creation, though more steps in this process remained to be accomplished. The clay/blood mixture ensured that man would be a combination of the divine and human. In a sense, therefore, man was created on Sabbath. In Genesis man was created on the day before Sabbath, but this difference is much less important than the over-arching connection between Sabbath and the creation of man. It is unlikely that such a specific linkage occurred in both accounts by chance. Both accounts can be traced to the same basic conception which was known to both cultures.³¹

²⁸Wallis, E.A. (2005). *Babylonian Life and History*. Barnes and Noble Press.

²⁹ Wallis,

³⁰Bertman, S. (2005). *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* Oxford University Press.

³¹ Jacobson, 1978

Therefore the idea of the link between Sabbath and the Creation of man can now be found in an extra-biblical source from the first half of the second millennium B.C., and as is commonly believed by Assyriologists, many elements in this type of story undoubtedly derived from still older written or oral traditions. From the biblical point of view the differences involved in the Babylonian account would have been introduced by gradual corruption from polytheistic conceptions.

The second phase in the process of Creation involved Enki, Nintu, and some assistant birth goddesses who broke bits of clay from the central stock and formed these pieces into inert statuettes of seven men and seven women. These were located adjacent to the birth "bricks," the place of parturition for Babylonian women in labour. The womb broke open in the 10th month and mankind was born. At this point Nintu diverges to give advise on marriage and obstetrics. Evidently the reading of this story served as a good-luck omen at the time of childbirth.³²

The Hebrew Creation Story: Genesis 1

Having considered the narration of the Mesopotamian society, the Biblical account is also necessary to be presented in order to understand and feel the echo in the Hebrew narrative. The narrative appears to have taken place in Mesopotamia. Since it had been discovered earlier that one of the rivers mentioned in Genesis narration is found in the land of Mesopotamia.

The Hebrew narration of creation started with the presupposition of the understanding of God as the only being in existence. Only God was therefore presented as the subject to perform all acts and forms of creation. The Spirit of God was seen to have arrived paving a way for the full commencement of creation work. All creatures (plants, aquatic animals, land animals, firmament etc) were created by the spoken word of God.³³

The creation of man was the last day's work. It presents God having a discussion to some set of individuals who were not actually specified. But some scholars are of the opinion that the 'us' must have been the other persons of the God-head.³⁴ The discussion was presented as a two side discussion but there was only one speaker. The subject of discussion was to create man in the

³² Shea, 1984

³³ Mark, 2018

³⁴Black, J. *et al* (2018). *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*. Oxford University Press.

image and likeness of God, and the purpose was for man to dominate the creatures that had been created earlier. The purpose of this creation was for God to have an earthly representative.

This is not so much in contrast to the purpose behind the creation of man in the Epic of Atra-Hasis whose purpose was for man to substitute the gods from their labour.³⁵ Consequently, the creation narrative was concluded by the explanation of the Sabbath. God was seen to have rested on the seventh day after the work of creation. The Sabbath later became a practice for the Jews as was to be prescribed in the Decalogue.

Significance of Mesopotamia in Creation Story

From the early period of studying the creation narratives, the study has always been incomplete without the mention of Mesopotamia. One could be emphatic that the Mesopotamian factor in creation story is of lasting effect and its importance is the focus of discussion in this section of this paper. These significances are presented as below:

Mesopotamia's idea of royalty is presented in the Genesis story of man's creation according to Shea.³⁶ The Mesopotamians understood royalty to mean ruling over vassal nations, and this idea was also portrayed in Genesis 1:28. Man was then to act as kings or as superiors over the other creatures. This purpose of creating man is of utmost significance in the story because it distinguishes the Biblical account from other Mesopotamian narratives.

Mesopotamia is also important in its use of time for the calculation of creation duration. There had been various arguments about the exact timing of the creation days, but the availability of the '60' minute/hour as used by the Mesopotamians had helped in solving the puzzle. The same time calculation is in use even in contemporary world. In affirming this position, Metz³⁷ expressed that the well-being of a community depended upon close observation of natural phenomena. Scientific or proto-scientific activities occupied much of the priests' time. An instance is stated of the Sumerians, who believed that each of the gods was represented by a number. The number sixty, sacred to the god 'An',

³⁵Kriwaczek, P. (2014). *Babylon: Mesopotamia and the birth of Civilization* Thomas Dunne Books

³⁶ Shea, 1984

³⁷ Metz, 2004

was their basic unit of calculation. The minutes of an hour and the notational degrees of a circle were of a Sumerian concept.

Also, Mesopotamia has helped in proving the authenticity of the Bible as ahistorical material far from a divine self-claim of the Bible. Mark noted that the archaeologists who sought physical evidenceto support the biblical stories found exactly the opposite.³⁸Cuneiform was deciphered by the scholar and translator; George Smith (1840-1876 CE) in 1872 CE. The story of the Great Flood and Noah's Ark, the story of the Fall of Man, the concept of a Garden of Eden, even the complaints of Job had all been written centuries before the biblical texts by the Mesopotamians.³⁹ This relays the fact that the narratives of the Bible are only historically credible and may not necessarily be divinely inspired.

Furthermore, Mesopotamia is of great landmark as a result of her early civilization in ancient times. Their teaching and philosophy appears to be the basis on which other neighbouring nations would build their philosophies, including the Israelites. The cultures of the Mesopotamians were adopted by other nations and theybecame a basis for them to build their cultures as the Mesopotamians were cynosure of all eyes. This had really made it possible to document stories (which are discovered in modern age as archeological evidences) and the education of people was also an advantage for proper writing.

Conclusion

The study of antiquity is basically characterized by the effect from Mesopotamia, as the effects cut across all spheres especially in studying the practices of the Israelites and their history. The creation story found in the biblical account is seen to have some Mesopotamian resemblances and parallels. This has more advantage to echo the historical credibility of the biblical narratives.

Modern readers are therefore to recognize the importance of the practices and culture of the Mesopotamians as it has gone a long way in giving a proper understanding of the events which had taken place in the early period of the existence of man. If the Mesopotamians were complacent and had not come up with ideas and philosophies that could have led to documentation through the various means, there would have been lot of erroneous and heretic teachings about the origin of the world and man. The influence of

³⁸ Mark, 2018

³⁹ Mark,

Mesopotamians are not limited to the creation narrative only as their effects are also felt in other incidences that took place in the first eleven chapters of Genesis.