

law would naturally be influential. Yet despite these various contacts and similarities, the religions of the two areas differ radically from one another. There is little similarity in religious practices, and Biblical monotheism is utterly different from anything that we find in Mesopotamia.

The whole matter of derivation is a rather slippery subject. It is easy to get into a frame of mind where one assumes that if any features in two different cultures or religions are similar, one must have been borrowed from the other. Actually, mere similarity is far from sufficient to establish such a claim. It would be necessary also to show that there is a real relationship through which such a borrowing might have come. Furthermore, it is important to notice the differences as well as the similarities.

Thus it is stated in many books that the biblical story of creation is borrowed from the Babylonian creation story. Probably I discussed this in my article in the book, *Modern Science and the Christian Faith*. The differences between these two stories are far greater than the similarities. Actually the similarities are only such as would be sure to be found in any two creation stories. It is quite different in the case of the flood, where there are many similarities in incidental details, even though there are also differences. I am quite convinced that the true story of the flood was passed on for centuries in Mesopotamia and that a certain number of changes took place in the course of transmission, even though many features were kept correct. Thus there has been preserved in the Gilgamesh epic a story that is remarkably similar to our biblical story. I believe that both stories go back to the recollection of the same events. The difference, of course, is that Moses was inspired of God, when he wrote the story of the flood, so as to keep his words free from error, and therefore we can be sure that all of the details in the biblical story are accurate and true.

When one compares the biblical story of the flood with the Babylonian story, he finds great differences in the whole attitude and atmosphere. The moral and religious aspects of the stories are utterly different, even though many of their detailed events are similar.

One can readily imagine someone three or four hundred years from now, picking up a book and reading that the President of the United States who was elected in 1960 was assassinated in the South, and was succeeded in office by the Vice-President, a man