

came to an end on the twenty-seventh day of the second month.

We will now consider a few examples of how J's and P's chronologies agree with one another. On the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains were seen (8.5 P). Forty days later Noah opens the window of the Ark (8.6 J). This would bring us to the tenth day of the eleventh month. He then sends forth three doves, still according to J, and between the sending forth of the first and the second dove, and between that of the second and third dove there is both times a space of seven days. Now we read about the sending forth of the second dove that Noah waited yet seven *other* days, which would seem to indicate that there *also* was a space of seven days between the sending forth of the first dove and that of the raven that Noah had sent forth first of all. In this way J's information gives us a space of twenty-one days from the tenth day of the eleventh month, which brings us to the first day of the twelfth. It is hardly accidental that we arrive at a date precisely two months after the reappearance of the mountain tops and exactly one month before New Year's Day when the waters were dried up from off the face of the earth. According to 7.11 (P) the waters of the Deluge began on the seventeenth of the second month. In the verse immediately preceding this, we read that the waters of the Flood came upon the earth 'after seven days', (7.10 J). By comparing these numerical indications we arrive at the result that Noah went into the Ark (7.6 ff) on the tenth day of the second month, i.e. forty days after New Year's Day, of Noah's six hundredth year. A most attractive supposition is the one advanced by Cassuto, that the Deluge pericope once contained a note stating that YHWH revealed himself to Noah on New Year's Day in the six hundredth year and commanded him to build the Ark, and that this work took Noah exactly forty days. In this way we should by a combination of the indications given in P and J arrive at a reasonable explanation of M.T.'s otherwise inexplicable date, the seventeenth day of the second month for the beginning of the Deluge.¹ J's statement that the catastrophe

¹ The LXX has two other systems, and the Book of *Jubilees* a third variant. Cf. Gunkel's commentary, p. 146.

was caused by the 'geshem', i.e. the heavy rains, the winter rains, is in all its simplicity and naturalness *widely different* from P's mythological conceptions; still this *statement may* very easily be combined with P's dates if only we assume that the dates in these old texts are taken from Israel's old calendar which was able to hold its own as the sacred calendar even after the introduction of the Assyrian calendar, where New Year was coincident with the spring equinox. Then J's rains would fall precisely in December-January, the culmination of Palestine's rainy season. It may be possible that the account of the Deluge once existed in a simpler form with only the 'inaccurate' figures, forty days and seven days. In its present version the account of the Deluge does at any rate *fit these* numbers *cleverly* into a calendar that not only takes the natural course of the year into consideration but also places New Year's Day in the focal point. Let us in this connection once more emphasize that YHWH's promise to Noah (8.22) could hardly find a more fitting 'Sitz im Leben' than the New Year Festival in the autumn before the beginning of the rains, the New Year Festival whose purpose was to ensure the proper balance between the powers and the perpetuation of life by ensuring rain and guaranteeing safety from chaos. In confirmation of this I wish to cite some words of wisdom²: 'The myth of the deluge, ending with the promise of the regular alternation of the seasons (Gen. 8.22), would fit in well with the autumn festival, all the more so since Noah who is saved from the chaos, reintroduced then, is the first vinegrower (Gen. 9.20). According to Lukian, *De dea Syria* § 13, the cessation of the flood was celebrated in the temple of Hierapolis by libations of water. The libations which took place at the feast of Tabernacles in Israel may, while they sanctified the water of the new year, also have been meant to recall the mythical renewal of the law of water as described in the story of the flood. In a Ras Shamra text, III AB, there occurs a myth about Al'iyān Ba'il's battle with the sea and the flood, i.e., the waters of chaos,

² This fits in very well with Elohim's promise in Gen. 9.8 ff, esp. vv. 14 f, 'When I gather clouds over the earth and the bow appeareth in the cloud, then I will remember my covenant which is between me and thee ...'

³ Johs. Pedersen, *Israel: its Life and Culture*, III-IV, 1940, pp. 749 f