We start by recalling what we have found to be the P-source in the primeval history:

1:1–2:3: the Creation Story
5: the Genealogy of Adam
6:9–8:19*: the Flood Story
9:1–17: new World Order and Covenant
10*: the Descendants of Noah’s sons (Table of Nations)
11:10–26: the Genealogy of Noah

We immediately see that the material in some places is paired off:

There are two stories: creation and flood
There are two genealogies: Adam and Noah
There are two agents: Enoch (5:21–24) and Noah

The creation and the flood stories stand in an antithetic relationship. This is clearly seen when we read the creation story in the light of its actual beginning in v. 2, seeing in v. 1 a summary headline corresponding with 2:1–3. V. 2 reads as follows:

הארץ היחיה תוהו ושם עולם ימים והשם הים
The earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while the spirit of God swept over the face of the waters.

(Gen 1:2)

Initially the world is here described in negative terms (possibly with the exception of רוח אלהים, the “spirit” or “wind” of God). There are three negative elements: תמים ונחָם, the “formless void” or “emptiness”; הושך, “darkness”; and תהום/המים, the “deep/waters.” This state is commonly described with the Greek word “chaos.” The creation story then describes step for step how God overcomes this initial situation through his creative acts:

Vv. 3–5: darkness is ousted by light
Vv. 6–8: deep/waters are ousted by the firmament
Vv. 9–10: deep/waters are ousted by the dry earth
Vv. 11–12: formless void is ousted by vegetation
Vv. 20–31: formless void is ousted by:
- swarms of living creatures in the sea
- birds in the sky
- animals and humans on the earth

In short, chaos is overcome by the cosmos; however, not in the way that the chaotic forces disappear, they are given their proper place: darkness to the night and waters above the firmament and deep below the sea. When the creation is described as țôb mēʾōd, “very good,” it is this placement of the elements in their right order, which is praised (1:31).

What we find in the flood narrative is the creation told in reverse; the chaotic waters take the earth back:

In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened.

18 The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters. 19 The waters swelled so mightily on the earth that all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered; 20 the waters swelled above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep. 21 And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all human beings.

( Gen 7:18–21)

Then the earth recovers by the power of the same wind or spirit that once hovered over chaos:

1 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind (rûʿah) blow over the earth, and the waters subsided; 2 the fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed.

( Gen 8:1–2a)

The P source continues the flood story in the sequence of the new world order and covenant (Gen 9:1–17). We have already seen the close resemblances in vocabulary between this text and the creation story. The peace in the animal world and between humans and animals lasts during the 1656 years reported in Gen 5; 1 it is first changed

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