

THE BIBLE AND MYTHOLOGY

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Arion, a poet who lived around 700 B.C.), was a musician of extraordinary skill. He was a master of the lyre. His abilities won him first prize at a music contest in Sicily. He quickly returned to his home town of Corinth by ship. On the voyage home the sailors got wind of his prize money and consequently plotted to kill him. Arion was unaware of this until the god Apollo told him of the plot in a dream. Apollo told him how to save his life. Arion was to request on last favor - the privilege of playing his lyre one last time. After he was finished he was to fling himself over the side of the ship. All this he did and Dolphins carried him safely to land.

Does the story sound familiar? It could. It is a familiar story of mythology. But it also sounds familiar in spots to students of the Old Testament. It has its similarities with the story of John and the 'fish'. Where the story of Arion originated no one is sure - but could it be possible that this story and others originated with the Bible?

There are many such stories to be found. Traditions of certain Gods of the Greeks and Romans relate to men of Biblical mention. For example Sir Walter Raleigh in his History of the World Said Jubal, Tubal, and Tubalcain were

Mercury, Vulcan, and Apollo, inventors of Pasturage, Smithing, and Music. Let's take a look and compare mythology and the Bible characters

#### Mercury and Vulcan

Jubal was the "father of all such as handle the harp and organ." (Genesis 4:21) It is very likely that he began to pervert these instruments. On the other hand Mercury was famous for the invention of the lyre. He had made it out of a tortoise shell.

Josephus (Ant. 1,2,2) says of Tubal(cain) that he "exceeded all men in strength, and was very expert and famous in marital performances. He procured what tended to the pleasures of the body by that method; and first of all invented the art of making brass." Vulcan on the other hand was an Architect, Smith, Armorer, Chariot builder, and maker of thunderbolts. And through a particular service of making thunderbolts for Jupiter he was given the most beautiful of the goddesses to wife - Venus. The Bible (Genesis 4:22) says Tubalcain was " an instructor (whetter) of every artificer in brass and iron."

#### Traditions of the Flood

Mythological traditions of man have not only come down but also traditions of the major events in his history.

Take for example the numerous Flood traditions...

In Greek mythology it is taught that after man's creation crime and violence soon grew rampant on the Earth. Man soon learned the use of metals in warfare and the Earth became wet with slaughter. Jupiter, able to observe all this, soon became angry. He summoned his council of lesser gods and they quickly decided to destroy the Earth and its inhabitants with fire - with the intention of starting a new race. He was almost ready to throw a thunderbolt when he realized the danger that fire might set the heavens on fire. He hastily decided to flood the world instead. Blackness and rain resulted. Jupiter called upon Neptune to use the water from the rivers. All the Earth was covered except Parnassus (this mountain was sacred to Jupiter). Here it is said in mythology that Deucalion and wife survived the dreadful and awesome flood.

There are numerous other traditions world-wide!!

Perhaps the most familiar is that of the Babylonian account ... The god Cronus had appeared to Xisuthrus, the king of Babylon, in a dream. Cronus informed him that he was to build a ship. Xisuthrus was to lay up store of meat and drink. It is interesting that in the narrative Xisuthrus is denoted as the "10th king" - while Noah was the 10th from Adam.

Modern traditions are also widespread ...

The Bhils, a wild jungle tribe of central India, relate

how a man while washing his clothes in a river was warned of the coming of the flood. He was urged by a fish to build a box to escape the ordeal. He, his sister, and the cook survived. The god Rama, when he discovered the survivors, asked how he was warned. The man informed him how a fish had warned him. Rama ordered the tongue of the fish cut out and commanded the man to repopulate the Earth.

The Karens of Burma related how the Earth was deluged and how two brothers escaped death on a rapt. As the waters rose closer to heaven the younger brother climbed out onto a tree that hung from the 'celestial vault'. The flood suddenly subsided and he was left hanging. Unfortunately the narration ends there.

The Incas of Peru also have a flood tradition. The water flooded even the highest mountain. Everything perished except a man and a woman in a box. As the flood decreased the box drifted into Tiahuanaco - which is about 70 leagues from Cuzco.

#### Creation of Man

Traditions of the creation of man are also interesting to note.

From Egypt - the story of how man was moulded by Khnoumou (the Father of the Gods) out of clay on a potters wheel.

The Babylonian account relates how Bel cut off his own

head. The other gods caught his blood and mixed it with the Earth and formed man from the 'bloody paste'.

The Shilluks of the White Nile explain that the different complexions of man come from the different colored clays.

And the American Eskimos of Point Barrow have a tradition that a certain spirit a' se lu made a clay man, set him on the shore to dry and breathed life into him.

In Greek and Roman mythology even the traditional story of Pandora has its parallels. Zeus - in order to retaliate against Prometheus for favoring man so heavily - created woman. This first woman was Pandora. After each god had contributed something harmful to be placed in a box she was given the box and commanded not to open it. But of course being the 'woman' she was - she weakened and opened the box. Out of the box came plagues, sorrow, and mischief - all headaches for man. Thus Zeus brought trouble to man through the first woman. Sound familiar?

#### The Gods Fight

One of the most interesting similarities occurs in the story of Cronus. He was for a time lord and ruler of the universe. Cronus had heard that one of his sons would someday dethrone him and replace him. So he acquired the practice of devouring his own children at their birth. Rhea, the sister queen of Cronus, deceived him into swallowing

the attempt of the giants in mythology to conquer heaven compared with Nimrod's attempt at Babylon.

There are also other ideas of merit concerning the origin of mythology. The idea that all persons in mythology did live and that legends have come down about them. The idea that all myths and stories contain certain lessons and have been preserved from that viewpoint. Also anciently there was the idea that the elements of fire, air, and water were the principle dieties. They were the most popular subjects of religious worship - thus myth is a personification of one of these elements. Last is the idea that mythology developed through language. For example Zeus means sky.

All of these ideas have merit. And obviously no one individual one is entirely correct. But it is safe to say that the 'major' characters of mythology do have their origin in human beings that once lived. The stories have obviously become perverted but similarities still exist. We have seen how mythology bears out Genesis 4:26 that - "men began to call themselves by the name of the Lord" and that Biblical stories also relate to those of Mythology. Which are correct? Write for the free articles - DOES GOD EXIST? and THE PROOF OF THE BIBLE.

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