Literary analysis of the Flood

On the surface, the Flood Narrative (Genesis 6-9) appears to have some duplications and contradictions such as the number of animals taken on the Ark and the timetable of the Flood. To explain this and deny Mosaic authorship, source critics have proposed that the Flood Narrative was composed of many small textual units from two different sources (J and P), which were woven together by later redactors. Each source wrote with the objective of promoting their own religious views. To understand how the Flood Narrative is divided by hypothetical sources by source critics, see the article: Literary analysis of the Flood at www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/dh11_flood.aspx. Source critics expect duplication, contradictions, and mythological material from the combining of two different sources dated 400 years apart (P was hypothetically dated 400 years later than J).

Literary analysis of Genesis 6-9 would indicate otherwise.

The literary structure of the Flood Narrative is a detailed and organized chiasm. Furthermore, the contradictions pointed out by skeptics are not contradictions at all and instead fit into this designed narrative. The structure of the Flood Narrative exhibits the following:

1. The literary unit has symmetrical inclusios, which designate a beginning and an end.
   
   A. The primary genealogy (Noah) sets the boundaries of the whole literary unit.
   
   B. The narrative has a prologue and epilogue, and
   
   C. The secondary genealogy (Noah’s sons) encapsulates the body of the narrative.

2. The whole literary unit has a symmetry that is parallel in concept and equivalent in number.

3. The chiasm ascends towards doom and recedes from it.

4. A general summary of the literary structure can be seen in this form:

   a. Primary genealogy (Gen 5:32)
   
   b. Prologue (Gen 6:1-8)
   
   c. Secondary genealogy (Gen 6:9-10)
   
   d. Before the Flood (Gen 6:11 – Gen 7:10)
   
   x. The Flood (Gen 7:11- Gen 8:19)
   
   d. After the Flood (Gen 8:20 – Gen 9:17)
   
   c. Secondary genealogy (Gen 9:18-19)
   
   b'. Epilogue (Gen 9:20-27)
   
   a'. Primary genealogy (Gen 9:28-29)

To continue reading, go to: www.helpmewithbiblestudy.org/5system_moses/dh11_flood.aspx