



READING THE BIBLE MYSTICALLY: Fall Series

Dr. Laurence H. Kant, Historian of Religion (Ph.D., Yale University, 1993)

December 13, Sunday, 2:00-5:00 p.m.

Genesis 5-9: Flood and Noah Narrative: Part 1

131 Jesselin Drive, Lexington, KY 40503



Everyone comes to the Bible with different perspectives. Lay people appeal to tradition, practice, belief, social justice, evangelism, literal interpretation, and opposition or apathy to religion. Scholars interpret the Bible from their own angles: history, literature, sources, language, theology, and archaeology. No one perspective, however, can encompass and fully explain biblical texts.

For me, a mystical approach to biblical interpretation entails the discovery and creation of profound meaning in the text. Integrative in nature, it uses a variety of perspectives to understand the contexts and multiple (often ambiguous and sometimes conflicting) meanings of passages. We start from the ground up, beginning with small details (word-by-word and even letter-by-letter) as we move through sentences and stories toward apparently hidden and esoteric readings. Usually what we regard as secret or mystical lies in open sight, but seeing it demands close attention and far-reaching awareness of all sorts.

In this session, we will study developments in human history following the story of Cain and Abel (including the Nephilim/giants in Gen 6) and continuing through the flood narrative and the Noah saga: Gen 5-9. This will take at least two sessions. Reflecting on the universality of flood myths and of tales of humanity's role in them, we will explore what makes floods such a powerful symbol for human beings and what makes the Genesis narrative distinctive. As always, there are profound questions to consider: Where exactly did humanity go wrong? What makes Noah different from his ancestors? Why are there two flood narratives, and what does each contribute? How do these stories fit into the tradition of epic literature, with concepts of honor and courage? How can a compassionate, moral God commit an act of genocide and planetary destruction? Why is this story of global violence so popular in the religious education of children? Why does God promise not to flood the earth again? How can the mind of God change? What is different about humanity and the earth after the flood? No previous background is necessary. Mutual respect is assumed in an atmosphere open to all spiritual, religious, and non-religious points of view.

The cost of the workshop is \$35.00 per person (cash, or check made out to "Mystic Scholar, LLC"), Reserve a place by emailing Dr. Kant at dbl2@qx.net (with "Mystic Scholar" in the subject line). Payment may be made at the door before the workshop. Please read Genesis 5-9 beforehand. For further information on the presenter, see the attached CV and bio.

*The photo in the middle of the page is of a Hebrew folio of Genesis 1 in the Leningrad Codex (the oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible), c. 1010 CE, originally from Cairo, Egypt, now in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg.