

An excerpt from, The Book of Genesis Composition, Reception, and Interpretation, Edited by Craig A. Evans Joel N. Lohr David L. Petersen. Chapter: The Formation of the Primeval History by Jan Christian Gertz, pp. 107-136

Priestly vs Non Priestly Texts in Genesis:

Despite the rather confusing current state of research, our short overview can conclude on a somewhat comforting note: historical-critical scholarship agrees that we can distinguish and differentiate two groups of texts in Gen 1–11, which can be delineated because of their linguistic profile and content and that are internally linked by several cross-references. Following the ground-breaking analyses of Hermann Hupfeld, Eberhard Schrader, Karl Budde, and Hermann Gunkel, the texts are distributed as follows:¹⁸ the texts belonging to the priestly layer and starting with the creation account (Gen 1:1–2:3) are the genealogy of Adam (Gen 5:1–27, 28*, 30–32), one version of the flood (Gen 6:9–9:17 [18a, 19]*; 9:28), one table of nations (Gen 10:1–7, 20, 22–23, 31–32), and lastly the genealogy of Shem (Gen 11:10–26). Non-P texts are the Eden narrative (Gen 2:4b–3:24), the story of Cain’s fratricide as well as the genealogy of Cain and Seth (Gen 4:1–26; 5:28–29*), the illicit marriages of the sons of God (Gen 6:1–4), the second version of the flood (Gen 6:5–8:22*), Noah the winegrower (Gen 9:[18–19]20–27), a further table of nations (Gen 10:8–19, 21, 24–30), and finally the Tower of Babel story (Gen 11:1–9). As far as the basic distribution is concerned, dissent is limited to some small details such as several verses in the flood story (Gen 7:7, 17a, 22*, 23a; 8:3a) and some marginal verses (Gen 2:4a; 9:18a, 19). In this sense the consensus formed by Witter, Astruc, and Eichhorn during the eighteenth century remains valid.