

Noah Primeval

Chronicles of the Nephilim
Book One

By Brian Godawa

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PREFACE

The story you are about to read is the result of Bible study and historical research about Noah's flood and the ancient Near Eastern context of the book of Genesis. While I engage in a large amount of creative license and speculation, all of it is rooted in an affirmation of what I believe is the theological and spiritual intent of the Bible. For those who are leery of such a "novel" approach, let them consider that the traditional Sunday school image of Noah as a little old white-bearded farmer building the ark alone with his sons is itself a speculative cultural bias. The Bible actually says very little about Noah. We don't know what he did for a living or even where he lived. How do we know whether he was just a simple farmer or a tribal warrior? If the world of that day was full of wickedness and violence, then would not a righteous man fight such wickedness as Joshua or David would? Noah would not have been that different from Abraham, who farmed, did business and led his family and servants in war against kings.

We know very little about primeval history, but we do learn from archeological evidence that humanity was clearly tribal during the early ages when this story takes place. Yet, nothing is written about Noah's tribe in the Bible. It would be modern individualistic

prejudice to assume that Noah was a loner when everyone in that Biblical context was communal. Noah surely had a tribe.

There is really no agreement as to the actual time and location of the event. Some say it was in upper Mesopotamia, some say lower Mesopotamia, some say the Black Sea, some say the earth was so changed by the flood that we would not know where it happened. Since Genesis has some references that seem to match Early Bronze Age Mesopotamian contexts I have gone with that basic interpretation.

The Bible also says Noah built the ark. Are we to believe that Noah built it all by himself? It doesn't say. With his sons' help? It doesn't say. But that very same book *does say* earlier that Cain "built a city." Are we to assume that Cain built an entire city by himself? Ridiculous. Cain presided as a leader over the building of a city by a group of people, just as Noah probably did with his ark.

One of the only things Genesis says about Noah's actual character is that he was "a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:9). The New Testament clarifies this meaning by noting Noah as an "heir" and "herald" of righteousness by faith (Heb. 11:7; 2Pet. 2:5). The popular interpretation of this notion of "righteousness" is to understand Noah as a virtually sinless man too holy for his time, and always communing with God in perfect obedience. But is this really Biblical? Would Noah have never sinned? Never had an argument with God? Never had to repent? As a matter of fact, the term "righteous" in the Old and New Testaments was not a description of a person who did good deeds and avoided bad deeds. Righteousness was a Hebrew legal concept that meant, "right standing before God" as in a court of law. It carried the picture of two positions in a lawsuit, one "not in the right," and the other, "in the right" or "righteous" before God. Not only that, but in both Testaments, the

righteous man is the man who is said to “live by faith,” not by perfect good deeds (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17). So righteousness does not mean “moral perfection” but “being in the right with God because of faith.”

What’s more, being a man of faith doesn’t mean a life of perfect consistency either. Look at David, the “man after God’s own heart” (Acts 13:22), yet he was a murderer and adulterer and more than once avoided obeying God’s will. But that doesn’t stop him from being declared as “doing all God’s will” by the apostle Paul. Or consider Abraham, the father of Faith, who along with Sarah believed that God would provide them with a son (Heb. 11:8-11). Yet, that biblically honored faith was *not* perfect, as they both laughed in derision at God’s promise at first (Gen. 17:17; 18:12). Later, Abraham argued with God over his scorched earth policy at Sodom (Gen. 18). Moses was famous for his testy debates with God (Ex. 4; Num. 14:11-24). King David’s Psalms were sometimes complaints to his Maker (Psa. 13; Psa. 69). All the heroes in the Hebrews Hall of Faith (Heb. 11) had sinful moments, lapses of obedience and even periods of running from God’s call or struggling with their Creator. It would not be heresy to suggest that Noah may have had his own journey with God that began in fear and ended in faith. In fact, to say otherwise is to present a life inconsistent with the reality of every human being in history. To say one is a righteous person of faith is to say that the completed picture of his life is one of finishing the race set before him, not of having a perfect run without injuries or failures.

Some scholars have even noted that the phrase “blameless in his generation” is an unusual one, reserved for unblemished sacrifices in the temple. This physical purity takes on new meaning when understood in the genetic context of the verses before it that speak of “sons of God” or *bene elohim* (pronounced: “beh-nay el-oh-heem”),

leaving their proper abode in heaven and violating the separation of angelic and human flesh (Gen. 6:1-4; Jude 5-7). Within church history, there is a venerable tradition of interpreting this strangest of Bible passages as referring to supernatural beings from God's heavenly host who actually mate with humans resulting in the giant offspring called *Nephilim* (pronounced "neh-feelem"). Other equally respectable theologians argue that these sons of God were either humans from the "righteous" bloodline of Seth or a symbolic reference to human kings or judges of some kind. I have weighed in on the supernatural interpretation and have provided appendixes at the end of the book that give the biblical theological foundation for this interpretation.

This novel seeks to remain true to the sparse facts presented in Genesis (with admittedly a few embellishments) interwoven with theological images
Preface

The story you are about to read is the result of Biblical and historical research about Noah's flood and the ancient Near Eastern context of the book of Genesis. While I engage in significant creative license and speculation, all of it is rooted in an affirmation of what I believe is the theological and spiritual intent of the Bible. For those who are leery of such a "novel" approach, let them consider that the traditional Sunday school image of Noah as a little old white-bearded farmer building the ark alone with his sons is itself a speculative cultural bias. The Bible actually says very little about Noah. We don't know what he did for a living before the Flood or even where he lived. How do we know whether he was just

a simple farmer or a tribal warrior? Genesis 9:2 says Noah “*began to be a man of the soil*” *after* the Flood, not before it. If the world *before* the flood was full of wickedness and violence, then would not a righteous man fight such wickedness as Joshua or David would? Noah would not have been that different from Abraham, who farmed, did business and led his family and servants in war against kings.

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This novel seeks to remain true to the sparse facts presented in Genesis (with admittedly significant embellishments) interwoven with theological images and metaphors come to life. Where I engage in flights of fancy, such as a journey into Sheol, I seek to use figurative imagery from the Bible, such as “a bed of maggots and worms” (Isa. 14:11) and “the appetite of Sheol” (Isa. 5:14) and bring them to life by literalizing them into the flesh-eating living-dead animated by maggots and worms.

Another player that shows up in the story is Leviathan. While I have provided another appendix explaining the theological motif of Leviathan as a metaphor in the Bible for chaos and disorder, I have embodied the sea dragon in this story for the purpose of incarnating that chaos as well. I have also literalized the Mesopotamian cosmology of a three-tiered universe with a solid vault in the heavens, and a flat disc earth supported on the pillars of the underworld, the realm of the dead. This appears to be the model assumed by the Biblical writers in many locations (Philipp. 2:10; Job 22:14; 37:18; Psa. 104:5; 148:4; Isa. 40:22), so I thought it would be fascinating to tell that story within that worldview unknown to most modern westerners. The purpose of the Bible is not to support scientific theories or models of the universe, but to tell *the story of God* through ancient writers. Those writers were people of their times just as we are.

I have also woven together Sumerian and other Mesopotamian mythology in with the Biblical story, but with this caveat: Like C.S. Lewis, I believe the primary purpose of mythology is to embody the worldview and values of a culture. But all myths carry slivers of the truth and reflect some distorted vision of what really happened. Sumer's Noah was Ziusudra, Babylon's Noah was Utnapishtim, and Akkad's was Atrahasis. The Bible's Noah is my standard. So my goal was to incorporate real examples of ancient Near Eastern history and myth in subjection to that standard in such a way that we see their "true origin." Thus my speculation that the gods of the ancient world may have been real beings (namely fallen "sons of God") with supernatural powers masquerading as deity. The Bible itself makes this suggestion in several places (Deut. 32:17; Psa. 106:34), and it also talks of the sons of God as "gods" or supernatural beings from God's divine council (Psa. 82:1; 58:1;

Ezek. 28:2). See the appendix at the back for my defense of this interpretation from the Bible.

Lastly, I have permitted myself to use extra-biblical Jewish literature from the Second Temple period as additional reference material for my story. The most significant is the book of *I Enoch*, a document famous for its detailed amplification of the Genesis 6:1-4 passage about supernatural sons of God mating with human women and birthing giants, as well as leading humanity astray with occultic knowledge. I use these ancient Jewish sources not because I consider them completely factual or on par with the Bible, but simply in an attempt to incarnate the soul of the ancient Hebrew imagination in conversation with the text of Scripture rather than imposing my own modern western one upon the text. I am within the tradition of the Church on this since authors of the New Testament as well as early Church Fathers and other orthodox theologians in church history respected some of these ancient manuscripts as well.

Many of these texts from the Second Temple Period, such as *Jubilees*, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* or *The Books of Adam and Eve*, and others found in the Pseudepigrapha, were creative extrapolations of the Biblical text. These were not intended to deceive or overturn the Bible, but rather to retell Biblical stories with theological amplification and creative speculation while remaining true to their interpretation of the Scriptures.

In short, I am not writing Scripture. I am not even saying that I believe this is how the story *might have* actually happened. I am simply engaging in a time-honored tradition of the ancient Hebrew culture: I am retelling a biblical story in a new way to underscore the theological truths within it. The biblical theology that this story is founded upon is provided in several appendixes at the back of the book for those who are interested in going deeper.

The beauty of fiction is that we can make assumptions regarding uncertain theological and historical information without having to prove them one way or another. The story requires only that we establish continuity within the made up world, and accepting those assumptions for the sake of the story does not imply theological agreement. So, sit back and let your imagination explore the contours of this re-imagined journey of one of the most celebrated religious heroes across all times and cultures.

Prologue

Methuselah squinted narrowly through half opened eyes. Enoch was beside him as they descended onto crystalline blue waves, the eternal sea. Above him, the pitch-black sky painted with a pulsating wave of ethereal color stretched endlessly into the distance. Methuselah knew where they were — in the waters above the heavens. Before him, a lone ancient temple rested upon the waters like an island, crafted from white marble with gold trimming and inlaid with innumerable precious jewels, jasper, sapphire, emerald, onyx, and others. Around this temple hovered myriads of the “holy ones,” like phantasms of starlight that he could see, but not quite see. He knew instinctively what it was — the temple of Elohim.

Methuselah sighed with disappointment. Another vision. He was approaching his 850th year of life and this was becoming a little much for his weary old soul. His father, Enoch, hounded him like a ghost in his dreams. Enoch was known for being a righteous man who walked with Elohim. Elohim took him up to heaven alive before he could experience the dismal universal experience that is death. No aching joints, no wavering eye sight, no difficulty in peeing as the years would wind him down to the grave.

From all this Enoch was spared. It did not seem fair, thought Methuselah. But alas, Elohim is the creator of all things, and surely has the right to do as he pleases, no matter how strange or incomprehensible those actions may be to us mortals made of clay and *nephesh*, God’s own breath. One day soon, this heavenly temple will be more than a vision for him, but not today. So Methuselah relaxed and took in the wondrous grandeur of the cosmos that Enoch escorted him through on the wings of the wind.

Despite his sense of helplessness, Methuselah shuddered with awe. Maybe these visions were worth the irritation, after all. Who else is allowed to see such marvels before their time? Maybe Elohim may yet take him, as he did Enoch.

Enoch turned back to him, a look as serious as any Methuselah could remember. “Methuselah, my son, listen with the hearing of your ears,” said Enoch, “for the earth has become corrupt. The wickedness of man is great in the earth, and every intention of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.”

Out of myriads of stars some fell from the sky and plunged into the waters below. Methuselah was pulled beneath the waters to watch their descent. They were feint, barely visible, but humanoid in shape, the reptilian ones.

“The Watchers,” said Enoch, “fallen from within the very circle of the divine council.” Methuselah had heard of the divine council of Elohim from Enoch on other occasions. On the high throne sat Elohim himself, the Creator and Lord of all. Though mortal eyes could not see him, he was visible in his vice-regent, one like a Son of Man, “The Angel of the Lord,” who mediated and led God’s heavenly host. Around the throne stood that heavenly host, the sons of God, or *bene elohim*, ten thousand times ten thousand of his “holy ones” who deliberated with the Almighty and would carry forth his judgments — except the ones who had fallen.

Below the sons of God in rank were the angels or *mal’akim*, lower messengers of Elohim. To say these angels were lower in rank than the sons of God was misleading. Mal’akim were mighty warriors who had the wisdom of sages and the power of a hundred men.

Enoch pointed toward two of the fallen stars, slightly brighter than the others, and continued, “These Watchers who left their proper abode and fell to earth were led by Semjaza and Azazel, the

mightiest of them all. Though in their prowess, these two were mere imitators of the original fallen star who was known by many names: Helel ben Shachar, The Shining One, Morning Star, Son of the Dawn, *Nachash* the Serpent of Eden, Lucifer.”

A shiver went through Methuselah’s spine as he continued descending into the deep. He then saw the reason. The spiny armored back of a long serpentine creature swerved just below him, and disappeared into the darkness. It was gigantic, maybe 70 cubits long or about 100 feet, a shadowy impression of its full fearful presence in the murky blackness. This was Leviathan, the mighty sea dragon of chaos, and the guardian of the deep. Few had ever seen it, and those who had, did not live to describe their horror.

Methuselah and Enoch landed on the bottom of the heavenly ocean and began to move through a solid crystalline floor, known to his people as *raqia*, the firmament of heaven. Below this *raqia* the heavens and the earth were enveloped by the firmament like a vaulted dome. Embedded in the vault of heaven glittered the stars, planets, and the greater and lesser lights that rose upon the ends of the earth in the east and set upon the gates of the west.

As Methuselah and Enoch watched, the sons of God passed through the clouds and approached the earth, a flat disc surrounded by the waters, under which were the pillars of the earth, and below that, Sheol, the underworld. Two hundred of these Watchers landed in succession on Mount Hermon in Bashan in the northwest and spread out across the earth from there.

The Watchers set up thrones on the earth to rule mankind as gods. They revealed unholy secrets of sorceries and war. Enoch’s voice resounded in his ears, “Mankind embraced their evil and their rebellion has arisen like a shout before the face of Elohim.” Methuselah felt a surge of grief wash over him as tears moistened his

eyes. The miseries of life already bore witness to the truth of Enoch's words.

“Do not weep, Methuselah, for behold, the Lord will come with ten thousands of his holy ones to execute judgment on all, and to destroy the wicked. But I saw a vision of a Chosen One who would bring an end to the reign of the gods and bring rest from the curse of the land. Elohim promised in the Garden that the seed of the Woman, Eve, would be at war with the seed of the Serpent, Nachash. But through the bloodline of this Chosen One would come an anointed King who would crush the head of the Nachash, the fallen sons of God, and their abominations in the land.”

Hundreds of leagues southeast from Mount Hermon, directly below Methuselah's feet, was Mesopotamia, the center of the earth, the land between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. The rivers produced a fertile crescent that rose from the Lower Sea in the south up to Ebla and the Levant in the north, bounded on the west by the vast desert land of Arabia, and on the east by the Zagros Mountains.

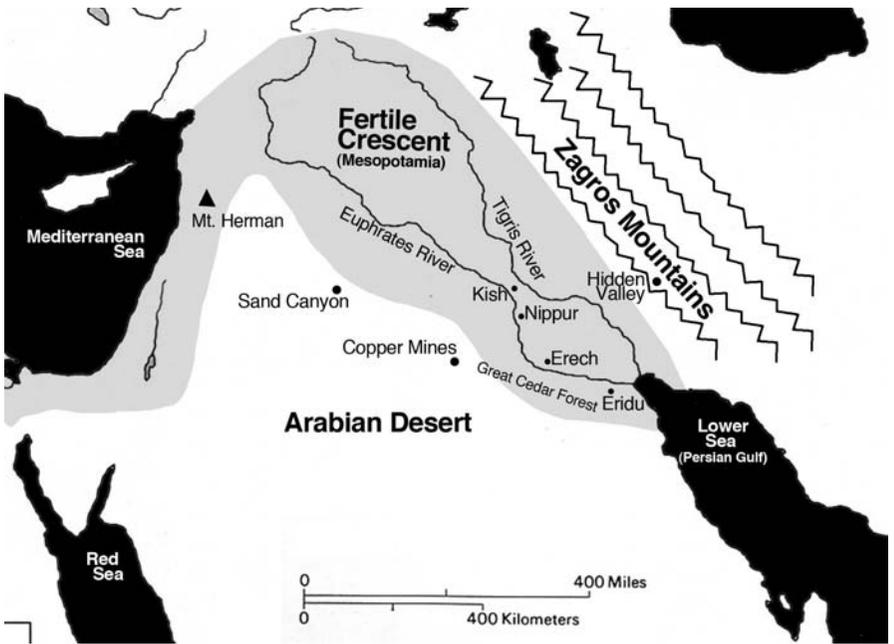
Methuselah descended to the southern part of Mesopotamia near the Lower Sea into the fertile land of Sumer. He was being taken home to the great cedar forest, where his nomadic tribe's camp was hidden from the city-states that bordered the rivers. The vision was almost at an end.

“I am not the Chosen One,” complained Methuselah, “So why do you keep accosting me with these visions?”

“Because,” replied Enoch, “the Chosen One is not listening. But you have his ear.”

Methuselah knew who the Chosen One was. And he was going to tan his hide.

Noah Primeval



Chapter 1

Noah ben Lamech dashed through the sparse brush surrounding the mighty cedars, dexterously twisting his spear to avoid tangling low hanging branches. Five of his fellow tribesmen, clad in animal skins, bearing spears, bows, and maces, trailed slightly behind.

Lemuel, Noah's protégé, notched his bow, aiming his flint tipped arrow at its prey in a hasty, running release. The target was a "pazuzu," a black monster with a double set of bat-like wings, talons for feet, and a ghastly looking doggish face. The arrow, loosed too quickly, buried into the tree inches from the pazuzu's ugly head. The vile creature uttered a piercing shriek, a hideous expression of its evil essence, and fluttered with increased frenzy.

A second pazuzu panicked and almost ran into the first one. They both flitted erratically around the thick trees, seeking shelter from their pursuers' missiles. Unable to find an opening through the heavy canopy of foliage overhead to reach the sky and freedom, they split apart to divert their predators.

Noah gestured to his men to split as well, three on one. Lemuel and Shafat veered into Noah's footsteps after the first pazuzu. The other three turned after the second one.

These creatures were enemy spies, scouts for the city gods, gathering reconnaissance on the last of the human tribes evading the conquering will of their Lords. This was not a hunt for food by Noah and his men. Humans don't eat evil, they destroy it.

Until now, Noah had managed to avoid detection by staying nomadic and hiding in the forest with his people. They had originally come from the west, but when the Watchers came to Bashan, those who would not submit were pushed south into the forests or desert of

Arabia or the mountains of Zagros. Noah's tribe had traversed all these territories and had found the forests to be the most inhabitable. But as his people grew in number, presently a couple hundred, with children and livestock, it was becoming more difficult to pick up quickly and move. If one of these damnable creatures got away and reported to the gods, Noah's community would be in jeopardy. They would run to the mountains where the city gods refused to follow. The desert was bone dry, scorching and brutal for child mortality, and mountain life was not much less miserable to raise a family like the ancient cave dwellers who died out long ago. There were not many of the human tribes left, and Noah was determined to remain one of them.

Fueled by his desperate need, Noah's spirit surged. His team spread out and triangulated their pazuzu. Hindered by the closeness of the trees and underbrush, the creature's wings slowed its progress, and the pursuit steadily gained ground. The pazuzu twisted and turned in confusion. With the desperation of a cornered animal, the quarry looked for an opening to strike back at the hunters.

Lemuel looked away briefly as he nearly ran headlong into a cedar tree. The pazuzu pounced in that instant. It took its eyes off Noah for one moment to swoop down. And that was all that Noah needed. He drew back and released his spear with the power of an arm accustomed to strenuous labor. The wooden shaft flew straight into the breast of the creature with such force that it impaled the pazuzu's body and pinned it into a tree. It screeched its last ugly evil shriek and died, black blood oozing down the rough bark of the cedar.

Noah, Lemuel and young Shafat approached the beast. Their long hair, and wistful beards flowing over their animal skins gave city dwellers the impression of uncivilized brutishness. But they would be wrong. The nomads of the west were a highly cultured

people whose earthiness was a deliberate expression of their refusal to worship the city gods. These were the people of the Creator Elohim and they were proud to be separate from the rest of humanity, who had rejected Elohim's kingship and descended into the idolatrous worship of the Watchers, the gods of the land. One could rightly call the nomadic tribes the last of humanity.

Noah was over five hundred years old and in his prime as the leader of his people. As Lemuel was Noah's apprentice, so young twenty-year old Shafat was Lemuel's. They were as close as brothers in their community. They did everything together and protected one another.

"Stand back!" Lemuel snapped to Shafat. "These things are treacherous. They'll feint death just to bring one of us with them to the grave. If it's talons get hold of you, we'll have to cut your arm off to loose you."

But its death throes were genuine. The pazuzu's legs twitched and the last of its air gurgled from its lungs.

"It stinks like excrement," blurted Shafat, with his hand over his nose in disgust.

"It is an abomination," concluded Lemuel. He reached up and jerked the spear out of the monster, letting it drop to the forest floor in a heap. He handed the spear to Noah.

"It is getting worse, Noah. There will soon be nowhere to hide. We cannot run forever."

Noah ignored the point. He prodded the creature with the tip of his spear, exposing a brand of Anu's name in cuneiform on the twitching leg. "This is a scout of Anu."

"We killed a scout of the god Anu?" exclaimed Shafat.

"Quiet your fear," Noah interrupted. "We bow to no god."

Lemuel amended Noah's statement, "No god but Elohim."

Noah shot an irritated glance at Lemuel, then caught himself and nodded reluctantly, “No god but Elohim.”

This was a sensitive issue for Noah. He was not always on speaking terms with Elohim, who seemed to be quite distant, only conferring with crazy men like his grandfather Enoch and leaving so much to the Mal’akim to do his bidding.

Noah had served Elohim through the years. He remained pure in his generation. He walked upright and kept separate from the pollution of the city gods who came from heaven and sought to mix their blood with humanity. Noah’s tribe and the other human tribes of the West refused to worship these pretenders to the throne of Elohim, and refused to participate in their corrupting sorceries.

But this was not enough for Noah. Though he knew Elohim was Lord of creation, he sometimes felt that there was little difference between the servitude Elohim expected and the servitude that the city gods demanded of their subjects. A god was a god after all, and in either case man was a servant.

Noah did not like being a servant. He yearned for freedom in his breast. Why can we not be left alone to live our lives? Why must we fight evil all the time? In a wicked generation, evil never sleeps. And Noah was growing weary from eternal vigilance. He preferred to hide away from it all and just enjoy his family, his beautiful wife, and his own concerns. He wanted to work the land and enjoy the fruit of his labors and be left alone. He had enough on his back to survive in this difficult world and to build his own community based on his own beliefs. If evil was left to run its course, it would destroy its own servants anyway, so why not let it? They deserved it. Why did Noah and his companions have to fight Elohim’s battles for him?

He was interrupted in his thoughts by the sound of breaking twigs. The three turned toward the sound, tensed and ready.

It was Tobias and the other two warriors. Noah instinctively glanced at their spears, hoping for a sign of pazuzu blood. There was none.

Tobias looked hesitant. “I think we got it. We reached the forest’s edge and it broke out to the clearing. But we struck it twice. It managed to stay in the air, but I do not believe it could make it back the distance to the city with two flints in its flesh.”

Noah pondered a moment. “We had best have an elder’s meeting tonight and make a decision whether to move on.”

Shafat let out a sigh of disappointment. Noah slapped him on the head and gave him an evil eye. Without a word, Noah stomped off toward the camp.

Lemuel wondered just how long they could keep going like this. He had followed Noah’s lead for many years and had always trusted him. Noah would do no wrong by any man, and he was the patriarch of their tribe, a warrior who knew the land well and would not compromise with wickedness. He was also impatient and insensitive with those who lacked his resolve. Some men needed understanding and encouragement in the ways of the Lord. Zeal for righteousness did not mean one should give up compassion.

But then again, Noah did listen to Lemuel. He was passionate, which meant he may have been quick to anger, but he was also quick to repent. Lemuel had never known a better man in all his days. He repressed another sigh and tramped after his leader.

Chapter 2

Far away in the skies over Mesopotamia, the wounded pazuzu flapped its double wings struggling to navigate the air streams that would help it remain aloft along its journey to the city. The two arrows burned its muscles with searing pain, one in its left thigh and the other in its right calf. It had lost plenty of blood. Its wings were feeling heavy. It labored on, knowing if it landed to rest, it would never make it back into the air.

The desert landscape gave way to the unmistakable marks of civilization as the pazuzu reached the outskirts of the city. Erech encompassed over one hundred hectares of land, or two hundred and fifty acres. Below the pazuzu's labored flight stretched the agricultural fields and farms watered by canals from the bordering Euphrates River. Since their very lives were interwoven with the river, Mesopotamians became expert canal builders, not only of levees and dikes for their crops in the outlying areas, but within the city, where multiple man-made estuaries and aqueducts criss-crossed the various residential divisions, channeling lavish amounts of water for everything from cooking to cleaning to waste disposal. Interspersed between those channeled sections were the adobe and sun-dried brick homes with Sumerian citizens going about their daily business, blissfully unaware of the flying presence high above.

In the center of this Sumerian metropolis that boasted a populace of close to ten thousand, a raised hillock overlooked the city and its outlying farming villages. On that hillock rose the temple called *E-anu*, a huge trapezoidal platform mound seventy-five cubits high, built from mud brick and limestone. It was dedicated to the patron deity of the city, Anu, the father god of heaven. At the top of

this platform terrace, raised another twenty cubits high, was the White Temple, the holy place of the gods. Its intense whiteness, the result of gypsum plaster, created a divine shining glow in the hot sun.

Next to this temple complex was a smaller temple district called *E-anna* for Inanna, the goddess of sex and war, and consort of Anu. The E-anna temple was much smaller than E-anu and differently designed, reflecting the lesser divine status of its patron deity. The E-anna district was devoted primarily to cult prostitution and other deviant whims of the goddess.

Erech was one the oldest cities of the alluvial plain and was therefore one of the largest and most advanced. It was originally settled by the Ubaid and Subarian people, but had been overtaken and expanded by the Sumerians who arrived from the mountains to establish the first urban civilizations. The Ubaid and Subarians formed the beginnings of a slave force that would help them achieve their urban paradise.

Each city-state was an independent entity with its own governing authority ruled over by a god. Every year at the New Year Festival the pantheon of city gods would meet in assembly and deliberate their divine decrees for the upcoming year. Anu arranged his pantheon after Elohim's divine council. He considered it a pleasure to mock the Most High with his own hierarchy of power.

The gods had no desire to burden themselves with the petty worries of human administrations, so they each chose a priest-king to rule in his stead through a governorship. Scribes often referred to the arrival of the gods and their rule in the past as "when kingship descended from heaven." But ever since that time, the princes of city-states vied for prominence amongst themselves as the gods also sought distinction. The hierarchy was precarious.

The White Temple on the top of E-anu was the highest point in the city. The large platform structure was a primitive version of a “ziggurat,” a new development in temple building that operated as a “holy mountain,” a connection between heaven and earth. Its four corners pointed to the four corners of the earth and the long straight limestone stairway that ascended from the base to the White Temple at top inspired the name “stairway to the heavens” by the plebeians. The White Temple was where the gods would assemble for their deliberations and liturgy. It was closed to all but the priest-king and his servants, and the priest-king Lugal-anu was there performing sacred duties when the wounded pazuzu crashed onto the floor.

Lugal-anu hurried his pace through the long dark underground tunnel connecting the ziggurat and the palace in the E-anna district. With practiced effort he balanced his sacrificial bowl in the flickering torchlight without spilling the blood offering for Anu and his consort Inanna. They always wanted blood. It was the food of the gods and they were ravenous.

It was not too long ago that Lugal-anu’s father, the previous priest-king of Erech, had died, leaving Lugal-anu as the new “big boss” of the land. His name meant “leader of Anu,” and his responsibilities included not merely the overseeing of ceremonial and cultic activities but the civil governing of the city and the military defense of the outlying area through a standing army. This combined religious and civic responsibility sometimes wore him out. He had even pleaded with the father god Anu to divide the duties between two leaders, one civil and one religious, but Anu told him it was not yet to be. Concentrated power was always more efficient at getting things accomplished, and Anu had a lot to accomplish.

The positive result of such multiple responsibilities was a certain breadth of wisdom. And wisdom made Lugal-anu a good

ruler. He had studied some of the dark secrets of the gods, and he was trained in the art of leadership and war. He pitied his people and sought their good, even if they did not understand that good, and the gods richly rewarded him. He had everything he wanted in this world of power and privilege — except a wife. Oh, he had concubines plenty. His nights were filled with orgies and erotic encounters to satisfy his every lustful desire. What he longed for was to be known — to make a true connection with another human being — to have a queen who would rule by his side. But how could the supreme human ruler of the city ever find a woman he could trust amidst this coterie of sycophants, manipulators, and usurpers?

Such thoughts fluttered through his mind as Lugal-anu passed into the palace area. His royal robes flowed behind him as he whisked over mosaic floors and art-engraved walls of brick. Palace guards stiffened to attention at the sight of him. He was pure royalty — a youthful three hundred years old, muscular, and handsome with his regal oblong cranium. All the servants of the gods and their entourage practiced head binding. It was an expression of devotion to the deity. Infants were taken early and their skulls bound with straps until they protruded like an extended egg. As the infant's skull matured and hardened, it maintained its oblong shape permanently.

Like all royal servants, Lugal-anu was completely hairless. Not a hair on their head, not an eyebrow or a single nose hair was allowed. It was a sign of perfection to transcend humanity by freeing oneself from the most mammalian of physical traits, hair. It made one look more like the sleek hairless gods he worshipped.

Lugal-anu marched through the outer court of the palace, striding past lines of bird-men soldiers. These hybrids with bodies of men and heads of hawks and falcons stood at perfect attention, motionless as statues. Their stoic rigidity masked the savage brutality of fierce warriors, created by the sorceries of the gods to

build an army for conquest. But bird-men were mere practice for the apex of the gods' creation, which Lugal-anu now approached at the doorway of the inner court.

The gigantic doors loomed over Lugal-anu's head. Fifteen feet tall, made of the mightiest cedar and inlaid with gold, they barely accommodated the two immense Nephilim guards on either side of the gateway.

Nephilim were giant warriors ten to fifteen feet tall, demigods created by the mating of the divine sons of God with the human daughters of men. They were the personal royal guard of the deity. Their bodies were covered in occultic tattoos used in magic. They sported an extra digit on their hands and feet for a total of twelve fingers and twelve toes. Their armor was unlike anything seen on the earth, made of a light metallic alloy unknown to man. The Nephilim were also called the "seed of Nachash," titans of war that could not be easily defeated by man born of woman. From the perspective of the Watchers, they were a strategic achievement. From the perspective of Elohim, they were pure evil. They struck terror into the hearts of everyone who saw them, including Lugal-anu. Though they seemed to defer to his authority, he never could quite bring himself to look them in the eye. He stared blankly at the floor ahead of him and continued his purposeful march.

Lugal-anu passed the giants into the inner court, the doors closing behind him like a barrier of magic. He paused to take a deep breath before looking up. This moment always took his breath away. Before him was the most beautiful atrium ever conceived by the mind of deity. It was 70 cubits long and 40 cubits high, a man-made paradise, a mixture of architecture sculpted by the most trained of slave craftsmen, and flora cultivated by the most practiced of horticulturalists. As Lugal-anu proceeded down the path toward the throne room, a flurry of doves flew out of the foliage around him

past the brick columns into the vaulted ceiling above, a heaven on earth. Gemstones glittered everywhere, embedded in the marble: lapis lazuli, sapphire, beryl, topaz, and amethyst. His own adjacent courtroom as priest-king, though full of its own luxuries, was impoverished by comparison.

As Lugal-anu approached the throne room, the smell of exotic incense burning on the braziers filled his nostrils and he saw the holy curtains to the throne room pulled back to display the forms of Anu and Inanna seated on gem-laden thrones. They were guarded by large crossbred sphinx-like creatures called *aladlammu*, who had the bodies of a bull or lion, and the bearded crowned heads of a human being — more occultic results of the gods' genetic tinkering with creation. This bull-man and lion-man were the living breathing monsters depicted in stone sculptures outside the palace, and they sent a shudder through Lugal-anu, their penetrating eyes following his every move with sentinel alertness.

Anu and Inanna silently watched Lugal-anu pour out his libation of blood into crystal chalices on the altar. Lugal-anu then genuflected and waited for their command.

The gods were resplendent in their royal finery. They were eight feet tall with shimmering blue lapis lazuli eyes and reptilian pupils. Their tongues were split lizard-like. Despite their androgynous appearance, Inanna dressed the part of a goddess. They had elongated heads, which the head-binding of their servants sought to mimic. Anu and Inanna would tolerate nothing less than human serfs molded into their likeness. They both wore the horned headdress of deity common throughout Sumer, and donned royal robes created from the feathers of vultures. Their ophidian avian presence provoked in the minds of mythmakers and artisans a common correlation of birds and serpents with divinity.

Their skin appeared smooth, but upon closer inspection, was like fine subtle serpentine scales that sparkled in the light, producing a visible aura of constant radiant luminescence. Those who looked upon them described this radiance in terms of beryl, crystal or shining bronze. And when their passions flared for good or bad, their shining would increase in brilliance giving the impression of flashes of lightning, thus warranting the description, “the Shining Ones.”

Lugal-anu could always count on Anu to have a certain detached playfulness about him, as if he enjoyed being deity and played up the formalities of royalty with a sardonic loftiness. Inanna, on the other hand, was unpredictable and dangerous. She had a violent temper as if everyone was in the way of her accomplishing her plans. She was known to instantly kill servants who made mistakes in her presence. Lugal-anu sought to ingratiate himself at every chance he could get.

“My priest-king, Lugal-Anu, lord of the city, how dost thou fare?” pronounced Anu with a touch of playful overstatement in his voice.

“Well, my lord Anu, king of gods,” praised Lugal-anu, promptly followed by a gesture to Inanna. “Queen of heaven, my worship.”

“Up, up. What do you want?” blurted Inanna impatiently.

Lugal-anu straightened up quickly and replied, “I have intelligence from one of our pazuzu scouts of a human tribe of nomads in the great cedar forest.”

“Well, go slay them,” she snorted.

Anu stepped in. “We want loyal, willing subjects, not rebels of insurrection, Inanna.”

This argument had been going on for some time. Inanna wanted to eliminate all the remaining human tribes who worshipped Elohim. But Anu thought it would accomplish their purposes more effectively if they polluted the human bloodline as a way to thwart

Elohim's plans for a kingdom. It frustrated Inanna to no end that she had to submit to Anu's kingship, but she reined herself in with calculated self-interest.

Lugal-Anu curried the Queen's favor, "My lord, I humbly defer to her highness. Every rogue human tribe is a possible fulfillment of the revelation."

Anu bristled with annoyance. "The revelation," he snorted contemptuously, conveying the impression that he didn't believe it. But he did believe it. He was just sick of the fearful dread that seized everyone when "the revelation" was brought up. Fear was healthy; dread was self-destructive.

"Yes, 'the revelation,'" Inanna shot back. "A 'Chosen One' who will end the rule of the gods. Are you not concerned? We are among the gods who rule. And you are the head of the pantheon, the high and mighty one." Now she was matching Anu's annoyance with sarcasm. "Unless you think you have nothing to lose."

Anu said for the hundredth time, "If they worship us, then we have no concern, and are free to use them as slave labor for *our* kingdom." What was opaque to Lugal-anu and to most humans under their control was the real identity and goals of the gods of the pantheon. Anu's real name was Semjaza, and Inanna's, Azazel. These Watchers were not gods like Elohim. They were in fact the sons of God who rebelled from Elohim's divine council and fell to earth in defiance of his tyranny. By masquerading as gods of the land, they could draw human worship away from Elohim. Mankind was created as Elohim's representative image on earth, to rule in his likeness. If the sons of God could transform the image of God into *their* image, their revenge would be almost complete. By mixing the human bloodline with their own, they could stop the bloodline of the promised King from bringing forth its fruit, and thereby win the war of the seed of Nachash with the seed of Eve.

Anu had a compassionate side that Inanna lacked. He would rather keep humans alive to serve him than destroy them. It was all a matter of perspective. He believed wisdom dictated that his own interests overlapped with what the humans would see as compassion. And perhaps they would even one day love him instead of fear him. Was this not what it was like to be Elohim?

Lugal-anu interrupted Anu's thoughts, "These nomads killed our scouts. They are ruthless savages."

Anu responded, "I too would kill those ugly little beasts if they were sniffing around my residence."

Inanna snorted with disapproval but refused to keep fighting. She would choose her battles. This was not one of them.

"Meet with the tribal leaders and allow them every opportunity to submit," Anu concluded.

Inanna's ire went up. "And if they do not?"

"Then enforce the will of the gods." Anu was not about to appear weak. His compassion only went so far.

Lugal-anu bowed low and backed away from their presence, wondering to himself if he had maintained a diplomatic amount of flattery for Inanna without disrespect for Anu's priority of place.

Inanna grinned to herself, her vampiric fangs glistening red with delight as she guzzled her blood offering with satisfaction. Perhaps she had not lost this battle after all.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian Godawa is the screenwriter for the award-winning feature film, *To End All Wars*, starring Kiefer Sutherland. It was awarded the Commander in Chief Medal of Service, Honor and Pride by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, won the first Heartland Film Festival by storm, and showcased the Cannes Film Festival Cinema for Peace.

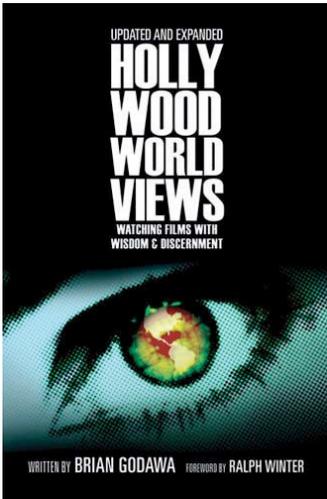
He also co-wrote *Alleged*, starring Brian Dennehy as Clarence Darrow and Fred Thompson as William Jennings Bryan. He previously adapted to film the best-selling supernatural thriller novel *The Visitation* by author Frank Peretti for Ralph Winter (*X-Men*, *Wolverine*), and wrote and directed *Wall of Separation*, a PBS documentary, and *Lines That Divide*, a documentary on stem cell research.

Mr. Godawa's scripts have won multiple awards in respected screenplay competitions, and his articles on movies and philosophy have been published around the world. He has traveled around the United States teaching on movies, worldviews, and culture to colleges, churches and community groups.

His book, *Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films with Wisdom and Discernment* has been released in a revised edition from InterVarsity Press. His book *Word Pictures: Knowing God Through Story and Imagination* (IVP) addresses the power of image and story in the pages of the Bible to transform the Christian life.

Find out more about his other books, lecture tapes and dvds for sale at his website www.godawa.com.

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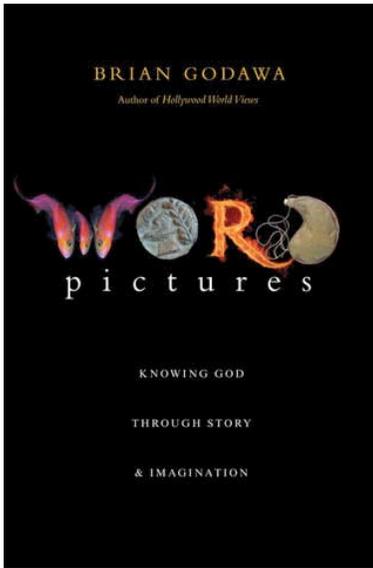
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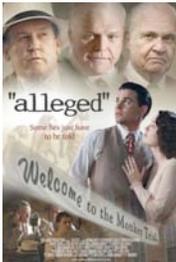
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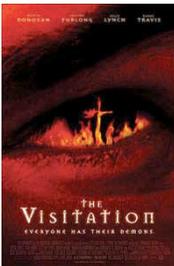
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A true story about Allied P.O.W.s who endure harsh treatment at the hands of their Japanese captors during World War II while they are forced to build a railroad through the Burmese jungle.



Alleged

Alleged is a romantic drama based on events using both historical and fictional elements occurring behind the scenes and outside the courtroom of the famous Scopes "Monkey Trial" of 1925.

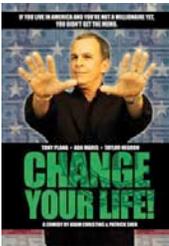


The Visitation

Written by Brian Godawa

Based on the bestseller by Frank Peretti

Peretti's supernatural thriller tells the story of a mysterious stranger (Edward Furlong) and his three associates, who arrive in a small town and perform miracles on those who would follow. Who is this charismatic drifter the townspeople have chosen to follow? Is he the true messiah, a false prophet or something far more sinister?



Change Your Life!

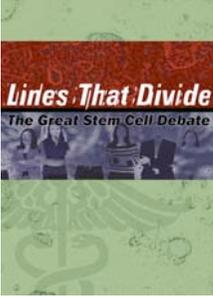
Written by Adam Christing and Brian Godawa

Adam Christing hosts this hilarious mockumentary following a group of six average Americans pursuing the American dream: Get Rich Quick! And they're going to do it through multi-level marketing. Super Success guru, Simon Martinez and his wife, Melinda (played by Hollywood stars Tony Plana and Ada Maris) are coming to town with their marketing strategy of how to make money, hosted at the big convention called Successpo!

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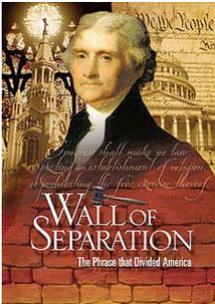
DOCUMENTARIES BY BRIAN GODAWA



Lines That Divide

Written & Directed by Brian Godawa

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Wall of Separation

Written & Directed by Brian Godawa

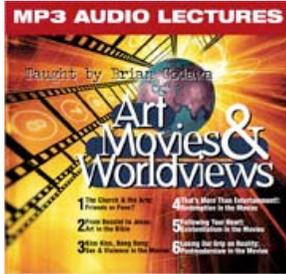
The “wall of separation” is a metaphor deeply embedded in the American consciousness, and an idea that continues to cause deep controversy within the country. In this historical documentary, Godawa takes a look at what the Founding Fathers intended when they framed the Constitution and wrote the First Amendment religion clauses. Were they trying to create a Christian nation, a secular paradise, or something in between?

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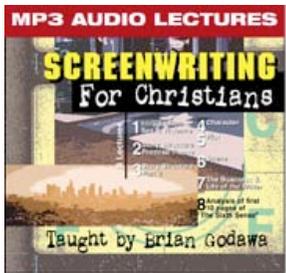
Brian has spoken around the world on the topic of movies, worldviews, and faith. Now you can purchase some of his presentations on downloadable MP3 directly from his website, www.godawa.com! Here are a sample of presentations:



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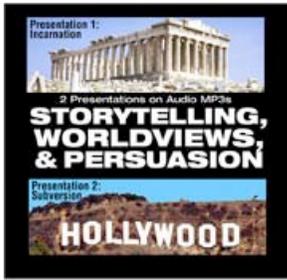


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Storytelling, Worldviews & Persuasion

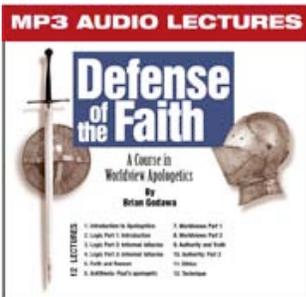
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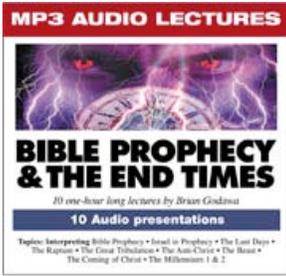


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