

The Urantia Book Synopsis of Papers



A Synopsis of Paper 96: Yahweh--God of the Hebrews

The early Semites had varying ideas of God, even during the same period. They worshipped Yahweh, El Elyon, El Shaddai, El, and Elohim; they believed in nature gods and other subordinate spirits.

Moses initiated the Hebrew belief in monotheism. Moses' mother was a member of the Egyptian royal family, and his father was a Semite liaison between the Egyptian government and the Hebrew slaves. Moses tried to negotiate for Hebrew freedom, but the agreement was later repudiated by the Pharaoh. A year later, while the Egyptian armies were busy elsewhere, Moses led his followers out of Egypt in a spectacular escape.

Moses comprehended Egyptian philosophy. He had been educated as a child about El Shaddai, and through his father-in-law he learned of El Elyon. The slaves he led knew little about such things but had retained a vague memory of Yahweh, the god of Mount Horeb (Sinai). During their extended encampment at the base of Mount Horeb, Moses wisely adjusted his teachings of the One God, attributing all the qualities of the Creator to Yahweh, the familiar god of his ignorant people.

It is unlikely that Moses' advanced monotheistic teachings would have held the attention of the ex-captives if it had not been for the fortuitous eruption of the Horeb volcano during the third week they camped there. Moses used the occurrence to convince his people that their God was mighty and all-powerful, above all other gods, who had singled out the Hebrews as his chosen people. The Hebrew concept of a jealous God first sprang from this event.

Moses was the most important spiritual teacher between Melchizedek and Jesus. He was an extraordinary combination of military leader, social organizer, and religious teacher. After his death, progress in the understanding of Yahweh rapidly deteriorated among the Hebrews. Leaders of Israel continued to believe, but the common people drifted backward in their beliefs, becoming contaminated with the less advanced Canaanite religious practices.

The Book of Psalms records various concepts of God from the times of Amenemope to Isaiah, from the crude idea of tribal deity to the expanded ideal of a loving and merciful Father. The Book of Job is derived from over twenty Mesopotamians who lived over a period of three hundred years. The idea of God during those centuries was best preserved near Ur in Chaldea. In Palestine, the wisdom of God was understood, but his love and mercy were not. Only those from Ur continued to preach about the mercy of God and salvation by faith.

Synopsis Titles of Papers