



CONTEXT FOR THE CHRIST EVENT:

Egyptian I

IN THE EGYPTIAN “BEGINNING” there was only the “nothingness” of the chaotic primeval water, called Nun. Similarly, in the Hebraic “beginning” “the earth was without form, and void [Heb. *bohu*; Gr. *kenoo*]; and darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Genesis 1:2). This is paralleled at the beginning of the Christ event, when “Christ Jesus . . . *made himself of no reputation* [Gr. *kenoo* = void], and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men . . .” (Philippians 2:5-7, italics supplied).

The Egyptians believed that the chaos of Nun was governed by the huge, evil serpent god, Apophis, who dwelled on the bed of the Nile River just south of Elephantine Island. In Hebrew mythology the primeval waters flowed forth from the center of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:10-14). It was apparently from there that the serpent came forth to tempt Eve by asking, “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Genesis 3:1).

Subsequent Hebrew passages refer further to the serpent: “And the Lord said unto him [Moses], What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it” (Exodus 4:2, 3; cf. Numbers 21:6-9, Isaiah 27:1).

All these references converge on the Christ event itself: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent [*ophis*] in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14, 15).

In Egyptian mythology original chaos preceded creation. Eventually, a tiny island rose out of the water and formed the primordial hillock surrounded by bulrushes (reeds). Then the god, Ra, climbed out of the water and onto the hillock in human form. Ra created the god, Shu (air), and the goddess, Tefnut (moisture), by spitting saliva (semen) into his hand (vagina). Next, Shu and

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Tefnut proceeded to create the earth and the sky. The earth and sky then mated and produced two divine couples — Geb and Nut, Osiris and Isis. Finally, the fifth level of deity emerged as Horus, the son of God and savior of humankind, who reigned as Pharaoh.

On the other hand, in the Hebraic account “the Lord God formed man [not other gods] of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). However, during his ministry on earth, Jesus explicitly used the Egyptian creation metaphor of spitting into his hand: “As long as I am [YHWH] in the world, I am [YHWH] the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay . . . ” (John 9:5, 6; cf. Mark 7:32-35).

Endnotes

1. Karl W. Luckert, *Egyptian Light and Hebrew Fire: Theological and Philosophical Roots of Christendom in Evolutionary Perspective* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991).
2. Norman Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).