

Introduction:

The biblical scholar B.W. Anderson identified an envelope structure that underlies the story of the flood in Genesis. In the typical envelope structure, what happens at the beginning of a story is reflected at the end, what happens second is reflected second to last. Sometimes the element that is reflected is simply a repeat of the earlier occurrence, in other cases it is an “undoing” of the earlier element. In this type of structure, the most important element is located in the middle and indicates the central point of the story.

Assignment:

You are to fill in the blanks in the envelope structure that has been reproduced below *and then* answer the questions at the bottom of the sheet

Structure of the Flood story:

a. 6:11 - “Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence.”

b. 6:13 - “_____”

c. 7:1 - “_____”

d. _____ - “all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened”

e. 7:17 - “...the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose...”

f. _____ - “But God remembered Noah”

e₁. 8:2 - “_____”

d₁. 8:7 - “until the waters were dried up from the earth.”

c₁. 8:16 - “_____”

b₁. _____ - “I will never again curse the ground...nor will I ... destroy every living creature.”

a₁. _____ - “God blessed Noah... ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth’”

Questions:

Usually the central element in an envelope structure is the most significant. The author has chosen to emphasize it through the structure of the story. It should reveal an important point the author chooses to make.

1. Who is the author, J, E, P, or D? (*note: the last blessing and 7:16 provide clues*) _____
2. What is the central point the author is making in this story?