

## Shem

I am Shem, son of Noah. Mom and Dad were middle aged before they started a family – Dad was 500. I think it might have been because they thought the world was not a good place to raise children. And that was actually true! Not only were there the ordinary crimes of assault, robbery, rape and murder, there was also a dark, spiritual evil that people of your day might call “creepy.” I am talking about the Nephilim.

But the LORD God must have spoken to Dad, because I and my two brothers were born in rapid succession. When we were old enough to help, Dad told us that he had gotten a disturbing message from the LORD. “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. So, make yourself an ark of cypress wood.”

We had noticed that our family was countercultural. Among people we knew, only our direct relations worshipped the Creator, but we had no idea unbelief was so widespread! The entire human race was to be wiped out, except for us. And we had to construct a vessel in which to preserve our own lives as well as those of the animals.

Now Dad was a skilled woodworker and had made watercraft for the nearby rivers, but the dimensions of this ark were stupendous! And the instructions were to make accommodations for a pair of every kind of land-dwelling, air-breathing animal and bird along with large amounts of their food. The LORD gave specific instructions for construction that included resins that bonded the planks together for strength and water-tightness.

We worked for a very long time but still needed help from workers outside the family. None of them believed what Dad said about a flood. They earned their wages, then went out to get drunk and joke about how the huge structure would be moved to the water. When Lamech died of natural causes at the surprisingly young age of 777, we suspected that something was happening. Then Methuselah began to grow feeble and we remembered that his name, "man of the dart" could also be interpreted as "when he is dead it shall be sent." Now we had an idea what that might mean. And when he handed the records of Adam and Seth to Dad, we knew that this meant the time was near.

When the animals began migrating to the ark and came right up the gangway to their quarters, you would think that the bystanders might want to get their tickets, but they continued scoffing and debating how the trick was done. Have you experienced the stubbornness of those who do not want to acknowledge the power of the Almighty? We were especially sad when God himself closed the door. It was just Mom and Dad, me and my brothers Ham and Japheth and our wives.

After a week on board, we were launched by the sudden onset of the flood and we were busy caring for the animals as the boat floated free. It was surprisingly stable. Some animals slept but those that remained awake ate plant food and we disposed of the waste with a well-designed system built according to the LORD’s directions. We settled into a routine as the sound of rain stopped and a loud wind began until we felt the ark scrape on solid ground.

When after 150 days we first looked out of the window on the top of the ark, we were stuck on top of one of the few peaks of land sticking up out of the endless sea. But we were altogether in the ark for a little more than a year before getting off, along with all the animals.

The world looked very different. The sky was blue instead of pink and the sun was harsh and bright. A colorful rainbow appeared, and the LORD told us that it was a symbol of his promise to never again destroy the earth

with water. But he also put the fear of man into animals, which reduced the danger from wild beasts. Also, the LORD gave permission for us to eat meat – something that had been done mostly by those who did not take the vegetarian tradition of Eden seriously.

We gradually began to understand that something else had happened to the world. Animals began to die of old age long before expected. Then we saw the death of our own children and great-great-grandchildren. Something had shortened the lifespan although those of us who grew up before the flood lived longer. I lived through the dispersion of Babel.

But my descendants and those of my brothers were like colonists in a new world and we brought with us the knowledge, skills and technology developed over the 1600 years when people lived over 900 years. This allowed us to establish advanced civilizations all over the world very quickly.

The LORD told me to turn over the records of my father as well as those of the ancestors, Adam, Seth and Enoch. It appears that the LORD had plans for the world and they centered around Abram. What do you know about the outcome of that story? Have you seen those records we entrusted to Abram? Has the coming one promised to Adam and Eve come? The one who would crush the serpent's head? Have you met him yet?

Genesis 5 – 11 and 14, Matthew 24, Luke 17, "Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study" by John Woodmorrappé, "In the Beginning," Walt Brown, Age Chart on [www.rossolson.org/drama/other\\_bible/age\\_chart.pdf](http://www.rossolson.org/drama/other_bible/age_chart.pdf)