

Did You Know...

✝ News and trivia from our parish and the Catholic Church ✝
-- contributed by the Christ Child Church Women's Club --

Christ Child Catholic Church

Dedicated to Growth in Christ and to the Challenges of Loving Service

23230 Summit Road, Los Gatos, CA 95033 ••••• (408) 353-2210 ••••• www.christchild.org

Noah's Ark

The epic tale of Noah, his pairs of animals, and his boat, is so magical, so awe-inspiring. Across many nations, cultures and religions, this legend is learned at an early age and becomes a life-long reference point.



Noah's adventure is written not only in the Old Testament, but in the Koran as well. The Old Testament was first written between 1000-500BC, and the Koran of course much later, around 700AD. But did you know that the story of the Flood and the Ark are actually *thousands of years* older?

The first occurrence of this iconic story has been traced all the way back to almost 3,000 years before Jesus!

Back in the mid-1800's, an ancient manuscript was discovered in the ruins of the great library of Nineveh. (For the curious, Nineveh was on the outskirts of what is today Mosul, Iraq.) The manuscript was contained on twelve clay tablets, and is known as **The Epic of Gilgamesh**.



Gilgamesh was both a human and a heroic figure, oriented to the multiple gods of his pagan times, and ruling his kingdom with a heavy hand. As he advanced in age and became concerned about his mortality, he made the acquaintance of **Utnapishtim**, who had achieved immortality -- by building an Ark and saving all the animals from a devastating Flood. All of Gilgamesh's adventures and exploits were inscribed in the manuscript, including many details of the trials and efforts of Utnapishtim.

When compared detail-by-detail, the similarities are astounding (see links below), and religious scholars of all schools have been fascinated by the ties across the millennia. Christian scholars understand that the writings of earlier, pagan eras were not as carefully guided by God's hand as were the oral traditions and transcriptions that resulted in the Bible's Old Testament.

I guess we should be happy that the Biblical account used the name Noah as the principal character, and not Utnapishtim (that's pronounced *oot-nah-pish-tim*). It just has a nicer ring to it, don't you think?

Still Curious? Check out the following links:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah%27s_Ark
<http://www.icr.org/article/noah-flood-gilgamesh/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah_in_Islam

--- *Karin and Greg Illes*