



Gene Ziegler

Octogenarian Time Capsule

## Noah's Arc

*Not always smooth sailing*

*Genesis 7:12 The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark, they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds...*

The heavy rain had an enchanting way of making sleep long and deep for Noah. The darkened skies made it harder to awaken in the mornings. But this morning, sleeping late was not to be. The knocking on his cabin door grew more insistent. His wife kicked him, as was her way to prod him into action in cases when she was not inclined to respond herself. Noah put his feet on the cold damp deck boards and reached for his robe, while grumbling, "Hold on, I'm coming. Who's knocking?"

"It's me, dad! Shem, and my wife is with me!" came the answer.

"What is Shem's wife's name?" asked Noah's wife peeking from under the covers, "I can never remember".

"Her name is Shem's wife, you silly woman. What more name does a woman need," replied Noah.

"I'm coming!" he shouted over the pounding noise of the rain.

Noah almost lost his balance as the arc rolled from side to side in the turbulent sea. The door to his cabin was bound tight by the shift and refused to yield to his pull on the wooded handle until the ark righted itself against the waves.

"Come in, come in, and bring your wife", said Noah as the door finally swung open, but then refused to close again.

The cabin Noah shared with his wife was by far the most roomy and comfortable cabin on the arc. It was bedroom, office, and sitting room fitting for God's chosen one. His sons and their wives, on the other hand, were forced to share a cramped dorm-like room added almost as an afterthought in the otherwise useless v-shaped space in the bow of the arc. It

provided for little privacy for the three couples and led a shared intimate knowledge of one another that they would willingly have foregone.

“How fare thee, Father Noah and Noah’s wife?” asked Shem observing the required pleasantries of the day. Shem’s wife remained silent as was expected.

“We are well enough.” Responded Noah.

“I’m not,” grumbled Noah’s wife from under the covers. “It’s been raining like this for more than a month, and it’s feckin depressing”. Shem’s wife’s eyes were wide with shock and surprise, but she held her tongue.

“How are your brothers and their wives?” asked Noah, ignoring his wife’s outburst.

“Japheth is doing okay, holding up his end, and his wife keeps to her assigned chores. He still whines constantly about being the middle child and how you favor me over him in all things. And I do wish they were a bit more discrete with their nightly copulations. It gets to be a bit tiring at times.”

“What of your brother Ham?” asked Noah.

“It’s Ham of whom I wish to speak, father”, said Shem, “He keeps to his own counsel as you well know, but living in as close quarters as we do, we can’t help but notice certain attitudes toward his wife that are troubling. Where is Japheth can’t seem to keep his hands off of his wife, Ham pays practically no attention to his.

“He spends most of his time tending to the animals, feeding and watering them, and cleaning out their stalls. I went to seek him out there to talk about my concerns and found him having carnal relations with the ewe. It’s not the first time this has happened and is not the only animal I have witnessed him violating.

“You know we have had our problems with Ham and his fascination with some of the boys in the village, but I always thought he would out-grow it. You’ll have to talk to him father.”

“Hmmm. Yes”, said Noah, “I have attempted to beat that behavior out of him on a number of occasions. I thought finding him a wife would help, but his interests still lie elsewhere. I was hoping that the isolation of this voyage would turn him around.

“You know, the flood couldn’t have come at a better time. The village elders were losing patience with Ham and his diddling with their sons, and their livestock for that matter.

“I think a prayer intervention might be the answer. I read in the village scrolls that similar behaviors have been curtailed with intensive praying. Surely God has time for our prayers now that he has drowned everyone else.”

“Will that be all”, barked Noah, “I haven’t had my breakfast”.

“There is something else troubling me,” said Shem, “you see I’ve noticed some rather strange behavior among the animals.”

“What sort of behavior?” Noah asked timidly, not sure he wanted to know. Shem was too inclined, to Noah’s way of thinking, to look deeply into the causes of behaviors of animals as well as men.

“We assumed in selecting male and female pairs of all of God’s creatures, procreation would follow, and repopulation of God’s world would follow.”

“And...,” prompted Noah.

“It doesn’t seem to be working out that way,” Shem replied, “we expected that every beast on board would be pregnant by now and would flower forth when we landed. Not all of the animal pairs seem to be interested in one another and I’m beginning to think it might have been shortsighted to bring only two of each creature on board.

“I’ve spent some time in the arc’s library, and....”

“We have a library?” Noah interrupted, “since when?”

“Right after the floods started,” continued Shem, “I gathered up all of the scrolls I could find in the village and brought them on board.”

“Ooh, I wish you hadn’t done that, Shem,” said Noah, “we were supposed to make a fresh start of things according to God’s plan. Anyway, what did you find?”

“I found this one scroll,” said Shem, “by a guy named Dawkins of Arimathea who writes about animals and he says... well 16.2% of all animals, including men, have gender identity issues, and I thought...”

“Enough!” shouted Noah, I don’t want to hear it. “Is that all?”

“Well...”, said Shem reluctantly, “there is one other thing”.

“Go ahead, tell him”, said Shem wife.

“Okay, what is it?”, Noah asked hoping it was plugged toilets or something else he could do something about.

“It’s about procreation, pop.” Started Shem sheepishly, “With just six of us of childbearing age on board, it’s going to require several generations of inbreeding to get things going and all, and this Dawkins guy says we can expect a lot of idiots.”

*Gene Ziegler, Chandler Arizona October 2018*