# The great Flood the Eridu Genesis

The [*Eridu Genesis*](http://www.livius.org/ei-er/eridu/eridu_genesis.html) is written on a Sumerian cuneiform tablet of which about two thirds are now lost. The missing parts can be reconstructed from texts like the [Sumerian King List](http://www.livius.org/k/kinglist/sumerian.html) and [Berossus](http://www.livius.org/be-bm/berossus/berossus.html): first the creation of men, then the kings who ruled before the Great Flood, and finally the Flood itself, culminating in an offer of eternal life to the Sumerian Noah, Ziusudra. It is essentially the same story as the "[Priestly document](http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood1-t-bible2.html)" that appears to have been a source of the canonical version of Genesis.

The translation of the Eridu Genesis offered here is adapted from a translation by Thorkild Jacobson. After the story of the Creation of Mankind, the gods were disturbed by the noise produced by men, and the supreme god Enlil decides to destroy human beings.

**[****81']** That day, Nintur wept over her creatures  
and holy Inanna was fill of grief over her people;  
but Enki took counsel with his own heart.[[1](http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood2-t.html#Note_1:)]  
An, Enlil, Enki, and Ninhursaga  
had the gods of heaven and earth swear by the names of An and Enlil.

**Ziusudra's Vision**

**[86]** At that time Ziusudra was king and lustration priest.  
He fashioned, being a seer, [a statue of] the god of giddiness  
and stood in awe beside it, wording his wishes humbly.   
As he stood there regularly day after day  
**[90']** something that was not a dream was appearing: conversation,  
a swearing of oaths by heaven and earth, a touching of throats,[[2](http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood2-t.html#Note_2:)]  
and the gods bringing their thwarts up to Kiur.

**Enki's advice**

And as Ziusudra stood there beside it, he went on hearing:  
"[Step up to the wall to my left and listen](http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood6-parallels.html#1)!  
Let me speak a word to you at the wall and may you grasp what I say,  
may you heed my advice! By our hand a flood will sweep over  
the cities of the half-bushel baskets, and the country;  
[the decision, that mankind is to be destroyed, has been made](http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood6-parallels.html" \l "2).  
A verdict, a command of the assembly, can not be revoked,  
**[100']** no order of An and Enlil is known  to have been countermanded,  
their kingship, their term, has been uprooted; they must bethink themselves ...  
Now ...  
What I have to say to you ..."  
  
[Lacuna; Enki orders Ziusudra to build the ark and load it with pairs of animals.]

**The Flood**

**[132']** All the evil winds, all stormy winds gathered into  
one and with them, the Flood was sweeping

over the cities of the half-bushel baskets,

[for seven days and seven nights](http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood6-parallels.html" \l "20).  
After the flood had swept over the country,  
after the evil wind had tossed the big boat about on the great waters,  
the sun came out spreading light over heaven and earth.

**Ziusudra's sacrifice**

[Ziusudra then drilled an opening in the big boat](http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood6-parallels.html" \l "22)  
and the gallant Utu sent his light into the interior of the big boat.  
**[140']**  Ziusudra, being the king,   
stepped up before Utu kissing the ground before him.  
[The king was butchering oxen, was being lavish with the sheep](http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood6-parallels.html" \l "27),  
barley cakes, crescents together with ...  
... he was crumbling for him  
...  
juniper, the pure plant of the mountains he filled on the fire  
and with a ... clasped to  
the breast he ...  
  
[Lacuna; Enlil is angry at finding survivors, but Enki explains himself]

**End of Enki's speech**

**[175']** "You here have sworn by the life's breath of heaven,

the life's breath of earth that he verily is allied with you yourself;

you there, An and Enlil, have sworn by the life's breath of heaven,

the life's breath of earth, that he is allies with all of you.

He will disembark the small animals that come up from the earth!"

**Reward of Ziusudra**

Ziusudra, being king, stepped up before An and Enlil, kissing the ground,  
and An and Enlil after honoring him  
**[180']** were granting life like a god's,  
[were making lasting breath of life, like a god's, descend into him](http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood6-parallels.html" \l "31).  
That day they made Ziusudra, preserver, as king,  
of the small animals and the [seed of mankind](http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood6-parallels.html#5),  
live toward the east over the mountains of Dilmun.[[3](http://www.livius.org/fa-fn/flood/flood2-t.html#Note_3:)]  
  
  
**Note 1:**  
These gods had been involved in creating Man.  
  
**Note 2:**  
Ziusudra witnesses in a vision how the gods are discussing the fate of humanity. The touching of throats is a gesture to indicate that if someone breaks his oath, he allows himself to be beheaded. The Kiur mentioned in the next line was a part of the temple of Enlil in Nippur.  
  
**Note 3:**  
Dilmun was a legendary place, far away on the edges of the earth. It was later identified with present Bahrain.

