

Tanhuma, Noah 5

Make yourself an ark of gopher wood (Gen. 6:14).

Rabbi Huna said in the name of R. Yose: For one hundred and twenty years, the Holy One kept warning the generation of the flood in the hope that they would resolve to repent. When they did not repent, He said to Noah, *Make yourself an ark of gopher wood*. Noah proceeded to plant trees. When asked, "Why these trees?" he would reply, "The Holy One is about to bring a flood upon the world, and He told me to make an ark, that I and my family might escape." They mocked and ridiculed him. In the meantime, he watered the trees, which kept growing.

When asked again, "What are you doing?" he gave them the same reply, and the generation of the flood continued to ridicule him. Finally he cut the trees down, and, as he sawed them into planks, he was again asked, "What are you doing?" He replied, "What I said I would do," even as he continued to warn the generation of the flood.

When they did not repent even then, the Holy One brought the flood upon them.

At last, when they realized that they were about to perish, they tried to overturn the ark. What did the Holy One do then? He surrounded the ark with lions.