

**The Epic of Gilgamesh, *continued***

**Literature**

were ready to board the boat. We loaded the boat with my family and my workers, and with both wild and tame animals. Shamash said to board the boat in the evening, and as soon as we had done this the rain started. There were great black clouds and thunder and lightning, and the storm grew so terrible that even the gods became frightened and were sorry they had ordered the flood. At last the wind and rain stopped, and it was over. When we looked out we saw nothing but water. We sent out a bird to find land for us, but she came back. Then we sent out another bird, but it never came back. We all prayed to the gods, and they had a great discussion. One was angry because I had been saved, but the one who had warned me said that I had learned about this in a dream. Another god made a speech and said what a sad thing it was that the flood had destroyed mankind. He said it would have been better if the people had been punished in some other way. And so at last, since I had lived through the flood, the gods decided to allow me to live forever.

**Why do you think they sent a bird to find land?**

---



---

**ANALYZING LITERATURE**

**1. Main Idea** Why did the gods decide to cause a flood?

---



---

**2. Critical Thinking: Making Comparisons** What elements in this epic are similar to the story of Noah and the flood from the *Bible*? What elements are different?

---



---

**ACTIVITY**

Research other ancient cultures that have stories of floods that destroy humankind. Why might certain cultures have these stories while others do not? Note that some cultures developed near rivers or other bodies of water.