

## **Babylonian Creation Narrative Enuma Elish**

There was once a time when neither heaven nor earth existed, but only the watery chaos ruled by Apsu [fresh water] and his consort Tiamat [salt water]. Tiamat gave birth to various pairs of heavenly beings, but they made so much noise that Apsu and Tiamat made plans to kill them. Their plot was discovered by Ea, the wise earth god, who killed Apsu before he could put his plan into effect. However, Tiamat was still alive. She used her creative powers to bring into existence a group of terrifying monsters over whom she placed Kingu, one of her own offspring. The stage was now set for battle. None of the other gods was able to stand up to the Tiamat/Kingu coalition. Then Marduk, son of Ea, entered the fray against Tiamat. He was promised the supreme kingship of the gods if he emerged the victor - and he did. Kingu was defeated. Tiamat was split in two. Marduk used half of her body to form the heavens and the other half to form the earth. He placed other gods in the heavens; these became the sun, the moon, and the stars. These other gods acknowledged Marduk as their king, and then proceeded to fashion the human race to serve their needs. The raw material they used for this latter process was clay mixed with the blood from the slain Kingu. A shrine was built in Babylon [gate of the gods] in which Marduk could be called on and worshiped.

*How would Babylonians, reasoning from creation narrative above, conflict with Hebrews who reason from the Genesis narrative, on the questions below?*

[01] Was the universe the accidental by-product of a war among the gods, or a planned and desired product?

[02] Was the matter, from which the universe was created, good or evil?

[03] Were human beings created as an afterthought to do dirty work for the gods, or are human beings the triumphant finale to the creation process?

[04] After humans were made, did their creator or creators take interest in them and concern for their welfare, or were the creator or creators not very interested in the fate of the human race?

[05] Are the heavenly bodies deities to be worshiped and served, or do they serve people by providing light for them?

[06] Should we take care of the earth, because it is a valuable creation, or is there no point in taking care of the planet, because it is merely junk? To whom does the earth belong?

[07] Are Human beings of little value, created as uninteresting slaves? Or is every person intrinsically (innately, inherently) valuable?