

Enuma elish and genesis: comparative analysis of babylonian and jude- christian di...



Although the claim has been made that the writing of Genesis was influenced by the Babylonian Creation Epic, Enuma Elish, the character and function of Deity in Genesis 1-2 differs greatly than that of Enuma Elish. At first glance, it appears that these two creation narratives share similar qualities, such as the opening words of Genesis 1 “In the beginning...” and the opening words of Enuma Elish “When on high the heaven had not been named...” (Tablet 1. 1). Both narratives illustrate Deity creating the world, and feeling strongly toward creation, however the nature of the God of Genesis and the nature of the gods of Enuma Elish differ greatly in that Yahweh considers his creation to be “very good” (Genesis 1: 31), whereas the Babylonian gods long to kill their creation because they are annoyed. While the God of Genesis and the Babylonian gods are similar in regard to their status as creator deity, they differ in that the God of Genesis is a single triune god, with far greater power, who is just, rather than vengeful.

One of the main differences between the character and function of Deity in Genesis 1-2 and Enuma Elish is simply that the God of Genesis is a single god, whereas there are several gods and goddesses vying for power and control in Enuma Elish. In this way, Deity as described in Enuma Elish is polytheistic, and the gods are all related to each other. This is evident when the god Ea exclaims “My little son, my little son! My son, the Sun! Sun of the heavens!” (Tablet 1. 101-102). Similarly to Enuma Elish, in the Bible Jesus is referred to as the “Son of God”, however due to the theology of the Trinity, the Father and the Son are both God. Additionally, Genesis 1: 26 reads “Then God said ‘let us make man in our image, after our likeness...’.”

Although one may claim that the pronoun “us” is indicative of multiple gods,

in actuality it just refers to the three persons of the Trinity, who are God.

From the start it is apparent that the character of Deity in Enuma Elish differs from that of Genesis in that Enuma Elish deals with many gods, while there is only one God in Genesis.

The God of Genesis also differs from the Gods of Enuma Elish because he is uncreated and eternal, whereas the gods of Enuma Elish are created, as written “ Then it was that the gods were formed in the midst of heaven...” (Tablet 1. 9). In this same way the gods of Enuma Elish can be killed, as demonstrated when Marduk kills Tiamat. One may claim that Jesus is also killed in the Bible, however he willingly sacrifices himself for humanity, whereas Tiamat does not want to die and is killed anyways. This also brings up the point that the gods in Enuma Elish fight with one another, whereas the persons of the Trinity do not. The God of the Bible is presented as one Triune God, however the multiple Babylonian gods cannot seem to agree with each other, even to the point of attempting to kill one another. For example, Tiamat says “ Their ways are truly loathsome to me. By day I find no relief, nor repose by night. I will destroy, I will wreck their ways” (Tablet 1: 37-38) in reference to the younger gods. One does not encounter this sort of spite when examining the book of Genesis. Even when God sends the flood in Genesis 6 he is not being vengeful, but is rather enforcing justice.

Additionally, in Enuma Elish the gods have different levels of power and control, whereas the God of Genesis is not subject to internal power struggles. In Genesis, God creates man in his image, but says “ Let us make man in our image” (Genesis 1: 26), referring to the three persons of the

Trinity. However, there is a hierarchy of power in reference to the Gods of <https://assignbuster.com/enuma-elish-and-genesis-comparative-analysis-of-babylonian-and-jude-christian-divinity/>

Enuma Elish, as demonstrated when it is written “Kingu was elevated, possessed of the rank of Anu, they decreed the fate for the gods, his sons” (Tablet 2. 158), showing how gods can gain power over other gods. This is further demonstrated when the gods say “You, Marduk, are the most honored of the great gods” (Tablet 4. 3), showing how the gods are not all equal, therefore placing emphasis on the hierarchy of the gods.

Despite a few apparent parallels between Genesis and Enuma Elish, there are several apparent differences between the gods of Enuma Elish and the God of Genesis which invalidate this claim. The Biblical God is a Triune Deity, whereas the Babylonian gods fight amongst themselves and struggle for power. Additionally, God is uncreated and exacts justice rather than revenge, unlike the Babylonian gods. While it is true that these two creation narratives both share traits which appear similar at first, the differences between the character and function of Deity between the two are simply too great. Whereas humanity is simply an afterthought to the Babylonian gods, God created the earth out of nothing and cares about his creation deeply.