

Mesopotamian DBQ Short Answers

Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Mesopotamia

Mesopotamians looked to religion to answer their questions about life and death, good and evil, and the forces of nature. They believed that each city and larger city-states belonged to a patron god or goddess who owned everything and everyone in the city. The people trusted the priests and priestesses in the temples to tell them what the gods wanted, and they followed the holy leaders' commands without question. In this way, the leaders in the temples had almost as much power over the people as the kings, who were also the high priests.

Mesopotamians believed that the gods, called dingir in Sumerian, looked and acted much like humans. They had feasts, marriages, children, and wars. They could be jealous, angry, joyful, and kind.

The dingir controlled four realms in the universe: An was the god of heaven, Enlil was the air-god, Enki was the water-god, and Ninhursag was the mother earth-goddess.

Enlil was also called the "father of the gods". He set up the me, or laws of the universe, but he broke the laws and was banished to the underworld. Enki, the water-god, was then put in charge of them, and organized the universe.

There were other important deities in Mesopotamia. Utu, the sun-god, lit the world with rays shooting from his shoulders. He moved across the sky in a chariot. Ur's patron god, Nanna, was the moon-god, who used a boat to travel by night.

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LIFE IN ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

MESOPOTAMIAN GODS AND GODDESSES

The Seven Great Gods

Name	Association	City	Symbol
An/Anu (AHN/AH-nu)	Father of the gods, god of the sky	Uruk	Bull
Enlil (EN-lill)	God of the air, later replaces Anu as father of the gods	Nippur	Horned crown on an altar
Utu/Shamash (OO-too/SHAH-mahsh)	Sun-god, lord of truth and justice	Larsa and Sippar	Sun's rays from shoulders, sun disk, saw
Nanna/Sin (NAH-nah)	Moon god	Ur	Crescent moon
Inanna/Ishtar (in-NAH-nah/ISH-tar)	Goddess of love and war	Uruk	8-pointed star, lion, weapons from shoulders
Ninhursag/Belitili (nin-HER-sag/bell-eh-TEE-lee)	Mother Earth	Several cities	"Omega"—symbol of the womb
Enki/Ea (EN-key/EE-ah)	God of fresh waters, lord of wisdom, magic, and arts and crafts	Eridu	Water filled with fish streams from shoulders, turtle

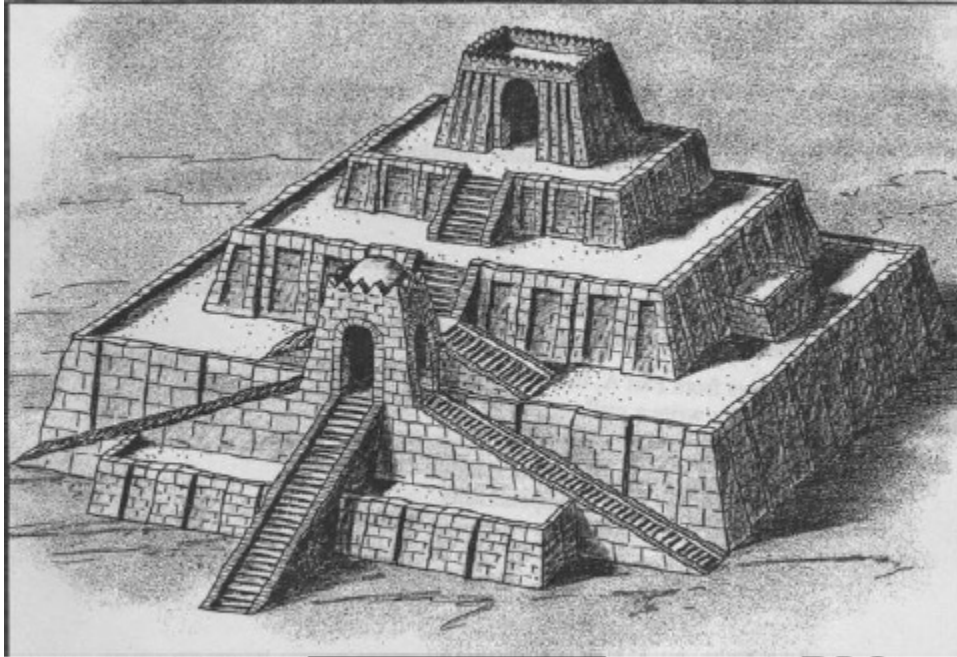
Some Gods of the Second Rank

Name	Association	City	Symbol
Adad (AH-dahd)	Storm god	Several cities	Lightning
Gula (GOO-lah)	Goddess of healing, medicine	Isin	Dog
Nabu (NAH-boo)	God of writing, accounting	Borsippa	Reed stylus
Marduk (MAR-dook)	National god of Babylon	Babylon	Spade, horned dragon
Ashur (AH-sure)	National god of Assyria	Assur	Dragon, winged disk

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Document #1



MESOPOTAMIA

ANCIENT DBQ

Sumerians and Akkadians practiced polytheism, the worship of many gods. They believed that keeping the gods happy was key to their own happiness and prosperity. On the other hand, if the gods were angry, they might bring suffering and disaster. Sumerians built huge temples called ziggurats. They believed these temples linked Earth with the heavens and linked people with the gods.

1. Look at the illustration. Notice the number of stairs. What does the size of the temple tell you about the value the Sumerians placed on their gods?
2. From the reading passage, what did the Sumerians and Akkadians look to their gods for?

Document #2

The Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the oldest pieces of literature, is made up of ancient folklore, tales, and myths. It was written in Mesopotamia about a strong and powerful king named Gilgamesh, who was believed to be part god, part man. The story describes his desire, to live forever. Gilgamesh goes on a long journey to

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find the secret to immortality but in the end, he realizes that he must die like other humans.

When the gods created Gilgamesh they gave him a perfect body. Shamash the glorious sun endowed him with beauty, Adad the god of the storm endowed him with courage, the great gods made his beauty perfect, surpassing all others, terrifying like a great wild bull. Two thirds they made him god and one third man.

Source: The Epic of Gilgamesh, translated by N.K. Sandars

1. Looking at the passage from the Epic of Gilgamesh, name at least two gifts the gods gave Gilgamesh.
2. Despite these gifts, what does Gilgamesh learn about himself at the end of the story?

Document #3



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Hammurabi, a ruler of ancient Babylon in Mesopotamia, came up with a set of laws for his people to live by. The collection of these laws is called the Code of Hammurabi. The laws were written on a stele, or stone slab. The Babylonians believed Hammurabi received these laws from a god.

1. Based on the passage above and the picture, who do you think are the two figures pictured on the stone?
2. How might it change people's actions to believe that Hammurabi's laws came from a god rather than from Hammurabi himself?

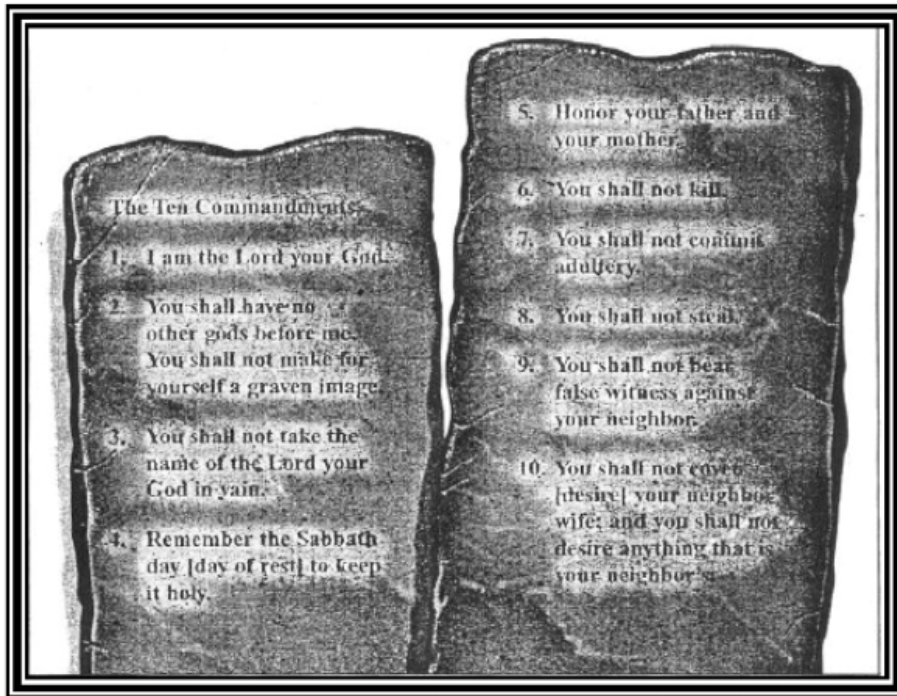
Document #4

In the Code of Hammurabi, the laws concerned daily life, business, medicine, property, and family. Punishment for breaking these laws was very harsh. For example, people caught stealing could be put to death. Those who did not show care and respect for the property of others had to pay a fine. Hammurabi stated his goal for the law code in this way:

“...to render [give] good to the people, to make justice shine in the land, to destroy the evil and wicked, that the strong do not oppress [mistreat] the weak.”

1. Name **three** things Hammurabi wanted to accomplish with this set of laws.
2. How were people punished for stealing in Hammurabi's time?

Document #5

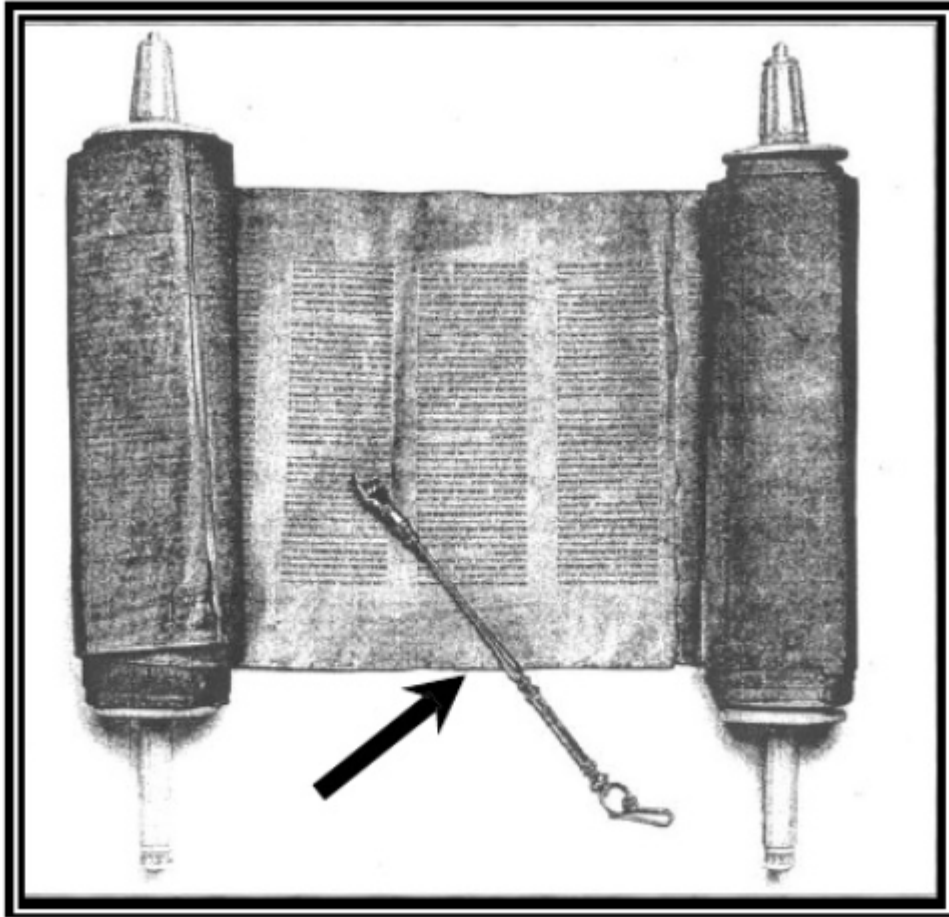


The Hebrews in ancient Mesopotamia were one of the first groups to practice monotheism, the worship of only one God. The Hebrews recorded their history and laws in the Hebrew Bible, which tells the story of God meeting Moses on a mountain. God gave Moses a set of laws called the Ten Commandments. These laws gave rules for how the Hebrews were to treat both God and other men.

1. Which commandment tells the Hebrews to worship only one God?
2. Which commandments specifically describe how people should treat one another?

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Document #6



The first five books of the Hebrew Bible are called the Torah. These books contain laws and teachings about how the Hebrews should act toward one another and toward God. The Torah is still considered sacred today by followers of Judaism.

Torah scrolls are still handwritten. The photo shows a Torah scroll with a pointer called a yad. Jewish law requires the use of a yad so that the writing on the scroll is not touched by a human hand while it is being read.

1. What does the Jewish law requiring use of a yad tell you about the value placed on the Torah by the Hebrews?