

## CHAPTER II

### SOME OTHER ACCOUNTS OF THE CREATION FOUND IN BABYLONIA

TEXT OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM TABLET. COMPARISON OF IT WITH GENESIS 2.  
TEXT OF A TABLET FROM NIPPUR AND COMPARISON WITH GENESIS. TEXT OF A  
TABLET FROM ASHUR COMPARED WITH GENESIS.

#### 1. Text of the British Museum Tablet.

1. A holy house, a house of the gods, in a holy place had not been made;
2. No reed had sprung up, no tree had been created.
3. No brick had been made, no foundation had been built.
4. No house had been constructed, no city had been built;
5. No city had been built, thrones had not been established;
6. Nippur had not been constructed, Ekur had not been built;
7. Erech had not been constructed, Eanna had not been built;
8. The deep had not been formed, Eridu had not been built;
9. The holy house, the house of the gods, the dwelling had not been made,---
10. All lands were sea,---
11. Then in the midst of the sea was a water course;
12. In those days Eridu was constructed, Esagila was built,
13. Esagila where, in the midst of the deep, the god Lugal-dul-azaga abode,
14. (Babylon was made, Esagila was completed).
15. The gods and the Anunaki he made at one time.
16. (The holy city, the dwelling of their heart's desire, they named as first),
17. Marduk bound a structure of reeds upon the face of the waters,
18. He formed dust, he poured it out beside the reed-structure.
19. To cause the gods to dwell in the habitation of their heart's desire,
20. He formed mankind.
21. The goddess Aruru with him created mankind,
22. Cattle of the field, in whom is breath of life, he created.
23. He formed the Tigris and Eupharates and set them in their places.
24. Their names he did well declare.
25. The grass, marsh-grass, the reed and brushwood (?) he created,
26. The green grass of the field he created,
27. The land, the marshes, and the swamps;
28. The wild cow and her young, the wild calf; the ewe and her young, the lamb of the fold;
29. Gardens and forests;
30. The wild goat, the mountain goat, (who) cares for himself (?).
31. The lord Marduk filled a terrace by the seaside,
32. ....a marsh, reeds he set,
33. ....he caused to exist.

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34. [Reeds he creat]ed; trees he created;
  35. In their.....in their place he made;
  36. [Bricks he laid, a founda]tion he constructed;

37. [Houses, he made], a city he built;
38. [A city he built a throne] he established;
39. [Nippur he constructed], Ekur he built;
40. [Erech he constructed], Eanna he built.

(At this point the tablet is broken. When it again becomes legible, it is in the midst of an incantation.)

**2. Comparison with Genesis 2.**-----This account of the creation has sometimes been compared with Genesis 2:4, ff., which describes a time when there was no grass or vegetation on earth, and then goes on to describe the creation of man and animals, speaking of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

In this account of the creation it is stated (line 21) that the goddess Aruru with Marduk created mankind.

In another Babylonian poem, the Gilgamesh epic, which contains the Babylonian story of the flood, there is an account of the creation of man which accords much more closely with Genesis 2:7 than that which accords much more closely with Genesis 2:7 than that which we are considering. It runs:

The goddess Aruru, when she heard this,  
 A man like Anu she formed in her heart.  
 Azuru washed her hands;  
 Clay she pinched off and spat upon it;  
 Eabani, a hero she created,  
 An exalted offspring, with the might of Ninib.

Here is clearly a tradition, similar to Genesis, that God formed man from the dust of the ground. The allusion to Aruru indicates that this formed a part of the early Babylonian tradition. There is considerable evidence that in an earlier form of the Babylonian account Marduk had no place. He was introduced into it later by the priests of Babylon. Azuru was in that earlier form the creator of man, and probably was said to have formed him from clay, as in the Gilgamesh epic.

While these points of likeness are evident, there are great differences between the two narratives. The Babylonian account speaks not only of grass and reeds as non-existent, but of cities and temples also, which, it tells us, were created later. It has no picture of Eden; its thought centers in well-known Babylonian cities. While Marduk appears as supreme in the Babylonian poem, the gods and

Anunaki, or spirits of earth, are recognized, so that the polytheistic view is not entirely absent. In the Biblical picture, on the other hand, Jehova is supreme. Opinions of scholars differs as to whether there was any real connection between the two narratives. Whatever opinion one may hold on this point, there can be no question but that the second chapter of Genesis is dominated by those religious conceptions, which were so uniquely manifested in Israel, while they are absent from the Babylonian narrative.

### **3. Text of a Tablet from Nippur.**

1. In the mountain of heaven and earth
2. The day Anu brought forth the great gods:

3. A tree of Ezinu had not been born, had not become green,
4. Her land, the goddess Takku had not created.
5. For Takku a temple-platform had not been filled in;
6. A ewe (?) had not bleated (?), a lamb had not been dropped,
7. A goat had not bleated, a kid had not been born,
8. No ewe had borne her lamb,
9. No goat had borne a kid,
10. The name of Ezinu, tall and holy, and of Sig.
11. The Anunnaki, the great gods, had not known.
12. There was no ses-grain of thirty-fold;
13. There was no ses-grain of fifty-fold;
14. Small grain, mountain-grain, and cattle-fodder there were not;
15. A possession and houses there were not;
16. Takku had not been brought forth, a shrine not lifted up
17. Together with the lady Ninki the lord had not brought forth men.
18. Shamash as leader came, unto her desire came forth;
19. Mankind he planned; many men were brought forth.
20. Food and sleep they knew not;
21. Clothing and dwellings they knew not.
22. The people with rushes and skis came,
23. Like sheep with their mouths.....they ate grass,
24. Garden water they drank.
25. When the land was green with the forms of their gods
26. And with edible plants the holy dwelling of Sig and Ezinu were green,
27. They brought food for the gods to the established dwelling
28. From the abundance of Sig and Ezinu.
29. The great gods in their holy dwelling
30. Ate; they were not satisfied;
31. They gave good food to their holy flock.

Barton, *Miscellaneous Babylonian Inscription*, No. 8

1. The great gods in their holy dwelling
2. Drank; they were not satisfied:
3. For the proper feeding of their holy flock
4. Kingship in security they established.
5. When Enki spoke a word to Enlil,
6. The waters of Enlil and Ezida
7. Made the holy dwelling green.
8. The mighty holy dwelling they inhabited for thee.
9. Enki and Enlil their holy word
10. To Sig and Ezinu spoke from the holy dwelling
11. Wool from the flock they gave;
12. Vegetables as food in abundance they gave.
13. For vegetation they made canals,
14. Irrigating machines with laborers attached they gave.
15. Wool was taken from the flock;

16. The shepherd of the flock reveled in abundance.
17. Ezinu stood as tall vegetation;
18. The bright land was green; it presented abundance in heaps;
19. In the field the head was lifted high;
20. From heaven abundance came;
21. Sig and Ezinu made increase;
22. For all they raised an abundance;
23. They filled the land with exalted courage;
24. The voice of their god uttered just decisions for them.
25. A dwelling-place was their land; food increased for the people;
26. The prosperity of their land brought them danger;
27. For making house-bricks the clay of the land they burned.
28. They became strong; they raised abundance;
29. Companions were they; man with wife they dwelt;
30. In misfortune the house assists them.

A colophon states that the tablet contained 60 lines. Ezinu was a god of vegetation---trees, grain, etc. Sig usually signifies “wool”, then “garment.” As Sig is in this text said to have become green along with Ezinu, it may designate flax, or possibly cotton, which produced a woolly substance from which garments were made. The goddess Takku was a patroness of agriculture. The story, therefore, begins before the existence of vegetation and domestic animals, before fields had been cultivated, or houses built, and before the establishment of political institutions, and it traces the coming of these into existence. In this respect it reminds one of Genesis 2:5, 6. The way in which the word of the great god Enki causes water to flow and other creative acts to follow resembles in a faint way God speaks and things come into existence in the first chapter and Genesis.

**4. Another Sumerian Account of the Creation of Man.**---Still another account of the creation of man has been found among

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the tablets discovered at the city of Ashur. This was copied by the Assyrian scribes from a Sumerian text so old that it is accompanied not only by an Assyrian translation, but also by many kabbalistic symbols. It read as follows:

1. When both heaven and earth had been completely established;
2. When the mother of the goddesses had been born;
3. When the earth had been brought forth, the land created,
4. When the domes of heaven and earth had been established,
5. Straight canals had been constructed;
6. The Tigris and Euphrates---their banks had been established;
7. Anu, Enlil, Shamash, Ea,
8. The great gods,
9. The Anunnaki, the great gods,
10. Lofty sanctuaries inhabited as creators.
11. In anxiety they asked:
12. “Since the domes of heaven and earth had been established,
13. Straight canals have been constructed,
14. The Tigris and Euphrates---
15. Their banks have been established,

16. What shall we change?
17. What shall we create?
18. O Anunnaki, ye great gods,
19. What shall we change?
20. What shall we create?"
21. The great gods standing aloft,
22. The Anunnaki, who determine fate,
23. The two of them made answer to Enlil:
24. "In the land where flesh grows, the bond of heaven and earth,
25. Langa, Langa we will overthrow;
26. From his blood mankind we will make,
27. Let the bonds of the gods be bound upon them;
28. For future days the limit
29. Be established;
30. The yoke and lifting cord on their hands
31. Be placed,
32. The temple of the great gods
33. Unto a loft sanctuary to bring,
34. The meadows to mark out,
35. Forever their limits
36. To establish,
37. The straight canal
38. As a boundary to establish
39. The earth to water, the plants
40. To raise,
41. The rain of heaven, the rain of heaven.....
42. The ravine of the land as a boundary to set,
43. The storehouse of the district to measure it,

Translated from E. Ebeling's *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur Religions Inhalts*, Leipzig, 1915-1919, No. 4. Written with notation that Barton thought might have been musical notes or directions for chanting.

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44. To make the field of the Anunnaki produce,
  45. To increase the abundance of the land,
  46. To keep the feast of the gods,
  47. Cool water to pour out
  48. In the dwellings of the gods, which have been made lofty.
  49. Ullugarra and Nigarra
  50. Shall they be called.
  51. Ox, sheep, cattle, fish, and bird,
  52. The abundance of the land to increase,
  53. The lord of gladness and the lady of gladness
  54. With their holy mouth to supplicate.
  55. O Aruru, who hast been raised up for ladyship,
  56. Great structures thou thyself shalt enclose,
  57. Wise men for the people, heroes for the weak,
  58. Like grain springing of itself from the earth, shall be made,---
  59. A destiny unchangeable as a star forever.

60. By day and night
61. The feasts of the gods,
62. Their great appointed festival of themselves
63. They shall celebrate.”
64. Anu, Enlil,
65. Ea, Ninmakhu
66. The great gods,
67. The place of mankind created.
68. The goddess Nisabe in mankind’s place was established.
69. Mighty and secret things.
70. As a scribe I teach.

This account shows that there were among the Babylonian traditions variations of the idea that man was made from the blood of a god. In this account, instead of being from the blood Kingu, one of the rebellious gods, husband of the arch-rebel Tiamat, he is made from the blood of Lamga, the craftsman, the god of carpenters.

It will be noted that, as in the sixth tablet of Creation Epic, so in this account man was created by the gods for the specific purpose of tilling the ground, building temples, and keeping up the festivals of the gods. It accords in that respect with the thought of the second chapter of Genesis, where man is placed in Eden, the garden of God, to dress it and to keep it for his Divine Creator (see Genesis 2:15).