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MESOPOTAMIAN VIEW OF THEIR PLACE ON THE WORLD AND UNIVERSE

*"Where is the man who can clamber to heaven? Only the gods live for ever with glorious Shamash, but as for us men, our days are numbered, our occupations are a breath of wind..."*¹

Is it possible for a man to achieve immortality even though we are subjects of the gods? How can we prevail if the gods give us harder and harder trials every day? These questions seemed to endure in the minds of Mesopotamians during the thriving time of their civilization. This idea of pessimism, of a short mortal life in which we couldn't do anything better than some thing of honor, courage and bravery before ^{we} ~~one~~ takes the inevitable road to death desired by the gods, translated itself into one of the first great epics of humanity: *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.²

An example of the grim reality that Mesopotamians thought they ^{would} ~~will~~ be enduring after death comes from the account that Endiku tells to Gilgamesh when he has a dream during his agonizing last moments³: "...The heavens roared, and the earth rumbled back an answer; between them I stood before an awful being, the somber-faced man-bird; he had directed on me on his purpose...He fell on me and his claws were in my hair, he held me fast and I smothered; then he transformed me so that my arms become wings covered with feathers. He turned his stare towards me, and he led me away to the palace of Irkalla, the Queen of Darkness, to the house from which none who enters ever returns, down the road from which there is no coming back. There is the house whose people sit in darkness; dust is their food and clay their meat... I entered the house of dust and I saw the kings of the earth, their crowns put away for ever; rulers

¹ N.K. Sandars, Trans., *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 71

² N.K. Sandars, Trans., *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1972) ^{page 7}

³ Ibid, p. 89-93

You need a clearer answer to the question asked

single space and indent long quotes

and princes, all those who once wore kingly crowns and ruled the world in the days of old. They who stood in the place of the gods like Anu and Enlil, stood now like servants to fetch baked meats in the house of dust, to carry cooked meat and cold water from the water skin... and there was Ereshkigal the Queen of the Underworld; and Belti-Sheri squatted in front of her, she who is recorder of the gods and keeps the book of death. She held a tablet from which she read. She raised her head, she saw me and spoke: "Who has brought you here?" Then I awoke like a man drained of blood who wanders alone in the waste of rushes; like one whom the bailiff has seized and his heart pounds with terror."⁴ This account demonstrates the belief that the afterlife was a

place of shame, of torments and of servitude to the gods where the acts that one committed in life would not be remembered in the afterlife and that no one becomes exempt from this terrifying destiny.

You need to analyze this quote more completely and connect it more clearly to your thesis.

As the story makes its progress we discover a more somber depiction of the power that gods had over humanity, and how this power determines the existence of mankind. The "Story of the flood"⁵ is the clear example of how the gods decide the future of humanity. Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh: "...In those days the world teemed, the people multiplied, the world bellowed like a wild bull, and the great god was aroused by the clamour. Enlil heard the clamour and he said to the gods in council, "The uproar of mankind is intolerable and sleep is no longer possible by reason of the babel." So the gods agreed to exterminate mankind... With the first light of dawn a black cloud came from the horizon; it thundered within where Adad, lord of the storm, was riding... Then the gods of the abyss rose up; Nergal pulled out the dams of the nether waters, Ninurta the war-lord threw down the dykes, and the seven judges from hell, the Anunaki, raised their torches, lighting the land with their vivid flame... One whole day the tempest raged,

How does this show Mesopotamian ideas of fate? How would?

⁴ Ibid, p. 92-93
⁵ Ibid, p. 108-113

You quote too much - paraphrase or choose the most relevant section.

gathering fury as it went, it poured over the people like the tides of battle; a man could not see his brother nor the people be seen from heaven... For six days and six nights the winds blew, torrent and tempest and flood overwhelmed the world... I looked at the face of the world and there was silence, all mankind was turned to clay."⁶ The outcome of humanity was decided by a

childish and capricious attitude of the gods. This passage demonstrates more of the pessimism that Mesopotamians had on their view of life.

The Mesopotamians saw themselves strictly controlled in every aspect of their lives by their gods. They ^{held} view that the only way to achieve "immortal life" was by achieving everlasting remembrance in the memories of future generations only by doing acts of courage and honor. In a more concise way, the Mesopotamians view ^d themselves in the world as the subjects of the gods and they knew that in order to be more than just a simple mortal, something of great sacrifice was needed to be done in order to have a more transcendental life.

again
analysis
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more
completely
and link
it to
your
thesis.

you haven't
proven
this

thesis?

You need to work harder to tie ~~the~~ each example that you give to the answer to the question. It is not enough simply to quote from the text, you need to explain ~~that~~ how the examples you use prove what you are trying to say. A good rule of thumb is 2 sentences of explanation for every sentence of quote. Paraphrasing is a good option also. →

⁶ Ibid, p. 108-111

Make sure to directly answer
the question in the intro. In a
short paper, the conclusion is too
late. Also indicate how you will prove it.

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