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ONCE UPON A TIME: RETHINKING CREATION
IN ENÛMA ELIŠ GENESIS 1 – 2:4a

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Hebrew Bible (HB), unlike modern science, does not attempt to describe reality in terms of atoms, energy, or mechanical causality. Instead, the opening sentence of the HB begins with a powerful theological statement affirming *berē šit bārā' 'ēlōhim* בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים “In the beginning God created” (Gen 1:1). This statement speaks to the omnipotence of the Israelite God as its solo ground, which means that such a god is most powerful to bring out of nothingness—no pre-existent matter, space, or time—living things (*creatio ex nihilo*).¹ Its purpose, therefore, is to teach that the whole world and everything therein were created by the “One True God”. This theological affirmation also presents God’s sovereign power in ordering the *kosmos*.² Genesis accounts two separate creation narratives: Gen 1 – 2:4a, which was composed from the Priestly (P) material, and Gen 2:4b – 25 that was formed from the Yahwistic (J) material.³

In addition to the above, some interpreters have used the Genesis creation narrative as a tool to dismantle the *Big Bang Theory*,⁴ or in some cases as an attack to Darwin’s Theory of Evolution (i.e. Darwinism).⁵ For others, it has been relegated to the level of some subheading

¹ *Creatio ex nihilo* expresses the view that there was once nothing but God, and now there is both God and a world other than God, (Richard Rice, “Creatio Ex Nihilo: It’s Not About Nothing,” in *Theologies of Creation: Creatio Ex Nihilo and Its New Rivals*, [New York: Routledge, 2015], p. 87).

² The term *cosmos* derives from the Greek *kosmos*, which refers to the entire universe as a single organized entity. There are also two other terms related to this: cosmogony (*kosmos + genia* = birth) and cosmology (*kosmos + logia* = report). The former is thus an account, usually in the form of a mythological tale, about the genesis of the structured universe. The latter, however, is a blueprint of the universe as a comprehensible and meaningful place (see: Robert A. Oden, s.v. “cosmogony” and “cosmology,” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary, A – C*, [Vol 1], [Ed. David Noel Freedman & Gary A. Herion], [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992], p. 1162 – 1171).

³ For a full discussion see: Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), p. 6; Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1972), p. 63; Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), p. 113 – 4; Gertz, p. 114 – 8

⁴ The term *Big Bang* was coined by cosmologist Fred Hoyle as a term of derision for the theory being put forward by George Gamow and others that the “universe is expanding.” This theory describes how the universe expanded from a very high-density, high-temperature state and offers a comprehensive explanation for a broad range of phenomena. For a discussion on the Big Bang Theory: Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, (Bantam Books, 1988); Gerald L. Schroeder, *Genesis and the Big Bang*, (Bantam Books, 1990); Eric Lerner, *The Big Bang Never Happened*, (Knopf Publishing group, 1992); J.B. Stump, *Science and Christianity: An Introduction to the Issues*, (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2017).

⁵ Darwinism is a theory of biological evolution. It was developed by the Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and others, stating that all species of organisms arise and develop through the natural selection of small, inherited variations that increase the individual’s ability to compete, survive, and reproduce. For a discussion on the theory of Darwinism consult: Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, (London: John Murray, 1859). For a discussion on Darwin and Genesis, see: Stephen C. Barton & David Wilkinson, *Reading Genesis After Darwin*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)

within the larger corpus of Old Testament theology. “Creation,” as Rolf Rendtorff writes, “to this day has been one of the ‘proverbial step-children’ in the recent discipline of Old Testament theology.”⁶ Other scholars, however, simply claim that creation was subservient to salvation or they suggested that Israel was not interested in nature.⁷

Furthermore, archaeological explorations of the late 19th and early 20th centuries have revealed many Ancient Near East (ANE) texts regarding how the *kosmos* initially came into being. We should, of course, mention that these texts offer a wide variety of accounts of the creation narrative: the physical universe, the pantheon, and the human race.⁸ One of these texts is the *Enūma Eliš* (hereafter EE), which dates to around 2000 BC.⁹ It is also the longest and most elaborate creation account from ancient Mesopotamia. The EE composition has been described as the forerunner of the opening chapter of Genesis (P). This hypothesis was first put forward by George Smith in 1875, whose findings suggested that there were strong similarities between both accounts. Other scholars, however, have departed from this position, suggesting that the EE is not a record of creation. Unlike Genesis, the two most important characters in the EE are the god *Marduk* and the goddess *Tiāmat* (“salty waters”). Its author has presented *Marduk* as the hero god of the story

⁶ Rolf Rendtorff, “Some Reflections on Creation as a Topic of Old Testament Theology,” in *Priests, Prophets and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), p. 205

⁷ Gerhard von Rad, “The Theological Problem of the O.T. Doctrine of Creation,” in *Creation in the Old Testament*, (Philadelphia and London: Fortress, 1984), p. 62; G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament Against its Environment*, (London: SCM, 1950), p. 71; In reference to Von Rad, Walter Brueggemann writes: “Von Rad asserted that ‘the doctrine of creation’ was peripheral to the Old Testament, and that the Old Testament was not, at least until very late, at all interested in creation per se.” (see: Walter Brueggemann, “The Loss and Recovery of Creation in Old Testament Theology,” in *Theology Today* 53 [1996], p. 178).

⁸ Among the texts are: *the Gilgamesh Epic* (2150 – 1000 BC in Sumerian, Old Babylonian and Middle Akkadian; found in the 1850s in Ashurbanipal’s library), *the Atrahasis Epic* (1700 BC in Old Babylonian; found in Sippar and Assurbanipal’s library), and *Eridu Genesis* (1600 BC in Sumerian; found in Nippur and Ur). Lambert indicates that other than *Enūma Eliš* there is no systematic treatment of cosmology in Sumero-Babylonian literature. He says that the longest literary text dealing with any aspect of this topic is the *Atrahasis Epic*, but this has rightly been called “a Babylonian history of mankind.” (see: W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myth*, [Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2013], p. 169); Other texts are: *The Bilingual Creation of the World* by Marduk (CT 13:35 – 38), (For translation in English, see: Benjamin R Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, [Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005], p. 487 – 97); and Berossos’ *Babyloniaca*, originally written in Greek during the reign of Antiochus I.

⁹ Lambert, 2013, p. 439 – 444; Wayne Horowitz, “Animate, Inanimate, and Primary Elements in Mesopotamian Creation Accounts: Revisited,” in *Welt Konstruktionen: Religiöse Weltdeutung Zwischen Chaos Und Kosmos Vom Alten Orient Bis Zum Islam*, [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010], p. 32), p. 29; In another paper, Professor Horowitz indicates that the tradition of Marduk fighting monsters and building heaven and earth may have been known in Babylon as early as the time of Hammurabi, (see: Wayne Horowitz, “Mesopotamia Accounts of Creation,” in *Encyclopedia of Cosmology: Historical, Philosophical, and Scientific Foundations of Modern Cosmology*, [Ed. Norris S. Hetherington], [New York: Garland Publishing, 1993], p. 388)

who demonstrates his power through various acts of creation and battles against other deities.

We must note that both texts that are to be compared here correspond to a literary work from the past that is peculiar to a particular period during which it was to be used for specific purpose within the defined social context. We are of the belief that these texts were written for the readers/listeners to define their religious, cultural, and political identity. In fact, these texts were composed in order to bear witness to their deepest religious beliefs and persuade others that such a belief system was true. In so far, we can argue that both the EE and P's accounts are texts of ancient fictions, however, they do contain a strong belief system that its readers/listeners found to be true. This also reveals, for the modern reader, that the fundamental purpose of these two accounts is of religious and theological matters, and not of scientific or historical material.

1.1 The Purpose

Scholarly research about the *Babylonian Creation Myth* has suggested that EE could have played an influential role in the literary shaping and theological function of the Priestly creation narrative in Gen 1 – 2:4a and other creational passages of the HB.¹⁰ The present work aims to analyze the EE and Gen1 – 2:4a in order to compare both accounts. This study is particularly interested in the way in which P has used the recitation myth of the *Akītu* festival, EE, to form its narrative. We propose to argue that both creation narratives are part of the broader genre of the ANE mythical creation accounts, and as such, they share common linguistic features. We will also argue that the EE account and P's account are analogous in how the primeval state of the *kosmos* is presented, i.e. *watery chaos* (EE I:5; Gen 1:2). Finally, we will focus on how *Elohim* is portrayed as the eternal creator, in contrast to *Marduk*. The overall goal of this paper is to show that the

¹⁰ Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), p. 73 – 101; Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis: Translated and Interpreted*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), p. 102 – 33; John L. McKenzie, "Myth and the Old Testament," in *CBQ* 21 (1959), p. 265 – 82; John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1930), p. 43 – 48; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), p. 8 – 13; Philippe Talon, *The Standard Babylonian Creation Myth Enūma Eliš*, (Helsinki: State Archives of Assyria, 2005), p. 60

biblical account and the EE are not too far apart from each other that that they do indeed share significant cohesion. This paper goes on to argue that a close literary relationship between the Priestly Pentateuch and Mesopotamian tradition existed.¹¹

1.2 Questions and Arguments

The questions one might ask about these texts: What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the EE and Gen 1 – 2:4a? Is the biblical text dependent on the EE? If not, then how do we reconcile both accounts? The argument brought forward in this paper will proceed in three steps: a) An argument that the identification of the common elements between both accounts; b) An argument that the biblical narrative depends on the EE account; c) An argument that the portrayal of *Elohim* is presented in contrast to *Marduk*. This present work does not intend to solve all the theological problems related to the creation myth; rather, its aim is to analyze the texts.

2. STRUCTURE, COMPOSITION, SIMILARITIES, AND DISSIMILARITIES

The first creation narrative in Genesis (P) is comprised of 7 days, and some scholars suggested that the week of creation correlates to the 7 tablets of the EE. More precisely, they have implied that the shared numerical value “7” links both accounts. “To attribute,” writes Alexander Heidel, “the number seven in Gen 1:1 – 2:3 to the fact that EE is composed of seven tables would be an attempt, actually made, to establish a reaction between the twelve sons of Jacob and the twelve months of the year.”¹² The subsequent section of this paper offers a brief analysis of the EE and Gen 1 – 2:4a as a literary composition. More particularly, it will focus on the outline, the composition and genre, and the similarities and dissimilarities of both accounts.

¹¹ The intertextual analysis of these texts has suggested to scholars that the evidence in certain cases is best described as an “influence on”, “allusion by”, or an “echo in” P that is not something that matters so much. Instead, the overall case will depend on P’s true allusions to other literature, in which the author utilizes “the marked material for some rhetorical or strategic end,” (Benjamin D. Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40-66*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 15; Any unconscious “echoes” of Mesopotamia in P would only reinforce [but not detract from at all] the argument that P has intentionally imitated Mesopotamian traditions, Kenton L. Sparks, “‘Enūma Elish’ and Priestly Mimesis: Elite Emulation in Nascent Judaism,” in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 126, No. 4 (2007), p 628

¹² Heidel, p. 128

2.1 The Outlines: Enûma Eliš and Genesis 1 – 2:4a

The two outlines below are presented as a tool for comparison. It has been suggested by other scholars that a final and very significant point is that they are comparable. For this outline, we followed both Alexander Heidel and John Jacobs' suggestions:¹³

- I. Creation of the *kosmos* and creation of the gods (I:1 – 20)
- II. Conflict between the older and younger gods (I:21 – 72)
 - A. The younger gods make noise (I:21 – 28)
 - B. *Apsû*, *Mummu*, and *Tiāmat* discuss (I:29 – 54)
 - C. The intention of *Apsû* is communicated to the younger gods (I:55 – 58)
 - D. *Ea* defeats *Apsû* and *Mummu* (I:59 – 72)
- III. *Ea* re-creation and organizes the *Apsû* (I:73 – 78)
- IV. Creation of *Marduk* (I:79 – 104)
- V. Conflict between the younger gods and *Tiāmat* (I:105 – IV:122)
 - A. *Anu* creates havoc for the gods and *Tiāmat* (I:105 – 110)
 - B. The gods and *Tiāmat* confer (I:111 – 162)
 - C. The plot of *Tiāmat* is discovered by *Ea* and reported to *Anšar* (II:1 – VI:64)
 - D. *Marduk* defeats *Tiāmat* (IV:165 – 122)
- VI. *Marduk* re-creation and organizes the *kosmos* (IV:65 – VI:91)
- VII. The fifty names of *Marduk* (VI:91 – VII:144)
- Epilogue: exhortation to study the EE (VII:145 – 162)

As we can notice, from Tablets I–VI, the author recounts the creation of the gods and the universe. Tablet I, for example, describes the condition of the universe before creation. It also presupposes the existence of *Apsû* (“sweet waters”) and *Tiāmat* at the beginning. Then, the narrative ascends onward to describe a series of conflict between the gods. In the closing portion of Tablets VI, however, the narrative focuses on the story of *Marduk*'s rest, which is then extended over virtually all of Tablet VII; thus, the narrative concludes with a short epilogue. Ultimately, the goal of the

¹³John Jacobs, “The Structure of the Enûma Eliš – Handout,” in *Academia.edu*, updated March 17, 2007 https://www.academia.edu/19987655/The_structure_of_the_Enûma_eliš_-_handout. (accessed October, 2019), p. 1; cf. Heidel, p. 128 – 9

EE is to praise *Marduk* as the most powerful god in the Babylonian pantheon.

In contrast to the above, the purpose of P's account is to present *Elohim* as the creator of the *kosmos*, which evidently departs from EE's goal. The outline presented below follows both Gordon J. Wenham and Kenneth A. Mathews' suggestions.¹⁴

- I. God the Creator (1:1 – 2)
 - A. In the Beginning (1:1)
 - B. Water Chaos (1:2)
- II. The Six day of Creation (1:3 – 2:4a)
 - A. The First Day, "Light" (1:3 – 5)
 - B. The Second Day, "Heaven" (1:6 – 8)
 - C. The Third Day, "Earth" (1:9 – 13)
 - D. The Fourth Day, "Luminaries" (1:14 – 19)
 - E. The Fifth Day, "Birds and Fish" (1:20 – 23)
 - F. The Sixth Day, "Animals and Humans" (1:23 – 31)
- III. The Seventh Day, "Sabbat" (2:1 – 4a)

The structure of P's account is systematically arranged in a series of 7 days; however, Wenham notes that the plot is itself highly problematic. We believe, nonetheless, that Gen 1:1 – 2:4a consists of one unit, although there are some scholars who do not consider v. 4a to be part of this unit. This thesis, of course, disagrees. The first half of the verse is characterized as P, whereas the second half is attributed to J.¹⁵ We have taken v. 4a as the conclusion of the first creation narrative. Thus, the goal of P is to present *Elohim* as the creator and the institution of *Shabbat*.

2.2 The Composition and Literary Genre of Enûma Eliš and Genesis 1 – 2:4a

The composition of the EE has been regarded as a poem with a defined set of beats and

¹⁴ Wenham, p. 6; Mathews, p. 113; Vervenne, p. 51

¹⁵ For a discussion on verse 4 see: M. Vervenne, "Genesis 1,1 – 24. The compositional Text of the Priestly Overture to the Pentateuch," in *Studies in the Book of Genesis: Literature, Redaction, and History*, (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2001), p. 45 – 7

meter,¹⁶ which was intended for recitation—rhetorically turning chaos into *kosmos*.¹⁷ Wilfred G. Lambert indicates that the EE was recited before the statue of *Marduk* by the High Priest. He also mentions that the Babylonians ritually enacted the battle between *Marduk* and *Tiāmat* during the *Akītu* Festival.¹⁸ This festival, Lambert mentions, “took place under the Late Babylonian kings, that is, from 625 to 539 B.C.”¹⁹ For Lambert, the EE is an important example of myth utilized for a cult.²⁰ For Professor Wayne Horowitz, however, the *Seven Tablets* of EE were written to celebrate *Marduk*’s return to Babylon in the summer of 1108 BC after spending a generation in exile.²¹ He also indicates that the EE might have incorporated material from an Old Babylonian origin.²² In terms of its author, scholars have indicated that it is unknown;²³ however, some have suggested that it was written by temple scribes or the priest of *Marduk*.²⁴

The narrative of Gen 1 – 2:4a is likely to be a “copy-and-paste” from the EE, or at least heavily influence by it. For instance, Hermann Gunkel, who has written extensively about the sea in the Old Testament (OT) in comparison with those in Babylonia, argues that the account could not have originated with the biblical author because there are elements in Gen 1 – 2:4a that resemble those from the Babylonian myths. He has gone into detail concerning his theories about

¹⁶ Feliu-Mateu & Millet-Alba mentions, “La métricaacacia, a diferencia de la grecolatina, no se basa en el número de sílabas de cada verso, sino en unidades básicas de acentuación, (Feliu-Mateu & Millet-Alba, p. 15); To which, Lambert indicates that “...the metre are not matters of form alone but involve the interrelation of form and meaning. The poetic line is not only a metrical unit but also one of sense and syntax.” Adding that, “The lines remain a basic unit. The metre is to be found in the structure of the individual line and in the organization of the lines into strophes. Study of these matters is somewhat like putting the commas in modern English or like phrasing a piece of music,” (Lambert, 2013, p. 17 – 34). For a full discussion, consult Selena Wisnom’s article, “Stress Patterns in Enūma Eliš: A Comparative Study,” in *Kaskal: Rivista di Storia, Ambienti e Culture Del Vicino Oriente Antico*, (Vol 120), (2015), p. 487 – 501

¹⁷ Tom Mels, “Lineages of a Geography Rhythms,” in *Reanimating Places: A Geography of Rhythms*, (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 32

¹⁸ W.G. Lambert, “The Great Battle of the Mesopotamian Religious Year: The Conflict in the Akītu House,” in *Iraq* 25 (1963), p. 189 – 90

¹⁹ W.G. Lambert, “Myth and Ritual as Conceived by The Babylonians,” in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, (Vol. 13), (Issue 1), (1968), p. 104 – 112

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998), p. 29 – 45

²² Wayne Horowitz, “Cosmic Geography in Accounts of Creation,” in *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1998), p. 108

²³ Feliu-Mateu & Millet-Alba, p. 14

²⁴ Michael Nathanson, *Between Myth & Mandate: Geopolitics, Pseudohistory & the Hebrew Bible*, (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2014), p. 70

the Babylonian myth as the origin of the negative material about the sea that ended up in the OT.²⁵ In fact, Gunkel proposed that the conflict between *Marduk* and *Tiāmat* is assumed in the OT passages about creation even though it is not stated. He writes, “We thus recognize in Genesis 1 a series of mythologically resonant features. It follows from this that Genesis 1 is not the composition of the author, but rather the written deposit of a tradition.”²⁶ Further on in his commentary on Genesis, he explains, “The description of Chaos and certain other elements which exhibit a poetic tone are... not attributable to the author P, but rather to his exemplar... In antiquity, one did not create cosmogonies.”²⁷ For him, the author of Genesis could not have written the creation story of P because ancient creation stories were exclusively inherited from earlier sources. Gunkel firmly believes that Moses copied his creation story from the Babylonians. On this issue, Lambert writes:

“Although the Babylonian cosmology began with a *primaeval* Tiamat, which is the etymological equivalent of *tehôm*, ‘the deep,’ in Gen. I, the major item of the Babylonian text, the battle between Marduk and Tiamat, does not appear in the Hebrew accounts of creation. The German scholar Gunkel supplied the missing link in his book *Schopfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (1895). He drew attention to a series of passages in the poetic books of the Old Testament in which a battle between Yahweh and the sea, or sea monsters, is alluded to. On this basis it could be affirmed that a conflict had existed in Hebrew traditions of creation, but had been washed out of the monotheistic formulation of Gen I.”²⁸

Lambert seems to reject Gunkel’s position on this matter.

Furthermore, Vervenne comments that the composition of Gen 1 – 2:4a does not circulate as an independent work but rather as “the result of a redactional rewriting of the existing text of Gen 2:5 – 3:24.”²⁹ Aside from that, the literary genre of Gen 1 – 2:4a has been highly debatable.

²⁵ The conflict motif is known as *chaoskampf*, “the struggle against chaos” (cf. Gen 1:2).

²⁶ Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos*, p. 11

²⁷ Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), p. 119

²⁸ W. G. Lambert, “A New Look at The Babylonian Background of Genesis,” in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, (Vol XVI), (Issue 2), (1965), p. 287

²⁹ Vervenne, p. 64

Some have argued that it was composed as a poem,³⁰ while others simply reject this idea.³¹ Although scholars might debate this particular issue of whether the chapter may or may not be considered as formal poetry, it does use poetic language. Similar to the EE, Gen 1 – 2:4a, Walter Brueggemann comments that it “likely was formed for liturgical usage.”³²

2.3 The Similarities and Dissimilarities

The relationship between these accounts has motivated several scholars to carry out comparative studies. The result of these comparative studies has generated both tension and several questions. Some scholars have suggested that both accounts share a considerable number of points which invite comparison not only between them but with other portions of the HB.³³ To speak about the comparison of both creation accounts is to say that it has been the result of a process of intellectual thought—which is evidently displayed in both narratives. Indeed, these accounts illustrate the condition in which the *kosmos* was found prior to its creation, i.e. “*watery chaos*.”³⁴ Genesis, for example, presents the initial state of the *kosmos* in Gen 1:2, which is parallel to Tablet I:5. Moreover, John L. McLaughlin points out that EE makes the course of time similar to P’s account by creating the sun, the moon, and the heavenly bodies (*cf.* Gen 1:14).³⁵ In light of this, the present diagram illustrates some of the similarities between the accounts.

Table I

The Similarities Between Enûma Eliš and Genesis

The following diagram shows side-by-side the thematic theme in both accounts.

³⁰ Brueggemann sees Genesis 1 as a poetic genre, (Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, [Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1982], p. 26 - 8), and Wenham calls it a “hymn” (Wenham, p. 10).

³¹ John S. Feinberg states, “The literary genre of Genesis 1–2 is a hotly debated issue among exegetes and theologians. What further complicates it is that the accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 do not seem to have the same genre.” Therefore, many would argue that Genesis 1 should be viewed as non-literally, because it is a separate genre from the rest of the book. Indeed, for those who view Genesis 1 as a separate genre, there is little unanimity as to its precise classification, (see: John S. Feinberg, *No one like him: The Doctrine of God*, [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001], p. 574 – 8).

³² Brueggemann, p. 22

³³ For example, Job 3 and 41; Psalm 29, 74, 82, 93, 104, and 105; Isa 13:5, 8; 27 and 51 (see: Heidel, p. 82)

³⁴ Since Gunkel, some scholars have accepted the idea of a chaos theory prior to creation (H. Gunkel, “Influence of Babylonian Mythology upon the Biblical Creation Story,” in *Creation in the Old Testament*, [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1984], p. 25 – 52; B.S. Child, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, [London: SCM, 1960], p. 42; B.W. Anderson, “Mythopoetic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith,” in *Creation in the Old Testament*, [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1984], p. 15)

³⁵ John L. McLaughlin, *The Ancient Near East: An Essential Guide*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012), p. 8 - 9

Feature	<i>Enuma Elish</i>	Gen 1:1–2:4a
Opening scene	Chaotic, primordial watery entities	Primordial water
Water named	Tiamat	תְּהוֹם or <i>tehom</i>
Wind	Used by Marduk to defeat the watery Tiamat	God's wind hovers over the primordial water
Sea and sky	Created from division of Tiamat; firmament holds in place	Created from division of primordial water; firmament holds in place
Order of creation	Primordial waters	Primordial waters
		Light
	Waters above/below	Waters above/below
	Land	Land (and plants)
	Bodies of light	Bodies of light
		Birds/fish
	Humanity	Animals/humans
	Divine feast/repose	God rests

These similarities suggest that the author of P was influenced by the EE, or that they at least knew some of the material from diverse traditions that ultimately return to the *Babylonian Creation Myth*. In regard to this, James Karl Hoffmeier argues:

“The similarities demonstrate that the biblical writers were aware of the creation myths of their neighbors and were intentionally refuting them. Thus, when Genesis 1:2 reports that ‘darkness was over the surface of the deep (*tehôm*), and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters’, there is apparently a polemic against the Babylonian goddess of the primeval sea, Tiamat. Genesis lacks the chaotic element and the sense of struggle between Marduk and the sea. Furthermore, Genesis challenges the Egyptian view that Ptah spoke creation into existence, claiming rather that the God of Israel uttered commands and creation followed.”³⁶

However, Heidel understands that the examination of the various points of comparison between them quite plainly shows that the similarities are really not as striking as we might expect.³⁷ For him, this is considering how closely the Hebrews and the Babylonians were related. When

³⁶ James Karl Hoffmeier, *The Archaeology of the Bible* (Oxford: Lion, 2008), p. 34.

³⁷ Heidel, p. 129

compared with other texts, EE stands out because the major creations originate from destruction. Scholars have suggested that EE also differs from others in that *Marduk* replaces the traditional male creators.³⁸ We also have to bear in mind that the P account is the product of a monotheistic religion; EE is the result of a polytheistic one.

Details aside, EE differs from Genesis in that the creation of the universe does not occur as the grand opening. It happens only towards the end of Tablet IV, a few lines after the incipit. EE has the chaos at the beginning, P places *Elohim* at the beginning. For Heidel, each version displays a number of features that are not found in the other.³⁹ Likewise, both accounts disagree on how human beings were created. Genesis, for example, tells that humans were created in the צלם “image” and דמות “likeness” of *Elohim* (Gen 1:27);⁴⁰ whereas the EE shows that humans were created from the blood of *Kingu*. Their purposes, respectively, varies between accounts. For Genesis, humans were created to have dominion over creation, i.e. to rule רדה.⁴¹ While for EE, humans were made in order to place upon them the workload of the gods, i.e. to become slaves of the gods.⁴² On this basis, the diagram presented below illustrates some of the dissimilarities.

Table II

The Dissimilarities Between Enûma Eliš and Genesis

The following diagram shows side-by-side the thematic theme in both accounts.

³⁸ Male gods: *Anu, Enlil, and Ea* (Andrea Seri, “The Role of Creation in Enûma Eliš,” in *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 12, no. 1 [(2012)], p. 7)

³⁹ Heidel, p. 129

⁴⁰ Wenham indicates that the term צלם is problematic due to the uncertainty of its etymology, which makes the phrase highly problematic to interpret (Wenham, p. 29).

⁴¹ Nahum M. Sarna makes the argument that the words used in v. 26 are better understood in light of a phenomenon registered in both Mesopotamia and Egypt, whereby the ruling monarch is described as “the image” or “the likeness” of a god (Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis - Bereshit: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation*, [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989], p. 12). To this, Sparks argues that we can reasonably conclude that the Priestly Writer was drawing on Mesopotamian tradition in order to depict the first human couple as royalty, (Sparks, p. 631).

⁴² In Tablet VI:34 of EE, we read: *imiddulli ilānī-ma ilāni umtaššir* meaning “On whom he imposed the service of the gods and set the gods free.” The CAD indicates that the verb *umtaššir* appears here in the perfect D-stem from (w)ašāru (also D [w]uššuru, muššuru) meaning “to release persons, populations from captivity, slavery, distraint, service, debt, disease” (CAD 20, s.v. umtaššir, p. 313a – 317b); see full translations of Tablet VI:31 – 35 in: W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myth*, p. 112 – 3; CAD translates it as: “He (Marduk) placed the workload of the gods (on mankind) and so released the gods (from toil),” (CAD XX, p. 316a)

Differences	<i>Enuma Elish</i>	Gen 1:1–2:4a
Theological orientation	Polytheistic	Monotheistic
Process of creation	Struggle, violent war	Spoken, tranquil acts
Divine's relationship to material world	Conjoined	Transcendent
Origin and action of creation	Everything is, or was, a deity; Marduk partitions, ordains	Almost everything created by God from scratch
Quality of creation	Suspect	Good
Humanity's place in the cosmic hierarchy	Formed from traitorous Kingu; subservient to the (gods of the) natural world	Bear divine image; given dominion over the natural world
Divine repose	Aim, objective	Consequence; humans also partake
Structure	Narrative style	Key phrases set within a six-day timetable (composed of parallel three-day subsets)

For scholars, this demonstrates that the theological differences between P and EE are more profound and entail more drastic adaptations. To this, Kenton L. Sparks writes:

“When significant differences separate the two stories, these arise especially when P asserts his views of anthropology and theology. Yet even these differences sometimes reveal the underlying influence of Mesopotamian ideas. In terms of anthropology, P goes beyond *Enûma Elish* by tracing humanity’s divine animation to the creator rather than to the blood of a rebel demon. Humanity bears the ‘image of God’.”⁴³

Stephen Bertman emphasizes this by writing:

“Both Genesis and *Enûma Eliš* are religious texts which detail and celebrate cultural origins: Genesis describes the origin and founding of the Jewish people under the guidance of the Lord; *Enûma Eliš* recounts the origin and founding of Babylon under the leadership of the god Marduk. Contained in each work is a story of how the cosmos and man were created. Each work begins by describing the watery chaos and primeval darkness that once filled the universe. Then light is created to replace the darkness. Afterward, the heavens are made and in them heavenly bodies are placed. Finally, man is created. These similarities notwithstanding, the two accounts are more different than alike.”⁴⁴

⁴³ Sparks, p. 631

⁴⁴ Stephen Bertman, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 312

Likewise, Rabbi Izaak Rapaport points out that “*Enûma Eliš*... is not anything like the record of creation which is found in the thirty-four verses of the first chapter of Genesis.”⁴⁵ For him, the cuneiform poem describes the brutal strife and warfare between two camps of mutually hostile deities; while Genesis is a prosaic recitation of creational activities by a divine being, beginning with the appearance of heaven and ending with that of man. These scholars might dissent, but it appears that P must have known the material of EE, and thus adjusted it very well to form their own telling. The basic paradigm of these narratives aligns closely; however, scholars still seem to be divided on this issue.

3. ONCE UPON A TIME: THE CREATION ACCOUNT IN THE *ENÛMA ELIŠ*

Up until this point, both EE and P’s accounts are two narratives that overlap and divert from one another. In terms of the creation itself, the poem reveals that it is the result of family struggles. Basically, EE indicates that the conflict started when the god *Ea* created the younger gods. The younger deities were making loud noises that disrupted the tranquility of the older gods, especially that of *Apsû* and *Tiāmat*. In other words, this struggle turned out to be one of generational ramifications, i.e. the younger gods versus the older gods. Hence, the subsequent section of this paper offers a brief analysis on the first tablet of EE. Particularly, it will focus on how the scene sets the grounds for creation to take place.

3.1 THE BEGINNING: A MINGLING OF THE WATERY CHAOS

As modern readers, we know that the formation of the universe erupted in an explosion beyond human comprehension or imagination. According to some creation traditions in ANE, it is formed out of primeval chaos to an organized structure with the city of Babylon at its center,⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Izaak Rapaport, *The Babylonian Poem Enuma Elish and Genesis Chapter One: A New Theory on the Relationship Between the Ancient Cuneiform Composition and the Hebrew Scriptures*, (Hawthorn Press, 1979), p. 13

⁴⁶ Mark Van De Microop, *Philosophy Before the Greeks: The Pursuit in Ancient Babylonia*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), p. 4; Professor Horowitz indicates that the *Enuma Elis* fails to explain the creation of plants and animals and does not include an underworld, (see: Wayne Horowitz, 1993], p. 388)

which is depicted in the EE. The first tablet recounts the struggle between cosmic order and chaos. It places the watery chaos at the beginning of creation, which is personified by the goddess *Tiāmat* (“salty waters”). The storyline in EE is theogony in essence, which describes the origins and genealogies of the Babylonian gods. The text reads as follows,

<i>ENŪMA ELIŠ</i>	TRANSLATION
<i>enūma eliš lā nabū(m) šamāmū</i>	I:1 When the highest heavens [were] not yet named ,
<i>šapliš ammatum šuma lā zakrat</i>	I:2 [and] the earth beneath had not been named .
<i>apsūma rēštū zārūšun</i>	I:3 [There was already] <i>Apsū</i> , the first god, their progenitor,
<i>mummu Tiāmat mu'allidat gimrīšun</i>	I:4 [and] the life-giving force, <i>Tiāmat</i> , give birth to them all;
<i>mēšunu ištēniš iḫīqūma</i>	I:5 Their waters were being mingled altogether
<i>gipāra lā kuššurū šuša lā šē'ū</i>	I:6 Before there was pastureland entwined or swamps could be found,
<i>enūma ilāni lā šūpū manāma</i>	I:7 When not one of the deities had been created,
<i>šuma lā zukkurū šīmātu lā šīmū</i>	I:8 [neither] they had not been evoked, [nor] their fates had not been determined,
<i>ibbunūma ilāni qiribšūn</i>	I:9 The gods were made [from] within them ;
<i>^d Laḫmu u ^d Laḫamu uštapū šumi</i>	I:10 <i>Laḫmu</i> and <i>Laḫamu</i> were created and their names came into existence .
<i>izzakru</i>	I:11 While they grew in age and increase in seize
<i>adi irbū išīḫū</i>	I:12 <i>Anšar</i> and <i>Kišar</i> , who were more important [than] them,
<i>Anšar u ^d Kišar ibbanū elīšunu atrū</i>	I:12 were created .

The opening verses, as we see them, read like how a Disney’s children book begins: “Once upon a time in a faraway land,” or as the opening of George Lucas’ films, “A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.” It seems possible that the author of the EE makes such an arrangement to place their account in an atemporal state (“timeless”), just as Disney and George Lucas does with their movies. By setting the atemporal state of the *kosmos*, the author is then able to introduce the divine parents. The first clause exhibits similar pattern to that of Gen 1:1; although both accounts placed creation in a timeless state, they differ in their theological statements concerning their deities. The arrangement here is followed by set of couplets: introduction (1 – 2), parentheses (3 – 8), and its climax (9). To which, Lambert writes:

“Our view is that the *enūma* clauses begun in 1 – 2 are interrupted by a parenthesis occupying the two couplets 3 – 6 and that they are continued in lines 7 – 8, as indicated by the repeated *enūma*. The two basic thoughts are: when heaven and earth did not exist, and

when the gods did not exist. Between the two the author has put a description of the universe before there was any heaven or earth. Then in line 9 one comes to the climax: creation. Line 9 speaks generally, and line 10 specifies the gods who were created at this time.”⁴⁷

The first word, *enûma*, is a conjunction and translates to “when”, “that”, or “at the time”.⁴⁸ The second word, *eliš*, is an adverb and translates to “above”, “up”, or “in heavens” (cont. to *šapliš* “above and below”).⁴⁹ Reading them together implies “When in the height”,⁵⁰ which is an adverbial phrase indicating a point in time (not defined).⁵¹ These two words, *enûma eliš*, are used to identify the title of the poem. The third word in line 1 is the negative particle *lā*, which means “no”, “not”, or “without”. It is interesting to note that the author of the poem displays this negative particle seven times in the first 12 lines of the poem. The case might be that the usage is related to the notion of emptiness. In its first case, for example, it appears with the verb *nabû*, “to name” or “to speak”. The notion in the ANE was that the conception of things or beings needed to be named for them to exist. If they were not called, then they had no rational reality.⁵² The general belief was that the name of a living being or an object was not just a simple or practical designation to facilitate the exchange of ideas between persons, but that it was the very essence of what was defined it and that the actual pronouncing of a name was to create what was spoken (*cf.* Gen 1:3). EE has reinforced this notion by affirming in lines 1–12 that neither the heaven and earth, nor the gods were not yet named. Once again, we believe that the particle *lā* then creates the notion of emptiness, formlessness, and void reality of the *kosmos*, which still prevails in Gen 1:2 (as discussed later).

⁴⁷ Lambert, 2013, p. 29

⁴⁸ CAD VI, s.v. *enûma*, p. 159a – 161a

⁴⁹ CAD IV, s.v. *eliš*, p. 95b – 97a

⁵⁰ Lambert translates it as: “When the heavens above did not exist.”

⁵¹ ACD, s.v. *eliš*, p. 69

⁵² T. Desmond Alexander & David W. Baker, s.v. “Creation,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch: A Compendium of Contemporary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), p. 158

In lines 3–4, the primal gods introduced *Apsû* as the *rēštû zārûšun*,⁵³ and *Tiāmat* as the *mummu an dmu'allidat*.⁵⁴ The author places divine parents (*Apsû* and *Tiāmat*)⁵⁵ in a secondary position, whereas the uncreated form of heaven and earth preceded them. Despite this, the EE proposes that all living matter ultimately derives from these two ancient deities. In this sense, the poem demonstrates that all the elements of which the universe was made were contained within *Apsû* and *Tiāmat*; and from them all the gods and goddesses originated (cf. line 9). This also presupposes that the matter already existed because nothingness is irrational reality. Perhaps this alludes to the Babylonian philosophy that could not conceive of a time when there was nothing. Likewise, the text indicates that only the two divine parents, which are defied as underground waters (“sweet waters”) and waters of the seas (“salty waters”) were in existence (cf. line 3 – 4). According to this, way before creation, the *kosmos* only existed in the form of darkness, primeval, watery power of chaos, and as well as an undifferentiated unity of fluids which are formed of sweet and salty waters respectively.

The significant part, nonetheless, is what follows in lines 5–8 that suggest the universe is comprised of water. To this, Professor Horowitz intimates that the evolution of the universe began with the mixing of the waters. These waters, which represent the divine parents, are divided into male and female parts, and as a result of this mixture of fluids (i.e., *mēšunu ištēniš ihīqūma*),⁵⁶ perhaps meaning “some kind of primeval intercourse,” *Laḥmu* and *Laḥamu* were born and became

⁵³ Lambert translates the phrase as: “the first in order, their begetter” (Lambert, 2013, p. 51); the term *rēštû* in qualifies *Apsû* as an “ancient,” “primordial” or “supreme” one, the one who is from the beginning (CAD XIV, s.v. *rēštû*, p. 275b – 276a). In both Hebrew and Akkadian, the meaning of the root *ršt* is related to “head,” “first”, or “beginning”. This indicates then that *Apsû*, the deep water, exists from the beginning. The term *zārû* is likewise used to qualify *Apsû* as “the begetter of all gods,” (CAD XXI, s.v. *zārû*, p. 72ab).

⁵⁴ Scholars have suggested that the term *mummu* is obscure in meaning. The CAD indicates that *mummu* is a feminine singular noun meaning “craftsman”, “creator”, or “life-giving force”. It also refers to “noise” and others associate it with “mother” or “womb” (CAD X/2, s.v. “mummu,” p. 197b); *Mu'allidat* is a verb feminine singular PTC in the D-stem (aḷ) from *walādu*, meaning “to give birth” (cf. CAD I/1, s.v. “[w]alādu”/ “[w]ulludu,” p. 292b)

⁵⁵ Heidel indicates that the god *Apsû* (masculine entity) was the father of the gods and *Tiāmat* (feminine entity) the mother. They were both husband and wife. The Babylonian mythology suggested that *Apsû* was the “primeval sweet-waters ocean” and *Tiāmat* was the “salt-water ocean.” According to Heidel, scholars have universally held *Tiāmat* as either a dragon or some serpentine monster. However, he understands that *Tiāmat* was a goddess, and as such she could give birth to dragons without herself being a dragon, (for more see Alexander Heidel’s discussion on this matter in *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of the Creation*, [London: University of Chicago Press 1951], p. 83 – 89).

⁵⁶ CAD VI, p. 86b – 87a

the two pillars of the *kosmos* (line 10). Then, they were soon followed and outgrown by *Anšar* and *Kišar* (line 12), who represented the boundary between the earth and the skies (i.e. the horizon). Additionally, scholars have demonstrated that the negativity about the water/sea is a universal motif in all corners of ANE literature.⁵⁷ Indeed, it symbolizes chaos, which is an element that must be forcibly contained to ensure life on earth—but at the same time, it is indispensable for the survival of the ecosystem. Professor Horowitz also mentions that in the later Babylonian tradition, the universe is built out of *watery chaos*; whereas in the earlier version, it seems to evolve out of the primeval waters of *Apsû* (Enki/Ea) and solid matter.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, these 12 lines suggest that creation is only possible by controlling and ordering the *watery chaos*.

3.2 A COSMIC BATTLE: *MARDUK* AND *TIĀMAT*

The EE indicates that *Marduk* defeated *Tiāmat* and, from her, created heaven and earth. It then seems necessary to address this in detail here. First, the background of the cosmic battle between *Marduk* and *Tiāmat* originated with the generational conflict narrated in Tablet I. That conflict became the excuse that eventually promoted *Marduk* as the supreme god of the Babylonian pantheon. According to the text, the conflict was caused by the noise of the younger gods, whose actions did not let the older gods rest. This episode is registered in Tablet I: 21–40.

The text reads,

<i>ENŪMA ELIŠ</i>	TRANSLATION
<i>innindūma athū ilāni</i>	I:21 The divine brothers came together,
<i>ēšū Tiāmatma naširšunu ištappu</i>	I:22 They troubled Tiāmat, [with] their clamor swells up and down.
<i>dalhunimma ša Tiāmat karassa</i>	I:23 They disturbed the mind and heart of Tiāmat,
<i>ina šu'āru šu'duru qereb Anduruna</i>	I:24 And by their dancing, they cause disturbance [in the] inside of Anduruna
<i>lā našir Apsû rigimšun</i>	I:25 Apsû could not reduce their noise,
<i>u Tiāmat šuqammumat ina pānīšun</i>	I:26 So, Tiāmat stood still in front of them,
<i>imtaršamma epšētāšun elīša</i>	I:27 [and thus], their conduct was upsetting to her

⁵⁷ Arent Jan Wensinck, *The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites*, (Amsterdam: Müller, 1918), p. 40 – 66; Y. S. Chen, *The Primeval Flood Catastrophe: Origins and Early Development in Mesopotamian Traditions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 70 – 121

⁵⁸ Horowitz, 1993, p. 390

<i>lā ṭabat alkassunu šunūti igammila</i>	I:28	Although their way of life was not good, she wanted to save them.
<i>inūšu Apsû zāri ilāni rabiūtīm</i>	I:29	Then Apsû, the progenitor of the great gods,
<i>issīma^d Mummu sukkallāšu</i>	I:30	Summoned ^d Mummu, his chief minister, and he said to him:
<i>izakkaršu</i>		
<i>^dMummu sukkallu muṭibba kabattī-ja</i>	I:31	“Oh, Minister Mummu, who satisfies my spirit,
<i>alkamma šēriš Tiāmat i nillik</i>	I:32	Come, let us present ourselves before Tiāmat!”
<i>Illikūma qudmīš Tāmatum ūšibū</i>	I:33	They went and sat down, before Tiāmat
<i>amāti imtallikū aššum ilāni bukrīšun</i>	I:34	As they discuss the matter about the gods, their sons
<i>Apsû pāšu ipušamma</i>	I:35	Apsû, opened his mouth
<i>ana Tiāmat elītamma izakkaršu</i>	I:36	and spoke to Tiāmat aloud...
<i>imtaršamma alkassunu elīja</i>	I:37	“Their actions became unpleasant to me
<i>urriš lā šupšuhāku mūšiš lā ṣallāku</i>	I:38	And [neither] I cannot rest in the day [nor] fall asleep at night.
<i>lušḥalliḡma alkassunu lusappiḥ</i>	I:39	I will destroy and break up their way of life
<i>qūlu liššakinma i nišlal nīni</i>	I:40	[so] that silence be established, and we may rest.”

The text indicates that *Apsû* decides to kill the younger gods so that silence can be restored, and the gods can rest once again. *Tiāmat*, as the god mother, refuses to kill the younger gods since she has given birth to them, and thus she does not to destroy what she had begotten (I:40 – 6). However, *Mummu*, the vizier of *Apsû*, urges his master not to follow the provisions of *Tiāmat* and so *Apsû* finally decides to end the younger gods (I:47 – 54). The text goes on to tell that the younger gods heard *Apsû* and *Mummu*’s intentions to kill them (I:55 – 58). The text mentions that when the gods heard the news, they were *idullū*, meaning “to wander around in distress” (i.e. frightened).⁵⁹ Thus, they were overcome by the terrifying news with “silence and sat quietly” (I:58), which is ironically the opposite of their previous actions, *rigimšun* (I:22 – 25).⁶⁰As a result, they along with *Ea* plot to kill *Apsû* (I:59 – 72). It is to be noted that *Apsû*’s plans to eliminate the younger deities backfire, implying that even our most carefully laid plans may fail.

Furthermore, after the younger gods confabulate to kill *Apsû* and succeed in their task, they were not done; indeed, they also wanted to eliminate *Tiāmat*, their mother. In the same tablet, the story develops that the younger generations of gods have become a source of horror and threats,

⁵⁹ The term *idullū* is a verb in the G-stem, P/F [or maybe also Pret], 3mpl from *dālu*, (CAD III, s.v. *dālu*, p. 58b)

⁶⁰ CAD XIV, s.v. *rigim*, p. 328b – 332a

which evoked *Tiāmat* to wage war against them (I:141 – 144; II:27 – 29; III:89 – 91). *Ea* and *Anu* refuse to face *Tiāmat* because they were afraid of her (II:49 – IV:32) For this reason, they consult *Marduk* to help them with this new mission. *Marduk*, of course, did not let this opportunity go away and thus, he had been made supreme god among them. The episode of the battle between *Marduk* and *Tiāmat* is registered in IV: 93–106. The text reads:

ENŪMA ELIŠ		LAMBERT'S TRANSLATION
<i>innindūma Tiāmat apkal ilāni</i> ^d <i>Marduk</i>	IV:93	Tiāmat and Marduk, the sage of the gods, came together,
<i>šašmiš itlupū qitrubū taḥāziš</i>	IV:94	Joining in strife, drawing near to battle.
<i>ušparrirma bēlum saparrāšu ušalmēši</i>	IV:95	Bēl spread out his net and enmeshed her;
<i>imḥulla šābit arkāti pānūšša umtaššir</i>	IV:96	He let loose the Evil Wind, the rear guard, in her face.
<i>iptēma piša Tiāmat ana la 'ātīša</i>	IV:97	Tiāmat opened her mouth to swallow it,
<i>imḥulla ušteriba ana la kātam šaptīša</i>	IV:98	She let the Evil Wind in so that she could not close her lips.
<i>ezzūtum šārū karšāša izānūma</i>	IV:99	The fierce winds weighed down her belly,
<i>innesil libbāšama pāša ušpalki</i>	IV:100	Her inwards were distended, and she opened her mouth wide.
<i>issuk mulmulla iḥtepi karassa</i>	IV:101	He let fly an arrow and pierced her belly,
<i>qerbīša ubattiqa usallit libba</i>	IV:102	He tore open her entrails and slit her inwards,
<i>ikmīšīma napšatuš uballi</i>	IV:103	He bound her and extinguished her life,
<i>šalamtāš iddā elīša izziza</i>	IV:104	He threw down her corpse and stood on it.
<i>ultu Tiāmat ālik pāni ināru</i>	IV:105	After he had killed Tiāmat, the leader,
<i>kišrīša uptarrira puḥurša issapḥa</i>	IV:105	Her assembly dispersed; her host scattered.

The importance here is not the cosmic battle itself but that each champion represents and stands for *Tiāmat*, as we know, who represents the “sea” (akk. *Ti'amatum* or *tāmtum*). *Marduk*, on the other hand, is not that easy to identify. His name is traditionally written as ^d AMAR.UD or AMAR.UTU, (more rarely ^d MES, ^dŠÀ.ZU or ^d ŠÛ). The logogram AMAR.UD may be read either as a genitive construction implying “the young bull of the Sun” or an apposition (*AMAR*) meaning something like “the son” or “the sun.”⁶¹ Thorkild Jacobsen suggested that the “*UTU*” element may be related to the Sumerian word for “sun”, “day”, or “storm”.⁶² We then understand that *Marduk*

⁶¹ Gwendolyn Leick, s.v. “Marduk,” in *A Dictionary of Ancient Near Eastern Mythology*, (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 115

⁶² Thorkild Jacobsen claims that the conflict between *Marduk* and *Tiāmat* itself is of West-Semitic origin, namely the Amorite, (see: Thorkild Jacobsen, “The Battle Between Marduk and Tiamat,” in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, [Vol. 88], [No. 1], [1968], p. 104 – 8])

(AMAR.UTU) represents either the “Son of Sun” or the “Sun of the Storm,” which seems likely due to what happens in lines 30–44. Moreover, when *Marduk* prepares himself to fight *Tiāmat* in the battle, he makes lightning precede him as he fills his own body with searing flame (IV:39 – 40), which is also linked to his birth (I:96). “The picture,” as Jacobsen writes, “given is unmistakably that of a god of storm, rain, lightning, and thunder, rather than of a solar figure.”⁶³

He goes on to add:

“If we must thus conclude that the battle between Marduk and Tiamat described in Enūma Elish is a battle of the elements, of forces in nature, a battle between the thunderstorm and the sea, it will naturally occur to one that such a battle is well known from elsewhere in the Ancient Near East.”⁶⁴

Jacobsen alludes to the Ugaritic myth of *Baal* (the storm) and *Yam* (the sea) in which the sea demands of *El* that *Baal* becomes his slave.⁶⁵ This culminates in a battle that resulted in subduing *Yam*. In our text, *Marduk* defeats *Tiāmat*.

Later on, the text describes what *Marduk* did with *Tiāmat*'s body (V:47 – 72).⁶⁶ In this same tablet, we are told in line 59 that after Marduk slaughtered *Tiāmat* (as fish) “he twisted her tail, attached (it) (to) the Durmāḥiš” (*ēgir zibbas-sa durmāḥiš urakkis-ma*).⁶⁷ In V:53 – 62, the author appears to describe the creation of the world following the form of *Tiāmat*'s body. For example, the eyes are identified with the source of the Euphrates and Tigris (V:55), modern Erzurum and Elazığ. The head (V:53) would then be the mountains to the west of Lake Van. The term *nagbu* (V:54) is probably best translated as “abyss”,⁶⁸ referring to the fresh water found

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 106

⁶⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁵ There are other scholars that disagree with Jacobsen's view, (John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament*, [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985], p.11 - 12).

⁶⁶ This text is very fragmented.

⁶⁷ Lambert indicates that the *durmāḥu* was “the cosmic rope” that held parts of the universe together: heaven, earth, and *Apsū* (see: Tab VII 78 – 83), (Lambert, 2013, p. 478); Lluís Feliu Mateu & Adelina Millet Alba write, “Existendiscrepancias en la traducción de estalínea; algunosautoresinterpretan que Marduk ata la cola de Tiámat con la «Gran Cuerda» [*durmāḥu*] y otrospreferiereninterpretar que Marduk confecciona la «Gran Cuerda» con el rabo de Tiámat,” (Feliu-Mateu & Millet-Alba, p. 78)

⁶⁸ The term *nagbu* refers to “spring” or “fountain”; the line suggest that Marduk open a spring from *Tiāmat*'s body, (CAD XI/1, s.v. *nagbu*, 109a-110b)

underground. A few lines later, the text indicates that the creation of the earth is completed by stretching out (*šauullulu*) “half of her.”⁶⁹ Lambert reconstructs this line as *mišlāša uššallila eršeti uktinna* meaning “[(Thus) the half of her] he stretched out and made it firm as the earth.”⁷⁰ Nevertheless, it is clear that the myth presented in EE involve a cosmic conflict. This is to say that the EE’s creation narrative was the result of younger gods pacifying the chaos their ancestors wrought. Perhaps creation here was the work of organization in which *Marduk* did not fashion the universe *ex nihilo*. Rather, he created by putting order to the chaos of *Tiāmat*’s bodily parts.

4. ONCE UPON A TIME: THE CREATION ACCOUNT IN GENESIS 1 – 2:4A

Now that we have examined the EE description of creation, let us turn to analyze Priestly material on the creation account. First, we must restate once again that the composition elements of both accounts have suggested to scholars that P is mimicking the EE, or at the very least, borrowing from it. Gen 1 – 2:4a belongs to the Priestly material, as Von Rad affirms, “it contains the essence of Priestly knowledge in a most concentrated form.”⁷¹ Some of the significant terms of P’s account are *bārā* בָּרָא “created,” *’ēlōhim* אֱלֹהִים “God,” and *haššāmayîm wē’et hā’āreš* הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ “the heaven and the earth” which are repeated in 2:1–3 but in the reverse order—Mathew understands that it recommends the ending to the section.⁷²

Second, we must understand that the chapter employs recurrent formulas that echo the same pattern throughout the chapter.⁷³ Again and again we hear: (1) “And God said” (vv 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29); (2) “Let there be...” (vv 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26); (3) “And it was so” (vv 3, 7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30); (4) “And God made” (vv 4, 7, 12, 16, 21, 25, 27); (5) “God saw that it was good” (vv 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31); (6) subsequent divine word, either of naming or blessing

⁶⁹ The term *šauullulu* refers to roof (a building) or to place as a top (CAD, s.v. *šauullulu*, 239b).

⁷⁰ Lambert, 2013, p. 101

⁷¹ Von Rad, p. 47

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 114

⁷³ Wenham, p. 6

(vv 5, 8, 10, 22, 28); (7) mention of the days (vv 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31).⁷⁴ Therefore, commentators have argued that the most obvious is the repetition of the phrase *wayhi-‘ereb wayhi-bōqer* וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר “there was evening and there was morning” that divides the chapter into a seven-day system. In this way, the plot is set by forming a period of work for each day that concludes with the *Shabbat*. This is to let the audience know that the cosmic God (*Elohim*) rested after He finished His creation. Thus, the subsequent section here offers a brief analysis of the first three verses of Gen 1; particularly, it will focus on how the text sets the stage for creation to take place.

4.1 THE BEGINNING: HEAVEN AND EARTH

The opening sentences, as stated earlier, introduces us to the thematic theme of the chapter, “God is the creator of all things.” It also shows us that *Elohim* is the main character of the entire plot, and even of all Scripture. In this sense, Mathews mentions that the creation account is “theocentric, not creature centered.”⁷⁵ We must note, of course, that the P author did not arrange his telling as a “natural history” but rather as cosmogony. In this aspect, it is like other ancient cosmogonies that its core structure is that of movement from chaos to *kosmos*. In other words, this composition unit contains a rich theological statement concerning *Elohim*’s creative power from the cosmic perspective. This is to say that the theological statement creation is considered as a “continuous transition from disarray to order, from unrest to rest, and from chaos to harmony.”⁷⁶ Genesis, moreover, predicates a creation out of nothingness, which means that by the sovereign will and power of the Israelite God, the *matter* was brought into existence from nothingness at the creation of the universe. It reads as:

HEBREW TEXT	LXX	NRSV
1 בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:	1 ¶ Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν.	1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the

⁷⁴ J. Gerald Janzen, “What does the Priestly Blessing Do?” in *When Prayer Takes Place: Forays into a Biblical World*, (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2012), p. 38

⁷⁵ Mathews, p. 113

⁷⁶ Vervenne, p. 53

earth,

Gen 1:1, Barry L. Bandstra shows, is a transitivity structure.⁷⁷ The clause is about the Israelite God (*Elohim*) creating heaven and earth. In this regard, the mood of the clause is decorative, which is to indicate that it is making a statement and does not have a conjunction because nothing precedes it. In the first word we have a preposition ב and the feminine singular noun רֵאשִׁית. The analysis of the prep suggests that it should be taken in a temporal circumstantial sense, which then renders the clause as a hypothetical temporal space.

Hence, E.A. Speiser argues that “the first word in the HB as a unit” is vocalized as *berē`šīt* (i.e., בְּרֵאשִׁית). He understands the term to be in a construct state, that is, the first of two connected forms which jointly yield a possessive compound. For him, then, the initial term should be understood as: “At the beginning of...” or “When...” and not “In/At the beginning.”⁷⁸ At the same time, the second term is a verb *bārā`* בָּרָא, literally “he created.” Jan Christian Gertz indicates that it is a priestly verb and it is used to describe the act of creation (*cf.* Gen 2:4a), and it is not picked up either in a positive sense or with regard to the striking theological idea of a creation by divine word alone as proposed in Gen 1—the verb בָּרָא is never used with human beings as the subject.⁷⁹

4.2 FORMLESSNESS AND VOID

Scholars have indicated that Gen 1:2 consists of three independent clauses, each one introduced with the conjunction “waw”. Bandstra indicates that these three clauses are an elaborating expansion of *hā`āreṣ* הָאָרֶץ, “the earth” (v. 1). He then adds that each clause makes a statement about the preexisting condition in order to characterize the state of the earth, i.e. before the deity starts to speak upon the void and unshaped *kosmos*.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Barry L. Bandstra, *Genesis 1-11: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text*, p. 41

⁷⁸ Speiser, p. 12

⁷⁹ Jan Christian Gertz, “The Formation of The Primeval History,” in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, (London: Brill, 2012), p. 114 – 8.

⁸⁰ BDB, תהה, p. 1062

HEBREW TEXT

וְהָאָרֶץ תִּהְיֶה תוֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֵף עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם׃²

LXX

² ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, καὶ σκότος ἐπάνω τῆς ἀβύσσου, καὶ πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος.

NRSV

² the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

There are three significant elements that stand out the most from the second verse. The first element is the idea of “formlessness” and “void” in 2a, which has been commonly accepted in the English translation as the NRSV, KJV, NIV; and also, it has been accepted in Spanish translations like DHH, NTV, and TLA. In fact, theologians as early as Augustine recognized already the “formlessness” condition of אֶרֶץ. In this sense, the LXX has been traditionally translated v. 2 as ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, meaning “invisible and unformed”. To which, David T. Tsumura indicates that this might be an earlier influence by the Greek philosopher Plato, who describes the substances as “invisible and unshaped”.⁸¹ Moreover, Von Rad explains that the Hebrew *tōhū* תוֹהוּ (“emptiness,” “desolation”) is connected more with the concept of the wilderness or even with the wilderness itself (*cf.* Deut. 32.10; Ps. 107.40, etc);⁸² while *bōhū* בֹּהוּ goes back to the Phoenician mother-goddess Baau. Von Rad also indicates that *bōhū* is a noun that is always connected with *tōhū*.

Secondly, the verse shows that the primeval conditions of the *kosmos* was *tēhôm* תְּהוֹם, “deep” and “sea” (which also refers to “watery chaos”), although in the original Babylonian it is personified by the goddess *Tiāmat* (see section 3.1). Heidel sees it as “the point of contact” between both accounts, that is, the usage of the Hebrew term *tēhôm* תְּהוֹם “deep” or “sea” (Gen 1:2). Bandstra suggests that the construct phrase would then be on the deep water’s surface or it could be a proper name (*Tēhôm* or Deep), making the phrase on *Tehom*’s surface.⁸³ Professor Horowitz carefully

⁸¹ David T. Tsumura has elaborated on an intensive discussion regarding the phrase: תוֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ (see: “David T. Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament*, [Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2005], p. 9 – 35)

⁸² Von Rad, 1972 p. 50

⁸³ Bandstra, p. 47

argued that *Tiāmat* and תַּיַמָּת are cognate terms designating the “sea”.⁸⁴ There some biblical references that point to *Tiāmat* as being a mystical creature (Ps. 74:13, 14; 89:9,10; 104:6, 7; Isa. 51:9, 10). Furthermore, as stated before, one of Gunkel’s points in his hypothesis is that P is borrowing its material from the EE, which is evident by the usage of the term *těhôm*.⁸⁵ Sparks seems to agree on this; he writes: “It seems to me that there is good evidence that P knew EE and adapted it to create his version of Israel’s creation story.”⁸⁶

Thirdly, v. 2c shows a third element that relates to the *rûah* of *Elohim*. Von Rad translates the clause as “storm of God”⁸⁷ and it is interesting to note that the representation of *Marduk* is “god of storm”. Wenham, however, points that “Scripture does the phrase רוח אלהים or רוח יהוה ever mean ‘great wind:’ it always refers to the Spirit or Wind of God.”⁸⁸ Contextually speaking, the *rûah* of *Elohim* refers to God who creates the universe in v. 1. It also refers to the hovering of God over the formless void of the *kosmos*. Unlike the EE, the *rûah* of *Elohim* is not in conflict. Instead, it is presented as an evocative activity that the Spirit of God was moving. In the OT, the Spirit is a term for God’s outgoing energy that is creative and sustaining (*cf.* Job 33:4; Ps 104:30).

In addition to the above, it seems possible that the author of P has resumed the cosmic battle of the ANE between the elements of “wind” and “water” in the second verse of the chapter. For him, the creation is possible after the divine wind empowers the force of chaos. OT scholars have suggested that this cosmic battle is depicted in other parts of the OT as well (Ps 74, 89, and 93). In light of this text, it has been pointed out that the chaos monster is represented as a serpent or a dragon called *Leviathan*, *the Sea-River*, or sometimes *Rahab*. In Psalm 74:13 – 15, the author

⁸⁴ Horowitz, 1998, p. 301 – 6; David T. Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989), p. 45 – 83, 156 – 59; Von Rad, 1972 p. 50; *BDB*, s.v. “תַּיַמָּת,” p. 1062

⁸⁵ See on this paper the section: *The Composition and Literary Genre of Enūma Eliš and Genesis 1 – 2:4a*.

⁸⁶ Sparks, p. 631

⁸⁷ Von Rod, *Genesis*, p. 49 – 50

⁸⁸ Wenham, p. 17

depicts the battle as follows:

HEBREW TEXT	LXX (73:13 – 15)	NRSV
13 אֶתְּהָ פוֹרְרַת בְּעֹזָתָהּ יָם שִׁבְרַתָּ רֵאשֵׁי תַּנְיִיִּים עַל־הַמַּיִם:	13 σὺ ἐκραταίωσας ἐν τῇ δυνάμει σου τὴν θάλασσαν , σὺ συνέτριπας τὰς κεφαλὰς τῶν δρακόντων ἐπὶ τοῦ ὕδατος .	13 You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the dragons in the waters .
14 אֶתְּהָ רִצַּצְתָּ רֵאשֵׁי לַוְיָתָן תַּחֲנַנּוּ מֵאֲכָל לֶעָם לְצִיִּים:	14 σὺ συνέθλασας τὰς κεφαλὰς τοῦ δράκοντος, ἔδωκας αὐτὸν βρῶμα λαοῖς τοῖς Αἰθίοσιν.	14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.
15 אֶתְּהָ בְּקַעַתָּ מַעְיָנוּ נִגְחַל אֶתְּהָ הַוְּבִשֶׁת נִהְרֹת אֵיתָן:	15 σὺ διέρρηξας πηγὰς καὶ χειμάρρους, σὺ ἐξήρανας ποταμοὺς Ἡθαμ.	15 You cut openings for springs and torrents; you dried up ever-flowing streams.

Again, this has a close parallel with the cosmic battle between *Marduk* and *Tiāmat* (see section 3.2), which indicates that the author of Psalm might have been familiar with this tradition. Some have suggested that the verses 13–15 are intended as either creation theology or as a theology of history, one that is highly mythicized. We believe that these verses do not describe historical events but rather primeval happenings. Verse 13a begins with the division of the primeval ocean, probably aimed at the establishment of the firmament between the primal seas above and below (Gen 1:6–8). It also recalls the destruction of the monster of chaos (v. 13b – 14a) as manifestations and representatives of the powers of chaos over the water (*cf.* Job 9:13; Ps 89:11; 29:10).

In regard to the quoted text, Lambert asks:

“Is there, then, good reason to presume a battle behind the second day of creation in Genesis? The poetic allusions nowhere speak of Yahweh splitting the sea, except for Ps. lxxiv. 13 in the traditional English rendering: ‘Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength.’ However, the meaning of פוֹרְרַת has been disputed on purely lexicographical evidence, and an Arabic cognate favors rather: ‘Thou didst set the sea in commotion.’ Thus, the case for a battle as a prelude to God’s dividing of the cosmic waters is unproven.”⁸⁹

It seems very likely that the author/s of P has replaced the polytheistic elements of the EE and confined them to the P’s conception of a monothetic religion. This means that both *Ea* and *Marduk*

⁸⁹ Lambert, 1965, p. 294

in the ANE. However, the biblical passage here (“Let there be!”) or its equivalent in Psalms (“He spoke and it was so,”) refers not only to the utterance of these “magic words” but to the expression of the omnipotent, sovereign, unchallengeable will of the transcendent God who creates matter by his word.

5. TWO SUPREME GODS: ELOHIM AND MARDUK

In the previous section, we highlighted some major points of the creation narrative in both EE and Genesis. In this section, however, our intention is to compare both *Marduk* and *Elohim* as supreme gods. It is important to mention that the concept of a supreme god as a singular patriarchal “Father of all creation” is common in Western culture. Scholars have claimed that it first started during the late Bronze Age, which Akhenaton’s Great Hymn to the Aten. The discussion here, then, would be analyzing how both *Marduk* and *Elohim* became supreme gods, respectively.

5.1 BIRTH OF MARDUK AND GENEALOGY

The role of *Marduk* as creator of the universe in the EE is certainly meant to be one step further in his ascent to become the main Babylonian deity. *Marduk*’s birth as stated in the EE goes as follows: to *Apsû – Tiāmat* is born *Laḥmu* and *Laḥamu*, and *Anšar* and *Kišar*. Then, at the third generation, *Anu* is born to *Anšar* and *Kišar*, and finally in the fourth generation *Ea* (the father of *Marduk*) is sired by *Anu* (see diagram below). This puts *Apsû – Tiāmat* as the great-grandparents of *Marduk*.⁹¹

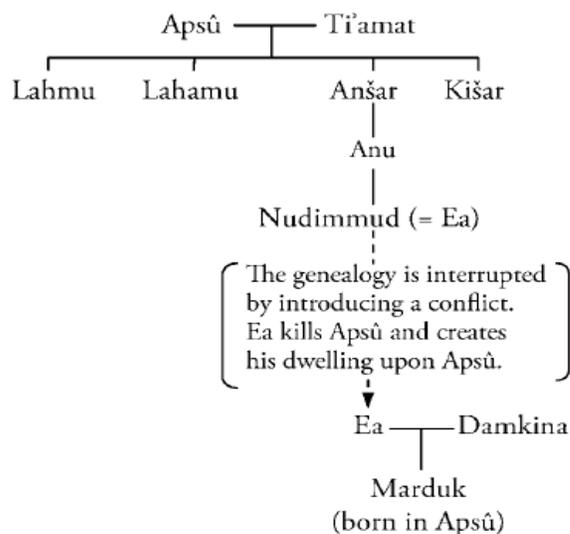
Figure I

Marduk’s Genealogy

The below diagram presents the Family Tree of Marduk.⁹²

⁹¹ Horowitz, 2010, p. 32

⁹² Seri, 2012, p. 9



As stated before, Tablet IV: 137 shows that the gods agree to elevate *Marduk* to the kingship if he will fight on their behalf against *Tiāmat* and her monsters. *Marduk* then defeats *Tiāmat* by cutting her in half, which eventually creates the *kosmos* from her and forms heavens and earth. The upper part of *Tiāmat*'s body became the heaven, the lower part the earth. In this way, *Marduk* distinguished the watery heavens from earth and provided the context for creation to happen. Humanity itself originated as the design of the god *Ea*, but *Marduk* implemented this design when forming humankind from the blood of the god *Kingu*, whom *Marduk* had defeated in cosmic battle. By accomplishing these deeds, *Marduk* then became the head of the Babylonian pantheon. To which, Jeremy Black writes:

“The rise of the cult of Marduk is closely connected with the political rise of Babylon from city-state to the capital of an empire. From the Kassite Period, Marduk became more and more important until it was possible for the author of the Babylonian Epic of Creation to maintain that not only was Marduk king of all the gods but that many of the latter were no more than aspects of his persona.”⁹³

In its description, EE accentuates *Marduk*'s role in establishing the boundaries of the created order, not only of space and matter but of time, which is marked off by the stars and heavenly bodies;

⁹³ Black, J & Green, A. *Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia*, (London: The British Museum Press, 1992), p. 128

Elohim does the same in P.

Unlike the biblical record, the EE suggests that the social order is patterned after the order of the sacred describing the establishment of the cosmic government and explains why there is a hierarchy of gods and why *Marduk* is to be worshipped as the supreme god. Perhaps, this government of the gods is also reflected in the political reality of Babylon. Perhaps even the myth is dramatizing the political crises of Mesopotamian history. What is significant, however, is that the myth sees the emerging political structure as the human-social reflection of the order achieved by the gods.

5.2 BIRTH OF ELOHIM

Elohim, the Israelite God, has no genealogy; the term itself is plural and used 216 times in the HB. The important concern in our paper is who the creator of the universe is according to Gen 1 and 2, and how it defers from EE. The texts suggest that the creation is led by two different entities in the biblical narrative. For example, Gen 1 – 2:4a states that *Elohim* is the creator of the universe (v. 1), whereas Gen 2:4b – 25 proposes that role is taken by YHWH (v. 4b). Of course, we are aware that this exegetical problem deserves more attention than what this paper is able to provide here.

According to Professor Mark Smith, the association of Israel's God (*Elohim*) with *YHWH* starts with a small group of followers during the time of Judges.⁹⁴ Smith points out that the name of Israel's God was originally known as *ʾēl* אֵל “El.”⁹⁵ Subsequently, his association with *YHWH* is presented in Joshua 22:22 (*cf.* Ps 10:12; 50: 1), where we read: *ʾĒl ʾēlōhim YHWH* אֵל אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה “God [of] gods [is] YHWH.” The first word in this clause reflects the development of the name of

⁹⁴ Mark Smith, *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002), p. 8

⁹⁵ *Ibid*

God “*El*” arising so that *YHWH* was originally *El*. Although *YHWH* was considered to be a separate deity, e.g. “the son of *El*.” Thus, scholars have suggested that *El* with its plural *-im* ending, may have been employed to emphasize his status as “God of gods,” or “The highest God.”⁹⁶ There is another reference in Psalm 82 that depicts *YHWH*⁹⁷ as the head of the council, even though this council is referred to as “the council of *El*.” The Psalm employs *El* as an epithet of *YHWH*.

This shows that \aleph , a tribal god, emerges as the patron god of an ethnic group called Israel. This is following the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Canaanite model of a patron-protective god, kingdom, or empire (such as the case of Aššur, the god of the Assyrian Empire). To this, Smith writes:

“The original god of Israel was El. This reconstruction may be inferred from two pieces of information. First, the name of Israel is not a Yahwistic name with the divine element of Yahweh, but an El name, with the element of *'ēl*. This fact would suggest that El was the original chief god of the group named Israel. Second, Genesis 49:24 - 25 presents a series of El epithets separate from the mention of Yahweh in verse 18...”⁹⁸

By linking *Elohim* and *YHWH* in Gen 1 and 2 (as “the most powerful creation”), the priestly tradition co-opted *Elohim* into its services. By doing this, Israel culturally approbated some elements of other Semite gods into Israel’s political-religious identity. Finally, scholars have suggested that the idea of *YHWH* as the Supreme God, as well as concepts such as the creation of the universe by word rather than deed and judgment over Israel, appear only during the Babylonian Exile (6th - 5th century BC).

6. CONCLUSION

This paper sought to argue for the close relationship between EE and Gen 1 – 2:4a. It focused on

⁹⁶ Teryl Givens, *Wrestling the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Cosmos, God, Humanity*, (Vol 1), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 117

⁹⁷ The argument is that Psalm 82 is part of the Elohist collection within the book of Psalms. In light of this, they have argued that the first *Elohim* in v 1 and the one in v 8 must be replaced with *YHWH* (see: L. Joffe, “The Elohist Psalter: What, How and Why?” in *SJOT* 15 [2001], p. 142 – 66).

⁹⁸ Smith, p. 32

looking into the similarities and dissimilarities between both accounts. It was argued that EE and P have different goals with respect to their worldviews. This paper also suggested that *Marduk* and *Elohim*, respectively, are portrayed as the creators of the universe and supreme gods of both cultures (Babylonian and Israelites). So, the question that still remains is: Does the above suggest that P knew of or least informed by the EE composition? Of course! This is unquestionable given the evidence! In fact, Sparks makes the argument that this was indeed the case. He writes:

“Absolutely. Enûma Elish was recited annually by Mesopotamian priests during the Akītu festival, where its recitation was the last cultic act on day 4 of that New Year event. In the following section we shall see that P knew not only Enûma Elish from the fourth day but also the closely related kuppuru ritual from the fifth day of the Akītu. This evidence will make it much more likely that P knew and was responding to Enûma Elish. Only when Genesis 1 and Enûma Elish are compared in relative isolation from this circumstantial evidence is it possible to evade the fact that P has imitated this ancient myth.”⁹⁹

We believe that during the Babylonian Exile, it is possible that the tradition of the EE and the P account overlap; thus, the author reframes their narrative to mimicking or responding to the EE. On this basis, the author/s of Gen 1 cannot predate the Babylonian Exile. Rather, he belongs to this period, if not later. This explains why there are elements in both accounts that overlap. At the same time, the dissimilarities can be understood as part of the author's theo-political views concerning his own faith and religious experience that made him and the Israelites different from other cultures in the ANE. Thus, the author/s, whoever he was, must have known the EE tradition in order to form his telling. We also believe that the biblical account of creation is part of the broader genre of the ANE mythical creation accounts, and as such they share common linguistic features.

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⁹⁹ Sparks, p. 632

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