



Appendix "D"



The Religion & Culture of Babylon



The Babylonians were a complex, yet very practical race of people who sought for security, knowledge, hope, and wisdom. They built a great City and culture to meet these desires. They developed a social and governmental structure to meet the very same physical and emotional needs. Finally, they built a religious system that they felt answered the very same questions that we of a modern society are still asking. Where did we come from? Why are we here? And, Where are we going after we die?

The **Religion** of the Babylonians is as dead as their civilization, and yet it lives all around us. The religion that was as complex as the people it served lived on to serve modern society, though many are not aware of that fact. In an attempt to answer man's life long questions, the Babylonians, over time, created a system of gods and beliefs that were sculpted to their society. An attempt to summarize the Babylonian religion will follow hereafter; however, it should be noted that the religion was so complex that an entire book could be written with the sole topic of Babylonian religion. The following is a brief summary of common beliefs and religious practices that were found in Babylon.

Death - The Babylonians had a strong belief in honoring their dead. Of the Babylonians the Greek Historian wrote, *"Their burials are made with the dead embalmed in honey, and their dirges are much the same as those of the Egyptians"* (*The History – Herodotus, Translated by David Grene, page 124, Book 1, sections 198*). To the Babylonians, the honoring of their dead was crucial. They believe that the dead released their spirits to a place deep under the earth called the underworld. In the underworld the dead roamed a vast desert that was void of food and water. Their happiness in the life here after was dependent on the ones they left behind. The details of the funeral and honor of the dead dictated some of the circumstances that the dead would be faced with in the underworld. The

dead were symbolically feed by the loved ones they left behind. The remaining family would put out an offering of daily food and water for their dead loved ones. Given this ritual, one can see that a deceased person who was not honored or left behind no loved ones would suffer in the after life.

Deity - Babylonian religion was far from a faith in one god. It was a religion of many gods and a religion of “Idolatry”. The Babylonians believed in hundreds even thousands of gods or idols. They created a god for just about every occupation, event, and element. There was a moon god, an agricultural god, a god of the wind, and even a god of childbirth. The list could go on and on. Depending on when and where you lived in Mesopotamia, different gods would occupy different degrees of importance. For example, Babylon was primarily an agricultural city with heavy needs for water. They were also a city that was accustomed to war and turmoil. Consequently, Babylon worshipped the god of water (Ea), the great god of agriculture (Marduk), and the god of war (Ishtar). Worship was given to the god in whom could best answer ones needs. Hence, the need for many gods.

Cities in Babylonia generally adopted a city god over time. This god was more or less the most important god to the city. This did not mean that the other gods were abandon, but rather traditions and folklore became modified to elevate the central god while the other gods continued to act in their specified realm.

The gods of Babylon changed with the time and culture. In studying the mythology of the Babylonians one will find that the gods would often mysteriously take the power and authority of another god. The gods could also change parents or divine status. This was all done as the Babylonian culture changed. This causes us some confusion; however, it was probably quite clear to the Babylonians.

Idols were carved and sculpted by the Babylonians so as to have a visual form to worship. After the Idol was finished the priest conducted a sacred ceremony that called for the spirit of the god to enter into the idol and bring life to it. From that point on, few people were allowed to come close to the god. Temples were built with courtyards that could look into the sacred sanctuaries that housed the idols. The common folk did not enter the sanctuary.

Large quantities of food were given by the people to feed the gods of the various temples. The food was placed before the gods at each meal. The people also offered large volumes of animal sacrifice to the gods and paid tribute in forms of money and valuables. This was very important due to the fact that each temple was staffed with a large group of priests and their families who needed food and means to live. The priests and their families are thought to have lived off of the sacrifices and offerings in the temples.

Foreordination or Destiny – The Babylonians believed that their choices could please or displease the gods bringing forth appropriate retributions. However, the gods were not obligated to honor faithful subjects nor were they bound to punish the disobedient. The gods ultimately decided fate. They had what was called “the book of destinies” where the gods could record their desired destiny for a man, society or even a race of people and it would happen.

Because of the Babylonian belief in “god controlled destiny”, they created personalities for their gods to help explain away why things happened the way they did. They created selfish gods, just gods, merciless gods, and downright wicked gods. The personalities of the Babylonian gods were as numerous as those found among mortal men.

Heaven – The Babylonian heaven was far from what most modern day Christians think of when they imagine heaven. The Babylonian heaven was not a place that man could go after death if he lived his life according to certain laws and understanding. It was rather a place where the gods lived and ruled away from the domain of common man.

The Babylonians believed that there were in fact three heavens. The first heaven, which was the lowest heaven, was where the stars of the sky resided. It was there that the lesser gods lived. The second heaven was the home of the great gods, whom the Babylonians called the “Igigi”. Finally, the third and greatest heaven was the home of An and Ki, the supposed father and mother of all deity.

The heavens were an obscure place in the minds of most Babylonians. It was vague and unclear what the heavens were like. To further complicate things, the definition of the heavens sometimes changed as society changed. For instance, during a certain period the third heaven wasn’t occupied by An and Ki at all. Other gods might have been substituted into the third heaven because of changes in tradition and societal circumstances.

Hell – To the Babylonians there was no hell, as we know it. They believed in a place call the underworld. The Underworld is a place where all mankind will go after death.

In an attempt to explain the process of death, the Babylonians developed a tradition that basically says when a body is place in the ground after death the spirit leaves the body and ventures on. Furthermore, the human spirit supposedly journeyed through the earth after loved ones place their mortal body in the grave. The spirit would first come to a place called the Abzu, the great ocean within the earth. The deceased spirits of man would cross a river that was connected to the Abzu. The spirit then continued its journey through the earth. As the spirit traveled through the earth it was believed that it came to a long staircase that led to a place that the Babylonians referred to as the

underworld or netherworld. All mankind goes to the underworld, whether they were good or evil.

Judgement – The Babylonians had basically no belief in a great and final judgement of mankind by the gods. Though they believed that the gods might issue punishments and rewards to man during mortality, once one died there was no accounting for the actions of one's life. Every deceased person's spirit reported to the spirit/under world much as a man would report to work. There was no difference in eternal assignment based on judgement.

Marriage – A key point in the Babylonian religious practice was that of the Marriage. The union of man and woman was part of their religion. The Greek Historian Herodotus wrote of the union of male and female Babylonians, though there are many individuals who dispute his record. He wrote, *"The ugliest of the customs among the Babylonians is this: every woman who lives in that country must once in her lifetime go to the temple of Aphrodite" (Ishtar) "and sit there and be lain with by a strange man. Many of the women who are too proud to mix with the others – such for instance, as are uplifted by the wealth they have – ride to the temple in covered carriages drawn by teams and stay there then with a great mass of attendants following them. But most of the women do thus: they sit in the sacred precinct of Aphrodite with a garland round their heads made of string. There is constant coming and going, and there are roped-off passages running through the crowds of women in every direction, through which the strangers walk and take their pick. When once a woman has taken her seat there, she may not go home again until one of the strangers throws a piece of silver into her lap and lies with her, outside the temple. As he throws a coin, the man says "I summon you in the name of Mylitta." (The Assyrians call Aphrodite Mylitta.) The greatness of the coin may be what it may, for it is not lawful to reject it, since this money, once it is thrown, becomes sacred. The woman must follow the first man who throws the money into her lap and may reject none. Once she has lain with him, she has fulfilled her obligation to the goddess and gets gone to her home. From that time forth you cannot give her any sum large enough to get her. Those women who have attained to great beauty and height depart quickly enough, but those who are ugly abide there a great while, being unable to fulfill the law. Some indeed, stay there as much as three or four years" (The History – Herodotus, Translated by David Grene, page 124, Book 1, Section 199).* Though there appears to be strong arguments against this story actually taking place in Babylon, it has been proven that similar acts took place in other cities in Mesopotamia in the temples dedicated to the goddess Ishtar (Greek – Venus). Being as Ishtar had temples in Babylon, it is quite possible that the same pre-marriage ritual took place in Babylon.

The Babylonians were less than religious when they selected a bride. It would appear that there was little courtship and romance. In fact, the selection of a Babylonian wife seemed to be almost in line with a livestock auction. Again, the Greek Historian wrote, *“In every village, once a year, the people did the following: as the girls in the village became ripe for marriage, they gathered and brought together all such to one place. There was a great throng of men surrounding it, and auctioneer put the girls up, one by one, for sale. He would begin with the best-looking, and, after she had been sold and brought a great price, he would auction off her whose looks were next best. They were all sold to live with their men. All the rich men of Babylon who were disposed to marriage outbid one another in buying the beauties. But those of the lower classes who wanted to marry were not set on fairness of form but took the uglier girls, with money to boot. For when the auctioneer had gone through all the best-looking girls, he would put up the ugliest, or one that was crippled, and would sell her off: “Who will take least money to live with this one?” This money came from the sale of the good looking girls, so those who were handsome portioned off the ill-favored and the cripples. But no man might give away his daughters to whom he pleased, nor might any man take any girl by buying her without a guarantor; he must produce his guarantor for a solemn promise to live with her in his home and only so be allowed to take her away. If the couple could not agree, the law was that the money must be returned. It was also possible for anyone who pleased to come from another village and buy”* (*The History – Herodotus, Translated by David Grene, page 122-123, Book 1, Section 196*).

Despite what appears to be a quite immoral and inhuman respect for the covenant of marriage, most feel that Babylonians regarded marriage as sacred and were quite faithful to what they viewed as a sacred pact or contract.

Morals - Given the Babylonian views on judgement and accountability, there was very little incentive for moral actions. The religion itself did not provide moral guidance. Any moral and ethical standards were adhered to because it suited their needs. Likewise, the Babylonians often broke that which we would call a moral standard because it brought about fulfillment of base desires or the goal of meeting physical and emotional needs.

Leaders - The Babylonian religion was centered on the King. He was often considered half-deity. He was placed as King by the gods and acted as their spokesman. The Babylonians used the title “lugal” for the King or most chief position within the city. It was the title of authority and was also considered as a title of divine power.

Next to the lugal was the “en”. The en was the highest priestly authority in the country or city. He was the “High Priest”. He often

worked hand and hand with the King or lugal. It was the en who officiated in rituals that symbolically transferred divine authority to the King.

Under the lugal and en were officials called “ensi”. The ensi, which is translated roughly to be “stewards”, were more or less officers under those two high-powered figures. Ensi were governors, priests and other subordinate authorities.

Religious Practice – The Babylonian religion was one of constant practice. Homes of the rich were built around courtyards that typically contained shrines to the gods whom the household held dear. Poorer homes didn’t consist of courtyards, in fact they were typically not much more than mud huts; however, smaller less elaborate shrines were also found in the homes of the poor. Their cities were filled with literally hundreds of temples, synagogues, and shrines. The people prayed to their gods, along with sacrificing animals and food to gain the grace of their gods. They honored their dead through offerings. Literally, the Babylonians believed that every act and occurrence in their lives was religious in nature.

Worship – The order and general guidelines to Babylonian religious worship is still at large. Unfortunately, we have but pieces to the puzzle and from which we can only attempt to describe what the whole picture should look like.

One example and tradition that we do have record of might help illustrate Babylonian religious worship. This example was and is known as the “**Sacred Marriage**”. It was also known as the “New Year Festival”, but to the Babylonians it was “Akitu”. In Babylon, the New Year Festival lasted for twelve days. It began on a day called “zagnuk” which is believed to be in the Babylonian month of Nisan or Nisan (March-April). The first four days of the festival were in fact dedicated to preparations for the event, including the necessary purifications, and acting out of the sacred Babylonian epics in the temples.

On the first day of the New Year Festival, the priests opened the great doors of the Esagila, the temple of Babylon’s city god Marduk.

On the second day, the high priest arises before the rising of the sun and performs a ritual by washing himself in the waters of the Euphrates. After he has been purified he enters the temple and recites secret prayers to the great Babylonian god Marduk. The prayer asks Marduk to bless Babylon and it’s people. In the prayer the High Priest also asks for Marduk’s permission to continue with the New Year Festival.

On the third day, two wooded statues were made. The statues were carefully carved and then adorned with precious stones and metals and finally clothed with red garments. One statue held a serpent and the other a scorpion. These statues represented evil and took part in the festival on day six.

On the fourth day, prayers were uttered in the morning and late evening by the priest. In the afternoon the Epic of the Creation was read in its entirety to the citizens of Babylon.

On the fifth day, the King began to play his leading part in the ongoing Epic. Within the Temple of Marduk, The Esagila, the King knelt before the high priest, who stripped him of his royal scepter, insignia, crown and all other items that would identify him as royalty. The High Priest then placed them before Marduk's statue. The priest then struck the King's face. After being stripped of authority, and humiliated by being struck, the King declare his innocence by saying "I have not sinned, O lord of the lands ..." The priest, acting as the voice of Marduk, announced that the King's declaration was heard and that Marduk will increase his dominion, heighten his loyalty, and bless his country. The King was then given back his royal attire. Following which the King was struck again. If a tear was shed after being struck (fertilizing rain?), it was a good omen. The tear also purified the King and his people.

The temple of Esagila was also purified on this day. A priest walked through the temple with a censor in one hand and a torch in the other. The priest sprinkled the walls of the temple with water from the Tigris River and resin from the cedar tree. A sheep was then sacrificed. The sheep was decapitated and its body was carried throughout the temple. The body of the sacrifice was then taken to the river Euphrates where it was thrown in the water. It was believed that this sheep paid the price of the sins of the people from the previous year. It was in deed a "scapegoat". By throwing the scapegoat into the river, one symbolically ridded the people of their sins. This act is probably the decayed remains of the sacred sacrifice taught to father Adam by the true and everlasting God.

On the close of the fifth day, the emotions of the people grew. Tradition states that the god Marduk supposedly disappeared, the power of death held him captive in the mountain, nature was lifeless hung in suspense, chaos might be about to return. The crowds began to work themselves up, they ran hither and thither, wailing and lamenting; the people's eyes were turned toward the ziggurat -- there was Marduk's "tomb", there he was imprisoned in the dusty dark of the Nether world and needed the help of their mourning.

The next day, the sixth day of the festival, was full of excitement. The subordinate gods of Marduk come to Babylon on this day. The crowds probably gathered along the banks of the great river Euphrates to watch the arrival of the visiting gods. The gods arrived one by one on sacred barges from cities throughout the country, each city sending their city god. They came from Nippur and Uruk, from Kutha and Kish. Most important of all Marduk's own son, Nabu, who was a resident at Borsippa, came to Babylon as the Savior of his father. Tradition says that Nabu led the triumphal procession of all the gods up from the river. The King probably waited anxiously for Nabu to arrive and save Marduk from captivity. Not so much was known of the actual "liberation" of Marduk, which may have been enacted on the seventh day of Nissan. In some

manner Nabu led the gods against his father's foes and Marduk was set free from the mountain.

The two statues of evil that were made on the third day were decapitated and their heads were cast into a large fire. Symbolically, the evil that held Marduk and plagued the city was destroyed

On the Seventh, and after the liberation of Marduk, the people celebrated and prepared for the assembly of the gods. This assembly occurred on the eighth day, and was a sacred and solemn event. All the gods were assembled before Marduk in the courtyard of his temple Esagila. They were arranged in order of precedence and stood facing Marduk, on whom they bestow their united power, giving him "a destiny beyond compare." While the King, the priests and the images were occupied in this way within the walls of the Esagila, the populace was to remain hushed and peaceful, a day of calm between the lamentations and the outburst of rejoicing.

It was the ninth day that the people of Babylon saw the great procession of gods and people from the Esagila to the Festival House, set in beautiful gardens outside the city. Eventually, Ishtar went with Marduk and the King proclaimed the start of the actual Festival.

On the tenth day, Marduk led the way back to the City Proper through crowds roaring out their ritual cries of joy. After his return, a grand banquet was held in the Royal Palace.

If this ordering of the days is correct, then it was that night, either in Esagila or in the chapel on top of the ziggurat, that the sacred marriage of Marduk and Ishtar took place. It is thought that the sacred marriage was enacted by the King with the high priestess. The two would consort together to renew the life in the land and guarantee prosperity.

On the eleventh day, the gods had a second assembly for the determination of destinies comparable to that of the eighth day. This time, however, it was the destiny of mankind that had to be settled. The reading



The Procession on the 9th Day of the New Years Festival

of the ancient epics were again read. This last solemn rite of the New Year Festival seemed to celebrate the great event when Marduk killed Tiamat and from his blood, formed mankind.

The twelfth day of the festival was the day of departures. Crowds probably mauled the river front as the visiting gods boarded their sacred barges for their journey home. It marked the end of the New Years Festival and the start of a prosperous year.

"April Fool's Day" has had its origins traced back to what took place on the 5th day of the New Year festival where the god disappeared and disorder prevailed.

For us to have a general understanding and feel for the Babylonians, a brief summary of a few of their gods needs to be made. **The Gods of Babylon** number nearly 2,000 according to available data, suggesting that it could very well be much higher in number. Due to the sheer number of gods it is unfeasible to address any more than a small fraction in this work. There are in fact entire books written on the subject of Babylonian gods and religion. This work will address only those gods that were of most importance to the Babylonians and those that would help the reader better understand the Book of Ezekiel.

Before we proceed, there are several points that need to be made about the Babylonian beliefs in their gods. First, the Babylonian gods were not immortal. Though they don't appear to grow old or die from natural causes, they could and often were killed by other gods. Second, the Babylonian gods gave into the same passions and appetites as man. They often had affairs with mortal men and women, they stole, sought revenge, and even participated in mortal acts. Kings were often exalted to human/god status. Finally, most Babylonian gods wore horned caps as a symbol of their divinity.

The Horned cap was one of the more ancient symbols of Mesopotamia. The gods were typically symbolized by wearing a cap that usually entailed seven pairs of stacked horns, though the symbolism remains unchanged even if only one pair of horns is used. The horns were thought to be adopted from the bull who was a symbol of procreation, power, superior strength, and omnipotence. The number seven symbolizes the universe, completeness, and totality. Both symbols adequately symbolize deity.

The following Babylonian gods are key to



**The Horned Cap of
Babylonian Deity**

the Babylonian culture, lifestyle, and important to understand when a serious student is studying the Book of Ezekiel or the people of Babylon. Only a brief summary is given for each god, listed in alphabetical order;

Babylonian Mythology

The gods of Babylon

Adad or **Iskur** - Adad was the Babylonian god who embodied the storms. He was a son of the god An and his goddess wife Ki; though another tradition says that he was the son of the god Enlil.

Adad was spelt in ancient symbols using the same symbol that the Babylonians used for the wind. He was associated with thunderstorms, hail, floods, and winds. He was especially worshipped by the people of dry areas where rainfall was crucial for agricultural prosperity. It was believed that Adad could bring needed rain or deny rainfall to those whom he was not pleased. Storm clouds were even called Adad's Bulls. It is believed by the Babylonians that Adad was partially responsible for the great flood that occurred on the earth.

Adad is usually depicted with lightning bolts in his right hand and an axe in his left hand.

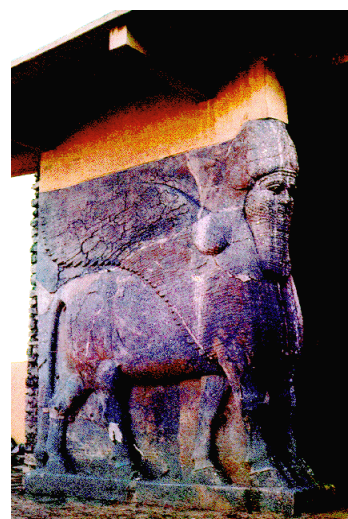


The god
Adad

Symbol of Adad:	The Wind (sometimes lightning)
Number of Adad:	6
Animal of Adad:	The Bull
Astrological Region of Adad:	Unknown

Adrammelech - Adrammelech was a Sumerian idol that was commonly found throughout Mesopotamia, Assyria, Medes and the connecting lands. It was typically associated with the King, throne rooms, palaces and capital cities. Its very name means "splendor to the King". It was thought to be the guardian idol sent from the sun god, Shamash, to protect that which was sacred to the gods. Some refer to the Adrammelech as a cherub, a guardian angel of sorts.

The body of Adrammelech was that of a lion. Its legs and hooves were



Remains of a
Adrammelech in Nineveh

that of a calf. It had wings of an eagle, and the face of a man. The somewhat bizarre symbolism is close to that used by John the Beloved in the vision he received on the Isle of Patmos. Likewise, Ezekiel used similar symbols when recounting the vision he received by the river Chebar. Adrammelech represented the creations of heaven and the power thereof. It should not be implied that the ancient prophets of the God of Israel, the true and living God, were speaking of the Adrammelech in their divine revelations. What should be noted is that the symbolism was obviously well understood by the cultures of the area and time.

An or Anu - The god An was rarely ever depicted in art; however, he was at one time the “King of the Igigi” (see entry on the Igigi). He was the son of the god Anshar and the goddess Kishar. He was the personification of the heavens. In fact, the word An is the Sumerian word for heaven. Most believe that An and Ki were the progenitors of most of the Mesopotamian gods. In fact, he is the father of Ea and the grandfather of Marduk. He was married twice, his first wife was Antu and his second wife was Ishtar. Antu and An were responsible for the birth of the Anunnaki (the gods of the underworld) and the utukki (the seven evil demons). He and his wife existed in the third and highest heaven.

An was the god of the sky, and had tremendous powers. He was capable of sending shooting stars (kishru’s) on command. He was also capable of making anything that he put into words, reality. He was a god of the kings and seldom had anything to do with the common folk.

Symbol of An:	The Horned Cap
Number of An:	60
Animal of An:	The Heavenly Bull
Astrological Region of An:	The Heavenly Equator

Anshar - Not much is known of Anshar, other than he was the father of An and the husband of Kishar. He was a king of the Igigi at one time; however, his role in Babylonian religion was never central. He is the god of the whole sky. It is thought that his qualities and domain were transferred by the Assyrians when they created the god Assur.

Symbol of Anshar:	Unknown
Number of Anshar:	Unknown
Animal of Anshar:	Unknown
Astrological Region of Anshar:	Unknown

Apsu or Abzu - The apsu is the ocean that the Babylonians believed lied underneath the whole earth. It is the home of Ea and his wife. It also contains the great

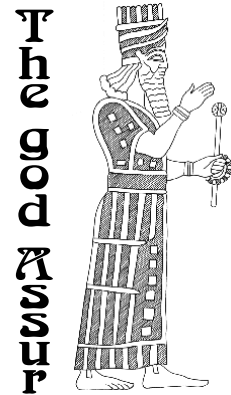
river Hubur which is the river that the Babylonians believed each person must cross in order to reach the underworld. The underworld lied beneath the apsu.

Most Babylonian temples had a tank or pool of holy water that symbolized the apsu. Since water was a crucial element of life in the desert, the apsu was an important element in religious worship.

Assur -

This god was probably best known as an Assyrian god; however, he still found place in the religion of the Babylonians. He was the god of the Assyrian nation. It was thought that his character was actually a renamed Anshar. He also embodied some of the characteristics of Ea, and Marduk. After the fall of Assyria to the Babylonians, he was still worshipped to some extent in Babylonia, though his predominance had fallen with Assyria.

Assur was different than most Babylonian gods because his domain was beyond that of the sky, or the earth, or some element. He was a god of the people. This was one of the first attempts by gentile nations at monotheology.



Symbol of Assur:	Unknown
Number of Assur:	Unknown
Animal of Assur:	The Snake-Dragon
Astrological Region of Assur:	Unknown

Dumkina or **Damkina** or **Damgalnuna** - Dumkina was the goddess wife of Ea, though some traditions title her as little more than a lover. She was the mother of Marduk and Bel (Bel is probably nothing more than another title for Marduk). She was considered one of the first mother goddesses. Not much is known of her. We know that there were several early cults that gave fish offering to her, probably because of her connection with Ea who was the god of the fresh waters and was often associated with fish.

Symbol of Dumkina:	Unknown
Number of Dumkina:	Unknown
Animal of Dumkina:	The Lion
Astrological Region of Dumkina:	The Constellation called the Wagon Wheel, Ursa Minor

Ea or **Enki** or **Nudimmud** - Ea was the father of the great Babylonian god, Marduk. As the father of Marduk, he was revered and respected in the Babylonian religion. His wife was the goddess Dumkina. He was considered the god

of the subterranean fresh water ocean. The Babylonians believed that the earth had a great subterranean ocean that supplied the lakes, rivers, and streams of the earth with fresh water. He is also said to be the god in charge of the bolt that bars the sea. One ancient cylinder seal shows Ea on his throne with water streams issuing from his shoulders. With such authority, Ea was considered one of the greater gods. Occasionally, Ea is referred to as Ea Mummu. Mummu means genius or clever man.

Ea's connection with water linked him to rituals in the Babylonian religion which required the use of water, one of which was the ritual of washing and purifying. He was associated with exorcism and white magic.

Ea was also considered a god of exceptional skill, technical talent, craftsmanship, and cunningness. His Sumerian name, Enki, means lord of the earth. This indicated that Ea might have been considered more than just lord of the ocean at one time. Other records indicate that Ea was the god of wisdom, art, and creation.

Ea supposedly created mortal man from clay with another one of his wives, the goddess Ninmah.



The god
Ea

Symbol of Ea:	The Goat-Fish (goat head with fishes body) or a stick with a Rams head
Number of Ea:	40
Animal of Ea:	Fish
Astrological Region of Ea:	12° south of the equator (includes Pisces and Aquarius)

Enkidu - A godly companion created to be a peer for the part god, part human man named Gilgamesh. He was created at An's command.

Enlil - Enlil was the Babylonian god of the wind or storm. He at one time ruled the Igigi until he gave over the rule to his father, An. He was considered a short tempered god whom according to tradition caused the great flood.

Symbol of Enlil:	The Horned Cap and seven small circles representing Pleiades
Number of Enlil:	50
Animal of Enlil:	Wild Bull or Snake-Dragon
Astrological Region of Enlil:	The Constellation Bootes and 12° north of the equator, "The way of Anu"

Ereshkigal or Allatu – Ereshkigal was the wife of Nergal and the supreme god of the underworld. In some traditions, she is said to be Ishtar’s sister. One of the recognizing features of Ereshkigal is that when she is angered her face grows livid and her lips grow black. Her name translates to “The Queen of the Great Below”. She is said to live in a grand palace at the doorway to the underworld (Ganzir) which has seven grand gates, each bolted and guarded.

It was Ereshkigal who Ishtar came to visit when she wandered into the underworld. It was also Ereshkigal who made the deal with Ishtar to trade Ishtar’s soul for Dumuzi (Tammuz).

Symbol of Ereshkigal:	Unknown
Number of Ereshkigal:	Unknown
Animal of Ereshkigal:	Unknown
Astrological Region of Ereshkigal:	Unknown

Gilgamesh (possibly Bilgamesh) – Gilgamesh was the son of a human King known as Lugalbanda and a wise goddess named Ninsun. Their union produced a son who was two-thirds god and one-third man. He grew to become a tall fearless warrior, but had no peers. Legend implies that his godly nature denied him peers. He is said to have built a city and ruled as King but was very wild causing his people to pray to the god An for help. An created a godly peer for Gilgamesh and named him Enkidu as an answer to their prayers.

Gilgamesh and Enkidu became friends after a evenly matched fight at their first meeting ended in a stalemate. Together they decided that they would venture out and make a name for themselves. They had heard that the god Enlil had placed a great beast at the entrance to a great forest as the forest’s guardian. The beast’s name was Humbaba. Eventually they found the beast and killed him.



Gilgamesh and Enkidu kill Humbaba

In another story, Gilgamesh was offered by the goddess Ishtar to become Gilgamesh’s lover. Gilgamesh greatly insults the goddess by telling her that she has had many lover and not been faithful to any of them. He then rejects her offer. Ishtar, angered by the insult, approaches An and asks that he send the Bull of Heaven down to Gilgamesh and

punish him for his actions. An agrees and the Bull is sent to the earth. Gilgamesh and Enkidu battle and defeat the bull; however, in the battle Enkidu is injured and dies. It is thought that this was punishment from the gods for killing Humbaba and the Bull of Heaven.

After Enkidu's death, Gilgamesh sets out on a journey to find the only man that survived the great flood, Utnapishtim. He hoped to find him and gain the secret to eternal life. After an amazing journey, Gilgamesh finds Utnapishtim and inquires after eternal life. He is told that he must stay awake for six days and seven nights. He fails and leaves disappointed.

Gula or Nintinuga or Ninkarrak or Neme or Ninisina -

The goddess Gula whose name translates as "great", was the great Babylonian goddess of health and healing. She was the goddess of the doctors and physicians. She understood diseases and their cures. She married to the god Ninurte. She was also the mother of the god Damu, and the god Ninazu who were all associated with healing. Idols were built in the form of dogs and worshipped in her honor.



Symbol of Gula:	Unknown
Number of Gula:	Unknown
Animal of Gula:	The dog
Astrological Region of Gula:	Unknown

Humbaba - Humbaba was a terrifying beast that was created by the god Enlil to protect his sacred cedar forest. He was supposedly a giant, protected by seven layers of radiance. He was usually portrayed as a creature with lion claws, long hair and whiskers, a terrifying face. Legend has it that he was killed by Gilgamesh and his friend Enkidu. Gilgamesh pinned the creature down while Enkidu smote off the creature's head.

Igigi - The Igigi is the name for the group of Mesopotamian gods which could better be named as the "council of great gods". The number of gods in the Igigi range from 10 to 300 depending on the time period being studied. By the Neo-Babylonian period the number of gods in the Igigi were but 10. Interestingly enough the gods appeared to have a specific ranking. There was a King or leader of the Igigi, who changed from time to time. The other gods also fell into the hierarchy and seemingly respected the other gods' statuses.

Ishtar or **Jshhara** or **Jrnini** or **Jnana** - Ishtar is another deity that lied central in Babylonian religion. She was the goddess of love, procreation, and war. She was identified with the planet Venus. She was the daughter of An (Anu), and later on became his second wife. She is sometimes the daughter of Sin and sometimes the sister of Ereshkigal.

She is often referred to as the divine prostitute. Her temples and the rituals associated with them were sexual in nature. Acts of sex actually took place in or just outside her temples, in fact, acts of prostitution from both genders commonly found place in the temples of Ishtar. Ishtar herself was said to have attracted many men of whom she used and quickly disposed of. She loved the god Tammuz in her youth, sought the love of

THE GODDESS ISHTAR



Cylinder Seal showing the goddess Ishtar

Gilgamesh, and gave pleasure to many others. She was also considered the goddess of fertility. Though she was the goddess of fertility,

she should not be confused with the mother goddess who blessed man with offspring. Ishtar gave mortal man carnal, sensual, and immoral desires and in such gained the title the goddess of fertility. In what seems to be an almost contradictory term, the name Ishtar is derived from the Sumerian translation which means “Lady of Heaven”.

As the goddess of war she was often a favorite goddess of Babylonian Kings. Her war like personality is often described as violent, relentless, and lusting after power.

It would seem that Ishtar, at one point and time, ventured in to the underworld. Once there she found that she was not allowed to leave. She had no desire to stay and pleaded for a way out. She was told that there was only one way out, she must find a replacement to remain the underworld in her stead. She offered up the name of her young lover/husband, Dumuzi. The demons retrieved Dumuzi and she was released. Her relationship to the plant Venus has to due with this occurrence. The planet Venus is the bright star of the mourning and symbolizes Ishtars emergence from the underworld.

- Symbol of Ishtar:** An 8 or 16 pointed star
- Number of Ishtar:** 15
- Animal of Ishtar:** the Lion (sometimes the dragon)

Astrological Region of Ishtar: Dibal (Venus) and the Bowstar (Sirius)

Ki or **Ninhursag** or **Ninmah** or **Nintu**- Ki is the goddess of the earth. She is sometimes called Ninhursag, “queen of the mountains” or Ninmah, “the exalted lady”, or Nintu, “the lady who gave birth”. She was the wife of An and the mother of many including Marduk. Babylonian legend says that between her and An, most of mankind was created. She was the mother of all living plants and vegetation. She was also the mother of all water.

Symbol of Ki:	Unknown
Number of Ki:	Unknown
Animal of Ki:	Unknown
Astrological Region of Ki:	Unknown

Marduk – Marduk was the most important god in Babylon. He was not only the “City god of Babylon”, but he was also considered in the Babylonian religion as the “King of the Igigi”, or higher gods. His power and authority in the mind of most Babylonians surpassed all other gods. He is often identified with the planet Jupiter, and the god Zeus by the Greeks.



The god Marduk

Marduk is the son of the god Ea and the goddess Dumkina. Though it is difficult to understand it’s exact meaning, Marduk is said to have been born mature. He is usually pictured in a proud and commanding posture. His stare was said to be powerful, through his four eyes symbolizing perfect knowledge. Likewise, Marduk is usually depicted with four ears, which would symbolize that he was the ultimate giver of life. Marduk was also said to have spoken with fire, symbolizing the power and strength of his word. In addition to this, Marduk was said to have been a skilled sorcerer. Aside from his own powers, as if they weren’t enough, Marduk was given a powerful gift from the god An (Anu), command of the four winds.

Babylonian legend says that Marduk became the “King of the Igigi” when the god An was sent by the Igigi on a peace mission to the angered goddess Tiamat and failed. This prompted Ea, Marduk’s father, to plead with Marduk to take care of Tiamat. Marduk obeyed his father and went before the Igigi and its current “King” or leader, Anshar. He proclaimed that he would not only defeat Tiamat, but that he would lay her head at Anshar’s feet. This was a bold announcement, but not half as bold as his charge for services rendered. Prior to his confrontation with Tiamat, he required that he be granted the power to control fates and supercede Anshar as “King of the Igigi”.

Apparently, Anshar and the other gods didn't feel threatened or angered by Marduk's requirements. Legend states that the god Anshar, Lahmu, Lahamu, and An built a shrine where they proclaim Marduk King of the Igigi. He was given a godly scepter, throne, and staff. Then An gave Marduk the ability to declare fate.

After being given the required items, Marduk boarded his chariot and led the gods into battle against Tiamat. Legend states that after a fierce battle, Marduk restricted Tiamat's movements with the winds. He then shot her in the belly with an arrow, split her open, and punctured her heart. Marduk then crushed her skull.

From the death of Tiamat, Marduk created the world that the Babylonians knew. From Tiamat's skin he made the roof of the sky. From her eyes he made the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. From the blood and bones of Tiamat and her armies he formed early man. Finally, he created Babylon, with the Ziggurat and Esagila to honor his name.

Anshar was so pleased with Marduk's victory over Tiamat that he honored him further by pronouncing many new names upon him;

Names for Marduk

1	Asarluhi	26	Grugal
2	Mershakushu	27	Hegal
3	The Son, The Majesty of the Gods	28	Sirsir
4	Marukka	29	Malah
5	Lugal-dimmer-anki (King of Heaven and Earth)	30	Gil
6	Bel	31	Gilima
7	Baal	32	Agilima
8	Nari-lugal-dimmer-anki	33	Zuluma
9	Namtila	34	Mummu
10	Namru	35	Zulum-ummu
11	Asare	36	Gizh-numun-ab
12	Asar-alim	37	Lugal-ab-dubur
13	Asar-alim-nuna	38	Pegal-guena
14	Tutu	39	Lugal-Durmah
15	Zi-ukkina	40	Aranuna
16	Ziku	41	Dumu-duku
17	Agaku	42	Lugal-duku
18	Shazu	43	Lugal-shuanna
19	Zisi	44	Iruqa
20	Suhrim	45	Irqingu
21	Suhgurim	46	Kinma
22	Zahrim	47	E-sizkur
23	Zahgurim	48	Addu
24	Enbilulu	49	Asharu
25	Epadum	50	Neberu

After becoming "King of the Igigi", Marduk ruled with relentless conviction to laws and judgement. He gave the King of Babylon power to rule. Angering Marduk often resulted in foreign countries ruling over Babylon. Proper tribute to him gave the Babylonians his blessings making them unstoppable.

Symbol of Marduk: triangular-headed spade or hoe, the "marru"
Number of Marduk: unknown

Animal of Marduk: snake-dragon, the “mushussu”
Astrological Region of Marduk: The Planet Jupiter

Nabu or **Nebo** or **Nabium** - Nabu was the son of the god Marduk and the goddess Sarpanitu. He was for a brief period the city god of Babylon, though Marduk never really relinquished his grip on the city. Nabu was the god of wisdom, knowledge, scribes, and scholars. He was the divine scribe of the tablets of destinies.

Nabu was the city god of Babylon’s sister city Bor Sippa. Though he was an important god in the Babylonian religion, there appears to be no myths relating to him. In some traditions, he assumed the characteristics of Ninurtu and subsequently became associated with irrigation and agriculture.

Nabu was the spouse of the goddess Tashmeta, though later traditions indicate that his spouse was Nisaba.

He was regarded as the god who was identified with the planet Mercury. It is also thought that the Babylonian god Nabu became the god Apollo in the Greek religion or rather Greek Mythology.

Symbol of Nabu: A single wedge (writing stylus)
Number of Nabu: unknown
Animal of Nabu: snake-dragon, the “mushussu”
Astrological Region of Nabu: The Planet Mercury



**Statue of the
god Nabu**

Nammu – Some traditions place the goddess Nammu as the mother of An and Ki and many of the ancient gods and goddesses. She is also said to be the mother of Ea. With this she became known as the mother goddess. Her name is written with Babylonian symbols using the same characters used for the apsu. Given this it is assumed that she was originally the goddess of the underground fresh water ocean.

Symbol of Nammu: Unknown
Number of Nammu: Unknown
Animal of Nammu: Unknown
Astrological Region of Nammu: Unknown

Nergal or **Erra** or **Erragal** or **Engidudu** – The name Engidudu translates as “the Lord who prowls by night”. Nergal was the god of the underworld, He was the

great Hunter god, the god of war and the god of plagues. He is the door keeper of the underworld, allowing souls to enter. He is the husband of the goddess Ereshkigal, the prime and supreme goddess of the underworld.

To the Babylonians, Nergal was the evil opposite of Shamash. He is sometimes the son of Ea, which might explain his submission to him. When Marduk is negligent in his care of Babylon, it is Nergal that tries to destroy it. Nergal hates the noisy and overpopulated mortals and animals. He is identified with the planet Mars, and many speculate that he represents the deified Nimrod.

Symbol of Nergal: Unknown
Number of Nergal: Unknown
Animal of Nergal: Unknown
Astrological Region of Nergal: The Planet Mars

Ningal –

Ningal was the wife of Sin and the mother of the great Babylonian Sun god, Shamash. It is unclear as to just what her dominion covered. Did she share in responsibility with her husband, the god of the moon? Or did her powers cover those possessed by her son, Shamash? Their powers might well have been passed on to them by Ningal? Such questions cannot be answered; however, this goddess was worshipped in many Babylonian cities. Even the great city of Babylon had a temple dedicated to Ningal. Her powers and dominion were most probably important to the Babylonians, otherwise, they would not have gone to such trouble in attempts to please her.



Symbol of Ningal: Unknown
Number of Ningal: Unknown
Animal of Ningal: Unknown
Astrological Region of Ningal: Unknown

Ninmah or **Aruru** or **Nintu** or **Mami** – Ninmah was another of the many female goddesses of the Babylonians that was considered the mother goddess. Slightly different from the other traditions, she was the mother goddess of the womb. She was also considered the midwife of the gods. Tradition says that she was directed by the god Ea to create man by molding clay and the blood of the gods. She created seven men and seven women. These mortals were created to bear the workload of the gods. Ninmah was summoned by the god Ea at a future time to create Enkidu as a companion for Gilgamesh.

Symbol of Ninmah: Unknown
Number of Ninmah: Unknown
Animal of Ninmah: Unknown
Astrological Region of Ninmah: Unknown

Nisroc or **Nisroch** – Nisroc was an Assyrian idol most commonly associated with the Assyrian King Sennacherib. The Assyrian King was assassinated as he was worshipping this Idol. Most feel that the Nisroc was the god Ninurta, one of the sons of Enlil. The eagle headed human is commonly depicted defeating the lion and the bull, most probably symbolizing dominion over other gods. It is also believed that the Nisroc is the god of birds and flying things.



**The Idol
Nisroc**

Sarpanitu or **Erua** – Sarpanitu was best known as the wife of the great god Marduk. She was revered by women as the goddess of childbirth. She was also known as Erua. The word “eru” in Babylonian means “to be pregnant”.

Symbol of Sarpanitu: Unknown
Number of Sarpanitu: Unknown
Animal of Sarpanitu: Unknown
Astrological Region of Sarpanitu: Unknown

Shamash or **Samas** or **Utu** or **Babbar** – Shamash was the Babylonian sun god, or the divine personification of the pure light of the sun. He was the son of the moon god, Sin. Though certain traditions state that he was the son of the god An or Enlil. He was said to have been the twin brother of Ishtar. His wife was the goddess Serida, of whom we know little.

Shamash was considered by the Babylonians as the god of truth, justice, and right. He was the destroyer of evil. He often acted as an

advocate for mankind amongst the gods. He sought for mercy and fair treatment of mankind.

Symbol of Shamash:	A Solar Disk with a four pointed star inside with rays coming from between the points
Number of Shamash:	20
Animal of Shamash:	Fiery Mules, or an Eagle, or a Serpent
Astrological Region of Shamash:	The Sun

Sin or **Nanna-Suen** or **Nannar** – Sin was the Babylonian god of the moon. He was another key god in the Babylonian religion, most especially during the time of King Nabonibus. Sin's name was written using the Babylonian symbol for the number thirty, the same number that would be used to represent a lunar month. Sin was the son of the god Enlil and the goddess Ninlil. His conception took place as the god Enlil raped the then unmarried goddess Ninlil. In shame Enlil was banished from the presence of the other gods, but Ninlil, apparently having feelings for Enlil, followed him. The product of this story was the god Sin.

Symbol of Sin:	The Crescent
Number of Sin:	30
Animal of Sin:	Bull or Lion-Dragon
Astrological Region of Sin:	The Moon

Tammuz or **Dumuzi** – The god Dumuzi was the shepherd god. He became quite popular among the Hebrews living in Jerusalem prior to their destruction in 587 BC. The Hebrew name for Dumuzi was Tammuz. Dumuzi was trapped in the underworld as a result of a selfish act by his lover Ishtar when he was but a young man. It would seem that Ishtar ventured to the underworld. Once there, she found that she was not allowed to leave. She had no desire to stay and pleaded for a way out. She was told that there was one way, she must find a replacement for her. She offered up the name of her young lover/husband, Dumuzi. The demons retrieved Dumuzi and she was released. He currently guards two of the gates into the underworld; the gate of Anu and Gizzida. It was a custom among the Babylonian religion to mourn for Dumuzi. It was a form of worship with certain ceremonial procedures. The Babylonians even named a month for him.

Despite Dumuzi's fate of being sentenced to the underworld, he still remains the god of the shepherds. This was a somewhat important occupation in Babylon, but even more important in the rough terrain of Israel.

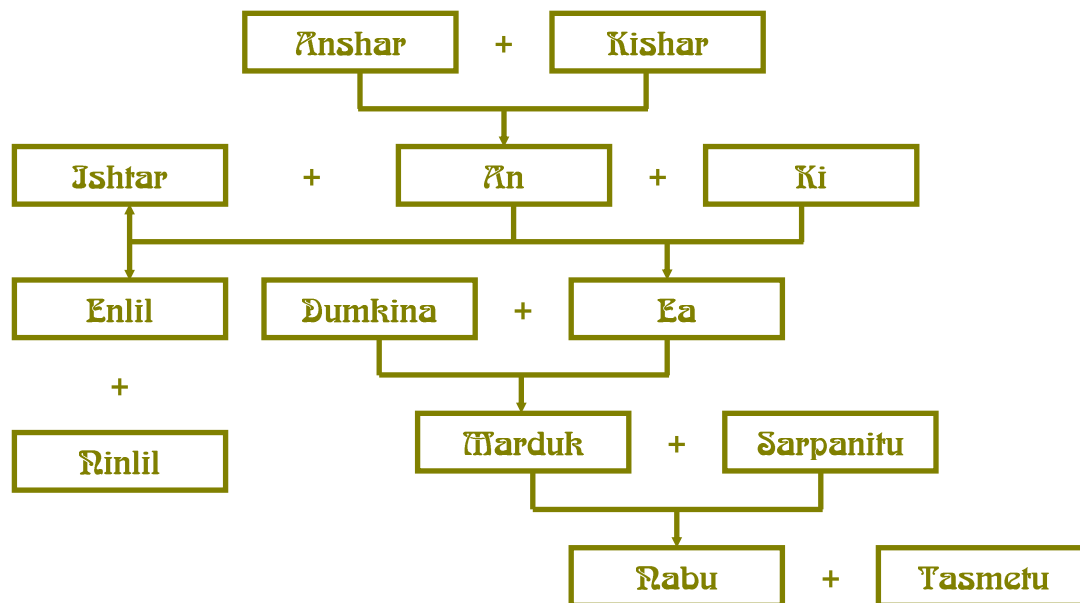
Symbol of Tammuz:	Unknown
Number of Tammuz:	Unknown

Animal of Tammuz: Unknown
Astrological Region of Tammuz: Unknown

Tiamat - The goddess Tiamat was the goddess of the salt waters of the earth. She was thought to have been married to Apsu, but it is difficult to say for sure. At one time Apsu was the god of the fresh waters. The union of this god and goddess was said to be consummated as the fresh water mingled with the salt waters. Tradition says that Tiamat's body actually held the salt waters of the earth.

Symbol of Tiamat: Unknown
Number of Tiamat: Unknown
Animal of Tiamat: Unknown
Astrological Region of Tiamat: Unknown

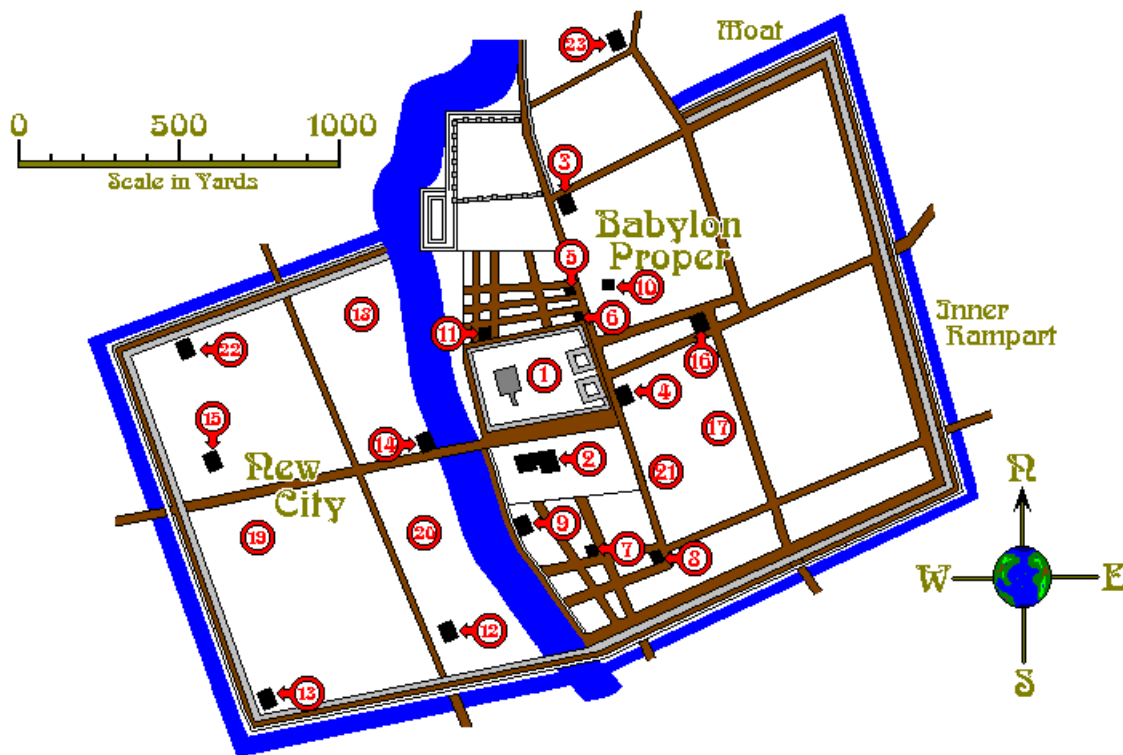
Rough Family Tree of a few of the Babylonian gods



With a god count in the neighborhood of 2,000 it isn't surprising to find out that Babylon and all of Mesopotamia was dotted with temples. **The Temples of Babylon** numbered fifty-five according to the ancient tablets that have been recovered and translated. Unfortunately, most of the temples of Babylon have lost their identity over the course of time. From the translated cuneiform texts that have been recovered, we have details from but a few temples. We won't attempt to cover all the known temples of Babylon in this work, but we will cover a few at this point.

Temples of Babylon

Locations of Selected Temples



Babylonian

1	The Ziggurat	8	The Temple of Ninurta	15	The Temple of Adad
2	The Temple of Marduk	9	The Temple of Ea	16	Temple in location;
3	The Temple of Ninmah	10	The Temple of Ishtar Agada	17	however, the names
4	Not Named (<i>bit res akiti</i>)	11	The Temple of Ashratum	21	are not known
5	The Temple of Nabu	12	The Temple of Shamash	22	The Temple of Belit Nina?
6	The Temple of Belet Eanna	13	The Mortuary Temple	23	The Temple of the New
7	The Temple of Ishara / Gula	14	The Temple of Belet Nina		Years Festival

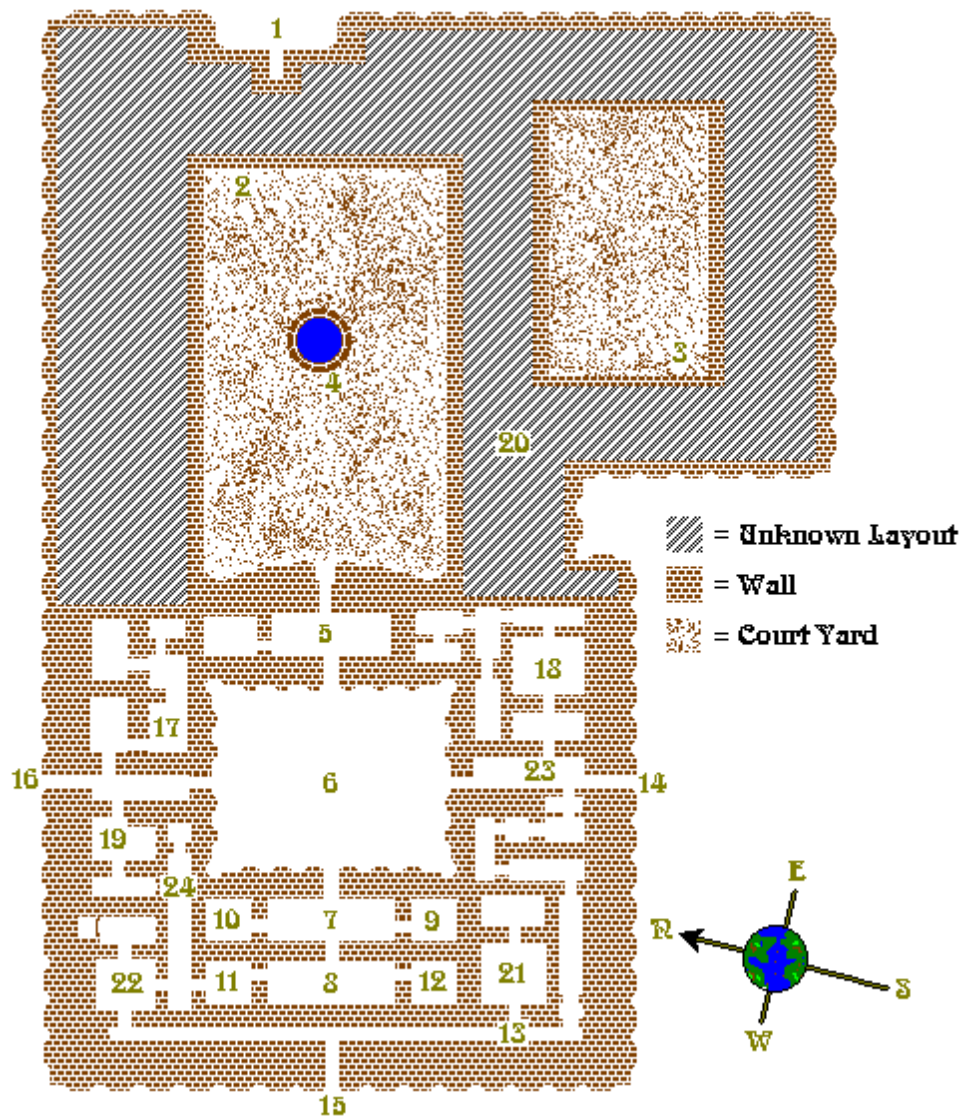
Babylonian Names

Babylonian

1	Etemenanki	8	e.PA.TU.til.la	15	e.nam.he
2	Esagila	9	e.kar.zagin.na	16	Temple in location;
3	e.mah	10	e.mas.da.ri	17	however, the names
4	bit res akiti	11	e.hi.li.kalam.ma	21	are not known
5	e.nig.gidri.kalam.ma.sum.ma	12	e.di.ku ₆ .kalam.ma		
6	e.ki.tus.kir.zal.la	13	e.nam.us		
7	e.sa.gar.tur.ra	14	e.hur.sag.an.ki.a		

The Temple of **Marduk** or **Esagila** as the Babylonians referred to it was probably the key most important place in Babylon. Its very name meant “**The Lofty House**”, signifying its importance. It was in this temple that the Statue of Marduk stood. Since Marduk was the city God of Babylon, and their very existence was due to him, Esagila was without a doubt the most revered place in the city.

The Layout of the Temple of Esagila



Legend

1	Entrance	7	Anti-Shrine	13	Long Corridor	19	Rooms Priest/Store
2	Main Courtyard	8	Statue of Marduk	14	South Entrance	20	Unknown
3	Courtyard	9	Service Room	15	West Entrance	21	Rooms Priest/Store
4	Well	10	Service Room	16	North Entrance	22	Rooms Priest/Store
5	Chapel Foyer	11	Service Room	17	Rooms Priest/Store	23	Corridor
6	Main Chapel	12	Service Room	18	Rooms Priest/Store	24	Corridor

The Esagila lied south of the great ziggurat in Babylon Proper. It is the Esagila that the great processional way or sacred way led. It also lied in very close proximity to the waterfront. It was one of the largest temples, and structures for that matter, in the entire city. Its dimensions were approximately 470 feet long by 345 feet wide, making it an obvious attraction to visitors and citizens alike.

Due to the fact that Esagila represented Babylon's divine power, conquering nations that came upon Babylon usually made it a point of ransacking it, taking the statue of Marduk and usually leaving the temple in ruin. This was done primarily as a show of power over the Babylonians and their god. Just a few examples of this are as follows:

- ☞ Between 1243 BC and 1207 BC the Assyrian King Tukulti-Ninurta I attacked Babylon, plundered Esagila and carried away the statue of Marduk (Babylon, by Joan Oates, page 94).
- ☞ In the year 1160 BC the Elamites invaded Babylon and took the statue of Marduk back to Elam (Peoples of the Past - Babylonians, by H.W.F. Saggs, page 121).
- ☞ In approximately 670 BC another Assyrian King by the name of Sennacherib invaded Babylon and carried off the statue of Marduk (Babylon, by Joan Oates, page 120-121).
- ☞ In approximately 480 BC the Persian King Xerxes captured Babylon after several months of siege and burned the Esagila to the ground and carried the statue of Marduk off (Babylon, by Joan Oates, page 138).

The Esagila, like most of the Babylonian temples, was made of crude unbaked mud bricks. The walls of such bricks were finished with either a thin coat of gypsum or a washing of lime. The exterior of the temple was free from extensive amounts of decoration or design. This kept with the Babylonian temple building traditions.

The Esagila was divided into basically three precincts. The main entrance lied to the east and has not been fully excavated (Excavations of the Esagila have been difficult since the temple lies some 21 meters beneath the current surface). Through the entrance, which was most likely entered after passing a stone altar (some theorize that the possible altar before the main entrance was plated with gold and rather large in size), that is if the Esagila followed tradition temple design, one would enter the entrance chamber. From the entrance chamber, there was a large open court, presumably with a well. Surrounding the open court was a number of rooms and passage of which the number and layout is unsure.

To the east of the large open court and through a passage to the south lied a smaller open court. It too was surrounded by rooms and passages of unknown use and layout. It could be speculated that the

smaller court to the south might have been a precinct dedicated to a god or goddess related to Marduk, like his wife for instance.

To the west of the large open court lied the actual precinct of Marduk. It was entered through a passageway on the west wall of the large open court and opened into an entrance chamber. To the south of the entrance chamber lied a room reserved for the temple guard.

The entrance chamber opened into an open courtyard with passages extending from the north, south, and west. This courtyard was used to assemble the visiting gods during the New Year Festival. Each of the four passageways shooting off of the courtyard was guarded by a pair of bronze serpents standing beside the openings. These serpents offered protection to the temple. Each passage eventually led to an exit/entrance to the precinct where elaborate altars stood.

To the west of the open courtyard lied the Main Shrine Room. Here sat the great statue of Marduk.

The Greek Historian Herodotus wrote, *“In the Babylonian temple there...is a great golden image of Zeus,”* Marduk, *“seated, and a great gold table set beside, and of gold, too, are the chair and its platform. As the Chaldeaens tell it, some eight hundred talents of gold were used in this. Outside the temple there is a golden altar and another great alter as well, on which full grown victims are sacrificed. (On the golden one there may sacrificed only sucklings.) On the bigger one, too, the Chaldaens burn a thousand talents’ weight of frankincense a year, when they celebrate the festival of this god. There was in that sanitary at that time a statue of solid gold, fifteen feet high”* (*The History – Herodotus, Translated by David Grene, page 116, Book 1, Section 183*).



The god Marduk

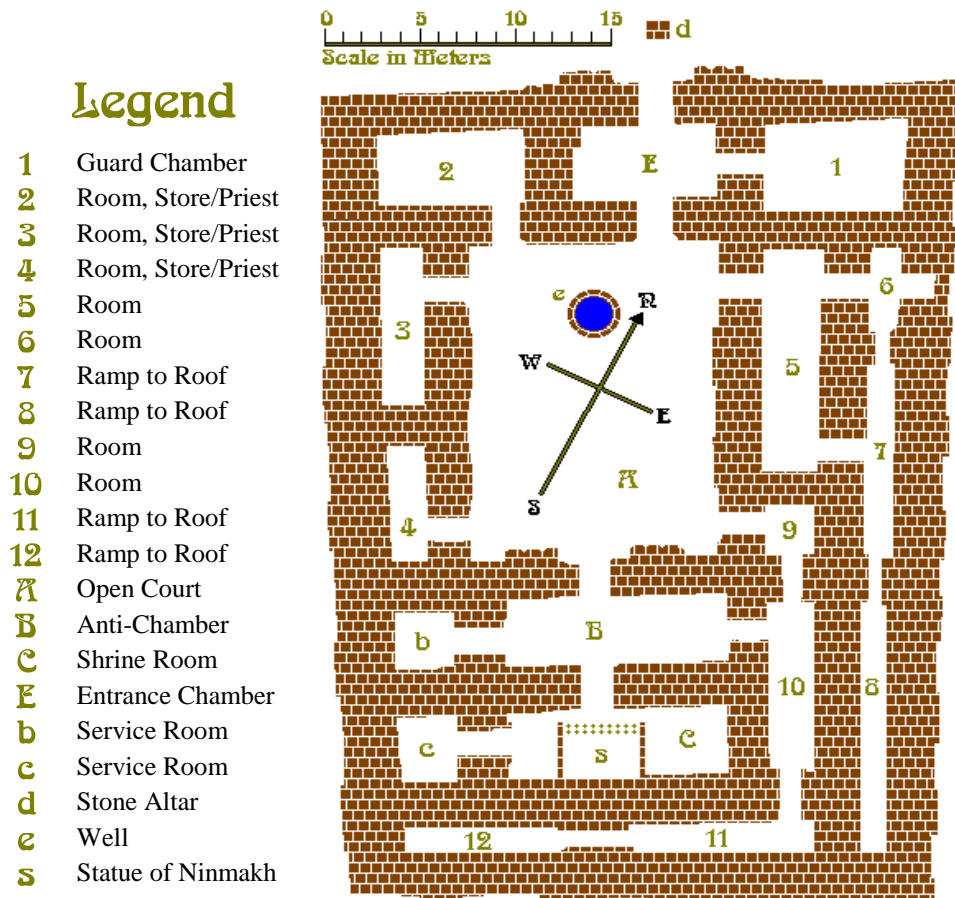
The Shrine room was, according to ancient Babylonian writings, made to look like the sun. This was done by coating the entire room in sheets of pure gold. The ceiling was made using the best cedar wood from Lebanon, a costly commodity. The ceiling was then also plated with gold. This gives some credibility to the statement made by Herodotus that the room housed some 800 talents or 60,480 pounds of gold.

As a side note, excavators have found a structure to the north of Esagila that they believe might be a temple or shrine built to the god Ea, Marduk’s father.

The Temple of Ninmah (Ninmakh) or E-Makh – The E-Makh was the first temple that a visitor saw after going through the Ishtar Gate into Babylon Proper. It was built of crude or unbaked mud bricks. The crude walls were then covered with a thin coat of plaster or as some would contend, a white washing with lime. This gave the structure a much more finished appearance. It is suspected that the temple structure was rather plain in appearance. There was little attempt to create elaborate finishings to the architecture. It is proposed that a small attempt was made by the Babylonians by using some black and white contrasting; however, the extent of this decoration was minimal at best.

Many are puzzled as to why the Temple of Ninmah was built of crude brick since it was rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar in a time when kiln baked brick and glossy colored enamel bricks were in high use for such structures such as Palaces, Gates, and Walls. The Babylonians were almost fanatic in their religion. Temples were rebuilt exactly as outlined by the gods hundreds of years before. It was unheard of to think that one could improve on the design of the gods.

The Layout of the Temple of Ninmah



The Temple was entered through large double doors at the northwest end of the structure. The temple could only be entered after passing by a stone altar standing before the entrance. One might imagine that an animal sacrifice was required before entrance to the temple, though the fact is the altar might have been used for little more than a place to offer a form of prayer.

The doorway of the temple was built with small enclosures that housed small statues. The small statues were idols of the temple god that served specific functions. There were idols of physical protection, idols of spiritual protection from demons, and other idols of importance to the temple god.

After passing through the large doors of the temple, one found oneself in the entrance chamber or temple foyer. To the northeast of the entrance chamber is a room that is thought to be a room reserved for the temple guard. From the entrance chamber, one could access the temple court which was open to the sky. In the court, a well offered water for possible rituals such as purification, washings, etc. The well might have symbolized the abzu or the great under world ocean worshipped by the Babylonians. Off of the court one could access rooms reserved for the dwelling of temple priest, store rooms, and even rooms that led to ramps that accessed the roof.

To the southeast of the open court, one could access the main shrine of the temple god, Ninmakh. In the main shrine room stood the statue of the god and represented the gods actual presence. It is theorized that there might have been access panels behind the statue leading into the room behind the statue for recital of ritual epics and voice overs for the god.

The Temple of Ishtar of Akkad – The

Temple of Ishtar was located in Babylon Proper, more precisely in the old city. It was close to the Temple of Marduk (Esagila) and the Etemenanki, and quite possibly close to them in importance. It lied just south of the Temple of Ninmah in the area referred to as the Merks. Ishtar was a predominate goddess among the Babylonians, and quite important to the city of Babylon. Given this, the Temple of Ishtar was of high importance to the Babylonians.

In keeping to traditional Babylonian standards, the Temple of Ishtar was built using crude unbaked mud bricks finished by a thin coat of

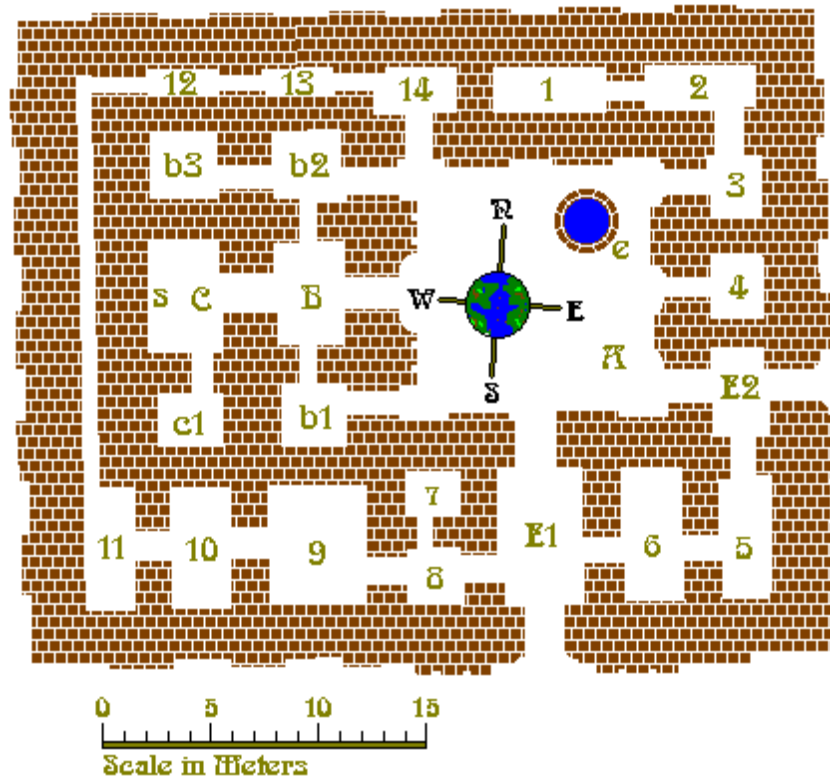
The Present Day Ruins of the



Temple of Ishtar of Akkad

gypsum or white washed with lime. The exterior, and interior walls for that fact, were practically bear from decoration.

The Layout of the Temple of Ishtar of Akkad



Legend	
1-4:	Priest's Quarters of Storage
5-7:	Porters' Room
8:	Entrance Chamber to Smaller Court
9:	Smaller Court
b1-3:	Service Rooms of the Temple
E1-2:	Entrance Chambers or Vestibules of the Temple
s:	Statue of the goddess Ishtar
10-14:	Chambers of uncertain use, probably used as store rooms giving access to the narrow passage which possible ramped to the roof
A:	The Open Court
B:	Ante-chamber to the Shrine
C:	Shrine
c1:	Service Room for the Shrine

The Temple of Ishtar not only kept to Babylonian tradition in building style, but in layout also. Though archeological findings don't show exterior altars, there was most probably a stone altar before both of the two entrances to the temple. The entrances led to entrance chambers that in turn led to a large open court equipped with a well for washings and other ritual acts.

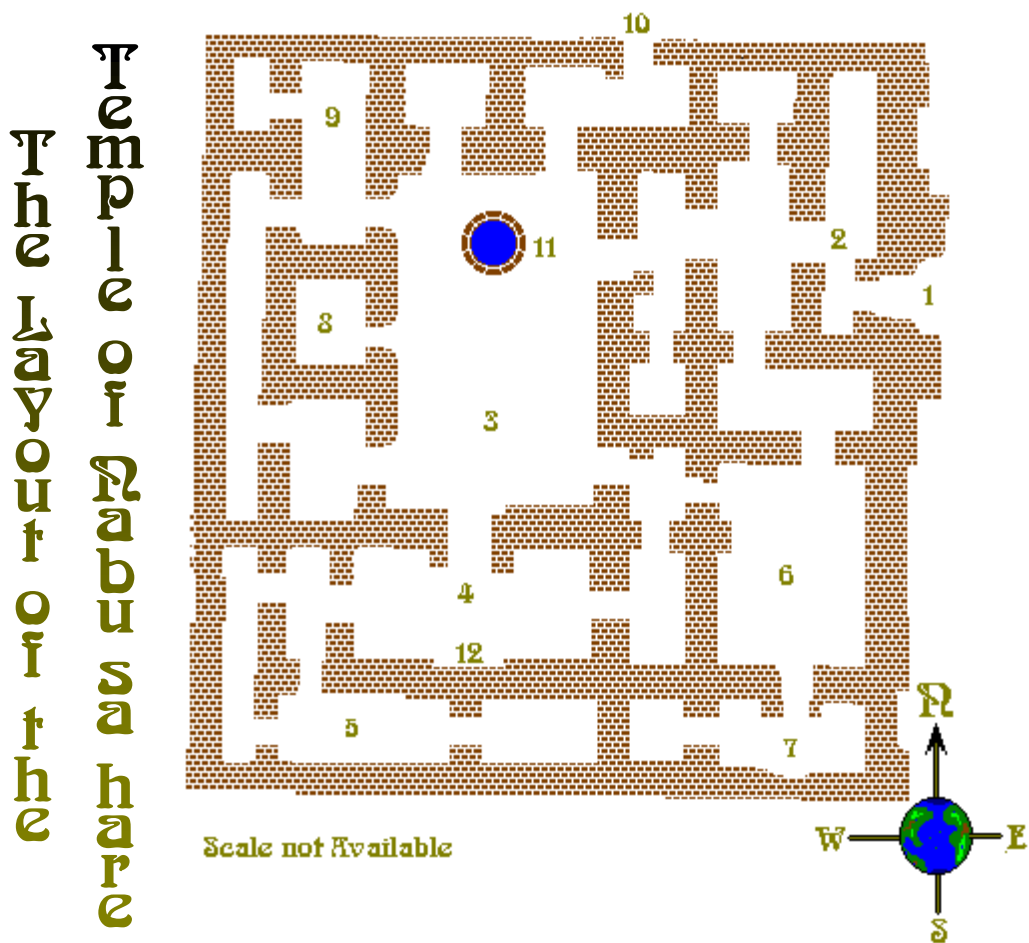
The Temple of Ishtar was outfitted with a shrine room where the statue of the goddess Ishtar stood and was worshipped. The temple had many rooms for housing the priests of the temple and supplies. One added

feature to the temple was a smaller secondary court. This might be an indication as to the importance of the temple in Babylonian religion status.

The Temple of Nabu sa hare – The Temple of Nabu is one of the more recent temples excavated in Babylon. Though much of the temple’s rooms and areas have not been assigned uses, much of it appears to follow traditional Babylonian temple architecture.

The Temple of Nabu sa hare lied in Babylon Proper in the old city. The temple lied between the Royal Palace and the great Ziggurat on the right side of the Processional Way as one entered the city through the Ishtar Gate.

Being as Nabu was the son of Marduk, his status among the Babylonians was high to say the least. Given the temple god, the location of the temple, and Nabu’s role in the New Year Festival, this temple was most likely a predominate temple among the people.



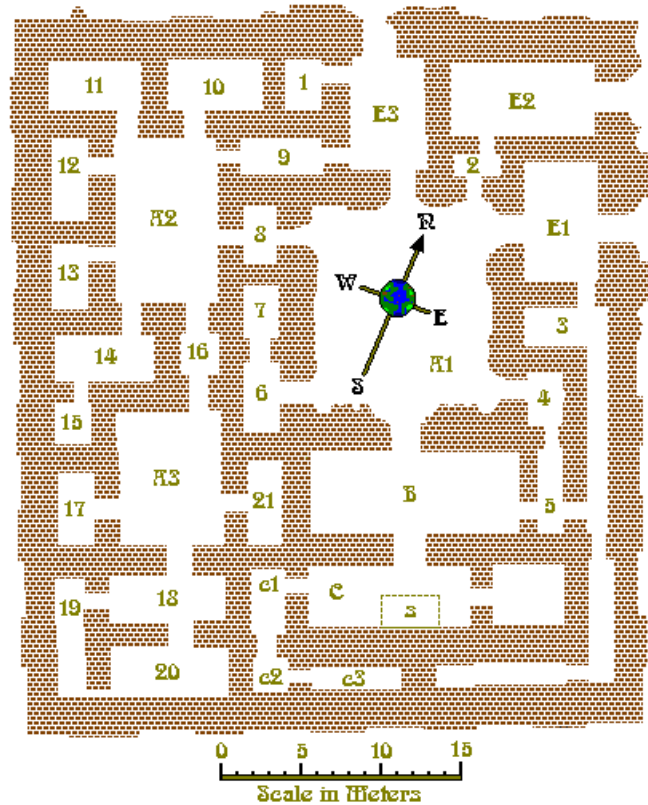
Legend

1	Main Entrance	5	Service Rooms	9	Service Rooms
2	Entrance Chamber	6	Smaller Open Court	10	Secondary Entrance
3	Main Open Chamber	7	Secondary Shrine	11	Well
4	Main Shrine Room	8	Secondary Shrine	12	Statue of Nabu

The Temple of Gula or Temple “Z” – The temple of Gula was referred to for quite sometime as the temple of “Z” because its identity was unknown. It has been determined that the temple was dedicated to the healing goddess “Gula”.

In keeping in line with standard temple building code, the Temple of Gula was constructed using crude bricks that were white washed after construction. It had two entrances, both of which opened into an entrance chamber with a room for a temple guard just off to the side. The entrance chambers led to a large open court, which in turn led to the shrine room. The west side of the temple appears to have been reserved for temple workers, priest quarters, storage, and other auxiliary uses.

The Layout of the Temple of Gula



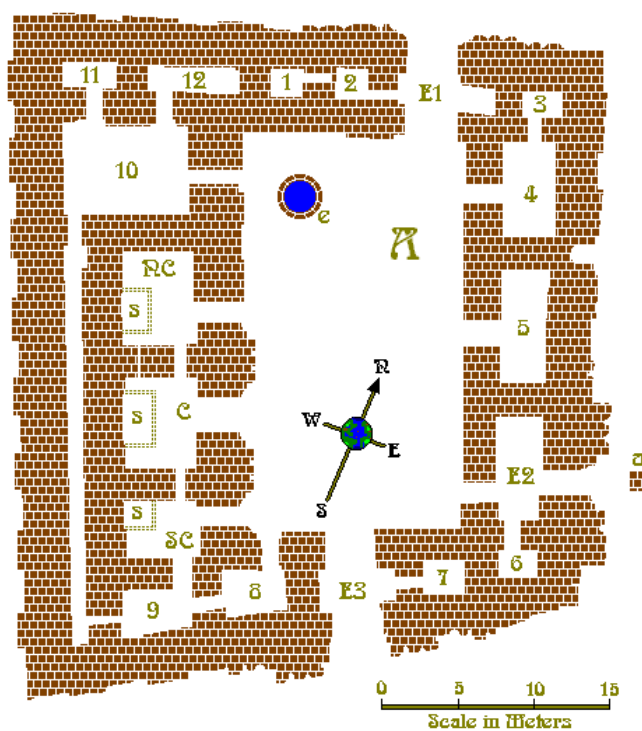
Temple

1	Temple Guard Room	12	Priest Quarters	A1	Main Courtyard
2	Temple Guard Room	13	Priest Quarters	A2	Secondary Courtyard
3	Temple Guard Room	14	Priest Quarters	A3	Secondary Courtyard
4	Service Room	15	Priest Quarters	E1	Entrance Chamber
5	Service Room	16	Service Room	E2	Entrance Chamber
6	Priest/Store Room	17	Priest Quarters	E3	Entrance Chamber
7	Priest/Store Room	18	Priest Quarters	C	Shrine Room
8	Entrance to Living	19	Priest Quarters	S	Statue of Gula
9	Quarter Precinct	20	Priest Quarters	c1	Service Rooms
10	Priest Quarters	21	Priest Quarters	c2	Service Rooms
11	Priest Quarters	B	Anti Shrine	c3	Service Rooms

The Temple of Ninib or Ninurta – The Temple of Ninib was located in the southern end of Babylon Proper within the old city. It could be found by following the processional way past the Ishtar Gate into Babylon Proper. One would continue past the Royal Palace, the Ziggurat, and the intersection just prior to the Esagila where the Processional Way turns left. One would continue straight until just prior to the inner rampart, on the right hand side, the Temple of Ninib stood.

The Temple of Ninib or Ninurta was dedicated to the god after which it was named. Ninurta was the spouse of the healing goddess Gula, which temple was practically next door. Ninurta was also a god of healing, though some traditions indicate that he was the god of war or the god of farmers. His temple was dedicated solely to him; however, it contained two secondary shrine possibly connected to related deity, such as his sons.

The Layout of the Temple of Ninib or Ninurta



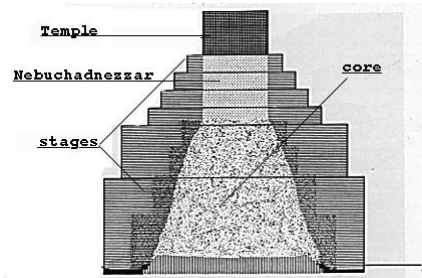
Legend

1	Service/Guard Room	5	Priest/ Store Room	9	Service Room
2	Temple Guard Room	6	Service/Guard Room	10	Small open courtyard
3	Priest/Store Room	7	Service/Guard Room	11	Priest/ Store Room
4	Priest/ Store Room	8	Service Room	12	Priest/ Store Room
RC	Secondary Shrine	N	Main Open Court	E3	Entrance Chamber
C	Shrine of Ninib	E1	Entrance Chamber	d	Altar
SC	Secondary Shrine	E2	Entrance Chamber	s	Statues of the gods

The temple was quite typical when compared with other Babylonian temples. The walls were made of crude unbaked mud bricks covered with a thin layer of gypsum or white washed with lime to give them a more finished white appearance. The temple consisted of a courtyard, and in this case a main courtyard and a smaller secondary courtyard. There was an altar before the entrance and a well in the courtyard. The list of similarities goes on and on.

The Etemenanki & The Ziggurat - The great

Ziggurat of Babylon was probably the first visual site of splendor that caught ones eyes as one approached the magnificent city from a distance. A ziggurat is often considered a pyramid type structure built by the cultures of the Near East as temples



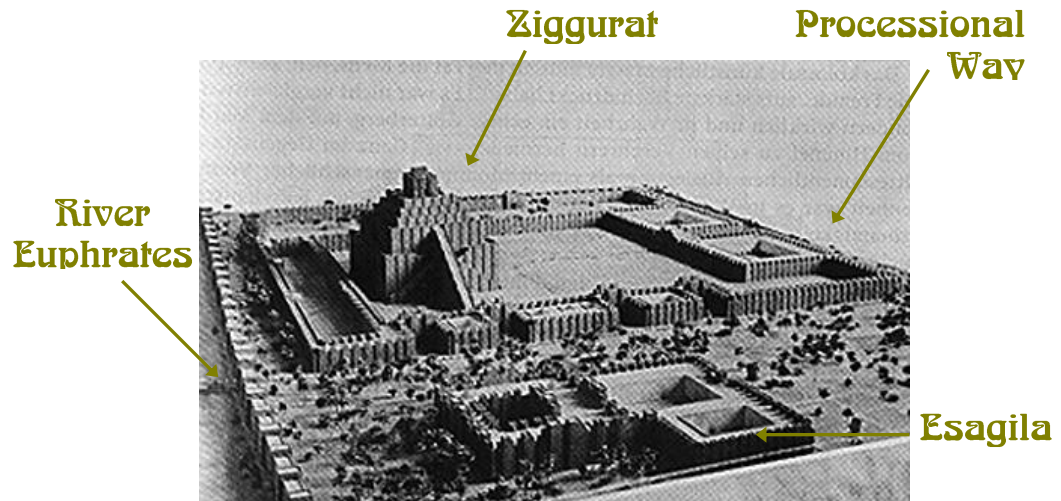
dedicated to their gods. They differ in many ways from the pyramids of Egypt once one gets pasts their pyramid shaped appearance. One of such differences was the fact that the Babylonian Pyramids were solid, except for a couple of drainage ports, and contained no rooms or passages inside. The Ziggurat of Babylon was called the “**Etemenanki**” which can be translated to mean, “**The building which is the foundation of Heaven and Earth**”.



Though the Etemenanki was the name for the Babylonian Ziggurat during the Neo-Babylonian period, it hadn't always been called by that name. It is speculated that the Etemenanki was none other than the famous Tower of Babel. The Tower of Babel is estimated to have been built in the year 2,350 BC and to have been built on the same foundation as Babylon's Etemenanki. Moses records the event surrounding the Tower of Babel and he writes, "...they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name..." (Genesis 11:1-9). Only a wicked and perverse people would rebuild the Tower of Babel. The tower had been rebuilt several times since the confounding of the languages by the Babylonians. As early as 600 years after the Biblical accounting, history states that King Hammurabi rebuilt the Tower of Babel to the sun god, Shamash.



The Tower of Babel



In the Neo-Babylonian period, the ziggurat lied more or less in the center of Babylon Proper. It lied in the midst of a spacious courtyard, and a rectangular precinct was built in its honor. To the north was the Royal Palace and the Ishtar Gate. To the East was the Processional Way and the Temple of Ishtar. To the West was the great River Euphrates, and to the South was the Temple of Marduk called Esagila.

Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar, claimed that he received divine inspiration in the 620's BC from Marduk, the chief god of Babylon, to not only overthrow the Assyrians but to rebuild the ziggurat which at that time was in a state of almost ruin. Marduk instructed Nabopolassar to

rebuild the main foundation of the ziggurat which to the Babylonians symbolized the “heart of the nether-world”. Marduk went further to instruct him that a temple was to be placed at the top of the ziggurat that was to equal the heavens, and went on to further lay out the details on height and design.

Nabopolassar started the refurbishing of the ziggurat with a grand ceremonial groundbreaking in which Nebuchadnezzar and his brother, both young in age, participated. After the ceremony, Nabopolassar proceeded with the project by first rebuilding the river wall that held off the near by Euphrates flood waters that often over ran the banks and caused havoc on the ziggurat. The great river Euphrates lied an approximated 427 feet from the ziggurat.

The next step in the ziggurats refurbishing was to build both an outer and inner retaining wall that would support the new foundation. It is suggested by archeologist and historians alike that Nabopolassar built a foundation that elevated the base of the ziggurat between 3.0 to 3.5 meters above water level.

We don't know just how far Nabopolassar got in his refurbishing efforts; however, we do know that he didn't finish the refurbishing in his life time. His son Nebuchadnezzar, who succeeded him on the throne, finished the ziggurat. Historians record that Nebuchadnezzar took over the project and revisited the design plans. He added on to the new foundation that his father had been in the process of building by elevating

the height from the 3.0 to 3.5 meters to a new height of 4.8 meters above water level. It is generally agreed that at least most of the preparations of the refurbishing had been made by Nabopolassar. This is primarily due to the fact that Nebuchadnezzar used building blocks that were 33cm by 33cm square usually having his inscription on them, the remaining ziggurat ruins show that a different size bricks were used, without inscription. Of course one should keep in mind that there is very little left of the ziggurat to serve as supporting evidence.

In the days of Nabopolassar, it is believed that skilled Babylonian workers were responsible for the refurbishing; however, by the time



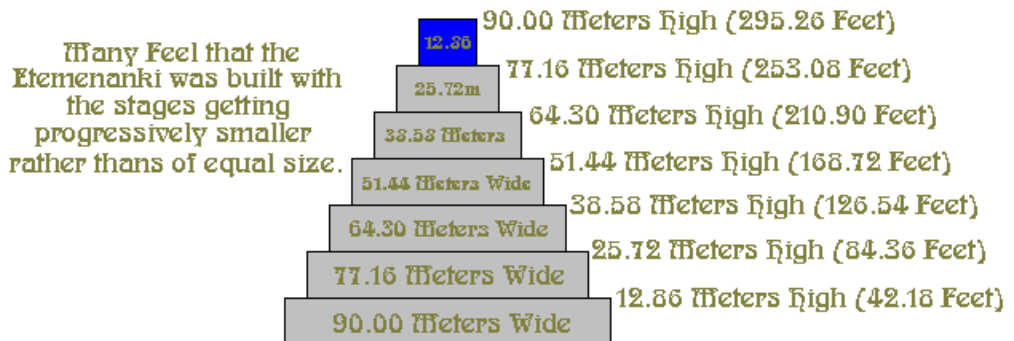
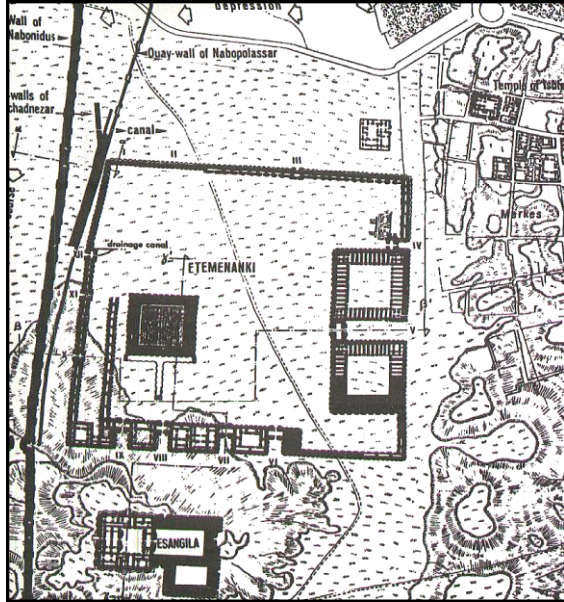
Present Day Remains of the Ziggurat in Babylon. All that is left is the remains of lower level Brickwork

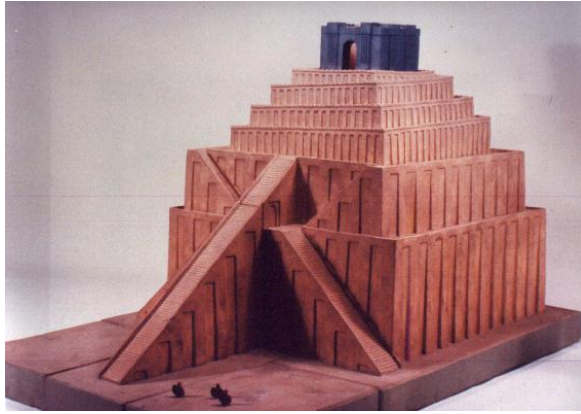
Nebuchadnezzar was King of Babylonia it would appear that slave labor was used in large number, some of which might have been Hebrew.

The building of the great Etemenanki was a very religious event. From its beginning to end it was linked with religious ceremonies that served to please Marduk. Regular pagan ceremonies were conducted around the ziggurat. Some of these ceremonies dealt with asipu-exorcists.

The actual layout and appearance of the ziggurat is still somewhat vague. The best factual source of the ziggurat's design is of course the ruins themselves. Unfortunately, the Persian King Xerxes breached the

river wall in attempts to destroy the temple and the city, and Alexander carried away most of the brick that made the ziggurat structure for his own uses. The next best source comes from a cuneiform text that modern day historians have named the "Esagila Tablet". In this tablet, we learn the dimensions of the ziggurat. The tablet says that the base was to be square and that the height of the ziggurat was to equal the base. It calls out the dimension in gar units, recording that the ziggurat was to be 15 gar wide, 15 gar deep, and 15 gar tall. The conversion for 1 gar equals 6 meters, so the ziggurat was to be 90 meters wide, 90 meters deep, and 90 meters tall. Below is a diagram showing the Ziggurat of Babylon and dimensions gained from the Esagila tablet.



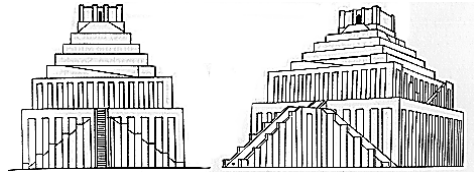


Reconstruction of the Ziggurat in Babylon

The Esagila tablet also records that the temple was to be built in seven levels, including what was to be a splendid temple that was to crown the top of the ziggurat. This top room was supposed to be the dwelling place of Marduk. The temple was to be built from glazed burned brick that matched the color of heaven. The walls of the top room were

built of gypsum and the roof was made from cedar, and for splendor the roof and walls were lined with gold, and detailed with alabaster, and precious stones. Within the top room, was an altar, footstool, and a statue of Marduk all made from gold (the presence of a statue or idol is questionable). Archeologists estimate that the room once contained 18.5 tons of gold (37,000 pounds).

The Esagila tablet went further to say that there was triple access to the ziggurat via stairways on the south side. It also says that the roof of the temple was accessible. Most speculate that it was accessible via a ladder in the upper temple chamber and that access to the roof was used for astronomical observation which was a key element in Babylonian religious practices.



The Greek historian Herodotus, who never professed to see Babylon in person, wrote of the Ziggurat based on descriptions given to him from actual citizens of Babylon. He writes, *“In midst of the temple square there was built a solid tower, in length and breadth one stade, and on this tower was mounted another, and another still on top of that – eight of them in all. The ascent to these has been constructed circularly, on the outside, around all of the towers. Halfway up the ascent there is a halting place and seats to rest on, where the climbers sit and rest. In the last tower there is a great temple, and in the temple there stands a great bed, well covered, and by it is set a golden table. But there is no image whatever in the temple, neither does any human being spend the night there, save one woman only, of the natives of the place, whom the god has chosen out of all, as declare the Chaldaean priests of this god.*

These same Chaldaeans say – though I myself do not believe their story – that the god is wont to come to this temple and rest on this couch, as also the Egyptian Thebes, according to the account of the Egyptians.

For there, too, in that temple of Zeus of Thebes, a woman sleeps, and both of these women (she in Thebes and she in Babylon) have no intercourse with men” (The History – Herodotus, Translated by David Grene, page 115-116 ,Book 1, Section 181-182).

Based on Herodotus’ writing one could assume that the top chamber of the Ziggurat was the home of the High Priestess. This same High Priestess is part of the New Year Festival, acting as Ishtar while the King consorts with her playing the part of Marduk.

The Etemenanki was an architectural wonder. It was designed with drainage channels, fabulous height, and extreme beauty. In fact, there are many who believe that the ziggurat was indeed the famed “Hanging Garden”. Those that believe this propose that there was never such an entity as an actual hanging garden, but rather the ziggurat was so magnificently designed and built as to have trees and foliage growing on the various levels or terraces that it started the notion of the grand “Hanging Gardens of Babylon”. Though this theory is improbable, it is not impossible. One strong argument against this theory is the Babylonian belief that the temple designs were from the gods and could not, and should not be improved upon.

Like the destroyed Tower of Babel, the Ziggurat of Babylon lies in a state like unto the one the true and living God pronounced upon it some 4,300 years ago. From an aerial view the outline of the ziggurat can be seen today; however, there is essentially nothing left of the ziggurat but wasted rubble and a rough outline.

Aerial View of the Etemenanki



The **Culture of Babylon** is still a very vague and obscure topic. There are obviously no surviving Babylonians that can tell us the way it was, nor are there clear surviving documents that truly address the topic. We are left with the speculative task of taking various ancient documents and traditions and piecing together a theoretical outline of what the Babylonian culture truly consisted of. The following is but a brief summary of things as they may have existed within the Babylonian lifestyle.

Astronomy – The Babylonians had a huge fascination with the stars and celestial sphere. Their fascination with the skies was more than just scientific, it was religious. This is evident in the fact that most of their temples and places of worship were built with access to the roof for astronomical purposes. They believed that the stars and bodies of the sky were intimately connected with the gods. They studied the movements of the heavens and even developed a system for predicting the future by reading those movements. This system later developed into the art of astrology and has developed into modern day horoscopes.

Astronomy was also a basis for the great advances in Babylonian math and science since both were crucial to the study of the stars. Some of the first devices for gazing at the stars and measuring their movements are reported to have come from the Babylonians.

Babylonian astronomers were responsible for the development of our system of measuring days, months, and years. The Babylonian astronomers established a system of time span based on the full moon, which we refer to as a lunar month. This defined each month as 29 to 30 days in length. The Babylonian math system was based on 6's rather than 10's. Hence, they took a day and divided it into twelve double hours. Each hour was based on sixty double minutes. All time measurement was measured in units of six rather than using a system of ten's which makes much more sense to us of a modern society. The calendar and time system was not without flaws in its infancy state; however, it was the basis for our modern measurements (Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, pages 362-366).

Commerce/Trade – The economy of Babylonia was far from dynamic; however, it did have sufficient agricultural resources to have some leverage in trade. The fertile valley, obtained through ingenious irrigation, grew crops superior to any neighboring region. The southern part of Babylonia was rich in palm dates while there was additionally grazing land here and there for raising flocks such as sheep, and goat. Consequently, wool became a resource.

The Babylonians lacked such resources as stone, metal, timber, drystuff and other vital commodities. This led the Babylonians to develop an extensive system of trade from very early on. The occupation of Trader was a common and crucial profession. Traders utilized trade routes that were often developed and maintained by the government, or the great river Euphrates which many cities in Mesopotamia were built around for just that purpose. Given the importance of trade and trade routes to the Empire, the king often built outposts and watchtowers along the trade routes to protect the lifeline.

Throughout history, when resources could not be traded for, which were vital to the Babylonian society, the King often initiated military invasion of a country or people in effort to procure such resources. This was fairly common throughout the region and time period.

Ancient texts show an amazingly complex economical system in Babylonia. There are evidences of such items as receipts for transactions, official loans, contracts, leases, transfers, inventories, and ledgers. There were deeds to land holdings and buildings. There were even official documents showing the ownership of slaves and businesses.

Court System – Another indication of the advances in Babylonian society was the existence of a judicial and court system. During the Neo-Babylonian era, the royal palace was designed with a large court just off of the throne room that served as the supreme court of the land.

Nebuchadnezzar himself could sit upon his throne and view the courtroom. It is still debatable as to how often cases actually came before the King and how many were resolved by the Kings appointed court officials. It is pretty well accepted that the Babylonians of the last era had developed a legal system of judges, lawyers, and auxiliary personnel to uphold the laws of the land. Much of the Southern Citadel or Royal Palace was dedicated to judicial matters.

The Babylonians were surrounded with laws, officials, and politics; however, the fairness and uprightness of the system is sometimes questioned. It was a land of riches, and all could be bought. Just how good their judicial system worked we might never know. We do know that great attempts were taken to make people honest. One example is recited by Ancient Mesopotamian scholar, A. Leo Oppenheim as he wrote,

“In order to protect the wording of a legal document against fraudulent alterations, two practices are attested. In Babylonia, until the middle of the second millennium, and in Assyria for almost the entire period under discussion, the inscribed document was placed in a thin clay envelope (a “case”) on which its content was repeated verbatim; the wording of the case could be easily checked against that of the tablet when the case was removed by the judge. In the Neo-Babylonian period, protection was achieved by making a copy of the original so that each party was provided with a document, and this fact had to be duly mentioned in the document” (Ancient Mesopotamia – Portrait of a Dead Civilization, A. Leo Oppenheim, page 282).

The Babylonian system of law and justice was one of the first attempts at creating a system of laws and civil order resembling those of modern democratic countries; however, the system had a long way to go. The king, royal diviners, and high political figures often stepped in and circumvented laws based on reasons other than justice and mercy.

Dance –

Babylonian Dance is mentioned in this work for the simple fact that the effects of the Babylonian custom have carried through nearly three thousand years.

In ancient Babylonia, and Babylon for that matter, it was customary for young virgins who were betrothed to be married to enter the temple of Ishtar and pay tribute to the fertility goddess. They would enter the temple and wait for a stranger to cast a bit of silver to them. The virgin would accept the silver, as it was forbidden to reject any offer, and retire to another room in the temple with the stranger. The two would engage in intercourse as a form of tribute to the goddess. The custom existed long before Nebuchadnezzar II Babylonia, and over time another custom had been added. The virgins would perform a sensual dance in the court of the goddess' temple as she awaited an offer. The dance was performed with the stomach of the woman exposed, since the stomach of the woman symbolized her fertility. The dance consisted of a series of pelvic gyrations, systematic flexes of the stomach muscles, and movements of the breasts. The feet were typically barefoot and never raised above the knees. The foot movement was not the focal point of the dance. Neither was head movement. The focus of the dance was the parts of the female body that were connected with fertility.



Picture of a Modern Day
"Belly Dancer"

The dance was later performed in Babylonia, probably during the time of the Neo-Babylonian era, for occasions other than temple worship. Such occasions were probably for the King, special events, dignitaries, and other noteworthy events. The dance soon traveled outside of Babylonia to Europe, and Asia. It became known as the "Belly Dance". Other cultures have influenced the dance by adding new elements, such as cymbals; however, the dance is still distinctive as the ancient dance of a fertility cult. The dance still requires the observer to toss coins to the dancer reminiscent of the ancient Babylonian temple.

Dress –

The dress of the Babylonians is probably quite similar to what we would picture mentally when we think of an Arabian. The Greek Historian wrote, *"For clothes, the people wear a linen tunic reaching to their feet and, over that, another one of wool, and they wrap themselves up in a small white cloak; and they wear shoes of their country, very like Boeotian sandals. They let their hair grow long, and they wear a kind of*

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peaked cap or turban. They saturate their whole body with myrrer. Each of them has his own seal and a carved staff. On the staff is the image of an apple, rose or lily or of an eagle or something else. It is customary with them never to have a staff without some device" (*The History – Herodotus, Translated by David Grene, page 122, Book I section 195*). Herodotus' description should be given some merit since even is he had never visited Babylonia, it is highly probable that he had seen with his own eyes visiting Babylonians in his home country. Even so, the Babylonian that Herodotus described appears to be a man of wealth, else why would he require his own seal?

Like any society, the clothing was probably diverse depending on time, location, gender, and social status. Even so, the description by Herodotus is probably a good guideline. The poorer classes of Babylonians were most probably clothed in similar fashion with turban and tunic; however, they were probably much plainer utilizing cheaper materials and plain walking sticks if any walking stick at all. One should also keep in mind that the Babylonian attire was very functional. The cloak and turban were designed for a desert like climate. Similarly, the attire of the Babylonians would change slightly according to occupation.

Not much is mentioned as to the attire of Babylonian women. Given the social status of women in Babylonia that is not too surprising; however, we do know based on similar traditions in nearby Medes or Persia that women of the upper class were adorned in fine woven apparel, sometimes including expensive silks for the pleasure of the man of the house. Women were often attired with veils and were required to veil their faces in public and around visitors in the home. The middle and lower classes probably imitated this dress code as



A Pendant from a Piece of Babylonian Jewelry



Picture of a typical Persian Woman's Attire

best as their means would allow. The Babylonian women were, like women of our time, very fond of jewelry such as necklaces, earrings, amulets, and bracelets. Their jewelry was typically religious in nature. They would wear jewelry that signified a god or goddess that was important to them at that time. For example, an ailing woman might wear a necklace with a dog on it, hoping that the goddess Gula might heal her. Another woman who was in hopes of conceiving and bearing a child might wear jewelry that would appeal to the

goddess of fertility.

Etiquette – When painting a mental picture of etiquette, manners, and pomp, the most common picture would probably be that of the English; however, given the overall baseness of the era, the Babylonians probably would have given the modern day English a run for their money.

The Babylonians followed a code of tradition that required a certain protocol when greeting or parting from a person or company. It usually consisted of bowing and paying tribute to those in ones company. They also followed many customs in their relationship with others primarily due to the religious beliefs that they embraced.



Typical Near Eastern Salutations

Family Relations – Interestingly, the family was not the base unit in Babylonia. Though individuals carried family names and lived in family units, the most important unit was the clan or tribe of which one was a part of. The clan acted as one large family. Obviously, the family unit carried importance with the individual, but the clan was ones identity. Families were rather small and it is somewhat unclear as to the extent of family relationships. We have bits and pieces of information regarding the Babylonian family. Unfortunately, the information we have is not adequate enough to help us truly understand the unit. The information on the family tends to come in small blurbs that often seem odd and incomplete when trying to form the mental image of the typical Babylonian family. One example of this is as follows;

“And whenever a man of Babylon has lain with his own wife, he sits about a burnt offering of incense, and the woman on the other side sits too, and as dawn comes they both of them wash themselves. For they will touch no vessel until they wash. This is the same among the Arabians” (The History – Herodotus, Translated by David Grene, page 124, Book 1 section 198).

Though such information is highly valuable, it leaves much of the picture of actual family relations unknown.

Foods – The Babylonians eat but two meals per day. One meal in the morning and another in the evening after the work of the day was done. The typical meal consisted of bread (unleavened), a home brewed style beer, and a

main dish consisting of dishes made from items like dates, beans (lentils, millets...), milk product like yogurt or cheese, pomegranates, apples, pears, grains (barley, wheat...) or meat (fish, lamb, beef...). Except for the well to do, meat was not a common dish because of the high cost of the commodity. Like wise, honey was but a food for the rich. Honey was not produced domestically yet. The only available honey was from wild beehives and was extremely expensive. Milk products were consumed, but milk itself was rarely consumed since without methods of refrigeration it could not be kept without spoiling.

Cooking was done over fire and employed spices and seasoning that gave life to the food. The olive plant was used much for its oils. Rice had not yet been introduced to the region during the Neo-Babylonian period; however, substitute dishes were made from grains and beans.

Vegetables were also a staple of Babylonian diet. Onions, lettuce and cabbage were among popular vegetables used for cooking and eating.

In addition to food and beer, the Babylonians were also connoisseurs of wine. They produced wine from red and white grapes as well as pomegranates and dates. They enjoyed their own wines as well as those that were imported through trade.

Government – The structure of Babylonian government is quite interesting. It was setup as a sovereign nation with a King who apparently reigned as a dictator whose word was law. For the most part this was not too far from the truth, though there was much more to the government structure than meets the eye. The Babylonian society, possibly learning over time, created a system of government that essentially kept check on their King. The King had the power to lead, direct and guide the country, but at the same time if the citizens of the country felt that the King's direction was inappropriate they had power to reprove the King. This was done by the formation of a high council.

Harems – Yes, the ancient myth of Arabian harems is true. It existed as far outside of Arabia as Babylonia and Persia. A harem is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as: “**1.** A house or a section of a house reserved for women members of a Moslem household. **2.** The wives, concubines, female relatives, and servants occupying such a place. **3.** A group of women sexual partners for one man. From the Persian haram meaning sacred, or forbidden place.”

Harems appear to be reserved for the wealthy and royalty. Common working class men did not typically have harems. The King's harem is probably the most interesting example of Babylonian harems. Oppenheim wrote,

“As for the King and his family, one should note first that the term “queen” was only applied to goddesses

and those women – in fact, only the queens of the Arabs - who served as rulers. The chief wife (called with differential circumlocution “she-of-the-palace”) and the royal concubines lived, at least at the Assyrian court, in a harem guarded by eunuchs. Their way of living was carefully regulated by royal edicts” (Ancient Mesopotamia, A. Leo Oppenheim, page 104).

It is thought that King Nebuchadnezzar himself had at least five rooms in the Royal Palace reserved for his harem. We do not; however, read of any accountings of Nebuchadnezzars wife or wives. This is in line with the culture of the time. Women, whether married to a man with just one wife or part of a large harem, were not highly valued by the culture. Wives and harems were important to men, but women were far from their equals.

Language – Organized, as well as written, language is one of the essential elements of an advancing society. Long before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonians developed what is considered the worlds first written language. Due to this fact, and several other points, Babylonia or Mesopotamia is considered the cradle of civilization. The birth of a civilization that writes and records history and knowledge, the birth of modern man.



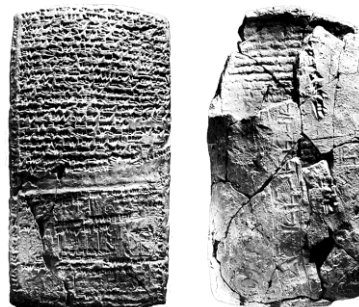
Small Cuneiform Tablet. Hand Size



Cuneiform Tablet about 3” x 5” in size

The language of the Babylonians is known as Akkadian; however, their script is called “Cuneiform”. This script is a cross between letters and hieroglyphics. Many believed that the language started out as a form of hieroglyphics but evolved into symbols that were more efficient to draw and write. The cuneiform letters appear as a series of wedges organized into shapes. This is undoubtedly why they are called cuneiform, the Latin word for “wedge-shaped”.

The Babylonians wrote their cuneiform histories and legacies on small to large clay tables. The tablets were prepared, and while still wet the author would engrave his/her work. After he/she was done, the tablet was allowed to dry and was thus preserved for future reference. They were often incased in clay to form a



Large Cuneiform Clay Tablet with cover

protective cover, somewhat like the modern day bindings of books.

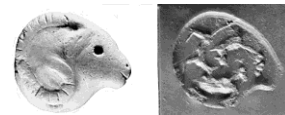
Aside from the standard clay tablets, the Babylonians also wrote on clay formed tubes that could be mounted on a pole and turned for easy reading. They called these documents cylinder tablets. Such writing documents were probably utilized for use in public places such as in temples, public parks, palace grounds and other such places. To the left is the cylinder document of Nebuchadnezzar.



Other items that the Babylonians used to write on were wooden boards filled with wax. These were utilized due to the lightweight, easy, and ready to use characteristics of wax. The

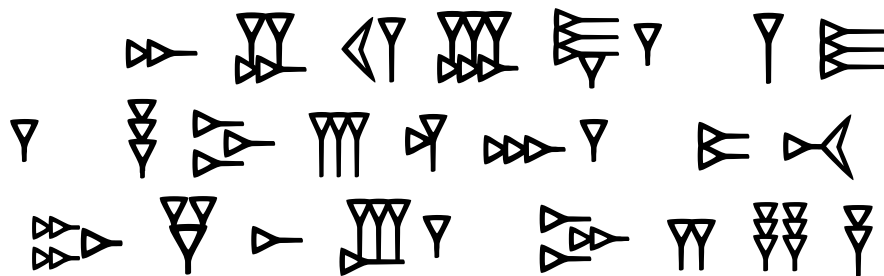
drawbacks were that such boards did not withstand the test of time like the harder clay tablets. They also needed to be kept relatively cool in the hot Mesopotamian climate, otherwise there was a risk that the wax could melt and distort the characters carved into it.

To keep track of their libraries of clay tablets and other records, the Babylonians usually placed clay “seals” on the records with some sort of symbol, figure, or depiction on it to indicate its contents. Archeologists have found entire libraries of Babylonian tablets, which are still being deciphered.



Clay Seal stamped with a Gazelle Head

The following symbols are samples of Babylonian or Akkadian cuneiform.



Math –

The mathematic system of the Babylonians was highly advanced for the time. It consisted of not only basic arithmetic, but also elements of algebra, geometry and physics. The Babylonians were skilled in the art of calculation and problem solving. Their math skills were derived from needs in architecture, land surveying, irrigation, city planning and other such tasks. Their math style was significantly different from those of the modern society since they based their entire system on factor of six rather than ten. The Babylonian system is referred to as a sekagesimal system rather than a decimal system like we of a modern society use.

Decimal	Sekagesimal
10	6
10 x 10	6 x 10
10 x 10 x 10	10 x 6 x 10
10 x 10 x 10 x 10	10 x 6 x 10 x 6

Despite advancements in mathematics, the Babylonians had not yet discovered the concept of “zero”. Even so, the accuracy and precision of Babylonian mathematics was unrivaled. Even as far back as the year 1900 BC scientist have discovered texts that contain equations that utilize Pythagoreans numbers;

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

Medicine – The first medical doctor is said to have come out of Babylonia. We know from ancient texts that the Babylonian doctors could successfully recognize such conditions as apoplexy, plague, rheumatism, arthritis, tumors, heart conditions, venereal diseases, phthisis (T.B.), jondus and many other diseases. In ancient texts, we read of the first recorded writing telling of a “doctor” carrying a doctor’s bag. He carried bandages, medicines, and instruments just to name a few items. Even so, the Babylonians physicians were still little more that witchdoctors who were only beginning to understand the human body.

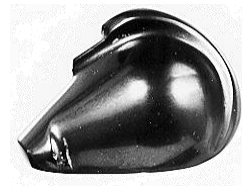
The Greek Historian Herodotus refutes the whole idea of Babylonian physicians and writes, *“Here is another of their customs, one that is second in wisdom. They bring their sick into the marketplace, for they do not use doctors at all. In the marketplace the passers-by approached the sick and gave them advice about their sickness, whenever someone has suffered the same sickness as the patient or has seen another with it. They approach and advise and comfort, telling by what means they themselves have recovered from the sickness or have seen another do so. One may not pass by a sick person in silence, without asking him what ails him”* (The History – Herodotus, Translated by David Grene, page123, Book 1 section 197).

Military – In a country where war had existed since what many believe was the birth of civilized man, a military was not only a must, but it was the very reason for existence. In the Neo-Babylonian period, Nebuchadnezzar’s father, Nabopolassar, created the Empire on military force and superiority.

Likewise, Nebuchadnezzar expanded the kingdom and fought back the Egyptians based on tremendous military ability.

The Neo-Babylonian Army was made up of Natives who served in position of authority and as basic foot soldiers, a number of slaves who were forced into military service, and mercenaries (trained foreign soldiers who served for a wage). The army was made up of foot soldier, cavalry, archers, and many other elements that existed in a modern army of the 500's BC. Even though the Neo-Babylonian army was large in size, its superiority came from military whitt. Their strategies and tactics were the most menacing element of their military.

Money System – The term “*money*”, as we know it, was non-existent in the Near East until the reign of Darius the I who reigned from 521 BC to 486 BC. Until this time printed currency and coins were not circulated. The Babylonians were smart enough to know that a system of true barter was ineffective and consequently adopted a system of pseudo-currency by using bits of silver that they referred to as “shekels”. Shekels were pre-weighted pieces of silver in a variety of shapes, all of which weighed about 3/10's of an ounce. The Babylonians exchanged wares and silver for the most part on the basis of weight. They used authorized standards, many of which were in the form of duck weights, to verify weights and exchanges. The Babylonian form of currency is further defined as follows.



Currency	Worth
1 Shekel	3/10 of an ounce of silver
1 Mana	60 Shekels or 18 ounces of silver
1 Biltu	60 Mana or 1,080 ounces of silver (67.5 US pounds)

Occupation – The primary occupation of the Babylonian was that of farmer, whether that is the Landowner, the paid Laborer, or the slave, the most common occupation had to do with growing crops. This occupation was very labor intensive. The horse drawn plow was not in use, and all farm tasks were highly manual in nature. They also required much care and nurturing due to the harsh climate. Canal maintenance and irrigation was crucial.



Other occupations commonly found in Babylonia were traders, merchants, priests, court officials, soothsayer, military, blacksmiths, weavers, accountants, scribes,

workers in the temples etc. The occupations found in Babylon were pretty much common to the people existing in the 6th and 7th century BC. The following table consists of occupations that existed in Babylon and Babylonia;

Common Babylonian Occupations

Artists	Fishermen	Priests
Astronomers	Fowlers	Royal commissaries
Bakers	Innkeepers	Scribes
Boatmen	Interpreters	Ship-wrights
Bookkeeper	Joiners	Smiths
Butchers	Musicians	Stonemasons
Carpenters	Night-Watchmen	Street vendors
Cartwrights	Officials	Tanners
Diviners	Physicians	Trader
Exorcists	Potters	Weavers

Science – The Babylonians, and more specifically the Chaldeans, were best known to most of the outside world of their time as magicians, sorcerers, and witches. This stereotyping of their society was probably due to the fact that they were not only involved in supernatural religious rites, but they also had a strong understanding of chemistry and science. The Babylonians had great knowledge of physics. This is evident in the advance architectural feats of the time such as canals, temples, enormous city walls and other such edifices of beauty. They had a vast knowledge of chemicals. They used processes for enamel glazing at an early age in history. They were able to mix ointments and medications for healing the sick. The mental image of the ancient alchemists probably originated in ancient Babylonia. Due to the advanced level of scientific knowledge and extensive religious backgrounds, the Babylonians were often misunderstood by less developed societies as magicians and workers of the supernatural.

The Babylonians developed a vast knowledge in metal works and their chemistry. They were among some of the first civilizations to make glass. They had a formula for a glass we refer to as “copper-lead” which the Babylonians made using 60 parts of ordinary glass, 10 parts lead, 15 parts copper, ½ part saltpetre, and ½ part lime. They made alloys of metal, and learned the art of metal refining.

To almost any standard, the Babylonian would rate high in scientific ability. They were thinkers, problem solvers, and inventors.

Slavery – Slavery was an intricate part in Babylonian society. Slaves were as a part of Babylonia as the citizens themselves. There were essentially three types of slaves in Babylonian society.

Family slaves were slaves that were owned by the family or man of the house. Typically the slave was the son or daughter of a slave who was also in the family. The man of the house or master of the slave usually treated the slave as a member of the family, though the slaves life was somewhat controlled. Family slaves rarely ran away, though there were laws against slaves running away, it is commonly felt that family slaves didn't run away because their life wasn't all that bad. The master of a family slave would often educate or train the slave in a field to increase the slave usefulness to the family. Though they literally worked as slaves, the family slaves were cared for by the master. They were given food and shelter along side the family, and in some cases an allowance of personal funds.

Serfs or **Slaves of the State** were slaves used in the service of the Royal Palace, Temples, or the government in general. They were typically individuals who were foreigners and obtained as a spoil of war. Serfs were generally never released from their service as slaves to the state, though if they were obedient and hard working there was opportunity for advancement within the ranks. They too were cared for by their master, and generally enjoyed a life reasonable comfort, relative to common definitions of slavery.

Debt Slaves are an interesting concept under the topic of social welfare. If a Babylonian were to become indebted and unable to fulfil his obligation to the person or business under which debt was acquired, the debtor would become slave to that entity for a set period of time until it was deemed that the debt was repaid.

Slavery was an intricate part of Babylonian society. It was an accepted custom, and doesn't appear to be questioned.

Social Levels – There were basically three social classes in Babylonia, though it could probably be broadened into many classes with minimal effort. For the purpose of this work, the classes of Babylonian social order are defined as follows;

1. An upper class composed of a feudal landed nobility, the civil and military officials of the bureaucracy, and the priests.
2. A middle class of merchants, craftsmen, scribes, and professional men.
3. A lower class of small landholders, urban and rural workers, and a horde of slaves.

Soothsayers/Sorcerers/Wisemen – The Babylonians were in constant quest for the knowledge of the future. They believed that the gods knew the future as well as controlled it. They established what were called “omen” books, which defined the methods by which one could communicate with the gods and the guidelines by which one could interpret the communications from the gods regarding the future. Individuals who were experts in this field were called soothsayers, diviners, fortune-tellers, and sometimes sorcerers and magicians. There were literally dozens of methods for telling the future or receiving the knowledge of the gods. Several are briefly summarized below;

Oil and Water Divination – The Babylonians believed that one of the ways by which the gods communicated was by acting on physical objects. The Babylonian diviners would take a bowl of water and drop a set volume of oil into the middle of the bowl. The oil would then be acted upon by the gods to give certain responses. The oil might disperse, or collect to the side of the bowl. It might remain floating in the center of the water, or give a litany of other responses. The diviner would then open the book of omens and look up the response that the gods had brought about with the oil in the water. Each response was defined in the book by listing the interpretation thereof. The Babylonians were thus instructed as to the events of their future.

Incense Censor and Smoke Divination – Similar to oil and water divination, this form of divination took place by the gods acting on physical objects in order to communicate with the diviner. In this case, the diviner would take a censor of burning incense and following set rituals would evaluate the response of the smoke produced. The gods supposedly controlled the movement and action of the smoke for purposes of communication. The diviner would then reference the book of omen to understand the interpretation of the message.

The Birth of Disfigured Animals and Humans as Divination – The Babylonians believed that the birth of a deformed or disfigured animal or human was an omen from the gods. Like other forms of divination the diviner would reference the “omen” books for the meaning of the disfigurements. Each defect or combination thereof had a different meaning. Most omens of this type were directed at the city or country rather than individuals.

The Internal Examination of Sacrifices as Divination – It was common among Babylonians to examine the internal organs of sacrificial animals and interpret the findings to receive communications from the gods. The liver was the most common organ examined in this type of divination; however, other items like the bowels, windpipe, and stomach

were also inspected. The diviner would look for abnormalities such as off colors, swelling, tumors, elongation's, and other items of interest. The results would be collected and the book omens would be referenced to understand the message that was sent from the gods.

Astronomical Divination – As previously discuss, astronomy was used by the Babylonians to communicate with the gods. The changes in the sky were messages to man from the gods. The Babylonians had an omen book for the astronomical signs that defined the meaning of the signs. The status of the stars at ones birth indicated many things about your future. This art later became known as “Astrology”.

Other Means of Divination – The Babylonians used many other means of divination. The King had diviners (magicians, soothsayer, wisemen...) who foretold the future of the King and his Empire. They used the above methods and in addition interpreted his dreams, reading the movement of birds, read the king's mood and body language, receiving answers from throwing marked rocks and stick (casting lots), the list can go on and on.

The art of divination was one of constant change. It changed with the time, city, and culture. The poorer people typically used versions of divination that were simplified versions of those already listed. There are evidences that such things as palm reading, seances, and other supernatural acts stemmed from the Babylonians.

Transportation – Most Babylonian travel was by foot; however there were definitely other alternatives. Much of the trade that occurred in Babylon used water transport. Boats were used to transport goods and passengers via the Euphrates river. For land travel, the camel, horse, donkey and ox became the primary beasts of burden. The horse was relatively new to the Near East, however its popularity was increasing. The camel was of course the old standby for desert travel. Handcarts, carriages, wagons, and other wheeled vehicles were also in use. Chariots were popular, especially among the military. The Babylonians were a progressing Nation, and travel and trade were important. Even so, travel was hard and physical.



**Recovered
Babylonian
Horse Bridle
and gear**

The brief and shallow overview of Babylonian life and culture by no means gives the full detail of Babylonian life, but as the Greek Historian said;

“These, then, are the customs of the Babylonians (The History – Herodotus, Translated by David Grene, page 124, Book 1, Section 200).”

Volumes of books can and have been written on Babylon. This work in no way covers the subject of Babylon in its fullness; however, it was the authors attempt to give a brief summary of the city and its people so as to create a base for better understanding the conditions under which God’s prophet “Ezekiel” lived, wrote, and prophesied. Before we leave the subject of Babylon, it is important for us to ask and understand this question; **“Why was the city of Babylon considered the epitome of wickedness?”**

As one studies the culture, religion, economics, and geographies of Babylon it becomes less and less clear why Babylon is the symbolic epitome of all wickedness. The Babylonians were a wise and intelligent group of people. They have been credited with developing written language, though we know Adam was given written language from God, the Babylonians obviously were one of the first civilizations to develop written language after the confusion of the languages. They were known as great mathematicians, recording equations still used today. They were skilled craftsman and builders. They even have the fame of having created one of the Seven Wonders of the World. They were lawmakers, traders, astronomers, and philosophers. The more one gets to know the Babylonians, the harder it is to see what sins they committed to make them symbols of sin.

Perhaps the difficulty with seeing Babylon’s sins is the fact that they are so similar to those of our modern society. To establish a reference between Babylon’s wickedness and our own, let us compare the Babylonians adherence to the Ten Commandments as well our own.

	Commandment of God	Culture of Babylon	Modern Society
#1	<i>Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Exodus 20:3).</i>	The Babylonians believed in the existence of over 2,000 gods, none of which was the true and ever lasting God. They placed all of their gods before the Gods of Israel.	Our gods are still quite divers. We have hundreds and hundreds of religions that define God differently losing sight of the one true God of Heaven and Earth. In addition, there is still much of the earth that worships stone idols this very day.
#2	<i>Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments (Exodus 20:4-6).</i>	The Babylonians had statues and idols for all of their gods as well as graven images of creatures created by their gods to serve specific purposes such as protection or healing. They worshipped creatures and gods who supposedly lived under the earth, above the earth and on the earth. They sacrificed and offered to these gods.	Though there are still many parts of the known world that worship gods of stone and metal, most of us in the western world would never think of worshipping a literal idol. In our sophistication, we now worship things like sporting events, careers, prestige, status, material wealth, large homes, fast cars, and many other things of this world. One might say that an idol is that which one sacrifices to. Our society sacrifices our children spiritual and physical well being for our modern idols, as well as our marriage, our relationship with the God of Heaven as well as all that is worthy of praise.

**Commandment of
God**

Culture of Babylon

Modern Society

#3	<i>Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain (Exodus 20:7).</i>	We have no record of the Babylonians misusing the Lord's name; however, based on their treatment of the Lord's Temple and the sacred things of God they obviously had little respect for Him.	The use of the Lord's name in vain, and associated with profanity has become common practice in much of society. Most use the Lord's name in vain dozens of times per day. Our respect for that Holy name is sadly fleeting.
#4	<i>Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it (Exodus 20:8-11).</i>	The subject of the Sabbath was somewhat foreign to the Babylonians. All days were days of work. Since their belief in the God of Israel was absent, so was their observance of His holy day.	The Sabbath is probably better considered a holiday instead of a Holy day among modern society. Most people in the world spend this day shopping, working around the house, enjoying recreation or a number of other active activities. The observance of the Sabbath as a day of respect, rest, and prayer is somewhat void in our modern societies.
#5	<i>Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee (Exodus 20:12).</i>	The honoring of parents was strictly enforced by the Babylonians. Unfortunately, it was not always deserving. Children were sometimes sold as slaves, beat or abused by parents, as well as other acts of mistreatment. Children honored their parents often out of fear instead of love and respect.	The respect for the role of Father and Mother is increasingly diminishing. Parents are disrespected verbally and on rare occasion even physically. Society has decided that parental discipline cannot be harsh, and consequently children end up following the teachings of society rather than their parents.
#6	<i>Thou shalt not kill (Exodus 20:13).</i>	Babylonian law prohibited unwarranted murder; however, death was often issued for offenses, which we might consider minor. It was also justified against neighboring societies or those that were not Babylonian citizens. The death of a non-citizen was not important relative to one of a citizen.	We can read of murders daily by opening our local newspapers. Furthermore, we have taken murder and made its name more palatable by renaming it for things like abortion and manslaughter.
#7	<i>Thou shalt not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14).</i>	Adultery was not only committed within the Babylonian society, but it was part of the religious practice. Woman often offered themselves in the temple as part of temple rituals.	Adultery is as much if not more apart of our modern day societies than it ever has been. The contract of marriage is entered into and discarded carelessly. Statistically it is easier to find someone who has had an affair than one who hasn't.

Commandment of God

Culture of Babylon

Modern Society

#8	<i>Thou shalt not steal (Exodus 20:15).</i>	Though Babylonia had a system of laws and enforcement quite advanced for their time, the system was also quite corrupt. The rich could buy their way through any violation of the law, as well as getting laws implemented that suited their needs. This allowed a system, which provided for the robbing and exploitation of the poor. The entire society was self-centered and self-serving. If it meant theft and dishonesty to achieve one's goal, so be it.	Like the Babylonians, most modern societies have laws against theft and dishonesty. In the same manner, we have those in society that seem to be above the law. Money and power often afford those individuals reprieve from judgment. Furthermore, there are many who take the risk of getting caught for the rewards of escaping with their undeserving prizes.
#9	<i>Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour (Exodus 20:16).</i>	Bearing false witness was wrong in Babylonia. There were indeed laws written prohibiting such acts; however, the Babylonians used it often. The rich were said to be able to do it more liberally since their riches obstructed justice from being served against them.	False witness is a word that takes many different faces in modern society. Reporters sometimes call it news. Lawyers call it justice, and people confuse it with the truth. In our society false witness is often as common as the truth. Parents use it in divorce proceedings and justify it as being best for the children. Justifying such acts in our minds seems to be the tone of the day.
#10	<i>Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's (Exodus 20:17).</i>	Coveting and theft was a way of life in Babylonia. In fact, the country adopted this principle as a way of government. If they were short of a natural resource, they simply invaded and destroyed a neighboring country who had it. The Babylonians coveted all the things of this world; knowledge, riches, land, power, influence, etc.	"He who dies with the most toys wins" is a comical bumper sticker that unfortunately conveys the true attitude of many people in modern society. They covet money, power, big homes, fast cars and the status of being richer than the next guy. The act of coveting is probably more predominate today than every before.

Babylon is often difficult to see as wickedness because it strikes too close to home. We are an advanced society with vast amounts of knowledge, power, and ability. Given this we have abandoned our dependence on the God of creation. We have become as the Babylonians, reliant on ourselves and our own strength. In spite of all that we know, the words of Moses seem to ring clear. After Moses conversed with God he said, "I know now that man is nothing". It is this simple truth of the relative greatness of the Father that the Babylonians and us alike have lost.