

## Ten *Enuma Elish* Questions

[The *Enuma Elish* is a Babylonian myth of redemptive violence. Accordingly, it is a myth that promotes the belief that violence is a useful mechanism for control and order.]



1) According to the anonymous author of the *Enuma Elish*, violence is necessary for creation.

(a) In the *Enuma Elish*, how is water violent/dangerous? Explain.

(b) In the *Enuma Elish*, how is water the beginning/origin of everything? Explain.

2) In the *Enuma Elish*, who gave Apsu the better advice: his *wife* or his *son*? Explain.

3) In the *Enuma Elish*, how does the story's anonymous author try to teach us the importance of controlling our anger? List two ways that the story tries to do so. [For example, vengeance (or revenge) plays an important role in the story's plot. How does the story aim to discourage us from seeking vengeance?]

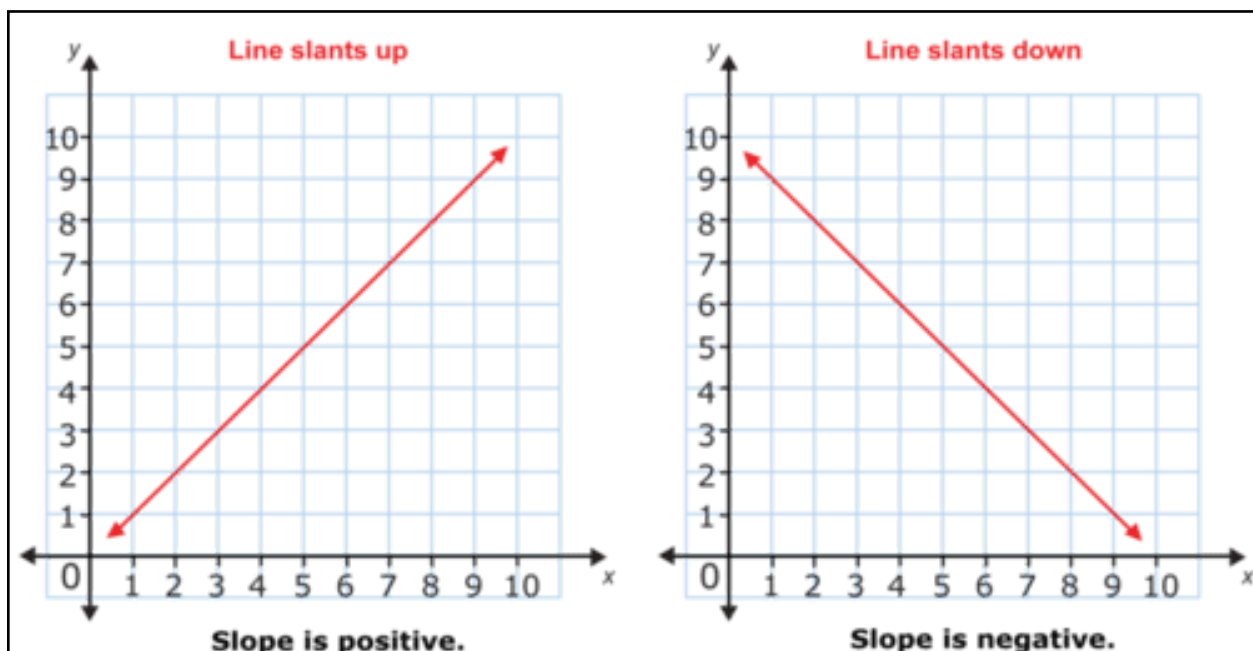
4) Who seems to have been the more loyal son: *Marduk* or *Kingu*? Why? Explain.

5) Why might Marduk be described as a kind of *mercenary* (or *soldier for hire*)? What does that say about him? Answer both questions.

6) Consider the genealogy (or family tree) of the gods. How does the story relate a god's age to their might/strength? Answer the question by answering the following two subquestion.

(a) If god A is *older* than god B, who is the *mightier* (or *stronger*) god? In other words, if god B is *younger* than god A, who is the *mightier* god? Explain your answer by providing two (or more) pieces of evidence from the story.

(b) Consider the following two graphs. Assuming that each graph's x-axis describes age and each graph's y-axis describes might/strength, does the story describe the numerical relationship as *positive* or *negative*? (Hint: If god A is *older* than god B then god B's age is *less* than god A's age, and if god B is *younger* than god A then god A's age is *more* than god B's age.)



- 7) How did the story's anonymous author promote the idea that 'might makes right'? In other words, how did the story's anonymous author promote the idea that the *mightiest* (or strongest) decides what is morally *right* (and what is morally wrong)? (Hint: Consider Marduk's role in the story.)
- 8) At least since the time of Hammurabi, Marduk had been the patron god of Babylon.
- (a) By regarding Marduk as the supreme god (who rules over the other gods), what do you think the Babylonians were trying to say about themselves in relation to the rest of the world?
  - (b) In the *Enuma Elish*, how did the story's anonymous author try explain Marduk's very special relationship to the city?

- 9) Marduk had wanted to create human beings out of his own blood, but his father (Ea) talked him out of it. In the end, Marduk created human beings out of Kingu's blood. How does that promote the idea that violence is necessary for creation?
- 10) The *Enuma Elish* is a myth of redemptive violence. Like any myth of redemptive violence, it is a story of the victory of order over disorder by means of violence. How so? In other words, explain how the *Enuma Elish* is a story of the victory of order over disorder by means of violence?