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Questions for Extra Credit (to be placed in the Drop Box)

1. What was the Mesopotamian view of the afterlife?

For the Mesopotamians, death was synonymous with something negative. Only the most important gods and a single human were assured eternal life. Once dead, the souls of humans did not go to heaven, but to the underworld.

2. What was the message of Siduri's advice to Gilgamesh?

The message Siduri wanted to convey to Gilgamesh is to let the meaning of life take its own path, without rushing. We are in good hands to be able to face the reality that we have to live and, therefore, death.

3. Consider Utnapishtim's initial response to Gilgamensh request for the secret to eternal life. How does his request complement what Siduri had said?

Utnapishm intends to convey to Gilgamesh that death is just another inevitable event in the course of life, thus supporting Siduri's advice that death is inescapable, that nothing is permanent.

4. Consider the story of Utnapishtim. What do the various actions of the gods and goddesses allow us to infer about how the Mesopotamians viewed their deities?

The world of Mesopotamia was very close to that of the gods, empowering them of everything that happened in the universe. It could be said that their deities were at times extremely celestial and capable.

5. According to the Epic, what are the respective roles of the humans and the gods? What do

Mesopotamian deities require of the humans? What do the humans expect of their gods?

The gods will always be above man, having control of his punishments and blessings. For humans, the gods were the ones who had the answers to their questions, and it was common to show them offerings. Mesopotamian deities were, therefore, inaccessible.

6. What wisdom has Gilgamesh gained from his epic? How has he changed as a result of his quest?

We can deduce that Gilgamesh is overwhelmed by the fear of aging and death. This leads him to undertake a long journey in which he is filled with wisdom and "the hidden was revealed to him.".