RR #19

Gods and their Humans

Over the ages, the relationship between humans and gods have differed from one community to another and from time to time. Historical texts depict little bit about how earlier societies treated higher godly powers. Although a monotheistic community differs from a polytheistic community, but both communities revolve around a higher divine power ruling over mortal humans. *Epic of Gilgamesh* is an epic poem from 2400-2600 BCE that talks about the life of a king named Gilgamesh and his strife to reach immortality in a polytheistic society. On the other hand, *Genesis* is the first book of the Hebrew bible that describes early human creation in a monotheistic society. Both texts portray the connection between humans and gods during their time, and describe how gods hold human characteristics, acquire humans’ respect, and solve human problems.

From a polytheistic society to monotheistic society, gods behave differently yet they have some similarities in dealing with humans. While trying their best to be gods, they sometimes still behave like humans. Both *Epic of Gilgamesh* and *Genesis* show how gods from their times make mistakes, follow their desires, and even lie like humans do. In *Genesis* section six it says, “And the Lord regretted having made the human on earth and was grieved to the heart.” This verse shows that God, like humans, made a mistake by creating evil humans and is regretting his decision like humans do when they make wrong decisions. In *Epic of Gilgamesh*, goddess Ishtar says when she sees Gilgamesh, “marry me, give me your luscious fruits.” This quote shows how goddess Ishtar catches sight of Gilgamesh and wishes to marry him like a regular human would do. In addition, both texts illustrate how respecting the gods is important and that human disobedience leads to punishment from the gods. In *Epic of Gilgamesh* God Anu says, “They have slaughtered the Bull of Heaven and killed Humbaba, watchman of the Cedar Forest. Therefore one of the two must die.” God Anu proclaims that either Enkidu or Gilgamesh shall die as a punishment for them for disobeying the Gods’ rules and killing the Bull of Heaven and Humbaba. In the same manner, God in Genesis punishes and curses Adam and Eve for not obeying his orders and eating from the tree of knowledge. The reader notices that God in Genesis helps his humans and cares for them more than the Gods in Epic of Gilgamesh do. in epic of Gilgamesh, the gods do not directly find a solution for the people when they come complaining about Gilgamesh, and only create another human that later becomes Gilgamesh’s best friend. This scenario shows how the gods were not fulfilling the humans’ needs and rather living their own independent lives. On the other hand, God in *Genesis* says, “It is not good for the human to be alone, I shall make him a sustainer beside him.” This quote shows how God was considerate when creating Adam and thought he would need a sustainer by him to help him through his life. The gods in *Epic of Gilgamesh* were unwilling to help their people unlike the God in Genesis who was trying his best to make Adam live a better life by creating Eve. In general, historical texts show how Gods in different societies have treated their humans in different ways.

All in all, different populations from ancient times invented their own image of the divine and included it in their historical writings, and many years later humans look back at their writings to find how the relationships between humans and gods differed from one society to the other with some similarities. Both *Epic of Gilgamesh* and *Genesis* describe gods from different views; however, both show how gods held human characteristics and acquired respect, but treated their humans differently.

* Explicitly tie your examples back to your thesis in order to give them a clear purpose and to avoid summary
* You used a lot of good quotations, but make sure you include citations
* Don’t refer to the reader or other people outside of the texts