

# Comparison of Views on Life and Death between the Mythology of the Ancient Mesopotamian Region and Biblical Mythology

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**Abstract:** This article compares the views on life and death in the ancient Mesopotamian mythology and the Biblical mythology from the perspectives of ontology of life and death and attitude towards life and death. It discusses the essence of "life and death" in the two myths from three aspects: different origins of life in the mythology of creating man, different ontology of death in the mythology of the great flood, and the pursuit of immortality. It analyzes their attitudes towards life and death, believing that one is "living towards death" and trying to obtain spiritual immortality, while the other is "still alive after death" and vainly pursuing physical immortality.

**Keywords:** Mesopotamian; Mesopotamian mythology; views on life and death; Bible.

## 1. Introduction

Mesopotamia, also known as the Fertile Crescent, is one of the oldest and most significant regions in the history of human civilization. The region's extensive literary traditions, including myths, epics, and legends, have formed a mythical system with extremely high popularity and literary value. (Zhang Ruoyi, 2021) Although scholars at home and abroad have conducted considerable research on the mythology of ancient Mesopotamia and achieved some important results, most of these studies are limited to the collation and translation of texts (Li Haifeng, 2018). Further research is needed on the historical background of Mesopotamian mythology, the universe view, the gods and humans perspective, and the development and evolution of social reality reflected in these myths.

Most studies on Mesopotamian mythology focus on creation myths and flood myths. For example, in his article "The Creation Myths and History of Ancient Mesopotamia" published in 2006, Guo Honggeng divided Mesopotamian mythology into three periods: Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian. He elaborated on their creation myths and history, arguing that Babylonian creation myths evolved from Sumerian myths, while Assyrian creation myths were basically copies of the former. (Guo Honggeng, 2006) This also reveals the consistency of Mesopotamian mythology over time, with no major changes, allowing us to treat it as a whole. Another example is Zhang Ruoyi's article "The System of the Great Flood Myth in Mesopotamia and Its Influence: Focusing on the Book of Genesis," published in 2021. This article compares the Hebrew mythology and the great flood myth of ancient Mesopotamia in terms of narrative framework and main plots. It argues that the two are "isomorphic but heterogeneous," meaning that they have obvious similarities in form and structure, but significant differences in content, from the names of gods and characters to the causes and consequences of mythical events, as well as the underlying ideological concepts. (Zhang Ruoyi, 2021)

This article mainly uses Zhao Lezhen's compilation of "The Epic and Mythology of Gilgamesh-Babylon" as well as "The Jewish Bible" published by Oxford University Press in 1985

and "The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible" in 1988 as materials to study the mythology of ancient Mesopotamia and Hebrew biblical mythology. It explores and compares the views on life and death reflected in both from the perspectives of ontology of life and death and attitude towards life and death.

## 2. Different Ontologies of Life and Death

### 2.1. Different Origins of Life in Creation Myths

#### 2.1.1. Biblical Mythology

The core question in creation myths is: Who am I? What am I supposed to do? What distinguishes humans from gods and other species in the world? In other words, what is the uniqueness of being human? The discussion of the ontology of life and death involves exploring the essence and origin of life, as well as the nature and source of death. In both myths, humans are created by gods, but the methods and purposes of creation are vastly different, leading to different answers to the question of the meaning of life.

In biblical mythology, God creates humans from the dust of the ground and breathes life into them by blowing into their nostrils. However, the reason for God's creation of humans is not explicitly stated. The only clue is the phrase, "no man to till the soil" (Genesis 2.5, Jewish Bible, 1985:15). This seems to suggest that God created humans to cultivate the land. Yet, humans in the Garden of Eden are described as caring for the garden for God, ultimately to satisfy their own hunger. Whether their labor is arduous or not is unknown, and it is also unclear whether God consumes the fruits in the garden. Does God require human labor? We are not sure. But it is certain that toil is one of the punishments God imposes on humans. Before banishing them from the Garden of Eden, God says:

"Cursed is the ground because of you;  
Through painful toil you will eat of it  
All the days of your life.  
It will produce thorns and thistles for you,  
And you will eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your brow  
You will eat your food  
Until you return to the ground,  
Since from it you were taken;  
For dust you are

And to dust you will return." (Genesis 3.17-3.19, Jewish Bible, 1985:17-18)

Through the words "By the sweat of your brow shall you eat your food" and "Until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return," it is not difficult to see that God emphasizes the concept of "labor." Work and toil are the punishment God gives to humans.

The mythology of ancient Mesopotamia emphasizes the concept of "pairing." Both humans and gods are born in pairs with even numbers. The goddesses have diverse personalities and varying statuses, but almost all of them possess the power of fertility and abundance. There is even a plot where the god Enki attempts to create humans alone, but creates infertile females and males without genitalia, further emphasizing the fertility of women and the cooperation between men and women. In contrast, the biblical mythology emphasizes the creation of Eve from Adam's rib, stressing that men came before women, with a tendency to deliberately downgrade women's status and abilities. When describing the lineage of childbirth, it also presents a clear pattern of a "patriarchal society." Sarah, the wife of Abraham, is unable to bear children, so Abraham has a child with his servant girl. (Genesis 16.1-16.6, Jewish Bible, 1985:36-37) Like Eve and all the women in the Bible, Sarah loses her subjectivity and exists only as someone's wife or mother. The servant girl's status is even lower, as her fertility is exploited and she is expelled after giving birth. In this process, women's fertility is de-sacralized, and the subject of childbirth becomes male.

In biblical mythology, the origin of life comes from the male deity God, and the essence of life becomes the worship of this sole male deity. Not only is labor involved, but everything about humans is under the control of God. The image and authority of the deity are also more concentrated in comparison. In Mesopotamian mythology, the gods主导 people's earthly lives. People labor and offer sacrifices to the gods, enduring lifelong toil before facing inevitable death. There is a pessimistic sentiment towards the state of affairs after death, and even the gods cannot escape the fate of death. In the Hebrew Bible, the deity has a stronger dominance over people, both before and after death. God enforces people to live in the way he prescribes, and any deviation will result in punishment. This punishment not only brings death but also continues even after death.

### 2.1.2. Mesopotamian Mythology

In the mythology of ancient Mesopotamia along the two rivers, labor was considered the inherent responsibility and burden of humans. The purpose of the gods creating humans was also very clear: to forage food and labor for the gods. Unlike the biblical mythology, where God created humans with a casual breath, in the creation mythology "The Creation of Man," the gods slaughtered two Lamujia gods, who were the "woodworking gods who made tools" (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:97), and created humans using their bones and blood. "The Creation of Man" was unearthed in Nippur, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, and researchers have inferred that it was written during the later period of the ancient Babylonian era (19th to 17th century BC). The mud tablet is divided into three columns, with the central column recording the

Sumerian language in the Neo-Assyrian script, and the right column containing a contemporary Akkadian translation of the original text (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:95). The intersection of these languages further reflects the inheritance and integrity of the mythology of ancient Mesopotamia.

In the Babylonian creation mythology "Enuma Elish," which describes the ascension of King Marduk, the plot undergoes some changes. Marduk, the son of the water god Ea (Enki), kills the rebel god Kingu and creates humans from his flesh and blood. "Enuma Elish," also known as "The Seven Tablets of Creation," predates the First Dynasty of Babylon. In recent years, some scholars have suggested that it was formed in the mid-second millennium BC (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:176).

The flood mythology "Atrahasis" elaborates on the beginning and end of the creation of humans. First, the gods were overburdened with labor, to the point where they even plotted to kill the supreme god Enlil, saying, "The harsh labor has killed us..." (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:234). So the gods went to the goddess of fertility Ninhursag and asked her to create "lulu," which were the first humans, saying, "Let them take on the labor of the gods!" (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:237). The gods killed the personified god Vi-Illa, mixed clay with the gods' flesh and blood, spat on it to give it spirit and turn it into humans. Many fertility goddesses, such as Mami, Inanna, Bellet-Ili, Allulu, and Ninhursag, worked together with the water god Enki to create humans. Enki shaped the clay, and together they cast spells on it to create seven men and seven women. Enki then gave them their destinies, and they were not fully created until after a waiting period of ten months.

The ultimate goal of creating humans to labor is to obtain sacrificial offerings. In the Garden of Eden, God asked humans to care for the garden, but seemingly did not collect sacrificial offerings (fruits). After leaving the Garden of Eden, it can be seen that God preferred animal husbandry, preferring livestock among the plant and animal offerings presented by humans, which also led to the conflict between Abel and Cain. There are also manifestations of conflicts between agriculture and animal husbandry in Mesopotamian mythology. The Sumerian mythology "Dumuzi and Enkimdu - The Controversy between the Shepherd God and the Agricultural God" is a small opera composed of four characters' duets, considered as one of the sources of ancient world drama history (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:110). One of the main characters is the goddess Inanna, who occupies an important position in Mesopotamian mythology. Her brother, the sun god Utu (Babylonian Shamash), persuaded her to marry the shepherd god Dumuzi, but Inanna had a stronger preference for the agricultural god Enkimdu. In the end, the conflict ended with the agricultural god's concession, and the agricultural god and the shepherd god became good friends (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:110-118). On the surface, it seems to be a victory for the shepherd god, but "Inanna's Descent into the Underworld" soon revealed the fate of the shepherd god. Gilgamesh reproached Ishtar (Sumerian Inanna) for her pursuit, calling her the "hall of heroes' harm" (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:43), because none of Ishtar's lovers had a good ending. Inevitably, Dumuzi also couldn't escape the tragic fate and was eventually captured by Inanna to be a substitute for death in the underworld.

The conflict between agriculture and animal husbandry is not so much between specific people or gods as it is between agriculture and animal husbandry. "The two river valleys have convenient irrigation systems and relatively suitable climatic

conditions, so both agriculture and animal husbandry are quite developed" (Jiang Jiayu, Ma Yueting, 2016). Therefore, although there are contradictions between agriculture and animal husbandry, they can coexist harmoniously. However, Cain's killing of Abel represents the inability to balance and develop agriculture and animal husbandry together, with the newly emerging animal husbandry (the younger brother) developing poorly. Both the shepherd god Dumuzi and the shepherd Abel met fatal endings, symbolizing the instability and immaturity of animal husbandry. The favor of the goddess and God represents that animal husbandry will continue to develop.

Mesopotamian mythology has a clear hierarchy, and people seek the meaning of life through labor and sacrificial offerings. Humans have a low status and are born to labor. The motivation for gods to create humans is to let them bear the burden of divine labor, but humans are very important, even indispensable to gods. This can also be seen from the raw materials used to create humans. Regardless of how the plot changes, the fact that the human body is made of mud and the bone and blood of gods remains the same, with the only difference being the unlucky god used as the raw material. Against this background, although humans are slaves to gods, they are also inferior substitutes for gods. There is a clear hierarchy among gods, with the relationship between the supreme god Enlil and the subordinate gods resembling the relationship between the subordinate gods and humans.

#### Different Death Entities in the Myth of the Great Flood

Both the mythology of the ancient Mesopotamian region and the biblical mythology contain plots of a flood destroying the world. Although the forms are similar, the underlying logic behind them is quite different. In the Hebrew Bible, labor and hard work are merely punishments bestowed upon humans by God, and it is "evil deeds" that bring about the flood to destroy the world. Human survival is linked to morality and virtuous behavior. The origin of life comes from God, but the essence of life is not sought externally; it can only be found inwardly, with God serving as the "grader." After banishing humans from the Garden of Eden, God still continues to scrutinize them. Humans ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil but failed to live up to God's moral standards, angering Him. In this sense, the flood (death) is caused by the conflict between humans and gods, or even the conflict among humans themselves. The essence of death is punishment.

The biblical flood mythology emphasizes the connection between humans and gods. God purposefully judges and punishes humans for their "sins." Although God has complete control over humans, they still possess a certain degree of autonomy and can be saved through virtuous behavior. In contrast, in the mythology of the ancient Mesopotamian region, humans are merely laborers to gods, their only value being the provision of sacrificial offerings. In conflicts, humans have no autonomy and cannot save themselves by adjusting their behavior. Death occurs randomly and accidentally, but the result is inevitable.

On the surface, it seems that the great flood was caused by Enlil's capriciousness. In essence, however, it was a struggle between gods, more specifically, between Enki and Enlil:

"[Not yet] a thousand and two hundred years had passed,  
[The land expanded], and the populace of various countries

multiplied,

[The land] roared like [a bull],  
And the gods were vexed by [their noise].

[Enlil] [heard] their commotion,

[And said to] the great gods:

"I can't bear the noise of humans anymore!

[Their commotion] disturbs my sleep.

[ ] I will bring disaster upon them," (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:244-245)

Noise is one manifestation of conflict, and there are descriptions of "noise" and "commotion" in several conflicts. In "Enuma Elish," the younger gods behave recklessly and "make a great commotion in the abode of the gods" (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:179). The supreme god Apsu declares, "I will eliminate them and thwart their deeds, (until) we can sleep peacefully again after restoring tranquility." (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:179) Such descriptions suggest the weakness of the ruling authority, unable to suppress its subordinates, followed by the plot of besieging and killing the supreme god. This speech is very similar to Enlil's words when he wanted to destroy humans. At that time, Apsu's main opponent was the god of water.

In terms of natural phenomena, it is logical that the struggle between the god of water Enki and the god of storms Enlil would lead to a flood. Compared to the great god Enlil, Enki was more involved in creating humans, endowing them with fate, and walking closer to them. It can even be said that while Enlil is the king of the gods, Enki is the king of humans. Therefore, the more humans there are, the more "disturbing" Enlil feels, likely because Enki's influence has already posed a threat to Enlil. Enlil ordered the gods to bring down several disasters, but they all failed due to Enki's covert interference. Finally, the two gods openly disagreed during a gathering of the gods. Enlil and the other gods wanted Enki to unleash the flood, but Enki refused:

"Enki spoke,

Saying to the gods, his brethren:

'Why do you bind me with curses? [...]

...Do you mean to make me cause [a flood]?

That is Enlil's job. Please choose him [and someone else]!

Let Shullat and [Hanish] go first!" " (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:260)

It is not difficult to see that although the gods gathered here aimed to destroy human beings, their spearheads were pointed at Enki. In the end, Enlil launched the flood to kill most of the human beings, but only Utnapishtim and some human beings survived with the help of Enki. The gods also remembered the bitterness of digging food from the soil again. This dispute ended in a draw. Enki only saved a small part of human beings, while Enlil lost the support of the gods.

The conflict between the god of water and wisdom Enki and the supreme god was also expressed in Babylonian mythology. In the Babylonian mythology "Enuma Elish", the supreme god Apsu told his spouse Tiamat that he wanted to "eradicate" these child gods. Although the mother god disagreed, Apsu and his steward Mummu still insisted on doing it. The god of water Ea (Enki) protected the child gods and killed Apsu. Then, Ea had conflicts with his mother Tiamat and the child god Kingu. After that, Marduk, the son of Ea and the protagonist of the Babylonian creation

mythology "Enuma Elish" (the king of Babylon), came on stage, killed the rebel Kingu, and created humans with his flesh and blood. In this story, the king of Babylonian humans is the son of the god of water Ea, which clearly shows the close connection between Enki and humans. In the Babylonian mythology "The Story of Adapa", Adapa broke the wings of the south wind and asked for help from Ea (Enki) before being punished by Anu (Enlil). This also shows the significance of Enki to humans. However, Ea's words to Adapa finally angered Anu. He asked, "Who can make his command override Anu's command?" (Zhao Lezhan, 1999:298), because Adapa (human) valued more of Ea's (god of water) words and refused to follow Anu's (supreme god) arrangement.

During the Sumerian period, each god looked after its own city. "Anu is the protecting god of Uruk, Enlil is the protecting god of Nippur, Enki is the protecting god of Eridu, Ninhursag and Ninkhursag are the protecting gods of Kish." (Guo Honggeng, 2006) Therefore, the conflict between Enki and Enlil might also be the struggle between the mythologized Sumerian cities, which returned to the conflict between humans. The flood mythology in the ancient Mesopotamia tried to warn people that worshiping gods was their only chance of survival in this crisis-ridden world.

The sources of death in these two types of mythology both came from gods, but their essences were different. The essence of death in Hebrew mythology was punishment, while in the ancient Mesopotamian mythology, people died because of the struggle between gods. In the Bible mythology, people died because of their own evils, gaining more subjectivity compared with the former, standing on the stage of struggle instead of being affected. However, in the Hebrew Bible, God was unique without peers, and even angels could not serve as substitutes. God's control over humans was absolute and complete, but humans were dispensable to God. Therefore, God could expel humans from Eden and destroy them with floods without any hesitation.

## 2.2. Missed Immortality

The theme of missed immortality and gaining and then losing it is reflected in both Sumerian mythology and biblical mythology, and often appears in many primitive tribal stories about the origin of death (Ye Shuxian, 1998). In these stories, plants usually possess mysterious powers unknown to humans. The Tree of Life in Eden, the magical herb in Sumerian mythology that can grant immortality, resonate across time and space with the peach of immortality and ginseng fruit that can extend lifespan for ten thousand years in the East. Scholar Ye Shuxian believes that the place where the immortal Utnapishtim resided is the predecessor of Eden, and that the legendary Kunlun Xuanpu also refers to the same place, namely the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

"The Babylonian epic narrates that after the protagonist walked through the dark passage, he once again saw the bright and fairyland of mankind... Western scholars have found the prototype of Eden Paradise in the Book of Genesis here. Don't we also see the true portrayal of Kunlun Xuanpu?" (Ye Shuxian, 1998)

Before eating the fruit of knowledge of good and evil, humans lived in the Garden of Eden and were not forbidden to eat the fruit of the Tree of Life. Adam ate the fruit of the Tree of Life, which was like a potion that could extend lifespan, so Adam and the first few generations of humans lived long lives.

The biblical mythology records that "Adam lived a total of 930 years and then died... Seth lived a total of 912 years and then died... Enosh lived a total of 905 years and then died... Cainan lived a total of 910 years and then died." (Genesis 5:5-14, 1919) Such long lifespans are obviously inconsistent with common sense. Later, "God said, 'Man is mortal, and my spirit will not always abide in him; yet his days may be to one hundred and twenty years.'" (Genesis 6:3, 1919) Although 120 years is a long time, it is still considered a normal human lifespan. The implied meaning of this statement is that Adam, Seth, and others lived long lives because God's spirit resided in their flesh. The spirit here should refer to the spirit contained in the fruit of the Tree of Life, which grants longevity and immortality, and this authority comes from God. Adam and Eve cutting off their path to immortality by eating the fruit of knowledge of good and evil, because they could no longer eat the fruit of the Tree of Life: "God commanded him, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die!'" (Genesis 2:16-17, 1919). God's words were not empty. From the moment humans ate the fruit of knowledge of good and evil and were expelled from the Garden of Eden, they lost immortality, so "eating the fruit of knowledge of good and evil" meant "certain death."

The relationship between man and God in biblical mythology is both the closest and the most distant. Only when God is angry and punishes mankind, "the covenant relationship created by God establishes the dominant position of God in the relationship between man and God" (Chen Zhongmeng, 2018). Man has no dominant power, and even the death of Jesus is arranged by God Himself, which cannot be regarded as a rebellion of mankind.

In Mesopotamian mythology, however, heroes such as Gilgamesh even scolded Ishtar, the chief god of his country, saying, "Only gods can live forever under the sun!" (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:27). His journey to seek immortality is actually a trip to the realm of gods, trying to become a god. Hero Gilgamesh overcame countless difficulties and finally obtained the immortal herb, but he lost the opportunity of immortality forever just because he took a bath in the river and got distracted for a moment, leaving only a snake shed on the ground. Although the snake did not appear directly, it stole the fruit of victory without paying any price. In many myths, the snake shed is a substitute used by the snake to die in place of it and deceive immortality.

Immortality not only elaborates the view of civilization on life in the context of mythology, but also elaborates people's longing for "God". People's worship of God is so intense that they want to become gods. Immortality is a symbol of God and a privilege only possessed by God. Losing immortality actually implies that man can never become a god, "man is born without the hope of immortality" (Zhang Wen'an, 2009), and death is one of the essences of man.

## 3. Attitude towards Life and Death:

### Live for Death

Surprisingly, despite the widespread concept of heaven and hell, the Bible only mentions hell in 13 places. The description of hell is rather general:

"Where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. For everyone will be salted with fire. (Some manuscripts add: Every sacrifice will be salted with salt.) Salt is good, but if it has lost its flavor, how can its saltiness be restored? Have salt

in yourselves, and be at peace with each other." (Mark 9:48-50, Chinese Union Version, 1919)

In Biblical mythology, death is also unavoidable, but people can make choices. The dual opposition of heaven and hell is to emphasize the horror and continuation of punishment in hell, controlling life through death. In this scenario, living itself is not important. Life in the earthly world is like a test, with the purpose of passing the entrance exam into heaven. The life in heaven returns to the theme of immortality mentioned in the previous section, as the existence of the soul blurs the boundary between life and death. The imagination of heaven cannot surpass human's understanding of the earthly world. Heaven is actually just a luxurious earthly life of immortality:

"The foundation of the city walls was adorned with all kinds of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of one pearl. The streets of the city were pure gold, transparent as glass. I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of the city." (Revelation 21:19-22, Chinese Union Version, 1919)

If in Mesopotamian civilization, people lived for laboring for the gods, then in Hebrew civilization, people lived for ascending to heaven. In heaven, the desire for "immortality" is fulfilled.

#### Live on Even after Death

In the Mesopotamian myth "The Descent of Inanna into the Underworld," the description of the underworld is "opposite to the earthly world." Those who follow Inanna to the earthly world to capture a substitute are described as "people who do not know food, do not know water...who snatch wives from between the knees of men and snatch infants from the arms of wet nurses." (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:134) In the twelfth tablet of "The Epic of Gilgamesh," when Enkidu is about to descend into the underworld, Gilgamesh warns him: "Do not kiss your beloved wife, do not strike your hated wife..." (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:89) Such descriptions easily reveal that the Mesopotamian concept of "death" is closely related to earthly life, in binary opposition to "life," completely opposite to "life," and therefore one cannot do what is normally done in the earthly world.

Death is inevitable. Even the goddess Inanna, the sister of the goddess who rules the underworld, has to pay a heavy price and leave a substitute to return to the earthly world.

One can glimpse the Mesopotamian civilization's attitude towards death from Gilgamesh's words. Before seeking immortality, he had a conversation with Enkidu, questioning his retreat in the face of battle. He exclaimed: "Once I die in battle, my name will be renowned!" (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:27) However, when Enkidu died of illness, he became afraid. What he was afraid of was not death itself, but dying painfully in bed and not being able to die gloriously as a warrior. Before his death, Enkidu said: "My friend, let those who die in battle be blessed." (Zhao Lezhen, 1999:57)

Thus, a peculiar contrast is formed. Mesopotamian

mythology is filled with helplessness and fear towards death, yet the question of "how to die" is very important to them. In the Hebrew Bible, there are elaborate descriptions of the beauty of heaven, and people's goal is to go to heaven and live after death, but for them, the most important question is "how to live."

## 4. Conclusion

This article mainly takes Zhao Lezhen's compilation of "The Epic of Gilgamesh: Babylonian Epic and Myth" and "The Jewish Bible" published by Oxford University Press in 1985 and "The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible" in 1988 as the research objects, exploring and comparing the views on life and death reflected in them from the perspectives of ontology of life and death and attitude towards life and death. Through analysis, it is found that in terms of the ontology of life and death, the two have different reproductive subjects, different status and importance of human beings. In terms of the attitude towards life and death, the mythology of ancient Mesopotamia pursues immortality despite death, hoping to die a worthy death, respecting death, but ultimately unable to escape the fear of death and vainly pursuing physical immortality. Hebrew Bible stories pursue life towards death, and life in the world is like an entrance exam to achieve spiritual "immortality". From the discussion of life and death, we can appreciate the vast historical panorama of the two regions and the spiritual origins of the two civilizations. Understanding the thinking patterns of different nations greatly helps us to further understand the roots of human beings, promote social and cultural development, and also build a sense of life and death with a common and integrated philosophy, forming a survival perspective that is in line with modern civilization.

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