

# THEY WILL BE NO CRISIS NEXT WEEK

## Tablet XI

Gilgamesh said to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway:  
 "As I look upon thee, Utnapishtim,  
 Thy features are not strange; even as I art thou.  
 Thou art not strange at all; even as I art thou.  
 My heart had regarded thee as resolved<sup>182</sup> to do battle,  
 [Yet] thou liest indolent upon thy back!  
 [Tell me,] how joinedst thou the Assembly of the gods,  
 In thy quest of life?"

Utnapishtim said to him, to Gilgamesh:  
 "I will reveal to thee, Gilgamesh, a hidden matter  
 And a secret of the gods will I tell thee: (10)  
 Shurippak—a city which thou knowest,  
 [(And) which on Euphrates' [banks] is situate—  
 That city was ancient, (as were) the gods within it,  
 When their heart led the great gods to produce the flood.  
 [There] were Anu, their father,  
 Valiant Enlil, their counselor,  
 Ninurta, their assistant,  
 Ennuge, their irrigator.<sup>183</sup>  
 Ninigiku-Ea was also present with them;  
 Their words he repeats to the reed-hut:<sup>184</sup> (20)  
 'Reed-hut, reed-hut! Wall, wall!  
 Reed-hut, hearken! Wall, reflect!  
 Man of Shuruppak,<sup>185</sup> son of Ubar-Tutu,  
 Tear down (this) house, build a ship!  
 Give up possessions, seek thou life.  
 Forswear (worldly) goods and keep the soul alive!  
 Aboard the ship take thou the seed of all living things.  
 The ship that thou shalt build,  
 Her<sup>186</sup> dimensions shall be to measure.  
 Equal shall be her width and her length. (30)  
 Like the Apsu thou shalt ceil her.<sup>187</sup>  
 I understood, and I said to Ea, my lord:  
 '[Behold], my lord, what thou hast thus ordered,  
 I will be honored to carry out.  
 [But what] shall I answer the city, the people and  
 elders?'<sup>188</sup>

<sup>181</sup> Lit. "draw, design."

<sup>182</sup> For the sense of *uagmir libbi* cf. F. Thureau-Dangin, *Huitième campagne de Sargon* (1912), line 52, and p. 11, n.7. And for the factitive force of the intensive conjugation cf. Heidel, *EG*, 80, n.164.

<sup>183</sup> More specifically, "inspector of canals." cf. *Creation Epic*, VII, 62.

<sup>184</sup> Presumably, the dwelling place of Utnapishtim. Ea addresses him through the barrier of the wall.

<sup>185</sup> Line 11 has the uncommon form Shurippak instead.

<sup>186</sup> The Akkadian for "ship" is feminine, although without the grammatical feminine ending.

<sup>187</sup> For the description of the subterranean waters of the Apsū cf. *Creation Epic*, IV, 62.

<sup>188</sup> cf. my remarks in *Studies in the History of Culture* (1942), 60.

Ea opened his mouth to speak,  
 Saying to me, his servant:  
 "Thou shalt then thus speak unto them:  
 "I have learned that Enlil is hostile to me,  
 So that I cannot reside in your city, (40)  
 Nor set my f[oo]t in Enlil's territory.  
 To the Deep I will therefore go down,  
 To dwell with my lord Ea.

[But upon] you he will shower down abundance,  
 [The choicest] birds, the rarest<sup>189</sup> fishes.  
 [The land shall have its fill] of harvest riches.  
 [He who at dusk orders] the husk-greens,  
 Will shower down upon you a rain of wheat."<sup>190</sup>

With the first glow of dawn,  
 The land was gathered [about me].  
 (too fragmentary for translation) (50-53)  
 The little ones [carr]ied bitumen,  
 While the grown ones brought [all else] that was need-  
 ful.

On the fifth day I laid her framework.  
 One (whole) acre<sup>191</sup> was her floor space,<sup>192</sup>  
 Ten dozen cubits the height of each of her walls,  
 Ten dozen cubits each edge of the square deck.<sup>193</sup>  
 I laid out the contours (and) joined her together.<sup>194</sup>  
 I provided her with six decks, (60)  
 Dividing her (thus) into seven parts.  
 Her floor plan I divided into nine parts.  
 I hammered water-plugs into her.<sup>195</sup>  
 I saw to the punting-poles and laid in supplies.<sup>196</sup>  
 Six 'sar' (measures)<sup>197</sup> of bitumen I poured into the  
 furnace,

Three sar of asphalt [I also] poured inside.  
 Three sar of oil the basket-bearers carried,  
 Aside from the one sar of oil which the *calking*<sup>198</sup> con-  
 sumed,  
 And the two sar of oil [which] the boatman stowed  
 away.

Bullocks I slaughtered for the [people], (70)  
 And I killed sheep every day.  
 Must, red wine, oil, and white wine<sup>199</sup>  
 [I gave the] workmen [to drink], as though river water,  
 That they might feast as on New Year's Day.  
 I op[ened . . .] ointment, applying (it) to my hand.

<sup>189</sup> I take these genitive forms to denote the superlative, in accordance with Semitic usage. The literal sense would be "[A choice of] birds, a hiding of fishes."

<sup>190</sup> Restored from lines 87, 90. As has long been recognized, these lines feature word plays in that both *kukku* and *kibūti* may designate either food or misfortune; cf. C. Frank, *ZA*, xxxvi (1935), 218. Wily Ea plays on this ambiguity: To the populace, the statement would be a promise of prosperity; to Utnapishtim it would signalize the impending deluge.

<sup>191</sup> cf. Heidel, *EG*, 82, n.170.

<sup>192</sup> Schott and Landsberger, *ZA*, XLII (1934), 137.

<sup>193</sup> The ship was thus an exact cube, cf. Heidel, *EG*, 82, n.173.

<sup>194</sup> Or "fashioned." "Contours," lit. "outside shape."

<sup>195</sup> For O. Neugebauer's explanation of the plugs cf. *ZA*, XLII, 138.

<sup>196</sup> Lit. "the needful."

<sup>197</sup> Var. "three sar." The *šar* was the number 3,600. If the measure understood with it was the *sātu* (seah), each *šar* designated about 8,000 gallons; cf. Heidel, *EG*, 83, n.178.

<sup>198</sup> For *niqqu* cf. A. Salonen, *Die Wasserfahrzeuge in Babylonien* (1939), 149, n.2.

<sup>199</sup> See A. Poebel, *ZA*, xxxix (1929), 149.

[On the sev]enth [day] the ship was completed.  
 [The launching] was very difficult,  
 So that they had to shift the floor planks<sup>200</sup> above and  
 below,  
 [Until] two-thirds of [the structure]<sup>201</sup> [had g]one [into  
 the water].

[Whatever I had] I laded upon her: (80)  
 Whatever I had of silver I laded upon her;  
 Whatever I [had] of gold I laded upon her;  
 Whatever I had of all the living beings I [laded] upon  
 her.

All my family and kin I made go aboard the ship.  
 The beasts of the field, the wild creatures of the field,  
 All the craftsmen I made go aboard.  
 Shamash had set for me a stated time:  
 'When he who orders unease at night,<sup>202</sup>  
 Will shower down a rain of blight,  
 Board thou the ship and batten up the entrance!  
 That stated time had arrived:  
 'He who orders unease at night, showers down  
 a rain of blight.' (90)  
 I watched the appearance of the weather.  
 The weather was awesome to behold.  
 I boarded the ship and battened up the entrance.  
 To batten down<sup>203</sup> the (whole) ship, to Puzur-Amurri,  
 the boatman,  
 I handed over the structure together with its contents.

With the first glow of dawn,  
 A black cloud rose up from the horizon.  
 Inside it Adad thunders,  
 While Shullat and Hanish<sup>204</sup> go in front,  
 Moving as heralds over hill and plain. (100)  
 Erragal<sup>205</sup> tears out the posts;<sup>206</sup>  
 Forth comes Ninurta and causes the dikes to follow.  
 The Anunnaki lift up the torches,  
 Setting the land ablaze with their glare.  
 Consternation<sup>207</sup> over Adad reaches to the heavens,  
 Who turned to blackness all that had been light.  
 [The wide] land was shattered like [a pot]!  
 For one day the south-storm [blew],  
 Gathering speed as it blew, [submerging the mountains],  
 Overtaking the [people] like a battle. (110)  
 No one can see his fellow,  
 Nor can the people be recognized from heaven.

<sup>200</sup> Read *ge-er-má-dù*, with Salonen, *op. cit.*, 93. I take the sense to be, however, that the weight had to be shifted around (*uštabbalu*) on the upper and lower decks (*eliš u šapliš*) to make the launching possible.

<sup>201</sup> Because of the masculine suffix (*šinišat-su*), the antecedent cannot be the feminine *eleppu* "ship." Perhaps *ekallu*, as in line 95.

<sup>202</sup> The true bearing of the word plays mentioned in lines 46-47. In order to reflect the rhyme of the Akkadian, which the two halves of this line contain—perhaps to bring out the proverbial content—I have translated here *lilāti* as "night," instead of "evening, dusk."

<sup>203</sup> Lit. "to calk," cf. Salonen, *op. cit.*, 152. This expression seems to mean here "to put the finishing touches to."

<sup>204</sup> For this reading of the names of the two heralds cf. *CT*, xxxv, 7, lines 19-20.

<sup>205</sup> i.e. Nergal, god of the nether world.

<sup>206</sup> Of the world dam.

<sup>207</sup> The term *šuharratu*, with the elative element *š-*, does not mean "rage," but "stark stillness, bewilderment, consternation." cf. line 131, below.

The gods were frightened by the deluge,  
 And, shrinking back, they ascended to the heaven of  
 Anu.<sup>208</sup>

The gods cowered like dogs  
 Crouched against the outer wall.  
 Ishtar cried out like a woman in travail,  
 The sweet-voiced mistress of the [gods] moans aloud:  
 'The olden days are alas turned to clay,  
 Because I bespoke evil in the Assembly of the gods.  
 How could I bespeak evil in the Assembly  
 of the gods, (120)

Ordering battle for the destruction of my people,  
 When it is I myself who give birth to my people!  
 Like the spawn of the fishes they fill the sea!  
 The Anunnaki gods weep with her,  
 The gods, all humbled, sit and weep,  
 Their lips *drawn tight*,<sup>209</sup> [ . . . ] one and all.  
 Six days and [six] nights  
 Blows the flood wind, as the south-storm sweeps the  
 land.

When the seventh day arrived,  
 The flood(-carrying) south-storm subsided in the  
 battle, (130)  
 Which it had fought like an army.  
 The sea grew quiet, the tempest was still, the flood  
 ceased.

I looked at the weather: stillness had set in,  
 And all of mankind had returned to clay.  
 The landscape was as level as a flat roof.  
 I opened a hatch, and light fell upon my face.  
 Bowing low, I sat and wept,  
 Tears running down on my face.  
 I looked about for coast lines in the expanse of the sea:  
 In each of fourteen<sup>210</sup> (regions)

There emerged a region(-mountain).<sup>211</sup>  
 On Mount Nisir<sup>212</sup> the ship came to a halt. (140)  
 Mount Nisir held the ship fast,  
 Allowing no motion.  
 One day, a second day, Mount Nisir held the ship fast,  
 Allowing no motion.  
 A third day, a fourth day, Mount Nisir held the ship  
 fast,  
 Allowing no motion.  
 A fifth, and a sixth (day), Mount Nisir held the ship  
 fast,  
 Allowing no motion.

When the seventh day arrived,  
 I sent forth and set free a dove.  
 The dove went forth, but came back;  
 Since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned  
 round.  
 Then I sent forth and set free a swallow.

<sup>208</sup> The highest of several heavens in the Mesopotamian conception of the cosmos.

<sup>209</sup> Var. "covered."

<sup>210</sup> Var. "twelve."

<sup>211</sup> cf. Oppenheim, *Orientalia*, xvii (1948), 54; for *nagū* see H. and J. Lewy, *HUCA*, xvii (1943), 11-15.

<sup>212</sup> For the identification of Mount Nisir with modern Pir Omar Gudrun, cf. my report in *AASOR*, viii (1926/27), 17-18.

The swallow went forth, but came back; (150)  
 Since no resting-place for it was visible,<sup>212a</sup> she turned  
 round.  
 Then I sent forth and set free a raven.  
 The raven went forth and, seeing that the waters had  
 diminished,  
 He eats, circles, caws, and turns not round.  
 Then I let out (all) to the four winds  
 And offered a sacrifice.  
 I poured out a libation on the top of the mountain.  
 Seven and seven cult-vessels I set up,  
 Upon their pot-stands I heaped cane, cedarwood, and  
 myrtle.  
 The gods smelled the savor,  
 The gods smelled the sweet savor, (160)  
 The gods crowded like flies about the sacrificer.  
 When at length as the great goddess<sup>213</sup> arrived,  
 She lifted up the great jewels which Anu had fashioned  
 to her liking:  
 'Ye gods here, as surely as this lapis  
 Upon my neck I shall not forget,  
 I shall be mindful of these days, forgetting (them) never.  
 Let the gods come to the offering;  
 (But) let not Enlil come to the offering,  
 For he, unreasoning, brought on the deluge  
 And my people consigned to destruction.'  
 When at length as Enlil arrived, (170)  
 And saw the ship, Enlil was wroth,  
 He was filled with wrath over the Igigi gods:<sup>214</sup>  
 'Has some living soul escaped?  
 No man was to survive the destruction!  
 Ninurta opened his mouth to speak,  
 Saying to valiant Enlil:  
 'Who, other than Ea, can devise plans?<sup>215</sup>  
 It is Ea alone who knows every matter.'  
 Ea opened his mouth to speak,  
 Saying to valiant Enlil:  
 'Thou wisest of gods, thou hero,  
 How couldst thou, unreasoning, bring on the deluge?  
 On the sinner impose his sin, (180)  
 On the transgressor impose his transgression!  
 (Yet) be lenient, lest he be cut off,  
 Be patient,<sup>216</sup> lest he be dis[lodged]!  
 Instead of thy bringing on the deluge,  
 Would that a lion had risen up to diminish man-  
 kind!  
 Instead of thy bringing on the deluge,  
 Would that a wolf had risen up to diminish man-  
 kind!  
 Instead of thy bringing on the deluge,  
 Would that a famine had risen up to l[ay low] man-  
 kind!  
 Instead of thy bringing on the deluge,

<sup>212a</sup> More exactly "appeared," from \*(w)apū, in view of the repeated writing with *p*.

<sup>213</sup> Ishtar.

<sup>214</sup> The heavenly gods.

<sup>215</sup> An allusion to one of the common epithets of Ea.

<sup>216</sup> For *šadādu* in the sense of "heed," and the like, see XII, 32.

Would that pestilence<sup>217</sup> had risen up to smi[te  
 down] mankind!  
 It was not I who disclosed the secret of the great gods.  
 I let Atrahasis<sup>218</sup> see a dream,  
 And he perceived the secret of the gods.  
 Now then take counsel in regard to him!  
 Thereupon Enlil went aboard the ship.  
 Holding me by the hand, he took me aboard. (190)  
 He took my wife aboard and made (her) kneel by my  
 side.  
 Standing between us, he touched our foreheads to bless  
 us:  
 'Hitherto Utnapishtim has been but human.  
 Henceforth Utnapishtim and his wife shall be like unto  
 us gods.  
 Utnapishtim shall reside far away, at the mouth of the  
 rivers!  
 Thus they took me and made me reside far away,  
 At the mouth of the rivers.  
 But now, who will for thy sake call the gods to Assembly  
 That the life which thou seekest thou mayest find?  
 Up, lie not down to sleep  
 For six days and seven nights."  
 As he sits there on his haunches, (200)  
 Sleep fans him like the whirlwind.  
 Utnapishtim says to her, to his spouse:  
 "Behold this hero who seeks life!  
 Sleep fans him like a mist."  
 His spouse says to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway:  
 "Touch him that the man may awake,  
 That he may return safe on the way whence he came,  
 That through the gate by which he left he may return to  
 his land."  
 Utnapishtim says to her, to his spouse:  
 "Since to deceive is human, he will seek  
 to deceive thee."<sup>219</sup> (210)  
 Up, bake for him wafers, put (them) at his head,  
 And mark on the wall the days he sleeps."  
 She baked for him wafers, put (them) at his head,  
 And marked on the wall the days he slept.  
 His first wafer is dried out,  
 The second is gone bad,<sup>220</sup> the third is soggy;  
 The crust<sup>221</sup> of the fourth has turned white;  
 The fifth has a moldy cast,  
 The sixth (still) is fresh-colored;<sup>222</sup>  
 The seventh—just as he touched him the man awoke.

Gilgamesh says to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway:

<sup>217</sup> Lit. "Erra," the god of pestilence.

<sup>218</sup> "Exceeding Wise," an epithet of Utnapishtim.

<sup>219</sup> By asserting that he had not slept at all. Lit. "Mankind being wicked, he will seek to deceive thee." For *raggu*: *ruggū* cf. B. Landsberger, *ana itūšu* (1937), 233.

<sup>220</sup> cf., e.g., *Ludlul, Babylonica*, VII (1923), 169, 35.

<sup>221</sup> For the Heb. cognate *ḫawwān*, cf. Jer. 7:18.

<sup>222</sup> For *bašlu* in reference to color cf. my remarks in *JAOS*, LXVIII (1948), 13. The entire episode, as has long been recognized (cf. especially, Landsberger, *ZA*, XLII, 141, n.1), depicts the progressive deterioration of the bread wafers (not loaves) day by day. The technical problem is how this was indicated. To add to the difficulty, the term for the sixth stage—*bašlu*—is ambiguous in that it may mean either "cooked, ripe" or "light-, fresh-colored." In the latter instance, stages 4-6 would be judged by the color.

"Scarcely<sup>223</sup> had sleep surged over me, (220)  
When straightway thou dost touch and rouse me!"

Utnapishtim [says to him], to Gilgamesh:

"[Go], Gilgamesh, count thy wafers,  
[That the days thou hast slept] may become known to thee:

Thy [first] wafer is dried out,  
[The second is gone] bad, the third is soggy;  
The crust of the fourth has turned white;

[The fifth] has a moldy cast,  
The sixth (still) is fresh-colored.

[The seventh]—at this instant thou hast awakened."

Gilgamesh says to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway:  
"[What then] shall I do, Utnapishtim, (230)  
Whither shall I go,

[Now] that the Bereaver has laid hold on my [members]?

In my bedchamber lurks death,  
And wherever I se[t my foot], there is death!"

Utnapishtim [says to him], to Urshanabi, the boatman:  
"Urshanabi, may the landing-pl[ace not rejoice in thee],  
May the place of crossing renounce thee!

To him who wanders on its shore, deny thou its shore!  
The man thou hast led (hither), whose body is covered  
with grime,

The grace of whose members skins have distorted,  
Take him, Urshanabi, and bring him to the washing-  
place.

Let him wash off his grime in water  
clean as snow, (240)

Let him cast off his skins, let the sea carry (them)  
away,

That the fairness of his body may be seen.  
Let him renew the band round his head,

Let him put on a cloak to clothe his nakedness,  
That he may arrive in his city,

That he may achieve his journey.

Let not (his) cloak have a moldy cast,  
Let it be wholly new."

Urshanabi took him and brought him to the washing-  
place.

He washed off his grime in water clean as snow.  
He cast off his skins, the sea carried (them) away,

That the fairness of his body might be seen. (250)

He renewed [the band] round his head,

He put on a cloak to clothe his nakedness,

That he might ar[rive in his city],

That he might achieve his journey.

[The cloak had not a moldy cast, but] was [wholly]  
new.

Gilgamesh and Urshanabi boarded the boat,  
[They launch]ed the boat on the waves (and) they  
sailed away.

His spouse says to him, to Utnapishtim the Faraway:

<sup>223</sup> Reading *an-ni-miš*, for which see W. von Soden, *Z.A.*, xli (1933), 129, n.3.

"Gilgamesh has come hither, toiling and straining.  
What wilt thou give (him) that he may return  
to his land?" (260)

At that he, Gilgamesh, raised up (his) pole,  
To bring the boat nigh to the shore.

Utnapishtim [says] to him, [to] Gilgamesh:  
"Gilgamesh, thou hast come hither, toiling and straining.  
What shall I give thee that thou mayest return to thy  
land?

I will disclose, O Gilgamesh, a hidden thing,  
And [a secret of the gods I will] tell thee:

This plant, like the buckthorn is [its . . . ].  
Its thorns will pr[ick thy hands] just as does the *rose*.  
If thy hands obtain the plant, [thou wilt  
find new life]." (270)

No sooner had Gilgamesh heard this,  
Than he opened the *wa[ter-pipe]*,<sup>224</sup>

He tied heavy stones [to his feet].

They pulled him down into the deep [and he saw the  
plant].

He took the plant, though it pr[icked his hands].

He cut the heavy stones [from his feet].

The [s]ea<sup>225</sup> cast him up upon its shore.

Gilgamesh says to him, to Urshanabi, the boatman:

"Urshanabi, this plant is a plant *apart*,<sup>226</sup>  
Whereby a man may regain his *life's breath*.

I will take it to ramparted Uruk, (280)

Will cause [ . . . ] to eat the plant . . . !

Its name shall be 'Man Becomes Young in Old Age.'

I myself shall eat (it)

And thus return to the state of my youth."

After twenty leagues they broke off a morsel,

After thirty (further) leagues they prepared for the  
night.

Gilgamesh saw a well whose water was cool.

He went down into it to bathe in the water.

A serpent snuffed the fragrance of the plant;

It came up [from the water] and carried off the plant.

Going back it shed [its] slough.<sup>227</sup>

Thereupon Gilgamesh sits down and weeps, (290)

His tears running down over his face.

**THERE WILL BE NO  
CRISIS NEXT WEEK**

**my schedule is already full**