

**Sin-leqqi-unninni, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablets 3-5**  
**Wesley Advocates 19 February 2017**

*III. i*

At the end of their hours' long wrestling match, how do Gilgamesh and Enkidu publically signify their truce and new friendship?

*III. ii*

Where exactly do Enkidu and Gilgamesh conceive their quest to visit the Cedar Forest and slay Humbaba? Why is that significant? Which of them initiates this plan? What does he foresee as difficulties?

How does the poet describe Humbaba? Why does he guard the Cedar Forest?

Describe Ninsun's role in preparing the men for this quest. What does she want from Shamash? What realms does the god Shamash govern?

Why should Enkidu assume the lead during the long journey?

*III. iii*

How does any human being know when Humbaba stirs? Why is he fearsome?

In addition to securing wood from the Cedar Forest, what do Gilgamesh and Enkidu seek?

*III. iv*

Enlil set Humbaba to guard the Cedar Forest—what realms does Enlil govern? Why is Humbaba even needed here?

In lines 5 – 8, Gilgamesh seems to understand his place in the universe when he says, "Only gods live forever . . . even our longest days are numbered." If so, why must they succeed in this quest? (Remember these words later, after Enkidu dies, when Gilgamesh wishes to secure immortality.)

What preparations must they make before leaving Uruk on this quest?

### *III. v*

How have attitudes toward Gilgamesh changed since Tablet 1? Why?  
What advice do the citizens of Uruk offer their king? Why?

N lines 91 ff. Gilgamesh calls Enkidu what? Where is Egalmah, and whose temple is that?

What is the significance of the men embracing “as teammates do”?

### *III. vi*

What further preparations must Gilgamesh complete before departing?

What further advice do the citizens offer him? Of what significance?

Note Enkidu’s acceptance of his role as guide. Why is that appropriate?

### *IV. i and ii*

What do we see in Figure 24, particularly in the depiction of Humbaba?

What particulars make this journey seem superhuman, epic?

### *IV. iii and iv*

What surprise do they find when they climb the last hill of the mountain?

Why does the plot require this fierce guard?

### *IV. v*

Notice Enkidu’s role in reminding Gilgamesh of their vows and helping him overcome any fear—Gilgamesh’s other self.

Why must Enkidu—not Gilgamesh—grab Humbaba’s guard?

Unlike any mortal, Humbaba possesses what powers rendering him especially difficult to capture and overcome?

What is the purpose of Humbaba’s howling? Figuratively, what does it represent?

*IV. vi*

What causes the wound to Enkidu's hand? How does that wound debilitate him?

In what way does Gilgamesh compensate Enkidu so that he can participate in overcoming Humbaba and secure his own glory despite the wound?

What is their song? Why is song so important to men like these?

Throughout this tablet, we see instances stressing amity and honor. Cite two or three.

*V. i*

Here at the top of the mountain, deep in the Cedar Forest, what can Enkidu and Gilgamesh see? Why is that significant? What realizations come to them?

*V. ii*

*No extant text.*

*V. iii*

Note another dream for Gilgamesh. How do we learn about the dream's contents? (Remember that the gods generally communicate with human beings through visions and dreams.)

How does Enkidu interpret the dream? What does he envision as the end of their battle with Humbaba?

Who prays to the mountain for help in lines 26 – 27? Please keep this prayer in mind.

*V. iv*

While Enkidu and Gilgamesh sleep and rest in preparation for the great battle, what happens on the mountain?

When Gilgamesh awakens, he reports another dream (or vision, as he calls it). In that dream, what happens to Mother Earth? To the sky? What transformation has occurred—and what does Gilgamesh now expect?

How does Enkidu, in contrast, interpret Gilgamesh's dream?  
Why does the poet want us to see this difference?

How has Shamash answered Ninsun's prayer? What does he say to Gilgamesh to inspire confidence?

Ultimately, the changes—horrible storm, winds—wrought by Shamash ensure Humbaba's defeat. How specifically?

*V. vi*

How do the heroes slay Humbaba? How does he try to win mercy? Who insists on killing him? How does that echo his previous behaviors?

Indeed, why must the heroes slay him rather than make a deal?

By the end of this tablet, what have they gained?