

Hammurabi's Declaration

Student Name _____ Date _____

Council of Advisors, I, whom Anu and Bel called by name me, Hammurabi, the exalted prince, who fears the gods, wants to bring about the rule of righteousness in this land, to destroy the wicked and the evil-doers. Those who are ruled by me will find that the strong will no longer harm the weak. I rule over the people like Shamash, god of the sun, to enlighten the land, to further the well being of mankind.

Thanks to my building projects here in southern Mesopotamia—such as the great and lesser canals—my people have prospered and multiplied. Now, my land is crowded. My people complain that there is crime. My people complain that they cannot get a fair price for their labor and yet they must pay too much for what they need. The people cry out that they want more of the things possessed by the nations surrounding us so that we can build many fine cities, supply the people with useful metals, and increase the strength of our armies. To enrich this kingdom, we need more people who will buy our excess grains.

My people are restless. You, my advisors, are to share your wisdom with me. What can I do to:

1. Keep my people happy and maintain stability here in Babylonia?
2. Let the people know that I am a fair and just ruler?
3. Reduce crime?
4. Guarantee fair wages?
5. Guarantee that citizens are treated fairly by trades people and professionals?
6. Guarantee that trades people and professionals get fair treatment?
7. Make sure that slaves do not revolt?
8. Provide for the things my people desire?
9. Relieve overcrowding?
10. Supply my magnificent armies with the materials they need and reward my generals and soldiers?
11. Find markets for our excess crops?

Remember, council members, your advice should include recommendations for my domestic policies and my foreign affairs.