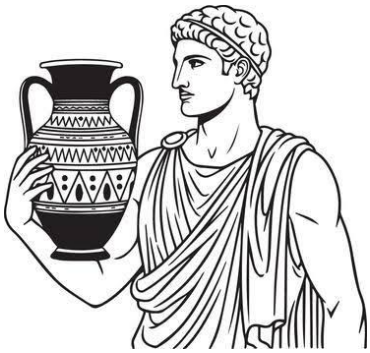
Year 9 History

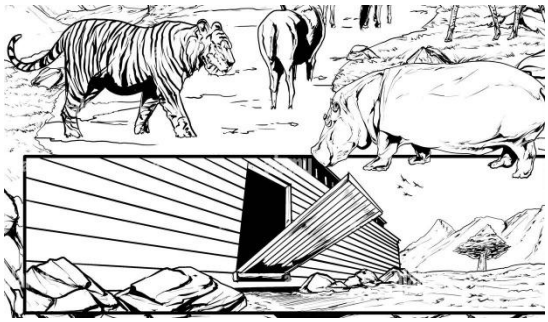


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Biblical History and the Ancient World

History is the story of human beings in the past. The word 'history' comes from the Greek word *'historia'*, meaning *investigation*. Historians try to analyse why things happened and how events affected people's lives. Historians collect evidence to solve various mysteries from the past.

How do historians find their information? Historians must find objects that people left behind, records of people, and events from the time, and even human remains. These types of evidence are called primary sources. Secondary sources are written after the event we are studying took place, such as history books.

Records

Written records are a good source of evidence for finding out about the past. We can work out historical dates from the Bible, because it records when the people of the Bible were born and died, and we can add up the years.

Two types of History

When speaking about the ancient world, there are two types of history:

1. Biblically- based history, which gives us the true history of the world, from the Creator Himself, as recorded in the Bible.

2. Secular history which ignores the historical record of the Bible and instead uses other methods for dating, such as the dating of artefacts or bones that are dug up through archaeology.

The dates given by secular history will not always match up to dates of biblical history. The actual reason is that secular history uses evolution as its starting point instead of the word of the Creator Himself.

The Hebrews had very good and accurate written records from which dates can be calculated. The first five books of the bible, called 'The Tora' were the words given by God to Moses, including The Ten Commandments. The Tora was carefully copied by scribes and passed on from generation to generation.

Secular historians date the artifacts they find using dating methods such as radiometric dating. Artifacts are dated in the same way that rocks and fossils are dated. These dating methods involve assumptions.

For example, radiometric dating measures how much of a material has decayed or altered over time. The assumption is that the rate of decay is always consistent. But no one really knows. The greatest assumption of secular history is that the universe came into being without the God of the Bible, millions of years ago, and therefore remains of civilizations of

the ancient world are dated being many, many thousands of years old – much more than the Bible tells us. If you Google 'date of the first human being', Google will tell you that: 'Modern human beings (Homo sapiens) first appeared around 315,000 to 300,000 years ago in Africa.' The Bible tells us otherwise - that the first humans were actually Adam and Eve, created about 6000 years ago.

Record of ages in the Bible		**Years from Creation**
God created everything.	*Genesis 1–2*	0
Adam became the father of Seth at 130.	*Genesis 5:3*	0 + 130 = 130
Seth became the father of Enosh at 105.	*Genesis 5:6*	130 + 105 = 235
Enosh became the father of Kenan at 90.	*Genesis 5:9*	235 + 90 = 325
Cainan became the father of Mahalalel at 70.	*Genesis 5:12*	325 + 70 = 395
Mahalalel became the father of Jared at 65.	*Genesis 5:15*	395 + 65 = 460
Jared became the father of Enoch at 162.	*Genesis 5:18*	460 + 162 = 622
Enoch became the father of Methuselah at 65.	*Genesis 5:21*	622 + 65 = 687
Methuselah became the father of Lamech at 187.	*Genesis 5:25*	687 + 187 = 874
Lamech became the father of Noah at 182.	*Genesis 5:28*	874 + 182 = 1056
The Flood started when Noah was 600.	*Genesis 7:6*	1056 + 600 = 1656
Noah died at 950 years old.	*Genesis 9:28-29*	1656 + 350 = 2006
Abraham - alive in the last 58 years of Noah's life	*Genesis 11:10-32*	2006 + 117 = 2123

Adding up the numbers on the right, from Creation to Abraham's death, we can calculate 2123 years.

Then we have to go to the New Testament, Matthew Chapter 1, to find out the generations from Abraham to the birth of Christ. (Read Matthew Chapter 1.) Because the date of the birth of Christ is confirmed by history books, we know it to be approximately 4 BC, lining up with the date for King Herod. Once we know the date for Christ's birth we can work backwards:

- Present day to Christ: approx. 2000 years
- Christ to Abraham: approx. 2000 years
- Abraham to Adam: approx. 2000 years

Timeline

Putting dates and events in order like this is called a time line. Note that BC stands for Before Christ and AD stands for "Anno Domini," which is Latin for "in the year of our Lord," or the years following Christ's birth. Modern-day historians have tried to undermine the Biblical reference to our dating system by replacing it with BCE: Before Common Era and CE: Common Era. **Using the Bible as a history book we can calculate dates for Old Testament Israel. These are the birth years of some of the key Biblical figures, and years for significant events.**

4004 BC - Creation

4004 – 3074 BC - Adam

2948 BC – 1997 BC - Noah

2348 BC – The Great Flood

2242 BC - The Tower of Babel

1922 – 1747 BC - Abram - Abram's name was changed to Abraham.

1896 - 1716 BC – Isaac

1836-1689 - Jacob – name changed to Israel; time of Israel in Egypt

!869 – 1759 BC – Joseph - In 1715 BC Joseph was sold as a slave and taken to Egypt where he became a ruler.

1525 – 1405 BC - Moses - The Ten Commandments; The Tabernacle; God sets His people free from Egyptian rule; The Israelites in the wilderness

!355 – 12 45 BC Joshua - In1451 BC Joshua claimed the land and the Israelites occupied and settled in Canaan

1200 BC - Ruth, Naomi - A time of famine when Israel was ruled by judges

1015-897 BC - **Samuel, King Saul, King David, Solomon, Absalom -** Israel ruled by kings. King Solomon builds the temple.

782-753 BC - Jonah disobeyed God's call to bring a message to Ninevah.

607-534 BC - Daniel who stands for his faith; first return of Jews to Jerusalem; temple rebuilt; Babylon taken by Cyrus

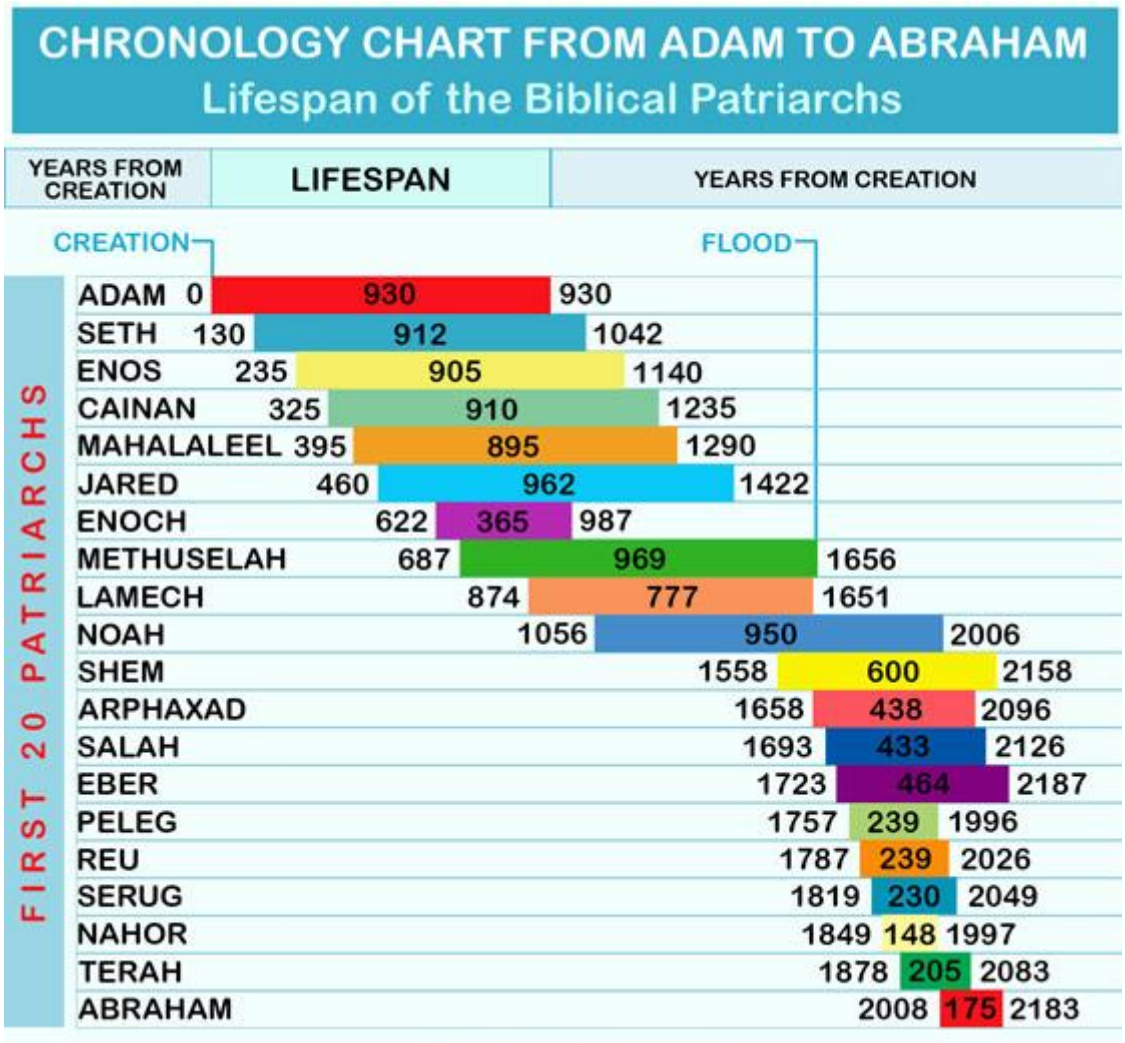
500 – 520 BC - Esther, Queen of Persian King Ahasuerus; **r**eturn of the Jews under Ezra.

445 BC – Nehemiah - responsible for rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. In 400 BC Nehemiah died.

Note that people lived longer closer to Adam, because they were closer to the perfect Creation. Noah lived to 950 years. The human lifespan gradually became shorter as time went on.

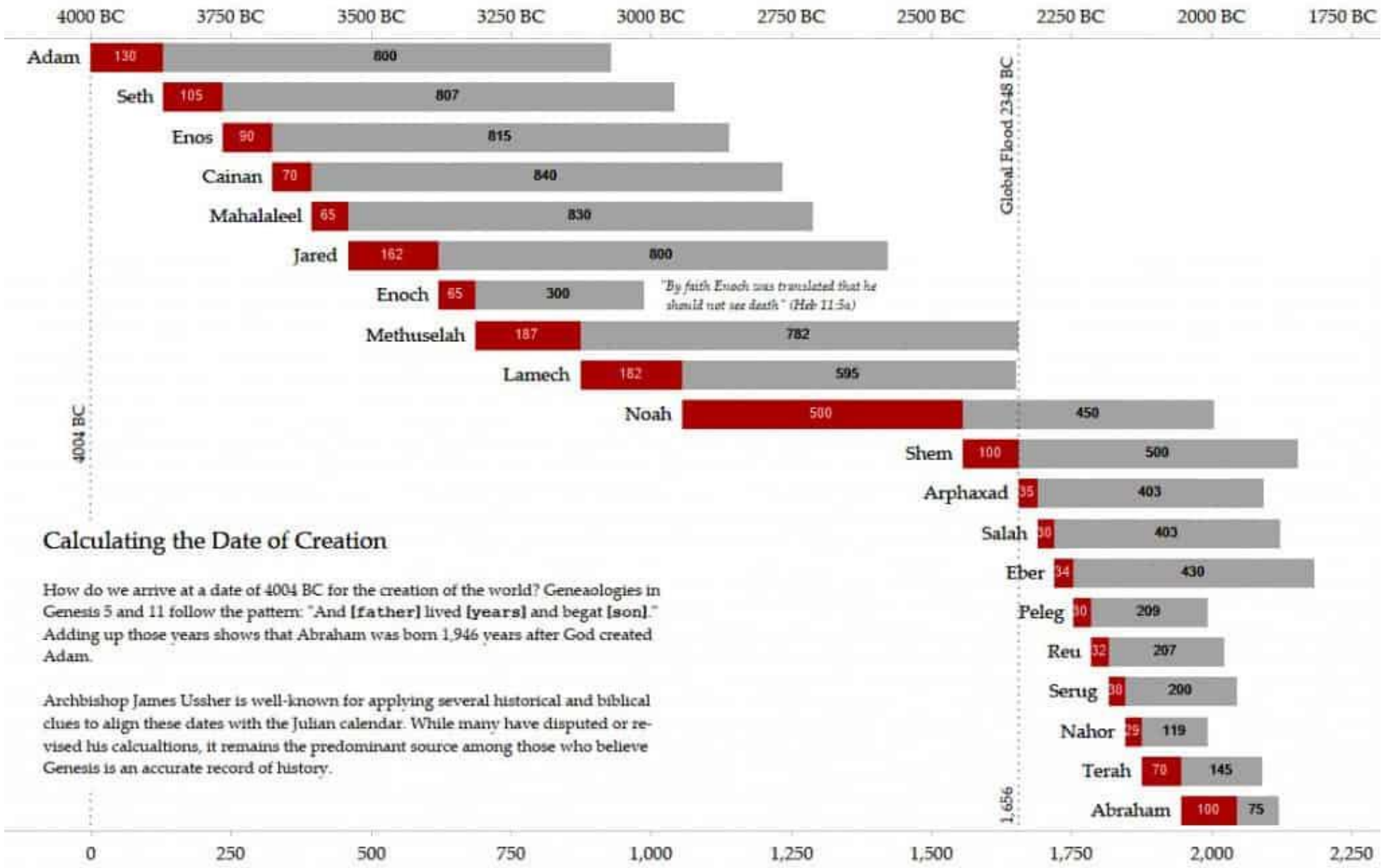
Look at the table on page 6 and you will see how the dates of the Old Testament Patriarchs overlapped. This meant that the older generations knew the younger, and were able to pass on knowledge. For example, Abraham was 58 years old when Noah died. The following table shows the lifespan of these people. Look in the middle section to see how long they lived. Most of the names on the next page you may not have heard of. But keep in mind that these people were the parents, grandparents or great grandparents of the Bible people we are most familiar with, shown in the timeline on page 4.

There is a general understanding in the world today that things are getting better as time goes by. But this is not the case. Adam, the perfect man, had a perfect gene pool. But once sin was introduced into the world, decay and decline followed. The genetics of the once perfect human being, gradually became less perfect.



Make a list of the lifespans of the following people: Adam, Methuselah, Noah, Shem, Abraham.

Genesis Timeline from Adam to Abraham



Calculating the Date of Creation

How do we arrive at a date of 4004 BC for the creation of the world? Geneaologies in Genesis 5 and 11 follow the pattern: "And **[father]** lived **[years]** and begat **[son]**." Adding up those years shows that Abraham was born 1,946 years after God created Adam.

Archbishop James Ussher is well-known for applying several historical and biblical clues to align these dates with the Julian calendar. While many have disputed or revised his calcualtions, it remains the predominant source among those who believe Genesis is an accurate record of history.

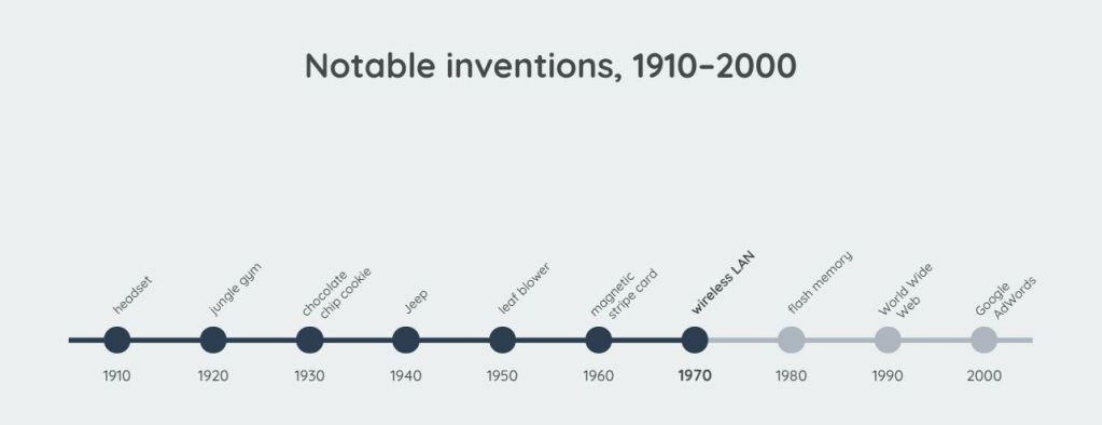
Activities

1. What are some differences between biblical history and secular history?

2. What was the world like when God first created it?

3. What changed it and how did it change?

4. Draw a horizontal timeline showing dates and events from creation to Abraham. Here is a timeline for 'notable inventions'. Create something similar to this using the information you have learned about the biblical timeline.



5. Who is the oldest person mentioned in the Bible?

6. Why did people gradually begin to live shorter lifespans?

7. How old was Abraham when he died?

8. Why is it very likely that Noah and Abraham knew one another?

9. What is the significance of the Tower of Babel to world history?

10. What does BC stand for?

11. What is the starting point for BC?

12. Which is the earliest date: 250 BC or 1926 BC?

13. What does AD stand for?

14. Which is the earliest date: 250 AD or 1926 AD?

15. What period of time are we living in at the moment?

16. What does the word 'genealogies' mean?

17. What does Matthew chapter 1 tell us about genealogies?

What about the rest of the world?

Every people-group originated from Adam and Eve, and therefore Noah. All people except for Noah and his family were wiped out by the world-wide global flood. By 2242 BC the population had increased and trouble broke out with the building of the Tower of Babel. From that point, when God confused the languages, people-groups spread out all over the world and developed new civilizations. So the history of civilization for every country begins from 2242 BC or later.

It's not just mainstream science that is influenced by the theory of evolution. It follows that ancient history (BC) also has an evolutionary foundation. Why do some scientists and historians adopt the belief that the earth is millions of years old?

They have to try and convince themselves and others that evolution, (one species evolving into another), would be possible within a framework of millions of years, even though in our present world, no one has ever seen one species evolve into another. As the Bible tells us, living things were created 'after their own kind' (Genesis 1:24). That means that the offspring of cats will always be cats, and the offspring of frogs will always be frogs etc. Evolutionists believe that although we can't see the evolution of species happening today, given millions of years it could have happened.

The Bible tells us the opposite. We can work out from Genesis that the first man and woman were created around 4000 BC. Adam and Eve were fully formed capable and intelligent human beings. Secular historians on the other hand, believe that early man developed from apes and finally evolved into human beings about 300,000 years ago.

So if these dates for the first human beings are not plausible according to the Bible, we can expect that later dates may also be highly inaccurate. For example, Wikipedia will tell you that

'the first civilization, often referred to as Sumer, emerged in southern Mesopotamia between 4000 and 3300 BC. This period marks the beginning of urbanization and the development of writing, cities, and governance in ancient civilizations. Sumer is recognized as a cradle of civilization, laying the foundation for many of the innovations that would shape later societies.'

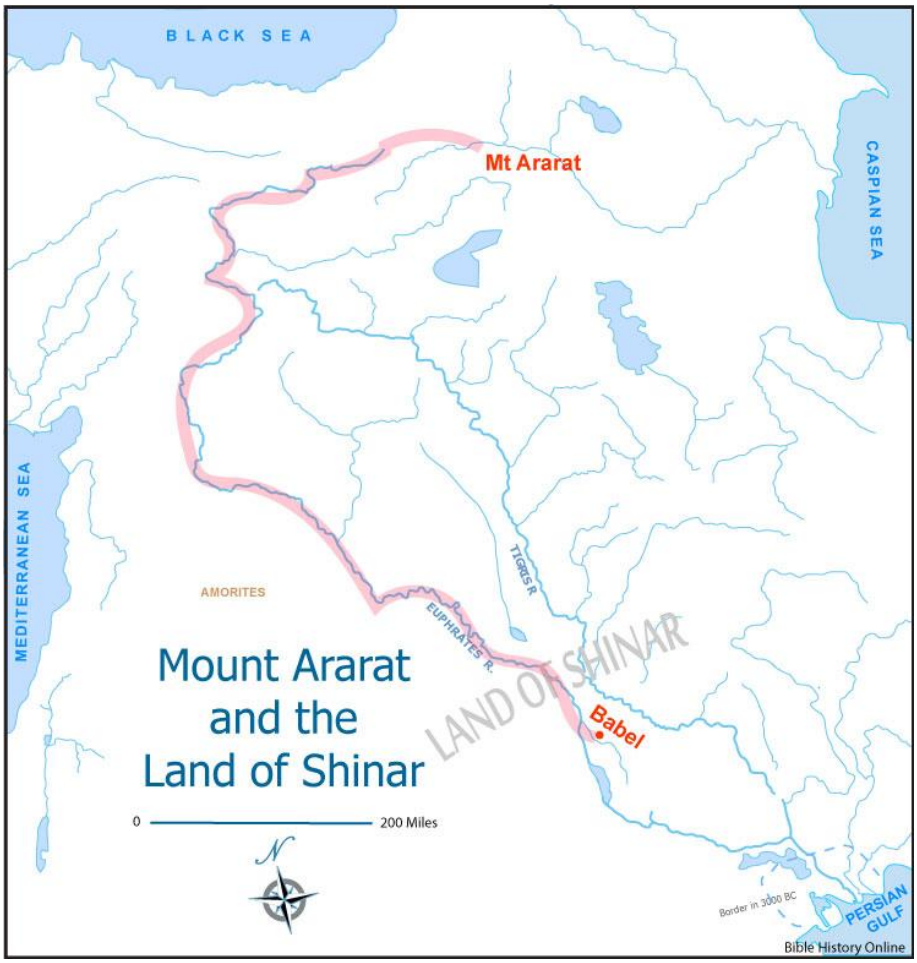
According to the Bible, this information is true, EXCEPT for the dates. These dates cannot be correct because the Bible tells us that the history of civilization began after the Great Flood, followed by the Tower of Babel around 2242 BC, when the languages were confused and different language groups dispersed all over the earth. Therefore, all the artifacts of civilization with which archaeologists examine, must relate to mankind's history after the Great Flood. This means that the starting point for any civilization is 2242 B.C. or later

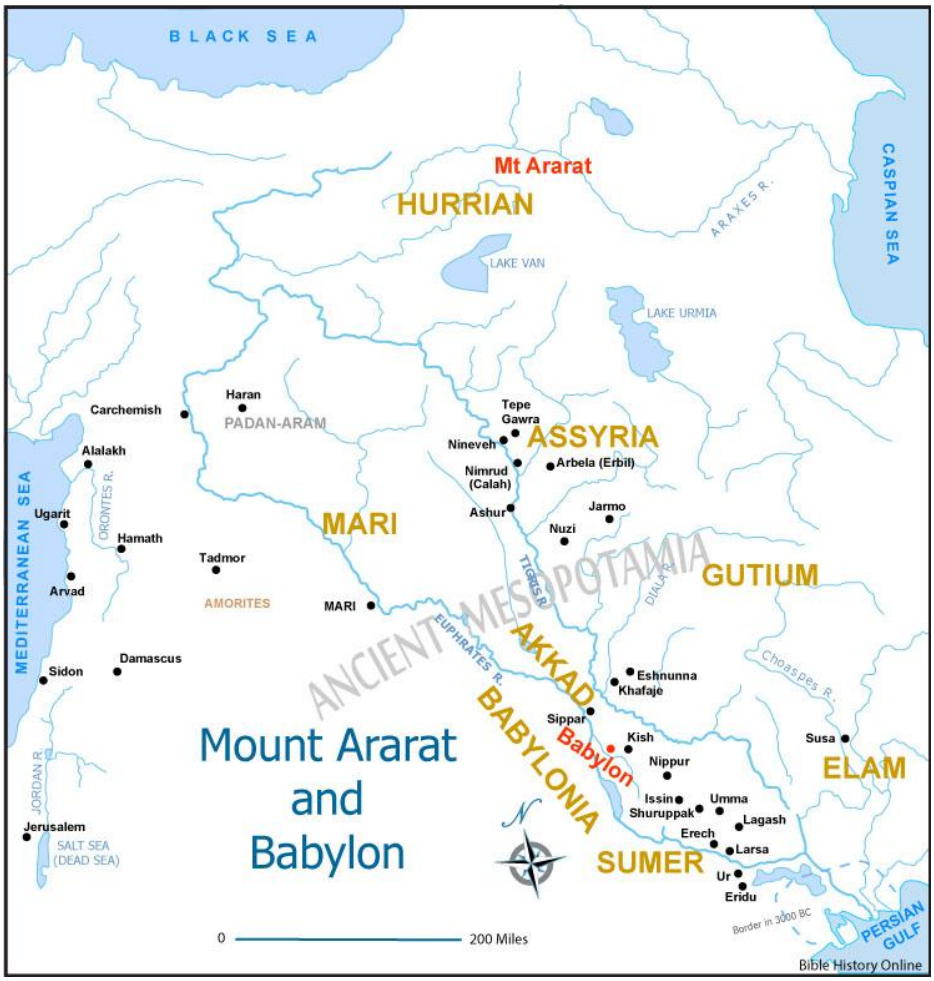
The idea that Sumer, Mesopotamia, is the cradle of civilization is totally correct from a biblical perspective. Mesopotamia is a fertile region located between the Tigris and

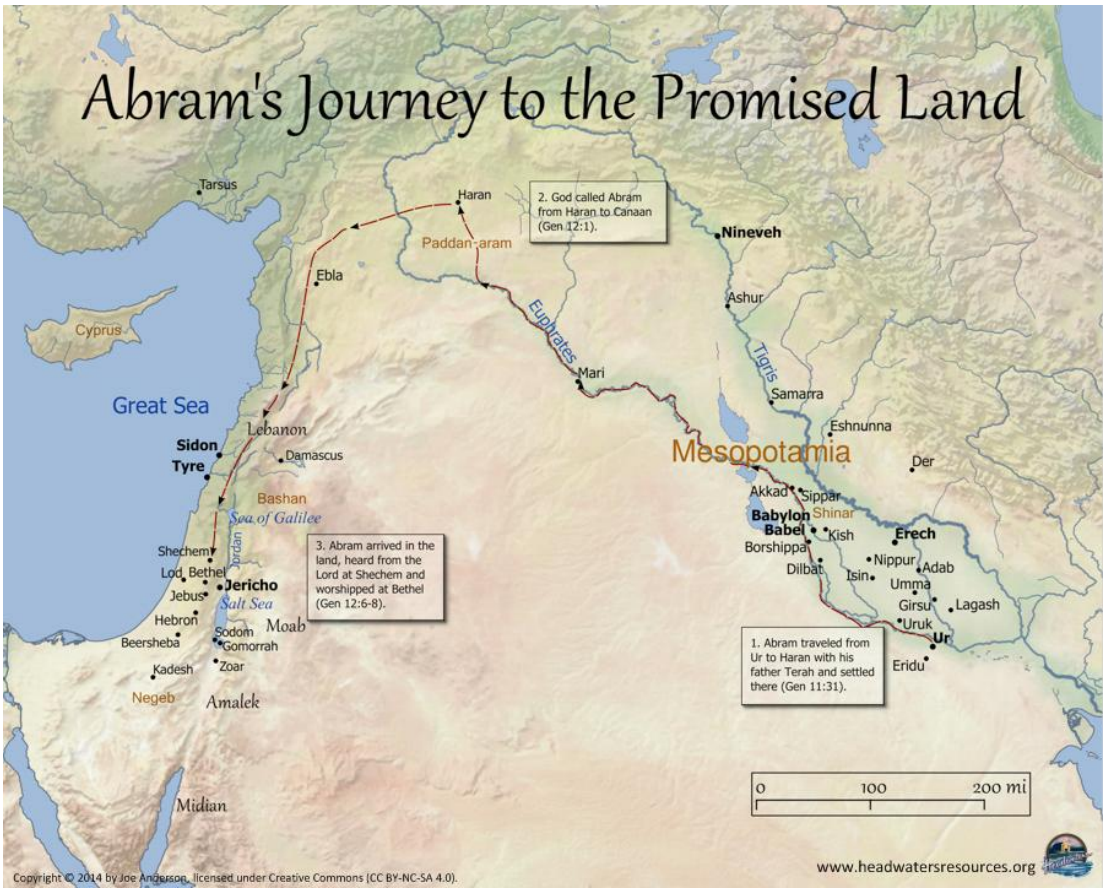
Euphrates rivers, corresponding to modern-day Iraq and parts of Syria, Turkey, and Iran. This ancient land is significant in biblical history, particularly as the homeland of Abraham, the patriarch of the Israelites. Ur, Abraham's city of origin, was a prominent Sumerian city-state in ancient Mesopotamia, known for its advanced culture and significant contributions to early human civilization.

Genesis 11:31 states, "Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (son of Haran), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there."

By studying the following maps, you will see how Noah's descendants could have travelled from Mt. Ararat, the landing place of the Ark, to Babel (Babylon). And on the second map, see how Abraham could have travelled from the Tower of Babel to Ur in Sumer. This means that Biblical history confirms the idea of earliest post-Flood civilization around 2000 BC. The third map shows how Abraham travelled to the Promised Land (Canaan), now modern Israel. God told Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. This meant that Abraham would not just be the father of Israel, but of all those who called the God of the Bible their own, (gentiles).




BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA
Mt Ararat
HURRIAN
ARAXES R.
LAKE VAN
LAKE URMIA
Haran
PADAN-ARAM
Carchemish
Tepe Gawra
Nineveh
ASSYRIA
Alalakh
Arbela (Erbil)
Nimrud (Calah)
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
ORONTES R.
Ugarit
Ashur
Jarmo
MARI
Hamath
Nuzi
Tadmor
TIGRIS R.
DIALA R.
GUTIUM
Arvad
AMORITES
MARI
ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA
EUPHRATES R.
AKKAD
Damascus
Sidon
Eshnunna
Khafajé
Choaspes R.
Sippar
BABYLONIA
Kish
Susa
Babylon
Nippur
ELAM
Mount Ararat and Babylon
Issin
Umma
Shuruppak
Lagash
JORDAN R.
Jerusalem
Erech
Larsa
SALT SEA (DEAD SEA)
SUMER
Ur
Eridu
Border in 3000 BC
PERSIAN GULF
0
200 Miles
Bible History Online


Abram's Journey to the Promised Land
Tarsus
Haran
2. God called Abram from Haran to Canaan (Gen 12:1).
Nineveh
Paddan-aram
Ebla
Ashur
Euphrates
Cyprus
Tigris
Mari
Samarra
Great Sea
Lebanon
Eshnunna
Sidon
Damascus
Mesopotamia
Tyre
Der
Akkad
Sippar
Bashan
Babylon
Shinar
Sea of Galilee
Babel
Kish
Erech
Shechem
Jordan
Borshippa
Nippur
Adab
Lod
Bethel
3. Abram arrived in the land, heard from the Lord at Shechem and worshipped at Bethel (Gen 12:6-8).
Dilbat
Isin
Umma
Jericho
Girsu
Lagash
Jebus
Salt Sea
Uruk
Hebron
Moab
Ur
Sodom
Gomorrah
1. Abram traveled from Ur to Haran with his father Terah and settled there (Gen 11:31).
Beersheba
Eridu
Kadesh
Zoar
Negeb
Amalek
0
100
200 mi
Midian
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Facts about the Great Flood

Noah was righteous

Gen 6:1 – 8 and Gen 7:1
Noah born 2,948 BC
The beginning of the world was 4000 BC (approx 6000 years ago)
By the time of Noah, the population of sinners had grown to such an extent that God had to do something drastic.
Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives were the only righteous people on earth, (8 people).
Noah found grace / favour in the eyes of the Lord, (Gen 6:8).

Noah was old when God called him.

Gen 5:31-32
Noah was 600 years old when God chose him to be his servant. His role was to save human and animal life, (Gen 7:6.) He lived to around 900 yrs.

Noah's children

Noah had only three children, (three sons): Japeth, Shem and Ham. Japeth was the eldest and Ham the youngest. Shem, the middle son, was 98 when he entered the ark. His son Arpachshad was born 2 years after the Flood. He also had other sons and daughters after that, (Gen 11:10). Remember that people lived much longer then and the age period for bearing children was much longer.
If Noah's children were of child bearing age when they entered the ark, did they have children, and if so, why didn't they bring their children aboard?
The Bible doesn't tell us the answer to this, but it is clear that there were only 8 people on the ark. Either God chose not to give them children pre-Flood, or, any children they had lived sinful lives and were lost in the Flood.

The Great Flood

Gen 7:6 - 24
Gen 8: 1 – 21
The flood occurred in 2,348 BC, (4,362 years ago).
The period of time from Creation to the Flood was 1,600.
The water came not just from the rain, but from underground springs.
So in 40 days it was possible for the whole earth to be covered with water.

What evidence do we see of a world-wide flood today?

1. The sea – made of water from the flood – salty. The huge upheaval of the earth caused mountains and valleys. As the flood receded it washed the minerals from the land down into the valleys. Sea now covers 70% of the planet. Before the flood most of the world was land.
2. Fossils – caused by the flood and were not formed over millions of years. Fossils require sudden burial. If the animals had died naturally they would have either been

eaten, or decomposed. The fine details we see in fossils don't occur in animals that slowly decompose. There are examples of fossils having lunch and giving birth.

3. Land formations – mountains, valleys, canyons, rock outcrops such as Uluru, Australia

Noah was a faithful obedient servant

The Bible tells us that Noah was obedient:
Gen 6:22 and Gen 7:5 – Noah did according to all that God had commanded.
He listened to God and heard accurately what God was saying.
Noah was chosen by God as His servant to bring about a special event in history.
Noah obeyed.

Noah delivered a prophetic message:
The message that God wanted to tell the world through Noah:

- God judges sin with death.
- God always judges sin with death.
- No one will get away with sin.
- There will be a day of judgment when all sin will be judged with death.
- Only those who escaped into the ark were saved.
- Only those who escape into God's salvation plan will be saved.

Noah was diligent, intelligent and skillful

Making of the ark:
Ch 6:14 – 16 – God's instructions for building the ark

The ark was not a bath tub or a cute little ark depicted in a children's story.
The proportions were for a most stable vessel: 30 x 5 x 3
This formula has proved to be the most stable dimensions for a water going vessel and there are 2 Nordic ferries made to these dimensions.
It was impossible to capsize,
It was massive in volume.
Noah and his sons had the technology. They were not ape-like men with low intelligence.

The size of the ark

A cubit is 1.5 feet, (46 cm). The boat was: 140 metres x 23 m x 13.5 m
Its volume was 43,500 cubic metres.
This is the equivalent of 522 standard railroad stock cars
(One railroad car holds 240 sheep.)

The fact that Noah's ark is plausible shows us that the Bible can be trusted as a historical document.

How did all the animals fit in?
God sent young or baby animals.
Only 11% of animals are bigger than sheep.
God sent only one pair of each kind – e.g. the horse family included zebra and donkey.

The boat had 3 levels.
These levels represent:
Father
Son
Holy Spirit

The door was on the second level.
Jesus says, "I am the door, by Me if any one enters in he shall be saved."

Only 7 people believed Noah.
But he kept on believing even though he was in the minority.

Noah was strong and courageous.

He kept moving ahead with what he knew God had told him to do. He didn't doubt in the face of scoffers.

What similarities are there between God's calling on us and God's calling on Noah?
Noah kept preaching the same message even though people didn't listen.
God wants us to tell people that there is an escape route. It doesn't matter if people don't listen.

What similarities / applications are there to end times?
Matt 24: 37 – 39 As in the days of Noah, so will the world be at the time of His coming. As God saved Noah from the disaster, He will save us.

Noah was blessed for his obedience.

Genesis ch 9 v. 1

Noah was a history maker.

Why could we say that this event was the most important so far in human history?
It's remembered in the history of all cultures.
Before the continental shift, all people in the world knew about the true God.
There are Flood stories in every culture – even in Tibet, which has the highest mountain in the world.
After the Flood, Noah's three sons went in different directions: Japeth to Europe, Ham, to Africa and Shem to Asia.

The history from Adam to Noah was recorded by Moses, and carefully passed on to future generations in the Jewish culture. But other cultures also have evidence of knowing the biblical events.

Flood stories and Creation stories in many cultures

Every country has a history. The descendants of every country in the world originated from Babel (Babylon), soon after the Flood. People groups travelled for huge distances, over long periods of time to reach places all over the world. Many cultures took with them the Biblical stories of Creation and the Flood, although they lost their understanding of the true God. They turned to idols and false gods, with only the Hebrews remaining as true worshippers.

Another way we can gain information about the history of people groups is to discover stories they have to tell. While stories from the past do not give us dates, and details may not always be completely accurate, we can see some resemblance to Biblical accounts in the following:

A Flood story has been told using Chinese writing character

(Eight people in a boat, meaning that there were eight people in Noah's ark – Noah, his wife, Ham, Shem and Japeth and their wives.)



When Wonjuna made the Great Flood (An Australian Aboriginal legend)
There was a medicine man named Tanjilli. He was very proud.
There was another man named Umbirri. He was jealous of Tanjilli, who was a very famous medicine man. Umbirri was a bad man who had been chased away from another tribe for stealing.

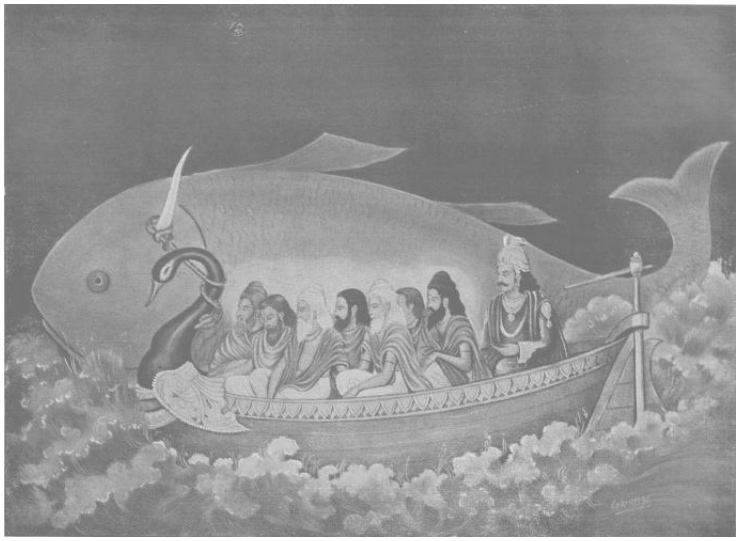
Umbirri thought he would make Tanjilli look foolish. There had not been rain for a long time. Umbirri told the tribe that Tanjilli could make it rain. The tribe asked Tanjilli to make it rain. Tanjilli tried to make it rain and soon large drops started to fall. Tanjilli was very proud. He boasted to everyone about what he had done. It rained and rained for 40 days and 40 nights.

Umbirri and Tanjilli were both washed away in the flood. Then an old man in the tribe called Oolpa asked the Great Spirit to make it stop raining. The rain stopped. The tribe then believed that it was the Great Spirit who had made it rain and not Tanjilli. They believed that Tanjilli and Umbirri did not survive the flood because they were not good men.

A fish called Vishnu (Hindi)
A man called Manu found a fish while washing his hands in the river. The fish said that he was God. He warned Manu that a big flood was coming. He sent Manu a large boat and ordered that two of every living species, plant and animal, to board the boat.

The flood came and covered the whole earth. When the waters receded, the boat landed on a mountain top. Manu took the plants and animals out of the boat. The flood had destroyed everything.

Note that the painting accompanying this story shows 8 people in a boat.



A Creation story told by an American Indian (www.creation.com)
The history of the world as my Blackfeet Elders told it …

"My name is Percy Bullchild. I'm sixty-seven years of age. I'm from the Blackfeet Indian tribe in Montana, USA. With what little education I have, I am going to try to write the version of our own true ways in our history and in our legends …

This story is about a lone spirit that lived in this spiritual place before there was a world with any kind of life. The lone spirit has been alive forever and will continue to live forever. Life is given to all of us humans and to all the creatures of the earth.

We call the Creator of everything "Creator Sun", who made the first living beings.
This is how Creator Sun made the first humans:
From the mud Creator Sun molded a form in his own shape, his own image. This mud figure came to life as Creator Sun blew into his nostrils. He wanted to do for the mudman something to help him overcome that loneliness. Using that strange power, Creator Sun put the mudman into a deep sleep so he wouldn't know what was going on.

Kneeling down beside him, Creator Sun took out the mudman's lowest, smallest left rib. With this rib he made an image after the mudman and himself, to bear fruit, to bear offspring.

This woman was looking for food one day when she was tempted by a "snakeman" who told her a half-truth and caused her to betray her husband. The Creator knew what was going on but, as always, he is so forgiving to all his creations. Nevertheless, all of us are to pay for whatever sins we commit.
Activities

Activities

1. What can be the earliest date for a civilization post-Flood?

2. How do we know that the various people groups that moved out from Babel had knowledge of the Creation and the Flood?

4. Give an example of how the theory of evolution is an influence in mainstream science.

5. Give an example of how the theory of evolution is an influence in secular history.

6. Draw maps to show how descendants of Noah may have traveled from the Ark's landing place to the fertile land between the Tigres and Euphrates.

7. What was the name of this region?

8. Read and summarize Abraham's story from Genesis 12 and 13.

9. What evidence from Genesis 19 is there to show that the population soon after the end of the Flood, once again become wicked? Where do you think these cities could have been?

10. How did God punish the cities?

11. What relation was Lot to Abraham?

12. How did God show compassion on Lot's family? (verses 15-16)

13. Why did Lot's wife abuse the Lord's generosity, and what happened to her? (verse 26)

14. Why do you think God chose Abraham to leave his homeland and moved to Canaan? (See Hebrews 11:8)

15. What is the land of Canaan today?

16. What was Abraham's inheritance going to be?

17. What did God mean when he told Abraham that he would be the father of many nations?



History of cultural groups
1. The Sumerians

After the Tower of Babel, people moved into the fertile land between the Tigres and Euphrates Rivers, Mesopotamia, and began to form small villages which slowly grew into large towns. Eventually these cities developed into the civilization of the Sumer. This land is often called the "Cradle of Civilization". As we have learned previously, Abraham was originally from here before God called him out to go to Canaan. Abraham was a descendent of Noah, and would have known Noah and his family because Noah and Abraham were alive at the same time. Abraham was 58 years old when Noah died. The people of Sumer practiced agriculture and farmed animals like sheep and goats. These would have been the offspring of the animals that were on Noah's ark. Although there were 2 of every kind of animal on the ark, male and female, God sent SEVEN of certain kinds of animals that could be used for food after coming off the ark.

Although the Sumerian civilization developed not so long after Noah's Flood, the people once again started to worship false gods. Abraham however, did not. He worshiped the true God. This is why God called him out to go to a new land, Canaan.

Sumer City-States

Each city-state had its own god. In the center of each city was a large temple to the city god called a ziggurat. The ziggurat looked like a step pyramid with a flat top. Here the priests would perform rituals and sacrifices.

As the Sumerian villages grew into large cities, they formed city-states. This is where a city government would rule the city as well as the land around it. These city-states often fought each other. They built walls around their cities for protection. Farmland was outside the walls, but people would retreat to the city when invaders came.

There were many city-states throughout Sumer. One of them was Ur, where Abraham came from. Eridu is thought to be the first of the major cities formed and one of the oldest cities in the world.

Sumerian Rulers and Government

Each city-state had its own ruler. The ruler was like a king or governor. The ruler of the city was often the high priest of their religion as well. This gave him even more power.

In addition to the king or governor, there was a fairly complex government with officials who helped to organize city building projects and keep the city running. There were also laws that the citizens must follow or face punishment. The invention of government is often credited to the Sumerians.

Important Inventions and Technology

One of the great contributions the Sumerians made to civilization was their many inventions. They invented the first form of writing, a number system, the first wheeled vehicles, sun-dried bricks, and irrigation for farming. All of these things were important for the development of human civilization.

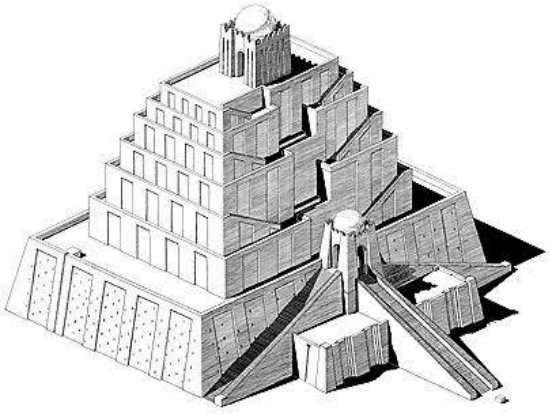
They also had an interest in science including astronomy and the movement of the moon and the stars. They used this information to make a more accurate calendar.

Fun Facts About the Sumerians

- Their number system was based on the number 60, like ours is based on the number 10. They used this when they came up with 60 minutes in an hour and 360 degrees in a circle. We still use these divisions today.
- Some historians think that the ziggurat at the city of Eridu was the Tower of Babel from the Bible.
- Some of the city-states were quite large. Ur is thought to have been the largest and may have had a population of 65,000 people at its peak.
- Their buildings and homes were made from sun-dried bricks.

Ziggurats
What did they look like?

Ziggurats looked like step pyramids. They would have anywhere from 2 to 7 levels or steps. Each level would be smaller than the one before. Typically, the ziggurat would be square in shape at the base.



How big were the ziggurats?

Some ziggurats are believed to have been huge. Perhaps the largest ziggurat was the one at Babylon. Recorded dimensions show that it had seven levels and reached a height of nearly 90 metres. It was also 90 metres at the base.

Why did they build them?

The ziggurat was a temple to the main god of the city. Each city in Mesopotamia had a primary god. For example, Murdock was the god of Babylon, Enki was the god of Eridu, and Ishtar was the goddess of Nineveh. The ziggurat showed that the city was dedicated to that god.

At the top of the ziggurat was a shrine to the god. The priests would perform sacrifices and other rituals here. They built them high because they wanted the shrine to be as close to the heavens as possible.

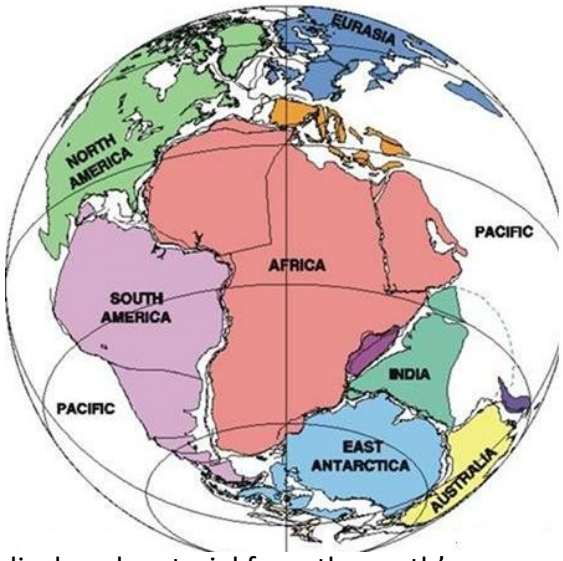
Are there any ziggurats left?

Many of the ziggurats have been destroyed over the past several thousands of years. The famous huge ziggurat of Babylon was said to have been in ruins by the time Alexander the Great conquered the city in 330 BC. The ziggurat at Chogha Zanbil is one of the last surviving ziggurats. Some ziggurats have been reconstructed or rebuilt. The ziggurat at the city Ur is one that has been somewhat rebuilt.

Interesting Facts About Ziggurats

- The ziggurat at Babylon was named Etemenanki. This meant "Foundation of heaven and Earth" in Sumerian.
- The tall height of the ziggurat may have also been useful during the seasonal flooding.
- There were generally only a few ramps leading up to the top of the ziggurat. This made the top easy to guard and helped keep the priest's rituals private, if they wanted.
- The early Egyptian pyramids were step pyramids similar to the ziggurat.
- The Aztecs of South America built stepped pyramids to their gods as well. This was years later and on a completely different continent.

This makes us ask, “Did the Aztecs learn how to build ziggurats from the Sumerians, because their ancestors lived in Sumaria and passed on the knowledge?” The second question is, “If so, how did the Aztecs get from Sumeria to South America?” In general, how did people get to such far away places in such a short time?



The answer to this is, that immediately after the Flood, the earth was not as we know it today. Originally the continents were joined together, but in 1960 it was scientificaly proven that the continents at one stage drifted apart, forming the continents as we know them today. This is called ‘continental drift’. Continents today may still be drifting apart at a very slow rate, but at the time of the Flood, and for a short time after, the drift was fast. This is called ‘catastrophic plate tectonics’. During the Flood, the ocean floor moved like a conveyer belt . The sinking ocean floor displaced material from the earth’s mantle. The earth’s crust would have been under such stress that it would have been torn apart, breaking up the pre-Flood supercontinent and the ocean floor. Because people started migrating only about 100 years after the Flood, (after Babel), the continents were not yet completely separated, and for a short window of time, they could walk from one continent to another on land bridges.

Activities

1. Draw a map of Sumer showing the Tigres and Euphrates.

2. Name two major cities in Sumer.

3. Why do you think Sumer is called “the Cradle of Civilization”?

4. Make a list of the inventions of the people of Sumer. Which invention is shown in the picture bottom left?

5. How did they create a calendar?

6. What kind of animals did they use for animal farming?

7. How old was Abraham when Noah died?

8. What evidence is there from the text that most people of Sumer had moved away from worshiping the true God?

9. What symbols on the Mesopotamian pottery below could be evidence of their religion?

9. Why did God choose Abram (later called Abraham), and what was his role going to be?

10. Describe the government of Sumer.

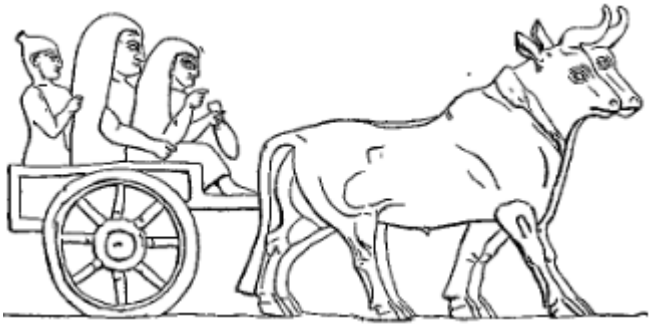
11. Make a list of dot points: facts about ziggurats. Draw one.

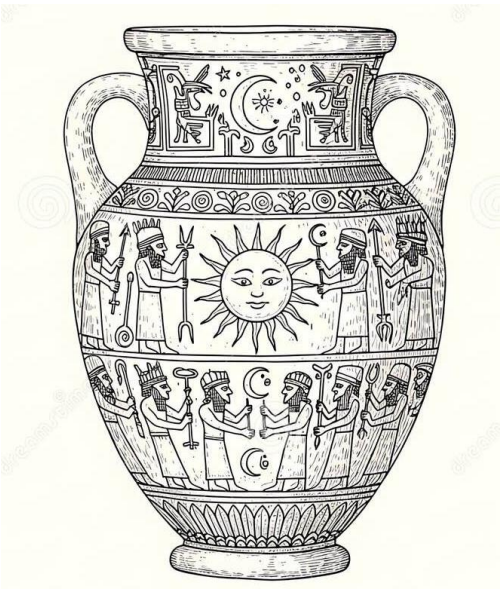
12. What is the possible origin of the remains of ziggurats in South America?

13. How did the people who left Babel get to faraway places?

14. Draw a map of the world before continental drift.

15. Why did rapid continental drift take place during and soon after the Flood?





2. The Hebrews

As we have already learned, the history of the Hebrews, (the Israelites or Jews) is recorded in the Bible. The history outlined in the Old Testament is shared by Jews and Christians. Hebrews believed in one God, called Yahweh, who gave them instructions and laws. These were written down in the Scriptures, the first 5 books called the Torah.

Yahweh made a covenant with the Hebrews. He promised them that one day they would have a homeland in Canaan and that He would always look after them, provided the Hebrews always obeyed Yahweh's laws. Canaan became the land of Israel and Syria.

Hebrew priests made sacrifices on behalf of the people as a way of saying sorry for their sin. At certain times the priests killed lambs, calves, goats, doves as a sin offering. This practice was no longer necessary once Christ came into the world, (AD 2-4), to be our ultimate sacrifice for sin.

The Hebrews had to follow many laws, including the Ten Commandments. Priests helped the people understand the laws. There were laws for:

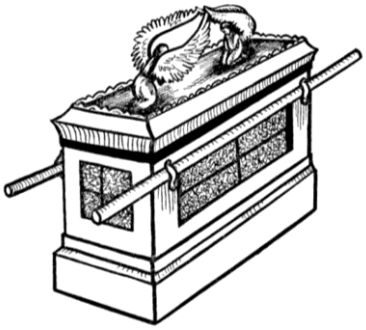
- Observing religious festivals
- Diet – such as only eating clean animals such as cows and sheep, (ones that don't eat other animals)
- Personal cleanliness and health
- Marriage
- Inheritance
- Ownership of property
- Morality
- Care of the poor
- Crime and punishment
- Government and war



Examples of laws
About fairness to the poor (Deuteronomy 24:14-15):
You should give poor workers their wage every day, because they need it right away.

About marriage
A man may not divorce his wife for trivial reasons. (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)

About marriage and war (Deuteronomy 24:5)
If a man has just married, he may not go off to war for one year so that he can devote himself to his home and the happiness of the woman he has married.
The Ten Commandments (Exodus20)
Given to Moses on stone tablets, and carried wherever the Israelites went in the Ark of the Covenant.



How do we know that the Bible is a true historical record?

Historians

Josephus, (AD 37 – 100), a Jewish historian wrote,
"We do not have an unnumerable multitude of books among us as the Greeks have – books that contradicts one another. Instead, we have only 22 books, which contain the records of all the past times, which are justly believed to be divine."

Those 22 books are exactly the same as our 39 books of the Old Testament because some books were combined such as Kings, Chronicles and the 12 minor prophets. Josephus claimed, *"no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any changes in them".*

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Most original copies Hebrew of the Bible were lost, until in 1947, a shepherd boy found the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest surviving written copies of the Bible.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are considered by many to be the most significant archaeological find of the 20th century. From 1947 to 1956, thousands of scroll fragments were uncovered from the caves near Qumran, located on the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea. Over the following decades, teams of scholars pieced these scrolls together to reconstruct an amazing library of texts from the third century BC to the first century AD.

Over the next decade, thousands of fragments were recovered from 11 caves near the Dead Sea. The scrolls include approximately 800–900 original manuscripts, preserved in over 15,000 fragments. They are primarily written in Hebrew, with some in Aramaic and a few in Greek.



The texts fall into two main categories:

- Copies of books from the Hebrew Bible, including nearly all books except Esther, some of which are the oldest known versions biblical manuscripts
- hymns, prayers, wisdom literature, apocalyptic texts, and legal or administrative documents, reflecting the beliefs and practices of specific Jewish communities.

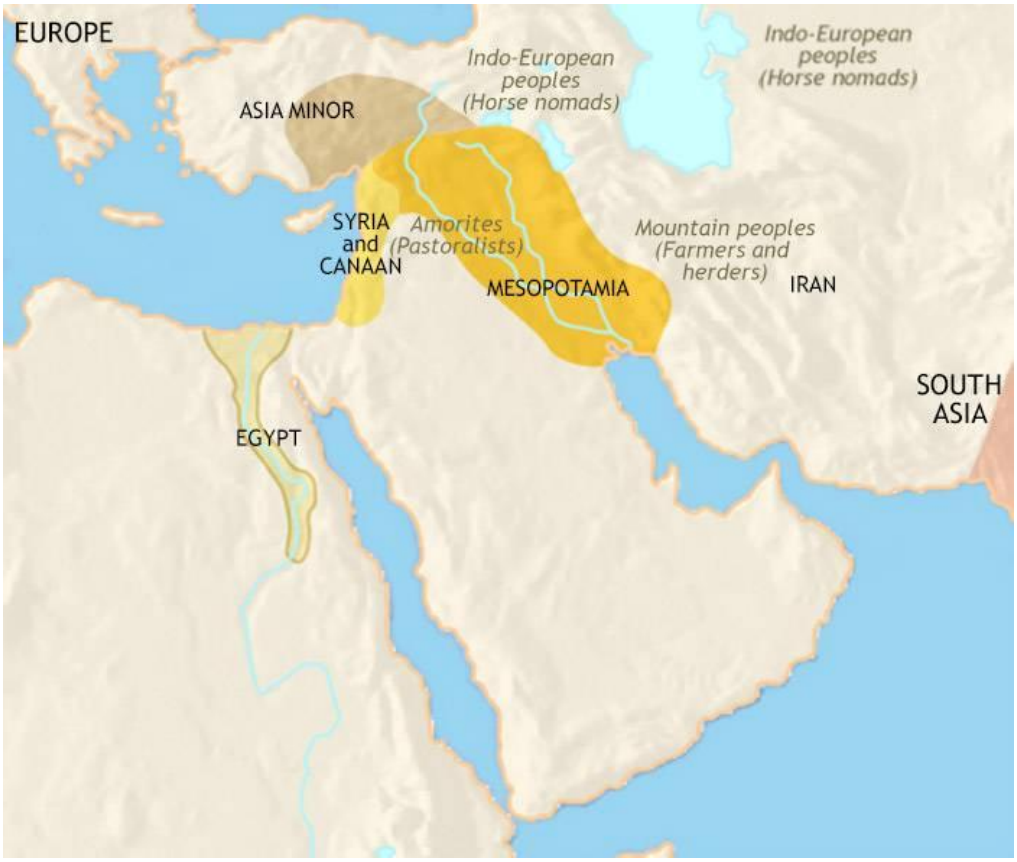
The Dead Sea Scrolls are crucial for understanding the development of Judaism and early Christianity. They confirm the remarkable accuracy of biblical transmission over centuries and provide context for the religious, social, and political environment of Second Temple Judaism. They were preserved in clay jars in the arid desert climate, which allowed them to survive for nearly 2000 years. Scholars have painstakingly pieced together the fragments, translating and analyzing them to reconstruct the texts and understand their historical context.

The history of the Hebrews overlaps with the history of other cultures such as the Egyptians, Greeks and the Romans.

Map showing Israel's position in Europe and the Middle East



Map showing Israel in earlier times



Timeline of key events in the history of the Hebrews

4004 BC The Creation	Yahweh created the universe, including the earth, plants, animals and the first people, Adam and Eve in six days.
2348 BC The Flood	God punished the world because of people's wickedness. Noah was told to build a huge boat, (an ark), to save his family and 2 of every kind of animal. The flood lasted for 150 days.
2242 BC The Tower of Babel	People became proud and ignored God. They built a huge tower to attempt to reaching the heavens. God intervened, leading to the confusion of languages and the scattering of people across the earth.
1900s – 2108 BC	Abraham, living in Ur, Mesopotamia, was told by God to move his family from Mesopotamia to Canaan. Abraham, his son Isaac and grandson Jacob (Israel) became the founding fathers of the Hebrews. Israel had 12 sons who became leaders of 12 separate Hebrew tribes. At the end of a long drought, food was scarce, so the Hebrews travelled to Egypt.
1600s – 1200s BC	Several hundred years after the Hebrews settled in Egypt, the pharaoh believed that there were too many Hebrews in his country. He forced them into slavery and ordered all baby boys to be killed. One Hebrew mother, put her baby in a basket made of woven reeds and set it afloat on the Nile River. An Egyptian princess found the baby and raised him as her own. She called him Moses. When Moses grew up, God called him to rescue the Hebrews and lead them back to Canaan. When the pharaoh refused to let the Hebrews go, God sent 10 disasters on the Egyptians as a sign of His divine power. The pharaoh was finally convinced and let Moses lead the people out of Egypt, but then had second thoughts and sent his army after them. God parted the Red Sea and the Hebrews walked through it on the dry sea floor. Once they were through, God caused the sea to rush in again and the Egyptian army who were following, drown. This is called 'The Exodus'.
1200 BC	It took the Hebrews 40 years to travel back to Canaan. During their wanderings, God gave Moses two stone tablets on which He wrote 'The 10 Commandments'. The Ark of the Covenant was built during this time to contain the stone tablets on which the 10 Commandments were written. It was carried with them wherever they went.
1200s BC	The Hebrew tribes finally settled in Canaan, the land that God promised Abraham. They learnt how to build farms and towns. They were often defeated by their enemies. An enemy tribe, the Philistines, stole the Ark of the Covenant.
1020 – 928 BC	The Hebrew tribes decided to unite so that they could have a more powerful army. Saul became king of the first kingdom of Israel. When he died, his armour-bearer David became king. David defeated his enemies, including the powerful Philistines. As a young boy David killed the Philistine giant, Goliath with a stone from his slingshot. Under King David the tribes of Israel had their greatest kingdom. David recaptured the Ark of the Covenant and made Jerusalem the capital city. Solomon,

	David's son, succeeded him as king, and was famous for his wisdom. Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem. When Solomon died, the Hebrew tribes argued and divided into two kingdoms: the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. (map p26)
586 BC	With their powerful army, the Babylonians captured Jerusalem and destroyed Solomon's temple. Many Hebrews were captured and taken to Babylon. This included Daniel.
539 BC	The Persian Empire (now Iran) conquered Babylon, and the Persian king gave the Hebrews permission to return to Canaan.
520 – 515 BC	The Hebrews rebuilt Solomon's temple.
322 BC	The Greek king, Alexander the Great conquered Canaan.
167 BC – 160 BC	The Maccabean Revolt was a Jewish uprising against the Seleucid (Greek Empire), led by the Maccabees to resist Greek oppression and restore Jewish religious freedom. This is celebrated by Jews with the Hannukah today. See the miracle that God performed on page 27.
63 BC	The Romans captured Judah, (the southern kingdom) and renamed the land Palestina. Palestina (or Palestine) was an insulting name derived from the Israelites enemies, the Philistines.
AD 2-4	Birth of Christ, (exact date unsure). Israel under Roman rule.
AD 41	Palestine became a Roman province. The Romans were strict and cruel, so the people of Palestine revolted against the Romans.
AD 70	The Jews continued to rebel against the Romans, so the Romans passed a law to prevent Jews from living in Jerusalem. For seven long months, the Roman military unleashed its full fury against the outnumbered Jewish rebels, culminating in the complete destruction of the Second Temple. The fall of Jerusalem resulted in widespread slaughter, enslavement, and dispersal of Jews to other places.
AD 135	The Romans finally destroyed Palestine. Many Jews left their country; those who stay were captured and sold as slaves.
AD 1930	By 1930, with no country of their own, Jews emigrated all over the world. The total world-wide Jewish population was approx. 15,000,000. The number of Jews in the following countries in 1930: USA 4,000,000; Poland 3,500,000; Soviet Union 2,700,000; Romania 1,000,000; Germany 500,000. In Palestine there were only 175,000.
AD 1933	Hitler took over Germany; his hatred for Jews was evident, prompting numerous Jews to emigrate to other countries.
AD 1938 - 1945	World War 2 and The Holocaust, resulted in the extermination of nearly 6 million Jews across Europe.
AD 1945 - 1947	The Jews across the world wanted to create their own state. Palestine was then controlled by the British. The United Nations approved the creation of a Jewish State and an Arab State in the British mandate of Palestine.
AD 1948 - 1949	The State of Israel declared itself as an independent Jewish state, with a new capital, Tel Aviv. Almost 250,000 Holocaust survivors made their way to Israel. "Operation Magic Carpet" brought thousands of European Jews to Israel. Almost 250,000 Holocaust survivors made their way to Israel.



The two kingdoms – divided 930 BC after the death of Solomon: the northern kingdom was Israel and the southern kingdom was Judah, (capital Jerusalem).



Israel today

The Maccabean Revolt

In 175 B.C., King Antiochus, whose ancient kingdom included Judea (located in present-day Israel), made it against the law for people who lived there to practice their religion, called Judaism. Instead, he wanted Jews to worship Greek gods. The Greeks made the Torah illegal for learning.

When they refused, he ordered his troops to destroy the Temple of Jerusalem, an important place of worship for Jews. He replaced the Jewish symbols with an altar dedicated to Zeus, the king of the Greek gods.

The Jews, led by Judah the Maccabee, rebelled against King Antiochus. Many historians believe that they battled for about three years to become an independent region so they could practice their religion. Finally, around 164 B.C., the Maccabees, as they were called, defeated King Antiochus and his troops.

When the Maccabees returned to their ransacked temple, they found only one jar of oil—just enough to light the temple's candles for one day. But according to the Talmud (one of Judaism's holy texts), the oil miraculously burned for eight days—enough time for the victorious Maccabees to find more oil for their sacred candles.

Restoring the temple and driving out King Antiochus didn't end the conflict. His followers continued to battle with the Jews for more than 22 years. Finally, in the year 142, the warring groups signed a peace treaty, and the Jews formed their own independent region.

Hanukkah

Lasting eight days, the joyous Jewish holiday celebrates a miracle from more than 2,000 years ago.

The Jewish festival of lights, called Hanukkah, is celebrated around the world today, close to the time when Christians celebrate Christmas.

To celebrate the ancient miracle of the oil burning a candle for eight nights, Jews celebrating Hanukkah light a candleholder called a menorah for eight nights. The menorah holds nine candles—one for each night plus a candle in the centre, called the shamash, used to light the other candles.



Activities

1. How do we know that the Bible is a true historical record?
2. What is the name for the God of the Bible in Hebrew?
3. What was the covenant God made with the Hebrews?
4. Why did the priests make sacrifices?
5. What changed the need for sacrifices?
6. On what were the Ten Commandments originally recorded?
7. What is the Ark of the Covenant and what was it used for?
8. Name three countries that adjoin Israel today.
8. Make a series of pictures to illustrate the 7 events of the first seven sections of the timeline on page 24.
9. 1020 – 928 BC – Who were the enemies of Israel and who helped to defeat them?
10. Who built the first temple in Jerusalem during this time?
11. When was this temple destroyed?
12. When was it rebuilt?
13. In 322 BC, which nation conquered the land of the Israelites and who was the king?
14. In your own words, what was the Maccabean revolt?
15. Who captured Israel in 63 BC?
16. From your own knowledge of the New Testament, what can you say about Roman rule in the time of Jesus?
17. When was the second temple, and Jerusalem, destroyed?
18. What new name did the Romans give to Israel?
19. In 1930, which countries of the world had the most Jews living there? Make a bar graph to show this.
20. What did Hitler want to do to the Jews in World War 2?
22. How many Jews were killed?
23. How did the Jews get their land back?
24. What is the capital of Israel today?



Jerusalem



3. The Egyptians

The Land of the Pharaohs

Ancient Egypt is known to be the land of pharaohs and the Great Pyramids. The pharaoh was the most powerful person in Egypt. Egyptians depended on the pharaoh to control the Nile, to protect them from invaders and govern them wisely. The pharaoh was not only a king but was also a god. The pharaoh owned all the land and was very wealthy. People paid their taxes in terms of crops or by working for him building pyramids and temples. Pharaohs lived in palaces with thousands of servants. They often had many wives and some had more than 100 children. When a pharaoh died, he passed on the right to rule to his eldest son.

One of Egypt's greatest pharaohs was Ramesis II, the mighty warrior-king. He led the Egyptian army to a number of victories over neighbouring lands, greatly increasing the Egyptian Empire.

Historical Dates

Some of Egypt's history can be discovered through biblical accounts of Moses and Josiph.

The Ancient Egyptian civilization is one of the oldest civilizations in the world, established only about 50 years after the Sumerians. Civilizations that were closer to Babel (e.g., those in the Middle East) were established earlier than civilizations farther from Babel (e.g., those in Australia or the Americas).

- Babylon (Sumer; Mesopotamia) 2234 BC
- Egypt 2188 BC
- Greece 2089 BC

Secular records may state that Ancient Egyptian civilization began about 5500 years ago but these dates are based upon a timeline written by the Egyptian priest Manetho in his work The Aegyptiaca (the History of Egypt). The Egyptians had no calendar like we do today. They derived periods or dated things in relation to other rulers who had died previously.

Many people who study Egyptian history are starting to believe that many of the earliest rulers were actually reigning concurrently. Specifically, two pharaohs could be ruling at the same time, one in the north, one in the south, or even in smaller regions. The number of years that these two pharaohs reigned would be therefore wrongly counted as two lifespans instead of one, making the Manetho's writings unreliable and the secular timeline for early Egyptian civilization incorrect.

Archaeological artefacts from the early dynasties are very few and cannot be relied on for making any absolute claims about dates. Therefore, secular history cannot be relied on for dates of many of the earliest kings in Egypt. The dates given below take biblical history into account.

Dynasties

Ancient Egyptian history is divided into dynasties, (or time periods).

The Early Dynastic Period (Dynasties 1 – 3) Soon after Babel 2242 BC

Mizraim, Noah's grandson, founded Egypt around 2188 B.C., a date consistent with both biblical and secular records. The Egyptians, the Sumerians, and the Mayans all retained the technology to build pyramids. The Early Dynastic Period of Egypt was a time when Lower and Upper Egypt became one country. People called this new united land the Two Lands. During this period, the families of the rulers of the two lands were in charge.

Who was the First Pharaoh?

Manetho, the early Egyptian historian, said that Menes was the first king of the Two Lands. Menes is probably also called Narmer. Narmer is the earliest recorded king of the First Dynasty. Narmer is also the earliest king linked to the symbols of power over the two lands.

During this time the Egyptians developed hieroglyphic writing which would be important for making records and running the government.

Near the end of the Dynastic Period and the start of the Old Kingdom, the first pyramid was built.

The Old Kingdom (Dynasties 4 – 8) about 2920 – 2770 BC

A powerful Egyptian god-king ruled the united country. Many important parts of ancient Egyptian life started to take shape then. This included their art, buildings, and religion.

Before this period, Egypt was made up of many small, separate villages. The new rulers created a government system for the whole country. Local royal governors helped run things. Early government buildings were often open-air temples. They were made from wood or sandstone. Writing, using hieroglyphs, started just before this period. We don't know much about the spoken language from that time.

Egypt had a strong central government and a prosperous economy. The Old Kingdom is most famous as a time when many pyramids were built.

The pharaoh was the head of both the government and the state religion. He was considered a god. Under the pharaoh, was his chief official, who ran many of the daily tasks of the government. Only the most powerful families gained an education and were taught to read and write. These people became the high-ranking government officials, priests, army generals, and scribes.

Pyramids



When people were scattered from the Tower of Babel, they probably took this building concept with them to places all over the world. It makes sense that many of the families that were scattered from Babel took varying ideas of the tower to their new lands and began building projects of their own. This would account for the Egyptians knowledge and expertise in building the pyramids.

The Old Kingdom period is most famous for building pyramids. This includes the first pyramid, the Pyramid of Djoser, and the largest pyramid, the Great Pyramid at Giza. The pyramids of Giza were also built at this time, as well as the Great Sphinx shown above.

Fall of the Old Kingdom

The central government began to weaken during the Sixth Dynasty. The governors became very powerful and began to ignore the rule of the pharaoh. At the same time, the country suffered from drought and famine. Eventually the central government collapsed and Egypt broke up into several independent states.

Then followed a time of civil war and chaos.

Interesting Facts About the Old Kingdom of Egypt

- The capital city of Egypt during the Old Kingdom was Memphis.
- The Old Kingdom is sometimes referred to as the "Age of Pyramids."
- Egypt established trade with many foreign civilizations during this period. They built trade ships to travel the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.
- Much of what we know about the Old Kingdom comes from tombs, pyramids, and temples. The cities where people lived were largely made from mud and have long since been destroyed.

First Intermediate period – (Dynasties 9 – 11) - The period in between the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom, about 2150 – 1986 BC

The Middle Kingdom (Dynasties 11 – 14) about 1986 – 1759 BC

The Middle Kingdom was the second peak period of the Ancient Egyptian civilization. During this time all of Egypt was united under a single government and pharaoh.

Peak of the Middle Kingdom



The Middle Kingdom reached its peak under the rule of the Twelfth Dynasty. The pharaohs of the time built a powerful standing army that protected the country from outside invaders and maintained control of the government.

The 12th and 13th dynasties provide the backdrop for the stories of Joseph, the oppression of the Israelites, Moses, and the Exodus. The biblical dates for these events can provide dates for these dynasties.

The arts of Ancient Egypt continued to develop during this time. A type of sculpture called the "block statue" became popular. The block statue was sculpted from a single piece of rock. It showed a man squatting with his arms folded on top of his knees.

Writing and literature developed as well. For the first time in Ancient Egyptian history, writing was used for entertainment including writing stories and recording religious philosophy.

Fall of the Middle Kingdom

It was during the Thirteenth Dynasty that the pharaoh's control of Egypt began to weaken. Eventually, a group of kings in northern Egypt, split from southern Egypt. As the country fell into disarray, the Middle Kingdom collapsed.

Second Intermediate period (Dynasties 15 - 17) - The period between the Middle and New Kingdoms, about 1759 – 1525 BC

The New Kingdom (Dynasties 18 – 20) about 1525 – 1069 BC

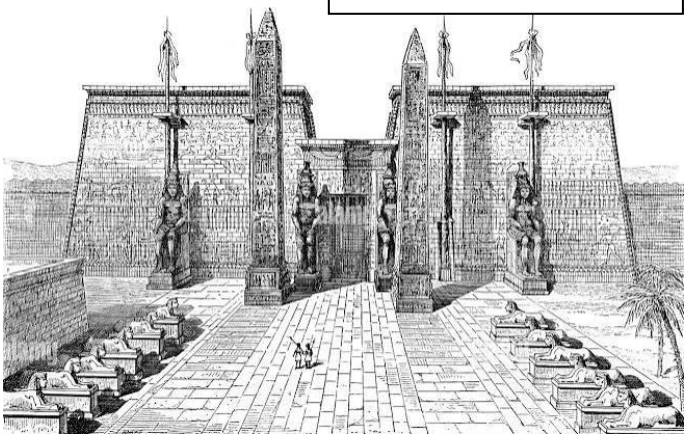
The New Kingdom was the golden age of the civilization of Ancient Egypt. It was a time of wealth, prosperity, and power. This period included some of the most famous and powerful of all the Egyptian pharaohs such as Ramses II, Tutankhamun and Akhentaten.



It was during the New Kingdom that the Egyptian Empire conquered the most lands. Pharaohs launched wide ranging expeditions taking over lands to the south (Kush, Nubia) and lands to the east (Israel, Lebanon, Syria). At the same time, Egypt expanded trade with many external nations and kings. They used gold mines in Nubia to gain great wealth and to import luxury goods from around the world.

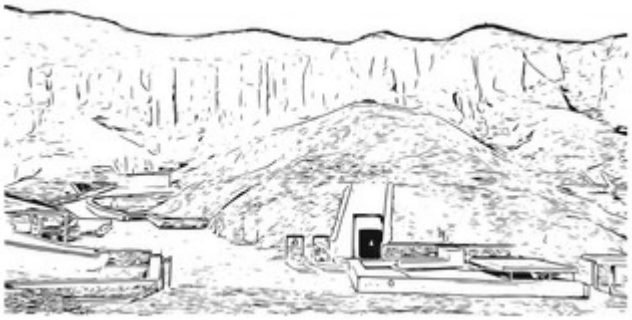
Temples

Statue of Tutankhamun



The pharaohs of the New Kingdom used their wealth to build massive temples to the gods. The city of Thebes continued to be the cultural centre of the empire. The Temple of Luxor, (shown right), was built at Thebes. Pharaohs also built monumental burial temples to honour themselves as gods. These included Abu Simbel (built for Ramses II).

Valley of the Kings



One of the most famous archaeological sites from the New Kingdom is the Valley of the Kings. The New Kingdom pharaohs were buried in the Valley of the Kings for 500 years. The most famous tomb in the Valley of the Kings is the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun which was discovered largely intact. It was filled with treasure, art, and King Tutankhamun's embalmed dead body (called a 'mummy').

Fall of the New Kingdom

It was during the reign of Ramesses III that the powerful Egyptian Empire began to weaken. Ramesses III had to fight many battles including an invasion by the Sea Peoples and tribesmen from Libya. These wars, combined with severe drought and famine, caused unrest throughout Egypt. In the years after Ramesses III died, internal corruption and infighting in the central government became worse. The last pharaoh of the New Kingdom was Ramesses XI. After his reign, Egypt was no longer united.

Interesting Facts About the New Kingdom of Egypt

- There were eleven pharaohs who had the name Ramesses (or Ramses) during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties. This period is sometimes called the Ramesside period.
- Hatshepsut was one of the few women who became pharaoh. She ruled Egypt for around 20 years.
- Pharaoh Akhenaten converted from the traditional religion of Egypt to the worship of one all-powerful god named Aten. He built a new capital city named Amarna in the honour of Aten.

Third Intermediate period (Dynasties 21 – 24) - The period between the New Kingdom and Late period, about 1069 – 664 BC

The Late Period (Dynasties 25 – 30)

about 664 – 332 BC

It was a time when Egypt was united under Egyptian rulers.

The Persians Invade

In 525 BC, the Persian Empire*, (see map on next page)*, invaded Egypt. They defeated the Egyptian army and took control of Egypt.

Egypt Under Persia

When the Persian Empire conquered Egypt, it was the largest empire in the world. Egypt then became a province of the Persian Empire.

Egypt prospered under the rule of the Persian King Darius I. Darius built temples and presented himself like a pharaoh to Egypt. However, later Persian leaders, such as Xerxes, treated Egypt cruelly causing much inner turmoil and rebellion.

Alexander the Great Invades

Persian rule came to an end with the invasion of the Greek Alexander the Great in 332 BC. He defeated the Persians and brought Egypt into his vast empire. After Alexander died, a Greek leader named Ptolemy I took control of Egypt and established the Ptolemaic Dynasty.

Interesting fact about the Late Period and Persian rule

During the late period, several different peoples and cultures from around the Mediterranean impacted the culture of Egypt. Immigrants from Greece, Phoenicia (modern day Lebanon), and Palestine all settled in Egypt. The Bible tells us that Darius was the king in the time of Daniel.

Ptolemaic dynasty 306 BC – 30 BC

323 – 30 BC

(pronounced tol – o – may – ic)

In 305 BC, Ptolemy I became pharaoh and the Ptolemaic period began. Alexandria became the new capital, named after the Greek king Alexandra the Great who conquered and took control of Egypt.



Ptolemy I was one of Alexander the Great's top generals.

In 30 BC, the last pharaoh, Cleopatra, VII, died. She became queen on the death of her father, Ptolemy XII, in 51 BC and ruled successively with her two brothers Ptolemy XIII and Ptolemy XIV and her son Ptolemy XV.

Activities

1. On a piece of paper, enlarge the four boxes below to make a chart of the four periods. Draw pictures and write dot points to show some key events that happened in each period of Egyptian history. Include any Biblical events that fit into these periods.

Early Dynastic Period	Old Kingdom
New Kingdom	Late Period

2. List the countries that were in the Persian Empire in the Late Period.



Names of countries today:

Lydia = modern day Turkey

Palestine = modern day Israel and Syria

Persia = modern day Iran

Macedonia = modern day Greece

Compare the places on this map with the map of Europe on page 23.

Find out: What is the capital of Egypt today?

Where Egypt's history interacts with Bible history

Traditional Egyptian Timeline

Period in Egypt's history	Dynasty	Dates B.C.
Old Kingdom	Dynasties 1–6	2920–2770 B.C.
Great Pyramids of Giza	4th Dynasty	2600–2500 B.C.
First Intermediate Period	Dynasties 7–11	2150–1986 B.C.
Middle Kingdom	Dynasties 12–13	1986–1759 B.C.
Second Intermediate Period	Dynasties 14–17	1759–1525 B.C.
New Kingdom	Dynasties 18–20	1525–1069 B.C.
Third Intermediate Period	Dynasties 21–25	1069–664 B.C.
Late Period (Persian)	Dynasties 26–30	664–332 B.C.
Alexander the Great		332–323 B.C.
Ptolemaic Period		323–30 B.C.
Roman Period		began 30 B.C.

Matching up Israel's history with Egypt's timeline

Biblical event	Dynasty	Dates B.C.
Abraham	4	Late 1900s B.C.
Joseph, Jacob to Egypt	12	1706 B.C.
Joseph dies	12	1635 B.C.
Moses born	12	1572 B.C.
The Exodus	13	1491 B.C.
Solomon starts temple	18	1012 B.C.

Source: Answers in Genesis

Activities

1. Write the name of corresponding period in Egyptian history for the following:

Example: Joseph corresponds to the Middle Kingdom.

a) Abraham

b) Joseph in Egypt

c) Moses born

d) The Exodus

2. Find out what connection the above Bible figures had with Egypt. In your own words, tell the stories of these people and their interaction with Egypt.

a) Abraham – Genesis 12:10

b) Joseph – Genesis chapters 37 – 50

c) Moses – Exodus chapters 2 - 14

Interesting facts:

1. In the 18th dynasty, Solomon made a successful alliance with his superpower neighbour, Egypt, by marrying the daughter of the pharaoh, (1 Kings 3:1-3). As Solomon's senior wife, she lived in the City of David until Solomon built a palace for her just outside the newly extended walls of Jerusalem to the north of Mount Moriah (1 Kings 7:8 & 2 Chronicles 8:11).

2. Queen of Sheba and Hatshepsut

A mysterious Bible character emerges from the 18th dynasty. The female pharaoh Hatshepsut's trip to the land of Punt is famous, but the identity of Punt has remained a mystery despite engravings commemorating the treasures she brought home. First Kings 10 says the queen of Sheba visited Solomon, giving and receiving great gifts. Josephus identified this queen of Sheba as "queen of Egypt and Ethiopia." In Matthew 12:42 the Lord Jesus refers to the queen of Sheba as "the queen of the south." "The south" is a biblical designation for Egypt. Thus, Hatshepsut was probably the queen of Sheba.

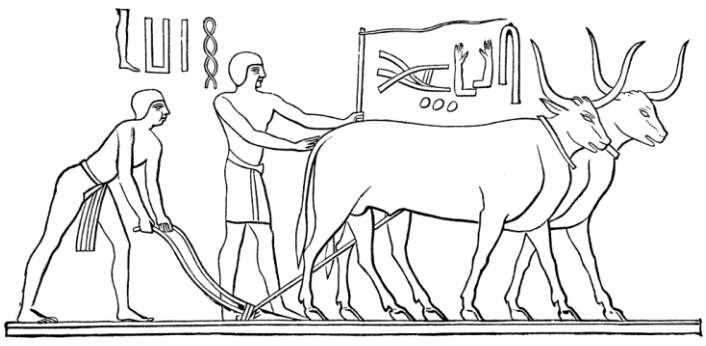
Life in ancient Egypt

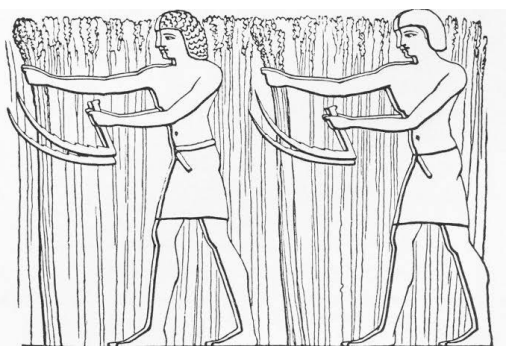
Most people in ancient Egypt were farmers. They lived with their families in houses made of mud bricks that were near the Nile River.

The Nile flooded each year, leaving behind fertile soil for planting crops like wheat, barley, lettuce, flax, and papyrus. As the Egyptians learned how to move river water to their fields, they were able to grow more food, including grapes, apricots, olives, and beans.

During flood season, farmers couldn't tend their crops. So instead, some worked building pyramids, tombs, and monuments. Other people worked as scribes (people who recorded events), priests, and doctors.

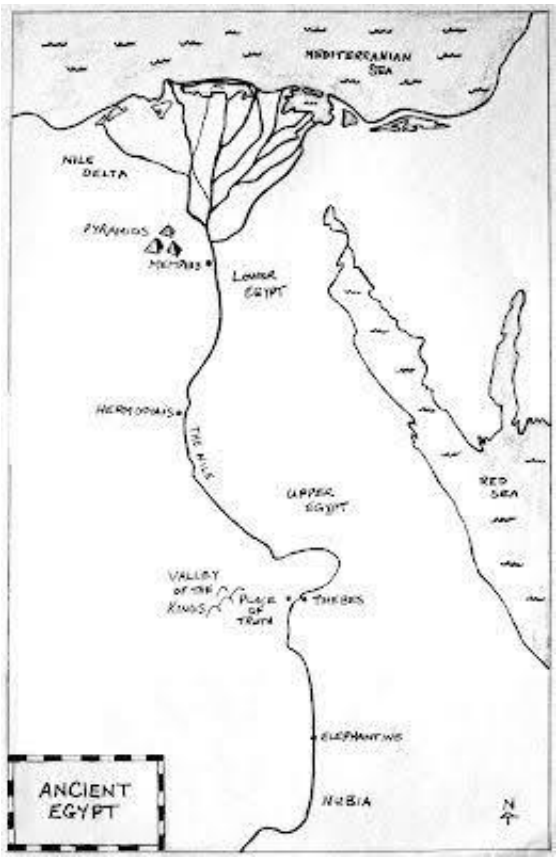
Women in ancient Egypt had more freedom than those in other ancient cultures. Like men, they could be scribes, priests, and doctors, and they usually had the same rights as men. Women could own their own homes and businesses. There is evidence that two of the pharaohs were women – Hatshepsut (Queen of Sheba) and Cleopatra.





The Nile

Egypt has almost no rain. The Nile was its only source of water and the lifeblood of the nation. It provided food such as fish, water birds, and larger animals including hippopotamuses* and crocodiles. The annual flooding occurred between July and October and brought water and new soil to the farmlands. The flood was considered a time of rebirth to the ancient Egyptians and marked the beginning of the year. The river was worshipped as a god. The Nile was Egypt's highway, carrying cargo and passengers.



*The ancient Egyptians killed and ate hippopotamuses. They hunted them for various reasons, including their meat, skin, and ivory. The killing one was seen as a demonstration of strength and power. Despite their fearsome nature, some Egyptians even survived attacks from hippos, as evidenced by ancient medical texts detailing treatments for hippo-inflicted wounds. The depiction of hunts appears in ancient Egyptian art and inscriptions

Egyptian gods

The ancient Egyptians worshipped over 2,000 gods and goddesses. Egyptians believed gods helped them in real life, too. For instance, Osiris's wife, the goddess Isis, helped cure human sickness, and the goddess Tefnut caused the rain to fall.

Animal gods – Many Egyptian gods took the form of animals. Other gods had human bodies with the head of an animal. People who killed sacred animals were executed.



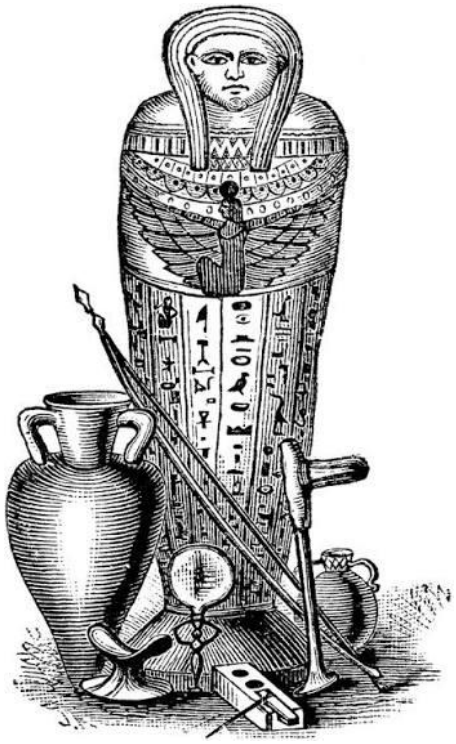




The Afterlife

The afterlife was an important part of Ancient Egyptian culture. One of the ways they prepared for the afterlife was to try and preserve the body as long as possible. They did this through a process called embalming. These embalmed bodies are called mummies.

The Egyptians went through an elaborate process to preserve the body and keep it from decaying. The main thing they did was try to get all the water and moisture out of the body. It was water that caused much of the decay.



The Egyptians started out by covering the body with a salty crystal substance called natron. The natron would help to dry out the body. They would also take out some of the organs. With the body covered and stuffed with natron, they would let the body dry out for around 40 days. Once it was dry, they would use lotions on the skin to preserve it, reinforce the empty body with packing, and then cover the body in wraps of linen. They would use many layers of strips of linen wrapping, covering the entire body. Resin (sap from trees), was used to glue the layers of wrap together. The total process could take up to 40 days.

Once the body was all wrapped up, it was covered in a sheet called a shroud and placed in a stone coffin called a sarcophagus.

Why did they care so much about the dead bodies?

In the Egyptian religion, the body was needed in order for the soul or "ba" of the person to unite with the "ka" of the person in the afterlife. The body was an important part of the afterlife and they wanted to preserve it forever.

Being mummified—the process of preserving a body—was an important part of how Egyptians believed their soul would enter the afterlife. So were tombs. These burial chambers were filled with things a person would need there: food, games, and even underwear!

Did everyone get the opportunity to be embalmed?

Only the very rich could afford the best embalming. It was important to everyone, though, so they got the best that they could pay for and most of the dead were made into mummies. It is estimated that 70 million mummies were made in Egypt over the 3,000 years of the ancient civilization.

There are still mummies of some of the ancient Pharaohs that exist today. Both Tutankhamun and Rameses the Great were preserved and can be seen at museums.

Interesting Facts about Egyptian Mummies

The heart was left in the body because it was considered to be the centre of intelligence. The brain was thrown away because it was thought to be useless.

Sometimes the mummy's mouth would be opened to symbolize breathing in the afterlife. It is probably this custom that led to the superstition that mummies come back to life.

Mummies are studied by scientists without unwrapping them by using CAT scan and X-Ray machines.

Activities

1. Explain the importance of the Nile to the ancient Egyptians?

2. What is the meaning of a river delta?

3. Which sea does the Nile flow into? (Look at the map)

4. Why was it so fertile and therefore good for growing crops?

5. What were some of the gods from nature that the Egyptians worshiped?

6. Describe and draw the Sphinx.

7. Describe some of the man-made gods that they worshiped?

8. What are mummies and how what was their purpose?

9. Compare the Egyptians understanding of the afterlife to the Christian understanding.

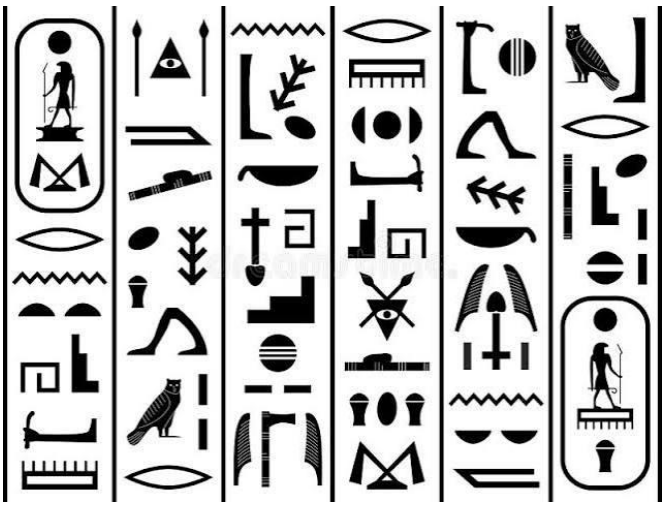
The Pyramids

The pyramids of Giza, including the Gret Pyramids, are massive structure s, built as tombs for the pharaohs. The largest pyramid, the Great Pyramid, stands about 148 metres high. That's as tall as a fifty-storey sky scraper with a base covering almost five football fields. It was built from 2,3000,000 granite blocks each at least 2.5 metres long and 2 metres high by 1.5 metres wide and weighing an average of 2.5 tonnes. They are still standing today.



Writing

The Egyptian, soon after the Sumerians, were one of the first known civilizations to have a written language. The Egyptian system was called hieroglyphic writing, in which symbols—not letters—represent words or sounds. These people even created writing sheets out of water reeds called papyrus. (This is where we get the word 'paper' from.) Hieroglyphs were carved into most temples and tombs to record names of pharaohs, describe events like battles, and give instructions for passing on to the afterlife.



Calendar



Ancient Egyptian astronomers created a calendar much like ours—based on the sun's rotation—and are thought to be the first civilization to measure a year using 365 days.

What did they wear?



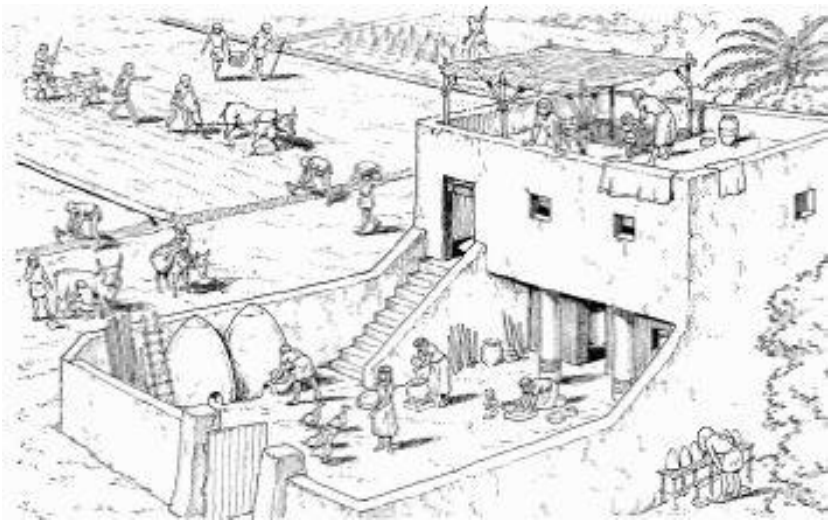
Looking impressive and being clean was very important to the Egyptians. Almost everyone - men and women - wore jewellery of some type. The rich wore jewellery made of gold and silver, while the poorer people used copper.

Makeup was important as well. Makeup was worn by both men and women. They had cosmetic cases they would carry around. The main type of makeup used was eye paint.

Because it was so hot, most people wore white linen clothes. Men wore something like sulus and women wore a straight dress. Slaves and servants would wear patterned fabrics.

Where did they live?

The average family lived in a village of sun-baked mud houses. The houses were fairly small with few windows or furniture. They had flat roofs. The people would sleep on the roofs in the summer when it was too hot inside.



What did they eat?

The main staple of the ordinary people was bread. They also had fruits, vegetables, lamb, and goats for food. They had clay ovens to cook in and usually used dishes made of clay. The main drink was beer made from barley.

What kinds of jobs did they have?

Ancient Egypt was a complex society needing people doing many different tasks and jobs. Some of the jobs they had included:

Farmers - most of the people were farmers. They grew barley to make beer, wheat for bread, vegetables such as onions and cucumbers, and flax to make into linen. They grew their crops near the banks of the Nile River where the rich black soil was good for crops.

Craftspeople - There were a wide variety of craftsmen jobs. They included carpenters, weavers, jewellers, leather workers, and potters. How skilled a craftsman was would determine his success.

Soldiers - Becoming a soldier was an opportunity for a person to rise in society. Most of the soldiers were foot soldiers. However, horses and chariots were also used. We know this from the Exodus, when the Egyptian army pursued the Israelites on their horses. See Exodus 15:1. There was a well-defined hierarchy in the Egyptian army. In peacetime, soldiers would help with government projects such as moving stone for a pyramid or digging a canal.

Scribes - Scribes were important people in Ancient Egypt as they were the only people who knew how to read and write. Scribes came from wealthy families and took years of training to learn the complex Egyptian hieroglyphics.

Priests and Priestesses - Priests and Priestesses were responsible for the temples and held religious ceremonies.

Activities

1. What is the name of the most famous pyramid?

2. Find out which other cultures around the world use symbols or pictures for words. (There is a clue on page 14.)

3. What expensive metals were used for jewellery?

4. Cloth was made from linen. Find out what linen is, and explain why this was a good source of raw material for making cloth.

5. Draw 3 people wearing typical clothing: a woman, a man and a slave.

6. Write 5 things that the picture on page 42 can tell you about early Egyptian life.

7. What similarities are there between these houses and the houses in Jesus' day? (This about the story of the man through the roof, Luke 5:19-26.)

8. How do we know that Egyptian soldiers used horses?

9. If you lived in early Egyptian times, which job would you like to do and why?



3. The Greeks

Ancient Greece was a civilization that dominated much of the Mediterranean thousands of years ago. At its peak under Alexander the Great, ancient Greece ruled much of Europe and western Asia. The Greeks came before the Romans and much of the Roman culture was influenced by the Greeks.

Ancient Greece formed the foundation of much of Western culture today. Everything from government, philosophy, science, mathematics, art, literature, and even sports was impacted by the ancient Greeks.



Periods in History

Historians often divide up the history of ancient Greece into three periods:

Archaic Period - (800 BC - 480 BC) This period ran from the start of Greek civilization to the introduction of democracy. This period also included the start of the Olympic Games.

Classical Period – (480 BC - 323 BC) The Classical Period began with the introduction of democracy in Athens. Athens, the capital, was governed by a democracy and great philosophers like Socrates and Plato. A philosopher is a thinker who develops new ideas. Also, the wars between Sparta and Athens occurred during this time. This period ended with the rise and then the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC.

Hellenistic Period - (323 BC - 31 BC) The Hellenistic period lasted from the death of Alexander the Great until 31 BC. The name Hellenistic comes from the Greek word "Hellas", which is the original word for Greece. In 146 BC Rome defeated the Greeks at the Battle of Corinth making it part of the Roman Empire.

Interesting Facts about Ancient Greece

- The Greeks often ate dinner while lying on their sides.
- They invented the yo-yo which is considered the 2nd oldest toy in the world after the doll.
- About one third of the population of some city-states were slaves.
- There were more city-states than just Sparta and Athens. Ancient Greece had around 100 city-states.
- The Romans copied much of the Greek culture including their gods, architecture, language, and even how they ate!

Activities

1. Draw a linear (horizontal) timeline showing the three periods of ancient Greek history, and the dates.

2. Draw three boxes representing the three periods. In each box draw one picture that is a key event in that period.

Two major cities: Athens and Sparta

Athens and Sparta were the two main city-states that ruled much of ancient Greece. They were often rivals and fought each other. At other times they united together in order to protect the Greek lands from invaders. The cultures of the two cities were very different. Sparta was almost entirely focused on war and how to fight, while Athens focused on the arts and learning.

Athens

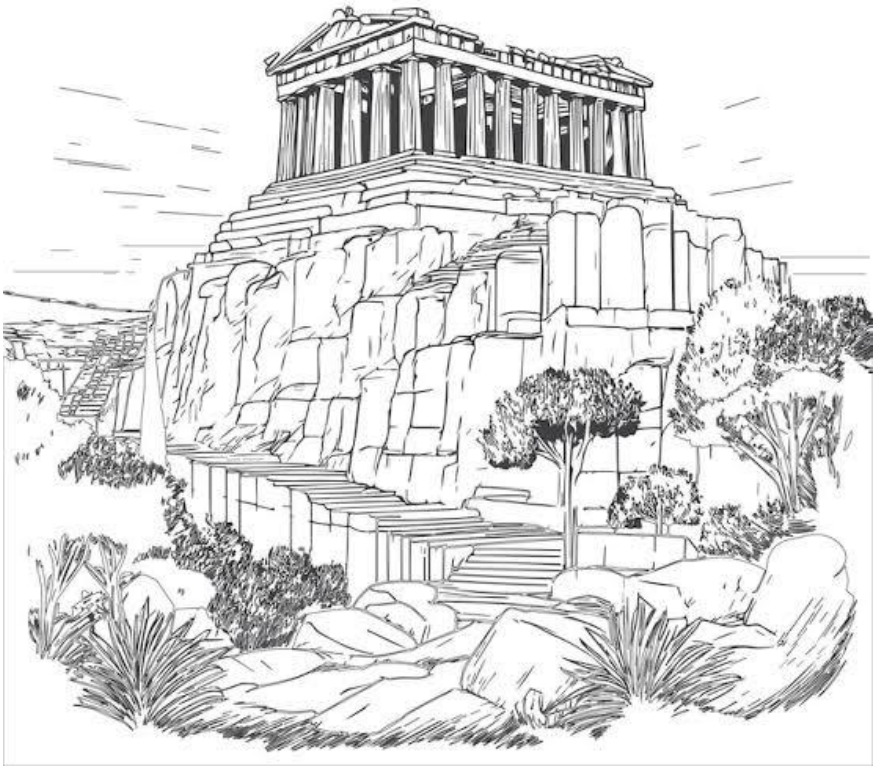
Athens is one of the great cities of the world. During the time of the Ancient Greeks, it was the centre of power, art, science, and philosophy in the world. It is the birth place of democracy and the heart of the Ancient Greek civilization. It is the capital of Greece today.

Named after Athena

Athens is named after the Greek goddess Athena. She was the goddess of wisdom, war, and civilization and the patron of the city of Athens. Her shrine, the Parthenon, sits on top of a hill in the centre of the city.

The Acropolis

The Acropolis was a collection of structures built on a hill in the middle of the city of Athens. Surrounded by stone walls, it was originally built as a fortress where the people could retreat when the city was attacked. Later, many temples and buildings were built here to overlook the city. It was still used as a fortress for some time, however. The most famous building, still standing today is the Parthenon.



Sparta

Sparta was one of the most powerful city-states in Ancient Greece. It is famous for its powerful army as well as its battles with the city-state of Athens. Sparta was located in a valley on the banks of the Eurotas River in the south-eastern portion of Greece.

Warrior Society

Unlike their counterparts in the city of Athens, the Spartans didn't study philosophy, art, or theatre; they studied war. The Spartans were widely considered to have the strongest army and the best soldiers of any city-state in Ancient Greece. All Spartan men trained to become warriors from the day they were born.

The basic equipment used by the Spartan soldiers included their shield, a spear, and a short sword. They also wore a crimson tunic so their bloody wounds wouldn't show. The most

important piece of equipment to a Spartan was their shield. The biggest disgrace a soldier could suffer was to lose his shield in battle.

Spartan boys were trained to be soldiers from their youth. They were raised by their mothers until the age of seven and then they would enter a military school called the Agoge. At the Agoge the boys were trained how to fight, but also learned how to read and write.

Activity

Write a comparison between the two cities, Athens and Sparta. Explain similarities and differences.

The Persian Empire

The Persian Wars were a series of wars fought between the Persians and the Greeks from 492 BC to 449 BC.

Who were the Persians?

In 559 BC the Persian king Cyrus II founded the Persian Empire. The Persian Empire was the largest and most powerful empire in the world at the time of the Persian Wars. They controlled land that stretched from Egypt all the way to India.



Who were the Greeks?

The Greeks were made up of a number of city-states such as Sparta and Athens. Typically, these city-states fought each other, but they united to fight against the Persians.

First Greek cities to be taken by Persia

The Greek cities of Ionia were Greek settlements on the west coast of Asia Minor, (today's Turkey). These cities fell into Persian hands 530 500 BC. The Ionians decided to revolt against the Persian rule. The revolt lasted from 499 to 493 BC. This uprising of Greek cities in Ionia against the Persian Empire, and was the beginning of the Greco-Persian Wars.

First Invasion of Greece

Darius I, King of Persia, decided he wanted to conquer the Greeks in 490 BC. He gathered a vast army of soldiers that outnumbered any army the Greeks could muster. They boarded the Persian fleet and headed to Greece.

Second Invasion of Greece



Ten years later, in 480 BC, the son of Darius I, King Xerxes, decided to get his revenge on the Greeks. He amassed a huge army of over 200,000 soldiers and 1,000 warships.

After the first invasion, the Athenians built up a mighty fleet of ships. The Persian Empire would eventually be conquered by the Greeks under the leadership of Alexander the Great.

Kings of the Persian Empire – Biblical History

King Cyrus

Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire, is a significant figure in biblical history, particularly in the context of the Jewish exile and return. He is mentioned in several books of the Bible, including Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezra.

In the book of Ezra, Cyrus is depicted as a liberator of the Jewish people. Ezra 1:1-2 records the decree of Cyrus, which allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.

To the Greeks, he was known as Cyrus the Elder and was particularly renowned among scholars of the day, because of his tolerance for peoples' customs and religions in the lands that he conquered, including the Jews.

Darius 1

Darius I, (or Darius the great), reigned from 522 to 486 BC. He was a prominent Persian ruler, mentioned in the books of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. In the book of Daniel, Darius is portrayed as a ruler who respected Daniel and his God. What did Darius say in Daniel 6:25-27, after Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den?

In the book of Ezra, Darius plays a crucial role in the continuation of the temple rebuilding project. Ezra 6:1-12 describes how Darius confirmed the decree of Cyrus and supported the

Jewish efforts to rebuild the temple, providing resources and protection for the project. This support is seen as part of God's special care for His people and His purposes.

Xerxes 1

Xerxes I, the fourth king of Persia, also known as Ahasuerus in the Hebrew Bible, was a Persian king who reigned from 486 to 465 BC. He was the son of Darius I. He inherited a vast empire that stretched from India to Ethiopia, encompassing many diverse peoples and cultures. His reign is noted for its ambitious building projects, and for his military campaigns. He is best known for his invasion of Greece in 480 BC. most notably against Greece.

The Book of Esther provides the most detailed biblical account of Xerxes, referring to him as Ahasuerus. The narrative begins with a grand banquet in the third year of his reign, showcasing the wealth and splendour of his kingdom (Esther 1:3-4). During this feast, Queen Vashti is deposed for her refusal to appear before the king, setting the stage for Esther, a Jewish woman, to become queen, and saving the Jewish race from death.

Esther's cousin Mordecai uncovers a plot to annihilate the Jewish people orchestrated by Haman, a high-ranking official in Xerxes' court. Esther courageously intervenes, revealing her Jewish identity to the king and pleading for her people. Xerxes responds favourably, granting Esther's request and authorizing the Jews to defend themselves (Esther 8:11). For full story see next page.

Artaxerxes

Artaxerxes I, son of Xerxes 1, was the fifth King of Kings of the Persian Empire, reigned from 464 to 424 BC, and is known as the biblical figure Ahasuerus. He is known for his role in the return of the Jewish community to Jerusalem after their exile.

He is mentioned in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Artaxerxes is known for his favourable policies towards the Jewish people, allowing them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city walls. In Ezra 7:11-26, Artaxerxes issues a decree granting Ezra the priest permission to lead a group of exiles back to Jerusalem and to teach the Law of God: "Now this is the text of the letter that King Artaxerxes had given to Ezra the priest and scribe, a man learned in matters of the commandments and statutes of the LORD for Israel."

Nehemiah, a cupbearer to Artaxerxes, also received permission from the king to return to Jerusalem and oversee the rebuilding of the city walls. Artaxerxes's support for the Jewish people is seen as a continuation of God's provision and faithfulness, enabling the restoration of Jerusalem and the reestablishment of the Jewish community in their homeland.

Queen Esther

June 28, 2025 by Prashanta Kumbhar

https://lightandgospel.com/queen-esther-bible-story/

Historical and Biblical Context

Time and Setting

The biblical account of Queen Esther is set around 479 BC in the grand empire of Persia, during the reign of King Xerxes (also known as Ahasuerus). Persia was one of the most powerful kingdoms in the world at that time, stretching from India to Ethiopia. The king ruled from his royal palace in Susa a city known for its wealth, power, and political drama. In this foreign land, far from Jerusalem, a quiet Jewish girl was about to be written into God's divine plan. It was a time of exile for her people, but God was about to show that even in exile, His promises remain.

Esther's Identity

Esther wasn't born into privilege. She was a young Jewish orphan, her parents gone, and her only family being her older cousin Mordecai, who lovingly raised her as his own daughter. Her Hebrew name was Hadassah, meaning "myrtle" a symbol of peace and restoration.

Though she lived in a land that didn't honour her God or her heritage, Esther never let go of her identity. She carried within her the quiet strength of her faith, even while walking through royal courts and uncertain danger.

Importance of the Story

The Book of Esther holds a special place in the Bible not just because of what happens, but how it happens. It's one of the only books in the Bible where God's name is never mentioned not once. And yet, His presence is everywhere. Every detail, every turn of events, every hidden moment points to divine providence at work behind the scenes.

Queen Esther Story Summary (Chapters Breakdown)

Chapter 1–2: Esther Becomes Queen

The story begins with a royal conflict. Queen Vashti refuses to appear before King Xerxes during a lavish banquet. As a result, she is removed from her position, and the search for a new queen begins across the Persian Empire.

Among many beautiful young women brought to the palace, Esther a humble Jewish girl is chosen. She wins favour with everyone she meets, including the king himself, and is crowned queen. Yet, Esther keeps her Jewish identity hidden, just as her cousin Mordecai had advised. At this point, she doesn't know God is preparing her for something far greater than the crown.

Chapter 3–4: Haman's Evil Plan

A powerful man named Haman is promoted by the king, but when Mordecai refuses to bow to him, Haman's pride turns into hatred. Instead of punishing only Mordecai, Haman plots to destroy all the Jews in the empire.

When Mordecai hears of this, he mourns in sackcloth and ashes and sends word to Esther, urging her to speak to the king on behalf of her people. At first, Esther is afraid approaching the king uninvited could cost her life. But after three days of fasting and prayer, she boldly decides to act. "If I perish, I perish," she says, choosing faith over fear.

Chapter 5–7: Esther's Brave Move

Esther doesn't confront the king immediately. Instead, she invites him and Haman to a private banquet not once, but twice. Her patience and wisdom build tension and trust.

At the second banquet, Esther finally reveals her identity and Haman's wicked plot. The king is furious. Ironically, the very gallows Haman had built for Mordecai become the place of his own execution. Justice is served, and God's unseen hand is once again revealed in perfect timing.

Chapter 8–10: Victory & Celebration

Though Haman is gone, the royal decree to destroy the Jews still stands. Esther pleads with the king, and he allows a new decree giving the Jews permission to defend themselves.

On the day of the planned attack, the Jews overcome their enemies, and the threat is removed. This great victory leads to the establishment of Purim, a festival of joy, remembrance, and thanksgiving. Even today, Purim is celebrated as a time to honour God's deliverance and Esther's bravery.

This biblical account isn't just ancient history it's a living testimony that God places us in positions for a reason, and He can use anyone, even the least expected, to bring about divine change.

Major Themes and Meanings in Esther's Story

Divine Providence Without God's Name

One of the most remarkable things about Esther's story is that God's name is never mentioned not even once. And yet, His presence is everywhere. From Esther being chosen as queen to the perfect timing of Mordecai's honour and Haman's downfall, we see a divine hand orchestrating every detail. This teaches us something beautiful: even when we don't see God or hear His name, He's still working behind the scenes arranging, protecting, guiding.

In moments when God feels silent in your life, Esther reminds you that He is still writing your story.

Courage and Obedience

Esther didn't feel ready. She didn't know how things would turn out. But still, she said, "If I perish, I perish."

Her words weren't dramatic they were deeply surrendered. She chose obedience to God and courage over comfort and safety. Her bravery came not from strength, but from trust in the One who had placed her there.

This biblical account calls us to ask: What step of faith is God asking me to take, even when I'm afraid?

Reversal of Destiny

One of the most powerful messages in Esther's story is the complete reversal of evil plans. Haman built gallows for Mordecai but he was the one hanged on them. The Jews were marked for destruction but instead, they were delivered and celebrated.

This is divine justice at work. God has a way of turning things around when all hope seems lost. He lifts the humble, defends the innocent, and humbles the proud.

Esther's story proves that with faith, no situation is beyond God's power to reverse.

The Power of Influence

Esther didn't lead an army or perform miracles but she used her voice, her position, and her influence wisely. She didn't rush or rebel she prayed, planned, and acted at the right time.

Her influence wasn't loud it was strategic, humble, and led by wisdom. And through it, an entire nation was saved.

This reminds us that God places us where we are for a reason. Whether it's in a home, a workplace, or a community, your influence can be a tool for righteousness and change.

Each of these themes in the Queen Esther Bible story reminds us that God can do the impossible through willing hearts. He may be unseen, but He is never absent. Esther's story teaches us to trust deeply, act boldly, and believe that where we are right now might just be "for such a time as this."

Life Lessons from Queen Esther's Story

The story is not just a historical account it's a guide for how we can walk with faith, wisdom, and courage in today's world. Esther's quiet strength and faithful heart leave us with timeless lessons that still apply in our everyday lives.

Trust God's Timing

Esther didn't seek the crown it was given to her. She didn't push her way into power God positioned her at the right place, at the right time. When Mordecai said, "Perhaps you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this," it was a divine reminder that God's timing is perfect.

There are seasons in life where we feel overlooked or out of place, but Esther's story encourages us to trust that God is preparing us behind the scenes for a purpose greater than we can imagine.

Stand for Your People

Esther could have stayed silent. She could have played it safe in the palace. But she chose to risk everything to stand for her people because her identity wasn't just royal, it was rooted in her faith and her heritage.

This teaches us that when we know who we are in God, we also discover what we're called to do. Your voice matters. And sometimes, the most powerful thing you can do is stand up for those who can't stand for themselves.

Speak with Wisdom and Strategy

Esther didn't act impulsively. She prayed, fasted, and waited. She chose her words and her timing with discernment. She spoke with courage, but also with grace and respect.

In a world that often pushes us to react quickly, Esther reminds us that wisdom and spiritual preparation matter. Before taking bold steps, she knelt in prayer. Her strategy wasn't about manipulation it was about alignment with God's will.

Celebrate Deliverance

After the victory, Esther and Mordecai didn't just move on they established Purim, a joyful festival to remember how God delivered them. It wasn't just about the win; it was about giving glory to the One who made it happen.

We too are called to pause and celebrate God's faithfulness. Whether it's big miracles or quiet rescues, God's unseen hand deserves joyful remembrance.

Each of these lessons from the Queen Esther Bible story speaks into our daily lives reminding us to be faithful, bold, and deeply rooted in God's purpose. Just like Esther, we are here for such a time as this.

FAQs About Queen Esther's Story

Who was Queen Esther in the Bible?

Queen Esther was a young Jewish orphan who became the queen of Persia. Through her courage and faith, she saved her people from destruction. The Queen Esther Bible story teaches how God can use anyone, no matter how humble their beginning.

What is the main message of Queen Esther's story?

The central message of the Queen Esther Bible story is about courage, obedience, and divine purpose. Even when God seems silent, He is working through our lives for His greater plan.

Why is God's name not mentioned in the Book of Esther?

Though God's name is never mentioned directly in the Queen Esther Bible story, His presence is clearly seen through the perfect timing and divine reversals in every chapter. It reminds us that God is always at work, even when we can't see Him.

What is Purim and how is it connected to Queen Esther?

Purim is a Jewish festival that celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish people through Esther's bravery. It comes directly from the events in the Queen Esther Bible story, where God turned sorrow into joy and fear into celebration.

What does "for such a time as this" mean in Esther's story?

This famous line from the Queen Esther Bible story shows that God had placed Esther in her position at the perfect time for a specific purpose. It reminds us that our own place and season in life may also carry divine meaning.

Conclusion

The Queen Esther Bible story is more than just an ancient tale it's a living testimony of how God can use anyone, anywhere, for His divine purpose.

Esther began her journey as an orphan girl, quietly living in exile with no fame, no influence, and no idea what lay ahead. But through God's providence, she became queen of a powerful empire not for comfort, but for calling.

Her story is a shining example of what happens when faith meets courage. She didn't seek the spotlight. She simply trusted God and stepped forward when it mattered most. Her bravery saved a nation, and her obedience glorified God.

Reflection

Where has God placed you "for such a time as this"?

Is it your home, your workplace, your school, or your community? Just like Esther, you may not feel ready but God is already working behind the scenes.

Rise of the Greek Empire

Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great was born 356 BC, in Macedonia (northwest of Thessalonica), Greece. He and his army overthrew the Persian Empire. He died at age 32 from a severe illness. No one knows the cause of the illness but poisoning has not been out ruled.

He succeeded his father Philip II to the throne in 336 BC at the age of 20, and spent most of his reign conducting a lengthy military campaign throughout Asia and Egypt. By the age of 30, he had created one of the largest empires in history, stretching from Greece to northwestern India. He was undefeated in battle and is widely considered to be one of history's greatest and most successful military commanders.

Fall of the Greek Empire

Years of internal wars weakened the once powerful Greek city-states of Sparta, Athens, Thebes, and Corinth.

When Alexander the Great died, there was a huge gap in power. Alexander's empire was divided among his generals. These new divisions soon began fighting. Although the Greek culture had spread throughout much of the world, it was politically divided.

Hellenistic Greece

The period of Ancient Greece after Alexander the Great is called Hellenistic Greece. During this time, the city-states of Greece fell into decline. The real centres of Greek culture moved to other areas in the world including the cities of Alexandria (Egypt), Antioch (Turkey), and Ephesus (Turkey).

The Rise of Rome

While the Greeks were in decline, a new civilization in Italy (the Romans) rose to power. As Rome grew more powerful, the Greeks started to see Rome as a threat. In 215 BC, parts of Greece allied with Carthage against Rome. Rome declared war on Macedonia (northern Greece). They defeated Macedonia in two battles.

Activities

1. Who ruled Greece from 559 BC to 323 BC?
2. Which kings of this empire are mentioned in the Bible during this time?
3. Who was Alexander the Great and what is he famous for?
4. What happened to Greece after his death?
5. Who finally defeated and took over Greece?

Lifestyle of Ancient Greeks

What were the Ancient Greek's homes like?



Greek homes were built around an outdoor courtyard. The courtyard was the centre of activity. It usually had a well for water, an altar to worship the gods, and was a good place for the kids to play.

Around the courtyard were the rooms of the house. Different rooms included a work room, a store room, and bedrooms. There also was a room called an andron where the men of the house would gather and entertain their male friends or business associates. Sometimes there was a separate entrance to this room so visiting men would not see the women of the house. Generally, the woman stayed away from the men in the house, especially visiting men. Oftentimes the house had a room set aside just for the women.

The walls of Greek homes were made from sun dried bricks with small windows set high in the walls. They were designed to keep the house cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

What was it like growing up in Ancient Greece?

When a Greek child was born, the father could decide whether to keep the child or not. If the child appeared weak or was a girl, sometimes the father would abandon the child. Once a child was accepted by the father, he or she was treated well. Greek children had toys and spent the day playing games. When boys became seven years old, they started school. They learned math, reading, and writing. Sometimes they would also learn a musical instrument. When they got older, they learned how to debate. Girls did not go to school. Children were considered adults by the age of 13.

What food did they eat?

The Ancient Greeks mostly ate bread dipped in wine, cheeses, fish, olives, and vegetables. Meat like pork or beef was only eaten on rare occasions such as festivals. Watered down wine was the main drink.

The men would often have dinner parties for their friends. They would start at sundown and run until late. Only the men attended and women were not allowed.

What clothes did they wear?

The ancient Greeks wore a tunic. Both men and women wore the tunic. It was a basic tunic made from a single rectangle of cloth cut into two. It was fastened at different places and a

belt was used at the waist. There were tunics of different lengths and colours. They were generally made out of a thin wool material. Some people could afford linen or even silk.



Jobs in Ancient Greece

There were many jobs for men in Ancient Greece including farmer, fisherman, soldier, teacher, government worker, and craftsman. The women, however, were generally homemakers and would raise the children and cook the meals.

Activities

1. Draw a picture of a Greek home, showing the outside.

2. Draw a possible floor plan of a Greek home, (an architectural bird's-eye view). Label the rooms.

3. What authority did the father of the house have over children?

4. What was the difference between the treatment of boys and girls?

5. Draw and label the typical clothing for a man.

Slaves

Slavery was a common practice during the time period of Ancient Greece. Most Greek families owned at least one slave and slaves were an important part of the culture and economy of Ancient Greece.

There were different types of slaves in Ancient Greece and different rules depending on the city where the slave lived. However, in general, slaves had few rights. They had to work long hours doing whatever job their owner demanded. Slaves couldn't own property and had fewer rights than citizens. In most cases, they could not be put to death without a fair trial.

Did the Greeks have a lot of slaves?

Historians aren't sure exactly how many slaves the Greeks owned, but they usually estimate that between 30 and 40 percent of the population were slaves. Even the poorest families owned at least one slave with some wealthy families owning hundreds.

Where did the slaves come from?

Most of the slaves were foreigners who had been captured in war or purchased through the slave trade.

What kind of work did they do?

Slaves did a wide variety of work depending on their skills and who owned them. Some slaves performed hard labour in the mines or on farms. Other slaves did household chores or worked as artisans in the city.

Were slaves ever set free?

Yes, slaves were sometimes set free by their owners. Owners may also allow the slave to save up money and buy their own freedom. Freed slaves were still not considered full citizens and often had obligations to their former owners.

How did they know who was a slave?

It was sometimes difficult to tell a slave from a free person in Ancient Greece. Slave women often had their hair cut short. This would have marked them as a slave because free women kept their hair long. Sometimes slaves were marked with scars or tattoos so they could be recognized as slaves.

Slaves of the Spartans

The Spartans ruled over a group of people called the Helots. The Helots were treated like slaves by the Spartans. They farmed the land and performed other manual labour for the Spartans. There were actually a lot more Helots than Spartans. In order to keep control, the Spartans had secret police who kept track of the Helots and killed anyone who they thought might rebel.

Interesting Facts About Slaves in Ancient Greece

- Slave owners were responsible for any crimes their slaves committed.
- Slaves participated in most occupations in Greece, but were not allowed to participate in politics.
- The worst job for a slave was working in the mines. This was dangerous and hard work. Slaves working in the mines didn't live very long.
- Wealthy Greeks would buy slaves as an investment and then rent them out to others.
- Slaves were often captured by pirates or bandits and sold at the slave market.

Activity

Write a piece of persuasive writing to the government of the day: “Recommendations for reforming the treatment of slaves”

Women in Greece

Women in Ancient Greece were considered second class citizens to men. Before getting married, girls were subject to their father and had to obey his commands. After getting married, wives were subject to their husbands. Women were looked down upon by men and were considered no smarter than children.

Staying at Home

Women were expected to stay at home and manage the household. In the city-state of Athens, men sometimes wouldn't allow their wives to leave the home. They were basically prisoners in their own homes. Women managed the household slaves and even lived in a separate part of the house.

Wealthy Women

Women married to wealthy men were often confined to their homes. Their jobs were to manage the household and to bear sons for the husband. They lived in a separate area of the home from the men and even ate their meals separate from the men. They had servants who helped with raising the children, doing household chores, and running errands. Most women, even wealthy women, helped to weave cloth for the family's clothing.

Poor Women

Poor women often had more freedom than wealthy women because they couldn't afford as many slaves. Because they didn't have a lot of slaves, poor women needed to leave the house to run errands, fetch water, and shop. They sometime took jobs as servants for the wealthy or worked in the local shops.

Did women have legal rights?

In some Greek city-states, such as Athens, women had few legal rights. In Athens, women generally couldn't own property, couldn't vote, and weren't allowed to participate in the government. In other city-states, women had a few more rights, but still had less rights than men.

Marriage

Women usually had no say in who they married. They were "given" in marriage by their father to another man. Sometimes very young girls were wed to older men.

Slave Women

Slave women were the lowest class in Ancient Greece. They not only were slaves, but they were also women.

Women in Sparta

Life was different for the women of the city-state of Sparta. In Sparta, women were respected as the "mothers of warriors." Although they were not considered equal with men, they had more rights and freedom than the women of Athens. They were educated, played sports, allowed to walk around the city freely, and were also able to own property.

Activity

Write a piece of persuasive writing to the government of the day: “Recommendations for reforming the treatment of women.”

Greek gods

The Greeks had many gods, the Greeks believed that each god had a special role. Many were given symbols. For example:

- Zeus controlled the weather. His symbol was a thunderbolt.
- Apollo was the god of the sun, as well as archery. His symbol was a bow and arrow.
- Demeter was the god of crops. His symbol was wheat.
- Poseidon was the god of the sea. His symbol was a 3-pronked fork and sometimes a fish.
- The Greeks added the symbols to their paintings or their decorated pottery.

Greek art and architecture

Greek Painting

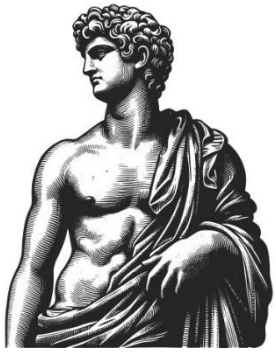
Written record shows that the Greeks enjoyed painting and that it was one of their most important types of art. However, very few of their paintings have survived as they were painted on wood panels or walls which have since been destroyed.



Pottery

One place where Greek painting did survive was on pottery and ceramics. We can tell from the intricate detail and quality of work that the Greeks were very talented painters.

Sculpture

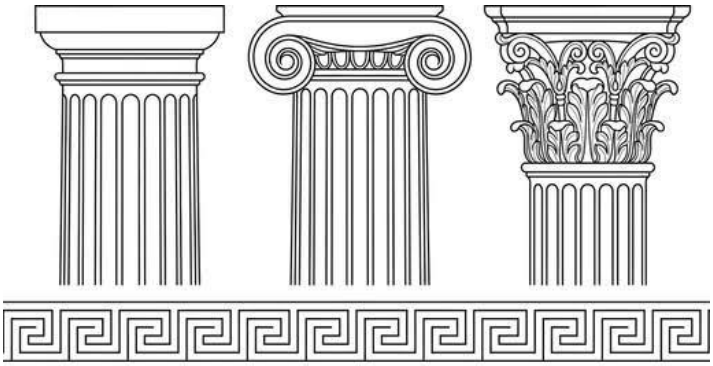


Greek sculpture was meant to show perfection. They wanted to create lifelike images of near perfect humans. Unlike the Romans, the Greeks never showed human imperfections in their art.

Architecture

Greek Architecture was intertwined with their art. A big part of their architecture was their columns. The Greek columns have been used in western architecture for the past 2500 years.

In Greek Architecture there were three main types of columns that were used: The Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian. See below for examples, (Doric left, Corinthian right).



The Parthenon

The Acropolis is a collection of structures sitting on a rocky hill. The Parthenon is a specific temple located on the Acropolis, in Athens. Dedicated to the goddess Athena, it is known for its Doric columns and exquisite sculptural details. The Parthenon is an important historical site, still standing today. It was built in the 5th Century BC in honour of the goddess Athena. It was a symbol of Athena's power and glory.



The Parthenon was later used as a Christian church. In the 1700s it was used by the Turks as a place to store gunpowder. When the gunpowder exploded the Parthenon was severely damaged. The latest threat to the Parthenon is damage caused by pollution.

Activities

1. What is the connection between Greek gods and art?

2. Draw and label the three types of columns invented by the Greeks.

3. Research to find the name of a building somewhere in the world today that uses one of these 3 types of columns in its architectural style. Make a rough sketch of the building.

4. In dot point form, give a brief history of the Parthenon.

The Olympic Games

The Greeks started the Olympic Games almost 3000 years ago in 776 BC. They were held nearly every four years for over a thousand years until they were stopped in 393 AD.

Who competed in the Ancient Olympic games?

In order to participate, athletes had to be a free man (no slaves) who spoke Greek. There may have also been a rule about age. Apparently, they wanted the athletes to be youthful, or at least youthful looking. From what we know, athletes were supposed to only be men. However, there are records of at least one woman winning an event, probably as an owner in a chariot race. Before the start of the games, athletes also had to take a vow to Zeus that they had been training for ten months.

The winners of the games were considered heroes. They got olive branches for winning, but also became famous. Sometimes they received large sums of money from their home town.

Where were the games held?

The Olympic Games were held in Olympia, hence the name Olympics. They were held there because the gods lived on Mount Olympus and the games were in honour of the king of the gods, Zeus. Athletes would travel to Olympia from many different Greek city-states and sometimes from far away Greek colonies to compete.

Ancient Olympic Events

The original Olympics had fewer events than what we have at the modern Olympics today. At the first Olympics there was only a single event. It was called the stadion and was a running race that went the length of the stadium, or around 200 meters. It wasn't until the 14th Olympics that they added in a second event. It was another running event that was one lap around the stadium; around 400 meters.

More events were added over the next several Olympics. These events included more running races of different lengths, wrestling, chariot racing, boxing, and the pentathlon. The

pentathlon combined the total scores of five events: long jump, discus throw, javelin throw, a stadion race, and wrestling.

Some of the events had similar names to events we have today, but had different rules and requirements. For example, in the long jump, jumpers used hand weights to help propel their bodies forward. Also, boxing and wrestling were very dangerous events with few rules. In boxing you could hit the opponent while they were down, and the match didn't stop until one fighter gave up or died. It wasn't a good idea to kill your opponent, however, as the dead boxer was given the victory.



Activities

1. What is the olive branch equivalent to in today's Olympic Games?
2. What is the origin of the name "Olympic"?
3. What was the stadion?
4. What was the second event added at a later day?
5. What is the 'pentathlon'?
6. Which event involved horses?
7. What were the dangers involved in the boxing event?
8. What Olympics event is the sculpture on the right depicting?



Greek history in the Bible

Greece plays a significant role in biblical history, particularly through the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul and the cultural context of early Christianity.

Key Locations and Events

Apostle Paul's Missionary Journeys: Greece is prominently featured in the New Testament, especially through the travels of the Apostle Paul. He visited several key cities, including Athens and Corinth, where he established early Christian communities. His teachings and letters to these communities are foundational to Christian doctrine.

Athens: Known as a centre of philosophy and culture, Athens was where Paul preached at Mars Hill, engaging with the Greek philosophers. His famous speech about the "Unknown God" is recorded in Acts 17.

Corinth: This city was a major commercial hub and is significant in Paul's letters, particularly the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians. Paul spent considerable time in Corinth, addressing issues of morality and community within the church.

Philippi: Located in Macedonia, Philippi was the first city in Europe where Paul preached. The conversion of Lydia and the imprisonment of Paul and Silas are notable events that occurred here, marking the establishment of one of the first Christian communities in Europe.

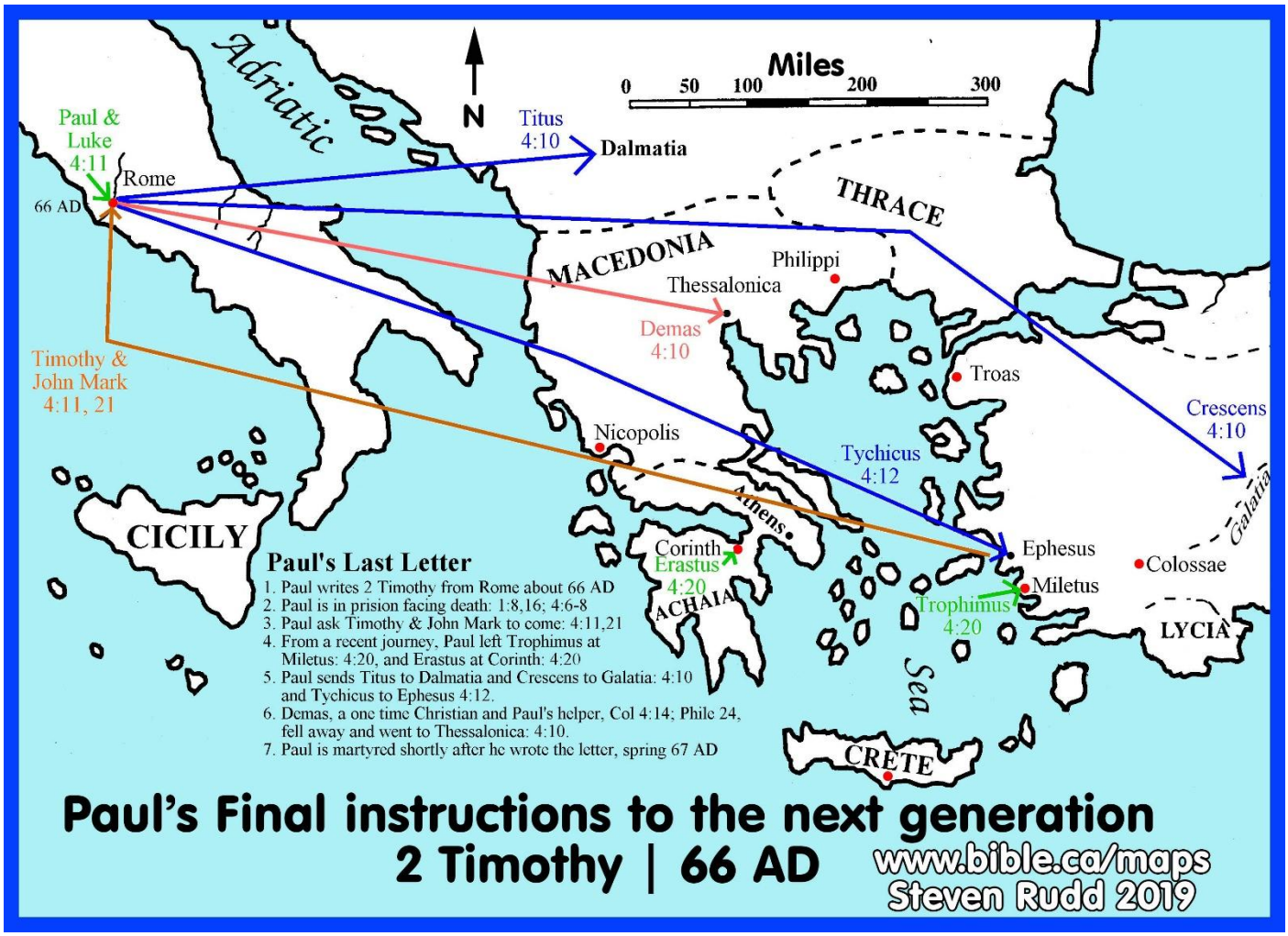
The Greeks were one of the first examples of Gentiles

Once the Gospel was preached in countries surrounding Israel, the new Christians were called ‘gentiles’ because they were not Jews. Many new Christians were Greeks. In the following verses, the word ‘Greek’ is used symbolically for ‘gentile’. For those who become Christians – whether Jew or and Greek, we are all one in Christ.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation for all believers, the Jew first, and the Greek.

Romans 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is over all, richly in all who call upon him.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither servant nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.



Note that the cities pf Athens, Corinth, Thessalonica and Ephesus still exist today.



Activities

Look up the following Bible verses to find out Paul's activities in the cities of Greece while on his missionary journeys. Write a brief outline of the events for each.

1. Macedonia – Acts 16:6-10

2. Philippi - Acts 16:13-15 (Lydia) and Acts 16:16-38 (Paul & Silas in prison)

3. Thessalonica – Acts 17:1-9

4. Berea – Acts 17:10-15

5. Athens – Acts 17:15-34

6. Corinth – Acts 18

Note that Paul also wrote letters to the people of Philippi and Corinth.

These are the books of Philippians and 1 & 2 Corinthians.





Paul in Athens



Lydia