

World History
Topic 2
The Fertile Crescent
3,400 BCE-70 CE

NAME: _____

I. Civilization in Mesopotamia

A. The **Fertile Crescent**

1. a region of the Middle East that stretches in a large, crescent-shaped curve from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea
2. includes **Mesopotamia**
 - a. a wide, flat plain in present-day Iraq
 - b. between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers
 - c. worlds' first civilization, Sumer, began to form here

B. Agriculture in Mesopotamia

1. rich and fertile soil
2. grew grains and vegetables and raised sheep, goats, and cattle
3. geography
 - a. foothills of Taurus and Zagros mountains in the north
 - b. plains in the south towards the Persian Gulf
 - c. hot and dry in the south
 - d. fertile because the rivers flood and deposit rich silt
 - e. sometimes flooded crops and towns
 - f. drought
4. used technology to farm
 - a. **irrigate** – supply water to crops
 - 1.) dug canals from rivers to fields
 - 2.) began settling new areas
 - b. wooden plow with seed funnel
 - 1.) cut a long furrow
 - 2.) dropped seeds in

C. City-States of Sumer

1. cities form
 - a. more food led to population growth and cities formed
 - b. Uruk was the first and had 40,000 people
 - c. others were Ur, Lagash, and Nippur
2. **city-state** – independent state that include a city and its surrounding territory
 - a. had its own government and laws
 - b. had its own main god
 - c. had walls and close houses
3. trade
 - a. had little wood, stone, and metal
 - b. traveled far to **barter** – trading system in which people exchange goods directly without using money
 - c. transported goods on barges on rivers
 - d. invented the wheel for carts and used sails on boats to trade
4. social classes
 - a. formed three classes
 - b. **distinct** – separate and different
 - c. upper class – ruler, officials, priests, merchants, land owners
 - d. middle class – farmers and skilled workers

- e. lower class – slaves
- f. both government and religion supported these classes
- g. men had higher social position
- h. women in the upper class could gain power

D. Religion in Sumer

1. **polytheism** – the belief in more than one god
 - a. the gods controlled weather, agriculture, and every aspect of life
 - b. behaved like people
 - c. lived forever with great power
 - d. happy gods brought good fortune and angry gods brought disaster
 - e. **prosper** – to gain in wealth
 - f. believed priests communicated with the gods
2. built **ziggurats** – pyramid-shaped brick temples
 - a. up to seven stories tall
 - b. steps
 - c. filled with paintings and statues
 - d. surrounded by farmland
 - e. storehouses held temples' goods

E. Sumerian Writing System

1. needed to track stored goods
2. began with pictographs on clay – simple pictures with tallies
3. **cuneiform**
 - a. a system of writing that uses triangular-shaped symbols to stand for words, ideas, and sounds
 - b. pressed wedge-shaped marks in clay tablets
 - c. recorded sales, taxes, and agreements
4. Epic of Gilgamesh
 - a. written in cuneiform
 - b. 12 clay tablets
 - c. told a mythical story of a hero
 - d. may have been a real king that ruled Uruk

F. Sumerian Government

1. ruled by priests
2. fought over land so priests picked a military leader
3. these leaders sometimes never gave up their power after the war
4. these kings respected the priests and the priests said the gods sent them to rule
5. kings began to hire workers for the city and served as the lawmaker and judge
6. law code
 - a. written set of laws
 - b. Ur-Nammu, king of Ur, issued the first
 - c. included laws about marriage, slavery and causing harm to others
 - d. example – knock an eye out, pay a pound of silver

G. Sumerian Achievements

1. irrigation, seed plow, cuneiform, wheel, and sail
2. mathematics and astronomy
 - a. divided an hour into 60 minutes and a minute into 60 seconds
 - b. divided the year into 12 months and the months into 30 days
 - c. spread these ideas through trade
3. bronze
 - a. mixed copper and tin
 - b. harder and better for making tools and weapons
 - c. will lead to powerful states later

II. The First Empires

A. City-States Grew

1. wanted more resources and began to fight
2. strong rulers conquered regions
3. formed **empires** – a state containing several countries or territories

B. Conquest of Sumer

1. fighting weakened city-states
2. Umma and Lagash
 - a. fought to control fertile land along their border
 - b. **ally** – an independent state that works with other states to achieve a shared military or political goal
 - c. fought with bronze axes and spears
 - d. Lagash won and looted and burned Umma
 - e. captured prisoners for slaves
 - f. later Umma recovered and beat Lagash
3. Sargon
 - a. Akkadians lived in the northwest
 - b. Sargon became the king of Kish
 - c. changed the culture to Akkadian
 - d. conquered and united other city-states and created the first empire
4. Akkadian culture spreads
 - a. shared **cultural traits** – an idea or way of doing things that is common in a certain culture
 - b. had similar religious practices and used cuneiform
 - c. spread cultural traits through the fertile crescent
 - d. traded with people in the Indus Valley (Pakistan)
 - e. crops were **abundant** – plentiful
 - f. no trees or minerals
 - g. traded for wood, copper, silver, and precious stones
5. the end
 - a. local rulers served as kings
 - b. Sargon ruled for over 50 years
 - c. within 100 years of his death, the empire fell
 - d. warriors from the Zagros Mountains took over
6. Ur-Nammu of Ur reunited Sumer for another 100 years before it fell again

C. The Babylonian Empire

1. Amorites from the north took over many cities including Babylon along the Euphrates River
2. Hammurabi became king and united southern Mesopotamia into Babylonia
 - a. sent governors, tax collectors, and judges to rule
 - b. spread out well-trained troops
 - c. oversaw public building projects
 - d. encouraged trade
3. **Hammurabi's Code**
 - a. set of laws that governed life in the Babylonian Empire
 - b. some were from Sumerian times
 - c. 300 laws
 - d. listed punishments for crimes like “an eye for an eye”
 - e. business contracts, taxes, marriage, and divorce
 - f. harming someone of the same rank was worse than harming someone in a lower rank
 - g. **governed** – to control or strongly influence
 - h. **rule of law** – the idea that all members of society must obey the law

4. life in the Babylonian Empire
 - a. the rich – kings, priests, and government officials
 - b. the poor – farmers, artisans, and slaves
 - c. farmed, cleared silt from canals, collected and wove wool into textiles
 - d. used new technology
 - 1.) tools
 - 2.) weapons
 - 3.) pottery
 - 4.) perfumes
 - 5.) medicine
 - e. created art
 - 1.) stone and bronze sculptures
 - 2.) gold and stone jewelry
5. the legacy of Sumer
 - a. Sumerian culture had lasted
 - b. Hammurabi's empire collapsed when he died
 - c. Sumer slowly faded away
 - d. Sumerian ideas and customs lived on

III. The Assyrian and Persian Empires

A. Development of the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires

1. Assyria was north of Babylon along the Tigris River
2. influenced by Sumer, the Akkadian Empire, and the Babylonian Empire
3. a military state
 - a. fought off many invaders after the fall of the empire
 - b. **cavalry** – soldiers who fought on horseback
 - c. used iron weapons and tools instead of bronze
 - d. built an empire that stretched from the Persian Gulf to Egypt
4. politics
 - a. divided the empire into 70 provinces
 - b. assigned a governor that reported back to the ruler
 - c. Ashurbanipal made Nineveh the capital
 - d. built a library of cuneiform tablets from Sumer and Babylonia about law, literature, mathematics, and science (20,000 survive today!)
5. Neo-Babylonian Empire
 - a. civil war and enemy attacks weakened the Assyrian empire
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar II
 - 1.) became king of Babylon
 - 2.) expanded to Egypt
 - 3.) captured Jerusalem and exiled the Jews
 - 4.) built walls, gates, and temples
 - 5.) The Hanging Gardens built on stone terraces

B. Rise of the Persian Empire

1. Babylon fell to Persia
 - a. became the largest empire in the world
 - b. lasted over a thousand years
 - c. dominated southwestern Asia and sometimes Egypt
 - d. had great political and cultural influence
2. Cyrus the Great
 - a. Persia formed to the east (Iran)
 - b. ruled by the Medes to the north
 - c. Cyrus the Great conquered them
 - d. conquered King Croesus's Lydia in Asia Minor (Turkey)
 - e. conquered Greek controlled Ionia to the south
 - f. expanded toward India
 - g. **standing army** – permanent army of professional soldiers
 - h. his "Immortal" soldiers were **elite** – representing the best
 - i. used the smell of camels to scare enemy horses
 - j. dug trenches to drain the Euphrates River for his soldiers to cross
3. Cyrus captured Babylon
 - a. grew into the wealthiest province
 - b. allowed to keep their own customs and religions
 - c. allowed Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple
4. Cyrus died
 - a. son Cambyses II took over
 - b. invaded northeast Africa and conquered Egypt
 - c. tried to capture Kush to the south but failed
 - d. had to kill and eat their pack animals in the desert
5. Darius the Great
 - a. took over after Cambyses died
 - b. expanded to the Indus Valley to the east
 - c. defeated Thrace to the west in Europe

d. lost in Greece at the Battle of the Marathon

C. Persia's Government and Religion

1. many diverse cultures
2. local self-government
 - a. divided empire into satrapies (provinces)
 - b. chose a leader for each
 - c. allowed to keep local laws and traditions and make decisions
3. central control
 - a. **reformed** – to improve
 - b. **tribute** – payment made to show loyalty to a stronger power
 - c. allowed provinces to pay according to its wealth
 - d. common **currency** – money that is used as a medium of exchange
 - 1.) gold coin with his image
 - 2.) made trade amongst the provinces easier
4. built new roads
 - a. made trade easier
 - b. easier travel for armies, government officials, and royal messengers
 - c. 1,500-mile-long Great Royal Road
5. postal station
 - a. messengers on horseback delivered from station to station
 - b. fastest system (still three months end to end)
6. Zoroastrianism religion
 - a. Zoroaster taught that Ahura Mazda was the supreme god
 - b. had an evil opponent
 - c. still allowed to worship other gods
 - d. Avesta – the sacred text included prayers and hymns
 - e. believed in good versus evil
 - f. people must work for good
 - g. believed in an afterlife
 - h. later influenced Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

D. Arts of Mesopotamia

1. show daily life
2. seals
 - a. stone seals identified owners
 - b. animal or geometric shape stamped into clay
 - c. cylinders and tubes rolled to show an entire scene
3. sculptures
 - a. carved realistic statues
 - b. relief sculpture – scene sticks out
 - c. **stele** – carved stone slab or pillar that stands on end
 - 1.) stele of Hammurabi
 - 2.) Hammurabi with Shamash god and the Code
 - d. large colorful reliefs on buildings
 - e. real and imaginary animals of tiles and bricks
 - f. painted cone-shaped pieces of baked clay

IV. The Phoenicians

A. The Mediterranean Sea

1. western boundary of Fertile Crescent
2. Phoenician civilization formed along the coast in Lebanon
3. consisted of city-states

B. Phoenicians

1. fearless sailors that guided trade ships (like earlier Greek Minoans)
2. developed from Canaanites
 - a. lived in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria
 - b. heavily influenced by Egypt
 - c. Phoenician society emerged after Egyptian rule ended
 - d. city-states ruled by priest-kings and shared power with merchants and a citizen **assembly** – group organized for a purpose
3. farming
 - a. influenced by geography
 - b. Lebanon Mountains bordered to the east
 - c. heavily forested and no room for farming
4. manufacturing
 - a. wove cloth and dyed purple with tiny sea snails
 - b. made pottery, glass, and metal objects
 - c. made wood furniture
5. traders
 - a. few natural resources
 - b. **import** – good or service sold within a country that is produced in another country
 - c. raw materials – gold, silver, tin, copper, iron, ivory, and precious stones
 - d. made bronze and silver bowls, iron tools, and weapons, and gold jewelry
 - e. shipped these and logs, wine, olive oil, salt, and fish across the Mediterranean
 - f. **exports** – good or service produced within a country and sold outside the country's borders

C. Phoenicians Used the Sea

1. navigation

- a. art of steering a ship from place to place
- b. ideal for trade on the western edge of Asia close to Europe and Africa
- c. trade routes from the east ended here to ship goods across the sea
- d. studied wind patterns and ocean currents

2. unknown waters

- a. sailed south and west past Egypt and along North Africa
- b. traveled north and west past the Balkan and Italian peninsulas
- c. explored the islands of Sicily and Sardinia
- d. reached Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal)
- e. passed Iberia into the Atlantic Ocean
- f. some traveled to Britain and others to West Africa
- g. searching for precious metals like gold and silver
- h. **profited** – to make a gain (natives didn't know the value)

3. colonies and city-states

- a. stopped for water, food, and supplies
- b. began settling fertile lands and grew into **colonies** – lands ruled by a distant country
- c. migrated to these colonies when Phoenicia was later attacked by Assyrians

- d. developed into city-states
- e. Carthage
 - 1.) fought three wars against the Romans
 - 2.) Romans destroyed Carthage
- f. Romans eventually take over all Phoenician city-states and colonies

D. Cultural Legacy of the Phoenicians

1. survived through **cultural diffusion** – the spreading of cultural traits from one region to another (often through trade)
 - a. linked cultures all around the Mediterranean
 - b. passed ideas to Greeks
 - c. standard of weights and measures for example
2. the **alphabet**
 - a. a small set of letters or symbols, each of which stands for a single sound
 - b. cuneiform required memorizing hundreds of symbols
 - c. Phoenician alphabet had 22 symbols for consonants
 - d. made learning to write much easier
 - e. Greeks began using it and added some vowel letters
 - f. they named it after the first two letters, alpha and beta
 - g. Romans adopted it and this led to our alphabet today

V. Origins of Judaism

A. Judaism

1. religion of Jewish people
2. developed in the Fertile Crescent 3,000 years ago
3. world's first religion with one God
4. shaped Christianity and Islam religions
5. influenced laws and human rights
6. one of world's oldest religions

B. Early Israelites

1. practiced **monotheism** – the belief that there is only one God
2. believed God created people in his image
3. acted based on **ethics** – ideas of right and wrong
4. the **Torah**
 - a. consists of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible
 - b. are also the first five books of the Old Testament
5. Abraham's covenant
 - a. lived around 1700 BCE
 - b. herded animals near Ur
 - c. God told him to travel to Canaan on the coast
 - d. God made a **covenant** – binding agreement
 - e. Canaan, the Promised Land, would belong to Abraham's descendants
6. the patriarchs
 - a. Abraham, his son Isaac, and his son Jacob
 - b. the forefathers of the Jews
 - c. Jacob had twelve sons, the ancestors of large tribes
 - d. Jacob was renamed Israel and his descendants became Israelites
 - e. **eventually** – after a time – this was written down in Genesis, the first book of Torah

C. Exodus

1. Canaan had a famine and Jacob's family moved to Egypt
2. Book of Exodus comes after Genesis
3. the new Egyptian pharaoh enslaved and mistreated them
4. **compelled** – forced – them to do harsh work
5. Moses
 - a. Israelite who was adopted by the pharaoh's family
 - b. God appeared to him and said to rescue his people
 - c. Moses asked the pharaoh to let his people go but he said no
 - d. God brought hardships because of his refusal
 - e. death of every Egyptian firstborn son
 - f. Israelites marked their doorways with blood of a lamb to prevent this
 - g. the pharaoh finally let them go and Moses led them to Sinai
 - h. **Exodus** – the escape of Israelites from slavery in Egypt
 - i. Jews celebrate Passover to commemorate this journey
6. the desert
 - a. lived in the Sinai Desert for 40 years
 - b. God prepared them for the Promised Land (Canaan)
 - c. received instruction, learned to worship, and created religious objects
 - e. faced hard conditions on the journey
 - f. God provided water and food

D. The Ten Commandments

1. stopped at foot of Mount Sinai
2. Moses went up to meet God

3. God gave him the Torah; the foundation of Judaism
4. includes law known as the Ten Commandments
5. **commandment** – an order to do something
6. if people believe in God and obey His laws, He will protect them
7. this journey teaches Jews to help oppressed people

E. Return to the Promised Land

1. continued on to the Promised Land
2. Moses died
3. Joshua
 - a. Moses's deputy became leader
 - b. had helped them when attacked
 - c. had been with Moses at the foot of Mount Sinai
4. entered Canaan and conquered Jericho and other kingdoms
5. the tribes of each of Jacob's sons settled different areas
6. herded animals and farmed on hillsides with terraces

VI. Beliefs of Judaism

A. The Hebrew Bible

1. Jews value written tradition, scholarship, and learning
2. known as “People of the Book”
3. the Torah and the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible)
4. God’s will shown through human events
5. forms the Old Testament
6. the Torah (first section)
 - a. first five books of the Hebrew Bible
 - b. tells of God’s creation of the world and people
 - c. Noah escaped a great flood on an ark
 - d. tells Abraham’s story
 - e. follows the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land
 - f. called the Law of Moses – many rules and laws included as well
7. the Prophets (section two)
 - a. contains books by or about Jewish **prophets** – a person believed to be chosen by God as a messenger to bring truth to the people
 - b. preachers, poets, and reformers
 - c. reminded people to obey God’s laws
 - d. told people how to relate to God, to others, to the land, and to themselves
 - e. traces the Jewish history
 - f. Book of Joshua describes the arrival in the Promised Land
 - g. also explains the creation of the kingdom of Israel
8. the Writings (last section)
 - a. includes great Hebrew literature such as Psalms – poems or songs offering praises or prayers
 - b. includes the Book of Proverbs – wise sayings giving advice
 - c. tells about heroes like Esther, Ruth, and Job
 - d. contains books like Chronicles – provides history

B. Jewish Law and Learning

1. **commentaries** – a set of comments or a recorded discussion about something
2. laws about religious rituals
3. laws to have a fair society, to help the needy, to protect the community through cleanliness and sanitation
4. **rabbis** – religious teachers – recorded oral laws
5. **Talmud** – a collection of oral teaching and commentaries
6. still discussed and studied today
7. Jews learn Hebrew and Aramaic to study it

C. Basic Teachings of Judaism

1. God did not live among the people and did not take on human or animal form
2. He was invisible and everywhere
3. ethical monotheism
 - a. in the Sinai Desert, the Israelites promised to follow God’s laws
 - b. believe there is one God who sets ethical rules
 - c. these rules must be followed to be faithful to God
4. righteousness and justice
 - a. know right from wrong
 - b. **righteousness** – acting or living in a way that is ethically right and obeys God’s laws
 - c. every **individual** – having to do with a single person or thing – has value and worth as well as responsibility to act righteously

- 1.) be honest and kind
 - 2.) work for **justice** – fairness and fair treatment
 - 3.) help those in need
5. observance of law
- a. felt a responsibility to obey God's laws and commandments
 - b. applies equally to every person, even leaders
6. women
- a. men had the most power
 - b. Jewish law gave them rights and protection
 - 1.) who they would marry
 - 2.) court cases
7. love others
- a. fight discrimination
 - b. give to charities
 - c. focus on human rights
8. other teachings
- a. **Sabbath** – a weekly day of rest (seventh day of the week/Saturday)
 - b. study and pray
 - c. strong ties to the Land of Israel; the land promised to them

VII. Early History of the Jewish People

A. Kingdom of Israel

1. time of the judges
 - a. Joshua led the Israelites to conquer Canaan
 - b. lived as a group of tribes
 - c. during times of conflict, rallied around **judges**
 - 1.) a leader who rallied the Israelites to defend their land
 - 2.) often warriors or prophets
 - 3.) didn't pass this leadership on to descendants
2. women
 - a. Deborah, the only female judge, inspired an army to win
 - b. Ruth followed her Jewish mother-in-law Naomi to Israel after her husband died, and they joined the tribe of Judah
3. the time of the judges ended when warrior Saul became king
4. David and Solomon
 - a. David, a young shepherd and musician, was one of Saul's best fighters
 - b. became the next king
 - c. captured Jerusalem and made it his capital
 - d. extended the kingdom's borders
 - e. wrote beautiful psalms – poems or songs in the Bible
 - f. Solomon, his son, then ruled
 - g. **commissioned** – to order the creation of – the First Temple
 - h. wrote many of the wise sayings in the Book of Proverbs
5. the kingdom divides
 - a. split into two after Solomon died
 - b. his descendants ruled the kingdom of Judah in the south (Judaism)
 - c. the descendants became known as Jews
 - d. the Assyrian Empire brutally conquered Israel in the north
 - e. many of those Israelites fled south to Judah as well
 - f. this is when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah and destroyed Jerusalem
6. Babylonian captivity
 - a. took thousands of Jews to Babylon
 - b. prophets encouraged them to continue obeying the Torah during exile
 - c. **exile** – separation from one's homeland
 - d. some Jews, like Daniel, became important in Babylon
 - e. many wanted to return to the homeland
 - f. Cyrus the Great, king of the Persians, conquered the Babylonian Empire
 - g. allowed Jews to return to Judah and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem
 - h. later rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem

B. Diaspora

1. communities of Jews living outside of their ancient homeland
2. Jews now lived throughout the Babylonian Empire
3. Land of Israel, Egypt, Asia Minor (Turkey), Mesopotamia, Iran, and central Asia
4. Esther
 - a. married the Persian emperor
 - b. his advisor planned to kill the Jews
 - c. Esther convinced the king to **reject** this – to decide against, turn away
5. Alexander the Great
 - a. Greek that conquered the Persian Empire
 - b. Greek empires ruled the Land of Israel, southwest Asia, Egypt, and southern Europe

- c. Jews settled these areas as well as Arabia and Africa and parts of Asia
- d. millions of Jews lived inside and outside of the Land of Israel
- e. Jerusalem remained their spiritual home

6. new ways to worship

- a. worshiped at the Temple in Jerusalem before
- b. now gathered in **synagogues** – meeting place
- c. prayed and discussed and had rabbis

7. Greek rule

- a. faced harsh treatment by the Greeks
- b. Maccabees family rebelled and won independence
- c. Hanukkah celebrates this victory

8. Roman rule

- a. the year 6 CE
- b. now called Judaea and later “land of the Jews”
- c. Romans were disrespectful and destroyed the Second Temple
- d. killed and enslaved thousands of Jews
- e. thousands fled
- f. teacher Yohanan ben Zaccai visited a commander and received permission to set up a center for Jewish scholars
- g. another Jewish rebellion led to Romans changing the name to Palaestina after the Israelites enemies the Philistines
- h. had to pay the Romans tribute and taxes

9. changes

- a. Oral Torah explained interpretations during Diaspora
- b. Rabbinic Judaism – traditions were handed down through writing and the focus was no longer on the Temple

C. Support for Society

1. Judaism has shaped civilization
2. Noahide Laws – seven laws that apply to society
3. the Ten Commandments
4. guidelines for social justice
 - a. how to respond to poverty, famine, and injustice
 - b. respect human life and give generously
 - c. care for strangers and refugees
 - d. respect others’ rights and property
 - e. honor parents and respect marriage
 - f. ideas about justice and equality led to the court system
 - g. idea of paying for crimes instead of the death penalty
 - h. asylum cities protected those awaiting trial
5. support for animal rights and the environment
 - a. humane treatment
 - b. environmental protections
 - c. crop rotation helps maintain soil nutrients
 - d. obligation to not destroy or waste resources

D. The Legacy of Judaism

1. 14 million Jews today around the world
2. mostly in the United States and Israel
3. one God created everything
4. Christians and Muslims honor Abraham and Moses
5. spread ethical teachings
6. the Hebrew Bible and the stories of Moses, David, and Esther
7. Jewish values formed modern democratic societies
8. worth of individual, moral behavior, responsibility, human rights, and justice