



Bible Geography

Political Geography – Mesopotamia

I. SUMER

- A. Location – at the head of the Persian Gulf
- B. Time – flourished as one of the earliest civilizations known to man
- C. Government
 - 1. City-states
 - 2. Ruler
 - a. War leader
 - b. High priest
 - 3. Large portion of the people were slaves
- D. Major Cities
 - 1. Ur
 - a. Biblical mention (Genesis 11:28-31; Genesis 15:7; Nehemiah 9:7; Acts 7:2-4)
 - b. Location – in southern Mesopotamia on the Euphrates
 - c. Religion
 - (1) Nannar (moon god) was the city god
 - (2) Built ziggurat to Nannar
 - d. Significance
 - (1) Abraham's native city
 - (2) Most powerful and prosperous city of Sumer
 - 2. Erech (Genesis 10:10)
 - 3. Calneh (Genesis 10:10)
- E. Religion
 - 1. Polytheistic (Joshua 24:2)
 - 2. No concept of heaven or hell and little emphasis on ethics
 - 3. Built ziggurats (cp. Genesis 11:4) – (see Ziggurat of Ur pic.)
 - a. A form of pyramid
 - b. Served as a platform for a temple
 - c. These were the “*high places*”



4. Each city had a favorite god

F. Accomplishments

1. Developed sexagesimal system of counting
 - a. Numbering by sixties
 - b. Still used in time and degrees of circles
2. Developed cuneiform (wedge-shaped characters) style of writing
3. Irrigated extensively
4. A business people
 - a. Carried on much trade
 - b. Credits and loans were given and recorded on tablets

II. AKKAD

- A. Location – in the region where the Tigris and Euphrates come the closest (not where they join) – (See Old Testament World map)
- B. Capital – Akkad
- C. Time – flourished later than the Sumerian civilization
- D. Greatest Ruler – Sargon of Akkad
 1. An empire builder
 2. Conquered from Sumer to the Mediterranean Sea

III. ELAM

- A. Location – between lower Tigris and the Zagros Mountains – (See Old Testament World map) (See Ancient World and Descendants of Noah map)
- B. Capital – Susa (also Shushan)
- C. Flourished around 2000BC
- D. Conquered by the Babylonians

IV. OLD BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

- A. Location – southern Mesopotamia



B. Major Cities

1. Babylon – capital
2. Ur
3. Mari

C. Major Rulers

1. Nimrod
 - a. The first empire builder according to scripture (Genesis 10:8-10)
 - b. Probably the ruler at the time of the tower of Babel
 - c. The source of other empires (Genesis 10:10-12)
2. Hammurabi
 - a. Most powerful Babylonian ruler according to secular history
 - b. Brought the city-states together
 - c. Made the Code of Hammurabi (a set of laws written by Hammurabi)
 - d. Sometimes identified with Amraphel of Genesis 14:1
3. Samsuiluna
 - a. Hammurabi's son
 - b. Saw the empire decline

D. Major Accomplishments

1. Law – Code of Hammurabi
2. Literature
 - a. Epic of Gilgamesh – story of the flood
 - b. Dictionaries
3. Knowledge
 - a. Mathematics
 - b. Astronomy
 - c. Magic
4. Skills
 - a. Built canals
 - b. Built scales