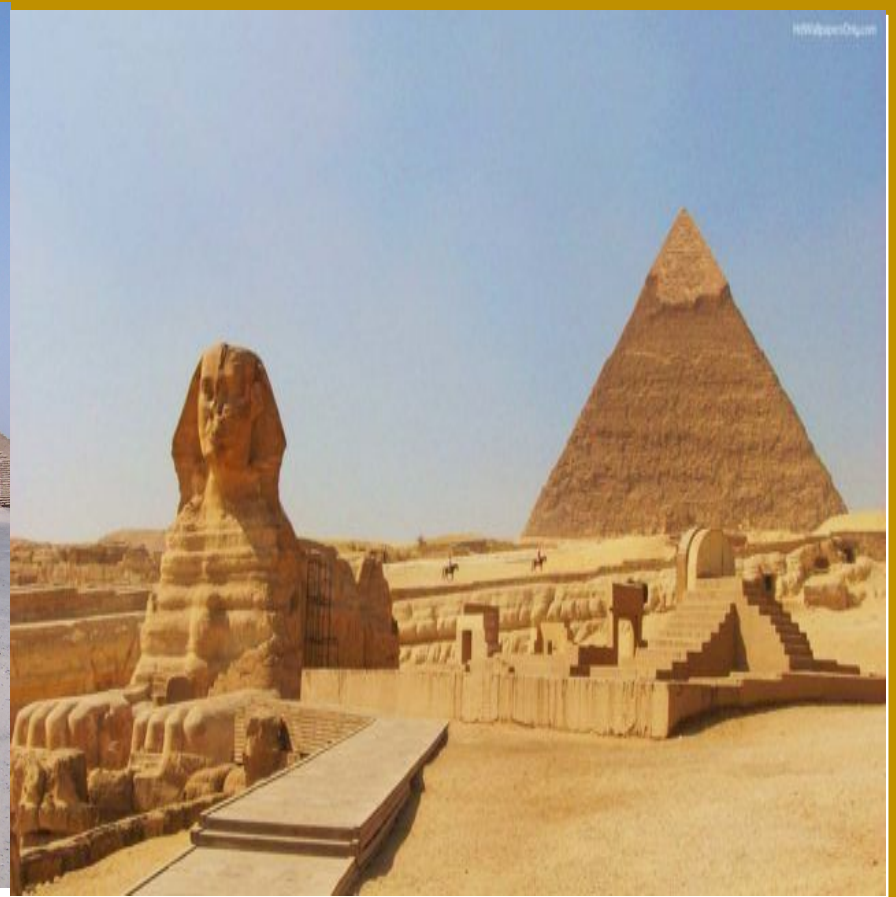


I. ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

II. FINAL VERSION

2 Kings 24:7

And the king of Egypt did not come again out of his land, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates.



A. Geography of the Fertile Crescent

1. At the same time that an ancient civilization was in Egypt, Africa, another civilization was in western Asia in a region called the **Fertile Crescent**.
2. This area covers the present day: **Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel**
3. Much of this land is either mountains or desert, but part is lush and green because of these two rivers: **Euphrates and Tigris Rivers**.



4. The word Mesopotamia means 'land between two rivers'

5. Both the Tigris and Euphrates begin in the Taurus Mountains and flow into the Persian Gulf.

6. As in Egypt, they depended upon the river for silt for farming

7. The yearly floods did not come as regularly as those in Egypt.



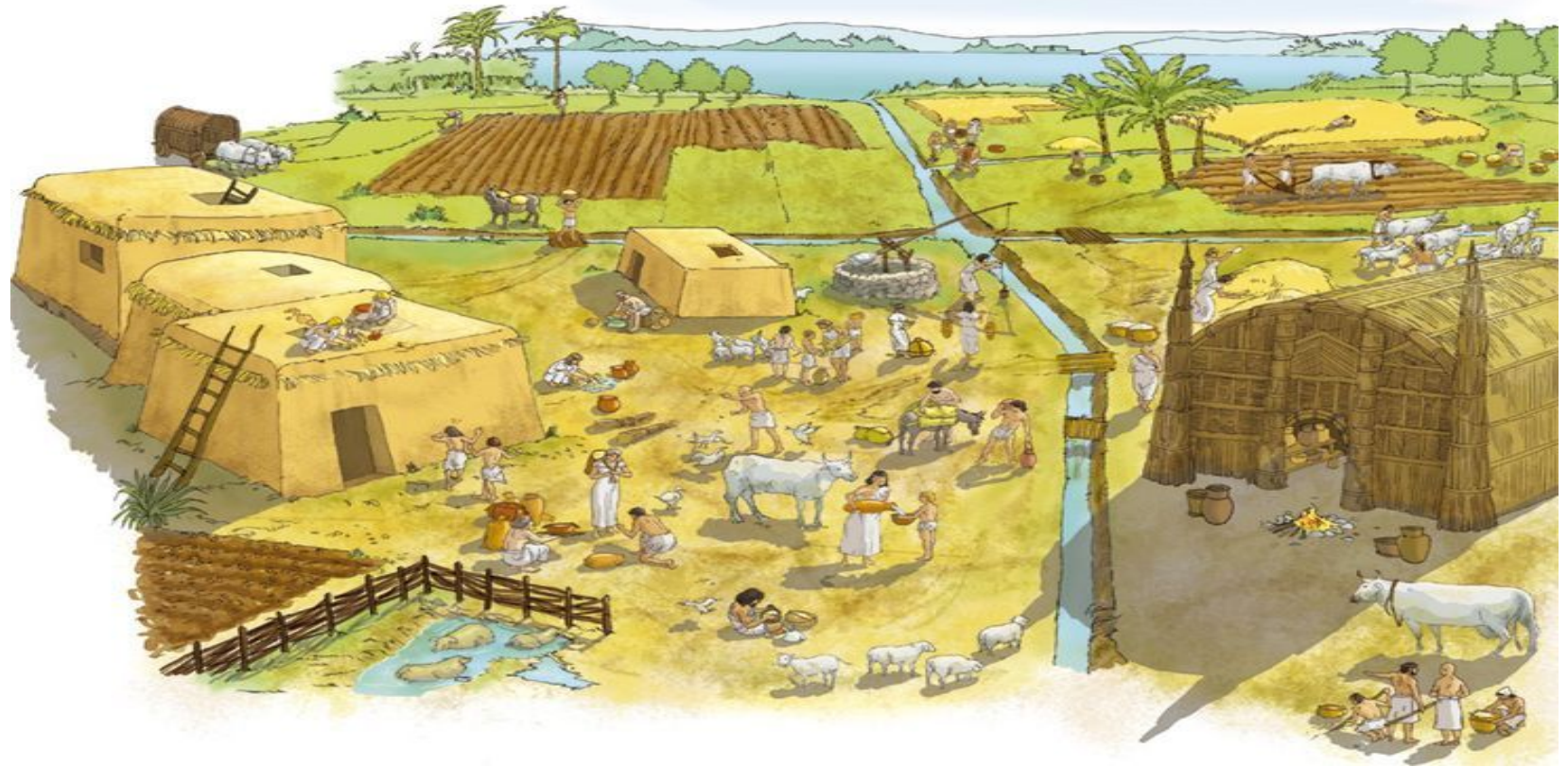
8. Southern Mesopotamia received little rain each year. This produced **droughts** (long periods of dry weather)

9. Northern Mesopotamia usually had enough rain to make some farming possible.

10. However southern Mesopotamia became better known for its fertile fields because northern Mesopotamia had rocky earth and only pockets of fertile soil.

B. From River to Field

1. Spring was harvest time, but also the time when the rivers flooded their banks.
2. Ancient farmers learned to build water control irrigation systems
3. They placed gates at the rivers bank and their irrigation canals. Then they dammed up an artificial lake with a gate. This way they could control the amount of water to the fields.



4. Early farmers grew plants along canal banks.

5. Fields of wheat and barley were the most important crops.

6. Sheep were especially prized in Mesopotamia for their wool and milk.

7. Cattle were good work-animals.



C. City States

1. Sumer was the southernmost region of ancient Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq and Kuwait)
2. The name means “land of the civilized kings”.
3. The Sumerians called themselves “the black headed people”
4. The Sumerians are thought to have formed the first human civilization in world history.

5. The Sumerians invented the wheel, the chariot, pottery wheels, and the sailboat.

6. The Sumerians are also credited for the first writing system, cuneiform.

7. Scribes, (boys who studied in school to write) used clay tablets and reed pens.



8. The king's palace was where a city-states planning and decision making took place.

9. Kings served as judges, generals, and canal overseers.

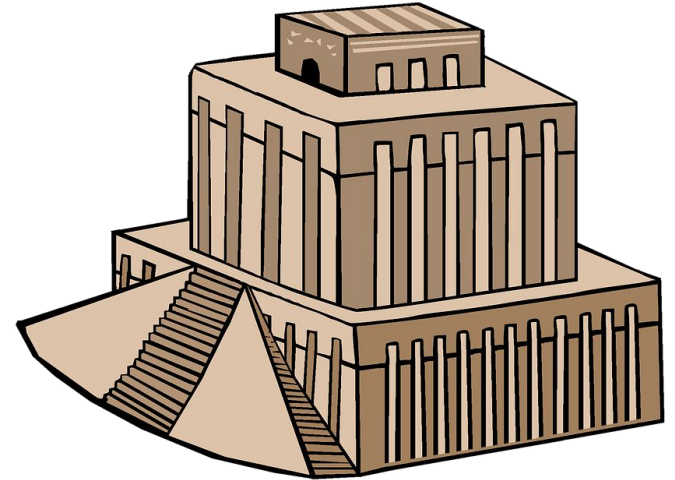
10. Unlike Egyptian pharaohs, Sumerian Kings were not considered to be gods.



11. In the center of most Sumerian cities stood a towering mud brick building, a **ziggurat** (temple).

12. Sumerians believed in **polytheism** (many gods)

13. Each city-state had a special god/goddess that was worshipped at that ziggurat.



14. During this time the city-states were united under one ruler, King **Sargon** of the city-state Kish.

15. Sargon expanded his empire to the north and traded with the seafaring people called the **Phoenicians**.

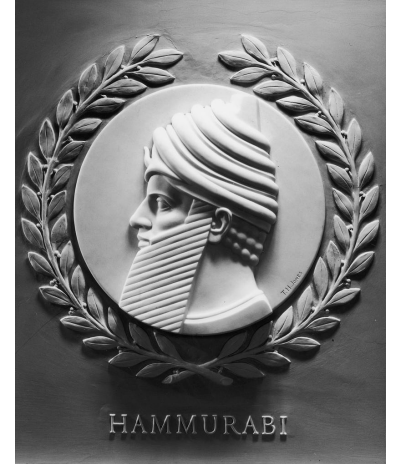
16. Because cuneiform, and trade expanded, Sargon was able to send instructions and govern over great distances.

17. **Babylon**, another city-state, had a King **Hammurabi** around 1800 B.C.

18. Hammurabi attacked the Sumerians and other city-states in the area. He created a huge empire.

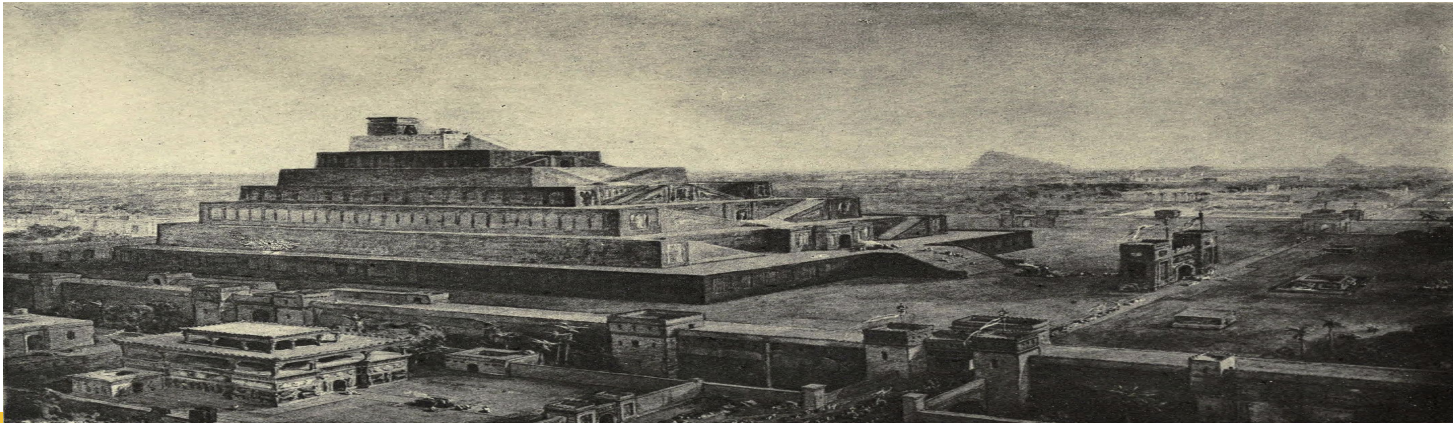
19. The **Code of Hammurabi** was one of the world's oldest code of laws.

20. A code of law is a written set of laws that apply to everyone under a government.



21. After Hammurabi died, about 1750 B.C., Babylonia began to fall apart. Throughout western Asia new powers overthrew old ones.

22. During this time of change, Babylonia remained one of the most powerful cities in the Fertile Crescent.



D. Beginnings of Judaism

1. Much information about these times come from a source that millions of people read today called the **Hebrew Bible**.
2. The Hebrew Bible is the Jewish people's record of their history and religion, which is called **Judaism**.
3. Christians and Muslims also read and honor the Hebrew Bible.
4. Based on Moses 5 books of laws, the **Torah**, or Hebrew Bible, comes from the word meaning "**to teach**"



5. The first book of the Bible tells of a family that lived in the city of Ur in Mesopotamia.

6. This family led by a man named **Abraham** and his wife **Sarah**, worshipped a different God.

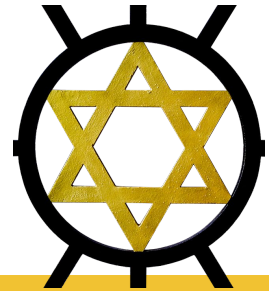
7. God told Abraham, “Go forth from your native land and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you...” which was **Canaan**



8. When Abraham arrived in Canaan, God made a **covenant** with him. This covenant is considered to be the beginning of Jewish history.

9. Later their descendants would become known as the people of Israel, or **Israelites**, after Abraham's grandson Israel.

10. The Israelites also became known as **Jews**.



11. Abraham's children and grandchildren prospered in Canaan, but then a time came of poor crops and terrible hunger. The people then traveled to **Egypt**.

12. A new pharaoh forced the Israelites with labor, and the people became **slaves**.

13. A man named **Moses** was born to Israelite parents but was adopted by the Pharaoh's daughter. One day he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite slave, and he killed the Egyptian. He was forced to flee the land to Midian, where he remained for years.

14. God called to him, “ I will send you to the Pharaoh and you shall set my people, the Israelites, free from Egypt. “

15. Moses was now seen as a prophet.

16. Moses with the help of God, led the captive Israelites free from Egypt. To this day Jews celebrate the Passover festival each year to remember their freedom from slavery.



17. Moses led the Israelites into Egypt where they wandered for **40 years**.

18. The Israelites traveled to a mountain, **Mount Sinai**.

19. God gave Moses a set of laws for the Hebrews to obey, known as the **Ten Commandments**.

20. One of the laws forbade the Hebrews from worshiping any other gods. This is known as **Monotheism**.

21. Before Moses died, he told the Israelites to cross the Jordan River, They defeated several kings and set up a nation of their own called **Israel**.

22. The Torah was the basis of life and faith. It commanded people to remember the **Sabbath (Saturday)** and keep it holy.

23. Israel became a powerful kingdom under the leadership of **King David**.

24. King David made **Jerusalem**, the capital city.

25. King David's son, **Solomon**, built a great temple in Jerusalem.

26. After Solomon's death, Israel was split into two - the northern kingdom was **Israel** and the southern kingdom was **Judah**.

27. The scattering of Jews to many parts of the world is known as **Diaspora**.