

BIBLE *Times* **& ANCIENT KINGDOMS**

TREASURES *from* **ARCHAEOLOGY**

David W. Cloud

INCLUDES DVD
WITH 19
POWERPOINT
PRESENTATIONS
WITH
3,200 SLIDES

Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms:
An Encyclopedia of Archaeological Treasures
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Table of Contents

Copyright and Distribution Policy	4
What's New for the 2016 Edition?	5
PowerPoints and Teaching Tips.....	6
Important Old Testament Dates	9
Israel's Geography.....	17
Bible Culture.....	25
Ancient Writing	61
Genesis 10-11.....	79
Ancient Babylon.....	123
Hammurabi: His Times and His Law.....	173
Ur of the Chaldees.....	191
Ancient Egypt.....	215
Baal.....	231
Hazor and Her Times	253
David and His Palace.....	265
Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.....	283
Samaria and Jezreel.....	317
The Assyrian Empire	351
Hezekiah and His Times	393
Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon.....	419
The Medo-Persian Empire.....	439
Edom, Nabateans, and the Spice Route	469
Herod's Temple and the Roman Era.....	473
Rome's Destruction of Israel	501
Christ's Ministry on the Sea of Galilee.....	535
From Jerusalem to Jericho	549
Christ's Passion Week.....	557

What's New for the 2016 Edition?

The August 2016 edition of *Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms* has five new chapters with accompanying PowerPoint presentations.

- The Bible Critics Were Wrong
- Edom, Nabateans, and the Spice Route
- Christ's Ministry on the Sea of Galilee
- From Jerusalem to Jericho
- Christ's Passion Week

It also has much new information and enlarged PowerPoints for some of the previous sections.

SAMPLE

PowerPoints and Teaching Tips

Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms is a package consisting of a book and a series of PowerPoint/Keynote presentations to illustrate the material. (Keynote is the Apple version of PowerPoint.)

Basically, the PowerPoint presentations are a graphical edition of the book. They are packed with more than 4,600 high quality color photos, drawings, historic recreations, and video clips.

Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms is a course on Bible geography, Bible culture, and Bible history.

It can be used for private study as well as Sunday School, Home Schooling, Bible Institute, and any similar setting.

It can be used as a stand-alone Bible course or as a supplement to other courses and studies.

It has a two-fold objective: to present apologetic evidence for the Bible and to give background material to help the student better understand the setting of Bible history.

We cover this fascinating history from Genesis to the New Testament, dealing with the Table of the Nations in Genesis 10, the Tower of Babel, Ur of the Chaldees, Egypt, Baal worship, the Philistines, the Canaanites, David's palace, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Edom, the Nabateans, and the Spice Route, Ahab and Jezebel, the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel, the Assyrian Empire, Hezekiah and his times, Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire, Herod the Great and his temple, Rome and Her Rule over Israel, Christ's ministry on the Sea of Galilee, From Jericho to Jerusalem, Christ's Passion Week, and Rome's Destruction of Jerusalem.

Many of the archaeological discoveries from the past 200 years, which we relate in the course, are so fascinating and improbable that they read like a novel. It is easy to see God's hand in this field, in spite of its prevailing skepticism.

The course also deals with Bible culture, such as weights and measures, plant and animal life, Caesar's coin, the widow's mite, ancient scrolls and seals, phylacteries, synagogues, false messiahs, judgment in the gate, ancient shipping and commerce, cosmetics, fine linen, the widow's mite, the pomegranate, mustard seed, idolatry, divination, tombs, the operation of ancient lamps, ancient war methods, millstones, pottery wheels, and olive presses.

We begin with an overview of Israel's geography and a timeline of Bible history to give the student a framework for better understanding the material.

Each section includes maps to help the student place the events in their proper location.

The course is packed with important but little-known facts that illuminate Bible history and culture.

The preparation for the book is extensive, the culmination of 40 years of Bible study, teaching, and research trips. In this context the author built a large personal library and collected information from major archaeological museums and locations in North America, England, Europe, Greece, Turkey, Jordan, and Israel.

Few things have helped me understand the Bible better than the archaeological and historical research that was done in preparation for writing this book, and we guarantee that the student who completes the course will read the Bible with new eyes and fresh enthusiasm.

The PowerPoint presentations are as follows:

- Bible Times 01 Israel's Geography
- Bible Times 02 Bible Culture
- Bible Times 03 Ancient Writing
- Bible Times 04 Genesis 10-11
- Bible Times 05 Ancient Babylon
- Bible Times 06 Hammurabi and His Times
- Bible Times 07 Ur of the Chaldees
- Bible Times 08 Ancient Egypt
- Bible Times 09 Baal

Bible Times 10 Hazor and Her Times
Bible Times 11 David's Palace
Bible Times 12 The Queen of Sheba
Bible Times 13 Samaria and Jezreel
Bible Times 14 The Assyrian Empire
Bible Times 15 Hezekiah and His Times
Bible Times 16 Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon
Bible Times 17 The Medo-Persian Empire
Bible Times 18 Herod's Temple and the Roman Era
Bible Times 19 Rome's Destruction of Israel
Bible Times 20 History of the Temple Mount
Bible Times 21 The Bible Critics Were Wrong
Bible Times 22 Edom, Nabateans, and the Spice Route
Bible Times 23 Christ's Ministry on the Sea of Galilee
Bible Times 24 From Jerusalem to Jericho
Bible Times 25 Christ's Passion Week

The PowerPoint presentations feature explanatory text on the slides themselves, but teachers should first read the material in the book, where more information is found. In this way, the teacher will be better prepared to describe the slides and answer questions.

The material in the course is extensive, and the teacher can decide whether to use all of it or to select only some portion of it for his particular class and situation.

The majority of the photos in the PowerPoint slides were taken by the author.

Israel's Geography

➤ A PowerPoint presentation of this material is included in the *Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms* package. See “PowerPoints and Teaching Tips” at the beginning of the course for more information.

In this chapter we give an overview of Israel's land, geographical features, and major regions and cities, to provide a background for understanding the kingdoms and events described in *Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms*.

Israel's Central Location

Israel is located at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe, the continents that were first settled by Noah's sons after the Flood.

Israel straddles the ancient crossroads between the three great centers of civilization following the Flood: Anatolia to the north, Mesopotamia to the east, and Egypt to the south.

God put Israel, the land of the Bible, at the center of the nations as a testimony to Himself. Israel's very location witnesses to the fact that her God is the true God.

“Thus saith the Lord God; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her” (Ezek. 5:5).

The Mediterranean Sea

The west coast of Israel borders the Mediterranean Sea. In the Bible it is called “the sea” (Nu. 13:29), “the great sea” (Josh. 1:4), and “the uttermost sea” (De. 11:24).

The Fertile Crescent

The Fertile Crescent is a large bow-shape region that runs from the northern tip of the Persian Gulf, follows the Tigris

and Euphrates River valleys east, and then swings south to Israel. This region straddles the Arabian desert.

The land between the Tigris and Euphrates is called Shinar in Genesis 10:10. (It was still called Shinar in Daniel's day 1,600 years after the Tower of Babel, Dan. 1:2.) The region is also called Mesopotamia, which means "the land between the rivers."

It is here that the ancient city states originated under the leadership of Nimrod and Asshur as recorded in Genesis 10-12. Archaeology has unearthed many of these cities, including Babylon, Erech (Uruk), Nineveh, Calah, and Ur.

Abraham followed this Crescent as he journeyed northwest from Ur to Haran and then down to Canaan (Gen. 11:31 - 12:5).

The Tigris and Euphrates originate in the Taurus mountains of Armenia. They flow southeast until they join together before flowing into the Persian Gulf. In ancient times the Gulf extended inland so far that the two rivers remained separated.

The Tigris is about 1,100 miles long. "Its length is eleven hundred and forty-six miles; its depth, volume, and velocity much greater than those of the Euphrates. It receives numerous tributaries" (Goodspeed, *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*).

The Euphrates is about 1,700 miles long. Unlike most rivers, it narrows and decreases in power, as it has only two tributaries. It gradually narrows from about 400 yards to 250 yards. As it nears the Gulf it "spreads out in canals and pools and swamps until it joins the Tigris."

Israel was a land bridge between the two greatest ancient civilizations: Mesopotamia and Egypt. The bridge was created by the Arabian desert on the east and the Mediterranean Sea to the west.

Ancient nations that surrounded Israel

To the east, beyond the Jordan River, were the countries of Edom, Moab, and Ammon. Edom was founded by Esau (Gen. 25:30; 36:1). Moab and Ammon were founded by the children of Lot (Gen. 19:36-38). All three nations were inveterate enemies of Israel.

The Philistines lived along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. They had five major cities: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath.

To the south of Israel was Egypt. The Nile River runs through Egypt. In the Bible it is called Sihor (Isa. 23:3; Jer. 2:18), “the river” (Gen. 41:1; Ex. 1:22), and possibly “the river of Egypt” (Gen 15:18). This is the river where the daughter of Pharaoh found the baby Moses in the basket (Exodus 2). This is the river that God turned to blood (Ex. 7:17). The river originates in Africa with the Blue Nile and the White Nile. It splits into branches and forms a delta where it flows into the Mediterranean Sea. The name “delta” comes from the Greek letter D -- Δ -- which is shaped like a triangle.

To the north of Israel along the coast was Phoenicia with its chief cities Tyre, Sidon, and Gebal (Byblos in Greek).

Farther north was Syria with its capital of Damascus.

To the east were the Mesopotamian empires, Assyria and Babylon.

Farther east were Media and Elam.

Later the Persian, Greek, and Roman empires ruled over Israel after she was judged by God for her sin.

Ancient Highways

There were two major roads that led south from Damascus.

One was **the Coastal Highway** running through Israel to Egypt. It entered Canaan north of the Sea of Galilee, ran across the valley of Jezreel, then down the Mediterranean coast. This was the major path for armies moving back and

forth and is the reason why so many battles were fought at Megiddo, which straddled this road. Because of the mountains, armies were forced to journey through the Jezreel Valley beneath the hill of Megiddo. The Coastal Highway was called the Way of the Philistines in ancient times and later called Via Maris (the Way of the Sea) by the Romans.

The other road was **the King's Highway** running east of the Jordan River from Damascus to Ezion-geber, a port on the Gulf of Aqabah, an arm of the Red Sea. From there another highway ran west to Egypt. Israel wanted to travel the King's Highway through Edom and the kingdom of the Amorites to the Jabbok River (Nu. 20:17; 21:22).

The queen of Sheba probably traveled one of these routes on her journey to visit Solomon, a trip that took many months from southern Arabia.

The Land of Israel

The expression "**from Dan to Beersheba**" was used to describe the extent of the nation Israel (Jud. 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:20; 2 Sam. 3:10; 24:2). During the reign of Solomon Israel controlled land farther north and south than this, and Israel will be even larger when Jesus establishes His kingdom, extending from the Euphrates to Egypt.

The twelve tribes of Israel were divided into territories during the time of Joshua (Josh. 14-19). To the north were Naphtali, Ashur, Zebulun, Issachar. In the center were west Manasseh, Ephraim, Dan, and Benjamin. In the south were Judah and Simeon. To the east of the Jordan River were Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

The Jordan River is 156 miles long and runs nearly the full length of Israel from north to south. The two major headwaters are at the foot of Mt. Hermon: the Dan Spring and the Banias or Pania Spring at Caesarea Philippi. The latter spring is named for the god Pan, whose temple was nearby.

From its northern headwater, the Jordan flows through the waters of Merom (Lake Huldah) and the Sea of Galilee, ending at the Dead Sea.

Jordan means “descend,” and it well deserves that name. It drops 3,000 feet from its beginning at 1,800 feet above sea level to its end at the Dead Sea 1,289 feet below sea level.

The Dead Sea is known in the Bible as the Salt Sea (e.g., Gen. 14:3; Num. 34:3; Deut. 3:17; Josh. 3:16) and the Sea of the Plain (Deut. 3:17). It has no outlet and there is no marine life other than bacteria and microbial fungi. It is the lowest place of any land mass on earth (400 meters or 1,300 feet below sea level). It is 34 miles long and 11 miles wide at the widest point and 430 meters or 1,400 feet deep.

At about 33% salinity, it is one of the world’s saltiest bodies of water, nearly nine times more salty than the oceans.

The Dead Sea region has less than two inches of annual rainfall. The average temperature in the summer is between 90 and 102 degrees Fahrenheit.

A variety of chemicals are extracted from the sea for commercial purposes, and it has long been used as a health spa.

There is a wide variety of animal life in the mountains around the Dead Sea, including camel, ibex, hare, hyrax (coney), jackal, fox, and leopard, and hundreds of bird species.

Sodom and Gomorrah were located somewhere in this region. Before the cities were destroyed, the area was like a beautiful garden (Gen. 13:10). Moses described what was left afterwards:

“And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath” (Deut. 29:23).

Various places have been suggested as the location of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other three “cities of the plain” (Gen. 19:25). Some believe they were scattered along the western side of the Dead Sea. Others, that they were scattered along the eastern side. Others, that the cities are now covered with water on the southern end of the sea.

There is a mountain on the southwestern shore of the sea called “Mount Sodom” by Arabs.

It would seem from the description in Genesis 13:3-11 that the cities were located just north of the Dead Sea. This is because Lot lifted up his eyes from Bethel, which is west of Jericho, and saw the region and it is described as “the plain of Jordan.” It is possible that the cities are beneath the waters of the Sea on the northern end.

Jerusalem has been the capital of Israel since David captured it from the Jebusites. It is mentioned nearly 1,000 times in the Bible, and it will be the capital of Christ’s kingdom when He returns. In a test of faith, Abraham was told to offer Isaac on Mt. Moriah which is where the Jewish temple was later built. David bought the threshing floor of Araunah on Moriah and prepared for Solomon to build the Temple there. Today Muslim mosques sit on the old Jewish Temple Mount.

Bethlehem, the birthplace of David and Jesus, is a little to the south of Jerusalem. Today Bethlehem is under Palestinian control and tourist movement is tightly controlled.

Galilee, the region around the Sea of Galilee, is where Jesus spent most of His life.

The **Sea of Galilee** is also called Kinneret or Chinnereth or Chinneroth (Num. 34:11; Josh. 11:2; 12:3), the Lake of Gennesaret (Lk. 5:1), and Lake Tiberias (John 6:1). It is about 33 miles in circumference, 13 miles long, and 8 miles wide. The deepest point is 43 meters (141 feet). It is fed by the Jordan River which enters to the north, and by underground springs.

This is the sea in which Jesus' disciples Peter and John fished (John 4:18).

Many of the events of Jesus' life occurred on or near the lake, including feeding the 5,000 (Lk. 9:10-17), feeding the 4,000 (Mat. 15:29-38), preaching and miracle-working in Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin (Mat. 11:20-23), quieting the storm (Mat. 8:26), walking on the water (Mat. 14:25-26), and casting demons out of the demoniac (Mat. 8:28-32).

To the southeast of the Sea of Galilee is Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, and Cana, where His first miracle was performed at the wedding.

The plain or valley of Jezreel (Jos. 17:16) is also called the plain of Esdraelon (the Greek form of Jezreel) and the valley of Megiddo (2 Ch. 35:22). The little river Kishon flows through the valley (Jud. 4:7, 13).

The ancient city of Jezreel is on the east side of the plain and the city of Megiddo is on the west.

This is where the battle of Armageddon will occur; "armageddon" means "hill of Megiddo" (Rev. 16:16).

As we have seen, this plain was the major highway through Israel from the north to Egypt, since it was the easiest passage through the mountains, and it was through here that many armies traveled and many battles were fought. In fact, it has been said that more battles have been fought here than anywhere else on earth.

Here Barak defeated the Canaanites (Jud. 4:13-14; 5:19) and Gideon defeated the Midianites (Jud. 6:33-34). Here the Philistines defeated the Israelites (1 Sam. 29:1) and Saul and Jonathan were killed on Mt. Gilboa overlooking the valley (1 Sam. 31:1-7). Elijah killed the prophets of Baal (1 Ki. 18:40) here. King Joram and King Ahaziah died here at the hand of Jehu (2 Ki. 9:24-27), and King Josiah, at the hands of the king of Egypt (2 Ch. 35:22-24).

Samaria was a district in the center of Israel. It was the heart of the northern kingdom. The city of Samaria was the

capital from the time of Omri. The city was destroyed by the Assyrians and the region repopulated with pagan people from the area of Media. After that it had a mixed religion, part Jewish and part pagan.

Gilead is a region on the east side of the Jordan River. It was occupied by the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh until the area was conquered by the Assyrians.

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON GEOGRAPHY

1. Israel is located on the crossroads of what three continents?
2. What is one of the names of the Mediterranean Sea in the Bible?
3. What is the Fertile Crescent?
4. Where is Mesopotamia located?
5. What is this region called in the Bible?
6. What three ancient countries were east of the Jordan River?
7. Where did the Philistines live?
8. What country is south of Israel?
9. What country was north of Israel on the coast?
10. What is the meaning of “from Dan to Beersheba”?
11. How many tribes are in Israel?
12. What river runs nearly the full length of Israel?
13. Where does this river originate?
14. What large lake does this river run through?
15. This river flows into what sea?
16. What is the capital of Israel?
17. In what region of Israel did Jesus spend most of his life?
18. What is the name of the sea where Jesus fed the 5,000?
19. What is another name for the valley of Jezreel?
20. What great battle will occur here in the future?
21. Where was Mt. Gilboa where Saul and Jonathan were killed?
22. Where did Gideon defeat the Midianites?
23. Was Samaria a city or a region?
24. Where was Gilead located?

Ancient Babylon

➤ A PowerPoint presentation of this material is included in the *Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms* package. See “PowerPoints and Teaching Tips” at the beginning of the course for more information.

Babylon is a major theme of Scripture. It appears in the early chapters of Genesis and does not disappear until the last chapters of Revelation.

Babylon’s Beginning

Babylon is the biblical name for the devil’s earthly kingdom with all of its religious and commercial aspects.

The beginning of Babylon’s history is recorded in Genesis 10-11 with the founding of Nimrod’s kingdom and the building of the Tower of Babel.

God commanded Noah and his sons to spread abroad and replenish the earth, but the majority of them congregated in a place called Shinar, which is a huge fertile valley watered by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. (It was still called Shinar in Daniel’s day 1,600 years later, Dan. 1:2). It is also called Mesopotamia (“the land between the rivers”).

This was the beginning of the kingdom of Babylon, which became a powerful empire centuries later and which in mystery form continues to exist in the world today (Rev. 17:5).

Instead of fearing the true and living God and acknowledging that He was righteous and just in destroying the world with a flood because of man’s wickedness and instead of praising God’s grace in saving a remnant through Noah, the majority of mankind rebelled even more than their forefathers and tried to put the holy Creator God completely out of mind.

In the description of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-4, God’s name is nowhere mentioned. Babel was (and is) all

about man, and any “god” involved in the enterprise is one of man’s device, one made in man’s image, and one that man can control. Ever since the Garden of Eden, men have been saying to God, “Depart from us” (Job 21:17).

The Tower was constructed about a century after the Flood. In the New Testament the apostle Paul described by divine inspiration what happened in that day.

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Romans 1:21-28).

Men began to worship idols and delve into the occult and to practice every sort of moral debauchery.

Babylon’s Founder

The first leader in Babylonian wickedness was **NIMROD**.

“And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same *is* a great city” (Gen. 10:8-12).

Theological liberals and humanists consider Nimrod a mythical figure, but this is willful skepticism. They have zero evidence to disprove the biblical account. The evidence, in fact, points to the fact that the Bible is a far more dependable historical record than anything that has been dug from the sands of Egypt or the tells of Mesopotamia.

The extra-biblical record of that time is a jumbled, contradictory, extremely fragmentary mess and any real history is hidden beneath a thick slathering of pagan mythology.

The Bible says that Nimrod was a “mighty one in the earth,” describing his prominence. He was the first leader of an anti-God confederacy, the first ruler of a humanistic empire, the forerunner of the end-time antichrist.

Nimrod probably demanded worship as god. This trait was imitated by his successors down to the Caesars in Rome and beyond.

The description of Nimrod as a “mighty hunter” refers to his prowess as a hunter of animals as well as a hunter of men. He was a lion killer and a man killer. He was a conqueror, an emperor, an empire builder.

The Babylonian god **BEL-NIMROD** (also Bel-Nipru and Bel-Merodach) doubtless pointed back to the biblical Nimrod. Bel-Nimrod certainly had the characteristics of Nimrod. He was a proud god-king and a mighty warrior. Bel-Nipru means “the god of the chase” or “the great hunter.” He was called “the supreme” and “the father of the

gods.” Renowned archaeologist Henry Rawlinson said, “The worship of Bel-Nimrod in Chaldea extends through the whole time of the monarchy” (*The Seven Great Monarchies*, vol. 1).

The Bible’s description of Nimrod fits several men known to ancient secular history.

One candidate for Nimrod is **SARGON THE GREAT** who is said to have ruled from about 2334 to 2279 BC, which is the general time period of Genesis 10-11.

Though many of the historical records about Sargon are clearly legendary, the *New World Encyclopedia* observes that the ruler “almost certainly has a basis in history.”

Sargon founded an empire that stretched from Elam to the Mediterranean Sea (*New World Encyclopedia*). Literary records have survived that describe a far-reaching and sophisticated legal and commercial system in Sargon’s day.

He built a glorious capital city in Akkad, which “became a main center of consumption, towards which goods and services flowed from the far-flung reaches of the empire. .. The centralization of cultural, economic, and military power under the Akkadian kings was accompanied by increased standardization of the cuneiform script, systems of weights and measure, calendar, and archive keeping. It also led to the creation, in what were undoubtedly royal workshops, of some of the finest works of art ever produced in ancient Mesopotamia” (“The Akkadian Empire,” Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago).

Sargon’s kingdom was permeated with idolatry. He installed his daughter, Enheduanna, as the cultic bride of the moon god in Ur of the Chaldees, and she composed hymns to the goddess Inanna.

If Sargon was not Nimrod, he is doubtless one of the proud descendants of Nimrod who established idolatrous kingdoms in that part of the world.

Consider also **NARAM-SIN**, Sargon’s grandson. His reign is dated by archaeologists to about 2250 BC, which is when

the Tower of Babel was built according to the biblical timeline.

He exalted himself as a god during his own lifetime (Enrico Ascalone, *Mesopotamia*, University of California Press, 2005, p. 30). In the Naram-Sin stele at the Louvre, he is wearing a horned helmet signifying deity. He was addressed by his officials as “god of Akkad.”

His name probably refers to Sin the moon god, which was worshiped widely in that day, including in Ur of the Chaldees where Abraham was born.

Naram-Sin was a proud, Nimrod-like warrior. He called himself “king of the four quarters, king of the universe.” Carrying a bow and spear, he is depicted on the Naram-Sin stele destroying a group of people called the Lullubi.

Thus Naram-Sin has the characteristics of the biblical Nimrod: bold leadership, pride, kingdom building, idolatry, aspiring to divinity, military prowess.

Consider also **ASSHUR**. The Bible mentions Asshur prominently as an associate with Nimrod, and the founder of Nineveh and other city-states in northern Mesopotamia on the Tigris River (Gen. 10:8-12).

Since the 19th century, the name Asshur has become well-known to historians and archaeologists.

The Assyrian empire was named after Asshur. Asshur became a mythological god, but there is no reason to believe that he was not also the man mentioned in the Bible.

Asshur had the characteristics of Nimrod and ancient Babel. A mighty leader and hunter/warrior, his symbol was a bow. He was worshipped as the sun god and as such was symbolized by a winged disc or wheel encompassing the rays of the sun.

Consider also **GILGAMESH**. Sumerian records claim that Gilgamesh was the king of Uruk (*Uruk* is Akkadian and *Erech* is Hebrew) in about 2,500 BC. This carries us back to the time near the Tower of Babel, and it is probable that the Gilgamesh mythology has an historical basis in Nimrod, as

the Bible says that Erech was as the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom (Genesis 10:10).

Even the skeptics consider Gilgamesh to have been an historical figure:

“It is generally accepted that Gilgamesh was a historical figure, since inscriptions have been found which confirm the historical existence of other figures associated with him: such as the kings Enmebaragesi and Aga of Kish. If Gilgamesh was a historical king, he probably reigned in about the 26th century BC” (“Gilgamesh,” *Wikipedia*).

The Gilgamesh Epic describes the Flood from a pagan perspective.

Gilgamesh is described as a proud, cruel conqueror--the very characteristics modeled by Nimrod. A popular Gilgamesh image depicts him fighting two lions, which fits the Bible's description of Nimrod as a mighty hunter.

Consider some excerpts from the Gilgamesh Epic:

“Supreme over other kings, lordly in appearance, he is the hero ... He walks out in front, the leader ... Gilgamesh is strong to perfection ... Who can compare with him in kingliness? ... Two-thirds of him is god, one-third of him is human. ... beautiful, handsomest of men ... perfect ... Like a wild bull he makes himself mighty, head raised over others, there is no rival who can raise his weapon against him. His fellows stand attentive to his (orders). . . . bold, eminent, knowing, and wise. ... He struts his power over the people like a wild bull.”

Gilgamesh is an opponent of the “god” who brought the flood. In the Gilgamesh epic, this god is called *Hawawa* the Terrible (*Humbaba* in some versions). Gilgamesh sets out to kill this god. It is not difficult to see that this is a corruption of the name Jehovah God, and in the Gilgamesh Epic we have a description of Nimrod's rebellion against God.

The Babylonian mythology of **MARDUK** might also have a historical basis in Nimrod. This was the conclusion of Alexander Hislop, author of *The Two Babylonians* (1853). Nimrod's wife Semiramis was possibly the basis for the goddess worship that permeated the ancient Mediterranean world, Marduk and Astarte being modeled on Nimrod and Semiramis.

Nimrod's character was reproduced in the Babylonian, Assyrian, Persian, and Greek kings that rose in succession across the pages of history in that part of the world. Henry Layard, who unearthed many ancient bas-reliefs depicting the Assyrian kings as hunters and warriors, made the following observation linking them to Nimrod:

“A conqueror and the founder of an empire was, at the same time, a great hunter. His courage, wisdom, and dexterity were as much shown in encounters with wild animals as in martial exploits; he rendered equal services to his subjects, whether he cleared the country of beasts of prey, or repulsed an enemy. The scriptural Nimrod, who laid the foundation of the Assyrian monarchy, was ‘a mighty hunter before the Lord’; and the Ninus of history and tradition, the builder of Nineveh, and the greatest of the Assyrian kings, was as renowned for his encounters with the lion and the leopard, as for his triumphs over warlike nations” (Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains*, p. 94).

Babylonian Culture

The Babylonians were highly advanced in technology.

“They had worked out a numerical system, compounded of the decimal and the sexagesimal series. The basis was the ‘soss,’ 60; the ‘ner’ was 600; the ‘sar,’ 3600. The metrology was accurate and elaborate, and formed the starting-point of all other systems of antiquity. All measures of length, area, capacity, and weight were derived from a single standard, the hand-

breadth. The division of the circle into degrees, minutes, and seconds on the sexagesimal basis (360° , $60'$, $60''$) hails from this period and people. The ecliptic was marked off into the twelve regions ... The year of three hundred sixty-five and one-fourth days was known, though the common year was reckoned according to twelve months of thirty days each, and equated with the solar year by intercalating a month at the proper times. Tables of stars and their movements, of eclipses of moon and sun, were carefully prepared. The year began with the month Nisan (March-April); the day with the rising of the sun; the month was divided into weeks of seven days; the day from sunrise to sunrise into twelve double hours of sixty minutes. The clepsydra and the sun-dial were Babylonian inventions for measuring time” (George Goodspeed, *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, 1902, Kindle Locations 1095-1100).

“Babylon’s was apparently the genius which excogitated an alphabet; worked out the simpler problems of arithmetic; invented implements for measuring the lapse of time; conceived the idea of raising enormous structures with the poorest of all materials, clay; discovered the art of polishing, boring, and engraving gems; reproduced with truthfulness the outlines of human and animal forms; attained to high perfection in textile fabrics; studied with success the motions of the heavenly bodies; conceived of grammar as a science; elaborated a system of law; saw the value of an exact chronology; in almost every branch of science made a beginning, thus rendering it comparatively easy for other nations to proceed with the superstructure. . . . It was from the east, not from Egypt, that Greece derived her architecture, her sculpture, her science, her philosophy, her mathematical knowledge, in a word, her intellectual life. And Babylon was the source to which the entire stream of eastern civilization may be traced” (Henry Rawlinson, *Great Monarchies*, III, pp. 75 f.).

Recent research by astrophysicist Mathieu Ossendrijver, using ancient tablets at the British Museum, has found that from about 1800 BC the Babylonians used a “complex geometrical model that looks like a rudimentary form of integral calculus to calculate the path of Jupiter” (“Babylonians Tracked Jupiter with Fancy Math,” *Live Science*, Jan. 28, 2016). The tablets analyzed by Ossendrijver date from 1800 BC to about 50 BC. The Babylonians developed “abstract mathematical, geometrical ideas about the connection between motion, position and time that are so common to any modern physicist or mathematician” (“Math whizzes of ancient Babylon figured out forerunner of calculus,” *Science*, Jan. 28, 2016). Alexander Jones of New York University says, “Such concepts have not been found earlier than in 14th century European texts on moving bodies. Their presence testifies to the revolutionary brilliance of the unknown Mesopotamian scholars who constructed Babylonian mathematical astronomy.”

The path of Jupiter was important to the Babylonians, as their chief god Marduk was identified with this planet.

In the third millennium BC, the Babylonians were making soap made from fats boiled with ashes (Soaphistory.net). A formula for making soap from water, alkali, and cassia oil was written on a Babylonian clay tablet around 2200 BC.

The institution of marriage was a foundational element in Babylonian society, but it was deeply corrupted from the divine original that had been given to man in the Garden of Eden.

“Giving in marriage was an affair of the father, and was entirely on a mercantile basis. The prospective bridegroom paid a stipulated sum for his bride, varying according to his wealth, sometimes a shekel, sometimes a mina. Some religious ceremonies accompanied the marriage celebration. The wife usually brought a dowry to her husband. Polygamy and concubinage were not

uncommon. The wife was completely under her husband's control. In certain circumstances she could be sold as a slave, or put to death. Divorce was very easy, since the husband had merely to bid the wife depart, giving her a writ of divorcement. The only restraint, and that probably a strong one, in the case of a Babylonian, was that he was generally required to restore to the wife the value of her dowry” (George Goodspeed, *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, 1902, Kindle Locations 930-937).

Women were offered for sale in marriage markets.

“Once a year in each village the young women eligible to marry were collected all together in one place; while the men stood around them in a circle. Then a herald called up the young women one by one and offered them for sale. He began with the most beautiful. When she was sold for a high price, he offered for sale the one who ranked next in beauty. All of them were then sold to be wives. The richest of the Babylonians who wished to wed bid against each other for the loveliest young women, while the commoners, who were not concerned about beauty, received the uglier women along with monetary compensation...All who liked might come, even from distant villages, and bid for the women. This was the best of all their customs but it has now fallen into disuse (Herodotus, *Histories*, I, 196).

Babylon's Tower

Under Nimrod's leadership the confederacy determined to build a great tower to “reach unto heaven.”

This does not mean they intended to build a structure that would actually reach heaven physically. The ancient Babylonians were not simple villagers engaged in a silly “will-o'-the-wisp” enterprise. They had an advanced understanding of astronomy and physics.

No, they were building a structure to bridge heaven and earth, God and man, through mystery religion.