

High School Level | STUDENT

WORLD HISTORY

*Observations and Assessments
from Creation to Today*

James P. Stobaugh



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This book is dedicated to this new generation of young believers whose fervor and dedication to the purposes of the Lord shall yet bring a great revival. Stand tall, young people, and serve our Lord with alacrity and courage!



Using Your Student Textbook

How this course has been developed:

1. **Chapters:** This course has 34 chapters (representing 34 weeks of study).
2. **Lessons:** Each chapter has five lessons each, taking approximately 20 to 30 minutes each. There will be a short reading followed by critical thinking questions. Some questions require a specific answer from the text, while others are more open-ended, leading the student to think “outside the box.”
3. **Weekly exams:** The final lesson of the week is the exam covering the week’s chapter.
4. **Student responsibility:** Responsibility to complete this course is on the student. Students are to complete the readings every day, handing their responses to a parent or teacher for evaluation. Independence is strongly encouraged in this course, which was designed for the student to practice independent learning.
5. **Grading:** Turn in your assignments daily or weekly to your parent/teacher.

Throughout this book you will find the following components:

1. **Narrative Background:** background on the period.
2. **Critical Thinking Questions:** questions based roughly on Bloom’s Taxonomy.
3. **Concepts/Generalizations:** terms, concepts, and theories to be learned.
4. **History Maker:** a person(s) who clearly changed the course of history.
5. **Historiographies or Historical Debate:** an examination of historical theories surrounding a period or topic.
6. **World View Formation:** An overview of historical understandings of who God is. There is also a subsection where we examine important thinkers of the period/topic.
7. **History & World View Overview:** an overview of world views.

What the student will need each day:

1. **Notepad:** for writing assignments.
2. **Pen/pencil:** for the answers and essays.

About the Author

James P. Stobaugh and his wife, Karen, have homeschooled their four children since 1985. They have a growing ministry, For Such a Time As This Ministries, committed to challenging this generation to change its world for Christ.



Dr. Stobaugh is an ordained pastor, a certified secondary teacher, and an SAT coach. His academic credentials include: BA, cum laude Vanderbilt University; Teacher Certification, Peabody College for Teachers; MA, Rutgers University; MDiv, Princeton Theological Seminary; Merrill Fellow, Harvard University; DMin Gordon Conwell Seminary.

Dr. Stobaugh has written articles for magazines: *Leadership*, *Presbyterian Survey*, *Princeton Spire*, *Ministries Today*, and *Pulpit Digest*. Dr. Stobaugh’s books include the *SAT Preparation Course for the Christian Student*, the *ACT Preparation Course for the Christian Student*, as well as *American History*, *British History*, and *World History* high school curriculum.

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Preface

History is meant to be a light that illuminates the present and directs attention toward the possibilities of the future. However, history is only ancient, dusty chronicles if one does not honestly study and assess these written records of events, as well as the events themselves. History is a social science—a branch of knowledge that uses specific methods and tools to achieve its goals.

Historians examine archival footprints. Some of these are written records: diaries, letters, oral histories, recordings, inscriptions, biographies, and many others. At times history seems merely to be a list of kings, of wars, and of other significant things. As a result, it can seem like only the study of a bunch of dead people. Who cares? Like Huck Finn, we quip, “After supper the widow Douglas got out her book and learned me about Moses and the bulrushes, and I was in a sweat to find out all about him; but by and by she let it out that Moses had been dead a considerable long time; so then I didn’t care no more about him, because I don’t take no stock in dead people” (Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*).

But history is alive, and full of interesting, glorious, and useful things! And it is terribly relevant to all of us.

There are lots of different histories. The Earth, the world of nature, and the universe all have pasts, but they have no histories, per se. Histories have to do with real, alive (or once alive) people. Only human societies have histories, based on collective memories from which they reconstruct their pasts.

Not all attempts to reconstruct the past have resulted in histories. My Uncle George (not a real uncle but just a family friend), grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, had an entirely different view of African history than I, a father of three African-American children. Uncle George had a delusional “history” that was very much like a Nazi propaganda film, but it was not a “history.” It was a “past” made up of venal images, obscured remembrances, and visceral prejudices that stewed in his poor, conflicted mind.

My history was big enough to love Uncle George—may he rest in peace—and I did, as did my three children. And in my life, we were brought together into an eternal peace. Perhaps that is the best thing one can say about world history; it brings everyone together in one shared history.

To be a true history, an account of the past must not only retell what happened but must also relate events and people to each other. It must inquire into causes and effects. It must



try to discern falsehood in the old records, such as attempts of historical figures to make them look better than they really were. It must also present the evidence on which its findings are based.

It is clear that all our information in regard to past events and conditions must be derived from evidence of some kind, and certain evidences are better than others.

To that end, I do not expect students to be completely neutral about historical sources. And yet, scholarly historical inquiry demands that we implement the following principles:

1. Historians must evaluate the veracity of sources. There must be a hierarchy of historical sources. Primary source material, for instance, is usually the best source of information.
2. Historians must be committed to telling both sides of the historical story. They may choose to lobby for one view over the other, but they must fairly examine all theories.
3. Historians must avoid stereotypes and archetypes. They must overcome personal prejudices and dispassionately view history in ruthlessly objective terms.
4. Historians must be committed to the truth no matter where their scholarship leads them. At times historians will discover unflattering information about their nation/state.
5. Finally, historians understand that real, abiding, and eternal history is ultimately made only by people who obey God at all costs.

After everything is said and done, historians are only studying the past. They cannot really change the past. Theories about the past come and go, and change with each generation; however, the past is past. Historians will debate about history, but they can never alter it. Only God can change history, and God alone.

When persons are reborn in Christ, their present, future, and, yes, even their past is changed. History is literally rewritten. They are new creations. That bad choice, that sin, that catastrophe is placed under the blood of the Lamb, and everything starts fresh and new; a new history for new people.

This happened in my own life. 150 years ago my great-great-grandfather, whose passion was to kill Yankees, was a slave owner in Eastern Tennessee. With that inheritance, like most white Southerners who grew up in the



Bungalow in Bora Bora

1960s, I grew to mistrust African-Americans. Like so many people captured by their history and culture, present and future became my past. However, when I was a senior in high school, I was saved. Jesus Christ became my Lord and Savior. My attitudes changed. It took time, but prejudices disappeared. Ultimately, I married my New Jersey wife, Karen, and we adopted three African-American children—whose ancestors, by the way, may have been owned by my great-great-great-uncle!

Three of my children are African-American. Imagine! Quite literally, my history was rewritten. It has been changed irrevocably by my decision to invite Jesus Christ to be Savior of my life. In a real sense, family prejudice and death existing for generations ended in my generation. The destructive historical cycle that was part of my history has ended. No one, nothing can do that but the Lord. History has been rewritten!

My prayer is that if you do not know this God who can change history—even your history—this history text might encourage you to invite Jesus Christ into your heart as Savior.



View from the top of St. Peters Basilica in the Vatican city. Large parts of central Rome are visible.

Chapter 1

MESOPOTAMIA

First Thoughts . . .

Authorities in the field of history do not all agree about the definition of civilization. Most accept the view that “a civilization is a culture which has attained a degree of complexity usually characterized by urban life.” In other words, a civilization is a culture capable of sustaining the social, political, and religious needs of a densely populated society. The Mesopotamian region, beginning with the Sumerians, created a system of writing to keep records, monumental architecture in place of simple buildings, and art that was worthy of its people. All these characteristics of civilization first appeared in Mesopotamia.

Chapter Learning Objectives . . .

In chapter 1 we will learn that Mesopotamia is probably the location of the Garden of Eden. Next, we will examine the rise of the Sumerian civilization. We will study how subsequent nations conquered and enlarged the Mesopotamian footprint. Along the way we will examine Mesopotamian gods and contrast them with the God of the Jews.

As a result of this chapter you should be able to:

1. Discuss at least three important contributions that the Sumerian civilization made to the Western world.
2. Contrast Mesopotamian gods and goddesses with the Jewish God.
3. Write a short report on the life of Daniel.
4. Analyze the Mesopotamian civilizations.
5. Describe an ordinary day in the life of a 14 to 18-year-old Mesopotamian youth.



LESSON 1

THE STORY OF MESOPOTAMIA

The story of Mesopotamia is the story of the very genesis of civilization. There is some debate about where people stopped merely herding their livestock and started farming and building cities and therefore creating a civilization. However, there are some strong arguments that it began in Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia, which means “between the rivers,” lies between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. It is located in the general vicinity of the present national states of Iraq and Syria. There is strong evidence that Mesopotamia is in fact Eden, where God placed the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve (Genesis 1).

Mesopotamia’s oldest known communities date from 7000 BC, although that date is much debated. Most biblical scholars argue for a more recent date (c. 4000 BC).

Several civilizations prospered in the region until, in the sixth century BC, it became part of the Persian Empire, the largest empire in the world up to then (see Daniel 5).

The first city-state (an autonomous, self-contained urban center, surrounded by a dependent agricultural area) in the region was made up of the Sumerian cities Eridu and Uruk, among others. Abram emigrated from the Sumerian city of Ur.

Sumerians developed a system of writing by imprinting on clay tablets using a stylus. A form of printing was a similar first: they carved negative images on a stone cylinder usually from two to six centimeters long. These were repeatedly rolled over fresh clay to produce positive inscriptions. As forerunners of finger rings used to imprint wax seals in later times, they were used to identify possessions, to seal written tablets, and to protect other valuables. Sumerians also invented the wheel and therefore improved transportation endeavors and building programs.

Other contiguous people groups took note of these wonderful things. They were not slow to follow. About 2330 BC, Sumeria was conquered by Sargon I, king of the Akkadians. The Gutians, tribespeople from the eastern hills, ended Akkadian rule about 2200 BC, and, a few years later,



The tomb of Cyrus the Great in Pasargadae, Iran.

the Sumerian Ur arose to rule much of Mesopotamia. Finally, Hammurabi of Babylon (who reigned about 1792–1750 BC) conquered the whole Mesopotamia area. The Hittites conquered much of the area, but the Persians actually dominated the entire region of Mesopotamia.

Mesopotamian peoples produced highly decorated pottery and clothing. They also invented musical instruments such as the harp and lyre, which were used to accompany the recital of their many epic literary works (e.g., the Epic of Gilgamesh). They developed the concept of the library, assiduously collecting and cataloguing their mass of literary works. These works were the basis of some vigorous public and private debates.

Furthermore, scholars are convinced that the Sumerians in particular had a form of assembly for making key political decisions using a consensual approach. They held courts to make legal judgments. They were the first people to develop a code of law, and therefore used precedent to determine later court cases. That they also developed some understanding of economics is attested to by evidence of price-setting agreements and openly advocated urban planning. The word *suburb* is mentioned for the first time in a Sumerian text.

The Sumerians used gold, silver, tin, lead, copper, and bronze in jewelry making and in the construction of buildings. They were not, however, able to develop iron weaponry—a shortcoming that ultimately hindered them militarily when invading armies brandished iron swords and chariots.

In general, Mesopotamian women had very few rights. However, they were free to go to the marketplaces, and to attend to legal matters for their absent husbands. They were even able to own their own property, borrow and lend, and engage in business for themselves. High-status women, such as priestesses and members of royal families, learned to read and to write. Finally, several Sumerian deities were women figures, which increased the status of women considerably.

The earliest writing in Mesopotamia was a picture writing invented by the Sumerians, who wrote on clay tablets using long reeds. The script the Sumerians invented was a type of writing called cuneiform. This picture language, similar to but more abstract than Egyptian hieroglyphics, eventually developed into a syllabic alphabet under the Persians. In other words, this is the language/writing that Daniel, Esther, and other Jewish exiles would have used.

Individual words were represented by crude pictorial symbols that resembled in some way the object being represented. This complicated writing system dominated Mesopotamia until the century before the birth of Christ. The Persians greatly simplified cuneiform until it resembled something closer to an alphabet.

They wrote on clay tablets with long reeds while the clay was still wet. The fresh clay hardened and a permanent record was created. The original Mesopotamian writings were crude pictures of the objects being named, but the difficulty of drawing on fresh clay eventually produced the wedges and hooks unique to cuneiform. This writing would be formed by laying the length of the reed along the wet clay and moving the end nearest the hand from one side to another to form the hooks. As with all cultures, writing greatly changed Mesopotamian social structure and the civilization's relationship to its own history. Writing allowed laws to be written (e.g., Hammurabi Code) and so to assume a static and independent character. Also, history became more detailed and incorporated much more of local cultures' histories (Richard Hooker).



Ancient cuneiform writing in Ur, southern Iraq. Photo by Unclefester89, 2005 (PD-US).

In October 539 BC, with the Jews in exile, the Persian king Cyrus took Babylon, the ancient capital of an empire covering modern Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. Babylon was, by that time, the ancient world's capital of scholarship and science. The subject provinces soon recognized Cyrus as their legitimate ruler. Since he was already the ruler of modern Turkey and Iran, it is not an exaggeration to say that the capture of Babylon meant the birth of the first true world empire. The Persian Empire was to last for more than two centuries, until it was conquered by the Macedonian Greek king Alexander the Great. Cyrus allowed the Jews (who were exiled in Babylonia) to return home.

For our purposes, the release of the exilic Jewish community was most important. The Jewish exile began with the destruction of Jerusalem and the transportation of Jewish survivors (notably Daniel and his friends) to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. The majority of Jews remained in Babylonia even after the reestablishment of Jerusalem by Nehemiah.

Assignment

Discuss at least three important contributions that the Sumerian civilization made to the Western world.

View over the reconstructed city of Babylon, Iraq, by the U.S. Navy, 2005.



LESSON 2

MESOPOTAMIA

Sumerian religions were polytheistic. The gods played a crucial role in the Sumerians' lives, both as a nation and as individuals. Most Sumerians, for instance, had a personal god or gods with whom they forged a special relationship. They were "good luck charms." The people looked to them for protection and assistance in all things, while also blaming them when things went wrong. These gods continued to be worshiped right through to the late Babylonian period.

The Sumerian pantheon was called the Anunnaki, although another name, the Igigi, was also used. These gods appeared to be polarities; thus, the first evidence of dualism entered world views. There were, in other words, good gods—the Anunnaki—and bad gods—the Igigi.

Originally, Marduk was the city god of Babylon, but in 1800 BC, he became the supreme god of the Mesopotamian pantheon. In fact, he was the god of the Palestinian provinces—and many think he was the god that Elijah confronted on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18). As such, he was recognized by

the gods of the cities that were subjected by the Babylonian kings. According to myth, Marduk defended the other gods against the diabolical monster Tiamat. After he had killed it, he brought order to the cosmos, built the Esagila, and created mankind. This is clearly seen in the Gilgamesh Epic. In the poem Enûma Elish it is stated that all other gods are just manifestations of Marduk

Marduk and other gods and goddesses were worshiped at Ziggurats or temples. In fact, one, named Etemenanki, the foundation of heaven on earth, is considered by most scholars to be the

tower of Babel of Genesis 11.



The reconstructed facade of the Neo-Sumerian Great Ziggurat of Ur, near Nasiriyah, Iraq, by Hardnfast, 2005.

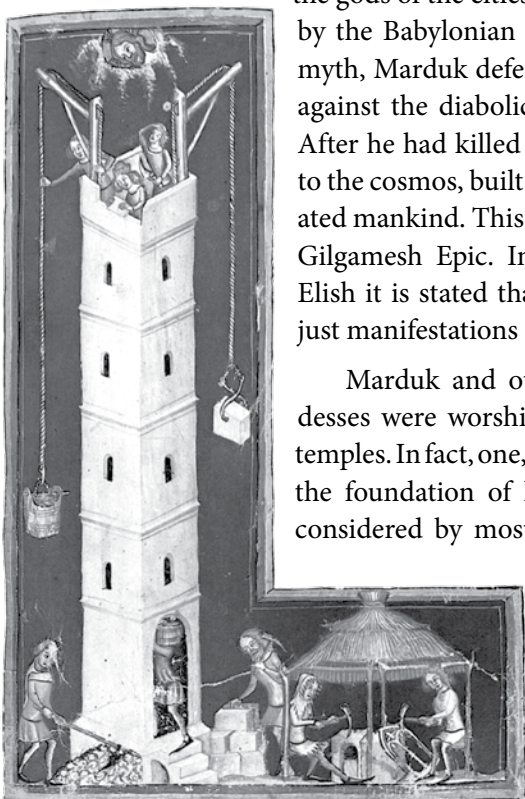
When the Babylonians celebrated New Year (the so-called Akitu festival), they remembered how Marduk had created order in the universe. The heart of this cosmos was Babylon, and the Esagila shrine was, therefore, the center of the universe. The Babylonian Marduk was embraced by the Persian invaders.

The gods bound people together in their social groups and were believed to have provided what they needed to survive. The Sumerians developed stories and festivals to explain and solicit help for their everyday lives. Priests reminded the people every new year that the gods determined their futures for the coming year. The priests were responsible for the sacrifices and cultic rituals that were essential for the help of the gods. In addition, property belonged to the gods, so priests administered it. This made the priests valuable and important figures in their communities.

Mesopotamian gods were impersonal with their human charges. What a contrast this was to the Judeo-Christian God that Daniel and his friends served!

Assignment

Contrast Mesopotamian gods and goddesses with the Jewish God.



German late medieval depiction of the construction of the tower, by Meister der Weltenchronik, c1370s.

HISTORY MAKER: DANIEL

Daniel is one of those pivotal men of history who was able to make a great impact on history without having any official influence or power. One of the four great prophets, although he is not once spoken of in the Old Testament as a prophet, Daniel was born in Jerusalem about 623 BC during the reign of Josiah. At the first deportation of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar (the kingdom of Israel had come to an end nearly a century before), Daniel and other noble youths were carried off to Babylon. As was the custom, the young elite of a conquered nation were taken to the mother country where they were raised in the ways of the empire. The hope was that the Jewish exiles would become good Babylonian citizens. Daniel was obliged to enter into the service of the king of Babylon, and in accordance with the custom of the age received the Chaldean name of Belteshazzar. His training in the schools of the wise men in Babylon was to fit him for service to the empire. Daniel, however, while he was willing to serve his new masters in an official capacity, had no intention of embracing Babylonian religion or culture. In fact, Daniel was distinguished during this period for his piety and his strict observance of the Mosaic Law. He gained the confidence and esteem of those who were over him. In other words, he was willing to prosper in Babylon, but he would never be a Babylonian. His habit of attention gained during his education in Jerusalem enabled him to soon master the wisdom and learning



Daniel in the Lions' Den by Currier & Ives, c1893.

of the Chaldeans, and even to excel his captors. He soon became known for his skill in the interpretation of dreams, a very important role in the superstitious Babylonian court. Daniel's commitment to the worship of God inevitably put him in conflict with his superiors. His fidelity to God exposed him to persecution, and he was cast into a den of lions but was miraculously delivered; after which Darius issued a decree enjoining reverence for "the God of Daniel" (Daniel 6:26). He probably died at Susa, about 85 years of age. Ezekiel, with whom he was a contemporary, mentions him as a pattern of righteousness (Ezekiel 14:14, 20).

Assignment

Write a short report on the life of Daniel. How is your life similar to and different from the life of Daniel?

LESSON 4

DAILY LIFE

Most Mesopotamians (Sumerians, Babylonians, Persians, etc.) were farmers. There were skilled craftsmen too—pottery, builders, and traders. As Mesopotamian kings conquered other nations they returned with slaves, one of the most famous of whom was Daniel.

Most Mesopotamians wore a garment that was a flounced skirt. The skirts varied in length. The upper part of the body was often left bare. Women's skirts appear to be less elaborate but more colorful when compared to the men's. Sumerian noble women dressed in colorful clothes and head dresses. Their jewelry was made from gold, silver, and bright stones.

The rich lived in large, elaborate homes with spacious courtyards. Most homes were clustered around the Ziggurat temple. While most homes were single dwellings, they often shared an exterior wall with another home, much like contemporary condominiums.

Since wood was scarce, families built their homes with sun-dried brick. Inevitably, there was a small family courtyard. The courtyard, or first floor, in each house was very important. It often contained a playground, a vegetable garden, and a chicken coop. Most homes were designed with three stories of living space. The first living space was the courtyard. Stairs led up to the second and third floors, and then to the roof. Mesopotamians were skillful architects who could construct sturdy multi-level houses.

Roofs were flat and became everyone's summer bedroom.

Babylon, like all cities, had rich sections of town and poorer sections of town. Normally, the better houses were built closer to the royal palaces and the temples. Generally speaking, though, all families lived in single dwellings.

Women in ancient Mesopotamia were not equal to men, but they did have more rights than women in other ancient cultures. They bought and sold goods, owned property, and owned their own businesses. Upper-class women,



like members of the royal family and those who gave their life to the temple as priestesses, could learn how to read and write. Some women even had civil government jobs.

Only the very rich went to school, and the schools were run by the temple priests.

Life revolved around the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates. Since there were so few natural resources, Mesopotamians relied on overland and river trade. Goods were traded with cultures all over Asia Minor and Northern Africa.

Babylonian, and especially Persian, soldiers were second to none in the ancient world. They conquered all of the known world at the time, except for Greece. Every Mesopotamian king kept a large standing army.

Assignment

Describe an ordinary day in the life of a 14 to 18-year-old Mesopotamian youth.