

## The Rise of Babylon

Babylon was the capital city and center of the Babylonian Empire. During its peak, Babylon was the largest city in the world with populations exceeding 200,000 people. It was home to kings such as \_\_\_\_\_ and **Nebuchadnezzar** as well as the fabled Hanging Gardens of Babylon which are one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Babylon is located in central Mesopotamia along the banks of the Euphrates River. Today the ruins of the city can be found around 50 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq. Babylon is mentioned several times in the Bible.

After the fall of the **Akkadian** \_\_\_\_\_, two new empires rose to power. They were the **Babylonians** in the south and the **Assyrians** to the north. The **Babylonians** were the first to form an empire that would encompass all of Mesopotamia.

### Rise of the Babylonians and King Hammurabi

The city of Babylon had been a city-state in Mesopotamia for many years. After the fall of the **Akkadian Empire**, the city was taken over and settled by the \_\_\_\_\_. The city began its rise to power in 1792 BC when **King Hammurabi** took the throne. He was a powerful and capable leader who wanted to rule more than just the city of Babylon.

Not long after becoming King, Hammurabi began to conquer other city-states in the area. Within a few years, Hammurabi had conquered all of Mesopotamia including much of the Assyrian lands to the north.

### The City of Babylon

Under Hammurabi's rule, the city of Babylon became the most \_\_\_\_\_ city in the world. Located on the banks of the Euphrates River, the city was a major trade hub bringing together new ideas and products. Babylon also became the largest city in the world at the time with as many as 200,000 people living there at its peak.

At the center of the city was a large temple called a \_\_\_\_\_. This temple looked something like a pyramid with a flat top and archeologists think that it was 300 feet tall! There was a wide street leading from the gates to the center of the city. The city was also famous for its gardens, palaces, towers, and artwork. It would have been an amazing sight to see.

The city was also the cultural center of the empire. It was here that art, science, music, mathematics, astronomy, and literature were able to \_\_\_\_\_.

### Hammurabi's Code

King Hammurabi established firm laws called **Hammurabi's** \_\_\_\_\_. This was the first time in history that the law was written down. It was recorded on clay tablets and tall pillars of stones called steles.

Hammurabi's code consisted of \_\_\_\_\_ **laws**. Many of them were quite specific, but were meant as guidelines to be used in similar circumstances. There were laws governing commerce such as wages, trade, rental rates, and the sale of slaves. There were laws governing criminal behavior describing the penalties for stealing or damaging property. There were even laws governing adoption, marriage, and divorce.

### **Fall of Babylon**

After Hammurabi died, his sons took over. However, they were not strong leaders and soon Babylon grew weak. In 1595 the \_\_\_\_\_ conquered Babylon. They would rule for 400 years. Later, the **Assyrians** would take over. It wasn't until 612 BC that Babylonia once again rose to power as the ruler of the empire over Mesopotamia. This second Babylonian Empire is called the **neo-Babylonian Empire**.

### **Neo-Babylonian Empire**

Around 616 BC King Nebuchadnezzar took advantage of the fall of the Assyrian Empire to bring the seat of the empire back to Babylon. It was his son Nebuchadnezzar II who led Babylon back to its former glory.

Nebuchadnezzar II ruled for 43 years. He was a great military leader and expanded the empire to include much of the Middle East all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. This included the conquering of the Hebrews and taking them into slavery for 70 years as told in the Bible. Under Nebuchadnezzar's rule, the city of Babylon and its temples were restored. It also became the cultural center of the world, just like during Hammurabi's \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Hanging Gardens of Babylon**

Nebuchadnezzar II built the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. This was a large series of terraces that rose to around 75 feet high. They were covered with all sorts of trees, flowers, and plants. The gardens are considered one of the great wonders of the ancient world.

### **Fall of Neo-Babylonia**

After Nebuchadnezzar II died, the empire began to fall apart once again. In 529 BC, the Persians conquered Babylon and made it part of the \_\_\_\_\_ Empire.

### **Fun Facts about the Babylonians**

- \* Nebuchadnezzar had a moat built around the city of Babylon for defense. That must have been quite a sight in the desert!
- \* All that remains of the city of Babylon is a mound of broken mud buildings about 55 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq.
- \* Alexander the Great captured Babylon as part of his conquests. He was staying in the city when he got sick and died.
- \* The city has been rebuilt or reconstructed in \_\_\_\_\_. The actual ruins and artifacts are likely buried under the reconstruction.