

CHAPTER 2

The Ship, the Sword, and the Book: Western Asia CA. 1500–400 B.C.

Key Terms

1. Assyrians
2. Neo-Babylonians
3. Phoenicians
4. Persian Empire
5. Cyrus the Great
6. Zoroastrianism
7. Abraham
8. Torah
9. covenant
10. monotheism
11. Israelites
12. David
13. Babylonian Captivity
14. alphabet
15. Canaanites
16. New Testament
17. Mt. Sinai
18. The Ten Commandments
19. Temple
20. Ugarit
21. International Crisis
22. Carthage
23. Astrology
24. Medes
25. Satrapies
26. Aramaic
27. Avesta
28. Ethical dualism
29. soteriology
30. Exodus
31. Saul
32. Solomon
33. Judah
34. Jerusalem
35. Elijah
36. Esther
37. Ruth

Essay Questions

38. Discuss the characteristics of the Assyrians and the reasons for their remarkable success as conquerors. What were their most valuable skills? Are there any similarities between Assyrian policies and those of any nation in today's world?
Ans: Look for specific references to the innovative use of cavalry, iron weaponry, engineering, and organizational skills—as well as to the lurid cruelty that will probably come first to students' minds. The internal weakness of some states attacked by the Assyrians, particularly Egypt, should be mentioned as a factor in their success as conquerors. As for the modern parallel, it might be presented as an optional question. Although many students are unversed in current affairs, a few would profit from discussing the point raised.
39. What was the role of the Phoenicians in disseminating the civilization of western Asia throughout the Mediterranean world? What would you say was the most important cultural achievement they passed on, and why?
Ans: Essays should include mention of the Phoenicians as a great naval power that had a penchant for founding colonies all around the Mediterranean, and the fact that Phoenician culture was so open to outside influences. These facts allowed elements of many ancient civilizations to spread and survive despite upheavals and foreign conquest in their homelands. The most unique and influential feature of the cultural practices adopted by the Greeks from the Phoenicians was the use of the alphabet, which students should note as a revolutionary concept in light of its phonetic nature.
40. Describe the Persian Empire. What helps explain its success? How was it similar to the empires it succeeded? How was it different?
Ans: Students should recognize continuities that, because of their basic quality, are often not seen (concept of authority, administrative institutions, use of the military). They should also see the Persians' innovations (concept of a universal empire, tolerance of regionalism, the influence of a new ethical ideology).
41. Summarize the main characteristics of Zoroastrianism, and discuss how Zoroastrianism may have influenced the Hebrew religion.
Ans: Good answers will discuss the notion of it being an inward-looking intellectual religion. The students should point out both the similarities and the differences. Similarities would include the idea of a supreme god as creator. They both had a linear conception of history, the belief in an afterlife, and the notion of the last judgment. Differences would include the fact that Zoroastrianism was not completely monotheistic but might be called ethical dualism. Students might also allow for a counter-possibility that Zoroaster was influenced by the Hebrews.
42. Discuss the development of the Hebrew religion, and compare it with what you know of the other religions mentioned thus far in the textbook.
Ans: Look for phenomena such as the evolution of monotheism, the covenant between God and the Hebrews, the writing of a sacred, linear history of the Hebrew nation, and the prophetic transformation. The comparison should include similarities and differences with Mesopotamian and Egyptian polytheism, the Amarna Reform, and Zoroastrianism.
43. Compare the Code of Hammurabi with the laws of the Hebrew Covenant (including, but not limited to, the Ten Commandments). In what way do they appear to have a common root? In what major way do they differ?
Ans: Students should appreciate the similarities between the two in, for instance, the Law of the Goring Ox and the use of harsh punishments. The penetration of law into common, everyday activity should be recognized, as well as the partial conceptualization of legal principles in the Hebrew case, which appears to be lacking in Hammurabi's Code. They could also mention that both could be found in permanent, written forms.
44. Survey Hebrew political history, from the Exodus to the return from Babylon.
Ans: Mention should be made of the completed conquest of Palestine, the change from judges to kings, the most illustrious of the kings (David, Solomon), the split into two kingdoms, the Assyrian conquest, and the Babylonian Captivity.

45. Do women seem to be regarded differently in Hebrew society than in other ancient civilizations? Consider the roles played by some famous Hebrew women.

Ans: A good answer will include a discussion about how women in Hebrew society did not own property or have the right to own property as described in the Hammurabi code. The answer should also make note of the fact that women were highly regarded in the family unit sharing equal position with their husbands, and were prized for their courage, cunning, and perseverance. Women that should be named are Debora, Esther, Ruth, or Judith. A good answer will take note of the frequency of strong women mentioned in the literature as compared to other ancient civilizations.

46. Why was the ancient city of Ugarit important not only for its time, but for future history?

Ans: Students should discuss that as a multiethnic trading city, Ugarit linked the Eastern Mediterranean with land caravans heading to Babylonia. It housed documents in four different languages and developed an alphabet based on symbols that stood for sound. This alphabet was later used by both Romans and English.

47. Looking at the examples of art in this chapter, what does it tell us about the societies of the time? Discuss if the art is purely decorative or whether it served political purposes; speculate on what it says about the perception man had of himself and his surroundings? Give specific examples to illustrate your point

Ans: The answers will vary somewhat when discussing decoration and self-perception, but the answers should include a thoughtful discussion of bodily postures, for example their formality and the position of the fingers, and the use of animals. A good answer will include a discussion of how the powerful men of the time were represented. The Frieze at Persepolis and the relief of the Conquest of Lachish should be mentioned.

Multiple Choice

48. All of the following are true of the Canaanites *except*

- A) Canaan is an ancient name for the lands currently called Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria.
- B) the Canaanite city-states were part of the first international system of states.
- C) the Canaanite city-states served as the cradle of Western writing systems.
- D) the Canaanites are now known as Phoenicians.
- E) the Canaanites were defeated by the invasions of the Sea Peoples.

Ans: E

Page: 30-31

49. All of the following are true of the Assyrians *except* that

- A) they used terror and deportation as political tactics.
- B) their main deity, Ashur, was a goddess of peace.
- C) provincial organization tended to discourage revolts.
- D) part of their success was due to the weakness of the states they invaded.
- E) the Assyrian army was equipped with iron armor and weapons.

Ans: B

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50. The Neo-Babylonians shared with the Assyrians

- A) accurate astronomical observations and predictions.
- B) a love of literature.
- C) a strong pacifist tradition.
- D) an indifference to any form of study unrelated to warfare.
- E) a reputation for harsh treatment of defeated peoples.

Ans: A

Page: 34-35

51. The most important historical contribution of the Phoenicians was

- A) the use of cedar wood for furniture.
- B) the kings' merchant council.
- C) slave-trading.
- D) the elimination of human sacrifice.
- E) the spread of Western culture and the alphabet, through their colonies.

Ans: E

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52. Ebla and Ugarit were
- A) flourishing city-states in the area of modern Syria and Palestine.
 - B) Egyptian gods invoked by doctors and patients.
 - C) the sons of Ramses II.
 - D) conquerors of Egypt.
 - E) multi-ethnic communities.

Ans: A Page: 30-31

53. The main achievement of Ugartic culture was
- A) the alphabet.
 - B) cuneiform religious script.
 - C) epic poetry.
 - D) the first dictionary.
 - E) metal weapons.

Ans: A Page: 30-31

54. Ugarit was destroyed by the
- A) David.
 - B) Phoenicians.
 - C) Saul.
 - D) the Sea Peoples.
 - E) Assyrians.

Ans: D Page: 31

55. The Phoenicians were best known in the ancient world as
- A) Warriors
 - B) Shepherds
 - C) Traders
 - D) Monotheists
 - E) Farmers

Ans: C Page: 31

56. The Assyrian homeland was in what geographical region
- A) Mesopotamia
 - B) Anatolia
 - C) The Levant
 - D) The Nile Valley
 - E) The Arabian Desert

Ans: A Page: 32-33

57. The chief god of the Assyrians was
- A) Ishtar
 - B) Enlil
 - C) Yahweh
 - D) Ashur
 - E) Osiris

Ans: D Page: 33

58. Around 1200 BC the Bronze Age gave way to what period
- A) Copper Age
 - B) Brass Age
 - C) Iron Age
 - D) Metal Age
 - E) Chariot Age

Ans: C Page: 30

59. The official art of Persia stressed
- A) advanced use of metal tools.
 - B) the unity of the peoples under Persian leadership.
 - C) the strength of the people against those who would conquer them
 - D) home life.
 - E) religious ceremony.

Ans: B Page: 36-37

60. Phoenician civilization flourished in what is today, modern
- A) southern Israel.
 - B) Syria.
 - C) Egypt.
 - D) Iran.
 - E) Lebanon.

Ans: E Page: 31

61. Phoenician colonies were located in all of the following *except*
- A) Cyprus.
 - B) Malta.
 - C) Spain.
 - D) Egypt.
 - E) Sardinia.

Ans: D Page: 31

62. The Persian idea of *absolute kingship* greatly affected which future leader?
- A) Thutmose II
 - B) Caesar
 - C) Alexander the Great
 - D) Ramses II
 - E) Cyrus I

Ans: C Page: 33

63. The destruction of the Assyrians was the result of a coalition of the Medes and
- A) Egyptians.
 - B) Phoenicians.
 - C) Neo-Babylonians.
 - D) Israelites.
 - E) Persians.

Ans: C Page: 34

64. What event in 722 BC saw the intersection of Hebrew and Assyrian history?
- A) The deportation to Babylon.
 - B) The conquest of Judah.
 - C) The destruction of Jerusalem.
 - D) The conquest of Israel and the deportation of the Lost Tribes.
 - E) The defeat of the Assyrians by the Hebrews.

Ans: D Page: 34

65. The New Kingdom of Egypt ended in what year?
- A) 1274 BC
 - B) 722 BC
 - C) 590 BC
 - D) 1000BC
 - E) 1075BC

Ans: E Page: 34

66. Who conquered Judea in 598 BC?
 A) The neo-Babylonians
 B) The Assyrians
 C) The Egyptians
 D) The Hittites
 E) The Phoenicians
Ans: A Page: 34
67. Cyrus the Great was
 A) a prince of the Medes.
 B) founder of the Persian Empire.
 C) one of the magi.
 D) a leader of an attack on Greece.
 E) succeeded by Cambyses who lost the empire to the Assyrians.
Ans: B Page: 35
68. Reasons for the success of Achaemenid Persia included all of the following *except*
 A) ruthless suppression of dissent.
 B) a strong military.
 C) general respect for the law.
 D) administrative competence.
 E) general generosity and tolerance of the defeated areas.
Ans: A Page: 35
69. Persian imperial administration combined
 A) democracy and oligarchy.
 B) absolute monarchy and theocracy.
 C) semi-independent provincial government with central control.
 D) local self-government with control by the senate.
 E) higher taxes and trade limitations on local governments.
Ans: C Page: 35
70. What architectural achievement was the neo-Babylonians known for?
 A) Pyramids
 B) The Temple of Solomon
 C) The Colossus
 D) The Hanging Gardens
 E) The Great Lighthouse
Ans: D Page: 34- 35
71. Which peoples were first displaced by Cyrus the Great in founding the Persian Empire?
 A) Neo-Babylonians
 B) The Medes
 C) The Hittites
 D) The Assyrians
 E) The Hebrews
Ans: B Page: 35
72. What is a *Satrapy*?
 A) A unit of the Persian army
 B) A Zoroastrian prophet
 C) A province of the Persian empire
 D) The neo-Babylonian currency
 E) A Hebrew religious ritual
Ans: C Page: 35

73. The Persian king was all of the following *except*
- A) treated with reverence.
 - B) attended by corps of slaves and eunuchs.
 - C) elected.
 - D) surrounded by splendid ceremonies and art.
 - E) bound by the rule of law and by the considerable power of the nobility.
- Ans: C* *Page: 36*
74. How long was the “Royal Road” from Persepolis to Anatolia?
- A) 100 miles
 - B) 1,000 miles
 - C) 1,600 miles
 - D) 10,000 miles
 - E) 16,000 miles
- Ans: C* *Page: 36*
75. The language the Persians used to unify their empire was
- A) Persian
 - B) Sumerian
 - C) Hebrew
 - D) Aramaic
 - E) Akkadian
- Ans: D* *Page: 36*
76. The religion of Zarathustra included all of the following *except*
- A) ethical dualism.
 - B) the obligation of the individual to behave rightly.
 - C) eternal reward or punishment based on earthly behavior.
 - D) an evil spirit named Ahura Mazda.
 - E) ceremonies involving fire.
- Ans: D* *Page: 37-38*
77. The Hebrews were
- A) a powerful Mesopotamian people who conquered the Babylonians.
 - B) a small, often-conquered people who founded the Western religious tradition.
 - C) the original inhabitants of a land known as Canaan or Palestine.
 - D) the founders of Western science and philosophy.
 - E) founders of the Mediterranean area tradition of religion.
- Ans: B* *Page: 38-39*
78. The Hebrews came to believe in
- A) a god of good and a god of evil.
 - B) a pantheistic world spirit.
 - C) no gods.
 - D) one transcendent god.
 - E) God revealing himself to many different peoples but favoring the Jewish tribes.
- Ans: D* *Page: 40-41*
79. In its current form, the Hebrew Bible includes
- A) the Torah or Pentateuch.
 - B) the historical books of the early prophets.
 - C) the books of the later prophets.
 - D) the writings (books of poems, proverbs, and wisdom literature).
 - E) All of these
- Ans: E* *Page: 39-40*

80. All of the following are features of the Hebrew religion *except*
- A) respect for other religions and the freedom of the individual conscience.
 - B) a covenant between YHWH and the Hebrews.
 - C) an enormous amount of legal material.
 - D) a sacred, national history.
 - E) the belief that the Hebrews are the chosen people of God.
- Ans: A Page: 40-42
81. The greatest king of Israel was
- A) Josiah.
 - B) Moses.
 - C) David.
 - D) Saul.
 - E) Cyrus.
- Ans: C Page: 41
82. The main role of the prophets was
- A) fortunetelling.
 - B) exhorting the Hebrews to righteousness and devotion to God.
 - C) leadership of the Hebrew army.
 - D) political rule of Israel.
 - E) writing a secular history of the Jewish people.
- Ans: B Page: 42
83. All of the following resulted from the Babylonian Captivity of the Hebrews *except*
- A) a divorce of membership in the Jewish community from actual residence.
 - B) the current form of the Torah.
 - C) absolute resistance to assimilation.
 - D) the rise of synagogues.
 - E) the right to return to Palestine in large numbers.
- Ans: C Page: 43
84. Women in the Hebrew religion were
- A) able to own land and have the right to sue.
 - B) priestesses in the Temple.
 - C) praised for their qualities of cunning, courage, and perseverance.
 - D) tribal leaders.
 - E) never found in the written record of the religion.
- Ans: C Page: 46
85. Which of the following does *not* describe the ancient Phoenicians?
- A) They were considered “traders of the world.”
 - B) They were known for creative military techniques.
 - C) Phoenician culture was spread by way of colonies.
 - D) Purple dyed textile fabrics were their trademark.
 - E) Their alphabet was based on the Ugarit alphabet.
- Ans: B Page: 30-31
86. The key to Assyrian success was their
- A) strong merchant fleet that controlled most of the Mediterranean trade.
 - B) ability to create an empire through economic alliances.
 - C) destruction of all defeated cultures.
 - D) religious and cultural tolerance.
 - E) massive military power.
- Ans: E Page: 33

87. The Hebrew national history book

- A) is written as a secular history.
- B) makes no reference to the Covenant.
- C) is considered to be a sacred history.
- D) has no reference to a Hebrew nation.
- E) places emphasis on military success.

Ans: C

Page: 39-40

88. The present state of Israel was claimed by Jews based on what precedent in their past history?

- A) Israeli military conquest of Palestine
- B) As payment for the Babylonian Captivity
- C) Given to Abraham for his faith by God
- D) Passages from the Old Testament
- E) As a result of the Holocaust

Ans: C

Page: 40-41

89. One of the few prophetesses mentioned in the Hebrew bible

- A) Esther
- B) Naomi
- C) Rebekah
- D) Deborah
- E) Ruth.

Ans: D

Page: 44

90. All of the following are true of Ugarit *except* that

- A) it had only one language.
- B) it was a thriving Mediterranean port.
- C) its cosmopolitanism made it distinctive among western Asian city-states.
- D) as a trading center, it linked ships coming from Cyprus or the Anatolian ports with land caravans heading to Babylonia.
- E) it played an important role in the spread of the alphabet.

Ans: A

Page: 30

91. Assyrian economic policy consisted of

- A) creating a varied labor force through careful deportation of those conquered.
- B) development of trade centers in the conquered cities.
- C) the advancement of agriculture.
- D) destroying all efforts to rebel.
- E) naval dominance.

Ans: A

Page: 34

92. Which of the following does *not* describe the Ten Commandments?

- A) They are more personal than Hammurabi's Code.
- B) They were received by Abraham on Mt. Sinai.
- C) They address the individual.
- D) They set down what a worshiper should not do.
- E) They regulate community life.

Ans: B

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93. What caused the Hebrew tribes to unite in the eleventh century?

- A) Military conquests led by Saul
- B) Philistine danger to the tribes as individual communities
- C) Attempt to create an empire
- D) To spread monotheism
- E) Fear of the Assyrians

Ans: B

Page: 41

94. Life for the Jews under the Neo-Babylonians involved

- A) slavery for Jews unwilling to give up their faith.
- B) the destruction of Jewish Temples.
- C) imprisonment for Jewish elders and religious leaders.
- D) the evolution of the Torah.
- E) deportation and separation of Jews throughout Babylon.

Ans: D

Page: 42-43

95. The god of the Hebrews demanded

- A) circumcision and ritual sacrifices only.
- B) equality of men and women.
- C) merciful treatment of the Canaanites.
- D) worship, obedience, and a comprehensive and forceful system of laws.
- E) Jews to worship their kings as representatives of God.

Ans: D

Page: 40-42

96. Zoroastrianism was

- A) Monotheistic
- B) Dualist
- C) Polytheistic
- D) Atheistic
- E) Pantheistic

Ans: B

Page: 37-38

97. The good god of Zoroastrianism is called

- A) Yahweh
- B) Ishtar
- C) Ashur
- D) Ahura Mazda
- E) Enlil

Ans: D

Page: 38

98. Which is not a part of the Hebrew Bible?

- A) Wisdom literature
- B) Torah
- C) Gospels
- D) Psalms
- E) Historical books

Ans: C

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Map Questions

99. Using Map 2.1, compare the extent of the Assyrian and Persian Empires. What areas did both of them control in the course of their expansion? Where were the imperial capitals?
100. On Map 2.2, locate the main historical sites in Hebrew history as discussed in the chapter. Consider the route of Abraham from Ur in Mesopotamia to Palestine, and of Moses leading the Hebrews out of Egypt. Referring back to Map 2.1 how far away from Jerusalem was Babylon, to which the Hebrews were deported?
101. On Map 2.1, locate the present day locations of Israel, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, and Iraq.

True/False

102. The Canaanites were defeated by the Sea Peoples.
Ans: F *Page: 30-31*
103. Cyrus the Great founded the Babylonian Empire
Ans: F *Page: 35*
104. Semi-independent provincial government with central control was characteristic of the Persian Empire.
Ans: T *Page: 35*
105. The religion of Zarathustra held a linear conception of history.
Ans: T *Page: 38*
106. The Pentateuch is the first 10 books of the Hebrew bible.
Ans: F *Page: 40*
107. One of the things that characterized the Hebrew religion was Monotheism.
Ans: T *Page: 41*
108. Israelite egalitarianism was for both men and women.
Ans: F *Page: 46*
109. The greatest King of Israel was Saul.
Ans: F *Page: 42*
110. Hebrew women were never found in the written record of religion.
Ans: F *Page: 46*
111. The Phoenician alphabet was based on the Ugarit alphabet.
Ans: T *Page: 30-31*
112. Fear of the Assyrians caused the Hebrew tribes to unite in the eleventh century.
Ans: F *Page: 41*