

STUDY PACK 15

ASSYRIA

“It is not surprising, therefore, that Mesopotamia, with its tower of Babel tradition and its faith in chaos and in the cosmic state, was very early a center of dreams _____. It was, moreover, a center of _____ in furthering this dream.”

~~ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *World History Notes*, p. 24 ~~

I. ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

The Mesopotamian city-states developed around ideas of god-ordained leaders representing the dominant spirits. Assyria developed in the area of the Tigris Valley to the mountains of Armenia and Kurdistan to the north and east.

It enjoys a temperate climate well suited to _____. The Assyrians were not a numerous people but they operated from a base of economic prosperity and developed a strong military.

II. TIGLATH-PILESAR I—1112 – 1074 B.C.

Tiglath-Pileser created the first Assyrian empire by conquering territory all the way to the Mediterranean Sea.

The Egyptians and Babylonians had unsuccessfully tried to establish an empire for many years. A mountain tribal people from northern Mesopotamia, the Assyrians, were able to accomplish this goal _____

The Assyrians were skilled warriors who were well-trained and followed a well-developed military plan. Their armies were divided into branches similar to today’s military groups. These divisions included the infantry, cavalry, engineers, and supply troops. The Assyrians were noted for their strength which was evident by the most powerful army in history to that time. They were also known for their cruelty and _____. Their kings often boasted of the vicious acts they committed such as extreme beatings, roasting their enemies, and cutting off parts of the body such as the nose, fingers, and even their heads.

The lands which the Assyrians conquered were divided into areas which were ruled by strong leaders who exercised _____, including the special responsibility of collecting taxes to care for the armies and other government needs. This network of leadership helped to develop the Assyrian empire. Their system of administration became a model to many of the later empires including the Persian and Roman.

III. THE GREAT REVIVAL

From II Kings 14:25 we know that Jonah lived during the time of Jeroboam II (793-753 B.C.). He was sent to Nineveh — the capital city of Assyria — to deliver a warning from God that unless they repented, they would be destroyed. There are several historical clues which seem to point to a date for this prophecy somewhere in the late 750’s B.C. — perhaps around 758 B.C.

During the reign of Adad-nirari III (811-783 B.C.) there was _____. However, at his death the nation entered a period of national weakness and even greater moral decay. “During this time, Assyria was engaged in a life and death struggle with the mountain tribes of Urartu, and its associates of Mannai and Madai in the north, who had been able to push their frontier to within less than a hundred miles of Nineveh” (*Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7).

In 759 B.C. _____, followed by _____. In 763 B.C. there was an eclipse of the sun. These were “events of the type regarded by ancients as evidence of divine judgment, and could have prepared the people to receive Jonah’s message” (*The Ryrie Study Bible*). “No doubt this depressed state of Assyria contributed much to the readiness of the people to hear Jonah as he began to preach to them” (Homer Hailey).

There is some historical evidence that during the reign of Ashur-dan III (771-754 B.C.) _____. This may have been the result of Jonah’s preaching. In 745 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.) came to the throne and Assyria again became a major power. Under his leadership the Assyrians became “_____” (Isaiah 10:5) against His rebellious people Israel. Israel finally fell to the Assyrians with the capture of Samaria in 722 B.C. (through the efforts of Tiglath-Pileser’s successors — Shalmaneser V and Sargon II).

Through the preaching of Jonah, and the repentance of the people of Nineveh, the city was spared at this time. However, history tells us their repentance was fairly short-lived. Soon they had fallen back into their sinful way of life. The prophet Nahum was then sent to these same people. However, they failed to repent (as they had with Jonah), and thus were destroyed in 612 B.C.

IV. THE DISPERSION

Tiglath-Pileser III conquered Syria and Israel. He began to move _____. This was designed to break their loyalty to the native land and to create a new class of Assyrians. This policy is described in II Kings 17. He also became recognized as _____.

V. SENNACHERIB

He came to the throne in 704 B.C. He conquered 46 cities in Judah, deported 200,000 people and besieged Jerusalem. His army was devastated by the Angel of the Lord (II Kings 19) who killed 185,000 in one night. Sennacherib was then killed by one of his sons.

VI. FALL OF ASSYRIA

Esarhaddon (680-669) expanded the Assyrian Empire, conquering Egypt. Nahum was used of God to prophesy the destruction of Assyria. Ashurbanipal succeeded Esarhaddon and as overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar who destroyed Nineveh.

The destruction is described in Zephaniah 2:13-15. The Assyrian emperor had used the title “the great king, the mighty king, _____, king of Assyria.” He was overthrown by the real _____.