

STUDY PACK 31

CIVILIZATION AND TRIBAL CULTURES IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

“Freedom is another concept that simply doesn’t exist in many, perhaps most, human cultures – there isn’t even a word for freedom in most non-European languages”.

~ Rodney Stark, *The Victory of Reason*, p. 24 ~

I. THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Tribal cultures developed all over the Western Hemisphere. In North America, the culture was divided into over _____. In Central and South America and on the Caribbean islands, hundreds of other tribal cultures developed. In the southern half of the hemisphere, a number of empires developed as powerful tribes conquered other tribes. There was less of this in the north, though it did happen. When representatives of European governments began to arrive in the Western Hemisphere, some of them thought they had reached India and they mistakenly called the natives “_____”.

II. THE MAYAN EMPIRE

The Mayan Empire had vanished by the time that European countries began to colonize Central America, but plenty of evidence of the Mayan civilization remained. Over 5,000 ruins of Mayan settlements have been uncovered. The Mayans had an elaborate system of writing, and fragments of many books have been uncovered. The Mayans built cities with brick roads and sewers. Cities were often built around _____. _____ were apparently common.

The Mayans planted and harvested many crops. They are the first civilization known to have cultivated chocolate.

The Mayans, as well as many other tribes, worshiped two primary gods. One was called Tezcatlipoca. This god was served by _____. Men performed ceremonies and offered sacrifices (including human sacrifice) to gain the cooperation of these spirits. The other god was Quetzalcoatl. He was pictured as the creator-god and was symbolized as a feathered serpent. There was a legend that a white-skinned, bearded god representing Quetzalcoatl would appear one day. Quetzalcoatl was also worshiped by ceremonies and sacrifices, including human sacrifice.

An early Spanish priest to the new world described this pagan religion this way. “With their child-murdering initiations, their secret mysteries, their orgies with outlandish ceremonies, they no longer retain any purity in their lives...Everywhere a welter of blood and murder, theft and fraud, corruption, treachery, riots, perjury, disturbance...pollution of sound, sins against nature...” Without a doubt both Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl were _____.

III. THE AZTECS

One tribe, the Aztecs, conquered most of _____. This tribe ruled with absolute authority. All conquered tribes were forced to practice socialism and pay a huge amount

of taxes to the Aztecs. Conquered tribes were also expected to provide people for human sacrifices, especially young female virgins. The Aztecs worshiped Quetzalcoatl and claimed that their king was a human manifestation of Quetzalcoatl. They also claimed he was _____.

The Aztecs maintained an army of _____. Their empire was centered around the city of Teotlichan (modern Mexico City). This city had over 60,000 homes and was larger than any city in Europe. The city was built around a fortress on a large highland lake which could be reached only by a series of crossways with gates and drawbridges. This city had roads, waterways, aqueducts, and a sanitation system more advanced than anything in Europe.

The Aztecs had a very well-organized government and they controlled virtually every facet of life for the conquered tribes. They were hated by the subject peoples. The Aztecs lived in wealth and great abundance while keeping all the other tribes in abject poverty. But every time a tribe tried to defy the Aztecs, thousands were killed in battle and thousands more were taken to the capital city to be sacrificed. All land _____.

A very detailed account of the Aztecs, their religion, their system of government and their relationship with conquered tribes is given by Bernal Dian Del Castillo. He accompanied Cortez during the conquest of Mexico and wrote in 1576 about his experiences in *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico*. Throughout his book, the pagan nature of the Aztecs is made very clear: “They led us to some large houses very well built of masonry, which were the Temples of their Idols, and on the walls were figured the bodies of _____ and other pictures of evil-looking idols. These walls surrounded a sort of Altar covered with clotted blood.”

“Cort’es also told them that one of the objects for which our great Emperor had sent us to their countries was to abolish human sacrifices, and the other evil rites which they practiced and to see that they did not rob one another, or worship those cursed images”.

“Let us leave this and go on to another great house, where they keep many Idols, and they say that they are their fierce gods, and with them many kinds of carnivorous beast of prey, tigers, and two kinds of lions, and animals something like wolves and foxes, and other smaller carnivorous animals, and all these carnivores they feed with flesh, and the greater number of them breed in the house. They give them food: deer and fowls, dogs, and other things which they are used to hunt, and I have heard it said that they feed them on the bodies of the Indians who have been sacrificed.”

“They also have in that cursed house, many vipers and poisonous snakes which carry on their tails things that sound like bells. These are the worst vipers of all, and they keep them in jars and great pottery vessels with many feathers, and there they lay their eggs and rear their young, and they give them to eat, the bodies of the Indians who have been sacrificed, and the flesh of dogs which they are in the habit of breeding”.

There are many, many other examples of Aztec cruelty. When the Spanish conquistadors arrived, the subject tribes were anxious to pledge their loyalty to the Spanish armies. They viewed _____.

IV. THE INCAS

The Incas, centered in modern day Peru, conquered large sections of South America. The empire they conquered was greater in area _____.

They worshiped the Sun God, whom they described as similar to Quetzalcoatl, though they used a different name.

They developed a primarily agricultural society ruled over by a large number of government bureaucrats. The Inca society shared many similarities with the government and culture of Babylon.

Evolutionists have long taught the theory of isolationism – that man evolved in several different places around the earth. They teach that these civilizations gradually developed and eventually made contact with one another. The Biblical concept is quite different. Diffusionists teach that man developed in one place and then spread throughout the world. This explains why so many cultures in different parts of the world resemble each other. The obvious explanation for the similarities of the culture of the Incas and Babylon is that they _____.

There is plenty of evidence that there was contact between the various continents and cultures. Evolutionists ignore this evidence because it does not fit with their theory. Evidence of such contact is also in the Bible; see Acts 2:5 and Romans 10:18.

V. NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES

The tribes in North America tended to develop differently. The tribe split up into small villages which moved often. They existed primarily by hunting and fishing, with limited agriculture and farming. Farming was considered women's work. Indian tribes largely practiced social, communal living. They believed in personal ownership of horses and some personal property. They _____. This deeply held religious and cultural prohibition against the private ownership of land caused them to do very little to develop the land. It also left them very vulnerable to newcomers _____.

The 500 North American tribes constantly warred with each other. Violence and raiding were considered a way of life. Stealing from another tribe was considered honorable.

Each tribe had their own system of gods. Their gods were considered _____. These spirits were thought to indwell animals and trees.

When an Indian tribe had hunted and fished extensively in an area, it packed up and moved to a new area. As a result, tribes rarely built permanent dwellings but lived most often in tents or temporary lodges.

VI. THE CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

Most of the Caribbean Islands were settled by people who became uniquely the tribe of that island or chain of islands. By the time representatives of the European nations arrived, the Carib tribe had spread out and ruled many islands and influenced and raided others. Many of the other islands had relatively peaceful cultures and were easily conquered by the Caribs. The Caribs eventually gave their name to the region. Unfortunately, they were a cannibal tribe (the very word cannibal comes from them) and they fattened up subject tribes and treated them as a food source.

VII. PAGANISM

The Scripture describes what it is like when cultures are given over to paganism. “They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Isaiah 44:9. See also, Isaiah 41:29, 40:17-26.