



Lesson 1

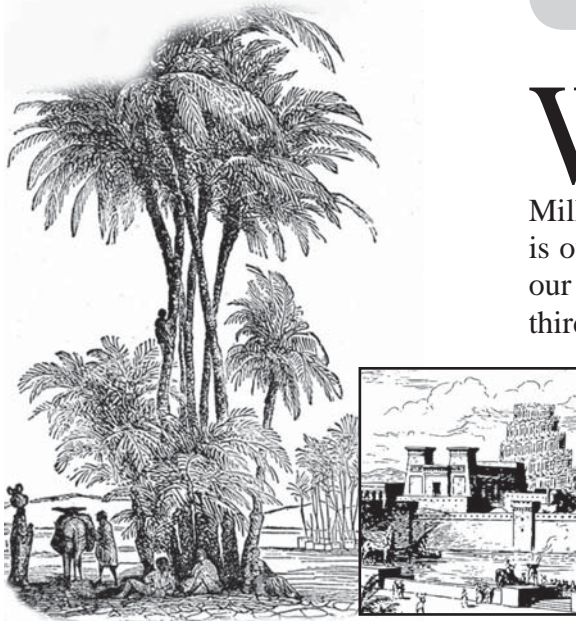
Chapter 1

Section 1

Lessons 1-5

Government & Economics

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN



When we look up into the sky, we can see an almost endless number of stars. Many of these stars are the center of their own solar systems. Millions of those stars together form the Milky Way which is our galaxy. Near one of the edges of the Milky Way is our solar system, consisting of a sun and its planets. The third planet from the sun is “Earth.” It has five oceans and seven continents.

The region where Europe, Asia, and Africa meet is known as the “Fertile Crescent.” Our timeline begins there about 4,000 BC when scientists agree that a cataclysmic event occurred (like a worldwide flood) that forced mankind to “start over.” Scholars agree that the Fertile Crescent is where recorded or written history on Earth began; and in approximately 2,500 BC, some interesting things were happening there.

The Fertile Crescent was made up of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia (“The Land Between

VOCABULARY

Archaeologist: a scientist who excavates and examines ruins of the past in order to establish the foundations of a culture

Delta: the place at the end of a river where the water flow deposits debris, silt, gravel, and dirt, and builds up a mounded area

Cult: followers of a pagan deity

Deity: a god or object of worship

Caste: a societal level of importance in a culture

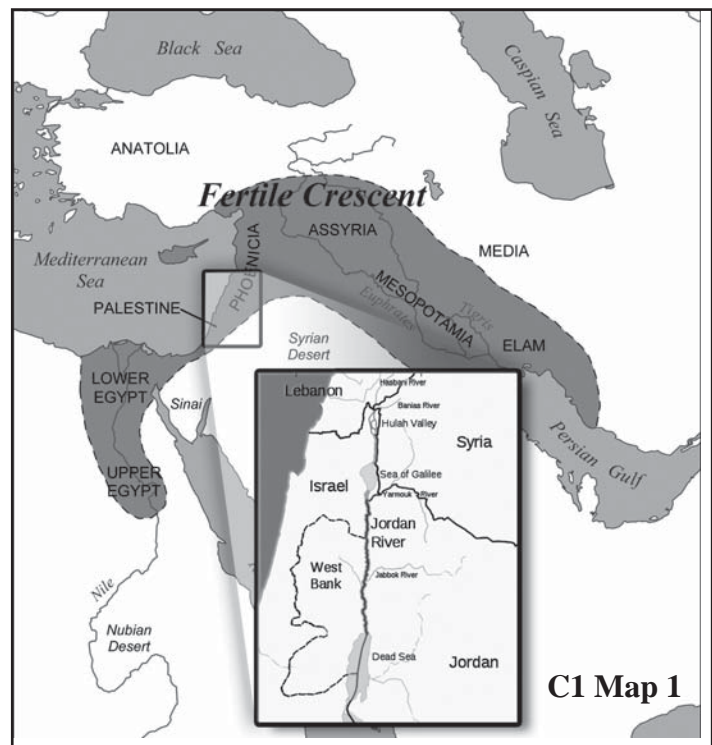
Assume: to take on the role of

Nomes: provinces or territories of Pharaonic Egypt.

Patron: a lord, master, or protector

Rear: to nurture in growth from childhood to adulthood

Harem: referring to many women who belong to one man and who live under the same roof in a household



C1 Map 1

the Rivers”). Those areas centered around four major river valleys, from which tribes migrated to populate the Earth:

1. the Tigris
2. Euphrates
3. the Nile
4. the Jordan

In those and other river valleys, human cultural expression made its debut. At the eastern end of the Fertile Crescent was Mesopotamia. There, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers emptied into the Persian Gulf. The modern nations of the region include Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. That part of the world is very much in the news today. It was where the Persian Gulf War (“Desert Storm”) was fought in 1992. In 1996, the United States conducted a series of bombing raids on Iraq in an effort to force Saddam Hussein (the dictator of Iraq) to stop persecuting the Kurdish people living in Iraq. In the 1980’s, Saddam Hussein spent millions of dollars rebuilding parts of the ancient city of Babylon and began to call himself the “New Nebuchadnezzar” (The original Nebuchadnezzar was an ancient Babylonian king). The universal principle, “there is nothing new under the sun,” is true. The section of the world where civilization began continues to be important today, thousands of years later.

One of the most significant aspects of the history of the Fertile Crescent is that *archaeologists* believe human civilization in the area appeared suddenly—as if civilization was not, and then it was. Human life there seems to have been created instantly.

Another interesting truth is that regardless of minor differences in cultures throughout history, at various geographical locations around the planet, human beings have always been human beings. The people of the Fertile Crescent 4,000 years ago were not very different from us today! That is why we study history, to help us learn about the present. American philosopher George Santayana once said that those who do not learn from history are doomed

to repeat it. Therefore, we study world history, so that we may avoid the mistakes of yesteryears.



The sites of Jarmo (in northern Iraq) and Jericho (in central Israel) are thought to be the two oldest human settlements on Planet Earth. They are both situated in the Fertile Crescent. Specifically in Mesopotamia, however, two groups of people initially established themselves as a political presence in the lower half of the region “Between the Rivers.” The southernmost section was settled by the *Sumerians*. One of the primary Sumerian city-states was *Ur*. It was situated in the *delta* region of the two rivers.

North of Sumeria was the kingdom of Akkadia, whose principal population center was Akkad. In time, however, those two ethnic divisions would merge. Eventually, the entire length of Mesopotamia would be occupied by two major empires—Assyria to the north and Babylonia to the south. The capital of Assyria was Nineveh, and the capital of Babylonia was Babylon. Babylonia was what the Akkadian-Sumerian coalition had become.

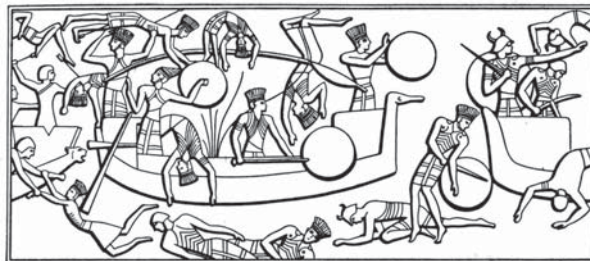
Every human society must have some form of government to guide its affairs. That is true for today, and it was true in the ancient past. As cultures have come and gone, the types of governmental systems they devised have varied. All, however, had the same purpose of producing order out of chaos. Our quest is to study those earliest governments in the Fertile Crescent.

Governments at the two ends of the Fertile Crescent were slightly different from each other. In Mesopotamia, the temple *cult*

of the local *deity* dominated each city-state. Therefore, the priests of those local cults became the high-level prominent *caste* within society. The high priest of each community emerged as its most important citizen. Often the high priest would *assume* the duties of king, as well. Therefore, each Mesopotamian city-state was usually ruled by a priest-king. Government and religion were thus united.

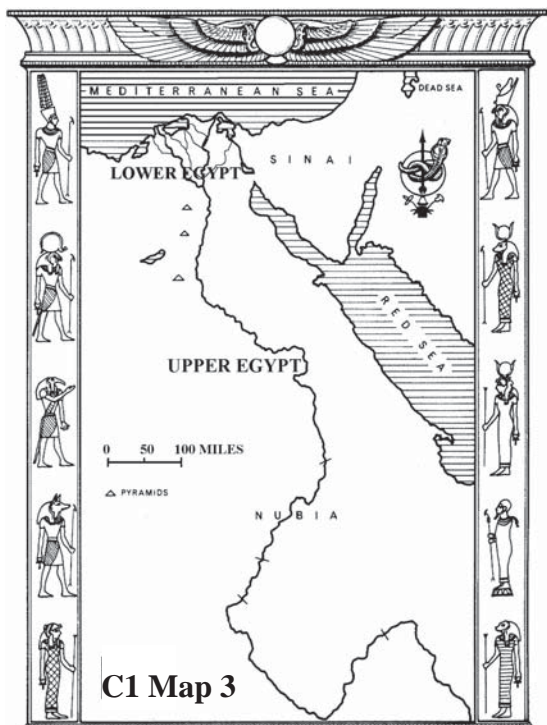
In Egypt, on the other hand, religion and government developed into two separate areas of authority, but often with considerable overlap. Egypt was originally a series of minor kingdoms, each of which was ruled by its own chief or “king.” In time, two major kingdoms emerged—the Kingdom of Upper Egypt and the Kingdom of Lower Egypt. In each was a number of provinces, or *nomes*. Each of those nomes was ruled by a *Nomarch*. Finally, the two kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt united into the nation of Egypt. That new

“Pharaoh.” Until the reign of Pharaoh Sesostris II of Egypt’s 12th Dynasty, the country’s 44 Nomarchs were engaged in a struggle with the Pharaoh for supreme political power. Pharaoh Sesostris II broke the power of the Nomarchs forever and established the supremacy of the Pharaoh for the remainder of Egyptian rule.



Egypt also had a *patron* god or goddess for each town, city, and nome. Therefore, united Egypt worshipped hundreds of deities (lesser gods). Sometimes those divinities were contradictory. Certain of those gods became more popular than others. The priest of the more popular gods possessed more power. Again, a political power struggle developed among the different groups of priests and between them and the Pharaoh. Particularly was that true with the priests of the sun-god Amun-Ra. That struggle between the priests of Amun-Ra and Pharaoh reached a critical point in the last days of the 18th Dynasty during the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep IV.

Human governments throughout history have ruled over the local population. The people in those societies were organized into families. Like governments, however, families have also been different from one another. Nevertheless, they have also been remarkably alike. Those truths can be seen in the Fertile crescent and distant China of long, long ago.



country was governed by a king. The king of unified Egypt lived in a palace called the *pr-aA*. Eventually, the name of the king’s palace became the title of its occupant, that is, the



Family

EARTH’S FIRST FAMILIES

Every human society throughout history has functioned within the boundaries

of the system known as *family*. The biological family provided a means to produce children, nourish them, and *rear* them to adulthood.

The family served as a means to amass property and wealth, no matter how much or how little, and supplied a system whereby that property could be passed on to the next generation. The family has also given each person a sense of identity and a means to reckon descent.

Depending on the culture, that descent might be considered as coming through the father or the mother. The basic family unit consists of children and their parents. Those parents, however, may be manifested in a variety of ways. They may, for instance, be biological parents, single parents, step-parents, or grandparents. Nevertheless, all are families.

Some preserved legal documents from ancient Mesopotamia give us an idea of how important family relationships were in that culture:

1. "The tablet of adoption belonging to Kuzu, the son of Karmishe"
2. "Tarmiya, the son of Huya, appeared with Shukriya and Kulahupi, with these two brothers of his, the sons of Huya, in a lawsuit before the judges of Nuzi"
3. "Sabitum, daughter of Ibbatum-Ibbatum, her father, delivered her into the house of Ilushu-ibni her father-in-law as wife to Warad-kubi, his son"

In each of those documents, the primary persons involved are identified in terms of his or her parent, offspring, sibling, or spouse. Three major cultures (Muslim, Hebrew, and Christian)

refer to the Old Testament of the Bible as their source of cultural history and record of family history from the ancient Fertile Crescent region.

On the other side of the planet, the ancient Chinese and other Asians respected their ancestors to the degree that they began to regard them as objects of worship. Oriental tradition forbade anyone from doing or saying anything which showed disrespect to one's parents, grandparents, or adult relatives.

In Egyptian society, a man had one legal wife who was the mother of the man's heirs. A man could have a *harem*, but those women were not legal wives, and their children were not heirs. Children of the era had much respect for their parents, who also highly valued the respect and affection of their family members. Tomb paintings and inscriptions bear witness to that fact. A typical Egyptian tomb inscription reads as follows: "*I was one beloved of his father, praised of his mother, whom his brothers and sisters loved.*"

In Egypt, all inheritance in one's family came through the mother. The closest blood ties were those of the woman and her children. In the societies of ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China, the family was of prime importance.

Governments and families are two of the primary of human institutions. Another one of equal importance is religion. To a very great extent, those three societal expressions give the people of any culture their identity. In the ancient Fertile Crescent and China, the people had great respect for their religious traditions.



LIFE PRINCIPLE

"When rulers are righteous, the people rejoice;
when rulers are wicked, the people mourn."

—Hebrew Proverb