

Chapter 4  
Lesson 2  
**Mesopotamian Empires**

**The First Empires**

- 2400<sub>B.C.</sub> city-states weakened
- powerful kingdoms arose and built **empires**-group of many different lands under one ruler.

**Who was Sargon?**

- Akkad
  - northern Mesopotamia
  - Sargon was the leader
  - conquered territories and became king of Sumer and Akkad, eventually all of Mesopotamia
  - formed world's first empire, lasted 200 years

**Who Was Hammurabi?**

- Amorites lived west of Mesopotamia
- 1800<sub>B.C.</sub> conquered Mesopotamia and built cities, including Babylon
- Hammurabi was the king
- began taking over more land and created the Babylonian Empire

**Hammurabi's Code**

- created a set of laws, code
- dealt with crimes, farming, business, marriage, and family
- listed punishment for each crime
- “eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth”
- protected the poor too
- later influenced Greece and Rome

**The Assyrian Empire**

- arose 1,000 years later
- built a powerful military

**The Assyrian Army**

- infantry (foot soldiers), cavalry (horsed soldiers), and charioteers
- very brutal
  - robbed people, set crops on fire, destroyed towns and dams, took **tribute**-forced payments, drove people from their homes
- one reason for their success was their iron weapons, learned from the Hittites

**Kings and Government**

- capital located at Nineveh
- divided empire into **provinces**, political districts
- king chose officials to govern, collect taxes, and carry out laws



## Life in Assyria

- had law codes but harsh punishments
- writing based off of Babylonian
- worshipped many of the same gods
- Ashurbanipal built one of the world's first libraries in Nineveh
  - held 25,000 tablets of stories
- farming and trade were important

## The Chaldean Empire

- 650<sub>B.C.</sub> the Chaldeans took power while the Assyrians were weak

## A New Empire

- about 1000<sub>B.C.</sub> Assyrians conquered the Chaldeans' small kingdom
- they hated their harsh new rulers
- when Assyrians were fighting each other, Nabopolassar reclaimed his kingdom
- 627<sub>B.C.</sub> forced Assyrians out of Uruk and crowned king of Babylonia
- others joined and defeated the Assyrians
- Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadnezzar created a new empire
  - Babylon was the capital
  - sometimes called New Babylonian Empire

## The Greatness of Babylon

- Babylon was largest and richest city in the world
- brick walls surrounded the city
- huge ziggurat
- palace had a giant staircase of greenery known as the Hanging Gardens
  - one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World
  - King Nebuchadnezzar built the garden to please his wife, she missed her homelands
- King Neb built a beautiful street near palace
  - gold statue of the god Marduk was wheeled in the street each spring
  - believed the ceremony would bring peace and bigger crops
- built many new canals
- high taxes to pay for building projects
- merchants came to the city traveling in groups called **caravans**
- astronomers**, people who studies the planet and skies, mapped the stars, planets, and phases of the moon.
  - invented the first sundial
  - first to follow a seven-day week

## The Fall of the Empire

- King Neb died and weak kings followed
- 539<sub>B.C.</sub> Persians took advantage and captured Babylon
  - they allowed them to keep their distinct culture

