

Biblical Connections in *The Curious Historian Level 1A* compiled by Daniel E. James

This optional, supplemental PDF for *The Curious Historian Level 1A (TCH1A)* draws connections between the historical context presented in the chapters and corresponding biblical settings and scriptures, theological concepts, or moral virtues. These connections can be used to aid you in incorporating biblical history into your study of ancient history and to facilitate further discussion with your student(s). Icons in the teacher's edition indicate when to reference this PDF.

This resource is intended for teacher use. To help initiate student interaction with the content, consider having students read the Bible passages aloud to you/the class.

Unit I: Ancient Mesopotamia

Chapter 1: The Ancient Sumerians

There are mentions of Sumer and other ancient city-states throughout the Old Testament, though searching the Scriptures for these names may leave you empty-handed, since different Bible translations use varying names and spellings for these places. For example, one of the names the Old Testament uses instead of Sumer is Shinar. The King James, English Standard, and New Revised Standard Version translations also use the name Erech instead of Uruk and spell Sargon's city of Akkad (see chapter 4) as Accad.

The land of Sumer/Shinar is first mentioned in [Genesis 10:10](#): “The first centers of his [Nimrod's] kingdom were Babel, Uruk, Akkad and Kalneh, in Shinar.” Again in [Genesis 11:1-9](#), we are taken to a plain in the land of Shinar where the people built the infamous Tower of Babel. Sumer is also called “Babylonia” and referenced by three Old Testament prophets—Isaiah ([Isaiah 11:11](#)), Daniel ([Daniel 1:1-2](#)), and Zechariah ([Zechariah 5:11](#))—as a place to which Israel would be exiled and from which a remnant of Israel would be gathered.¹

Chapter 2: The Ancient Sumerian City-States

[Genesis 14:1-16](#) offers us a glimpse of the relationships between city-states in the ancient world. Each of the kings named in this passage would have been ruler over his own city-state. Kedorlaomer, the king of Elam (home of the Elamites; see chapter 6) also ruled over a number of smaller city-states that regularly paid him tribute. After twelve years of service to him, the kings of the smaller city-states—Bera of Sodom, Birsha of Gomorrah, Shinab of Admah, Shemeber of Zeboyim, and Zoar of Bela—stopped paying tribute and rose up in rebellion. Kedorlaomer called on kings Amraphel (ruler of Sumer/Shinar), Arioch, and Tidal to help him subdue the rebelling city-states. When Kedorlaomer overcame the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah with his army, he did not merely collect the tribute he was owed but also easily defeated their armies and chased some of their men into tar pits. Then, he took all of their goods and their provisions—presumably a lot more than the unpaid tribute would have amounted to—and left.

In these verses, the ancient world certainly sounds like a brutal and merciless place. It seems the strong did whatever they wanted while the weak had little choice but to endure whatever was done to them. If your city and king were stronger than those around you, then you might have been relatively safe . . . at least until someone stronger came along.

1. D.J. Wiseman, “Shinar,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., ed. D.R.W. Wood, I. Howard Marshall, A.R. Millard, J.I. Packer, and D.J. Wiseman (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1095.