

Revised Edition | High School Level | STUDENT

# WORLD HISTORY

*Observations and Assessments  
from Creation to Today*



**MASTERBOOKS®**  
— CURRICULUM —

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## PREFACE

History is the remembering, the consideration about why we have come so far. And there are two primary points of view about the way history is formed... and thus remembered. One says that history is nothing more than arbitrary events connected by happenstance. The opposite point of view, this author's point of view, argues that there is a design, purpose, or pattern in history. As a matter of fact, history is nothing more or less than an unfolding of God's plan for the world.

The writing of history is the selection of information and the synthesis of this information into a narrative that will stand the critical eye of time. History, though, is never static. One never creates the definitive theory of a historical event. History invites each generation to reexamine its own story and to reinterpret past events in light of present circumstances.

Know that history is alive, full of interesting, glorious, and useful things, and terribly relevant to all of us. To be a true history, an account of the past must not only retell what happened but must also relate events and people to each other. It must inquire into causes and effects. It must try to discern falsehood in the old records, such as attempts of historical figures to make them look better than they really were. It must also present the evidence on which its findings are based.

It is clear that all our information in regard to past events and conditions must be derived from evidence of some kind, and certain evidences are better than others. To that end, scholarly historical inquiry demands that we implement the following principles:

1. Historians must evaluate the veracity of sources. There must be a hierarchy of historical sources. Primary source material, for instance, is usually the best source of information.
2. Historians must be committed to telling both sides of the historical story. They may choose to lobby for one view over the other, but they must fairly examine all theories.
3. Historians must avoid stereotypes and archetypes. They must overcome personal prejudices and dispassionately view history in ruthlessly objective terms.
4. Historians must be committed to the truth no matter where their scholarship leads them. At times historians will discover unflattering information about their nation/state.
5. Finally, historians understand that real, abiding, and eternal history is ultimately made only by people who obey God at all costs.

After everything is said and done, historians are only studying the past. They cannot really change the past. Theories about the past come and go, and change with each generation; however, the past is past. Historians will debate about history, but they can never alter it. Only God can change history, and God alone.

When persons are reborn in Christ, their present, future, and, yes, even their past is changed. History is literally rewritten. They are new creations. That bad choice, that sin, that catastrophe is placed under the blood of the Lamb, and everything starts fresh and new; a new history for new people.



Prague Theological Hall at Strahov Library in Prague, Czech Republic

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In Chapter 1 we will learn that Mesopotamia is probably the location of the Garden of Eden. Next, we will examine the rise of the Sumerian civilization. We will study how subsequent nations conquered and enlarged the Mesopotamian footprint. Along the way we will examine Mesopotamian gods and contrast them with the God of the Jews.

## READERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO

1. See the connection between Genesis and early civilizations.
2. Identify some of the contributions of early civilizations to the Western world.
3. Explain and distinguish the religions of early Mesopotamia.
4. Describe the culture of Mesopotamia.
5. Construct a written letter using cuneiform writing.

## PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PRINCIPLES

- Babylon
- Cuneiform
- Enuma Elish
- Epic of Gilgamesh
- Hammurabi
- Henry Morris
- Mesopotamia



4004 BC  
Creation

2242 BC  
The Tower of Babel



Ancient Sumerian stone carving

1

## IN THE BEGINNING



**A**uthorities in the field of history do not all agree about the definition of civilization. Most accept the view that “a civilization is a culture which has attained a degree of complexity usually characterized by urban life.” In other words, a civilization is a culture capable of sustaining the social, political, and religious needs of a densely populated society. The Mesopotamian region, beginning with the Sumerians, created a system of writing to keep records, monumental architecture in place of simple buildings, and art that was worthy of its people. All these characteristics of civilization first appeared in Mesopotamia.

1896 BC  
Israelites delivered  
from Egypt

## Genesis and So Noted

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”  
– Genesis 1:1 (KJV)

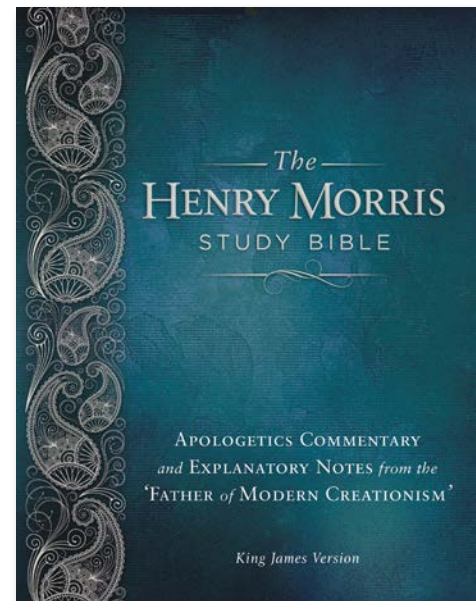
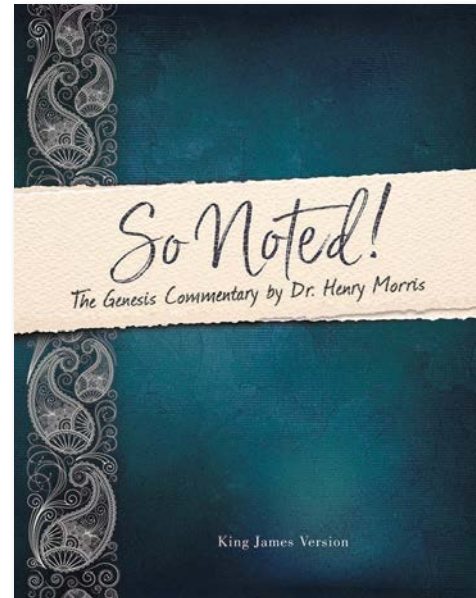
History is meant to be a light that illuminates the present and directs attention toward the possibilities of the future. However, history is only ancient, dusty chronicles if one does not honestly study and assess these written records of events, as well as the events themselves. History is a social science; a branch of knowledge that uses specific methods and tools to achieve its goals.

There are lots of different histories. The Earth, the world of nature, and the universe all have a past, but they have no history, per se. Histories have to do with real, alive (or once alive) people. Only human societies have histories, based on collective memories from which they reconstruct their pasts.

After everything is said and done, historians are only studying the past. They cannot really change the past. Theories about the past come and go, and change with each generation; however, the past is past. Historians will debate about history, but they can never alter it. Only God can change history, and God alone. When persons are reborn in Christ, their present, future, and, yes, even their past is changed. History is literally rewritten. They are new creations. That bad choice, that sin, that catastrophe is placed under the blood of the Lamb, and everything starts fresh and new; a new history for new people.

This study of the past presented here will begin where all history begins, in the Bible, and specifically the Book of Genesis. Genesis is the Greek word for “beginning.” All history flows from God’s creation of the world, as recorded here, and His creation of Adam and Eve, the first historians of humanity.

*So Noted* is a complete excerpt of the Book of Genesis from *The Henry Morris Study Bible*. Understanding the Book of Genesis is foundational and vital for a deeper understanding of God’s Word, including historical events like creation and Noah’s Flood and their aftermath. It will help readers form a stronger biblical worldview.



So *Noted* includes all 600 of the study notes for Genesis from *The Henry Morris Study Bible*. Henry Morris created thorough notes that provide readers with access to his decades of rigorous biblical study, as well as his scientific knowledge, to bring clarity to modern confusion and controversy over the intersection of science and faith. His comprehensive notes ensure readers have a firm understanding of the theological, cultural, and scientific background of the Book of Genesis. They also include cross-references to notes on other verses, which are available in the full *Henry Morris Study Bible*.

Throughout your reading of this text, you will find references to the “Comparative Worldviews” chart in the appendix located in the student book and the teacher guide. Worldviews relevant to current people or cultures are noted for you to contrast to the Biblical Truth. If you have the teacher guide, you may choose to tear out the chart so you can keep it available while reading about the various religions and philosophies discussed in the book. It is always best to keep your primary focus on the foundation of Scripture when studying other teachings and worldviews.



## Comparative Worldviews

	God	Man	Sin	Authority/Revelation	Salvation
<b>BIBLICAL TRUTH</b>	God is eternal, existing in three persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is eternal and transcendent; the Son took on flesh to dwell on earth.	Man is created in the image of God, made in a likeness to God, and is able to do good and please God on his own.	Any thought or action that is contrary to the will of God as revealed in the Bible.	God and His revelation (found in the books of the Bible).	Salvation is possible through the voluntary atonement of Jesus on the Cross and the forgiveness individuals receive voluntarily by repentance and faith in Jesus' work on their behalf; works have no merit for salvation; salvation is a free gift received by God's grace alone.
<b>DEISM</b>	Only the Father; believe in Allah (monotheism) and that Jesus was the Son of God, but a prophet; Allah is transcendent and removed from mankind.	Man is the highest creature made by Allah and is able to do good with his free will, though he needs guidance from Allah's prophets.	A fragment of revelation made by Allah in the Quran and Hadith; no concept of original sin or competing moralities.	The Bible is viewed as a revelation from God that has been corrupted; but the revelations of Muhammad in the Quran represent the Bible.	Man's purpose will be judged by Allah for his or her own actions; there is no concept of a mediator or Jesus and His death that saves and on the Cross; man's true nature remains intact (no Parallel).
<b>DEITY ONLY</b>	Deny the Trinity; allow Jesus to see God; Jesus is not the Son of God in the Messiah; the Holy Spirit is not a person.	Man is created in the image of God, made in a likeness to God, and is able to do good and please God on his own.	Embracing the laws prescribed in the Old Testament; cultural, societal, racial, and traditions.	20 books of the Old Testament; cultural, societal, racial, and traditions.	Salvation is possible through the obedience of the individual to biblical and traditional laws; government is emphasized through personal acts of sacrifice and penitence.
<b>DEISM/DEITY ONLY</b>	A distant deity or force that has no intimate connection with the world.	A rational being who directs his own destiny.	None by individual; generally rejected as an objective standard.	One may spiritual revelation from God, acknowledge natural but rationally human reason and practice.	Values by individual; none acknowledge an almighty.
<b>DEISM/DEITY ONLY</b>	Allah; Man is the supreme god who is worshipped; but there is also another deity who represents evil, Angel Malvey.	The first man to exist to be created by Allah; Man is not well defined apart from doing good or evil.	Six hierarchical and spiritual aspects and is not well defined apart from doing good or evil.	The Quran is the scripture revealed by the prophet Muhammad; various sects hold different versions or interpretations.	Those who disregard Allah are said to have their actions; there is no concept of a mediator or Jesus through all will ultimately be judged as such in heaven.
<b>DEISM/DEITY ONLY</b>	Denies that God is personal being, but refers to a machine and impersonal. Claims reality has a beginning and end. Many religious traditions worship many gods (polytheism).	The moral concept of the universe and should each harmony with the universe through proving the balance of sin and forgiveness.	The biblical concept of sin is denied, while the Cross makes no final balance of sin and forgiveness.	The writings of Carl von Clausewitz are considered the founding principles of Zionism. Other important writings include the Zohar, the Talmud, and the Shema prayer.	Values are denied; there is no need for personal revelation from judgment; The ultimate goal is to achieve unity with the One by purifying the One.

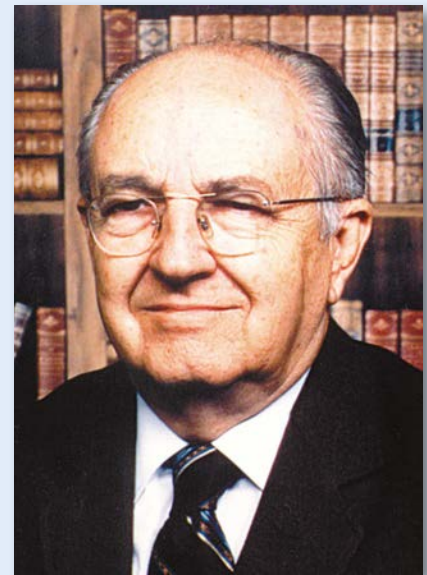
## Historia: The Father of Modern Creation Science

A prolific and influential scholar known to believers and skeptics alike as “the father of modern creation science,” Dr. Henry M. Morris truly was a man of science and a staunch man of God. Dr. Morris began his serious study of the Bible in the 1930s and authoring books in the 1940s, but it was his landmark work, co-authored with Dr. John Whitcomb, titled *The Genesis Flood* in 1961 that influenced generations to begin discovering the fallacies of evolution and the biblical truth of creation. With over 60 books, founding and leading the Institute for Creation Research (ICR), Dr. Morris’ death in 2006 was a profound loss to millions.



“The modern world is desperately in need of God’s own wisdom with respect to the purpose and meaning of true science. The Bible will be found not only to reveal a thoroughly modern perspective on the real facts and principles of science but also to provide wisdom and guidance concerning its proper role in human life and in the eternal counsels of God.”<sup>1</sup>

—Dr. Henry Morris



1. Dr. Henry Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science* (Master Books, 2002), page 12.



## History of Mesopotamia

The story of **Mesopotamia** is the story of the very genesis of civilization. There is some debate about where people stopped merely herding their livestock and started farming and building cities and therefore creating a civilization. However, there are some strong arguments that it began in Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia, which means “between the rivers,” lies between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. It is located in the general vicinity of the present national states of Iraq and Syria. There is strong evidence that Mesopotamia is in fact Eden, where God placed the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve (Genesis 1).

Mesopotamia: Means “between the rivers” as it was established between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

The oldest known communities of Mesopotamia go back to around 2200 B.C. Some biblical scholars argue for a more recent date.

Several civilizations prospered in the region until, in the second century B.C., it became part of the Persian Empire, the largest empire in the world up to then (see Daniel 5).

The first city-state (an autonomous, self-contained urban center, surrounded by a dependent agricultural area) in the region was made up of the Sumerian cities Eridu and Uruk, among others. Abram emigrated from the Sumerian city of Ur (see *So Noted*, page 60, Genesis 11).

Sumerians developed a system of writing by imprinting on clay tablets using a stylus. A form of printing using carved images on stone cylinders (from two to six centimeters long) was also a first. By repeatedly rolling over fresh clay, printed images were used to identify possessions, seal written tablets, and protect other valuables, much like finger rings on wax seals in later times. Sumerians also invented the wheel, thereby improving transportation endeavors and building programs.

Other bordering people groups took note of these wonderful things. They were not slow to follow. About 2330 B.C., Sumeria was conquered by Sargon I, king of the Akkadians (see *So Noted*, page 53, Geneses 10:10).

The Gutians, tribespeople from the eastern hills, ended Akkadian rule about 2200 B.C.,



**MAP 1: Mesopotamia  
(present-day Middle East)**

- Mesopotamia was mostly in today’s Iraq, but also parts of modern-day Iran, Syria and Turkey.
- Mesopotamia encompasses the land between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

and, a few years later, the Sumerian Ur arose to rule much of Mesopotamia. Finally, **Hammurabi** of Babylon (who reigned about 1792–1750 B.C.) conquered the whole Mesopotamia area. The Hittites conquered much of the area, but the Persians actually dominated the entire region of Mesopotamia.

Mesopotamian peoples produced highly decorated pottery and clothing. They also invented musical instruments such as the harp and lyre, which were used to accompany the recital of their many epic literary works (e.g., the *Epic of Gilgamesh*). They developed the concept of the library, assiduously collecting and cataloguing their mass of literary works. These works were the basis of some vigorous public and private debates.

Furthermore, scholars are convinced that the Sumerians in particular had a form of assembly for making key political decisions using a consensual approach. They held courts to make legal judgments. They were the first people to develop a code of law, and therefore used precedent to determine later court cases. That they also developed some understanding of economics is attested to by evidence of price-setting agreements and openly advocated urban planning. The word suburb is mentioned for the first time in a Sumerian text.

The Sumerians used gold, silver, tin, lead, copper, and bronze in making jewelry and in the construction of buildings. They were not, however, able to develop iron weaponry — a shortcoming that ultimately hindered them militarily when invading armies brandished iron swords and chariots.

In general, Mesopotamian women had very few rights. However, they were free to go to the marketplaces and to attend to legal matters for their absent husbands. They were even able to own their own property, borrow and lend, and engage in business for themselves. High-status women, such as priestesses and members of royal families, learned to read and to write. Finally, several Sumerian deities were women figures, which increased the status of women considerably.

Hammurabi: Ruler of Babylon who reigned from about 1792-1750 B.C. and who conquered the whole Mesopotamian area.



Hero mastering a lion  
(Possibly Gilgamesh)

Epic of Gilgamesh: Ancient story of the hero Gilgamesh recorded on 12 clay tablets around 1200 B.C.

# Historia: Ancient Alphabets

The earliest writing in Mesopotamia was a picture writing invented by the Sumerians, who wrote on clay tablets using long reeds. The script the Sumerians invented was a type of writing called *cuneiform*. This picture language, similar to but more abstract than Egyptian hieroglyphics, eventually developed into a syllabic alphabet under the Persians. In other words, this is the language/writing that Daniel, Esther, and other Jewish exiles would have used.

Cuneiform: The word means “wedge shaped” and refers to the writing invented by the Sumerians that was etched in clay tablets.

Individual words were represented by crude pictorial symbols that resembled in some way the object being represented. This complicated writing system dominated Mesopotamia until the century before the birth of Christ. The Persians greatly simplified cuneiform until it resembled something closer to an alphabet.

“ They wrote on clay tablets with long reeds while the clay was still wet. The fresh clay hardened, and a permanent record was created. The original Mesopotamian writings were crude pictures of the objects being named, but the difficulty of drawing on fresh clay eventually produced the wedges and hooks unique to cuneiform. This writing would be formed by laying the length of the reed along the wet clay and moving the end nearest the hand from one side to another to form the hooks. As with all cultures, writing greatly changed Mesopotamian social structure and the civilization’s relationship to its own history. Writing allowed laws to be written (e.g., Hammurabi Code) and so to assume a static and independent character. Also, history became more detailed and incorporated much more of local cultures’ histories.”

—Richard Hooker

**ALPHABETIC, LANGUAGE.**

ENGLISH.	HEBREW.	PHIENICIAN.	GREEK.	HEBREW OF COINS.																													
A	𐤀	𐤁	Α	Α	<p><i>Cadmus brought the Phoenician letters (15 in number) into Greece about 1500. B.C. They gradually changed in form till they became the ground of the Roman letters now used all over Europe.</i></p> <p><b>THE GREEK ALPHABET.</b> <i>contained 16 letters till 400 B.C. when the Ionic of 24 was introduced.</i></p> <p><i>The different Alphabets have the following number of letters, to wit:</i></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>1. Italian.....</td><td>20.</td></tr> <tr><td>2. Latin.....</td><td>22.</td></tr> <tr><td>3. Hebrew.....</td><td>22.</td></tr> <tr><td>4. French.....</td><td>25.</td></tr> <tr><td>5. English.....</td><td>26.</td></tr> <tr><td>6. German.....</td><td>26.</td></tr> <tr><td>7. Spanish.....</td><td>27.</td></tr> <tr><td>8. Arabic.....</td><td>28.</td></tr> <tr><td>9. Turkish.....</td><td>28.</td></tr> <tr><td>10. Persian.....</td><td>32.</td></tr> <tr><td>11. Russian.....</td><td>35.</td></tr> <tr><td>12. Slavonic.....</td><td>42.</td></tr> <tr><td>13. Sanserit.....</td><td>44.</td></tr> <tr><td>14. Chinese (Charadors).....</td><td>214.</td></tr> </table>	1. Italian.....	20.	2. Latin.....	22.	3. Hebrew.....	22.	4. French.....	25.	5. English.....	26.	6. German.....	26.	7. Spanish.....	27.	8. Arabic.....	28.	9. Turkish.....	28.	10. Persian.....	32.	11. Russian.....	35.	12. Slavonic.....	42.	13. Sanserit.....	44.	14. Chinese (Charadors).....	214.
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O	𐤏	𐤐	Ο	Ο																													
P	𐤐	𐤑	Ρ	Ρ																													
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S	𐤓	𐤔	Σ	Σ																													
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Ancient writing was initially based on word pictures, like Egyptian hieroglyphs, but it gave way to letter characters that could form endless words. Image from *Adams Synchronological Chart or Map of History* by S.C. Adams (Green Forest, AR: Attic Books, 1871, 2012)

In October 539 B.C., with the Jews in exile, the Persian king Cyrus took Babylon, the ancient capital of an empire covering modern Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. Babylon was, by that time, the ancient world's capital of scholarship and science. The subject provinces soon recognized Cyrus as their legitimate ruler. Since he was already the ruler of modern Turkey and Iran, it is not an exaggeration to say that the capture of Babylon meant the birth of the first true world empire. The Persian Empire was to last for more than two centuries, until it was conquered by the Macedonian Greek king Alexander the Great. Cyrus allowed the Jews (who were exiled in Babylonia) to return home.

For our purposes, the release of the exiled Jewish community was most important. The Jewish exile began with the destruction of Jerusalem and the transportation of Jewish survivors (notably Daniel and his friends) to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. The majority of Jews remained in Babylonia even after the reestablishment of Jerusalem by Nehemiah.



The front and back of the Cyrus Cylinder



Tomb of Cyrus the Great

## Mesopotamia and Religion

Sumerian religions were polytheistic, which meant they worshiped many gods. The gods played a crucial role in the Sumerians' lives, both as a nation and as individuals. Most Sumerians, for instance, had a personal god or gods with whom they forged a special relationship. They were “good luck charms.” The people looked to them for protection and assistance in all things, while also blaming them when things went wrong. These gods continued to be worshiped right through to the late Babylonian period.

The Sumerian pantheon of gods was called the Anunnaki, although another name, the Igigi, was also used. These gods appeared to be polarities with good and evil; thus, the first evidence of dualism entered worldviews. There were, in other words, good gods — the Anunnaki — and bad gods — the Igigi.

Originally, Marduk was the city god of Babylon, but in 1800 B.C., he became the supreme god of the Mesopotamian pantheon. In fact, he was the god of the Palestinian provinces — and many think he was the god that Elijah confronted on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18). As such, he was recognized by the gods of the cities that were subjected by the Babylonian kings. According to myth, Marduk defended the other gods against the diabolical monster Tiamat. After he had killed it, he brought order to the cosmos, built the Esagila, and created mankind. This is clearly seen in the *Gilgamesh Epic*. In the poem “**Enûma Elish**” it is claimed that all other gods are just manifestations of Marduk.

Enûma Elish: The Babylonian creation myth that was discovered in 1849 within the ruins of ancient Nineveh.



### Comparative Worldviews

See “Biblical Truth” on the chart to help you contrast it with these ancient Sumerian teachings.



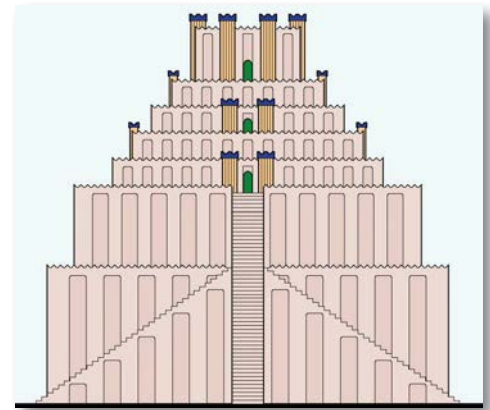
Marduk, with his thunderbolts, destroys Tiamat the dragon

Marduk and other gods and goddesses were worshiped at Ziggurats or temples. In fact, one, named Etemenanki, the foundation of heaven on earth, is considered by most scholars to be the Tower of Babel of Genesis 11.

When the Babylonians celebrated New Year (the so-called Akitu festival), they remembered how Marduk had created order in the universe. The heart of this cosmos was Babylon, and the Esagila shrine was, therefore, the center of the universe. The Babylonian Marduk was embraced by the Persian invaders.

The gods were thought to bind people together in their social groups and were believed to have provided what they needed to survive. The Sumerians developed stories and festivals to explain and solicit help for their everyday lives. Priests reminded the people every new year that the gods determined their futures for the coming year. The priests were responsible for the sacrifices and cultic rituals that were essential for the help of the gods. In addition, property was said to belong to the gods, so priests administered it. This made the priests valuable and important figures in their communities.

Mesopotamian false gods were impersonal with their human charges. What a contrast this was to the true Judeo-Christian God that Daniel and his friends served!



Reconstruction of the Etemenanki based on Hansjörg Schmid



Restored ziggurat in ancient Ur

## Daily Life in Mesopotamia

Most Mesopotamians (Sumerians, Babylonians, Persians, etc.) were farmers. There were skilled craftsmen too — potters, builders, and traders. As Mesopotamian kings conquered other nations they returned with slaves, one of the most famous of whom was Daniel.

The clothing of many people in Mesopotamia included a garment that was a flounced skirt. The skirts varied in length. The upper part of the body was often left bare. Women's skirts appear to be less elaborate but more colorful when compared to those of the men. Sumerian noble women dressed in colorful clothes and head dresses. Their jewelry was made from gold, silver, and bright stones.

The rich lived in large, elaborate homes with spacious courtyards. Most homes were clustered around the Ziggurat temple. While most homes were single dwellings, they often shared an exterior wall with another home, much like contemporary condominiums.

Since wood was scarce, families built their homes with sun-dried brick. There was a small family courtyard. The courtyard, or first floor, in each house was very important. It often contained a playground, a vegetable garden, and a chicken coop. Most homes were designed with three stories of living space. The first living space was the courtyard. Stairs led up to the second and third floors, and then to the roof. Mesopotamians were skillful architects who could construct sturdy multi-level houses. Roofs were flat and became everyone's summer bedroom.



**Babylon**, like all cities, had rich sections of town and poorer sections of town. Normally, the better houses were built closer to the royal palaces and the temples. Generally speaking, all families lived in single dwellings.

Women in ancient Mesopotamia were not equal to men, but they did have more rights than women in other ancient cultures. They bought and sold goods, owned property, and owned their own businesses. Upper-class women, like members of the royal family and those who gave their life to the temple as priestesses, could learn how to read and write. Some women even had civil government jobs.

Only the very rich went to school, and the schools were run by the temple priests.

Life revolved around the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates. Since there were so few natural resources, Mesopotamians relied on overland and river trade. Goods were traded with cultures all over Asia Minor and Northern Africa.

Babylonian, and especially Persian, soldiers were second to none in the ancient world. They conquered all of the known world at the time, except for Greece. Every Mesopotamian king kept a large standing army.

Babylon: Most famous city of ancient Mesopotamia, in modern-day Iraq, which was a significant place of power for a thousand years.



Partially restored Babylon ruins, Hillah, Iraq



## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

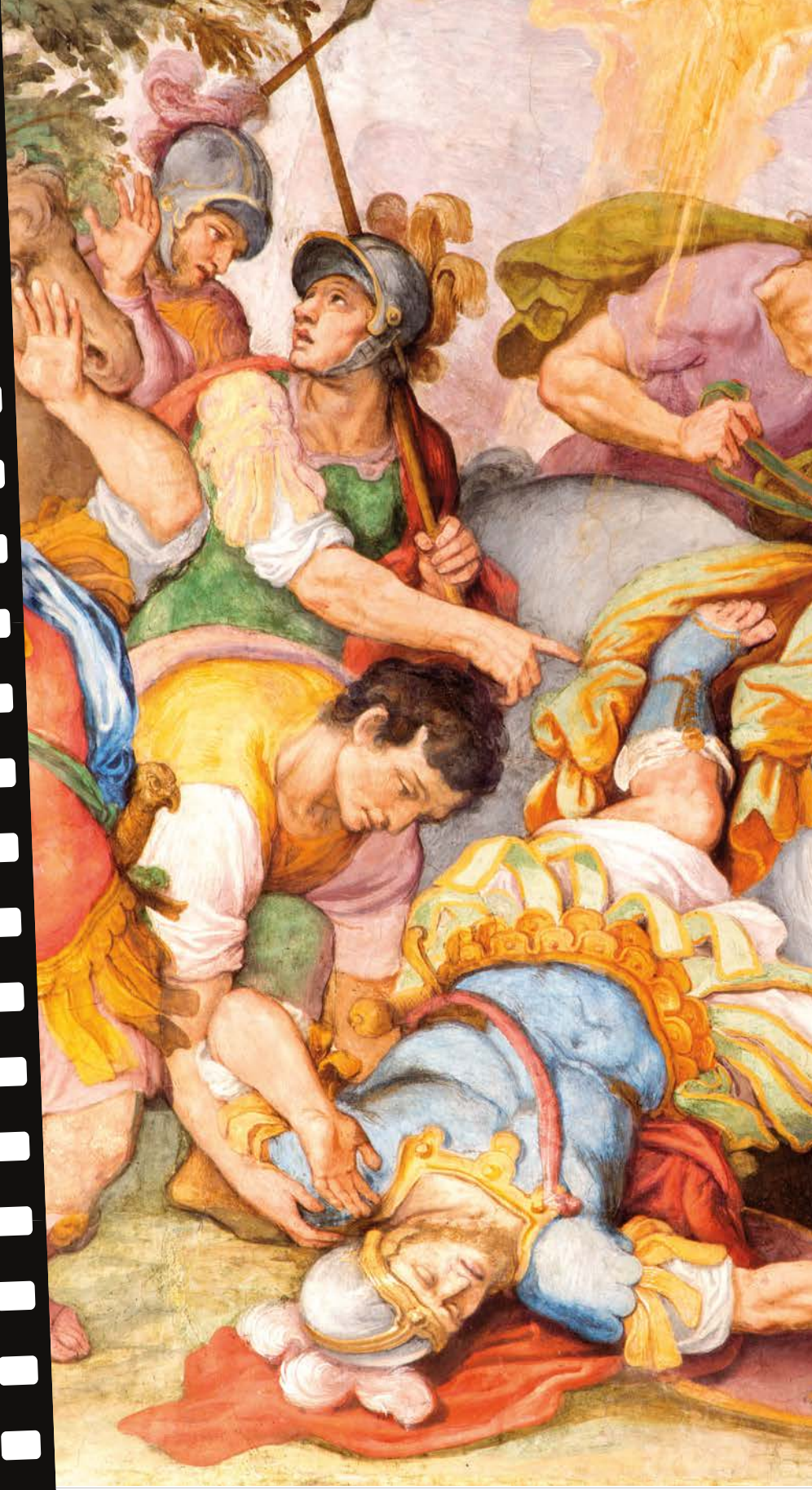
In Chapter 9, we will examine the explosive growth and expansion of Christianity, as in three generations the Early Church had spread the gospel of Jesus Christ across the known cultural and political world. Next, we will look at the everyday lives of early Christians. We will also look at other religions of those first few centuries.

## READERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO

1. Connect and relate the birth of the early Church to the Roman Empire.
2. Understand the radical lifestyle and influence of the early Church.
3. Identify the impact of Constantine on history.
4. Understand other world-views during the first few centuries.
5. Evaluate the impact of the Coliseum and its reflection of Roman culture.

## PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PRINCIPLES

- Constantine
- Gnosticism
- Jesus Christ
- Luke
- Monasticism
- Origen
- Saint Augustine



AD 33  
Christ's death and  
resurrection

AD 70  
Destruction of  
Jerusalem



*The Conversion of St. Paul* fresco  
by G. B. Ricci

# 9

## EARLY CHURCH HISTORY



**C**hristianity began as a small Jewish sect in the eastern Mediterranean region. It quickly grew in size and influence over a few decades, and by the fourth century A.D. had become the dominant religion within the Roman Empire. Today it is the most populous religion in the world. Why? How could a group of ordinary people such as fishermen and tax collectors, in one generation, turn the world upside down?

c. AD 98  
John the Beloved dies

## The Birth of the Church

In the first five years after the death and Resurrection of the Lord **Jesus Christ**, the Church He founded became the major religion of the greatest empire the world has ever known. This cultural revolution — for Christianity was always more than just a “religion” — began with a man who was both wholly human and wholly God. During His three-year earthly ministry, He wrote nothing, created no organization, and owned no property.

Josephus, also known as Yosef ben Matityahu (Joseph, son of Matthias), became known, in his capacity as a Roman citizen, as Titus Flavius Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian who survived and described in writing the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Josephus spent his life in and around Rome as an advisor and historian to three emperors. For centuries, the works of Josephus were more widely read in Europe than any books other than the Bible. They are invaluable sources of eyewitness testimony to the development of Western civilization, including the foundation and growth of Christianity in the first century.

Jesus Christ: The Word made flesh, Jesus is the eternal one of God, the King of kings, the Savior. He was there in the beginning creating the world, came to earth as a child, grew up to share of God the Father’s truth, died, rose again, and was exalted to the right hand of God, where every knee will one day bow before Him.

### Historia: Josephus’ description of Jesus

“

Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”<sup>1</sup>



Within 30 years after Christ’s death, His followers were called Christians, and within four short centuries, without any army, navy, or air force, Christians had “conquered” the known world with the gospel. In the same way, while Rome was conquered by the barbarians, the Christians captured the hearts and the souls of the barbarians. Today, Christianity is the most populous religion in the world.

1. *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, translated by William Whiston, Philadelphia, 1856, page 530.

One of the early Christians, **Luke**, was chosen to write about the birth of the church in the Book of Acts, in which he describes the growth, persecution, and geography of Jesus' followers, including Gentiles (non-Jews). He ends the book with the imprisonment of Paul in Rome.

Acts 2:9–11 lists many of the nations that were part of the Roman Empire. These verses show us that, for whatever reason, many Jews from “every nation under Heaven” were living in Jerusalem. It was there that the Church was birthed, and so was Christianity. At that time, Christians were all Jews and were viewed as a sect of Judaism.

Beginning in Acts 8, the Bible states that the persecution of the Church caused many to scatter, or travel, to other places and preach the gospel (Acts 8:4). Paul, a former Pharisee who had studied Plato and the Talmud, was first known as Saul and went from house to house looking for Christians whom he had imprisoned (Acts 8:3). Here, we see religious Jews opposed to the message that Jesus was the Son of God.

In a great conversion experience, Paul was changed and became one of the most influential leaders of the Early Church. He was the one who formulated, in his many letters to several early Christian congregations, much of the theology of the Early Church.

The Early Church decided against requiring that new converts become “Jewish” before they would be accepted as Christians. Clearly, the work of the Apostle Paul was influential in this regard (Acts 15). Eventually, Jews and Christians were seen as different groups with different religions. This was partly due to the change in membership of the Church that took place by the end of the second century when Christians with Gentile backgrounds began to outnumber Jewish Christians.

In the first century, Nero, the cruel, unstable Roman emperor at that time, instituted a major persecution of Christians. Many Jews were mistaken for Christians and were also persecuted. The result was that most Jewish people sought desperately to separate themselves from Christians. In a way, then, the Christian church withdrew from Judaism because of persecution by the Romans.

A fire that broke out on July 19, A.D. 64, spread rapidly throughout Rome, raging for nine days and destroying much of the city. This was the worst in a series of fires that beset the crowded city, home to more than a million people, packed tightly into apartments of wooden construction, among narrow streets and alleyways. Only two areas escaped the fire, one of which housed a large Jewish population.

Luke: Wrote of the birth of Christ in the Book of Luke and of the Early Church in the Book of Acts. It is presumed that he was a Gentile, educated as a physician and historian who traveled extensively with Paul.



*Conversion on the Way to Damascus by Caravaggio*

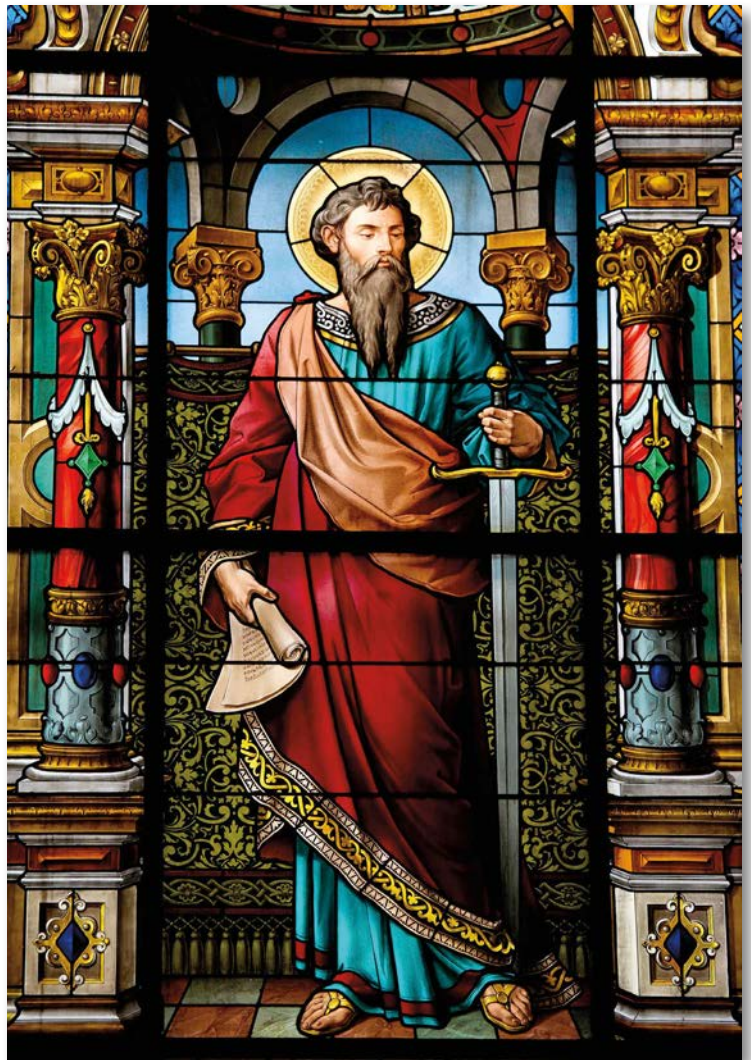


Roman emperor Nero singing while Rome is burning from *Allgemeine Weltgeschichte*

Nero was not in Rome at the time, and rumors began that he himself had set the fire in order to rebuild the city according to his own plans. In order to stop the rumors, Nero came up with a plan to place the blame on Christians. He was known for his cruel executions, and he had the Roman Christians executed publicly in his gardens nearby and in the circus.

It was during this time of persecution that Paul was imprisoned, and eventually martyred, for his faith under Nero. In one of his last speeches, Paul appealed to Agrippa (great-grandson of Herod) to convert. Although Paul was Jewish, he was also a follower of Jesus (Acts 26). He explained that the prophets of long ago had all been pointing to Christ's birth and death. He also explained that the Jews were chosen to proclaim light to the Gentiles who would, in turn, show the world God's love. In these ways, Christians and Jews are forever entwined.

Nero did not live long after Paul's execution around A.D. 68. Nero is reported to have committed suicide. The end of the century saw a vast turnover of Roman emperors and the construction of the Colosseum. The last of Jesus' apostles, John, died around A.D. 98.



Stained glass window with Saint Paul at St. Gertrude's church in Gamla Stan, Stockholm

## The Second Century

Jerusalem was the center of Christianity until its destruction by Roman armies in A.D. 70, but from this center Christianity spread to other cities and towns in Palestine and beyond.

One place in particular was Antioch. Perhaps the most successful Christian church, Antioch sent out more missionaries than any other early church. Interracial, full of rich and poor, Antioch was a palatable alternative to the social, racial, and ethnic segregation that had become part of the early Roman Empire. To fellowship one with another, Christians literally climbed over walls that were built by the Romans to keep groups segregated. Deacons acted on behalf of neglected ethnic minority widows (Acts 6:1–6). Philip carried the gospel across ethnic/racial lines (Acts 8:4–17). Peter met with a Gentile (the first-century equivalent of a minority!), Cornelius, and defended his actions to the Church (Acts 10:1–11:30). Paul and Barnabas brought together Gentiles and Jews at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:46–52). And, Paul actively pursued the Gentile Timothy and drew him into ministry (Acts 16:1–5). Special devotion to beliefs was recognized — not ignored, not hidden — but it was not an obstacle to fellowship.



The Antioch Chalice,  
first half of 6th century,  
Metropolitan Museum of Art



*Saints Paul and Barnabas at Lystra* by Bartholomeus Breenbergh

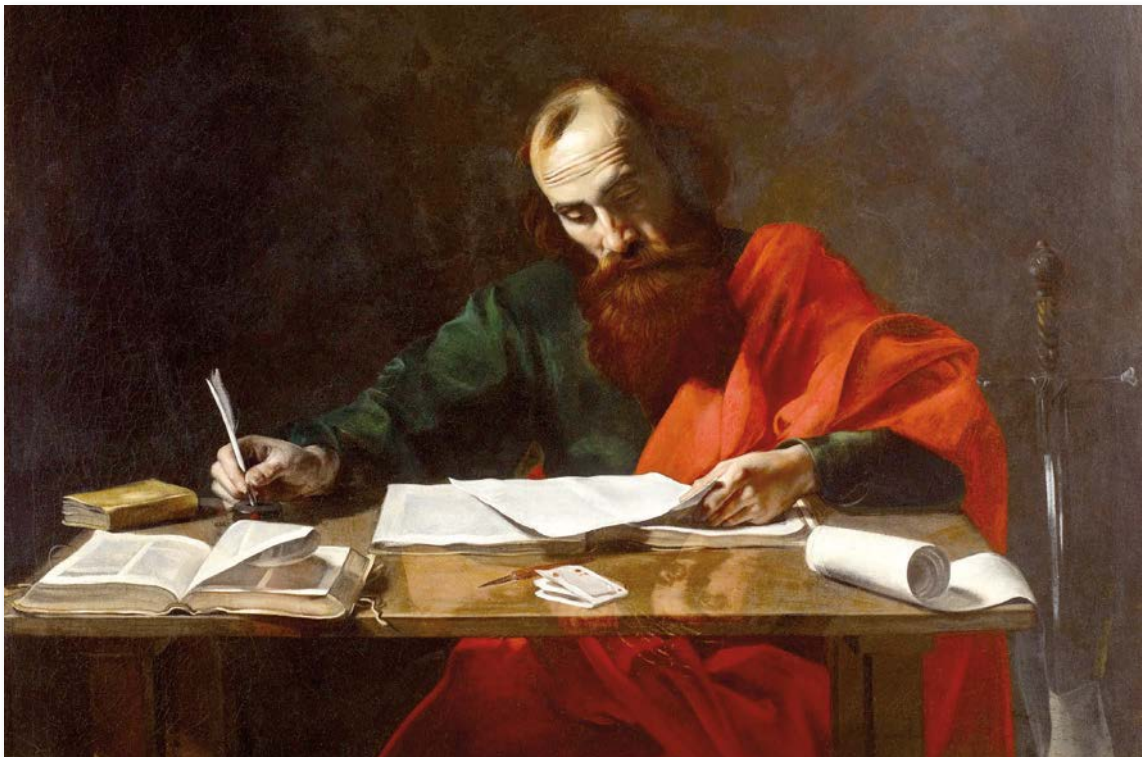
Christian teaching was particularly radical. Paul wrote that there was neither Jew nor Greek in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). Paul emphasized that three major first-century social distinctions no longer mattered in Christ: ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender. Paul stressed, “You are all one in Christ Jesus.” The first-century Church, as I mentioned earlier, struggled with many problems. For instance, Hellenist (Greek) widows, traditionally neglected by the Jews, were now being neglected by Hebrew Christians (Acts 6:1).

Paul not only wrote extensively to the churches about the faith, but he made four missionary journeys. He did perhaps more than any other man to advance the cause of the gospel.

As a Jewish sect, the primitive Christian church had shared the status of Judaism in the Roman Empire, and enjoyed the fruits of Roman toleration. However, Emperor Nero, in A.D. 68, singled out Christians as enemies. The grounds for hostility toward the Christians were not always the same, and often opposition and persecution were localized. The loyalty of Christians to “Jesus as Lord,” however, was irreconcilable with the worship of the Roman emperor as lord, and emperors such as Trajan, Claudius, and Marcus Aurelius, who ruled



*The Preaching of St. Paul at Ephesus by Eustache Le Sueur*



*Saint Paul Writing His Epistles by Valentin de Boulogne*

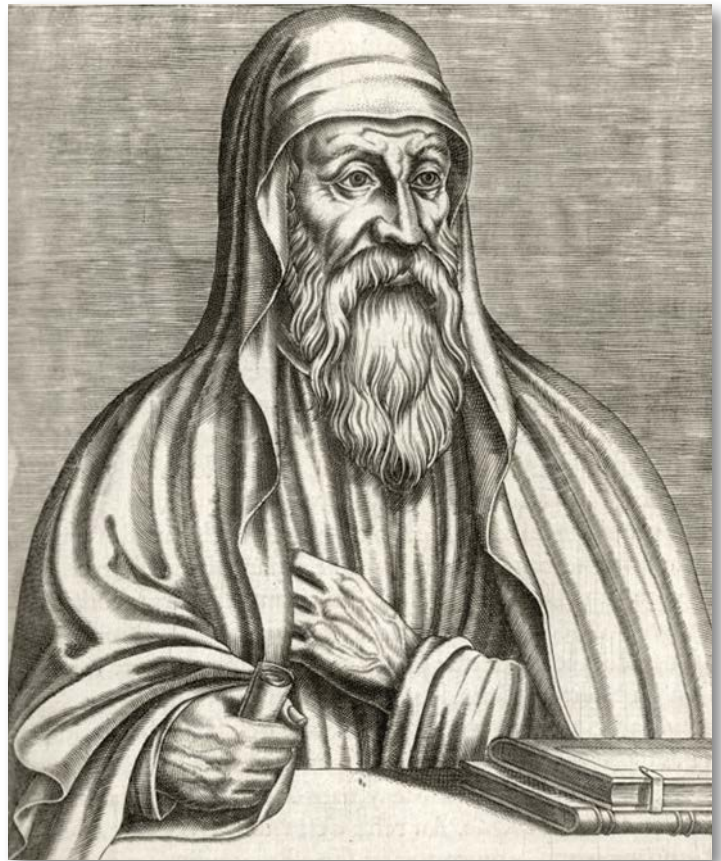
during periods of social stress and conflict, saw the Christians as a great threat. Finally, by the fourth century, Christianity had grown so much that Emperor Diocletian decided it had to be eradicated. He tried, but failed, to accomplish that goal.

What was the Early Church fellowship? First, it met in homes, and although this imposed size limits on its fellowship, it also permitted the Church to enjoy intimacy and caregiving. The Church, for instance, shared a meal every time it met — a practice that eventually evolved into an agape meal. There is much debate about what sort of leadership emerged. Many believe that the position of pastor initially emerged from the deacons, who historically were called to serve, not to govern. The Presbyters, or elders, governed. There was no board of trustees. The pastor was identified by, and selected for, his gifts, which were manifestly evident in every pastor.

Sometimes a husband-and-wife team shared the pastoral leadership. (This should not offend the reader — even today some couples informally function as leadership teams with the man designated as the official pastor.) Later, an Episcopal form of government arose that was very similar to the present Roman Catholic witness.

An early and strong movement was **Monasticism**. Renunciation of the world, or Monasticism, had in fact nourished the growth of Christianity from the start, and by A.D. 300, persons who wished to embark on an ascetic life had many exemplars from which to choose. As young people had in the past pursued wisdom by going to the philosopher, so now Christian youth sought out Christian ascetics or leaders under whom they might learn the new Christian philosophy. In Egypt, the church leader Origen (A.D. 185–254) taught new converts about Christianity and encouraged them with his ascetic lifestyle, including sleeping on the floor, fasting, and abstaining completely from all alcohol.

**Origen** was also a respected Old Testament scholar, and by the end of his life he was the leading Christian apologist. He specialized in answering the charges of the highly educated pagan (mostly Greek) community. He targeted the unapproachable Platonist, Celsus: “. . . it is not by incantations that Christians seem to prevail [over evil spirits], but by the name of Jesus...” (Origen, *Contra Celsus*).



Origen from “Les Vrais Portraits Et Vies Des Hommes Illustres”

**Monasticism:** An early and strong movement of Christianity that helped nourish the Church through its teaching that involved rejecting the things of the world in order to embrace the teachings of Jesus.

**Origen:** Early Church leader from Egypt who lived from A.D. 185 to 254, teaching principles based on his ascetic lifestyle.



## Christianity and Rome

From the beginning, Roman authorities perceived Christians as a threat. This was primarily because Christians (like Jews) refused to worship any god but the true God. However, Christians, unlike those of other religions, also refused to serve in the army. And although they did not openly subvert the civil authorities, Christians did not enthusiastically embrace public office either. These things, among others, conspired to unleash a series of persecutions against Christians that continued off and on until Emperor Constantine gave the Christian faith “most favored status” in the Roman Empire.

Most readers will have heard of the early Christians’ secret meetings in the catacombs (tombs), which were hollowed out underneath Rome. Roman authorities were naturally reluctant to search for or to persecute Christians who were hiding in the creepy catacombs. Thus, the very thing that represented death to others represented life to the Christians.

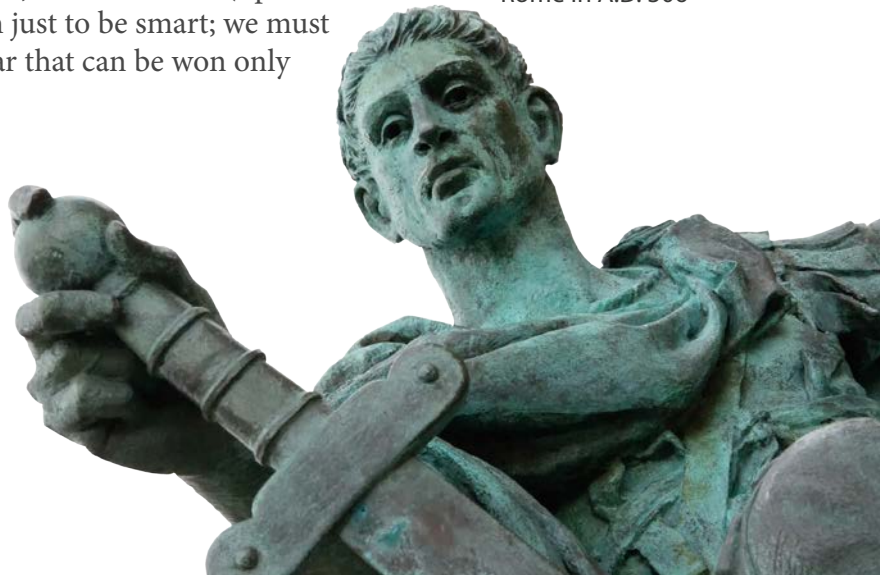
As stated previously, this persecution of Christians ended with the reign of **Constantine**. One of the most influential acts of Constantine the Great was his decision in A.D. 330 to move the capital of the empire from Rome to the city of Byzantium at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. The new capital, named Constantinople, also became the home base of a new Christian church. While western Christianity became increasingly centralized around the pope (Bishop of Rome), eastern city fellowships — Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria — developed separate from one another; so although worship practices evolved along similar lines, church government and minor doctrines evolved much differently.

In conclusion, things are not all that different today. In the 21st century, Christians must be clever and resourceful: “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:10–11; NIV). However, it is not good enough just to be smart; we must also be fighters, because we are in a culture war that can be won only by those who know how to fight well.

To be successful in any campaign, one must know the enemy. The enemy of the people of God is not flesh and blood; it is the spirit of this age — powers and principalities. It is widespread immorality and mediocrity that threatens the very underpinnings of modern civilization.

Constantine: The Roman Emperor who ended the persecution of Christians. He lived from A.D. 306 to 337. In A.D. 330 he moved the capital of the empire from Rome to the city of Byzantium. The new capital, named Constantinople, also became the home base of a new Christian church.

A bronze statue of Emperor Constantine at York Minster cathedral where he was proclaimed Emperor of Rome in A.D. 306



This enemy can be overcome by preparedness, not by manipulation; by good, not by evil. The weapons are the whole armor of God — truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and God’s Word (Ephesians 6). We who are Christians must understand that in Christ we are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37), and we need to act like it!

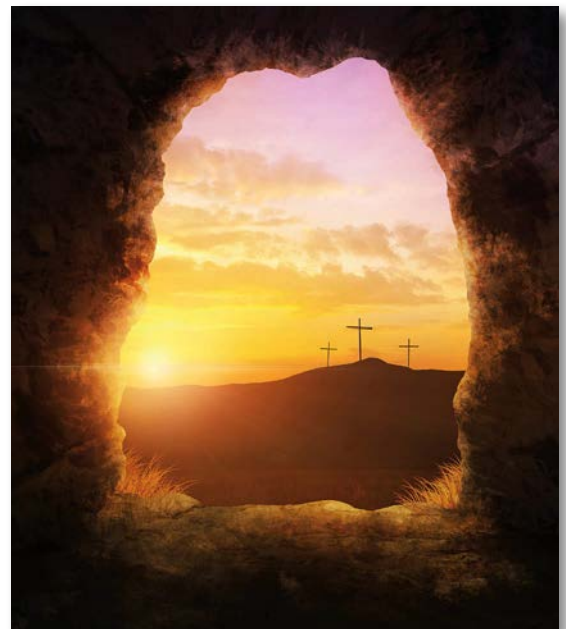
We know absolutely that someday every knee shall bow before Jesus Christ, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord (Philippians 2:10–11). This is no small comfort to Christian warriors.

Christians still have much work to do in today’s culture. Many Christian apologists warn us that at some point people will become fed up with the excesses and dysfunctional aspects of our culture, and that as modern mainline culture fails to sustain people in their pursuit of self-interest, they will want something more. This shallow culture of hopelessness is evident in the billboards that line highways, in the songs that play on radios, in the movies that entertain in theaters. Culture is exemplified in university courses and on best-seller lists. It is now questionable whether modern cultural order is capable of nourishing the freedom, responsibility, and civility that people require to sustain vital lives. Modernity (a word to describe modern culture) creates problems far deeper than drugs. It creates a crisis of cultural authority in which beliefs, ideals, and traditions are losing their compelling force in society. There is a numbness spreading across the land that presents great opportunity for Christians.

This author prays that we who follow Christ will make the most of our opportunities to influence our world for Him. Christians should be encouraged that in the near future many people will be looking to sources of stability and strength for direction. By default, those Christians whose lives are lived well and who have a purpose for living, beyond the next paycheck, will have an irresistible appeal.

While living in a hostile culture, Christians must prepare to live and to thrive in the city of God. Christians must with vitality and readiness live in the world without succumbing to the world’s system (John 15:19).

To this hopeless, secular world, history is mundane. To the Christian, history is sacred, fraught with opportunity. To secular society, history is not didactic; it helps people feel better. To the Christian, history is full of important lessons, and it challenges people to be all they can be in Christ. To secular people, time and space are finite entities full of fearful pitfalls. To the Christian, no matter how bad things are, because God is alive and well, time is holy and the land is holy. Secular people act out of no purpose or design. In contrast, Christians know that God is in absolute control of history. In a way that is not condescending, Christians must be tirelessly hopeful. We can do that by speaking the truth of God’s Word in places of deception.



## Other Religions and Worldviews

During the Early Church's infancy, there were at least five primary religious beliefs competing for the souls of people. First, of course, was the polytheistic religion of Rome, which focused on the gods associated with nature. This was mostly a religion of superstition rather than ethical teachings. By the time of Pentecost, the emphasis on these gods had already begun to decline.

Of greater threat were the mystery religions, which invited converts not only to be in relationship with deities, but also to use this relationship to gain power. These religions taught that the entire world was inhabited by good spirits and evil spirits, both of which could be persuaded by rituals and formulas to perform certain acts of power.

Perhaps most popular among these mystery religions was Mithraism, whose ancient Persian god, Mithras, was supposedly born from a rock. His worshipers had a complex system of seven grades of initiation, with ritual meals. They met in underground temples, which survive even today.



Mithras killing the bull

Other worldviews/religions also competed for people's hearts and minds. The more educated in the Roman Empire were being influenced by the major philosophical teachings of that era. For instance, according to the teaching of Plato, the physical world was merely an imperfect copy of a spiritual world that consisted of divine thoughts and ideas called "forms." Through knowledge, a person would strive to be more and more like the forms or spiritual types of his physical surroundings. Salvation, then, was nothing more than bringing down to earth the spirit of a god.

The most popular Western worldview was Gnosticism, which was popular among the followers of Plato. Salvation, according to the Gnostics, came through the knowledge of the spirit world and denial of the material.

As it is today, **Gnosticism** was practiced among intellectual centers (e.g., universities) of the empire. Gnosticism incorporated elements of Judaism and Christianity, which confused many early converts. Gnosticism invited believers to embrace a spirituality that was both appealing and sustaining. It was "spiritual" but not confessional.

Beginning in Jerusalem, the Christian faith competed against these cultural and religious worldviews, and won. Battle after battle ensued until a sort of orthodoxy emerged with the creation of the Roman Catholic Church.

Gnosticism: A heretical movement of the 1st and 2nd century, the Greek word *gnostikos* meant "having knowledge." They taught the value of personal spiritual knowledge over belief in accepted teachings.

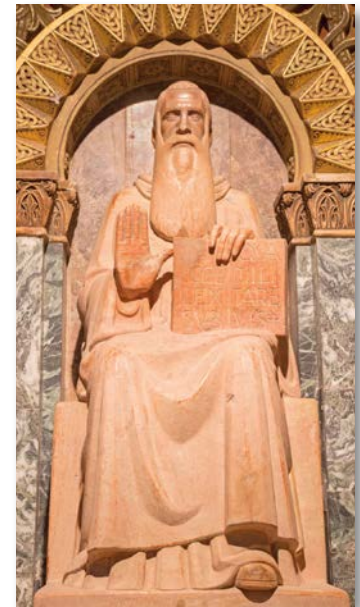
A philosopher and bishop of the Hippo region in North Africa, **Saint Augustine** (A.D. 354–430) was an important theologian in world history. It was never clear to Augustine where philosophy ended and theology began. Augustine argued that Christian faith and philosophical understanding were complementary. Augustine spoke for a generation of believers at the end of the Roman Empire. Through Augustine, Plato’s understanding of the world and separation of the soul from the body were given Christian interpretations.

While Augustine was a bishop, Christians were facing terrible persecution by the Romans. Many of the priests and other leaders of whom Augustine had charge denounced their faith. When the persecution ended, many former leaders repented and were reinstated in the Church.

This era also saw the birth of the first monastery. Benedict of Nursia (A.D. 480–547) was born into a wealthy Italian family, but was repelled by the excessive lifestyles manifested in his city-state. As a result, he withdrew to Monte Cassino where he built his famous monastery. Benedict established an austere rule of life associated with monasteries to this day. Monks were not permitted to own property. Benedict also devoted much of his time to the needs of the poor and is known as the father of Western monasticism.

Due to the instability of Rome’s leadership, other worldviews, and the tendency to blame other groups for the difficulties faced in the first few centuries, Christians suffered persecution and martyrdom. At first, the term “martyrdom” applied to apostles, and connoted the high office to which only the most esteemed believers were called. The early Christian period before Constantine I became the “classic” age of martyrdom. A martyr’s death was considered a “baptism in blood,” cleansing one of sin as baptism in water did. Early Christians venerated martyrs as powerful intercessors, and their final words were treasured as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Saint Augustine: A philosopher and bishop of the Hippo region in North Africa, he lived from A.D. 354 to 430, and was an important foundational theologian in the Early Church.



The statue of Saint Benedict of Nursia in Dormition Abbey



The Monastery of Monte Cassino

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In Chapter 18, we will look at Northern and Eastern Africa and the ancient civilizations that shaped the area. Then we will see how the geography of West Africa encouraged traders to come looking first for gold and then for men. South Africa's complex history includes oppression by European colonies and, later, the effects of apartheid. We will also be inspired by those who left a deep impression on this vast continent.

## READERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO

1. Understand the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Kush.
2. Identify how the geography of West Africa contributed to its wealth and to the slave trade.
3. Evaluate how indigenous groups were affected by colonists in South Africa.
4. Discuss the impact of those who fought for justice in Africa.

## PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PRINCIPLES

- Boers
- Ghana
- Nelson Mandela
- Persian Empire
- Queen of Sheba
- Slave trader
- Zulus



AD 700  
First West  
African empire

AD 1482  
First Portuguese  
slave-trading fort



Queen of Sheba's visit  
to King Solomon

18

## AFRICAN HISTORY



**T**he history of Africa is the story of a varied people, for this continent is home to over 50 countries and thousands of ethnic groups. Northern Africa includes Egypt, Lybia, the Nile River, and the Saharan Desert. It also boasts Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. In West Africa, herdsmen fought to maintain their autonomy, but Muslim — and, later, European — slave traders transported millions upon millions of African slaves to other parts of the world. South Africa experienced the Boer Wars and the devastating effects of apartheid. In the book *Cry the Beloved Country*, Alan Paton relates the story of Kumalo, a South African who represents the resignation and strength of those who experienced prejudice, economic depression, and personal difficulties in South Africa. New generations all over this vast continent are facing new challenges — like the HIV/AIDS epidemic, drought, and civil conflicts.

**AD 1994**  
**End of apartheid  
in South Africa**

## Northern and Eastern Africa

Ethiopia is first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 2 and later in Numbers 12:1: “And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married” (KJV).

It was in Africa that the Hebrew children crossed the Red Sea to escape the Egyptian army. Before this, Northern Africa was likely settled by Ethiopians. Ancient scholar Diodorus Siculus recorded that “the Ethiopians conceive themselves to be of greater antiquity than any other nation . . . they affirm that the Egyptians are one of their colonies.”<sup>1</sup>

While Egypt modernized its culture and became wealthy, Ethiopia tried to maintain its ancient customs and was in poverty in comparison. Many of its citizens migrated to Egypt. Eventually, the discovery of sought-after resources such as ivory, gold, and precious stones promoted the Ethiopian Empire to one of wealth and trade with Egypt. Egypt came to rule over Ethiopia, affecting its culture and religion, and, in turn, the Ethiopians then ruled Egypt for several centuries.



Miriam and Aaron complain against Moses

1. Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, Volume III, (Book 4. 59-8).



Kushite delegation on a Persian relief from the Apadana palace, c. 500 B.C.

The area between Egypt and Ethiopia, now known as Sudan, also had its own identity and culture. Identified in the Bible as the Kushites, these indigenous Africans had once ruled and been ruled by Egypt. When the **Persian Empire** conquered Egypt, the Kushite civilization continued to flourish for a time. This may have been due in part to the decline of Egypt. Kush was within or near the southern border of Persia, but Herodotus claims the Kushites outwitted the Persians and later sent gifts of gold and ivory in lieu of taxes. The Kushites reportedly provided ivory for the palace built by King Darius. Even if the Kushites were under Persian control, the Persians were more tolerant of the cultures they absorbed.

**Persian Empire:** Sometimes referred to as Elam. From the rule of Cyrus in 558 B.C. to its overthrow by Alexander III in 330 B.C., it was the dominant empire of the world.

West of Egypt, in northern Africa, nomadic Berber tribes inhabited the area known as Libya. They have been described as herdsman who moved their goats and cattle toward the coast and back inland. The area also provided fruits, vegetables, and olives, so the Berbers were likely farmers, as well.

With a northern coast facing the Mediterranean, Libya was not only a trading area, but was colonized by nations and empires, including Phoenicia, Greece, and Rome. Although Libya is a nation today, ancient Libya encompassed all of the land in Africa west of Egypt.

In the Bible, Libya is identified in 2 Chronicles 12:3 as “Lubim.” It was probably a north African, Simon of Cyrene, who was told to carry the Cross of Christ. Cyrene was part of the ancient area of Libya.



## West Africa and the Slave Trade

The west coast of Africa may have been a difficult area to reach, as we have little mention of this land before the Greeks. Perhaps it was the contrary winds that drove sailors east, the belief in a flat earth, or the lucrative civilizations to the north that prevented sailors from reaching this area. Some think the Phoenicians did reach the western coast, and they may have traded for gold. This area is still known as the Gold Coast.

Archaeologists have uncovered the remains of ancient civilizations in present-day Nigeria and Mali. It was **Ghana**, however, that established the first West African empire around A.D. 700. By then, the mineral wealth of the area was known for both gold and salt, and the use of the camel for transportation across the Sahara enabled inhabitants of both North and West Africa to transport goods for trade.

Muslims made their way west through these trade routes. At first, the indigenous inhabitants refused to convert, but eventually they became primarily Muslim. Captives were sent across the Sahara and sold to other parts of the world as forced workers, servants, and wives. This **slave trade** continued in West Africa, as well as other parts of Africa, for well over a thousand years.

The European slave trade in West Africa began when the Portuguese built the first slave-trading fort in 1482, beginning a dark period for Western civilization. Slave trading became the most lucrative of all trade in the area. The Dutch and English followed in the 1500s, with Spain contracting with England for vast numbers of slaves. American colonies imported slaves for labor, especially on plantations.

After kidnapping potential slaves, merchants cruelly forced them to walk in slave caravans to the European coastal forts, sometimes as far as 1,000 miles.

Merchants learned that it was more profitable to allow weaker captives to die along the way than chance that their cargo would remain unsold at the European forts. Thus, thousands of African captives never survived the arduous journey to the coast, and many others died on the journey across the sea.

Shackled and under-nourished, only half the people survived these death marches. Those who reached the coastal forts were put into underground dungeons where they would stay, sometimes for as long as a year, until they were boarded on ships.

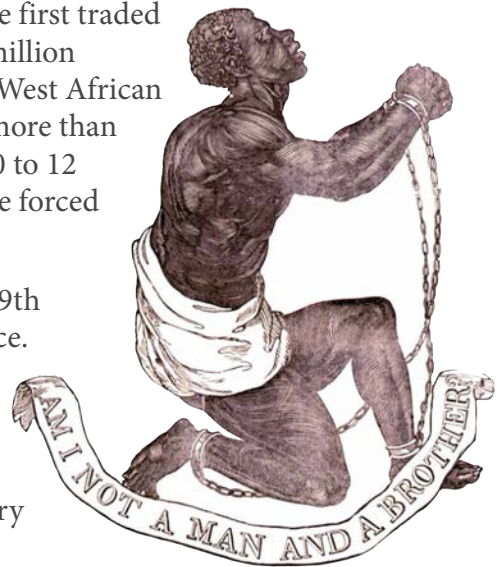
Ghana: Established the first West-African empire around A.D. 700. The mineral wealth of the area became known for both gold and salt.

Slave trade: The slave trade of Africa became highly profitable through Muslim traders and lasted well over a thousand years. The European slave trade began when the Portuguese built the first slave-trading fort in 1482. The Dutch and English followed in the 1500s, with Spain contracting with England for vast numbers of slaves. American colonies imported slaves for labor, especially on plantations.

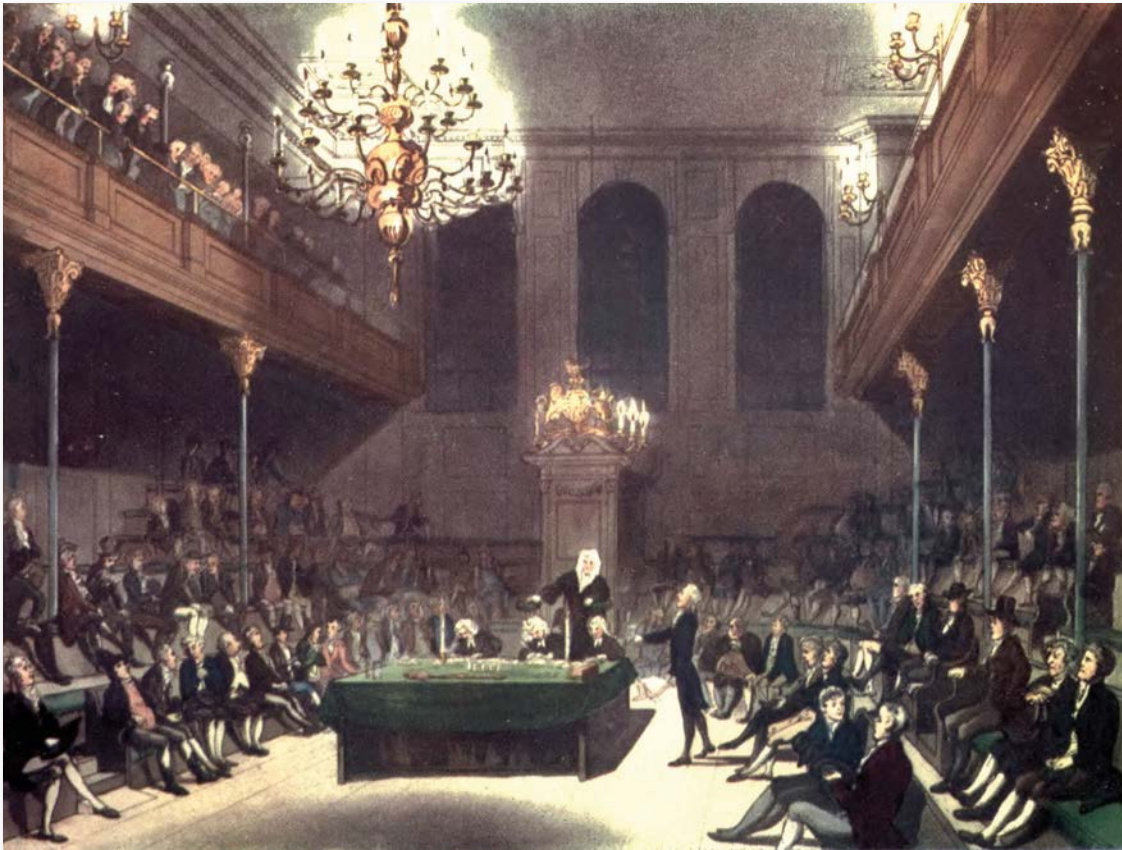
By 1619, more than a century and a half after the Portuguese first traded slaves on the African coast, European ships had brought a million Africans to plantations in the Americas. Trade through the West African forts continued for nearly 300 years. The Europeans made more than 54,000 voyages to trade in human beings and sent at least 10 to 12 million Africans to the Americas. This was the most massive forced migration in world history.

The slave trade ended in England in the early part of the 19th century, thanks to abolitionists such as William Wilberforce. British merchants found other income streams. Cotton, indigo, rubber, and other precious natural resources were abundantly available in interior Africa.<sup>2</sup>

In America, the last-known ship arrived in 1859, but slavery would not be outlawed until the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.



The Official Medallion of the British Anti-Slavery Society



The House of Commons in Wilberforce's day

2. [www.historyworld.net](http://www.historyworld.net).

## South Africa

Around 2,500 years ago Bantu peoples started migrating across sub-Saharan Africa from the Niger River Delta. The San People of Southern Africa and the Bantu-speakers lived mostly peacefully together, although since neither had any method of writing, researchers know little of this period.

From around A.D. 1200 a trade network began to emerge in the area. Additionally, the idea of sacred leadership emerged — a concept that transcends English terms such as “kings” or “queens.” Sacred leaders were thought to be types of prophets, people with supernatural powers and the ability to predict the future. A Western euphemism for this leadership would be “witch doctors.”

In 1488, Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa first. Although the Portuguese basked in the nautical achievement of successfully navigating the cape, they showed little interest in colonization. The Portuguese had little competition in the region until the late 16th century when the English and Dutch began to challenge the Portuguese along their trade routes.

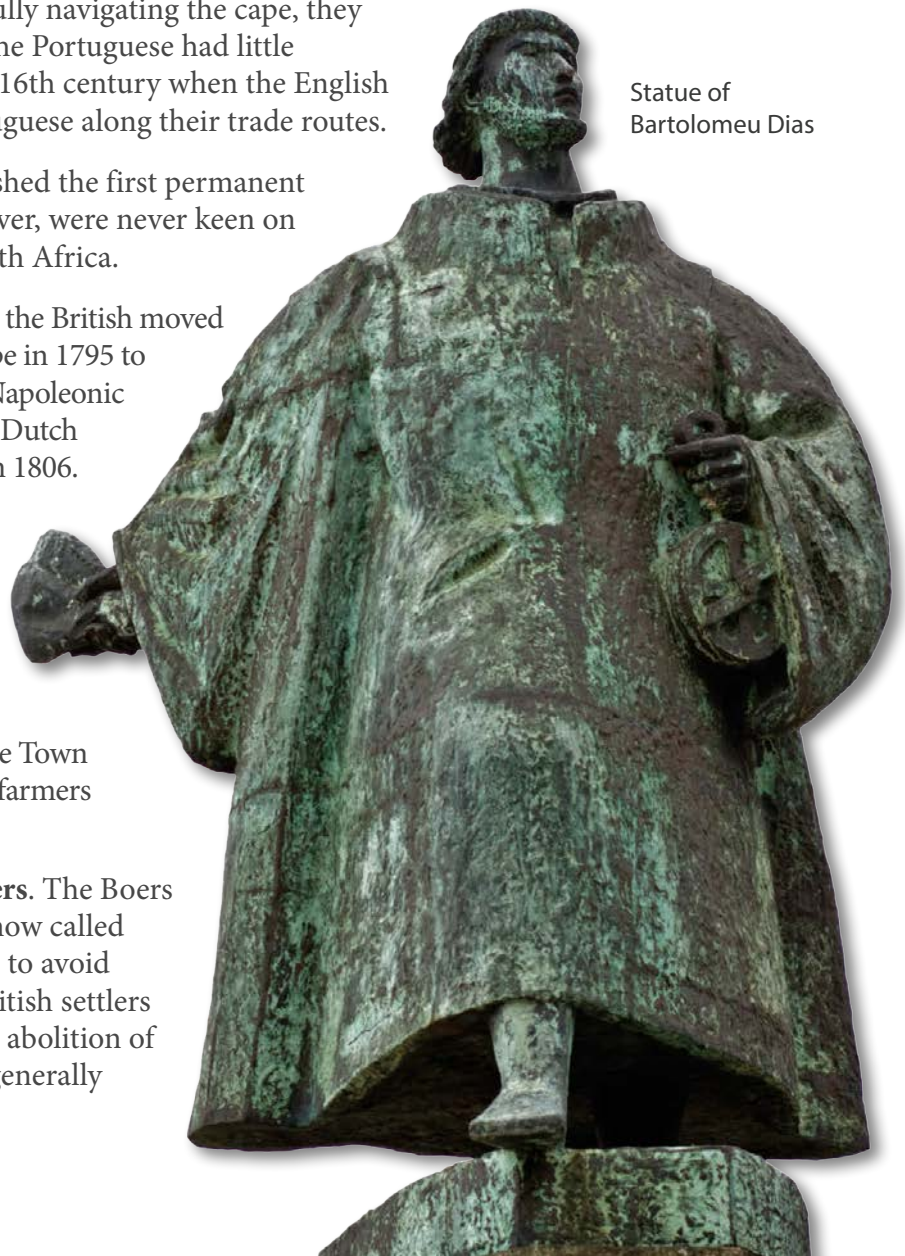
The Dutch East India Company established the first permanent European settlement. The Dutch, however, were never keen on establishing a permanent colony in South Africa.

By 1800, Dutch power began to fade, and the British moved in to fill the vacuum. They seized the Cape in 1795 to prevent it from falling into the hands of Napoleonic France, then briefly relinquished it to the Dutch (1803) before definitively conquering it in 1806.

At the tip of the continent the British inherited an established colony with 25,000 slaves, 20,000 white colonists, and 1,000 freed black slaves. Power resided solely with a white elite in Cape Town, and differentiation on the basis of race was deeply entrenched. Outside Cape Town isolated black and white sheep and cattle farmers populated the country.

A new militant group emerged: the **Boers**. The Boers were a group of mostly Dutch settlers, now called Afrikaners, who moved out of the cities to avoid British control. The gap between the British settlers and the Boers further widened with the abolition of slavery in 1834, a move that the Boers generally

**Boers:** The Dutch noun for “farmer.” These were a group of mostly Dutch settlers who moved out of the cities to avoid British control. The first Boer War between the British and the Boers began in 1880.



Statue of  
Bartolomeu Dias

regarded as against the order of the races. Yet the British settlers' conservatism stopped any radical social reforms, and in 1841 the authorities passed a Masters and Servants Ordinance, which perpetuated white control. Meanwhile, numbers of British immigrants increased rapidly in Cape Town, in the area east of the Cape Colony (present-day Eastern Cape Province), in Natal. The discovery of diamonds and the subsequent discovery of gold led to a rapid increase in immigration of fortune seekers from all parts of the globe, including Africa itself.

When the area began to expand, the colonists encountered native tribes. When the British tried to conquer the **Zulus**, the Zulus resisted. In 1878, following the death of several British citizens, the British demanded the perpetrators be turned over for trial. When refused, the British began preparations to invade Zululand.

To counter this threat, the Zulu king mustered a massive army of 24,000 warriors. Armed with spears and antiquated muskets, the army was divided in two with one section sent to intercept the British on the coast and the other to defeat the center column. Moving slowly, the center army group made camp in the shadow of a rocky promontory. The British sent out patrols to locate the Zulus. The following day, a mounted force encountered a strong Zulu force. Fighting through the night, this group was not able to break off contact until early the next morning.

Now the British commander resolved to move against the Zulus in force. At dawn, 2,500 armed men left to track down the Zulu army. Though badly outnumbered, he was confident that British firepower would adequately compensate for his lack of men. To guard the camp, 1,300 men stayed behind. The Zulus could not be found because they had slipped away and doubled back to attack the camp.

At first the British were able to beat off the Zulu attack with disciplined rifle fire. Finally, though, the British forces were wiped out. The battle cost the British 858 killed as well as 471 of their African troops for a total of 1,329 dead.

South Africa won its independence in the 1930s and elected the National Party to power in 1948. The new government instituted a new form of racial discrimination, known as apartheid (meaning apart-hood), in 1948. These "laws" segregated blacks and whites, outlawed interracial marriages, and required black South Africans to carry their identification in pass books, which they would need to present upon demand. These laws led to uprisings, protests, and deep resentment, and continued in some form until 1994.

Zulus: This is a clan from Southern Africa. Cetshwayo kaMpende ruled the Zulu Kingdom from 1872 to 1879. His refusal to submit to the British led to the Anglo-Zulu War.

## Legacies of Africa

### Nelson Mandela (1919–2013) Christian

**Nelson Mandela** was a young lawyer when he came to understand the extent of South Africa’s apartheid laws. Due to his understanding of law and his respect as a leader of the Youth League, he was elected president of the African National Congress (ANC). He promoted nonviolent forms of protest including strikes, boycotts, and legislation. His efforts were becoming known, for by 1952, he was restricted from standing up and speaking at the meetings he had organized.



Mandela casting his vote in the 1994 elections

He continued to fight against unjust laws, using the legal and political systems, case by case and bill by bill, until the government outlawed the ANC in 1960. Mandela then had to do his work “underground,” at times in disguise. The government went on a rampage of arresting protesters, leading to an intense

time of fear and oppression in the country.

Mandela was found and arrested in 1962. The government wanted to make an example of him, as well as punish him. He was sentenced to life in prison for “inciting Africans to strike” and for traveling without his documents.

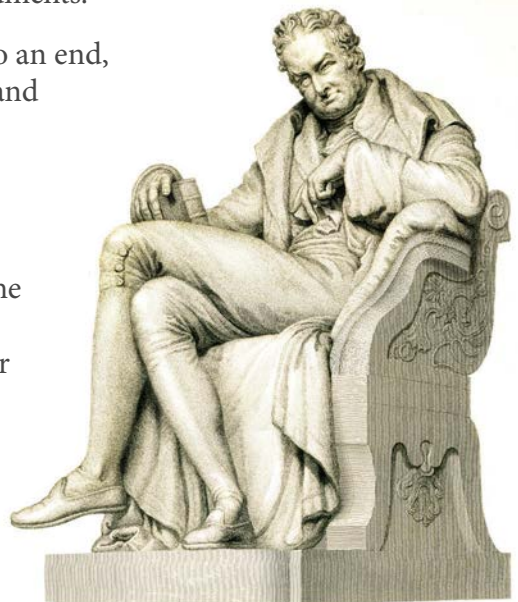
Mandela would not be released until 1990. As apartheid came to an end, he was elected the first black president of South Africa in 1994 and continued to fight for justice until his death in 2013.

### William Wilberforce (1759–1833) Christian

Wilberforce dedicated his life to a righteous cause — the end of the slave trade in Great Britain. He proclaimed, “So enormous, so dreadful, so irremediable did the [slave] trade’s wickedness appear . . . that I would never rest until I had effected its abolition.”

Wilberforce introduced bills starting in 1789, and the slave trade (by ship) was outlawed in 1807. He was ridiculed and threatened, but he never gave up. A bill abolishing slavery throughout the British colonies became law one month after his death in 1833.

Nelson Mandela: He promoted nonviolent forms of protest including strikes, boycotts, and legislation during the late apartheid era of South Africa. He was arrested in 1962 and not released until 1990, becoming the first black president of South Africa in 1994.



## Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

In 1 Kings 10, the **Queen of Sheba** has come to see if all she has heard about Solomon is true. She arrives with a train of camels and gives him gold, spices, and precious stones. Josephus identifies her as the queen of Ethiopia and Egypt, and Jesus refers to her as the “queen of the South” in Matthew 12:42. Some scholars think she may have come from modern-day Yemen, the southern part of the Arabian peninsula, but the gold may have come from Ethiopia. An archaeological dig in 2012 revealed an ancient but vast gold mine in northern Ethiopia with an inscription in Sabaeans, the language of the kingdom of Sheba.

Queen of Sheba: She visited Solomon as recorded in 1 Kings 10. Josephus identifies her as the queen of Ethiopia and Egypt, and Jesus refers to her as the “queen of the South” in Matthew 12:42.



Queen of Sheba and King Solomon bronze relief, Gates of Paradise, Florence Baptistery door

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In Chapter 27, we will examine 19th-century Europe and observe the rise of France, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Italy — nation-states that replaced Bavaria, Bohemia, Alsace-Lorraine, and Burgundy. Next, we will examine the great nationalist revolutions of 1848. Finally, we will examine how nationalism forever changed the political complexion of Europe.

## READERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO

1. Understand how Napoleon was able to build an empire following the French Revolution.
2. Identify the significance of the Rosetta Stone.
3. Analyze the rise of nationalism in Europe.
4. Evaluate the 1848 revolutions that wracked Europe.
5. Discuss the warring worldviews that emerged in Europe during this period.

## PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PRINCIPLES

- Ethnicity
- Franco-Prussian War
- G.W.F. Hegel
- Karl Marx
- King Frederick I
- Napoleon Bonaparte
- Rosetta Stone



AD 1795  
Napoleonic Empire  
begins

AD 1861  
Kingdom of Italy  
proclaimed



Napoleon accepting the  
surrender of Madrid

27

## NATIONALISM



A “nation-state” was a country whose territory had defined borders and whose principally similar ethnic people were organized by either race or cultural background. Generally, in a nation-state, everyone spoke the same language and shared the same set of cultural values. Napoleon led one of the first modern empires and established France as a world leader. Following the Napoleonic Wars, from 1820 to 1871, nation-states achieved mature status in Europe. Nationalism clearly became the basis for the organization of Western civilization. This development not only ended the last vestiges of feudalism, but also set the stage for the replacement of religious wars by national political wars that proved costly and devastating to the Western world.

AD 1871  
Unification  
of Germany



## The Age of Napoleon

The French Revolution lasted from 1789 to 1795. The Napoleonic Empire began in 1795. After six years of catastrophic chaos, a diminutive but charismatic **Napoleon Bonaparte** seized control of the government and its army. Napoleon had at his disposal the most powerful army in the world. From 1791 to 1799, more than 1.5 million men were conscripted into the military. Under Napoleon Bonaparte, a further 2.5 million took up arms. Napoleon built the first citizen army.

In 1804, the French had more than 350,000 soldiers, organized into corps that were independent armies of varying sizes. Each corps contained infantry, cavalry, artillery, and engineers that could beat any force of equal size and was capable of fighting at least a delaying action against superior enemies. For a generation, the Grande Armee would be the most potent offensive force in Europe.

The nations of Europe had already begun moving against revolutionary France before the execution of King Louis XVI. In August 1792, a joint Prussian-Austrian army invaded France and slowly marched toward Paris. They were met at Valmy by a hybrid force of French regular army troops and revolutionary volunteers. The French won and thereby halted the allied forces. This was followed by victories in the Netherlands.

European monarchs most certainly did not wish for French Revolutionary zeal to spread to their kingdoms.

Great Britain especially was transformed at a stroke from a concerned older brother into an implacable foe of the revolution and anyone associated with it. The German states and Austria joined England.

New allied armies attacked France, but the French army stabilized the situation. French domination had only begun. Over the next two years, the Austrians were driven from the Netherlands, and Northern Holland was annexed. By 1795, Prussia, Spain, Hanover, and Saxony had all opted out of the coalition, leaving Britain and Austria to continue the fight against France's revolutionary government.

In Italy, 26-year-old Napoleon expelled the combined Austrian armies from northern Italy in a lightning campaign. Within a year of fighting, the French Army of Italy secured the entire Po River Valley. It then joined up with troops marching out of southern Germany and advanced on Vienna, forcing the Austrians to sue for peace.

Napoleon Bonaparte: Lived from 1769 to 1821, ruling France, the most powerful nation on earth at the time, and taking nationalism to a new level. He crowned himself emperor in 1804, expanding the French empire until his striking defeat in Russia in 1812. He was eventually exiled to the island of Saint Helena where he died.



The Emperor Napoleon in His Study at the Tuileries

Napoleon turned to Egypt. Even though Egypt seemed to offer very few material and no strategic advantages, Napoleon wished to weaken England and prevent her from colonizing India. General Napoleon Bonaparte had ambitions to conquer the land of Cleopatra and Mark Antony.

Although the French army won several land battles, Napoleon found himself stuck in the Sinai Desert with a hungry army and few supplies. He took his army back to Europe. One effect of the Egyptian expedition was the discovery of the **Rosetta Stone**.

Back in Europe, a joint Austrian-Russian army managed to win most of northern Italy away from the French. By the end of 1799, half of the earlier French territorial gains had been lost, although the Russian offensive ground to a halt soon after due to internal problems.

With Great Britain controlling a tight commercial blockade, France planned an invasion of England. Numerous newly formed French army corps were stationed in an enormous series of training camps along the English Channel. The invasion plans were finally brought to a close when Austria and Russia again declared war and invaded southern Germany. France did not want to fight a two-front war.

In one of history's most famous military maneuvers, Napoleon responded by surrounding the central Austrian army then occupying Bavaria. The Austrians were unable to prevent the French occupation of Vienna, and in December of 1805 the remaining Allied army lost the important Battle of Austerlitz to Napoleon, knocking Austria out of the war for several years.

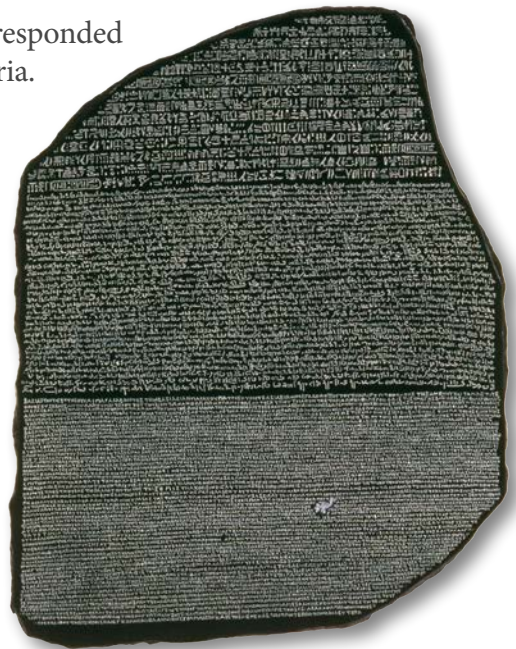
In the Atlantic, the French and Spanish navies were defeated by the British Fleet and resulted in the destruction of both the French and Spanish fleets, but at the cost of British Admiral Nelson's life.

Prussia yet again sided with Great Britain and declared war on France in 1806. The ongoing warfare and military campaigns involving much of Europe came to be known as the Napoleonic Wars.

Soon, the French army went after Portugal, and by 1808 had conquered Spain, thanks in part to the corrupt leadership of King Charles IV of Spain. The British intervened, defeating the French forces in Portugal, but it would be years before Spain's fate was determined.

As the wars raged on in Central Europe, near the Bavarian border and in Spain, Czar Alexander I of Russia was becoming weary of the punishing effects of the English blockade on his country's economy. No longer acting as an ally to France, the czar tempted Napoleon to invade Russia.

**Rosetta Stone:**  
Discovered in 1799 by a French soldier as their army marched through Egypt. It contains three languages, Egyptian hieroglyphics, Egyptian demotic, and ancient Greek, which helped translators understand ancient Egyptian writings for the first time.



The Rosetta Stone

Although sophisticated, the invasion, which began on June 24, 1812, got off to a poor start due to the massive loss of horses in the hot weather and the refusal of the Russians to give battle. As the Russian army retreated east and the French army followed, they found themselves farther from their supply bases. By the time they fought their first major battle, the French army had shrunk to half due to death and desertion.

The French army pushed onward to Moscow, and Napoleon believed that an armistice would soon be offered. He positioned himself in Moscow, but after a month of waiting, he realized that the situation had become serious. If he remained there for the winter, the political climate back in France could destabilize. If he withdrew, it would be seen as a defeat.

He chose to move his army back into east Prussia, but as the army marched back through Russia, increasingly severe cold, disease, and avenging Cossacks turned half the main army into a mass of fugitives. The Grand Armée ceased to be (James Burbeck).

A new coalition of Great Britain, Russia, Prussia, Spain, Portugal, Austria, and Sweden advanced into France from every direction, and Paris surrendered on March 31, 1814. Although Napoleon was exiled, he tried to raise up his army again and was defeated at the famous Battle of Waterloo. This time the French army was virtually disintegrated. Napoleon was exiled on the South Atlantic island of Saint Helena, where he died in 1821.

Napoleon ruled the most powerful nation on earth for a time and took nationalism to a new level.



Napoleon Crossing the Alps

## The Rise of Nationalism

Nations have been around for a very long time, though they have taken different shapes at different points in history. In the middle of the 19th century they suddenly appeared all over Europe.

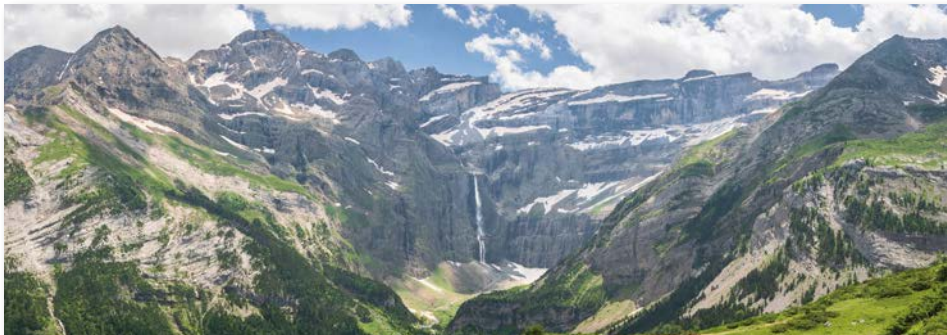
What is a nation? One historian defines a nation as “an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”<sup>1</sup> Millions of strangers rally around a flag, an idea, and a charismatic leader.

“For the development of nationhood from many different cultures and ethnicities, by far the most important factor is that of an extensively used vernacular literature.”<sup>2</sup> A long struggle against an external threat may also have a unifying, significant effect, as that which occurred in France at the end of the 18th century.

An **ethnicity** is a group of people with a shared cultural identity and spoken language. Different ethnic groups can exist in one nation, but somehow, they must find a way to unify. Outside threats and a common language all conspire to make a people unite as a nation.

Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, writes, “A nation is a far more self-conscious community than an ethnic group. Formed from one or more ethnicities, and normally identified by a literature of its own, it possesses or claims the right to political identity and autonomy as a people, together with the control of specific territory, comparable to that of biblical Israel and of other independent entities in a world thought of as one of nation-states.”<sup>3</sup>

Often a nation is formed by geographical barriers. The Pyrenees Mountains separate France from Spain, and the Atlantic Ocean separates England from everyone else.



Panoramic view of Gavarnie Falls in French Pyrenees

**Ethnicity:** A group of people with a shared cultural identity and spoken language. Different ethnic groups can exist in one nation, but somehow, they must find a way to unify. Outside threats and a common language all conspire to make a people unite as a nation.

1. *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson, London: Verso, 2006.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

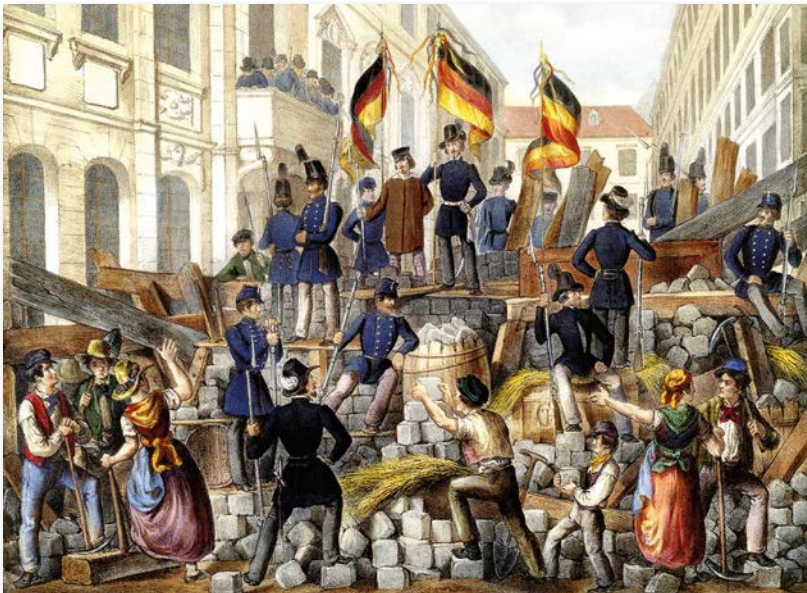
Professor Anderson concludes, “A nation-state is a state which identifies itself in terms of one specific nation whose people are not seen simply as ‘subjects’ of the sovereign but as a horizontally bonded society to whom the state in a sense belongs. There is thus an identity of character between state and people. In some way the state’s sovereignty is inherent within the people, expressive of its historic identity. In it, ideally, there is a basic equivalence between the borders and character of the political unit upon the one hand and a self-conscious cultural community on the other. In most cases this is a dream as much as a reality. Most nation-states in fact include groups of people who do not belong to its core culture or feel themselves to be part of a nation so defined. Nevertheless, almost all modern states act on the blind assumption that they are nation-states.”

The Bible provides the original model for a nation. The nation of Israel was a people of destiny in a particular geographical area, serving the same God.

In summary, most nations develop on the basis of common ties of religion and language. However, many exceptions exist — among them, the United States.

How did the modern nation arise? The beginnings of modern nationalism started at the end of the Middle Ages when the nation-state had more allure than other social orders. The cultural life of Europe was based on a common inheritance of ideas and attitudes transmitted in the West through Latin and, originally, a common religion, Roman Catholic Christianity. The pope was the head of every European nation. The breakup of feudalism, the growth of competing social and economic systems, and the Reformation conspired to encourage the growth of nations.

A great leap forward for nationalism was the French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic conquests. France became a uniform and united national territory, with common laws and institutions. French armies spread the new good news of nationalism throughout lands they conquered, which included almost every European country. Universal suffrage and literacy also



The revolutionary barricades in Vienna in May 1848



Soldiers return to Copenhagen after the Revolution of 1848

helped. Although language became a barrier between nations, within a nation it was as binding as glue. A whole set of national symbols, folklore, and holidays arose to stimulate nationalism.

The Revolution of 1848 marked the awakening of various peoples to national consciousness. In that year both the Germans and the Italians originated their movements for unification and for the creation of nation-states. Although the attempts at revolution failed in 1848, the movements gathered strength in subsequent years. After much political agitation and several wars, an Italian kingdom was created in 1861 and a German empire in 1871.

The growth of nationalism in another important area — central Europe — had a great impact on later history. Peoples living in the Balkan Peninsula desired to break away from the ailing Austro-Hungarian Empire for most of the last part of the 19th century.

One clear result of the nationalistic revolutions of 1848 was the creation of an Italian nation. Previously, Italy's peninsula included several small but powerful city-states (Genoa, Milan, and Naples). On March 17, 1861, the kingdom of Italy was proclaimed, with Victor Emmanuel II as king. Rome and Venice remained outside the kingdom. However, the patriot Garibaldi organized a march on Rome. Fearing foreign intervention, the Italian government reluctantly stopped Garibaldi. France still controlled Rome. In 1866, Italy became the ally of Prussia in the Seven Weeks' War against Austria, and, at the war's end, acquired Venice. In 1870, French defeats in the Franco-Prussian War caused France to withdraw from Rome, finally freeing the Italians to enter the city. In July 1871, Rome became the capital of a united Italy.

France, which was already a nation and had already had a major revolution, was also rocked by the Revolution of 1848.

## The Revolution of 1848

By 1848, many liberal Frenchmen, for whom the Napoleonic days were distant memories, were afraid that they might lose their rights. They joined mobs in the streets of Paris. Ultimately, a new constitution was written. The 1848 constitution affirmed the hallowed revolutionary ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. The French Second Republic was proclaimed.

Republics were likewise emerging all over Europe. Monarchs still existed but, increasingly, following the British model, they were more symbolic than real leaders. Prime ministers, presidents, and chairmen ruled with a represented body undergirded by a written constitution. Allied to these egalitarian movements were the growing national identities of states.

The same was true all over Europe. Germans, Poles, Italians, and Spaniards all had experienced the heady feeling of belonging not merely to a church or to an ethnic group but to a nation. They liked the feeling. Now Bavarians called themselves German. Burgundians called themselves French. The Flemish were Belgian.

At the same time, the desire for natural rights and freedom could and would be sacrificed for nationalistic purposes. For instance, in France, the most egalitarian nation in Europe, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, nephew of Napoleon I, overwhelmingly defeated the incumbent in a national election. It was not enough for the popular young Napoleon. President Bonaparte overthrew the republic with ease in the violent coup d'état of December 2, 1851. He assumed dictatorial powers and renamed himself Napoleon III. He also extended his term of office to ten years. Despite continued pockets of opposition, clear evidence of widespread popular support encouraged him a year later to convert the Second Republic into the Second Empire. After 1860, Napoleon III began a series of liberal reforms that resulted in a constitutional monarchy in 1870. Nonetheless, a new pattern emerged: when asked to choose between their rights and the nation, citizens uniformly chose the latter.

What did Europe look like in the middle part of the 19th century?

France, in spite of its energetic domestic scene, was very much a second-rate European power. This was to be confirmed in the Franco-Prussian



Portrait of Louis Napoleon (1852)

War of 1871 where Germany soundly thrashed the French Republic in a short war.

The semblance of a German nation, as a part of the Holy Roman Empire, emerged before the first millennium A.D. The first German king of note was Otto I. Elected in 936, Otto combined extraordinary forcefulness, dignity, and military prowess with great diplomatic skill and genuine religious faith. Germany was several independent German states, including Hanover, Prussia, and Bavaria, among others.

The warrior **King Frederick I**, known as Frederick Barbarossa, ruled from 1152 to 1190. Regarding himself as the successor of Charlemagne, he spent most of his reign trying to restore imperial glory to Germany and Italy. He almost succeeded.

The Reformation, some scholars argue, created Germany. Germany embraced Protestantism, which became the unifying factor in many divergent areas. Before long, Prussia dominated other German states. The Hohenzollern family controlled the kingdom of Prussia. Unlike the English, the Hohenzollerns enjoyed uncontested male heirs from 1640 to 1786. This brought great stability to Germany. Frederick William of Prussia, known as the Great Elector, reigned from 1640 to 1688. His grandson Frederick the Great was a Renaissance warrior.

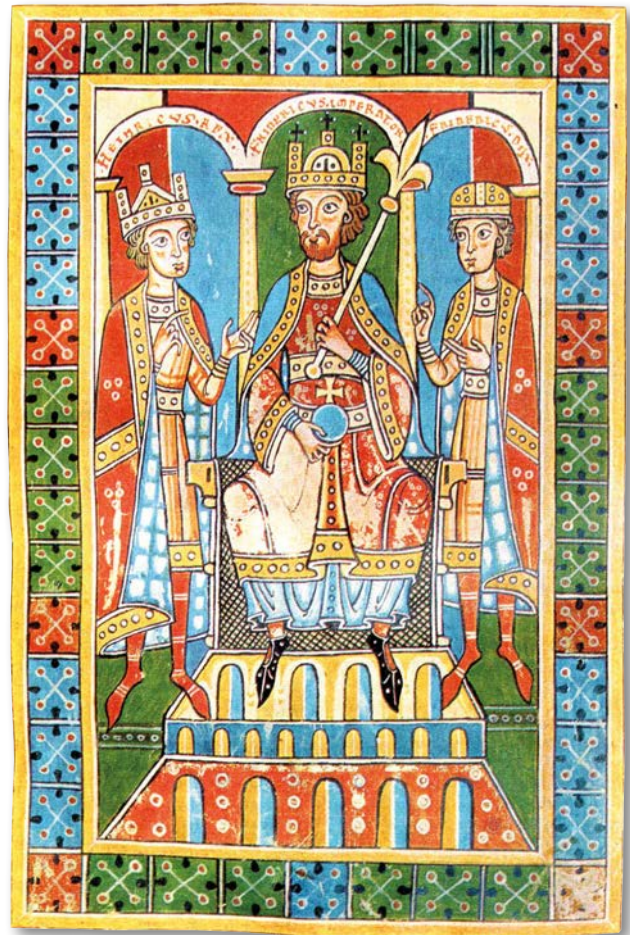
However, it was not until the Napoleonic Wars that Germany started to unite. Napoleon I's aggression had the unintended effect of pushing German states together and arousing a sense of German national identity. This nation would defeat France half a century after the Battle of Waterloo.

To a much lesser degree than in France, Germany experienced national revolts in 1848. The only thing the revolts accomplished was the strengthening of the monarchy.

At that point, a bigger-than-life individual — Otto von Bismarck — entered German history. Bismarck remained one of the most significant political figures of modern Germany. He contributed significantly to the creation and shaping of the modern German state as Prussian minister, president, and imperial chancellor from 1862 to 1890.

Bismarck's view of Germany was based on territory rather than on language and culture. He wanted to establish a Reich, or Greater Germany. He succeeded so well that no one could deny that Germany was a unified state when it defeated France in 1871.

King Frederick I:  
Known as Frederick Barbarossa, ruled from 1152 to 1190. Regarding himself as the successor of Charlemagne, he spent most of his reign trying to restore imperial glory to Germany and Italy.



Frederick Barbarossa and his sons  
King Henry VI and Duke Frederick VI





French reservists responding to the call

The **Franco-Prussian War** was a truly modern, nationalistic war that would eventually plague the 20th century. In the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, France was defeated by the German states under the leadership of Prussia. The underlying causes of the conflict were the determination of Bismarck to unify Germany under Prussian control and, as a step toward this goal, to eliminate French influence in Europe. However, Napoleon III, emperor of France from 1852 to 1870, wanted a war by which he could regain the prestige lost as a result of defeats suffered at the hands of Prussia in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. In addition, the military strength of Prussia, as revealed in the war with Austria, constituted a threat to French dominance on the continent of Europe. France lost this war completely. It was a humiliating defeat.

But France and Prussia were not the only European powers. Like a sleeping bear, Russia was awakening and reaching for empire. Russia was looking more and more to the West for its identity. Russia was the largest nation on earth and in many ways the most backward.

Russia had experienced stable leadership for three centuries under the Romanovs. During Romanov rule, the dominant theme was the state's determination that Russia become and remain a great European power. By the mid-18th century, Russia was militarily and economically powerful, but at the cost of despotic rule. Russians had virtually no rights and lived in a feudalistic regime.

In the early 19th century, France's emperor, Napoleon I, invaded Russia and was defeated. Russia was then Europe's most powerful empire. It could not remain that way long. Other European countries became more powerful as their economies experienced the vast changes of the Industrial Revolution, which began in England and took a number of generations to spread across Europe. The Industrial Revolution did not reach Russia until the late 19th and early 20th centuries — 100 years after it had begun in England.

Franco-Prussian War: Fought from 1870 to 1871, this was a truly modern, nationalistic war that would eventually plague the 20th century. France was defeated by the German states under the leadership of Prussia. The underlying causes of the conflict were the determination of Bismarck to unify Germany under Prussian control and, as a step toward this goal, to eliminate French influence in Europe. However, Napoleon III, emperor of France from 1852 to 1870, wanted a war by which he could regain the prestige lost as a result of defeats suffered at the hands of Prussia in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866.

The Crimean War (1853–1856), in which Russia was defeated by France and Britain, showed that smaller industrialized countries could whip mighty Russia. The Nationalist revolutions of 1848 did not touch Russia at all.

As Prussia's fate was tied to the Hohenzollern family, Austria's fate was closely linked to the Hapsburgs, who provided stable leadership for five centuries. By the early 19th century, the Hapsburgs were the most stable royal family in Europe, and they were firmly in control of a joint Austrian-Hungarian Empire.

In March 1848, a revolutionary movement arose among the many people groups in Austria. Germans, Magyars, Slavs, Italians, and Serbs turned against the Hapsburg regime. A constitutional monarchy satisfied the rebels, and Franz Joseph I assumed leadership. Eventually, however, Joseph removed all liberal reforms except the dissolution of serfdom.

Nationalism remained in Austria, however, and would prove to be its undoing because it was one cause of World War I. In the 1850s, Austria faced the problems of protecting the empire from nationalism encouraged by its neighbors. Russia, for instance, aided Russian ethnic groups in Austria-Hungary. Austria-Hungary carved out a tenuous kingdom in central Europe. Franz Joseph, realizing that he needed a strong ally to maintain his nation, turned to Germany. Germany and Austria began a 75-year alliance that made the two nations practically inseparable but ultimately destroyed both nations during World War I.

In summary, nationalism and democratic movements were often emerging in Europe hand in hand. When they were at odds, though, inevitably Europeans chose their nation before their rights.



The Relief of the Light Brigade

## Hegel, Proudhon, and Marx

### G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) Humanist

**G.W.F. Hegel** held that truth had no application if there were not opposites warring for its reality. Although he never held a political office and was not even alive during the revolutions of 1848, he probably did more to stimulate revolution than any other living person. Hegel, a decidedly modern philosopher, vigorously attacked everything scientific. He believed strongly in the dialectic and in polarity. For instance, if there was no evil, there was no good. There could be no good in the universe if there was no evil in the same universe. From the struggle between these polarities, or in the dialectic, there emerged truth. Hegel began with a thesis (a position put forward for argument). Opposed to this was a contradictory statement or antithesis. Out of their opposition came a synthesis that embraced both. Since the truth lay only in the whole system, this first synthesis was not yet the truth of the matter, but became a new thesis, with its corresponding antithesis and synthesis, and so on. Truth, then, was not absolute and was always open to interpretation. Truth lay in the “search” of the “system.”

The essence of the modern state is that the universal be bound up with the complete freedom of its particular members and with private well-being, that thus the interests of family and civil society must concentrate themselves on the state. It is only when both these moments subsist in their strength that the state can be regarded as articulated and genuinely organized.<sup>4</sup> —G.W.F. Hegel

### Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) Communist

Proudhon instituted the last serious philosophical attempt to undermine the human will as a determining factor in human decision-making.

This anarchist revolutionary, strong on practice, weak on theory, believed that mankind was neither good naturally nor bad because of circumstances. Mankind, to Proudhon, was wrongly made — a dud, so to speak. It was not mankind’s fault that it had so much trouble — it was God’s fault for making him this way. Therefore, as Proudhon states, mankind’s destiny is to re-create his ideal in himself continually, translating roughly to “Sinner, save yourself.” Since mankind could rely on no outside source to ameliorate him, governments, religions, and any other external authority were superfluous.

Justice, as we can see from the example of children and savages, is the last and slowest to grow of all the faculties of the soul . . . to be ready under all circumstances to rise energetically in defense of this dignity — this is justice.<sup>5</sup> —Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

4. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, G. W. F. Hegel, Berlin, 1821.

5. *What is Property?* P.J. Proudhon, Princeton: Mass., 1876.

G.W.F. Hegel: Lived from 1770 to 1831, and held that truth had no application if there were not opposites warring for its reality. Although he never held a political office and was not even alive during the revolutions of 1848, he probably did more to stimulate revolution than any other living person.



Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

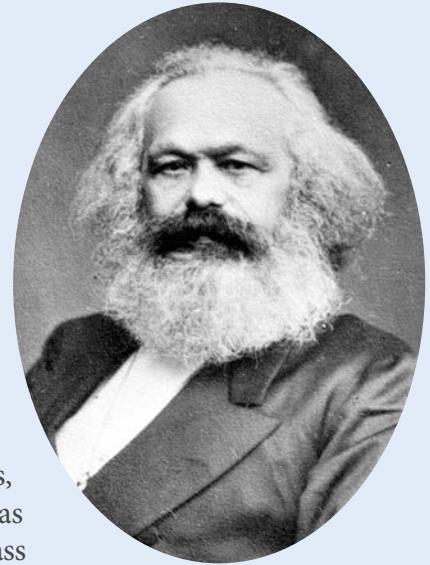
## Karl Marx (1818–1883) Atheist, Communist

One disciple of G.W.F. Hegel was **Karl Marx**. Marx, the father of Communism, applied Hegelian theory to society. The proletariat fought the bourgeoisie, and in this struggle the proletariat was cleansed and prepared for its ultimate call to rule. To the deterministic, atheistic Marx, Christianity was a fairy tale created to placate weak people.

### A Passage from *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx

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The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations. The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — bourgeoisie and proletariat. From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed. The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.<sup>6</sup>



Karl Marx: Lived from 1818 to 1883, and called the father of Communism, he applied Hegelian theory to society. The proletariat (working class) fought the bourgeoisie (ruling, wealthy classes), and in this struggle the proletariat was cleansed and prepared for its ultimate call to rule. To the deterministic, atheistic Marx, Christianity was a fairy tale created to placate weak people.

6. *The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx, United Kingdom: 1848.