Chapter 3: Early Empires in the Ancient Near East, c. 2300 B.C. – c. 300 B.C.

Lesson 1: Akkad & Babylon
• What comes to mind when you think of the word *empire*? Consider where you have heard this word used before, such as in conversations, in books, in movies, and on television. How was the word used and what did it refer to? Then list 3 characteristics below that you think an empire has.

1. ________________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________________
It Matters Because

• As the number of Sumerian city-states grew and the city-states expanded, new conflicts arose.

• City-states fought each other for control of land and water.

• Located on flat land, the Sumerian city-states were also open to invasion by other groups.
Akkadian Empire

• Guiding Question: What were the contributions of Sargon and the Akkadians?
• To the north of the Sumerian city-states were the Akkadians.
• The Akkadians spoke a Semitic language.
• Around 2340 B.C., Sargon, leader of the Akkadians, overran the Sumerian city-states and set up the first empire in world history.
• An empire is a large political unit or state, usually under a single leader, that controls many peoples or territories.
• Empires are often easy to create, but they can be difficult to maintain.
• The rise and fall of empires is an important part of history.
According to legend, Sargon's mother bore him in secret. She then put her son in a basket and cast it onto a river. The basket floated down the river and was found by Akki, the drawer of water. He took Sargon and reared him as his son. Historians know for sure that Sargon gained prominence when he defeated Lugalzagesi, a ruler who had conquered the Sumer city-states. Sargon thereby became the ruler of Sumer and went on to defeat city-states along the middle Euphrates up to northern Syria. During Sargon's reign, trade flourished between his land and surrounding regions. The end of his rule was troubled by rebellions. However, Sargon is considered to be the first great empire builder.

MORE ABOUT THE IMAGE: This is a victory stele of Naram-Sin, Sargon's grandson, from c. 2230 B.C.
Akkadian Empire

- In his new empire, Sargon used the former rulers of the conquered city-states as his governors.
- Sargon’s power was based on the military, namely his army of 5,400 men.
- Sargon’s empire included all of Mesopotamia as well as lands westward to the Mediterranean.
- Sargon was later remembered in chronicles in ancient Mesopotamia as a king who “had no rival or equal, spread his splendor over all the lands, and crossed the sea in the east.”
Akkadian Empire

- One of Sargon’s successors, his grandson Naram-Sin, who ruled from 2260 B.C. to 2223 B.C., continued the greatness of the Akkadian empire.
- Like his grandfather, Naram-Sin waged numerous military campaigns.
- Naram-Sin’s successes led him to boast that he was “King of the Four Corners of the Universe,” and he declared himself a god.
- The Akkadian empire, however, did not last.
- Attacks from neighbors caused the Akkadian empire to fall by 2150 B.C.
This stele (or commemorative pillar) was erected by Sargon’s grandson Naram-Sin to celebrate one of his victories.
Babylonian Empire

• Guiding Question: What was the significance of Hammurabi’s codification of laws?
• The end of the Akkadian empire brought a return to independent city-states in Mesopotamia.
• Finally, after a long period of warfare among the city-states, a new empire arose.
Hammurabi’s Rule

• In 1792 B.C., Hammurabi- a king from Babylon, which was a city-state south of Akkad, came to power.
• Using divide and conquer methods, Hammurabi gained control of Sumer and Akkad, thus creating a new Mesopotamian kingdom with its capital at Babylon.
• After his conquests, Hammurabi called himself “the sun of Babylon, . . . the king who caused the four quarters of the world to render obedience.”
• After Hammurabi’s death in 1750 B.C., however, a series of weak kings were unable to keep the empire united, and it finally fell to new invaders.
Hammurabi was still young when he took the Babylonian throne (c. 1792 B.C.). During his reign, he was involved in constructing temples, irrigation canals, and public buildings. He also engaged in a series of wars. In 1787 B.C. he conquered the cities of Uruk and Isin. For about 20 years after this, he was not involved in any major military operations. However, during the last 14 years of his rule, Hammurabi had continuous conflicts with various powers. Hammurabi is best known for the code of laws that he compiled. This code consisted of a collection of legal decisions that dealt with economics, family matters, civil law, and punishments. The laws were carved on a diorite (a dark rock similar to granite) stele in the temple of Marduk in Babylon.

MORE ABOUT THE IMAGE: This diorite sculpture, thought to depict Hammurabi, dates from around 1750 B.C.
The Code of Hammurabi

• For centuries in Mesopotamia, laws had regulated people’s relationships with one another.

• During his rule, Hammurabi laid out a set of laws known as the Code of Hammurabi. This collection of laws is one of the earliest examples of a written law code, and it carries ideas of both legal and political importance.

• The Code of Hammurabi was based on a system of strict justice.

• Penalties were severe, and they varied according to the social class of the victim.

• A crime against a noble by a commoner was punished more severely than the same offense against a member of the lower class.

• Moreover, the principle of retaliation (an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth) was a fundamental part of this system of justice.
This stela, created in the eighteenth century B.C., is inscribed with the Code of Hammurabi.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hammurabi's Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If any one bring an accusation of any crime before the elders, and does not prove what he has charged, he shall, if it be a capital offense charged, be put to death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If anyone is committing a robbery and is caught, then he shall be put to death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a man rent his boat to a sailor, and the sailor is careless, and the boat is wrecked or goes aground, the salior shall give the owner of the boat another boat as compensation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a man wishes to separate from a woman who has borne him children, or from his wife who has borne him children, then he shall give that wife her dowry, and a part of the usufruct [right of use] of field, garden, and property, so that she can rear her children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a son strike his father, his hands shall be hewn off.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a builder build a house for some one, and does not construct it properly, and the house which he built fall in and kill its owner, then that builder shall be put to death.</td>
</tr>
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The Code of Hammurabi

• The legal ideas in the **Code of Hammurabi** had a major impact on **Mesopotamia** and future legal codes.

• The largest category of laws in the code focused on marriage and the family.

• **Parents** arranged marriages for their **children**.

• After marriage, the 2 parties signed a marriage contract, which made the marriage legal.
The Code of Hammurabi

• Mesopotamian society was patriarchal; that is, men dominated society.
• Hammurabi’s code shows that women had far fewer rights in marriage than men had.
• A husband could divorce his wife if she failed to fulfill her duties, was unable to bear children, or tried to leave home to engage in business.
• Even harsher, a wife who neglected her home or humiliated her husband could be drowned.
• Fathers ruled their children as well. Obedience was expected.
  • “If a son strike his father, his hands shall be hewn off.”
• If a son committed a serious enough offense, his father could disinherit him.
• Hammurabi’s laws clearly covered almost every aspect of people’s lives.
The Code of Hammurabi

- **Hammurabi’s code** also included ideas that held a political impact.
- The code took the duties of public officials seriously.
- Officials who failed to solve crimes had to make personal restitution to the victims or their families.
- Judges could be penalized for ruling incorrectly on a case.
- Due to Hammurabi’s connection with laws, images of him can be found in several government buildings in the United States.
- **Hammurabi** is one of the many “lawgivers” depicted in marble engravings in the United States Capitol building.
- There is also an engraving depicting the “great lawgivers of history,” including **Hammurabi**, on an outside wall of the U.S. Supreme Court building.
Assignment

• Complete Chapter 3, Lesson 1 Quiz.
• You are allowed to use your notes to assist you on completing your quiz, but NOT your Chromebook or phone!
• Turn your quiz into the organizer after you have finished completing it.
• Make sure your name is on your quiz before you turn it in!