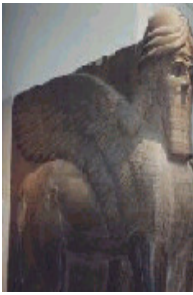
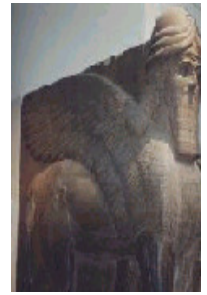


MESOPOTAMIA IN HISTORY AND PROPHECY



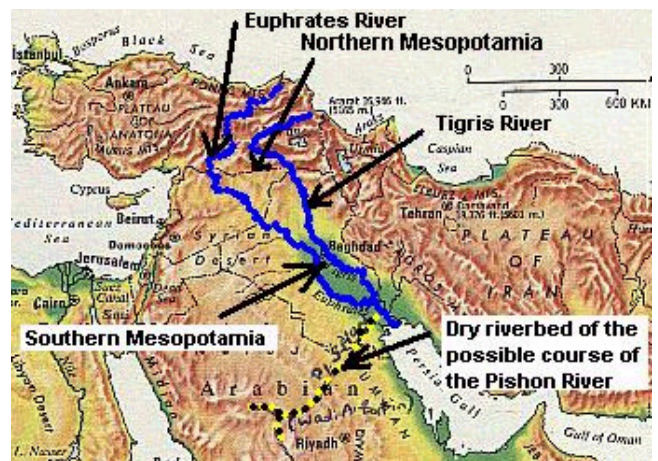
Mesopotamia is known as the cradle of civilization for this is where civilization was born according to the Bible. Mesopotamia is a Greek word which means between the rivers. Mesopotamia is between the two great rivers we know today as the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers which flow through the Middle Eastern countries of Iraq, Syria and Turkey.



Often when people think of Mesopotamia they think of the land in southern Iraq where the city of Babylon existed but we need to remember that Mesopotamia extends right up to the area in southern Turkey between the source of the rivers near Lake Van. The first mention of the land of Mesopotamia in the Bible is found in the account of the Garden of Eden where God created the first human beings, Adam and Eve.

In **Genesis 2:10** we read: 'Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads.' The verses after give the names of the rivers as the Pishon, Gihon, Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Now since the Tigris and the Euphrates have their sources in the mountainous region of southern Turkey, it is usually assumed by theologians today that the Garden of Eden is located in that same area.

Regarding the Hebrew for the word riverhead Ernest Martin tell us: "Where rivers came together, or a river intersected with a larger river, this juncture was called the HEAD of the river that joined the other. The word 'HEAD' did not describe the source (the beginning) of a river, but it signified a place where it intersected with another river or flowed into the ocean"(Solving the Riddle of Noah's Flood, pp. 10-11).



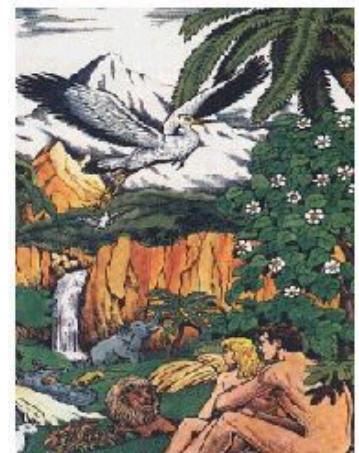
In 1996 Boston University scientist Farouk El-Baz examined satellite photos of northern Arabia and Kuwait and to his amazement easily detected a dry riverbed cutting through the limestone of northern Arabia. He noticed that the riverbed petered out as it reached the sand dunes of central Arabia.

Now the interesting thing is that this ancient river, which is 3 miles wide in some places, fulfills all the requirements for one of the rivers of Eden! Notice what **Genesis 2:11-12** says: "The name of the first [river] is Pishon; it is the one which encompasses the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium [fragrant resins] and the onyx stone are there". The Arabian peninsula is RICH with bdellium and precious stones as well as having a rich deposit of gold near the source of this ancient river and so it fits the description of Havilah.

This evidence points us to the delta region of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers near the top of the Persian Gulf as being the area where the Garden of Eden was, where God created our first parents, Adam and Eve.

We all know the story of how they disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit and were cast out of the garden. They chose to decide for themselves what is right and wrong instead of yielding to God's way. God sentenced them and all mankind that sprang from them to live cut off from God for the next 6000 years with a few exceptions to fulfill God's plan for redeeming mankind.

The Garden of Eden



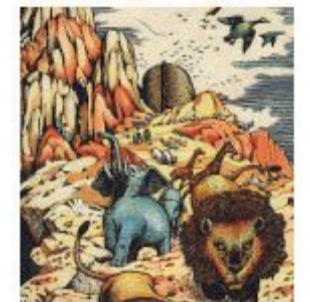
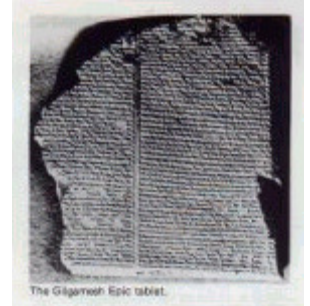
After their son Cain killed his brother Abel we read how he was driven away and lived east of Eden in the land of Nod and built a city after the name of his son Enoch. This city was east of the Tigris River, probably in the ancient land of Elam in southern Iran.

Without God's guidance and submission of man to God ways, human civilization developed over the next 1600 years. The fruits of living according to that which man thinks is right was not good. The latter end of the pre-flood age is described by God in this way in **Genesis 6:5-8**:

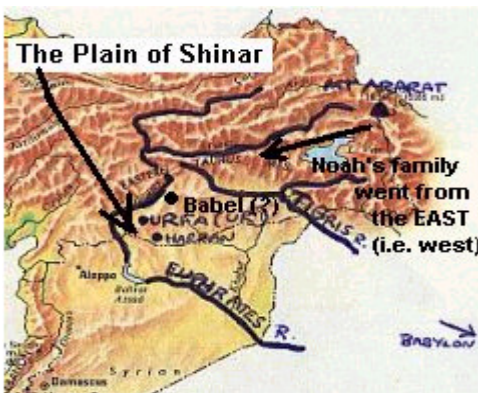
“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast...But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

All mankind then died in a massive global flood that God brought on the earth. Mankind was survived and started over again through Noah, his wife and 3 sons and their wives who God saved through the ark which Noah built. This story of the flood is remembered in traditions by every people around the world. Aside from the biblical record, the most famous tradition is the Gilgamesh Epic which was found in the library of Ashurbanipal in the ruins of the Assyrian capital, Nineveh. The year in which Noah and his family came out of the Ark after the Flood was 2304 BC.

We read in **Genesis 8:4** that “the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains [plural] of Ararat”. From here in eastern Turkey, not far from the source of one of the upper branches of the Euphrates River, the post-flood history of mankind began.



It is assumed that the Babel where the Tower of Babel was constructed was in southern Iraq at the site of Nebuchadnezzar's capital city of Babylon. This conflicts with the Biblical record of the early migration of Noah's family from the mountains of Ararat. The land of Babylon where the early Sumerian civilization blossomed is in southern Mesopotamia and it is both south and east of Ararat. The plain of Shinar to which Noah's family migrated and where Nimrod built the city and Tower of Babel is to the west of Ararat.



In **Genesis 11:1-2** we read: "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed **FROM the east (i.e. they went WEST)**, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there."

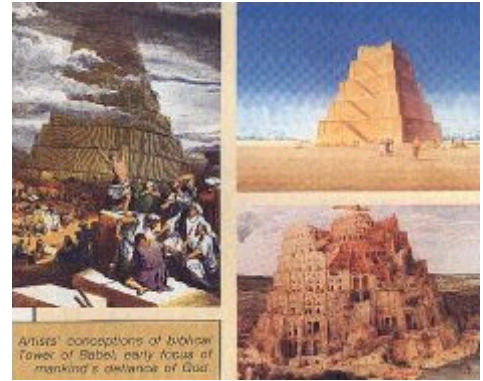
The people leaving this region would have had flocks of animals as well as their families. To travel, they would have needed to follow a river in order to assure they would always have a sufficient water supply for both the people as well as the animals. One of the two upper branches of the Euphrates has its source near Mt Ararat and travels east to west in the direction that Noah's family travelled.

The region of Turkey that they would have traveled through is extremely mountainous until they reached the point where the Euphrates turns south near the present day Syrian border. And here, the mountains end and the region flattens out into a plain. This plain near the present day towns of Haran and Urfa is the biblical plain of Shinar.

In **Genesis 10:8-10** we read: “And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord...And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad,

and Calneh, in the land of Shinar." Nimrod established Babel, Accad(from which the Akkadian empire got its name) and Calneh in this area near the towns of Urfa and Haran.

In **Genesis 11** we read the account of the Tower of Babel, "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech...And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth."



Stephen Collins has speculated that the top that would reach unto heaven was a space vehicle that literally would go into the heavens and the tower was the beginning of a space tower. While I have my doubts about that, his main point remains that the technology of the early post-flood world was progressing so fast that God had to take drastic action. Just imagine a world where there was one language and the geniuses of the world lived hundreds of years and they could share their technical information without any language barriers?

There is a lot of evidence to support the hypothesis that the pre-flood world reached a high technological level of development and that Noah's Ark was a huge 'time capsule,' preserving a variety of preflood artifacts. Many ancient artifacts have been found around the world that have amazed those who have found them at the technology that would have been required to create them.



Ancient Sumerian text - Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta

"Once upon a time... the whole universe, the people in unison, to Enlil **IN ONE TONGUE** gave praise."

God actions at the Tower of Babel halted the rapid progression of technical development. God both scattered them and confused their languages to achieve this result and move the ethnic races toward the lands He had in mind for them to inhabit. An ancient Sumerian text entitled, "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta" tell us of such a time when everyone spoke the one language, "Once upon a time... the whole universe, the people in unison, to Enlil **IN ONE TONGUE** gave praise."

When was the Tower of Babel built? In **Genesis 10:25** we read that Peleg was so named "for in his days the earth was divided". Now Peleg was born 101 years after the Flood. There simply wasn't anywhere near enough people on earth that soon after the Flood for this to be the year that the Tower was destroyed. It seems apparent that he took on the name of Peleg later on his life, much like Abraham had his name changed from Abram. If the Tower was destroyed half way into his life then it would have occurred around 2100 BC.

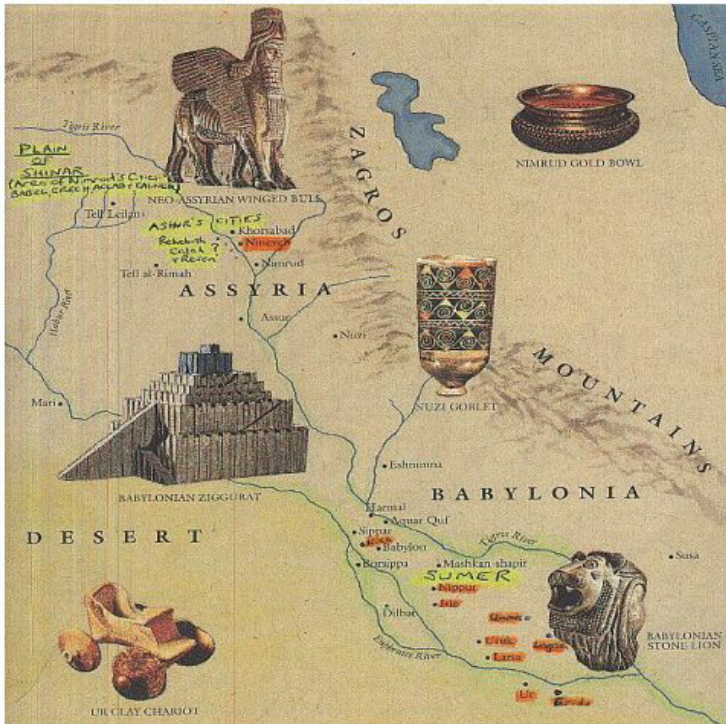
Based on Genesis 10, the population probably increased between 3 to 4 times with each generation of about 30 years. On the generous side, if we quadruple the population of the earth every 30 years we would have about 500 people after 100 years and 120 000 people after 200 years or a city about the size of Toowoomba. By the time that Sargon the Great comes onto the scene another 100 years later in 2000 BC the population could have reached well over 7 million people.

Population Growth after The Flood

[Based on a quadruple increase every 30 years]

2304 BC	8 people
2200 BC	500 people
2100 BC	120 000 people
2000 BC	7 000 000 people

Cities of Early Mesopotamia



The next event that occurs according to the **Genesis 10:11** where we read: "Out of that land (the Plain of Shinar) went forth Asshur (Shem's son and the ancestor of the Akkadians and the Assyrians, who, in turn, were the ancestors of the German people today), and [Asshur] built Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city."

Asshur continued further along the path of Noah's family from the mountains of Ararat, further downstream the plain of Shinar, this time along the Tigris River to build several cities, the most famous being the later Assyrian capital city of Nineveh.

Further downstream in Southern Mesopotamia other cities were founded such as Kish(named after Nimrod's father Cush), Lagash, Nippur, Uruk, Eridu, Umma, Isin, Larsa and Ur. This area at this time is known to us as Sumer.



Culturally these cities were similar but each city had their own ruling dynasty. These city-states fought for supremacy and the natural resources of the area in a great number of conflicts between 2100 to 2000 BC until they were forcibly united by Sargon the Great who conquered the land of Sumer from the north around 2000 BC. He was an Akkadian and descendant of Asshur and his Akkadian Empire was the first great empire of the post-flood age. He ruled over all of Mesopotamia for 56 years.



Because the chronology of Mesopotamia is linked to the chronology of Egypt it is, in my opinion, out by a number of centuries. The dates for the pre-Exodus history of Mesopotamia which I am giving today are about three to four hundreds years later than what you will read in your history books. This, of course, gives more time after the Flood for the population and civilization to grow before these events occur since historians generally don't accept the Flood and the biblical date for the Flood.

After Sargon the Great he was succeeded by his two sons for 24 years and then his grandson Naram-Sin who ruled for 37 years.

Pictured here is Naram-Sin's famous stele commemorating a victory over the Lullubi tribe from the Zagros mountains to the east of Babylon.

Akkadian Empire

From 2000 BC Sargon the Great
(56 years)

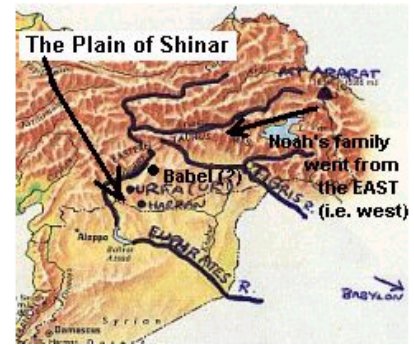
His sons (24 years)

His grandson - Naram-Sin(37 years)

During Naram-Sin's reign in 1877 BC
God calls Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees

It was probably in Naram-Sin's reign over the Akkadian empire that God called Abraham out of "Ur of the Chaldees" in the year 1877 BC. Most scholars think that this Ur was the Sumerian city of Ur in southern Mesopotamia. The cuneiform tablets of Ebla mention a city designated "Ur in the territory of Haran."

This city is today called Urfa and is located 30 km north-west of Haran and it was from this Ur of northern Mesopotamia that Abraham came out from. Haran bears the name of Abraham's brother while in this small area there are other towns bearing the names of other patriarchs such as Serug, Nahor and Abraham's father Terah.



Sargon's dynasty lasted about 200 years and was overthrown by the barbaric Gutians who had poured out of the area of the Zagros mountains around 1800 BC. One city that seems to have survived this foreign occupation was Lagash, whose governor Gudea left about 20 statues of himself. Around 1780 BC Uruk under King Utuhegal drove out the Gutians.

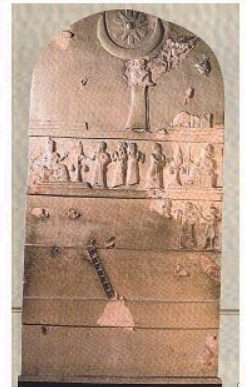
The Ur-Nammu Stele

The Ziggurat at Ur

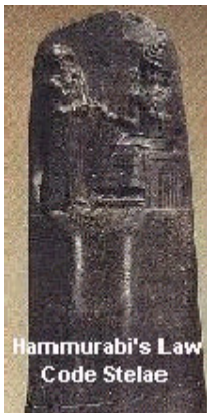


Ur experienced a revival under the third dynasty which was founded by Ur-Nammu around 1770 BC and ably carried on by his son Ur-Shulgi.

Ur-Nammu was the king of Ur who built its famous ziggurat and left us with the Ur-Nammu stele which pictures him involved in an important Sumerian ritual.



Next came the savage Elamites, who not only conquered Ur, but completely destroyed it around 1650 BC which was fairly close to the time of the famine in Egypt in Joseph's time. In the north reigned the first major dynasty of Assyria founded by Shamshi-Adad I around 1650 BC. Eventually the Elamites were driven out of Southern Mesopotamia. After a period of anarchy two powerful states emerged in the south: Isin and Larsa. The last ruler of Larsa, Rim-Sin, succeeded in uniting the major part of the country.



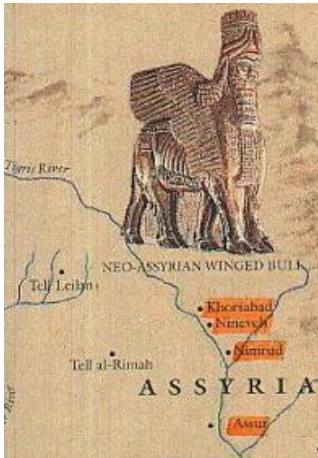
Rim-Sin was defeated by the Amorite king Hammurabi, who succeeded in uniting the whole country under a single head. The word Amorite means "westerner" and they came from the land west of Mesopotamia.

Hammurabi's dynasty is known as the first dynasty of Babylon. He is best known for his famous law code which many scholars mistakenly believe was where Moses got the laws and statutes of the Bible from. Hammurabi was actually a contemporary of Moses and his rule began around 1420 BC while the Israelites were in the wilderness before entering Canaan.

After Hammurabi's dynasty came to a close Mesopotamia was occupied by various peoples such as the Kassites, Mitanni and the Hittites.

From around 950 BC Assyria was able to free itself from these invading peoples and soon became a great power to be reckoned with. During its bitter struggle for existence, it developed into a war machine known for its cruelty and became the scourge and terror of the entire Middle East. At first the Assyrian campaigns took the form of raids in search of booty and tribute and then began to annexe conquered lands into a mighty empire that included the Babylonian area of southern Mesopotamia.

- 1800 BC** Akkadian Empire overthrown by the Gutians from the east
- 1780 BC** Uruk under King Utuhegal drives out the Gutians.
- 1770 BC** Ur-Nammu begins the third dynasty of Ur
- 1650 BC** Elamites destroy Ur and are later driven out by Isin and Larsa
- 1420 BC** Amorites under King Hammurabi rule Mesopotamia
- After the Amorites come the Kassites, Mitanni and the Hittites



The greatest cities of Assyria, which were also capitals at various times, were Nimrud (named after Nimrod), Khorsabad, Ashur and Nineveh. These cities were excavated in the mid 1800's to reveal fabulous golden artifacts, huge winged bulls which can be seen at the British Museum and massive libraries of cuneiform tablets.

In those Assyrian records is mention of a religious revival during the reign of Adad-Nirari III who reigned from 810-783 BC which is roughly the time when Jonah preached to Nineveh.

Tiglath-Pilneser carried away the Israelite tribes east of the Jordan around 730 BC and then his successors Shalmaneser V and Sargon II conquered Samaria and carried away the House of Israel 10 years later.

Hezekiah refused to pay tribute to the next king of Assyria, Sennacherib, who, in turn, besieged Jerusalem. God destroyed 185 000 of Sennacherib's army in one night. Upon Sennacherib's return to Nineveh he was assassinated by his sons and Esarhaddon assumed the throne. Esarhaddon and his successor Ashurbanipal extended the empire to its greatest height by conquering Egypt.

Zephaniah began prophesying during the latter stages of Ashurbanipal's reign. He prophesied that God "will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness and flocks shall lie down in the midst of her" (**Zephaniah 2:13-14**).

In 612 BC the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar, along with the Medes and the Scythians (who were Israelites) destroyed Nineveh and the Assyrian empire along with it. Nineveh was never rebuilt and today the shepherds of nearby Mosul graze their sheep among the dunes of Nineveh.

Timeline for Assyrian Empire

Adad-Nerari III	810-783 BC (Religious revival in his day possibly from Jonah)
Tiglath-Pileser III	744-727 BC (Carried away tribes east of Jordan)
Shalmaneser V	726-722 BC (Began captivity of Israel)
Sargon II	721-705 BC (Completed Israel's captivity)
Sennacherib	704-681 BC (Tried and failed to conquer Jerusalem)
Esarhaddon	680-669 BC (Conquered Egypt)
Ashurbanipal	668-633 BC (Extended conquest of Egypt as far as Luxor)
Fall of Nineveh	612 BC

Nabopolassar began the Neo-Babylonian empire in 612 BC. He died in 607 BC and soon after Nebuchadnezzar took over as king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar defeated Ramses the Great in the famous battle of Carchemish in 605 BC. Syria and Palestine changed hands several times between Nebuchadnezzar and Ramses the Great over a period of 19 years of hostility until around 588 BC they negotiated a peace treaty where Egypt gave up Syria and Palestine to Babylon leaving Jerusalem without support and agreed to exchange to each other political fugitives which included Jewish refugees who were in Egypt. Three years later Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and carried away the Jewish people to Babylon in 585 BC.

Timeline for Babylonian Empire

612 BC	Nabopolassar defeats Assyria and establishes Neo-Babylonian Empire
607 BC	Nabopolassar dies and his son Nebuchadnezzar begins to rule
605 BC	Nebuchadnezzar defeats Ramses the Great at Carchemish
588 BC	Peace treaty between Nebuchadnezzar and Ramses
585 BC	Babylon conquers Jerusalem and carries Jews off to captivity
539 BC	Babylon is conquered by the Persians

His dynasty was to last only another 50 years until in the days of the Babylonian king Belshazzar the Persians conquered the seemingly impregnable city of Babylon. Isaiah made this prophecy about Babylon, "It will never be inhabited or dwelt in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there, no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there" (**Isaiah 13:20-21**).

Unlike the ruins of Nineveh where sheep now graze local shepherds completely avoid the ruins of Babylon believing the place to be demon-infested. Today the ruined city of Babylon is being restored by the Iraqi Department of Antiquities.

Timeline after Babylon

539 BC	Mesopotamia ruled by the Persians
331 BC	Alexander the Great conquers the Persians. Mesopotamia ruled by the Seleucid Greeks
250 BC	Parthians rule Mesopotamia
226 AD	Sassanids rule Mesopotamia
635 AD	Arabian empire rules Mesopotamia
1258 AD	Mongols sack Babylon
1800's	Ottoman Turks rule Mesopotamia
1917 AD	Britain conquers Mesopotamia
1932 AD	Modern state of Iraq created

After Babylon was conquered in 539 BC the land of Mesopotamia was occupied by the Persians (539-331 BC). After Alexander the Great's conquest in 331 BC, the Greek dynasty of Seleucus I held Mesopotamia. In around 250 BC the Parthians (an Israelite people) took Mesopotamia from the Seleucids.

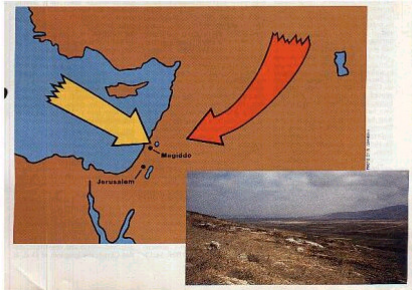
After rebuffing Roman attacks, the Parthians fell in AD 226 to the Sassanids. Arab tribes conquered the Sassanids in 635, bringing with them a new religion, Islam. Six hundred years later the Mongols sacked Babylon in 1258 under Ghenghis Khan.

The Ottoman Turks and Safavid Persian rulers vied for control of Mesopotamia from the 16th to the 18th century and the Turks eventually prevailed. During World War I British troops took the area after much hard fighting. The League of Nations then mandated Iraq to Great Britain. Iraq became independent in 1932 and is primarily populated by Islamic Arabs though many very different ethnic peoples have lived in this land over the millennia.

Most of the future prophecies about Babylon and Assyria refer to the Central European lands where their earlier occupants have migrated to over time along with the political, economic and religious system which they began in Mesopotamia.

In **Daniel 11:40-42** we read: "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him (probably an Arab alliance that may well include Iraq) and the king of the north (the coming United Europe) shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over...He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape".

Crossing the Euphrates to go to Armageddon



Mesopotamia will probably be under the occupation of the coming United Europe in the great tribulation. At the sixth trumpet we read in **Revelation 9:14-16** about four angels or messengers who are held back at the Euphrates and released to kill a third of mankind with their army of 200 million. Right before Christ returns after 3 ½ years of world war the river Euphrates will be dried up to let the great hordes of the Asiatic alliance through to confront the European armies based in the Holy Land at the battle known to many as Armageddon (**Revelation 16:12-14**).

They are destroyed by Christ at his return and slowly the rebuilding of a new world commences under the millennial rulership of Jesus Christ as the Kingdom of God is brought to earth.

Ultimately the future of the land of Mesopotamia is to one day become a suburb of the New Jerusalem when God the Father descends to earth with the New Jerusalem after the millennium and Great White Throne Judgment period. A wonderful end for a land that has seen so much violence and bloodshed over the past six millennia.

Mesopotamia becomes a suburb of the New Jerusalem

