

# Ancient Mesopotamia

1800 BCE – 539 BCE

One of the world's great civilization arose in the Tigris-Euphrates valley some 5000 years ago and continued in various forms until Babylon fell to the Persians in 539. During that time powerful empires such as Assyria and Babylon became cultural and military powerhouses. They were outstanding astronomers, mathematicians and engineers.

Have you ever wondered why there are 60 minutes to an hour, or 12 signs of the Zodiac? Both are products of ancient Mesopotamian culture. This seminar will explore that culture as well as the history behind it. We will focus on the period from Hammurabi to Nebuchadnezzar (approx. 1800 BCE – 539 BCE).

Participants will be asked to read "*The Babylonians*" by G. Leick or an equivalent book as well as some material from the internet supplied by the moderator.



Some possible presentation topics might be:

- Hammurabi and his code of law
- Nebuchadnezzar's palace and other building projects
- Commerce and trade
- Farming
- The jewelry and pottery of Ur
- Mesopotamian art
- Food and drink
- The role of women
- The Epic of Gilgamesh and other literature
- Babylonian science, mathematics and technology
- The excavation of Babylon
- Mesopotamian religions
- Mesopotamia and the Bible
- Nineveh and Assyrians culture
- Sennacherib and the Assyrian war machine
- The rule of Sargon II
- The fall of Babylon