

Chapter 7: New Civilizations and Empires in Western and Central Asia: 7-5 Chapter Review

Book Title: World Civilizations

Printed By: Colin Morris-Moncada (006279659@coyote.csusb.edu)

© 2018 Cengage Learning, Cengage Learning

7-5 Chapter Review

7-5a Summary

After the decline of Mesopotamia and Egypt in the first millennium B.C.E., several other peoples created their own states and empires. The Assyrian Empire, founded on an efficient army, lasted only a brief time. After it was toppled in the seventh century B.C.E. by a coalition of enemies, most traces of it were wiped away in its Mesopotamian homeland. One of the Assyrians' conquests was Phoenicia, whose people are remembered for their maritime explorations and colonization and for taking the first major steps toward a phonetic alphabet.

For more than two hundred years after the conquests of Cyrus the Great, the Persian Empire brought relative peace and progress to much of the Near East. Learning from their more advanced subjects, the imperial governors allowed substantial freedom of worship, language, and custom, while upholding superior justice and efficient administration. Trade and crafts flourished throughout the immense empire. From the preaching of Zarathustra emerged a new, highly sophisticated ethics that was elevated to a state religion centuries later.

The contribution of the Jews to later history was of a different nature. According to the biblical account, the Semitic ancestors of the Hebrews left Mesopotamia and entered Palestine, possibly sometime in the middle of the second millennium B.C.E. After a long duel with powerful neighbors, the Jews set up a monarchy that broke into two parts in the 900s. The larger northern segment, Israel, gradually fell away from Judaism and was dispersed by Assyrian conquest. The smaller part, Judea (with its capital Jerusalem), stayed true to Yahweh and survived as a province of other empires into Roman times.

What distinguished the Jews was their monotheistic religion and their linkage of a universal God with ethical standards in this life and immortal salvation in the next. Their gradually evolving vision of an omnipotent, just, and merciful Lord who would one day send a messiah to lead the Hebrews to glory was the cement that held this small nation together. It was a vision unique to them, and its power carried the Jews through a history of subjugation and torment.

Chapter 7: New Civilizations and Empires in Western and Central Asia: 7-5 Chapter Review

Book Title: World Civilizations

Printed By: Colin Morris-Moncada (006279659@coyote.csusb.edu)

© 2018 Cengage Learning, Cengage Learning

© 2020 Cengage Learning Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means - graphic, electronic, or mechanical, or in any other manner - without the written permission of the copyright holder.

