

# Biographical Dictionary

## A

**Abraham** Man whom God revealed Himself to around 2091 BC and whose descendants became the nation of Israel.

**Aesop** Greek author who wrote fables.

**Ahasuerus** See Xerxes.

**Akhenaton** Pharaoh during the New Kingdom; tried to change the Egyptians' beliefs about many gods and believed there was only one god, Aton.

**Alexander the Great** Became ruler of Macedonia at the age of twenty-two; led the Greek army in conquering many lands and spreading Greek culture.

**Antiochus IV** Seleucid king who became ruler of Judea in 176 BC.

**Archimedes** Greek mathematician who advanced the lever and compound pulleys.

**Aristophanes** Playwright of the only surviving Greek comedies.

**Aristotle** Greek philosopher who devoted himself to the study of science.

**Artaxerxes** King of Persia and son of Xerxes; allowed the Israelites Ezra and Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem to rebuild its walls.

**Asoka** Ruler of the Mauryan Empire in ancient India; promoted Buddhism.

## B

**Basil II** Byzantine emperor from 976–1025; a great warrior; also known as the Bulgar Slayer.

**Belisarius** Byzantine general under Justinian I.

## C

**Caesar, Gaius Julius** Military general who became dictator of Rome; member of the triumvirate; also known as Julius Caesar.

**Caesar Augustus** See Octavian.

**Carey, William** British Baptist missionary to India; began missionary work there in 1793. He and other missionaries trained Indian pastors and evangelists to serve their own people.

**Champollion, Jean-François** Egyptologist and translator of the hieroglyphics on the Rosetta stone in 1822.

**Chandragupta Maurya** Indian warrior who conquered a large part of India and began the Mauryan dynasty.

**Chang Heng** Chinese inventor of the seismoscope.

**Charlemagne** King of the Franks; greatest of the Carolingian kings; extended the Frankish kingdom to its greatest size; crowned by the pope as emperor of the Western Roman Empire.

**Cicero, Marcus Tullius** Philosopher, lawyer, and member of the Senate who introduced Romans to Greek philosophy; an excellent orator who wrote many speeches to persuade the Senate.

**Clovis** First king of the Franks whose conquests shaped what would eventually become the French nation.

**Confucius** Chinese philosopher whose teachings greatly influenced China's classical age.

**Constantine I** Roman emperor who moved Rome's capital to Byzantium; legalized Christianity; also known as "Constantine the Great."

**Cortés, Hernando** Commander of the Spanish conquistadors who entered the Aztec city of Tenochtitlán in 1519.

**Cyrus II** A Persian leader who led a successful revolt against the Medes.

## D

**Darius I (the Great)** Persian noble who helped put down a rebellion; third ruler of the Persian Empire.

**David** Second king of Israel; loved and obeyed God.

## E

**Eratosthenes** Greek scholar; the first to draw lines of latitude and longitude on a map.

**Esther** Hebrew who was chosen to be queen by King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) of Persia and whom God used to save the Israelites in Babylon from destruction.

**Euclid** Greek mathematician; wrote the first geometry book.

**Ezana** King of Aksum in ancient eastern Africa; made Christianity the official religion of Aksum; the first to issue coins with a Christian symbol, a cross.

## G

**Gautama, Siddhartha** Founder of Buddhism.

## H

**Ham** A son of Noah; received a curse for his wickedness. Ham's descendants founded nations in the Far East, in Africa, and along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

**Hammurabi** King of the Amorites and ruler of the Babylonian Empire.

**Hannibal** General of Carthage; tried repeatedly to conquer Rome during the Second Punic War; is considered one of the greatest generals in ancient history.

**Hatshepsut** Queen of Egypt; first woman to be pharaoh; ruled during the New Kingdom.

**Henry II** Last of the Norman kings of England; came to the throne in 1154; developed England's legal system.

**Heraclius** Emperor of the Byzantine Empire; reconquered land taken by the Persians and the barbarians; made roads in his empire safe for commerce.

**Herodotus** Greek historian; known as the Father of History.

**Hippocrates** Greek physician; famous for his contributions to the study of medicine; called the Father of Medicine.

**Homer** Greek poet and storyteller; author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

## J

**Japheth** A son of Noah. Japheth's descendants moved to what is now Turkey and eastern Europe.

**Jasaw Chan K'awiil I** Mayan ruler in the city-state of Tikal.

**Jesus Christ** God's Son; second Person of the Trinity; the promised Messiah; came to earth as a man and died on the cross to pay the penalty for the sins of mankind.

**Jimmu Tenno** Mythical Japanese ancestor who was believed to be the first of the Japanese emperors.

**John** King of England after Henry II; was forced to sign the Magna Carta because of his abuse of power.

**Jonah** Prophet whom God sent to Nineveh to tell the Assyrians to turn from their evil ways and follow Him.

**Joseph** Hebrew who was sold into slavery in Egypt during the Middle Kingdom; used by God to help the Egyptians through a famine and preserve the Hebrew people.

**Josephus** Jewish historian; sided with the Romans during the destruction of the Jewish temple in AD 70.

**Justinian I** Emperor of the Byzantine Empire; created a simplified code of Roman laws; also known as Justinian the Great.

## L

**Landa, Diego de** Spanish priest who tried to make the Mayas accept Roman Catholicism. Much information about the Mayans is found in his writings.

**Luther, Martin** German monk who separated from the Roman Catholic Church and helped start the Protestant Reformation.

## M

**Maccabeus, Judas** Leader of the Jewish revolt against the Seleucids (Syrians) in the second century BC.

**Mansa Musa** Malian king in ancient western Africa; known for his immense wealth and devotion to Islam; most famous of the Malian kings.

**Marius** Military hero who reorganized the Roman army and allowed poor citizens to enlist for long terms of service.

**Mark Antony** Roman general who ruled the eastern part of the Roman Empire after forming an alliance with Octavian.

**Marshall, John Hubert** British archaeologist who discovered and helped excavate the ancient cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro in the Indus Valley in the early 1920s.

**Martel, Charles** High official of the Franks who led their army to many great military victories. He and his descendants ruled the Carolingian Empire.

**Moffat, Robert** Scottish missionary to Africa; began missionary work there in 1817; set up mission stations and translated the Bible into the local language.

**Montezuma II** Aztec emperor who expanded the Aztec boundaries; built many temples, canals, and hospitals.

**Morrison, Robert** British missionary to China; began missionary work there in 1807; the first to dress like the national people to tell them about Jesus; translated the entire Bible into Chinese.

**Moses** Hebrew whom God used to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt; wrote the first five books of the Bible.

**Muhammad** Founding prophet of Islam.

**Murasaki Shikibu** Japanese author who wrote what is considered to be the world's first novel; a lady of the Japanese court.

## N

**Nebuchadnezzar II** King of Babylon around 612 BC.

**Nero** Roman emperor who ordered many Christians to be put to death by crucifixion or burning.

**Noah** Man whom God saved from the Flood with his wife, three sons, and his sons' wives; directed by God to build an ark and put every kind of animal and insect in it.

## O

**Octavian** Ruler of the western part of the Roman Empire and eventually the Roman world; also called Caesar Augustus.

## P

**Pepin the Short** King of the Franks; son of Charles Martel; gave conquered Lombard lands to leaders of the Roman Church.

**Pericles** One of the leaders of the democracy in Athens; considered one of the best orators of all time.

**Plato** Greek philosopher who wrote books about government in the form of conversations (dialogues).

**Pompey** General who was popular with the Senate for his accomplishments of turning Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine into Roman provinces and ridding the Mediterranean Sea of pirates.

**Pythagoras** Greek mathematician who studied geometry and came up with an important theorem about the area of triangles.

## Q

**Qin Shi Huang Ti** Chinese emperor who began the Qin dynasty; name means "First Emperor."

## R

**Rameses II** One of the last pharaohs of Egypt; also called Rameses the Great.

## S

**Samuel** Last judge in Israel; anointed Saul to be king.

**Sargon I** Ruler of the Sumerian city-state Kish around 2270 BC; established the first empire.

**Saul** First king of Israel.

**Shem** A son of Noah; Shem's descendants were the future nation of Israel.

**Shotoku** Japanese prince who developed a constitution that later became the basis for laws in Japan.

**Socrates** Greek philosopher who encouraged his students to seek truth through human reason.

**Solon** Greek nobleman from Athens who wrote new laws allowing men of the lower classes to participate in government.

**Sophocles** Playwright of Greek tragedies.

**Sulla** General appointed by the Senate to command the Roman army; declared himself dictator after winning a civil war.

**Sundiata** King of Mali in ancient western Africa; known as the first mansa (ruler) of Mali and as the Lion King.

**Sunni Ali** African ruler who established the large empire of Songhai.

## T

**Taylor, Hudson** British missionary to the interior land of China; began missionary work there in 1854; founded the China Inland Mission.

**Theodora** Wife of Byzantine emperor Justinian I.

**Thucydides** Athenian historian who recorded the events of the Peloponnesian War.

**Thutmose III** Became pharaoh of Egypt after Queen Hatshepsut.

**Tutankhamen** Pharaoh of Egypt at the age of nine; died around age nineteen; also called King Tut; known for his tomb of treasures.

## V

**Virgil** Roman poet who wrote the *Aeneid*; considered the greatest Roman poet.

## W

**Wang Xizhi** Chinese calligrapher; credited by some as the Father of Calligraphy.

**Woolley, Leonard** Archaeologist who, in the 1920s, uncovered many treasures from Ur and the land of Sumer.

**Wu Ti** A Chinese emperor in the Han dynasty who greatly expanded China.

## X

**Xerxes** King of Persia; also called Ahasuerus; son of Darius.

## **Y**

**Yahweh** Hebrew name for the one true God.

**Yoritomo** Leader of the Minamoto clan; the first shogun, the supreme military leader of Japan; set up a military government called the shogunate.

## **Z**

**Zoroaster** Founder of Zoroastrianism in ancient Persia.