



— DICTIONARY —
of Daily Life

IN BIBLICAL & POST-BIBLICAL ANTIQUITY

Complete in One Volume
A-Z

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CITIES

In antiquity though only a small percentage of the population lived in them, cities were noted for their wealth and importance. The dense and differentiated population of cities included a wealthy elite and the mass of the poor. Estimates of city populations are often based on speculation, but where their area can be determined, scholars estimate between 100 persons per acre or 250 persons per hectare (ha. = 2½ acres), with possibly higher densities.

Ancient cities contained monumental buildings such as temples and the palaces of the rulers, as well as structures that came to be known as wonders of the ancient world. The Temple of Artemis, Babylon's Hanging Gardens, and the Lighthouse of Alexandria all represented the power and wealth of a great city. As hubs of transportation, cities served rulers as administrative centers, and many of the ancient texts that have been recovered were found in city palaces and temples.

A. THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Hebrew word translated “city,” *‘ir*, occurs 1,090 times in the Old Testament (cf. Aramaic *qiryâ* [Ezra 4:10]) but the word often designates towns or villages. Cities had dependent villages, *bānôt*, literally “daughters” (Num 21:25). A city was expressly stated to have walls whose gates were closed at night (Lev 25:29, 30; Neh 13:19). Disreputable persons such as traders, tanners, prostitutes, and beggars lived outside the walls. The only open space in Hebrew towns and cities was the area just inside the city gate. This space was reserved for meetings of citizens (cf. Ruth 4:1; Prov 1:21), the proclamation of judicial decrees (2 Chr 32:6; Neh 8:1–3), and the pursuit of commercial activity (2 Kgs 7:1).

Genesis 4:17 informs us, “Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch,” and from this foundation civilization developed. The important Assyrian cities of Ashur, Nineveh, and Calah are listed in

Genesis 10:11. The rebellion of humankind is epitomized by their attempt to build the Tower of Babel, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves” (Gen 11:4).

Abraham was called by God out of the great Sumerian city of Ur (Gen 11:28; cf. Neh 9:7), but as he was a Semite, who may have been born in the area of Haran (Gen 24:4–10; 28:2–10), he may have lived outside the walls of Ur in a tent (cf. Heb 11:9). Joseph and his family sojourned in Goshen in Egypt far from the capital cities of Memphis (Isa 19:13) and Thebes (“No-Ammon” in Nah 3:8). The Hebrew slaves may have helped to build the 19th Dynastic capital city of Per-Ramesses (Exod 1:11). When the Hebrews left Egypt to conquer Canaan, they encountered cities fortified with high walls (Deut 1:28; 3:5). The greatest of the Canaanite cities was Hazor (Josh 11:10–13) in the north, with an upper citadel of 30 acres and a lower city of 170 acres.

The invading Philistines established a pentapolis (“five cities”), three along the coast (Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ashdod), and two inland (Gath and Ekron). Further to the north along the Mediterranean coast the leading Phoenician cities such as Tyre (Ezek 27–28), Sidon, and Byblos had excellent harbors as well as stands of timber inland suitable for boat-building, enabling the Phoenicians to become the outstanding seamen of antiquity.

In the 10th c. BC David captured the Jebusite city called Jebus, which henceforth became the capital city of Jerusalem, also known as Zion (2 Sam 5:6, 7). The original city was located on what is now the southeastern ridge of the present city. That original site was protected by the Hinnom, Tyropoeon, and Kidron Valleys (to the south and east respectively) and was provided with water by the Gihon spring. Solomon would build the temple and his own palace to the north of the ridge and higher up the hill.

During the 9th c. BC, Omri and his son Ahab, kings of the breakaway northern kingdom, which was often referred to in the OT as “Israel” in contradistinction to the southern kingdom often referred to as “Judah,” established their rival capital of Samaria some 35 mi. north of Jerusalem. By the 8th c. BC Israelite cities experienced a housing crisis, when for the first time overcrowding became a serious problem. The disparity in wealth and oppression of the poor by the ruling class in the cities called forth the denunciation of injustices against the poor by the prophets Amos (6:8) and Hosea (8:14). Jonah, the reluctant prophet, was sent to the Assyrian city of Nineveh, an exceedingly great city by the standards of the day. The expression “three days’ journey” found in Jonah (3:3, KJV) is a literary expression for a large city and cannot literally be taken for the city wall’s known circumference, which was nowhere near 60 miles long (see the description of Nineveh below under section C.). Nineveh’s fall in 612 BC was foretold by Nahum.

In 732 BC the Assyrian Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC) destroyed the ancient city of Damascus, the capital city of the Arameans located north and east of Israel. Ten years later Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC) took the city of Samaria; and shortly thereafter Sargon II (721–705 BC) carried off 27,290 individuals from the region of Samaria and imported people from Mesopotamia to the region to take their place (2 Kgs 17). Refugees fleeing from the north at this time caused Hezekiah to enlarge Jerusalem in the southwestern area of the city, the so-called “Mishneh” (meaning “Second Quarter”). Through divine intervention Jerusalem was delivered from the siege of Sennacherib (704–681 BC) in 701 BC, but it was conquered by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar (604–562 BC) in 597 BC, who then returned to destroy the temple in 587 or 586 BC because of its continuing rebellion from his rule.

Many of the exiles from Judah taken to Mesopotamia must have been awed by the great city of Babylon, which Nebuchadnezzar had built (Dan 4:30). The majority of the Jewish settlers in that area seem to have lived in small autonomous settlements; the Murashu tablets attest to their engagement in society while retaining their Jewish identity as demonstrated by their Yahwistic names.

Babylon’s wickedness and fall were foretold by the prophets (Isa 47; Jer 50). With the capture of Babylon in 539 BC by the Achaemenid king Cyrus (559–530 BC), we find Jews at the royal court in the great Persian capital of Susa (Esth 1:2; 2:2–9). Cyrus authorized the Jews to return to Judah to rebuild their temple, which was not completed until 515 BC. Later, under the auspices of the Persian king, Artaxerxes I (464–425 BC), Nehemiah as governor of Jerusalem supervised the rebuilding of its walls in 445 BC.

Though Jerusalem herself was guilty of idolatry, she was still God’s holy city (Pss 46:4–5; 48:8) and a splendid renewed city was promised by the prophets (Isa 54:11–12; Jer 7; Ezek 40–48; Zech 2:4; 8:3, 5), a city covered with jewels with twelve gates, where children would play peacefully and joyously in the streets.

B. THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Greek word *polis*, translated “city,” often designates no more than a hamlet. For example, while Luke 2:4 calls Bethlehem a *polis*, John 7:42 more accurately calls it a *kōmē* (“village”). Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, was so insignificant that it is not mentioned in the Old Testament, Josephus, or the Mishnah. It is within four miles of a major city, Sepphoris, which is not mentioned in the Gospels. The other major city in Galilee also built by Herod Antipas was Tiberias, to the south of Capernaum on

the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is quite striking that apart from Jerusalem, and though Jesus traveled through the territory of Tyre and Sidon on the Mediterranean coast and the cities of the Decapolis east of the Sea of Galilee, his ministry was entirely conducted outside of cities, in contrast to Paul and the other apostles whose ministries were conducted mainly in cities.

Herod the Great (37–4 BC), in addition to the temple in Jerusalem, built many Greco-Roman structures such as theaters, baths, and temples in honor of Augustus, for example, at the great harbor which he built at Caesarea and at Samaria, which he renamed Sebaste in honor of the emperor. The Roman governors normally stayed with their troops at Caesarea.

Paul was on his way to root out Christians in Damascus, one of the cities of the Decapolis, when he had a dramatic spiritual about-face. The Decapolis, a league recognized by Pompey, consisted of ten cities, all located in Transjordan, with the exception of Scythopolis. When the early Christians were persecuted in Jerusalem, many fled to the great city of Antioch in Syria. Founded by Seleucus I ca. 300 BC, it is sited inland from the Mediterranean coast on the Orontes River. It was there that the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). And it was from Antioch that the church first sent out Saul (later renamed Paul), Barnabas, and Mark on a mission trip.

Paul and his companions on his second mission trip preached at the key cities of Philippi, a Roman colony on the European continent to the north of Greece, and Thessalonica on the key Via Egnatia in Macedonia. Paul then went by himself to the great city of Athens (Acts 17:16–34), where he expressed dismay at the idols of the city and where he had limited success in establishing the church. He had greater success at the key city of Corinth, which controlled the narrow isthmus connecting the Peloponnesus with the mainland, and which had two harbors (Lechaeum on the Gulf of Corinth to the west and Cenchrea on the Saronic Gulf to the east). Boats would be dragged over the relatively narrow (3.5 mi.) land bridge of the peninsula from one harbor to the other on a road constructed for that purpose rather than circumnavigate the Peloponnesus with its dangerous storms. (It would not be until 1893 that the Corinthian Canal, first debated in the 6th c. BC, was completed.) Corinth, which had been destroyed by the Romans after a revolt in 146 BC, had been re-founded by Caesar as a colony in 44 BC. The temple of Aphrodite with her sacred prostitutes loomed on the Acrocorinth above the city. Erastus, director of public works, was one of Paul's converts (Rom 16:23).

On his third journey Paul spent three years at the great metropolis of Ephesus (Acts 20:31), with its population of 180,000. Its pride was the great temple to Artemis, regarded as one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Its citizens gathered in its grand theater, which held 24,000 people, to denounce Paul, and shout their loyalty to their goddess (Acts 19:28–34). On his final return to Jerusalem Paul bypassed Ephesus and met the elders at the great Ionian city of Miletus (Acts 20:15–17), once famed for its pre-Socratic philosophers.

Having expressed his desire to come to Rome, Paul finally reached the capital city as a prisoner (Acts 28:16). He met with members of the church and also representatives of the 40,000 Jews settled in the capital.

John records messages from the risen Christ to seven cities in western Asia Minor (Rev 1:11), the most notable of which were Sardis, once the capital of Lydia, Smyrna, hailed as the most beautiful city in Ionia, and Pergamum, a lofty city with the second largest Hellenistic library and a grand altar to Zeus.

The author of Hebrews reminded his listeners: “But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb 12:22). John declared, “I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband” (Rev 21:2).

C. THE NEAR EASTERN WORLD

Early Mesopotamian cities

Both the Sumerian *URU* and the Akkadian *alum* designated large cities as well as small hamlets. The Akkadian *kārum* designated the trading area of a city, typically the harbor by the riverside.

Apart from recent discoveries of villages which clustered together to form a city near Tell Brak in northeastern Syria around 4000 BC, the earliest evidence for cities comes from southern Mesopotamia. Between 3200 and 2350 BC there was an “explosion” of cities. Then from 2350 to 1600 BC certain key cities developed into territorial states.

The earliest cities were based upon an irrigation culture, and were in effect city-states with their own ruler, an organized priesthood, an independent government, and a citizenry that was proficient in a wide range of arts and crafts. Such cities were generally rectangular in shape, and comprised a central core containing the temple of a deity, which also served as a center for the administration of the city. Close to this area was located the residence of the ruler. Surrounding these buildings were the houses of the citizens, divided into sectors.

Beyond the city walls were other houses and the agricultural land which the citizens tilled to produce crops and on which they raised their herds. The positioning of the buildings tended to be governed by such important considerations as the location of irrigation canals. Thus the average Sumerian city presented a haphazard appearance, with narrow irregular tracks serving as roads.

According to Mesopotamian tradition the earliest of five antediluvian cities was Eridu, extending some 800 acres, which held the E-Apsu temple of the god Ea/Enki. The largest and most important city was Uruk (biblical Erech), the home of the legendary king Gilgamesh, who was credited with building its walls, which extended a total of some six miles and had 900 semicircular towers. The city encompassed over 1,000 acres at its height. It contained the E-Anna temple dedicated to Inanna (Ishtar) and yielded our earliest cuneiform tablets.

The excavations of Ur, which was dedicated to the moon god (Nanna, Sin) have yielded fabulous royal treasures and grim evidence of human sacrifice in the Early Dynastic Era (ca. 2700 BC). It flourished in the Ur III period under Ur-Nammu (2112–2095 BC), who produced the first extant law code, and whose ziggurat is still partially preserved. Ur contained about 35,000 persons.

A prime example of early Bronze Age urbanization in Syria was Ebla (Tell Mardikh), the existence of which has only been known since 1964. At its height Ebla controlled more than a quarter million inhabitants. Ebla attained its greatest importance (2400–2250 BC) just before it was destroyed by Sargon of Agade. Its archives yielded 17,000 tablets written in Eblaite, a Semitic dialect hitherto unknown. The 140-acre city was surrounded by strong stone walls containing four city gates. Its upper area or acropolis contained the royal palace and administrative buildings, while the lower city was divided into four areas, each with its own city gate.

The most important religious center was Nippur, located in southern Mesopotamia, with the E-Kur temple for the god Enlil. The city of 800 acres has thus far yielded 60,000 cuneiform tablets, including major literary and religious compositions. Also found is a unique scaled map of the city (ca. 1500 BC), featuring its walls, gates, rivers, canals, temples, and a central park.

Kings who conquered a city customarily removed the idol of the patron god or goddess from the city, while its inhabitants lamented the abandonment of their city by their god as in the case of Ur, which was sacked by the Elamites ca. 2000 BC: “Nanna has abandoned Ur. . . . O Nanna, the shrine Ur has been destroyed, its people are dead” (“Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur,” *ANET*, 455, 461).

Assyria and Babylon

Assyrian kings built several capitals in the triangle between the confluence of the Zab Rivers (the Great Zab and the Little Zab) and the Tigris. The earliest capital was Ashur, dedicated to the god Ashur, which contained 34 temples and two palaces. The 150-acre city on the Tigris remained the religious capital of the Assyrians after other capitals were established. Upstream was Calah (modern Nimrud) which remained a capital for over a century. Its 900-acre area was encompassed by a four-and-a-half-mile wall, made up of approximately 70 million bricks. To celebrate the building of his great palace, Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BC) invited 69,754 guests for a ten-day banquet. His successor, Shalmaneser III (858–824 BC), built a fortress area for armament workshops, barracks, and a reviewing area for his armies, which would conquer areas in Syria.

The usurper Sargon II (721–705 BC) built a new city at a site called Khorsabad. He boasted: “The people and their possessions I carried off. Those cities I destroyed [e.g., Samaria] . . . At that time I built a city with (the labor) of the peoples of the lands which my hands had conquered . . . and I called its name Dûr-Sharrukîn” (*ARAB*, 2.3, 37). The palace and a four-story ziggurat were erected on a platform within the 600-acre city.

Today the best-known of the ancient Assyrian cities is Nineveh, with 1850 acres enclosed within a seven-mile wall. Its inner wall with fifteen gates enclosed Sennacherib’s (704–681 BC) “Palace without Rival,” as well as gardens, and a zoo. The stone reliefs of his palace depict in detail the king’s siege of Lachish in 701 BC. His grandson, Ashurbanipal (668–?627 BC), assembled an important library of 24,000 tablets, including the Gilgamesh and Creation Epics. The city fell in 612 BC to an attack of Medes and Chaldeans.

The largest city in the ancient Near East was Babylon, with 2500 acres (approximately 4 square miles). As Herodotus, who visited the city in the fifth century, observed, it was bisected by the Euphrates River and protected by moats and walls with towers at 65-foot intervals. It was most resplendent during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (604–561 BC), who boasted of his palace as “the marvel of mankind, the center of the land, the shining residence, the dwelling of majesty” (*CANE* 1.435). It contained the Esagila, the temple of Marduk, and the Etemenanki, a 300-foot-high ziggurat. For his Median wife Nebuchadnezzar built the famous “Hanging Gardens,” one of the Seven Wonders of the World. He adorned the broad processional way from the Ishtar Gate in the north with colorful glazed brick. A writer proclaimed, “Babylon is such that one is filled with joy looking at it, He who lives in Babylon, his life will be prolonged” (van de Mieroop, 43). Babylon fell without much fighting to the troops of Cyrus

(559–530 BC) in 539 BC, who then allowed the exiled Jews who wished to do so to return home.

Egypt

The most important city in Egypt during the Old Kingdom (2700–2200 BC) was Memphis, situated at the apex of the Delta on the west bank of the Nile. Tradition held that it was established by Menes, the first pharaoh who unified Lower (northern) Egypt and Upper (southern) Egypt. It was sacred to the god Ptah. The name of the temple of Ptah, *Hiku-Ptah*, gave rise to the Greek *Aiguptos* or “Egypt.” Beyond it lay vast necropolis areas including Saqqara, with the first “step” pyramid and Giza, the location of the great pyramid of Khufu (Cheops), one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The name of Pepy I’s pyramid *Mennufer* (Coptic *Menfe*) gave rise to the Greek “Memphis.”

During the Middle and New Kingdom eras (2000–1200 BC), the most important city became Thebes in Upper Egypt, situated on both banks of the Nile. Its patron deity was Amun, and its Egyptian name was *Waset*. According to Theban tradition, the city came into being at creation: “Waset city is the pattern for every city, . . . then mankind came into being within her; to found every city in her true name since all are called ‘city’ after the example of Waset” (Seton-Williams and Stocks, 536). Today its ruins are known as Luxor after the Arabic *El-Uqsur* (“castles”).

Thebes led in the crusade against the invading Hyksos, whose capital was at Avaris in the northeastern Delta. Theban rulers included the famous queen Hatshepsut (1479–1457 BC), who ruled as a pharaoh, and her stepson, Tuthmosis III (1457–1425 BC), the greatest Egyptian general. These rulers built two massive temple complexes including Karnak to the north and Luxor to the south. Pharaohs added to these structures for nearly a millennium, including the massive hypostyle hall of Ramesses II (1279–1213 BC) at Karnak. They also erected numerous pylons and obelisks to commemorate their victories and achievements.

On the west bank of the Nile, Amenhotep III (1386–1349 BC) built his palace at Malqata, and a mortuary temple marked by the two colossal statues ascribed to “Memnon” by the Greeks. Also very striking are the mortuary temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahri at the base of a sheer cliff, and the mortuary temple of Ramesses III (1185–1154 BC) at Medinet Habu, with detailed depictions of the Sea Peoples such as the Philistines who attacked Egypt ca. 1175 BC. Beyond this area is the Valley of the Kings, where pharaohs such as Tutankhamun (1340–1331 BC) were buried.

It was from Thebes that pharaohs such as Sesostris III (1874–1855 BC) extended Egyptian control south to Kush (Cush), from whence they

obtained the gold which made Egypt fabulously wealthy. About 1500 BC, Tuthmosis III captured the great Kushite capital city of Kerma near the Third Cataract on the Nile. Covering 60 acres, Kerma was the first and the largest city in Africa. Its cemeteries contained up to 25,000 burials with evidence of hundreds of human sacrifices in honor of their kings.

For a brief interlude of eleven years Thebes was abandoned by the heretic pharaoh who changed his name from Amenhotep IV to Akhenaten (1356–1340 BC), to signal his monotheistic devotion to Aten, the sun-disk. In the middle stretch of the Nile on the east bank he established the new city of Akhetaten (Amarna). In a radical departure from the traditional temples with their dark cellae for the gods, his temples were open to the sun. Also radically innovative were naturalistic paintings and sculptures of the royal family in the new “Amarna” style.

The North Suburb of Amarna had about 300 houses and two palaces. In the central area were the Great Palace with state apartments, and the Great Temple with 1,800 offering tables. The “Amarna Letters,” which were accidentally discovered by a peasant woman in 1887, came from the Records Office. These included correspondence of the pharaohs Amenhotep III and Akhenaten with numerous kings in Anatolia, Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. From a sculptor’s workhouse emerged the celebrated bust of Nefertiti. To the east was a walled workmen’s village with about 70 houses.

In the 19th Dynasty, Ramesses II (1279–1213 BC), who has been identified as the pharaoh of the Exodus by advocates of the Late Date for that event, completely rebuilt Avaris as his capital city, Per-Ramesses, “The House of Ramesses.” This city on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, which covered an enormous area of four square miles, contained palaces, a military base, administrative buildings, gardens, and a harbor. A scribe declared: “I have reached Per-Ramesses and have found it in [very] good condition, a beautiful district without its like, after the pattern of Thebes. It was [Re] himself [who founded it]” (*ANET*, 471). Per-Ramesses is probably the Pi-Ramesses of Exod 1:11.

D. THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

Greek City-states

The Greek word *polis* included more than the city proper, the *astu*; it also included the surrounding countryside and designated a city-state. Such city-states arose in the Archaic Age (8th–7th c. BC). The proliferation of many *poleis* in Greece with pockets of limited agricultural land created

fiercely independent settlements, each devoted to its patron deity and ancestral traditions. Some cities, such as Athens and Corinth, were blessed with a high point of land, the acropolis of the city. All had agoras for commercial and public activities including a *prytaneion* or town hall, and a *bouleuterion* or building for its elected council. All had walls—with the exception of Sparta, which relied on its formidable army. Most had stoas or colonnaded porticoes, theaters on hillsides, and gymnasia for athletic exercise and lectures.

Aristotle describes 158 city-states, most quite small, some with as few as 700 or 800 male citizens. Athens was the largest with 40,000 adult citizens and a total population of about 200,000, covering 550 acres. It had an excellent harbor at Piraeus four miles away and silver mines at Laurium. In the 5th c. BC only three other cities had 20,000 or more citizens; Argos in the Peloponnesus and the Greek colonies of Syracuse and Acragas in Sicily.

In his celebrated funeral oration, recorded by Thucydides, Pericles contrasted the great merits of Athens with its xenophobic rival city Sparta, “In a word, then, I say that our city as a whole is the school (*paideusin*) of Hellas” (*Hist.* 2.41). Sparta, however, defeated Athens in the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC) and ordered Athens to dismantle its walls. Because Athenian democracy condemned his teacher Socrates to death in 399 BC, Plato admired Spartan government and held that there should be no more than 5,040 citizens in his ideal *polis* (*Leg.* 5.737d–738e).

In Athens it was in the gymnasium of the Academy where Plato taught and the gymnasium of the Lyceum where his student Aristotle walked around and established his “Peripatetic” philosophy. Zeno, who established Stoicism, taught in the agora’s *Stoa Poikile* (“the Painted Porch”). Cynic philosophers such as Diogenes in the Hellenistic era proclaimed that they were members of a universal *cosmopolis* rather than citizens of a particular city. With the rise of Alexander and his successors’ kingdoms, city-states lost their political independence, but not their cultural significance. The wealth of the Ptolemaic kings lured such scholars as Theophrastus, the disciple of Aristotle, to Alexandria thus making that city the foremost intellectual center. Though Athens was eclipsed, Heraclides of Crete (3rd c. BC) was still able to write: “If you haven’t seen Athens, you’re a stump. If you’ve seen [it] unamazed, you’re a donkey (*onos*). If after being charmed by it you leave, you’re an ass (*kanthēlios*)” (Heraclides, *On the Greek City* 1.5).

In the 5th c. BC, Hippodamus of Miletus is credited with establishing a pre-ordained city plan at Piraeus and Thurii in Italy, which featured land allocated in advance, for religious, public, and private quarters, in an orthogonal grid of oblong blocks, generally 100 by 50 meters in length and width.

Legend has credited Alexander with establishing 70 cities named after himself as he conquered the Persian Empire, though only about eight can be identified. During his campaign in Egypt he founded the greatest of these Alexandrias in 331 BC. It was designed in a Hippodamian fashion by Deinocrates of Rhodes in 311 BC. The unusual siting of Alexandria includes the Pharos Island, later the site of the lighthouse which was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. This was connected to the mainland by the Heptastadion (seven stades) bridge, on either side of which were located harbors. The city, which was located north of Lake Mareotis, had broad avenues, the tomb of Alexander, the Museum, which was a research institute, and the greatest library of the ancient world. Alexandria eventually had 180,000 male citizens, all descendants of Macedonians and Greeks. Two of the five districts were settled by numerous Jews, who were allowed a measure of autonomy. In Alexandria under the sponsorship of Ptolemy II the Hebrew Torah was translated into the Greek version, known as the Septuagint.

In Ptolemaic Egypt there were only three other Greek cities: Naucratis, a trading emporium in the Delta, which had been given to the Greeks by Psammetichus I in the 7th c. BC, the city of Ptolemais, and the city of Paraetionium in Libyan territory. Citizens of all these cities were self-governing and were exempt from taxation.

Roman Cities

Romans dated their history from the legendary founding of Rome, A.U.C. = *ab urbe condita* (753 BC), by Romulus and Remus upon seven hills on the east bank of the Tiber near an island in the middle of the stream fifteen miles upriver from its mouth at Ostia. The oldest settlement was on the Palatine Hill. The temple of Jupiter was erected on the Capitoline Hill. The low marshy area became the forum, where the Senate building, the temple to Vesta, basilicas for court cases, and the rostrum for speakers were built.

With the expulsion of the last Etruscan king in 509 BC, Rome became a Republic, governed by two annually elected consuls. It gradually expanded its territories against the Etruscans to the north and the Samnites and Greek colonies such as Neapolis (Naples) to the south. In fighting three wars against the great Punic city of Carthage, a colony of Tyre, in North Africa, Rome acquired its first overseas territories in Sicily. Rome planted colonies throughout Italy, granting their inhabitants full citizenship rights, and then continued to do so as it expanded throughout western Europe and the eastern Mediterranean world. It sometimes granted existing cities rights as a *civitas* or Roman city. These cities would function as instruments of imperial policy, and would vie with each other for imperial favor.

A new colony such as those established on the remains of Carthage and Corinth, both destroyed in 146 BC, would begin with a survey, and then the parceling out of plots of land to veterans. A major north-south road, the *cardo maximus*, would intersect with a major west-east road, the *decumanus*, the two meeting at the forum. Roman cities typically had a temple to Jupiter, a basilica for court cases, baths, and amphitheaters for gladiatorial games. Wealthy patrons would erect lavish buildings such as the Stoa of Attalos at Athens, and the Library of Celsus at Ephesus. The governing of cities, especially the collection of taxes, was entrusted to the wealthy *decuriones*, town councilors.

The city of Rome itself is estimated to have held nearly a million people in the 1st c. AD, the majority of them foreigners. Most lived in squalid multi-storied *insulae* or apartment buildings. Only the few wealthy senators could afford a private *domus*, and they preferred to live in their country villas when they could.

Augustus claimed that he had found a city of brick, and transformed it by erecting marble edifices, though he himself lived in a very modest home. He divided Rome into fourteen districts, and appointed *vigiles* to serve as a police and fire brigade, with a force of 7,000 men. The shoddy construction of the buildings, and the use of braziers for cooking, presented a constant fire hazard. After the devastating fire of the city in AD 64, Paul and Peter perished in the persecutions unleashed by Nero upon the Christians to deflect the wide suspicion that the emperor himself had set the fires so that he could build his Nova Roma and his *domus aureus* or “Golden House.”

Vespasian destroyed the latter and built the Flavian amphitheater (the Colosseum) in its place. Domitian erected the Arch of Titus, commemorating his brother’s capture of Jerusalem in AD 70. He also erected his colossal palace on the Palatine Hill, overlooking the Circus Maximus, where 250,000 people could view the exciting chariot races.

The eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 perfectly preserved the buildings of Pompeii, which had had a population of 20,000. The nearby city of Herculaneum was also overwhelmed by a wave of hot volcanic material. Much of the port city of Ostia, which was abandoned in Late Antiquity due to malaria, has also been preserved, including numerous temples to foreign deities such as Mithras.

Virgil praised the god-fated destiny of Rome, founded by the descendants of the Trojan Aeneas, in his masterpiece, the *Aeneid*. The historian Livy asserted, “There is no part of the city that is not full of holiness, full of the godhead” (*Rom. Hist.* 5.52.2). The satirists, however, decried the filth, the crime, the crowds, and other unpleasant aspects of the city, such as its noise: “Here at Rome very many invalids die from insomnia, although it’s food undigested and clinging to the fevered stomach that induces the

malaise in the first place. Which lodging allows you to rest, after all? You have to be very rich to get sleep in Rome” (Juv. *Sat.* 3.232–236). Lucian has Nigrinus, a Platonic philosopher, exclaim: “And wouldst behold the turmoil of Rome: slander and insolence and gluttony, flatterers and false friends, legacy hunters and murderers!” (*Nigr.* 17).

E. THE JEWISH WORLD

The sectarians of Qumran, who considered the Jerusalem temple corrupt, envisaged “A Vision of the New Jerusalem,” which would be 140 stades (18.7 mi.) wide east and west, and 100 stades (13.3 mi.) north and south. Twelve gates would be named after the twelve tribes. The longest of the Dead Sea Scrolls, *The Temple Scroll*, gave detailed descriptions of the new temple, including such matters as the location of latrines.

Herod the Great (37–4 BC) rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem on a huge platform. Its splendor was world-renowned. Final work on the temple was completed just a few years before it was destroyed by Titus in AD 70 after the Jews had rebelled against Rome. Thereafter the Tenth Roman legion was quartered in Jerusalem. When the Jews rebelled a second time under Bar Kochba in AD 132–135, the emperor Hadrian renamed the city Aelia Capitolina and banned Jews from the city.

After the first revolt, Johanan b. Zakkai, the leader of the Pharisees, petitioned Vespasian to leave him “Yavneh and its sages.” Yavneh (also called Jamnia) was a small city south of Joppa (Jaffa). The Sanhedrin moved to Yavneh and the Pharisees managed to survive and develop rabbinic Judaism there.

After the second revolt the Sanhedrin moved to Galilee, where the key city was Tzippori (Greek Sepphoris). Many famous rabbis lived there including Judah ha-Nasi, “the Prince,” who edited the Mishnah. Tzippori had at least sixteen synagogues. When the Romans prohibited the performance of the Jewish rituals, the Jews performed their rites secretly, for example, reading the Esther scroll at night rather than during the day.

After the death of Judah ha-Nasi, the Sanhedrin and patriarchate moved to Tiberias, where famous scholars such as Rabbi Meir and Jose the Galilean taught. That city of 200 acres had 40,000 inhabitants and thirteen synagogues. Jerome consulted with one of the rabbis from Tiberias to learn Hebrew.

Nisibis, a city in northeast Syria, 300 miles east of Antioch, had a strong Jewish community. The Jews were active as traders along the caravan routes eastward. Because of the strong Jewish community at Nisibis, Christianity made no headway there until about AD 300.

Another city which showed extraordinary Jewish vitality was Sardis in western Asia Minor. Josephus (*Ant.* 14.259–261) cited an important decree

from the Romans granting the Jewish community autonomy and the right to have a place of worship there. Excavations have recovered inscriptions revealing the role of Jews as shopkeepers, goldsmiths, and even as members of the city's council. What is most exceptional is the granting of the gymnasium complex to the Jews for use as a synagogue (ca. AD 200). The huge building was about 200 ft. long and 60 ft. wide, with a forecourt that was an additional 130 ft.—the largest synagogue from the ancient world yet recovered. The prominence of the Jews at Sardis probably provoked Melito (fl. late 2nd c. AD), the bishop there, to preach his strongly anti-Jewish sermon on the Pasch (Easter).

F. THE CHRISTIAN WORLD

The Shepherd of Hermas counseled, “‘You know,’ he said, ‘that you who are servants of God are living in a foreign country, for your city is far from this city. If, therefore, you know,’ he said, ‘your city in which you are destined to live, why do you prepare fields and expensive possessions and buildings and useless rooms here?’” (*Herm. Simil.* 1).

Heeding the warning of Jesus, Christians fled Jerusalem prior to its destruction in AD 70 for Pella in the Transjordan, one of the cities of the Decapolis (Eus. *Hist. eccl.* 3.5.2–3). As most early Christians were Jewish, they were also affected by Hadrian's expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem.

An important early Christian center was Antioch, where Ignatius, its bishop, developed the principle of monepiscopacy, that is, one bishop in a given city overseeing all the presbyters or priests. On his way to martyrdom in Rome he wrote seven letters, including one to a fellow bishop and martyr, Polycarp of Smyrna, who had contact with the apostle John. In the reign of Marcus Aurelius, many transplanted Asian Christians in the city of Lugdunum (Lyon) in the Rhône River Valley of France were martyred. One of these who survived, Irenaeus, became an influential bishop, who denounced gnostic heresies.

A late tradition (Eusebius) has Mark founding the church in Alexandria. Christianity spread westward to Cyrene, probably through converts who had been at Jerusalem at Pentecost. Christianity is attested in Carthage around AD 200. This city produced the leading Latin apologist Tertullian, and later the martyr bishop Cyprian. Christianity also spread eastward from Antioch to Edessa, where believers spoke and wrote in Syriac.

A key theological center was Alexandria. Scholars such as Clement and Origen, who later moved to Caesarea, followed the Jewish philosopher Philo in interpreting Scriptures in an allegorical fashion. This clashed with the more literal interpretation advocated by leaders in Antioch. The

Alexandrian bishops such as Athanasius and Cyril emphasized the deity of Christ, while the Antiochenes such as Theodore and Nestorius emphasized the humanity of Christ.

The conversion of the emperor Constantine in AD 312 at the battle of the Milvian Bridge in Rome led to the Edict of Milan in the following year which granted Christians toleration. Though Constantine established churches, such as St. Peter's in Rome, his decision in AD 330 to move his capital eastward to Byzantium, which would be renamed Constantinople, drastically reduced Rome's political importance. Constantine granted civic status to Christian communities at Antaradus and Maiuma in Palestine, which were detached from their pagan counterpart cities of Arad and Gaza.

The Germanic Goths, who were Arian Christians, burst through the Roman frontiers, defeating the Byzantine emperor at Adrianople in AD 381. They then moved westward to sack Rome in AD 410, the first time the city had fallen to an invader in eight centuries. Jerome, who was then in Bethlehem, recorded his dismay at the news: "After that the brightest of earthly lights went out, when, truly, the very head of the Roman Empire was cut off, when, to speak yet more truly, the whole world perished along with a single city then I fell silent and was abashed, and spoke not, and my sorrow was renewed: my heart within me was afire, a flame broke through my meditations" (*Comm. Ezech.* 1.3).

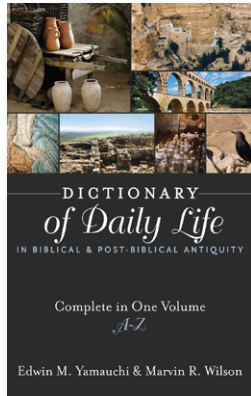
It was to counter the accusations of the pagans that this calamity was due to Christianity that Augustine composed his great masterpiece, *De civitate Dei*, "The City of God," to argue that there were two cities: the earthly City of Man which would perish, and the heavenly City of God which was imperishable. He wrote: "Accordingly, two cities have been formed by two loves: the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God; the heavenly by the love of God, even to the contempt of self. The former, in a word, glories in itself, the latter in the Lord. For the one seeks glory from men; but the greatest glory of the other is God, the witness of conscience" (*Civ.* 14.28).

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RKH and EMY

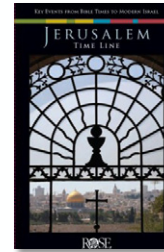
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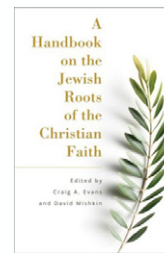
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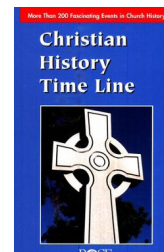
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