

## **Lecture One: A Brief History of History!**

It would be impossible to understand the Bible properly without a basic working knowledge of its **setting in both Geography and History.**

### **We begin with a time line of Middle Eastern History**

**Prehistoric Times:** Generally recognized as the period “before recorded History”. There are no written records. It spans the time from the earliest verification of Human presence until the evidence of large communities and cities.

Prehistoric times can be divided

1. Paleolithic Period – 14,000 B.C.E. (some scientists believe 2.5 million years ago)

At. Any rate we know that the term comes from the work of John Lubbock, biologist and archaeologist around 1885. (from the Greek *palaios* (ancient) and *lithos* – meaning stone.

2. Mesolithic Period – 14000 B.C.E. – 8000 B.C.E. The term also comes from the work of John Lubbock. The word "Mesolithic" is derived from the Greek words *mesos*, meaning "middle", and *lithos*, meaning "stone". Scientists see evidence of the development of basic human technology during this period.

3. Neolithic Period 8000 B.C.E. – 3200 B.C.E. Referred to as the “New Stone age” (Greek: Neos Lithos ) Begins with evidence that people were farming and developing use of livestock, and ending with evidence that people were beginning to use metal tools.

4. Chalcolithic Period ( Copper Period) – 4000 B.C.E. – 3200 B.C.E. (Greek *khalkos* + *lithos* copper & stone) in which the use of early metal tools appeared in addition to the use of stone tools.

### **Ancient Times**

From the area known as the Fertile Crescent or the Cradle of Civilization, come the earliest written records we have. There are records of the empires of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Anatolia.

The times of Ancient history can be divided:

Early Bronze Age 3200 – 2000 B.C.E.

Middle Bronze Age 2000 to 1550 B.C.E.

Late Bronze Age 1550 to 1200 B.C.E.

During this time people began the development of metallurgy.

There are some cultures that have extensive written records during their Bronze Age.

### **Iron Age 1200 to 332 B.C.E.**

*The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah belong to this time*

**Classical Times** refers to the time when the Middle East was culturally centered around Greek and Latin Speaking peoples.

The times of Classical history can be divided:

Hellenistic Period 332 to 63 B.C.E.

Roman Period 63 B.C.E. to 324 A.D. (Common Era I prefer to use the term A.D.)

Byzantine Period 324 A.D. – 640 A.D.

**The Medieval Period** (Islamic Medieval Times) By 640 A.D. Palestine and a large portion of the Middle east was under the rule of the Arabs. As we know, since that time the dominant culture has been influenced by Arabians and Islam.

The times of the Islamic Medieval Period can be divided:

The Early Islamic Period 640 – 1099

Crusader Period 1099 –1260

Mamluk Period 1260 to 1517

Ottoman Period (Empire) 1517 –1918

Modern Times (WW1 and the fall of the Ottoman Empire onward)

NOTE: The people of Israel and Judea are “late Arrivals” historically

There are at least two thousand years of recorded history, and cultural advancements **before the time** of the foundation of Israelite and Judean History.

**During the Late Bronze age** (1550 –1200 B.C.E.) Egypt was the main force in the Middle East, including Palestine. Their main enemy and competitor was the Hittite Empire, which was located in Anatolia (Turkey) they fought and made peace, but as the century ended both empires collapsed. The collapse may have been hastened by a variety of invaders and nomadic peoples who were migrating through and into the area at the time.

There is a stone slab known as the “Merneptah Stele” (Greek for Monument) engraved with a description of Pharaoh Merneptah’s military victories in Africa and the Near East.

It was discovered by British archaeologist Flinders Petrie in Thebes in 1896.

The Merneptah Stele (picture Below) is the earliest non biblical reference to the nation of Israel ever discovered. The mention of Israel simply states, “Israel is laid waste, its seed is not.” It indicates that at the time the inscription was engraved, the nation of Israel was significant enough to be included by name among the other major city-states which were defeated by Merneptah in the late 13th century B.C. Because of this information, we can safely assume that there was a group of people calling itself Israel, living and occupying the land of Canaan in 1220 B.C.E.

