Ancient City of Ur
(Mesopotamian Civilization)

Virtual Field Trip
By Bradley Lavite

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This virtual field trip explores three aspects of the ancient City of UR. Follow the links below to explore this ancient city which dates back roughly eight-thousand years!

- Historical Significance
- Archaeological Excavation
- Unearthed Artifacts

Conclusion

Home
Historical Significance

The ancient City of Ur is a Sumerian City formerly, known as the Ur of the Chaldees. Named after the Chaldeans, a people who settled there between 6200-6500 B.C. The city is said to be the birthplace of Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim) and the beginnings of the belief in one almighty God.
Historical Significance

The Sumerians came from the highlands of northern Anatolia around 3000 B.C. and settled in the area of Ur about 900 B.C. The Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim) was born in 570 B.C. of Aazar and later married Sarah before emigrating from UR to continue calling people to Allah, the one God.
Historical Significance

From UR Abraham, his wife Sarah, and nephew Lot, born of his brother Haran emigrated to Egypt calling people to Allah, the one God. They left Ur for Egypt because Abraham believed that no one was going to follow in his call to Allah.
Additional Information

For more information on Abraham, his wife Sarah, and his nephew Lot’s journey please visit the links below!
Web Links

Click on a link below to access more information!

Abraham

Ur

Sumerians

Iraq
ABRAHAM, MAN OF GOD

As the recipient of God’s promise to make a great nation and to give the land of Canaan to that nation, Abraham was revered in the Old Testament as the forefather of the Israelites, who were called “the offspring of Abraham [Is. 41:8].”

The first sentence of the Gospel of Matthew declares that Jesus was descended from Abraham, and elsewhere in the New Testament the extraordinary faith of the patriarch was held up as an example to all. Abraham was seen as not only the progenitor of the Jews but the spiritual father of all the faithful, Gentile as well as Jew. Thus Paul wrote to the Galatians: “So you see that it is men of faith who are the sons of Abraham [Gal. 3:7].” In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus described the envy of the rich man in Hades of Lazarus, the poor man who is “carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom [Lk. 16:22]”—a phrase that gave Christians a metaphor for heaven.

Undeniably, the appeal of Abraham’s unflinching faith largely accounted for his prominence in the New Testament. Quoting from Genesis, Paul wrote to the Romans: “For what does the scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’ . . . The promise to Abraham and his descendants, that they should inherit the world, did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith [Rom. 4:3].”

Throughout the Bible (and in the Koran as well, for Muslims consider him a great prophet), Abraham appears as a man whose life was a shining example of faith in action.
Historical Lineage

Aazar

Nahor  Abraham  Haran

Ishmael  Ishaq  Lot
Historical Journey

• Abraham’s preaching took him from the City of Ur to the Egyptian Empire!
Historical Journey

• Abraham’s journey followed what is known as the Fertile Crescent!
Archaeological Excavation

• The ruins of Ur were found and first excavated by the British consul J.E. Taylor, who partly uncovered the ziggurat of Nanna. The British Museum began excavations there in 1919 and was joined later by the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania.
Archaeological Excavation

• The expedition completely excavated the ziggurat, the entire temple area at Ur, and parts of the residential and commercial quarters of the city. The most spectacular discovery was the Royal Cemetery. It contained art treasures of gold, silver, bronze, and precious stones.
Archaeological Excavation

• The Ur site excavated by C. Leonard Woolley contained about 1800 burials. Woolley classified 16 of these as "royal" based on their distinctive form, their wealth, and the fact that they contained burials of servants and other high-ranking personages along with the "royal" person.
Archaeological Excavation

• Sir Leonard Woolley
  – Credited with the excavation of the City of Ur, Iraq 1922-1934.
  – Published over 25 archaeological books.
City of Ur Site Layout

- Site was buried underneath 15 feet of blowing silt and sand.
- Excavation process was tedious due to the extreme weather at Ur.

View Weather at City of Ur
City of Ur Site Layout

Ziggurat of Ur

Burial Sites

Dwelling Quarters
City of Ur Site Layout

- Dwelling Quarters
- Burial Sites
- Ziggurat of Ur

Read About
The Tower of Babel
The Tower of Babel

Why did the people build a tower?

The table of nations in Genesis 10 shows that after the flood, Noah’s descendants multiplied rapidly and spread across the earth.

The story of the tower of Babel is set, perhaps, in the fifth generation after Noah, in the time of Peleg, when “the earth was divided.” As people migrated from the east, they came to a plain in the land of Shinar, where the mighty hunter Nimrod established the cities of his kingdom. Shinar has been identified as the part of Mesopotamia called Babylonia, an ancient region of the Tigris-Euphrates basin in what is present-day Iraq.

After their arrival in Mesopotamia, the people learned to manufacture not only sun-baked bricks, such as those used in the construction of common dwellings, but also kiln-fired bricks that were strong enough to support massive structures. For mortar they used bitumen, a substance easily scooped from tar pits in this oil-rich region—a technique of masonry that was common only in Mesopotamia. Archeology confirms the detailed account in Genesis of this technological breakthrough.

With this technical know-how, the people undertook a great project: the building of a city and “a tower with its top in the heavens.” Such a grand accomplishment, they reasoned, would keep them strong and make them famous.

BABEL. The word Babel was well known in ancient times. It was the name of the great Mesopotamian city-state of Babylon.

The Genesis writer plays on the similar sounds of Babel and balal, a Hebrew word for confuse: “Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused [balal] the language of all the earth [Gen. 11:9].”

Despite their similarity in sound, and despite what many believe, there is no link between Babel and the English word babble—though God’s act of stopping the building no doubt raised an unintelligible babble of tongues among the people of the world.

Some students of the Bible have suggested that mankind wanted to storm the heavens with this ancient skyscraper, but the biblical text does not support such a notion.

What was wrong with building a tower?

Genesis offers no explanation for God’s displeasure, but a common interpretation is that by deciding to build a tower that would unify and strengthen them, the people had put themselves...
Ziggurats

A ziggurat is a colossal stepped platform similar to pyramids and built as a holy site to honor various gods.
"Ziggurats were a form of temple common to the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians. The earliest examples date from the end of the third millennium BC, the latest from the 6th century BC. The ziggurat was a pyramidal structure, built in receding tiers upon a rectangular, oval, or square platform, with a shrine at the summit.
Ziggurats

The core of the ziggurat was sun-baked bricks, and the facings were fired bricks, glazed in different colors, which are thought to have cosmological significance.
Ziggurats

Access to the summit shrine was provided by a series of ramps on one side or by a continuous spiral ramp from base to summit. The number of tiers ranged from two to seven. Notable examples are the ruins at Ur and Khorsabad in Mesopotamia. The Mayan people of Central America built similar structures." - Encyclopedia.com
The Ziggurat at Ur

The Ziggurat at Ur was built as a tribute to the God “Sin” and was called “Etemennigur,” which meant “a house whose foundation creates terror.”
Additional Information

Click on a link below to access more information!

Ziggurat of Ur Pictures

Web Links

Archaeological Excavation

Unearthed Artifacts
Web Links

Click on a link below to access more information!

Leonard Woolley

Conclusion

Ziggurats
Unearthed Artifacts

The excavation of the site at the City of Ur uncovered numerous artifacts. In this section viewer will see some of the historical artifacts found during Leonard Woolley’s 1920 archaeological digs.

- Ram
- Standard
- Mask
- Boat
- Lyre
Ram Caught in a Thicket

- Excavated: Royal Tomb of Lady PU-Abi’s.
- Dated: 2,600 B. C.
- Description: Supports for an offering table.
- Locations Held: University of Pennsylvania.

See Artifact
Click Here
Ram Caught in a Thicket
The Standard of Ur

- Excavated: Found laying in the corner of a private grave above a head of a man, Ur.
- Dated: 2,650-2,400 B.C.
- Description: Icons of peace and war.
- Locations Held: British Museum in London.
The Standard of Ur
Silver Boat

- Excavated: Royal Tomb of King Abargi, Ur.
- Materials: Silver.
- Dated: 2,650-2,400 B.C.
- Description: Boat Gilgamesh might have used on his voyage to seek Utnapishtim.
- Locations Held: Baghdad Museum.
Golden Bull Lyre

- Excavated: Royal Tomb of King Abargi, Ur.
- Dated: 2,750 B.C.
- Description: Lyre with golden bull's head used by the king's court.
- Locations Held: Baghdad Museum.
Golden Bull Lyre
Royal Assyria Mask

- Excavated: Royal Tomb of a High Priestess in the Gipar-ku, Ur.
- Materials: Colored bitumen with glass inlays.
- Dated: 2,650-2,400 B.C.
- Description: Inlay from the great temple.
- Locations Held: Baghdad Museum.
Royal Assyria Mask
Additional Information

Click on a link below to access more information!

- Excavation
- Site Pictures
- Web Links

Unearthed Artifacts

Conclusion
Excavation Site Pictures
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Excavation Site Pictures
Excavation
Site Pictures
Ziggurat of Ur
Pictures
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Ziggurat of Ur Pictures
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