

MEET THE HITTITES



As states grew and competed for land and resources, the more favorably situated — **including the Hittites, who had access to iron**— had greater access to resources, produced more surplus food, and experienced growing populations. These states were able to undertake territorial expansion and conquer surrounding states.

HITTITE HIGHLIGHTS:

FOUNDED: 1750 BCE?

FOUNDER: PITHANA?

CAPITAL: KUSSARA, LATER HATTUSHA

LANGUAGE: HITTITE

RELIGION: POLYTHEISTIC

NEIGHBORS: EGYPT, ASSYRIA, TROY, BABYLON

MAJOR CAMEO: THE BIBLE (*GENESIS 10*)

CLAIM TO FAME: IRON & CHARIOTS

It wasn't until around the time of 2000 B.C. that the Indo-European speaking Hittites started to appear in the northern part of Asia Minor, a very fertile region in which a crucial element appeared. This key element was iron. About 350 years later around 1650 B.C. the Hittites started building an empire. As time went on they ended up expanding into more of Asia Minor, seized northern Syria from the Egyptians, and expanded into northern Mesopotamia, where they conquered the Babylonians.

While conquering the Babylonians the Hittites gained a lot of important knowledge that would later help them to improve their empire. The Hittites were not as advanced as the great people of Mesopotamia, but with the knowledge that was gained the Hittite culture began to flourish. The Hittites began to extract iron from ore. By doing this they figured out how to make tools and weapons out of iron. They would heat the iron until it was red-hot and then pound out the impurities and then plunge it into cold water to harden it; thus allowing the edges to become stronger and sharper than the usual bronze or copper weapons. This is one of the key discoveries that made the Hittites such a famous civilization. Now with the technology of making iron tools and weapons, this allowed the Hittite Military to arm more people at a very lesser expense. The Hittites were very warlike people, noted for their intense ferocity.

The use of iron tools and weapons was a very important discovery in which the Hittites tried to keep as few people as possible from knowing about it. But this was a very hard task to carry out. As their empire collapsed around 1200 B.C. the ironsmiths migrated to other parts of the country. This new knowledge began to spread into Asia, Africa, and Europe, thus ushering the Iron Age.

The Hittites adopted Old Babylonian laws, but these laws were greatly modified. These laws were far more merciful than the laws of the Old Babylonians, perhaps because the Hittites were less concerned about maintaining a rigid central authority. Unlike the Babylonian laws there only a handful of crimes in which were under the category of capital crimes.

Along with adopting the laws, the Hittites also adopted many of their gods as well. The Hittites believed that all gods were legitimate gods. Whenever the Hittites conquered a certain group, they adopt the gods in which that group believed in.

The Assyrians were responsible for the folding of the Hittite Empire. The Assyrians began to move into larger parts of the Fertile Crescent. Eventually taking over the Hittites. However this empire flourished for about 450 years.



1750 BCE-1180 BCE

