

Who were the Ancient Persians?

Name _____

The Persian Empire was established in 550 BCE by Cyrus II, also known as Cyrus the Great. Before this time, Persia had been a vassal state to a group of people known as the Medes, who had ruled over Persia for approximately 150 years.

In 550, however, Cyrus led a successful revolt against the Medes and won Persian independence. After winning independence, Cyrus decided to expand his territory. He conquered a great deal of land in the Middle East, and the emperors after Cyrus continued his legacy of conquest. Darius I and his son Xerxes, for example, both attempted to conquer Greece, beginning a series of conflicts between Greece and Persia known as the Persian Wars.

Zoroastrianism was a religion that became widely practiced in the Persian Empire during the mid-500s BCE and was based on the teachings of a man named Zoroaster. Zoroaster believed that the world had been created by a god named Ahura Mazda.

Zoroastrianism was perhaps one of the first religions to teach dualism, which is the belief that the world is governed by the opposing forces of good and evil. To Zoroaster, Ahura Mazda was the source of everything good and true in the world. In contrast, Ahura Mazda was opposed by the evil spirit Ahriman. Zoroaster believed that people should fight against evil forces by telling the truth and by doing good deeds.

Who were the Ancient Greeks?

The Ancient Greeks were people who lived along the eastern Mediterranean Sea in southern Europe and western Asia. Ancient Greece created many of the ideas and culture that make up modern civilization.

They established a cluster of civilizations that began around 1600 BCE with the Mycenaean civilization. After a mysterious dark age, around 800 BCE independent City States emerged that developed the seeds of modern Western Civilization. Each city state acted independently and was thought to be protected by one of the Greek Gods.

Greek cities had public buildings on the top of a hill with the rest of the people living in nearby valleys. These public buildings were protected by a wall and together were known as an Acropolis. The Agora was located in the center of town and it was where business was conducted.

Greek cities had amphitheaters that were curved to give better acoustics. Greeks often attended theatres in order to cure themselves of disease, believing that ancient dramas directed by priest might be an effective treatment. The Colossus of Rhodes was a huge statue of Helios that straddled the Harbor of Rhodes. It was 102 feet tall and was destroyed in an earthquake in 227 BCE.

Historians believe that homosexuality was widespread in Ancient Greece. Gender was not as important as being dominant or submissive in a relationship.

Slavery was a typical part of life for many people in classical civilizations. People believed that slavery was a natural part of human life. In Ancient Greece and later in Ancient Rome, slaves were typically numerous and had very few rights.

Ancient Athens was well-known for having the world's first democracy. Our word "democracy" comes from the Greek word "demos" which means "people" and "kratos" which means "power".

Plato was a philosopher from Athens, a city-state of Ancient Greece. Our word "platonic" comes from the philosopher Plato, who believed that men and women could build deep nonsexual relationships. He also encouraged women to take part in debates.

Plato stated in one of his most famous works, *The Republic*, that he believed philosophers were the only people qualified to run the government. Plato says in his work that he does not believe that every person should have a say in the government, which was a critique of how Athenian government was run at that time.

Plato was a student of Socrates, and he was the mentor who taught Aristotle, who in turn taught Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great conquered many lands and spread the culture of Greece and the ideas of Socrates Plato and Aristotle.

Alexander the Great

Philip II became king of Macedonia, a kingdom of Ancient Greece, in 359 BCE. He was well-known for beginning a period of Macedonian dominance in Greece before he was killed in 336 BCE.

Alexander the Great was the son of Philip II of Macedonia and was well-known for his conquest of large areas in the Middle East, Egypt, and Central Asia. Historians believe that Alexander encouraged the blending of cultures from these areas with Greek culture, creating a new culture that is referred to as "Hellenistic" or "Greek-like."

Alexander was known to be a great leader and had been trained to rule almost from birth. He was taught warfare and politics from his father, his mother, and from the great Greek philosopher Aristotle.