Mesopotamia Timeline

5000 BC - The Sumer form the first towns and cities. They use irrigation to farm large areas of land.

4000 BC - The Sumer establish powerful city-states building large ziggurats at the center of their cities as temples to their gods.

3500 BC - Much of lower Mesopotamia is inhabited by numerous Sumer city-states such as Ur, Uruk, Eridu, Kish, Lagash, and Nippur.

3300 BC - The Sumerians invent the first writing. They use pictures for words and inscribe them on clay tablets.

3200 BC - The Sumerians begin to use the wheel on vehicles.

3000 BC - The Sumerians start to implement mathematics using a number system with the base 60.

2700 BC - The famous Sumerian King Gilgamesh rules the city-state of Ur.

2400 BC - The Sumerian language is replaced by the Akkadian language as the primary spoken language in Mesopotamia.

2330 BC - Sargon I of the Akkadians conquers most of the Sumerian city states and creates the world's first empire, the Akkadian Empire.

2250 BC - King Naram-Sin of the Akkadians expands the empire to its largest state. He will rule for 50 years.

2100 BC - After the Akkadian Empire crumbles, the Sumerians once again gain power. The city of Ur is rebuilt.

1900 BC - The Assyrians rise to power in northern Mesopotamia.

1792 BC - Hammurabi becomes king of Babylon. He establishes the Code of Hammurabi and Babylon soon takes over much of Mesopotamia.

1781 BC - King Shamshi-Adad of the Assyrians dies. The First Assyrian Empire is soon taken over by the Babylonians.

1750 BC - Hammurabi dies and the First Babylonian Empire begins to fall apart.

1360 BC - The Assyrians once again rise in power.

1250 BC - The Assyrians begin to use iron weapons and chariots.

1225 BC - The Assyrians capture Babylon.

1115 BC - The Second Assyrian Empire reaches its peak under the rule of King Tiglath-Piliser I.

1077 BC - Tiglath-Piliser dies and the Assyrian Empire becomes weaker for a time.

744 BC - The Assyrian Empire becomes strong once again under the rule of Tiglath-Piliser III.

721 BC - King Sargon II takes control of Assyria. The empire grows stronger.
709 BC - Sargon II takes control of the city of Babylon.

705 BC - Sargon II dies and Sennacherib becomes king. He moves the capital to Nineveh.

668 BC - Ashurbanipal becomes the last great King of Assyria. He establishes a great library in the city of Nineveh.

626 BC - Ashurbanipal dies and Assyria begins to crumble.

616 BC - Nabopolassar takes control of Babylon back from the Assyrians and crowns himself king. The neo-Babylonian empire begins.

604 BC - Nabopolassar dies and Nebuchadnezzar II becomes King of Babylon. He will rule for 43 years and bring the Babylonian Empire to its peak.

550 BC - Cyrus the Great rises to power and the Persian Empire begins.

539 BC - Cyrus the Great takes the city of Babylon and lets the Jewish people return to Israel.

522 BC - Darius I becomes King of Persia. He expands the empire and divides it up into states each ruled by a governor called a satrap.

518 BC - Darius I establishes the capital of the Persian Empire at Persepolis.

490 BC - Darius I attacks the Greeks. He is defeated at the Battle of Marathon.

480 BC - Xerxes I tries to conquer the Greeks with a huge army. He is eventually turned back in defeat.