

# Unit 1 – Pre-History/Mesopotamia

## Lesson 1 – B.C. and A.D.

### Understanding our Timeline

#### I. Definitions

- A. B.C. = Before Christ
- B. A.D. = Anno Domini (the year(s) of our LORD)
- C. The zero mark on the timeline indicates the birth of Jesus Christ. Biblical scholars have adjusted the actual date to c. 6 to 4 B.C.
- D. Alternatives to B.C. and A.D.
  - 1. B.C.E. = before the “common era”
  - 2. C.E. = the “common era”
  - 3. This system began about 100 years ago and has become popular in recent decades. It is an attempt to remove Jesus Christ from the timeline of history. In fact, there is no definition of “common era”.
- E. Circa = about/approximately. When historians are unsure of a date, they will place a “c.” in front of it as to say, “this is my best guess”.

#### II. Why is there a need for a divided timeline?

- A. Because we don't know when creation occurred, we cannot establish the first date on our timeline.
- B. We have a much more accurate date for the birth of Christ which is represented by the “0” on the timeline.

#### III. God and time.

#### IV. Learning to use the timeline.

- A. B.C. dates always come first, then you have a zero and then A.D. dates come second. One thing you will have to get used to doing is numbering B.C. dates in what appears to be a backwards fashion. This leaves us the ability to continuously add older and older dates.
- B. Calculating periods of time.
  - 1. To figure out how many years are in a B.C. period or A.D. period, you will need to subtract the smaller number from the larger number.
  - 2. To figure out how many years within a period that crosses the zero mark, you will need to add the two numbers.

#### V. Other Calendars

- A. The Gregorian Calendar (based on the sun)
- B. The Hebrew Calendar (based on the moon)
- C. The Islamic Calendar starts with the year 622 A.D.
- D. The Ancient Chinese Calendar started 4718 years ago.