Phoenician Sea Power

1 Tyre (tyr) was the major city of a region called Phoenicia (fuh NISH uh). Phoenicia was a Fertile Crescent civilization that looked west. It faced the Mediterranean Sea. There were many growing cities

5 around this sea.

Phoenicia had few resources, but they were important. There were snails that produced a rich purple dye. The purple color was highly valued by wealthy people. There were also cedar forests. Phoenicians sold

10 the dyed cloth and wood to neighboring peoples. ✓

The Phoenicians traded by sea to gain wealth. In time, they controlled trade in much of the Mediterranean. From about 1100 B.C. to 800 B.C., Phoenicia was a great sea power. Phoenician ships

15 sailed as far as the Atlantic Ocean.

Trade brought goods from lands around the Mediterranean to the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon (SY dun). Bazaars were full of foods and animals from faraway places.

The Phoenician Alphabet

20 The Phoenicians used writing to help them with trade. They created a way of writing that used just 22 symbols. These symbols formed the Phoenician **alphabet**. Each of the symbols stands for a sound of the language. The alphabet is used in many languages today.

25 English is based on this alphabet.

The Phoenician alphabet was far easier to learn than cuneiform. Many more people learned to use it. The alphabet made trade easier between people who spoke different languages. Phoenicia's sea trade helped

30 spread the alphabet. ✓
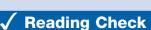
The Rise of the Israelites

The Hebrews settled in the Jordan River valley. This valley was south of Phoenicia. Later they were known as the Israelites. Much of their early history comes

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✓ Reading Check

Circle the names of the two resources the Phoenicians first used to build their wealth.

Mark the Text

✓ Reading Check

How did the Phoenician alphabet differ from cuneiform script?

_____

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> **Key Term**
>
> **alphabet** (AL fuh bet) *n.* a set of symbols that represent the sounds of the language

from stories in religious books. One of these books is
35 the <u>Torah</u> (TOH rah). The Torah is the Hebrew Bible.
The Israelites greatly influenced our civilization.

The Israelites came from Mesopotamia. According
to the Torah, their leader was named Abraham. The
Torah says that God told Abraham to leave
40 Mesopotamia. He taught his people to practice
monotheism. Abraham led the Israelites to the land of
Canaan (KAY nun). Then a **famine** caused them to flee
to Egypt.

An Israelite named Moses led his people out of
45 Egypt. The flight from Egypt is called the Exodus (EKS
uh dus). For 40 years, the Israelites lived in the desert
on the Sinai (SY ny) Peninsula. There, God gave them
the Ten Commandments, a code of laws. Later, the
Israelites went back to Canaan.

50 The Israelites united under King Saul. The next king
was named David. He made Jerusalem his capital.
Later the country split into two kingdoms—Israel and
Judah. Judah was conquered by its neighbor, Assyria.

In 722 B.C., the Assyrians **exiled** thousands of
55 Israelites to far-off parts of their empire. In 612 B.C.,
Judah was taken over by Chaldean Babylonians. In
587 B.C., the King of Judah rebelled. King
Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and exiled the
people of Judah to Babylonia. ✓

Review Questions

1. How did the Phoenicians gain their wealth and
power?

_____

_____

2. What was the Exodus?

_____

_____

Key Terms

monotheism (MAHN oh thee iz um) *n.* the belief in one god
famine (FAM in) *n.* when there is so little food that people starve
exile (EK syl) *v.* to force someone to live in another country

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Vocabulary Strategy

The word *Torah* is not a Key Term. But, it is defined in context. Use the chart on the first page of this section to help you find clues to clarify its meaning. Circle the words or phrases that tell you what the word *Torah* means.

Target Reading Skill

The Torah says that Abraham was told to leave Mesopotamia and live elsewhere. Keep reading to see what that means.

Where did Abraham lead the Israelites?

_____

_____

_____

✓ Reading Check

Who were the Israelites?

_____

_____

_____