WHI.4a Persia: Empire of Tolerance

**Where is Persia?**

Persia was an empire, based in what is today the country of Iran

Located just to the east of Mesopotamia, the Persian empire was one of the richest and most powerful empires of the B.C.’s

**What Makes Persia Special**

Persia, unlike many other early empires, was unique because as it expanded and conquered other people, they were very tolerant, and welcomed those people into the empire as equals

This all started with Cyrus the Great, the Persian king who defeated Babylon and freed the Jews held there (Babylonian Captivity)

**Cyrus The Great**

Cyrus the Great was different because he was tolerant and respected those territories and cultures he conquered

Kept his army from looting and destroying cities he took over

Allowed people to keep their own local governments and religions

Led to peace instead of revolt

**Benefits of the Persian Empire**

Beyond treating conquered people fairly, and allowing them to keep their customs and religions, Persia offered its’ citizens good government, money, and a road system for all

Persia was eventually run by an emperor named Darius

Darius expanded the empire, going as far east as India, and as far west as Europe

**Persia Under Darius I**

Persia was eventually run by an emperor named Darius

Darius expanded the empire, going as far east as India, and as far west as Europe

Darius also set up common weights and measurements to help trade

Encouraged the use of money (coins) in trade rather than using the bartering system

**Imperial Bureaucracy**

While the Persian Empire was rich, powerful, and welcoming, it was also very difficult for one man to govern because of its size

Darius divided Persia into provinces (sort of like states) ruled by governors called Satraps

Each satrap controlled his territory and collected taxes for the Persian emperor

When you divide your government into different sections, with different people in charge of each division, that is called a bureaucracy

**Royal Road**

Another innovation under Darius was the Royal Road

A 1,677 mile long road connecting the heart of the empire, the Royal Road allowed communication and business (trade) to move quickly

**Persian Religion**

Along with good government and fair treatment of its’ people, the Persian Empire offered its own unique religion

Zoroastrianism: original, monotheistic religion of Persian Empire

**Zoroastrianism**

Started by a Persian prophet named Zoroaster, about 600 B.C.

Monotheistic

Believes in:

Belief in two opposing forces in the universe (Good vs. Evil)

A single universal, all powerful God- Ahura Mazda

People pick a side in battle of good vs. evil

God gives final judgment of people

It is believed by many that Zoroastrianism influenced Judaism, and later, Christianity.

Ideas also found in Christianity

All-powerful God, Life is a struggle between good and evil, people have Free will, God makes Final judgment

Angels and Satan (good vs. evil)

WHI 4a Vocab. List-Persia

1. Tolerant
2. Empire
3. Cyrus the Great
4. Darius I
5. Royal Road
6. Satrap
7. Bureaucracy
8. Zoroastrianism