King Menes Unites Egypt c. 3100 BC
Menes, ruler of Upper Egypt (southern kingdom), conquered Lower Egypt (northern kingdom in the Nile delta region), uniting the two into one kingdom. He established Memphis as the new capital of Egypt.

Hieroglyph Script in Egypt c. 3000 BC
Egyptians developed hieroglyphs (picture symbols) to represent concepts and ideas. This script was used for thousands of years in various forms. Modern understanding of hieroglyphs was first possible by translating the parallel texts inscribed on the Rosetta Stone discovered in AD 1799.

Wheel Used in Mesopotamia c. 2900 BC
The development of the wheel and axle for transportation benefited commerce by making it easier to move goods long distances.

Plow Appeared in Egypt c. 3200 BC
Early Egyptians used simple plows to prepare fields for planting. Most likely pulled by cattle, a sharpened stick loosened the dirt, allowing air and water to contact the planted seeds, encouraging sprouting and growth.

Glass Making in Egypt c. 2900 BC
The manufacture of glass probably began as a glaze to cover ceramic vessels. Because early glassmaking was costly, it was used primarily in making jewelry and utensils for the wealthy.

Gilgamesh c. 2700 BC
Gilgamesh was the greatest of the kings of Uruk, about whom the Epic of Gilgamesh was written. The Uruk kingdom covered southern Mesopotamia.

Ur of Chaldees Founded c. 3000 BC
Founded on the banks of the Euphrates River near the Persian Gulf, the city of Ur thrived as a commercial port. Abraham was living in Ur when God called him to move to Canaan.

Old Kingdom Period Began c. 2700 BC
Lasting until about 1950 BC, this period, sometimes called the Pyramid Age, was known for the construction of the giant pyramids. During this era, the capital of Egypt moved from Memphis to Thebes.

First Step Pyramid at Saqqarah c. 2650 BC
Built for King Zoser, the pyramid at Saqqarah rises 200 feet in 6 giant steps.

Papyrus Developed in Egypt c. 2600 BC
A paper-like material made from the crushed stems of the papyrus plant became widely used for writing in Egypt. For storage, the long sheets of papyrus were rolled into scrolls.

Cuneiform Script in Sumer c. 3300 BC
Using characters to communicate words and syllables, cuneiform was one of the earliest forms of writing, later spreading across much of the Middle East.

Silk Discovered in China c. 2700 BC
According to legend, Emperor Huangdi’s wife, Xilingshi, is credited with discovering silk. The Chinese, desiring to maintain a monopoly on silk trade, kept silk cultivation a secret until about 200 BC.

Used by Permission