**MIDDLE EAST 3 - Central and Southwest Asia**

**Historical Overview**

* **Fertile Crescent**
* **Agricultural Revolution**

**Religion**

* **Three major religions began in this region:**
  + **Judaism – 2000 B.C.**
  + ***Monotheism* – belief in only one god**
  + **1000 B.C. founded a kingdom called Israel**
  + **Christianity – 2000 years later, based on teachings of Jesus**
  + **Islam – Between A.D. 632 and 714 they gained control of most of Central and Southwest Asia**

**European Imperialism**

* **After World War I, European powers divided it into a number of nations and *protectorates***
  + **Areas that have their own government but are controlled by an outside power**

**Physical Characteristics**

* **Towering mountains and vast, arid plains**
* **Deserts cover most of plains except where the rivers flow**
  + **Kara Kum and Kyzyl Kum – two of worlds greatest deserts found in Central Asia**
* **Aral Sea – landlocked salt sea**
* **Water diverted upstream by soviets to irrigate farmland, leaving salt flats**
* **Tigris River – vital but limited water source**

**Climates**

* **Desert ecosystem**
  + ***Chaparral* – drought-resistant herbs and bushes**
* **Mountains and coastal regions have cool, wet winters and warm, dry summers**

**Ecosystems**

* **Mainly desert ecosystems**
* **Areas with slightly higher rainfall support temperate grasslands.**
* **Forests grow near mountains and rivers**
* **Caspian Sea – worlds largest inland body of water**

**People and Cultures**

* **Rich cultural history**
* **Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all developed in this region**
  + **Most people of the region are MUSLIM**
* **Traditional culture – nomadic livestock herders have lived in moveable tents called yurts**
  + **Supplement income by making fine carpets and rugs**
  + **Nomads – people who travel from place to place**
* **Islamic Worship –** 
  + **Mosques – Islamic places of worship**
  + **Five times each day, a muezzin, or crier, climbs the minaret, the tower attached to the mosque, to call the people to prayer.**
* **A Holy City**
  + **Jerusalem is sacred to members of three religions.**
  + **Jews consider it the site of the ancient kingdom of Israel**
  + **Christians, it is the place where Jesus was crucified**
  + **Muslims believe that Muhammad visited heaven from Jerusalem**
  + **Reason for much struggle**

**Economy**

* **Large portion of land is used for livestock raising and nomadic herding, but majority of people live in urban areas**
  + **Services and industry are main activities**
* **Areas of subsistence and commercial farming in areas of fertile soil**
* **Petroleum and natural gas $$$**

**Technology**

* **Lack of fresh water**
* **Desalination plants – evaporate seawater to obtain fresh water**