

The Ziggurat

The ziggurat was built to honor the main god of the city.

What did they look like?

Ziggurats looked like step pyramids. They would have anywhere from 2 to 7 levels or steps. Each level would be smaller than the one before.



How big did they get?

Perhaps the largest ziggurat was the one at Babylon. Recorded dimensions show that it had seven levels and reached a height of nearly 300 feet (91 meters).

Why did they build them?

The ziggurat was a temple to the main god of the city. Each city in Mesopotamia had a primary god. The ziggurat showed that the city was dedicated to that god.

At the top of the ziggurat was a shrine to the god. The priests would perform sacrifices and other rituals here. They built them high because they wanted the shrine to be as close to the heavens as possible.

Are there any ziggurats left?

Many of the ziggurats have been destroyed. The ziggurat at Chogha Zanbil is one of the last surviving ziggurats. Some ziggurats have been reconstructed or rebuilt. The ziggurat at the city Ur is one that has been somewhat rebuilt.

Interesting Facts About Ziggurats

- The tall height of the ziggurat may have also been useful during the seasonal flooding.
- The early Egyptian pyramids were step pyramids similar to the ziggurat.
- Also Mayans and Aztecs built stepped pyramids to their gods. This was thousands of years later and on a completely different continent.