

The Myth of Atlantis

WORD BANK

Atlantis: a city with an ancient group of people

Civilization: a highly developed group of people, culture

Pillars of Hercules: Two big rocks at the mouth of the Mediterranean Sea

Strait of Gibraltar: A narrow strait or opening into the Mediterranean Sea

Technologically: relating to technology or the use of equipment, machines or scientific ideas

Moral: deciding what is good or bad

Conquer: to take over

Corrupt: not good or acting dishonestly

Catastrophic: great damage or destruction

Captured: to take

Minoan civilization: ancient people who lived in Crete

Compelling: Keeps your attention

Allegory: a story or poem with another meaning

The myth of Atlantis is a story that has been passed down through the ages...it is a very famous story, do you know it?

In the 4th century BCE, the ancient Greek philosopher Plato said he heard a story from the Egyptians about Atlantis. It was a powerful and advanced civilization that existed around 9,000 years before his time.

In the story, Atlantis was a large island - larger than ancient Asia and Libya combined! It was located past the "Pillars of Hercules," which is generally believed to be the Strait of Gibraltar. On Atlantis there was a mountain in the center of the land. Atop the mountain, there was a fantastic temple in honor of Poseidon.

The Atlanteans (people from Atlantis) were technologically advanced but not very moral people. Although they lived peacefully for some time, they eventually wanted to conquer others. They had a vast empire and were threatening other civilizations. However, because they were corrupt and arrogant, the gods decided to punish them.

Plato said that the gods caused a series of catastrophic (disastrous) events, including earthquakes and floods, that sank Atlantis into the ocean. It disappeared without a trace!



“In a single day and night of misfortune all your warlike men in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared in the depths of the sea.” - Plato, *Timaeus*

The story of Atlantis has captured the imagination of people for centuries. There are many ideas about its possible location and whether or not it really happened... Some think it was the island of Santorini in Greece, which had a big volcanic eruption that changed the Minoan civilization.

While the story of Atlantis is a compelling mystery, there is still no evidence to say it really happened. Many scholars think it is a legend or allegory written by Plato to teach philosophical or moral lessons. The myth of Atlantis continues to be a popular topic in literature, art, and popular culture.