The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World

Thousands of years ago, people who lived near the Mediterranean Sea built some amazing structures. They were so wonderful that historians named seven of the most notable structures as The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The seven wonders list has changed over time. However most historians today agree that the seven wonders includes a pyramid, a garden, two statues, a temple, a tomb, and a lighthouse. Only one structure still stands—the Great Pyramid of Giza. All the rest are lost to the mists of time.

The Great Pyramid of Giza. The only ancient monument still standing is the Great Pyramid of Giza. The Great Pyramid sits on the Giza plain near Cairo, Egypt. The Great Pyramid was built as a tomb for the Pharaoh Khufu. Two smaller pyramids and the Sphinx also sit on the Giza plain. Some historians include all three pyramids and the Sphinx together as a one of the seven wonders.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Babylon was located on the banks of the Euphrates River in modern Iraq. Babylon had beautiful bronze gates and huge terraced walls. Some early writers describe the terraces as covered with lovely trees and plants which they called hanging gardens. But there is no archeological proof that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon ever existed.

The Statue of Zeus at Olympia. Ancient Olympia was a religious shrine to Zeus, the greatest of the Greek gods. The shrine included a temple and a 40-foot-tall gold and ivory statue of Zeus sitting on his throne. The shrine was located on the west coast of Greece about 90 miles from modern Athens. Pilgrims came to the shrine for religious festivels and athletic games that were held in honor of Zeus.

The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus. The ancient Greek city of Ephesus was located on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea near modern Selcuk in Turkey. One of the most beautiful buildings in the ancient world—the marble Temple of Artemis—was located at Ephesus. The temple attracted pilgrims from around the ancient world.

The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus. Halicarnassus was an ancient Greek town located in southwestern Turkey at modern Bodrum. It was the capital of the Persian province of Caria. Caria was governed by a local king named Mausollos. The tomb of Mausollos was built on a hill overlooking the city. This tomb was called the Mausoleum. The Mausoleum was famous in the ancent world in for its beautiful columns and sculputures.

The Colossus at Rhodes. Rhodes is a Greek island in the Mediterranean near the southwest corner of Turkey. An enormous marble and bronze statue of Helios, the Greek sun god, stood near the entrance to one of Rhodes’ harbors. Because of its size, early historians named this statue the Colossus.

The Pharos of Alexandria. Alexandria is a citie on Egypt’s Mediterranean coast built by Alexander the Great. The island of Pharos sat between the harbor at Alexandria and the sea. A great marble and stone lighthouse was built on Pharos during the reigns of the first Greek pharaohs. The lighthouse used fire and huge bronze mirrors to reflect light out to sea.