

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The First Israelites

- The first Israelites built a small kingdom in Canaan along the Mediterranean Sea around 1000 B.C.
- A small population who practiced a religion that focused on only one God
 - Monotheism – the belief in only one God
- The Israelite religion became known as Judaism (Jews)
 - Judaism influenced Christianity and Islam
 - Judaism also helped shape the beliefs and practices of societies in Europe and America

The First Israelites

- Spoke a language called Hebrew
- Wrote down much of their history and religious beliefs
 - Later became the Hebrew Bible
- Early Israelites were herders and traders from Mesopotamia
- Believed they were descendants of Abraham and were to worship the one true God
- Abraham's grandson, Jacob, was also called Israel
 - Israel means "one who struggles with God"

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The First Israelites

- Jacob's 12 sons were each given a portion of land dividing Canaan into tribes, or separate family groups
 - Became known as the 12 tribes of Israel
- After living in Canaan for 100 years, were forced to move to Egypt due to drought and famine
- Egyptian pharaoh made the Israelites slaves to help build pyramids and work in the fields
- After some time, the pharaoh became fearful of the large number of Israelites (Hebrews), ordering all baby boys to be thrown into the Nile River

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The First Israelites

- One mother put her baby in a papyrus basket and hid it in the reeds along the riverbank
- The pharaoh's daughter found the baby and made him her son, naming him Moses, which means "to draw out"
- After Moses was grown, around 1290 B.C., God told Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt to freedom.
- God sent 10 plagues, a disease or something that causes problems for a lot of people, to trouble Egypt in an effort to convince the pharaoh to let the Israelites go

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The First Israelites

- Moses requested that the Pharaoh release the Israelites and let them go to the wilderness to worship God
- Pharaoh finally agreed, but after releasing the Israelites changed his mind and sent his army after them
- God parted the Red Sea for the Israelites to cross but let Pharaoh's army drown in the sea
- The Israelite escape from Egypt is known as the Exodus

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The First Israelites

- En route to Canaan, the Israelites traveled through the Sinai desert
- Moses went to the top of Mt. Sinai, where he received the teachings and laws of the Torah, later the first 5 books of the Hebrew Bible
- The Torah described a covenant, or agreement, with God
 - God promised to return the Israelites to Canaan, the Promised Land, if they followed his laws
 - Most important part of the Torah is the Ten Commandments

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The First Israelites

- The Ten Commandments helped shape the basic moral laws of many nations
- The Ten Commandments also helped develop a belief in the “rule of law” – idea that laws should apply to everyone equally
- It took the Israelites 40 years to reach Canaan
- Moses didn't live to see the Israelites return to Canaan
 - After his death, Joshua took over as the Israelite leader

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The First Israelites

- Other people, mostly Canaanites, were found to be living in the Promised Land when the Israelites arrived
- Following God's guidance and led by Joshua, the Israelites went to battle against the Canaanites to take their land back
- Joshua led the Israelites to the city of Jericho for one of the first battles and three more wars
- After Joshua died the Israelites looked to judges, usually military leaders, for leadership

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The First Israelites

- Some of the judges were Barak, Gideon, Samuel, Eli, Samson, and Deborah, a woman judge
- The Israelites won control of the hilly region in central Canaan and the Canaanites kept the flat, coastal areas
- Phoenicians – a group of Canaanites who were skilled sailors and traders, spreading goods and ideas
 - One of the most important ideas was an alphabet
 - An alphabet made writing simpler and helped people keep records
 - They passed it on to the Greeks and then the Romans

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Kingdom of Israel

- Around 1000 B.C., the strongest people living in Canaan were the Philistines
 - Philistines had strong cities & made iron tools and weapons
- In 1020 B.C., the Israelites asked Samuel, one of the judges and a prophet, to choose a king
 - A king was needed to unite the Israelites against the Philistines
 - Prophet – a person who claims to be instructed by God to share God's words

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Kingdom of Israel

- The Israelites chose a warrior-farmer named Saul to be king
 - Saul was a popular warrior who had won many battles
- Next, God chose David, a young shepherd, to be king
 - David became famous for killing a giant Philistine, Goliath
- David drove the Philistines from the area and conquered other neighboring nations, creating an empire
- Conquered people had to pay David and the Israelites tribute
 - Tribute – forced payments of money or slaves to a ruler

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Kingdom of Israel

- David levied heavy taxes on the Israelites to expand his new capital, Jerusalem, and build a temple
 - Regardless, the Israelites viewed David as their greatest king for centuries
- After David died, his son Solomon became king
 - Solomon built a magnificent temple in Jerusalem
 - It became the center and symbol of the Jewish religion
 - Solomon taxed the people more than David, to pay for his great buildings, turning many of the Israelites against him

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Kingdom of Israel

- After Solomon died, ten of the 12 tribes of Israel established their own kingdom in the north, called Israel (capital – Samaria)
- The southern kingdom was called Judah (capital – Jerusalem)
- Two neighboring kingdoms, Chaldea and Assyria, were also building empires in southwest Asia
 - Wanted to control trade routes through Israel and Judah, thus, causing them to feel threatened

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Kingdom of Israel

- In 722 B.C., the Assyrians conquered Israel and scattered the 10 tribes across the empire
- Over time, the Israelites were forced to move and lost their religion and way of life
 - Often called the “lost tribes of Israel”
- Assyrians settled in the land around Samaria and became known as Samaritans
- In 620 B.C., Judah also fell to the Egyptians but kept their king

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Kingdom of Israel

- However, the Chaldeans conquered Egypt in 605 B.C. and became the new rulers of Judah
 - The Jews (Judah) and Egyptians then rebelled against the Chaldeans
 - King Nebuchadnezzar of the Chaldeans, however, captured Jerusalem in 597 B.C.
-
- In 586 B.C., the Chaldean king crushed Jerusalem, destroying the temple and sending the Jews to Babylon (known as the Babylonian Captivity)

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Growth of Judaism

- The Jews called their time in Babylon an exile
 - Exile means “being forced to live in a foreign land”
- While in Babylon, Jews began to worship and rest on the Sabbath and meet in synagogues, Jewish houses of worship
- During the 500's B.C., Persians conquered parts of SW Asia
 - Persians defeated the Chaldeans, taking over Babylon
 - The Persian king, Cyrus, allowed the Jews to return to Judah, however, some stayed in Babylon

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Growth of Judaism

- Upon returning to Judah, the Jews rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple
- Jews looked to their religion for leadership, appointing priests and scribes as their leaders
 - A scribe named Ezra wrote the Torah on parchment paper, then the priests sewed them together to make long scrolls
- The five books of the Torah and 34 other books describing events in Jewish history, added later, came to make up the Hebrew Bible

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Growth of Judaism

- In 334 B.C., Alexander the Great, a king from Greece, began a conquest to take over kingdoms around the Mediterranean Sea
- In 331 B.C., he defeated the Persians, taking control of Judah
- Alexander allowed the Jews to stay in Judah, but introduced the Greek language and Greek customs to Judah
- Many Jews still lived in other parts of Alexander's empire, including Babylon and Egypt
 - These Jews became known as the Diaspora, a Greek word meaning "scattered"

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Growth of Judaism

- Many Jews of the Diaspora learned the Greek language and customs but remained loyal to Judaism
 - One group copied the Hebrew Bible into Greek, helping to spread Jewish ideas throughout the Mediterranean world
- In 168 B.C., the Greek ruler of Judah, Antiochus, attempted to make the Jews worship Greek gods and goddesses
 - A priest named Judas Maccabeus and his followers rebelled and fled to the hills, then formed an army known as the Maccabees

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Growth of Judaism

- The Maccabees eventually drove the Greeks out of Judah and destroyed all traces of Greek gods, goddesses in the temple
 - Jews recall the cleansing of the temple each year when they celebrate Hanukkah
 - Priests from Judas Maccabeus' family became the new rulers of Judah and took back part of the kingdom of Israel
-

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Growth of Judaism

The Jewish Way of Life

- Jewish law influenced much of a Jew's daily life, including their education, their food, and their clothes
 - Emphasized self-control and reminded them of their religion
- Placed great importance on:
 - Family, especially sons, to carry on the family name
 - Education – taught by fathers and mothers, elders
 - Diet – could eat only certain animals and food had to be prepared a certain way
 - Food prepared according to Jewish laws is called kosher

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Growth of Judaism

The Jewish Way of Life

- Placed great importance on:
 - Clothing – used flax or wool to make cloth but did not combine the two and covered their heads
 - Jewish men wear skull caps called yarmulkes and Jewish women wear scarves or skull caps
-

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Growth of Judaism

The Jews and the Romans

- In 63 B.C. the Romans, from the western side of the Mediterranean Sea, what is today Italy, conquered Judah and renamed it Judaea
- The Romans, at first, allowed Jewish rulers to run Judaea
- One of the most famous was King Herod
 - Known for his cruelty, changes to the temple in Jerusalem
 - Also known as who was king when Jesus was born

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Growth of Judaism

The Jews and the Romans

- After Herod died, Roman officials ruled Judaea
 - Jews wished to regain control but had divided into different groups and did not have the power
 - Pharisees – taught, in synagogues, the Torah and how to apply its laws to daily life
 - Sadducees – priests and scribes who didn't agree with the Pharisees' teachings
 - Essenes – priests who broke away from the temple in Jerusalem and lived in the desert
 - Believed to have written the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were found in a cave near the Dead Sea, 1947 A.D.

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Growth of Judaism

The Jews and the Romans

- Jewish hatred of Roman rule reached its peak in the 60s A.D.
 - Many Jews were still waiting on a Messiah, or deliverer
 - Other Jews, called Zealots, wanted to fight the Romans
- In 66 A.D., the Zealots revolted against the Romans and drove them out of Jerusalem
 - However, the Romans retook Jerusalem 4 years later, killing thousands of Jews and destroying the temple
 - The Western, or Wailing, Wall is all that remains of it today

ANCIENT ISRAEL HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Growth of Judaism

The Jews and the Romans

- Jews managed to survive, but no longer had priests
 - Instead, began to follow leaders called rabbis, teachers of the Torah
 - Rabbis continued to save and pass on the teachings of the Torah and combined the teachings in a book, the Talmud
- For almost 2,000 years most Jews lived outside Judah (now called Palestine)
- In 1948 A.D., Palestine was divided and a new Jewish nation called Israel was created