



# The Origins of Judaism



## Origins

- ❖ Abraham is considered the father of Judaism
  - ◇ Born around 1800 BCE in Babylonia
  - ◇ Began to believe in one god instead of the many gods worshipped throughout Mesopotamia
  - ◇ \*Monotheism!\*
- ❖ Abraham makes a covenant, or agreement, with God
  - ◇ If Abraham will obey his commands and leave his home and family, God will bless and protect him
  - ◇ Abraham has two children, his son Isaac becomes the first generation in the covenant, Isaac's grandchildren found the 12 tribes of Israel
  - ◇ God tests Abraham's devotion

## The Covenant

- ❖ The Hebrews believed they were God's (Yahweh) chosen people because of the covenant with Abraham
- ❖ Semi-nomadic leads them to settle in Egypt
  - ◇ Enslaved in Egypt and are led out by Moses
  - ◇ The Exodus

## Search for the Promised Land

- ❖ Word Canaan refers to ancient Fertile Crescent
- The Ten Commandments
- ❖ Moses receives the Torah from God
  - ◇ Includes the 10 Commandments
- ❖ Ten Commandments become the basis for code of ethical behavior

...if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation...

## Sacred Texts

### ❖ The Torah

- ◇ First 5 books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) and the rest of the Tanakh
- ◇ “Old Testament” to Christians

### ❖ The Talmud

- ◇ The “oral Torah,” which interprets the Torah

## Important Figures

### ❖ Prophets are God’s spokespeople

- ◇ Can be male or female, Jewish or non-Jewish
- ◇ seen throughout the Torah

### ❖ Abraham

- ◇ Covenant

### ❖ Moses

- ◇ Exodus, 10 Commandments

### ❖ Saul

- ◇ First king of Israel

### ❖ David

- ◇ King of Israel, warrior and prophet

### ❖ Solomon

- ◇ David’s son, king of Israel
- ◇ Makes Jerusalem the capital of Israel
- ◇ Holy Temple on Mount Moriah (Solomon’s Temple)

## Kingdom of Israel

- ❖ Around 920 BCE: Kingdom splits into Israel in North and Judah in South

## End of the Kingdom

- ❖ 722 BCE: Israel fell to Assyrians
- ❖ 600 BCE: Temple of Solomon destroyed
- ❖ 586 BCE: Judah fell to Babylon
  - ◇ King Nebuchadnezzar forced Hebrews into exile. During this time they became known as Jews.