

CHAPTER 3 Section 4 (pages 77–83)

The Origins of Judaism

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about the spread of culture through trade.

In this section, you will learn about the *origins* of Judaism.

AS YOU READ

Uses the chart below to take notes on the beginnings of Judaism.

TERMS AND NAMES

Palestine Region on the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea

Canaan Ancient home of the Hebrews

Torah First five books of the Hebrew Bible

Abraham “Father” or the first of the Hebrew people

monotheism Belief in a single god

covenant Mutual promise between god and the Hebrews

Moses According to the Torah, the man that led the Jews out of slavery

Israel Region on the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea

Judah Hebrew kingdom in Palestine

tribute Payment made by a weaker power to a stronger power

Promised Land	Kingdom of Israel	Babylonian Captivity
• <i>Canaan in Palestine</i>		

The Search for a Promised Land

(pages 77–78)

Where did the Hebrews claim land?

The Hebrews made a claim to an important piece of land, the area now called **Palestine**. They believed the land had been promised to them by God. Their ancient home was the area of Palestine called **Canaan**. This region sat on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea and on the Red Sea, which led to the Indian Ocean. It opened to the trade of many lands. Most of what we know about the early history of the Hebrews comes from the **Torah**, the sacred book of the Hebrews.

The story of the Hebrews began in Mesopotamia. There, according to the Torah, God chose a man named **Abraham** to be the “father,” or the first of the Hebrews. God told Abraham to move his family to Palestine. Abraham promised that he and his people would always obey God. (The Hebrews were among the world’s earliest peoples to believe in one god, or **monotheism**.) God, in turn, promised to always protect them from their enemies. This was the first of many **covenants**—promises between God and the Hebrews.

1. What role did Abraham play in early Hebrew history?

Moses and the Exodus (pages 78–80)

Who was Moses?

When their crops failed, the Hebrews moved to Egypt around 1650 B.C. Over time, they were forced to become slaves. After many years, they fled. The Hebrews called this mass departure “*the Exodus*.”

According to the Torah, a man named Moses led them out of Egypt between 1300 and 1200 B.C. They wandered 40 years in a wilderness. During that time, the Torah says, God gave **Moses** the Ten Commandments. These were the laws that the Hebrews were to follow. For the second time, God promised to protect them in return for their obedience to his laws.

After Moses died, the Hebrews finally reached Palestine and settled. There they began to adopt new ways of life. They often fought with other peoples living in the area, as each group tried to control the best land and other resources.

The Hebrews were organized into twelve groups, called *tribes*. Each tribe was separate from the others. But in times of danger they would unite under leaders called *judges*. One of those judges was a woman named Deborah. It was unusual for women in Hebrew society to hold such a position. Women usually were expected to stay home and raise children.

The Hebrews had other leaders called *prophets*. They said that they were messengers sent by God to tell the people how he wanted them to act. These prophets told the people that they had two duties: to worship God and to deal in just and fair ways with one another. With this message, religion was changing. Instead of being a part of life run by priests, it was now a matter of each person living a *moral* life.

2. What were the Ten Commandments?

The Kingdom of Israel (pages 81–82)

How was Israel formed?

After the exile, the only large tribe left was the tribe of Judah. As a result, the Hebrews came to be known as the Jews. Their religion was called Judaism.

From about 1020 to 922 B.C., the Jews were united into one kingdom, **Israel**. Three kings helped unite them. The first, Saul, drove off their enemies. The second, David, made Jerusalem the capital. The third, Solomon, built a magnificent temple to be used to worship God.

After Solomon’s death, though, the kingdom split into two parts. Israel was in the north, and **Judah** was in the south. For the next two centuries, each of the kingdoms had times of prosperity, followed by low periods.

3. How was Israel split?

The Babylonian Captivity (page 82)

Who conquered Israel and Judah?

Disaster came when both kingdoms lost their independence. Israel and Judah began to pay tribute to Assyria. **Tribute** is money paid by a weaker power to a stronger power to make sure it does not attack.

Eventually, the northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians. Later, the southern kingdom fell to the Babylonians. Many Jews were forced into exile in Babylon. They lived there for many years during what was known as the *Babylonian Captivity*. Then the Babylonians themselves were conquered by the Persian king Cyrus the Great. The new ruler let 40,000 Jews return home.

4. What was the Babylonian Captivity?
