

Chapter Summary

The Israelites

Lesson 1 *Beginnings*

- A group of people in Southwest Asia known as the Israelites practiced Judaism. Judaism was an example of monotheism. The Israelites recorded their beliefs in sacred writings that came to be known as the Hebrew Bible.
- According to Jewish belief, the Israelites descended from Abraham. The Hebrew Bible describes how Abraham led his family and others to settle in Canaan. Later, a famine drove the Israelites out of Canaan and into Egypt.
- According to the Hebrew Bible, the Israelite prophet Moses led the Israelites to escape Egypt, where they had been enslaved. During this journey, known as the Exodus, Moses received from God a set of laws called the Torah.
- When the Israelites returned to Canaan from Egypt, they found other groups living there. The Israelites engaged in a series of battles in an attempt to reclaim their homeland.
- The Phoenicians were skilled sailors and traders whose trade network and settlements stretched across the Mediterranean region. As a result, Phoenician ideas, such as their alphabet, spread throughout the region.
- After many conflicts, the Israelites won control of the dry, hilly area in central Canaan.

Lesson 2 *The Israelite Kingdom*

- By 1100 B.C., the Israelites controlled most of Canaan. The Philistines remained. Many Israelites called for a king to unite the Twelve Tribes of Israel against the Philistines.
- Saul became the first king, and then David succeeded him. Known for his bravery in battle, David united the Twelve Tribes and defeated the Philistines. Today, David is regarded as the greatest of the Israelite kings.
- David's son, Solomon, followed him as king around 970 B.C. Despite Solomon's accomplishments, the Israelites eventually turned against him. His death around 922 B.C. sent the kingdom into a period of conflict.

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- After Solomon's death, the Israelites split into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. Outside empires soon threatened these two kingdoms.
- The Assyrians captured Israel, while the Chaldeans under King Nebuchadnezzar captured Judah. The Chaldeans forced many of Judah's people to live in exile in Babylon.

Lesson 3 *The Development of Judaism*

- While some Jews accepted their exile in Babylon, others hoped to return home to Judah. When the Persians defeated the Chaldeans, the Persian king allowed the Jews to return home around 538 B.C.
- The three parts of the Hebrew Bible—the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings—explain the laws and rules of the Israelites. The Hebrew Bible also records important elements of Jewish culture, such as art, literature, and proverbs.
- The laws of the Torah influenced the roles and duties of family life for the early Jews.
- The Torah also affected the foods that early Jews ate and the clothes that they wore.

Lesson 4 *The Jews in the Mediterranean World*

- In 331 B.C., Alexander the Great of Greece defeated the Persians. Under Alexander's rule, many Jews remained in Judah, while others settled in other parts of the Greek empire. These groups living outside the Jewish homeland became known as the Diaspora.
- After Alexander's death, his empire was divided into separate kingdoms. The kingdom that covered much of Southwest Asia was ruled by the Seleucids. Seleucid kings ruled Judah by 200 B.C.
- The Seleucid king Antiochus IV required the Jews to worship Greek gods and goddesses. As a result, a Jewish priest named Judas Maccabeus led a revolt against the Seleucids in 167 B.C. and eventually regained control of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Chapter Summary *Cont.*

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The Israelites

- In 63 B.C., Roman forces captured Judah. Over time, different groups emerged among the Jews. These groups held differing beliefs and different views about how to respond to Roman rule.
- The Zealots led a revolt in A.D. 66. The Romans eventually recaptured Jerusalem and also defeated a second rebellion in A.D. 132. The Romans then instituted stricter controls. They renamed Judaea and called it Palestine.
- Under Roman rule, rabbis helped the Jews survive and preserve their religion and culture.