

The Hebrews and Israel
World History
Kienast

The earliest Hebrews were pastoral nomads who lived in twelve tribes. They originally lived in Mesopotamia, but immigrated to what is now Israel around 2100 BCE. The traditional story says that a man named Abraham moved his family from the Mesopotamian city of Ur and that his descendants helped establish Israel.

Israel was united together between 1020 and 922 BCE by three kings named Saul, David, and Solomon. All three kings ruled a theocratic government with themselves as both the head of the government and head of the Hebrew religion.

The Hebrews are especially important to history because they helped establish the world's first monotheistic (belief in one God) religion. The tradition of monotheism eventually helped later Christians and Muslims spread their monotheistic faiths.

Unfortunately, the kingdom of Israel was attacked and conquered frequently. Egyptians took over Israel between 1400 and 1070 BCE. Not long after the reign of Solomon ended in 922. The Assyrians and Babylonians both took over Israel between the years 772 and 586. The Babylonians actually brought the majority of the Hebrew people to Babylon and enslaved them. This period began the scattering of the Jews, also called the Jewish Diaspora. Diaspora means "scattering" in Greek and explains how Jews were forced to migrate to other countries by different empires from the Babylonians in 586 BCE to the Romans in 70 CE.

One thing that the conquests of Israel led to was the writing of Jewish history and their laws. Jewish leaders were fearful that their history and religion might be lost if they didn't write it down, which led to the writing of the Torah, which is both a history of the Hebrew people and a compilation of their religious laws and teachings. Hebrew religion and law is important because it helped provide the foundation for monotheistic religions and Hebrew laws such as the Ten Commandments helped found later law codes.