

Kingdom of Israel – Revised Script

Many early Bible stories discuss the history of Judaism and its people. These stories are mostly about wandering from land to land in search of a home, a leader, and a stable place to thrive.

According to the Bible, Abraham brought his people into the land of Canaan sometime between 2000 and 1700 BC. Canaan was located in what is now present-day Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel. Here, Abraham made a covenant, or promise, with God. God told Abraham he would be the father of the Hebrew people and that Canaan would be their promised land.

Because Abraham kept his covenant with God, he was blessed with a large family. His grandson was Jacob, also known as "Israel," and his followers were known as "Israelites." Jacob had 12 sons, and each of their families became a different Hebrew tribe. Together, they were called the "12 tribes of Israel." One tribe was led by Jacob's son, Judah. The Hebrews named their religion Judaism, after him.

A drought soon drove the Hebrews away from the safety of Canaan and toward Egypt. The Egyptians enslaved the Israelites for hundreds of years. Moses led the Israelites out of slavery and to freedom in the 13th century, BC.

The Bible says God gave Moses two stone tablets with the 10 Commandments inscribed on them. The 10 Commandments were a list of religious teachings that taught people how to live more righteously. Some religions still follow those same commandments today. Moses took the commandments and stored them in a wooden chest, called the Ark of the Covenant. This became the Hebrews' most sacred object.

Moses died, and this left the Israelites without a leader. Moses' second-in-command, Joshua, traveled with the Israelites back to Canaan and fought alongside them in the battle of Jericho.

The 12 tribes were still not united, and over the next 300 years, they followed leaders known as judges. The last judge of the 12 tribes was named Samuel. Samuel was a prophet, and was said to be able to speak to God directly.

The Israelites convinced Samuel to choose a king for all the tribes. He chose a man named Saul from the tribe of Benjamin to become the first official king of Israel.

Saul didn't turn out to be a great choice, and Samuel probably picked him because he was a skillful fighter. But Saul's son-in-law David was also an awesome warrior, and he later led Israel's troops in battle with great success.

David became the second King of Israel. He was both incredibly famous and well loved by his people. King David was a great military leader and defeated the Philistines as well as several

other small kingdoms. This put Israel on the map as a regional power. David conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital. He was able to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, and the city became a religious center for Judaism and its people.

At last the Hebrew people were united. They finally had the leader, the home, and the permanence that they had yearned for. In Jerusalem, the Jewish people thrived. Others began to make religious pilgrimages there.

David is still revered as Israel's most important king. In fact, the symbol on Israel's flag is even called the Star of David. King David planned to build a great temple to house the Ark of the Covenant, which was eventually completed during his son Solomon's reign. Though the current location of the Ark is unknown, the temple that was built to house it would become one of the most important religious sites in the world.