

## ANCIENT HEBREWS (1)

The Hebrews were a nomadic tribe of people in the southern part of Mesopotamia. *Hebrew* means *the people from the other side of the river* in Greek. This refers to their location near the Euphrates River. According to the Hebrews, God made a covenant with Abraham promising that his descendants would be *God's chosen people*. Abraham was summoned by God to leave Ur in Mesopotamia. He traveled to Palestine in the southwest corner of the Fertile Crescent. Abraham had a grandson named Jacob. Jacob's 12 sons became the leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob was also called *Israel* and his descendants became known as *Israelites*.

Most of the tribes of the Fertile Crescent were *polytheistic* (believed in many gods and goddesses). The Jews were different. They were *monotheistic* (believed in one god). Two other monotheistic religions have emerged in the Fertile Crescent region: Christianity and Islam. They both have strong links to Judaism. Much of the ethical view (what is right and wrong) of those two religions comes from the teachings of Judaism.

## ANCIENT HEBREWS (2)

In about 1800 B.C.E., famine forced the Hebrews to leave Palestine and enter Egypt. They were treated harshly and were eventually enslaved by the Egyptians. Moses led the Hebrews out from Egyptian enslavement in 1200 B.C.E. Upon leaving Egypt, the Bible states that God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, which outlined the religious and moral duties that the Hebrews were expected to obey.

Eventually the Persians conquered the Babylonians. The Persian ruler allowed the Hebrews to return to Palestine. From this time forward they would be known as Jews. Though released from captivity, the Jews were not independent. They were still controlled by the Persian Empire. Later they would become parts of Empires controlled by Alexander the Great and the Romans. Eventually the Romans forced them to leave Palestine again. This exile is known as *Diaspora*. It would be nearly 2000 years before they returned to the land that they believed God had promised them.

### ANCIENT HEBREWS (3)

After 40 years of wandering in the Sinai Desert, the Hebrews returned to Palestine. They claimed that this was the land promised to them by their covenant with God. A local tribe called the Philistines resisted the Hebrews' attempts to return to Palestine. Fighting broke out between the two peoples. Like other tribes of the Fertile Crescent, the Hebrews turned to a King who could lead them in battle. They found that King in David. Under his leadership, the Hebrews defeated the Philistines and regained control of Palestine.

Weakened by being split in half, the Hebrews were a ripe target for invasion by foreign armies. In 722 B.C.E., the Assyrians conquered Israel. In 586 B.C.E., Babylon conquered Judah. The Babylonians destroyed much of Jerusalem, including the temple built by Solomon. The Hebrews were enslaved by the Babylonians and many were taken to Babylon. They became known as Jews (from the place name *Judah*).

### ANCIENT HEBREWS (4)

David united the 12 Hebrew tribes and created the nation of Israel. He established Jerusalem as the capital. During the reign of David's son Solomon, Israel became wealthy. Solomon kept the peace with his powerful neighbors in Mesopotamia and Egypt. As a result, the Hebrews traded widely throughout the Fertile Crescent region.

Jerusalem became one of the great cities of the Fertile Crescent during Solomon's rule. He built a great temple dedicated to God. He also built impressive palaces for himself. But these projects cost money and labor. Many of the Israelites resented the taxes they had to pay for these projects and the labor they had to supply. Discontent flared into rebellion following the death of Solomon. Israel was split into two. The northern part was called *Israel* and the southern part *Judah*.



## ANCIENT HEBREWS ESSAY (PAGE 1)

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Clan: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Fill in the Blanks

The Hebrews were a nomadic tribe of people in the southern part of \_\_\_\_\_. *Hebrew means the people from the other side of the river* in Greek. This refers to their location near the \_\_\_\_\_ River. According to the Hebrews, God made a \_\_\_\_\_ with Abraham promising that his descendants would be *God's chosen people*. Abraham was summoned by God to leave Ur in Mesopotamia. He traveled to \_\_\_\_\_ in the southwest corner of the Fertile Crescent. Abraham had a grandson named Jacob. Jacob's 12 sons became the leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob was also called \_\_\_\_\_ and his descendants became known as *Israelites*.

In about 1800 B.C.E., \_\_\_\_\_ forced the Hebrews to leave Palestine and enter Egypt. They were treated harshly and were eventually \_\_\_\_\_ by the Egyptians. \_\_\_\_\_ led the Hebrews out from Egyptian enslavement in \_\_\_\_\_ B.C.E. Upon leaving Egypt, the Bible states that God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, which outlined the religious and moral duties that the Hebrews were expected to obey.

After 40 years of wandering in the \_\_\_\_\_ Desert, the Hebrews returned to Palestine. They claimed that this was the land promised to them by their \_\_\_\_\_ with God. A local tribe called the \_\_\_\_\_ resisted the Hebrews' attempts to return to Palestine. Fighting broke out between the two peoples. Like other tribes of the Fertile Crescent, the Hebrews turned to a \_\_\_\_\_ who could lead them in battle. They found that king in \_\_\_\_\_. Under his leadership, the Hebrews defeated the Philistines and regained control of Palestine.

David united the 12 Hebrew tribes and created the nation of \_\_\_\_\_. He established \_\_\_\_\_ as the capital. During the reign of David's son Solomon, Israel became \_\_\_\_\_. Solomon kept the peace with his powerful neighbors in \_\_\_\_\_ and Egypt. As a result, the Hebrews \_\_\_\_\_ widely throughout the Fertile Crescent region.

## ANCIENT HEBREWS ESSAY (PAGE 2)



Clan: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Jerusalem became one of the great cities of the Fertile Crescent during Solomon's rule. He built a great \_\_\_\_\_ dedicated to God. He also built impressive palaces for himself. But these projects cost money and \_\_\_\_\_. Many of the Israelites resented the \_\_\_\_\_ they had to pay for these projects and the labor they had to supply. Discontent flared into rebellion following the death of Solomon. Israel was split into two. The northern part was called \_\_\_\_\_ and the southern part \_\_\_\_\_.

Weakened by being split in half, the Hebrews were a ripe target for \_\_\_\_\_ by foreign armies. In 722 B.C.E., the \_\_\_\_\_ conquered Israel. In 586 B.C.E., Babylon conquered \_\_\_\_\_. The Babylonians destroyed much of Jerusalem, including the \_\_\_\_\_ built by Solomon. The Hebrews were enslaved by the Babylonians and many were taken to Babylon. They became known as \_\_\_\_\_ (from the place name *Judah*).

Eventually the \_\_\_\_\_ conquered the Babylonians. The Persians allowed the Hebrews to return to \_\_\_\_\_. From this time forward they would be known as \_\_\_\_\_. Though released from captivity, the Jews were not independent. They were still controlled by the Persian Empire. Later they would become parts of Empires controlled by \_\_\_\_\_ and the Romans. Eventually the Romans forced them to leave Palestine again. This exile is known as the \_\_\_\_\_. It would be nearly 2000 years before they returned to the land that they believed God had promised them.

Most of the tribes of the Fertile Crescent were \_\_\_\_\_ (believed in many gods and goddesses). The Jews were different. They were \_\_\_\_\_ (believed in one god). Two other monotheistic religions have emerged in the Fertile Crescent region: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. They both have strong links to \_\_\_\_\_. Much of the ethical view (what is right and wrong) of those two religions comes from the teachings of Judaism.