

# Hebrews and Judaism

## Brief #3

### Focus

The Hebrews were a group of people who founded the Kingdom of Israel.

The Hebrews were a group of people who lived in an area called Canaan, which is the area of Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and northeastern Israel.

At the time of the Canaanites, the Egyptian Empire was a powerful force and major civilization in the region. Scholars think that many Canaanites migrated to Egypt due to a famine. The Egyptians then forced the Hebrews to live as slaves for many hundreds of years.

Scholars don't know exactly when, but at some point the enslaved Hebrews were granted their freedom and allowed to leave Egypt. The story of the enslavement and emancipation of the Hebrews is told in the book of Exodus, which is in the *Torah*. **The Torah is the first five books of the Bible**, and also the most important book in the religion of Judaism.

**Judaism is the religion practiced by the Hebrews, who are the ancestors of Jewish people.** Judaism is one of the first monotheistic religions in the world. **Monotheism is the belief in one god.**

**In about 1000 B.C., the Kingdom of Israel was founded by King David.** The Hebrews were then known as the Israelites.

After King David's death, his son Solomon became the king of Israel. He is famous for building a temple in which to keep the Torah. There are many very strict laws regarding how the Torah is treated. For example, every copy of the Torah is handwritten by scribes. The Torah itself is kept between two scrolls, and a special pointer is used to read from the sacred books.

After the death of King Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel split into two parts: Israel was located in the north and Judah was located in the south. In 722 B.C., Israel was conquered by the Assyrian Empire. Over a hundred years later, the Babylonians conquered Judah.

Judaism is one of the most important world religions. Not only is it practiced by millions of people the world over, it is also considered the origin of two other widely practiced religions: Christianity and Islam.

### Vocabulary

1. Hebrews
2. Canaan
3. Torah
4. Judaism
5. monotheism
6. Kingdom of Israel