

# **The History of Judaism**

**Judaism is a religion that began in Mesopotamia also known as the Middle East.**

**Those who follow Judaism are called Jews or Hebrews. Today, Israel is a nation in the Middle East that was established as a safe haven for Jewish people after World War II.**

**Israel has the largest population of Jews in the world. The United States has the second largest population.**



The story of Judaism is told in their holy book, The Torah, which Christians and Muslims also share. Christians refer to those books containing Jewish history as the Old Testament.

Judaism was founded by Abraham. He is considered to be the father of Judaism. When God spoke to Abraham he made a covenant (promise) with him that if Abraham and his people would always obey and only worship God, in return God would always protect them.

From this early promise Jews became known as "God's chosen people." Not because He favored them over others but because according to the Torah they accepted Him when all other people on Earth rejected Him for false gods.

**Hebrews became one of the earliest cultures to be monotheistic, or to believe in only one God.**

The God of the Hebrews was VERY different from the surrounding cultures which were polytheistic. Those cultures found it hard to believe that any one God could look after everyone and still get the work of the world done. Their gods were generally tied to one location, sometimes too busy to worry about regular people and only looked after people living in their region.

**The God of the Hebrews was:**

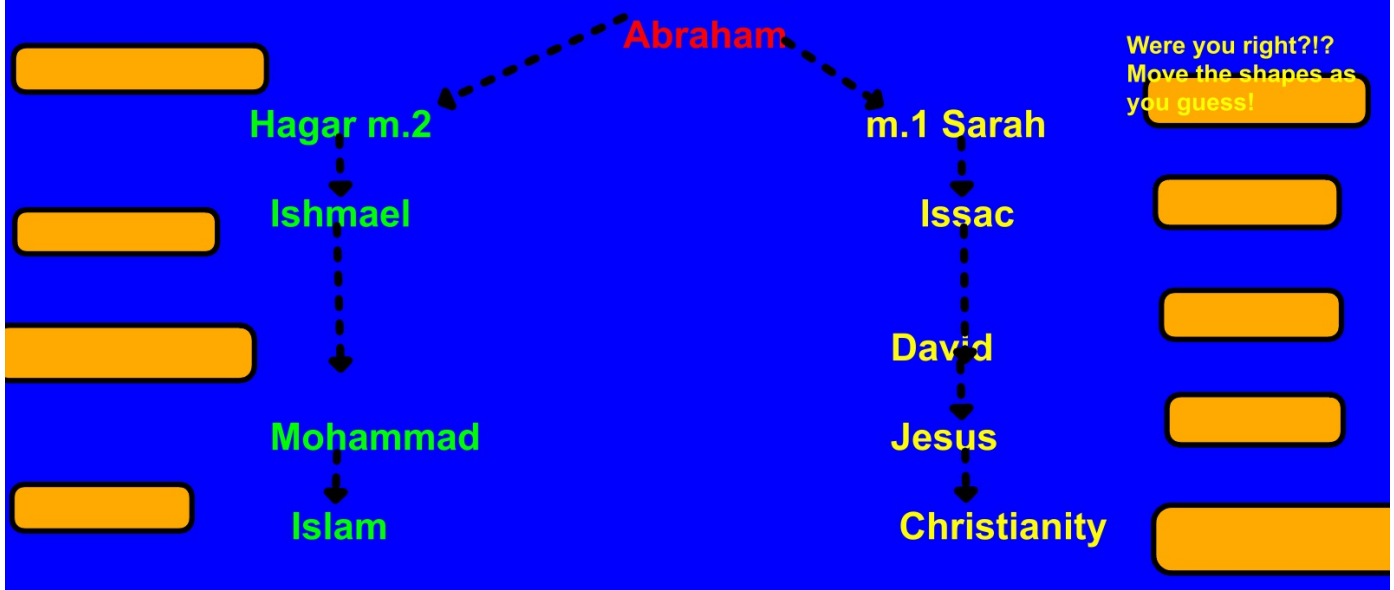
- Omnipotent (all powerful)**
- Omnipresent (present everywhere)**
- Omniscient (all knowing)**

**Abraham was not just the father of Judaism he also influenced its early beliefs and exemplifies total dedication to his beliefs. Can you identify the story from the Torah that is depicted below?**



Abraham is also credited with being the ancestor of three major world religions. Obviously, he is the founder of Judaism but through his descendants on two different sides of the family tree would come Christianity and Islam.

Today, there is a lot of controversy about which first born son was the true heir to Abraham, do you remember the story of his sons? Can you guess why each religion would be biased in its telling of the story?



**The Hebrews worked their land, worshipped, until  
one day all their crops died....  
sad times...  
so God instructed them to move to Egypt!**

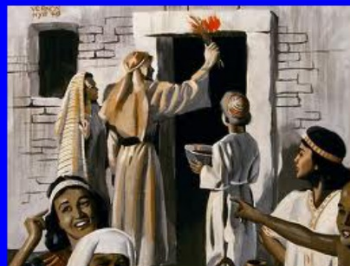
**At first they worked and were fine but as they  
multiplied the Torah says that the Pharaoh  
became nervous so ordered them enslaved and  
the first born male of every Jewish household  
killed...**

**Which brings us to Moses**

Let's use the pictures below to tell the story of Moses! Organize the pictures and we'll fill in the story as we go!



THE TEN PLAGUES	
1. BLOOD	6. Boils
2. Frogs	7. HAIL
3. Lice	8. Locusts
4. Flies	9. DARKNESS
5. Pestilence	10. SLAYING OF THE FIRSTBORN







**What kinds of advantages and disadvantages might there be in where Israel is located today?**

