

☆ JUDAISM

Historical Origins

Judaism, the religion of the Jewish people, dates back more than 4,000 years. Its founder was Abraham, who lived in Mesopotamia. According to the Hebrew Bible, God told Abraham to move to Canaan in present-day Israel and Lebanon. God made an agreement with Abraham to bless his descendants. They later became known as Hebrews or Israelites. The Hebrew Bible contains books of law, history, and prophecy. Another important work is the Talmud, a collection of scholarly writings.



Moses, a descendant of Abraham, is rescued from the Nile.

Central Beliefs

Judaism was the first major religion to teach monotheism, or the belief in one god. Jews believe God is the creator of the whole universe and has given them special responsibilities. Jews are to live holy lives by treating others well and pursuing justice. Today, Jews worship in synagogues, and their leaders are called rabbis.

Spread of Judaism

For centuries, Judaism was practiced primarily in what is present-day Israel. Several times in history, empires conquered the region and drove many Jews from the area. The last major event occurred in A.D. 135 when Rome punished Jewish rebels attempting to regain independence. As Jews spread out around the world, Judaism spread with them.

A worshipper holds up a Torah scroll during a Passover blessing at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, Israel.