The Hebrews and Judaism

Abraham: Father of the Hebrews
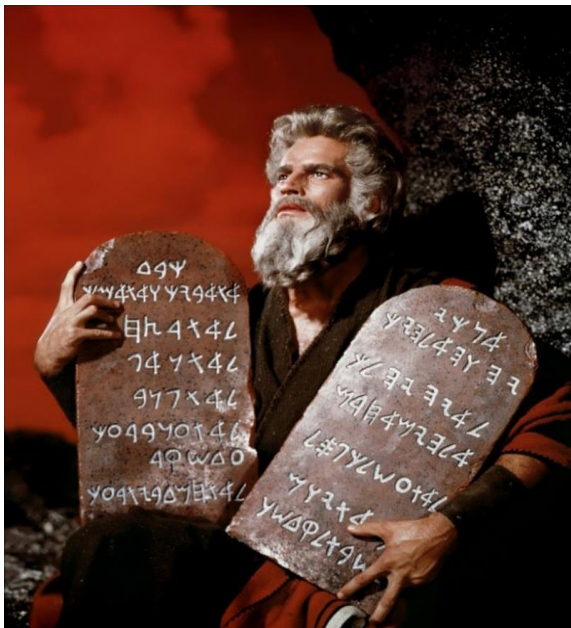
- According to the Torah, Judaism began when God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation if he left Ur for Canaan
- God's promise to Abraham = **covenant** = agreement, contract
- God would protect and bless Abraham & his descendants as long as he worshipped and followed God's rules.

Source

The Hebrew were another civilization who originally lived in Mesopotamia. A great Hebrew leader named Abraham led the Hebrews from Sumer into the land of Canaan. This land is current day Israel and Lebanon.

The Hebrews lived in Canaan for many years. Then a drought began to kill their crops so they then went to Egypt, a powerful force and major civilization in the region. The Egyptians enslaved the Hebrew for many hundreds of years.

At some point, the enslaved Hebrew were granted their freedom and allowed to leave Egypt. Another great Hebrew leader named Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt back to Canaan. This account 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 were the ancestors of Jewish people. Judaism is one of the first monotheistic religions in the world. In

about 1000 B.C., King David founded the Kingdom of Israel. The Hebrew 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. After the death of King Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel split into two parts: Israel to the north and Judah to the south. In 722 B.C., the Assyrian Empire conquered Israel, and over a hundred years later, the Babylonians conquered Judah.

In Mesopotamia and Egypt, most people were polytheistic; however, the Hebrew were monotheistic. According to the holy writings of Judaism, God told Moses to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt and across the desert to Canaan. This journey was called the Exodus, which means 'departure'. The Hebrews followed laws during the Exodus, with the most important of the laws called the Ten Commandments. Several religions believe that God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses while the Hebrew were in the desert on their way to Canaan, the 'Promised Land'.

The Ten Commandments taught people to honor their parents and to love one another. They do not allow people to lie, steal, cheat, or kill.

1. What caused the Hebrews to leave Canaan?
2. Who built the temple, which held the Torah?
3. In what ways are the Ten Commandments similar to many laws that we have today?

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