



World History

Early History of Judaism

Name:

Section:

Score: ____/5

Directions: Read the following passages and answer the questions for each one.

The Old Testament

The history of Judaism is inseparable from the history of Jews themselves. The early part of the story is told in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). It describes how God chose the Jews to be an example to the world, and how God and his chosen people worked out their relationship. It was a stormy relationship much of the time, and one of the fascinating things about Jewish history is to watch God changing and developing alongside his people.

Question: Why would it be fair to say that the Old Testament of the Bible is a history of the Jewish people?

The Bronze Age

Jewish history begins during the Bronze age in the Middle East. The birth of the Jewish people and the start of Judaism is told in the first 5 books of the Bible (Known as the Torah). God chose Abraham to be the father of a people who would be special to God, and who would be an example of good behavior and holiness to the rest of the world. God guided the Jewish people through many troubles, and at the time of Moses he gave them a set of rules by which they should live, including the Ten Commandments.

Question: What is the importance of Abraham?

The birth of Judaism

This was the beginning of Judaism as a structured religion. The Jews, under God's guidance became a powerful people with kings such as Saul, David, and Solomon, who built the first great temple. From then on Jewish worship was focused on the Temple, as it contained the Ark of the Covenant, and was the only place where certain rites could be carried out.

Question: Explain how a culture's common faith in God could strengthen them culturally or politically. Use information from the paragraph for ideas.

The kingdom declines

Around 920 BCE, the kingdom fell apart, and the Jewish people split into groups. Around 600 BCE the temple was destroyed, and the Jewish leadership was killed. Many Jews were sent into exile in Babylon. Although the Jews were soon allowed to return home, many stayed in exile, beginning the Jewish tradition of the Diaspora - living away from Israel.

Question: List 3 of the hardships the Jews faced in the ancient era.