

## Judaism

### Intellectual Output 2, Unit III



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## IERS Digital Modules on Judaism

- [Introduction to Judaism I: History of Judaism](#)
- [Introduction to Judaism II: Themes](#)

Judaism is a monotheistic religion, stemming from the **covenant** established by God with the **Hebrews**.

### The origins of Judaism

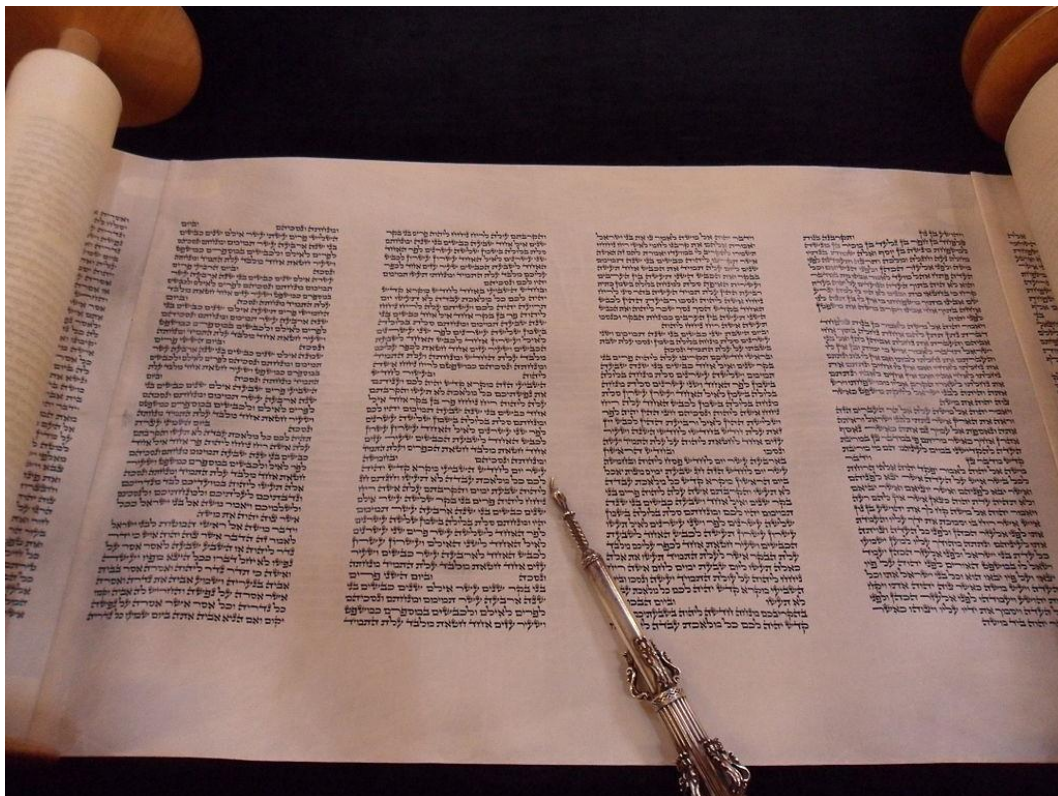
According to the Bible, Abraham acknowledged God as the **one true God** and rejected idolatry. However, historical studies tend to show that the emergence of monotheism is a much slower process. Nevertheless, the religion of the Hebrews is the **first monotheistic religion**.

#### More information on:

- [The origins of Judaism](#)

### Main doctrinal tenets of Judaism

Judaism is sometimes described as an **orthopraxy**, i.e. practices and observances are more important than belief. It is based on the principles written in the **Hebrew Bible** (the **Tanakh**) and its commentaries, such as the **Talmud**.



1. The scrolls of the Torah contain the Jewish law (see [IERS module Judaism II, section 1, source 1](#))

#### More information on:

- [The Hebrew Bible and its commentaries](#)

## Main practices of Judaism

Abiding by the religious law is a way of worshipping God and maintaining the Covenant. Two of the most known practices are the day of rest (**Shabbat**) and the **kashrut**, a complex set of **dietary laws**. Some animals are forbidden, and those deemed **kosher** have to be slaughtered in a certain way. Meat and milk cannot be mixed. In Ancient Times, God was worshipped in the **Temple of Jerusalem**. Since the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, the **synagogues** have become the center of the Jewish religious life.



2. A model of the second Temple (see [IERS module Judaism II, section 2, source 2](#))

### More information on:

- [Main Jewish practices](#)
- [The Temple and the synagogues](#)
- [The importance of Jerusalem](#)

## Historical evolution

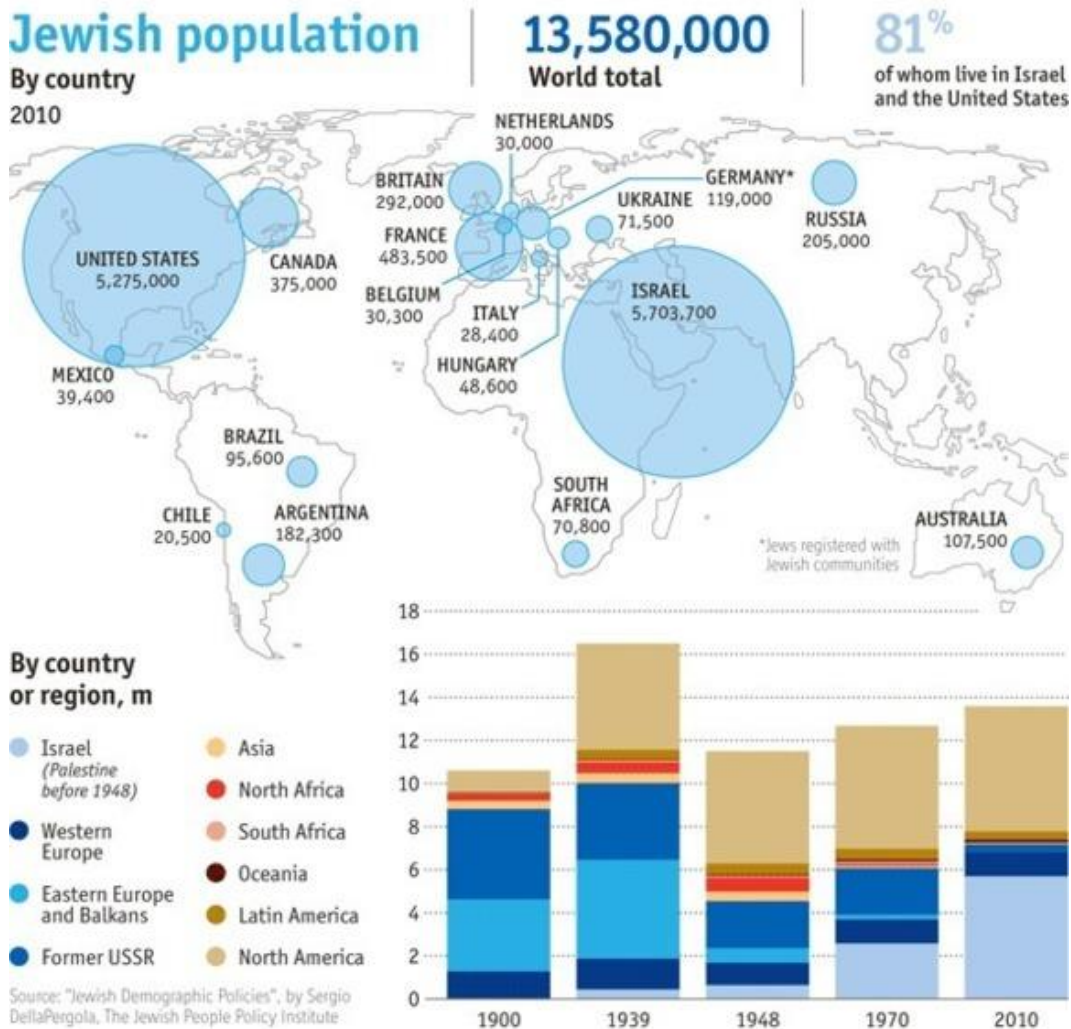
The ancient history of Judaism is mostly known through the **Bible**, but we have other sources such as archaeology and ancient historians. During this first period, the Hebrews built a kingdom and developed a monotheistic religion centered on the **Temple of Jerusalem**. The second period starts with the destruction of the Temple and the dispersion of the Jews. **Rabbinic Judaism** proclaimed the centrality of the text and established most of the practices still respected today. Judaism evolved during the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times while Jews were a religious minority. The 18th century was the beginning of great changes, both internal, with a religious revival and the movement of **Jewish Enlightenment**, and external, with the emancipation of the Jews during the 19th century. The 20th century witnessed the emergence of Jewish nationalism (**Zionism**), which led to the creation of the State of Israel and the **Shoah** (catastrophe), i.e. the Jewish genocide during World War II, which had profound impact on the Jewish world and beyond.

### More information on:

- [The origins of Judaism](#)
- [Rabbinic Judaism](#)
- [Judaism in Middle and Early Modern Ages](#)
- [Jewish Modernity](#)
- [Judaism in the 20th and 21st c.](#)

## Judaism in the globalized world

With between **15 and 17 millions Jews**, Judaism is the tenth largest religion in the world. Due to history, Jews are scattered throughout the world, creating a **diaspora**. It also explains the diversity of Judaism.



3. Jewish population (see [IERS module Judaism I, section 5, Source 3](#))

### More information on:

- [The Jewish population in the world](#) [see Source 3]
- [The Jewish diaspora](#)
- [The diversity of Judaism](#)