

Judaism

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson looks at one of the first monotheistic religions. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Judaism

2. Categories of Judaism

1. Judaism

Among the world's religions, Judaism is considered to be one of the first of the **monotheistic** religions. These are religions that hold the belief that there is only one god. The historical line that is followed in Judaism begins with the figure Abraham. He is the father of the monotheistic religions, which dates back more than 3,000 years.

People who follow the beliefs of Judaism are generally known as **Hebrews** or **Jews**. They are descendants of Abraham through his second son, Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob, whom God later named **Israel**. The Jewish people, or Israelites, believe they have been chosen by God for some purpose. This purpose is expressed in their sacred text through covenants and agreements made between God and the nation of Israel.

The storyline of this covenant with its laws and prohibitions is chronicled in their sacred texts, the Torah, and the Talmud. Judaism, in spite of its evolution and many interpretations over time, always begins with God's blessing of responsibility and purpose upon Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Hebrew patriarchs.



TERMS TO KNOW

Monotheistic

Believing that only one god exists.

Jew

A practitioner of Judaism; one descended from practitioners of Judaism.

Hebrew

In Judaism, a descendant of Abraham.

Israel

2. Categories of Judaism

Along the historical and faithful line of Judaism, there have been different interpretations of their book, their purpose, and how their faith is to be practiced and achieved. The most traditional form of Judaism is called Orthodox Judaism. It holds that the Torah is a direct revelation to Moses from God. The laws and prohibitions apply and have relevance everywhere all the time.

Conservative Judaism, on the other hand, generally maintains that the Torah was divinely inspired; in other words, that the Jewish prophets were inspired to write the Torah, and that it wasn't directly delivered from the mouth of God.

Conservative Judaism emerged primarily in Germany in the mid-19th century in response to a third branch, called Reform Judaism.



DID YOU KNOW

Reform Judaism is considered to be the least traditional of the three in that it interprets Jewish law as a set of guidelines to follow rather than obligatory rules and strict commandments of restraint and action in the world.

Conservatives wanted to distinguish themselves from the Reformers in the shifting context of modernity during the 1850s. Conservatives felt that the Jewish law should be upheld but allowed to evolve and accommodate shifting contexts and situations.



SUMMARY

Judaism is one of the first monotheistic religions and dates back more than 3,000 years. The Jewish people believe they're descended from Abraham, the first Hebrew patriarch. Followers of Judaism believe they are chosen by God for some purpose. There are three primary **categories of Judaism**: orthodox, conservative, and reform.

Source: THIS TUTORIAL WAS AUTHORED BY TED FAIRCHILD FOR SOPHIA LEARNING. Please see our [Terms of Use](#).



TERMS TO KNOW

Hebrew

In Judaism, a descendent of Abraham.

Israel

The name given by God to Jacob; the name of the Jewish nation.

Jew

A practitioner of Judaism; one descended from practitioners of Judaism.

Monotheistic

Believing that only one god exists.