

# Early: Egypt, Kush, and Canaan

## Overview and Objectives

### Overview

In an Experiential Exercise, students use their bodies to model the physical geography of ancient Egypt, Kush, and Canaan to learn about how environmental factors influenced early settlement in these areas.

### Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

#### *Social Studies*

- model the physical geography, including major river systems, of ancient Egypt, Kush, and Canaan.
- recognize locations of early human settlement in these areas.
- describe how environmental factors supported permanent settlement and the development of civilization in these areas.

#### *Language Arts*

- write a short expository composition that states a thesis and offers persuasive evidence to validate arguments and conclusions.

### Social Studies Vocabulary

**Key Content Terms** topography, vegetation, Nile River, Egypt, Kush, Mediterranean Sea, Canaan, Jordan River

**Academic Vocabulary** factor, physical, geography, aspect, diverse

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### Setting the Stage - Ancient Egypt and the Middle East

Can you use one word to describe the geographic setting of an entire region? If that region is North Africa and the Middle East, you can. That one word would be *desert*. Locate both the northern part of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula on the map on the opposite page. Then look at the smaller vegetation map below on this page. The vegetation for most of the region is desert or desert scrub. Few plants grow in the desert. Small trees, bushes, and other plants that have adapted to a dry climate make up desert scrub.

Look again at the vegetation map. Notice the narrow band of broadleaf evergreen forest that extends through Egypt. How can trees that remain green all year grow in such a dry area? The answer is the Nile River. This vegetation zone follows the path of the Nile River in Egypt.

The Nile River has long been an essential source of life-giving water in a dry land. For thousands of years, the Nile flooded the land along its banks, leaving deposits of rich soil in the Nile River valley. The ancient Egyptians grew plentiful harvests of wheat and barley there. These harvests made it possible for the Egyptians to develop one of the world's greatest ancient civilizations.

Two other ancient civilizations developed in this region. Located south of Egypt was the ancient civilization of Kush. Kush developed close ties with Egypt. Northeast of Egypt is an area that borders the Mediterranean Sea. This is the land of ancient Canaan, where the Israelites settled. These people, sometimes called Hebrews, were the ancestors of the Jews. They gave the world one of its major religions—Judaism, and founded the Kingdom of Israel in Canaan.

The mostly dry and hot geographic setting of North Africa and the Middle East was home to three civilizations you will learn about in this unit. First, you will learn more about geography and its effect on where and how these civilizations grew. Then, you will explore each civilization, beginning with the ancient Egyptians.

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### Section 1 - Introduction

In this chapter, you will explore how geography affected three civilizations that arose in northern Africa and southwestern Asia. These were the civilizations of the ancient Egyptian, Kushite (KUSHITE), and Israelite peoples.

The Egyptians settled along the Nile River, in the northeast corner of Africa. Their civilization lasted from around 3100 B.C.E. to 350 C.E. The Kushites settled to the south of Egypt, along the southern part of the Nile River. Their civilization began around 2000 B.C.E. and lasted until 350 C.E. The Israelites, later called Jews, settled northeast of Egypt, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, in about 1800 B.C.E. Although the Jews were forced from their homeland in 70 C.E., their civilization continues to flourish today.

Environmental **factors** greatly affected where people settled. Three important factors were water, topography (the shape and elevation of the surface features of the land), and vegetation (plant life). These three factors were determined by each area's **physical geography**. Physical geography includes mountains, rivers, valleys, deserts, climate, and the fertility of the soil.

In this chapter, you will learn why water, topography, and vegetation were important to early human settlement. You will explore the physical geography of the lands of the ancient Egyptians, Kushites, and Israelites. You'll find out how environmental factors in these places affected people's choices of where to live.

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### Section 2 - Environmental Factors and Early Human Settlement

In ancient times, environmental factors influenced people's choices of where to settle. Three important environmental factors were water, topography, and vegetation.

**Water** The most important environmental factor in early human settlement was water. Physical features like rivers, lakes, and inland seas were good sources of fresh water.

Water was important for many reasons. People needed fresh drinking water to live. They also bathed and washed things in fresh water. Bathing and washing helped prevent disease.

Water was a source of food. People caught fish from rivers, lakes, and seas. They hunted water birds and other animals that gathered near water.

In addition, farmers needed water to grow their crops. For this reason, farmers often settled near rivers. A river's natural flooding could help irrigate their farms. Farmers could also dig canals or trenches to direct river water to their crops. For example, farmers in Mesopotamia dug canals for this purpose.

Water was also used for transportation. Cities and towns often used rivers as "highways." People traveled in boats to visit relatives and trade goods. Towns near the sea could trade goods with countries far away.

**Topography** A second environmental factor was topography. Topography refers to the shape and elevation of the land. It includes features like mountains, hills, plains, valleys, and deserts.

The topography of an area was important for early human settlement. Farmers preferred to settle in flat, open areas such as plains and valleys. Large, flat spaces gave farmers room to plant crops. Also, the rich soil in coastal plains and river valleys was excellent for growing these crops.

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Mountains were less friendly to human settlement. Steep mountains were hard to cross. Their jagged peaks, cold temperatures, and rocky land made farming difficult.

Deserts also discouraged settlement. They were hot and dry. They contained very little water for farming. Sandstorms occurred when strong winds carried dense clouds of sand that could block out the sun. The intense heat, lack of water, and sandstorms made travel and living in the desert difficult.

**Vegetation** A third environmental factor was vegetation, or plant life. There are many kinds of vegetation, such as trees, bushes, flowers, grass, and reeds. The crops people grow are also a type of vegetation.

Many aspects of physical geography affect vegetation. A climate with mild weather and regular rain is good for plant life. Fresh water supports the growth of vegetation. The areas around rivers and lakes are usually green and lush. Mountains are often covered with thick groves of trees. Dry and hot deserts have very little vegetation.

The vegetation in an area influenced early human settlement in several ways. Most important, plants were a source of food. People could eat the wild plants available and also the crops they planted. Vegetation had other uses as well. People learned to make many useful products out of plants, including baskets, tools, medicine, rope, and even paper. Trees provided shade from the hot sun. And plants and flowers added natural beauty to a place.

Wherever people settled in the ancient world, water, topography, and vegetation were important factors. Let's look at how these environmental factors influenced the early settlements of the Egyptians, Kushites, and Israelites.

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### Section 3 - Environmental Factors and the Early Settlement of Egypt and Kush

The Egyptians and Kushites both settled near the Nile River. The Egyptians lived along the northern part of the river. The Kushites lived to the south.

Why did settlements in these areas cluster around the Nile River? Let's look at the physical features of Egypt and Kush to see how environmental factors favored settlement near the Nile.

**Physical Features of Egypt and Kush** The most important physical feature in ancient Egypt and Kush was the Nile River. Flowing north from east Africa, the Nile created a long, fertile valley that ended in a marshy delta where the river emptied into the Mediterranean Sea.

The Nile River valley was bordered by the Libyan Desert to the west and the Nubian Desert to the east. These sandy deserts were extremely hot and dry. Most people avoided these areas, although the deserts did play one important role in the settlement of Egypt and Kush. They formed a natural barrier that helped protect people living in the Nile River valley. The deserts did not support large settlements, and few invaders wanted to risk crossing these harsh places.

On the north, Egypt was bordered by the Mediterranean Sea. Settlers could not drink its sparkling salt water, but the sea was rich in fish and other kinds of seafood. It was also a waterway that linked ancient Egypt to other civilizations.

To the east of Egypt and Kush was a long channel of very salty water called the Red Sea. The climate in this area was hot and dry. Much of the land near the Red Sea was desert.

**Environmental Factors and Human Settlement in Egypt and Kush** Environmental factors in ancient Egypt and Kush greatly favored settlement near the Nile River. Most important, the Nile was a source of fresh water in an area that was mostly desert.

The lack of water in the deserts made them unfit for farming. But in the Nile River valley, the river provided natural irrigation and fertilization. Every summer, the river overflowed its banks. The floodwaters soaked the dry ground for several weeks. As the water level decreased, a thin layer of silt (very fine particles of rock) was left behind. This soil was perfect for farming.

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Also, where there was fresh water, people were more likely to find fish to catch and animals to hunt. The abundant wildlife in the Nile region included fish, ducks, geese, hippos, crocodiles, giraffes, and ostriches.

The topography of the river valley also encouraged human settlement. In the south, parts of the Nile ran through narrow valleys between steep hills. But there were also wide, flat areas of land around deep bends in the river. These flat areas were good for farming. In the north, wide plains were watered by the Nile's annual flooding.

Vegetation was rare in the dry deserts, but it was plentiful in the Nile River valley. Useful plants included reeds and a tough water plant called papyrus. People wove reeds into baskets, and roofs for their huts. Papyrus was used to make rope and paper. And the rich farmland was good for growing crops like wheat and barley.

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### Section 4 - Environmental Factors and the Early Settlement of Canaan

The ancient Israelites settled in Canaan (KAY-nen), a diverse land along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Canaan's physical features and environmental factors made settlement easier in some parts of the region than in others.

**Physical Features of Canaan** Canaan's physical features included plains and valleys, hills and mountains, deserts, and bodies of water.

In the west, coastal plains bordered the Mediterranean Sea. To the north, the Lebanon Mountains rose steeply from the coast. The southern part of this range gave way to the lower hills of Galilee.

The Jordan River flowed down from a mountain range through the middle of Canaan, heading south through the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. The land around the narrow river valley included hills, grassy slopes, and mountains. To the east lay the hot, dry Syrian Desert. In southwestern Canaan was the Negev (NEHgehv) Desert. Rain soaked this area during the winter months, supplying the Negev with more water than most deserts receive.

**Environmental Factors and Human Settlement in Canaan** In Canaan, as in Egypt and Kush, water was a key environmental factor. In very ancient times, the wet, fertile plains near the Mediterranean Sea were farmed. The Mediterranean also enabled traders from many lands to visit Canaan.

Other bodies of water also played a role in the settlement of Canaan. The Sea of Galilee was actually a freshwater lake. It had plentiful fish, and fertile land was nearby. Another large lake, the Dead Sea, was so salty that nothing grew in it, not even plants. The area near the Dead Sea was hot and dry, making it unsuitable for farming.

The main source of fresh water was the Jordan River. People living near the river hunted, fished, and farmed along its banks.



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But unlike the Nile River, the Jordan River did not flood regularly, so its valley was not as fertile as the Nile's.

Canaan's varied topography greatly influenced patterns of settlement. Farmers found it easiest to live on the Mediterranean's coastal plains and near the Jordan River. In other areas, the hilly land and dry soil made growing crops difficult. As a result, many people, including the ancient Israelites, became herders rather than farmers. Herders tended flocks of sheep, goats, cattle, donkeys, and camels. Unlike farmers, herders were nomads, wandering from place to place in search of good land for their animals to graze.

People found it hardest to settle in the mountains and deserts. Mountainous land and dry desert land were both difficult to farm. Still, some people did live in these areas. Nomads sometimes herded cattle and camels in the Negev and Syrian deserts.

In general, Canaan's hot, dry climate discouraged abundant plant life. Vegetation was most plentiful near the Jordan River. Some areas had small forests. Others had only short, scrubby plants. Grasslands were common, though, and herders made good use of them to feed their animals.

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### Summary

In this chapter, you learned how three environmental factors influenced the early settlement of ancient Egypt, Kush, and Canaan.

**Environmental Factors** Three important environmental factors are water, topography, and vegetation. These factors greatly affected where ancient people settled.

**Early Settlement of Egypt and Kush** In Egypt and Kush, most people farmed in the fertile Nile River valley. The Nile River provided fresh water in an area that was mostly desert. The topography of the Nile River valley made the land good for farming. The valley also supported useful vegetation like reeds and papyrus.

**Early Settlement of Canaan** In Canaan, the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee were important sources of fresh water. Much of the land, however, was too hot, dry, or hilly for farming. As a result, many people, including the ancient Israelites, were herders rather than farmers. Herders were nomads who moved from place to place to find grasslands where their animals could graze.

# The Ancient Egyptian Pharaohs

## Overview and Objectives

### Overview

In a Writing for Understanding activity, students board an Egyptian sailing boat and “visit” monuments along the Nile River to learn about four ancient Egyptian pharaohs and their important accomplishments. After completing their journey, they write a letter about what they have seen and learned on their tour.

### Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

#### *Social Studies*

- identify the accomplishments of four key pharaohs from ancient Egypt: Khufu, Senusret I, Hatshepsut, and Ramses the Great.
- analyze ancient Egyptian art and architecture to better understand the accomplishments of the pharaohs.
- hypothesize some ways in which Egyptian pharaohs achieved their most impressive accomplishments, and the effects of those accomplishments on ancient Egypt.

#### *Language Arts*

- create a multi-paragraph personal letter with expository text that engages the interest of the reader and states a clear purpose.
- revise writing to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs.

### Social Studies Vocabulary

**Key Content Terms** pharaoh, Hatshepsut, Ramses II, treaty

**Academic Vocabulary** period, accomplish, structure, authority, reign

## Lesson 8

### Lesson 8 - The Ancient Egyptian Pharaohs

Source: History Alive! The Ancient World - 8

#### Section 1 - Introduction

In this chapter, you will visit ancient Egypt. You will meet four leaders, called pharaohs.

In 1922, archaeologists discovered the tomb of a pharaoh known as King Tutankhaten (too-tan-KAH-tin), or King Tut. Inside a small burial chamber, they found three coffins nested inside each other. The smallest coffin was made of solid gold. It held the king's mummy. (A mummy is a body that has been preserved after death to keep it from decaying.) On the mummy's head was a magnificent golden mask. Jewelry and good luck charms lay on the mummy and in the wrappings that protected it. Other rooms of the tomb were filled with statues, weapons, furniture, and even a chariot.

The treasures in King Tut's tomb provided an amazing glimpse into ancient Egypt. Other pharaohs also left behind fabulous riches and artwork. Many of these pharaohs had great monuments built to celebrate their lives and their accomplishments. Like King Tut's tomb, these artifacts have much to teach us about this ancient civilization.

In this chapter, you will learn about three important **periods** in ancient Egyptian history. Then you will meet four pharaohs who ruled during these periods, learn what they **accomplished**, and explore some of the monuments they left behind.

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### Section 2 - Ancient Egypt and Its Rulers

Ancient Egypt enjoyed three long periods of stability and unity under the rule of **pharaohs**. Historians call these periods the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom.

The Old Kingdom lasted from about 2700 to 2200 B.C.E. During this time, early pharaohs set up a strong central government. They also had great pyramids built as tombs for themselves. Some historians call this time the Age of the Pyramids.

The Middle Kingdom (about 2000 to 1800 B.C.E.) is sometimes called the Period of Reunification because it followed years of chaos and disunity. During this era, Egyptians enjoyed many great achievements in literature, art, and architecture.

The New Kingdom (about 1600 to 1100 B.C.E.) is often called Egypt's Golden Age. During this time of peace and stability, ancient Egypt's power reached its height. Pharaohs increased trade and had huge monuments built.

As in Mesopotamia, religion played a central role in Egypt's social and political order. Pharaohs were believed to be gods. They owned all the land and were responsible for their people's well-being. They were kings, generals, and religious leaders, all combined.

After they died, pharaohs were thought to enter an afterlife that would never end. Their tombs were built to last. Many objects were buried with the pharaoh for use in the next world.

The pharaohs built other monuments to glorify their power and success. The map shows the locations of some of the greatest monuments. Let's find out more about these **structures** and the pharaohs who ordered their creation.

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### Section 3 - Pharaoh Khufu: The Pyramid Builder

The pharaoh Khufu (KOO-foo) ruled from about 2551 to 2528 B.C.E., during the Old Kingdom period. Today, he is best known as the builder of a famous pyramid.

Not much is known about Khufu. Some stories describe him as a cruel, harsh ruler. Others say that he was powerful but kind.

We do know that Khufu helped establish the pharaoh as a central **authority**. For example, he kept strict control over Egypt's food supply. He oversaw the harvest and the storage of extra grain. He also controlled a large network of government officials who carried out his laws. Khufu emphasized his supreme power by declaring himself a god.

Khufu and other Old Kingdom pharaohs had magnificent pyramids built as tombs for themselves and their families. Khufu was responsible for the building of the Great Pyramid at Giza. It is one of the wonders of the ancient world.

The Great Pyramid sat at the center of a huge complex of temples, statues, monuments, and smaller tombs. It was made of more than 2 million stone blocks, perfectly fitted together. Inside, tunnels led to several burial chambers. The king's chamber had six roofs to hold up the weight of the stone layers above it.

Building the Great Pyramid was an amazing feat. No one knows exactly how the Egyptians did it. The pyramid took about 20 years to complete. Khufu had strict control of the building project. He organized and fed thousands of workers. The finished pyramid was a stunning monument to Egyptian engineering.

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### Section 4 - Pharaoh Senusret I: Patron of the Arts

The pharaoh Senusret I (SEHN-oos-ret) ruled from about 1971 to 1926 B.C.E., during the Middle Kingdom. He was a strong leader who ruled a stable, unified Egypt. Art, literature, and architecture flourished during his **reign**.

The arts thrived under Senusret's rule. The pharaoh controlled mines filled with gold, copper, and gems such as purple amethyst. Artisans fashioned these materials into beautiful pieces of jewelry. Bracelets and necklaces were often highly detailed. They were also decorated with stones like turquoise.

Some of the greatest works in Egyptian literature were written during Senusret's reign. "The Story of Sinuhe" tells of a young official named Sinuhe who overhears a plot to kill the pharaoh. Fearing for his own life, Sinuhe flees Egypt. He thrives in his new land, but he grows very homesick. When a new pharaoh calls him home, Sinuhe returns joyfully to Egypt.

Senusret's greatest accomplishments were in religious architecture. He had many temples, shrines, and religious monuments built and improved.

Perhaps Senusret's finest architectural achievement was the White Chapel. (A chapel is a small temple.) It was made of alabaster, a hard white stone. Some historians think that the chapel was originally covered in a thin layer of gold.

Beautiful artwork decorated the chapel's pillars. Carved scenes showed the pharaoh with various gods. Birds, animals, and Egyptian symbols were also depicted.

Senusret wanted his memory to live on through his monuments. But few of his buildings survived the passage of time. A later pharaoh took the White Chapel apart and used the pieces in a monument of his own. Archaeologists later discovered the pieces and reconstructed the White Chapel.

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### Section 5 - Pharaoh Hatshepsut: Promoter of Egyptian Trade

During the New Kingdom, the pharaoh **Hatshepsut** (haht-SHEP-soot) ruled Egypt from about 1473 to 1458 B.C.E. Hatshepsut was Egypt's first female pharaoh. Under her rule, Egyptian art and architecture flourished. Hatshepsut was also known for encouraging trade.

One of her greatest accomplishments was her rise to power. Never before had a woman pharaoh ruled Egypt. At first, she shared power with her male relatives. However, she soon took over as sole ruler.

Hatshepsut strengthened her position in several ways. She filled her government with loyal advisers. She demanded the same respect shown to male rulers. Sometimes, she dressed in men's clothing. She even put on the fake beard worn by male pharaohs. Artists were often instructed to portray her as a man. She also spread stories that her father was a god.

As pharaoh, Hatshepsut promoted trade with other countries. Her biggest trade expedition was to the African kingdom of Punt, at the southern end of the Red Sea. Over 200 men in five ships brought gifts and trade goods to Punt.

Hatshepsut left behind a stunning monument to her reign—a great temple at Dayr al-Bahri (deer ahl-BAH-ray). The main part of the temple was built into a cliff above the Nile River. At the entrance were two tall, thin monuments called *obelisks*. The entrance was also graced by 200 sphinx statues. The sphinx is a mythical creature with the body of a lion and the head of a man.

Scenes from Hatshepsut's reign decorated the temple walls. Detailed carvings portrayed the great voyage to Punt. The carvings showed the valuable things that the pharaoh's traders had brought back to Egypt



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### Section 6 - Pharaoh Ramses II: Military Leader and Master Builder

The pharaoh **Ramses II** (RAM-seez) ruled from about 1290 to 1224 B.C.E., during the New Kingdom. Called Ramses the Great, he is one of the most famous pharaohs. He reigned for more than 60 years, longer than almost any other pharaoh. He is best known for his military leadership and for building numerous monuments.

Ramses used his power to excess. He had over 100 wives, and more than 100 children. Never shy about his importance, he had hundreds of statues of himself erected throughout Egypt. Some of them were over 60 feet high.

From a young age, Ramses was a fearless soldier. He fought alongside his father in various battles. At the age of ten, Ramses was made a captain in the Egyptian army.

Ramses tried to defend an Egyptian empire that extended north into Canaan. His most famous military campaigns were against the Hittite Empire in Anatolia (present-day Turkey). The Hittites constantly threatened Egypt's northern borders. In his best known battle, Ramses reached a standoff with the Hittites, even though he was greatly outnumbered.

Ramses was also a peacemaker. He and the Hittites signed the world's first peace **treaty**. This peace lasted until the Hittite Empire collapsed around 1190 B.C.E.

One of Ramses' greatest projects was the temple complex at Abu Simbel. The main temple was carved into the side of a cliff. The cliff was on a bank of the Nile River. A smaller temple honored his favorite wife, Nefertari.

Four giant statues of a seated Ramses framed the entrance to the main temple. The figures were carved right out of the rock face of the cliff. They are among the finest examples of the artistic skill of Egyptian sculptors.

The inside of the temple was also remarkable. Visitors passed through three large rooms, called halls, to reach the temple's main room. This room's altar contained statues of Ramses and three Egyptian

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gods. The temple was built so that, twice a year, the sun lined up with the entrance. Beams of sunlight would shine down the halls and light up the statues.

Ramses ordered more temples and monuments built than any other pharaoh in history. When he died, he was buried in the tomb that he had ordered workers to construct solely for him. His mummy is one of the best-preserved bodies ever found

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### Summary

**In this chapter, you learned about the accomplishments of four of the pharaohs of ancient Egypt who ruled during three long periods of stability.**

**Ancient Egypt and Its Rulers** Ancient Egypt enjoyed three periods of stability and unity under the rule of pharaohs. These periods were the Old Kingdom (Age of the Pyramids) from about 2700 to 2200 B.C.E.; the Middle Kingdom, (Period of Reunification) from about 2000 to 1800 B.C.E.; and the New Kingdom, (Golden Age) from about 1600 to 1100 B.C.E.

**Pharaoh Khufu** During the Old Kingdom, Khufu set up a strong central government. He also had the Great Pyramid built at Giza. It was an amazing construction feat and one of the wonders of the ancient world.

**Pharaoh Senusret** During the Middle Kingdom, Senusret encouraged Egyptian art and literature. Artisans and architects created fine works, including White Chapel.

**Pharaoh Hatshepsut** Hatshepsut, Egypt's first female pharaoh, promoted Egyptian trade during the New Kingdom. She had a great temple built at Dayr al-Bahri.

**Pharaoh Ramses II** Ramses the Great was a superior military leader and builder of monuments during the New Kingdom. He signed the world's first peace treaty with the Hittites. He had the temple complex at Abu Simbel built.

# Daily Life in Ancient Egypt

## Overview and Objectives

### Overview

In a Problem Solving Groupwork activity, students create and perform interactive dramatizations to learn about the social structure of ancient Egypt and its effect on daily life for members of each social class.

### Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

#### *Social Studies*

- explain why the social structure of ancient Egypt is organized like a pyramid, and how religion affects that organization
- identify the key aspects of daily life for five social classes in ancient Egypt.
- discuss the role of written language and various art forms in ancient Egypt.

#### *Language Arts*

- read aloud expository text fluently and accurately and with appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression.
- deliver informative presentations using facts, details, examples, and explanations developed from written and visual sources.

### Social Studies Vocabulary

**Key Content Terms** social pyramid, social class, status, noble, peasant, afterlife, hieroglyph

**Academic Vocabulary** supreme, occupy, rigid, role, neutral

## Lesson 9 - Daily Life in Ancient Egypt

### Section 1 - Introduction

In this chapter, you will meet members of Egyptian society. You'll learn what Egyptian life was like during the New Kingdom (about 1600 to 1100 B.C.E.).

Each year, when the Nile River flooded its banks, all of Egypt celebrated the Opet Festival. Work in the fields stopped while people at all levels of Egyptian society joined in a great festival honoring the pharaoh and his patron, the god Amon-Re (AH-muhn-RAY).

Almost everyone in Egyptian society took part in the Opet Festival. Priests decorated the god's statue with jewelry. They put the statue in a shrine and placed the shrine on a ceremonial boat called a barque. The beautifully decorated boat was made by artisans, or craftspeople. High-ranking government officials competed for the honor of carrying the barque on poles through town. Members at the lower levels of society, such as farmers, lined the streets to watch the procession. Scribes made a written record of the celebration.

The Opet Festival brought all these groups together. But in everyday life, they belonged to very different social classes. These classes made up a social pyramid, with the pharaoh at the top and peasants at the bottom. In between were government officials, priests, scribes, and artisans. The daily lives of the Egyptian people were distinct for each class.

In this chapter, you will learn about the various classes that made up Egypt's social pyramid. Then you'll explore how social rank determined advantages and disadvantages, work responsibilities, and the quality of daily life for the members in each class.

## Section 2 - Ancient Egypt's Social Pyramid

Egyptian society was structured like a pyramid. At the very top of this **social pyramid** was the pharaoh, Egypt's **supreme** ruler. Egyptian religion strengthened the pharaoh's authority. Pharaohs were believed to be gods, and their word was law.

Next in importance were several layers of **social classes**. The classes near the top of the pyramid had fewer people and enjoyed higher **status**. The classes nearer the bottom had greater numbers of people but lower status.

**Egypt's Social Classes** Below the pharaoh were the next two highest classes in the social pyramid—government officials and priests. They were the most powerful groups in Egypt.

Government officials carried out the orders of the pharaoh. Most officials came from **noble** families. They were powerful and wealthy, and they enjoyed a high quality of life.

Priests were also a powerful group, because religion touched every part of people's daily lives. Priests were in charge of the temples and religious rituals. They also oversaw the important ceremonies surrounding death and burial.

Next on the social pyramid were scribes. Scribes held a respected position in society. They recorded information for government and religious leaders. It took many years of schooling to become a scribe.

Artisans **occupied** the next layer of the social pyramid. This group included craftspeople like carpenters, metalworkers, painters, sculptors, and stone carvers. Artisans were highly skilled, but they had little social status.

At the bottom of the social pyramid were the **peasants**. They were the largest social class. Peasants worked the land, providing the Egyptians with a steady food supply. When not farming, peasants worked on the pharaoh's massive building projects.

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**Life in Egypt's Social Classes** Egypt's social pyramid was fairly rigid. Most people belonged to the same social class as their parents. There was little chance of moving to a higher class. Members of different classes may have had some things in common, but, in general, their lives were quite different.

Egyptians in all social classes cherished family life. Most Egyptians married within their social group. Children were highly valued.

Men and women had different roles within the family. Men were the heads of their households. They worked to support the family. Fathers often began to train their sons at a young age to take on their line of work. Women typically managed the home and raised the children. Upper-class women had servants or slaves to help them. Lower-class women did the work themselves.

Men were in charge of Egyptian society, but women enjoyed more freedom and rights than most women in the ancient world. They could own land and run businesses. They could also ask for divorces and represent themselves in legal matters. Some women in the middle and upper classes worked as doctors, government officials, or priestesses. Both women and men enjoyed a better quality of life the higher they were on the social pyramid.

The Egyptians believed that their class system created a stable, well-ordered society. Each group had its own role to play. Let's take a look at the duties and daily lives of the various social classes during the time of the New Kingdom

### Section 3 - Government Officials

Government officials belonged to the highest class on Egypt's social pyramid, after the pharaoh. Their job was to assist the pharaoh in his or her role as supreme ruler of Egypt.

Government officials were often members of the pharaoh's family or other upper-class families. Most of them inherited their positions from family members. However, trusted servants from the royal court sometimes rose to power.

**Important Government Officials** Three important officials were the vizier (vuh-ZEER), the chief treasurer, and the general of the armies. Each had his own duties.

The vizier had more power than anyone except the pharaoh. The vizier advised the pharaoh and carried out his commands. He appointed and supervised many of the other government officials.

The vizier also served as a kind of chief judge. Other judges would bring him their toughest cases. A vizier was expected to be fair and **neutral**, showing no special favor to either side in a dispute. One vizier gave this advice about being impartial, or not taking sides: "Regard one you know like one you don't know, one near you like one far from you." In works of art, viziers were often shown wearing white, the color of neutrality.

The chief treasurer oversaw the government's wealth. His main duty was to collect taxes. Egypt's economy was based on goods rather than money. People paid their taxes in grain, cows, cloth, and silver.

After the pharaoh, the top military commander in Egypt was the general of the armies. He advised the pharaoh in matters of war and national security, such as how to protect Egypt's borders from invaders. He also helped the pharaoh make alliances with other kingdoms.

**Lives of Luxury** High government officials led lives of luxury. Most were nobles who had great wealth, fine homes, and plenty of time to socialize.



## Lesson 9

The lavish banquets enjoyed by these wealthy Egyptians illustrate their grand lifestyle. Hosts took pride in the meal. Cooks might roast duck, goose, pigeon, quail, antelope, sheep, and goat. Dishes were piled high with special delicacies that might include figs, dates, grapes, and coconuts. A variety of breads and cakes and honey completed the feast.

Guests at banquets dressed in fine linen clothing. Both men and women wore perfume. Women often wore ropes of beads as jewelry. They painted their nails, lined their eyes with makeup, and used lipstick.

At the start of a banquet, it was customary for guests to offer the host lengthy blessings, such as wealth, great happiness, a long life, and good health. The host often responded simply with "Welcome, welcome," or "Bread and beer," as a way of saying, "Come and eat!"

The feast began with men and women taking their seats on opposite sides of the room. Important guests were given chairs with high backs. Everyone else sat on stools or cushions. Servants, mostly women, waited on the guests. There were no forks or spoons, so people ate with their fingers.

While the guests ate, musicians, dancers, and acrobats provided entertainment. Musicians were usually women. They played flutes, harps, rattles, and lutes (a guitarlike instrument). Guests often clapped along with the music.

## Section 4 - Priests

Like government officials, priests were powerful and highly respected in society. A large network of priests served under the pharaoh, who was considered the highest-ranked priest of all.

**The Duties of Priests** Priests had different jobs. The High Priest advised the pharaoh and oversaw all religious ceremonies. Temple priests were in charge of the temples scattered throughout Egypt. Other priests handled more common concerns and requests. They gave advice and performed healings.

Women were allowed to be priestesses in Egypt. They were generally regarded as equal to male priests. Their main duty was to oversee temples that were devoted to music and dancing.

Temple priests played an extremely important role in Egyptian religion. Every temple was home to one or more Egyptian gods. A temple priest's primary job was to take care of his temple's special god in a variety of ways.

A temple's god was thought to live in a statue. The statue was housed in a holy room called a sanctuary. Only a priest who had purified (cleansed) himself could enter the sanctuary. There were many steps a priest had to take to be purified. He had to avoid certain foods, such as fish, that were associated with the lower classes. He had to cleanse his body by bathing in holy pools, three or four times a day. He also had to shave off his body hair. And he had to wear clothes made of linen cloth, because animal products like leather and wool were considered unclean. Once he was purified, the priest could perform his sacred duties.

**The Priests' Role in Burial Practices** Priests had a special role to play in burial practices. Egyptians believed in a life after death. They thought that in the afterlife, a person's body remained with his or her dead spirit. For this reason, the Egyptians used a method called embalming to preserve bodies from decay. Priests oversaw this sacred ritual.

The embalming process had many steps. First, the embalmers removed the body's organs, such as the brain, lungs, and liver. They used hooks to pull the brain out through the nostrils. Only the heart was left in the body. Egyptians believed that the gods used the heart to judge a dead person's soul.

## Lesson 9

Then, the organs were packed in jars to preserve them. The organs and body were dried out with a special salt called natron.

After about 70 days, the embalmers washed and oiled the body. Then they wrapped it in hundreds of yards of linen. The embalmers decorated the wrapped body, or mummy, with pieces of jewelry and protective charms. Often, they placed a mask over the head. Finally, they spread a black, gooey gum over the body and wrapped it a final time.

The mummy was then ready for burial. First, it was placed in a wooden box. The box was then stored inside a large stone coffin called a sarcophagus. Because the ancient Egyptians believed that the afterlife was much like life in this world, they buried other items along with the box or coffin. These included food and drink, furniture, statues, jewelry, gold, clothes, games, and mirrors.

Not all Egyptians could afford such complicated burials. But even poor Egyptians wrapped their dead in cloth and buried them with loaves of bread and other items they thought would be needed in the afterlife.

## Section 5 - Scribes

In the social pyramid, scribes were one level below priests. Scribes were Egypt's official writers and record keepers. They were highly respected and well paid. Most scribes worked for the government. Others worked for priests or nobles.

Only men were allowed to be scribes. They came from all classes of society. Becoming a scribe was one of the few ways that men could rise above their parents' social class.

**Scribe Schools** Boys who wanted to become scribes had to attend scribe schools. The schools were run by priests. Most students came from artisan or merchant families. Very few boys came from the peasant class.

Schooling started around the age of five. Students typically spent 12 years or more learning **hieroglyphs**, the symbols used in the Egyptian system of writing. This writing system was quite complicated. Most students first mastered a simpler form of writing and then worked their way up to hieroglyphs.

Students had to memorize over 700 hieroglyphs. They spent as many as four years copying the signs, over and over. They practiced their writing on pieces of wood, flakes of stone, and even broken bits of pottery. As their skills improved, students were allowed to write on papyrus, a type of paper made from the papyrus plant.

Students in scribe schools did not have an easy life. Classes sometimes lasted from dawn until sunset. Teachers were strict and often treated their students harshly. Teachers punished students for being lazy or for not paying attention. Beatings were common. One stern schoolmaster wrote, "A youngster's ear is on his back; he only listens to the man who beats him."

**The Work of the Scribes** Ancient Egyptians kept all kinds of records, so scribes held a wide variety of jobs. They recorded accounts of the grain and food supply. They wrote down the results of the government census, which counted the people living in Egypt. Some scribes calculated and collected taxes. Legal scribes recorded court cases and helped enforce laws. Military scribes kept track of the army's soldiers and food supply, and the number of enemies killed in battle.

## Lesson 9

Every scribe used the same tools. For pens, a scribe used finely sharpened reeds. For paper, he used a sheet of papyrus laid on a writing tablet. The tablets were made of wood or stone. Each tablet contained two wells, one for black ink and one for red ink. A small container held water that was used to wet the ink.

A scribe carried his tools with him wherever he traveled. His tablet hung from a cord slung over his shoulder. Attached to the tablet were leather bags and cases that held his other tools.

Scribes also carried rolls of papyrus. This paper was a remarkable Egyptian invention. The Egyptians made paper by first cutting the inner part of the papyrus plant into strips. These strips were soaked in water for several days until they were soft. The soft strips were laid out in a crisscross pattern, and then pressed between two sheets of cloth until all the water was absorbed. Finally, the papyrus strips were pressed one more time to form a sheet of paper

## Section 6 - Artisans

Below the scribes on the social pyramid were the artisans. Egypt's artisans were highly skilled laborers who created some of the most beautiful art objects in the ancient world. Yet, unlike scribes, they rarely got respect from higher classes. Only the few who became masters at their craft were sometimes honored for their work.

**Types of Artisans** Artisans specialized in any one of a number of crafts. Workers in this class included carpenters, jewelers, leatherworkers, metalworkers, painters, potters, sculptors, and weavers. Artisans made many beautiful objects, including stunning jewelry and elegant furniture. Painters portrayed scenes of Egyptian daily life. Most artisans were men, but some women wove fabric, beaded clothing, and made perfume.

The most skilled artisans were the stone carvers. They produced the statues, engravings, and reliefs found in Egyptian temples, tombs, and monuments.

Stone carvers played an important role in tomb building. The belief in an afterlife inspired wealthy Egyptians to order elaborate tombs for themselves. Stone carvers helped equip the tombs with artworks to honor and preserve the dead. Artworks might include statues of the deceased, highly detailed wall engravings, and stone coffins.

Stone carving was demanding and time consuming work. Carvers often worked with hard rock, such as granite. They used dolerite, another type of hard rock, to pound out an initial shape. Next, they refined the shape and carved in details, using stone tools and copper chisels. Then, they used quartz sand to smooth and polish the object. Painters often added color to the finished product.

**The Daily Life and Work of Artisans** Artisans were a class toward the lower middle of society. They lived with their families in modest homes. Their houses were usually rectangular and barely 10 yards long. Three rooms stretched from front to back. The first room was used as a workroom or to house animals. The living room came next. The final room was divided into kitchen and a bedroom. The roof was sometimes used as another place to work or sleep.

## Lesson 9

Artisans typically worked side by side in big workshops. They usually worked for ten days at a stretch before taking time off. The workers depended entirely on their employers for food. In hard times, when food was in short supply, artisans often went hungry.

Pharaohs called upon hundreds of artisans at a time to work on royal projects. Artisans created the fine artwork that often covered temples, royal tombs, and other monuments. They worked in large groups to complete engravings, paintings, and hieroglyphics.

Despite artisans' skill and creativity, the upper classes often viewed them as little more than common laborers. Even the most talented artists were rarely allowed to sign their work. But some artists did receive recognition. Employers sometimes threw a banquet for their favorite artist. Occasionally, they honored an artist by letting him portray himself in a painting or an engraving

## Section 7 - Peasants

Peasants made up the lowest and largest class in Egypt's social pyramid. They were generally considered unskilled laborers. Yet Egyptian society depended on their work. Peasants grew the crops that supplied everyone with food. When not busy working the fields, peasants helped build monuments like the pyramids.

**The Three Seasons of the Nile** Peasant life revolved around the Nile River. Its three seasons were the flooding season, the planting season, and the harvest season.

The flooding season lasted from June to September. During this time, the Nile overran its banks and fertilized the fields. Farmers had to wait for the waters to go down before they could work the fields. In the meantime, they labored on royal projects, such as building pyramids and temples.

In October, the planting season began, and farmers sowed their fields with seeds. The biggest crops were wheat and barley, which were used to make bread.

Peasants worked in pairs to sow the fields. The farmer softened the earth with a plow pulled by cattle. A second person, often the farmer's wife, followed behind to scatter the seeds. Throughout the season, farmers carefully irrigated the land.

The harvest season began in March. Usually the farmer's entire family helped with the harvest. The men cut down the plants with sickles (metal blades with short wooden handles). Then the women and children gathered the tall stalks of grain.

During harvest time, everyone worked from dawn to dusk. Peasants often sang songs to make the long hours of labor go more quickly. Sometimes, musicians played in the fields while the workers sang.

**The Daily Lives of Peasants** Peasants had the fewest comforts of any of the social classes. They lived in plain houses made of mud bricks. Their furniture was sparse, often just woven mats.



## Lesson 9

The peasants' diet was also simple. A typical daily meal might be made up of onions, cucumbers, fish, and homemade bread. Peas and lentils were also common. Unlike the upper classes, peasants rarely ate meat. In times of famine, they often had to boil tough papyrus plants for food.

Peasants spent most of their lives working, but they did have some time for fun. Men enjoyed a river game that involved knocking each other off papyrus rafts. Holidays were celebrated before planting and after the crops were harvested. Peasants also took part in festivals held to honor the Egyptian gods.

An important time of year for peasants was the end of the harvest season. As a reward for their hard work, they were allowed to gather up any leftover grain and keep it for food.

But farmers could also be punished for a poor harvest. They had to pay taxes in the form of crops. If a harvest came up too short to pay the required tax, a farmer might be brutally beaten

## Summary

**In this chapter, you learned about Egypt's social pyramid. Their social class determined the daily life of ancient Egyptians.**

**Government Officials** This was the highest social class after the pharaoh. Many officials were nobles who inherited their jobs, but some rose to power. Three key officials were the vizier, the chief treasurer, and the general of the armies.

**Priests** Priests were powerful and respected. They advised the pharaoh, oversaw religious ceremonies, took care of temple gods, and prepared bodies for the afterlife.

**Scribes** Scribes were Egypt's official writers and record keepers. They were well paid and respected. They trained for many years in special schools to learn hieroglyphs, Egypt's writing symbols. Boys from several social classes could become scribes.

**Artisans** These highly skilled laborers created beautiful objects but got little respect. Stone carvers were among the most skilled and important artisans.

**Peasants** This lowest and largest social class grew crops that supplied food and also helped build monuments such as the pyramids. Peasants' lives revolved around the three seasons of the Nile River.

# The Kingdom of Kush

## Overview and Objectives

### Overview

In a Visual Discovery activity, students analyze images of significant events and leaders from four periods in the history of ancient Kush to learn about the development of the independent kingdom of Kush and its changing relationship with ancient Egypt.

### Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

#### *Social Studies*

- identify the location of the civilization of Kush.
- analyze and describe images that show the commercial, cultural, and political relationship between Kush and Egypt, and the development in Kush of an independent economy, government, and culture.
- explain how location influenced the history of Kush during four different time periods.

#### *Language Arts*

- emphasize salient points to assist listeners' understanding of main ideas and concepts.
- use a timeline to effectively and coherently organize main ideas.

### Social Studies Vocabulary

**Key Content Terms** Meroë, dynasty, kandake

**Academic Vocabulary** complicate, unique, establish, superior

## Lesson 10 - The Kingdom of Kush

### Section 1 - Introduction

In this chapter, you will learn about the African kingdom of Kush. Kush was located on the Nile River, to the south of Egypt.

The civilization of Kush thrived from about 2000 B.C.E. to 350 C.E. Kush and Egypt had a close relationship throughout much of Kush's long history. Signs of their close ties can be found in pictures on the walls of some Egyptian tombs and temples.

A good example is the tomb of Hatshepsut, Egypt's first female pharaoh. Many painted scenes of Egyptian life decorate the walls. But on closer examination, not all the people in the paintings are Egyptian. Some people look a little different. They have darker skin and curly hair. These people are Kushites (KUH-shites). In some scenes, the Kushites appear to be bearing gifts. In others, they look as if they are armed with bows and arrows. As these images suggest, Egypt and Kush had a **complicated** relationship. Sometimes it was peaceful. Often it was not.

In this chapter, you will learn about the relationship between Egypt and Kush and the influence of each culture on the other. You will also discover how the location of Kush influenced its history and how Kush created its own **unique** civilization.

## Section 2 - The Egyptianization of Kush

Aside from Egypt, Kush was the greatest ancient civilization in Africa. Like its neighbor to the north, Kush grew up around the fertile banks of the Nile River. Kush was known for its rich gold mines. In fact, another name for *Kush* is *Nubia*, which comes from *nub*, the Egyptian word for gold.

Kush's location and natural resources made it an important trading hub, or center. Kush linked central and southern Africa to Egypt. Pharaohs sent expeditions on ships south along the Nile to buy, or sometimes steal, goods. The Egyptians traded grain and linen for Kush's gold, ivory, leather, and timber. The Egyptians also bought slaves.

At times, Egypt raided Kush or took control of some of its lands. During the New Kingdom (about 1600–1100 B.C.E.), Egypt's power was at its height. Egypt conquered Kush. Kush was forced to pay tribute to Egypt in the form of gifts. The pharaoh appointed a governor to make sure the tribute was paid every year. The Kushites gave the governor gold, cattle, ivory, ebony, ostrich feathers, and slaves.

While under Egypt's control, Kushite society became Egyptianized, or more like Egypt. For example, Kushites spoke and wrote in Egyptian. They worshiped Egyptian gods and wore Egyptian-style clothes. Kush's archers fought in Egypt's army. Kush's royal princes were sent to Egypt to be educated.

Around 1100 B.C.E., Egypt's New Kingdom collapsed. Kush regained its independence. However, Egyptian culture persisted. About 900 B.C.E., a new line of Kushite kings was established. But even these kings continued to follow Egyptian traditions.

### Section 3 - Kush Conquers Egypt

After the collapse of the New Kingdom, Egypt fell into political chaos. At least ten Egyptian kingdoms fought one another for power. The constant fighting made Egypt weak and unstable.

In the mid-700s B.C.E., Kush took advantage of Egypt's weakness. Kushite armies invaded Egypt. In about 730 B.C.E., the kings in northern Egypt surrendered to Piye, king of Kush.

After his conquest of Egypt, Piye declared himself pharaoh. One of his titles was "Uniter of the Two Lands." The kingdom of Kush now extended 1,500 miles. It reached from the Kushite city of Meroë (MER-oh-ee), located on the southern Nile River, to the Mediterranean Sea.

In Egypt, Piye and his family became the 25th dynasty, or line of rulers. Kushite pharaohs ruled over Egypt for nearly a century. Historians have traditionally called them the "black pharaohs."

The Kushite pharaohs did not want to destroy Egypt. Instead, they wanted to revive Egypt's past glory. They built magnificent new temples and pyramids in both Egypt and Kush. One of the most beautiful was the temple at Jebel Barkal. It was modeled after the temple built by Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II at Abu Simbel.

By the 670s B.C.E., Egypt was being attacked by the Assyrians. The Assyrians had created a powerful empire in Mesopotamia. In 671 B.C.E., an Assyrian king invaded Egypt. For many years, the Kushites tried to hold off the forces of the Assyrians. But the Assyrians used their advanced iron weaponry to drive the Kushites out of Egypt. By the mid 650s B.C.E., the last of the Kushite pharaohs had fled to Kush.

#### Section 4 - The Kush Capital of Meroë

A new dynasty in Kush followed the Kushite pharaohs that had ruled Egypt. About 590 B.C.E., Egypt once more invaded Kush and was able to destroy its capital city, Napata (NAP-uh-tuh). The Kushites decided to make Meroë their new capital. Meroë was 300 miles south of Napata, safely out of Egypt's reach.

Meroë's location helped Kush remain an important center of trade. Traders used the Nile, the Red Sea, and overland routes to transport their goods. Most of these routes took traders through Kush. As a result, Kushites traded with many lands. Some of these lands were nearby, such as other African kingdoms and Arabia. But Kush also traded with such distant lands as Rome (on the peninsula of Italy), India, and possibly even China.

Meroë was a large and wealthy city. It became the center of a Kushite civilization that lasted for nearly 1,000 years. At its height, the city thrived as a great center of industry as well as culture. It became especially well known for producing iron. Because of their superior knowledge of iron technology, the Assyrians had triumphed over the Kushites in Egypt. The Kushites were now determined to equal the military might of the Assyrians.

Meroë had everything needed to produce iron. It had a rich supply of iron deposits. It also had plenty of forests, which provided the wood needed to make charcoal. The charcoal was used to heat the iron deposits. Once the hot iron separated from the rock, it was cooled in the Nile's waters.

Ironworkers in Kush made a variety of things. They crafted weapons such as spears, arrows, and swords. They also created tools to make farming faster and easier. These tools included axes, for quickly clearing forests, and hoes, for loosening soil.

## Section 5 - Kush Returns to Its African Roots

After its separation from Egypt, Kush returned to its African roots. Artwork, clothing, and buildings no longer imitated Egyptian styles. Kushites worshiped an African lion-god rather than Egyptian gods. The Kushite people wrote and spoke a native language called Meroitic (mer-uh-wid-ik), after Meroë, which had its own alphabet.

Kushite art and architecture flourished. Artisans made beautiful pottery, cloth, and gold and silver jewelry. Rulers built grand palaces, temples, and pyramids.

Kush also revived the African practice of female leadership. Powerful **kandakes**, or queen mothers, ruled Meroë. The kandakes usually co-ruled with their sons or husbands. Kandakes were considered goddesses and were very powerful.

One of the greatest kandakes was Queen Amanirenas. She defended Kush against the powerful Romans in 24 B.C.E. The Romans had taken over Egypt as they expanded their vast empire. They then demanded tribute from Kush. Kandake Amanirenas and her son, Prince Akinidad, led an attack that destroyed several Roman forts on Kush's borders. The war with Rome raged on.

After three years of fierce fighting, Rome signed a peace treaty with Kush. Kush no longer had to pay tribute to Rome.

Under Amanirenas, Kush had defeated the most powerful empire in the world. The kingdom of Kush survived for nearly 400 more years. In 350 C.E., Kush fell to invaders from the African country of Ethiopia



## Summary

**In this chapter, you learned about the African kingdom of Kush. Kush had a complicated relationship with ancient Egypt, its neighbor to the north.**

**The Egyptianization of Kush** Kush's location on the Nile River and its natural resources made it a trade center. During the New Kingdom period, Egypt conquered Kush and Kushites adopted Egyptian ways.

**Kush Conquers Egypt** Under the rule of King Piye, Kush conquered Egypt. Kushite pharaohs ruled Egypt for nearly a century, building new temples and pyramids in both Egypt and Kush. Then the Assyrians forced the Kushites to leave Egypt.

**The Kush Capital of Meroë** Meroë became the capital of Kush about 590 B.C.E. It was the center of Kushite industry, such as ironwork, and trade for 1,000 years.

**Kush Returns to Its African Roots** Kush returned to its African culture and revived the African practice of powerful women leaders, called kandakes. Kandake Amanirenas stopped Rome's attempt to take control of Kush

# The Origins of Judaism

## Overview and Objectives

### Overview

In a Writing for Understanding activity, students identify key historical leaders of the ancient Israelites and explain their role in the development of Judaism.

### Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

#### *Social Studies*

- describe the origins of Judaism as the first monotheistic religion.
- identify the Torah as the source of the basic teachings of Judaism and as a source of information on the history of the Israelites, also called Hebrews.
- explain the significance of Abraham, Moses, David, and Solomon in the history of the Israelites and in the development of Judaism.
- document on a timeline the locations and movements of the ancient Israelites, including the Exodus from Egypt.

#### *Language Arts*

- write expository compositions with persuasive evidence to validate arguments and conclusions.
- revise writing to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within paragraphs.

### Social Studies Vocabulary

**Key Content Terms** Torah, Israelite, Judaism, tradition, Israel, slavery, Jerusalem, covenant, Exodus, Ten Commandments

**Academic Vocabulary** eventually, fundamental, foundation, symbol

## Lesson 11 - The Origins of Judaism

### Section 1 - Introduction

In this chapter, you will learn about a group of people who lived northeast of Egypt. These people were known as the Israelites, later called Jews.

Jewish civilization developed gradually after about 1800 B.C.E. and continues to flourish today. The people who became the Jews originally lived in Mesopotamia. Around 1950 B.C.E., they moved to Canaan. Canaan was located on a strip of land extending along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Israelites, sometimes called Hebrews, were the ancestors of the Jewish people. Judaism is the religion of the Jewish people and is one of the world's most influential religious traditions.

The origins of Judaism and its basic teachings and laws are recorded in its most sacred text, the Torah. The word *Torah* means “teaching.” The Torah consists of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. This bible is also called the *Tanakh* (TAH-nahkh). In addition to the Torah, the Hebrew Bible includes two collections of texts known as the Prophets and the Writings. Christians use a version of the Hebrew Bible as their Old Testament.

In this chapter, you will find out about the origins, or beginnings, of Judaism. You will read about some of the early history of the Jewish people, as told in the Hebrew Bible. You will also meet four leaders of the ancient Israelites—Abraham, Moses, and kings David and Solomon (SAH-leh-mehn)—and learn about their contributions to the development of Judaism.

## Section 2 - What We Know About the Ancient Israelites

Historians rely on sources of information such as artifacts and writings, including the **Torah** and the other parts of the Hebrew Bible. From such sources, scholars have learned much about the ancient **Israelites** and the development of **Judaism**.

**The Torah** The Torah contains written records and teachings of the Jews, and 613 commandments that direct moral and religious conduct. As often happened in ancient times, accounts of the history of the Jewish people were handed down orally from generation to generation. Later on, these stories and **traditions** were written down.

Besides the Torah and the other parts of the Hebrew Bible, historians look at additional sources of information about events and ideas in early Jewish history. Historians often examine archaeological artifacts as well as written records to gain a better understanding of life in this time period.

**The Early History of the Israelites** According to the Torah, the ancestor of the Israelites was a man named Abraham who lived near Ur in Mesopotamia. Around 1950 B.C.E., Abraham and his family migrated to Canaan, a region of land along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Settling in Canaan, the Israelites herded flocks of sheep and goats.

About 1800 B.C.E., according to the first book of the Torah, a famine forced many Israelites to flee from Canaan to Egypt. For a while, the Israelites prospered in Egypt, but **eventually** they were enslaved. In time, one of their leaders, Moses, led the Israelites in their escape from Egypt.

For 40 years, says the Torah, the Israelites traveled in the wilderness, until they settled once again in Canaan. By 1000 B.C.E., the Israelites had set up the kingdom of **Israel** in Canaan. Israel was ruled by King David and then by his son, King Solomon. David united the Israelites into one kingdom. Solomon built a magnificent temple in the capital city. When Solomon died, in about 930 B.C.E., the kingdom of Israel separated into two kingdoms—Israel in the north and Judah in the south

### Section 3 - Important Jewish Leaders

The Hebrew Bible tells of the lives of early Jewish leaders. Four key leaders were Abraham, Moses, David, and Solomon.

**Abraham** Abraham is called the “father of the Jews.” One central idea of Judaism is the belief in a single God. According to the Torah, it was Abraham who introduced this belief to the Israelites, ancestors of the Jews. This was a new idea in the ancient world. At that time, most people worshiped many gods and goddesses.

According to the Torah, God first spoke to Abraham, telling him to move his family from Mesopotamia to Canaan. God also promised to make Abraham the father of a great nation and to bless this nation. Abraham did as he was told, and his descendants became known as the Jewish people.

**Moses** The greatest leader of the Israelites was Moses. The Torah tells how he led his people out of slavery in Egypt. Moses told the Israelites that God would lead them to Canaan, the “promised land,” in exchange for their faithful obedience.

Moses also gave Judaism its fundamental teachings. The Torah tells how God gave Moses ten important commandments, or laws, engraved on two stone tablets. These teachings became the foundation of Judaism. The books of the Torah are also called the Five Books of Moses.

**Kings David and Solomon** After escaping from Egypt and traveling in the wilderness, the Israelites returned to Canaan. It was here that they created a united kingdom, called Israel, during the reigns of King David and his son, King Solomon.

King David established Jerusalem as a holy city and the capital of Israel. King Solomon built Jerusalem’s great First Temple. To the Israelites, and later the Jews, the city of Jerusalem and its Temple became powerful symbols of their faith in God.

You will now learn more about each of these four important leaders. Let’s find out what the Hebrew Bible tells about them.

## Section 4 - The Life of Abraham: Father of the Jews

Some scholars believe that Abraham, originally named Abram (AY-brum), was born about 2000 B.C.E. in Ur in Mesopotamia. The people of Ur worshiped many gods. But Abram came to believe that there was one true God. This belief would set Judaism apart from other ancient religions. Abram's special relationship to God would become the foundation of the Jewish faith.

**Abraham's Covenant with God** According to the Torah, the faith that would become Judaism began with a sacred agreement, or covenant, between God and Abram. When Abram was about 50 years old, the Torah says that God visited him. God said to him, "Leave your own country and your father's house, and go to a country that I will show you." God promised to make Abram the father of a great nation of people.

Abram obeyed. Around 1950 B.C.E., he gathered his many relatives and went west into the land of Canaan.

The Torah says that when Abram was 99 years old, God spoke to him again: "I will make a covenant between myself and you." God promised to love and protect Abram's descendants, meaning Abram's children and the generations that would follow. In return, Abram agreed that he and his people would always devote themselves to God.

To mark their covenant, the Torah says, God gave Abram a new name, Abraham, which means "father of many." God also promised the land of Canaan to Abraham's people. For Jews, Canaan became the "promised land." According to the Torah, the covenant meant that Jews would set an example by their actions for how God wanted people to live.

**Abraham's Descendants** Many years earlier, before Abram left the city of Ur, he had married a beautiful woman named Sarai. She endured many hardships as she traveled with her husband to Canaan and Egypt. As the years passed, she did not have any children.

The Torah says that God promised that Abraham's wife would have a son. God gave Sarai a new name, Sarah, which means "princess." A year later, Sarah gave birth to Isaac. The Torah says that

she was 90 and Abraham was 100 years old when their son was born. As Isaac's mother, Sarah was the ancestress of the Jewish people.

According to the Torah, the Jewish people are descended from Abraham and Sarah, through their son Isaac and his wife Rebekah. Rebekah gave birth to Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel. The descendants of Jacob, Abraham's grandson, were the Israelites. They flourished as a nation made up of 12 tribes.

Abraham made many contributions to the development of Judaism. He introduced the belief in a single God. Because of his covenant with God, Jews believed that they should set an example of how to live. Their reward was the promised land. These beliefs became a central part of Judaism.

## Section 5 - The Life of Moses: Leader of the Israelites

Moses was a great leader of the Israelites. The Torah tells how Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and gave them God's laws and teachings to live by.

**The Exodus from Egypt** By the time of Moses, in the 1300s B.C.E., a large group of Abraham's descendants were living in Egypt. There, the Torah says, the Israelites "increased in number and became very powerful." Fearful of their growing strength, the pharaoh forced them into slavery. According to the Torah, God told Moses, "I will send you to the pharaoh, and you shall free my people."

Moses went before the pharaoh, the Torah continues, and told him to let the Israelites go free. When the pharaoh refused, God punished Egypt with ten terrible plagues. Finally, the pharaoh gave in. Moses began to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

According to the Torah, the pharaoh soon changed his mind. The Egyptian army chased after the Israelites and nearly caught up with them at the edge of the Sea of Reeds. But Moses raised his staff (walking stick), says the Torah, and the waters of the sea parted. The Israelites crossed safely to the other side. When the Egyptians tried to follow, the waters flooded over the army, drowning the soldiers. The Israelites escaped.

The Torah calls the flight from Egypt to freedom the Exodus, which means "departure." The Exodus became a central event in the history of the Jewish people.

**The Ten Commandments** As it is told in the Torah, after the Israelites left Egypt, they traveled through a wilderness for 40 years. During this time, God gave Moses the laws and teachings that became the foundation of Judaism. Some of these laws are called the Ten Commandments.

The Torah says that Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, the "Mountain of God." Alone, Moses had gone up the mountain to pray. He returned carrying two tablets of stone. Engraved on the tablets were the Ten Commandments.



Some of the commandments listed the Israelites' duties to God. For example, one commandment was, "You shall have no other gods besides me." This commandment reminded the Israelites of their promise to worship only one God. Another commandment told the Israelites to set aside one day a week, the Sabbath, for rest and worship.

Other commandments laid down basic moral teachings (ideas about the right way to live). For example, one said, "You shall honor your father and mother." Other commandments forbade stealing, lying, and murdering.

The Ten Commandments stated some of Judaism's basic teachings. The Torah says that by obeying God's commandments, the Jewish people would fulfill their part of the covenant with him. Their responsibility was to make God's moral teachings known to the world. In turn, God would protect them.

Moses made several key contributions to the development of Judaism. First, he led the Exodus out of Egypt. Jews have celebrated this event ever since to remember the journey from slavery to freedom and as proof that God watched over them. Second, Moses gave Judaism some of its most fundamental laws and teachings, which Jews and Christians call the Ten Commandments. Third, Moses forged the Israelites into a united Jewish people devoted to a single God

## Section 6 - The Lives of David and Solomon: Kings of Israel

After their travels in the wilderness, the Israelites settled once more in Canaan. The Hebrew Bible describes how they built a kingdom, called Israel, and the great First Temple during the reigns of two kings, David and Solomon.

**David Expands the Kingdom of Israel** In David's time, about 1000 B.C.E., the Israelites were at war with a rival people, the Philistines (FIH-lih-steenz). According to the Hebrew Bible, the Philistines promised to be the Israelites' slaves if an Israelite could beat their fiercest warrior, the giant Goliath (guh-LIE-uhth).

As it is told in the Hebrew Bible, David was not yet a grown man, but he was outraged at Goliath's mockery of God. Bravely, he stepped forward. His only weapon was a slingshot. With one mighty throw, he felled Goliath with a stone.

David's courage and faith were rewarded when he became king of the Israelites after the first king, Saul, fell in battle. According to the Hebrew Bible, God said, "The Israelite kingdom will remain with him and with his children and his children's children forever."

As king, David completed the defeat of the Philistines as well as other enemies. He united the Israelites into a single nation known as Israel. He created a strong central government. He gave the new kingdom its own army, courts, and officials. David himself served as the nation's chief priest. He was also a poet and a musician. Many of the Psalms in the Writings in the Hebrew Bible are attributed to David.

David chose Jerusalem as the capital city. Under his rule, this city became the center of Israel's political and religious life. David brought the Israelites' most sacred object, the Ark of the Covenant, to Jerusalem. The Ark was a wood and gold chest that held the tablets of the Ten Commandments. As the home of the Ark, Jerusalem became a holy city.

**Solomon Builds the Great Temple of Jerusalem** After David's death, his son, Solomon, became king about 965 B.C.E. Solomon built a magnificent temple in Jerusalem to house the Ark of the

Covenant and to serve as the center of Jewish worship. According to the Hebrew Bible, he told God, "Thus all the peoples of the earth will know Your name."

Building the First Temple in Jerusalem was King-Solomon's major achievement. He also strengthened the kingdom of Israel by making treaties with neighboring kingdoms. And he increased foreign trade and developed industries such as copper mining and metal working. Solomon was also a poet. The Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes in the Writings in the Hebrew Bible are attributed to him.

Kings David and Solomon made major contributions to Judaism. They laid the foundation for kings to govern the Jews for more than 400 years. David established Jerusalem as a holy city. Solomon built the great First Temple of Jerusalem. Because of the acts of David and Solomon, Jerusalem would always be the most holy city to the Jews, as well as a powerful symbol of their faith.

## Summary

**In this chapter, you read about the ancient Israelites and the origins of Judaism. You learned about four Jewish leaders who helped Judaism develop.**

**Ancient Israelites** Historians study artifacts and writings such as the Hebrew Bible to learn about the ancient Israelites and the development of Judaism. The Torah has the first five books of the Hebrew Bible and commandments that direct Jewish life.

**Abraham, Father of the Jews** Abraham introduced the belief in one God. He made a covenant with God to go to Canaan, and in turn God made him the father of the Jews. The Jews believed they should act in a way that would fulfill God's covenant.

**Moses, Leader of the Israelites** Moses led the Israelites on an Exodus out of slavery in Egypt. At Mount Sinai, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, basic laws and teachings of Judaism. Moses united the Jews into a people who worshiped one God.

**Kings David and Solomon** David defeated the Philistines, united the Israelites in a new nation called Israel, and made Jerusalem the capital and a holy city. Solomon, David's son, built the First Temple in Jerusalem, signed treaties, and increased trade. Both men were also poets with parts of the Hebrew Bible attributed to them.

# Learning About World Religions: Judaism

## Overview and Objectives

### Overview

In an Experiential Exercise, students identify the central teachings of Judaism as they explore ways in which these traditions have survived throughout history.

### Objectives

In the course of reading this chapter and participating in the classroom activity, students will

#### *Social Studies*

- describe the central laws and teachings of Judaism.
- summarize the ways in which the laws and teachings of Judaism remain influential today.
- explain why and how Judaism survived and developed despite the Jewish Diaspora.

#### *Language Arts*

- select and use an appropriate tone and strategy to restate, teach, and execute multi-step instructions and directions.
- make reasonable assertions about a news article, through accurate and supporting citations.

### Social Studies Vocabulary

**Key Content Terms** polytheism, monotheism, Talmud, ethics, exile, Jewish Diaspora, Yavneh

**Academic Vocabulary** capture, survive, source, instruct, disperse

## Lesson 12 - Learning About World Religions: Judaism

### Section 1 - Introduction

In this chapter, you will learn about key Jewish teachings. You will also discover how Judaism was preserved after most Jews were driven from their homeland.

The kingdom of Israel split into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah after the death of King Solomon in about 930 B.C.E. Weakened by this division, the people were less able to fight off invaders.

Israel was the first to fall. In 722 B.C.E., the Assyrians conquered the kingdom and took its leaders to Mesopotamia. The people of Israel were sent to many lands. In 597 B.C.E., another Mesopotamian power, Babylon, invaded Judah. Babylon's king, Nebuchadnezzar (neh-byuh-kuh-DREH-zehr), laid siege to the city of Jerusalem. The Jews, as they came to be known, fought until their food supplies ran out. With the Jews weakened by starvation, the Babylonians broke through the walls and **captured** the city. In 586 B.C.E., Nebuchadnezzar burned down Solomon's great Temple of Jerusalem and all the houses in the city. Most of the people of Judah were exiled as captives to Babylon.

The Babylonian Exile was the start of the Jewish Diaspora (die-AS-puh-ruh). The word *diaspora* means "a scattering over a wide area." This was the first exile of most of the Jewish people from their homeland.

Yet the Jews were able to keep Judaism alive. In this chapter, you will first learn about four important Jewish teachings. Then you will read about why the teachings of Judaism have **survived** to modern day.

## Section 2 - The Central Teachings of Judaism

The religious and moral ideas of Judaism have had a lasting effect on Western civilization. Let's look at four central teachings of Judaism that remain very influential today.

**Monotheism** Most people in ancient times believed in many gods. This belief is called polytheism. The Israelites, later called Jews, were different. They believed that there is only one God, a belief called monotheism. Judaism is the world's oldest monotheistic religion.

Judaism teaches that God is the source of morality (standards of right and wrong). These ideas of right and wrong had not always been known in ancient civilizations. Jews learn about and follow their religion by studying their sacred texts. Through study and prayer, many Jews feel that God is close to them in their daily lives.

**Following Jewish Teachings** Following the teachings in the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud (TAHL-muhd) is central to Jewish life. The Torah instructs Jews about how to lead moral lives. For example, Jews are taught to "love your neighbor as yourself."

Among Judaism's oldest laws and teachings are the Ten Commandments. The commandments tell how to lead upright and honorable lives. For example, one commandment tells Jews to set aside a holy day, the Sabbath, every week. The Sabbath, a day of rest and prayer, is still practiced not only by Jews, but also by followers of other world religions, including Christianity and Islam. The commandments also lay down standards of right and wrong, such as "You shall not steal" and "You shall not murder."

Over time, Jewish religious leaders developed a larger set of laws and teachings. For example, there were rules about what foods to eat. Many religious practices began, such as the festival of Passover. These holy days celebrate the Exodus—the freeing of the enslaved Israelites from Egypt. Jews observe these rules and practices in different ways.

**Equality and Social Justice** Beginning with the Ten Commandments, Judaism has always been concerned with a code of ethics, or moral values of right and wrong. Two important values that have influenced many societies are equality and social justice.

Unlike some other ancient civilizations, the Israelites did not view their leaders as gods. They believed that there is only one God, and even kings had to obey God's laws and teachings. Judaism teaches that God considers all people equal.

Belief in equality goes hand in hand with a concern for social justice. Many stories and sayings in the Hebrew Bible, or *Tanakh*, teach about treating everyone fairly. For example, one passage says, "You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor." Caring for the less fortunate people in society is a basic value in Judaism.

**The Importance of Study** Studying the Hebrew Bible, and especially the Torah, is very important in Judaism. Jews also study interpretations of the Hebrew Bible made by scholars and rabbis, or religious teachers.

In ancient times, those rabbis and scholars who were interpreting the basic teachings of the Torah made decisions that were passed down orally. In the 200s C.E., Jewish scholars began to write the Talmud, which contains this oral tradition along with academic analyses. The Talmud became a basic source of Jewish law. Later on, rabbis wrote their own studies of both the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud, continuing the tradition of interpreting the teachings of Judaism.

Throughout history, Jews have kept their reverence for study and learning. Many Jews learn about Jewish history, law, and traditions through reading and discussion. They also pass on their knowledge to other members of the faith.



### Section 3 - Foreign Rule and the Jewish Diaspora

The invasion of Judah in 597 B.C.E. and the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in 586 B.C.E. threatened the survival of Judaism. Thousands of Jews were **exiled** in Babylon. By this time, the Israelites had become known as Jews. Members of the Israelite tribe of Judah called themselves “Judeans,” and their homeland, Judah. The name was later shortened to “Jews.”

The **Jewish Diaspora** had begun. From this time on, the followers of Judaism were **dispersed**, or scattered, in many lands. Those who did return home found their land dominated by foreign rulers. It would not be easy to keep Judaism alive.

**Rule by the Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks** The Jewish captives lived in Babylon for about half a century. From then on, Jews outside their homeland prayed to return. During this exile in Babylon, men that the Jews believed to be great prophets rose up to encourage the people to remain faithful to Judaism.

In 539 B.C.E., the Persians conquered the Babylonians. The Persian king, Cyrus, ended the Jews’ exile. Many Jews returned to Judah, where Cyrus allowed them to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem and to practice their religion. The rebuilt Temple became known as the Second Temple. Other Jews stayed in Babylon.

For nearly 400 years, Judah was ruled by foreigners. After the Persians came the Greeks. Often, the foreign rulers were harsh.

One Greek ruler, Antiochus (an-TIE-uh-kuhs), tried to force the Jews to worship idols of Greek gods in the Second Temple. In 168 B.C.E., the Jews rebelled and started a war that spanned more than 20 years. During that war, in the year 164 B.C.E., they drove the Greeks from Jerusalem and reclaimed and rededicated the Temple. Jews today celebrate Hanukkah (HAH-nuh-kuh) to honor this victory and the rededication of the Temple.

**Rule by the Romans** For about 80 years after the war with the Greeks, the Jews lived as an independent kingdom in Judah, now called Judea. Then, in 63 B.C.E., they fell under Roman rule.

The Romans were building a great empire, and they were quick to act against any sign of rebellion. More than 50,000 Jews were brutally executed under Roman rule. But the Romans did allow the Jews to practice their own religion and to govern some of their own affairs. In 22 B.C.E., the Romans appointed King Herod to rule all the Jews. Herod announced a big project to expand the Second Temple in Jerusalem, on an even grander scale than Solomon's Temple. The work took 46 years to complete.

In 66 C.E., the Jews rose up against the Romans. For three years, they managed to keep the Romans out of Jerusalem. Then, in 70 C.E., a Roman military leader named Titus led an army of 60,000 soldiers against the Jews. The Jews fought back fiercely, but they were hopelessly outnumbered. They watched in horror as the Romans destroyed the great Temple in Jerusalem. All that was known to remain of the Second Temple was its western wall. To this day, Jews consider the Western Wall their most sacred place.

In 135 C.E. the Romans put down another Jewish revolt. This Roman victory began the final exile of the Jewish people from their homeland. The Romans seized Jewish land and forbade the Jews from entering Jerusalem. Although some Jews always remained in the land of Israel, thousands were sent to other parts of the Roman Empire.

The Jews had lost their homeland and their holy city. Yet Judaism not only survived, it flourished. Next, you will learn how the Jews preserved their faith and way of life.

Source: History Alive! The Ancient World - 12

## Section 4 - Preserving the Teachings of Judaism

After losing control of their homeland, their holy city, and the great Temple that was the heart of their faith, the Jews faced a great struggle to preserve their religion. They were exiled throughout many gentile, or non-Jewish, lands. With creativity and dedication, they found ways to keep Judaism alive.

**Rabbi Yohanan ben Zaccai:** One rabbi who helped preserve Judaism was Yohanan ben Zaccai. When the revolt against Rome began in 66 C.E., ben Zaccai feared for the future of Judaism. He worried that if the rabbis died in the fighting and the Temple was destroyed, Judaism might not survive.

Ben Zaccai begged the Jews to surrender to save Judaism. When they refused, he decided to approach the Romans for help.

Ben Zaccai had himself smuggled out of Jerusalem in a coffin. He met with a Roman general named Vespasian (vuh-SPAYzhee-ehn), and gained permission to open a Jewish school, with the help of other rabbis, in the town of **Yavneh** (YAHV-neh).

When Jerusalem fell, Yavneh became the center of Jewish learning. At their school, Ben Zaccai and the other rabbis taught new rabbis. Teachers came from many places to study at Yavneh. Then they returned to their communities to share what they had learned. In this way, the rabbis at Yavneh made sure that Jews still had leaders to guide them.

**New Teachers and Practices** In addition to training other rabbis, the rabbis at Yavneh introduced new practices. These new ways ensured that the teachings of Judaism would be passed on. The rabbis made the synagogue important. A synagogue is a house of worship. It is also a place to study, to meet, and to gather socially. Synagogues made Jewish communities stronger.

The rabbis also created a religious service for synagogues. Prayer and study of sacred texts became a new way to worship God without the Temple rituals. Today, Jews, Christians, and Muslims follow

this model for services. In these ways, Yohana ben Zaccai and other rabbis helped Judaism to adapt and flourish even after the destruction of its central holy site in Jerusalem.

These new practices helped Jews preserve their religion in communities around the world. Over the centuries, rabbis studied and commented on Judaism's sacred texts, and developed other new practices. Jews have faced prejudice and persecution, but they have kept their faith.

In 1948, a new Jewish state, Israel, was created in part of the lands once ruled by David and Solomon. Jews from many places settled in their ancient homeland. For other Jews around the world, Jewish traditions have enabled their religion to thrive.

## Summary

**In this chapter, you learned about how Judaism was preserved in the Diaspora.**

**The Central Teachings of Judaism** Earlier religions believed in polytheism. Judaism is the oldest monotheistic religion. The Hebrew Bible and the Talmud present a code of ethics with teachings that focus on social justice. Jews pass on learning to others.

**Foreign Rule and the Jewish Diaspora** After Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E., most Jews were exiled to Babylon. When the Persians defeated Babylon in 539 B.C.E., many Jews returned to Judah under Persia's rule. Later, the Greeks and then the Romans ruled Judah, now Judea. The Jews fought the Romans in 66 C.E. and in 135 C.E. The Romans put down these revolts and exiled most of the Jews.

**Preserving the Teachings of Judaism** During the Jewish Diaspora, Jews wanted to preserve their religion. Rabbi Yohanan ben Zaccai set up a center of Jewish learning in Yavneh. His rabbis taught other rabbis, who shared their knowledge at home. Ben Zaccai made synagogues a center of Jewish life and created a new religious service. These new practices preserved Judaism. In 1948, the Jewish state of Israel was created in lands once ruled by David and Solomon.