

Judaism is...



- ♦ “A 4000 year old tradition with ideas about what it means to be human and how to make the world a holy place”
(Rabbi Harold Kushner, *To Life*)
- ♦ A “covenant relationship” between God and the Hebrew people- focus on God’s law
- ♦ A celebration and sanctification of life
- ♦ A faith, a people, a way of life...

A 4000 year old tradition...

- ♦ The Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (“Israel”) – origins of the Hebrew people (more than 3800 years ago)
- ♦ Enslaved in ancient Egypt and freed by Moses (more than 3300 years ago)
- ♦ Hebrew monarchy in the “Promised Land” (The Land of Israel), ends 6th century BCE



Historical periods in Judaism

- ◆ The Covenant
 - ◆ Patriarchs-archeological evidence
 - ◆ Elohim & animal sacrifice
- ◆ The Exodus
 - ◆ Moses- leads the Israelites from slavery
 - ◆ Passover-celebration
- ◆ Sinai and the Law
 - ◆ 613 laws in Pentateuch
 - ◆ Ark of the Covenant & Tent of the Meeting

The Covenant

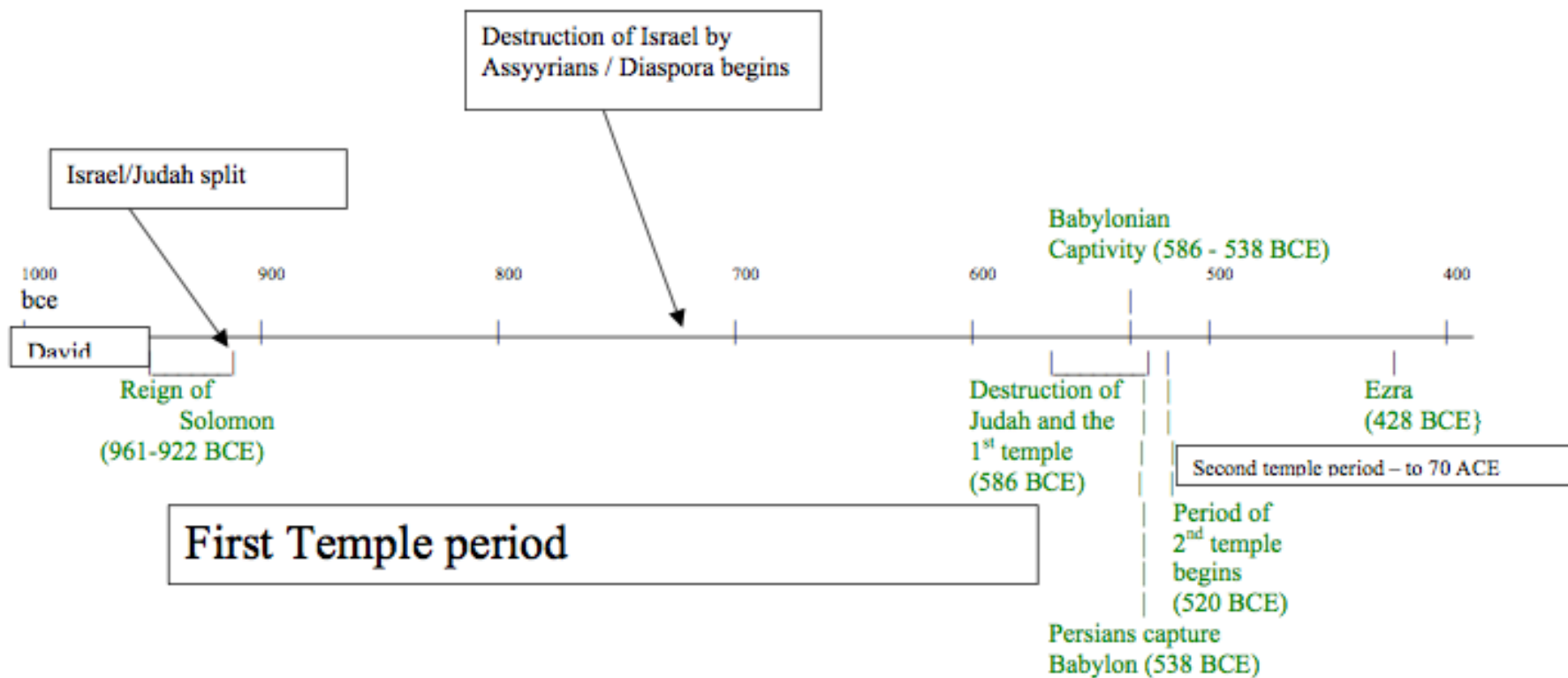
- ◆ Abraham was to be the father of a great nation, and that is of course, the nation of Israel
- ◆ He was promised a Land for his nation; specifically, the land of Canaan
- ◆ Abraham himself was to be greatly blessed. Abraham was to be a blessing to others.
- ◆ Those who bless Israel will be blessed. The one who curses Israel will be cursed. In Abraham all will be blessed. Other nations in addition to Israel would come from Abraham.
- ◆ Circumcision was to be the sign of the covenant.

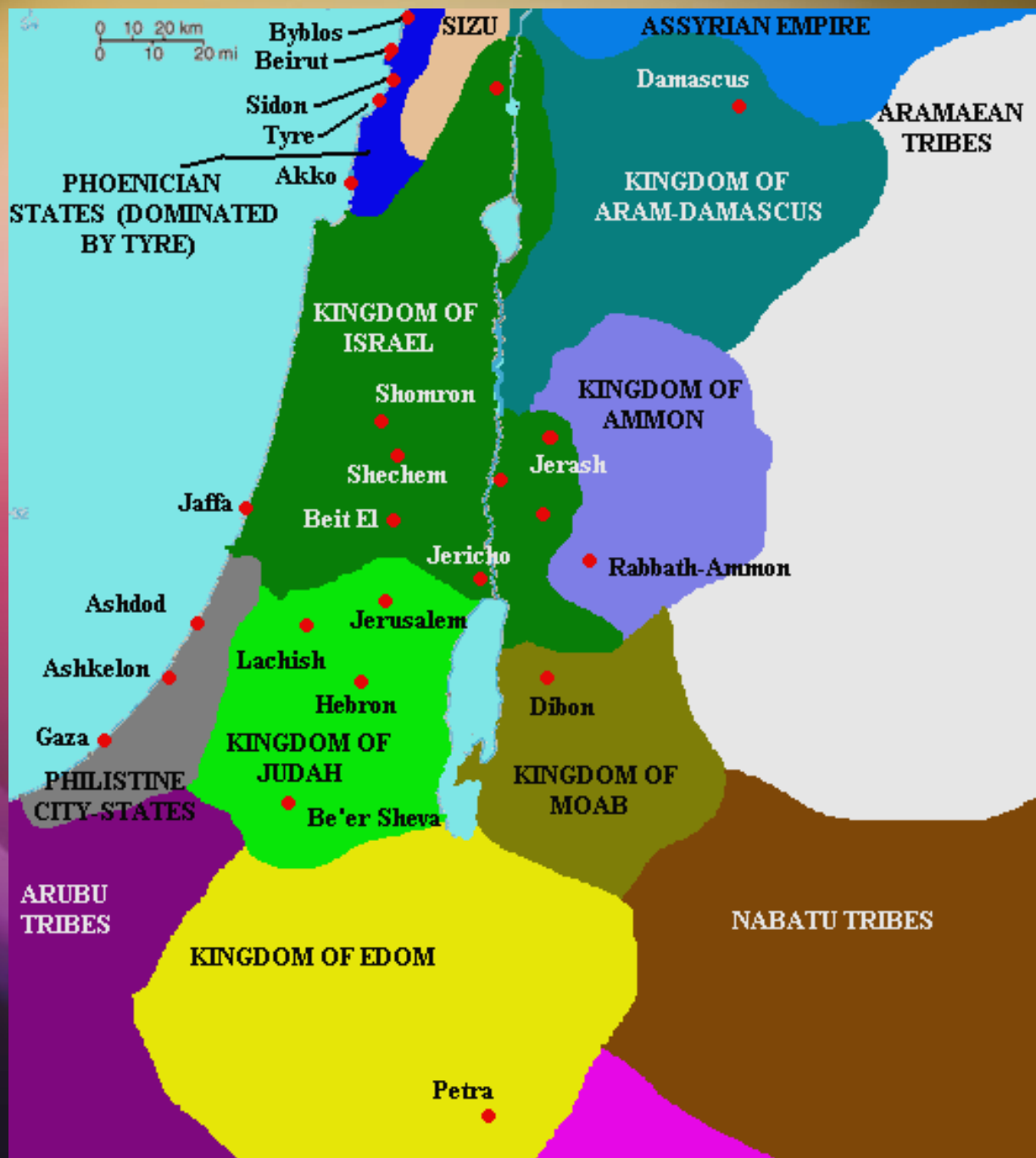
Historical Periods in Judaism

- ◆ The Monarchy and 1st Temple period
 - ◆ Jerusalem established as capital by David
 - ◆ Temple built by Solomon
 - ◆ Central to Judaism
 - ◆ Prophetic movement begins
- ◆ Babylonian Captivity
 - ◆ Ezekiel – YHWH with people
 - ◆ Isaiah – YHWH g_d to all
 - ◆ Ezra – “people of the book”

Historical period in Judaism

- ◆ Diaspora- from time of Assyrian destruction of Israel [721 b.c.e]
 - ◆ Synagogue [assembly]
 - ◆ Rabbi [“master” of Torah]
 - ◆ Mishnah & Talmud
- ◆ 2nd Temple Period
 - ◆ Priests, singers [Hazzan], attendants
 - ◆ Period of Roman rule, Herods
 - ◆ 2nd Temple destroyed in 70 a.c.e.





Religious Texts and their diversity

- ♦ Torah - first five books of Hebrew scripture- also called Pentateuch
- ♦ Mishnah - 2nd century C.E. - debates about meaning of the law- Judah of Galilee
 - ♦ Writings since Ezra
- ♦ Talmud - 4th century C.E. – a compilation of Gemara [everyday life] and Mishnah - Babylon

How is Judaism practiced in the World?



- ♦ The heart of Judaism is in the home and family, social responsibility and doing Mitzvot (“good deeds” based on God’s commandments)
- ♦ Tikkun Olam - “repairing *this* world” through justice and righteousness; through “deed, not creed”
- ♦ Through education and hard work Jews work to make their lives, the lives of others, and the world, what God intended them to be - Holy!

L'CHAIM means "To Life!"

As a people, Jews are...



- ♦ A nation in Diaspora (dispersed)
- ♦ 15 ~ 16 million in worldwide population
- ♦ United by a common heritage (an “ethnic” religion), divided in contemporary practice:

- ♦ Orthodox:

- ♦ Modern
- ♦ Chasidic (Ultra Orthodox)

Reformed (18th century Germany)

Conservative ~ moderates, response to reform

- ♦ Reconstructionalism (20th century America)



How does Judaism sanctify life?



Life cycle celebrations:

- ♦ Bris – ritual circumcision, sign of the covenant
- ♦ Bar/Bat Mitzvah – full adult status and responsibility within the religion
- ♦ Marriage – “Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:22)
- ♦ Death – funerals, mourning (sitting “Shiva”), and memorials (“Yartzeits”)



How does Judaism sanctify time?

The Jewish Holidays:

- ◆ High Holidays:
 - ◆ Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)
 - ◆ Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement)
- ◆ Sukkot, the “Festival of Booths” (fall harvest festival)
- ◆ Simchat Torah ~ celebrating Torah
- ◆ Chanukah, the “Festival of Lights”





More Holy Days...



- ♦ Purim (“Lots”) – a carnival (commemorates events told in book of Esther)

- ♦ Pesach (“Passover”) – commemorates the exodus from Egypt (events told in Exodus)



- ♦ Shavuot (“weeks,” Pentecost) – commemorates receipt of Torah at Sinai

- ♦ Other, minor festivals

- ♦ Shabbat (Sabbath, 7th day, on Saturday) – the “Day of Rest”

As a faith, Jews Believe...



- ♦ In one God, creator of the universe, personal but non-corporeal
- ♦ In prophets of old – especially Moses, through whom Torah was revealed to the Hebrew people
- ♦ In Torah (first five books of the Bible), containing religious, moral and social law which guides the life of a Jew
 - ♦ the Hebrew Bible does *not* include the New Testament

As a way of life, Judaism is based on...



- ♦ 613 commandments found in Torah (“Written Law”)
- ♦ Mishnah (“repetition”) expansion and interpretation of Torah
- ♦ Talmud (“Oral Law”) – commentary of ancient rabbis that elaborates on how to apply God’s Law in everyday life through:
 - ♦ Dietary rules (Kashrut/Kosher)
 - ♦ Dress and other symbols
 - ♦ Prayer and devotion to the one God
 - ♦ The synagogue and rites and rituals
 - ♦ Observance of Holy days
 - ♦ Proper social relations between male and females
- ♦ The Diaspora after Assyrian Conquest (8th cent.)



To Life!



To Life!



LeCháim!

How is Judaism related to Christianity?



- ♦ Judaism predates Christianity – it is the foundation of Christianity but is *not* a part of it
- ♦ Jesus was Jewish, as were his followers and the Apostles
- ♦ Jews do not believe that Jesus was anything more than a good and wise man who lived and died 2000 years ago – Jews still await their messiah
- ♦ The Jewish messiah would not be divine. He would be a political figure who restores the Hebrew monarchy and causes peace to reign on Earth
- ♦ Jews are not concerned about salvation and the “world to come”