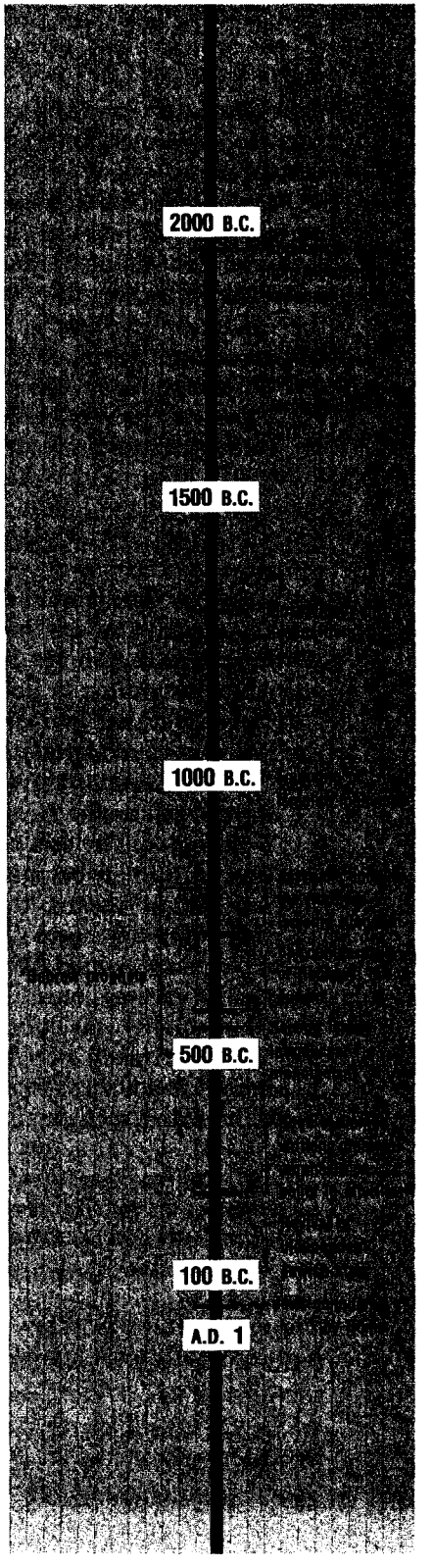
From: Glen Blackburn, *Western Civilization: A Concise History. From Early Societies to the Present* (New York: St. Martin's, 1991), pp. 47–62.

3

The Hebrews: 2000 to 100 B.C.



Between 2000 and 100 B.C., Hebrews gradually evolved the religion that became known as Judaism. Judaism was distinct in two ways: (1) it was *monotheistic* (belief in one God) rather than polytheistic, and (2) it stipulated that God expected moral behavior from people rather than the performance of magical rituals. The evolution of Judaism proceeded in three stages. In its first stage, the Hebrew religion was a form of *monolatry*, meaning that Hebrews worshipped one God but did not deny the existence of other people's gods. In its second stage, the religion became monotheistic, as the prophets insisted that God was a universal deity who ruled all peoples. In its third stage of development, Judaism placed new emphasis on certain beliefs, such as the promise of eternal life after death and the expectation of the future coming of a Messiah.

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

According to the Hebrew Old Testament, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).* This one sentence announced a spiritual revolution. By saying that God "created" the earth, the Hebrew writer (whose name is unknown to us) was proclaiming that only one God exists and that God is distinct from nature. The Hebrews repudiated the belief in several gods existing within nature. They also saw God as masculine, thus denying the existence of mother goddesses symbolizing fertility as well as the sexual rituals that had accompanied this belief.

The Book of Genesis also contains some striking passages about the creation of human beings. It refers to the first man as "Adam," but in Hebrew "Adam" means "the man," so the Genesis writer was referring to humankind in a general sense. From Adam, God took a rib and made it into a "woman" named Eve, a companion for man. But being a secondary creation, Eve was considered inferior to Adam. (This religious view of sexual inequality was common among most ancient peoples.) Adam and Eve were portrayed as living in the Garden of Eden, but their sense of human pride got them into trouble. God told them not to eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," but when Eve

> saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6)

The eating of the fruit from the tree of knowledge was an act of rebellion, a grasping for total knowledge that only God can possess. Humans were

*Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the Old Testament are taken from the Revised Standard Version.

thus portrayed as assertive and even arrogant, a view significantly different from conceptions of humanity in Asian religions. So God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever," he must be banished from the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3: 22–23). People had come to know good and evil and were therefore "like" God, but God refused to let them eat of the tree of life, become immortal, and "be" God.

The first chapters of Genesis tell an entrancing story about the relationships between God and nature and between God and humans. The story reflects the ideas and beliefs held by most Hebrew people, for the Book of Genesis was compiled from a number of documents written by different authors. What is important about Genesis is not the facts, but what the facts represented to Hebrews and later to other peoples. (It makes little difference, for example, whether the Creation occurred in six twenty-four-hour days or in six eons.) The underlying message of Genesis is simple: there is one God who is the creator of all things, this God is a concrete personality who has a special relationship with humans rather than with nature, but humans are independent of God and free to choose between good and evil.

Although the underlying message of Genesis may be simple, the quest to understand that message was a complex one for Hebrews. Hebrew monotheism evolved gradually over more than a thousand years, so the story of the Hebrews is also the story of the spiritual awakening of a people.

THE ORIGINS OF HEBREW RELIGION

Abraham

Little is known of the origins of the people we call Hebrews. They were probably a seminomadic Semitic tribe who lived as sheepherders and craftspeople in and around Mesopotamia. Their story as we know it begins with Abraham, who sometime early in the second millennium B.C. had a religious experience that induced him to leave Mesopotamia. Abraham and his family migrated westward to the land then called Canaan, near the southeastern end of the Mediterranean Sea.

Abraham and his descendants (Isaac, Jacob, and so on) were the patriarchs, or fathers, of the Hebrew people. Yet, in a sense, the real father was the divine spirit that the Hebrews worshipped; for Hebrew identity came from their adherence to a unique religion, not from living in a certain area or from building a particular governmental structure. Their religion focused on the worship of one God, whose original name

we do not know but who was later called the "God of Abraham." Modern scholars often use the word *Yahweh*—derived from the Hebrew sacred letters *YHWH*—to refer to the God of the early Hebrews. Yahweh insisted that Abraham and his descendants worship only him; in return, Yahweh would protect and aid the Hebrews in various ways. But Yahweh did not deny the existence of other gods for other peoples. Exodus, for example, poses the question, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?" (15:11). Thus, early Hebrew religion was a form of monolatry; eventually, though, it would develop monotheistic ideas.

Hebrew patriarchs believed that God was more concerned with human moral behavior than with rituals. In Genesis, God is depicted as angry about human moral blindness: "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (6:5). Although the Hebrews were as bloodthirsty as any other people in their wars, they came to believe that they should behave more humanely in their dealings with each other. Thus, Hebrew religion had no sexual orgies or human sacrifices, though it did have animal sacrifices. A unique feature of the religion was a kind of questioning spirit, a willingness by the patriarchs to argue with God to ensure that justice was done. For instance, when God said that he was going to destroy Sodom because of the wickedness of its citizens, Abraham objected and God agreed to spare Sodom if there were at least ten righteous men in the city. In the end Sodom was destroyed because ten righteous men could not be found, but the important point is that Abraham was able to negotiate with God and to insist that he be fair and just.

Although some Hebrews remained in and around Canaan indefinitely, Abraham's grandson, Jacob, led others south to Egypt, probably in search of better farming possibilities. This occurred at about the same time the Hyksos from Asia invaded and conquered Egypt (sometime between 1700 and 1500 B.C.). Hebrews remained in Egypt for several centuries. However, as the Egyptians tried to reestablish national unity after driving out the Hyksos, they began to insist that Hebrews give up their religion and worship Egyptian gods instead. If the Hebrews had agreed to do so, they probably would have ceased to be a separate people and gradually would have integrated with the Egyptian people. But sometime around 1300 B.C., the Hebrews rebelled against the Egyptians under the leadership of Moses, forcing their way out of Egypt in what would become known as the Exodus. Ever since, the Exodus has been considered by Hebrews a great historical event, for it was God who led them out of Egypt in order to protect them. Also significant about the Exodus is that God was portrayed as supporting rebellion against a monarch. Thus it inspired among Hebrews a strong dislike of political despotism, especially political authority that purports to replace divine authority.

TECHNOLOGY

The Consequences of the Book of Genesis

What is the relationship between an ancient religious document such as the Book of Genesis and modern technology? Some scholars argue that the Hebrew conceptions of God, nature, and humans created a religious and philosophical orientation that encouraged Western people to develop technologies that could explore and use nature. Although all peoples have developed technologies and used nature to some extent, Western Civilization has been much more aggressive than have other civilizations in its use of technology. The question is, then, what accounts for this aggressiveness?

One important element in the Hebrew religious and philosophical orientation is its de-spiritualization of nature. By believing that God is distinct from nature, the Hebrews were implying that nature is inanimate, empty of gods and spirits. Over the centuries, this idea gradually persuaded many Western people to view nature as a reality that could be used to their advantage. Thus, people were free to develop tools and techniques for exploring nature in any way they saw fit.

The Hebrews also considered human beings to be exalted creatures, entitled to help rule and use the earth. God is quoted as saying, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth" (Genesis 1:26). The sense of human superiority is also expressed in Genesis 2:19: "So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name." When Genesis says that God lets "man" name the animals, he is implying that humans are participants in the Creation as a kind of subsidiary partner of God.

The Creation of Man *The story of the Creation was painted by the Renaissance artist and sculptor Michelangelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (see Chapter 10). Here, God reaches out to give life to humans, Michelangelo portrays God as distinct from his creation and the earthly world; humans are portrayed as creatures of great worth, created in the divine image. (The Granger Collection)*

Moses

Little is known with certainty about Moses. We know that he was a decisive figure in Hebrew history and that he lived sometime between 1350 and 1250 B.C. We also know that he was a political leader who guided the Hebrews out of Egypt into the Sinai desert, where they wandered for several decades waiting for divine guidance from Yahweh to return to the "Promised Land" (Canaan). Moses was also a religious teacher, who reinvigorated the covenant between God and the Hebrews that had originally been made with Abraham. In particular, Moses received from God the Ten Commandments, a set of moral codes that governed the behavior of Hebrews.

The religion that Moses taught was in the same tradition as that followed by Abraham. Although Yahweh did not deny the existence of other gods, he insisted that Hebrews worship only him. Yahweh was clearly different from other gods in several respects. As a spiritual deity, he could not be identified with any one place and would not tolerate "graven images" of himself. Yahweh also had a special relationship with Hebrews, one that was embodied in a covenant by which he promised to protect Hebrews if they obeyed his commandments. The covenant was unique in several ways. For one thing, it was based on free moral choice on both sides. Most other peoples of the time believed that they had no choice but to worship the gods of their particular areas. The Hebrews were not bound in this way, as they were free to choose to worship Yahweh, and Yahweh was similarly free to leave the Hebrews if they did not obey his commandments. Also unique about the covenant was its moral content, most notably the Ten Commandments (see Exodus 20:1–17). Thus obeying Yahweh meant adhering to certain moral standards. Yet another unique element of the covenant was its assumption of equality. The covenant applied equally to all Hebrew people, not just to priests, tribal leaders, or the upper classes.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HEBREW STATE

Canaan was populated primarily by the polytheistic Canaanites, but during the decades before and after 1200 B.C., Hebrews gradually invaded the land. This invasion was in part a series of battles to defeat and conquer the Canaanites and in part a gradual and peaceful infiltration into Canaan. Sometime after 1200 B.C., twelve Hebrew tribes formed a sacred confederation among the people of Yahweh. This confederation was called *Israel,* and Hebrews were subsequently known as *Israelites.*

The sacred confederation lasted from around 1200 to 1020 B.C. During that time, Israel was united only by the covenant with Yahweh and had no central governnment or capital city. It was endangered,

Moses Michelangelo's statue of Moses (c. 1515–1516) portrays the ancient Hebrew leader as a powerful, majestic figure, holding the tablets containing the Ten Commandments. (The Granger Collection)

however, when the Philistines began to occupy Israelite land. The Philistines were a militarily powerful people who lived to the west of the Hebrews, on the shores of the Mediterranean. They were probably related to the Phoenicians, who lived north of the Israelites.

Unlike the historical records of most other ancient peoples, which contain few accounts of clearly defined individual personalities, the account of the Israelite resistance to the Philistines contains several memorable and distinct human personalities. Samson, for example, is a heroic figure known for his great strength, allegedly having killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. Samson, of course, was undone by Delilah, a beautiful Philistine woman who by enchanting him was able to cut off his hair and thus destroy the source of his strength. David, another folklore hero of the Israelite resistance, is said to have destroyed the Philistine giant, Goliath, in an epic battle. Goliath was armed with a spear while David fought with a slingshot, a highly developed weapon at that time.

To defend themselves against the Philistines, the Israelites instituted a monarchical government sometime around 1020 B.C. The first king was Saul, a man who was periodically seized by spiritual frenzies and thus presumed to have been anointed by Yahweh. After Saul came David, who eventually ended the Philistine threat and organized a central government in the capital city of Jerusalem. The Israelites thought of David as a model king; indeed, Jesus would later be identified as a descendant of David. David was succeeded by Solomon, a powerful ruler who acquired a reputation for being wise. Solomon conquered additional territory for Israel and increased its prosperity by developing extensive commercial ties with other states and rulers (including possibly the Queen of Sheba in Africa). He also used some of this wealth to build the temple at Jerusalem, which became the center of Yahweh worship.

During the reigns of David and Solomon, much of the Old Testament was written. An extraordinary body of literature, the Old Testament was inspired in various ways by Israel's religious spirit. Some of it took the form of devotional poetry:

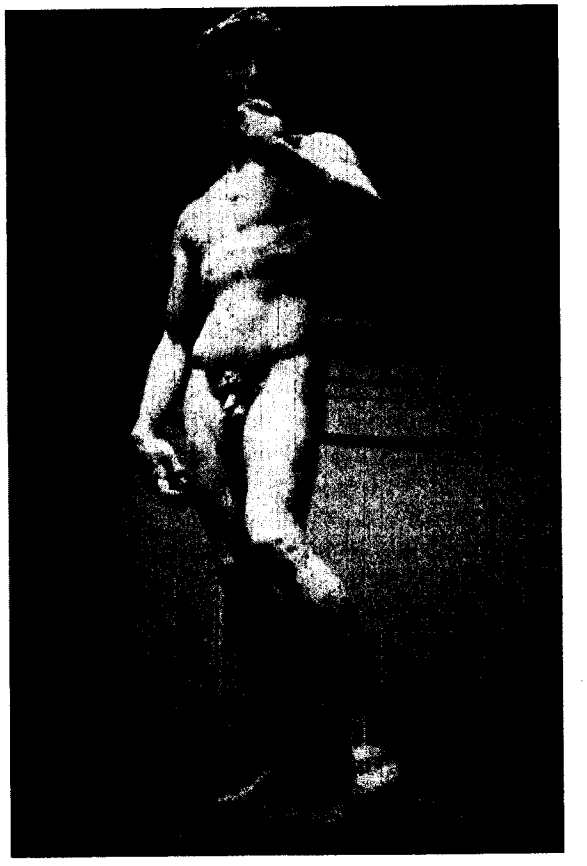
> As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
> So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
> My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
> When shall I come and appear before God?
>
> Psalms 42:1–2

Some of it inquired about what constitutes a good life. The following passage declares the meaninglessness of material possessions:

> Vanity and vanities, saith the Preacher;
> Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.
> What profit hath man of all his labor,
> Wherein he laboureth under the sun?
> One generation goeth, and another generation cometh,
> And the earth abideth for ever.
> The sun also ariseth and the sun goeth down,
> And hasteth to his place where he ariseth.
>
> Ecclesiastes 1:2–5

Yet other parts of the Old Testament were written as lyrical poetry. The following passage expresses the passionate love of a young shepherd and shepherdess (or, in a more religious interpretation, the love of God for Israel):

> The voice of my beloved! behold he cometh,
> Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. . . .
> My beloved spake, and said unto me:
> Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away;



David Michelangelo's statue of the Israelite King David presents him as a heroic figure full of youthful vitality. (B. Glassman)

> For lo, the winter is past,
> The rain is come and gone;
> The flowers appear upon the earth,
> The time of the pruning is come.
>
> Song of Songs 2:8–12

These words express well the exuberance felt by many Israelites in the days of David and Solomon. But this exuberance was soon overshadowed by political quarrels within the Israelite kingdom. Although some Israelites had always opposed the establishment of the monarchy, the voices of protest grew louder during Solomon's reign. Solomon was an enormously wealthy and sometimes despotic ruler who had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. To support his entourage and continue his construction projects, he imported slaves from Phoeni-

cia (present-day Lebanon) and imposed labor requirements on lower-class Israelites. Solomon's policies resulted in a sharp division between the classes—poverty and sometimes slavery for the lower classes and wealth and power for the upper classes.

Soon after Solomon's death (c. 922 B.C.), a rebellion erupted as his empire disintegrated into two weak states—the Northern Kingdom of Israel (sometimes called Samaria) and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The two kingdoms lived side by side for a time, until the Northern Kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. and Judah was conquered by the Babylonians in 597 B.C. In both events, many Israelites were either killed or carried off into exile to become slaves.

In addition to these political calamities, the Israelites faced religious problems as well. These problems originated when the Israelites first settled in Canaan. Canaanite religion was polytheistic and focused on soil fertility and good crops. Like the religions of many other ancient peoples, the Canaanites believed in the analogy of human fertility and that of the soil, and they practiced the rituals common to this belief—sexual orgies, sacred prostitution, and sometimes even human sacrifice. As the Israelites settled among and often intermarried with the Canaanites, they began to absorb some of the Canaanite religious practices. Yahweh worship gradually became intermingled with Canaanite religion, and Yahweh was sometimes identified with Baal, the Canaanite god of storms and vegetation.

The Israelite tradition was thus changed in two major ways. One was political and economic in nature: the Israelites lost their equality in political and economic status when under their monarchy they became divided into the rich or the poor. The other major change in Israelite tradition was religious, propelled by the intermingling of Israelite and Canaanite beliefs and practices. These changes, in turn, led to the prophetic movement, in which the prophets protested against what they saw as religious corruption and social injustice in Israelite society. As we will see, the prophetic movement transformed Israelite religion during the eighth to sixth centuries B.C.

THE PROPHETIC MOVEMENT

The word *prophet* is broadly defined as "one who is called." More specifically, it refers to one who is called by God to transmit God's messages. Prophets had long been a part of Hebrew history, serving as advisers to Israelite kings. It wasn't until the ninth century B.C., however, that some prophets began to criticize the behavior of monarchs. The ninth-century prophets were mostly ecstatic visionaries, whereas those of the eighth century B.C. began to write and preach in more reasoned and literary terms. Indeed, their pronouncements constitute large parts of the

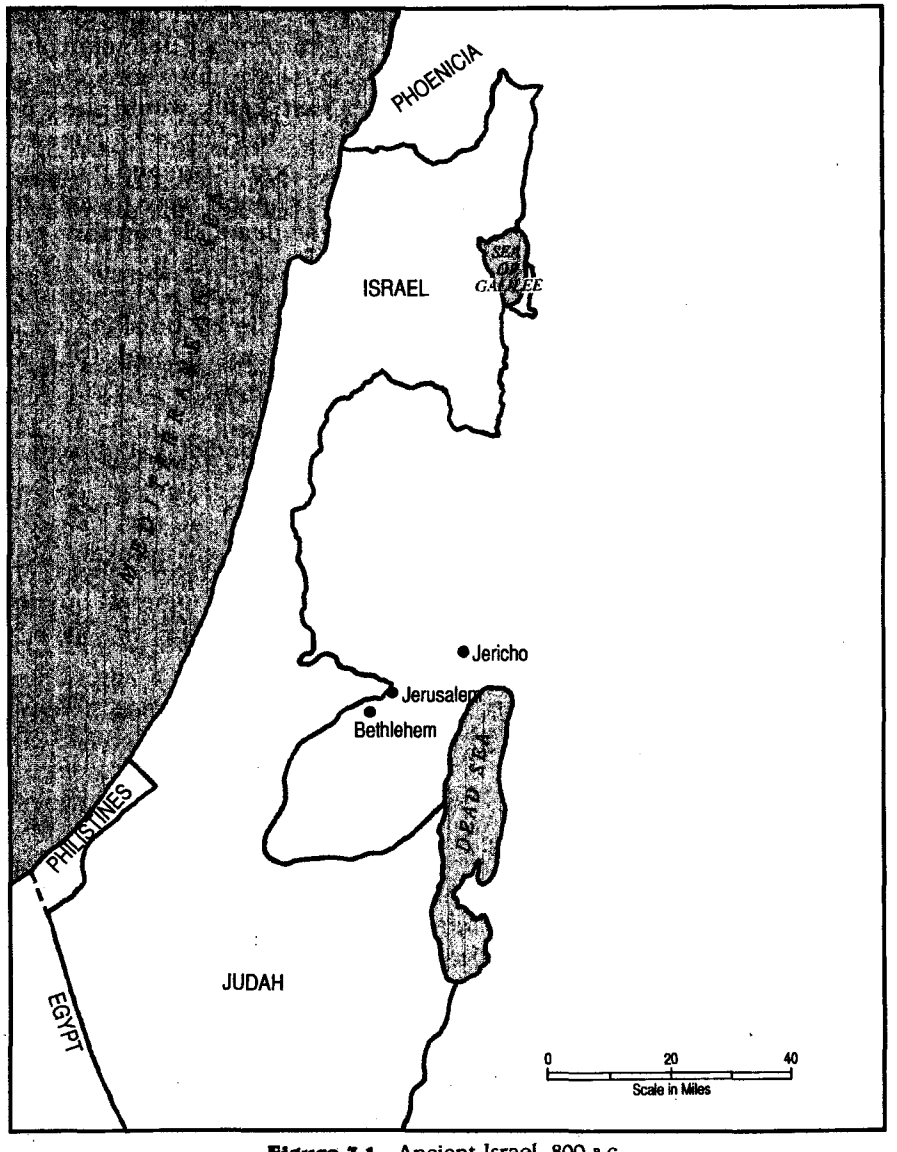


Figure 3.1 Ancient Israel, 800 B.C.

Old Testament. It is not known precisely who put the prophetic books in written form. Probably the sayings of the prophets were passed on orally for a time and then written down.

The prophets of the eighth century B.C. came from the lower classes and hence were not highly respected. They were often provocative and

even insulting in their criticisms of Israelite society. As a result, they were usually disliked and sometimes punished. The prophet Jeremiah, for example, was flogged several times by order of various monarchs of Judah who were angered by his prophecies that Judah would soon be destroyed. Yet the prophets were great religious teachers who stressed above all monotheism and morality. Although monotheism and morality had long been implicit in Hebrew religion, the prophets were the first to teach explicitly that one God rules all people and demands morality, not rituals, from them.

The first of the eighth century prophets was Amos, a sheepherder who around 750 B.C. burst onto the Israelite scene by breaking up a religious service that included fertility rites. Amos quoted God as denouncing the rituals:

> Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and cereal offerings,
> I will not accept them.
>
> Amos 5:22

Amos told the Israelites that God wanted justice for the poor rather than rituals, and that people would be judged according to the moral quality of their lives:

> Seek good, and not evil,
> that you may live;
> and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you,
> as you have said.
> Hate evil, and love good,
> and establish justice in the gate.
>
> Amos 5:14–15

"Establish justice in the gate" meant helping the poor and oppressed who often congregated around city gates. Amos warned the Israelite upper classes that God would punish them if they continued to seek personal wealth and ignore the needs of the lower classes. One of Amos's successors, Hosea, described God's punishment in graphic terms:

> They shall fall by the sword,
> Their infants shall be dashed in pieces,
> And their pregnant women ripped open.
>
> Hosea 14:2

Hosea's prediction was realized as small kingdoms were crushed by larger empires and the Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. More interesting, though, was that the prophets viewed the Assyrian conquest as a carrying out of God's purposes. According to traditional religious thought, God was assumed to protect

Hebrews from all enemies; his failure to do so would reveal his inferiority to the Assyrian gods. Refusing this traditional assumption, the prophets preached that the Assyrians were instruments of God used to punish the Israelites for their sins. In effect, the prophets portrayed God as ruler of both Assyrians and Israelites, thus marking a major step in the development of monotheistic religion. The Assyrian conquest was for the Israelites a political disaster but it was also a spiritual breakthrough.

Still more political calamities ensued. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was destroyed by the Babylonians early in the sixth century B.C., and most of its surviving population was taken into exile in Babylon. At this time, Israelites were increasingly known as Jews, a name derived from Judah. Unlike their counterparts from the Northern Kingdom, the Judean exiles were able to survive as an identifiable community and were able to continue worshipping in their traditional faith.

The experience of exile raised a fundamental spiritual issue: if God is responsible for everything that happens, then why does he allow the good to suffer and the wicked to prosper? This question is confronted in the Book of Job, a long series of poems about a good man who suffers greatly and who wonders what he has done to deserve such suffering. God responds by telling Job that humans will never understand divine ways and must simply accept their fate. The broader message, of course, is that a monotheistic God is so transcendent, so far beyond human comprehension, that his ways cannot be understood.

Babylon was conquered by the Persian Empire in 539 B.C. The Persians were more benevolent than the Babylonians and allowed many Jewish exiles to return home. This good fortune was celebrated by the last of the great prophets, the Second Isaiah. His real name is unknown, but he is called the Second Isaiah because he wrote the last parts of the Book of Isaiah. Ironically, this poet is regarded as one of the greatest writers and spiritual leaders of all time. He was an explicit monotheist and the first prophet to state unequivocally that there is only one God:

> I am the first and I am the last;
> besides me there is no God.
>
> Isaiah 44:6

Although some early prophets hinted at the concept of monotheism, the Second Isaiah was the first to make its true meaning clear. Jews responded to monotheism by asking the question: If only one God exists, why do only Jews know him? The Second Isaiah explained that Jews were designated by God to suffer for the sins of others and thereby to transmit the divine message to all people. Suffering then, was a sign of the love of God and a means through which people could attain purification and redemption. This concept of the "suffering servant" is described by the Second Isaiah in the following words:

He is despised and rejected of men;
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . .
He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities. . . .
With his stripes we are healed. . . .
The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:3, 5–6

The prophetic movement ended sometime late in the sixth century B.C. Although led by a relatively small number of people, the movement had a tremendous impact on Jewish religion. The prophets universalized Jewish religion by teaching that God ruled the entire universe. They also universalized morality in the sense that they spread the idea of equality among all people in the eyes of God. The prophets were not political revolutionaries, nor did they attempt to overturn the established political order. But their demands for social justice place them among the first social reformers in Western history.

JUDAISM AFTER THE PROPHETS

The people of Judah kept the Hebrew tradition alive; thus their religion came to be known as *Judaism.* Judaism bound the Jewish people together by giving them an identity even though they no longer constituted a politically independent nation. The Jewish people were controlled by the Persians until the second half of the fourth century B.C., when they were absorbed into Alexander the Great's empire (see Chapter 4). After a brief period of Judean independence (142–63 B.C.), they were conquered by the Roman Empire in 63 B.C.

Judaism continued to evolve during the last five centuries B.C. Among the most important developments were new beliefs about the afterlife, which had previously been a minor concern of Judaism (since the Jews assumed that God would reward them in this life by protecting them from enemies). However, encouraged by the political calamities that continued to befall them as well as some Zoroastrian influence (see Chapter 2), Jews began to contend that God's rewards and punishments would be given to them after death. Thus they began to teach that in this life people had to choose between following God, the source of goodness and righteousness, or following Satan, the embodiment of evil. Further, bodily resurrection would occur in the afterlife followed by a divine judgment, at which time the pious would achieve immortality in heaven and the wicked would be damned to eternal hell.

Particularly significant to the development of these ideas about the afterlife was the Book of Daniel, written sometime during the second century B.C. Daniel is apocalyptic—that is, it makes predictions about the ultimate destiny of the world—and much of it is written in allegorical, obscure language. In particular, the Book of Daniel was

highly influential in teaching about the "last things"—the resurrection of the dead and the final reign of God.

Another development in Judaism was a belief in the coming of a *Messiah,* meaning one who is "anointed" by God. Some Jews believed that God would send a political Messiah to restore their political independence; others assumed that the Messiah would be a spiritual leader unconcerned with politics. In either case, the belief in a Messiah gave Judaism a sense of expectation, a sense of waiting for some great event. This sense of expectation would later contribute to the rise of Christianity, since the followers of Jesus believed that he was the awaited Messiah.

CONCLUSION

The spiritual journey of the Jewish people had several major impacts on the history of Western Civilization:

1. From it emerged, directly or indirectly, three major religions—Judaism itself, which remained the religion of many Jews; Christianity, which developed out of Judaism in the first century A.D.; and Islam, inspired in part by Judaism in the seventh century A.D.
2. As noted earlier, the Jewish conception of a monotheistic God superior to nature had the effect of de-spiritualizing nature. Since nature was no longer regarded as having spirits, Western people eventually came to believe that they could investigate and use nature to their advantage. Over the centuries, the de-spiritualization of nature encouraged the development of Western science and technology.
3. The Jewish belief that humanity is God's greatest creation helped create a strong sense of pride among Western people. It also supported the idea of freedom, in that people were portrayed as being able to choose between good and evil. Ultimately, Western people came to believe that they could accomplish great things, and this tendency helped make Western Civilization a dynamic and aggressive force in world history.
4. The Jewish belief that God cares for all people helped create a sense of moral responsibility. According to the historian Harry Orlinsky, the prophets taught that "justice was for the weak as well as the strong, . . . that one could not serve God at the same time that he mistreated his fellow man."[1] In Leviticus is the admonition: "And you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (19:18). Jewish moral precepts were far more humane than those of other ancient peoples; indeed, they would ultimately become the source of the most noble, ethical teachings in Western Civilization.
5. The Jewish conception of history was unique. Most other ancient peoples took the fatalistic view that history repeats itself in ever-recurring cycles (see Chapter 2). This cyclical view assumes that every society proceeds through a predetermined sequence of

events—birth, maturity, and inevitable death. The Jews, however, looked forward to a future golden age—the final judgment of God and the entry of the pious into paradise. The effect was to portray history as developing in a linear fashion, as progressing toward a goal. This idea of progress became a fundamental assumption in Western history. Eventually, the Judeo-Christian belief in spiritual progress was modified to include material progress, the presumption that life on earth can be made continually better.

6. Ironically, even though the Jews are cofounders of Western Civilization, they have been persecuted by other Western peoples over the centuries. Christians, for instance, have often perceived Jews as religious and racial enemies, the result being periodic outbursts of anti-Semitism and sometimes the torturing and killing of Jews. The ultimate example of anti-Semitism is the twentieth-century Holocaust, the murdering of more than six million Jews by German Nazis and their collaborators during World War II.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Early Hebrew religion
Abraham
Moses
Genesis and Western technology
The Israelite monarchy (1000–900 B.C.)
The prophetic movement
Amos
Job
The Second Isaiah
Judaism after the prophets
Daniel
Messiah
The significance of Judaism

SUGGESTED READINGS

The Old Testament is, of course, the fundamental source on the spiritual journey of the Jewish people. The stories contained in the Old Testament—such as the life of Moses or the liaison of Samson and Delilah—are not always historically reliable, but they have inspired the writing of many literary works and musical compositions over the centuries.

A good modern analysis of the Old Testament is Dane R. Gordon, *The Old Testament: A Beginning Survey* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1985). Three good histories of ancient Israel are John Bright, *A History of Israel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976); Harry M. Orlinsky, *Ancient Israel,* 2nd ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1960); and G. W. Anderson, *The History and Religion of Israel* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966).

NOTE

[1]Harry M. Orlinsky, *Ancient Israel,* 2nd ed. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1960), p. 144.

4

The Greeks: 1200 to 30 B.C.