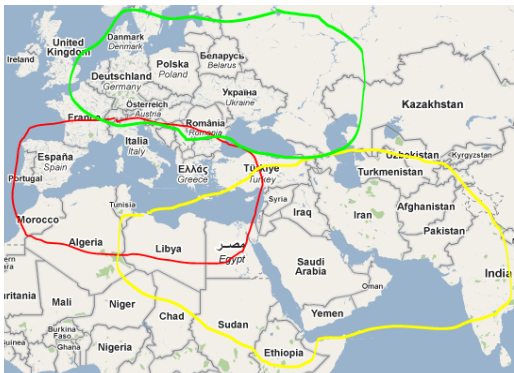


## WORLD RELIGIONS: SESSION FOUR

### JUDAISM: “A FAITH, A FAMILY, A COVENANT”

#### WHO IS A JEW?

- Not necessarily an adherent of the religion of Judaism (50% of Israeli Jews, and U.S. Jews, are secular)
- “Anyone declaring in good faith that he is a Jew, and who does not profess any other religion, shall be registered as a Jew.” Israel 1958
- “For the purposes of this Law [of return], a Jew is someone born to a Jewish mother, or converted [to the Jewish faith] and (s)he is not a member of another religion.”
- Messianic Jew
- Not a “race”
- Jewish Diaspora (*diaspora*=Greek word for dispersion, being spread out)



Ashkenazic (North & Eastern Europe)

Sephardic (Spain, Mediterranean, North Africa)

Mizrahim (Eastern)

#### HISTORY OF JUDAISM

Biblical Judaism: 1400 BC - 331 BC “1st Temple Period” (c. 950 - 586 BC)  
Hellenic Judaism: 331 BC - 135 AD “2nd Temple Period” (c. 530 - 70 AD)  
Rabbinical Judaism: 135 AD - 1750 AD  
Modern Judaism: 1750 AD - Present

#### IMPORTANT HISTORY AFTER THE “OLD TESTAMENT” PERIOD

1. Holy Land conquered by Alexander the Great in 332 BC. Hellenization: influence of Greek language and culture. Hebrew scriptures translated into Greek (called the *Septuagint*).
2. Three sects that developed by the time of the Hasmonean dynasty (142 BC - 63 BC)  
Pharisees: stressed interpretation and practice of the Law (Torah); spiritual fathers of rabbinical Judaism  
Sadducees: written Torah only (rejected “oral Law”); controlled the Temple and Priesthood  
Essenes: separatists who believed the temple & priesthood were corrupt; awaiting Messiah(s);  
Qumran community; *Dead Sea Scrolls*
3. Roman Rule begins 64 BC
4. Jesus is born in Bethlehem, c. 5 BC; died & arose c. 30 AD in Jerusalem
5. 70 AD Destruction of the Temple by Titus
6. 135 AD Simon bar Kochba revolt; Jerusalem leveled by Emperor Hadrian, Jews expelled
7. Second major Jewish diaspora
9. Moses be Maimon (*Maimonides* or *Rambam*) 1135-1204  
“From Moses to Moses there is none like Moses.”  
The Mishnah Torah; 613 Mitzvot (commandments)

### The Thirteen Principles of Faith

10. From the fifth century onward, the Jewish people suffered due to Church and/or State sanctioned persecutions. The rise of Islam in the 7th century brought an additional source of persecution.
11. 1894: Dreyfus trial in France; Theodore Herzl founded political Zionism movement.
12. The Holocaust: January 30, 1933 - May 8, 1944
13. 1948 State of Israel born; war with Arabs
14. 1967 Six Day War
15. 2008 State of Israel is 60 years old

## SCRIPTURES AND AUTHORITIES

Tanakh: The Hebrew Bible, what Christians commonly call the *Old Testament*.

Torah: The first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). Also called the five *Books of Moses* or the *Pentateuch* (a Greek word that means “five books”). The cornerstone of the Torah is the *Ten Commandments*. When a Jewish person uses the word “Torah” they may be referring specifically to these five books or they might be referring to the written *and* oral law as a whole.

Nevi'im: The Prophets---this section includes the historical books of Joshua, Judges, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings; the books of the Major Prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; and the books of the Minor Prophets Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Ketuvim: The Writings---this section includes the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, The Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and I & II Chronicles

Talmud: The written record of several centuries of discussion, interpretation, and commentary on Torah by the earliest rabbis, who were primarily scholars and teachers of Torah.

Mishnah: The oral Torah tradition which was committed to paper in about A.D. 200

Gemara: A commentary on the Mishnah (3-6th Century)

Halakhah: The legal discussions in the Talmud

Aggadata: guidance on ethical matters; history; folklore

Midrash: A compilation of homilies gathered over the centuries; can also refer to a particular method of interpretation.

Sefer ha-Zohar (Book of Splendor): Written in Spain between 1280 and 1286 by Moses de Leon, it is the primary text for the Kabbalah, the unorthodox, mystical branch of Judaism. Followers of Kabbalah believe that when God gave Moses the Torah, he also gave secret wisdom--the Kabbalah-- that as been passed down to initiates over the centuries. The teachings of the Kabbalah have found a home in the New Age movements in Western culture.

## BRANCHES OF JUDAISM

Orthodox Judaism Modern or traditional; accepts all of the Torah, Talmud, and Halakhah as authoritative.

### HASIDIC JUDAISM

- **Ba'al Shem Tov 1700-1760, Ukraine**
- **Emphasize spiritual fervor and mystical encounters with God.**
- **“Ultra-orthodox”**
- **Traditional Dress from 18th Century**
- **Separation from secular society**
- **Large communities found in New York and in Israel**

Conservative Judaism      Uniquely American Judaism; seeks a middle ground between the traditional religion and the modern world; the laws and traditions are not practiced as meticulously as an orthodox Jew— they believe in greater flexibility.

Reform Judaism      Liberal Judaism; began in 19th century in Germany; all of the Torah is fluid and open to reinterpretation by modern culture.

Secular Judaism      is comprised of Jews who feel an family, ethnic and cultural connection to the Jewish people, but they do not practice the religion. They may be atheists, but not necessarily. 50% of Jewish people in Israel and in the U.S. are secular.

Kabbalah      Mystical Judaism; in the west it became a “pop religion”.

## **BELIEFS**

Remember, beliefs vary widely in the Jewish community. These beliefs are basically Orthodox or Conservative beliefs:

### **The Thirteen Principles of Jewish Faith**

1. I believe with perfect faith that G-d is the Creator and Ruler of all things. He alone has made, does make, and will make all things.
2. I believe with perfect faith that G-d is One. There is no unity that is in any way like His. He alone is our G-d. He was, He is and He will be.
3. I believe with perfect faith that G-d does not have a body. Physical concepts do not apply to Him. There is nothing whatsoever that resembles Him at all.
4. I believe with perfect faith that G-d is first and last.
5. I believe with perfect faith that it is only proper to pray to G-d. One may no pray to anyone or anything else.
6. I believe with perfect faith that all the words of the prophets are true.
7. I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses is absolutely true. He was the chief of all prophets, both before and after him.
8. I believe with perfect faith that the entire Torah that we now have is that which was given to Moses.
9. I believe with perfect faith that this Torah will not be changed, and that there will never be another given by G-d.
10. I believe with perfect faith that G-d knows all of man's deeds and thoughts. It is thus written (Psalm 33:15), “He has molded every heart together, He understands what each one does.”
11. I believe with perfect faith that G-d rewards those who keep His commandments, and punishes those who transgress Him.
12. I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah. How ever long it takes, I will await His coming every day.
13. I believe with perfect faith that the dead will be brought back to life when G-d wills it to happen.

## **God**

Judaism is monotheistic, although in modern times “God” is defined in a wide variety of ways, especially by Reformed Judaism.

When Moses asked God for His Name, at the burning bush, God responded with YHWH-- “I am that I am”. This is the most sacred and holy name for God, according to Judaism. It is so holy it is never said aloud by the Orthodox. When reading the Torah out loud, the word *adonai* (Lord) or *HaShem* (the Name) is spoken in place of YHWH.

### **Prayer**

- Shema: This is the most famous and universal of Jewish prayers, called the Shema Yisrael. All devout Jews repeat it in the morning and again at night. *Shema Yisrael adonoi elohenu, adonoi ehad. Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.*
- Prayer is said three times daily by observant Jews: evening, morning and noon (or early afternoon).
- Blessings: said dozens of times during the day; Each blessing starts with: “*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe...*”
- After the destruction of the Temple, the rabbis taught that prayer has replaced the sacrifices. (Hosea 14:1-2)

### **Sin and Salvation**

- Jews believe that people enter the world with a soul that is pure, innocent and untainted. Human beings sin, not because we are somehow predisposed to it (like the Christian concept of original sin), but because we are not perfect.
- Sin is always an action--thoughts or attitudes, no matter how bad, are not sin unless they turn to action. Every individual is responsible for his own actions.
- Forgiveness for sin is achieved by repentance, prayer, good deeds, and ultimately God's mercy. Sacrifices for sin were prescribed in the Torah, but because the temple has never been rebuilt, sacrifices cannot take place. Prayer has replaced sacrifice.
- Judaism focuses on the here and now, although there is a “world to come”.
- Judaism teaches the immortality of the soul and the ultimate resurrection of the dead

### **The Covenant**

- Only Jewish people are bound to the Mosaic Covenant
- They fulfill their purpose to be a “light to the Gentiles” by living faithful to that Covenant
- Judaism does not proselytize, except to call non practicing Jews back to the Covenant; conversion is possible but lengthy
- Judaism teaches that Gentiles are not bound to the Mosaic Covenant, but rather to the Noahic Covenant (given to Noah).

#### **Noahic Covenant**

1. Do not commit idolatry.
2. Do not blaspheme God's name.
3. Do not murder.
4. Do not commit adultery.
5. Do not steal.
6. Establish courts of justice.
7. Do not cut flesh from a living animal.

### **Mashiach: The Messiah**

- According to Orthodox Judaism, “*the Messiah is a God fearing, pious Jew , who is both a great Torah scholar and a great leader as well. He is a direct descendant of King David, and will be anointed as the new Jewish King. (In fact the Hebrew word for Messiah--Mashiach--means “anointed one”.) When the Messiah comes, there will be a universal recognition of the truth of Torah and the God who gave that Torah at Mt. Sinai. All Jews will return to the Land of Israel where they will throw off the yoke of their enemies and undergo a complete spiritual revival. They will embrace the faith of their forefathers and dedicate themselves to G-d's service forever. They will rebuild the Holy*

*Temple where the Divine presence will shine forth, spreading the light of truth, justice, tolerance and peace throughout the world.”*

- Observant Jews believe they can hasten the coming of the Messiah by keeping the Torah faithfully and urging all Jews to return to Torah practice, especially keeping the Sabbath.

### **Yeshua Ha Machiach (Jesus the Messiah)**

#### **Who was Jesus?**

- Jesus of Nazareth was a 1st century Jewish man who fulfilled all the initial qualifications of the Messiah: of the tribe of Judah, from the line of David, born in Bethlehem, Jewish mother, etc.
- All of his first followers were Jews.
- Jesus kept the law perfectly and had complete respect for it, but criticized those who added burdensome man-made traditions.
- He was a lover of people—especially those on the margins; he was a miracle worker, made startling claims, spoke with unusual authority, and challenged the religious system.
- After his resurrection, he helped his disciples see how he fulfilled the Scriptures: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” Luke 24:27

#### **Who were the first members of the first church?**

- All of the leaders and members of the first church were Jewish.
- These thoroughly monotheistic Jewish believers were convinced that not only was Jesus was the Messiah, but that YHWH himself had entered their world in Jesus of Nazareth and accomplished their salvation.
- Gentiles were allowed into the church when God showed Peter that the New Covenant was going to include people from every nation, tribe, people and tongue (Acts 10:34; Acts 15:7-9).
- Eventually there were many more Gentiles in the church than Jews; unfortunate events led to a generally anti-semitic attitude in the Church that persisted for far too long. Many Christians have grieved over this history.
- Despite this wretched history, there are many Jews today who have come to faith in *Yeshua Ha Machiach*. They are called **Messianic Jews**. They do not see themselves as converts to “Christianity”—rather they are Jewish followers of Yeshua just like the first church.
- It is a point of *great* contention amongst Jewish people whether or not someone who believes in Yeshua can still be considered a Jew. While Atheism, and even incorporating other beliefs such as Buddhism, do not seem to be a problem, the complicated and painful history of Jewish/Christian relations leads many Jews to draw a line in the sand when it comes to believing in *Yeshua*.

#### **Why do some Jews continue to reject Yeshua as the Messiah?**

- Some Jewish people reject Jesus as Messiah because they claim he did not fulfill all the Messianic prophecies. In particular, he did not build the third temple (Ezekiel 37:26-28), gather all Jews back to the Land of Israel (Isaiah 43:5-6), usher in an era of world peace and end all hatred, oppression, suffering and disease (Isaiah 2:4), or spread universal knowledge of the God of Israel (Zech. 14:9)
- Some Jewish people reject the Christian view that Jesus is a twice-coming Messiah—first a suffering Messiah, but in the future a victorious Messiah.
- Finally, the whole idea that God could “incarnate” is an objection. They just don’t accept that God could be “made flesh and dwell among us”.

## PRACTICES

Judaism tends to emphasize practice over beliefs as being the most important. In Orthodox Judaism the practices are complex and extensive. This is just a simple list of some of the more obvious practices:

**Shabbot** *Shabbot*, or the Sabbath, is day of rest commanded by God in the Torah. Orthodox Jews strictly observe the Sabbath; Conservative Jews are not as strict; Reform Jews may keep some aspect of the Sabbath, or none at all. The Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday night and ends at sunset on Saturday night.

### 39 CATEGORIES OF FORBIDDEN SABBATH WORK

- |                  |                |                |                  |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Carrying      | 11. Knotting   | 21. Sifting    | 31. Building     |
| 2. Burning       | 12. Untying    | 22. Grinding   | 32. Demolishing  |
| 3. Extinguishing | 13. Shaping    | 23. Kneading   | 33. Trapping     |
| 4. Finishing     | 14. Plowing    | 24. Combing    | 34. Shearing     |
| 5. Writing       | 15. Planting   | 25. Spinning   | 35. Slaughtering |
| 6. Erasing       | 16. Reaping    | 26. Dying      | 36. Skinning     |
| 7. Cooking       | 17. Harvesting | 27. Stitching  | 37. Tanning      |
| 8. Washing       | 18. Threshing  | 28. Warping    | 38. Smoothing    |
| 9. Sewing        | 19. Winnowing  | 29. Weaving    | 39. Marking      |
| 10. Tearing      | 20. Selecting  | 30. Unraveling |                  |

**Kosher Law** The Hebrew word “kosher” means fit or proper. The kosher laws are complex and extensive. Here are some key laws:

#### 1. Meat, Poultry, Fish

The only mammals permitted are those which chew their cud and are cloven hoofed. Basically only chicken, turkey, duck and goose are permitted birds. Fish must have fins and scales. All shellfish are prohibited.

#### 2. Kosher Slaughtering

The processing of kosher meats and poultry requires that the animal be slaughtered in the manner prescribed by the Torah. The Torah forbids eating the blood of an animal. The two methods of extracting blood from meat are salting and broiling.

#### 3. Milk and Meat in the Kosher Kitchen

The Torah forbids cooking a young goat in its mother’s milk. As a safeguard the Rabbis extended this prohibition to disallow the eating of meat and dairy products at the same meal or preparing them using the same utensils.

**Synagogue** The synagogue is the center of Jewish community life. It is the place for worship on the Sabbath (either Friday night or Saturday morning) and is a place of Jewish education. Each synagogue has a handwritten Torah scroll that is treated with great reverence. Services are simple, focused on reading from the Torah and saying prayers together.

## HOLIDAYS

### Purim

Celebrates Esther’s triumph over the Jew-hating Haman in Persia (Book of Esther). Celebrated in the spring.

### Passover

The “Feast of Unleavened Bread” commemorates God’s protection on the night of his final plague on the Egyptians, and the subsequent hasty departure of the nation of Israel. Called *Pesach* in Hebrew. Observed in

the spring. (Exodus 12:14-17) 1st *Pilgrimage festival*.

Lag B'Omer

Begins the counting from the first Sunday after Passover to Shavuot. It was also the first of the "first fruits" harvest brought to the temple (an "omer" of grain). (Lev. 23:15-16)

Shavuot

The "Feast of Weeks", celebrating the giving of the Ten Commandments and the Torah, and the second of the first fruits offerings. Traditionally called Pentecost--50 days after the 2nd day of Passover. 2nd *Pilgrimage festival*. (Lev. 23:15-16, 21)

Tish B'Av

The fast of the 9th of the month of Av. A day of mourning to commemorate the many tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people.

Rosh Hashanah

Jewish New Year; the shofar (ram's horn) is sounded. Occurs in Autumn. (Lev. 16:24)

Yom Kippur

The Day of Atonement; Jews fast for 25 hours, reflect on their sins, repent, and seek forgiveness from God. Occurs in Autumn. (Lev. 16:29-30)

Sukkot

The "Feast of Booths", a time of thanksgiving for God's protection of Moses and the Hebrews during their 40 years in the wilderness. The family constructs a tent structure and lives in it during the holiday. This is the third of the first fruits festivals. Observed in Autumn. (Lev. 23:24, 42). 3rd *Pilgrimage festival*.

Simchat Torah

"Rejoicing in the Torah"; celebrates the completion of the yearly Torah reading, and starts the cycle again from the beginning. Right after Yom Kippur.

Chanukah

Festival of Lights, celebrates the rededication of the temple in Jerusalem in 165 B.C. Celebrated in December.