**World Religion Unit:** Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Judaism** (Ancient World Book Page 60-65)

**Vocabulary:**

*Covenant* Promise made by God.

*Moses* Israelite leader whom the Torah credits with leading the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan.

*Prophet* Religious teacher who is regarded as someone who speaks for God.

*Diaspora* Scattering of people who have a common background or beliefs.

The Torah, the most sacred text of Judaism, says God made a promise to the Israelite leader Abraham. The promise has helped shape the history of the people of Israel from ancient times to the present.

The early Israelites came to believe that God was taking part in their history. The Torah records events and laws important to the Israelites. It is made-up of five books. They are called Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy (doo tur AHN uh mee). Later, Christians adopted these books as the first five books of the Old Testament.

**The Beliefs of Judaism:**

To the Israelites, history and religion were closely connected. Each event showed God’s plan for the Israelite people. Over time, Israelite beliefs developed into the religion we know today as Judaism. You already know that Judaism was monotheistic from its beginning. It differed from the beliefs of nearby peoples in other ways as well.

**A promise to the Israelites:** Most ancient people thought of their gods as being connected to certain places or people. The Israelites, however, believed that God is present everywhere. They believed that God knows everything and has complete power.

According to the **Torah**, God promised Abraham that his people world become kings and build nations. God said to Abraham, “I will keep my promise to you and your descendants in future generations as an everlasting covenant.” Because of this **covenant**, or promise made by God, the Israelites considered themselves to be God’s “chosen people.” This covenant was later renewed by **Moses**, an Israelite leader who lived sometime around 1200 B.C. He told the Israelites that God would lead them to **Canaan**, “the promised land.” In return, the Israelites had to obey God faithfully.

**The Ten Commandments:** At the heart of Judaism are the Ten Commandments. The Israelites believed that God delivered the Commandments to them through Moses. Some Commandments set out religious duties toward God. Others are rules for correct behavior. Here are some of the Commandments.

**“ I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt… you shall have no other gods beside me… honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded… you shall not murder. You shall not steal.”**

* **Ten Commandments**

In addition to the 10 Commandments, the Torah sought out many other laws. Some had to do with everyday matters, such as how food should be prepared. Others had to do with crimes. Like Hammurabi’s code, many of the Israelites’ laws try to match punishments to crimes. At the same time, religious teachers called on leaders to carry out the laws with justice and mercy.

**Judaism and Women:**  Some laws protected women. One of the commandments, for example, required that mothers be treated with respect. But, as in many other religions, women were considered to be of lower social status than men. A man who was head of a family owned his wife and children. A father could sell his daughters into marriage. Only a husband could seek a divorce.

Early in Israelite history a few women, such as **judge Deborah**, one honor and respect as religious leaders. Later on, however, women were not allowed to take part in many religious leadership roles.

**Justice and Morality:** The history of the Israelites tells of **prophets**, or religious teachers who are regarded as speaking for God. The prophets told the Israelites how God wanted them to live. They warned the people not to disobey God’s law. Disobedience could bring disaster.

Prophets preached a code of ethics, or moral behavior. They urged the Israelites to live good and decent lives. They also called on the rich and powerful to protect the poor and weak. All people, the prophets said, were equal before God. In many ancient societies, a ruler was seen as a god. To the Israelites, however, their leaders were human. Kings had to obey God’s law just as shepherds and merchants did.

**The Effects of Judaism:**

After their exile from Judah in 587 B.C., **the Jews**, or people who follow Judaism, saw their homeland controlled by various foreign powers, including the Romans. The Romans drove the Jews out of their homeland in A.D. 135. As a result, the Jewish people scattered to different parts of the world.

**New Settlements:** The Romans carried on the Jewish **diaspora**, the scattering of a group of people, begun by the Assyrians and Chaldeans.

Wherever they settled, the Jews preserved their heritage. They did so by living together in close communities. They took care to obey their religious laws, worship at their temples, and follow their traditions. The celebration of Passover is one such tradition. It marks a time when Israelites believed their children were spared from destruction. Death “passed over” them, and they were led out of Egypt by Moses. Over time, such long-held traditions helped to unite Jews.

**Effects on Later Religions:** Judaism had an important influence on two later religions, Christianity and Islam. Both religions have their beginnings in Judaism. Both faiths originated from the same geographical area. Both were monotheistic. Jews, Christians, and followers of Islam all honor Abraham, Moses, and the prophets. They also share the same moral point of view that the Israelites first developed.

1. What did the prophets tell the Israelites? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. How did the Jews preserve their heritage? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. What did God’s covenant with Abraham require of the Israelites? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What religious laws did the Israelites follow? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_