



Judaism

The Religion of the Jews

Introduction

- One of the worlds oldest continuing religions
- Halakhah – Explains Jewish law, custom, and practice
- Jewish communities exist in all parts of the world because of migration and exile.
- Jewish Population 13.3 million (the majority live in North America).

Basic Doctrine

- Monotheistic religion – believe that there is one God who created the universe and still governs it.
- Everything people experience has meaning because God is behind it.
- God appeared on Mt. Sinai. The content of that revelation is the Torah.



Beliefs Continued



- The Torah is a set of commandments
- According to tradition, on Mt. Sinai God enter into a covenant with the Jewish people – If they would acknowledge God as their sole creator and obey his laws, God in turn would be especially mindful of them
- Israel's well-being is dependant on obedience to God's laws.

Beliefs Continued

- They also believe that at the end of time God would send a Messiah to redeem the Jews and restore them to their own land.
- The idea of the Messiah and the Torah are very closely related. By study and doing what is right an individual can help to hasten the time when the Messiah comes
- Teachers who help people to understand the Torah are called Rabbis
- Sacred Text: Torah-written, Talmud-oral, Mishnah

Worship and Practices

- Worship in synagogues.
- Jews pray three times a day
- Jews recite numerous benedictions (prayers) throughout the day.
- On Monday and Thursday mornings the Torah is read at the front of the synagogue.



Worship and Practices

- Jews adhere to strict dietary laws.
- Certain animals are considered unclean and cannot be eaten, ex. Pigs, fish with out fins or scales.
- Edible animals must be properly slaughtered and meat and milk products are not to be eaten together.
- Every seventh day (Saturday) is the Sabbath, when no work is performed.
- The Sabbath is spent in prayer, study, rest and family fasting



Major Festivals

- Pesach (Passover)
- Shabuoth (Weeks or Pentecost)
- Rosh Hashanah (the New Year)
- Yom Kippur (the day of Atonement)
- Hanukkah
- Bar Mitzvahs (boys),
Bat Mitzvahs (girls)



Special Occasions



- Boys reach legal maturity when they turn 13, then they assume responsibility for obeying commandments.
- Girls reach maturity at 12
- The next turning point is marriage called Kiddushin

History

- The history of the Jews can be found in the Old Testament of the Bible.
- 586 BC Jews were exiled to Babylonia
- 539 BC Cyrus the Great allowed local temples to be restored, but they could not reestablish a monarchy
- 165 to 142 BC began as a civil war and ended with political independence for 80 years
- A Jewish historian named Flavius Josephus provided accounts of the re-taking of the Jewish people.
- During the medieval period (1400-1600), Judaism was revitalized by mystical movements. One of which is Kabbalah. This describes the dynamic nature of the godhead and offers a powerful symbolic interpretation of the Torah and the commandments.

History Continued



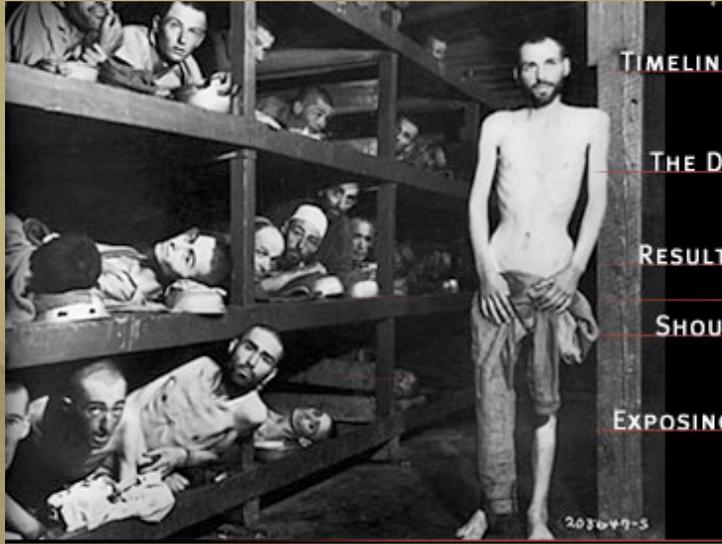
- The Crusades also affected the Jews in the Middle East. All non-Christians were killed.
- Hatred for the Jews culminated with the Holocaust. This was a massive extermination effort. Jews were forced to live wear the Star of David as identification, then were forced to live in ghettos, then were forced to concentration camps and death camps. 6 million Jews were killed and many more suffered from starvation, over work, exposure, etc.

The Holocaust

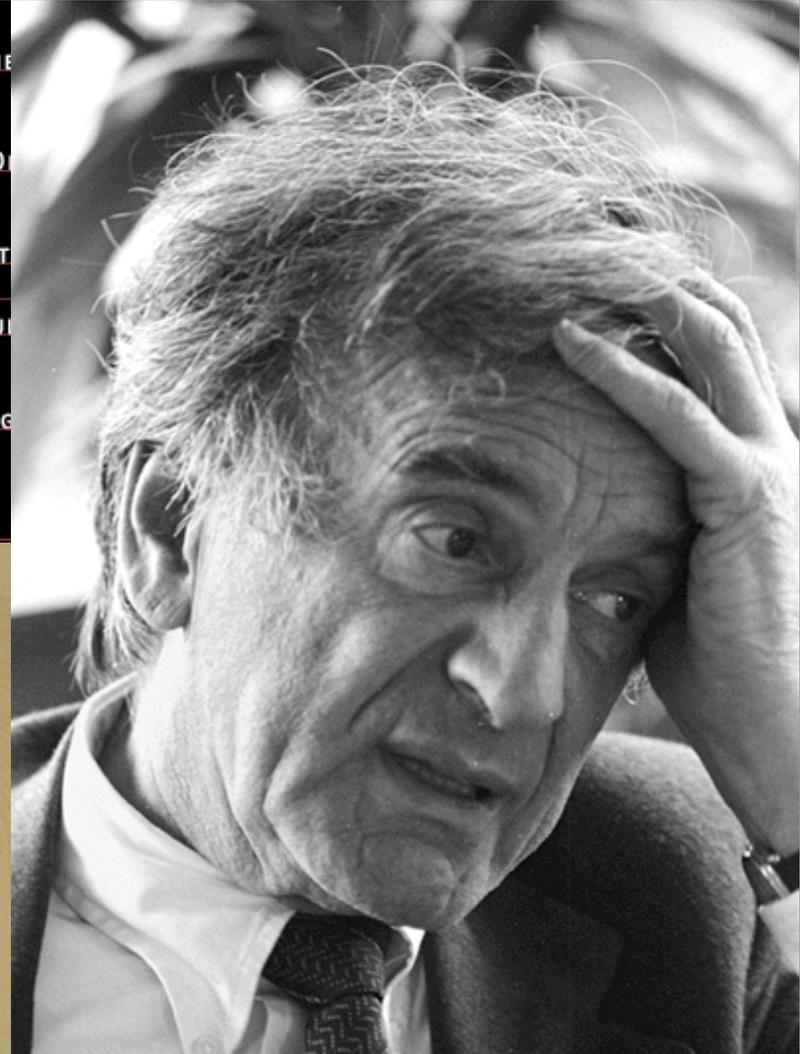


American Judaism has been profoundly affected by the Nazi destruction of the Jews and the formation of the state of Israel. It is seen as a symbolic death and re-birth.





Above is a picture of some holocaust survivors. To the side is a picture of a survivor named Elie Wiesel. He later went on to win a noble peace price in literature for his book Night.



Zionism

- Zionism, the movement to create a modern Jewish society in the ancient homeland. Zionism is a secular idea, but it ultimately lead to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948.

The Three Types of Judaism

- The Reform Movement – emphasizes a sense of community. It has also worked to increase the participation of women in religious ritual. In 2000 the reform rabbis voted to affirm gay and lesbian marriages. Least strict
- Conservative Judaism – it respects traditional Jewish law and practice while advocating a flexible approach to halakhah. They also have ordained women rabbis.
- Orthodoxy – try to integrate traditional observance with modern life. The immigration of many orthodox Jews after the holocaust strengthen the American Orthodoxy. Most strict.