



# First Notes on Judaism...

- Later– The conflict in the Middle East with all three of these religions claiming the same holy spots!

# 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"*
- *A "covenant relationship" between God (Yahweh) and the Hebrew people*
- *A faith, a people, a way of life, now considered an ethnicity as well as a religion (more on ethnicities later)*

# *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)*



# 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



# World Mapper

- religion

# *As a people, Jews are...*

- *A nation in Diaspora (Dispersed)*
- *15 - 20 million in worldwide population*
- *United by a common heritage (an "ethnic" religion), divided in contemporary practice:*
  - *Orthodox:*
    - *Modern*
    - *Chasidic (Ultra Orthodox)*
  - *Reformed (18<sup>th</sup> century Germany)*
  - *Conservative*
    - *moderates, response to reform*



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



- 613 commandments found in Torah ("Written Law")
- Talmud ("Oral Law") - 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 Temple and Temple rites
  - Observance of Holy Days
  - Proper social relations between male and female, in business, judicial rulings, etc.



# 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...



- Pesach ("Passover") - commemorates the exodus from Egypt (events told in Exodus)
- Shavuot ("weeks," Pentecost) - commemorates receipt of Torah at Sinai
- Shabbat (Sabbath, 7<sup>th</sup> Day, on Saturday) - the "Day of Rest"



# 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"

# What are Jews really concerned about?

- *Tikkun Olam - "repairing this world" through justice and righteousness; through "deed, not creed"*
- *The heart of Judaism is in the home and family, social responsibility and Doing Mitzvot*
  - *("good deeds" based on God's commandments)*
- *Through education and hard work we make our lives, the lives of others, and the world, what God intended it to be - Holy!*





*To Life!*



*To Life!*



*LeChaim!*

# Web resources



- **Judaism 101: <http://jewfaq.org/>**  
*"an online encyclopedia of Judaism, covering Jewish beliefs, people, places, things, language, scripture, holidays, practices and customs"*
- **ReligiousTolerance.org on Judaism:**  
**<http://www.religioustolerance.org/judaism.htm>**

