

Lesson Two: Israel's Rise and Fall

6.42 Describe the unification of the tribes of Israel under Kings Saul, David, and Solomon, including David's founding of Jerusalem as his capital city in 1000 BC/BCE and the building of the first temple by Solomon.

6.43 Summarize the four major events after the rule of King Solomon in the history of Israel, including the breakup of the Kingdom of Israel, destruction of the Northern Kingdom, Babylonian captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, and the return of the Jews to their homeland under the Persian Empire.

Engage: "Animated History: Ancient Israelites"

Explain how David became king.

Who was Solomon?

What are some civilizations that conquered Israel?

What happened to Israel after Solomon's death?

What caused the first diaspora?

Who freed the Jews?

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What caused the Great Diaspora?

What kept the Jews united and allowed their culture to continue on?

Becoming a Kingdom

How did the kingdom of Israel rise?

Jewish sacred texts tell the story of the **founding of the Kingdom of Israel** by one of the most famous and complex figures in Jewish texts, **King David**. According to these texts, David began life as a simple shepherd, who was declared to be the next king by the prophet Samuel. The current king of **Israel**, **Saul**, favored David for his musical skills but grew jealous of the youth when he defeated a leader of an army of invading Philistines. In this battle, the Torah relates that David killed that leader, a giant named Goliath, using only a rock and a slingshot.

David learned that King Saul was plotting to kill him. He fled and traveled throughout Israel, uniting the tribes of Israel under his command. Eventually he led his forces against Saul and the armies of Israel, and became the ruler of Israel around 1000 BCE. His first act as king was to capture the city of **Jerusalem** and make it his capital. Eventually, he would bring the Ark of the Covenant, which was believed to hold the **Ten Commandments**, to Jerusalem.

As king, David played many roles. He was a powerful warrior, defeating many enemies and crushing rebellions, including one led by his own son, Absalom. David's many sons often quarreled and caused trouble. David was also a poet and is believed to have written the Book of Psalms. He had many wives, as was customary at the time, and once

ordered a soldier named Uriah sent into battle where he was killed so David could marry Uriah's beautiful wife, Bathsheba. David ruled Israel for 40 years before his death.

David is one of the most celebrated figures in Jewish history. His combination of military strength, his skill as a ruler, and his spirituality have made him a role model for both Israel and the cultures that have drawn inspiration from the Jewish tradition. David is also known as a poet; the book of Psalms, attributed to David, is popular and frequently quoted. Even his flaws and shortcomings make him a very human and accessible figure.

According to Jewish sacred texts, King David's son, Solomon, become another famous king of Israel. Solomon ruled Israel in the 900s BCE. Solomon was renowned for his wisdom and was a poet. He strengthened his kingdom by establishing trade networks and by starting major building projects. [King Solomon](#) built the Temple in Jerusalem, which became the central site for the worship of God.

Answer the following questions using the article.

Describe David's rise to power.

Where did David locate the capital of Israel?

- A) Cairo
- B) Sumer
- C) Assyria
- D) Jerusalem

Which book of the Bible did David write?

- A) Psalms
- B) Proverbs
- C) Genesis
- D) Exodus

Which of the following does NOT describe Solomon?

- A) Son of David
- B) Built the temple in Jerusalem
- C) Renowned for his wisdom
- D) United the tribes of Israel

Watch the videos under King David and Solomon

Provide hashtags that summarize the accomplishments and importance of both King David and Solomon's roles in the history of ancient Israel.

King David	King Solomon

A Kingdom Divided

What Happened to the Israelite Kingdom

Two Israelite States

King Solomon died around 930 BCE. After his death, only the southern part of the kingdom, where Solomon's family came from, supported his son Rehoboam as successor. The northern part of the kingdom, which had been heavily taxed by Solomon for his construction projects in **Jerusalem**, rebelled and set up its own Kingdom of **Israel**. The two kings battled each other, but neither could decisively defeat the other.

For the next two centuries, there were two Israelite kingdoms. There was the Kingdom of **Israel** in the north and the Kingdom of Judah in the south. They were often at war with each other. They also fought with other powers in the region. Israel had a series of rulers. Usually, one family ruled for a generation and was then overthrown. Judah controlled Jerusalem and the Temple. Judah continued to be ruled by the descendants of David and Solomon. Later, Judah gave its name to the people we know as Jewish.

The **Assyrian Empire** was a power from northern **Mesopotamia**. For more than a century it had been extending its territory and gaining wealth by conquering other peoples. In 721 BCE, the Assyrians conquered the northern Kingdom of Israel. The Israelite people of the northern kingdom were sold into slavery or deported to other parts of the Assyrian Empire. These people are often called the ten lost tribes. The Assyrians also conquered much of Judah. Judah was reduced to a small amount of territory around Jerusalem.

Conquered by Babylon

There was another rising power from Mesopotamia. It would bring the end of Israelite control of Jerusalem for 70 years. The **Neo-Babylonian Empire** was led by King **Nebuchadnezzar II**. Nebuchadnezzar defeated Assyria in 607 BCE. He continued to conquer and expand his territory. When Judah fought back, Nebuchadnezzar attacked the kingdom. In 586 BCE, Judah was defeated. Jerusalem was destroyed. The Temple's treasures were stolen, and the building was burned. The leading citizens of Judah, including the Temple priests, were taken away to Babylon as prisoners.

The Jewish people did not lose their culture in Babylon. During this time, the **Torah** became the central focus of Jewish worship. Scholars created many hand-copied scrolls of the Torah. They read them aloud in Jewish temples in Babylon. Experts in Jewish teachings and law, who would later be called rabbis, became more important to keeping Jewish traditions alive. Having copies of the Torah helped the Jewish people to remember the laws and customs of **Judaism**. Cyrus, King of Persia, conquered the Babylonians in 539 BCE. Cyrus allowed the Jewish people to return to Judah. The Jewish people rebuilt the Temple in its original location. This became known as the Second Temple

Answer the following questions using the article.

What was the first main event after the death of King Solomon?

- A) Conquered by Assyria
- B) The splitting of Israel
- C) Exiled by Babylonians
- D) Rebuilding of the temple

Describe the impact the Assyrians had on the Israelites. Mention any important names and events

Describe the impact the Babylonians had on the Israelites. Mention any important names and events

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What enabled the Israelites to not lose their culture while in exile in Babylon?

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Describe the impact the Persians had on the Israelites. Mention any important names and events.

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Watch the first three videos for the Fall of Israel

Take notes over the following events. Then provide hastags for the impact each event had on Israel.

Israel Split	Assyrians	Babylonians	Persians
Hashtag	Hashtag	Hashtag	Hashtag

The Persian, Roman, and Greek Empires Rule Judea

Why were the Jewish people eventually dispersed geographically?

The religion of the ancient Israelites began to evolve into **Judaism**, with some of its familiar observances and practices, during the Jewish exile in Babylon and the two centuries under Persian rule after they returned to **Jerusalem**. Scholars think that the first synagogues developed, along with prayer practices separate from the centralized Temple in Jerusalem, while in exile in Babylon. This was the first step in creating a more portable religion. When Cyrus allowed Jewish people to return to Jerusalem, the public reading of the **Torah** and an oral translation of it into everyday language were both established. Scholars believe that was the start of the central Jewish religious ritual of the reading of the Torah that continues to this day. The Temple was then rebuilt and its rituals restored. Then came a period of challenge.

In 332 BCE, the Persian Empire was conquered by a Greek army under the leadership of **Alexander the Great**. Most of the peoples conquered by the Greeks embraced Greek culture. In Judah, however, the Jewish people were divided between those who admired Greek culture and those who saw its polytheistic beliefs and practices as an offense against the Torah. When a Syrian-Greek king tried to force the Jewish people to worship Greek gods and set up statues of these gods in the Temple, as well as an image of himself, the Jewish people revolted. The Jewish people won, and their religious freedom and the purity of the Temple were restored. This is one of the events still celebrated by Jewish people during the festival of Hanukkah.

The Romans

For the first time in more than 400 years, Judah was an independent kingdom under its own Jewish kings. But at the same time, the **Roman Empire** was growing in power and expanding eastward into the territories near Judah. When fighting broke out among Judah's ruling family in 63 BCE, Rome took over. Judah became a Roman province and its name was changed to **Judea**.

Under the Romans, Jerusalem reached its greatest size before modern times. In 37 BCE, the Romans named Herod, a Jew from Idumea (south of Judah), as the ruler of Judea. He started great building programs in Jerusalem, including a splendid expansion of the second Temple. This gave a certain prestige to the many Jewish people living throughout the Roman Empire. The **Hebrew Bible** was translated into Greek, and other people in the Roman Empire came to know and admire the moral code of the Torah.

Revolt

When Herod died in 4 BCE, the Romans appointed a series of governors to rule Judea. One governor was Herod's son, Herod Antipas, who is described in the Christian New Testament. Although many Jewish people got along with the Roman leaders, there were others, called the Zealots, who resisted Roman rule. Finally in 66 CE, the Romans' religious impositions in the Temple and oppressive taxes led the Jewish people to revolt. The Jewish people were defeated. In 70 CE, the Romans captured Jerusalem and destroyed most of the city, along with the Second Temple.

As the fighting between the zealots and the Romans became more heated around 70 CE, a Jewish scholar named Yohanan ben Zakkia fled from Jerusalem. According to legend, he faked his own death to avoid suspicion from the Zealots and arranged a meeting with Vespian, who led the Roman armies. Vespian gave Yohanan permission to establish an academy of Jewish learning and a council of Jewish scholars outside of Jerusalem. This allowed the study of the Torah and the continuation of Jewish practices after the destruction of the Temple.

In 132 CE, a second Jewish revolt broke out. After four years, it was crushed by the Romans. This time the Romans changed the name of Jerusalem and barred Jewish people from living there. The Jewish people lived all over the Roman Empire and no longer had a place where they were the primary political or religious power. That was the end of Judea, but it was not the end of the Jewish people.

Answer the following questions using the article.

What does the term, "portable religion" mean?

Describe the impact the Greeks had on the Israelites. Mention any important names and events.

Describe the impact the Romans had on the Israelites. Mention any important names and events.

Watch the last two videos under the Fall of Israel

Take notes over the following events. Then provide hashtags for the impact each event had on the nation of Israel.

Greeks	Romans
Hashtag	Hashtag

Activity One

Create two comics, one for David and one for Solomon that conveys the roles they played in Israel's history.

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Activity Two

Create a visual timeline that correctly arranges the following events in the order that they occurred: The breakup of the kingdom of Israel, Assyria destroying the Northern Kingdom, Babylonian captivity, Return to the Homeland under Persian Rule, Jewish revolt against the Greeks for religious freedom, the fall of Israel by the Romans.
