











# Mesopotamia

## Brief #2 (cont.)

### Fast Fact

From the Hammurabi  
Code:

*If a son strike his  
father, his hands shall  
be hewn off.*



### Babylon

**In about 1894 B.C., the city-state of Babylon began to emerge as a major force in the Fertile Crescent.** It encompassed many city-states and spread over the whole of Mesopotamia. One of Babylon's most powerful kings was Hammurabi. **Hammurabi is famous for developing the Hammurabi Code, which consists of 282 laws.**

The Babylonians made many contributions to mathematics and astronomy. The Babylonian Empire lasted until 539 B.C.



### Assyria

**In around 1900 B.C. the Assyrian Empire, which was located in the northern part of Mesopotamia, gained power and influence.** Even though Assyria and Babylon were separate civilizations, they influenced each others culture and progress.

Each civilization that emerges makes contributions that advance human knowledge. Even in the ancient world, people traveled, talked, and traded. As they did, different ideas, inventions, and religions were spread from person to person and eventually from culture to culture.

In the 19th century, archeologists found what has come to be called the Library of Ashurbanipal. This was the library of an Assyrian king of the same name. The library comprises thousands of clay tables that contain the writings of many civilizations that existed in Mesopotamia. **One of the writings that was found was of a Babylonian poem called Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh is thought to have been an ancient Mesopotamian king.**

### Vocabulary (cont.)

9. Babylon
10. Hammurabi Code
11. Assyrian Empire
12. Gilgamesh
13. Mesopotamia



### Cradle of Civilization

**Mesopotamia is often called the cradle of civilization because it is the area in which the first civilizations were established.** The civilizations discussed here, along with many others, made important early contributions that helped to shape the development of all civilizations to follow.

# Hebrews and Judaism

## Brief #3

### Focus

The Hebrews were a group of people who founded the Kingdom of Israel.

**The Hebrews were a group of people who lived in an area called Canaan, which is the area of Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and northeastern Israel.**

At the time of the Canaanites, the Egyptian Empire was a powerful force and major civilization in the region. Scholars think that many Canaanites migrated to Egypt due to a famine. The Egyptians then forced the Hebrews to live as slaves for many hundreds of years.

Scholars don't know exactly when, but at some point the enslaved Hebrews were granted their freedom and allowed to leave Egypt. The story of the enslavement and emancipation of the Hebrews is told in the book of Exodus, which is in the *Torah*. **The Torah is the first five books of the Bible**, and also the most important book in the religion of Judaism.

**Judaism is the religion practiced by the Hebrews, who are the ancestors of Jewish people.** Judaism is one of the first monotheistic religions in the world. **Monotheism is the belief in one god.**

**In about 1000 B.C., the Kingdom of Israel was founded by King David.** The Hebrews were then known as the Israelites.

After King David's death, his son Solomon became the king of Israel. He is famous for building a temple in which to keep the Torah. There are many very strict laws regarding how the Torah is treated. For example, every copy of the Torah is handwritten by scribes. The Torah itself is kept between two scrolls, and a special pointer is used to read from the sacred books.

After the death of King Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel split into two parts: Israel was located in the north and Judah was located in the south. In 722 B.C., Israel was conquered by the Assyrian Empire. Over a hundred years later, the Babylonians conquered Judah.

Judaism is one of the most important world religions. Not only is it practiced by millions of people the world over, it is also considered the origin of two other widely practiced religions: Christianity and Islam.

### Vocabulary

1. Hebrews
2. Canaan
3. Torah
4. Judaism
5. monotheism
6. Kingdom of Israel