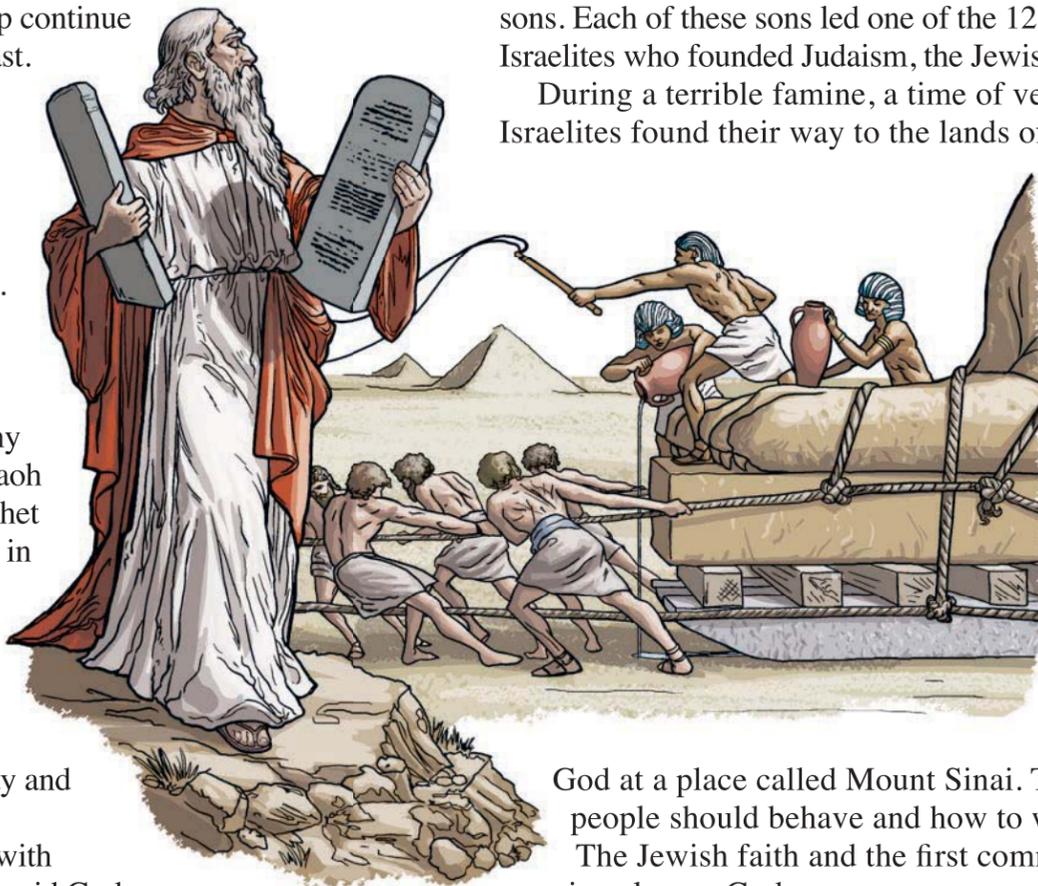


Hello and Peace!

Shalom! This is Hebrew for “hello” or “peace.” In this issue we will learn about the ancient Israelites’ history and culture. We will also learn about the geography of the region and how claims of land ownership continue to cause conflict in the Middle East.

Around 2000 B.C., a man named Abraham did something amazing that helped shape the religions of our world. He said there were not several gods and goddesses, but only one true God. The belief in only one God is called monotheism. Most people of the time were polytheistic, which meant they worshiped many gods. Other leaders, such as Pharaoh Akhenaton of Egypt and the prophet Zoroaster of Persia, also believed in one God. However, these men weren’t able to spread this idea as Abraham and his family did. The belief in one God became the foundation not only of the Jewish religion, but of Christianity and Islam too.

Abraham made an agreement with God, called a covenant. Abraham said God looked upon Abraham and his descendants as his chosen people. He also said God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and all his descendants. Abraham and his family were nomadic people. Nomads move from place to place and do not have a permanent home. Abraham took his family from Mesopotamia and



moved to Canaan. (People later called this land Palestine. You will see on a map that today this region includes the countries of Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.) Abraham’s grandson, Jacob, had 12 sons. Each of these sons led one of the 12 tribes of Israel. It was the Israelites who founded Judaism, the Jewish religion.

During a terrible famine, a time of very little food, the Israelites found their way to the lands of Egypt. There, the Egyptians made them slaves. Many years later, a man named Moses led the Israelites, out of Egypt and back toward the land of Canaan. This journey from Egypt, called the Exodus, occurred around 1290 B.C. It took the Israelites 40 years to get back to the land of Canaan. Along the way, Moses received the Ten Commandments from

God at a place called Mount Sinai. These rules stated how people should behave and how to worship and honor God.

The Jewish faith and the first commandment state that there is only one God.

After returning to Canaan, the Israelites saw that other people had come into their promised land. Conflicts and wars over this land continue in present times. Both the Jewish and Arab people claim ownership of this land. In this issue we will learn more about the early Israelites and the modern land of Israel.

Connections

A Look at the Israel Independence Day Festival

People in Los Angeles gather together every year to celebrate two different Independence Days. One of them, which you are probably familiar with, happens on the July 4. But a different Independence Day festival takes place every spring at a place called Woodley Park. It’s the annual Israel Independence Day Festival.

This festival features a wide variety of food and entertainment. Vendors in booths and tents provide traditional Israeli dishes like spicy chickpea falafel served in a soft pita, or schwarma, which is like a sandwich made with pita, cucumber, salad and many kinds of roasted spiced meats.

Three different stages in the park feature traditional music like klezmer music (a traditional Jewish music style, originally from

eastern Europe) as well as dancing. If they wish, visitors can participate in many of the dances.

Vendors of all kinds offer many varieties of Israeli goods, things like handmade jewelry, pottery, ceramics and crafts. There are sometimes even matchmaking booths where old-fashioned matchmakers attempt to make love-matches for any interested visitor.

But this isn’t the only festival celebrating Israel’s independence. There are hundreds of festivals that focus on the celebration of this historic day. Every year on the fifth day of the Jewish month of Iyar, people all over the world from Israel to Los Angeles gather together to celebrate the official creation of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948. In Hebrew, this special day is called Yom Ha’atzmaut.



Houses in Israel are decorated with Israeli flags and emblems for Yom Ha’atzmaut.



Ancient Israelites

About 3,000 years ago, one Israeli leader was a woman named Deborah. At that time, the Israelites didn't have one powerful leader, but several people called judges. Deborah sat in the shade of a palm tree and spread the word of God to people who came to listen to her. She also helped solve disagreements among her people. Deborah helped her people gain back control of much of the land of Canaan.

Eventually, Israel had one ruler at a time. Saul was the first king of Israel. David, who you will read about in a later story, became king of the Israelites around 1000 B.C. King David united the tribes of Israel, reclaimed the city of Jerusalem and made it Israel's capital. King David was a wise and brave leader. He also wrote most of the Book of Psalms, which is found in the bible.

David's son, Solomon, led the Israelites and spread the ideas of Israel to different lands in the area. King Solomon's subjects built a beautiful temple to honor God and to hold the Ark of the Covenant—a gold-covered, wooden box that held the Ten Commandments. When Solomon died, the 12 Israelite tribes fought and separated into the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah. During the fighting, the temple was destroyed. Eventually, around 722 B.C., Assyrian invaders destroyed the Kingdom of Israel. Later, in 597

B.C., the Babylonians of Mesopotamia conquered the Kingdom of Judah. The Israelites were scattered with no homeland, and eventually blended into the culture in which they lived. However, they continued to believe in their God and traditions.

Jewish Faith

The Old Testament of the Bible is the sacred writing for the Jewish religion. It is made up of 39 books. The first five books tell about the history of the ancient Israelites and of Moses. These books are called the Torah (meaning "instruction").

If you practice the Christian religion, your Bible will have the Old Testament and the New Testament. The New Testament tells of the time of Jesus.

The Jewish holy day, or Sabbath, is Saturday, and their place of worship is a

synagogue. Religious teachers are known as rabbis. One important Jewish holiday is Rosh Hashanah. This is the new year celebration that occurs in the fall. Following Rosh Hashanah is Yom Kippur. This is a time of prayer and fasting. Hanukkah, or the Festival of Lights,



Israel

Israel is about the size of New Jersey with a population of around 7.2 million people. Jerusalem is the capital and largest city in Israel. Jerusalem is a very old city. People have lived there for 3,000 years. Jerusalem is also a holy city to three world religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Syria all border Israel. Israel also touches the Mediterranean Sea, and is only 290 miles long. It takes only six minutes to fly from one end of the country to the other.

The Sea of Galilee is the largest freshwater lake in Israel. The sea supplies Israel with drinking water and water for crop irrigation. The highest point is Har Meron and the Dead Sea is the lowest point. Not only is the Dead Sea the lowest point in Israel, but it is also the lowest elevation on Earth.

For thousands of years, people have fought for ownership of the land long called Palestine. When the ancient Jews left the

area thousands of years earlier, Arabs (who now practice the Islamic religion) moved into the region. After World War II, most of the land became the country of Israel and a homeland for the Jews. The Arabs were angry and claimed Palestine was really theirs. A war erupted very quickly. The people of Israel won the conflict and took more of the land in the region. Since then, there have been several more conflicts. In the 1990s, a series of agreements gave Palestinians self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But some Arabs still call for the destruction of Israel, and there are conflicts in the region between Israel, terrorist groups and the Palestinian government.

Israeli people enjoy lots of sports—soccer and basketball are the most popular. Diamond cutting and polishing is an important industry in Israel, and the main exported crops are flowers, oranges and avocados.

World Regions



World Biography

King Solomon

King Solomon was the son of King David. His mother was named Bathsheba. He ruled Israel for 40 years. Solomon's kingdom stretched from Egypt to Syria and as far east as Mesopotamia.



When his dad died, young Solomon had a dream where God asked Solomon what he wanted most. Solomon said that he wanted to understand right from wrong. Solomon became known as the wisest man in the world.

King Solomon made many decisions during his rule. One decision involved two mothers. Each had a baby, but one woman's baby died. One night, the woman whose baby had died took the other woman's child and claimed the baby was hers. The woman whose child was taken asked Solomon to help her prove the baby was truly hers. Solomon ordered one of his soldiers to cut the baby in half so each mother could have part of the child. The baby's real mother, who had asked Solomon to help her, said not to do such a thing. She would stop claiming the baby was hers if her baby could live. The other woman, who had stolen the child, thanked Solomon for his wise decision. To whom do you think Solomon gave the baby?

King Solomon built the first Holy Temple in Jerusalem. The Ark of the Covenant was placed here. The Ark held the Ten Commandments Moses received at Mount Sinai.

Between 960 and 922 B.C. during King Solomon's rule, the Israelites had much peace and prosperity and trade with neighboring lands. It is said that Solomon had 12,000 horses with horsemen and 1,400 chariots. He built many buildings, including a palace that took 13 years to finish. He also had a huge wall constructed around the city. Some criticized Solomon for taxing such buildings and using slaves to work on many of the projects.

Some also say Solomon wrote most of the Book of Proverbs in the Bible. When Solomon died, the 12 Israelite tribes fought and divided into the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel.

honors the rededication of the holy temple in Jerusalem.

Passover is a time of remembering Jewish ancestors and their journey out of Egypt where they were slaves. Jewish people have a special dinner during Passover—the Seder. They eat specific foods to remember a period called the Exodus.

Seder Foods

Roasted egg: symbolizes the cycle of nature that has no beginning or end

Haroset: chopped apples, nuts, spice and wine; symbolizes the mortar used by enslaved Jews

Green vegetables: celery and parsley symbolize spring and rebirth; vegetables dipped in salt water symbolize the tears of enslaved Jews

Bitter herbs (horseradish): represent the bitterness of slavery

Bone of a lamb: represents lambs sacrificed by Jews as they prepared to leave Egypt

Matzo: cracker without yeast that was eaten during Exodus

Hebrew Writing

Hebrew is a very old writing system. There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, which is called the “Alef-Bet.” It is written and read from right to left. At first, Hebrew did not include vowels, and with only consonants it was difficult to pronounce the square Hebrew letters. (Example: town would be t-w-n.) Around the 4th century A.D., Hebrew began to disappear from use. It regained popularity in the early 20th century and became the official language of Israel. Dots and dashes, called nikuds, have been added to Hebrew. These give Hebrew vowel sounds. Nikuds are placed above and below certain consonants. Vowels are used in schoolbooks and prayer books but are not usually written in newspapers, magazines or on signs. Many words in English come from Hebrew. Some of these include amen, cherub, hallelujah, camel and cider.

Wailing Wall

Also called the Western Wall, the Wailing Wall is a very sacred place for Jews. It is a remaining part of the temple in Jerusalem that the Romans destroyed in about A.D. 70. Jewish people from all over the world come to pray at the Wailing Wall. If you go to the wall, you might see notes placed in cracks of the wall. These prayers, called tzeitels, are placed for those who cannot come in person to pray.

This Week's Question

Why was the Dead Sea given this name?

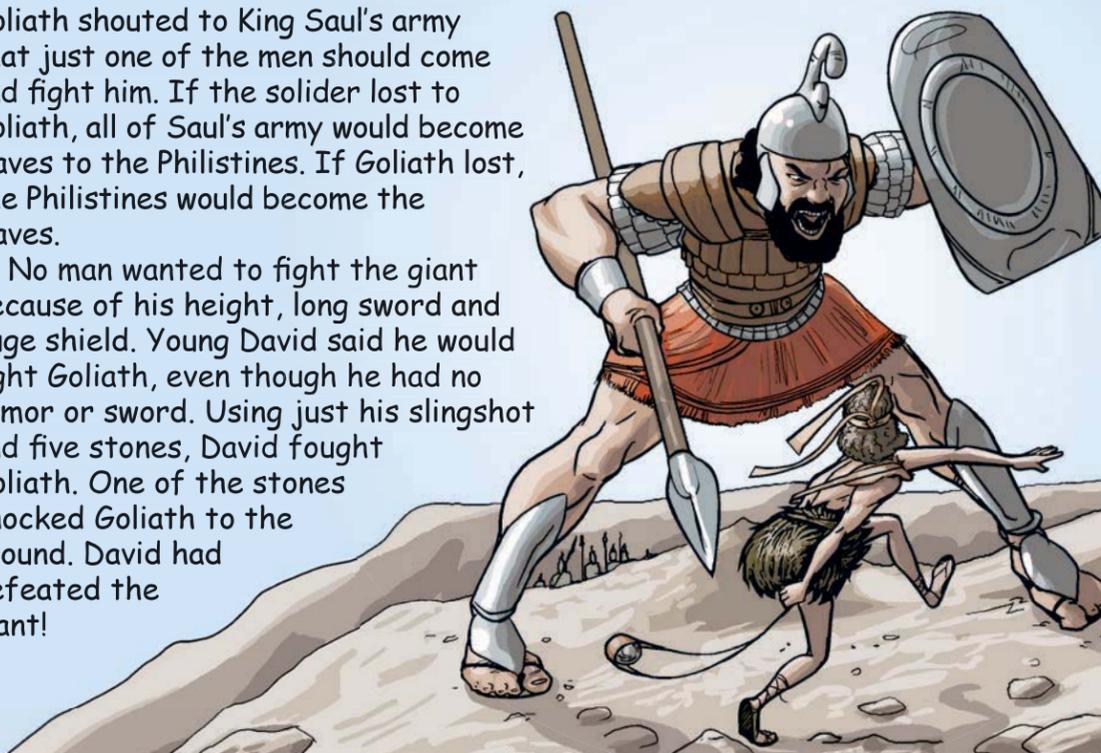
The Dead Sea has its name because other than some tiny green algae, nothing lives in it—no fish, seaweed or plants. Nothing can live in this body of water because it is too salty, more than six times saltier than ocean water. Located between the countries of Jordan and Israel, the Dead Sea is actually a lake and not a sea. This body of water is 48 miles long and about 3 to 11 miles wide. No rivers begin from the Dead Sea, so the only water that leaves the sea leaves by evaporation. That's what makes it so salty. And over time it gets saltier. Did you know that you wouldn't sink if you swam in the Dead Sea? The salt keeps you afloat. Can you think of a salty body of water in the United States?

David and Goliath *Citizenship*

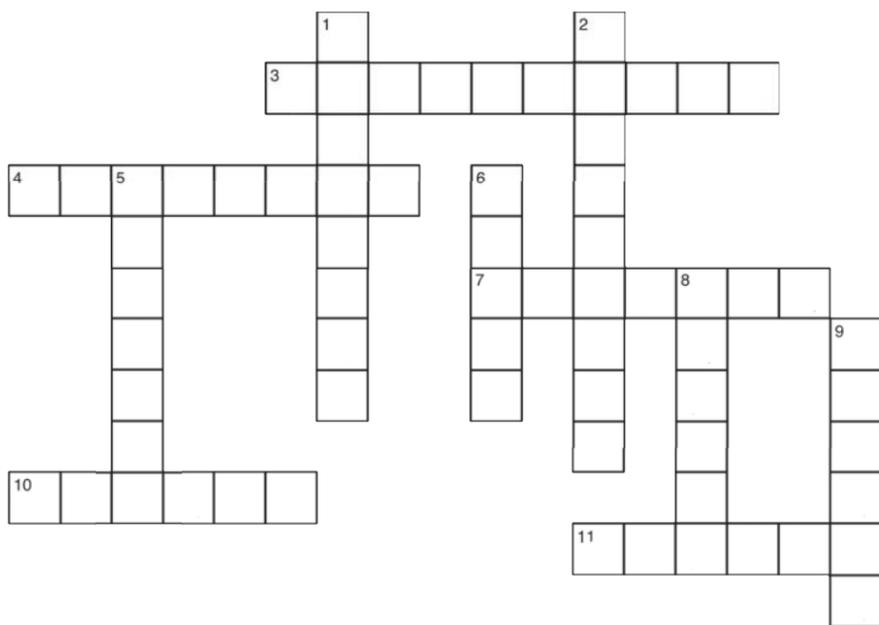
Have you ever stood up to someone much bigger than you? There is a story about a battle that took place between David (who would go on to become King David) and a giant named Goliath. Goliath stood 9 feet tall and was a strong warrior. David was a shepherd boy. His father sent David to check on his brothers who were fighting the Philistine soldiers. Goliath was one of the Philistine soldiers.

Goliath shouted to King Saul's army that just one of the men should come and fight him. If the soldier lost to Goliath, all of Saul's army would become slaves to the Philistines. If Goliath lost, the Philistines would become the slaves.

No man wanted to fight the giant because of his height, long sword and huge shield. Young David said he would fight Goliath, even though he had no armor or sword. Using just his slingshot and five stones, David fought Goliath. One of the stones knocked Goliath to the ground. David had defeated the giant!



Name _____



ACROSS

- 3. belief in one God
- 4. Jewish holiday that marks ancestors' journey out of Egypt
- 7. salty body of water that borders Israel and Jordan
- 10. ancient name for Palestine
- 11. time of very little food

DOWN

- 1. agreement with God
- 2. city that is holy to the Jews, Christians and Muslims
- 5. wise king of the ancient Israelites
- 6. name for the Passover meal
- 8. word meaning peace or hello
- 9. official language of Israel



As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.



Clarity of Expression:

Thomas Paine and 'Common Sense'

Thomas Paine was a failure as a student, sailor, businessman and soldier, but wow, could he write! He published pamphlets in Colonial America that stirred the hearts of people in a way that no one else had ever done.

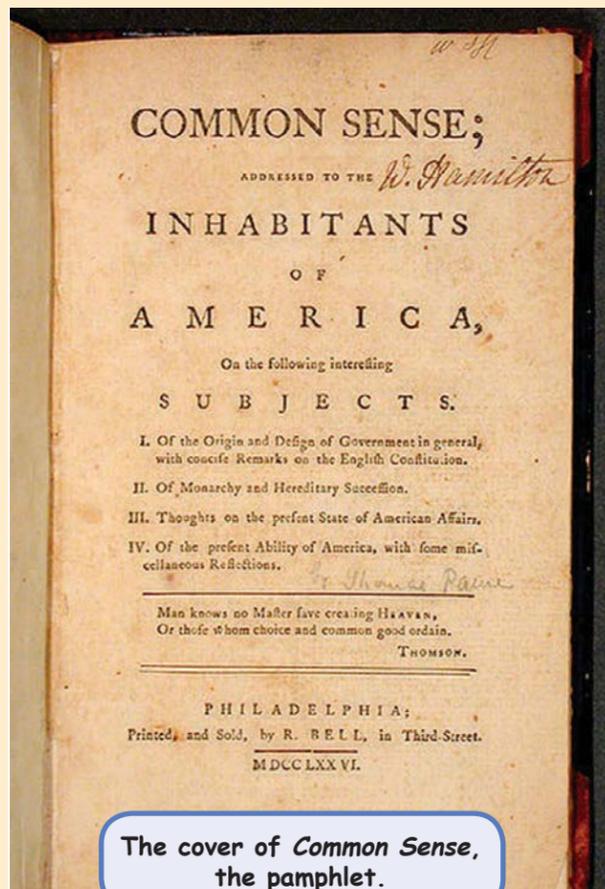
Born in England in 1737, Paine dropped out of school at a young age. He bounced around in various jobs without success. He worked for his father, then as a sailor, then as a tax collector. But his life changed when he met Benjamin Franklin, who convinced him to come to America in 1774.

Paine was caught up in the fever for independence that was sweeping the Colonies. He wrote a pamphlet (a small newspaper or magazine, much like an issue of Studies Weekly) titled "Common Sense." It made a passionate argument that the only choice for the colonists was to fight for their independence from Britain. His clear

and logical writing spoke to the people. "Common Sense" sold thousands of copies, and Paine became famous. He wrote, "The birthday of a new world is at hand..." history has proven how true his words were.

Paine joined the Continental Army and discovered he wasn't cut out to be a soldier, either. Writing was his special skill. His next pamphlet, "The Crisis," contains his most famous line: "These are the times that try men's souls." General Washington had Paine's pamphlets read aloud to encourage the American troops during the Revolution.

Paine's facts and ideas were clear and persuasive. Many of these ideas were written into the Constitution, the core of our government. When have you been successful in using your words to change someone's mind? Can you think of other times when clarity of expression helped change the course of history?



The cover of *Common Sense*, the pamphlet.

Let's Write

In 1947, shepherds found some old scrolls in a cave near the Dead Sea. These writings, about 800 documents written on papyrus and 2,000 years old, were inside jars. Remember, papyrus was the paper the ancient Egyptians used. Historians put 15,000 fragments of paper back together like a huge jigsaw puzzle. The documents contain information on Jewish beliefs and the beginning of Jesus' time. Pretend you are a shepherd who accidentally found the jars or a researcher working on putting the fragments together. Write a diary entry about your day. Remember to check for proper punctuation, spelling and grammar.



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