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Ancient Canaan, The Exodus And Babylon: A Lesson Plan



Article by [Noreen](#) (1,732 pts)
 Published on Feb 9, 2009



This article provides a social studies lesson plan on the geography of Ancient Palestine and modern day Israel. The lesson provides students with background on Abraham, the Exodus from Egypt, the divided Kingdoms and the eventual Jewish Diaspora following the captivity in Babylon. (Map Project)

The history of Ancient Palestine, and most of the Middle East, is dominated by religious events and figures. Archaeological digs and ancient architecture dot the region where documented fact and religious tradition have commingled to form a fascinating tangle of myth and history. With this in mind, the lesson plan given here is meant to introduce students to the land of Canaan where modern day Israel, Jordan and Lebanon now sit. It deals with Abraham, the Exodus, and the exile in Babylon. While it is true that the Exodus was never empirically proven and there is only [one](#) artifact that points to the Jewish people being in Egypt at all, it's a great story that includes the ancient cultures and geography of the area.

Lesson focus: To introduce students to the history of the area in the Middle East that holds modern day Israel, Jordan, Lebanon. It is intended to familiarize students with the area's past so as to help them understand the ongoing [Israeli-Palestinian conflict](#).

Educational Standards Met:

[NCSS \(National Council for the Social Studies\) Thematic Standard: III People, Places, and Environment.](#)

NCSS (National Council for the Social Studies) Thematic Standard: IV Individual Development and Identity.

[NSS \(National Social Sciences\) -WH.5-12.1 ERA 2: Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples, 400-100 BCE.](#)

Lesson Outline:

- 1) In ancient times the nations of Israel, Lebanon, and Jordan did not exist. The area where these countries now are was known as Canaan.
 - a) According to the Bible, the Israelites were led into Canaan by Abraham. Abraham was believed to have come from Ur, a city in Mesopotamia.
 - b) Canaan was already occupied by Phoenicians, Canaanites, and Philistines.
- 2) Israelites were the only monotheists.
- 3) Abraham's Grandson Jacob had twelve sons.
 - a) Each became the head of one of The Twelve Tribes of Israel.
 - b) Famine drove the tribes into Egypt
 - c) Around 1200 BC the Exodus from Egypt is believed to have occurred. It is the tale of the Jewish people fleeing Egypt and slavery. It is celebrated by Jews each year at Passover.



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- d) Moses was the Prophet who led them out of Egypt.
- e) Moses did not live to reach Canaan. His successor Joshua led the people across the Jordan River and finishes the journey.
- 4) For about 200 years the Jews clash with the Philistines and Canaanites.
- 5) Era of Judges.
- a) The effort to rule Canaan was hindered by disagreement among the tribes.
- b) Each tribe was governed by leaders known as judges. The judges held both military and judicial authority.
- 6) Warfare caused most of the tribes to unite under King Saul. (~1020 BC)
- a) David killed the Philistine Goliath for Saul. Dissatisfaction with Saul led to David's ascension to the throne in 1012 BC.
- b) David's son Solomon came to power in 961 BC. He built a magnificent temple and new cities .. He died in 922 BC and resentment over taxes and mandatory labor during his reign caused the tribes to split.
- 7) Two Kingdoms: The 10 northern tribes called their kingdom Israel. The 2 southern tribes called their kingdom Judah and retained Jerusalem as their capital.
- 8) Invasions:
- a) Conquered by Assyrians in 722 BC. This scattered the 10 northern tribes throughout Assyrian Empire.
- b) In 586 BC the Chaldeans took over Judah, destroyed the temples and enslaved some citizens. The slaves were taken to Babylon. Known as the Exile in Babylon, this was a time when small groups began to meet on the Sabbath. This practice was the beginning of synagogues.
- 9) The Chaldeans were conquered by the Persians in 539 BC. The Persian King Cyrus II freed the Jews and allowed them to return to Jerusalem. Some remained and since that time communities of Jews have lived outside of Palestine or Israel. Referred to as the [Diaspora](#).
- 10) Map Assignment
- a) Fill in a [blank map](#) of the area with these modern day nations.
- i) Jordan,
- ii) Israel (West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights)
- iii) Lebanon
- b) Fill in blank map with the [ancient territories](#) following Solomon's death..
- i) Phoenicia
- ii) Israel
- iii) Judah

Vocabulary:

Canaan - land between Egypt and Syria. (Modern day Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel.) Canaan means land of purple due to the purple dye extracted from murex shellfish found off the coast of Palestine.

Canaanites – an agricultural people who settled in Canaan hundreds of years before the Israelites.

Phoenicians – one of the Semitic groups from the Arabian Peninsula that settled in northern Canaan.

Philistines - neighbors to the south of the Phoenicians were from the eastern Mediterranean. Eventually, Romans would call southern Canaan Palestine or land of the Philistines.

Moses –the son of a Jewish slave. His mother was said to have place him in a basket of reeds which she set afloat on the Nile to save him being slaughtered. It was the Pharaoh's orders to drown male Hebrews at birth. He was found by the Pharaoh's daughter and raised as her own.

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