

CHAPTER TEN

Judaism

History

Judaism is the religion and way of life of the Jewish people – a nation originating from the holy land of ancient Palestine – historically known as Canaan. Although Jews trace their roots to Canaan, they have lived, in the entirety of their history, not only in the land of ancient Palestine but also in the surrounding regions of Egypt, Arabia, Babylon, Persia, Europe, and their peripheries. In the present times, Jews are estimated to be about 14 million in the world – 0.2% of the world’s population – with primary concentrations in Israel, North America, and Europe. Even though the global number of its followers is relatively small, the religion of Judaism has a significant historical and theological influence on the world through its impact on the two largest world religions – Christianity and Islam. In essence, the religion of Judaism and its beliefs are based on the divine scriptures given to Moses. However, Jews trace their history much earlier back to Abraham.