

## Hebrew and Phoenician Contributions to Civilization

### I. Hebrew Contributions to Civilization

#### 1. Monotheism

The Hebrews were the first people to accept the belief in a single God as the creator and Supreme Ruler of the universe. The Hebrews called this God, “Yahweh”.

#### 2. Old Testament

The Hebrews recorded their history, moral principles, and religious beliefs in the “Old Testament”, which is the Hebrew Bible. The first five books of the Old Testament are called the “Torah”.

#### 3. Mosaic Law

Mosaic Law is found in the Torah and sets moral standards for relationships among people. The Mosaic Law teaches “Love thy neighbor as thyself”. It includes the “Ten Commandments”. Some of the commandments are:

1. “Thou shall not kill”;
2. “Thou shall not steal”;
3. “Thou shall not bear false witness”;
4. “Thou shall not commit adultery”;
5. “Honor thy father and thy mother”.

The commandments exemplified God’s ideals of behavior and moral conduct.

#### 4. Hebrew Prophets

The Hebrews believed that certain religious teachers, called “prophets”, were sent by God to serve as his voice to the people. The prophets cried out for social righteousness and a better world. They denounced evil and oppression, and demanded justice for the poor and weak.

#### 5. Judeo-Christian Ethic

Judaism set the standard for high moral and ethical principles, which are still followed today. Examples include hard work, loyalty, honesty, etc.

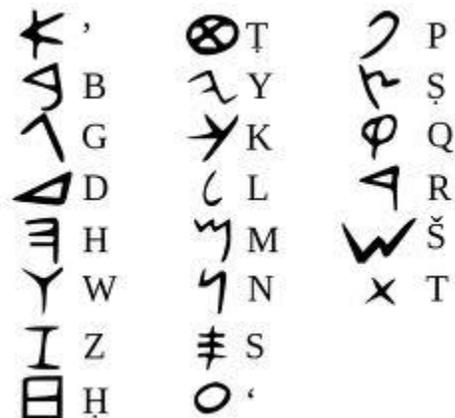
### II. Phoenician Contributions to Civilization

#### 1. Trading and Sailing

The Phoenicians served as “missionaries of civilization” bringing eastern Mediterranean products and culture to less advanced people.

#### 2. The Alphabet

The Phoenicians invented a new way of writing that used only 22 symbols. This was much simpler than “cuneiform”, which had 600 symbols. Soon, Phoenician writing was being used throughout the Mediterranean world. Four more symbols were added later, resulting in the alphabet used today in most of the Western world. In fact, the word “alphabet” comes from the first two letters of the Phoenician alphabet – “aleph” and “beth”.



### Questions to Answer

1. Why was ‘monotheism’ an important contribution?
2. Why was “Mosaic Law” an important contribution?
3. How does the “Judeo-Christian ethic” influence today’s society?
4. What contributions did the Phoenicians make to civilization?