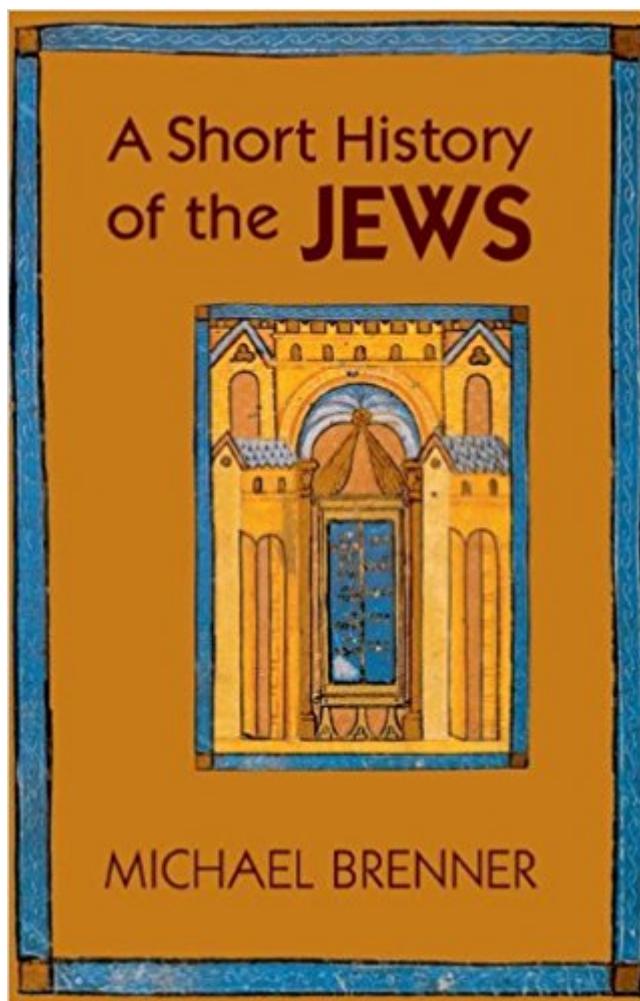


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# A Short History Of The Jews



## Synopsis

This is a sweeping and powerful narrative history of the Jewish people from biblical times to today. Based on the latest scholarship and richly illustrated, it is the most authoritative and accessible chronicle of the Jewish experience available. Michael Brenner tells a dramatic story of change and migration deeply rooted in tradition, taking readers from the mythic wanderings of Moses to the unspeakable atrocities of the Holocaust; from the Babylonian exile to the founding of the modern state of Israel; and from the Sephardic communities under medieval Islam to the shtetls of eastern Europe and the Hasidic enclaves of modern-day Brooklyn. The book is full of fascinating personal stories of exodus and return, from that told about Abraham, who brought his newfound faith into Canaan, to that of Holocaust survivor Esther Barkai, who lived on a kibbutz established on a German estate seized from the Nazi Julius Streicher as she awaited resettlement in Israel. Describing the events and people that have shaped Jewish history, and highlighting the important contributions Jews have made to the arts, politics, religion, and science, *A Short History of the Jews* is a compelling blend of storytelling and scholarship that brings the Jewish past marvelously to life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this concise but all-encompassing account of the Jews, Brenner (*After the Holocaust*) does a remarkable job of escorting readers from the biblical narrative of Abraham's journey from Ur and idolatry through the treacherous, monotheistic course of Jewish history, concluding with modern-day Israeli society. A professor of Jewish history at the University of Munich, Brenner treats much of the biblical narrative as lore, accepting as fact only those stories and time lines corroborated by

extra-biblical evidence. Wandering, tradition, and tragedy emerge as themes as the Jews, once exiled from their biblical homeland of Israel, spend much of history defending their religion, being coerced to forsake it, and yearning for the re-establishment of the Temple. Tragedies have followed the Jews: Crusades, expulsions, book burnings, the Holocaust; yet there have also been periods of efflorescence and development during which the Jews have thrived and produced works of great scholarship and innovation. Brenner's work successfully conveys, in a comprehensive and comprehensible fashion, the enduring history of the Jewish people. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As the title indicates, this is a compact survey of Jewish history, an introduction for general readers. Still, Professor Brenner manages to cover a great deal of ground while effectively explaining many of the key elements of the Jewish experience. From biblical times to the present, Brenner asserts, a recurring theme of Jewish history is migration, yet it is migration that constantly kept the land of Israel as the focus of Jewish emotions and aspirations. In the opening chapter, Brenner utilizes recent scholarly revelations to effectively glean fact from mythology regarding early wanderings of the Israelites and the supposed exodus from Egypt and conquest of Canaan, but these enduring myths continue to exercise profound influence on Jews. Subsequent chapters also emphasize Jewish movements, from the expulsion from Judea under the Romans to the Holocaust. Critics may object to the Eurocentric concentration of later chapters, which ignore the vibrant Jewish communities in North Africa and western Asia. But on the whole, this work serves as an excellent introduction. --Jay Freeman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I read the first chapter and learned something new that I had never heard before. I love reading books that are entertaining and educational.I can hardly wait to finish the rest of the book.

Exactly as described

good book

This book is very hard to follow, and while it is packed with information, and the author is clearly a scholar beyond reproach on the topic, the writing style is so dense and overlapping fact packed as to render any linear narrative thread almost impossible to follow.I have a serious interest in Jewish

culture and history, and was disappointed in how hard it was to follow this book. For comparison Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein take a very detailed and even quantitative look at how education shaped Jewish history in their book, "The Chosen Few: . . ." but do so in a way as to make the narrative both entertaining and easy to follow, despite being academic. I read a lot of books and try hard to push through them, but I put this book down without finishing it.

Brenner's book is accessible, knowledgeable and concise. It is an excellent starting point for those wanting to learn more about the history of the Jewish people. The book also contains interesting images from various versions of the Haggadah through the centuries from different countries. This underlines the deep respect one gets upon completion of the book for a people who have maintained their culture through centuries of diaspora. Recommended for students of religion and history.

I agree with the comment of twp77. This book is concise and a very good introduction to Jewish history. I recommend it to anyone who is interested in history, as the language of the book is very accessible to anyone. The author has some other books on the same subject so I will have a look at those books, too.

I am posting this review to counteract the one above, who does not seem to have read the book, and seems to have given it one star because he ordered the wrong title. The book is not overly long, given the 5,000 year history of the Jews.

I mistakenly purchased this book, thinking that it was "A Short History of the Jewish People," by Raymond Scheindlin, which was recommended to me & often used as a textbook. I should have been more careful to read the author's name! This Brenner book is misnamed: it's nearly twice as long as Scheindlin's superb "Short History of the Jewish People" (which I ended up buying and reading; it is published by Oxford University Press), and not nearly as good a read as Scheindlin's. *A Short History of the Jewish People: From Legendary Times to Modern Statehood*

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