When did Judaism begin: death of King Solomon

1. A central theme in Deuteronomy, which is a pillar of the Judaism religion, is that God favors those who abide by his covenant. For example, the Israelites will be protected and get their promised lands from the Canaanites. On the other hand, those who don’t follow God’s laws will *~wink wink King Solomon~* get torn apart.
2. A recurring scene in Israelite history is being in war. Judaic ideology formed part by part, but they were all accompanied and sometimes sparked by toil of war and reunion after invasions, such as reunion with fellow Israelites after the Babylonian exile and Roman conquer of Syria Palestina (and even in the more modern parts of Jewish history, such as the crusades between 11th and 15th centuries). I am finding it quite appealing to say that constantly being in war (i.e. being invaded) is part of the Jewish identity and shaped the Jewish culture greatly, and the death of Solomon followed by the division of Israel territory is the beginning to all of this.
3. Potential critique to this argument: King Solomon himself didn’t introduce any ideology that is very “Jewish” to Judaism. Counter critique: Indeed King Solomon himself did not invent Judaism. He was what led to the development of Judaism. Judaism is a collective belief, not something that was thought up by a single person, therefore it is always changing according to its environment. King Solomon was someone who marked the start of something that remained a constant theme across this

Timeline:

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| 1000 B.C.E. | 950 B.C.E. | Construction of the first Temple by Solomon begins |

the northern tribes refused to accept Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, as their king

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| 931 B.C.E | 931 B.C.E | Death of King Solomon. Division of the territory into the Kingdom of Israel and Kingdom of Judah |
| 721 B.C.E. | 721 B.C.E. | Sargon the Assyrian conquered Samaria, removing Jewish population to northern Mesopotamia |
| 701 B.C.E. | 701 B.C.E. | Assyrian king Sennacherib came down the Mediterranean coast and conquered many Judean cities. Attacked but did not conquer Jerusalem. |

* King Solomon, although with a great looking empire, broke his covenant with God by intermarriage with people of other beliefs and led to the split of his Kingdom and weakening of its military power.

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| 587 B.C.E. | 586 B.C.E. | Nebuchadnezzar destroys Jerusalem and the Temple, and exiles most elite residents |
| 539 B.C.E. | 530 B.C.E. | Cyrus the Great defeats the Babylonian Empire and establishes the Persian Empire; invites the Judeans back to rebuild their temple |

* Exile and reunion

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| 495 B.C.E. | 495 B.C.E. | Oldest document mentioning the Jewish military colony in Syene |
| 458 B.C.E. | 458 B.C.E. | Group led by Ezra reestablished the Torah, law of Moses |

* Formation of culture after the exile

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| 70 C.E. | 70 C.E. | siege of Jerusalem, and destruction of Second Temple |
| 66 C.E. | 70 C.E. | "outbreak of Jewish rebelliousness in Alexandria that was put down heavy-handedly by Tiberius Julius Alexander" |

* Another one of the conquests. Perhaps I can find more information on this being a “spiritual awakening” like the previous painful experiences.

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| 323 B.C.E. | 323 B.C.E. | death of Alexander the Great |

Death of King Solomon is when Judaism began. I have two reasons for this argument.

First, the death of king Solomon is one of the key events in Deuteronomistic history. In the beginning of 1 Kings, King Solomon “loved the lord”, and he “sacrificed and offered incense at the high places.” The Lord was very pleased, and gave him a wise and discerning mind, and riches and honors all his life, but under a condition. The condition is “If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked.” However, in 1 Kings 11, King Solomon intermarried with so many women, which the Deuteronomistic book even gave a number of one thousand of them. The Lord, seeing this, was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice…Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, that he will surely tear the kingdom from you and give it to your servant. The Lord also prophesized that the kingdom will be split after the death of King Solomon, and the prophecy did fulfill, as the Solomon’s land split into the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel. This is one of the most significant examples of the repercussions of not abiding by the covenant of God. The Covenant is perhaps one of the most important ideas in Deuteronomy, and one of the most important characteristics of Judaism. Jewish people abide by certain principles and laws in exchange for God’s protection. Although we couldn’t corroborate the existence of King Solomon with archaeological evidence, the story of King Solomon is erected if not made up by the Deuteronomistic historians as an example of a person who violated God’s Covenant because of his lack of self-discipline, despite how much he loved God and sacrificed for Him, received the division of his empire as a punishment. The purpose of this story for it to be included in the Deuteronomistic history is a fair warning to what happens when one breaks the conditions of the Covenant, no matter how powerful he or she is.

Secondly, it was starting with the death of King Solomon that Israelites started a long journey of interaction with other empires, viz. the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians and the Romans. The clash of Judaism with other cultures and beliefs brought the emergence new ideas and practices, some of which probably so engrained as part of Judaism that it is hard think they were incorporated from interaction with another ideology. For example, in chapter 6 of *Origin of Jews*, Weitzman mentioned that “Judeanness shifted from an ethnicity to an ethno-religion over the second century BCE in tandem with Hellenization. Archaeological finds from Judea and elsewhere in Palestine from the late Hasmonean period reveal a shift in religious practice, the emergence of new forms of piety that involve ritualized self- monitoring, mental preparation, or self- discipline.” Another example is the Babylonian exile of Jewish people in Jerusalem, which is commonly recognized as a watershed moment in Jewish history.

One counterpoint to the argument that the death of Solomon was the starting point of Judaism is that King Solomon himself didn’t introduce any important ideology to Judaism. However, I say that Indeed King Solomon himself did not invent Judaism. He was what led to the development of Judaism. Judaism is a collective belief, not something that was thought up by a single person, therefore it is always changing according to its environment. King Solomon was someone who marked the start of something that remained a constant theme across this