

Activity 5: Writing Prompt

Diaspora after the Destruction of the 2nd Temple

Background: After the Romans destroyed the Jewish temple in AD 70, many Jews fled Jerusalem. This diaspora led to the Jews spreading throughout the Roman Empire.

Writing Question: How did Judaism survive the diaspora following Roman rule and the destruction of the 2nd Temple?

Writing Expectations:

Write a well-developed paragraph that fully answers the focus question. The paragraph must include the following:

- € A clearly stated thesis
- € Three pieces of evidence to support your thesis- need to be historically accurate
- € Analysis that connects and explains how the evidence proves the thesis
- € Accurate and relevant vocabulary
- € Complete sentences
- € Correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar



Map of the Roman empire at the death of Augustus in AD 14. The shaded areas represent the main areas of Jewish settlement at the time. (From Antony Kamm, *The Israelites: an Introduction*, Routledge 1999).

<http://www.the-romans.co.uk/cults.htm>

Activity 3: Cause and Effect Reading Strategy The Hebrews and Judaism- Results of the Revolt

Read the following passage. In the boxed section, underline the different effects, short and long term, that the destruction of the 2nd temple had on the Hebrew culture and/or religion. Ex: thousands of Jews left Jerusalem.

With the capture of Masada [the Jewish mountain fortress] in AD 73, the Jewish revolt was over. As punishment for the Jews' rebellion, the Romans killed much of Jerusalem's population. They took many of the surviving Jews to Rome as slaves. The Romans dissolved the Jewish power structure and took over the city.

Many were taken as slaves, and thousands of Jews left Jerusalem after the destruction of the Second Temple. With the Temple destroyed, they didn't want to live in Jerusalem anymore. Many moved to Jewish communities in other parts of the Roman Empire. One common destination was Alexandria in Egypt, which had a large Jewish community. The population of these Jewish communities grew after the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.

Second Revolt

Some Jews, however, chose not to leave Jerusalem when the Romans conquered it. Some 60 years after the capture of Masada, these Jews, unhappy with Roman rule began another revolt. Once again, however, the Roman army defeated the Jews. After this rebellion in the 130s the Romans banned all Jews from the city of Jerusalem. Roman officials declared that any Jew caught in or near the city would be killed. As a result, Jewish migration throughout the Mediterranean region increased.

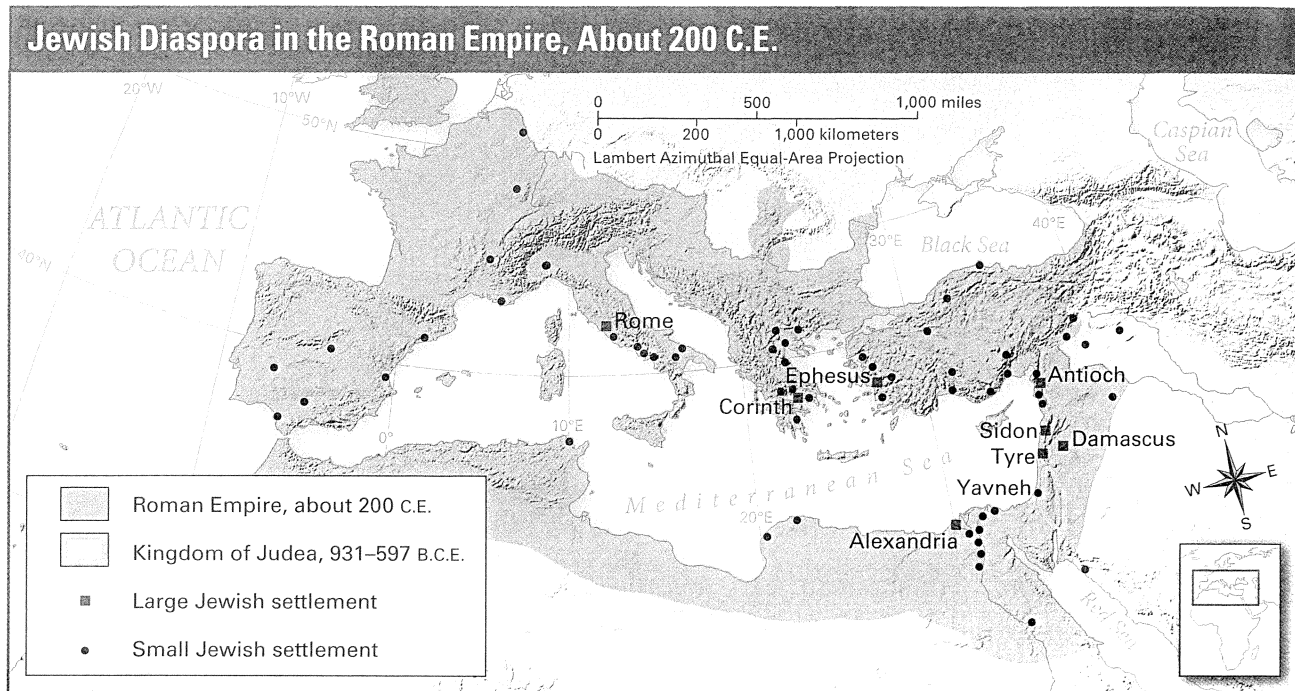
Migration and Discrimination

For those Jews not living in Jerusalem, the nature of Judaism changed. It was because the Jews no longer had a single temple at which to worship, local synagogues became more important. At the same time, leaders called rabbis or religious teachers took on a greater role in guiding Jews in their religious lives. Rabbis were responsible for interpreting the Torah and teaching.

This change was largely due to the actions of Yohanan ben Zaccai, a rabbi who founded a school at Yavneh, near Jerusalem. In this school, he taught people about Judaism and trained them to be rabbis. These schools became an important part of every community and preserved the Jewish culture and religion. Influenced by Yohanan, rabbis' ideas shaped how Judaism was practiced for the next several centuries. Many rabbis also served as leaders of Jewish communities.

Over many centuries, Jews moved out of the Mediterranean region to other parts of the world. In many cases this movement was not voluntary. The Jews were forced to move by other religious groups who discriminated against them. This discrimination forced many Jews to leave their cities and find new places to live. As a result, some Jews settled in Asia, Russia and much later, the United States.

World History: Ancient Civilizations, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 2006: page 242



After the Romans put down the Jewish revolts, they forced most Jews into exile in many parts of the Roman Empire.

12.4 Preserving the Teachings of Judaism

After losing control of their homeland, their holy city, and the great Temple that was the heart of their faith, the Jews faced a great struggle to preserve their religion. They were exiled throughout many gentile, or non-Jewish, lands. With creativity and dedication, they found ways to keep Judaism alive.

Rabbi Yohanan ben Zaccai One rabbi who helped preserve Judaism was Yohanan ben Zaccai. When the revolt against Rome began in 66 C.E., ben Zaccai feared for the future of Judaism. He worried that if the rabbis died in the fighting and the Temple was destroyed, Judaism might not survive.

Ben Zaccai begged the Jews to surrender to save Judaism. When they refused, he decided to approach the Romans for help.

Ben Zaccai had himself smuggled out of Jerusalem in a coffin. He met with a Roman general named Vespasian (vuh-SPAY-zhee-ehn), and gained permission to open a Jewish school, with the help of other rabbis, in the town of **Yavneh** (YAHV-neh).

When Jerusalem fell, Yavneh became the center of Jewish learning. At their school, Ben Zaccai and the other rabbis taught new rabbis. Teachers came from many places to study at Yavneh. Then they returned to their communities to share what they had learned. In this way, the rabbis at Yavneh made sure that Jews still had leaders to guide them.

Yavneh an ancient city in Israel that became a center for Jewish learning

New Teachers and Practices In addition to training other rabbis, the rabbis at Yavneh introduced new practices. These new ways ensured that the teachings of Judaism would be passed on.

The rabbis made the synagogue important. A synagogue is a house of worship. It is also a place to study, to meet, and to gather socially. Synagogues made Jewish communities stronger.

The rabbis also created a religious service for synagogues. Prayer and study of sacred texts became a new way to worship God without the Temple rituals. Today, Jews, Christians, and Muslims follow this model for services. In these ways, Yohanan ben Zaccai and other rabbis helped Judaism to adapt and flourish even after the destruction of its central holy site in Jerusalem.

These new practices helped Jews preserve their religion in communities around the world. Over the centuries, rabbis studied and commented on Judaism's sacred texts, and developed other new practices. Jews have faced prejudice and persecution, but they have kept their faith.

In 1948, a new Jewish state, Israel, was created in part of the lands once ruled by David and Solomon. Jews from many places settled in their ancient homeland. For other Jews around the world, Jewish traditions have enabled their religion to thrive.



In the tradition of Rabbi ben Zaccai's first school, scholars today continue to learn and to share their understanding in Torah study groups like this one.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, you learned about how Judaism was preserved in the Diaspora.

The Central Teachings of Judaism Earlier religions believed in polytheism. Judaism is the oldest monotheistic religion. The Hebrew Bible and the Talmud present a code of ethics with teachings that focus on social justice. Jews pass on learning to others.

Foreign Rule and the Jewish Diaspora After Babylon destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E., most Jews were exiled to Babylon. When the Persians defeated Babylon in 539 B.C.E., many Jews returned to Judah under Persia's rule. Later, the Greeks and then the Romans ruled Judah, now Judea. The Jews fought the Romans in 66 C.E. and in 135 C.E. The Romans put down these revolts and exiled most of the Jews.

Preserving the Teachings of Judaism During the Jewish Diaspora, Jews wanted to preserve their religion. Rabbi Yohanan ben Zaccai set up a center of Jewish learning in Yavneh. His rabbis taught other rabbis, who shared their knowledge at home. Ben Zaccai made synagogues a center of Jewish life and created a new religious service. These new practices preserved Judaism. In 1948, the Jewish state of Israel was created in lands once ruled by David and Solomon.