

Introduction to Judaism

Lesson 1

Jewish History from Creation to the Roman Empire

- 1) Creation 3800 BC. What is the purpose of creation? The Jewish view.
 - A. To do good to mankind.
 - B. True good is only in the next (spiritual) world.
 - C. We must earn our reward for it to be truly and fully enjoyed.
 - D. This purpose was for all mankind.
 - E. Man failed to fulfill his purpose so God realized that he needed a representative to guide man towards fulfilling their purpose.
 - F. Abraham 1815 BC. 1948 from creation of the world. See chart 1.
 - G. Abraham realized that there was a God on his own See charts 2 and 3.
 - H. God chose him to be his representative on earth and to be the father of his nation.
- 2) Impurities still had to be purged.
 - A. Ishmael
 - B. Esau
 - C. Jacob's family had to go through exile and purification in Egypt 1523 BC. See chart 4.
- 3) Exodus 1313 BC.
 - A. A nation created by God from nothing.
 - B. To guide the world to the true spiritual path.
 - C. To show the world that God controls everything. He destroyed the most powerful nation on earth.
- 4) The giving of the Torah (The Law)
 - A. Morality is revealed by God, not created by human beings.
 - B. Every Jew experienced this revelation. A personal invitation from God.
 - C. An eternal covenant with the Jewish people.
 - D. The written law is given with an explanation. The oral law.
 - E. The primacy of Moses' prophecy and teachings.
- 5) Entering the Land of Israel 1273 BC
 - A. Putting the Torah into practice.
 - B. A sacred land requires high standards.
 - C. Joshua and the judges 404 years. See chart 5.
- 6) King David 807 BC
 - A. Conquering all of the Land of Israel. See chart 6.
 - B. God's beloved king. Author of the Psalms.
 - C. Father of the Messianic line. See chart 7.

7) Solomon and the Temple

- A. God rests his presence among his people.
- B. The Kingdom splits after Solomon's death.
- C. Ten tribes follow idols, while the remaining two tribes of Judah and Benjamin remain loyal.
- D. The great prophets. Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah. Messages for all time.

8) Destruction of the first temple 586 BC

- A. 586 vs. 423
- B. End of the prophetic era. See chart 8.
- C. The men of the great assembly. The destruction of idolatry.
- D. Transition to Rabbinic Judaism

9) The four great exiles of the Jewish people

- A. Babylon
- B. Persia
- C. Greece
- D. Rome

10) Babylon, the first exile 70 years

- A. Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years. See chart 5.
- B. The last books of the Bible. Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.
- C. Nebbacezer, Evil Merodach, Belshazzar

11) Persia, the second exile 52 years

- A. Darius, Cyrus the great, Achashverosh, Darius
- B. Achashverosh the Book of Esther
- C. Darius, son of Achashverosh, authorizes the rebuilding of the Temple.

12) Greece, the third exile

- A. 337 BC. Philip of Macedon unifies Greece.
- B. 335 BC. Alexander the Great is born.
- C. Visited Israel and met with Simon the Righteous. Allowed the Jews autonomous rule.
- D. He left no heir, so the kingdom was divided into 3 spheres of influence.

13) 198 BC. Seleucid dynasty takes over the Land of Israel.

- A. Great Jewish assimilation into Greek culture
- B. 167 BC. Army comes against Jerusalem. Repressive decrees against the Jews.
- C. 166 BC. Revolt by the Maccabees driving out the Greeks. This is the story of Channukah.
- D. Hasmonean dynasty begins. 161 BC-37 BC. Combines temporal leadership and religious leadership to one person.
- E. Eventually the leadership becomes corrupt, causing the mass of Jews to reject Hasmonean leadership. Civil war among the Jewish people.