

# Introduction to Judaism

## Lesson 2

### Jewish History II

- 1) Civil war between the descendants of the Hasmonean dynasty. One side invites Romans in to help.
  - A. Rome, the fourth exile
  - B. Herod the Great appointed as governor of Judea. He dies in 4 BC. This marks the end of Jewish independence in Israel.
  - C. 66 AD. Jewish revolt against Romans.
  - D. 67 AD Vespasian begins campaign to subdue Judea. Vespasian is appointed as Caesar. Titus his son continues campaign against Judea.
  - E. 70 AD. Titus destroys Jerusalem. 17th of Tammuz the walls of Jerusalem are breached. 9th of Av the Temple is burned. The final exile begins.
- 2) Exile a new challenge. How do we preserve our way of life?
  - A. The writing of the oral tradition.
  - B. Rav Yehudah Hanasi, known as Rebbi, our teacher. In 163 he becomes the Nasi (chief justice). Compiles the Mishnah 170-200 AD.
  - C. Babylonia becomes main Jewish community. Yeshivas established in Sura and Pumpedisa, which last 1000 years. Talmud is redacted and publicized by 500 AD. This becomes main source of Jewish scholarship and is still studied today.
- 3) Christianity
  - A. Begins as a new sect of Judaism but is rejected by the Jews. Then it turns towards pagans for new converts.
  - B. Initially repressed by the Romans until 312 AD when Constantine converts and establishes Christianity as the state religion. Council of Nicea establishes Christian principals.
- 4) Islam, 610 AD
  - A. Mohamed dies in 632 AD and his disciples spread their faith throughout Middle East and North Africa, eventually reaching Spain.
  - B. Jews are tolerated by Moslems and follow their migration. 762 AD, Baghdad established as center of learning and culture.
- 5) Gaonic period 500-900 AD
  - A. Rav Amram Gaon establishes prayer book 880 AD, still in use.
- 6) Jewish life in Spain 711-1492
  - A. Golden age for Jews, who were financiers, brokers, doctors, and intellectuals.
  - B. Three great Rabbis illustrate the history of Jewish Spain
  - C. Maimonides 1135-1204. Three monumental works. Commentary on the Mishnah. Guide for the perplexed. Yad hachazakah code of Jewish law. 1146, Almohad invasion, Maimonides flees to Egypt where he became the doctor for the caliph of Cairo.

- D. Nachmanides 1194-1270, wrote commentary on the Torah and the Talmud. In 1263 forced into disputation with Pablo Christiani. Eventually migrated to Israel, where his synagogue still stands.
  - E. Abarbanel 1437-1508, finance minister for Ferdinand and Isabella. He wrote about the themes of the Torah rather than just explaining the words. 1492, Jews expelled from Spain, 200,000 left. 1497, Jews expelled from Portugal. Many Jews who remained were hidden Jews. End of Jewish life in Spain and Portugal.
- 7) Rashi 1040-1105, the teacher of all Jews
- A. Lived in Provence, France, wrote commentary on the Torah and the Talmud. Indispensable for any serious study of the Torah.
- 8) Other events of the early Middle Ages which affected the Jewish people
- A. First Crusade 1095
  - B. Second Crusade 1147
  - C. Third Crusade 1189
  - D. First blood libel, England 1144
  - E. First accusation of host stealing, England 1243
  - F. Dominican and Franciscan orders established 1216
  - G. Talmud burned in Paris 1242
  - H. England expels Jews 1290
  - I. Spanish Inquisition 1481
- 9) Separation of Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews
- A. Sephardic Jews are from Middle Eastern countries, including Spain.
  - B. Ashkenazic Jews are from Eastern Europe.
  - C. Ashkenazic Jews begin to migrate from Germany into eastern European countries in Middle Ages to escape persecution. They have skills and are welcomed by the developing countries. In 12th century Jews are in Lithuania and Russia.
- 10) Events in the late Middle Ages which affected the Jewish people
- A. Rabbi Isaac Luria 1534-1572. Revealed Kabbalah mystical insights to the masses of Jews.
  - B. Chmelnitzki massacres 1648. Killed 100,000 Jews in Russia and Poland, destroying over 300 communities.
  - C. False Messiahs Shabbtai zvi 1626-1676 and Jacob Frank 1726-1791
  - D. Rabbi Yisroel Baal shem tov 1700-1760 founder of Chassidus, brought back Jewish masses by infusing daily life with spiritual holiness.
  - E. Gaon of Vilna 1720-1797, Leader of Lithuanian Judaism critic of Chassidus.
  - F. Moses Mendelsohn 1729-1786 founder of Reform Judaism leader of Haskalah movement.
  - G. Cantonist decrees in Russia 1827. Jewish boys are conscripted into Tzar's army. This causes great hardship and division in Jewish communities.
  - H. 1882 Massive migration begins to United States. Eventually over 2 million emigrate.
  - I. 1860 Theodore Herzl born, father of modern Zionism.
  - J. 1897 first Zionist Congress. Establishes Jews' desire for a homeland.