

SOCIAL STUDIES 1207

A HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLES

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A HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

We have learned from history that we too often learn nothing from history. Nearly two thousand years ago the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, came to earth to save mankind. While He walked among men, He taught that God loved the world (John 3:16) and that when you believe in Him you should (Mark 12:30), "... love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . ." Jesus added to the simplicity of His message a command that required believers to extend to others their love toward God (Mark 12:31), "... Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. . . ." Centuries have passed, and unfortunately the power of that divine command has dimmed in the hearts of men.

For the Christian his neighbor has too often been defined in a parochial manner and limited to those of similar faith, background, or race. Man tends to trust those who resemble himself and to be suspicious of those who are in some way different. Christians, too, have fallen prey to this error and have restricted the love of Christ that they should extend to others. Christians have been involved in practices that have not demonstrated the love of Christ.

How should we respond when we find Christians, or those who claim to be Christians, in a less-than-flattering light? We cannot go back and correct the faults of those in the past. We can learn from their errors, and we can develop attitudes and take action that will bring our testimony into line with the Saviour's teachings.

As you move on in life, possibly for further education, to work, and to have your own family, you will encounter those who differ from you. You will begin to deal with people of different races and religions, who hold opposing views and beliefs, and who live according to different standards. What should your attitude be when you encounter those who are distinct from yourself? Can you evaluate any group, race, or religion and generalize an attitude toward them? Although the Bible includes principles of separation to be applied by the Christian as he encounters others, God has never authorized prejudice or

discrimination among His people. Christians are required to use discernment in their relationships, but we are forbidden prejudices that inhibit love for others.

Perhaps the saddest event of history is the prejudice directed toward the Jewish race. Although man has seen discrimination toward all races at various times, the Jews have been the recipients of racial hatred since the first century. Much of this prejudice began within the Christian community, but Christians today can learn from this error and can recognize that God is dealing with the Jews in His own manner and according to His own plan. Moses had warned the nation of Israel about the consequences of not obeying God's commandments. He said (Deuteronomy 28:37), "And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all the nations whither the Lord shall lead thee." Nevertheless, by investigating the history of anti-Semitism and the prejudice directed toward the Jews as a race, the Christian can become informed about the danger of embracing such non-Biblical attitudes.

In this **LIGHTUNIT** you will study the history of the Jews since their dispersion from Palestine in A.D. 70. First, you will observe the inception of anti-Semitic attitudes within the organized church and how these attitudes continued through the Middle Ages. Second, you will investigate the economic ascendance of the Jews of Europe and how their financial success brought about additional prejudice. Third, you will study how economic prejudice became the basis for political anti-Semitism that reached its climax in the Germany of Adolf Hitler. Fourth, you will compare what God revealed about the Jews with the historical reality of their plight.

Christians who desire to conform to the image of their Saviour will welcome an honest appraisal of the history of Jews. Some may be disturbed to find Christians behaving in a less than equitable manner, but our Lord died for all sins. Having received His divine forgiveness, Christians cannot change the past; but they can formulate Biblical attitudes for the future.

OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. The objectives tell you what you will be able to do when you have successfully completed this LIGHTUNIT.

When you have finished this LIGHTUNIT, you should be able:

1. To describe Jewish life during the dispersion.
2. To discuss the inception of religious anti-Semitism.
3. To outline the effects of the crusades of the Middle Ages.
4. To categorize the problems faced by the Jews of the Middle Ages.
5. To summarize the events of the Spanish Inquisition.
6. To compare Jewish economic principles with the economy of medieval Europe.
7. To outline the rise of the Rothschild banking institutions.
8. To summarize the history and function of the court Jew.
9. To explain the advent of Hebrew phobia.
10. To describe Jewish reaction to centuries of anti-Semitism.
11. To summarize the conflict between Reform Judaism and Zionism.
12. To list recent trends in anti-Semitism.
13. To explain the attitude Christians should have toward the Jews.

Survey the LIGHTUNIT. Ask yourself some questions about this study. Write your questions here.

I. JEWISH SURVIVAL IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN WORLD

Among the unique characteristics of the Jewish people is their will to survive and their desire to re-establish a homeland in Israel. As Christians observe the Jewish culture, they find that eighteen hundred years after the destruction of the Jewish Temple and the city of Jerusalem the Jewish people remain hopeful

that God will return to them the land that He promised.

Jews scattered throughout the world today share with Christians a common spiritual heritage. Paul proclaimed that (Romans 4:16) "... Abraham . . . is the father of us all." Because they have rejected the Messiah, the

Lord Jesus, God (Romans 11:8), "... hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear. . . ." God's will toward the Jews continues even today. As Christians we can be channels of God's loving concern for His Old Testament people.

After the dispersion of the Jewish nation, Jews lived as a nation within many nations. The Romans destroyed their homeland, razed their Temple, and scattered their people, yet the

Jewish nation survived. In this section of the **LIGHTUNIT**, you will investigate the inception of **anti-Semitic** discrimination that has been forced upon the Jewish people.

Often the very nature of anti-Semitic activity, which was aimed at either **assimilating** the Jews or destroying them, became the very element that unified them. You will study the developments of anti-Semitism, its causes, and the claims of those who question its existence.

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able:

1. To describe Jewish life during the dispersion:
 - 1.1 To explain the events that caused the dispersion.
 - 1.2 To summarize the persecution arising out of the dispersion.
2. To discuss the inception of religious anti-Semitism:
 - 2.1 To compare the plight of Christians and Jews in the early era of Christianity.
 - 2.2 To explain how Christians became anti-Semitic.
3. To outline the effects of the crusades of the Middle Ages.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning success in this section.

annihilate
anti-Semitism
assimilation

commonality
deicide
Diaspora

genocide
paradox
stigma



Note: All vocabulary words in this **LIGHTUNIT** appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given in the Glossary.

DISPERSION

In the first century A.D., Jews who had lived under Roman rule for decades were dispersed throughout the Old World. This exile came about as a result of two revolts; at the center of each revolt was the desire for Jewish independence. The first is termed the Jewish Wars of A.D. 68 to 73. The second is the *Bar Kokhba* revolt of A.D. 132 to 135.

The first Jewish revolt. Revolts erupted in the Roman Empire from Spain to Judea following

the death of the Emperor Nero, and division occurred in Rome over the choice of a new ruler. In Judea these new uprisings were an extension of the revolts that had become commonplace since the death of Agrippa I in A.D. 44. By September of A.D. 66, rebellious Jews had secured the city of Jerusalem and repelled the Roman Twelfth Legion led by Gallus, the governor of Syria.

Titus Flavius Vespasianus, who desired the throne of the Roman Empire, led three Roman

legions into rebel territory. Vespasianus commissioned his son, also named Titus, to attack Jerusalem from the north. Titus was later given command of the Roman army in Palestine as a result of his father's return to Rome as emperor. Titus led the siege against the north walls of the city, and on August 6 of the year A.D. 70, he entered Jerusalem, burning the Temple and leveling the city.

The second Jewish revolt. The exile began for the Jews in A.D. 70 with the survivors of Titus' conquest. Yet the tenacity of these people would be demonstrated in another revolt. In



The Romans made slaves of many Jews.

A.D. 132 a rebellion led by *Bar Kokhba*, whom many believed to be the Messiah, began in Judea. Soon the rebelling Jews marched against the Roman colony being established in Jerusalem. The Roman citizens and the Roman Tenth Legion were routed from Judea and sought refuge at Caesarea-Philippi.

When the Roman general, Hadrian, led the Roman armies back into Judea to lay siege to Jerusalem, he entered the land from the north with seven legions of troops who converged upon the Holy City. Most of the conflict took place outside the city where Bar Kokhba's troops were concealed in caves. The city itself was soon regained by Hadrian, and again the Roman colony of Aelia Capitolina was established in Jerusalem.

The results of revolution. As a result of this second revolution, official policies were established by the Roman Empire that attempted to prevent the Jews from remaining a people. The revered site of their once holy place was forbidden to the remaining Jewish population. Only from a distance could they view what was at one time their nation's glory. Centuries later, under the so-called Christian rule, the prohibition remained. Jerome recorded the tragic scene of watching elderly Jews weeping over the ruins from Mount Olivet.

The annual half-shekel duty paid by every Jew to the Temple continued even in the **Diaspora**, but it was diverted into a special Roman tax on the Jews. To prevent Jewish evangelism, a Roman law was passed that prohibited adult circumcision. Thousands of Jews were sold into slavery and others were **annihilated**. The land of Judea itself became known as *Palestine*, the land of the Philistines. History would prove, however, that even without a land and without a nation, Jewish hope would not die.



Write true or false.

- 1.1 _____ The dispersion of the Jews occurred as a result of two revolts.
- 1.2 _____ Titus the Roman invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple in A.D. 70.
- 1.3 _____ *Bar Kokhba* was a Roman emperor.
- 1.4 _____ The Roman colony of Aelia Capitolina was established in Jerusalem.

- 1.5 _____ Hadrian entered Judea with seven legions of troops.
 - 1.6 _____ *Palestine* means *land of the Israelites*.
 - 1.7 _____ Rome passed laws to encourage Jewish unity.
 - 1.8 _____ Adult circumcision was prohibited by Roman law.
 - 1.9 _____ Jewish hope quickly faded following the revolts.
 - 1.10 _____ Jews were prohibited from entering Jerusalem after the revolts.
-

RATIONALE OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Religious **anti-Semitism** had its beginnings in the development of the Christian church in the second century A.D. Most Jewish writers find the source of religious discrimination to be the New Testament writings. Although these misinterpretations of the Scriptures may well have been the source of the perpetuation of anti-Semitism in a later period, to claim that they are the origin of this phenomenon is a definite oversimplification. Other factors present in the early centuries of the church must also be considered in order to gain an accurate historical perspective of the problem.

The historical closeness of Judaism and Christianity has resulted in a historical **paradox**. The two faiths are deeply rooted in a common heritage and yet they have engaged in continued conflict and hostility. Perhaps this **commonality** in fundamentals was one of the factors that led to the ensuing conflict.

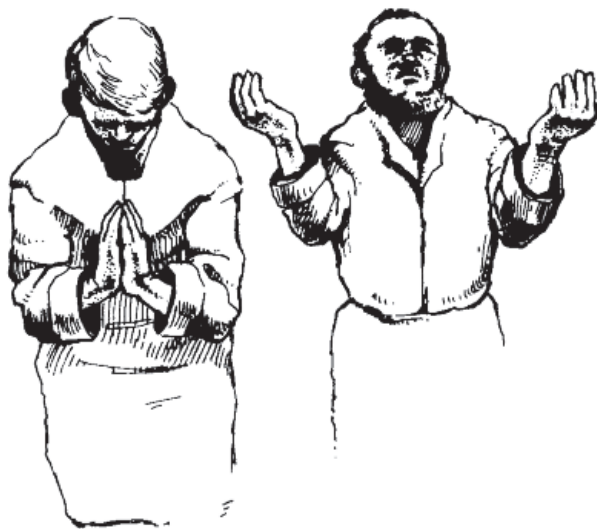
This closeness of Christianity and Judaism caused considerable confusion among those who were of neither faith. This early lack of distinction is easily comprehended when it is recognized that the early church often represented a faith that was partially Jewish in both scope and practice, incorporating many Jewish hymns, prayers, and customs.

Many decades passed during the first and second centuries before Christianity was viewed as anything more than just another branch of the sectarian Jews.

The laws that the Roman government enacted against Jews in the Diaspora also affected Christians, who were often seen as just another Jewish sect. During the Third Primitive Persecution (A.D. 96 to 161) broad attacks against the Jews also struck against Christians. Trajan, emperor of the Roman Empire, ordered both the punishment of Christians and the

annihilation of Jews. Consequently, all Jews who could be found were put to death. Even when a Jew claimed conversion to Christianity, he was not excused from extermination.

With this apparent identity crisis among some early professing Christians, they sought to sever their ties to early first-century Jewish traditions. This decision became one of expediency, for to escape the discrimination against the Jews, they had to demonstrate that they detested the Jews as much, if not more, than the Romans.



Christians and Jews share a common heritage.

This thinking began to enter the theology of some professing Christians as early as A.D. 140 with Justin Martyr claiming that the Jews had no right to the Old Testament Scriptures because the Scriptures were prepared for and belonged only

to Christians. This idea was well advanced by the time of the writing of Eusebius of Caesarea who was the most important church historian of the fourth century. Eusebius discerned a distinction between the terms *Hebrew* and *Jew* and based his complete treatment of the Jews on the foundation of this artificial difference. All the noble characters of the Old Testament, according to Eusebius, were Hebrews and they were considered to be holy. The evil characters were called Jews. Thus, the persecuted church

began what was thought to be the holy endeavor of persecuting the Old Testament people of the Lord.

From the inception of anti-Semitic attitudes, this problem was to develop into a complex system of religious discrimination. Eventually the New Testament Scriptures would be reinterpreted to fit the popular belief that a Christian could not love God apart from hating the Jews. Such limited interpretation of God's Word can at no time be considered valid.



Complete these statements.

- 1.11 Religious anti-Semitism began in the _____ century A.D.
- 1.12 Most Jewish writers claim that anti-Semitism is found in the pages of the _____.
- 1.13 A historical closeness and common heritage exist between a. _____ and b. _____.
- 1.14 Persecution of both Christians and Jews was ordered by the Roman emperor, _____.
- 1.15 Justin Martyr claimed that the Jews had no right to the _____.



Complete these activities.

- 1.16 Explain why the "Christians" sided with the Romans in discriminating against the Jews.

- 1.17 Explain the distinction Eusebius made between Hebrews and Jews.

INCEPTION OF RELIGIOUS ANTI-SEMITISM

Anti-Semitism, of which the extreme purpose is the **genocide** of the Jewish race, became one of the major factors in keeping these people, who were alienated from their traditional homeland, a cultural unit. The very discrimination and prejudice leveled against the Jews as punishment for whatever crimes they could be blamed, precluded Jewish assimilation for over sixteen hundred years. Prevented from

becoming a part of the Gentile world, Jews could look only to each other for support and survival.

If anti-Semitism had not existed, the Jewish people may have found themselves involved in other cultures to the extent that the Jewish race would have vanished. This assimilation, however, did not occur.

Era of church and state. Following the days of the faithful early church, false doctrine began to creep into the church. By 300 A.D. many churches had departed from the true faith, and the true church became a remnant of the faithful.

The union of the Christian church and the Roman empire under Constantine increased what had already been a growing animosity between some professing Christians and the Jews. The initial legislative act of Constantine's new "Christian" Rome (October 18, A.D. 315) pronounced the religion of the Jews, who were considered an evil sect, illegal and in certain instances punishable by death (Cod. Theod. XVI, vii, 1).

Thus began an official policy of discrimination toward Jews based upon religious prejudice that would continue until 1965 when, as the result of the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church removed this **stigma** from the Jews.

The first laws concerning Jews were designed to exclude them from holding municipal office. In A.D. 348 additional laws were passed that forbade Jews from owning slaves or marrying into the households of professing Christians. Such laws were passed by the Roman government at the urging of officials of the professing church and remained in force until the fall of the empire.

During the period preceding the rise of the Holy Roman Empire that commenced with the ascent of Pope Gregory I to the throne of Rome, theological decisions were made affecting

Jewish life. In A.D. 387 John Chrysostom, the Bishop of Antioch, delivered a series of sermons in which he formally charged that all Jews were guilty of **deicide**—the murder of God—for being the people who crucified Christ. This allegation permitted Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, to order bishops to burn down synagogues of Mesopotamia and Egypt or convert them to use by Christianity.

During this time Augustine developed his doctrine of forced conversion. Such a doctrine resulted in the bodily apprehension of Jews and subsequent baptism. In A.D. 612 this forced-conversion doctrine became the official policy of King Sisebut in dealing with the Jews in Spain.

As the Roman Empire crumbled, the Roman Catholic Church increased its worldly wealth and influence. Political Rome became unable to exercise power, but the Holy Roman Empire was waiting to assume dominance.

The wealth and influence of the Roman Church increased at the expense of its spiritual power. The darkness of the Middle Ages followed. The plight of homeless Jews became more severe. To understand the predicament of the Jews in the medieval period, two factors must be investigated. First, were the crusades, not only how they affected the Jewish people but how they changed the course of European history. Second, the various charges brought against the Jews must be observed to gain an accurate perspective of anti-Jewish hysteria.



Write the definition of these words.

- 1.18 genocide _____

1.19 assimilation _____

1.20 anti-Semitism _____

1.21 deicide _____



Match these items.

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1.22 | _____ Gregory | a. Holy Roman Empire |
| 1.23 | _____ Bishop of Milan | b. John Chrysostom |
| 1.24 | _____ Roman Church | c. Ambrose |
| 1.25 | _____ king of Spain | d. Sisebut |
| 1.26 | _____ Bishop of Antioch | e. third emperor |
| | | f. pope |

Crusades. From the beginning of Islam in the seventh century to the present day, the followers of the prophet Muhammad have been a force with which both Christians and Jews have had to reckon. Islam's place in the present study lies in the fact that since its first sweep into the land of the Bible before the middle of the seventh century, Arab inhabitants of that former Jewish homeland have passionately embraced the Islamic faith. Furthermore, the reaction of the Catholic Church in Europe to this Muslim invasion was to bring calamity upon the people of the Near East and the Jews of Europe as aggressive armies marched against Muslims, whom they considered the "enemies of God."

In Muslim-dominated lands, Jews lived in relative peace compared to their counterparts in Europe. Both Christians and Jews under Muslim rule, however, were subjected to certain restrictions. One, later to be copied by Pope Innocent II, was the requirement that Jews wear an identifying yellow or red patch on their clothing.

Prior to the conflict in the Near East, Europe found itself gripped by the darkness of the Middle Ages. Life was tolerable for the European Jew only because life for anyone then was at best tolerable. The incredible crusades, however, were to change life not only for the Jew but they were to alter the course of Western civilization. The crusades were, in some ways, the most remarkable events of the Middle Ages.

The causes of the crusades were many, not the least of which was that religious piety of the day placed great value on pilgrimages. Although Jerusalem had been under Muslim control since A.D. 638, pilgrims had been able to visit, except for brief periods, numerous sacred shrines in and about the area without danger. From A.D. 1071 and the capture of most of Asia Minor by the Seljuk Turks, however, accounts of persecution and desecration were carried back to the European centers of Christendom by terrified survivors. As a result, Pope Urban II finally called for a crusade to capture the Holy Land from the hands of the Muslims in 1095.

Seven major crusades followed from 1095 to in 1270, plus minor expeditions before and after those dates. Although some of the most famous men of Europe were identified with the crusades, so were the lowest elements of European society. For peasants, the crusades offered relief from the dull routine of life.



Jews and Arabs lived in relative peace in 1000 A.D.

Poorly organized and without adequate leadership, they crossed from England and northern Europe into those areas with large colonies of Jews. The men of the crusades soon recognized the futility of traveling to a distant land to destroy God's enemies when the Jews were so close at hand.

Joined by local mobs in the plunder, city after city was pillaged and an estimated ten thousand Jews were slain in central Europe. This action was seen as retribution upon the evil Jews, and the crusaders used cross-shaped swords to exterminate these enemies of God.

Jerusalem was eventually reached and after more destruction the city fell in July, 1099. Both Arabs and Jews fell victim to the crusaders at the fall of the Holy City. None of the crusades, however, successfully established Catholicism in the Holy Land. In 1244 European forces were driven from Jerusalem for the last time.

The crusades were pathetic and dismal failures. The changes that did occur, however, were so remarkable that the crusades became the single most important influence on the Middle Ages. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the crusades was the spread of

nationalism. The Jews, unfortunately, remained a people forbidden to partake of the "new fruits" of civilization. Indeed, as already noted, the crusades introduced a *new* wave of anti-Semitism. The long centuries since the Jewish dispersion had evolved to a point where the fearful words of Deuteronomy 28:67 would be echoed

time and again by the Jews of the latter part of the Middle Ages:

In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.



Write the correct letter and answer on each line.

- 1.27 The religion of Islam follows the prophet _____.
a. Moses c. John
b. Muhammad d. Muslim
- 1.28 In 1095 Pope _____ called upon Christians to join the crusades.
a. Urban II c. Seljuk
b. Innocent I d. Paul III
- 1.29 From 1095 to 1270, _____ major crusades traveled to the Holy Land.
a. four c. seven
b. ten d. six
- 1.30 On the whole the crusades were _____.
a. successful c. spirit led
b. necessary d. failures
- 1.31 The most significant aspect of the crusades was the planting of the seeds of _____.
a. Christianity c. nationalism
b. Judaism d. hope
-



Review the material in this section in preparation for the Self Test. The Self Test will check your mastery of this particular section. The items missed on this Self Test will indicate specific areas where restudy is needed for mastery.