

# JUDAISM: FROM BABYLON TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

# Last class

- Tanakh (Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim)
- Covenant with God (many covenants, conditions of those covenants)
- Land in the Tanakh (Israel/Palestine)
- Exile and Return

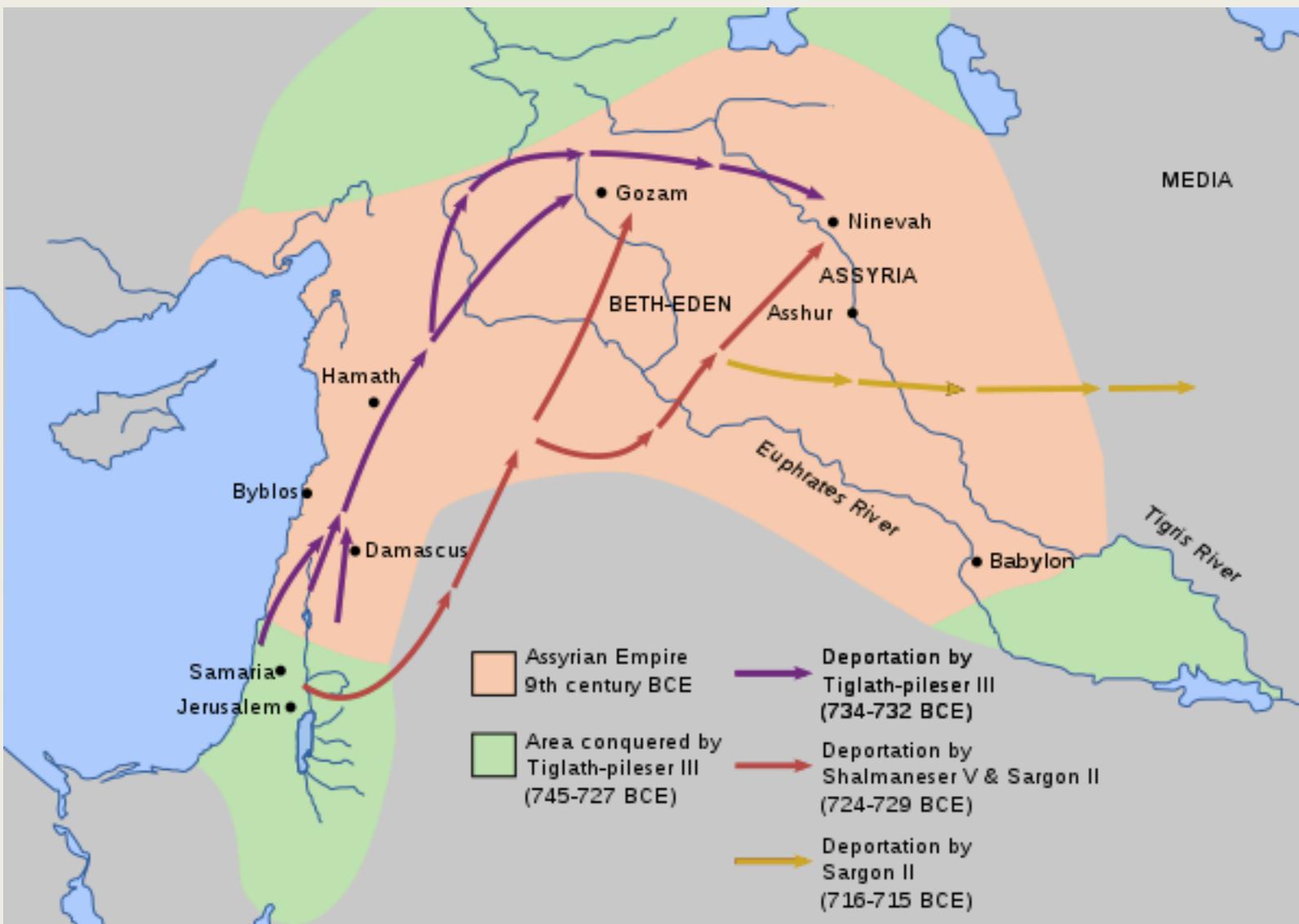
# Today History of Judaism

- Focus on:
- Relation to land
- Reaction to destruction of Temple/Jerusalem,  
expulsion from Israel
- Relation to surrounding and dominant kingdoms
- Jewish diaspora
- Christian anti-Judaism

# Tanakh Review

- Written between c. 600 and 100 BCE
- Composed of older traditions
- Often seeks to explain Israel's misfortunes
- Establishes covenant with God
- Establishes monotheism

# Fall of Israel: 722 BCE



# Babylonian Empire: 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE



# Babylon to Alexander

- Jews allowed to return to Israel and rebuild Jerusalem by Persian Empire, late 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE
- Lived under Persian Empire until it fell to Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE)





# Hellenism

- Conquest of Alexander brought Greek language and culture
- LXX, Greek translation of the Tanakh (translated between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE)
- Adoption of Greek philosophy
- Important works in Greek
- Philo of Alexandria (Jewish philosopher)
- Josephus (Historian and Apologist of Judaism)

# Judaism under Rome

- Herod the Great appointed ruler of Judea
- Often depicted as villain who order the massacre of children in a effort to kill Jesus as a child
- He was also a cruel leader, trying to please Rome at the expense of his people

# Jewish War

- 66 CE, Jews rebelled against Rome
- Found initial success
- Ultimately no match for Roman Army
- 70 CE, Roman army enters Jerusalem, destroys Jewish Temple

# Results

- Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed
- The Temple was never rebuilt
- Many Jews were displaced from Jerusalem and Judea
- Two more rebellions—Kitos War (115-117 CE) and the Bar Kokhbh revolt (132-135 CE)— saw Jews exiled from Judea, and Jerusalem razed to the ground

# Diaspora Judaism

- Diaspora, outside of one's homeland
- Main sub-group of Judaism that survived the war and destruction: the Pharisees

# Pharisaic Judaism before the war

- Focused on the **Oral Torah**
- **Oral Torah** transmitted orally from generation to generation
- Focused on development of laws that would make the sometimes-obscure commandments of the easier to understand and follow
- This process is called **Midrash**
- Later written down as **Mishna**

# Pharisaic Judaism before the war

- Oral Torah
- “You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk” (Exodus 23:19; 34: 26)
- interpreted as forbidding mixing milk and meat, an aspect of ‘keeping kosher’

# Pharisaic Judaism before the war

- Encouraged and developed synagogue worship as an alternative to the Temple
- This aided the survival of the Pharisees after the destruction of the Temple

# After the war

- Pharisaic Judaism became Rabbinic Judaism
- Without the Temple, the Rabbis set out to canonize the Hebrew Bible, gives us the form it is in today
- Judaism shifted from a Temple-based religion to a text-based religion
- Oral Torah written down as Mishna
- Combined with Gemara (more general reflections on Mishna) become Talmud

# Two Major Histories of Judaism

- History of Judaism in the Diaspora
  - *Development of Jewish philosophy and theology*
  - *Kabbalah and the nature of evil*
- Rise of Christianity
  - *Christian anti-Judaism*

# Judaism in a Christian Empire

- Christianity made legal in 313 by Emperor Constantine (the Great)
- Christianity made the religion of the Roman Empire by 380



# Christian Anti-Judaism

# Gospel of Matthew

- 27:22-25 Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said [the Jews in the crowd], “Let him be crucified!” Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!” So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.” Then the people as a whole answered, ***“His blood be on us and on our children!”***

# Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE)

## *City of God* 18.46

“Slay them not, lest they should at last forget Your law, unless he had also added, Disperse them; because if they had only been in their own land with that testimony of the Scriptures, and not every where, certainly the Church which is everywhere could not have had them as witnesses among all nations to the prophecies which were sent before concerning Christ.”

# Judaism in the Middle Ages

- Jewish people lived, and prospered throughout Europe and the Middle East
- Jews lived in Jerusalem under Byzantine (Greek Christian) rule
- Jews continued to live in Jerusalem under the Islamic Caliphate

# Crusades and European Jews

- Jews living relatively peacefully and prosperously in Europe during the Middle Ages
- Crusader armies marched through Europe, “converting” or killing large communities of Jews
- **“Pogroms”**
- Catholic Church did not tolerate the forced conversion of Jews
- BUT, the Catholic Church viewed baptism, even forced baptism, as absolutely binding

# Crusades and Middle Eastern Jews

- Crusaders destroyed whole cities and their inhabitants
- When the crusaders conquered Jerusalem, they slaughtered the inhabitants, Muslims, Jews, and Christians

# Judaism and the Medieval Catholic Church

- The Catholic Church was supposed to be the protector of the Jews
- Opposed Pogroms and forced conversions
- But maintained that baptized Jews were in fact now Christians

# Judaism and the Medieval Catholic Church

- On the one hand, spoke out against violence against the Jews
- On the other continued to make laws that harmed and oppressed the Jews

# Lateran Council (1215 CE)

- Pope Innocent III declares Jews must wear distinctive clothing
- In France, a round badge
- In Germany, a pointed hat
- The “marks of Cain”
- Clothes made it easier to target Jews with harassment and abuse

# Expulsions in Europe

- Jews expelled from England in 1290
- France in 1306
- Lithuania in 1395
- Spain in 1492 (along with Muslims)
- Portugal in 1497
- Many fled to Holland, others to South America through newly opened sea routes

# Germany, Judaism, and Martin Luther

- Martin Luther tried to convert Jews as well
- When conversions failed, Luther wrote against the Jews
- “We are at fault in not slaying them [the Jews]” wrote Martin Luther

# Developments in Jewish Thought

- Maimonides part of rediscovery of Aristotle and application of Aristotelian philosophy to Judaism
- Applied rationalistic philosophy to Jewish texts
- Also developed mystical approach to Judaism known as **Kabbalah**
- Kabbalah questioned the Rabbinic assumption that God was omnipotent or all-powerful

# Kabbalah

- Focuses on the problem of Jewish suffering
- Moses de Leon and Isaac Luria questioned the goodness and omnipotence of God
- Their commentaries on Torah do not ignore dark and demonic forces of existence
- Kabbalah generally acknowledges the reality of evil in the world

# Evil in Judaism

- Evil challenges assumptions about God
- Importantly provided a persuasive explanation for the exile and suffering of the Jews
- Suffering and evil exist because God is cut off from humanity

# Enlightenment and Judaism in Europe

- 1791 Jews granted full citizenship in France
- 1869 German Jews fully emancipated and restrictions on residence, occupation, and marriage were eliminated
- Jews were allowed to hold political office

# Enlightenment and Anti-Semitism

- Enlightenment ended (in theory) discrimination based on religion
- Enlightenment political philosophy was that one could not be persecuted because of their religion
- So anti-Judaism waned, but this gave rise to anti-Semitism
- Anti-Semitism saw Jews as Semitic people, and on racial grounds considered them inferior

# Enlightenment and Anti-Semitism

- Anti-Semitism focused less on Judaism's religious identity or position vis a vie Christianity (though this was still there)
- Anti-Semitism was a racist position that attacked Jews as an inferior race
- Targeted religious and non-religious Jews