

# The second destruction of the jews temple



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The destruction of the Jews temple led to the disruption of the Jews religion, culture and politics. The destruction of the temple also led to the dispersion of the Jews within and outside Israel. In addition, it shaped the Jews worship by changing the focus from sacrificial worship to scriptural interpretation. Political development that occurred in the post-temple period also informed the rise of a new political system dominated by the Torah and the Rabbis and reduced the influence of the former priests.

### The Impacts of the Destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem

The second destruction of the temple in Jerusalem played a critical role in upsetting the status quo in the religious and political arena. Separating and sending the Jews into the diaspora interfered with their religious practice and appeared focused at annihilating the Jews population. The Jews people depended on the temple for spiritual and political directions. The destruction of the temple, therefore, apart from causing negative psychological impacts on the Jews, posed a significant threat to their religion.

The disruption of the Jews priesthood and the priestly class that represented the core of the Judean politics and depicted the face of the Jews' worship sent the Jews nation into disarray and created a power vacuum. The Jews sacrificial cult and the hereditary priestly class acted as the mediating link between the divine powers and the humans, and the great influential priestly class lost its grip on power and its relevance in the Jews community. Rabbis and Torah scholars then replaced them. The destruction of the temple also brought the sacrificial worship to an end. The gradual recession of the priesthood was indicative of an institution that had lost its relevance. The

rabbis and the Torah scholars gained control of power and relegated the former priests into conditions of inactivity. The rabbis sometimes prescribed the duties performed by the Jews.

### The Shift in the Jews' Worship in the Post Temple Period

The powers previously held by the priestly circles had immensely been dissipated under the Torah establishment. The destruction of the temple caused a shift in the authority from the traditional priest controlled system to a system dominated by the Torah scholars and the Rabbis. Some of the duties earlier performed by the priests that had been challenged under the new establishment included serving as judges in religious and civic affairs; acting as inspectors of purity and custodians of the tithes. The priests had also taught the divine law in the previous religious establishment. The law of Moses had determined the roles of the priest in the Judean system before the second destruction of the Jews temple. All the duties performed by the priests were disrupted when the temple was destroyed. Just as was witnessed in the first destruction of the temple, the Jews met in small groups and in synagogues to discuss the scriptures.

### Power Struggles that Plagued Israel in the Post Temple Period

The new establishment dominated by the Torah scholar was characterized by certain forms of power struggles. Power deprivation angered some priest and as such informed the creation of various groups of people who sought to agitate to have their interests guarded. The rabbinic literature indicates that the struggle to control power existed between the rabbis and the priests. The assertion thereof has been supported by the attempts made by some priests

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to rebuild a temple in Jerusalem. The Bar Kokhba revolt was mainly inspired by the need to re-establish the temple in Jerusalem and re-enthroned the Jewish priesthood.

The revolt painted some priestly circles as determined to promote their priestly agenda. Different circles emerged, drawing their inspirations from the need to restore priesthood to the desire to preserve culture. The Bar Kokhba was quelled with considerable force. Among the factions that emerged were the Sadducees who were formerly in charge of the temple. Other than the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the Zealots, and the Essenes also emerged.

The Pharisees were determined to preserve the Hebrew culture and religion by observing its tradition and religious laws to the letter. The Zealots, on the other hand, strived to have the priestly rule restored and were bitterly opposed to the Roman influence in Israel. Some Zealots even resorted to acts of intimidations and protest to have their wishes granted by the Roman powers. The Essenes formed the fourth group of the Jews during the period that succeeded the second destruction of the Jewish temple. They continued to observe their traditional ways and steered clear of animal sacrifices, meat, and wine. They also continued to live in celibacy. The conflicts informed by the desire to influence religion did not only exist between the Romans and Jews but also existed between the Greeks and the Jews.

During the Seleucid period, Alexander the Great conquered Egypt and took control of some part of Israel. Although the development occurred before the second destruction of the temple, the conflicts between the Jews and the

Greek culture became prominent when the second destruction of the temple occurred. The antagonism between the Greek and the Jews culture grew when the Jews tradition and culture were shaken from the second destruction of the Jews temple.

The destruction of the second temple caused the dispersion of people far away from Israel. The Romans resettled some cadre of traditional priests in the coastal planes. The aristocratic priests were specifically resettled in a place called Gathas. The development disrupted the ceremonial based temple religion. The Jews then resorted to practicing religion in synagogues and homes. Once the temple was destroyed, the need to define religious books became apparent. The priests, therefore, convened a meeting in Yavneh and deliberated on the books particular books to include in the Canon. During the selection process, some books were hotly debated and were almost ex-punched from the list that would later be named the Cannon.

When the Jews who had lived in Israel after the destruction of the second temple witnessed the executions perpetrated by the Romans, they became worried dispersed and settled in Egypt and in places around the Mediterranean. The population of the Jews living in the diaspora increased. The dispersion of the Jews people led to the spread of the Jews scripture through oral tradition and the interpretive work. The spread of the Judaism outside the borders of Israel was aided by the existence of the Canon; Oral history and the use of written materials that had been explored right from the when Cyrus assumed leadership in Persia and sent the Jews back to Israel after taking control of Babylon.

The distribution of the written material aided the spread of the scriptures. The explanation and the protection of the Hebrew scripture followed when most people began to espouse the Jews' teaching. Later, philosophical discussions emerged classifying the Jews law into six parts. The Philosophical discussions also detailed the application of the law in a document called 'Mishnah'. By about 400 CE, the 'Talmud' had been created out of the 'Mishnah' when various commentaries were added to the Mishnah.

The Romans stayed in Israel for a considerable amount of time after the destruction of the Jews Temple. Their stay, therefore, precluded the Jews from re-establishing the priesthood. The growing dissent among the Jews sparked revolts which never bore outcomes anticipated by the Jews. The destruction of the temple eliminated the power that had once been controlled by the priesthood. Secondly, it tweaked the Jews religion by shifting focus from the temple ritual to the scriptures.

### The spread and Challenges of the Jews in the Diaspora

After the destruction of the temple, the Jews vitality grew in places such as Spain and Iraq. The spread and growth of the Jews outside of Israel in part was influenced by the tolerance in countries such as Spain and Iraq. Years after the destruction of the Jews temple, the Jews resettled in countries where they would experience politically engineered persecution. The challenges faced by the Jews people in the diaspora led to the emergence of the Kabbalistic literature that served to give hope to the Jews in the wake of the unyielding persecution. The Kabbalistic literature sought to bolster the Jews religion by highlighting the superiority of the Jews religion.