The Jewish Diaspora
After the death of Solomon, the Hebrew kingdom split in two. Israel to the North, Judea to the South.

This left the Jewish kingdom weak. In 722 B.C., the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians.
Babylonian Exile

- In 586 B.C. the Babylonians of Mesopotamia, under King Nebuchadrezzar, conquered the city of Jerusalem.
- The Temple of Solomon was burned to the ground.
The Diaspora Begins

- The Jews of Israel and Judah were exiled to Mesopotamia.
- This was the beginning of the Diaspora, which means scattering over a wide area.
Return

• In 539 B.C., the Persians conquered the Babylonians. The Persian King, Cyrus, allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem.

• The Temple of Solomon was rebuilt for a Second time.
Foreign Rule

- For 400 years, the Jews were ruled by foreign powers.
- Greek rulers replaced the Persians. In 168 B.C., the Greek ruler Antiochus tried to force Jews to worship idols in the temple.
Hanukkah

- The Jews rebelled for 20 years and eventually drove the Greeks out.
- Hanukkah is celebrated to mark this victory over the Greeks.
Roman rule

• In 63 B.C. the Romans took control. The Romans allowed Jews to practice their religion and some self-government.
• However, any rebellion was crushed. More than 50,000 Jews would be executed over the years of occupation.
King Herod

- In 22 B.C., King Herod was appointed by the Romans to rule over the Jews. He expanded Solomon’s Temple.
- However, in 66 A.D., the Jews rebelled again.
The Jews kept the Romans out of Jerusalem for three years.

In 70 A.D., the Roman General Titus defeated them and destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem. All that remained was the western wall.
Western wall, Jerusalem
In 135 A.D., the Romans put down another rebellion. The Jews were expelled from Jerusalem and scattered all over the Roman Empire.
Survival

• With the loss of the temple, the Rabbis adapted Jewish religious practices to focus on prayer and study of the Torah and the Talmud. This way they could worship without the religious rituals of the temple.
Torah

• The Torah is the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. In the Christian Bible, it would be called the Old Testament.
Talmud

- The Talmud is a collection of Jewish writings that interpret the laws and teachings of the Hebrew Bible.
Synagogue

• The synagogue is the center of spiritual life for the Jewish community. It serves the same basic function as a church in Christian communities.