

# JUDAISM: PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

## FIRST TEMPLE JUDAISM (922-586 BCE)

- YHWH emerges – polytheism slowly yields to monolatry
- Temple emerges – displaces other places/forms of worship
- No completed Torah (pieces exist but not the whole)
- Religion is conservative (aims to preserve precarious order)
- Afterlife is bleak (sheol)
- Ends with Babylonian Exile as elites carted off into exile



Temple: blood sacrifice done by priests

- Critically, some stay loyal to YHWH and write numerous texts (including the Torah)

## SECOND TEMPLE JUDAISM (c. 538 BCE - 70 CE)

- Torah becomes central (enabled devotion without a temple during Exile)
  - Become a people set apart (distinguished by vigilant adherence to purity codes)
  - Moses and exodus story are Torah's central narrative (exile --> return)
- Monolatry yields to monotheism (YHWH now creator of universe, not tribal deity)
- Synagogues make faith more portable and democratic
  - Leaders chosen for merit; educates commoners; participatory prayer by all replaces passively watching priest conduct temple sacrifice.
- Satan emerges (contrast II Samuel 24:1 with 1 Chronicles 21:1)
- Idea of a glorious future (new apocalyptic genre)
  - Includes afterlife of heaven and hell
  - End times idea causes earlier Messiah idea ("anointed" one or king) to proliferate
- Higher status of scripture & monotheistic creator god means new Bible books are different
  - First Temple: Prophets write for themselves; hear directly from God; God speaks clearly to everyone; Rewards & punishments affect all of Israel in here and now
  - Second Temple: Texts attributed to past authority figures; hear from angels; God speaks in code to the elect; Rewards & punishments affect individuals in next life

## RABBINIC JUDAISM (post 70 CE - present)

- No temple, no land → Loyalty transferred to Torah
  - Priests replaced by rabbis and mom/dad
- Torah focus fosters Oral Torah (Mishna & Talmud)
  - Bible sacred & closed – now just commentaries
  - Layers of interpretation do not always agree!
    - makes study/argument into a religious act
- Oral Torah attributed to Moses – *authorship & innovation* generally denied in religion
- Anti-semitism partly results from bad timing - Xn gospels written during feud with Jews and need to blame someone other than Romans for Jesus' execution
  - Jews' desire to escape Xn persecution eventually births Zionism and thus Israel (1948)
- Varied responses to Enlightenment creates sects (i.e. Reform, Conservative, Orthodox)

