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THE DISPERSION OF THE JEWS IN  
THE WESTERN WORLD.

A Thesis presented to the  
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Divinity

by

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Picture to yourself a solitary vessel drifting on vast ocean. Neither wind nor wave can harm it. Oft times the mountain-high billows seem to suck it into their swirl, and sink it to the bottom of the sea; but ever again it rides upon the crest of the waves, serenely sailing on its course. Under this metaphor the sages of old conceived the history of the Jews. The Jews are the tiny craft sailing in loneliness across the boundless ocean. Again and again they seem to be completely engulfed by nations; again and again it appears that they will be stricken forever from the list of peoples of the earth, yet they always reappear, rejuvenated, with added numbers, with increased strength.<sup>1</sup>

Quite uniquely the individual Jew is described thus: "To be born a Jew is to be born to a satyric comedy; often to be the clown that is slapped; sometimes to be momentarily the courtier and the next moment the vassal, and always to be immortal who laughs at the Dynasties, Empires and Principalities that fought to destroy him and themselves perished."<sup>2</sup>

Any reader of the Old Testament cannot help but be filled with awe and admiration for God's chosen people. He cannot help but wonder at the great miracle of their history, their Exodus from Egypt by the power and goodness of the almighty God. He cannot help but shudder at the threatenings breathed upon them by that same omnipotent Lord. It is the

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1. A Sketch of Jewish History, Karpeles . . . . . p. 7  
2. The Jews Through the Centuries, H.L.Willetts. . . . . p. 21



realization of one of these threats with which we are here concerned.

Throughout the Old Testament time and again the Lord tells His chosen people; "I will scatter you among the heathen."<sup>1</sup> "And ye shall be removed into all kingdoms of the earth."<sup>2</sup> "I shall scatter them among the nations, and disperse them in the countries."<sup>3</sup> "Yea, Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people."<sup>4</sup>

It is my purpose to show in what manner and to what extent these threatenings of the almighty God were pronounced upon his chosen people, the children of Israel, the Jews. We will consider their dispersion in the Western world. In the early centuries the Jews of Egypt, Palestine, and Asia Minor were called Western Jews in distinction from those who were carried away to Babylon and the plains of Assyria. According to the modern division, the Jews of Egypt, Judea, and Greece are included among the eastern Jews, in distinction to those of Spain, Germany, and England. We here retain the former division.

#### CAUSES OF THE DISPERSION

That we might get a complete picture, we should first mention the greatest hero of antiquity, Alexander the Great. When he made his triumphal march through the world in 334 B.C., he did not pass Jerusalem by. The highpriest and priests of Jerusalem came out of the city to entreat him

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1. Lev. 26,33.  
2. Deut. 28,25.  
3. Ezek. 12,15.  
4. I Kings 9,7.



to deliver them. He spared the city, and gave the Jews the assurance of his favor, and promised them protection against all their oppressors. However, the empire established by Alexander the Great was of short duration. With his successor, the Jews again became the prey of strange nations, especially the Egyptians.<sup>1</sup> During the wars of the second and third centuries B.C., thousands of Jews were made captive and reduced to slavery, passing from owner to owner and land to land. However, through their unswerving attachment to their customs, they proved quite unsatisfactory servants. Many were granted their freedom, and instead of returning to Palestine, remained in the land of their former slavery, and with their brethren in faith, formed communities.<sup>2</sup> In ancient times the Babylonians and Syrians, conquerors of the Jews, deported large masses into various provinces. They did this either to chastise the rebels, or to populate uninhabited parts of their territories.<sup>3</sup> Pompey in 63 B.C. carried off hundreds of Jewish captives to Rome. Yes, all those who survived the destruction of Jerusalem and the desolation of their country were sold as slaves and carried away into every province of the Roman Empire.<sup>4</sup> But *one of* the most important causes of the diaspora was the persecutions. The healing of the lame man in the temple gate precipitated the Sadducean persecution.<sup>5</sup> This was not

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1. A Sketch of Jewish History, G. Karpeles. . . . . p. 29  
2. The Jewish Encyclopedia. . . . . p. 560  
3. Ibid . . . . . p. 561  
4. History of the Jewish Commonwealth, Jahn . . . . . p. 653  
5. Jewish Christianity, Dana. . . . . p. 64



at all harsh. However, when the Pharisees were aroused it became severe, so that the disciples were scattered abroad.<sup>1</sup> Then there was what Luke calls, Acts 8,1 - "a great persecution". Later he adds, Acts 11,19 - "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only." The final blow was rendered in the Herodian persecution, Acts. 12.

There were several other causes, what we might call voluntary causes of the dispersion. There were many adverse conditions in Palestine. It was a small land, and excessively over-populated. It was the battle field for Egypt and Syria. This, together with the restlessness and tendency to travel of that day, caused many of the Jews to welcome invitations to settle elsewhere. When Ptolemy I evacuated Egypt, many of the Jews followed him to his kingdom.<sup>2</sup> The Didachoi and their successors, for the sake of consolidating and uniting their kingdoms, promoted as much as possible the intermingling of various nationalities. Consequently there were many migrations from one province to another. They were frequently in need of ~~many~~ settlers for their newly founded towns, the rights of citizenship and other privileges were therefore often granted without any further questions. The Jews were attracted by these offers.<sup>3</sup> Opportunities for trade or for military service also lured many to other lands.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Jewish Christianity, Dana. . . . . p. 37
  2. The Jewish Encyclopedia. . . . . p. 560
  3. The Jewish People in the Times of Jesus Christ,  
Schuerer. . . . . p. 221
  4. The Jews through the Centuries . . . . . p. 153



The ease and comparative safety of travel also assisted in the Diaspora.<sup>1</sup> The great trade routes of the world all crossed in Palestine and served as pathways leading the Jews to every corner of the world.<sup>2</sup>

#### EXTENT OF THE DISPERSION

Perhaps we should first mention the sources from which we derive our information concerning the extent of the Jewish Diaspora. Of course, our chief source is the New Testament, particularly the Book of Acts (the first twelve chapters), the Epistles of Paul, and between every line of the Synoptic Gospels. Besides this records preserved are due to excavations or occasional occidental finds, shattered remains of synagogues and burial places with few inscriptions, occasional scraps of parchment or papyrus. We have Josephus as historian, Philo as exegete, and all sorts of Apocrypha writings. Documents, literary notices, and excavations all join in giving us much material recording the existence of Jewish colonies in the late Hellenistic and Roman period.

The spread and number of the Jews in the dispersion almost seems unbelievable. To quote Strabo, writing in the reign of Augustus: "Jews were to be found in every city, and that in the whole world it was not easy to find a place where they had not penetrated, and which was not dominated by them."<sup>3</sup> Josephus also tells us that there was no nation

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1. The Apostolic Age, J. H. Ropes . . . . . p. 51  
2. The Mission and Expansion of Christianity. . . . . p. 20  
3. The Beginnings of the Christian Church, Lietzman . p. 95



in the world that had not among its inhabitants part of the Jewish people. A century and a half before our era we hear from the Jewish Sibyl this lament of Israel: "Crowding with thy numbers every ocean and country - Yet an offense to all around thy presence and thy customs."<sup>1</sup> And in the Sibyl we read of the Jews:

"Every land is full of thee, and every sea  
All men take offense at thy customs."<sup>2</sup>

A critical examination reveals that in both Egypt and Syria there may have been well near a million Jews. In Palestine about 500,000, and in the rest of the Roman Empire at least 1,500,000. If there were 55,000,000 in the empire, at least 7% were Jews.<sup>3</sup>

As we mentioned before, the New Testament is our richest source of material. From the book of Acts we learn that on the day of Pentecost there were present Jews from all parts of the Diaspora, "devout men from every nation under heaven".<sup>4</sup> In more detail it mentions: "Parthians, and Medes, and Edomites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and in Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia. Phrygia and Pamphylia in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."<sup>5</sup> As we shall see later, there was only one city in all of Paul's

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1. Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus. . . . . p. 5,6
  2. Lietzman, op. cit. . . . . p. 93
  3. The Beginnings of the Christian Church, Lietzman. . . p. 97
  4. Jewish Christianity, Dana . . . . . p. 129
  5. Acts 2,9-11.



journeys in which he did not find a synagogue, namely, Philippi. The extent of the dispersion is also implied in John's Gospel where the Pharisees are conspiring to get rid of Jesus; they say: "Whither shall this man go that we shall not find him?"<sup>1</sup> James addresses himself to the twelve tribes of the dispersion. So he seems to indicate that there were Jews from all twelve tribes.

Philo seems to be exaggerating when he says that in many sections the Jews were almost as abundant as the native population.<sup>2</sup> We quote from Agrippa's letter to Caligula: "She (Jerusalem) is my native city, the mother city not only of Judea alone, but (also) of the greatest number (of others) on account of the colonies which she sent forth from time to time into adjacent lands, Egypt, Phenicia, Syria, both the other and also the section called Coele Syria, also those scattered from away, Pamphylia, Cilicia, most parts of (the Roman province of) Asia up to Bithynia and the nooks of Pontus; in the same way also into Europe, viz., Thessaly, Boeotia, Macedonia, Aetolia, Attica, Argos, Corinth, the most and best parts of the Pelopennesus. And not only the continents are full of the Jewish colonies (or settlements) but also the most notable of the islands, such as Euboea, Cyprus, Crete. I say nothing of those beyond the Euphrates."<sup>3</sup> Jewish communities as that in Alexandria were to be found in Ptolemaius, Caeserea, Dora, Appolonia, Jamnia, Azotus, Ascalon, Gaza, Anthedon, Phasaelis, and others crowded along the coast;

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1. John 7, 35.

2. The Beginnings of the Christian Church, Lietzman. p. 97

3. Philo, Legatio ad Gaium, c. 36

The Biblical Review, Vol. 10. . . . . p. 546



Antipatris and Sebaste lay further inland, and Archelais in the Jordan valley.<sup>1</sup> Important places in the Jewish Diaspora in the days of Caesar and Augustus were: Alexandria, Sidon, Tyre, Ascalon, Paros, Delos, Cos, Lesbos, in the Aegean; Ephesus, the Roman capital of her province in Asia, Sardis, Laodicea, Tralles, Miletus, Pergamum, Holicarnassus, Cyrene and Cyrenaica, Ancyra (now Angora) in Galatia, and Rhodés.<sup>2</sup>

### JEWS IN PALESTINE

In the year 168 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.) made his second expedition against Egypt. This campaign was very successful, but he was robbed of the fruits of his victory by the intervention of Rome. Having been greatly humiliated, he determined to avenge his humiliation on the Jews. Appolonius, obeying the orders of Antiochus, advanced upon Jerusalem, entered the city on the Sabbath, butchered the inhabitants, carried off women and children to be sold as slaves. A royal edict suspended the practise of the Jewish religion on pain of death.<sup>3</sup> This really was the beginning of all the trouble in Palestine in the first century. We cannot go in to detail in this connection, but the following events occurred in succession. Pompey subdues Judea and imposed tribute. Julius Caesar granted them a partial exemption. They were freed from taxes on the Sabbatical year for the land was not cultivated during that year. The Jews expected Herod to grant them complete exemption but

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1. History of N. T. Times in Palestine. S. Mathews. . . p. 156  
2. Biblical Rev. op. cit. . . . . p. 546  
3. The History of the Jewish People, Margolis & Marx . p. 184



they were disappointed.<sup>1</sup>

About the middle of the first century many tumults arose between the Jews and their rulers. They were usually caused by the cruelty of the governors whose demands were often inhuman. The Jews rebelled. They succeeded in driving Florus, from Jerusalem. Agrippa came to that city after the tumult and he was respected by the people. However, before long the insurgent party again had the upper hand, and Agrippa had to leave. The rebels captured Masada and killed the Roman garrison. In the summer of 66 A.D. the captain of the temple, Eleazar, son of the highpriest Ananias, forbade the sacrifice for <sup>the</sup> Rome<sup>emperor</sup> to be continued. The war was then on.<sup>2</sup> Agrippa sent 3,000 horsemen upon the rebels, who had set fire to his palace.<sup>3</sup>

In the meantime massacres of the Jews broke out in every city of Palestine. The army of Certius attacked Tyre and killed 8,400.<sup>4</sup> At Askelon 2,500 were slain. Two thousand were slain and many were imprisoned at Ptolemias.<sup>5</sup> At Scythopolis the Jews tried to be friendly to the rest of the inhabitants. However, their enemies would not believe their attitude. To prove their friendship, they asked the Jews to go with their families outside of the city for a short time. Having spent two quiet nights without the city,

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1. Jahn . . . . . p. 517  
 2. Josephus and the Jews, Jackson . . . . . p. 184  
 3. Jahn . . . . . p. 455  
 4. The Works of Flavius Josephus, Whiston . . . . . p. 718  
 5. Ibid. . . . . p. 716



the third night was disturbed as the people of the city fell upon them. They killed about 13,000 and plundered all they possessed.<sup>1</sup> By far the worst massacres occurred at Caesarea. in 66 A.D. in the twelfth year of the reign of Nero, the second year of procuratorship of Florus, an imperial edict arrived in Caesarea, by which Syrian and Greek inhabitants were raised above Jews.<sup>2</sup> The Jews were then continuously insulted by the other inhabitants. The synagogue of Caesarea stood near a plot of ground which Jews were going to purchase at a great price. However, the owner refused to sell to them, and instead built a factory which blocked every access to the synagogue.<sup>3</sup> The Jews of Caesarea were further insulted when a Greek placed a pot turned upwards at the door of the synagogue and sacrificed birds upon it. This led to a riot.<sup>4</sup> After this incident twelve distinguished Jews went to Florus to air their grievances. He immediately had them put in prison, and took the sacred books. Another tumult arose. Soldiers were sent out and plundered the Jewish market, and also went into private homes. Many publicans who held the rank of Roman knights were dragged before Florus scourged and crucified. Nearly 3,600 Jews lost their lives in this disturbance.<sup>5</sup> According to Josephus several massacres in this city, and as many as 20,000 were killed.<sup>6</sup>

Thus throughout Palestine uprisings occurred in every

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1. The Works of Flavius Josephus, Whiston . . . . .	p. 715
2. Ibid. . . . .	p. 716
3. Josephus and the Jews . . . . .	p. 182
4. Ibid. . . . .	p. 183
5. Jahn. . . . .	p. 453
6. Foakes Jackson. . . . .	p. 185



city. These uprisings brought upon the Jews untold suffering, climaxed in the destruction of Jerusalem 70 A.D. Titus had succeeded his father Vespasian, and came to Jerusalem with four legions. Wall after wall was battered down, the daily sacrifice in the Temple was stopped, and finally most of the city went up in flames. The sufferings in that city must have been terrible. According to Josephus 115,880 dead bodies were carried out through one gate between the months of Nizan and Tammuz. Before the close of the war 600,000 dead were taken from the city. Then too, many of the inhabitants were carried off and sold as slaves in Roman markets. But for incidental events in the next few years the fall of Jerusalem may be called the end of the Jewish War of the first century.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE DISPERSION ACCORDING TO ST. PAUL

In order to chart our course as we consider the dispersion of the first century, it seems most logical to follow Paul on his various missionary journeys. After locating the Jews in all the cities which he visited, we can discuss those inhabiting the cities which this apostle never reached.

It was in the year 43 A.D. that the apostle Paul took up his work as a colaborer with Barnabas at the congregation at Antioch in Syria. It was at that time the third largest city of the Roman Empire.<sup>2</sup> Antioch was the capital of Syria and one of its favorite resorts.<sup>3</sup> It's very location, we might say, was on the border between the Palestinian and Gentile world. It was only natural that there should be

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1. Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. VII. . . . . p. 127  
2. Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah . . . p. 74  
3. Ibid. . . . . p. 74



found one of the largest Jewish settlements outside of Palestine.<sup>1</sup> We could speculate for quite some time as to how the Jews arrived there in such vast numbers, but all the afore mentioned causes of the Diaspora combined to make this an important Jewish settlement. We might also mention an incident occuring many years before. The Persian King, Artaxerxes Ochus, on his return from his Egyptian campaign (about 340 B.C.) brought with him many Jewish captives and placed them along the Caspian Sea, and throughout Syria, especially at Antioch.<sup>2</sup> Voluntary additions must have added thousands. The Jews obtained privileges from the kings of Asia. Seleucus Nicator (311-280 B.C.) made them citizens in those cities he had built in Asia, lower Syria, and Antioch. He gave them privileges equal to those of the Macedonians and Greeks.<sup>3</sup>

Wherever the Jews were granted equal rights with the Macedonians and Greeks, there was found friction. It took little to stir up one group against another, and false accusations were always abundant. Though many great insurrections appeared in Antioch between 66 - 70, the imperial government persevered in its policy of toleration. It turned a deaf ear to the supplications of Greeks in Antioch, who demanded the expulsion of the Jews, or at least the abolition of their privileges.<sup>4</sup>

The insurrections and controversies between the various groups often took on a violent form. At one time, Antiochus,

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1. Jewish Christianity, Dana . . . . . p. 88
  2. Schuerer, the Jewish People at the Times of J.. p. 223
  3. The Works of Flavius Josephus . . . . . p. 360
  4. Radin, the Jews Among the Greeks and Romans . . p. 563



son of the archon of the Antiochian Jews, went to an assembly of Greeks in the theatre and falsely accused his father and several other Jews of a design to burn the city. Upon this, some of the Jews were immediately brought to the theater and burnt. The market was also burnt. However, an attempt to exterminate the Jews completely could not be made. This rumor was proven to be false, and it was found that the market had been burnt by debtors who sought to destroy the bonds in the archives.<sup>1</sup> Under Titus (70 A.D.) the Jews were accused of starting a serious fire. When the emperor came to investigate these insurrections, he was greeted by throngs enthusiastic for him to revoke the privileges of the Jews, and that they should be expelled. Titus refused to listen and left Jews in Antioch with their former position. Titus, according to Josephus, is to have said: "Their own country, to which as Jews they ought to be banished, has been destroyed, and not another place could now receive them."<sup>2</sup> We are also given an inkling as to their number in Antioch by Josephus who describes the synagogue at Antioch at quite some length. He mentions it as being particularly elegant. To this synagogue the successors of Antiochus Epiphanes had presented the sacred vessels of brass which Antiochus had carried off from the temple of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> It was from the city of Antioch that Paul and Barnabas were sent out on their missionary journeys. All the information we have of their journey's we find in the New Testament. However, conditions in the various sections and

- 
1. Jahn, History of the Hebrew Commonwealth. . . . p. 496
  2. Josephus and the Jews, Foakes Jackson . . . . p. 222
  3. Schuerer, the Jewish People at times of Christ. p. 273



cities which they visited are explained to us at quite some length by profane historians.

The earliest cities visited by Paul on his first missionary journey were Salamis and Paphos on the island of Cyprus. Many causes joined to bring the Jews to this island, however, Luke in the Book of Acts mentions one cause in particular: "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch...."<sup>1</sup> Philo tells us that Jews were found in almost all the islands of the Grecian Archipelago and the Mediterranean Sea, in quite large numbers.<sup>2</sup> From the New Testament their number is only indicated by the fact the "synagogues" of the Jews of Salamis are mentioned.<sup>3</sup> However, from profane history we learn that the Jews in Cyprus were so numerous that they rebelled, overturned the local government, and slew hundreds in protest to the drastic program of Hadrian in Palestine.<sup>4</sup> There occurred a regular war of extermination. Two hundred and forty thousand inhabitants of Cyprus are to have been massacred by the Jews. Finally the Romans subdued these Jews and passed an edict that no Jew should settle on this island under the severest penalty. Eusebius confines this massacre to the city of Salamis,<sup>5</sup> but it hardly seems possible that the rest of the island was not involved.

From Cyprus Paul and Barnabas visited the cities of

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1. Acts 11, 19,20.
  2. Schuerer, The Jewish People at the Times of Christ . p. 232
  3. Acts 13,5.
  4. The Jews through the Centuries, Willett. . . . . p. 281
  5. Jahn, History of the Hebrew Commonwealth . . . . . p. 529f.



Asia Minor: Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, derbe, and Attalia. From the New Testament we learn little as to the number of Jews in these sections. However, we do find a synagogue in every one of these cities which Paul visited. They must have been quite numerous. Already at the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, we read that the Jews were inclined to treat Hellenism rather contemptuously, that is, they insisted on maintaining a strong wall of partition (religiously) between themselves and other peoples. To remove this wall, Antiochus attempted to suppress the Jewish religion by force. However, every attempt to do so only proved a failure.<sup>1</sup> In the dominion of the Seleucidae, the toleration of Jewish communities and their religion was simply a matter of course. The first of them conferred important political privileges upon the Jews who resided within their kingdom.<sup>2</sup> Caesar enlarged upon these privileges given to the Jews. After him Dolabella, a supporter of Antony, who in 43 B.C. took possession of Asia Minor, and ratified the privilege of exemption from military service and of observing their own religious service, both of which had been given by Caesar.<sup>3</sup>

The number of Jews in these cities of Asia Minor can in no manner be definitely determined. Perhaps Luke gives us an inkling as to their number when he says: "Many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas."<sup>4</sup> Or

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1. Schuerer. . . . .p.256  
 2. Ibid. . . . .p.281  
 3. Ibid. . . . .p.259  
 4. Acts 13, 42.43.



again, "A great multitude of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed."<sup>1</sup> However, their number seems to have been small at Iconium, or at least they were not at all on their own, for they had to stir up devout and honorable men and women of the city to take action against Paul and Barnabas.<sup>2</sup>

Their existence in these cities for a long time seems apparent from the fact that they had intermarried.<sup>3</sup> The Jews throughout the diaspora were expected to pay a didrachma per head for a single year. If the sums confiscated by the propretor, Flaccus, in 62, represent actually that tax, we may draw the inference that in Asia Minor the Jewish population numbered 45,000 males, or a total of at least 180,000 persons. The sum confiscated amounted to more than 120 lbs. of gold.<sup>4</sup>

Many Jews were also found in Phrygia and Lydia. According to Josephus, Antiochus III, (the Great), transported 2,000 Jewish families to these countries from Babylonia.<sup>5</sup> By making them planters and taxgatherers he stabilized conditions among the seditious inhabitants of that region.<sup>6</sup> It is only natural to suppose that for reasons of trade or other privileges they migrated to the other Greek towns.

On Paul's second missionary journey he visited the towns near Lydia and Phrygia. He visited Philippi, one of the

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1. Acts 14,1.

2. Acts 13,50ff.

3. Acts 16,1 -- "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek."

4. The Jewish Encyclopedia. . . . . p.562

5. The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism, Lods . . . . . p.202

6. The New Testament World, Dana. . . . . p.254



chief cities of Macedonia. Philippi is the only city which Paul visited where there was no synagogue. Luke writes: "And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city on the river side, where prayer was want to be made."<sup>1</sup> Thessalonica, Berea and Athens are mentioned as having a synagogue, but no further information is given as to the number of their Jewish inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

At Corinth Paul also found a synagogue of the Jews. The door posts of a synagogue have been found at Corinth on which ~~stands~~<sup>is inscribed</sup> the name of the congregation - "Synagogue of the Hebrews". This inscription is in Greek which shows how the Jews accepted the Greek language.<sup>3</sup> Luke tells us that the chief ruler of this synagogue was Sosthenes.<sup>4</sup> He also tells us that "the Jews with one accord made insurrection against Paul and brought him to the judgement seat, saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship contrary to the law. When Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you."<sup>5</sup> Gallio refused to take action against Paul as he was brought before him by the Jews. Their number was large enough to cause insurrection, but hardly large enough to take the law in their own hands as they did at Cyprus. At Corinth Paul became acquainted with Aquila and

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1. Acts 16,12.13.

2. Acts 17,1 - "...they came to Thessalonica where was a synagogue of the Jews." Acts 17,10 - "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea, who coming thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews. Acts 17,16.17. at Athens "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews."

3. The Beginnings of the Christian Church, Lietzmann. p. 113

4. Acts 18,17.

5. Acts 18,12



Priscilla. This in itself is not important, but Luke, in a parenthetical remark gives us the reason for their coming to Corinth, "because that Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome."<sup>1</sup>

From Corinth Paul proceeded to Ephesus. We have a note concerning the Jews in this city from a very early date. The rights of citizenship were conferred upon them by Antiochus II (261-246 B.C.).<sup>2</sup> At the same time it was granted to the Jews of many of the other Ionian cities.<sup>3</sup> Even from Luke we gather quite some information about these Jews. That is, quite some, in compared to the many cities of which he mentions only the fact that they had a synagogue. We are informed that certain vagabond Jews sought to cast out evil spirits.<sup>4</sup> At Ephesus there was also quite some stir against the Jews for they opposed the worship of the Ephesian goddess, Diana, and thus ruined the business of a certain silversmith, Demetrius.<sup>5</sup> The townclerk informed Demetrius that he should be careful in his action against the Jews, and warned him to closely follow the steps of the law in his actions. Perhaps the clerk was moved to do this

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1. Acts 18,1ff.

2. Lietzmann. . . . . p. 113

3. 'Marcus Brutus (42 B.C.) planning to march against Antony and Octavianus, had Ephesus issue a public edict saying that the Jews were not to be interfered with in the observance of the Sabath and their own sacred usages. Dolabela, a supporter of Antony in 43 B.C., took possession of Asia Minor, ratified privilege of exemption from military service, and of observing their own religious service. Therefore he had sent this communication to the authorities at Ephesus.

4. Acts 19,13.

5. Acts 19,21ff.



by the number of Jews in that city. Surely he would not have informed him to take such precaution if the Jews were far in the minority and had no influence whatsoever.

In the New Testament we find another reference to the Jews of all these cities of Asia Minor and Ionia, and Macedonia, namely, the Epistle of James. James was written to the Jews of the dispersion. It gives us no indication as to where they were located. But it is addressed to the Jewish Christians in the Hellenistic world.<sup>1</sup>

### JEWIS IN ROME

In Rome, the capitol of the then known world, we find many traces of Jewish inhabitants. Already at the time of Augustus they numbered into the thousands. Josephus tells us that 8,000 Roman Jews joined the embassy which came from Palestine to Rome in 4 B.C.<sup>2</sup> This embassy, made up of fifty men, was sent to Rome with the petition that they might live according to their own laws.<sup>3</sup> Suetonius informs us that at the death of Caesar, a great number of Roman Jews made lamentations at his bier during entire nights.<sup>4</sup> Luke bear witness to the existence of a large number of Jews in Rome, and to their organization, when he writes and quotes the words of Paul, "And it came to pass that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when

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1. Jewish Christianity, Dana. . . . . p. 104ff.  
 2. Schuerer. . . . . p. 235  
 3. The Works of Flavius Josephus, Whiston . . . . . p. 538  
 4. Schuerer, op. cit. . . . . p. 235



they were come together he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans."<sup>1</sup> Luke mentions many other things which testify to the existence of Jews in Rome.

Other N. T. testimony to this fact, is the Epistle to the Hebrews. It evidently was written to console the Jewish Christians of a Roman congregation in the face of the complete divorcement of Christianity from Judaism.<sup>2</sup>

The spread of the Jews in Rome is also evidenced by their burying grounds. The inscriptions on the tombstones almost write the history of the race. Some of these cemeteries have been only recently discovered. In 1602, Bosio discovered a small cemetery before the Porta Portuensis. This was the burial place of the Jews of Trastevere. A large cemetery was discovered around 1860 on the via Appia in the Vigna Rondanini. Many Roman Jewish inscriptions were found there. In 1866 or 1867 a Jewish cemetery was also discovered in the vineyard of Count Cimarra, also on the Via Appia. A Jewish cemetery on the Via Lubicana, in the neighborhood of Esquinal and Viminal, was found in 1883. From a Jewish cemetery in Porto, at the mouth of the Tiber, which has been known for a long time, we get many epitaphs. The date of all these cemeteries cannot be definitely determined, but we are quite safe in saying they existed or came into being between the second and fourth centuries.<sup>3</sup> On

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1. Edersheim. . . . . p. 70  
2. Jewish Christianity, Dana. . . . . p. 22,23.  
3. Schuerer . . . . . p. 240



these many tombstones we find the names of many Jewish syn-  
agogue dignitaries in every center of population.<sup>1</sup> All these  
testify to the existence of a great number of Jews at Rome.

Synagogues and their inscriptions also testify to the  
spread of the Jews in Rome. Inscriptions inform us that  
the Jews were divided into a large number of separate and  
independently organized communities (συναγωγαι), each having  
its own synagogue, gerousia, and public officials.<sup>2</sup> From  
inscriptions we have become acquainted with seven of these  
synagogues. Three bear the names Augustus, Agrippa, and  
Volumnius. They undoubtedly assumed these names because  
they had these rulers as their patrons, or because the  
worshippers were chiefly their attendants and clients.  
Others derived their names from the camps in which they stood.<sup>3</sup>  
The prominent part the Jews play in the insurrections at the  
time of Nero, Vespasian and Trajan also testify to their  
importance.<sup>4</sup>

On very thorough study, Edersheim informs us that there  
were about 40,000 Jews in Rome at the time of Augustus, and  
about 60,000 at the time of Tiberius. He adds that they  
were found in every profession of that day,<sup>5</sup> and they had  
worked their way into every class of society.<sup>6</sup>

Having seen the existence of a large Jewish population  
of Rome, we must ask, how and when did these Jews settle

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1. Edersheim. . . . . p. 240  
2. Schuerer . . . . . p. 69  
3. Ibid. . . . . p. 248  
4. Ibid . . . . . p. 229  
5. Edersheim. . . . . p. 68  
6. Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelisu-Dill. p. 83



there? It is really impossible to fix a definite date, but for our purpose, we trace the first settlement to about 139 B.C., when Simon the Maccabee sent an embassy to Rome to renew the treaty of amity between the Senate and Judea. These ambassadors brought back a Senatorial decree, which recognized the independence of the Jewish state and commended the Jewish People to be friendly with all the kingdoms and principalities of the East within the sphere of Roman power.<sup>1</sup> It is very probable that some of these ambassadors settled at Rome. They were expelled from that city because it was reported that they attempted to infect the Romans with their own cult.<sup>2</sup>

We know definitely that in the wars under Pompey, Cassius, and Antonius, many Jews were brought captive to Rome and sold as slaves.<sup>3</sup> Especially after Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem in 63 B.C., numerous Jewish prisoners of war were brought to this capitol. Here they were sold as slaves. However, because of the inconvenience to their masters which their strict adherence to Jewish ceremonies caused, they proved quite unsatisfactory as slaves.<sup>4</sup> How far they went can be seen from Josephus who tells us of two of his Jewish friends (priests) who refused to eat anything but figs and nuts; so as to avoid the defilement of Gentile food.<sup>5</sup> These slaves which proved unsatisfactory

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1. A History of the Jewish People, M & M . . . . . p. 150  
2. Ibid. . . . . p. 287  
3. Edersheim . . . . . p. 67  
4. Schuerer. . . . . p. 234  
5. Edersheim . . . . . p. 67



were not led to execution, but were sent back home or remained in Rome for whatever fortunes might await them.<sup>1</sup> Philo attributes the origin of the Jewish community in Rome to the released prisoners of this war. However, the political importance which this community had already acquired in the proceedings against Flaccus (59 B.C.) shows that it did not consist of a few captives brought by Pompey, but rather prisoners made in earlier wars, perhaps the wars in Asia Minor.<sup>2</sup>

The released prisoners who desired to remain in Rome were assigned a locality on the right bank of the Tiber. After this first community was filled, a second quarter sprung up outside the gate of Capena along the Appian Way. This settlement extended as far as the gate of Egeria. Here the greatest number of Jews resided during the time of the empire.<sup>3</sup> Juvenal jests at the fact, that the sacred grave of Egeria, was leased to Jews and swarmed with Jewish beggars.<sup>4</sup> The two hills of Janiculum and Vatican were inhabited by Egyptian merchants and Jews,<sup>5</sup> but they were forced to move from the Vatican by the Pontiffs who preferred that hill.<sup>6</sup> Augustus assigned to the Jews a special quarter, the "14th region" across the Tiber, which stretched from the slope of the Vatican onwards across the Tiber island. This seems to have been their poor quarter. (Shown by poor burying grounds, no paintings.) The more exclusive Jewish section

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1. Stanley, History of the Jewish Church . . . . . p. 234-359
  2. The Jewish Encyclopedia . . . . . p. 561
  3. A History of the Jewish People, M & M . . . . . p. 291
  4. Schuerer. . . . . p. 239
  5. Jahn, History of the Heb. Commonwealth. . . . . p. 664
  6. Ibid. . . . . p. 670



seems to have been by the Porta Capena, where the Appian Way entered the city. Fine burial grounds with many paintings bear this out.<sup>1</sup> All in all there were eight large Jewish communities in Rome.<sup>2</sup>

Because the Jews came in such large numbers to Rome, and because of their customs, it is only natural that the Roman aristocracy in general despised the Jews. However, some of the aristocrats delighted in them. We find direct relations between the Jews and the Imperial court from the time of Augustus on. Under Nero, the Empress Poppaea seems to have been inclined toward Judaism.<sup>3</sup> Many edicts in their favor provided that they were not to be disturbed in their religious ceremonies, nor in the observance of their sabbaths and feasts. The annual temple tribute was allowed to be sent to Jerusalem. (Cf. p.30) They objected to bear arms or march on the Sabbath so they were freed from military service. They were not obliged to appear in courts of law on their holy days. Augustus provided that when the public distribution of corn or money fell on the Sabbath, the Jews were to receive their share on the following day. Similarly the Roman authorities confirmed a decree by which the founder of Antioch, Seleucus I, had granted the Jews the right of citizenship in all the countries of Asia Minor and Syria which he had built, and the privilege of receiving, instead of the oil that was distributed, which their religion forbade them to use, an equivalent in money.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Edersheim. . . . . p. 69  
 2. Eight Jewish communities of Rome: 1. Αγιοθηόλου 2. Αρκετωνου  
 3. Νηβουμαδου after Volumentius, prefect of Syria under Augustus: 4. Κουμμοιου (from the field of Mars): 5. Ευβορηου  
 Subura: 6. Εβραίου (Samaritans, Palestinians): 7. Ελιας  
 (Velia, Elia); 8. Καρκαρηθίου.  
 3. Scheurer. . . . . p.239  
 4. Edersheim . . . . . p. 71



With so many edicts favoring the Jews, it is not difficult to understand their rapid spread throughout Rome. There were no laws to hamper their spread except in the brief period under Tiberius (19 A.D.) Then, at the instigation of Sejanus, he expelled the Jews from Rome and Italy.<sup>1</sup> It seems that a fraudulent practise by some unscrupulous Jews caused this expulsion. Four Jews, claiming to be instructors, persuaded Fulvia, a woman of great dignity, to send purple and gold to the temple at Jerusalem. They obtained these materials and took them for their own use. Tiberius was informed of this by Saturninus, the husband of Fulvia. He then banished the Jews from Rome.<sup>2</sup> At this time also the consuls took 4,000 Jewish men and sent them to Sardinia to combat the brigands. Tiberius at that time said: "Either these wretches will perish, and they will be no loss to the empire; or they will subdue the robbers who infest that land."<sup>3</sup> (Perhaps they formed a nucleus to Jewish community in that land). That 4,000 Jews capable of bearing arms were available, gives us a bit of an inkling as to their number in Rome. In spite of the repressive measures adopted by Tiberius, there is no reason to believe that the Jews left Rome. Many must have remained their secretly. At any rate, twenty years later, Philo found a large community there, ready to support him in his mission on behalf of his Egyptian countrymen.<sup>4</sup> We know that Sejanus was removed from office in

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1. A History of the Jewish People, M & M . . . . . p. 288  
2. The Works of Flavius Josephus, W. Whiston . . . . . p. 549  
3. Jahn, History of the Hebrew Commonwealth. . . . . p. 671  
4. Edersheim. . . . . p. 72



31 and after that the Jews were permitted to return.<sup>1</sup> After the overthrow of Tiberius, he perceived that the Jews had been slandered without cause by Sejanus, and commanded the authorities in all places not to molest the Jews nor prevent the practise of their customs.<sup>2</sup>

Another attempt was made to banish the Jews under Claudius (41 - 54). When he commenced his reign he issued an edict of toleration for the Jews. However, towards the end of his reign, owing to disturbances created by Jewish opposition to the Christian propagandists and because members of his own household had become adherents to Judaism, gatherings in the synagogues were forbidden.<sup>3</sup> Odian writes that Claudius closed the synagogues and wanted to banish the Jews but their number was too great.<sup>4</sup> It is true that Judaism had already won many proselytes, and thus was too much intertwined with Roman life to be completely suppressed, however Suetonius says Claudius did banish them.<sup>5</sup> This is confirmed by the New Testament, "because that Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome."<sup>6</sup> The Edict of Expulsion had no lasting consequences. When Paul was imprisoned in Rome (59-61), we find the Jews well established. They were even governed by their own council.<sup>7</sup>

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1. A History of the Jewish People. M & M . . . . . p. 289
  2. Schuerer. . . . . p. 236
  3. M & M op. cit. . . . . p. 289
  4. Jahn's History of the Hebrew Commonwealth . . . p. 673
  5. *Judaeos impulsare Chresto assidue tumultantes Roma expulit.* Schuerer . . . . . p. 236
  6. Acts 18,2. Orosius says this occurred in the 9th year of Claudius which would make it about 50 A.D. This suits Luke's narrative very well. (Luke the Historian)
  7. Jahn, History of the Hebrew Commonwealth . . . p. 676



One practise of the Jews which continually offended the Romans, was their payment of the annual temple tax. The Romans disapproved of these large sums of gold being sent to Jerusalem. Flaccius, during his rule, confiscated the sum collected in Asia Minor for this purpose. However, later edicts of Caesar, confirmed by Augustus, authorized the practise both as to Rome and the provinces. When the cities of Asia Minor tried to oppose it, Agrippa intervened in favor of the Jews. A series of edicts broke the resistance of the Greek cities.<sup>1</sup> Late in the first century the half shekel temple tax was done away with in Rome, as far as Jerusalem was concerned. This tax was now paid to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. The Jews were outraged. This ordinance, being rigorously enforced, led to mean persecutions at the hands of the informers. These outrages were stopped by Nerva (96-98). This tax continued to be levied even in times of Christian emperors, until it was abolished by Julian the apostate. (361-363).<sup>2</sup>

#### JEWS THROUGHOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Having thus far confined our discussion of the Jews in Rome, it is well that we now direct our attention to the Jews throughout the Roman Empire. We might call Rome the nursery of the Jews in the far western part of the then known world. From there they spread throughout the rest of Italy. We find them well-established at Cremona, Mantua,

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1. The Jewish Encyclopedia. . . . . p. 566  
2. A History of the Jewish People, M & M . . . . . p. 291



Bologna, and Ferrara.<sup>1</sup> Cicero informs us that the yearly offerings from Rome went out not only from Rome, but from other cities of Italy.<sup>2</sup> Next to the Jewish community in Rome, that of Puteoli (Dikaarchia) is presumably the most ancient in Italy. This was the chief trading port of Italy with the East. Jews were found there as early as 4 B.C. immediately after the death of Herod the Great.<sup>3</sup> There was also a Christian Church here as early as 61 A.D. "And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium; and after one day the southwind blew, and we came the next day to Puetoli, where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days."<sup>4</sup> The city of Pompey had Jewish inhabitants when in 79 it was buried beneath the lava and cinder of Mt. Vesuvius.<sup>5</sup>

Not only in the cities of Italy do we find such Jewish communities, but we are told that at the time of Augustus there was no city of any importance in the empire that did not possess its Jewish quarter.<sup>6</sup> The entire history of the apostle Paul also testifies to the vast spread of Jews throughout the Roman Empire.

It might be well for us now to consider the relationship between Jews and emperors and also their attitude toward the common people. They recognized the fact that they were strangers in a strange land. This made them loyal to

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1. Jahn, History of the Hebrew Commonwealth. . . . p. 677  
 2. Ibid. . . . . p. 671  
 3. Schuerer. . . . . p. 241  
 4. Acts 28,13.14.  
 5. A History of the Jewish People, M & M . . . . p. 291  
 6. Mathews, A History of N.T. Times in Palestine . . p. 157



the ruling powers and procured them the protection of kings and Caesars.<sup>1</sup> The good will of the emperors and rulers toward the Jews is manifest in the many edicts in their favor. These numerous edicts in turn testify to the vast number of Jews spread throughout the empire. It was Caesar and Augustus who were chiefly responsible for the Jews formal recognition within the Roman Empire.<sup>2</sup> Caesar had prohibited foreign "collegia", but made a distinct exception in the case of the Jews.<sup>3</sup> Such communities of other races often were used for political purposes, and therefore abolished by Augustus.<sup>4</sup> Judaism acquired a legal standing, and it came to be treated as a religio licita throughout the whole extent of the Roman Empire.<sup>5</sup> Josephus has given us a large number of public enactments, partly decrees of the Senate, partly decrees of Caesar and Augustus, and partly those of certain Roman officials or municipal authorities of that period. All of these have as their object the securing to the Jews the free observance of their own religion, or further confirmation of some other privilege.<sup>6</sup> They were given free observance of their Sabbath. Free exercise of all of the customs of their fathers was legally assured to them. (Only one custom was ever prohibited, and that was only for a short time under Hadrian, the custom of circumcision. This was one of the causes of the revolt in 132.)<sup>7</sup> To illustrate how the Jews were favored by some rulers I quote

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1. Edersheim. . . . .	p. 75
2. Schuerer . . . . .	p. 257
3. The Jewish Encyclopedia. . . . .	p. 563
4. Schuerer . . . . .	p. 258
5. Ibid. . . . .	p. 259
6. Ibid. . . . .	p. 257
7. The Jewish Encyclopedia. . . . .	p. 565



from Josephus:

"Julius Caesar, praetor (consul) of Rome, to the magistrates, senate, and people of the Parians, sendeth greeting. The Jews of Delos, and some other Jews that sojourn there, in the presence of your ambassadors, signified to us, that by a decree of yours, you forbid them to amke use of the customs of their forefathers and their way of sacred worship. Now it does not please me that such decrees should be made against our friends and confederates, whereby they are forbidden to live according to their own customs, or to bring in contributions to common suppers and holy festivals, while they are not forbidden so to do even at Rome itself for even Gaius Caesar, our imperator and consul, in that decree wherein he forbade the Bacchanal rioters to meet in the city, did yet permit these Jews, and these only, both to bring in their contributions, and to make their common suppers. Accordingly, when I forbid other Bacchanal rioters, I permit these Jews to gather themselves together, according to the customs and laws of their forefathers, and to persist therein. It will be therefore good for you, that if you have any decree against these our friends and confederates, to abrogate the same, by reason of their virtue, and kind disposition toward us." (Ant. Book 14, Chap. 10.)

Beside the right to observe all the customs of their fathers, the Jews were given many other privileges. In the quarters in which they lived they were permitted to erect association halls (synagogues) for purposes of common worship and reading of the law.<sup>1</sup> Jewish communities were also given the right to administer their own funds and to levy taxes, to defray common expense, especially in connection with the synagogue. The principle tax was that of a didrachma, an annual poll tax of a Tyrian half shekel (2 Greek drachmas) payable by each adult male member, and destined to sustain the treasury of the temple in Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> They likewise possessed the privilege of settling their own legal affairs. They had their own judges, and their own code of laws. Contrary to information given in the Jewish Encyclopedia it seems apparent from certain N.T. examples,<sup>3</sup> that the Jews exercised

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1. The Jewish Encyclopedia. . . . . p. 564  
2. Ibid. . . . . p. 266  
3. Ibid. . . . . p. 567



not only civil, but even criminal jurisdiction over the members of their community: Gallio watches the Jews maltreat Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue;<sup>1</sup> Paul has converts put in prison and scourged.<sup>2</sup> Every Jewish community was authorized, at least tacitly, to form for itself an autonomous organization -- administrative, financial, and judicial. Because they were forbidden to bear arms or march more than 2,000 cubits on the Sabbath<sup>3</sup> they were exempt from military service, possibly on consideration of a pecuniary indemnity. This principle was proclaimed by the Pompeians in the year 49.<sup>4</sup> In localities where all the above privileges were legally established, they could not be expelled except by means of a formal decision issued by the supreme authority.<sup>5</sup>

Among the most important right of the Jews, was his right to hold Roman citizenship. This made him subject only to the Roman court. It made him exempt from any degrading punishment such as scourging and crucifixion. It gave him the right to appeal against any sentence to the emperor himself.<sup>6</sup> Even during the great Vespasian War, Titus declined to give in to the request of the people of Antioch to deprive the Jews of citizenship.<sup>7</sup>

Relation between Jews and various emperors:

Caesar - After the battle of Pharsalus and the death of Pompey (48), Hyrcanus and his minister Antipater, openly

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1. Acts 18,17.  
 2. Acts 22,19; 26,11.  
 3. Schuerer. . . . . p. 264  
 4. The Jewish Encyclopedia . . . . . p. 567  
 5. Ibid. . . . . p. 564  
 This procedure was followed by Tiberius in Rome; under Trajan in Cyprus; under Hadrian in Aelia.  
 6. Schuerer. . . . . p. 278  
 7. Ibid. . . . . p. 270



fostered the cause of Caesar. When in trouble in Egypt, a Jewish auxiliary force of 3,000 men came to his aid. The Jewish highpriest also used his influence to bring the Egyptian Jews over to the side of Caesar in his war with Ptolemy XIV. Caesar showed his gratitude by restoring the political position of Hyrcanus, who was named hereditary head of the Jewish nation and received back the territory taken away by Pompey, especially the important port of Jaffa (47-44).<sup>1</sup> The Jews were then given valuable privileges by this ruler. They were permitted to form religious associations, and to forward their contributions to the temple at Jerusalem. They were exempted from army service. They were not subject to Roman jurisdiction in civil suits between Jews.<sup>2</sup>

All the privileges granted the Jews by Caesar were confirmed by Augustus (30 B.C. - 14 A.D.) He likewise granted them further privileges. They were not to be compelled to appear in a court of law on the Sabbath. When a public distribution of money or corn took place, and the day of distribution fell on the Sabbath, then their share of corn or money was to be delivered to them on the following day. All the provinces were furnished with oil. Since the Jews were forbidden to make use of it, they were to receive the equivalent in money.<sup>3</sup> Augustus also provided a permanent allowance for a daily sacrifice for him in the temple.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Margolis & Marx, Hist. of the Jewish People ... . p. 164  
2. Ibid. . . . . p. 288  
3. Schuerer. . . . . p. 265  
4. The Biblical Review . . . . . p. 561



During the short reign of the next emperor, Caligula (37-41), things were quite different. Caligula was an enemy of the Jews.<sup>1</sup> He required them to erect statues to him and worship him as God. Of course, the heathen mob who had been used to worshipping Mercury, Apollo, serpents and crocodiles, did not hesitate in bowing down to their emperor. However, when the Jews opposed this, he heaped unspeakable miseries upon them, so that Philo calls it a "truceless war". He wrote: "We are rated not only as slaves, but as the vilest of slaves, our sovereign having become our owner." Their houses were looted. An old bronze four-horse chariot with the emperor on it was placed in the largest synagogue of Rome.<sup>2</sup> Caligula demanded that they recognize him as god, and offer sacrifices to him, before he would concede any privileges to them.<sup>3</sup> However, his was a short reign and his successor Claudius (41-54) immediately issued a decree of universal toleration.<sup>4</sup>

Even the reign of Nero (54-68), thanks to the empress Poppoea, was on the whole favorable to the Jews.<sup>5</sup> Under Vespasian, (69-79) Titus, the conqueror of Jerusalem, deported thousands of Jewish captives to western Roman provinces. Many went to Sardinia to work in the mines, while many others remained in Rome. From here they drifted into other Italian cities.<sup>6</sup> The successor of Vespasian, Domitian,

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1. Jahn, History of the Heb. Commonwealth. . . . . p. 672
  2. The Biblical Review. . . . . p. 560-61.
  3. Jahn, op. cit. . . . . p. 649
  4. Schuerer. . . . . p. 266
  5. Ibid. . . . . p. 266
  6. Old European Jeweries, Philipson . . . . . p. 6



hated the Jews. He rigidly demanded tribute. He included the Jews in the common persecution of the Christians.<sup>1</sup>

Nerva (96-98) enacted three laws favoring the Jews. He discharged all those who had been accused of impiety and atheism, and recalled those who had been banished. He prohibited the persecution of the subjects of his empire. He also freed the Jews from the burden of taxes imposed on them by Domitian. A medal from that period was found and reads, CALUMMA FISCII JUDAICI SUBLATA. This implies that the Jews no longer were fined heavy sums on frivolous and false charges. But Origen informs us that they still paid their tax of a half shekel.<sup>2</sup>

The Roman emperor, Trajan (98-117), in the year 114 set out to conquer Armenia and Mesopotamia, and dreamed of finally reaching India as did Alexander the Great. However, at this time the Jews of Egypt, Cyrene and Cyprus, rose up against Rome, and the Greeks. They fanned the flame of insurrection throughout the entire dispersion. They fought fiercely and for a time in many places had the upper hand. These insurrections were soon quelled by Trajan's general Turbo. (It was at this time that Cyprus was completely cleansed of Jews). Trajan's eastern campaign collapsed, he was defeated by the Arabs (117), and died shortly thereafter.<sup>3</sup>

Another insurrection occurred among the Jews under Hadrian (117-138), this was occasioned by a formal prohibition of the rite of circumcision. However, his

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1. Jahn, Hist. of the Heb. Commonwealth. . . . . p. 520  
2. Ibid. . . . . p. 521-22.  
3. Hist. of the Jewish People, M & M . . . . . p. 211-12.



successor, Antonius Pius, granted permission to circumcise the Jews, and confined the prohibition to the Gentiles.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps this is the most appropriate place to speak of the rebellions of the Jews. In the face of the many privileges bestowed upon them by the various emperors it is at times difficult for us from this distance to understand their insurrections. Men will not relinquish a state of peace unless party hatred, persecution, or the tyranny of rulers, which are the common cause of insurrection drive them to despair or violence. All three of these combined here.<sup>2</sup> Armed conflict existed from 68-135. This originated when material and religious aspirations of certain Jews came into contrast with the denationalizing tendencies of the imperial systems.<sup>3</sup> A rebellion, as that under Hadrian can be understood. Hadrian, besides forbidding the rite of circumcision, had sent a colony to Jerusalem to rebuild the city with his name, and consecrate it to Jupiter Capitolinus. The ambitions of a certain Barchochebas urged the people to rebellion.<sup>4</sup> Again the city fell under Roman wrath. Hadrian destroyed it completely and later erected a Roman city on its site with a temple to Isis and an equestrian statue of the emperor. No Jews were permitted to enter the city on punishment of death. The name of Jew became one of disgrace, and in most places the garments he was compelled to wear were badges of

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1. Schuerer. . . . . p. 268
  2. Hist. of the Heb. Commonwealth, Jahn. . . . . p. 526
  3. A Hist. of N.T. Times in Palestine, Mathews . . . . p. 370
  4. Jahn. . . . . p. 535-36.



dishonor.<sup>1</sup>

As varied as were the relations between Jews and emperors, so too were the relations between Jews and common people. On the whole, history records an almost continuous series of attempts, on the part of the communities among whom they lived, to deprive them, not only of their immunities, but also of their common rights.<sup>2</sup> It is really not at all difficult to understand the attitude of the Greeks and Romans toward the Jews. The Jew was, so to speak, a negative element in the heathen world. They were strangers in a strange land. Not only were they without sympathy toward that which went on about them, but they showed marked contempt and abhorrence of it. Tacitus tells us: "The Jews kept close together, and were ever most liberal to one another, but they were filled with bitter hatred for all others."<sup>3</sup> The brotherly love they manifested for one another seemed unbearable to the Greeks and Romans. Josephus says-- Every one either hated them or were afraid of them. Yet the Jews had to remain close together. For if one suffered all might suffer. The danger which threatened one community would

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1. The Jews through the Centuries, Willett. . . . . p. 18  
Life of Jews for first 10 centuries was almost blissful compared to the fiendish treatment they received later. Pope Innocent III decreed in 4th Lateran Council (1215) and by every church council of that century--compelling every Jew to wear on his clothes a mark, usually a piece of yellow cloth by which he at once might be designated as a Jew. "From that time on the Jew was marked as creature."  
Ghetto of M.A. -- dark gloomy, streets with houses towering high on either side, sunlight rarely streaming in; situated in the worst slums of the city; shut off by gates, barred and bloted every night by chains and locks no one permitted to depart from sunset to sunrise. The Jews were effectually excluded. They suffered "pestlike" isolation.(Philipson-p.21)
  2. Edersheim. . . . . p. 75
  3. Ibid. . . . . p. 66-67



undoubtedly soon effect the next. To entertain strangers was not only a virtue, but a religious necessity among them.<sup>1</sup> They clung tenaciously to their old customs, and kept with tender memories the sacred traditions of their faith. Everywhere they organized individual communities. That is the only way they could maintain their native religion and usages.<sup>2</sup> It was really something totally new which the Roman government allowed that everywhere everyone was at liberty to live and worship his own god or gods. The chief accusation the Greeks and Romans had against the Jews was "they refuse to worship the gods of the city".<sup>3</sup> Wherever a Roman, Greek, or Asiatic might wander, he could take his God with him, but not so with the Jews. He had only one temple - Jerusalem. Only one God - Him who had once been throned there between the cherubim, and who still was king over Zion.<sup>4</sup> The Jews looked back to the mother church in Jerusalem as the ultimate authority in everything. As we read concerning the Jews at Antioch - "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question."<sup>5</sup> Thus the Jews were bound closely together by a common creed, common life, common center, and common hope.<sup>6</sup> No wonder that the Jews were persecuted at various times. No wonder they were despised in various

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1. Edersheim. . . . . p. 19  
2. Schuerer . . . . . p. 243  
3. Ibid . . . . . p. 276  
4. Edersheim. . . . . p. 3  
5. Dana, Jewish Christianity. . . . . p. 128-29.  
6. Edersheim. . . . . p. 75



localities, enjoying all the rights, and yet remaining a separate people. I wonder if the early emperors, Caesar, Augustus, etc, would have granted them all the privileges they did, if at that time they would have realized that they wanted to remain such a separate people. One custom which particularly irritated the Romans and Greeks, was the sending of the annual temple tax to Jerusalem. After the fall of Jerusalem in 70, the Roman government instead of abolishing the temple tax which had no further object, decided to impose it for the benefit of the treasury of Jupiter Capitolinus in Rome.<sup>1</sup>

There were three things in particular which the educated world mocked concerning the Jews - the abstinence from the use of swine flesh; strict observance of the Sabbath; and worship without images.<sup>2</sup> Yes, the majority of the people of the time looked upon Judaism as a barbara superstio.<sup>3</sup>

In spite of the fact that the majority of the Greeks and Romans despised the Jews and Judaism, it made a deep impression upon some of the people. Why it made such a deep impression is this: The Jews knew how to present the favorable parts of Judaism first; the Jewish religion aimed at a practical realization of a moral and happy life; and it happened to be so much the fashion of the time to patronize oriental religions generally. The first thing the proselytes were taught to do was to despise the gods, repudiate their

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1. The Jewish Encyclopedia. . . . . p. 566  
2. Schuerer. . . . . p. 295  
3. Ibid. . . . . p. 292



nationality, and to desparage parents, children and brothers.<sup>1</sup> In the face of the deep corruption of that time, such renunciation and life of retreat had a strange charm and fascination for naturally pious souls, especially among the women.<sup>2</sup> Thus many, even among the wealthy and educated classes, became proselytes to Judaism.

### JEWS IN SPAIN

The only authentic notice we have of the existence of Jews in Spain in the first century is from Paul's Epistle to the Romans. There he writes, "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you:"<sup>3</sup> We are quite certain that Paul travelled only where Jews dwelt or where Jewish teachings had been well established.

Some believe Jews to have inhabited Spain already at the time of Solomon. Those take Tarshish mentioned throughout the Bible to mean Spain. In support of this, a stone has been found with the Hebrew inscription meaning: "This is the tomb of Adoniram, the officer of king Solomon, who came to collect the tribute, and who died the. . ." <sup>4</sup>

Scriptures mentions such an officer I Kings 4,6 - "And Adoniram, the son of Abda was over the tribute."

It is very probable that some Jews found their way into Spain after Jerusalem was taken by Titus, and prisoners were sent to all parts of the world. Then too, the great Jewish insurrections under Vespasian, Trajan, and Hadrian,

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1. Schuerer. . . . . p. 297-99  
 2. Dill, Roman Society from Nero to M. Aurelius. . . p. 83  
 3. Romans 15,24.  
 4. Jahn. *This inscription cannot be shown.* . . . . p. 680



terminated disastrously, and threw into circulation numerous Jewish captives. Some of these perhaps became the nuclei of communities in Spain.<sup>1</sup>

#### JEWS IN EGYPT

In order to trace the dispersion of the Jews in Egypt, we must go back at least to the time of Jeremiah (629-587). At this time a large groups of Jewish immigrants went into Egypt for fear of the Chaldees, in opposition to the will of Jeremiah.<sup>2</sup> We are told by that prophet that they settled in various parts of Egypt, in Migdol, Tahpankes, Noph, and Patros.<sup>3</sup> Isaiah also gives us a bit of information concerning the extent of their dispersion at this early date - "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remenant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and

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1. The Jewish Encyclopedia. . . . . p. 561  
(At the beginning of the 4th century, 305, the council of Illiberis devoted four decrees to the Jews, forbidding Christians to live on intimate terms with them. In the law of the Theodosian Code, addressed to the prefect of Gaul (425-435), a favorable mention of the Jews occurs, which would prove that they were firmly settled, and were scattered throughout Gaul and Belgium. (Old European Jeweries, Philipson p. 7-9) In 1492, Ferdiand and Isabella issued a proclamation commanding all Jews, men, women, and children to leave the kingdom and never return. (Willett)
  2. Jeremiah 42. 43.
  3. Jeremiah 44. Jer. 41,16,17 - "Then took Johanan, the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the force that were with him, all the remenant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah, after that he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, even mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon: And they departed and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Beth-lehem, to go to enter into Egypt."



from Shinar, and from Hameath, and from the islands of the sea."<sup>1</sup>

From several other sources we also gain information concerning the Jews in Egypt at this early date. Psammetichus I is said to have had Jewish mercenaries in his army in his war against the Ethiopians, 650 B.C.<sup>2</sup> In 1901 a certain Prof. Sayce purchased from some Egyptian diggers a papyrus which they said they had found on the island of Elephantine, which is situated in the first cataract of the Nile. This Papyrus which is dated 471 B.C. tells of a settlement of Jews in Yeb. Many other papyri bearing similar evidence have been found.<sup>3</sup> The information we have concerning this Elephantine colony tells us that they were a military colony, playing an official part in the life of the country, and had for several generations become so thoroughly established that they built a temple to their God Jahweh.<sup>4</sup> Archives edited in 1901 and 1911 of the family of a certain Yedoniah settled at Elephantine, dated in the reigns of Xerxes, Artaxerxes, and Darius II, reveal the existence of Jews in Egypt already before the conquest of Egypt by the persians in 525.<sup>5</sup>

We have papyri giving us bits of information concerning the settling of Jews in Egypt, and numerous guesses have also been made, but we can state positively that the great majority of its residents had been attracted by Alexander the Great

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1. Is. 11,11.
  2. Schuerer. . . . . p. 227
  3. The Jewish Background of Christianity, Levison. . . p. 11
  4. The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism, Lods. . . . . p. 174
  5. Ibid. . . . . p. 4



(334-323 B.C.), who granted to the Jews exceptional privileges equal to those of the Macedonians.<sup>1</sup> It is said that Egyptians came to Alexander and wanted Jews to reimburse them with the value of gold, silver, and precious stones which their ancestors had lent them when the Lord led them out of Egypt by Moses. The Jews acknowledged the justice of this demand, and consented to pay, provided that the Egyptians would satisfy their demands for the services of four hundred years. Alexander decided that the two debts balanced each other.<sup>2</sup> This is of course all tradition.

Trouble in Palestine under the Syrian kings greatly swelled the number of Jews in Egypt, for the Ptolemies with only one exception favored them. Privileges granted by the Ptolemies were even enlarged by Julius Caesar.<sup>3</sup>

Ptolemy I (Soter also Logus) took Jerusalem and Judea by treachery in 320 B.C.<sup>4</sup> At this time he took a great many Jews captive to Egypt to garrison the frontiers. Tradition has it that 30,000 were taken. He also compelled some of these to settle in Cyrenaica.<sup>5</sup> He gained the confidence of the Jews by entrusting them with his strongholds. Ten years later he again visited Judea and by levity induced many Jews to emigrate to Egypt.<sup>6</sup> It is said that during his reign 100,000 Jews were taken captive and sold as slaves to the Egyptians. They were granted freedom by his successor

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1. Edersheim. . . . .	p. 61
2. Jahn. . . . .	p. 639
3. Edersheim. . . . .	p. 61
4. The Works of Flavius Josephus, Whiston . . . . .	p. 352
5. The Jewish Encyclopedia. . . . .	p. 561
6. Jahn . . . . .	p. 641



Ptolemy Philadelphus. (285-246 B.C.)<sup>1</sup> Thus he conciliated the Jews. They enjoyed perfect liberty under him, as is made apparent from the Petries papyri.<sup>2</sup> His successor, Ptolemy Philopater was opposed by the Macedonians, and the Jews came to his rescue. Yet 60,000 of them were lost to him.<sup>3</sup> This ruler was "a monster of cruelty and debauchery". He ravaged Judea, then returned to Alexandria and shut up every individual of the Jews, gathered them in the Hippodrome intending to destroy them by elephants. The cries and wailings of the multitude terrified him, and finally he pardoned them.<sup>4</sup>

One of the foremost friends of the Jews was Ptolemy VI (Philometer) who went so far as to sanction the erection of a Jewish temple in Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Under Antiochus V (Eipater) (164-162 B.C.), Onias IV found he had no prospects of succeeding to the priesthood in Palestine, so he came to Egypt. He was cordially accepted by Ptolemy Philometer. This ruler gave him in Leontopolis, in the province of Heliopolis, a delapidated temple, previously dedicated to the "cat-goddess". It was rebuilt and modelled after the temple in Jerusalem. This lasted from 160 B.C. to 73 A.D.<sup>6</sup> The ruins of a brick wall can still be seen on three rugged sand hills known as the "mounds of the Jews".<sup>7</sup>

Ptolemy VII (Physson) assumed an attitude of hostility toward the Jews. This was excited not because of their

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1. Jahn . . . . .	p. 639
2. The Jewish Background of Christianity, Levison . . . . .	p. 15
3. Jahn . . . . .	p. 645
4. Ibid . . . . .	p. 645
5. Schuerer . . . . .	p. 256
6. Ibid . . . . .	p. 286-87
7. Stanley, History of the Jewish Church. . . . .	p. 222-23



religion but because of their political partisanship.<sup>1</sup>

Besides the many Jews taken captive by these rulers and taken to Egypt, many went there of their own accord. It seemed the preferable place to go. The goodness of the soil and the liberality of the majority of the Ptolemies attracted them.<sup>2</sup> In several towns, especially the new cities founded by the Ptolemies, in which colonists were in great demand, the Jews obtained, either the freedom of the city pure and simple, or possibly a special statute which gave them rights almost equivalent to the citizens of the most privileged class, namely the "Macedonians" as they were called in Egypt.<sup>3</sup>

After the destruction of Jerusalem, and the temple, the Jews of Egypt received great accessions to their numbers.<sup>4</sup> We have scant information as to the dispersion of these Jews in particular colonies, but Philo informs us that about an eighth of the total population of 7,800,000 were Jews. Which means that there were about 1,000,000 Jews scattered throughout Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Today we still have one trace of a Jewish settlement in Egypt, directly east of Alexandria, close along the seashore.<sup>6</sup>

#### JEWS IN ALEXANDRIA

By far the greatest settlement of Jews in Egypt was found in Alexandria. At first a special quarter was assigned to

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1. Schuerer. . . . . p. 256
  2. The Works of Flavius Josephus, Whiston. . . . . p. 352
  3. The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism. . . . . p. 202-03
  4. Jahn. . . . . p. 650
  5. Schuerer. . . . . p. 229
  6. Stanley . . . . . p. 221



them by the eastern harbor of the Canopus canal. This was called the "Delta". Later it became necessary to assign a second of the five sections of that city to them.<sup>1</sup> The Didachoi were the first to assign a separate portion, "a ghetto", to the Jews. In those days the ghetto was considered a privilege for it was established "that they might lead a purer life by mingling less with foreigners."<sup>2</sup> In such a district they established their own communal organization.

Under Agrippa I, the spread of the Jews throughout Alexandria greatly irritated the Macedonians. Not only did the Jews completely control two sections of the city of 1,000,000 people, but they also spread throughout the other sections. They likewise rigorously agitated for full citizenship. Therefore Flacius (the prefect) ordered them to be restricted to one quarter of the city, and at the same time reduced their municipal rights.<sup>3</sup> Many found no room in this one quarter so they helplessly camped among shores and in cemeteries. Whoever appeared in the other quarters of the city was seized and put to death in a most brutal manner. It is claimed that 38 elders were publicly scourged.<sup>4</sup> This gives us an idea as to their vast number in Alexandria.

The spread of Jews throughout the city of Alexandria is also evidenced by the number of synagogues found there. Philo tells us that these houses of prayer abounded in every section of the city.<sup>5</sup> Their chief glory was the great central

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1. Edersheim. . . . . p. 61
  2. Schuerer . . . . . p. 228
  3. The Beginnings of the Christian Church, Lietzman p. 109
  4. Ibid. . . . . p. 110
  5. The Biblical Review, Vol X, Oct. 1925. . . . . p. 549



synagogue, built in the shape of a basilica, with double colonnade, and so large that it needed a signal for those most distant to know the proper moment for the responses. In this cathedral stood 70 chairs of state, encrusted with precious stones, for the 70 elders who constituted the eldership of Alexandria, on the model of the great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

In general, the Jews of Alexandria were treated very kindly by the rulers. Alexander gave them the rights of citizenship because of the willing assistance they gave in the wars against the Egyptians.<sup>2</sup> They were employed by the Ptolemies as mercenaries, especially for the garrisoning of fortified places.<sup>3</sup> The sons of Onias commanded the forces of Cleopatra, when she disputed the possession of the kingdom with her son Ptolemy Lathyrus. The pagan historians praise the loyalty of the Jews, who continued faithful to the queen, even when she was deserted by the greater part of the Egyptians.<sup>4</sup> Ptolemy VI gave the command of the whole army to two Jewish generals Onias and Dositheus.<sup>5</sup> By the latest Ptolemies many important appointments were entrusted to them. The export trade in grain was given into their hands. The harbor and river police were also committed to their charge.<sup>6</sup>

When foreigners were given so many privileges, and then

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1. Edersheim. . . . .	p. 61
2. Whiston, The Works of Flavius Josephus . . . . .	p. 717
3. Ibid. . . . .	p. 228
4. Jahn . . . . .	p. 647
5. Schuerer . . . . .	p. 279
6. Edersheim. . . . .	p. 61



entrusted with important appointments by rulers, there was bound to be trouble with the common people. They despised the Jews. The Jew was made the constant theme of popular merriment and mockery. The theater would resound with laughter as the religion of the Jews was lampooned.<sup>1</sup> The Jews irritated at ever-increasing mockings and maltreatments, furiously broke out in rebellion, and attacked the Macedonian citizens with stones. They rushed into the amphitheater with lighted torches, to burn it and all the people assembled there. This hostility was also excited by the rebellion of the Jews in Palestine (66 A.D.)<sup>2</sup> The prefect, Tiberius Alexander, finding that milder measures were of no avail, sent out a body of 17,000 soldiers who slew about 50,000 Jews and plundered and burnt their dwellings.<sup>3</sup> Besides the 50,000 killed in Alexandria it is recorded that 60,000 were killed throughout other parts of Egypt.<sup>4</sup>

After years of rebellions and revolutions, the Jews that did remain in Alexandria were confined to a ghetto, "whence they could not burst forth suddenly, and fling themselves upon the illustrious city and make war upon it."<sup>5</sup>

Throughout these rebellions the Egyptian Jews spread on all sides - westward to and even beyond the province of Cyrene, southward to Abyssinia and Ethiopia.<sup>6</sup>

#### JEWS IN CYRENE

The strongest community of Jews west of Alexandria in

1. Edersheim. . . . .	p. 66
2. Lietzman, The Beginnings of the Christian Church	p. 110-11
3. Jahn . . . . .	p. 457
4. Lietzman . . . . .	p. 110-11
5. The Jewish Encyclopedia. . . . .	p. 563
6. Edersheim. . . . .	p. 62



the Diaspora, was found at Cyrene. It is said that Ptolemy I, (Logas) sent 30,000 of his captives there to garrison the fortresses.<sup>1</sup> Strabo reports that the inhabitants of Cyrene at Sulla's time (about 85 B.C.) were divided into four classes: citizens, agriculturists, metoikoi (settlers), and Jews.<sup>2</sup> Still they enjoyed equality of civic rights.<sup>3</sup> (Cf. footnote #4) A Jewish inscription at Bernice, apparently dating from 13 B.C., shows that the Cyrenian Jews formed a distinct community under nine rulers of their own, who no doubt attended to the communal affairs.<sup>5</sup>

The Cyrenian Jews were noted for their strong anti-Roman feeling, which more than once was cruelly quenched in blood.<sup>6</sup>

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- 1. Jahn . . . . . p. 640
  - 2. Schuerer . . . . . p. 231
  - 3. Ibid . . . . . p. 246
  - 4. Josephus quotes Strabo: "There are four classes of men among those of Cyrene: that of citizens, that of husbandmen, the third of strangers, and the fourth of Jews. Now these Jews have already gotten into all cities; and it is hard to find a place in the habitable earth that hath not admitted this tribe of men, and is not possessed by them: and it hath come to pass that Egypt and Cyrere, as having the same governors, and a great number of other nations, imitate their way of living, and maintain great bodies of Jews in a peculiar manner, and grow up to a greater prosperity with them, and make use of the same laws with that nation also. Accordingly the Jews have places assigned them in Egypt, wherein they inhabit, besides what is peculiarly allotted to this nation at Alexandria, which is a large part of that city. There is an ethnarch allowed them, who governs the nations, and distributes justice to them, and takes care of their contracts, and the laws to them belonging, as if he were the ruler of a free republic. In Egypt, therefore, the nation is powerful, because the Jews were originally Egyptians, and because the land wherein they inhabit, since they went thence, is near to Egypt. They also removed into Cyrene, because that this land adjoined to the government of Egypt, as well as does Judea, or rather was formerly under the same government." (Ant. Book 14, Chap. 12)
  - 5. Edersheim. . . . . p. 63
  - 6. Ibid . . . . . p. 63



At the time of Vespasian a sort of aftermath of the war was finished here. At Trajan's time this was the main seat of Jewish revolt.<sup>1</sup> Under him 500,000 Jews are supposed to have been massacred. This is to have taken place about 115 A.D. Jewish historians attribute this war to the ambitions of fugitives who took refuge in Alexandria after the destruction of Jerusalem, and there built a temple. However, we have no record that any temple was built in Egypt other than that of Onias.<sup>2</sup>

The Jews of Cyrene were also effected by the Sicarii. One of these, Jonathan, a weaver, who had fled from Egypt, persuaded many poor Jews to follow him into the desert where he would perform miracles. The Roman prefect, Catullus, was informed of this by the more distinguished Jews. He sent a body of soldiers out to bring back this multitude that followed Jonathan. The majority were put to death, and the rest were made prisoners. Jonathan was brought before Catullus. However, for revenge against those who had made known his plot, Jonathan accused the rich Jews as accomplices in this undertaking. Catullus therefore put three thousand to death and confiscated their property. Jonathan, then made the same accusation against Flavius Josephus and others at Alexandria. Josephus had formerly lived peacefully at Rome, and on this account was conducted to Rome where Vespasian investigated and found all the accusations groundless. Jonathan was ordered to be scourged and burnt alive yet he escaped without punishment.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Schuerer. . . . . p. 231  
 2. Jahn . . . . . p. 527  
 3. Ibid. . . . . p. 520



We may assume that Jewish settlements existed further west than Cyrene from single traces that have been found. That there were Jews in Carthage at Tertullian's time appears from the commencement of his work, *adv. Judaeos*.<sup>1</sup> Jewish inscriptions found at Mauritania and Algiers prove that these places had their own Archontes (rulers) while the special direction of public worship was always entrusted to the Archisynagogos or "chief ruler of the synagogue".<sup>2</sup>

Though persecuted by emperors, not tolerated by various groups and parties, despised by individuals, in spite of all this there is a bright side to Judaism of the first century. It retained its exclusiveness as a religious community in spite of the many efforts to wipe it out. The Jews did not accept the theory "In Rome do as the Romans do." They could not do so and remain true to their religious ideals. They must have viewed with distaste the morals and conduct of those living in idolatrous Alexandria and Antioch. With what repugnance must they have viewed the exposure of infants, the secret orgies masked as rites of religious brotherhoods, no purity in life or wedlock, bastardy thru faithless wives, secret assassinations, blood, and murder; everywhere theft, deceit, wastefulness, disorder, perjury, adultery and debauchery. Still, in the face of all this, the sincere Jews, Hellenized though they were in speech and many forms of culture, more than ever recognized the authority of their law.<sup>3</sup>

Were we able to trace the footsteps of a Jew walking through the streets of Alexandria in that first century,

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1. Schuerer. . . . . p. 231-32  
 2. Edersheim . . . . . p. 63  
 3. The Biblical Review, Vol. X, Oct. 1925. . . . . p. 556-57



we could see him pass the splendid temple of the Greeks, completely overlook the equestrian statue of the emperor in the public square, give no heed whatsoever to the blasphemous idolatry which everywhere abounded, and finally enter his own humble synagogue. There he was pleased to find himself surrounded by those who shared his descent, his faith, his hopes. No one could have compared the voiceless, meaningless, and blasphemous heathen worship (if it deserves the name) to the synagogue with its hymns, its sublime liturgy, its Divine Scripture.<sup>1</sup> Josephus informs us that "it was held in reverence by nations from the end of the earth."<sup>2</sup> As we have pointed out throughout this account of their dispersion, synagogues were established in every Jewish community. Of all the cities which Paul visited, Philippi, alone is not mentioned as having a synagogue. It seems that the larger Jewish colonies, such as those at Alexandria, and Cyrene, erected synagogues in Jerusalem, as academies where their children could be instructed in the Hebrew language and in the law. During the Passover Festival they performed their devotions in their own synagogue, because the temple could not contain the vast number of Jews that assembled at Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> It seems that it was the leading men of these synagogues, who persecuted and killed the first martyr, Stephen.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps other synagogues

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1. Edersheim. . . . . p. 18.19  
2. Ibid . . . . . p. 73.74  
3. Jahn . . . . . p. 647  
4. Acts 6,9.



were built by different trade guilds. In these the members of the guilds assembled so that they would at once know where to find Jewish employers or fellow workmen.<sup>1</sup> The synagogues were organized really to "uphold the faith of their fathers among the communities of the dispersion."<sup>2</sup> Philo pays high tribute to them when he says: "In all the towns thousands of houses of instruction were open where discernment and moderation and skill and justice and all virtues generally were taught."<sup>3</sup>

It was around the synagogue that the entire life of a Jewish community centered. The people would appoint their own officers to take charge of the synagogue and settle all their legal disputes. Up to the time of Augustus there was one head over all called "ethnarch" or "genarch". He was both supreme judge and administrator. However Augustus divided these between the gerusia and a committee of Archons.<sup>4</sup> The "Archisynagogus" was their religious president. The community council headed by the "archon" settled their secular affairs. It varied in number according to the size of the community. At Bernice there were nine members on this council.<sup>5</sup> However, at Alexandria, there seems to have been seventy members, patterned after the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem.

Were we to enter a synagogue of the first century we would not only find Jews in attendance, but also many Gentiles.

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1. Edersheim . . . . . p. 61  
 2. Schuerer. . . . . p.282  
 3. Ibid. . . . . p.282  
 4. The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IX. . . . . p.565  
 5. Schuerer--and Jewish Encyclopedia . . . . . p.565



To almost every Jewish community of the dispersion there was attached a number of "Godfearing" Gentiles who adopted the Jewish mode of worship and attended the Jewish synagogue.<sup>1</sup>

Josephus boasts: "Likewise among the mass of the people there has for a long time now been a great amount of zeal for our worship; nor is there a single town among the Greeks or barbarians or anywhere else, not a single nation to which the observance of the Sabbath as it exists among ourselves has not penetrated; while fasting and the burning of lights, and many of our laws with regard to meats are also observed."<sup>2</sup>

Judaism did not demand complete submission of its converts immediately. It did not at the outset demand complete adoption of the Jewish law. The neophyte was at first simply a friend of Jewish customs, observing the least enthralling ones, such as the keeping of the Sabbath, the lighting of fire on the previous evening, keeping certain fast days, and abstinence from unclean foods.<sup>3</sup> And do not think for a moment that these converts were altogether of lowly station in life.

Fulvia, at the time of Tiberius, was a senator's wife.

Flavius Clemens was a nephew of emperor Domitian. Poppae, wife of Nero, was favorably disposed toward Judaism. Often the converts assumed Hebrew names - Beturia Paulina, who turned Jewess at the age of 70, was renamed Sarah. Thus, these converts in vast numbers joined themselves to Jewish communities.

Yet one brief note. No matter how uninteresting this

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1. Schuerer. . . . . p. 314
  2. Ibid. . . . . p. 306
  3. The Jewish Encyclopedia . . . . . p. 570
  4. A History of the Jewish People, M & M . . . . . p. 290



dispersion may be in other respects, it does present a few facts which cannot help but excite our admiration. First of all, I refer to the preservation of the Jews as a nation. Their history reminds us of the burning bush, ever burning, yet never consumed. Never has there been a nation so powerful, yet so disesteemed. Never such a clever, resourceful, successful people, yet so undesirable. Child of sorrow, wanderer, exile, son of the ghetto - that is the Jew of the Dispersion.

You have undoubtedly beheld it, but once more let me call attention to the hand of the Almighty God in this Diaspora. The service it rendered to the initial propagation of the Gospel, cannot be exaggerated. It was virtually the highway on which the Gospel could rapidly spread. It was the seed-bed for the Gospel, and an abundant harvest has come from that planting.



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