

## **Episode 3: The Shaping of Traditions**

### **III-1 Atlas: Israel-Palestine: 30**

In the next one hundred and fifty turbulent years, in response to Roman oppression and domestic turmoil, the rabbis would move their headquarters from Jabneh progressively northward into and through the Galilee. Their crowning achievement, the legal compilation known as the Mishnah, would be compiled at Sepphoris (Tzipori) -- just a few miles from the Galilean town of Nazareth.

- Point out Jerusalem, and the outpost of Masada.
- Point out Jabneh, where, after the Second Temple's destruction, the rabbis established their headquarters and began their leadership of the remnants of their people.
- Point out Sepphoris, home of Judah Ha-Nasi and site of development of the Mishnah in the early third century.

### **III-2 Atlas: Israel-Palestine: 135**

As has been true throughout history, the location of Judea was pivotal in the story of its people. When Judea rose in revolt against the brilliant and ruthless Roman emperor Hadrian in 132-135 under the leadership of Simeon Bar Kokhba, a warlord with messianic pretensions of his own, it made a horrific mistake. Judea was included in the crucial eastern front of the Roman Empire with Parthia. For Hadrian, the geopolitical stakes were too high, and it was "two strikes and you're out."

Following Hadrian's murderous crushing of the rebellion, the remaining population was massacred or deported. Waging psychological warfare as well, Hadrian deprived Judea even of its name. He researched the name of the ancestral enemies of the Jews, the Philistines, and renamed the entire country "Palestine," the Latin version of Philistia. Its vanquished and twice-destroyed capital Jerusalem he renamed "Aelia Capitolina," after the names of his family and of his patron god, Jupiter Capitolina.

- Point out that what had been Judea was now joined with Syria in a new province called "Syria-Palaestina," and that Jerusalem no longer appears on the map: it is now labeled by its new name.
- Note also "Bethar" (just to the left and below Aelia Capitolina) as the place where Bar Kokhba's revolt was destroyed, and where Bar Kokhba met his own violent end.
- Click the Zoom-Out button at the lower-right, below the thumbnail-map. Point out the encroachment of the Parthian Empire (upper-right) up to the eastern border of the Roman Empire. This helps to explain the strategic significance to Hadrian of permanently altering the nature of the land that guarded the eastern front....and access to the eastern Mediterranean.
- Point out the substantial Jewish Diaspora communities elsewhere in the eastern part of

the Roman Empire: Antioch and **Aleppo** (in Syria), **Salamis** (on the isle of Cyprus), and (dragging the map slightly leftward using the thumbnail-map slider) the Egyptian city of **Alexandria**. Click on the communities in bold for additional pop-up information.

- Then, dragging the map rightward using the thumbnail-map slider, show the Jewish presence in Parthia/Babylonia, including substantial communities in Dura-Europos (near the top-center), and Nehardea and Ctesiphon (halfway down the Euphrates River to the Persian Gulf from Dura).

### III-3 Atlas: World: 330

The Roman Empire in this era was extensive but increasingly fragile, due to pressures from European tribal invasions from the north and from Sassanid (Persian) aspirations in the east.

As Christianity solidified its grasp in southern and western Europe and in the Middle East in the ensuing centuries, Jewish presence declined, and the center of Jewish religious leadership shifted to the Sassanid Empire. By the sixth century, as the western portion of the empire succumbed to numerous European tribal invasions, the remainder of Roman power was centered in Byzantium..

- Indicate the extent of the Roman Empire in the age of Constantine. Moving the time-slider on the left to 468 and then 560, show the split and subsequent decline of the empire.
- Returning to 330 using the time-slider, Zoom In on the eastern Mediterranean. Point out the European tribal (Visigoths, Vandals, etc.) invasions of Italy, and, in the lower-right, point out the Byzantine city of Hierosolyma (Jerusalem).

### III-4 Atlas: Mediterranean, 651

Less than two decades after its creation, the Islamic Caliphate had established its rule over northern Egypt and Libya, and it would extend this rule across North Africa in the ensuing decades and then move northward into Spain.

- Point out the western boundary of the Caliphate in 651.
- Then, using the thumbnail-map slider, move the map to the far-left and up a bit to show North Africa and Spain (labeled “Kingdom of the Visigoths”). The reddish North-African western frontier will still be visible at the right of the map.
- Then, change the date to 732, using the time-scale slider on the left of the screen. The Islamic expansion will become evident.
- Click in the middle of Spain to zoom in on the Iberian Peninsula.

### III-5 Atlas: World: 560

Fifty years before Muhammad, the Middle East was divided between the weakening Byzantine Empire, based in Constantinople in modern Turkey, and the vulnerable Sassanid Empire,

based in Persia and extending to the edge of the Indian subcontinent. Just two decades after Muhammad's life, the map of that area was markedly different, and a century after, the Middle Eastern and world maps were dramatically different.

- Point out the empires in 560.
- Then, click 651 on the time-scale on the left. Note the size and extent of the "Caliphad Arab Empire." Note particularly its western expansion to North Africa in Egypt, and the boundary with "Byzantine" (i.e., the remains of Christian Rome) at the border of Turkey.
- Click 732 on the time-scale on the left. Point out the extent of the "Umayyad Arab Empire," particularly noting the consolidation of North Africa and the conquest of Spain in the west, and the addition of the area of modern Pakistan in the east. If needed, click the Modern View tab in the lower-right area to show the modern nation-states, and then click Historic View to toggle back to the 732 map.