

## JUDAISM

### SPREAD AND CHALLENGES

It took many years for the Israelites to finally get to what they thought was the Promised Land -Canaan. After some fighting the Jews established the Israelite kingdom. After many years, Canaan was conquered by the Assyrians, the Babylonians and then eventually the Romans. The Israelites once again found themselves enslaved, this time by Babylonians. The Israelites were then taken over by Romans who destroyed much of what had been built in Jerusalem by the Israelites. Most of the Jews were scattered all over the region and eventually moved from place to place to avoid **persecution** which continues to this day. The dispersion of the Jews is called the Diaspora.

Q: What two groups of people also enslaved the Jews? \_\_\_\_\_.

Q: What do you think persecution means?

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The worst persecution of the Jews was during World War II by the Nazis who murdered more than six million Jews or a third of the world's Jewish population. This was called the Holocaust. Beginning in the 1880's Jews began returning to their homeland in growing numbers, this time to avoid persecution where they lived. After World War II, many Jews believed that for the Jewish people and culture to survive, Jews needed to live in their own country where all Jews from anywhere in the world would have the right to live and be citizens. In 1948, Palestine was divided up and a Jewish state of Israel was formed in the land that was once called Canaan, surrounded by countries with predominantly Muslim populations. Since Muslims also claimed rights to the land where the Jews were living, there was conflict, which continues to this day in the Middle East.

Q: What was the event that occurred in WWII that killed 6 million Jews? \_\_\_\_\_.

Q: When were the Jews given a homeland and why?

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Q: Why is their conflict to this day between Jews and Muslims in the Middle East?

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Today nearly fourteen million Jewish people live all over the world. Approximately half of them live in the United States, one quarter live in Israel, and a quarter are still scattered around the world in countries in Europe, Russia, South America, Africa, Asia and other North American and Middle Eastern countries. Anyone born to a Jewish mother is considered a Jew.

Q: Where do most people of the Jewish faith live today? \_\_\_\_\_.