Beyond One Exile

Tracing the causes and growth of the Jewish diaspora

9-12.WC.17 "Explain the expulsion of the Jewish people from their homeland and the subsequent Jewish diaspora."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions that forced people from the homeland, circle evidence that Jewish communities remained there, and number two ways the diaspora grew through migration. Use your marks to explain why the diaspora did not begin with one event.

A Homeland and Communities Abroad

1. In 586 BCE, Babylonian armies captured Jerusalem after a revolt against Babylonian rule. They destroyed the First Temple and deported many people from the kingdom of Judah, including leaders and skilled workers, to Babylonia. Earlier deportations had begun in 597 BCE. Not everyone was taken: some Judeans stayed in the land, while deported families built lives far from Jerusalem. When Persia conquered Babylon in 539 BCE, its rulers allowed exiles to return and rebuild the Temple. Some returned, but others stayed in Babylonia. Thus forced removal created communities outside the homeland without ending Jewish life inside it.

2. Centuries later, Judea came under Roman rule. A Jewish revolt ended in 70 CE when Roman forces destroyed the Second Temple in Jerusalem; war brought deaths, enslavement, and flight. After another revolt, from 132 to 135 CE, Rome devastated Judea and barred Jews from Jerusalem for much of the following period. These events drove more people away, but they did not empty the homeland: Jewish communities continued in areas such as Galilee. Nor did Rome start the diaspora from nothing. Jewish communities already lived in Babylonia and in cities around the Mediterranean before the Roman wars.

3. The diaspora, the spread of a people beyond an ancestral homeland, grew through more than conquest. Families joined relatives abroad, and merchants moved for work, adding to older communities formed by deportation and war. In places such as Alexandria in Egypt and Babylonia, Jews adapted to local languages while maintaining religious traditions. Synagogues, shared texts, and travel helped connect communities separated by distance. Jerusalem remained important even when many Jews could not live there. The history of the diaspora is therefore not a story of one moment when every Jew was expelled, but of repeated displacement, migration, and enduring ties to the homeland.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Babylonian actions create communities outside the homeland without removing everyone from it?

2. How did Persian policy affect where Jewish communities lived after 539 BCE?

3. Why did the Roman wars expand the diaspora rather than begin it?

4. How did migration and shared practices shape Jewish communities after the forced removals?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A museum label claims, "The Romans expelled every Jew from Judea, and the diaspora began that day." Write a replacement label of 65 to 85 words that corrects both claims, connects Babylonian and Roman events to the diaspora's growth, and explains one way distant communities stayed connected.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond One Exile

HIGH SCHOOL · 9-12.WC.17

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions that forced people from the homeland, circle evidence that Jewish communities remained there, and number two ways the diaspora grew through migration. Use your marks to explain why the diaspora did not begin with one event. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Babylonian actions create communities outside the homeland without removing everyone from it?	**Babylon deported many Judeans to Babylonia, where they built lives, but some Judeans remained in their homeland.**
2	How did Persian policy affect where Jewish communities lived after 539 BCE?	**Persia allowed exiles to return. Some returned to the homeland, while others stayed in Babylonia.**
3	Why did the Roman wars expand the diaspora rather than begin it?	**The wars caused enslavement and flight, but Jewish communities already existed in Babylonia and around the Mediterranean.**
4	How did migration and shared practices shape Jewish communities after the forced removals?	**Families joining relatives and merchants moving for work added to communities abroad. Synagogues, shared texts, and travel helped distant communities maintain connections.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Jewish diaspora did not begin with a single Roman order. Babylonian armies deported many Judeans in the sixth century BCE, but some people stayed, and later some exiles returned. Others remained in Babylonia. Centuries later, Roman wars destroyed the Second Temple and forced more people to flee or face enslavement; Jewish communities still survived in the homeland. As families migrated, communities spread farther. Synagogues and shared texts helped Jews in distant places sustain religious traditions and ties to Jerusalem.

Accept labels that distinguish the earlier Babylonian deportations from later Roman displacement and state that Jews continued to live in the homeland. A valid connection between distant communities may include synagogues, shared texts, travel, or ties to Jerusalem.