

Daniel 7:7

We celebrate this miraculous victory with the holiday of Hanukkah. (See [here](#) for a full historical account of the Hanukkah story.)

Rome (69 CE - Present)

The Roman Empire brought the final blow for Jewish sovereignty in Israel and the final exile for the Jews, one that has lasted for nearly 2,000 years and has not yet ended.

The Jewish people during that time were split into four factions: the Pharisees, Sadducees, Sicarii and Zealots. Some of these groups began rebelling against the mighty empire.

The Emperor Nero saw this as treason and sent his best general, Vespasian, along with his son, Titus, and 60,000 Roman soldiers to quell the revolt.

Finally, in the year 3829 (69 CE), an oppression that started with heavy taxes ended with mass murder. The Jewish people were butchered and slaughtered, their homes ransacked and the Holy Temple burnt to the ground. And since then, the Jewish people have been persecuted and exiled. (See [here](#) for a full historical account on the Roman exile.)

In the year 1096, the First Crusade destroyed Jewish communities across Europe and in Israel. In 1144, the first recorded blood libel took place. In 1190, Jews were massacred in England during the Third Crusade. A public burning of the Talmud took place in Paris in 1242. In 1290, all Jews were expelled from England.¹⁶ The Spanish Inquisition occurred in 1478. In 1648, Jews were massacred by Chmielnitzki's forces (what is known as *gezeirat tach v'tat*). In 1918, over 60,000 Jews were killed during the Russian revolution. Finally, during the Holocaust: six million Jews were slaughtered.

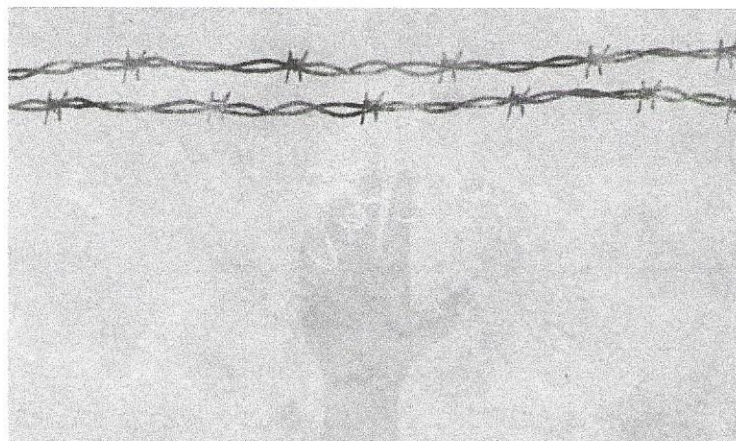
In the words of Mark Twain:

The Egyptians, the Babylonians and the Persians rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greeks and Romans followed and made a vast noise, and they were gone...The Jew saw them all, survived them all.

For a chassidic perspective on the four exiles, see [here](#).

The Dispute of Exiles

So what exactly constitutes an exile? As mentioned above, the Jewish people were exiled from a few countries in Europe. Why don't they fall into the count?



Art by [Sefira Lightstone](#)

This war resulted in the Romans razing Jerusalem to the ground, and the destruction of the city of Beitar, where the Romans believed leaders of the rebellion were stationed. In referencing Beitar's destruction, this Talmudic legend clearly associates the Roman Empire with Esau, and presents Jews and Romans as eternal antagonists.

Hadrian King of Edom

Midrash Tanchuma (mid 1st millennium C.E.) takes this a step further, and connects Edom with the Emperor Hadrian, who put down the Bar Kokhba revolt (Warsaw ed., *Bereishit* 7):

אנדריאנוס מלך אדום כיון
שכבש את העולם כולו
הלך לו לרומי אמר לבני
פלטרין שלו מבקש אני
מכם שתעשו אותי אלוה
שהרי כבשתי את כל
העולם אמרו לו עדיין לא
שלטת בעירו ובביתו, הלך
והספיקו בידו והחריב בית
המקדש והגלה את ישראל
וחזר לרומי, אמר להם
כבר החרבתי ביתו
ושרפתי היכלו והגלתי [ת]י
עמו עשו אותי אלוה.

After Hadrian, **king of Edom** conquered the world, he returned to Rome and said to his officers: "I want you to make me a god, since I have conquered the world." They said to him: "But you have not yet established your rule over his (God's) city and his house." He went, succeeded, destroyed the Temple, exiled Israel, and returned to Rome. He said to them: "I have now destroyed his house and burned his Temple and exiled his people. Make me a god."

Tanchuma here conflates the Great Rebellion against Rome, which led to the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., with the Bar Kokhba Rebellion sixty years later, and thus makes Hadrian—not Vespasian or Titus—the destroyer of the Temple.

Putting history aside, however, we can see how this midrash makes the most powerful nation in the world into one that fears, or at least respects, the God of Israel. Moreover, Hadrian's subordinates in this story see the "real" battle in this world as one between Rome and Judah, i.e., between Esau and Jacob.

A midrash, found in *Genesis Rabbah* (mid-first millennium C.E.), also connects Emperor Hadrian with Esau (*Gen. Rab.* 63:7, Theodor-Albeck ed.):

שני גוים בבטן שני גאי גוים
בבטן זה מתגאה בעולמו [וזה
מתגאה בעולמו, זה מתגאה
במלכותו]^[6] וזה מתגאה
במלכותו

"Two nations (*goyim*) are in your womb"
– Two proud (*geyim*) nations are in your
womb,^[7] this one is proud of his world
[and that one is proud of his world; this

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According to Jewish historians, the Roman Empire came to be identified with Esau and "Edom". In medieval rabbinic writing, "Edom" is used to refer to the Byzantine Empire.

Story of Romulus and Remus

According to Jewish historians, Romulus, the founder of Rome was from the line of Esau. The basic legend about how Romulus came to be the first king of Rome begins with the god Mars impregnating Rhea Silvia, who was daughter of deposed king. This was from the line of the Trojan Kings who ruled from Alba Longa. After the birth of Romulus and Remus, the king orders them to be left to die in the Tiber River. When the basket in which the twins were placed washes up on shore, a wolf suckles them until a shepherd Faustulus finds the twins and brings them into his home. Latin for prostitute and she-wolf is *lupa*. They were probably raised by a prostitute. When they grow up, Romulus and Remus restore the throne of Alba Longa to its rightful ruler, their grandfather.

Then they set out to found their own city. Sibling rivalry leads Romulus to slay his brother. Romulus started the town on one of the 7 hills of Rome called Palestine. Romulus then becomes the first king and founder of the city of Rome. Rome is named after him.

Source: [Was Esau's Descendants in Rome? | Who Is America? \(12tribehistory.com\)](#)