

ABSTRACT

THE ROAD TO LYDDA: A SURVIVOR'S STORY
RABBAN YOHANAN BEN ZAKKAI'S FLIGHT FROM JERUSALEM
ACCORDING TO *EICHA RABBA* 1:5

Moshe Shoshan

This article presents an analysis of the story of the escape of R. Yohanan ben Zakkai from Jerusalem as it appears in *Eicha Rabba*. This version of the story differs markedly from the accounts found elsewhere in rabbinic literature, most notably in that it does not refer to R. Yohanan's request to save 'Yavne and her sages'. The *Eicha Rabba* account focuses on the survival of the Jews rather than on the establishment of a center of Jewish study and practice to succeed Jerusalem. Torah is presented as a source of practical wisdom, which gives the rabbis the ability to save a remnant of their people. The article also explores the implications of the identification of the figure of Abgar with the figure of the same name known to us from Christian legend. In light of this, the story should also be read as an anti-Christian narrative.