

CALIFORNIA CONTENT
STANDARD 10.1.1*Judeo-Christian and
Greco-Roman Perspectives*

Specific Objective: Analyze the similarities and differences in Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman views of law, reason and faith, and duties of the individual.

For much of human history, people have lived under the rule of kings or other rulers who held absolute power. A direct contrast is the system of **democracy**, in which people govern themselves through councils and agreed-upon laws. The earliest democracies arose in ancient Greece and Rome.

Ancient Greece had a (limited) form of **direct democracy**. In a direct democracy, citizens represent themselves directly at councils. Ancient Rome saw the rise of the **republic**—an indirect democracy in which citizens rule through representatives, whom they elect. Many countries today, including the United States, use the republic form of democracy.

Greco-Roman Views

- ___ Citizens should **participate in government** by voting, debating in public, making laws, serving on juries, and holding office.
- ___ The world has **natural laws**—patterns that can be discovered through reason and intellect, rather than superstition.
- ___ Democracy can be protected by having **branches of government**:
 - a legislative branch to make laws,
 - an executive branch to approve laws,
 - a judicial branch to resolve legal disputes.
- ___ There should be **written law**.

The development of democracy was supported by Judeo-Christian ideas, which spread in two main ways:

- ___ After the Jews were exiled from Israel in A.D. 70, they brought their beliefs with them to their new lands.
- ___ As Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire, especially in the A.D. 400s, it became the dominant religion in Europe.

Judeo-Christian Views

- ___ Every person is born with **worth and dignity** because they were created by God.
- ___ Every person has the **ability to choose** between doing good and doing wrong.
- ___ Every person has the **responsibility to help** others in need and the community.