

The Destruction of Jerusalem AD 70



In AD 70 the Roman army lead by General Titus destroyed Jerusalem and the Holy Temple leaving only the outer retaining wall of the Temple known today as the Wailing Wall where Jews and others of faith place small pieces of paper containing personal requests into the crevices of the 65-foot high wall, hoping for answers to their prayers.



Wailing Wall Jerusalem

The Destruction of the Temple in AD 70 was significant for the early Catholic Church which was comprised of thousands of Jews. After the Temple was destroyed the Church was no longer seen as a Jewish sect but as a new religion. The end of the Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system brought a virtual close to the Jewish religion. There was a continuation of the religious observances, but it was a mere shadow of what had existed before.



Sculpture known as the *Titus Arch* shows the Romans and Jewish prisoners entering Rome.



Josephus was an eyewitness to this event. In his historical writing “The Jewish Wars” Josephus tells us that over one million Jews died either by the sword or by starvation during the siege of Jerusalem. Over ninety thousand were taken prisoner and enslaved.



Josephus estimated the number of Jews in Jerusalem at the Passover season of 70 A.D. to have risen above 3 million. The Roman army completely surrounded the city and soon famine set in. Armed groups of citizens went from house to house in search of food, breaking down doors and confiscating food and anything of value for themselves. As the food scarcity intensified conditions got worse and order broke down completely in the besieged city as roving hordes of militants went totally berserk looting, killing and ransacking homes and confiscating all the goods they could lay their hands on without caring about how their victims would survive.

In his account of the event Josephus writes that thousands of Jews were captured as they went outside the wall to search for food. They were captured in ambushes and he writes:

“they were first whipped and then tormented with all sorts of tortures and before they died they were crucified before the wall of the city....every day they caught five hundred Jews...so the soldiers, out of the wrath and hatred they bore for the Jews, nailed those they caught to the crosses....Titus commanded that the hands of many of those caught should be cut off....now those that perished by famine in the city, the number was prodigious and the miseries they underwent were unspeakable for if so much as the shadow of any kind of food did anywhere appear a war was commenced and the dearest of friends fell fighting one another....nor did they at length abstain from girdles and shoes and the very leather...they pulled off and gnawed....a woman snatching up her son, who was a child sucking at her breast, said, “...Come; be thou my food”...as soon as she said this, she slew her son, and then roasted him and ate one half of him and kept the other half concealed.”

Jewish Wars Chapter 5 and 6



The destruction of the Temple was predicted by Jesus in Luke 19:41-46

“As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

Catechism 585 On the threshold of his Passion Jesus announced the coming destruction of this splendid building, of which there would not remain "one stone upon another". By doing so, he announced a sign of the last days, which were to begin with his own Passover.”

Jesus also predicted the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24. This is a mysterious chapter of the bible.

First it describes the destruction of the Temple that would occur in AD 70. Jesus even says to the apostles, “Truly I say to you this generation will not pass away until all this things take place.” Secondly, interwoven with the destruction of Jerusalem is the prophecy of the Second Coming of Christ.

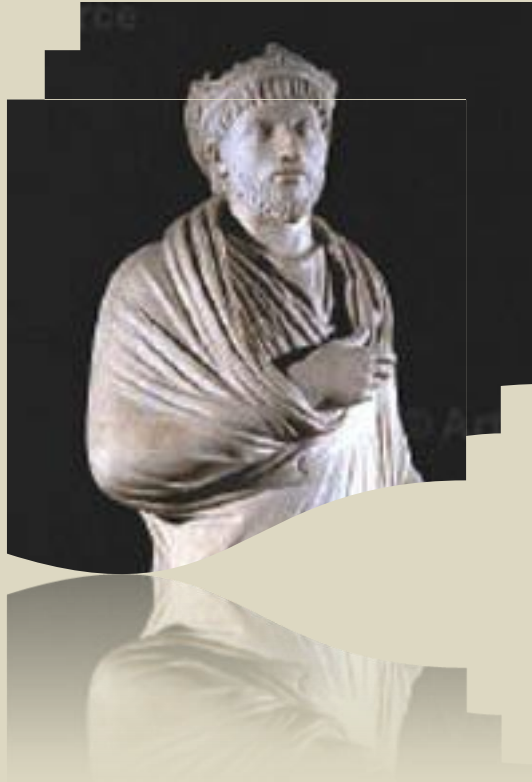
Not one Christian was killed during the siege of Jerusalem. In Matthew 24: 15 Jesus says, “So when you see the desolating sacrilege spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place —let the reader understand— then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”

That is what the Christians in Jerusalem did. They fled to the mountains.



Josephus also wrote that there were mysterious signs foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem:

“There was a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year. Thus also, before the Jews' rebellion, and before those commotions which preceded the war, when the people were come in great crowds to the feast of unleavened bread, on the eight day of the month Nisan, and at the ninth hour of the night, so great a light shone round the altar and the holy house, that it appeared to be bright day-time; which light lasted for half an hour....At the same festival also, a heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed, brought forth a lamb in the midst of the temple.” *Jewish Wars by Josephus*



Emperor Julian the Apostate

A Plan to Rebuild: In AD 363 the Roman Emperor known to Christians as Julian the Apostate, because of his opposition to Christianity, issued an edict that the Temple be rebuilt in Jerusalem. This was incredible news for the Jews who had been without their Holy Temple for almost 300 years.

From throughout the world Jews came to Jerusalem to help in the rebuilding. The Emperor Julian appointed Alypius of Antioch, the Roman Governor of Great Britain, to carry out the project. However the Hand of God would not allow the rebuilding. The foundations of the Temple were rocked when flames of fire burst forth from under the ground. The flames were accompanied by large explosions. The rebuilding stopped. This was seen as a sign from God that the Temple was not to be rebuilt.



Dome on the Rock-Islam's Holy Place

One of Islam's most holy places, the Dome on the Rock now stands in Jerusalem where the Jewish Temple once stood. It was built in 688 after the Moslems had captured Jerusalem. Clearly we can see the hand of God in the destruction of the Temple, predicted by Jesus, to the Dome of the Rock now preventing the Jews from rebuilding their Temple to conduct animal sacrifices under God's Old Covenant with Israel.

Please click on the link below and **watch this excellent documentary** from the British Broadcasting Corporation on the Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem. It is divided into 6 parts each lasting about 10 minutes. It is based on the writings of Josephus.

To watch Part One Click [HERE](#) Part Two [HERE](#) Part Three [HERE](#)

Part Four [HERE](#)

Part Five [HERE](#)

Part Six [HERE](#)

You can read from Josephus *The Jewish Wars* [HERE](#):

Recommended book: *What Jesus Really Said About The End Of The World* by David Currie

Next topic: Did the Emperor Constantine start the Catholic Church in the fourth century as some Protestants claim? Who was Constantine the Great?