

The Intertestamental Period: The Jewish Revolt

Introduction:

1. We noted before that what we call the “Intertestamental Period” is often slightly expanded and referred to as the “Second Temple Period.”
2. Today we will discuss the destruction of the Second Temple and its immediate aftermath.

I. The Beginnings of Rebellion

- A. Misrule of The Roman Procurators
- B. Desire for Political Sovereignty
- C. Socioeconomic hardships
- D. Ethnic hostility between Jews and non-Jews
- E. The stopping of daily sacrifices for the Emperor
- F. Jewish Terrorism

II. The Early Jewish Revolt

A. The Catalyst:

1. An incident occurred in Caesarea Maritime when a Greek merchant house expanded upon the synagogue’s entrance and performed augury on the steps of the synagogue.
2. The Caesarea Sanhedrin raised 8 talents (~\$2 Million) to pay Florus to hear the case. He refused, took the money, and fled the city.
3. Florus sent soldiers to take 17 talents from the temple. The Pharisees mocked Florus, which engaged him. Florus looted the city, crucified the Pharisees, and left some 500 Roman soldiers stationed in Jerusalem.

B. Initial Jewish Success

1. The Jews overthrew the Romans, who had been stationed in Jerusalem.
2. The Jews recaptured the fortress of Masada.
3. 12,000 Roman soldiers were sent to recapture Jerusalem but were defeated by the Jewish military.
4. The Jews established their own government.

C. Rome’s Response:

1. Seeing the initial success of the Jews, the Romans feared that other conquered peoples might become emboldened to rebel.
2. Emperor Nero sent one of Rome’s most competent generals, Vespasian, and his son Titus to deal with the uprising.

D. Joseph Ben-Matityahu

1. Realizing that Galilee would be the next theater of War, Joseph Ben-Matityahu was appointed to lead the resistance in Galilee.

2. Joseph was:
 - a) 29 years old at this time.
 - b) Had no military experience
 - c) The son of Jerusalem's wealthiest family
 - d) Very well educated
 - e) Familiar with Rome and had personally met Nero.
3. Joseph struggled to secure the cooperation of the Galilean cities.
4. The Siege of Yodfat — AD 67
 - a) Yodfat was a poor defensive fortification because it did not have any natural water source.
 - b) Joseph managed to trick the Romans into moving nearer the city walls by making it appear that they had a water source, thus allowing them to fight against the Romans, even injuring Vespasian himself.
 - c) When Titus' troops arrived at Yodfat, the Romans scaled the fortifications and razed the city.
 - d) The Romans destroyed the city and refused to allow the survivors to bury the dead.
5. Joseph's Ploy
 - a) Joseph retreated into a deep cave within the city. Since it was a sin to commit suicide, Josephus proposed that each of the 40 officers and citizens kill one another until Joseph was the only one left standing.
 - b) Joseph met with Vespasian and played upon his Roman superstitions. He declared him Caesar, although it was virtually ludicrous to do so.
 - (1) (Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 3.9.9)
 - c) Joseph then entered into the service of "Titus Flavius Vespasianus."

III. The Year of Four Emperors

A. Nero (54-68)

1. Nero's rule of Rome was a disaster.
2. In AD 68, The western portion of the empire revolted against Nero in support of a general named Galba. The Senate installed Galba as emperor, and Nero committed suicide after being pursued by Vindex.
3. The end of his rule is the end of the Julio-Claudian Dynasty.

B. Galba (June, 68 - January, 69)

C. Otho (January, 69 - April, 69)

D. Vitellius (April, 69 - December 69)

E. Vespasian (December, 69 -79)

1. During the unrest, Vespasian halted his march on Jerusalem, claiming that he needed the authority of the Roman Emperor to continue.
2. Only when the Roman Legions declared Vespasian as emperor did he continue his march.
3. After Vespasian became emperor, he remembered Joseph, who had seemingly prophesied this turn of events. He invites Joseph into his household. Joseph would be renamed "Flavius Josephus" after his newfound patron.

IV. The End of the Jewish Revolt

A. The Situation in Jerusalem

1. Titus took control of the conquest after his father, Vespasian, was named emperor.
2. After the successful Roman campaigns in northern Galilee, the surviving Jewish troops retreated into Judea and Jerusalem.
3. With the Jewish holidays approaching, Jerusalem was swollen with people. Josephus reports around 1 Million Jews were present in Jerusalem, although that is likely an extreme exaggeration.

B. Titus Enters Jerusalem

1. Jerusalem was too large for Rome to encircle.
 - a) Thanks to Herod's expansions, Jerusalem was still able to gather supplies.
2. Titus eventually tore down the walls of Herod's expanded Jerusalem and was able to encircle
3. Josephus pled to Jerusalem to give up on behalf of Titus.

C. Cruelty against Jerusalem

1. The people faced starvation
2. Thousands of defectors and citizens were caught and crucified
 - a) The people swallowed their gold coins ... which led to mass disembowelments of those caught.

D. The Destruction of the Temple

1. The Antonia Fortress collapsed allowing the Romans access to the temple mount.
2. Although Titus promised Josephus that the temple would not be destroyed, in the heat of battle, a soldier tossed his torch, and the city began to burn.
3. Titus entered the burned and looted temple to the chants of his men, sacrificed a pig on the altar, and ordered the destruction of the temple.

E. Failed Parley

1. The leaders of the Jewish rebellion met with Titus to discuss terms of surrender with Josephus Translating.
2. For Titus, only total surrender was acceptable. The Jews did not agree.
3. The Romans marched house to house, killing or enslaving everyone who attempted to hide or fight back.
4. The stones of the temple were pushed off the temple mount and scattered.
5. At the end of the day, on the 26th of September AD 70, Jerusalem was dead. This Day is remembered today as "Tisha B'av."
6. (Matthew 24:1-35; Luke 24)

V. The End of the Revolt

A. After Titus has conquered Jerusalem, he allows Josephus to take what he wants from the ruins.

1. Josephus takes only the scrolls of the Bible from the temple and rescues some of his friends and family from their crosses.
2. Titus offers to build Josephus a villa overlooking the city, but Josephus knows that his people would never accept him.

B. Vespasian's Triumph

1. The victory over the Jews and their wealth was paraded.
2. The prisoners of war were paraded and then executed.
3. Vespasian and Titus were paraded and honored.
4. Vespasian and Titus forced survivors to construct the Colosseum in Rome.

C. Masada

1. Although Vespasian was celebrating their conquest, the war was not over.
2. The Sicarii still held out against the Romans in Masada.
3. Seeing the incredible fortifications of Masada, The Romans built up a road on an existing ridge and a siege tower to break in the Wall of Masada.
4. The Jews Reinforced their wall with timbers and earth. The Romans burned the timbers.
5. The next morning, the Romans enter the city and find that the Jews have committed suicide. (Josephus *Jewish War* 7.8.7)

VI. Josephus

A. Josephus has a complicated legacy:

1. He is regarded as a turncoat by many Jews.
2. He is an invaluable resource for the intertestamental period.
3. His writings are considered to be largely very reliable and historical.
4. However, there is a propagandistic tint to some of his writings.

B. Josephus is the author of four works:

1. The Jewish War — ~AD 77-78
2. The Antiquities of the Jews — ~AD 93-94
3. The Life of Josephus — ~AD 90
4. Against Apion — ~AD 90's

Conclusion:

1. The study of the intertestamental period can be a lot to digest, but it provides important insight to the world of the New Testament.
2. Religious, political, and moral challenges have always existed and will always exist. People will always need a savior.
3. The events of the intertestamental period led to the "fullness of time."
 1. (Galatians 4:4-5)