

The Destruction of the Temple (70 Ce)

by Robert Wurtz II

The destruction of the Temple in 70 CE marks a significant turning point in Jewish history, highlighting the importance of faith and righteousness in the face of adversity.

Scripture: Psalm 37:25, Matthew 10:34, Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14

Topics: "Jewish History", "Eschatology"

Description

Robert Wurtz II delves into the historical significance of the Temple in the first century, emphasizing its grandeur and importance as a common meeting place for both believing and non-believing Jews. The rise of false messiahs among the Zealot leadership caused division and hostility within families, fulfilling Jesus' prophecy of setting family members against each other. The destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 marked a turning point in Jewish history, leading to the dispersion of believers and the emergence of Rabbinic Judaism.

Transcript

It is hard to imagine how beautiful and awesome that the Temple actually was in the first century. So many times we think the "upper room" may have been in someones attic, etc. The Temple was quite a site to behold for those who were there. We, some 2000 years later only have the detailed models and 3D animations to go on. Just seeing them is awe inspiring. Although hostility towards the Notzrim (Christians) increased with each passing year, we must remember that the believing Jews and the non-believing Jews were constantly mingling together both in the Temple and in the local synagogues. This is a very important fact! Paul preached in synagogues and Jesus attended synagogue. It was a main part of their identity as Jews and a means with which to express their religion. To loose the Temple would mean the loss of a common meeting place- both for believing Jews and non-believing Jews alike.

What exacerbated the whole problem were the many men who rose up and claimed "Messiah" status in the Zealot leadership (Jewish Freedom Movement). The believing Jews could not follow them and it alienated the believers from their non-believing family members and friends. They were viewed as traitors of Israel. This is the reality of the "sword" that Jesus said he would bring and set family members at enmity with each other (Matthew 10:34).

McClintock and Strong writes... "During the final struggle of the Jews against the Romans, A.D. 70, the Temple was the last scene of the tug of war. The Romans rushed from the Tower of Antonia into the sacred precincts, the halls of which were set on fire by the Jews themselves. It was against the will of Titus

that a Roman soldier threw a firebrand into the northern out-buildings of the Temple, which caused the conflagration of the whole structure, although Titus himself endeavored to extinguish the fire (War, 6:4). Josephus remarks, "One cannot but wonder at the accuracy of this period thereto relating; for the same month and day were now observed, as I said before, wherein the holy house was burned formerly by the Babylonians. Now the number of years that passed from its first foundation, which was laid by king Solomon, till this its destruction, which happened in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, are collected to be one thousand one hundred and thirty, besides seven months and fifteen days; and from the second building of it, which was done by Haggai in the second year of Cyrus the king, till its destruction under Vespasian there were six hundred and thirty-nine years and forty-five days." The sacred utensils, the golden table of the shew-bread, the book of the law, and the golden candlestick were displayed in the triumph at Rome. Representations of them are still to be seen sculptured in relief on the triumphal arch of Titus." (from McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 2000 by Biblesoft)

Josephus reluctantly describes in detail the atrocities that took place. Everyone ought to read those sobering accounts. People resorted to the most horrific means of survival. Hunger has a way of bringing madness to those who are unrighteousness. The Psalmist once wrote... "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. 26 He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. 27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. 28 For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off." (Psalm 37:25-28)

Famine has often been used as an arrow of God's judgment. And as Matthew Henry once put it... "God is never at a loss for a means with which to punish a wicked people... His quiver is always full."

Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple with it. The city was plowed according to Micah 3. The believing Jews fled to the Mountains of Pella. The Pharisees fled to Yavneh (Yamnia or Jamnia) to begin construction of an academy and forge a whole new "sterilized" Judaism free from all the "min" (minim-heretics) called RABBINIC JUDAISM. The "rebels" fled to Masada where they systematically committed suicide. Rome had built a ramp up the the fortress and when the Jews threw large stones down it... the Romans went into town and got the peoples family members to stand on the front lines. A woman and a few children who had hidden and lived to tell the story. The Sacarii were killed in 73 CE in Egypt. The Saducees were destroyed with the Temple.

In the next lesson, we will look at how the Pharisees took up the cause of the Zealots. The authority of God will soon be placed into the hands of the "Rabbi's" and the Jewish believers as we once knew them would be persecuted almost out of existence.

Some info taken from Funk and Wagnall Encyclopedia 1983. Would recommend the Lumina software for looking at 3D versions of the Temple. Classes can be taken via correspondence from AIHLS on the Temple (2 semesters). Early Christian historians Eusebius and Epiphanius claim that prior to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 the Jerusalem Christians fled to the Decapolis city of Pella (note also Mark 13:14; Matt 24:15; Lu 21:20-22; cf. 19:43-44 Evidence from Biblical, Historical, Archaeological and Critical Studies J. Julius Scott, Jr. (Web page)).

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