

**PROPHET AND HISTORIAN:
JOHN AND JOSEPHUS**

*John's Four Winds
And First Two Woes,
Fulfilled in A.D. 27 Through 70.
The Third Woe Fulfilled in
A.D. 131 Through 135.*

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to people very important to me: my children, Cheryl, Mark, Dennis, Michelle;

My grandchildren: Mark, Michael, Braeden, Meaghan, Brooke; My deceased wife, Arlene, who endured long hours of research; My wife, Marian, who encouraged me to seek publication.

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Chapter one

Introduction

Many authors who interpret the Apocalypse claim that it predicts a future rapture of the saints, a tribulation of the wicked, and a thousand-year Christian kingdom. Hal Lindsey picked up this theme in the 1970's with his "*The Late, Great Planet Earth*," "*The Rapture*," "*The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon*," and other titles. This theme was picked up again by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins in their "*Left Behind*" series. Both LaHaye/Jenkins and Lindsey were very well received and sold millions of books. However, to me, it seems strange that the Apocalypse, written by an apostle, was not meant to guide the apostle's contemporaries, all of them faced with a difficult choice now that the prophesied Messiah has arrived.

Not all biblical scholars agree on this futurist interpretation. They have developed four schools of interpretation. One school, the preterist interpretation, views the prophecies as meant primarily for people who

lived during the time of Christ and the apostles. The scholarly Anchor Bible Commentary gives a thorough analysis of all schools of interpretation. In the volume devoted to the Apocalypse, J. Massyngberde Ford discussed the views of biblical scholars who believed that, although John the Evangelist authored the text that we have today, he had at his disposal the preaching of John the Baptist. Being a disciple of the Baptist, the Evangelist would be familiar with, and would believe, what he learned from the Baptist. These scholars believe John incorporated the Baptist's preaching into what he passed on to us, the revered Apocalypse of John the Evangelist. These scholars believe so because the writing style of much of the Apocalypse is different from the style of the Evangelist's Gospel and Epistles. They believe the Evangelist incorporated sections of the Baptist's preaching that were still important in A.D. 96. The Evangelist then added text of his own, notably the letters to the seven churches. The difference in writing style is apparent in the letters to the churches also.

These scholars argue convincingly that Chapters 4 through 11 had their origin in the Baptist's preaching and that chapters 4 through 11 are the earliest portions of the Apocalypse. J. M. Ford explains all of this in detail (*The Anchor Bible: Revelation: A New Translation with*

Introduction and Commentary (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), p. 3)

Their argument is that John the Baptist preached these early visions. His disciples repeated them to others, some of whom became Christian, one of whom was John the Evangelist. The Baptist's disciples continued to preach the visions, repeating them in their original form, for approximately thirty years. Around A.D. 66, a Christian disciple added more visions and preached the combined text during the Judean revolt against Rome. Finally, around A.D. 96, John the Evangelist reorganized the visions and added the letters to the seven churches. This was twenty-six years after the Temple's destruction, thirty-eight years before the final, disastrous defeat of Judea. This reorganized text is the text we read today. The possibility that Chapters 4 through 11 originated with John the Baptist, and could possibly be part of the Baptist's announcement of the Messiah, made me think that these visions might apply more directly to events when Christianity began than events that are future to us.

I read many history books to see if the Apocalypse could compare to historical events of first and second-century Judea. I believe I found a point-by-point relationship for the four winds and the three woes. When the Evangelist

put the final completed text into writing, many events and disasters the Baptist warned about had already taken place. John the Evangelist was an eyewitness to them.

I also read Gary DeMar's "*End Times Fiction*," in which DeMar criticizes the futurist interpretation that proposes a soon-to-come rapture, tribulation, and millennial kingdom. DeMar believes these predictions are based more on fiction than on fact. Recently, a few years after I had published my own book, Hank Hanegraaff and Sigmund Brouwer published "*The Last Disciple*." Hanegraaff agrees with DeMar and feels convinced that the prophecies were fulfilled during the early Church age. Hanegraaff hosts a radio talk show "The Bible Answer Man."

Tyndall House, the publisher of the "*Left Behind*" series agreed to publish a similar series of Hanegraaff and Brouwer novels proposing that it was the early Christians, not we, who will experience the predictions. "*The Last Disciple*" is the first volume in the proposed new series, three sequels already planned.

"*The Last Disciple*" has generated much interest and praise and has provided a polarizing point between readers, in the general public, who accept the futurist interpretation and those who feel it is not correct. The authors, themselves, have gotten into the dispute. Tim LaHaye feels

betrayed by Tyndall House Publishing. He believes they agreed to publish Hanegraaff's novels to continue making money like they did with his "*Left Behind*" series. He thinks Hanegraaff's preterist interpretation is unbiblical and nonsense. Hanegraaff, in the Afterword of "*The Last Disciple*" (pages 393-5) goes into some detail on what he thinks is wrong in LaHaye's interpretation. Readers comments on Amazon.com about "*The Last Disciple*" show how the general public has taken sides on the issue.

I've read "*Left Behind*" novels and "*The Last Disciple*." They are all well written novels using fictional characters to capture reader's involvement while the setting of both series describes the author's interpretations. I think "*The Last Disciple*" is at a disadvantage because the general public is not familiar with early Church history and does not recognize the names of real historical characters and real events. For those people, the whole novel might read as fiction. "*Left Behind*," on the other hand, does not have this disadvantage. The reader easily discerns between the purely fictional characters and the proposed, future fulfillment of the prophecies.

I believe my book can serve a good purpose here. My original book "*Revelation and the Fall of Judea*" was not written as fiction. All of it discusses real historical persons

and real historical events. I condensed my book into the present “*Prophet and Historian: John and Josephus*” to cover the main historical events, using long quotes from historical sources not easily reached by the average reader and comparing them to the text of the Apocalypse. Both of my books cover a much longer period of time than “*The Last Disciple*.” I start in A.D. 27 and continue to A.D. 135 when Rome destroys the Judean nation and deports the surviving Judeans into other nations. The Judeans had rebelled against Rome, following the leadership of Bar Kochba, whom they believed to be the promised Messianic King. In my interpretation, I view Bar Kochba as a rival to Christ. I view him as the False Messiah who led Judea to destruction.

Here are historical events I found that I think fit the Four Winds and Three Woes better than modern events. I compared events that occurred in Judea following Christ's death and the demise of Judea to certain visions in the Apocalypse. I thought then, and still think, that the visions warned the unbelieving Judeans, what would happen should they oppose the Messianic kingdom set up by the Messiah and try to destroy it.

Many Judeans believed Christ and chose to follow his apostles, but many other Judeans could not believe. The

teachings of Jesus were then taken to the Gentiles and many Gentiles believed. I think Apoc. 7:1-9 refers to this, indicating that 144,000 (a symbolic figure indicating a large number) were gathered from the twelve tribes. Then many others from all nations and all languages were gathered and joined to the 144,000. Historically, the first Christians did come from the Judean people. When the unbelieving Judeans tried to eradicate Christianity, many Christians fled to nearby Gentile areas. While there, they began accepting Gentile converts into their worship.

St. Paul concentrated on the Gentiles and brought many into Christianity. The conversion of Gentiles has been ongoing ever since. They greatly outnumber the Judeans. Like Apoc. 7:9 says, they are a great multitude, too numerous to count, gathered from all nations, and tribes, peoples, and tongues. While the unbelieving Judeans tried to subdue Christianity, causing it to spread to the Gentiles, the unbelieving Judeans also resented Roman occupation and tried to free themselves from Roman control. These two conflicts: Judeans oppressing Christians and Judeans resisting Roman occupation intensify from year to year.

Finally a point is reached when the unbelieving Judeans gain the upper hand over the Christian Judeans. When things look very bleak for the Christians, the

unbelieving Judeans fight off Roman occupation. Rome decides to reconquer Judea. The reconquering of Judea, I think, is the fulfillment of the first and second woes.

There is a period of further hostility, then the Judeans, united under someone they think is the Messiah, throw off Roman occupation again. This time, Rome destroys the Judean state, relocates the survivors, and brings in foreign peoples to occupy the land. This, I think, is the fulfillment of the third woe. I will show why those events look like the fulfillment of the three woes in the following chapters. I will include long quotes from historians (Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius) describing the events. Some were eyewitnesses. I will also cite Biblical verses that, I believe, predicted the events. Here is a brief summary of the events leading to the first woe.

By A.D. 64, Christianity had grown and spread throughout Asia Minor. Peter and Paul planted Christianity in Rome. The turning point leading to the fulfillment of the three woes occurred when Nero revived the so-called "Imperial Cult" and made it a test of Roman allegiance throughout the Empire. This test required a sacrifice to Caesar. Judeans alone, because they believed in only one God, were exempt from it. Due to a concession made by Pompeii when he conquered Judea, Judeans had always

been exempt from observing the Imperial Cult.

Up to that time an outsider looking at Christianity would judge it to be a sect within Judaism. Both groups, in Judea at least, consisted mainly of Judeans. In Jerusalem, both groups worshiped in the Temple. The Judeans wanted to preserve their exemption. They wanted also to be rid of Christians. So they denied Christians access to the Temple. They wished to make it clear that Christians were not adherents of their faith. This prevented Christians from claiming exemption from the Imperial Cult even though they worshiped only the one true God of Israel. Now Rome can punish the Christians if they refuse to acknowledge the Imperial Cult.

I think the visions of three woes were a warning from John the Baptist of what would happen should the Judeans not accept the Messiah and try to destroy his mission. I believe, after thirty-seven years, time has run out for Judea. I believe so because, within one year, Judea will be in full-scale war with Rome.

There had been hostility all along, but the incident that triggered war started over something that seemed small. Some Judeans owned a synagogue next to property in Caesarea owned by a pagan Gentile. Some Judeans tried to purchase the property, offering a generous price. The pagan

refused. Instead, he started construction on his property that prevented free access to the synagogue. Some short-tempered Judeans attacked the workers, hoping this would stop construction. The pagans appealed to the procurator, Florus. Florus ruled in their favor and ordered the Judeans not to interfere.

The Judeans then offered Florus a bribe to stop the construction. Florus took the money; but, instead of stopping construction, he went to Sebaste, about twenty miles to the southeast. The next day, a Sabbath day, in late April or early May, A.D. 65, a pagan man, ". . . a certain man of Caesarea, of a seditious temper" as Josephus puts it (Wars, II, XIV, 5) (Josephus, II, p. 262) went in front of the synagogue and set up a makeshift altar on an overturned pot. He sacrificed a bird to the pagan gods.

Outraged Judeans rushed at him. Pagan observers came to his assistance. Soon a race riot erupted. News of this spread to other cities and caused race riots there also. Seeing things rapidly get out of hand, some well-to-do Judeans who were sympathetic to Rome, went to Sebaste to ask Florus to return and stop the rioting. Florus had them arrested.

When news of the riots reached Jerusalem, about fifty miles to the southeast, the people there grew tense and

apprehensive. Florus took advantage of the situation and had his men raid the Temple. They stole seventeen talents from the Temple treasury. Florus claimed the emperor needed it. This happened on May 16, A.D. 65.

When news of the Temple robbery reached Jerusalem, a crowd gathered around the Temple. They passed a collection basket so, as they put it, the impoverished Procurator need not resort to robbery. This offended Florus. He ordered extra troops, cavalry and infantry, to march from Caesarea to Jerusalem and punish those who mocked him.

The next day he held court and demanded those responsible be surrendered to him. When the people refused, he punished them by allowing his troops to take whatever they wanted from a neighborhood called "the upper market" and to kill anyone who resisted. The looters slaughtered three-thousand and six-hundred men, women, and children. Some they scourged and crucified, even Roman citizens. No Judean procurator ever before dared do the brutal things that Florus did that day.

The Judeans were ready to revolt, but the priests talked them out of it. The Romans will kill them all, the priests argued. Hoping to end this crisis by a public gesture of submission, the people agreed to salute the Roman troops when they arrived from Caesarea. It was customary for

troops to be saluted on their arrival and for the troops to acknowledge the salute. Florus, still angry, advised the troops not to acknowledge the salute. If any Judeans taunted them, they may retaliate.

When the soldiers ignored the salute, some Judeans insulted them. The soldiers attacked. After dispersing the crowd, the soldiers tried to storm the Temple. The Judeans blocked the way. The Judeans then destroyed the walkway between the Temple and the fortress, thus isolating the Temple. When Florus saw that he could no longer get access to the Temple and, therefore, could not easily rob its treasury, he sent for the Temple leaders. He told them that he would leave Jerusalem and take most of his troops with him if they restored order.

Florus then sent a report to Cestius Gallus, the Roman governor of Syria, who had higher authority. Florus falsely accused the Judeans of revolt. The Judeans also sent their report accusing Florus. To learn the facts, Cestius sent a man to investigate. The man happened to meet King Agrippa II on the way. Agrippa II had no authority over Judea but was concerned. He decided to go to Jerusalem also.

The facts supported the Temple leaders. Cestius then reported Florus' misconduct to Nero. Agrippa II advised the

Judeans to repair the walkway and continue paying the Roman tax. This would show good faith when Nero investigates. Agrippa thought Nero would replace Florus. He encouraged the Judeans to continue respecting Florus as procurator until Nero sends a replacement. This the Judeans refused to do.

Soon after the above incident, Eleazar ben Jairi and some Sicarri captured Masada. Masada is thirty-five miles south of Jerusalem in the mountains near the Dead Sea. Later, the new High Priest refused to accept any request for sacrifice from Gentiles. This was an open break with Rome. Ever since their first contact with Pompey, the Temple authorities always made a daily sacrifice on Rome's behalf. This conveyed Rome's respect to the God of Israel. The Temple authorities in the past always accepted gifts to God from foreign kings. Josephus, the historian of my title, counts this refusal as the war's real beginning.

The upper-class Judeans, the rich ones who cooperate with Rome, including most of the Sadducees, but also including many rich Pharisees, priests, and well-educated Judeans, were against the war. Those for war were mainly the less well-off and, of course, the Zealots and Sicarri. The middle-class tried to remain neutral.

The upper-class urged resumption of the daily sacrifice

on Rome's behalf. They wanted to avoid any action that might lead to war. Opposed by Zealots and Sicarri, they then advised Florus and Agrippa to send troops to restore order. Florus already had a detachment in Jerusalem. Agrippa II sent some of his troops. Together they quickly recaptured the upper city, where the well-to-do Judeans lived, but the lower city and the Temple area remained under control of those who wanted war.

For seven days, both sides attacked each other without gaining any headway. On the eighth day, the revolutionaries, taking advantage of a religious ceremony, caught the upper city by surprise. They defeated the well-to-do Judeans, burnt their homes, and massacred many. The survivors fled for their lives. The revolutionaries then burnt the public archives where all credit records were stored. This prevented the rich from collecting debts. The revolutionaries did this to win support from those who had debts. The revolutionaries then beat back the foreign troops and cornered them. After some negotiations, the revolutionaries agreed to permit safe conduct out of Jerusalem if the soldiers lay down their arms. When the soldiers did, the revolutionaries let Agrippa's troops leave but killed the Romans.

When the pagans in Caesarea heard what happened-

--the soldiers were their own relatives--they killed twenty--thousand Judeans in Caesarea. This prompted Judeans in other cities to attack and kill Gentiles. This led to further retaliation by Gentiles in other cities. Bloodshed and violence spread throughout Judea. Even as far away as Alexandria, Egypt, the Gentiles killed fifty-thousand Judeans. All this happened in summer of 65, three months after the pagan bird sacrifice in Caesarea.

Cestius Gallus, without waiting for Rome's directive, brought in the Syrian-based XII Legion to crush the revolt. He conquered many small Judean towns on his way to Jerusalem. He subdued most of Jerusalem by October 30, but reached a stalemate when the Zealots fought their way inside the Temple mount and shut the gates. Afraid that the whole population would attack from all sides if he stormed the Temple, he decided to withdraw from the city. The Zealots pursued him. With their greater number, the Zealots caused the Romans to break rank. Before the rout was over, the Zealots killed five thousand foot-soldiers and more than four hundred cavalry.

This unprecedented and humiliating defeat of a full-scale Roman army filled the Judeans with confidence. They cheered Simon bar Giora, who led the attack, calling him their hero. This man will play an important role later in

the war. Judea was now, in late November 65, in open rebellion against Rome, five months after the bird was sacrificed.

The people planned their defense against Rome's retaliation. On January 28, A.D. 66, they formed a provisional government led by the middle class, who up to that time had been neutral. Now that war was inevitable, the middle class felt they should control the revolution. They appointed Simon, son of Gamaliel, and Joseph, son of Gorion, as joint heads of the new government, and Ananus, a Sadducee, as High Priest. The well-known and influential Ananus wound up as the real head. Ananus organized the country into military defense zones. One was Galilee. He placed Galilee under the command of Josephus, son of Matthias. Josephus will later become the Judean historian (the historian of my title) who will give an eyewitness account of this war.

The government's policy was more of organizing a defense and secretly longing for a peaceful settlement rather than taking the offensive. Josephus, then, as military commander of Galilee, openly urged a plan against invasion, but, privately, tried to defuse the revolution. He soon had a rival, a Zealot extremist named John from Gischala in Galilee. John was very keen to fight the Romans.

Another extremist was Simon bar Giora, whose leadership defeated the XII Legion. Simon opposed the provisional government. He lost the political infighting and was forced to leave Jerusalem. He and his followers joined the Sicarri at Masada. After a while, he quarreled with the Sicarri also. He then took his men to the hills. There he recruited runaway slaves to build an army and furnished it by raiding nearby towns. His indiscriminate raids on Judeans as well as Gentiles alarmed the provisional government. The government sent armed men to destroy him, but he eluded them.

No one knows how Nero would have dealt with Florus, had the Judeans not revolted. Faced with open rebellion, Nero sent a fresh army commanded by Vespasian to crush the revolt. Vespasian's army entered Palestine from the north, and began a systematic conquest, city by city. Within a year, he conquered Jotapata, the headquarters of Josephus, and took Josephus prisoner. Later, Josephus became an interpreter for Vespasian. In his service as interpreter, Josephus tried, many times, to get the Judeans to give up their hopeless revolt against Rome.

Vespasian's army then conquered Joppa on July 12, A.D. 66, causing 11,600 fatalities. By October, Vespasian

had conquered Gischala. John of Gischala, the rival of Josephus, fled with many followers to Jerusalem. Many refugees from other areas reconquered by Vespasian also went to Jerusalem. The city could not hold so many people. Overcrowding and the new political ambitions of the refugees weakened the provisional government.

Chapter two

The First Woe

The year is A.D. 66, autumn, sixteen months after the sacrifice of the bird. Thousands of Judean refugees flee toward Jerusalem. They come from Galilee and other areas attacked by Vespasian. I wonder what the weather was like that autumn. I wonder if the refugees anticipated more than the onset of winter as they made their way. Was an eagle in the sky? Did it cry at them as they passed? If so, did they remember the words of the eagle in John's vision as they trudged on? The eagle in John's vision cried: "*Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth . . .*" (Apoc. 8:13)

These people seek refuge in Jerusalem. They will add their sorrows to a city overwhelmed with sorrow. They will bring with them, also, a new political awareness. It will sweep through the Zealot party shifting the party's goals. New leaders will vie for control. Two contenders are Eleazar, son of Simon, and John of Gischala. John previously had opposed Josephus for control of Galilee. The

Zealots are not the only ones interested in controlling the city. The Sicarri are powerful in both Jerusalem and at Masada. The Sicarri in Jerusalem are led by Judas the Galilean; the Sicarri at Masada, by Eleazar ben Jairi.

There is also a peace movement by the Judean middle class. The leader is Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai, a Pharisee priest. He will later escape Jerusalem and set up a rabbinical school at Yabneh (Grayzel, p. 195) There he will preserve the Judean heritage for future generations. But the strongest political group is the Zealots. They seized control of the central government, which collapsed under the influx of refugees. Then they tried to depose Ananus, the High Priest and de-facto head of government. Then they start a reign of terror to neutralize all influence of the fallen government:

There were, besides these, other robbers that came out of the country, and came into the city, and joining to them those that were worse than themselves, omitted no kind of barbarity; for they did not measure their courage by their rapines and plundering only, but proceeded as far as murdering men; and this not in night-time or privately, or with regard to ordinary men, but

they did it openly in the daytime, and began with the most eminent persons in the city; for the first man they meddled with was Antipas, one of the royal lineage, and the most potent man in the whole city. . . . This caused a terrible consternation among the people; and every one contended himself with taking care of his own safety, as they would do if the city had been taken in war.

(WARS IV, III 4) (Josephus, II, pp. 335-6)

To justify replacing Ananus, the Zealots proposed that the High Priest be chosen by drawing lots. The lot fell to an unsuspecting priest, unconnected to families with prior High Priests. The Zealots easily made him their pawn. As the coming disaster took shape, charismatics warned the Christians to leave the city and go to Perea (Jordan). This was early in A.D. 68, January through March.

Knowing the Zealots would abuse their control of the High Priest, Ananus urged the people to help him regain his position. While he spoke, the Zealots attacked him and his listeners. His enraged listeners then attacked the Zealots. After a bloody street battle, the Zealots were beaten. They sought safety in the Temple's inner courts. These courts

were surrounded by strong, high walls, so the Zealots could easily defend themselves. They could even withstand a siege because of ample grain supplies and water in underground cisterns.

John of Gischala then asked Ananus to call a truce so he could talk the Zealots into surrender. When Ananus sent him, John told the Zealots that Ananus planned a surrender to Rome. He urged the Zealots to ask the Idumeans to help depose Ananus before the Romans come. This appealed to the Zealots.

The Idumeans sent a twenty-thousand-man army. Ananus refused to let them enter Jerusalem. That night, some Zealots snuck out of the Temple and secretly opened the gates. The Idumeans resented having been denied entry into the holy city of their common faith (the Idumeans had recently been converted to Judaism). They pillaged the city and killed Ananus and 8,500 of his supporters.

But the rage of the Idumeans was not satiated by these slaughters; but they now betook themselves to the city, and plundered every house, and slew everyone they met: and for the multitude they esteemed it needless to go on killing them, but they sought for the high priests, and the general-

ity went with the greatest zeal against them: and as soon as they caught them they slew them. . . . I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city, and that from this very day may be dated the overthrow of her wall and the ruin of her affairs. . . . And I cannot but think that it was because God had doomed this city to destruction as a polluted city, and resolved to purge his sanctuary by fire, that he cut off these their great defenders and well wishers. . . . Now after these were slain, the Zealots and the multitude of the Idumeans fell upon the people as upon a flock of profane animals, and cut their throats; and for the ordinary sort, they were destroyed in what place soever they caught them. . . . Those whom they caught in the daytime were slain in the night, and then their bodies were carried out and thrown away, that there might be room for other prisoners; and the terror that was upon the people was so great, that no one had courage enough either openly to weep for the dead man that was related to him, or to bury him. . . .

(WARS IV, V, 2-3) (Josephus, II, pp. 347-8)

Pleased with the victory, the Zealots accepted John of Gischala into the ruling circle. By spring of 68, Gischala dominated the party. By spring also, the Idumeans, ashamed of the misery they caused, left the city. When they did, the Zealots imposed a new reign of terror:

. . . After which these Idumeans retired from Jerusalem, and went home . . . while the Zealots grew more insolent, not as deserted by their confederates, but as freed from such men as might hinder their designs, and put some stop to their wickedness. Accordingly, they made no longer any delay, nor took any deliberation in their enormous practices, but made use of the shortest methods for all their executions; and what they had once resolved upon, they put into practice sooner than anyone could imagine. But their thirst was chiefly after the blood of valiant men, and men of good families; the one sort of which they destroyed out of envy, the other out of fear; for they thought their whole security lay in leaving no potent man alive. (WARS

IV, VI, 1) (Josephus, II, p. 350)

While the Zealots were strengthening their hold on Jerusalem, Nero was weakening his hold on Rome. Sickened by Nero's abuse of power, the Roman Senate finally deposed him. They sent loyal troops to arrest him. They planned to execute Nero by the "old method;" that is, order soldiers to hang him by the head from a forked branch and beat him to death. Nero fled, but was tracked down. As the soldiers entered his hiding place on June 9, 68, he committed suicide.

After his death, the senate could not pull the rival factions together. The Empire began to break apart. Three Generals within a year boasted that they were Emperor. Rival generals defeated them. Vespasian halted his attack in Judea and waited for Rome to stabilize.

Taking advantage of this lull, Simon bar Giora led his men to conquer the towns and villages around Jerusalem. This destroyed Zealot power outside Jerusalem. We now have Simon bar Giora master of Judea and the Zealots master of Jerusalem. Not happy with this, the Zealots sent an army to destroy Simon. They were defeated and returned to Jerusalem.

If Simon felt strong enough, he would have attacked Jerusalem. He chose, instead, to attack the Idumeans.

Aided by treachery of Idumean traitors, he and his army fought their way into Idumaea. His success alarmed the Zealots. They kidnaped Simon's wife to hold as hostage. Simon then withdrew from Idumaea and besieged Jerusalem. He killed or maimed every Judean his army captured. He tortured some, cut off their hands, and sent them back to warn the Zealots that he would do the same to all his enemies if anything happened to his wife.

Frightened by this, the Zealots released their hostage. Simon then left and continued his conquest of Idumaea, causing many Idumean refugees to flee to Jerusalem. When he conquered Idumaea, he came back and again besieged Jerusalem. The Judeans are in a terrible situation now. They hated the Romans. They feared Simon. But even more than Simon, they feared the Zealots:

Now this Simon, who was without the wall, was a greater terror to the people than the Romans themselves, as were the Zealots who were within it more heavy upon them than both of the others; and during this time did the mischievous contrivances and courage [of John] corrupt the body of the Galileans; for these Galileans had advanced this John and made him very potent . .

(WARS, IV, IX, 10) (Josephus, II, p. 362)

John had been supported in his bid for power by the Zealots and now, seemingly in gratitude for their support, he allowed them to do anything they wished:

. . . for he permitted them to do all things that any of them desired to do, while their inclination to plunder was insatiable, as was their zeal in searching the houses of the rich; and for the murdering of men and abusing of the women, it was sport to them.

(WARS, IV, IX, 10) (Josephus, II, p. 362)

They also . . . indulged themselves in feminine wantonness, without any disturbance, till they were satiated therewith; while they decked their hair, and put on woman's garments, and were besmeared over with ointments; and, that they might appear very comely, they had paints under their eyes, and imitated not only the ornaments, but also the lusts of women, and were guilty of such intolerable uncleanness, that they invented unlawful pleasures of that sort; and thus did they

roll themselves up and down the city, as in a brothel house, and defiled it entirely with their impure actions; nay, while their faces looked like the faces of women, they killed with their right hands; and when their gait was effeminate, they presently attacked men and became warriors, and drew their swords from under their finely-dyed cloaks, and ran everybody through whom they alighted upon. However Simon waited for such as ran away from John, and was the more bloody of the two: and he who had escaped the tyrant within the wall, was destroyed by the other that lay before the gates; so that all attempts of flying and deserting to the Romans were cut off as to those who had a mind to do so.
(WARS, IV, IX, 10) (Josephus, II, p. 362)

Some Zealots then tried to oust Gischala. The Judean masses joined in and so did the Idumean refugees. John's men retreated once more into the Temple where, because of its impregnable construction, there was again a stand off. Looking for new allies, the Judean people invited Simon bar Giora to help. So in April of 69, Simon and his men entered Jerusalem. But he also was unable to penetrate the Temple.

Simon then tried to control the city. When the people resisted, Simon defeated them and ruled by force. He became an even worse tyrant than John of Gischala.

Later, within the Temple walls, another mutiny erupted against John of Gischala. This mutiny was led by Eleazar ben Simon. His men seized the Temple's inner courts. This is the first time that the inner courts have been occupied by any of the combatants. For a while, this three-sided battle raged around the Temple: the mutineers in the inner courts, John of Gischala's forces in the rest of the Temple complex, and Simon bar Giora's forces surrounding the Temple.

On April 15 in the year 69, General Vitellius took control of the Roman government. He was the third successor of Nero within a year. His unpopularity caused a civil war. A few months later, the armies of the east asked Vespasian to rule. Vespasian agreed but felt he should finish the conquest of Judea. On June 5, he resumed the offensive and easily reconquered all Judea except Jerusalem and the three fortifications of Herodion, Machaerus, and Masada. Herodion was ten miles south of Jerusalem near Bethlehem. Machaerus, where John the Baptist was beheaded, was forty miles east of Jerusalem in the mountains of Perea on the other side of the Dead Sea.

Masada was a mountain fortress on the west side of the Dead Sea, about forty miles south of Jerusalem. Then on July 3, Vespasian accepted the army's offer. He left his son, Titus, to finish the war while he restored order in Rome. He will be crowned Emperor on December 20, A.D. 69.

During summer and early fall of A.D. 69, the forces of Gischala and Bar Giora continued fighting. The fighting caused the city terrible misery. In their mad assaults against each other, these two rival factions burnt and destroyed all the stored grain in the city. Before summer was over, both sides had run out of food. By early fall, the city faced starvation.

. . . he [Gischala] sallied out with a great number upon Simon and his party; and this he did always in such parts of the city as he could come at, till he set on fire those houses that were full of corn, and of all other provisions. The same thing was done by Simon, when, upon the other's retreat, he attacked the city also: as if they had on purpose done it to serve the Romans, by destroying what the city had laid up against the siege, and by thus cutting off the nerves of their own power. Accordingly, it so came to pass, that*

all the places that were about the temple were burnt down, and were become an intermediate desert space, ready for fighting on both sides of it; and that almost all that corn was burnt, which would have been sufficient for a siege of many years. So they were taken by the means of famine, which it was impossible they should have been unless they had thus prepared the way for it by this procedure.

**This destruction of such a vast quantity of corn and other provisions, as was sufficient for many years, was the direct occasion of that terrible famine which consumed incredible numbers of Jews in Jerusalem during its siege.*

[Whiston's footnote] (WARS V, I, 4)

(Josephus, II, p. 372)

Think about what the unbelieving Judeans have done. They are at war with the most powerful empire on earth. They had small chance of victory at best. Now they have no chance. With unthinkable madness, those who sought power fought a civil war in their capital while their common enemy conquered the rest of their country. The uncommit-

ted Judeans must have been horrified to witness the destruction of their resources, even their stored grain.

Their leaders acted like locusts and stripped all of them of everything they need to withstand their common enemy. Bad as the power struggle was, however, it did not kill the nation. It only tormented the nation and wasted its resources--just like the plague of locusts in Apoc. 9:1-5 tormented for five months destroying all the stored food, but the Judeans survived to face, while starving, the Roman assault.

Now a worse woe faces the Judeans. The Romans are revamping their forces, calling for more troops, and planning a final assault with the sole objective of total surrender or total defeat. This will be a worse disaster for the Judeans than the one they just experienced. This woe, the second woe, will destroy their independence. Worst of all, it will destroy the Temple.

Chapter three

The Second Woe

APOCALYPSE 9:13-19

- 13 *And the sixth angel sounded the trumpet: and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before the eyes of God,*
- 14 *Saying to the sixth angel, who had the trumpet: Loose the four angels, who are bound in the great river Euphrates.*
- 15 *And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year: for to kill the third part of men.*
- 16 *And the number of the army of horsemen was twenty thousand times ten thousand. And I heard the number of them.*
- 17 *And thus I saw the horses in the vi-*

sion: and they that sat on them, had breastplates of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone, and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions: and from their mouths proceeded fire, and smoke and brimstone.

18 *And by these three plagues was slain the third part of men, by the fire and by the smoke and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.*

19 *For the power of the horses is in their mouths, and in their tails. For, their tails are like to serpents, and have heads: and with them they hurt.*

These verses describe an angel blowing a trumpet. A voice tells the angel to free four other angels who are bound at the Euphrates river. Those angels gather an army of 200,000,000 soldiers who will kill one-third of humanity. As with the locusts, many have tried to find a line-by-line interpretation of these verses. Some authors compare this army to the followers of Communism. Others point to a future army that the antichrist will lead against Jesus Christ when Christ returns to establish the millennial kingdom.

I think this vision is symbolic. Nobody has ever found a literal fulfillment of it, except to propose a future war involving an invading army of 200,000,000 soldiers. So I looked, instead, for a historical event involving a large army and a disastrous defeat. So far, I have found that the Apocalypse is more relevant to first and second-century Judea than it is to our twenty-first-century Gentile nations. I did not have to look far for a logical fulfillment in the first century. The Roman army coming up against the unbelievers is, I believe, the reorganized army under Titus.

When Vespasian put Titus in charge, Titus took steps to insure that he could not fail. Six months, he spent, reorganizing his army. Adding to the three legions that had been under the command of his father: the fifth, the tenth, and the fifteenth, Titus summoned the twelfth legion from Syria. This is the same legion the Judeans defeated when the rebellion started. One can wonder about the legionaries' sentiments as they came in for the kill. Titus also requested troops from the confederate Kings of the East who were allied with Rome. From these sources, he organized a sixty-thousand man army. The combined forces of Simon bar Giora and John of Gischala counted 23,400 fighting men. These fighting men controlled a total population of several hundred thousand, all crowded within the city's

walls.

By spring of 70, Titus was ready. By April, he and his army reached Jerusalem. Seeing the Romans setting up camp, Bar Giora and Gischala quit fighting each other. They sent men to raid the closest camp. The Romans retreated at first; but, when reinforcements arrived from their other camps, they forced the Judeans to retreat. Confined again within the city, the Judeans resumed their civil war.

It is now Passover. Instinctively the Judeans stopped their civil war so they could celebrate Passover. Pious people carry wood to the Temple in a traditional ceremony to restock the Temple's supply for the sacrificial fire. Eleazar ben Simon's men, barricaded in the inner courts allowed the pilgrims to enter. John of Gischala noticed this. He sent some of his men disguised as pilgrims. Once enough of them slipped in, they overpowered Eleazar's men. This occurred on April 14.

Titus by now is ready to attack the city. The city, just like the Temple, is surrounded by high walls. The walls to the south and the east are on the crests of steep valleys that run along the city's southern and eastern edge. It would be suicidal to send an army up from the valley to scale the walls.

The walls to the north and west are on ground that slopes down toward the city. There is ample room for battering rams and siege equipment. The downward slope makes it easier to shoot arrows and boulders down into the city.

Titus chose the western wall. His men cleared an area and built level ramps that went straight to the wall. These provided level surfaces upon which to roll their heavy war machines. They planned to use their battering ram to knock down the wall, their catapults to hurl boulders into the city, and their siege towers to provide high platforms for archers to shoot down into the city.

They finished the work in late April. When the Judeans heard the battering ram pounding the wall, they finally stopped their civil war and, for the first time, planned a joint offensive against the Romans. They thought a sneak attack might take the Romans by surprise. A group of Judeans opened a gate and ran out. They shouted to the Romans not to fire. They said they were tired of civil war and wanted to surrender. Other Judeans on top the wall flung rocks and shot arrows at them. The Romans rushed to help the victims. On signal from the leader, all Judeans turned on the Romans and killed many of them.

The Judeans then withdrew into the city and began to

reinforce a second, older wall which was about a quarter mile behind the first wall. The Romans broke through the first wall on May 7 and captured part of the city after heavy fighting. Five more days of pounding opened the second wall, and more of the city fell into Roman hands. A third wall protected the oldest sections of the city and still another wall protected the Temple.

The Temple was also protected by the Fortress Antonia. The fortress was an enlargement of the northwest corner of the Temple wall. Entering it, one could pass through the wall into the Temple courtyard. Titus decided to storm Antonia and, simultaneously, knock an opening in the wall some distance south from Antonia. His men built new ramps to provide a level approach for his equipment: two against Antonia, two against the wall.

While the men worked, Josephus urged the Judeans to surrender. He told them how in the past God had always defended them when they were obedient and let them be punished by their enemies when they were disobedient:

Thus it appears, that arms were never given to our nation, but that we are always given up to be fought against and to be taken; for I suppose that such as inhabit this holy place ought to commit

the disposal of all things to God, and then only to disregard the assistance of men, when they resign themselves up to their arbitrator who is above. As for you, what have you done of those things that are recommended by our legislator? and what have you not done of those things that he hath condemned? How much more impious are you than those which were so quickly taken! You have not avoided so much as those sins that are usually done in secret; I mean thefts and treacherous plots against men, and adulteries. You are quarrelling about rapines and murders, and invent strange ways of wickedness. Nay, the temple itself is become the receptacle of all, and this divine place is polluted by the hands of those of our own country; which place hath yet been revered by the Romans, when it was at a distance from them, when they have suffered many of their own customs to give place to our law. And, after all this, do you expect him whom you have so impiously abused to be your supporter?

(WARS V, IX, 4) (Josephus, II, p. 398)

The revolutionaries (the seditious as Josephus calls them) refused to listen, but many other Judeans wanted to surrender:

As Josephus was speaking thus with a loud voice, the seditious would neither yield to what he said, nor did they deem it safe for them to alter their conduct; but as for the people, they had a great inclination to desert to the Romans: accordingly, some of them sold what they had, and even the most precious things that had been laid up as treasures by them, for a very small matter, and swallowed down pieces of gold, that they might not be found out by the robbers; and when they had escaped to the Romans, went to stool, and had wherewithal to provide plentifully for themselves: for Titus let a great number of them go into the country, whither they pleased. And the main reasons why they were so ready to desert were these, that now they should be freed from those miseries which they had endured in that city, and yet should not be in slavery to the Romans: however, John and Simon, with their factions, did more carefully watch these men's

going out, than they did the coming in of the Romans; and, if anyone did but afford the least shadow of suspicion of such an intention, his throat was cut immediately.

(WARS V, X, 1) (Josephus, II, pp. 399-400)

The starving people, crazed with hunger, stalked each other like animals searching for hidden food:

Some of the revolutionaries were the most brutal of all in their quest for food: They also invented terrible methods of torments, to discover where any food was, and they were these: to stop up the passages of the privy parts of the miserable wretches, and to drive sharp stakes up their fundaments; and a man was forced to bear what was terrible even to hear, in order to make him confess that he had but one loaf of bread, or that he might discover a handful of barley-meal that was concealed; and this was done when these tormenters were not themselves hungry; for the thing had been less barbarous had necessity forced them to it; but this was done to keep their madness in exercise, and as making preparations

of provisions for themselves for the following days. (WARS V, X, 3) (Josephus, II, pp. 400-1)

Realizing the Judeans were not going to surrender, Titus ordered all new captives crucified in front of the wall. He hoped this would terrify the Judeans into surrender:

He [Titus] then sent a party of horsemen, and ordered they should lay ambushes for those that went out into the valley to gather food. Some of these were indeed fighting men, who were not contented with what they got by rapine; but the greater part of them were poor people, who were deterred from deserting by the concern they were under for their own relations; for they could not hope to escape away, together with their wives and children, without the knowledge of the seditious; . . . the severity of the famine made them bold in thus going out: so nothing remained but that when they were concealed from the robbers, they should be taken by the enemy; and when they were going to be taken, they were forced to defend themselves, . . . [and] after they

had fought, they thought it too late to make any supplications for mercy: so they were first whipped, and then tormented with all sorts of tortures, before they died, and were then crucified before the wall of the city.

(WARS V, XI, 1) (Josephus, II, p. 402)

John of Gischala sent some of his men to dig tunnels under the ramps by Antonia and shore up the tunnels with wooden pillars and beams. On May 29, when the Roman equipment was on the ramps, John's men set the wooden supports on fire. The tunnels collapsed. The fire spread to the equipment, and destroyed all of it. Two days later Simon bar Giora sent his men to torch the Roman equipment on the other ramps south of Antonia.

Titus' hope for a quick victory was gone. He ordered a siege wall around the city to prevent access to any kind of food. The Judeans had been foraging for food at night, especially along the southern and eastern valleys. With the siege wall completed--it was five miles long and circled the entire city--Titus concentrated on Antonia. His men built new ramps and new war machines. This took twenty-one days. The logs for rebuilding were hauled nine miles. All nearby lumber had been used or destroyed during the war.

During this construction, the people within the city suffered terribly. Most were sick; many were dying. Those who had strength fought for whatever food they could find. Those who could, snuck out of the city to surrender, even climbing over the siege wall:

So all hope of escaping was now cut off from the Jews, together with their liberty of going out of the city. Then did the famine widen its progress, and devoured the people by whole houses and families; . . . As for burying them, those that were sick themselves were not able to do it; and those that were hearty and well were deterred from doing it by the great multitude of those dead bodies, . . . Nor was there any lamentation made under these calamities, nor were heard any mournful complaints; . . . A deep silence also, and a kind of deadly night, had seized upon the city; while yet the robbers were still more terrible than these miseries were themselves; for they brake open those houses . . . and plundered them of what they had; and . . . went out laughing, and tried the points of their swords on the dead bodies; and in order to prove what

mettle they were made of, they thrust some of those through that still lay alive upon the ground . . . Now every one of these died with their eyes fixed upon the temple, and left the seditious alive behind them. Now the seditious at first gave orders that the dead should be buried out of the public treasury, as not enduring the stench of the dead bodies. But afterwards, when they could not do that, they had them cast down from the walls into the valleys beneath

(WARS V, XII, 3) (Josephus, II, pp. 406-7)

Somehow the Romans found out that rich Judeans swallowed their gold and jewels before they left the city. Just when these Judeans thought they had escaped the miseries of the city, they wound up butchered by Roman soldiers in search of gold:

Yet did another plague seize upon those that were thus preserved; for there was found among the Syrian deserters a certain person who was caught gathering pieces of gold out of the excrements of the Jews' bellies; for the deserters used to swallow such pieces of gold, as we told

you before, when they came out; and for these did the seditious search them all; for there was a great quantity of gold in the city, insomuch that as much was now sold (in the Roman camp) for twelve Attic (drams) was sold before for twenty-five. But when this contrivance was discovered in one instance, the fame of it filled their several camps, that the deserters came to them filled with gold. So the multitude of the Arabians, with the Syrians, cut up those that came out as supplicants, and searched their bellies. Nor does it seem to me that any misery befell the Jews that was more terrible than this, since in one night's time about two thousand of these deserters were thus dissected.

(WARS V, XIII, 4) (Josephus, II, p. 409)

Antonia fell on July 1. Two weeks later, amid fierce counterattacks, the Romans demolished it. The Judeans no longer had sufficient able-bodied men to maintain the daily sacrifice. When Josephus heard that the sacrifice had ceased, he again encouraged surrender. He pleaded with John of Gischala who was watching him from the wall. When John refused to surrender, Josephus blamed John for

bringing misery to Jerusalem:

But still, John, it is never dishonorable to repent, and amend what hath been done amiss, even at the last extremity. Thou hast an instance before thee in Jechoniah, the king of the Jews, if thou hast a mind to save the city, who, when the king of Babylon made war against him, did, of his own accord, go out of this city before it was taken, and did undergo a voluntary captivity, with his family, that the sanctuary might not be delivered up to the enemy, and that he might not see the house of God set on fire; on which account he is celebrated among all the Jews in their sacred memorials, and his memory is become immortal, and will be conveyed fresh down to our posterity through all ages. This John is an excellent example in such time of danger; and I dare venture to promise that the Romans shall still forgive thee As Josephus spake these words, with groans and tears in his eyes, his voice was intercepted by sobs. However, the Romans could not but pity the affliction he was under, and wonder at his

conduct. But for John and those that were with him, they were but the more exasperated against the Romans on this account, and were desirous to get Josephus also into their power . . .

(WARS VI, II, 1-2) (Josephus, II, p. 418)

Titus next chose to attack the Zealots within the Temple. There were huge wooden doors in the Temple wall next to the ruins of Antonia. The Romans built two ramps leveling out the approach to the doors. For a second front, they built two additional ramps leading to the wall some distance from Antonia. So many trees had already been felled that the Romans had to travel eleven miles to find lumber.

While the Romans built the ramps, Jerusalem remained under siege. Terrible tales of woe came out of the city:

Now of 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 any where appear, a war commenced presently, and the dearest friends fell a fighting one with another

about it, snatching from each other the most miserable supports of life. Nor would men believe that those who were dying had no food, but the robbers would search them when they were expiring, lest any one should have concealed food in their bosoms, and counterfeited dying: nay, these robbers gaped for want, and ran about stumbling and staggering along like mad dogs, and reeling against the doors of the houses like drunken men; they would also, in the great distress they were in, rush into the very same houses two or three times in one and the same day. Moreover, their hunger was so intolerable, that it obliged them to chew everything, while they gathered such things as the most sordid animals would not touch, and endured to eat them; nor did they, at length, abstain from girdles and shoes, and the very leather which belonged to their shields they pulled off and gnawed: the very wisps of old hay became food to some, and some gathered up fibres, [of hay] and sold a very small weight of them for four Attic . . .

(WARS, VI, III, 3) (Josephus, II, p. 424)

One woman, a daughter of the wealthy Nakdinion ben Gorion, ate barley grains out of horse manure. Another woman killed her infant son, roasted him, and ate him:

There was a certain woman . . . eminent for her family and her wealth, . . . [when] . . . it was now become impossible for her any way to find any more food attempted a most unnatural thing; and snatching up her son, who was a child sucking at her breast, she said--'Oh thou miserable infant! for whom shall I preserve thee in this war, this famine, and this sedition? Come on: be thou my food, and be thou a fury to these seditious varlets, and a byword to the world, which is all that is now wanting to complete the calamities of us Jews.' As soon as she had said this, she slew her son, and then roasted him, and ate the one-half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed

(Wars VI, III, 4) (Josephus, II, pp. 424-5)

With the ramps completed, the Romans moved in their battering ram. The doors proved too heavy to be knocked

down, so on August 8, the Romans stacked wood against the doors and set them ablaze. The fire burned all night. It spread to the roofs of structures within the Temple complex. The next morning, August 9, the same date the Temple fell to the Babylonians, the Romans burst through the smoldering doors and stormed the Temple courtyard (Josephus, II, pp. 426-7).

During the battle, some Romans torched the Temple. Titus had given prior orders not to harm the Temple. When Titus saw the Temple burning, he tried in vain to quench the fire. Meanwhile, other Romans, seeing the Temple ablaze, torched everything in sight. The whole Temple complex, with all its buildings, lay in ruins. Everything that could burn perished in the fire: the wood interiors, the Temple curtains, the candles, the wood brought in for the fire, the scrolls, everything. Except, while the fire was spreading, the Romans looted whatever valuables they could carry away. Besides the gold and silver utensils and the Temple treasury, they took the master copies of the Torah scrolls. These were later presented to Vespasian at his palace in Rome.

During their looting, the Romans slaughtered every Judean that fell into their hands:

And now the Romans, judging that it was in vain to spare what was round about the holy house, burnt all those places, as also the remains of the cloisters and the gates, two excepted; the one on the east side and the other on the south; both which, however, they burnt afterward. They also burnt down the treasury-chambers, in which was an immense quantity of money, and an immense number of garments, and other precious goods there reposit; and, to speak all in a few words, there it was that the entire riches of the Jews were heaped up together, while the rich people had there built themselves chambers (to contain such furniture). The soldiers also came to the rest of the cloisters that were in the outer (court of the) temple, whither the women and the children, and a great mixed multitude of the people, fled, in number about six thousand. But before Caesar had determined anything about these people, or given the commanders any orders relating to them, the soldiers were in such a rage, that they set that cloister on fire; by which means it came to pass, that some of these were destroyed by throwing themselves down

headlong, and some were burnt in the cloisters themselves. Nor did any one of these escape with his life. . . .

(WARS VI, V, 2) (Josephus, II, p. 430)

The Romans then attacked the lower section of the old city. This part of the city lay on the south slope of Mt. Moriah and on the summit of Mt. Ophel. Mt. Ophel was seventy-five feet lower than Mt. Moriah. After four weeks of heavy fighting, the Romans captured the lower section. It fell on September 8. The besieged who survived fled to the upper section and barricaded themselves inside King Herod's heavily-walled palace. This upper section of the city lay west of the lower section and on top of Mt. Zion. The tops of these mountains are not high compared to the lowest valleys in Jerusalem; they are more like hills, but the mountain range itself is several-thousand feet higher than the surrounding plains.

Jerusalem lies on the upper levels of the mountain range. The summits of the two main mountains are half-a-mile from each other. The area of each summit is not much larger than several city blocks. The summit of Mt. Zion is about two hundred and seventy-five feet higher than Mt. Ophel in the city's lower section. Because of this uphill

climb, the Romans decided not to attack Mt. Zion from the lower city.

Titus, therefore, moved his troops to the opposite side of Mt. Zion where they could attack from level ground. They attacked the wall at a point next to Herod's palace. They broke through and stormed the palace on September 26. Simon bar Giora and some of his men escaped into ancient tunnels under the city, but John of Gischala was captured. John asked the Romans for mercy, so Titus sentenced him to life imprisonment.

Meanwhile, Simon and his men vainly tried to find an underground passage that led away from the city. They even dug tunnels of their own. The best they could do was wend their way underground from Herod's palace to the Temple on Mt. Moriah. Not many days later, before the startled eyes of Roman guards, Simon emerged through the Temple ruins. The guards arrested him. The rest of his men surrendered as they came out of the tunnels.

The Roman army then demolished every building in Jerusalem except a few saved to house a small occupying force. According to Josephus, 97,000 Judeans were captured and 1,100,000 died during the four years of war (Josephus, II, p. 440). The Romans crucified some on the spot as a warning against future rebellions. They set other

prisoners aside to be executed in the sports arena in combat with wild animals or in gladiatorial contests. They executed some prisoners this way during the trip back to Rome. Titus held a victory celebration in Caesarea early in October. He held two more to honor his brother, Domitian, and his father, Vespasian on October 24 and November 17. During these three celebrations, gladiators killed prisoners in combat contests. Most of the prisoners, however, were sold into slavery.

Sometime in A.D. 71, Titus led a "triumph," a formal procession of his army past cheering crowds in Rome. The soldiers wore their best uniforms. They held the loot from the Temple high over their heads so all could see it. They marched their prisoners so the people of Rome could see them also. Complying with a long-established tradition, Simon bar Giora, the conquered chieftain, walked past the spectators with his hands tied and a noose around his neck. When the procession reached Jupiter's temple, it halted and, according to custom, Simon was pulled by the noose, while being whipped, to a nearby traditional spot where he was strangled. The crowd applauded his death while Jupiter was honored with sacrifices. The procession then continued its triumphant march past the Emperor.

Over the next two years (71 and 72), the Romans

crushed the last Judean resistance at Herodion and Machaerus. Eleazar ben Jairi and his 960 followers held out for another year at Masada. Faced with certain defeat, they all committed suicide. A few aftershocks of resistance by Judeans rocked Alexandria and Cyrene and a few other large cities in the Empire, but, by A.D. 79, the rebellion had ended.

The Judean defeat was disastrous. Hundreds of thousands perished. But the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple did not kill the Judean nation. It still remained, ruled by Rome through a procurator, but still a recognizable ethnic community that was predominantly Judean. It will still practice many of its own traditional civic and religious customs. It would still, for example, carry on with the priestly offices it exercised before the war. In spite of the casualties during the civic disorders (first woe) and during the war with Rome (second woe), Judea survived.

The Judeans got into trouble in the first place because, when God's works were performed in their midst, many failed to recognize them. The unbelievers had their own ideas of what God's works ought to have been, ideas which were really the works of their own hands, what they expected and what they wanted. They convinced the

uncommitted to follow them rather than the apostles.

APOCALYPSE 10:1-7

- 1 *And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was on his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.*
- 2 *And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth.*
- 3 *And he cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth. And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.*
- 4 *And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying to me: Seal up the things which the seven thunders have spoken: and write them not.*
- 5 *And the angel, whom I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth,*

lifted up his hand to heaven,

- 6 *And he swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things which are therein; and the earth, and the things which are in it; and the sea, and the things which are therein: that time shall be no longer.*
- 7 *But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound the trumpet, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared by his servants the prophets.*

A mighty angel clothed with God's majesty, stands with one foot on land, the other on the sea. Later, two powerful beasts will rise, one from the land, the other from the sea. Both beasts will cause much trouble. This mighty angel is more powerful than both beasts. The angel stands with both their domains underfoot.

The angel shouts in a voice sounding like a lion's roar and is answered by seven thunders. John understands what the thunders say, but he is not allowed to record it. Then the angel, with right hand lifted to heaven, swears that there will

be no more delay. When the seventh angel sounds the trumpet, the mysterious working of God shall be finished: *"as he hath declared by his servants, the prophets."*

The mystery declared to the prophets was the messianic kingdom of God's chosen one. Through that mystery, the entire world will be offered salvation. This messianic kingdom is exactly the kingdom foretold by John when he said: *"Do penance: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* (Matt. 3:2). It is the same kingdom described by Jesus when he told how it would arrive: *"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say: Behold here, or behold there. For lo, the kingdom of God is within you."*

(Luke 17:20-1)

Chapter four

Awaiting The Third Woe

In Apoc. 11:1-14, a voice tells John to measure the Temple and observe those who worship there. But John is not told to measure the Temple courtyard. The courtyard now belongs to the Gentiles, who will trample the holy city for forty-two months. John then sees two witnesses who will prophesy forty-two months. Enemies rise against the witnesses and kill them. Their bodies lie in the street. Three days later God raises them. All during the public ministry of Jesus and forty-two years following it, the remnant of Israel watched as events prophesied by the Baptist, one by one, came true. My review of these events is now in the year 70. The Temple is gone. In Apoc. 12:1-6, John describes a woman clothed with the sun, standing on the moon. Twelve stars shine around her head. She is pregnant. Her son will rule all nations with an iron rod. A large red dragon stalks the woman, waiting to devour the newborn child. She gives birth, but God rescues the child. The woman flees to the

wilderness where God will protect her for 1260 days.

This vision shows how the promised Savior interacts with the human source of the Savior, and to an opposing force bent on destroying the Savior. All three can be represented by individual persons. The Savior is Jesus Christ. The human source of his flesh is his mother, Mary. The opposing force is Satan. One can go further, though, and visualize the opposing force as King Herod, who sent men to kill the newborn Jesus. But to interpret this vision in terms of three individual human beings is to miss its wider implications. The vision really shows larger-than-human groups even though Jesus and Mary are the heads of two groups.

What is being born is the Church, the flesh and blood sisters and brothers of Jesus. They have been marked by baptism as members of his body. This body is being generated from the authentic Israel composed of those who lived the Mosaic covenant. They built the society that nurtured the biological bloodline of Jesus, starting with Abraham and continuing to Mary and Joseph. But Israel is more than the genealogical tree of direct ancestors and blood relatives of Jesus. Israel is a nation. Israel is all the descendants of Abraham's grandson, the grandson God named Israel (Gen. 32:29).

I think that Israel is the woman in the vision; the Church is the child. Both are collective entities not visible in all their dimensions. One can see some individuals who are members of each community, but one cannot see the whole community. For one thing, each community comprises too many people to be seen at once. For another, each community spans through time reaching far back into the past, in Israel's case, and far into the future, in the Church's case. The most important reason they are not visible is that the relationship among the individual members, the relationship that gives each community its unity, is the very thing that human eyes cannot see.

Waiting for the child's birth is the dragon. The dragon is Satan with all those who follow Satan. The whole group is imaged as a dragon. The name "Satan" is a title telling who the dragon is. It is the title held by the fallen angel named "Lucifer."

APOCALYPSE 12:7-13

7 *And there was a great battle in heaven, Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels:*

8 *And they prevailed not, neither was*

their place found anymore in heaven.

- 9 *And that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, who seduced the whole world; and he was cast down unto the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*
- 10 *And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying: Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: because the accuser of our brethren is cast forth, who accused them before our God day and night.*
- 11 *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of the testimony, and they loved not their lives unto death.*
- 12 *Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you that dwell therein. Woe unto the earth, and to the sea, because the devil is come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.*

13 *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman, who brought forth the man child:*

When the dragon realized that it had been cast down and could no longer grasp the child, it went after Israel, the woman who bore the child.

APOCALYPSE 12:14

14 *And there were given to the woman two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the desert unto her place, where she is nourished for a time and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.*

The Lord protected the woman as promised. The remnant of Israel still left on earth was given wings (so to speak) to fly into the desert, desert meaning a place in the ordinary world. The ordinary world has always been parched for God's living waters. She, the Israel remaining on earth, will be preserved there throughout the times of the Gentiles.

Apoc. 12:17 says that the dragon was angry with the woman and went to make war on her seed. At the beginning of the Church age, the Roman Empire could be mobilized against the woman, so the dragon went to mobilize the Roman Empire.

APOCALYPSE 12:18

15 And he stood upon the sand of the sea.

The sea is the Mediterranean. The Judeans would, from their perspective, recognize that Rome lies directly opposite them across the Mediterranean Sea.

Chapter five

The Sea Beast

APOCALYPSE 13:1-4

- 1 *And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy.*
- 2 *And the beast, which I saw, was like to a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his own strength and great power.*
- 3 *And I saw one of his heads as it were slain to death: and his death's wound was healed. And all the earth was in admiration after the beast.*
- 4 *And they adored the dragon, which gave power to the beast: and they*

adored the beast, saying: Who is like to the beast? and who shall be able to fight with him?

A great beast rises from the sea. It has seven heads and ten horns. A crown rests on each horn. One head has a mortal wound, but the beast still lives.

This sign is similar to the previous signs. It represents a collective entity too big to be seen by human eyes. This beast is the Roman Empire. Judeans would visualize it rising from the sea because Rome is across the Mediterranean from Judea. It looks like a leopard but has a mouth like a lion and feet like a bear. This shows how powerful Rome is. The beast has seven heads and ten horns. The ten horns refer to vassal kings allied with Rome. The ten horns are described again in Apoc. 17:9-13 under the first sight. The beast just received the dragon's strength and great power.

The beast has seven heads, I think, to show the seven divine heads that ruled the Roman Empire starting when Augustus dared to presume that Julius Caesar is divine. The first five of the seven divine Caesars were Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. Nero is the head with the mortal wound.

Caligula, thinking he really was a god, tried to depose the Most High God from the Judean Temple and impose Caesar worship there. He met disaster, but it was a personal disaster. A man he insulted murdered him. His death did not end the dynasty of Julius Caesar. His uncle, a distant nephew of Julius Caesar, succeeded him.

Nero was the next member of Caesar's dynasty to meet disaster. He made so many enemies in Rome that the Roman Senate conspired to kill him. He committed suicide. This time the Empire almost died when the head died. Here are historical events I found that, I think, show how Nero fits this vision as the head with the mortal wound.

First I will quote Roman historians to show how his blatant immorality and cruelty shocked even the pagan Romans. Nero murdered many innocent people who got in his way. Within his own family he poisoned his stepbrother Britannicus. He thought Britannicus, the natural son of Claudius and, therefore, the true heir, would be a rival to the throne. He ordered the murder of his mother when she became meddling. He ordered a physician to overdose his aunt's medication to kill his aunt. He had his first wife, Octavia, executed. He kicked to death his second wife, Poppaea, who was pregnant with his child. He even had people murdered on a whim:

It chanced that a comet had begun to appear on several successive nights, a thing which is commonly believed to portend the death of great rulers. Worried by this, and learning from his astrologer Balbillus that Kings usually averted such omens by the death of some distinguished man, thus turning them from themselves upon the heads of the nobles, he resolved on the death of all the eminent men of the State; but the more firmly, and with some semblance of justice, after the discovery of two conspiracies. The earlier and more dangerous of these was that of Piso at Rome; the other was set on foot by Vinicius at Beneventum and detected there. The conspirators made their defense in triple sets of fetters, some voluntarily admitting their guilt, some even making a favor of it, saying that there was no way except by death that they could help a man disgraced by every kind of wickedness. The children of those who were condemned were banished or put to death by poison or starvation; a number are known to have been slain all together at a single meal along with their preceptors and attendants, while others were

prevented from earning their daily bread.

(XII, Nero, 36) (Suetonius, II, pp. 151-3)

There was no check against Nero's immorality. His subjects were afraid to admonish him. Many flattered him, telling him he was doing right. For example, here is how flatterers consoled Nero after he had his mother murdered:

But the emperor, when the crime was at last accomplished, realized its portentous guilt. The rest of the night, now silent and stupified, now and still oftener starting up in terror, bereft of reason, he awaited the dawn as if it would bring with it his doom. He was first encouraged to hope by the flattery addressed to him, at the prompting of Burrus, by the centurions and tribunes, who again and again pressed his hand and congratulated him on his having escaped an unforeseen danger and his mother's daring crime. Then his friends went to the temples, and, an example having once been set, the neighboring towns of Campania testified their joy with sacrifices and deputations.

(Annals 14:10) (Tacitus, *The Annals*, p. 326)

This fifth head of the "divine" Empire meddled in God's relationship with the chosen people. Nero was asked whether Caesarea should be a pagan city or a Judean city. Nero said it should be pagan. The Judeans, angered over this blasphemy, took to the streets. The Pagans fought back.

Nero showed little concern for Judaism. He ignored prior concessions granted to Judaism by previous Caesars. These concessions amounted to religious liberty for the Judeans. Nero's renegeing on Rome's commitments fanned hatred, anger, and frustration. It helped push the Judeans to revolt. When they revolted, Nero authorized maximum force to gain control. Although it was unbelieving Judeans who revolted, Rome fought all Judeans. So Nero brought the Empire to fight both the woman and the child.

Nero admired large and beautiful buildings. He wanted to rebuild Rome, but he could not do it as long as the old structures remained. Someone's chance remark gave him the opportunity he was looking for:

When someone in a general conversation said: 'When I am dead, be earth consumed by fire,' he rejoined 'Nay, rather while I live.' and his action was wholly in accord. For under cover of

displeasure at the ugliness of the old buildings and the narrow, crooked streets, he set fire to the city so openly that several ex-consuls did not venture to lay hands on his chamberlains although they caught them on their estates with tow and firebrands, while some granaries near the Golden House, whose room he particularly desired, were demolished by engines of war and then set on fire, because their walls were of stone. For six days and seven nights the destruction raged, while the people were driven for shelter to monuments and tombs. At that time, besides an immense number of dwellings, the private houses of leaders of old were burned, still adorned with trophies of victory, and the temples of the gods vowed and dedicated by the kings and later in the Punic and Gallic wars, and whatever else interesting and noteworthy had survived from antiquity. Viewing the conflagration from the tower of Maecenas and exulting, as he said in 'the beauty of the flames,' he sang the whole of the 'Sack of Ilium [Troy],' dressed up in his regular stage costume. Furthermore, to gain from this calamity too all

the spoil and booty possible, while promising the removal of the debris and dead bodies free of cost he allowed no one to approach the ruins of his own property; and from the contributions which he not only received, but even demanded, he nearly bankrupted the provinces and exhausted the resources of individuals.

(XII, Nero, 38) (Suetonius, II, pp. 155-7)

When he realized that the people suspected him, he blamed the fire on the Christians. The fire destroyed ten of Rome's fourteen sectors. Outraged victims beat Christians and dragged them through the streets. Some they threw into the Tiber river. Seeing that the Romans did blame the Christians, Nero declared the Christians public enemies and authorized their execution.

But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiation of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations,

called Christians by the populace.

(Annals 15:44) (Tacitus, *The Annals*, p. 380)

In front of angry Romans, gladiators strangled Christians or stabbed them. Wild animals, half starved, stalked Christians across the arena and ate them amid the roar of cheering Romans. Crucified Christians died a slow and pitiless death. Others, covered with flaming tar, served as lights for night games. Old men, young women, even boys and girls were slaughtered.

It was worse for those Nero caught. Applauded by his flatterers, he unveiled his cruelty and sadism as he helped torture the victims.

He so prostituted his own chastity that after defiling almost every part of his body, he at last devised a kind of game, in which, covered with the skin of some wild animal, he was let loose from a cage and attacked the private parts of men and women, who were bound to stakes, and when he had sated his mad lust, was dispatched by his freedman Doryphorus; . . .

(XII, Nero, 29) (Suetonius, II, p. 133)

It is even believed that it was his wish to throw living men to be torn to pieces and devoured by a monster of Egyptian birth, who would crunch raw flesh and anything else that was given him. Transported and puffed up with such successes, as he considered them, he boasted that no prince had ever known what power he really had, . . .

(XII, Nero, 37) (Suetonius, II, p. 153)

At the same time, Nero sent Vespasian to crush the Judean revolt. Nero is fighting the woman and all her children. Gradually Nero's cruelty and murders alienated the Roman Senators. They finally decided to depose him. First they conspired with the nobility to assassinate Nero and replace him with the nobleman Piso. Nero got wind of it. He launched a murderous purge that killed Piso and many others.

Resentment over his ruthless reprisal led to an army revolt in Gaul. Nero assumed dictatorial power. He threatened reprisals against conspirators in Gaul. More army revolts broke out in Spain and Africa. Seeing their clandestine plots fail, the Roman Senate took formal action. They declared Nero a public enemy and sentenced him to death. When troops loyal to the Senate found Nero and

were ready to seize him, he committed suicide:

While he hesitated, a letter was brought to Phaon by one of his couriers. Nero snatching it from his hand read that he had been pronounced a public enemy by the senate, and that they were seeking to punish him in the ancient fashion; and he asked what manner of punishment that was. When he learned that the criminal was stripped, fastened by the neck in a fork and then beaten to death with rods, in mortal terror he seized two daggers which he had brought with him, and then, after trying the point of each, put them up again, pleading that the fated hour had not yet come. Now he would beg Sporus to begin to lament and wail, and now entreat someone to help him take his life by setting him the example; anon he reproached himself for his cowardice in such words as these: 'To live is a scandal and a shame - this does not become Nero, does not become him - one must be resolute at such times - come, rouse thyself!' And now the horsemen were at hand who had orders to take him off alive. When he heard them he quavered: 'Hark,

now strikes on my ear the trampling of swift footed coursers!', and drove a dagger into his throat, aided by Epaphroditus his private secretary. He was all but dead when a Centurion rushed in, and as he placed a cloak to the wound, pretending that he had come to aid him, Nero merely gasped: 'Too late!' and 'This is fidelity!' With these words he was gone, his eyes so set and starting from his sockets that all who saw him shuddered with horror.

(XII, Nero, 49) (Suetonius, II, pp. 177-9)

This "wounded head's" death in A.D. 68 ended the dynasty started by Julius Caesar. The Romans had a premonition this would happen:

The race of the Caesars ended with Nero. That this would be so was shown by many portents and especially by two very significant ones. Years before, as Livia was returning to her estate near Veii, immediately after her marriage to Augustus, an eagle which flew by dropped into her lap a white hen, holding in its beak a sprig of

laurel, just as the eagle had carried it off. Livia resolved to rear the fowl and plant the sprig, whereupon such a great brood of chickens was hatched that to this day the villa is called 'Ad Gallinas' [The Hen Roost], and such a grove of laurel sprang up, that the Caesars gathered their laurels from it when they were going to celebrate triumphs. Moreover it was the habit of those who triumphed to plant other branches at once in the same place, and it was observed that just before the death of each of them the tree which he had planted withered. Now in Nero's last year the whole grove died from the root up, as well as all the hens. Furthermore, when shortly afterwards the temple of the Caesars was struck by lightning, the heads fell from all the statues at the same time, and his scepter too was dashed from the hand of Augustus.

(XII, Galba, I) (Suetonius, II, p 191)

The Roman senate intended to appoint a new emperor

from a different family, but lost control of government when other families revolted. Within ten months, there were three military coups under Galba, then Otho, then Vitellius. The mortally wounded empire was in danger of falling apart as did the Greek empire when Alexander the Great died:

When Vitellius was dead, the war had indeed come to an end, but peace had yet to begin. Sword in hand, throughout the capital, the conquerors hunted down the conquered with merciless hatred. The streets were choked with carnage, the squares and temples reeked with blood, for men were massacred everywhere as chance threw them in the way. Soon, as their license increased, they began to search for and drag forth hidden foes. Whenever they saw a man tall and young they cut him down, making no distinction between soldiers and civilians. But the ferocity, which in the first impulse of hatred could be gratified only by blood, soon passed into the greed of gain. They let nothing be kept secret, nothing be closed; Vitellianists, they pretended, might be thus concealed. Here was the first step to breaking open private

houses; here, if resistance were made, a pretext for slaughter. The most needy of the populace and the most worthless of the slaves did not fail to come forward and betray their wealthy masters; others were denounced by friends. Everywhere were lamentations, and wailings, and all the miseries of a captured city, till the license of the Vitellianist and Othonianist soldiery, once so odious, was remembered with regret. The leaders of the party, so energetic in kindling civic strife, were incapable of checking the abuse of victory. In stirring up tumult and strife the worst men can do the most, but peace and quiet cannot be established without virtue.
(Histories, IV, 1) (Tacitus, *The Histories*, p. 191)

Rome found a savior in Vespasian, a well-respected general. He was, then, still battling the Judeans. Patriots in Rome and elsewhere asked Vespasian to head a fourth (and final) coup and save the Empire. The Romans also had a premonition that there would come from Judea men destined to rule the world. The Judeans, of course, prophesied the Messiah, but the pagan Romans misunderstood. The Roman historians Suetonius and Tacitus both mention it, and both

took it to mean that Vespasian and his sons were the men:

There had spread over all the Orient an old and established belief, that it was fated at that time for men coming from Judea to rule the world. This prediction, referring to the emperor of Rome, as afterwards appeared from the event, the people from Judea took to themselves; accordingly, they revolted, and, after killing their governor, they routed the consular ruler of Syria as well, when he came to the rescue, and took one of his eagles. Since to put down this rebellion required a considerable army with a leader of no little enterprise, yet one to whom so great power could be entrusted without risk, Vespasian was chosen for the task, both as a man of tried energy and as one in no wise to be feared because of the obscurity of his family and name.

(XII, Vespasian, 4) (Suetonius, II, p. 289)

Prodigies had occurred, which this nation [Judea], prone to superstition, but hating all

religious rites, did not deem it lawful to expiate by offering and sacrifice Some few put a fearful meaning on these events, but in most there was a firm persuasion, that in the ancient records of their priests was contained a prediction of how at this very time the East was to grow powerful, and rulers, coming from Judea, were to acquire universal empire. These mysterious prophecies had pointed to Vespasian and Titus, but the common people, with the usual blindness of ambition, had interpreted these mighty destinies of themselves, and could not be brought even by disasters to believe the truth.
(Histories, V, 13) (Tacitus, *The Histories*, p. 665)

If the prophecies of the Messiah were now applied to Vespasian, the new head of the wounded beast, is it any wonder that the earth admired the beast and said: "*Who is like to the beast?*" and "*Who shall be able to fight with him?*" Vespasian's family formed a new dynasty. He is the sixth head. His son, Titus, is the seventh head. This dynasty retained the title "Caesar" and encouraged the Romans to continue worshiping the current Caesar as they had been doing. Titus reigned as "Caesar" when the

Judeans first heard this portion of the Apocalypse.

Apoc. 17 also describes a second vision of the sea beast, this time providing more detail about the seven heads.

And the beast which was, and is not: the same also is the eight, and is of the seven, and goeth into destruction. (Apoc. 17:11)

It reveals that there will be an eighth head who is one of the first seven and is also the beast. This eighth head will be Vespasian's youngest son, Domitian, who will succeed Titus. He, more so than Titus or Vespasian, will abuse the Empire's claim to divinity. He, just like Nero before him, will enforce Caesar-worship. But I am getting ahead of myself. When the early Church and Judea first heard this prophecy, Domitian was not yet emperor.

APOCALYPSE 13:5-10

- 5 *And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies: and power was given to him to do two and forty months.*
- 6 *And he opened his mouth unto blasphemies against God, to blaspheme*

his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 *And it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. And power was given him over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation.*

8 *And all that dwell upon the earth adored him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, which was slain from the beginning of the world.*

9 *If any man have an ear, let him hear.*

10 *He that shall lead into captivity, shall go into captivity: he that shall kill by the sword, must be killed by the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

Remember when John saw the dragon running to the shore? The dragon was looking for help in a new fight against the woman and her child. When the dragon arrived on the shore, a vision of the Roman Empire emerged from the sea.

Chapter six

The Land Beast

APOCALYPSE 13:11-18

- 11 *And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns, like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.*
- 12 *And he executed all the power of the former beast in his sight; and he caused the earth, and them that dwell therein, to adore the first beast, whose wound to death was healed.*
- 13 *And he did great signs, so that he made also fire to come down from heaven unto the earth in the sight of men.*
- 14 *And he seduced them that dwell on the earth, for the signs, which were*

given him to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make the image of the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and lived.

- 15 *And it was given him to give life to the image of the beast, and that the image of the beast should speak; and should cause, that whosoever will not adore the image of the beast, should be slain.*
- 16 *And he shall make all, both little and great, rich and poor, freedmen and bondmen, to have a character in their right hand, or on their foreheads.*
- 17 *And that no man might buy or sell, but he that hath the character, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*
- 18 *Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast. For it is the number of a man: and the number of him is six hundred sixty-six.*

This vision shows a beast rising from the earth. The beast resembles a lamb. But Jesus is a lamb, or rather, a lamb is the symbol of the human Incarnation of Jesus. This beast rose from the earth. In a similar genesis, the human flesh of Jesus rose from the earth. It arose through the human descendants of Adam who rose from the earth, for God created Adam from the dust of the earth.

This beast that resembles a lamb, could therefore, be a man, the man who will become the next divine head, the eighth head, of the sea beast. If the same spirit that motivates the sea beast motivates this man, this man will speak like the dragon. He will wield the first beast's power and will make the earth and all the earth's inhabitants worship the first beast. I propose that this man is the emperor Domitian, the second successor of his father, Vespasian.

Domitian got his first taste of power when he was eighteen. Troops loyal to his father had just defeated the short-lived coup of Vitellius. They wanted Vespasian as emperor, but Vespasian and his eldest son, Titus, were still in Judea. In spite of Domitian's youth, he was the logical figurehead to rule until his father returned to Rome.

It was only after victory that he [Domitian] ventured forth after being hailed as Caesar, he assumed the office of city praetor with consular powers, but only in name, turning over all the judicial business to his next colleague. But he exercised all the tyranny of his high position so lawlessly, that it was even then apparent what sort of man he was going to be. Not to mention all details, after making free with the wives of many men, he went so far as to marry Domitia Longina, who was the wife of Aelius Lamia, and in a single day he assigned more than twenty positions in the city and abroad, which led Vespasian to say more than once that he was surprised that he did not appoint the emperor's successor with the rest.

(XII, Domitian, 1) (Suetonius, II, pp. 341-3)

Vespasian and both his sons revived emperor worship. They authorized a religious cult with a priesthood. Noble-men vied for position as priests and built new temples. In this way, the divine Caesars of the Flavian family were worshiped, same as the divine Caesars of the family of Julius Caesar had been.

Domitian was jealous of his brother Titus, and many times plotted against him.

On the death of his father he hesitated for some time whether to offer a double largess to the soldiers, and he never had any compunction about saying that he had been left a partner in the imperial power, but that the will had been tampered with. And from that time on he never ceased to plot against his brother secretly and openly, until Titus was seized with a dangerous illness, when Domitian ordered that he be left for dead, before he had actually drawn his last breath. And after his death he bestowed no honor upon him, save that of deification, and he often assailed his memory in ambiguous phrases, both in his speeches and in his edicts.

(XII, Domitian, 2) (Suetonius, II, pp. 343-5)

When Domitian succeeded Titus in A.D. 81, the priests of this cult, the "College of the Flaviales," wore crowns which had borne the image of Vespasian and would now bear Titus as well. Domitian told the priests to include his image also:

He presided at the competitions in half-boots, clad in a purple toga in the Greek fashion, and wearing upon his head a golden crown with figures of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, while by his side sat the priest of Jupiter and the college of the Flaviales, similarly dressed, except that their crowns bore his image as well.

(XII, Domitian, 4) (Suetonius, II, p. 349)

This implied that Domitian was already divine while yet alive. The sea beast now, in A.D. 81, has a head that thinks like he thinks, a head that has an unscrupulous character ready to follow any selfish temptation.

The sea beast, I propose, is the Roman Empire, and the land beast is a human being serving as the living head of the Empire. A human head is visible to other humans and can talk to them. When Domitian follows the whims placed in his mind by the dragon, he allows the dragon to influence both him and the Empire. Domitian will then--he actually did--cause people to worship the image of the beast that was slain but now lives. He did this by encouraging and, later, enforcing emperor worship. He even believed he was a god privileged to do anything he desired:

When he became emperor, he did not hesitate to boast in the senate that he had conferred their power on both his father and his brother, and that they had but returned him his own; nor on taking back his wife after their divorce, that he had 'recalled her to his divine couch.' He delighted to hear the people in the amphitheatre shout on his feast day: 'Good fortune attend our Lord and Mistress.' Even more, in the Capitoline competition, when all the people begged him with great unanimity to restore Palfurius Sura, who had been banished some time before from the senate, and on that occasion received the prize for oratory, he deigned no reply, but merely had a crier bid them be silent. With no less arrogance he began as follows in issuing a circular letter in the name of his procurators, 'Our Master and our God bids that this be done.' And so the custom arose of henceforth addressing him in no other way even in writing or in conversation.

(XII, Domitian, 13) (Suetonius, II, pp. 367-9).

In this way he became an object of terror and hatred to all, but he was overthrown at last by a conspiracy of his friends and favorite freedmen, to which his wife was also privy. He had long since had a premonition of the last year and day of his life, and even the very hour and manner of his death. In his youth astrologers had predicted all this to him, and his father once even openly ridiculed him at dinner for refusing mushrooms, saying that he showed himself unaware of his destiny in not rather fearing the sword. Therefore he was at all times timorous and worried, and was disquieted beyond measure by even the slightest suspicions. It is thought that nothing had more effect in inducing him to ignore his proclamation about cutting down the vineyards than the circulation of notes containing the following lines:

*'Gnaw at my root, as you will; even
then shall I have juice in plenty
To pour upon thee, O goat, when
at the altar you stand.*

(XII, Domitian, 14) (Suetonius, II, pp. 369-71)

For eight successive months so many strokes of lightning occurred and were reported, that at last he cried: 'Well, let him now strike whom he will.' Yet there was nothing by which he was so much disturbed as a prediction of the astrologer Ascleterion and what befell him. When this man was accused before the emperor and did not deny that he had spoken certain things which he had foreseen through his art, he was asked what his own end would be. When he replied that he would shortly be rent by dogs, Domitian ordered him killed at once; but to prove the fallibility of his art, he ordered that besides that his funeral be attended to with the greatest care. While this was being done, it chanced that the pyre was overset by a sudden storm and that the dogs mangled the corpse, . . .

(XII, Domitian, 14) (Suetonius, II, pp. 373-5)

Finally he, himself, fell victim to violence:

The day before he was killed he gave orders to

have some apples which were offered him kept until the following day, and added: 'If only I am spared to eat them'; then turning to his companions, he declared that on the following day the moon would be stained with blood in Aquarius, and that a deed would be done of which men would talk all over the world. At about midnight he was so terrified that he leaped from his bed. The next morning he conducted the trial of a soothsayer sent from Germany, who when consulted about lightning strokes had foretold a change of rulers, and condemned him to death. While he was vigorously scratching a festered wart on his forehead, and had drawn blood, he said: 'May this be all.' Then he asked the time, and by pre-arrangement the sixth hour was announced to him, instead of the fifth, which he feared. Filled with joy at this, and believing all danger now passed, he was hastening to the bath, when his chamberlain Parthenius changed his purpose by announcing that someone had called about a matter of great moment and would not be put off. Then he dismissed all his attendants and went to his bedroom, where he

was slain.

(XII, Domitian, 16) (Suetonius, II, pp. 375-7)

This beast from the earth has a name. The numerical value of the name is 666. This is a clue for Christians to recognize the beast when he comes. Ancient Hebrew and Aramaic lacked symbols to show numbers as we have today with Arabic numerals. These languages simply used letters for numbers. The ancient Latins and Greeks did the same. We are familiar today with some Latin letters used as Roman numerals.

In those days any word could be converted to a number by adding each letter's numerical value. This was frequently done with people's names to give a kind of code name. We do something similar today when we use the first letters of long titles to spell a shorter substitute word. UNESCO for "United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization" is a good example.

The English equivalents of the Hebrew letters for "Caesar Nero" have the following values:

Q	=	100
S	=	60
R	=	200

N	=	50
R	=	200
W	=	6
N	=	<u>50</u>
		666

The words stand for QAESAR (Caesar) NERWN (Neron) (Scullion, pp. 1278-9). In Hebrew, vowels are not written as letters but as vowel marks above and below each syllable, much as we use accent marks today. The vowel marks are frequently omitted. Therefore: QSR NRWN.

The results are similar if we use Latin rather than Hebrew. In Latin the letters spelling NERON have the following values (Barclay, II, p. 102):

N	=	50
E	=	6
R	=	500
O	=	60
N	=	<u>50</u>
		666

This beast from the earth has a name. The name is the number of a man. The number is 666. This is the number

that Nero's name had. The new emperor will be another Nero. He will try to destroy the woman and her child just like Nero tried.

This portion of the Apocalypse was first preached before Domitian became emperor. Nero's memory was still fresh in people's minds. Rumor had it that Nero had not really died. He escaped and was hiding, planning vengeance against his enemies. The rumor found ready ears. After all, Nero spent his latter years already hiding. Perhaps the Christians worried about these rumors and what would happen to them if Nero did return--or someone just like Nero.

Domitian seemed to be another Nero. He had a similar character. Both were immoral, even by pagan standards. Both were cruel. Both insisted upon emperor worship. Both claimed they were divine. Both persecuted the Church. Both authorized death for anyone refusing to humor them as gods. Both were killed while yet young.

One final similarity. Both were the last members of their dynasties.

Chapter seven

The Elect Gathered

APOCALYPSE 14:1-5

- 1 *And I beheld, and lo a lamb stood upon mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty-four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads.*
- 2 *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the noise of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder; and the voice which I heard, was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps.*
- 3 *And they sang as it were a new canticle, before the throne, and before the four living creatures; and the ancients; and no man could say the canticle, but those hundred forty-four thousand, who were purchased from the earth.*

- 4 *These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb.*
- 5 *And in their mouth there was found no lie; for they are without spot before the throne of God.*

This lamb is the same lamb described in Apoc. 5:6, the lamb standing as if slain. The lamb is Jesus. Jesus the Lamb stands on Mt. Zion with 144,000 souls who have followed him. These souls are the first fruits, the first ones that were redeemed from the earth. They are the elect in Apoc. 7:4, the Judeans who recognized Christ, who were faithful to him unto death, and who have reached his heavenly gathering.

Their number is shown in the traditional way the Israelites took their census: a roll call of tribes, so many persons from each tribe. To use round numbers showing that an adequate number is considered rather than make an actual count, the Israelites had a convention of squaring the number of the tribes and then multiplying it by one thousand. Twelve squared times one thousand is 144,000

persons. This is presented as an estimate of souls harvested as Israel gave birth to the Church.

In the previous chapters, the Dragon recruited the sea beast and land beast to help pursue the woman. She fled to the desert. The dragon wanted the beasts to fight the woman and her child (the Christians) and the rest of her seed (the still unbelieving Judeans). When these two beasts attacked, people, both Judean and Gentile, made their choice to accept Jesus or accept Rome. There was a big persecution. Those who refused to accept Rome were killed, and their souls encountered the Lord. They are the first fruits of the harvest.

APOCALYPSE 14:6-7

6 *And I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the eternal gospel, to preach unto them that sit upon the earth, and over every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people.*

7 *Saying with a loud voice: Fear the Lord and give him honour, because the hour of his judgement is come; and adore ye him, that made heaven and earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

The time has come for God to separate unbelievers from those who do believe, like a shepherd would separate goats from sheep. Angels will announce God's intentions and warn how serious God is. This is a "gospel" in the original meaning of the word. The time has also come to take the eternal gospel to the Gentiles.

"Gospel" is the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of "euaggelia," a Greek word meaning "good news," but more accurately it means "official and authentic news." It is "good" in the sense that it is accurate and reliable. The word was used in Roman times to denote the "authentic announcements" sent ahead by Imperial officials to the people they were about to visit (Ford, p. 28). A messenger would arrive beforehand and tell the people how to prepare for the visit and what to expect. In the same way, the first angel proclaims God's authentic announcement: *"Fear the Lord, and give him honour, because the hour of his judgement is come; and adore ye him, that made heaven and earth, the sea, and the fountains of water."*

APOCALYPSE 14:8

8 *And another angel followed saying: That great Babylon is fallen, is fallen; which*

*made all nations to drink of the wine of the
wrath of her fornication.*

I propose "Babylon," here, refers to the unbelieving Judeans who still control the nation. The word really refers to the city of Babylon, a city traditionally cited as an example of people resisting God until God disciplined them.

The Judeans who control the nation and the Temple priesthood are resisting God. They are choosing their will rather than God's will. This self-will is evident in many strata of Judean society, even the highest strata. The ruling strata, Herod and his heirs, Judean aristocrats, and other influential persons who supported Herod had pursued their own agenda for many years.

The Judeans argued about legitimate succession of high priests ever since the days of Jonathan Maccabeus (Freedman, p.77 & Cornfield, p. 25) Jonathan ignored the traditional procedure and, on his own authority, named himself High Priest. This disrupted the traditional procedure and weakened the legitimacy of all subsequent high priests. When Rome conquered Judea, Pompey required that the High Priest be validated by Rome. This encouraged some candidates to seek Rome's favor beforehand. Many unworthy men became High Priest simply because Rome

accepted them. These men were more interested in politics than in serving the Most High God.

Priests were divided into two camps: the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees believed in life after death; the Sadducees did not. Being more worldly minded than the Pharisees, the Sadducees readily cooperated with Rome, so the high priests validated by Rome were almost exclusively Sadducees. Surprising that these men, who do not believe in an afterlife, are appointed to lead public worship of the God who rules the afterlife.

The Sadducees focused everything on success in this life. They wanted to comply with God's expectations, but they could not understand what God wanted because they did not believe in life after death. Many of them were also hypocrites. They faked piety. Many Pharisees did also. Jesus often warned the Sadducees and the Pharisees about this.

The Zealots wanted God to liberate Judea, and they tried to help God. Zealot methods violated the Commandments, yet many Judeans supported the Zealots. The whole nation is drifting away from God.

Simultaneously, Judea gave birth to the Christians. People who understood what God had promised, who recognized Christ as the one foretold in Scripture, and

accepted baptism. They formed one group, the Church. Those Judeans who did not believe stayed as they were. They, the unbelievers, became post-Church Judea. The unbelievers controlled the nation, the Temple, the priesthood--they controlled Judaism.

I propose that the four winds had been held back while the elect were marked. Now the four winds are released, and the unbelievers will fall from the preeminence their ancestors once had.

APOCALYPSE 14:9-20

- 9 *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice: If any man shall adore the beast and his image, and receive his character on his forehead, or in his hand;*
- 10 *He shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mingled with pure wine in the cup of his wrath, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy angels, and in the sight of the Lamb.*
- 11 *And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever: neither have they rest day nor night, who have adored*

the beast, and his image, and whoever receiveth the character of his name.

- 12 *Here is the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*
- 13 *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me: Write: Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow them.*
- 14 *And I saw, and behold a white cloud; and upon the cloud one sitting like to the Son of man, having on his head a crown of gold, and in his hand a sharp sickle.*
- 15 *And another angel came out from the temple crying with a loud voice to him that sat upon the cloud: Thrust in thy sickle, and reap, because the hour is come to reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe.*
- 16 *And he that sat on the cloud thrust his sickle into the earth, and the earth was reaped.*
- 17 *And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp*

sickle.

- 18 *And another angel came out from the altar, who has power over fire; and he cried with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying: Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vineyard of the earth; because the grapes thereof are ripe.*
- 19 *And the angel thrust in his sharp sickle into the earth, and gathered the vineyard of the earth, and cast it into the great press of the wrath of God:*
- 20 *And the press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the press, up to the horses bridles, for a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*

The harvest of souls is about to begin. It is shown as a reaping of fields and vintage of grapes. "One like the Son of Man" will do the reaping. An angel will do the vintage. God wills the harvest to be made. Humans and angels will do it, fallen humans and fallen angels included. The whole thing will be the natural consequences of what all of us, good and bad, are pursuing.

APOCALYPSE 15:1

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and wonderful: seven angels having the seven last plagues. For in them is filled up the wrath of God.

Judgment is about to begin upon the circumcised who oppose Christ. When the seven last plagues pour upon the earth, all things prophesied by the Baptist will happen. This will be the "Great Tribulation" for Judea. Judeans will be caught in the confrontation between the Empire's religious errors and God's truth. All Judeans, both those who believe Christ and those who do not, will be hated for not accepting the Empire's beliefs. Both groups will be persecuted. Many will be killed.

The Judeans, who believe Christ, will enter a spiritual sphere previously closed to humanity. This sphere transcends death and brings a fuller life after death. It brings them into God's presence. The next vision of the sea of glass is symbolic of standing in the presence of God.

APOCALYPSE 15:2-4

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled

with fire, and them that had overcome the beast, and his image, and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God:

- 3 *And singing the canticle of Moses, the servant of God, and the canticle of the Lamb, saying: Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O King of ages*
- 4 *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and magnify thy name? For thou only are holy: for all nations shall come, and shall adore in thy sight, because thy judgments are manifest.*

The above describes the intermediary visions between the second and third woes. Their purpose was to explain why the destiny of those who do not believe will proceed as it does. Now the unbelieving will experience the third woe. With the events of the third woe, " . . . *the kingdom of this world is become our Lord's and his Christ's. He shall reign for ever and ever.*" (Apoc. 11-15). Judea will cease to exist as an independent nation.

Chapter eight

The Third Woe

Apoc. 15:5-8 describes seven angels poised in heaven ready to strike the earth. Now John sees each angel receiving a golden vial. The vials contain God's wrath. Time has run out for Judea. The Lord is already here. He is knocking at the door. The promised one, the beloved, like a gazelle, came: "*leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.*" (Song of Solomon 2:8). Those within Judea who respond will become the betrothed, the spouse, of the promised one. Those who fail to respond, who do not recognize their day of visitation, will experience the great day of Almighty God. "*His threshing fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor and gather his wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.*" (Matt. 3:12). They will experience what all nations will experience, each in their own time--but Judea first--as they make their choice. Will they believe? Or will they not believe?

These verses were first preached in A.D. 50-70 by a disciple of John the Baptist. But even if, as some believe, John the Evangelist composed them as late as 96 A.D., the events I am about to describe would still be future events. They start in A.D. 100 and reach a climax in 135. So they are revelations of future events, but not, as I propose, of the distant future.

These future events will happen soon. The first verse in the Apocalypse says so. *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to make known to his servants the things which must shortly happen (Apoc, 1:1).* The last chapter repeats it: *"And he said to me: These words are most faithful and true. And the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent his angel to show his servants the things which must be done shortly." (Apoc. 22:6)*

Christ founded the Church during his lifetime. The reaction against his followers mounted as the Christianity grew. It came first from the unbelieving Judeans, and later, as the Apocalypse predicted, from Rome. It was not merely the opposition of humans; fallen angels opposed the Christians. The Devil opposed the Christians.

The Devil tried to devour the child then tried to drown the mother. That is, the Devil spewed a flood of false

inspirations and temptations to entice the Judeans not to believe and not to cooperate with the promised one. It did not work. The Devil then incited the Roman Empire, including the visible head of the Empire, to attack the woman and all her children.

APOCALYPSE 16:1-7

- 1 *And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels: Go, and pour out the seven vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.*
- 2 *And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth, and there fell a sore and grievous wound upon men, who had the character of the beast; and upon them that adored the image thereof.*
- 3 *And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea, and there came blood as it were of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.*
- 4 *And the third poured out his vial upon the rivers and the fountains of waters; and there was made blood.*

- 5 *And I heard the angel of the waters saying: Thou art just, O Lord, who art, and who wast, the Holy One, because thou hast judged these things:*
- 6 *For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.*
- 7 *And I heard another, from the altar, saying: Yea, O Lord God Almighty, true and just are thy judgments.*

It was the unbelieving Israelites who shed the prophets' blood. And their unbelieving descendants persecuted and killed the Messiah's followers.

APOCALYPSE 16:8-11

- 8 *And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and it was given unto him to afflict men with heat and fire:*
- 9 *And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name*

of God, who hath power over these plagues, neither did they penance to give him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom became dark, and they gnawed their tongues for pain:

11 And they blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pain and wounds, and did not penance for their works.

It took a full generation after their defeat in A.D. 70 before the Judeans could again exert any real influence in their own homeland. So until A.D. 96, all Palestine was peaceful enough for economic prosperity to return. Nerva and Trajan, the first two of the five so-called "good emperors," helped nurture this prosperity. When King Herod Agrippa II died in Rome around A.D. 100, Rome annexed the areas he ruled into Palestine. Palestine was then annexed into Syria, a Roman province ruled by Roman procurators.

Right away conditions in Judea worsened. The new procurators, just like their predecessors thirty-five years

earlier, found dishonest ways to enrich themselves. The Judeans resented this. Their resentment fueled a new desire for national independence. Like their fathers before them, they decided to fight for independence.

Trajan wanted to avert rebellion. To woo Judean loyalty, he promised to rebuild the Temple. This pleased the Judean leaders. They planned a feast day to commemorate it. They named the new feast "Trajan's Day." They planned to combine it with Purim and Nicanor's Day to make a three-day annual festival (Finkelstein, p. 219). They then found unexpected opposition to rebuilding the Temple.

The Judean Nationalists did not want the Temple rebuilt. They thought it would diffuse their argument for independence. The Samaritans did not want it rebuilt because they never had full access to the Temple. The Christians, too, did not want it rebuilt. The fall of the Temple had confirmed their understanding that the new covenant had replaced the old one. Christian opposition caused Trajan to realize that Christianity was different from Judaism. At this time, Christians were persecuted in Rome. Trajan's realization that Christianity was a rival religion encouraged him to deal harshly with Judean Christians. He did this to please the unbelieving Judeans.

Also at this time, Rome had border problems with

Parthia on the eastern frontier. Parthia (modern Iran) had never been conquered by Rome. They had always been a menace on the eastern frontier. Trajan decided to invade Parthia. The Parthians let his armies penetrate as far as their Capitol, Ctesiphon, in A.D. 115. The Parthians then counterattacked behind the front lines in areas Trajan had already conquered. This sparked revolts elsewhere in the empire. With his initiative destroyed, Trajan retreated to Antioch in A.D. 116.

He kept his army in Antioch over the winter. That winter, a severe earthquake struck the city. The Judeans took this as a sign that the Messiah was coming. They began at once to prepare for the Messiah's arrival. Judean hopes, and the nationalistic sentiments that fueled the hopes, were fanned into open rebellion by the Judean Nationalist Party. This was a new political party. It was similar to the Zealot party that was active during the last war.

The Judeans thought that the Temple would rise again in A.D. 120 because that would be the jubilee year after its destruction. So the time seemed ripe for the Messiah. The jubilee year, according to Mosaic law, occurs every fifty years. All real estate, even if it had been sold, was to be returned to its original owners in the Jubilee year.

Around this time, Loukuas Andreas, a Judean in

Cyrene, electrified the Judeans with his conviction that now is the time. They accepted him as "king" and revolted, even in cities far from Palestine. They attacked everything pagan. Since these attacks occurred in pagan cities outside Judea, the pagans retaliated against the Judeans. It quickly escalated into racial war. Some fighting spread into Palestine, but the bulk of this war was fought by Judean populations outside Palestine. Trajan abandoned his war against Parthia and used his armies to restore order within the Empire. History calls this the "War under Trajan."

Trajan appointed Marcius Turbo to suppress the rebellion in Africa, and Lucius Quietus, a Moorish general, to crush rebellion in Palestine. Trajan died in 117. Hadrian succeeded him. Hadrian spent two years trying to stop the insurrection. He tried not to be as harsh as Trajan. One of his first acts was to replace the brutal Lusius Quietus. The insurrection was finally put down in 119. More than a hundred thousand Judeans died. The beautiful synagogue in Alexandria lay in ruin. Some Judean cities also lay ruined. Hadrian then decided to rebuild Jerusalem. He renamed the city "Aelia Capitolina." He did not plan, however, to rebuild the Temple. This frustrated Judean hopes again, and the uneasy peace imposed after so much bloodshed fell apart.

Again the Judeans yearned for independence. Nationalistic fervor revived. Judeans formed underground resistance groups. By 125, tensions had risen high enough that Rome reacted against any show of nationalist sentiment. Among other things, Rome forbade public readings of any Scripture judged to foster nationalist bias--the book of Ester, for example. The book of Ester always had been read during the public celebration of Purim. Now it cannot be read. Judean resentment grew because of this.

Rome also outlawed circumcision. Rome claimed that circumcision violates a Roman law against mutilation. The key words cited against circumcision were that people should not mutilate the genitals (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 21). The Roman law really banned castration and was already enforced by Nerva. Hadrian banned both castration and circumcision. He made both punishable by death. Hadrian's new law, whatever his motive, amounted to religious persecution. This is the first time Judaism had been persecuted since Antiochus IV Epiphanes three-hundred years earlier. During that earlier persecution, the Maccabees led a revolt that eventually won Judean independence.

That persecution and revolt had a profound influence on apocalyptic literature. It came to serve as the framework for prophecies, even Christian prophecies, about the end

times. To the Judeans of 125, it did seem as though it were the end times. Almost all Judeans expected the Messiah. Those who did not believe Jesus looked for someone else. Overzealous men all over Judea pointed out would-be Messiahs.

Into this turmoil, Hadrian stirred one blunder after another. In the year 128, word got out that Hadrian now planned a temple to Jupiter rather than rebuild the Judaic Temple. This galvanized the Judeans. Two respected leaders, Ishmael and Simeon, who up to this point were pacifists, now talked rebellion. Rome executed them.

These two men had restrained the extremism within the Nationalist Party. With their death, the leadership passed to the militant wing, to a man with extraordinary charisma. He was an up-and-coming leader with his own guerrilla army. He had already shown his brilliance as a military strategist. His name was Simeon ben Kosiba. He will lead Judea to disaster.

APOCALYPSE 16:12-16

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and dried up the water thereof, that a way might be prepared for the kings

from the rising of the sun.

- 13 *And I saw from the mouth of the dragon, and from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs.*
- 14 *For they are the spirits of devils working signs, and they go forth unto the kings of the whole earth, to gather them to battle against the great day of the Almighty God.*
- 15 *Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*
- 16 *And he shall gather them together into a place, which in Hebrew is called Armagedon.*

An angel pours the sixth vial on the Euphrates river. The river runs dry, allowing passage for an invading army. Three unclean spirits gather the nations for the final onslaught.

I believe this final onslaught is the war of A.D. 131-5.

The Roman army destroyed all Judean resistance and deported the survivors. Very few commentaries mention this war. There was no eyewitness historian to report it like Josephus reported the earlier war. In that earlier war, Rome destroyed the Temple and the Holy City. But the Judean nation survived. In this war, Rome literally destroyed the Judean nation.

Simon ben Kosiba appealed to the Judeans. They thought he was the Messiah, but he led them to disaster. Jesus had already warned the Judeans: *"I am come in the name of my father, and you receive me not: If another shall come in his own name, him you will receive."* (John, 5:43). The unbeliever's rejection of Jesus, their acceptance of a false messiah, and their total destruction fits very well this third and final woe: "The end is here!"

The first mention of Kosiba dates to A.D. 128, right after the execution of Ishmael and Simon. Kosiba led one group of partisan fighters. When the Judeans looked to him for inspiration, he encouraged all the separate groups to unite. Each separate group had already fought the Roman tenth legion, but none could defeat the legion. The tenth legion, stationed near the ruins of Jerusalem, was there to enforce Roman rule in Judea. Tinius Rufus, the procurator, finally told the tenth legion to destroy all the partisan

groups. This helped encourage the partisans to unite under Kosiba.

Kosiba spent most of 129, training this army, organizing its chain of command, and planning an offensive. Then he attacked and defeated the tenth legion. The Judeans hated the tenth legion because it provoked the first war, and because it destroyed the last Judean resistance at Masada. They also resented the tenth legion's choice of a wild pig for its emblem. Kosiba's victory won him wild enthusiasm and made him a national hero.

A year later, many Judeans compared Kosiba to Judas Maccabeus, the Judean patriot who led the revolt against Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Others thought he might actually be the Messiah come to liberate Israel. Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph wondered about this. Akiba was a famous Judean leader. He started his schooling late in life (when he was forty). Forty years later, he dominated the intellectual thinking in Judea. His influence on the Judaism that survived the destruction of Judea has been substantial. Some present-day Jewish historians consider him a second Moses (Finkelstein, p. 156).

Akiba expected the Messiah during these turbulent years, just like other Judeans did. Kosiba first caught Akiba's notice when Kosiba molded the various resistance

groups into a unified army and led that army into stunning victories.

As Kosiba attracted more men into his army, even Gentiles, Akiba became convinced that Kosiba must be the Messiah. This would be around 130. After that, when speaking of Kosiba, Akiba quoted Num. 24:17: "*A star shall rise out of Jacob and a scepter shall spring up from Israel . . .*" He also, more than once, publicly stated his conviction that "This is the Messianic king!"

The Judeans then began to call Kosiba "Bar Kochba." This was a word play to have his name mean "Son of the Star." Kosiba later assumed the title "Nasi" which means "prince" or "president" of Israel.

Another spiritual leader who supported "Bar Kochba" was Eleazar the Priest. A well-respected spiritual leader, he held a high position in the priestly hierarchy. Convinced that Kosiba, "Bar Kochba," was the Messianic prince' he served Bar Kochba as High Priest throughout the war.

Recent excavations in Israel reveal the name of Rabenu Botniya Bar Miasa as another priest allied with Bar Kochba (Mansoor, p. 180). His name is not mentioned in history, so nothing is known about him. But he must have been an important religious leader. The title "Rabenu" means "Our master par excellence." It was rarely given. It

was previously given to Moses and Judah. A similar title was given to Rabbi Gamaliel, the man who trained Paul the apostle around A.D. 40.

There were other rabbis, however, who did not believe Bar Kochba. Rabbi Jonathan ben Torta, a highly respected rabbi and close friend of Akiba, is quoted in rabbinical lore: "*Akiba, grass will grow out of your jaw and the Messiah will not yet have come!*" (Finkelstein, p. 269). But enough people believed that Bar Kochba was the promised one that he soon had widespread support in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. By the year 131, Bar Kochba's fame reached all over Palestine. The tenth legion, which could no longer control him, was replaced by the renowned sixth legion "Ironsides."

Bar Kochba set his administration headquarters in Ein Gedi, a small city twenty-five miles south of Jerusalem near the Dead Sea's west shore. By this time, his army had grown to 400,000 fighting men. His men stockpiled all the provisions they could find. They built emergency shelters and food caches in caves on steep cliffs where the Roman army could not attack. They built forts and strongholds all over Palestine, complete with strategically-placed tunnels, giving them the advantage when fighting begins.

To make sure they had enough weapons, they asked

Judean craftsmen who sold weapons to the Roman army to deliberately make weapons with minor flaws. They hoped the Romans would send them back for repair--just in time to be seized for the offensive. They planned their offensive for fall, right after harvest. By October, 132, they were ready.

They struck the sixth legion at Lod (near the modern airport at Lydda) (Klein, *Israel, Land of the Jews*, p. 101). Bar Kochba easily defeated the sixth legion. When the twenty-second legion rushed in to help, he defeated it also. A few months later, Bar Kochba freed all Palestine from Roman control.

Bar Kochba then set up military posts at Herodion and Qumran and other strategic places (but not Masada). He administered the newly liberated nation from Ein Gedi because Jerusalem still lay in ruins. There remained standing only seven synagogues, a Christian church (the "Upper Room" where Christ celebrated the Last Supper), and a few blocks of houses. He resumed the daily sacrifice on the Temple ruins. And he ordered coins struck, late in 132, with the inscription "*Year one of the redemption of Israel.*" (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 21).

Who is this man playing such a decisive role in Judean destiny? Why did so many Judeans, and many Gentiles as well, look to him as the single, unchallenged leader? Only

seventy years earlier, their own great-grandfathers would not unite under a single leader. What does this man have that other leaders before him did not have?

History provides only hints to answer these questions. Practically all information known about him came through folklore. Much of it sounds more legendary than factual. Some of it is contradictory. He was hero and patriot to some. While to others, he was bandit and murderer.

Rumor had him a descendant of the Hasmonean-Maccabean family. These leaders had, three centuries earlier, won freedom from the Seleucid Empire. Rumor claimed his ancestry reached to King David. This helped reinforce popular belief that he was the Messianic Prince. It was a factor in his widespread acceptance. He also had charisma, that ability to radiate manliness and charm, intelligence, and leadership. He projected his charisma onto other men the way popular and successful leaders have always done when they lead men who admire them. Full of action and energy, he was a military genius who led his men into brilliant victories.

No one has passed down a description of his appearance. He was rumored to have been very strong, feared by battle-hardened Roman warriors. He was able, somehow, to kick back the Roman stone ballistae flung at him (Klein,

Israel, Land of the Jews, p. 118). His men said he killed several Roman soldiers this way. Being brave himself, he demanded bravery from his men. To test their personal bravery, he made them endure the pain of having a finger amputated. Four hundred thousand men lost a finger to prove their loyalty (Klein, *Israel, Land of the Jews*, p. 101).

An old legend from Midrash Lamentations shows his poor respect for God. As he advanced with his men to engage the Roman army, an old man shouted to him, "*May the Creator be your help against them!*" Bar Kochba's reply was this prayer: "*Oh God! You needn't bother to help us. Just don't help our enemies.*" (Klein, *Israel, Land of the Jews*, p. 101). The Midrash quotes Ps. 59:12 as a judgment against Bar Kochba. "*Hast not Thou, O God, cast us off? And go not forth, O God, with our hosts?*"

Christian historians also criticized Bar Kochba. Eusebius, writing in the fourth century, described Bar Kochba as a murderer, an impostor who hid behind the word play of his name, as though he were dealing with slaves. Bar Kochba had claimed to be like a star come from heaven to redeem his suffering people. He instilled awe and fear into the people by somehow breathing fire. St. Jerome wrote that Bar Kochba blew burning tow from his mouth to make it look as though he breathed fire.

After his acceptance as Prince of Israel and while the die was cast in the rebellion against Rome, Bar Kochba demanded all Judeans pledge loyalty to his government. History does not record exactly what he expected, but Church fathers resented it. Whatever it was, Church fathers considered it blasphemy and a rejection of Jesus. St. Justin, a martyr who lived during the Bar Kochba era, said Bar Kochba demanded that Christians fight with him against Rome. Bar Kochba killed all who refused.

New information has come from Yigael Yadin's excavations in Israel. Documents from this dig show that Bar Kochba habitually issued brief and direct orders. He demanded obedience. "*From Shimeon ben Kosiba to Yeshua ben Galgoul . . .*" (the military chief at Ein Gedi), "*I take heaven to witness against me that unless you mobilize the Galileans who are with you, every man, I will put fetters on your feet as I did to Ben Aphlul.*" (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 137). "Galileans" might refer to the followers of the Galilean Jesus. This would bear out the comments of Justin Martyr.

Mobilization must have been difficult for Christians. To side with the rebels meant to accept Bar Kochba for what he claimed to be. He claimed he was the prophesied prince, the one God chose to restore Israel. But it would be an

Israel separated from Jesus Christ. The Christians had no alternative. They had to choose allegiance to Bar Kochba or allegiance to Jesus Christ. The followers of Bar Kochba would not have tolerated allegiance to both.

The contradiction between Bar Kochba and Jesus Christ, and the realization of what was at stake when Christians made their choice, is what drove the final wedge between the Judeans who believed Christ and those who did not (Avi-Yonah, p. 163 & Zeitlin, III, p. 375). Until that time, there had been a strong Judaizing influence in the Church. All Bishops of Jerusalem, for example, had been Judean. From here on, Judean dominance in the Church, even in Jerusalem, ended.

We are now in A.D. 132. Judea is finally free of Roman control. The Judeans can manage their own affairs, pursue their own interests. I can imagine their joy and enthusiasm. I can see the unbelievers convinced that this is what the Messiah was supposed to accomplish, not what Jesus Christ did, but what Bar Kochba did. And, of course, I can see them firmly convinced that Jesus Christ is a false messiah. One can wonder what Bar Kochba's followers would have done to the remembrance of Jesus Christ, had they remained victorious. But Providence did not allow it.

While Bar Kochba pondered over management of his

government, Hadrian pondered over his problems if he accepted Judean independence. If Judea can gain freedom by force, other provinces might try the same. If they do try, that would destroy the Empire's stability. Hadrian decided to preserve the Empire at all cost. He appointed his best general, Julius Severus, to reconquer Judea. Severus had just crushed a German revolt on the northern frontier. Severus put together an army of thirty-five thousand fighting men and sixty-thousand auxiliaries.

He entered Palestine from the north, and swept through Galilee, the valley of Jezreel, through Ephraim and the Judean hills and finally arrived at Jerusalem in the winter of 133-4. Though Bar Kochba had a much larger army, he avoided large-scale fights that might have defeated Severus in a decisive battle. Instead, Bar Kochba struck with small hit-and-run forces, a guerrilla war launched from many villages and strongholds throughout Israel. Severus for his part simply surrounded any village or fort used as a rebel sanctuary. One by one, he attacked the strongholds, killed the defenders, burnt the buildings, and leveled the rubble.

In less than one year's time, Severus smashed most of Bar Kochba's strongholds. He slaughtered women, children, and livestock along with Bar Kochba's fighting men. In his

relentless sweep through Palestine, Severus destroyed over nine-hundred towns and villages and fifty forts (Klein, *Israel, Land of the Jews*, p. 102). The survivors of Bar Kochba's fighting forces kept retreating to safer ground. Now, in 133, most of them are in Jerusalem and the high hills southeast of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem would not do because it had not been rebuilt since the first war. So in early spring 134, Bar Kochba retreated to Ein Gedi, twenty-four miles southeast of Jerusalem, where he already had his administrative center. Ein Gedi had abundant spring-fed fresh water, making it better suited to withstand a siege.

Severus lay siege in spring, 134. By summer it was obvious that Ein Gedi would soon fall. So Bar Kochba's men retreated to the smaller but better-fortified city of Bethar. Bethar is twenty miles northwest of Ein Gedi and about seven miles southwest of Jerusalem. It is close to Bethlehem, only a few miles away. Joshua 15:59 mentions Bethar, so it is an ancient city. It still exists today under the modern name of Bittir (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 193).

Bethar contained a strong fortress built on a hill. Walls enclosed the city, running a total length of 3280 feet. The walls protected twenty-five acres, including the fort. Deep chasms outside the walls on the east, west, and north

made access impossible. The south side, however, faced level ground. A moat sixteen feet deep, forty-nine feet wide, and two hundred and sixty feet long protected this side against assault.

Bar Kochba then moved his headquarters to Bethar. He still had two hundred thousand fighting men, each marked with a missing finger. He stationed them between Ein Gedi and Bethar along the valley of Murabba'at.

Severus followed. On August 9, 134, he lay siege to Bethar.

APOCALYPSE 16:17-19

17 *And the seventh angel poured out his vial upon the air, and there came a great voice out of the temple from the throne, saying: It is done.*

18 *And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and there was a great earthquake, such an one as never had been since men were upon the earth, such an earthquake, so great.*

19 *And the great city was divided into three parts; and the cities of the Gen-*

tiles fell. And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the indignation of his wrath.

The seventh angel pours the last vial, and "*It is done!*" This is the downfall of the first-chosen, the fall of Judea. It is the rise of the last-chosen. It is God's vindication over those who rejected God's anointed one. Judea, the first chosen, has fallen. I think Bar Kochba's disastrous defeat and Rome's destruction of Judea is the logical fulfillment of this vision. Here is how it happened.

Severus had just placed Bethar under siege (August 9, 134). August 9 is a fateful day in Judean history. Titus stormed the Temple on August 9, A.D. 70. Before that, on August 9, 586 B.C., the Babylonians destroyed Solomon's Temple. Bethar will endure this siege by Severus for exactly one year. Bethar will fall on August 9, 135 (Mansoor, p. 181).

Just before Bethar's fall, when Hadrian could taste victory, he enforced harsher laws against the noncombatants in the reconquered areas of Judea. He did this to quench any expression of nationalist hopes the Judeans might still have. Previous laws forbade the public reading of certain

books of Scripture, like the book of Ester, which the Romans felt were fanning nationalist hopes. Now Hadrian forbade the Torah. No one could teach the Torah. Rabbi Akiba, who up to this point did not actively support the rebellion, now openly defied this law. As he put it, if the Torah is abolished, there is no further purpose in living (Finklestein, p. 272). The Romans executed him.

Bar Kochba's men in Bethar and their families suffered terribly during the siege. The Romans wanted to kill all the rebels. The rebels, in desperation, fought to the end. The city had already run out of food. By August 9, the day the Romans stormed the city, the people were starved.

Because the city ran out of food, some people wanted to surrender. Bar Kochba would not allow it. Somehow, Bar Kochba suspected Eleazar the Priest of plotting a surrender. No reliable source supports this, but folklore has it that a Roman spy told Bar Kochba that Eleazar was negotiating with them. He lied, but hoped it would divide Bar Kochba and his chief advisors. Bar Kochba believed it.

On August 9, Bar Kochba confronted Eleazar, but Eleazar denied it. Unable to control his temper, Bar Kochba beat Eleazar to death. That was the day Severus stormed Bethar. Bar Kochba himself died that day. Folklore has it that a scorpion or poisonous snake bit him. He was dead or

dying when Severus found him.

When the Romans fought their way into Bethar, they killed almost the entire population. They cut down men, women, and children. They lifted infants by their feet and dashed their heads against rocks. The Midrash claims three hundred lay dead near a single rock, the rock covered with spilled brains (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 256). Roman soldiers wrapped school-age children in their school-scrolls and set them afire. Other students, as well as their teachers, fell to Roman spears and arrows as did Bar Kochba's fighting men.

Enough blood spilled during the assault that the river flowing through the city turned red. The Midrash claims it became one part blood, two parts water (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 256). The surrounding soil absorbed enough blood that, after the war, it served the Gentiles as fertilizer for their vineyards (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 256).

Bodies choked the river. Picture the Roman calvary charging across the river with blood-red water splashing the horse's bellies. Another source describes the horses up to their nostrils in blood-red water. Apoc. 14:20 paints a similar scene: ". . . and the press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the press, up to the horses' bridles for a thousand and six-hundred furlongs."

All that remained now were Bar Kochba's forces

barricaded in caves along the Murabba'at. Any survivor who managed to escape Bethar fled to the caves. The caves were accessible through openings in the vertical walls of steep cliffs that rose one thousand feet above the valleys below. Bar Kochba had chosen them as strongholds because the Roman army could not reach the caves without exposing themselves. The cave openings connected into large cavities in the bedrock along the cliffs. These caves once sheltered David and his men from King Saul eleven hundred years earlier (1 Sam. 24:1-7).

Bar Kochba's men had stocked the caves with food before the war. They had also built cisterns to collect spring rain. A cistern found near the opening of one cave measured four by sixteen feet (Mansoor, p. 190).

Severus, when he saw the openings in the cliffs, recognized the impossibility of a frontal attack. So he tried to confine the Judeans within the caves. He thought hunger would drive them to surrender. The Roman army pitched camps in the valleys below the caves and on the highlands above the caves to insure that no one could escape. This was partially successful. The Judeans did go hungry, but they would not surrender. However, the siege confined the Judeans to an area that could not support their numbers. So, in time, they gradually lost their ability to take any initiative.

Many did die of starvation. Others died in desperate raids against the Roman camps. But they never surrendered. They and their descendants lived in the caves for several generations. The caves were still occupied one hundred years later when Severus Alexander was emperor.

Conditions in the caves were terrible at first. Too many people sought shelter there. They soon ran out of food. Some starved. Some in desperation ate anything that seemed edible. The Midrash reports that some even ate the remains of their fallen comrades.

One story tells of a young man sent to find a nearby corpse. He found the body of his father, but could not bring himself to desecrate his father's corpse. He concealed it and went back empty handed. A second man went out. By smell alone, he found the concealed corpse. He cut parts of flesh from it and returned. After the men had eaten, the first young man asked where the body was. When he heard the answer and realized what they had done, it sickened him (Yadin, *Bar-Kochba*, p. 65).

The Romans finally left the survivors alone in their caves. The survivors no longer attacked the Romans. The war was over. Fifty Judean forts and 985 Judean towns and villages lay ruined, and 580,000 Judeans were killed (Mansoor, p. 167). Hunger and disease raised the toll to

700,000. Almost half the Judean population of 1.5 million perished (Klein, Israel, *Land of the Jews*, p. 107).

The Judeans killed at Bethar remained where they lay, their bodies rotting in the sun. The surviving Judeans were not allowed to bury them. Rome did this to punish the survivors and to warn other provinces against revolt. Rome sold many survivors into slavery, so many that the price for slaves dropped throughout the Empire. Many other Judeans, if they could afford it, left Judea and settled elsewhere.

After this mass slaughter and deportation, Rome encouraged foreign peoples to settle in Judea. Rome wanted the remaining Judeans to be a minority among other racial stocks. From then until the nineteenth century, the Jewish people remained a minority. In 1856, for example, there were only 10,500 Jews in Palestine (Harel, in Oesterreicher, p. 147). In the late 1860's, Jewish people in Europe began to return, but at a slow pace. In 1897 there were 50,000 Jewish people in Palestine. In 1914, there were 90,000 (Grayzel, p. 683).

Freed of Judean pressure, Hadrian could now make his own decisions about rebuilding Jerusalem. He decided to make Jerusalem a pagan city. He appointed Aquilla, a Greek interpreter related to him by marriage, to supervise the work. Workmen cleared the ruins as best they could,

and plowed the exposed ground to level it.

On August 9, 136, the first anniversary of Bethar's defeat, Hadrian used the same plow to mark the outlines of his new city. Judeans could not enter the new city under pain of death. They could not even approach the city. They could only stare at it from afar. Later they received permission to buy safe passage to visit the Wailing Wall. But they could do this only once a year.

Rome annexed Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (all of Israel) into the province of Syria. It was called "Syria Phillistina" or, later, "Palestine." Jerusalem was renamed "Aelia Capitolina" after Hadrian's middle name "Aelius" and after Jupiter, whose temple in Rome was called "Capitolinus." Where the Judean Temple once stood now stands a pagan temple. Inside, where the Holy of Holies once stood, now stands Jupiter.

The name "Aelia" caught on. By the fourth century, the city was seldom called by its old name (Finklestein, p. 271). By the seventh century, when the Moslems conquered the city, they arabacized the name into "Iliya." So total had been the defeat of Judea that, for hundreds of years, the name "Iliya" rather than "Jerusalem" echoed through the streets of the ancient homeland.

This is not the end of this people, however. God

warned the Israelites that their children would betray the covenant, and God would make an example of them (Dt. 31:24-9). But God will call them again when the Gentiles have had their day. Their descendants will rebuild their nation. Our generation has seen that happen.

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