



History

Course: Jewish History

Lesson Four

Title: The War of the Jews (67 –70)

Text: Luke 21:20 ‘And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.’

Introduction:

Flavius Josephus (c. 37-100)

Wrote the account of the War of Jews

Josephus was general in Galilee.

He surrendered to the Romans and worked with them.

He was held in high esteem by the Romans and lived in Rome after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Josephus wrote the Antiquities of the Jews and the War of the Jews for a Roman audience.

His figures are often grossly exaggerated.

John of Giscala

Probably responsible for hiding the Temple treasures between 68 – 70 AD.

Valuable articles mostly hidden in Jerusalem but also around Jericho and the Northwest shore of the Dead Sea.

Copper Scroll

Dead Sea Scrolls

Record made of where the treasures were hid.

20 March 1952 Copper scroll found in Cave No.3 at Qumran near the Dead Sea.

Found in two fragments made completely of copper.

Copper – durable

Oxidisation made it difficult to open.

Scroll opened in 1956 at Manchester College of Technology.

Contained list of places where the Zealots had hidden the treasures from the Temple. Included items such as Gold, Silver, Incense

61 locations where treasure had been hidden.

Contents of Copper Scroll

List of treasure buried in Judea and Jerusalem.

Unlike any other scroll – 2 copper sheets.

No treasure has been found.

Did others get their first? Knights Templar?

The rolls of copper before they were opened

One inscription reads '*In the fortress which is in the vale of Achor, forty cubits under the steps entering to the east: a money chest and its contents, of a weight of seventeen talents'*

J M Allegro, The Treasure of the Copper Scroll (p.33).

Defeat of the Twelfth Legion at Beth Horon (66 AD)

Jews won incredible victory against Cestius Gallus

Jews outnumbered by Romans about 5:1

Romans had superior armour – Most Jewish fighters without shields.

Victory achieved by mass infantry charges and firing burning arrows..
Worst defeat by the Romans since 9 AD when Varus lost two legions fighting against the Germans.

Battle of Beth Horon (AD 66)

Roman army camped on Mount Scopus overlooking the city.
Marched on city - encamped outside Herod's palace.
Jews forced to remain behind second wall of the city.
Gallus retreated - Moved back to Mount Scopus
Jews saw their opportunity and chased them killing those at the rear.
Next day Gallus continued retreat.
Twelfth Legion almost wiped out at Beth Horon.
Humiliation of losing their Eagle.
Legion saved only by 400 men who remained at Beth Horon allowing the rest of the Legion to retreat. The 400 men were killed by the Jews but their bravery allowed the rest of the Legion to escape.

The miraculous victory at Beth Horon regarded as divine deliverance by Jews.
The Jewish militants associated this great victory with divine providence.
Joshua and the Macabees saw a great victory in Beth Horon.
Josephus regarded this victory as sealing the fate of the Jews.

1. The Jews believed they could not lose because God was with them.
2. Nero understood the serious nature of the revolt and was forced to send reinforcements.

Destruction of Jerusalem AD 70

According to Josephus
The siege of Jerusalem lasted 5 months
The number of dead was one and a quarter million.
Area of Jerusalem at time of siege was a third of a square mile.
Many Jews came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover became trapped.
Probably the numbers are exaggerated by Josephus
The Jewish war would have kept many Jews away from Jerusalem.
Many Jewish deaths were due to factional fighting.