

Not one stone will be left here upon another

dedicated to the Roman Emperor and to the Roman pantheon. But the fire spread quickly and was soon out of control. The Temple was destroyed at the end of August and the flames spread into the residential sections of the city. The Roman legions quickly crushed the remaining Jewish resistance. Some of the surviving Jews escaped through hidden underground tunnels while others made a final stand in the Upper City. This defense halted the Roman advance; they had to construct siege towers to assail the remaining Jews. The city was completely under Roman control by September 7, 70 AD and the Romans continued to hunt down the Jews that had fled the city.

Josephus had acted as a mediator for the Romans and, when negotiations failed, witnessed the siege and aftermath. He wrote:

Now as soon as the army had no more people to slay or to plunder, because there remained none to be the objects of their fury (for they would not have spared any, had there remained any other work to be done), [Titus] Caesar gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and Temple, but should leave as many of the towers standing as they were of the greatest eminence; that is, Phasaelus, and Hippicus, and Mariamne; and so much of the wall enclosed the city on the west side. This wall was spared, in order to afford a camp for such as were to lie in garrison [in the Upper City], as were the towers [the three forts] also spared, in order to demonstrate to posterity what kind of city it was, and how well fortified, which the Roman valor had subdued; but for all the rest of the wall [surrounding Jerusalem], it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it [Jerusalem] had ever been inhabited. This was the end which Jerusalem came to by the madness of those that were for innovations; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind.

Josephus claims that 1,100,000 people were killed during the siege, of which a majority were Jewish. 97,000 were captured and enslaved. Many fled to areas around the Mediterranean.

Titus reportedly refused to accept a wreath of victory, as there is "no merit in vanquishing people forsaken by their own God".²

Please prepare Saint John 18:33-37 for next Sunday

² After his death Titus was defied by the Roman Senate.

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The Wailing Wall

The *Wailing Wall* is a place of prayer at the ruins of the 1600 foot long western wall of the Jerusalem Temple

Today's Gospel: Mark 13:1-8

✠ AS HE CAME OUT OF THE TEMPLE, ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES SAID TO him, 'Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large

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buildings!’ Then Jesus asked him, ‘Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down.’ When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ‘Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?’ Then Jesus began to say to them, ‘Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, “I am he!” and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

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Sack of the Second Temple depicted on the inside wall of the Arch of Titus in Rome.

The End of Temple Judaism

The siege of Jerusalem in the year 70 AD was a decisive event in the First Jewish-Roman War. It was followed by the fall of the Masada fortress in 73 AD. The Roman army, led by the future Emperor Titus, besieged and conquered the city of Jerusalem, which had been occupied by its Jewish defenders in 66 AD. The city and its famous Temple, just completed in 64, was destroyed. The Arch of Titus still stands in the forum in Rome. It celebrates the sack of Jerusalem and its Temple,

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Despite early successes in repelling the Roman sieges, the Zealots¹ fought amongst themselves, lacking proper leadership. They lacked discipline, training, and preparation for the battles that were to follow. Titus surrounded the city with three legions on the western side and another on the Mount of Olives to the east. He put pressure on the food and water supplies of the inhabitants by allowing pilgrims to enter the city to celebrate Passover and then refusing them an exit. After Jewish sallies killed a number of Roman soldiers Titus sent Josephus, the Jewish historian, to negotiate with the defenders; this ended with Jews wounding the negotiator with an arrow. Another Jewish sally was launched shortly after the wounding. Titus was almost captured during this sudden attack, but escaped.

In mid-May Titus set about destroying the newly built Third Wall with a ram, breaching it as well as the Second Wall and then turned his attention to the Fortress of Antonia just north of the Temple Mount. The Romans were then drawn into street fighting with the Zealots, who were then ordered to retreat to the temple to avoid heavy losses. Josephus failed in another attempt at negotiations and Jewish attacks prevented the construction of siege towers at the Fortress of Antonia. Food, water and other provisions were dwindling inside the city but small foraging parties managed to sneak supplies into the city, harrying Roman forces in the process. To put an end to the foragers, orders were issued to build a new wall and siege tower construction was restarted as well.

After several failed attempts to breach or scale the walls of the Antonia Fortress, the Romans launched a secret attack, overwhelming sleeping Zealot guards and taking the Fortress. This was the second highest ground in the city after the Temple Mount. It provided a perfect point from which to attack the Temple itself. Battering rams made little progress, but the fighting itself eventually set the walls on fire, when a Roman soldier threw a burning stick onto one of the Temple's walls. Destroying the Temple was not among Titus' goals, possibly due in large part to the massive expansions done by Herod the Great mere decades earlier. Most likely, Titus had wanted to seize it and transform it into a temple

¹ Zealotry was originally a political movement in first century Judaism which sought to incite the people of Iudaea Province to rebel against the Roman Empire and expel it from the holy land by force of arms, most notably during the Great Jewish Revolt (AD 66-70). Zealotry was described by the historian, Josephus as one of the "four sects" at this time.