

# 9th of Av – A History of Events

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## **News Letter 5846-022**

**7th day of the 5th month 5846 years after creation**

**The 5th Month in of the first year of the third Sabbatical Year**

**The Third Sabbatical Year of the 119th Jubilee Cycle**

**July 20, 2010**

Shalom Family,

I have for you the history of the 9th of Av and why you should remember this date.

July 19th 2010 9th of Av Hebrew Calendar

July 22nd 2010 9th of Av Sighted Moon Calendar

As we approach the 9th of Av I am sending this Newsletter out to all, no matter if they are Jewish and keeping the Hebrew Calendar or if you are one of the Ten Lost tribes of Israel and using the sighted moon calendar. This report is for all of us and it is also for all those who are known as gentiles.

It was on this date that many things in History took place which have caused us to mourn; The Rebellion of the 10 spies, Joshua and Caleb did not, the rest incurred the curse to wander in wilderness for 40 years until they had all died; the destruction of the Solomon's Temple and the Destruction of Herod's Temple all took place at this same time.

I am going to also include in here the fall of Samaria, although I have no exact date.

But because the house of our Father, the creator of all things was destroyed because of our sins on two occasions we remember this day whether you are a Jew or a Ten Tribes or a Gentile, it matters not. A great tragedy took place on this date.

2730 year after being expelled from Israel the curse of Ezekiel's 390 year X 7 began in the Sabbatical cycle for captivity in 721 BC. This curse ends in 2010 and now the Ten Northern tribes of Israel can return back to the Land of Israel.

So here is a more complete list of significant events on this date in Jewish history and why it is a time of mourning for the nation of Israel:

- **Av 9, 1377 BC** – The ten spies brought the bad report leading to the wilderness wandering.
- **723 BC** Samaria falls to Assyria Actual date not known Captivity begins 721 BC
- **Av 9, 586 BC** – Babylonians destroy Solomon's temple.
- **Av 9, 70 AD** – Romans destroy 2nd temple.

- **Av 9, 135 AD** – The Bar Kochba revolt was crushed by Roman Emperor Hadrian. The city of Betar — the Jews’ last stand against the Romans — was captured and liquidated. Over 100,000 Jews were slaughtered.
- **Av 9, 1290 AD** – July 25, 1290 Jews forced out of England.
- **Av 9, 1492 AD** – August 11, 1492 Jews forced out of Spain.
- **Av 9, 1914 AD** – August 1, 1914 World War I Began (The immediate cause of the war was the June 28, 1914 assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, by Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb citizen of Austria-Hungary and member of the Black Hand. Wikipedia On August 1, 1914 Germany declared war on Russia)
- **Av 9, 1942 AD** – July 23, 1942 – Treblinka extermination camp opened in occupied Poland, east of Warsaw. The camp is fitted with two buildings containing 10 gas chambers, each holding 200 persons. Carbon monoxide gas is piped in from engines placed outside the chamber, but Zyklon-B will later be substituted. Bodies are burned in open pits.
- **Av 9, 2005 AD** – Starting at midnight on August 14, 2005, the entry and presence of Israeli citizens in the areas to be evacuated was prohibited under paragraph 22A of the Implementation of the Disengagement Plan Law 2005. Disengagement from the Gaza Strip was completed on August 22, and from northern Samaria on August 23, 2005.

This is why we read Lamentations at this time.

<http://www.shemayisrael.co.il/parsha/kahn/archives/devarim66.htm>

To understand the root of all of these calamities we must investigate the first event that took place on the 9th of Av. In this week’s Torah portion, Moses starts his final speech to the Israelite people where he rebukes them for their various mistakes and shortcomings throughout the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. One of the incidents of rebuke concerned the sending of the spies. Upon their return, the majority of the spies gave a negative report. This made the Israelite people nervous, and they did not want to proceed into the land of Israel. As it says, (Devarim 1:26-28): “And you did not want to ascend, and you rebelled against the word of HASHEM your G’d. You spoke evil in your tents and you said, ‘Because G’d hates us He took us out from the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorite to destroy us. To where shall we ascend? ... A people greater and taller than we ...:”

Time of weeping

Earlier (Bamidbar 14:1) the Torah related the return of the spies and the reaction of the people:

“The entire assembly raised their voice and the people wept on that night.” Our sages (Taanis 29a) explain that it was the night of the 9th of Av when the Israelite people wept and G’d declared, “You were weeping without a cause. This night will be established as a time of weeping throughout the generations.”

Mind-boggling

It is mind-boggling how a small group of Israelite leaders could cause a whole nation to lose their faith in G'd who had taken them out of Egypt, split the Red Sea, and revealed Himself at Mount Sinai. As Moses responded (Devarim 1:30-33) "Don't be broken and don't fear them. HASHEM your G'd, Who goes ahead of you, He will fight for you, like all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes. And as you have seen in the wilderness that HASHEM your G'd carried you as a man carries his son. And in this matter, you don't trust HASHEM your G'd?" How can people who experienced daily miracles with the Mann falling from Heaven to sustain them, and the well of Miriam following them throughout their journey in the wilderness, as well as the Clouds of Glory protecting them from their enemies and natural dangers, suddenly lose faith in the One who provided all these constant miracles? How could they even consider that G'd hated them, or, as our sages explain, that they feared that G'd did not have the power to conquer the land of Israel for them?

**<http://www.ucg.org/brp/brp.asp?get=daily&day=29&month=March&year=2003&Layout=>**

The Fall of Samaria; Israel's Captivity (2 Kings 17:3-23; 18:9-12) March 29

The destruction and removal of the northern kingdom finally arrives. God had given Israel ample warning and exhortation to repent through His prophets (17:13). But sadly, they would not heed.

As was explained in the highlights for 2 Kings 15:29-31, Israel's last king, Hoshea, was initially installed in office as an Assyrian puppet ruler in the wake of the Assyrian campaign ending in 732 B.C. Yet he turned out to be an unreliable puppet. For when the Assyrian emperor Tiglath Pileser III was forced to return to Mesopotamia to deal with turmoil in the state of Babylonia, Hoshea proclaimed himself free of Assyrian suzerainty—looking to the growing power of Egypt at this time as a possible counterweight to Assyrian dominance in the region.

Upon Tiglath's death in 727, he was succeeded by his son Shalmaneser V. For two years, the new emperor remained occupied with the Babylonian uprisings his father's last years had been consumed with. But then, in 725, the fourth year of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:9), Shalmaneser moved west to regain control over Syro-Phoenicia and Philistia, which included Israel.

Hoshea was again subjugated to Assyria and forced to pay tribute (17:3). But then Shalmaneser discovered that the Israelite ruler was plotting against Assyria with Egypt. Hoshea "had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt" (verse 4). According to Egyptian history as presently understood, there was a strong new leader in Egypt, Pharaoh Tefnakht, founder of its 24th dynasty. "Osorkon IV of [overlapping] Dynasty 22 ([believed by many to be] King So of the Bible) was apparently his [i.e., Tefnakht's] vassal" (Eugene Merrill, Kingdom of Priests, 1987, p. 415).

In retaliation, Shalmaneser laid siege to Samaria. The powerful Israelite capital withstood the assault for three grueling years, but it finally fell in 722 B.C. It is not clear at what point Hoshea was thrown into prison—either at the beginning of the siege or the final fall of the city.

However, the fact that his reign is reckoned until 722 would seem to support the latter conclusion.

Sargon, Shalmaneser's field commander—who would succeed him as king later the same year (as Sargon II)—would claim responsibility for the conquest of Samaria. But the Bible doesn't name him in the account of its fall. Indeed, credit for victory at the time would actually have gone to Shalmaneser, as he was the king, not Sargon. Samaria was thereafter made an Assyrian province.

Then, in Israel's second mass deportation, the remainder of the northern kingdom's populace was captured and taken away. Sargon claims to have carried away 27,290 people. Yet this was only a tiny fraction of the total population of the remnant of the northern kingdom. It is likely that many more had already been carried away under Shalmaneser, and many more had died in battle or from starvation and disease during the Assyrian siege. And perhaps many before that had fled and migrated to other lands.

We should further understand from history that Samaria was not utterly and absolutely vanquished at this point. Shalmaneser died in 722 B.C. and Sargon took the throne of Assyria. In 720 he faced a new uprising in Babylonia. After it, "Sargon then immediately moved west to subdue a large Syro-Palestinian coalition led by Hamath [in Syria]. He retook Damascus and even Samaria, now considered an Assyrian province, and demanded a reaffirmation of Judah's loyalty by the payment of a heavy tribute. [A footnote says that Samaria was thus taken twice.] He then moved through Ekron and Gaza to the very borders of Egypt.... Finally, he turned back north to Tyre and completed the siege of that stronghold which Shalmaneser had undertaken five years before in 725" (Merrill, pp. 408-409).

Another source, explaining the same events, says that the conquest of Samaria in 722 "did not prevent a further rebellion in Palestine and Syria in 720 B.C., also with Egyptian encouragement. Sargon reacted immediately and in a campaign along the coast of the Holy Land conquered Gaza and Raphia. He inflicted defeat upon the Egyptian force sent to aid another rebel, the king of Gaza. In consequence, Sargon received tribute from Egypt, and even from the Arabians. Samaria, too [that is, what was left of it], was involved in this rebellion, and in order to prevent its recurrence, Sargon [then, in 720] began extensive shifts of populations within his provinces. Many of the inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel were exiled to distant regions of the Assyrian Empire...." (Yohanan Aharoni and Michael Avi-Yonah, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*, 1977, p. 97).

In the prior deportation under Tiglath-Pileser (733-732 B.C.), the people had been carried to Assyria in northern Mesopotamia—to "Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river of Gozan" (1 Chronicles 5:26)—in what is now southeast Turkey, northeast Syria and northern Iraq. Yet notice where the Israelites of this second deportation were relocated: "in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (2 Kings 17:6; 18:11). Ancient Media, on the south side of the Caspian Sea in what is today northwest Iran, was a long way east of Assyria. And notice this additional detail from the first-century Jewish historian Josephus: "The king of Assyria...besieged Samaria three years and quite demolished the

government of the Israelites, and transplanted all the people into Media and Persia” (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 9, chap. 14, sec. 1). Persia was just south of Media.

Thus, those in the first Israelite captivity were taken primarily to locations in Assyria. A decade later, some of those in the second captivity were resettled in the same areas. However, it appears that the vast majority of those in the second captivity were marched right through these Assyrian areas on a great journey east—and then resettled in Media and Persia. (The Assyrians had only recently conquered these latter regions. They were thus unavailable for resettlement at the time of Israel’s first deportation.)

Amazingly, we can trace the progenitors of the peoples of northwest Europe, the Celts and Scythians, to these very locations where the Israelite captives were resettled. Indeed, the Celts and Scythians first appear in secular history in these very places and at the very same time that Israel was taken into captivity. And this only makes sense—for they are, in fact, the same people. The Israelites were never regathered to the Promised Land. Instead, their descendants later trekked from the areas of their captivity, in a centuries-long migration, into northwest Europe. (To learn more, request or download our free booklet *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*.)

Following Israel’s final deportation, the Bible states, “There was none left but the tribe of Judah alone” (2 Kings 17:18). To clarify, the Hebrew word for “tribe” here, *sebet*, can mean an entire nation with more than one tribe (compare Jeremiah 51:19, New Revised Standard Version). And in fact it must mean that here since the kingdom of Judah included, besides Jews, a significant number of Benjamites and Levites. The point is: “There was none left but the nation of Judah alone.” While there may have been a few hangers-on, the northern tribes of Israel were gone.

**<http://www.focusonjerusalem.com/destructionoftemple.html>**

Ezekiel, Daniel, Jeremiah and The Destruction of Temple

The present walls around the Old City were built from 1537 to 1541 by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent after the Ottoman conquest of Israel. At that time most of the ancient walls were reduced to rubble. Suleiman ordered that Jerusalem be fortified to protect its people against marauding Bedouins. The walls were rebuilt upon the foundations of the walls constructed during the time of the Second Temple and the later Roman expansion. For the most part, the modern gates of the city are not closely related to the walls and gates that existed in Roman times or earlier. There is some debate about the correct location of some of the ancient gates and walls. However visitors to the recently restored Jewish Quarter in the Old City can see an uncovered section of the wall built by Nehemiah at the time of the return from the Babylonian exile. The Old City retains its charm and fascination to these days. Narrow crowded shops and the Oriental bazaar with its many markets offer endless adventure for visitors and pilgrims. It is hard to escape the feeling that one has stepped into the timeless, changeless past. Each quarter of the Old City brings an immediate shift in architecture and shops, in passers-by and inhabitants alike. The Temple Mount is conspicuous whether viewed from the Mount of Olives, or from the Lutheran church tower across from the Holy Sepulchre, or from the Citadel

Museum roof. Normally tranquil and peaceful with its park like setting, one would hardly guess that this small parcel of land, only 35 acres, is the center of the world and the hottest piece of real estate anywhere on earth. Biblically speaking, it's most exciting history lies yet ahead!

Two temples of Yahweh have been located on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in times past. Solomon's Temple called by the Jews, "The First Temple," was destroyed by the siege of Nebuchadnezzar and the armies of Babylon on the 9th of Av in 586 BC. Some seventy years later, approximately, Jewish exiles were allowed to return to Jerusalem to build an altar, the "Second" Jewish temple and finally the walls of the city. Although modest in comparison to the First Temple, the Second Temple was greatly enlarged and expanded by Herod the Great. This latter temple was the Temple in which Jesus was dedicated, and where He taught and cast out the money changers on two occasions. The New Testament contains three references to a Third Jewish Temple standing on the site at the end of the present age. Likewise there are Scriptural reasons (Christians believe) that a coming Third Temple will be followed by a Fourth. The location of the First and Second Temples is a matter of keen interest among devout Jews in Israel today as the Third Temple must be built on the consecrated ground where the First and Second Temples stood. This site is currently under the control of the Muslim WAQF. The Temple Mount has been the flash-point of the ongoing "Temple Mount Intifada" sparked after the collapse of the Camp David Peace talks in July 2000.

Ezekiel, whose name means "God strengthens," had trained for the temple priesthood in Jerusalem, which he intended to enter at age 30. But he was carried into captivity by General (soon to be King) Nebuchadnezzar in 597 BC (probably at age 25, Ezekiel 1:1,2)—along with a number of fellow countrymen including King Jehoiachin. He was a contemporary of Daniel, though a few years older at the time of their deportation. In fact Daniel, his three friends (Dan. 1), and 10,000 Jewish hostages had been taken to Babylon 8 years earlier in 605 after Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of the Egyptian armies at the Battle of Carchemish (Jeremiah 46:2). Shortly after reaching Babylon, Ezekiel found himself called by God to awaken the remnant of the Jews in exile, to comfort them, to make them fully aware of God's continuing purposes for Israel. He was also to remind them also of God's dealings with all the nations. Ezekiel's clear and dazzling visions of the glory and splendor of the presence of God are accompanied by warnings of impending destruction of the temple and the beloved city. His wife died in 597 as a sign from God that the siege of Jerusalem had begun (24:16-18). The prophet's words came true in the final destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II in 586 BC, however Ezekiel's work continued until his death about 570 BC. Ezekiel was a young married man who intended to enter the Temple priesthood when he reached the age of 30. He was taken captive in 597 B.C.E and appointed to care for the exiles in his company. The Book of Ezekiel opens with an awesome vision of God's chariot throne and mighty angels accompanying the remnant of His people into exile. In September 592, Ezekiel was taken to Jerusalem "in visions of God." The terrible idolatrous state of the temple was unfolded to him by The Angel of the Lord. Ezekiel also witnessed the departure of the Shekinah, the divine presence, in stages from the temple, the temple courts, and finally from above the Eastern gate, (Ezekiel 10-11)

In 587 Ezekiel's young wife died as a sign from God that Jerusalem was about to fall, (Ezek. 24:16-18). The prophet was not allowed to mourn her passing. Similarly, Daniel's' great vision

of the Millennial Temple was given to him about 572 B.C. While Daniel spent a long and productive life as a major statesmen in the successive governments of Babylon, accompanied by some 10,000 of his countrymen, and while Ezekiel accompanied another large group of later exiles to Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah was chosen to remain in Jerusalem during the final siege and destruction. Jeremiah, "the weeping prophet" took the judgments falling on Judah as if they were God's personal judgments upon himself. He was not, however, allowed by God to pray for the people (Jeremiah. 8:16):

I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath; he has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; surely against me he turns his hand again and again the whole day long. He has made my flesh and my skin waste away, and broken my bones; he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; he has made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long ago. He has walled me about so that I cannot escape; he has put heavy chains on me; though I call and cry for help, he shuts out my prayer; he has blocked my ways with hewn stones, he has made my paths crooked. He is to me like a bear lying in wait, like a lion in hiding; he led me off my way and tore me to pieces; he has made me desolate; he bent his bow and set me as a mark for his arrow. He drove into my heart the arrows of his quiver; I have become the laughingstock of all peoples, the burden of their songs all day long. He has filled me with bitterness, he has sated me with wormwood. He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes; my soul is bereft of peace, I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, "Gone is my glory, and my expectation from the LORD." (Lamentations 3:1-18)

For forty years Jeremiah continued to preach and warn the people, all without any reward or sense of accomplishment. He was told to prophesy about the coming judgment on Israel's judgment as other prophets also did, and he was given promises of the future restoration and blessing of Israel. Jeremiah specifically predicted the destruction of the Jerusalem and the seventy year captivity of the people. He also pronounced judgment on those who destroyed her, Babylon:

And the whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the Lord; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation. (Jeremiah 25:12,13).

For thus says the LORD: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfil to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart, will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile." (Jeremiah. 29:10-14)

Babylon was of course subsequently judged and leveled as predicted. In 553 B.C.E. Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians (Daniel 5). So significant were the prophecies of Jeremiah

(50-51) against Babylon that major portions of his predictions await fulfillment in our own day. Tradition has it that Jeremiah was martyred about 584 after being taken captive to Egypt by his fellow countrymen who tried to flee Nebuchadnezzar. The Lamentations of Jeremiah are read every year, to this day, by devout Jews gathering at the Western Wall of the Temple Mount on the 9th day of the month of Av. It was on the 9th of Av, 586 B.C.E. that the magnificent temple of Solomon was destroyed. It was on the 9th of Av in the year 70 C.E. when the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans.

The 8th through 12th Chapters of Ezekiel are revelations of what was malignantly wrong in Jerusalem. So serious and deep-rooted was the national idolatry that God could only move in judgment—violently destroying most of his covenant people. Ezekiel's knowledge of what was then going on in Jerusalem, several hundred miles away, came to him in a series of great visions. When he received the divine revelation described in Chapter 8, he was sitting in his house in exile with the elders of Israel with him, waiting for a prophetic word from God. There the Spirit of God caught him up by a lock of his hair and transported him to Jerusalem, so he could have a bird's eye view of what was happening in the temple itself. Ezekiel's vision gives us insights that enable us to judge the inner state of our hearts before God, and if necessary to submit ourselves to God's corrective open-heart surgery.

“In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat my house, with the elders of Judah sitting before me, the hand of the Lord GOD fell there upon me (Ezekiel). Then I beheld, and lo, a form that had the appearance of a man; below what appeared to be his loins it was fire, and above his loins it was like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming bronze. He put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was (located) the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes (God) to jealousy. And behold, the (Shekinah) glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.”

The Shekinah, or Cloud of Glory, is here shown as the outshining “Presence” which accompanied the people of Israel in their wilderness wanderings—a Pillar of Fire by night and a Pillar of Cloud by day. The awesome Presence of the majesty and ineffable splendor of God at the time of the dedication of the First Temple by Solomon, 373 years earlier, is recorded in II Chronicles 7:1-3. In Ezekiel's time, the manifested presence of God as the Shekinah departed from the Temple (Ezekiel 10ff), to leave Jerusalem in stages, obviously with great reluctance. However, in a yet-future day, the glowing cloud of the Shekinah will rest once again over Jerusalem marking the return of Messiah and the fulfillment of Israel's final destiny as chief among the nations, (Matthew 24:29-31, Isaiah 4:2-6). The image which provoked God to jealousy described was probably an obscene statue or image indicating the nation's open tolerance of sexual immorality. The “pillars” of Baal in the Old Testament were carved phallic symbols to remind the worshiper of unrestrained male virility associated with that pagan God. That such a symbol should be found anywhere near the temple, which was carefully marked off in zones of increasing holiness, should have been unthinkable to God's people. The worship of pagan deities such as Baal allowed the people of Israel to become sexually



indulgent and permissive, to rational selfish behavior that was prohibited by the Law of Moses. God continues to give Ezekiel a personal tour around the Temple Mount:

“Then he said to me, ‘Son of man, lift up your eyes now in the direction of the north.’ So I lifted up my eyes toward the north, and behold, north of the altar gate, in the entrance was this image of jealousy. And he said to me, ‘Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel are committing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see still greater abominations.’”

A holy God cannot have fellowship and remain in communion and intimate relationship with an unclean and profaned people. The Apostle Paul instructs us,

“What partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? What accord does Christ have with Belial?...What agreement has the temple of God (our bodies) with idols?” (2 Corinthians 6:14,15)

And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, and behold, there was a hole in the wall. Then he said to me, ‘Son of man, dig in the wall’: and when I dug in the wall, lo, there was a door. And he said to me, ‘Go in, and see the vile abominations that they are committing here.’ So I went in and saw; and there, portrayed upon the wall round about, were all kinds of creeping things, and loathsome beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel. And before them stood seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, with Jaazaniah, (“Yahweh hears”), the son of Shaphan standing among them. Each had his censer in his hand, and the cloud of incense went up. Then he said to me, ‘Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, every man in his room(s) of pictures? For they say, “The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.”’ He also said to me, ‘You will see still greater abominations which they commit.’”

“Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the house of the LORD; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. Then he said to me, ‘Have you seen this, O son of man? You will see still greater abominations than these.’”

The heart of all false religion in the world traces back to Nimrod and the Babylonian mystery religion. Tammuz was the divine child who died and was raised again, mentioned in connection with Semiramis, his mother, the wife of Nimrod.

Tammuz seems to have been virgin born without benefit of normal sexual intercourse in marriage. The cult of the mother-and-child was perpetuated in Egypt as Isis and Osiris, in Greece as Venus and Cupid, in Rome as Aphrodite and Eros, etc. Worship of the Great Mother and the nature/fertility rites of Canaan (Baal worship) are variations on this central idolatry of Babylon. Temple prostitution was common among the Canaanites whom the Israelites were supposed to have totally destroyed upon entering the land under Joshua. Instead the Israelites accommodated and incorporated Canaanite idolatries into the worship of Yahweh.

And he brought me into the inner court of the house of the LORD; and behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men, with

their backs to the temple of the LORD, and their faces towards the east, worshiping the sun to the east. Then he said to me, 'Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it too slight a thing for the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here, that they should fill the land with violence, and provoke me further to anger? Lo, they put the branch to the nose. Therefore I will deal in my wrath; my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity; and though they cry in my eyes with a loud voice, I will not hear them.'

The Temple in Jerusalem faced east to symbolize that hope and light and the eventual appearing of the Messiah would come from the direction of the rising sun. Open and deliberate sun worship (which was central to the Egyptian religion, for example) was a flaunting of the law of Moses forbidding the worship of the "host of heaven," that is the sun, moon, stars, or the angelic beings they symbolize. In turning their backs to the Holy of Holies in order to bow to the east, the twenty-four representative temple elders were turning their backs to God and to the sanctuary where God was to be served and revered. By their actions they were denying the very purpose for which the temple was built. The true temple of God today is the body of every believer, and true and proper service to God is to allow Him to put His temples to the holy uses He has made us for. Scripture reveals that violence and lawlessness in a nation are the results of spiritual decline and rejection of God and His ways. Taylor says, "When church leadership becomes corrupted there is no end of chaos that is caused to the life of the nation."

The euphemistic expression "to put the branch to the nose" perhaps is somewhat equivalent to our modern expression, "to thumb one's nose at someone." It probably means something even more vulgar, literally it is "to put forth a stench before the nose (of God)."

After ignoring repeated warnings from a long-suffering and patient, merciful God, there do come times in all our lives, and in national and corporate life as well, when judgment can no longer be averted. Ezekiel is given to see God's prompt action of judgment against all Jerusalem which is to be carried out for Him by angels sent for that purpose. The year, the month, the day, and the hour for judgment had arrived. Our attention is called to the fact that judgment begins at the sanctuary. Perhaps this is the inspiration for Peter's word to the church, "The time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God. And if it begins with us, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? And 'if the righteous man is scarcely saved, where will the sinner and ungodly appear?'" (1 Peter 4:17,18, Prov. 11:31)

The scripture text in Ezekiel continues:

"Then he (the Lord) cried in my ears with a loud voice, saying, 'Draw near, you executioners of the city, each with his destroying weapon in his hand.' And lo, six men came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, every man with his weapon for slaughter in his hand, and with them a man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his side. And they went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

"Now the (Shekinah) glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherubim on which it rested to the threshold of the house; and he called to the man clothed in linen, who had the writing case at his side. And the LORD said to him, 'Go through the city, through Jerusalem,

and put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it.' And to the others he said in my hearing, 'Pass through the city after him, and smite; your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity; slay old men outright, young men and maidens, little children and women, but touch no one upon whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary.' So they began with the elders who were before the house. Then he said to them, 'Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain. Go forth.' So they went forth, and smote in the city. And while they were smiting, and I was left alone, I fell upon my face, and cried, 'Ah Lord GOD! Wilt thou destroy all that remains of Israel in the outpouring of thy wrath upon Jerusalem?' "Then he (God) said to me, 'The guilt of the house of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great; the land is full of blood, and the city full of injustice; for they say, 'The LORD has forsaken the land, and the LORD does not see' As for me, my eye will not spare, nor will I have pity, but I will requite their deeds upon their heads.' Ezekiel's lament (that all of his people would surely be destroyed if God persists in his slaughter of men, women and children without pity or without sparing) continues, "Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?" (Ezekiel 11:13) According to the Bible judgment is "God's strange work." God is long-suffering and reluctant to judge, yet as a Just God, He must inevitably deal with human evil:

"For the Lord will not cast off for ever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve the sons of men. To crush under foot all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside the right of a man in the presence of the Most High, to subvert a man in his cause, the Lord does not approve. Who has commanded and it came to pass, unless the Lord has ordained it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and evil come? Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins?" (Lamentations 3:30-39)

In response to his prayers, an answer from God comes, granting a great promise, which would come to pass in the distant future to bless all of Israel,

"And the word of the LORD came to me: 'Son of man, your brethren, even your brethren, your fellow exiles, the whole house of Israel, all of them, are those of whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'They have gone far from the LORD; to us this land is given for a possession.' Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Though I removed them far off among the nations, and though I scattered among the countries, yet I have been a sanctuary in small measure (or, "for a little while"), in the countries where they have gone.' Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: I will gather you from the peoples, and I will assemble you out of the countries where they have gone.' And I will give you the land of Israel.' And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things, and all its abominations. And I will give them a new heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will requite their deeds upon their own heads, says the Lord GOD.'" (Ezekiel 11:14-21)

Israel has suffered the loss of Jerusalem and the precious Temple Mount for over 2500 years. The prophecies of Daniel, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel have all shown themselves to be explicitly accurate. The “Times of the Gentiles” has concurrently run its course throughout that long span of time. Today, the devout Jews of Israel and the world are looking to rebuild the ancient temple. The failure of the Oslo Peace Process has sparked a renewed sense of urgency within Jewry to commit to the task of insisting on a presence once again on Mount Moriah. Thus, Israel today is beginning to adjust its national longing away from the Wailing Wall, and higher up the mountain...to the place where the ancient temples of Solomon and Zerrubabel once stood, and the place where the Shekinah glory of God once dwelt among them.

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**<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/jewishtemple.htm>**

The Romans Destroy the Temple at Jerusalem, 70 AD

In the year 66 AD the Jews of Judea rebelled against their Roman masters. In response, the Emperor Nero dispatched an army under the generalship of Vespasian to restore order. By the year 68, resistance in the northern part of the province had been eradicated and the Romans turned their full attention to the subjugation of Jerusalem. That same year, the Emperor Nero died by his own hand, creating a power vacuum in Rome. In the resultant chaos, Vespasian was declared Emperor and returned to the Imperial City. It fell to his son, Titus, to lead the remaining army in the assault on Jerusalem.

The Roman legions surrounded the city and began to slowly squeeze the life out of the Jewish stronghold. By the year 70, the attackers had breached Jerusalem’s outer walls and began a systematic ransacking of the city. The assault culminated in the burning and destruction of the Temple that served as the center of Judaism.

In victory, the Romans slaughtered thousands. Of those spared from death: thousands more were enslaved and sent to toil in the mines of Egypt, others were dispersed to arenas throughout the Empire to be butchered for the amusement of the public. The Temple’s sacred relics were taken to Rome where they were displayed in celebration of the victory.

The rebellion sputtered on for another three years and was finally extinguished in 73 AD with the fall of the various pockets of resistance including the stronghold at Masada.

“...the Jews let out a shout of dismay that matched the tragedy.”

Our only first-hand account of the Roman assault on the Temple comes from the Jewish historian Josephus Flavius. Josephus was a former leader of the Jewish Revolt who had surrendered to the Romans and had won favor from Vespasian. In gratitude, Josephus took on Vespasian’s family name – Flavius – as his own. We join his account as the Romans fight their way into the inner sanctum of the Temple:

“...the rebels shortly after attacked the Romans again, and a clash followed between the guards of the sanctuary and the troops who were putting out the fire inside the inner court; the

latter routed the Jews and followed in hot pursuit right up to the Temple itself. Then one of the soldiers, without awaiting any orders and with no dread of so momentous a deed, but urged on by some supernatural force, snatched a blazing piece of wood and, climbing on another soldier's back, hurled the flaming brand through a low golden window that gave access, on the north side, to the rooms that surrounded the sanctuary. As the flames shot up, the Jews let out a shout of dismay that matched the tragedy; they flocked to the rescue, with no thought of sparing their lives or husbanding their strength; for the sacred structure that they had constantly guarded with such devotion was vanishing before their very eyes.

...No exhortation or threat could now restrain the impetuosity of the legions; for passion was in supreme command. Crowded together around the entrances, many were trampled down by their companions; others, stumbling on the smoldering and smoked-filled ruins of the porticoes, died as miserably as the defeated. As they drew closer to the Temple, they pretended not even to hear Caesar's orders, but urged the men in front to throw in more firebrands. The rebels were powerless to help; carnage and flight spread throughout.

Most of the slain were peaceful citizens, weak and unarmed, and they were butchered where they were caught. The heap of corpses mounted higher and higher about the altar; a stream of blood flowed down the Temple's steps, and the bodies of those slain at the top slipped to the bottom.

When Caesar failed to restrain the fury of his frenzied soldiers, and the fire could not be checked, he entered the building with his generals and looked at the holy place of the sanctuary and all its furnishings, which exceeded by far the accounts current in foreign lands and fully justified their splendid repute in our own.

As the flames had not yet penetrated to the inner sanctum, but were consuming the chambers that surrounded the sanctuary, Titus assumed correctly that there was still time to save the structure; he ran out and by personal appeals he endeavored to persuade his men to put out the fire, instructing Liberalius, a centurion of his bodyguard of lancers, to club any of the men who disobeyed his orders. But their respect for Caesar and their fear of the centurion's staff who was trying to check them were overpowered by their rage, their detestation of the Jews, and an utterly uncontrolled lust for battle.

Most of them were spurred on, moreover, by the expectation of loot, convinced that the interior was full of money and dazzled by observing that everything around them was made of gold. But they were forestalled by one of those who had entered into the building, and who, when Caesar dashed out to restrain the troops, pushed a firebrand, in the darkness, into the hinges of the gate. Then, when the flames suddenly shot up from the interior, Caesar and his generals withdrew, and no one was left to prevent those outside from kindling the blaze. Thus, in defiance of Caesar's wishes, the Temple was set on fire.

While the Temple was ablaze, the attackers plundered it, and countless people who were caught by them were slaughtered. There was no pity for age and no regard was accorded

rank; children and old men, laymen and priests, alike were butchered; every class was pursued and crushed in the grip of war, whether they cried out for mercy or offered resistance. Through the roar of the flames streaming far and wide, the groans of the falling victims were heard; such was the height of the hill and the magnitude of the blazing pile that the entire city seemed to be ablaze; and the noise – nothing more deafening and frightening could be imagined.

There were the war cries of the Roman legions as they swept onwards en masse, the yells of the rebels encircled by fire and sword, the panic of the people who, cut off above, fled into the arms of the enemy, and their shrieks as they met their fate. The cries on the hill blended with those of the multitudes in the city below; and now many people who were exhausted and tongue-tied as a result of hunger, when they beheld the Temple on fire, found strength once more to lament and wail. Perea and the surrounding hills, added their echoes to the deafening din. But more horrifying than the din were the sufferings.

The Temple Mount, everywhere enveloped in flames, seemed to be boiling over from its base; yet the blood seemed more abundant than the flames and the numbers of the slain greater than those of the slayers. The soldiers climbed over heaps of bodies as they chased the fugitives.”

#### References:

Josephus' account appears in: Cornfield, Gaalya ed., Josephus, The Jewish War (1982); Duruy, Victor, History of Rome vol. V (1883).

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Spend the rest of this week reading Lamentations brethren. Understand the importance of this week from a historic point of view. And once this day arrives the question for our generation is this. The Curse of 390 years is over in 2010, you can now return to Israel, the question is will you. Or will you once again declare to Yahovah that you do not have faith in Him the same as our ancestors did in the wilderness of Paran? This is a serious time to think and consider your response.

Years ago I was in Pompei, Italy on a tour and found it fascinating to see. After sending out this article this week I discovered this information which ties into the 9th of Av.

**<http://members.bib-arch.org/publication.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=36&Issue=4&ArticleID=6> The Destruction of Pompeii—God’s Revenge?**

By Hershel Shanks

Nine years, almost to the day, after Roman legionaries destroyed God’s house in Jerusalem, God destroyed the luxurious watering holes of the Roman elite.

Was this God’s revenge?

That's not exactly the question I want to raise, however. Rather, did anyone at the time see it that way? Did anyone connect the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 C.E. with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70?

First the dates: The Romans destroyed the Second Temple (Herod's Temple) on the same date that the Babylonians had destroyed the First Temple (Solomon's Temple) in 586 B.C.E. But the exact date of the Babylonian destruction is uncertain. Two different dates are given in the Hebrew Bible for the destruction of the First Temple. In 2 Kings 25:8 the date is the 7th of the Hebrew month of Av; Jeremiah 52:12 says it occurred on the 10th of Av. The rabbis compromised and chose the 9th of Av (Tisha b'Av). That is the date on which observant Jews, sitting on the floor of their synagogues, still mourn the destruction of the First Temple, Solomon's Temple, in 586 B.C.E. and the Second Temple, Herod's Temple, in 70 C.E. The exact corresponding date in the Gregorian calendar is also a bit uncertain. According to the translator of the authoritative translation of Josephus, the ancient historian who gives us our most detailed (if sometimes unreliable; see sidebar) account of the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., it occurred on August 29 or 30.<sup>1</sup> Others place it earlier in the month. The eruption of Mt. Vesuvius that destroyed Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabia and other nearby sites occurred, according to most commentators, on August 24 or 25 in 79 C.E. According to Seneca, the quakes lasted for several days.

But the dates are close enough to raise the question: Were these two catastrophic events connected, at least in the mind of some observers?

The volcanic eruption of Vesuvius has been graphically described by Dio Cassius in his Roman History:

The whole plain round about [Vesuvius] seethed and the summits leaped into the air. There were frequent rumblings, some of them subterranean, that resembled thunder, and some on the surface, that sounded like bellowings; the sea also joined in the roar and the sky re-echoed it. Then suddenly a portentous crash was heard, as if the mountains were tumbling in ruins; and first huge stones were hurled aloft, rising as high as the very summits, then came a great quantity of fire and endless smoke, so that the whole atmosphere was obscured and the sun was entirely hidden, as if eclipsed. Thus day was turned into night and light into darkness ... [Some] believed that the whole universe was being resolved into chaos or fire .... While this was going on, an inconceivable quantity of ashes was blown out, which covered both sea and land and filled all the air ... It buried two entire cities, Herculaneum and Pompeii ... Indeed, the amount of dust, taken all together was so great that some of it reached Africa and Syria and Egypt, and it also reached Rome, filling the air overhead and darkening the sun. There, too, no little fear was occasioned, that lasted for several days, since the people did not know and could not imagine what had happened, but, like those close at hand, believed that the whole world was being turned upside down, that the sun was disappearing into the earth and that the earth was being lifted to the sky.<sup>2</sup>

The tone is plainly apocalyptic. And indeed Dio seems to have had this in mind. In the next paragraph he notes that the eruption consumed the temples of Serapis and Isis and Neptune

and Jupiter Capitolinus, among others. It is almost as if some supreme God was at work. Seventeen-year-old Pliny the Younger was an eyewitness to the eruption and described it in terms similar to Dio's. In two surviving letters to Tacitus, Pliny also gives an account of the death of his famous uncle Pliny the Elder, author of the renowned *Historia Naturalis*. Pliny the Elder was at Misenum in his capacity as commander of the Roman fleet when the eruption began. He set sail to save some boatloads of people nearer Vesuvius and headed toward Stabia—to no avail. All perished, including Pliny, as his nephew recounts:

Ash was falling onto the ships, darker and denser the closer they went. Now it rains bits of pumice, and rocks that were burned and shattered by the fire ... Broad sheets of flame were lighting up many parts of Vesuvius; their light and brightness were the more vivid for the darkness of the night ... Buildings were being rocked by a series of strong tremors and appeared to have come loose from their foundations and to be sliding this way and that. Outside, however, there was danger from the rocks that were coming down ...

It was daylight now elsewhere in the world, but there the darkness was darker and thicker than any night ... Then came the smell of sulfur, announcing the flames, and the flames themselves ... onto the ships, darker and denser the closer they went. Now it rains bits of pumice, and rocks that were burned and shattered by the fire ... Broad sheets of flame were lighting up many parts of Vesuvius; their light and brightness were the more vivid for the darkness of the night ... Buildings were being rocked by a series of strong tremors and appeared to have come loose from their foundations and to be sliding this way and that. Outside, however, there was danger from the rocks that were coming down ...

[Then] came the dust, though still lightly. I looked back [from his flight from Misenum] ... We had scarcely sat down when a darkness came that was not like a moonless or cloudy night, but more like the black of closed and unlighted rooms. You could hear women lamenting, children crying, men shouting.<sup>3</sup>

Then comes the same apocalyptic tone that we saw in Dio:

There were some so afraid of death that they prayed for death. Many raised their hands to the gods, and even more believed that there were no gods any longer and that this was the one last unending night for the world ... I believed that I was perishing with the world, and the world with me, which was a great consolation for death.<sup>4</sup>

Did anyone connect all this to the Jewish God? To the Roman destruction of the Jerusalem Temple?

In a conversation with Harvard's Shaye Cohen about something else, I offhandedly asked him if he knew of any ancient source that made the connection between the Vesuvius eruption and the destruction of the Temple. I had already asked this of several other scholars, but none had any sources for me, although they said there must be some. Shaye, however, immediately replied, "Try Book 4 of the Sibylline Oracles." He was right on.

Book 4 of the Sibylline Oracles is thought to be mostly Jewish oracles by a so-called sibyl (in Greek legend an aged woman who uttered ecstatic prophecies) that were composed shortly



after the eruption of Vesuvius in 79. The oracles were preserved by Christians who believed they gave pagan testimony to the true religion and to Christ.<sup>5</sup> Although composed after the event, it is written as a prediction: An evil storm of war will also come upon Jerusalem from Italy, and it will sack the great Temple of God ... A leader of Rome [Titus] will come ... who will burn the Temple of Jerusalem with fire [and] at the same time slaughter many men and destroy the great land of the Jews.

...

When a firebrand, turned away from a cleft in the earth [Vesuvius] in the land of Italy, reaches to broad heaven it will burn many cities and destroy men. Much smoking ashes will fill the great sky and showers will fall from heaven like red earth.

Know then the wrath of the heavenly God.<sup>6</sup>

There is more—from Pompeii itself:

After the destruction, the site was subject to looting. And people who had managed to flee came back to see whether they could retrieve some of their possessions.

One such person came back to a house in an area of Pompeii designated today as Region 9, Insula 1, House 26. After having walked through the desolation of the city, he (unlikely to be a “she”) looked about and saw nothing but destruction where once there had been buildings and beautifully frescoed walls. Disconsolate and aghast, he picked up a piece of charcoal and scratched on the wall in large black Latin letters:

SODOM GOMOR[RAH].<sup>7</sup>

As he saw it, the divine punishment of these two cursed Biblical cities was echoed in the rain of fire on Pompeii.<sup>8</sup>

The inscription was found in a 19th-century excavation at the site. I went to Pompeii to see the place where it was discovered. (The inscription itself is in the stores of the Naples Archaeological Museum; it is nearly illegible at this time.) In the center of the insula (a kind of city block) where it was found is a beautifully preserved columned atrium. House 26 is like the others in the insula—dark, destroyed, with vestiges of paintings on the walls, but mostly nothing.

It would seem that this inscriptional reference to Sodom and Gomorrah was the work of a Jew, which leads to the question whether there were Jews living in Pompeii. An indication that the answer is yes is a painting found in excellent condition on the walls of another, more elegant house. It is a painting of the Judgment of Solomon, deciding which of two women is the mother of the baby (1 Kings 3:16–28). The painting is the earliest known depiction of a Biblical scene and was the subject of a BAR article a couple of years ago.