

What year did the Temple Fall – 68, 69 or 70 CE?

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13th day of the 4th month 5850 years after the creation of Adam
The 4th Month in the Fifth year of the Third Sabbatical Cycle
The Third Sabbatical Cycle of the 119th Jubilee Cycle
The Sabbatical Cycle of Earthquakes, Famines and Pestilence

July 12, 2014

Shabbat Shalom Family,

During the past few weeks we have been discovering Tomb Stones, which give us the year the person died in relation to the Sabbatical year counting from the destruction of the Temple. I am also learning that the four renown chronologists who looked at them dismissed them because they did not match the theory they were using. I am so furious when I see this. Zuckerman looked at them beginning in the 1920's, if I have my facts right; Wacholder in the 1940's. But Zuckerman and Wacholder disagreed on when the Temple was destroyed and there are those today who have the same argument.

Zuckerman follows the same system the Jews use today, which would give you the Sabbatical year beginning at Rosh Hashanah in 2014. Wacholder uses the system that says the Sabbatical year begins at Rosh Hashanah in 2015. And as I have written to you before, both of them drop those historical dates that do not match their own theory. They dropped those years which proved their theory wrong. We wrote of these before and they are also in our book. Chapter 22, page 209 of *Remembering the Sabbatical year of 2016* explains how this confusion came about and exactly by whom and why that person fudged the dates. It was all done by Rabbi Yose in order to make Simon bar Kochbah look like he was the promised messiah. Go and read that chapter in the book. If you do not have the book then get one right after the Sabbath is over.

Let us begin in this week's Newsletter to address exactly when the Temple was destroyed. Was it 68 C.E. as Zuckerman and all the Jewish people say? Was it 69 C.E. as Wacholder and his followers say? Or was it 70 C.E.? Let's look at the facts and then you, who are to judge angels, should be able to discern which is right.

From [Wikipedia](#) we read the following.

The account of Josephus described Titus as moderate in his approach and, after conferring with others, ordering that the 500-year-old Temple be spared. (Solomon's Temple dated to the 10th century BC, though the physical structure was Herod's Temple, about 90 years old at the time.) According to Josephus, the Roman soldiers grew furious with Jewish attacks and tactics and, against Titus' orders, set fire to an apartment adjacent to the Temple, which soon spread all throughout. However, Josephus may have written this in order to appease his coreligionists.

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.[2]

And truly, the very view itself was a melancholy thing; for those places which were adorned with trees and pleasant gardens, were now become desolate country every way, and its trees were all cut down. Nor could any foreigner that had formerly seen Judaea and the most beautiful suburbs of the city, and now saw it as a desert, but lament and mourn sadly at so great a change. For the war had laid all signs of beauty quite waste. Nor had anyone who had known the place before, had come on a sudden to it now, would he have known it again. But though he [a foreigner] were at the city itself, yet would he have inquired for it.[3]

Josephus claims that 1.1 million people were killed during the siege, of which a majority were Jewish, and that 97,000 were captured and enslaved, including Simon bar Giora and John of Giscala. [4]

“The slaughter within was even more dreadful than the spectacle from without. Men and women, old and young, insurgents and priests, those who fought and those who entreated mercy, were hewn down in indiscriminate carnage. The number of the slain exceeded that of the slayers. The legionaries had to clamber over heaps of dead to carry on the work of extermination.” [5]

Many fled to areas around the Mediterranean. Titus reportedly refused to accept a wreath of victory, saying that the victory did not come through his own efforts but that he had merely served as an instrument of God's wrath. [6]

2. Flavius Josephus. The Wars of the Jews or History of the Destruction of Jerusalem. Containing The Interval Of About Three Years. From The Taking Of Jerusalem By Titus To The Sedition At Cyrene. Book VII. Chapter 1.
3. Flavius Josephus. The Wars of the Jews or History of the Destruction of Jerusalem. BOOK VI. Containing The Interval Of About One Month. From The Great Extremity To Which The Jews Were Reduced To The Taking Of Jerusalem By Titus.. Book VI. Chapter 1.1
4. Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews* VI.9.3
5. “Milman, The History of the Jews, book 16”. Crcbermuda.com. Retrieved 2013-08-31.
6. Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 6.29

From Judaism online we read the following.

The destruction of the Second Temple is one of the most important events in the history of the Jewish people, and certainly one of the most depressing.

It is a sign that God has withdrawn from (though certainly not abandoned) the Jews. Although the Jews will survive—in accordance with the promise that they will be an “eternal nation” – the special relationship with God they enjoyed while the Temple stood is gone.

Sadly, this period of time, perhaps more than any other reflects the maxim that Jewish past is Jewish future, that Jewish history is Jewish destiny.

There’s no period of time that more closely reflects what is going on today in Israel and among the Jewish people worldwide. We are still living in the consequences of the destruction of the Second Temple, spiritually and physically. And the same problems we had then are the same problems we have now.

States the Talmud (, 9b): “Why was the Second Temple destroyed? Because of *sinatchinam*, senseless hatred of one Jew for another.”

What is the antidote to this problem which is so rampant in the Jewish world today? The answer is *ahavatchinam*, the Jews have to learn to love their fellow Jews.

There’s no hope for the Jewish people until all learn how to communicate with each other, and respect each other, regardless of differences.

God has no patience for Jews fighting each other. It’s extremely important to study this period of time carefully because there are many valuable lessons that we can learn about the pitfalls that need to be avoided.

“JUDEA CAPTURED” Before setting fire to the Temple, the Romans removed anything of value. Then they harnessed a group of Jewish slaves to take these priceless artifacts to Rome. Their arrival in Rome is memorialized in engravings of the Arch of Titus, still standing there today near the

Forum which depicts the *Triumph* or victory parade held by victorious legions to celebrate their victory and display the spoils of war.

It was the tradition in the Roman Jewish community that Jews would never walk under that arch. On the night of May 14, 1948, when Israel was declared a state, the Jews of Rome had a triumphant parade and marched under the arch. Their message: "Rome is gone, we're still around. Victory is ours."

But at the time it was a horrible disaster. Hundreds of thousands of people died, many more were enslaved. There were so many Jews flooding the slave market after the Great Revolt that you could buy a Jewish slave for less than the price of a horse. Israel was in despair.(3)

MASADA

Jerusalem has been conquered, the Temple has been destroyed, but it was not over yet.

A group of about 1,000 Zealots escaped and made their way into the desert, near the Dead Sea, where they holed up in the great fortress on top of a mountain plateau called Masada that rises more than 1,200 feet above the shores of the Dead Sea. Masada was built by Herod, the Great, as a place of refuge for him. As such it was practically self-sufficient. With its own water collection system and storage houses that could feed an army for years. What's more, the fortress was practically inaccessible from below and easy to defend.

Indeed, the Zealots manage to survive there for three years.

If you go visit the ruins of Masada, you will see the remains of the fortress as well as the Roman siege wall, camps and ramp that the Romans built, using Jewish slave labor, in order to capture Masada(4).

Josephus reports on the capture of Masada in 73 CE and the narrative resembles in some way the capture of Gamla. Here, too, the Zealots killed their own families, then each other until finally, there was only one man left, and he committed suicide. Josephus recounts the final speech of Zealot leader, Eleazar ben Yair:

"Since we, long ago, my generous friends, resolved never to be servants to the Romans, nor to any other than God himself, who alone is the true and just Lord of mankind, the time has now come that obliges us to make that resolution true in practice....It is very clear that we shall be taken within a day's time; but it is still an eligible thing to die after a glorious manner, together with our dearest friendsLet our wives die before they are abused and, our children before they have tasted slavery; and after we have slain them, let us bestow this glorious benefit upon one another mutually and preserve ourselves in freedom, as an excellent funeral monument to us. But first let us destroy our money and the fortress by fire...and let us spare nothing but our food; for it will be a testimonial when we are dead that we were not conquered for want of provisions; but that, according to our original resolution, we have preferred death before slavery."(5)

For the modern state of Israel, Masada is a symbol of Jews who chose to die as free men rather than be enslaved or executed by the Romans, and is held up as a Zionist ideal. Up until recently, Israeli

soldiers would go up to Masada to be sworn in, and call out for the mountain to hear and echo back: “Masada will never fall again!” (We will discuss this in greater detail in future installments on modern Zionist history.)

Back in 73 CE when Masada, the last Jewish stronghold, fell, the Romans could finally declare an end to the revolt.

And from the [Jewish virtual library](#)

During the summer of 70, the Romans breached the walls of [Jerusalem](#), and initiated an orgy of violence and destruction. Shortly thereafter, they destroyed the Second Temple. This was the final and most devastating Roman blow against Judea.

It is estimated that as many as one million Jews died in the Great Revolt against Rome. When people today speak of the almost two-thousand-year span of Jewish homelessness and exile, they are dating it from the failure of the revolt and the destruction of the Temple. Indeed, the Great Revolt of 66-70, followed some sixty years later by the Bar Kokhba revolt, were the greatest calamities in Jewish history prior to the [Holocaust](#). In addition to the more than one million Jews killed, these failed rebellions led to the total loss of Jewish political authority in Israel until 1948. This loss in itself exacerbated the magnitude of later Jewish catastrophes, since it precluded Israel from being used as a refuge for the large numbers of Jews fleeing persecutions elsewhere.

From these three sources we are told the Temple fell in 70 C.E. so where does the notion that it fell in 68 or 69 come from? As I said, from Rabbi Yose and the Seder Olam.

We will now read from [Qedesh La Yahweh Press](#) on this important matter.

It is unfortunate, indeed, that we possess no direct testimony by any contemporary historian or other such record that can testify directly as to whether or not Sabbath year was in progress during the period that Jerusalem was captured by the Romans (i.e. in the summer of 70 C.E.) Such a document would end all speculation on the issue and would settle the questions once and for all. Nevertheless, Josephus, who was a contemporary with that event, goes a long way towards doing just that. In his history of the first Revolt, Josephus mentions an invasion of the Judaeae Idumaea by Simon ben Gioras in the winter of 68/69 C.E. The fields of Idumaea, we are told, were cultivated. This detail is important because the Idumaeans in this region and that period were Jewish by religion and would not have cultivated their fields in the few months prior to a Sabbatic year nor during a sabbath year. Therefore, the evidence from Josephus strongly indicates that the Sabbath year could not have taken place until the next year (70/71 C.E., Nisan reckoning).

The Chronology of Simon’s Invasion

The sequence of events for Simon’s invasion of Idumaea are as follows: Vespasian, the Roman general, was in Caesarea preparing to march against Jerusalem when word arrived of the death of Emperor Nero. (Josephus Wars, 4:9:2). Nero had died on or about June 9, 68 C.E. Since it was early summer, it would have taken approximately three weeks for news to arrive from Rome to Palestine (this being a reasonable estimate due to the urgency of the message of the Emperors

death). Vespasian must have heard of Nero's Death on or about the beginning of July, which is supported by comparing the statements of Theophilus and Dio. (Theophilus, 3:27 : Dio 65:1, 66:17)

Vespasian after hearing of Nero's death and the civil war that ensued, deferred his expedition against Jerusalem, "anxiously waiting to see upon whom the empire would devolve after Nero's death; nor when he subsequently heard that Galb was emperor would he undertake anything, until he had received further instruction from him concerning the war. (Jos., Wars, 4:9:2)

In response, Vespasian sent his son Titus to the new Emperor for instructions. Yet before Titus could arrive in Rome, while he was still sailing in vessels of war around Achaea, it being the winter season, Galba was assassinated and Otho succeeded to the Crown. (Jos., Wars, 4:9:2)

Titus then sailed back from Greece to Syria and hastened to rejoin his father at Caesarea. "The two (Vespasian and Titus), being in suspense on these momentous matter, when the Roman empire itself was reeling, neglected the invasion of Judea, regarding an attack on a foreign country as unseasonable while in such anxiety concerning their own."(Jos., Wars, 4:9:2)

Otho had ascended to the throne on January 15, 69 C.E. It would have taken about 14 to 21 days for news of Galba's death to reach Greece where Titus was. Therefore, Titus must have started back for Syria in mid-February and rejoined his father at Caesarea in late February or Early March of 69 C.E. "but another war WAS NOW IMPENDING over Jerusalem." (Jos., Wars 4:9:3.) At this point Josephus backs up a little to tell the story of how the Jewish faction leader Simon ben Gioras came to lay siege against Jerusalem. The context of this discussion is that the siege of Simon ben Gioras against Jerusalem was about to occur at the same time that Titus made his return trip from Greece.

In the months before the siege Simon had collected a strong force and had over run not only the province of Acrabetene but the whole district extending to the border of Idumaea. He then fortified himself in a city called Nain where "he laid up his spoil of corn" and "where most of his troops were quartered." Here he began training his men "for an attack upon Jerusalem." (Jos., War 4:9:3-4. cf. 2:22:2)

The Jewish Zealots, who were allied with and had many members from the Idumaeans, fearing an attack by Simon, made an expedition against him (unthinkable in a Sabbath year), but they lost the contest. In turn Simon "resolved first to subdue Idumaea" and forthwith marched to the borders of that country. (Jos., Wars, 4:9:5.) "not long after," Simon invaded that country again with a larger force. This time he took control of the fortress at Herodion (Herodium). Through a bit of trickery, Simon was able to convince the Idumaeans that he possessed a force far too great for them to thwart. The Idumaeans unexpectedly broke rank and fled. (Jos., Wars, 4:9:5-6.)

Simon, thus "marched into Idumaea without bloodshed," captured Hebron, "where he gained abundant booty and laid hands on vast supplies of corn," and then pursued his march through the whole of Idumaea."(Jos., Wars, 4:9:7.) On his march through Idumaea, Simon made "havoc also of the whole country, since provisions proved insufficient for such a multitude; for, exclusive of his troop, he had 40,000 followers." His cruelty and animosity against the nation "contributed to the complete devastation of Idumaea. (Jos., Wars, 4:9:7.)

Just as a forest in the wake of locusts may be seen stripped quite bare, so in the rear of Simon's army nothing remained but a desert. Some places they burned, others they razed to the ground; ALL VEGETATION throughout the country vanished, either trodden under foot or consumed; while the tramp of their march rendered CULTIVATED LAND harder than the barren soil. In short, nothing touched by their ravages left any sign of its having ever existed.(Jos., Wars, 4:9:5.)

The land was (energon), i.e. "cultivated," "Productive," "active." (GEL, p. 261: SEC,GK.
#17531756

G1753 ?????????? energeia *en-erg'-i-ah*

From G1756; *efficiency* ("energy"): – operation, strong, (effectual) working.

G1756 ?????????? energe?s *en-er-gace'*

From G1722 and G2041; *active, operative*: – effectual, powerful.

G2041 ??????? ergon *er'-gon*

From ?????? ergo? (a primary but obsolete word; to *work*); *toil* (as an effort or occupation); by implication an *act*: – deed, doing, labour, work.

This evidence proves that the land in Idumaea was at the time planted with crops. It also places Simon's invasion in the months of Khisleu (Nov. /Dec) when the fields are first sown. The Jews under Simon were also harvesting all consumable vegetation, something not done during a Sabbath year.

In turn the zealots captured Simon's wife and triumphantly entered the city of Jerusalem as if Simon himself had been captured. In response Simon laid siege to Jerusalem (which he would not have done in a Sabbath year), causing a great terror among the people there. Out of fear the citizens allowed Simon to recover his wife (Jos., Wars, 4:9:8.) but he was not yet able to take the city.

Josephus then backtracks to report the events occurring in Rome at that time. Galba was murdered (Jan., 69 C.E.), Otho succeed to power, and Vitellius was elected emperor by his soldiers. The contest between Otho and Vitellius ensued, after which Otho died, having ruled 3 months and 2 days.(Jos., Wars, 4:9:9.)

This evidence demonstrates, since aggressive war was committed and crops were in production during the winter of 68/ 69 C.E. that those who support the Temple destruction in the month of Ab (the fifth month) 68 C.E., could not possibly have a Sabbatical year starting at Tishri 68 C.E. So this year is eliminated as a potential Sabbatical year. Also, since the Jews by custom did not plant crops during the six months prior to the beginning of a Sabbath year this would also eliminate a Sabbath year in the year 69 starting with the Aviv because Simon's army was harvesting as much food as they could in the winter of 69 C.E.

(I have skipped the section on who the Idumaeans were. You can read this at Qedesh La Yahweh Press. For brevity's sake, the Idumaeans were Jewish and kept the Jewish faith and would have kept the Sabbatical years as well.)

Conclusion

There can be no doubt. The Idumaeans of the first century were not only Jews by Religion but were living in the Holy Land, and not in just any part of the Holy Land, but in that portion which had historically belonged to the tribe of Judah. Under Jewish domination they were required to adhere to the Jewish faith or else be forced to abandon the country. At the same time, the Idumaeans were in close alliance with the Zealots, a strict Jewish sect, and demonstrated their loyalty to their faith in the Jewish war against Rome.

With these details, we are compelled to the conclusion that the Edomites living in southern Judaea were strict adherents to Jewish law. If they had not been, an alliance with the Zealots would have been impossible and the other Jews would have found grounds to expel them from the country.

These facts force us to conclude that when Simon invaded the country of Idumaea in the winter of 68/69 C.E. – an act itself not committed in a sabbath year – there was no possible way that these Idumaeans would have avoided the Sabbath years laws. But since they did cultivate their fields, we are presented with clear evidence that the winter of 68/69 C.E. was not a part of a Sabbath year (this also proves that 2014 is not a Sabbatical year). Further, since the crops of this planting season would normally be harvested after the beginning of the next year (69/70 C.E.

Nisan reckoning), we have evidence that this next year was also not a Sabbath year either.

The attack on Jerusalem by the Jewish factional leader Simon ben Gioras, and the crops grown in Idumaea during the winter of 68/69, prove that this year and the next was not a Sabbatical year.

And the fact that Simon was harvesting crops for his army in the winter of 69/70 also shows that the only possible year for the Sabbatical to occur was 70/71 C.E. Nisan reckoning.

Let us conclude this study with what became of Simon.

The experienced and unassuming general Vespasian was given the task of crushing the rebellion in Judaea province. His son Titus was appointed as second-in-command. Given four legions and assisted by forces of King Agrippa II, Vespasian invaded Galilee in 67. Avoiding a direct attack on the reinforced city of Jerusalem, which was defended by the main rebel force, the Romans launched a persistent campaign of terror to eradicate rebel strongholds and punish the population. Within several months Vespasian and Titus took over the major Jewish strongholds of Galilee and finally overran Jodapatha, which was under the command of Yosef ben Matitياهو, after a 47 day siege. Driven from Galilee, Zealot rebels and thousands of refugees arrived in Judea, creating political turmoil in Jerusalem. Confrontation between the mainly Sadducee Jerusalemites and the mainly Zealot factions of the Northern Revolt under the command of John of Giscala and Eleazar ben Simon, erupted into bloody violence. With Edomites entering the city and fighting by the side of the Zealots, Ananus ben Ananus was killed and his faction suffered severe casualties. Bar-Giora, commanding 15,000 troops, was then invited into Jerusalem by the Sadducee leaders to stand

against the Zealots, and quickly took control over much of the city. Bitter infighting between factions of Bar-Giora, John and Eleazar followed through the year 69.

(Factions fought vigorously over the control of Jerusalem, always trying to destroy each other's grain stores to starve each other into submission. This is important to note because they would not have been able to plant that winter of 69-70. knowing they could not harvest in 70 because it was a Sabbatical year. So destroying the grains of the other side was a strategic ploy they all set out to do.)

After a lull in the military operations, owing to civil war and political turmoil in Rome, Vespasian was called to Rome and appointed as Emperor in 69. With Vespasian's departure, Titus moved to besiege the center of rebel resistance in Jerusalem in early 70. The first two walls of Jerusalem were breached within three weeks, but a stubborn rebel standoff prevented the Roman Army from breaking the third and thickest wall. Following a brutal seven-month siege, during which Zealot infighting resulted in burning of the entire food supplies of the city, the Romans finally succeeded in breaching the defenses of the weakened Jewish forces in the summer of 70. Following the fall of Jerusalem, Titus left for Rome, leaving Legion X Fretensis to defeat the remaining Jewish strongholds, finalizing the Roman campaign in Masada in 73–74.

Just before Passover in 70 CE, Titus began the siege of Jerusalem. He quickly took down the first and second wall, but then met fierce resistance^[4] as the factions within Jerusalem realized the necessity of joining forces.^[9] However, Simon and John both upheld their reigns of terror over the citizens, causing many to flee to the Romans. To counteract these desertions, Simon put every potential betrayer, including some of his previous friends, to death.^[4] In August 70, five months after the siege began, Jerusalem fell to Titus. Simon escaped into the subterranean passages of the city. By means of stone cutters he tried to dig away into freedom, but ran out of food before he could finish. Clothed in the garments of a Judean king he rose out of the ground at the very spot where the Temple had stood,^[10] was taken prisoner and brought to Rome.^[11]

Like kings of other countries Simon was displayed during the triumphal procession. Judged a rebel and a traitor by the Romans, he was executed by being thrown to his death from the Tarpeian Rock near the Temple of Jupiter.^[12]