

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

BIBLICAL TRUTH CONCERNING THE STATE OF ISRAEL

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PART 8: THE REJECTION OF THE MESSIAH

NO RECORDS OF JEWISH POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The Gospel of John was written after the death and resurrection of Jesus (between 85-95 A.D.), some 52 years after His resurrection. The prophecy spoken by Jesus (**Matthew 24:1-2, 15-20**) had been fulfilled. In 70 A.D. Jerusalem had been reduced to a heap of rubble, the temple was destroyed and Jews who had lived in Jerusalem had been killed or sold as slaves on the Roman slave market.

The apostles were not interested in political and military development in the land of Palestine but were determined to establish that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Messiah, what His teaching had been, and the fact that the Jewish leadership had rejected him as the Messiah. **John 1:1-14**

- The Gospel of Matthew was written in between 40-45 A.D.
- The Gospel of Mark was written in between 65-68 A.D.
- The Gospel of Luke was written 61 A.D.
- The Book of Acts finished in 63 A.D.

Looking at the dates of these five books, we can see that only the Gospel of John was written after the destruction of Jerusalem.

THE REJECTION OF JESUS

Very few Christians in the last 200 years have given much thought to the rejection of Jesus. As we look upon it, we must understand and accept the following facts:

1. God the Creator had decreed that His only begotten Son should be sent to the earth, to be born to a woman of the tribe of Judah and a descendant to King David. **John 3:16-18; 1 John 4:6-16**

No human being who believes in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, can justify the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the Jewish leadership as trivial. Since it didn't please the Jews to accept Jesus, God would somehow back off and say, "Sorry, I will try again in the future and hope the next one suits you." **This rejection was an insult that God will not forgive!** Here is what Jesus said about it: **Matthew 21:33-46**

2. The New Testament records the rejection by the Jewish leadership
 - a. The Sanhedrin condemned Him to death. **Matthew 26:59-68**



- b. The Jewish leadership demanded the death of Jesus. **Matthew 27:15-26**
- c. The Jewish leadership pronounced a curse upon themselves and their children. **verse 25**
- d. After the resurrection, the Jewish leadership conspired against the truth with bribery to conceal the fact that Jesus was resurrected. **Matthew 28:11-15**
- e. After the day of Pentecost, the Jewish leadership continued to deny that Jesus was the Messiah. **Acts 4:1-22; 5:12-40**

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

God spoke through Moses before the people had entered the Promised Land and told them that they could choose between being blessed or cursed. If they made the choice of being obedient, there would be great blessings. **Deuteronomy 28:1-14**

But if they decided not to obey, there would be horrible curses. **verses 15-68**

The worst possible curse to fall upon the children of Israel would come if they rejected God's redemption plan and despised the Messiah!

"And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you." (Deuteronomy 28:63-68)

Let's look at the historical events during the years 66 to 70 A.D. which are taken mainly from Jewish historical sources.¹

¹ Solomon Grayzel, A HISTORY OF THE JEWS, 1947, p.

THE JEWISH UPRISING OF 66 A.D.

It made the Jews furious when the Roman procurator (governor) Florus decided to rob the temple in Jerusalem of its treasures. As they began to demonstrate on the streets in Jerusalem, Florus sent in Roman soldiers and killed thousands of Jews. This brought more Jews into the city from the countryside so that Florus withdrew from the city and left one third of his army as a garrison in the city.

The Zealots felt that this was an ideal opportunity to revolt against Rome and establish a Jewish state. Eleazar, the son of a former high priest took control of the Temple ground and issued an order that only Jews could sacrifice and worship there. This meant that the Gentiles living in Jerusalem could no longer worship the Emperor of Rome in the outer court of the temple as they had previously done and was a defiant move to challenge the authority of Rome. The Jewish aristocrats and middle class tried to resist this move but the Zealots (revolutionaries) prevailed and the stage was set for war with Rome.

The Jewish aristocrats sent messengers to Florus and King Agrippa in Galilee, asking for soldiers to quell the uprising. Florus was only too happy that the Jews had rebelled since this gave him a chance to settle the score with them. A small army was sent to Jerusalem, and with the Roman garrison in the city, they were able to capture the entire city except the Temple ground which was held by elite fighters from the Zealots. The Zealot fighters broke out from the Temple ground and were joined by the Jewish population in the city and able to drive out the invading army, leaving two fortresses in the city with soldiers from Agrippa in one and Roman soldiers in the other.

During negotiations, the Zealots promised that if Agrippa's soldiers and the Romans would surrender and come out without arms, they would let them go and return to Galilee. Agrippa's soldiers were let go but the Roman soldiers were slaughtered when they came out without weapons.

Once the news broke out in Palestine that the Jews had started a full rebellion, Gentiles in other cities started to attack Jewish enclaves and the whole region went up in flames. Cestius Gallus, the Roman governor of Syria marched south with an army to put down the rebellion. He was able to capture a number of Jewish towns, but once he got close to Jerusalem, his army was defeated and he began a retreat. Zealot army units repeatedly ambushed his retreating army and were able to capture weapons and supplies from the battered Roman army fleeing north to Syria.

Euphoria began to spread among the Jews as they had finally been able to defeat a Roman army. A Jewish government was formed and the Zealots recognized that they were not capable of holding political offices and two men were selected to lead the Jews, Joseph, son of Gorion, a former high priest and Simon son of Gamaliel, a descendant of Hillel.

Military governors were appointed over the various districts of Palestine to organize defense lines, enlist men for the national army and lay up supplies.

Galilee was considered the most vital military area and where the Romans had to be stopped.

Meanwhile, the Romans were preparing a large army under the leadership of General Vespasian in 67 A.D. He was given three combat hardened legions, cavalry units and thousands of soldiers from King Agrippa. Altogether, the army consisted of 60,000 men.

It was Nero who was emperor at this time and the one responsible for the apostle Paul beheading.

Joseph, the Jewish military governor of Galilee betrayed the Jerusalem government. As thousands of his Jewish soldiers deserted in the face of such a mighty Roman army, he offered to help the Romans defeat his own people. He was assigned to the Roman general staff with the mission to weaken the resistance from the Jews through propaganda. He took a Roman name, Flavius Josephus, which is well known among historical scholars since he wrote an account of what happened and has been quoted through the centuries as a historical authority from this time.

There was fierce fighting in Galilee but the Jewish forces could not stand against the Romans and were routed. The remaining forces fled to Judea. Vespasian decided to suspend the fighting and spend the winter of 68 A.D. in Galilee before he marched to Jerusalem.

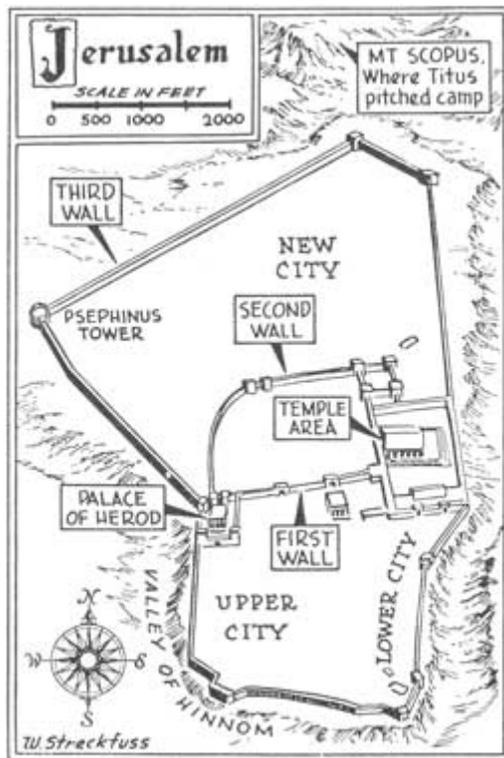
The uprising was doomed because the Zealots did not receive any help from Jews in the Persian Empire or from Jews living in other parts of the Roman Empire. In the meantime, there was a coup in Rome and Nero committed suicide. A power struggle began to see who would be the new emperor. In the summer of 68, Vespasian pressed south and took all of Judea with the exception of Jerusalem. He was proposed to become the next emperor and left for Rome where he eventually became the new emperor. In his absence, the Roman army in Palestine was turned over to his son, Titus.

When news arrived in Jerusalem that the heartland of Palestine was under Roman control, the moderate Jewish government lost power, and when the leadership of the Zealots found out that Joseph had betrayed them, they executed every member of the moderate government and blamed them for the appointment of Joseph.

With the Roman army standing on the outside, civil war broke out in Jerusalem as the surviving moderate leaders rallied the population in Jerusalem and defeated the Zealots, who had to retreat to the Temple grounds. The Zealots appealed to the Idumean armed faction that the moderates were about to surrender Jerusalem to the Romans. If you remember, the Idumaeans were Edomites (descendants of Esau) who had been forced to convert to Judaism prior to year 0. The children of these converts had become fanatic Jews willing to die for a Jewish state. The Zealots and the Idumaeans made a great slaughter of the moderate Jews and the streets in Jerusalem were red with blood. The Zealots took command once the civil war was over.

But further insanity broke out as the Zealots split in three groups, each with a leader. Their names were Johanan of Gischala, Eleazar ben Simon and Simon ben Giora. These three men and their followers fought each other, killing one another and used up precious supplies.

In 70 A.D. Titus put an iron ring around Jerusalem and the siege began. The Zealots realized that they had to stop fighting one another and unite against the Romans.



Titus ordered that civilians would not be allowed to flee Jerusalem and anyone caught was crucified. The Zealots also ordered that no one could leave Jerusalem; it was fight or die. The Romans breached the outer wall within fifteen days of beginning the siege. Soon the second wall had fallen and the Zealots and Idumaeans were driven in to the Temple ground.

The Zealots proclaimed that God would not permit his Holy Place to be destroyed but they had forgotten the prophetic word spoken by the Jeremiah. **Jeremiah 7:1-16**

The remaining Jewish priests continued the daily routine of prayer and sacrifice until they ran out of animals. **The priests and the Jewish leadership rejected Jesus as the Messiah; they did not understand that He was the last lamb to be sacrificed and kept sacrificing in vain until they all were killed.** Now you should

understand what Paul wrote in his letter to the Hebrews. **Hebrews 9:11-26**

The defenders were able to hold off the Romans for three more weeks. When the Roman soldiers finally broke through, they did not spare a single Jew in the Temple area and brutally killed them with as much pain inflicted as possible. Then the temple buildings were burned, and for the next two years, the Roman army destroyed the temple stone by stone until only what is today called the Wailing Wall was left standing.

The Jewish people were devastated because they believed that God no longer cared for them and had allowed His temple to be destroyed. Even though God had allowed the Temple to be destroyed some 600 years earlier, they still didn't understand it was because of their sins.

According to the Jewish turncoat Josephus, several hundred thousand Jews were killed in the fighting or later in mass execution. Thousands upon thousands of young men and women were taken to Rome and sold on the slave market to

the highest bidders. Other Jews were condemned to work in mines throughout the Roman Empire.

Titus selected 700 young handsome Jewish men to be taken to Rome and forced to march in his victory parade. Afterwards they were taken into custody to become gladiators where most of them were killed in the Coliseum arena.

Two of the top Zealot leaders were captured alive; Johanan of Gischala was too sick to be taken to Rome to be paraded and was sentenced to life imprisonment. Simon ben Giora was sent to Rome to be paraded and was executed.

MASADA

Masada has become a rallying point for the Zionists and is also a great tourist attraction in Israel. In order to better understand this place, let me quote from Encyclopedia Britannica:

“Hebrew orvot Meẕada (“Ruins of Masada”), ancient mountaintop fortress in southeastern Israel, site of the Jews' last stand against the Romans after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Masada occupies the entire top of an isolated mesa near the southwest coast of the Dead Sea. The rhomboid-shaped mountain towers 1,424 feet (434 m) above the level of the Dead Sea. It has a summit area of about 18 acres (7 hectares). Some authorities hold that the site was settled at the time of the First Temple (c. 900 BC), but Masada is renowned for the palaces and fortifications of Herod the Great (reigned 37–4 BC), king of Judaea under the Romans, and for its resistance to the Roman siege in AD 72–73.

The site was first fortified either by Jonathan Maccabeus (d. 143/142 BC) or by Alexander Jannaeus (reigned 103–76 BC), both of the Hasmonean dynasty. Masada was chiefly developed by Herod, who made it a royal citadel. His constructions included two ornate palaces (one of them on three levels), heavy walls, defensive towers, and aqueducts that brought water to cisterns holding nearly 200,000 gallons (750,000 l). After Herod's death (4 BC), Masada was captured by the Romans, but the Zealots, a Jewish sect that staunchly opposed domination by Rome, took it by surprise in AD 66. The steep slopes of the mountain made Masada a virtually unassailable fortress.

Following the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Second Temple (AD 70), the Masada garrison—the last remnant of Jewish rule in Palestine—refused to surrender and was besieged by the Roman legion X Fretensis under Flavius Silva. Masada's unequalled defensive site baffled even the Romans' highly developed siegecraft for a time. It took the Roman army of almost 15,000, fighting a defending force of less than 1,000, including women and children, almost two years to subdue the fortress. The besiegers built a sloping ramp of earth and stones to bring their soldiers within reach of the stronghold, which fell only after the Romans created a breach in the defenders' walls. The Zealots, however, preferred death to enslavement, and the conquerors found that the defenders, led by Eleazar ben Jair, had taken their own lives (April 15, AD 73). Only two women and five children—who had hidden in a water conduit—survived to tell the tale. Masada was briefly reoccupied by the Jews in the 2nd century AD and was the site of a Byzantine church in the 5th–6th century. Thereafter, it was abandoned until the 20th century, except

for a brief interval during the Crusades; the Arabs called the mountain As-Sabba (“The Accursed”).

A general survey of the ruins was made by Israeli archaeologists in 1955–56, and the entire mountaintop was excavated by Yigael Yadin in 1963–65, assisted by thousands of volunteers from around the world. Descriptions by the Jewish historian Josephus, until then the only detailed source of Masada's history,



were found to be highly accurate; the palaces, storehouses, defense works, and Roman camps and siege works were all revealed and cleared, as was the winding trail (the “Snake Path”) on the mesa's northeastern face. A synagogue and ritual bath discovered on Masada are the earliest yet found in Palestine. Among the most interesting discoveries is a group of potsherds inscribed with Hebrew personal names. These may be lots cast by the last defenders to determine who should die first.

In the 20th century Masada became a symbol of Jewish national heroism, and it is now one of Israel's most popular tourist attractions. The difficult ascent of its footpaths is regularly performed by Israeli youth groups, while a cablecar provides tourists with a less rigorous access route. Arkia, Israel's domestic airline, provides regular service to a small airfield on the adjacent Dead Sea plain.”²

GOD CRUSHED JUDAISM

By 73 A.D. Judaism was crushed and the temple was destroyed. All the furnishing inside the temple had either been destroyed or taken to Rome.

Judaism was now confined to the synagogues in the different nations where Jews lived and the leaders of the synagogue system continued to reject Jesus as the Messiah and engaged in a fierce persecution of Christian Jews and Gentiles.

Any Christian who supports the political state of Israel and calls himself a Christian Zionist is an enemy of God! They are in reality saying that when Jesus died on the cross, He didn't die for the Jewish people but for the Gentiles. This is an insult to God Almighty and a terrible rejection of the suffering Jesus endured on the cross!

² "Masada." Encyclopædia Britannica. Ultimate Reference Suite. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2009

JUDAISM IS DEAD!

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:8-12)

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?