

## **CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?**

1. Describe the genealogy and educational background of Josephus?
2. What were Josephus's political sentiments at the outbreak of the insurrection?
3. Compare Josephus's efforts to prepare the Galilee for war to his success on the battlefield?
4. Who opposed Josephus's rule in the Galilee and why?
5. Describe Josephus's attitude to the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes?

This and much more will be addressed in the twelfth lecture of this series: "Josephus Flavius: Traitor or Hero?".

To derive maximum benefit from this lecture, keep these questions in mind as you listen to the tape and read through the outline. Go back to these questions once again at the end of the lecture and see how well you answer them.

**PLEASE NOTE:** This outline and source book was designed as a powerful tool to help you appreciate and understand the basis of Jewish History. Although the lectures can be listened to without the use of the outline, we advise you to read the outline to enhance your comprehension. Use it as well as a handy reference guide and for quick review.

# THE EPIC OF THE ETERNAL PEOPLE

Presented by Rabbi Shmuel Irons

Series II Lecture #12

## JOSEPHUS FLAVIUS: TRAITOR OR HERO?

### I. The Formative Years

A. The family from which I am derived is not an ignoble one, but has descended all along from the priests; and as nobility among several people is of a different origin, so with us to be of the sacerdotal dignity is an indication of the splendor of a family. Now I am not only sprung from a sacerdotal family in general, but from the first of the twenty four courses; and as among us there is not only a considerable difference between one family of each course and another, I am of the chief family of that chief course also; further more, by my mother I am of the royal blood, for the children of Asamoneus, from whom that family was derived, had both the office of the high priesthood, and the dignity of a king for a long time together. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 1**

B. Now my father Matthias was not only eminent on account of his nobility but had a higher commendation on account of his righteousness and was in great reputation in Jerusalem, the greatest city we have. I was myself brought up with my brother, whose name was Matthias, for he was my own brother, by both father and mother; and I made mighty proficiency in the improvements of my learning, and appeared to have both a great memory and understanding. Moreover, when I was a child and about fourteen years of age, I was commended by all for the love I had to learning, on which account the high priests and principal men of the city came then frequently to me together, in order to know my opinion about the accurate understanding of points of the law. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 2**

C. When I was sixteen years old, I had a mind to make trial of the several sects that were among us. These sects are three: The first is that of the Pharisees, the second that of the Sadducees, and the third that of the Essenes, as we have frequently told you; for I thought that by this means I might choose the best if I were once acquainted with them all. So I contented myself with hard fare and underwent great difficulties and went through them all. Nor did I content myself with these trials only; but when I was informed that one whose name was Banus lived in the desert and used no other clothing than grew upon trees and had no other food than what grew of its own accord and bathed himself in cold water frequently, both by night and by day, in order to preserve his chastity, I imitated him in those things and continued with him (them?) three years. So when I accomplished my desires, I returned to the city, being now nineteen years old, and began to conduct myself according to the rules of the sect of the Pharisees, which is of kin to the sect of the Stoics, as the Greeks call them. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par.**

D. But when I was in the twenty-sixth year of my age, it happened that I took a voyage to Rome and this on the occasion which I shall now describe. At the time when Felix was procurator of Judea, there were certain priests of my acquaintance, and very excellent persons they were, whom on a small and trifling occasion he had put into bonds and sent to Rome to plead their cause before Caesar. These I was desirous to procure deliverance for and that especially because I was informed that they were not unmindful of piety towards God, even under their afflictions but supported themselves with figs and nuts. Accordingly I came to Rome, though it was through a great number of hazards by sea; for, as our ship was drowned in the Adriatic Sea, we who were in it, being about six hundred in number, swam for our lives all the night. Upon the first experience of the day and upon our sight of a ship of Cyrene, I and some others, eighty in all, by G-d's Providence [He] prevented the rest, and were taken up into the other ship: and when I had thus escaped, and was come to Dicearchia, which the Italians called Puteoli, I became acquainted with Aliturius, an actor of plays, and much beloved by Nero, but a Jew by birth; and through his interest became known to Poppea, Caesar's wife; and took care, as soon as possible, to entreat her to procedure that the priests might be set at liberty; and when, besides this favor, I had obtained many presents from Poppea, I returned home again. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 3**

## II. Josephus and His Attitude towards the Revolt

A. And now I perceived innovations were already begun and that there were a great many very much elevated, in hopes of a revolt from the Romans. I therefore endeavored to put a stop to these tumultuous persons and persuaded them to change their minds and laid before their eyes against whom it was that they were going to fight and told them that they were inferior to the Romans not only in martial skill, but also in good fortune and desired them not rashly and after the most foolish manner, to bring on the dangers of the most terrible mischiefs upon their country, upon their families, and upon themselves. And this I said with vehement exhortation because I foresaw that the end of such a war would be most unfortunate for us. But I could not persuade them; for the madness of desperate men was quite too hard for me. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 4**

B. I was then afraid, lest, by inculcating these things so often, I should incur their hatred and their suspicions, as if I were of our enemies' party, and should run into the danger of being seized by them and slain, since they were already possessed of Antonia, which was the citadel; so I retired into the inner court of the temple; yet did I go out of the temple again, after Manahem and the principal of the band of robbers were put to death, when I abode among the high priests and the chief of the Pharisees; but no small fear seized upon us when we saw the people in arms, while we ourselves knew not that what we should do, and were not able to restrain the seditious. However, as the danger was directly upon us, we pretended that we were of the same opinion as them; but only advised them to be quiet for the present, and to let the enemy go away, still hoping that Gessius (Florus) would not be long ere he came with great forces, and so put an end to these seditious proceedings. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 5**

### III. Josephus becomes Governor of Galilee

A. But as to those who had pursued after Cestius, when they returned to Jerusalem, they overbore some of those that favored the Romans by violence, and some they persuaded (by entreaties) to join with them, and got together in great numbers in the temple, and appointed a great many generals for the war. Nor did they neglect the care of other parts of the country. But John, the son of Matthias, was made the governor of the toparchies of Gophritica and Acrabastene; as was Josephus, the son of Matthias, of both the Galilees. Gamala also, which was the strongest city in those parts, was put under his command. So every one of the other commanders administered the affairs of his portion with that alacrity and prudence they were masters of. As to Josephus, when he came into Galilee, his first care was to gain the goodwill of the people of that country, as sensible that he should thereby have general good success, although he should fail in other points. And being conscious to himself that if he communicated part of his power to the great men, he should make them his fast friends, and that he should gain the same favor from the multitude if he executed his commands by persons of their own country with whom they were well acquainted; he chose out seventy of the most prudent men who were elders, and appointed them to be rulers of all Galilee. He chose seven judges in the city to hear the lesser quarrels; as to the greater causes and those wherein life and death were concerned, he enjoined they should be brought to him and the seventy elders. Josephus also, when he settled these rules for determining causes by the law, with regard to the peoples' dealings done with another, betook himself to make provisions for their safety against external violence, and, as he knew the Romans would fall upon Galilee, he built walls in proper places about Jotapata and Bersabee and Salamis and about Capharecce and Japha and Sigo and what they call Mount Tabor and Taricheae and Tiberias. Moreover, he built walls about the caves near the lake of Gennesar, places which lay in the Lower Galilee; the same as he did to the places of Upper Galilee, as well as to the rock called the Rock of the Achabari and to Seph and Jamnith and Meroth. In Gaulanitis he fortified Seleucia and Sogane and Gamala. As to those in Sepphoris, they were the only people to whom he gave leave to build their own walls, and this because he perceived they were wealthy and ready to go to war, without standing in need of any

injunctions for that purpose. The case was the same with Gischala, which had a wall built about it by John the son of Levi himself, but with the consent of Josephus. For the building of the rest of the fortresses, he labored together with all the other builders, and was present to give all the necessary orders for that purpose. He also got together an army out of Galilee of more than a hundred thousand young men, all of whom he armed with the old weapons which he had collected and prepared for them. And when he had considered that the Roman power became invincible, chiefly because of their readiness in obeying orders and the constant exercise of their arms, he despaired teaching his men the use of their arms, which was to be obtained by experience, but observing that their readiness in obeying orders was owing to the multitude of their officers, he made his partitions in his army more after the Roman manner and appointed a great many subalterns. He also distributed the soldiers into various classes, whom he put under captains of tens, and captains of hundreds, and them under captains of thousands, and besides these he had commanders of larger bodies of men. He also taught them to give the signals one to another and to call and recall soldiers by the trumpets, how to expand the wings of an army and make them wheel about and when one wing has had success, to turn again and assist those that were hard to get, and join in the defence of what had most suffered. He also continually instructed them in the courage of the soul and the hardiness of the body, and, above all, he exercised them for war, by declaring to them distinctly the good order of the Romans, and that they were to fight with men who, both by strength of their bodies and courage of their souls, had conquered in a manner the whole habitable earth. He told them that he should make trial of the good order they would observe in war, ever from the crimes they used to indulge themselves in, such as theft and robbery and rapine, and from defrauding their own countrymen, and never to esteem the harm done to those that were so near of kin to them to be any advantage for themselves; for that wars are then managed the best when the warriors preserve a good conscience; but that such as are ill men in private life, will not only have those for enemies which attack them, but G-d himself also for their antagonist. And thus did he continue to admonish them. Now he chose for the war such an army as was sufficient, i.e., sixty thousand footmen, and two hundred and fifty horsemen; and besides these, on whom he put the greatest trust, there were about four thousand five hundred mercenaries. He had also six hundred men as bodyguards. Now the cities easily maintained the rest of his army, and retained the other half at home, in order to get provisions for them; in so much that the one part went to the war, and the other part to their work: and so those that sent out their corn were paid for it by those that were in arms, by that security which they enjoyed from them. **The Wars of the Jews Book II 20:3, 4-8**

B. So when Gessius had been beaten, as we have said already, the principal men of Jerusalem, seeing that the robbers and innovators had arms in great plenty, and fearing lest they, while they were unprovided with arms, should be in subjection to their enemies, which also came to be the case afterward, and, being informed that all Galilee had not yet revolted from the Romans, but that some part of it was still quiet, they sent me and two others of the priests, who were men of excellent characters, Joazar and Judas, in order to persuade the ill men there to lay down their arms, and to teach them this lesson: that it would be better to have those arms reserved for the most courageous men that the nation had (than to be kept there). For so it had been resolved: that our best men should always have their arms ready for the future; but still they should wait to see what the Romans would do. When I had received these instructions, I came into Galilee, and found the people of Sepphoris in no small agony about their country, because the Galileans had resolved to plunder it on account of the friendship they had with the Romans; and because they had given their right hand and made a league with Cestius Gallus, the president of Syria; but I delivered them all out of the fear they were in, and persuaded the multitude to deal kindly with them, and permitted them to send to those that were their own hostages with Gessius to Dora, which is a city of Phoenicia, as often as they pleased; though I still found the inhabitants of Tiberias ready to take arms. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 7-8**

C. Now, as soon as I was come into Galilee, and had learned this state of things by information of such as told me of them, I wrote to the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem about them, and required their direction what I should do, Their direction was that I should continue there, and that, if my fellow-legates were willing, I should join with them in the care of Galilee. But those my fellow legates, have gotten great riches from those tithes which as priests were their dues, and were given to them, determined to return to their own country. Yet when I desired them to stay long, that we might first settle the public affairs, they complied with me. So I removed, together with them, from the city of Sepphoris, and came to a certain village called Bethmaus, four furlongs distant from Tiberias, and thence I sent messengers to the senate of Tiberias, and desired that the principal men of the city would come to me. When they came, Justus himself being also with them, I told them that I was sent to them by people of Jerusalem as a legate, together with these other priests, in order to persuade them to demolish that house which Herod the tetrarch had built there and which had the figures of living creatures in it, although our laws have forbidden us to make any such figures, and I desired that they would give us leave so to do immediately, but for a good while Capellus and the principle men belonging to the city would not give us leave, but were at length entirely overcome by us, and were induced to be of our opinion. So Jesus the son of Sapphias, one of those whom

we have already mentioned as the leader of a seditious tumult of mariners and poor people, prevented us and took with him certain Galileans and set the entire palace on fire and thought he should get a great deal of money thereby, because he saw some of the roofs gilt with gold. They also plundered a great deal of the furniture, which was done without approbation. When I understood this state of things, I was greatly provoked, and went down to Tiberias, and took all the care I could of the royal furniture, to recover all that could be recovered from such as had plundered it. They consisted of candlesticks made of Corinthian brass, royal tables, and a great quantity of uncoined silver; and I resolved to preserve whatever came to my hand for the king. So I sent for ten of the principal men of the senate, and for Capellus the son of Antyllus, and committed the furniture to them, with this charge, That they should part with it to nobody else but to myself. From thence I and my fellow-legates went to Gischala to John, wanting to know his intentions and soon saw that he was for innovations and had a mind to principality, for he desired me to give him authority to carry off that corn which belonged to Caesar and lay in the villages of upper Galilee, and he pretended that he would expand what it came to in building the walls of his own city. But when I perceived what he endeavored to do; for that I thought either to keep it for the Romans or for myself, now I was entrusted with the public affairs there by the people of Jerusalem. But, when he was not able to prevail with me, he betook himself to my fellow-legates, for they had no sagacity in providing for the future, and were very ready to take bribes. So he corrupted them with money to decree that all that corn which was within his province should be delivered to him; while I, who was but one, was outvoted by two, and held my tongue. But when I had dismissed my fellow-legates and sent them back to Jerusalem, I took care to have arms provided and the cities fortified, and when I had sent for the most hardy among the robbers, I saw that it was not in my power to take their arms from them, but I persuaded the multitude to allow them money as pay and told them it was better for them to give them a little willingly rather than to be forced to overlook them when they plundered their goods from them. And when I had obliged them to take an oath not to come into that country unless they were invited to come, or else when they had not their pay given them, I dismissed them and charged them neither to make an expedition against the Romans nor against those their neighbors that lay round about them; for my first care was to keep Galilee in peace. So I was willing to have the principal of the Galileans, in all seventy, as hostages for their fidelity, but still under the notion of friendship. Accordingly, I made them my friends and companions as I journeyed and set them to judge causes and (with their approbation) I gave my sentences, while I endeavored not to mistake what justice required and to keep my hands clear of all bribery in those determinations. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 12, 13, 14**

## IV. John of Gischala

A. But as for Gischala, its affairs were thus: When John, the son of Levi, saw some of the citizens much elevated upon their revolt from the Romans, he labored to restrain them and entreated them that they would keep their allegiance to them, but he could not gain his purpose, although he did his endeavors to the utmost. The neighboring people of Gadara, Gabara, and Sogana, with the Tyrians, got together a great army, and fell upon Gischala, took Gischala by force, and set in on fire. When they had entirely demolished it, they returned home. Upon which John was so enraged, that he armed all his men, and joined battle with the people forementioned and rebuilt Gischala after a manner better than before and fortified it with walls for its future security. **The Life of Flavius**

**Josephus Par. 10**

B. But the hatred that John, the son of Levi, bore to me, grew now more violent while he could not bear my prosperity with patience. So he proposed to himself, by all means possible to make away with me and build the walls of Gischala, which was the place of his nativity. He then sent his brother Simon, and Jonathan, the son of Sisenna and about a hundred armed men to Jerusalem, to Simon, the son of Gamaliel, in order to persuade him to induce the communal leadership of Jerusalem to take from me the government over the Galileans and to give for suffrages for conferring that authority upon him. This Simon was of the city of Jerusalem and of a very noble family, of the secret of the Pharisees, which are supposed to excel others in the accurate knowledge of the laws of their country. He was a man of great wisdom and reason and capable of restoring public affairs by his prudence when they were in an ill posture. He was also an old friend and companion of John, but at that time he had a difference with me. When, therefore, he had received such an exhortation, he persuaded the high priests, Ananus and Jesus the son of Gamala, and some others of the same seditious faction to cut me down, since I was growing so great, and not to overlook me while I was aggrandizing myself to the height of glory. He said that it would be for the advantage of the Galileans if I were deprived of my government there. Ananus also, and his friends desired them to make no delay about the matter lest I should get the knowledge of what was doing too soon, and should come and make an assault upon the city with a great army. This was the counsel of Simon, but Ananus the high priest demonstrated to them that this was not an easy thing to be done, because many of the high priests and of the rulers of the people, bore witness that I had acted like an excellent general and that it was the work of ill men to accuse one against whom they had nothing to say. When Simon heard Ananus say this, he desired that the messengers would conceal the thing and not let it come among many, for that he would take care to have Josephus removed from Galilee very quickly. So he called for John's brother (Simon) and charged him that they should send presents to Ananus and his friends, for as he said, they might probably by that means persuade them to change their minds. And indeed Simon did at length thus go pass what he aimed at, for Ananus and those with him, being corrupted by bribes, agreed to expel me from Galilee, without

making the rest of the citizens acquainted with what they were doing. Accordingly they resolved to send men of distinction as to their families and of distinction as to their learning also. Two of these were of the populace, Jonathan and Ananias, by sect Pharisees, while the third, Jozar, was of the stock of the priests, and a Pharisee also, and Simon, the last of them, was of the youngest of the high priests. These had it given them in charge that, when they came to the multitude of the Galileans, they should ask them what was the reason of their love to me, and if they said that it was because I was born at Jerusalem, that they should reply that they four were all born at the same place, and if they should say it was because I was well versed in their law, they should reply that neither were they unacquainted with the practices of their country, but if, besides these, they should say they loved me because I was a priest, they should reply, that two of these were priests also. Now, when they had given Jonathan and his companions these instructions, they gave them forty thousand (drachmae) out of the public money, but when they heard that there was a certain Galilean that sojourned at Jerusalem, whose name was Jesus, who had about him a band of six hundred armed men, they sent for him and gave him three months' pay and gave him orders to follow Jonathan and his companions and be obedient to them. They also gave money to three hundred men that were citizens of Jerusalem to maintain them all and ordered them also to follow the ambassadors. When they had complied and were ready for march, Jonathan and his companions went out with them, having along with them John's brother and a hundred armed men. The charge that was given to them by those that sent them was this: that if I would voluntarily lay down my arms, they should send me alive to the city of Jerusalem, but that, in case I opposed them, they should kill me, and fear nothing, for that it was their command for them to do so. They also wrote to John to make all ready for fighting me and gave orders to the inhabitants of Sepphoris, Gabara, and Tiberias, to send auxiliaries to John. Now, as my father wrote me an account of this (for Jesus the son of Gamala, who was present in that council, a friend and companion of mine, told him of it), I was very much troubled, discovering thereby that my fellow-citizens proved so ungrateful to me, that, out of envy, they gave orders that I should be slain. My father earnestly pressed me also in his letter to come to him, for he longed to see his son before he died. I informed my friends of these things and that in three days' time I should leave the country and go home. Upon hearing this, they were all very sorry and desired me, with tears in their eyes, not to leave them to be destroyed, for so they thought they should be if I were deprived of the command over them, but as I did not grant their request, but was taking care of my own safety, the Galileans, out of dread of the consequence of my departure, that they should then be at the mercy of the robbers, sent messengers over all Galilee to inform them of my resolution to leave them. Whereupon, as soon as they heard it, they got together in great numbers from all parts with their wives and children. This they did, as it appeared to me, not more out of their affection to me, than out of fear on their own account, for, while I stayed with them, they supposed that they should suffer no harm. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 38-41**

C. Now, in a few days those ambassadors whom we had sent, came back and informed us that the people were greatly provoked at Ananus and Simon, the son of Gamaliel, and their friends; that, without any public determination, they had sent to Galilee and had done their endeavors that I might be turned out of the government. The ambassadors said farther that the people were ready to burn their houses. They also brought letters, whereby the chief men of Jerusalem, at the earnest petition of the people, confirmed me in the government of Galilee and enjoined Jonathan and his colleagues to return home quickly. But as to Jonathan and Ananias, I freed them from their bonds and gave them provisions for their journey, together with Simon and Joazar and five hundred armed men who should guard them, and so I sent them to Jerusalem. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 60, 64**

#### V. Loyalty to the King

Now at the same time certain young men of the village of Dabaritta, who kept guard in the Great Plain, laid snares for Ptolemy, who was Agrippa's and Bernice's steward, and took from him all that he had with him. Among these things there were a great many costly garments, and no small number of silver cups, and six hundred pieces of gold; yet were they not able to conceal what they had stolen, but brought it all to Josephus, to Taricheae. Hereupon he blamed them for the violence they had offered to the king and queen and deposited what they brought to him with Eneas, the most potent man of Taricheae, with an intention of sending the things back to the owners at a proper time. This act of Josephus brought him into the greatest danger, for those that had stolen the things had an indignation at him, both because they perceived beforehand what was Josephus's intention, and that we would freely deliver up what had cost them so much pains to the king and queen. **The Wars of the Jews Book II 21:3**

#### VI. The Fall of Galilee

A. And thus did Vespasian march with his army and came to the bounds of Galilee, where he pitched his camp and restrained his soldiers, who were eager for war. He also showed his army to the enemy, in order to frighten them and to afford them a season for repentance, to see whether they would change their minds before it came to a battle. At the same time he got things ready for besieging their strongholds. And indeed this sight of the general brought many to repent of their revolt and put them all into a consternation, for those that were in Josephus' camp, which was at the city called Garis not far from Sepphoris, when they heard that the war had come near them and that the Romans would suddenly fight them hand to hand, dispersed themselves and fled, not only before they came to a battle, but before the enemy ever came in sight, while Josephus and a few others were left behind. As he saw that he had not an army sufficient to engage the enemy, that the spirit of the Jews were sunk, and that the greater part would willingly come to terms if they might be credited, he already despaired of the success of the whole war, and determined to get as far as he possibly could out of danger; so he took those that stayed along with him, and fled to Tiberias. **The Wars of the Jews Book III 6:3**

B. As to Josephus, his retiring into that city which he chose as the most fit for his security, put it into great fear; for the people of Tiberias did not imagine that he would have run away, unless he had entirely despaired of the success of the war. Indeed, as to that point, they were not mistaken about his opinion, for he saw whither the affairs of the Jews would end, and was sensible that they had but one way of escaping: by repentance. However, although he expected that the Romans would forgive him, yet did he choose to die many times over rather than to betray his country, and to dishonor that supreme command of the army which had been entrusted with him, or to live happily under those against whom he was sent to fight. He determined, therefore, to give an exact account of affairs to the principal men at Jerusalem by a letter, that he might not by too much aggrandizing the power of the enemy, make them too timorous; nor, by relating that their power beneath the truth, might encourage them to stand out when they were perhaps disposed to repentance. He also sent them word that if they thought of coming to terms, they must suddenly write him an answer; or if they resolve upon war, they must send him an army sufficient to fight the Romans. Accordingly he wrote these things, and sent messengers immediately to carry his letter to Jerusalem. **The Wars of the Jews Book III 7:2**

#### VII. The Siege of Jotapata

A. On the fifth day, which was the twenty-first of the month Artemisius (Iyar), Josephus prevented him, and came from Tiberias and went to Jotapata and raised the drooping spirits of the Jews. A certain deserter told this good news to Vespasian, that Josephus had removed himself thither, which made him make haste to the city, as supposing that, with taking that, he should take all Judea, in case he could get Josephus under his power. So he took this news to be of the vastest advantage to him and believed it to be brought about by the Providence of G-d, that he who appeared to be the most prudent man of all their enemies, had, of his own accord, shut himself up in a place of sure custody. **The Wars of the Jews Book III 7:3**

B. But as the people of Jotapata still held out manfully, and bore up under their miseries beyond all that could be hoped for, on the forty-seventh day [of the siege] the banks cast up by the Romans were become higher than the wall. On that day a certain deserter went to Vespasian, and told him how few were left in the city and how weak they were, and that they had been so worn out with perpetual watching and also perpetual fighting, that they could not now oppose any force that came against them, and that they might be taken by stratagem, if any one would attack them at about the last watch of the night, when they thought they might have some rest from the hardships they were under, and when a morning sleep used to come upon them, as they were thoroughly weary. He said that the watch used to fall asleep; accordingly his advice was, that they should make the attack at that hour.

And on this day the Romans slew all the multitude that appeared openly, but on the following days they searched the hiding-places and fell upon those that were underground and in the caverns and went thus through every age, excepting the infants and the women, and of those they gathered together as captives twelve hundred. As for those that were slain at the taking of the city, and in the former fights, they were numbered to be forty thousand. So Vespasian gave order that the city should be easily demolished and all the fortifications burnt down. And thus was Jotapata taken, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Nero, on the first day of the month Panemus [Tamuz]. **The Wars of the Jews Book III 7:33, 36**

#### VIII. The Surrender of Josephus

A. And now the Romans searched for Josephus, both out of the hatred they bore him, and because their general was very desirous to have him taken so that the greatest part of the war would be over. They then searched among the dead and looked into the most concealed recesses of the city, but as the city was first taken, he was assisted by a certain supernatural providence, for he withdrew himself from the enemy when he was in the midst of them and leaped into a certain deep pit, which had a large den at one side of it. This den could not be seen by those that were above ground, and here he met with forty persons of eminence that had concealed themselves with provisions enough to satisfy them for not a few days. So in the day-time he hid himself from the enemy, who had seized upon all places, and in the night-time he got up out of the den and looked about for some way of escaping and took exact notice of the watch, but as all places were guarded everywhere on his account, there was no way of getting off unseen, so he went down again into the den. Thus he concealed himself two days, but on the third day, when they had taken a woman who had been there with them, he was discovered. Whereupon Vespasian sent immediately and zealously two tribunes, Paulinus and Gallicanus, and ordered them to give Josephus their right hands as security for his life and to exhort him to come up.

However, he was afraid that he was invited to come up in order to be punished, until Vespasian sent besides these a third tribune, Nicanor, to him. He was one that was well known to Josephus, and had been his familiar acquaintance in old time. When he came, he enlarged upon the natural mildness of the Romans towards those they have once conquered. **The Wars of the Jews Book III 8:1, 2**

B. Now, as Josephus began to hesitate with himself about Nicanor's proposal, the soldiers were so angry that they ran hastily to set fire to the den, but the tribune would not permit them so to do, being very desirous to take the man alive. And now, as Nicanor lay hard at Josephus to comply, and he understood how the multitude of the enemy threatened him, he called to mind the dreams which he had dreamed in the night-time, whereby G-d had signified to him beforehand both the future calamities of the Jews, and the events that concerned the Roman emperors. Now Josephus was able to give shrewd conjectures about the interpretation of such dreams as have been ambiguously delivered by G-d. Moreover, he was not unacquainted with the prophecies contained in the sacred books, being a priest himself and of the posterity of priests, and just then was he in an ecstasy. Setting before him the tremendous images of the dreams he had lately had, he put up a secret prayer to G-d, and said, "Since it pleaseth Thee, Who hast created the Jewish nation to depress the same, and since all their good fortune is gone over to the Romans, and since Thou hast chosen this soul of mine to foretell what is to come to pass hereafter, I willingly give them my hands, and am content to live. And I protest openly, that I do not go over to the Romans as a deserter of the Jews, but as a minister from Thee." **The Wars of the Jews Book III 8:3, 4**

C. However, in this extreme distress, he was not destitute of his usual sagacity, but, trusting himself to the providence of G-d, he put his life into hazard (in the manner following): "Since it is resolved among you that you will die, come on, let us commit our mutual deaths to determination by lot. He whom the lot falls to first, let him be killed by him that hath the second lot, and thus fortune shall make its progress through us all, nor shall any of us perish by his own right hand, for it would be unfair if, when the rest are gone, somebody should repent and save himself." This proposal appeared to them to be very just, and when he had prevailed with them to determine this matter by lots, he drew one of the lots for himself also. He who had the first lot laid his neck bare to him that had the next, supposing that the general would die among them immediately, for they thought death, if Josephus might but die with them, was sweeter than life; yet was he with another left to the last, whether he must say it happened so by chance, or whether by the providence of G-d; and as he was very desirous neither to be condemned by the lot, nor, if he had been left to the last, to imbrue his right hand in the blood of his countryman, he persuaded him to trust him, and to live as well as himself. **The Wars of the Jews Book III 8:7**

D. However, Vespasian gave strict orders that he should be kept with great caution, as though he would shortly send him to Nero. When Josephus heard him give those orders, he said that he had somewhat in his mind that he would willingly say to him (Vespasian) alone. When therefore they were all ordered to withdraw, excepting Titus and two of their friends, he said, "Thou, O Vespasian, thinkest no more than that thou hast taken Josephus himself captive; but I come to thee as a messenger of greater tidings; for had not I been sent by G-d to thee, I knew what were the laws of the Jews in this case, and how it becomes generals to die. Dost thou send me to Nero! Why? Are Nero's successors till they come to thee still alive? Thou, O Vespasian, art Caesar and emperor, thou, and this thy son. Bind me now still faster, and keep me for thyself, for thou, O Caesar, art not only lord over me, but over the land and the sea, and all mankind; and certainly I deserve to be punished, if I rashly affirm anything of G-d." When he had said this, Vespasian at present did not believe him, but supposed that Josephus said this as a cunning trick in order to save himself; but in a little while he was convinced, and believed what he said to be true, G-d himself erecting his expectations, so as to think of obtaining the empire, and by other signs foreshowing his advancement. He also found Josephus to have spoken truth on other occasions; for one of those friends that were present at that secret conference said to Josephus, "I cannot but wonder how thou couldest not foretell to the people of Jotapata that they should be taken, nor couldest foretell this captivity which has happened to your or thee, unless what thou now sayest be a vain thing, in order to avoid the rage that is risen against thyself." To which Josephus replied, "I did foretell to the people of Jotapata that they would be taken on the forty-seventh day, and that I should be caught alive by the Romans." Now when Vespasian had inquired of the captives privately about these predictions, he found them to be true, and then he began to believe those that concerned himself. Yet he did not set Josephus at liberty from his bands, but bestowed on him suits of clothes and other precious gifts; he treated him also in a very obliging manner, and continued so to do, Titus still joining his interest in the honors that were done him. **The Wars of the Jews Book III 8:8, 9**

#### IX. The Fall of Jerusalem

A. So Vespasian's good fortune succeeded to his wishes everywhere, and the public affairs were, for the greatest part, already in his hands. Upon this he considered that he had not arrived at the government without Divine Providence, but that a righteous kind of fate had brought the empire under his power, for as he called to mind the other signals, which had been a great many everywhere, that foretold he should obtain the government, so did he remember what Josephus had said to him when he ventured to foretell his coming to the empire while Nero was alive. So he was much concerned that this man was still in bonds with him. He then called for Mucianus, together with his other commanders and friends, and in the first place he informed them what a valiant man Josephus had been and what great hardships he had made him undergo in the siege of

Jotapata. After that he related those predictions of his which he had then suspected as fictions, suggested out of the fear he was in, but which had by time been demonstrated to be divine. "It is a shameful thing," (said he)," that this man who hath foretold my coming to the empire beforehand and been the minister of a divine message to me, should still be retained in the condition of a captive or prisoner." So he called for Josephus, and commanded that he should be set at liberty. Whereupon the commanders promised themselves glorious things from this requital Vespasian made to a stranger. Titus was then present with his father, and said, "O father, it is but just that the scandal (of a prisoner) should be taken off Josephus, together with his iron chain; for if we do not barely loose his bonds but cut them to pieces, he will be like a man that hath never been bound at all." For that is the usual method as to such as have been bound without a cause. This advice was agreed to by Vespasian also, so a man came in, and cut the chain to pieces, while Josephus received this testimony of his integrity for a reward and was moreover esteemed a person of credit in the future as well. **The Wars of the Jews Book IV 10:7**

B. But then Titus, knowing that the city would be either saved or destroyed for himself, did not only proceed earnestly in the siege, but did not omit to have the Jews exhorted to repentance. So he mixed good counsel with his works for the siege, and being sensible that exhortations are frequently more effectual than arms, he persuaded them to surrender the city, now in a manner already taken and thereby to save themselves and sent Josephus to speak to them in their own language, for he imagined they might yield to the persuasion of a countryman of their own.

So Josephus went round about the wall and tried to find a place that was out of the reach of their darts, and yet within their hearing, and besought them in many words to spare themselves, to spare their country and their Temple, and not to be more obdurate in these cases than foreigners themselves. The Romans, who had no relations to those things, had a reverence for their sacred rites and places although they belonged to their enemies and had until now kept their hands off of them, while such as were brought up under them and, if they be preserved, will be the only people that will reap the benefit of them, hurry on to have them destroyed. Certainly the wall still remaining was weaker than those that were already taken. They must know the Roman power was invincible, and that they had been used to serve them, for, that in case it be allowed a right thing to fight for liberty that ought to have been done at first, but for them that have once fallen under the power of the Romans and have now submitted to them for so many long years, to pretend to shake off that yoke afterward, was the work of those who had a mind to die miserably, not of those who were lovers of liberty. **The Wars of the Jews Book V 9:2, 3**

C. When the siege of Jotapata was over and I was among the Romans, I was kept with much care, by means of the great respect that Vespasian showed me. Moreover, at his command, I married a virgin who was from among the captives of that country; yet did she not live with me long, but was divorced upon my being freed from my bonds and my going to Alexandria. However, I married another wife at Alexandria, and was thence sent, together with Titus, to the siege of Jerusalem, and was frequently in danger of being put to death, while the Jews were very desirous to get me under their power, in order to have me punished; and the Romans also, whenever they were beaten, supposed that it was occasioned by my treachery, and made continual clamors to the emperors and desired that they would bring me to punishment as a traitor to them. But Titus Caesar was well acquainted with the uncertain fortune of war and returned no answer to the soldiers' vehement solicitations against me. Moreover, when the city Jerusalem was taken by force, Titus Caesar persuaded me frequently to take what gave me leave so to do; but when my country was destroyed, I thought nothing else to be of any value which I could take and keep as a comfort under my calamities, so I made this request to Titus, that my family might have their liberty; I had also the holy books by Titus's concession, nor was it long after, that I asked of him the life of my brother and fifty friends with him and was not denied. When I also went once to the Temple, by the permission of Titus, where there were a great multitude of captive women and children, I got all those that I remembered from among my own friends and acquaintances to be set free, being in number about one hundred and ninety, and so I delivered them without their paying any price of redemption and restored them to their former fortune. When I was sent by Titus Caesar with Cerealius, and a thousand horsemen, to a certain village called Thecoa, in order to know whether it was a place for a camp, as I came back, I saw many captives crucified and remembered three of them as my former acquaintance. I was very sorry at this in my mind and went with tears in my eyes to Titus and told him of them, so he immediately commanded them to be taken down and to have the greatest care taken of them; in order to their recovery; yet two of them died under the physician's hands, while the third recovered. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 75**

#### X. Roman Citizen and Historian

A. But when Titus had composed the troubles in Judea and conjectured that the lands which I had in Judea would bring me no profit, because a garrison to guard the country was afterwards to pitch there, he gave me another country in the plain. When he was going away to Rome, he chose me to sail along with him, and paid me great respect. When we were to come to Rome, I had great care taken of me by Vespasian, for he gave me an apartment in his own house, which he lived in before he came to the empire. He also honored me with the privilege of a Roman citizen and gave me an annual pension and continued to respect me to the end of his life, without any abatement of his kindness to me. This very thing made me envied and brought in into danger, for a certain Jew, whose name was Jonathan, who had raised a tumult in Cyrene, and had persuaded two thousand men of that country to join with him, was the occasion of their ruin, but when

he was bound by the governor of that country and sent to the emperor, he told him that I had sent him both weapons and money. However, he could not conceal his being a liar from Vespasian, who condemned him to die, according to which sentence he was put to death. After that, when those that envied my good fortune did frequently bring accusations against me, by G-d's providence I escaped them all. I also received from Vespasian no small quantity of land as a free gift in Judea. About this time I divorced my wife also, not being pleased with her behavior, though not until she had been the mother of three children, two of whom are dead and one, whom I named Hyrcanus, is alive. After this I married a wife who had lived in Crete, but a Jewess by birth. She was a woman of eminent parents, the most illustrious in all the country, and whose character was beyond that of most other women, as her future life did demonstrate. By her I had two sons; the elder's name was Justus, and the next Simonides, who was also named Agrippa. These were the circumstances of my domestic affairs. However the kindness of the emperor to me continued still the same; for when Vespasian was dead, Titus, who succeeded him in the government, kept up the same respect for me which I had from his father; and when I had frequent accusations laid against me, he would not believe them, and Domitian, who succeeded, still augmented his respects to me for he punished those Jews that were my accusers and gave command that a servant of mine, who was a eunuch, and my accuser, should be punished. He also made that country I had in Judea tax free, which is a mark of the greatest honor to him who hath it. Even Domitia, the wife of Caesar, continued to do me kindnesses. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 76**

B. I was not then in like manner afraid of my own writing, but offered my books to the emperors themselves, when the facts were almost under men's eyes, for I was conscious to myself that I had observed the truth of facts, and as I expected to have their attestation to them, so I was not deceived in such expectation. Moreover, I immediately presented my history to many other persons, some of whom were concerned in the war, as was king Agrippa and some of his kindred. Now the emperor Titus was so desirous that the knowledge of these affairs should be taken from these books alone that he subscribed his own hand to them and ordered that they should be published. King Agrippa wrote me sixty-two letters and attested to the truth of what I had therein delivered. Two of these letters I have here subjoined, and thou may thereby know their contents, "King Agrippa to Josephus, his dear friend, sendeth greeting. I have read over thy book with great pleasure, and it appears to me that thou hast done in much more accurately and with greater care than have the other writers. Send me the rest of these books. Farewell, my dear friend." "King Agrippa to Josephus, his dear friend, sendeth greeting. It seems by what thou has written that thou standest in need of no instruction in order to reveal information from the beginning. However, when thou comest to me, I will inform thee of a great many thing which thou dost not know." So when this history was perfected, Agrippa, neither by way of flattery, which was not agreeable to him, nor by way of irony, as thou wilt say (for he was entirely a stranger to such an evil disposition of mind), wrote this by way of attestation to what was true, as all that read histories may do. **The Life of Flavius Josephus Par. 65**

## XI. Josephus and the Pharisees

A. However, this prosperous state of affairs moved the Jews to envy Hyrcanus, but they that were the worst disposed to him were the Pharisees, who were one of the sects of the Jews, as we have informed you already. These have so great a power over the multitude that, when they say anything against the king or against the high priest, they are presently believed. **Antiquities Book XIII Chap. 10:5**

B. But Yanai gave her the following advice: that she need but follow what he would suggest to her in order to retain the kingdom securely with her children; that she should conceal his death from the soldiers until she should have taken that place; after this she should go in triumph, as upon a victory, to Jerusalem and put some of her authority into the hands of the Pharisees. They would commend her for the honor she had done them and would reconcile the nation to her, for he told her they had great authority among the Jews, both to do hurt to such as they hated, and to bring advantages to those to whom they were friendly disposed. They are then believed best of all by the multitude when they speak any severe thing against others, though it be only out of envy at them. And, he said, that it was by their means that he had incurred the displeasure of the nation whom indeed he had injured. "Do thou therefore," said he, "when thou art come to Jerusalem, send for the leading men among them, and show them my body and with great appearance of sincerity, give them leave to use it as they themselves please, whether they will dishonor the dead body by refusing it burial, as having severely suffered by my means, or whether in their anger they will offer any other injury to that body. Promise them also, that thou wilt do nothing without them in the affairs of the kingdom. If thou dost but say this to them, I shall have the honor of a more glorious funeral from them than thou couldest, have made for me, and when it is in their power to abuse my dead body, they will do it no injury at all, and thou wilt rule in safety." So when he had given his wife this advice, he died after he had reigned twenty-seven years, and lived fifty years, within one. **Antiquities Book XIII 15:5**

C. So she had indeed the name of the Regent, but the Pharisees had the authority, for it was they who restored those that had been banished and set these who were prisoners at liberty, and, to say all at once, they differed in nothing from lords. However, the queen also took care of the affairs of the kingdom and got together a great body of mercenary soldiers and increased her own army to such a degree that she became terrible to the neighboring tyrants and took hostages of them, and the country was entirely at peace, excepting the Pharisees, for they disturbed the queen. They desired that she would kill those who persuaded Alexander to slay the eight hundred men, after which they cut the throat of one of them, Diogenes, and after him they did the same to several, one after the other, until the men that were the most potent came into the palace, and Aristobulus with them, for he seemed to be displeased at what was done, and it appeared openly that if he had an opportunity, he would not permit his mother to go on so. **Antiquities Book XIII 16:2**

## XII. Josephus and the Sadducees

A. But the Sadducees are those that compose the second order and take away fate entirely and suppose that G-d is not concerned in our doing or not doing what is evil. They say that to act what is good or what is evil is at men's own choice, and that the one or the other belongs so to every one that they may act as they please. They also take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades. Moreover, the Pharisees are friendly to one another and are for the exercise of concord and regard for the public. But the behavior of the Sadducees one towards another is in some degree wild, and their conversation with those that are of their own party is as barbarous as if they were strangers to them. And this is what I had to say concerning the philosophic sects among the Jews. **The Wars of the Jews Book II 8:14**

B. This young Ananus was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed.... He assembled a Sanhedrin of judges and brought before them ... and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned. **Antiquities Book XX 9:1**

C. And now Jesus, the son of Gamaliel, became the successor of Jesus, the son of Damneus, in the high priesthood, which the king had taken from the other, on which account a sedition arose between the high priests with regard to one another, for they got together bodies of the boldest sort of the people and frequently came from reproaches to throwing of stones at each other, but Ananius was too hard for the rest by his riches, which enabled him to gain those that were most ready to receive. . . . And from that time it principally came to pass, that our city was greatly disordered, and that all things grew worse and worse among us. **Antiquities Book XX 9:4**

D. I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananus was the beginning of the destruction of the city, and that from this very day may be dated the overthrow of her wall and the ruin of her affairs, since they saw their high-priest, and the procurer of their preservation, slain in the midst of their city. He was on other accounts also a venerable, and a very just man, and besides the grandeur of that nobility, dignity, and honor of which he was possessed, he had been a lover of a kind of parity, even with regard to the meanest of the people. He was a prodigious lover of liberty, and an admirer of a democracy in government and did ever prefer the public welfare before his own advantage and preferred peace above all things, for he was thoroughly sensible that the Romans were not to be conquered. He also foresaw that of necessity a war would follow, and that unless the Jews made up matters with them very dexterously, they would be destroyed. To say all in a word, if Ananus had survived it would certainly have compounded matters, for he was a shrewd man in speaking and persuading the people and had already gotten the mastery of those who opposed his designs or those who were for the war. And the Jews would have then put abundance of delays in the way of the Romans, if they had had such a general as he was. Jesus was also joined with him, and,

although he was inferior to him upon the comparison, he was superior to the rest. I cannot but think that it was because G-d had doomed this city to destruction, as a polluted city, and was resolved to purge his sanctuary by fire, that he cut off these their great defenders and wellwishers, while those that a little before had worn the sacred garments and had presided over the public worship and had been esteemed venerable by those that dwelt on the whole habitable earth when they came into our city, were cast out naked, and seen to be the food of dogs and wild beasts. And I cannot but imagine that virtue itself groaned at these men's case and lamented that she was here so terribly conquered by wickedness. And this at last was the end of Ananus and Jesus. **The Wars of the Jews Book IV 5:2**

### XIII. Josephus and the Essenes

A. For there are three philosophical sects among the Jews. The followers of the first are the Pharisees; of the second the Sadducees; and the third sect, who pretends to a severer discipline, are called Essenes. These last are Jews by birth and seem to have a greater affection for one another than the other sects have . . . These men are despisers of wealth, and so very communicative as raises our admiration . . . And as for their piety toward G-d, it is very extraordinary . . . But in the judgments they exercise they are most accurate and just .... These are the divine doctrines of the Essenes about the soul, which lay an unavoidable bait for such as have once had a taste of their philosophy.

There are also those among them who undertake to foretell things to come by reading the holy books and using several sorts of purification and being perpetually conversant in the discourses of the prophets, and it is but seldom that they miss in their predictions. **The Wars of the Jews Book II 8:2, 3, 5, 9, 11, 12**

B. We have thought it proper to relate these facts to our readers, however strange they may be, and to declare what hath happened among us, because many of these Essenes have, by their excellent virtue, been thought worthy of this knowledge of divine revelations. **Antiquities Book XV 10:5**

### XIV. Josephus, the Scholar

A. Our legislator has expressly forbidden us to deride or blaspheme the gods recognized by others, out of respect of the very word "god". **Against Apion Book II Par. 34**

B. Let there be seven men to judge in every city .... Let every judge have two officers allotted him out of the tribe of Levi. **Antiquities Book IV 8:14**

C. But for him that acts contrary to this law, let him be beaten with forty stripes save one. **Antiquities Book IV 8:21**

D. Besides those two tithes, which I have already said you are to pay every year, the one for the Levites, the other for the festivals, you are to bring every third year a third tithe to be distributed to those that want, to women that are widows, and to children that are orphans. **Antiquities Book IV 8:22**

E. If a woman's husband dies, and leaves her without children, let his brother marry her, and let him call the son that is born to him by his brother's name and educate him as the heir of his inheritance. **Antiquities Book IV 8:23**

F. He that maimeth any one, let him undergo the like himself and be deprived of the same member of which he hath deprived the other, unless he that is maimed will accept money instead of it, for the law makes the sufferer the judge of the value of what he hath suffered and permits him to estimate it, unless he will be more severe. **Antiquities Book IV 8:35**

#### XV. Ambassador to Mankind

We have already demonstrated that our laws have been such as have always inspired admiration and imitation into all other men. Even the earliest Grecian philosophers, though in appearance they observed the laws of their own countries, yet did they, in their actions and their philosophic doctrines follow our legislator, and instructed men to live sparingly and to have friendly communication one with another. Farther, the multitude of mankind itself have had a great inclination for a long time to follow our religious observances, for there is not any city of the Grecians nor any of the barbarians nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day has not come, and by which our fasts and lighting up lamps and many of our prohibitions as to our food are not observed. They also endeavor to imitate our mutual concord with one another and the charitable distribution of our goods and our diligence in our trades and our fortitude in undergoing the distresses we are in on account of our laws; and what is here matter of the greatest admiration: our law hath no bait of pleasure to allure men to it, but it prevails by its own force; and, as G-d himself pervades all the world, so hath our law passed through all the world also. **Josephus Against Apion II Par. 40**

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