

Slide 1 – Picture of today’s torn down temple.

Why this is important - the difference in perspective, Hanukkah, understanding what really happened informs our belief today. In short, one of the biggest proofs that Yeshua is the Messiah is seldom mentioned, and very seldom mentioned in detail.

When there is war, history is something that is recorded by the victors and/or the survivors. It’s not possible to know all details with certainty when talking about ancient history. It’s difficult even with modern history to see things accurately. Today’s history books do not come close to giving Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher the credit they deserve for bringing down the USSR and there is scant evidence that their political rivals wouldn’t have brought down the USSR and even opposed the measures Reagan and Thatcher used to thwart that evil empire. The world just went through an incredibly confusing time with COVID, for instance. What we did was so ridiculous and unbelievable that I saved a bunch of printed newspapers so our yet-to-be-born grandchildren will not think we are telling them jokes when we tell them about these times. I did this because there is very little chance COVID’s history gets told accurately due to the incredible amount of polarization and obfuscation.

We do have a source of information about the time period around the destruction of the second temple. Those are the works of Flavius Josephus, a Jew of the tribe of Levi who was also a Roman citizen who was authorized to write the history of the Jewish people after the destruction of the temple. I will likely reference Josephus casually in my talk today because I’ve read it. But, remember, Josephus was a Roman collaborator in the end and he wrote his history for Rome, so we are all confident it is biased in the direction that let him keep his life and freedom.

In that vein, remember to keep the reality that history is written from perspectives and very seldom purely objective in mind when using it to formulate doctrines. But history is very important for use to understand one of the biggest proofs that Yeshua is the Messiah. That proof is the destruction of the Temple, and I will explain that in due time.

The big divide here is that from the Jewish historical perspective, the general blame for the fall of the second temple, in 70 AD, is recorded as disunity among the Jewish people that caused Rome to invade. The picture we paint of first century Judea lacks details. Even today’s Jews must use the New Testament, in part, to understand first century Judea because there isn’t a ton of material available on the topic apart from Josephus. Nonetheless, let’s look at some history to paint as good of a picture as we can about first century Judea.

Slide 2 Four factions from Jewish history:

Pharisees – legalistic, liked traditions purity

Sadducees – Rejected the oral law and wanted to compromise with Rome – (this still makes no sense to me)

Zealots – passionate nationalists – like the Maccabees, violent against Romans and this makes the Romans have to retaliate. These guys wanted to start a revolution.

Sicarii – Jewish terrorists/assassins who would kill their own countrymen if they compromised. The Chosen made one of the apostles out to be one of these guys and did a good job.

The problem I have with saying the Sadducees were the ones who wanted to compromise with Rome is that fact that the two guys who actually did compromise with Rome, Flavius Josephus and Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, were both Pharisees. Yochanan ben Zakkai had to be smuggled out of Jerusalem to meet with Titus and make a compromise that allowed the Jewish faith to continue to exist. He literally struck a deal with Rome to move the Sanhedrin and thus preserved it (which preserved a ton of doctrine and such for both us and the Jews). The Pharisees held the synagogues so they had an alternative to the Temple. So it makes more sense for them to be able to compromise since their adherents would have already been compromising, like reading from the LXX for instance. Josephus is regarded as an actual traitor to modern Jews but he was also a Pharisee and produced the most historical evidence we have about that time. Before the final uprising, he spent his time, you guessed it, getting Jews to compromise with Rome. And when the final uprising came, he did serve Rome and was their ambassador. So we have to ask where these Sadducees are that were compromising with the Romans because the Sadducees were wiped out and the Pharisees were not.

Different factions and a lack of respect for leadership, or a lack of respect for leadership that was principled “enough”, surely contributed to the demise of Judea. Anarchy and a lack of standards is also a component. They were in a state of confusion – Babylon. Compromisers thought they were trying to preserve the nation/faith. Purists loathed compromisers. Constant bickering and even violence among the holy people. If this sounds familiar to today, it should. This is another reason for us to study history, so we don't repeat it. The level of disunity in Judea was so bad that the Jews actually killed each other while Romans were invading.

The Jewish history generally omits the faction of Messianics, those who believed that Yeshua is the Messiah, (Jesus is the Christ) as there were PLENTY of us by 65 AD. Josephus actually does record the followers of Yeshua, and mentions Yeshua Himself, briefly, but we are not included in the modern accounts of the destruction of the Temple in modern Jewish history that I can find.

The events that caused the destruction of the Temple and the second, and present, exile took about 120 years to play out. In 63 BC, Pompey's troops entered Jerusalem to put down infighting at the invitation of the Jewish leadership. He never left and thus began the occupation. Yes, they brought it on themselves. One could argue it started long before this when the Maccabees made a treaty with Rome when Rome wasn't humongous, too. The point here is that we can't measure time the way Yahweh measures time. In the past 150 years, various prophecy systems have come up thinking we were in the last days but those systems really only concentrate on western civilization and what was happening at the time. Prophecy often takes a very long time to play out. We have to remember the Hebrews were grown up in Egypt over hundreds of years and that the plan of salvation is a 7000 year endeavor rather than a six year campaign. This is another reason for the message I'm giving today. We tend to look at things in a much shorter time period than Yahweh does.

Slide 3 "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined." (Dan 9:25-26)

I am not one to know how to count out this formula, but the decree to rebuild the temple came from Cyrus of Babylon in 536 BC and the culmination of the prophecy on the board lands squarely during Yeshua's ministry. Some have counted this off to be very precise, but there is no doubt that this time culminated in Yeshua's day because of the record of the New Testament. Herod and all of Judea knew it was time for the Messiah, which is why Herod had all those kids killed. We have to understand, from the amount of time the Hebrews were in Egypt and the amount of time and events that transpired in the time between the temple being decreed to be rebuilt and the Messiah, that when we talk about prophecy, we talk about things in a very big picture sense with very long periods of time.

Back to first century Jerusalem. Herod had built a fortress to guard the Temple. It took a long while for the Romans to get that far into the city. Tens of thousands of Roman soldiers were battling tens of thousands of Jews. The carnage was immense. The suffering was hell. When Jews tried to escape the city, they were crucified. Titus encircled the city and starved all who didn't try to escape. There was literally no food. This is what was prophesied for women to eat their kids. So when Jews, famished by starvation, managed to escape, they were crucified facing inside the city, while starving, in the sight of those inside of Jerusalem, who were also starving. The only choice was

which horrific death you were going to endure, and from either perspective you had to watch your country's demise while being helpless to do anything about it.

The Romans laid siege works against Herod's fortress but the Jews craftily set a trap that burnt their siege works to the ground. After Titus starved the city, he had all the trees cut down within a 13 mile perimeter and built another rampart. No power saws, no semi-trucks, oh, no. This was all done by hand. The Jews got to watch this while they were starving and couldn't do anything about it. Well, except for the Jews they used as slaves to build the very siege works that would end their nation. So if the fighting Jews wanted to stop the rampart from being built, they had to shoot their own countrymen with arrows. When the fortress finally fell, the last of the fighters retreated into the Temple. A Roman soldier set the Temple on fire. Many Jews threw themselves into the fire to try to die nobly, or at least not at the hands of the Romans. Many Roman soldiers entered the melee and died as well. It was horrific to the extreme. Romans and Jews died together as the Temple burnt, with human blood running down the steps of the Temple. Thus fulfilling the prophecy of Yeshua and, also, a punishment on both peoples for the innocent murder of the Messiah.

When we talk about the Temple falling in 70 AD, we're talking about an incredible battle that took a million lives and several years. The suffering and cruelty cannot be overstated. They didn't have rifles and bombs. These people all died in close quarter combat. The screams, the agony, the death was immense. This was huge and hell does not even describe it. People who tried to surrender were crucified. Elderly were summarily executed. Tens of thousands were sold as slaves. Any warriors not killed or crucified were taken to Rome to die in arenas fighting wild animals. Oh, they had to carry the Temple treasures as slaves on their way to Rome, too. The Romans didn't want to sack Jerusalem because they knew it would be incredibly costly and take a very long period of time to actually crush the Jewish people. That's why they put up with it for so long. When it finally fell, they made sure the world knew and they made a horrific example of the Jews. But, again, Yahweh knew all this well in advance, so he sets the situation for this to happen. Titus began the siege of Jerusalem in 66 AD and it didn't fall until 70 at the cost of more than a million lives. The actual siege of the whole region of Judea started earlier and ended later.

After the fall of the Temple, Titus razed the rest of Jerusalem and committed genocide to attempt a complete eradication of the Jewish people.

Slide 4 If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? If a calamity occurs in a city has not YHVH done it? Surely Adonai YHVH does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel To His servants the prophets. (Amo 3:6-7)

All this only makes sense if you are a Messianic or Christian for modern parlance. The only scriptures in the Tanakh (the Hebrew bible, AKA the Old Testament) that hint about the second temple coming down also include the Messiah coming at the same time. All the Jewish sources I read have reasons but no scripture whatsoever as to the timing of the second destruction of Jerusalem. And the reason for my little history lesson today is to answer these people today who are rejecting Yeshua as the Messiah. You need to understand that if He's not the Messiah then there is absolutely no reason or explanation for the last two thousand years. Our movement is so concerned about details and straining at gnats that we have forgotten the truth is easy to know and see. That pile of rocks in Jerusalem with the Muslim mosque on top of it tells the story.

Slide 5 When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." (Luk 19:41-44)

Yahweh doesn't do these big things without first telling us through His prophets. The destruction of the first Temple was prophesied by Isaiah and Jeremiah. So the prophecy of the destruction of the second Temple was given by One greater than those prophets. Yeshua wept over this news. It hurt Him. He knew He was about to be crucified and die a horrific death. He knew He was about to be rejected by His own people. He knew it all. And yet He was sorry and sad. He knew that Jerusalem was going to be laid waste and He told His followers in advance so that they would know when to leave and Christianity would spread.

Slide 6 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (Dan 9:27)

A complete destruction was prophesied and that's what happened. We focus on the temple but Judea was laid waste. Jerusalem had all its trees cut down for its own destruction, while the people watched. And then the Jewish slaves had to actually build the siege ramps and ramparts out of their own trees so their enemies could kill their countrymen. A complete humiliation and subjugation that took years to complete. And this explains the last two thousand years and our present state here in the latter days. The second temple came down after the Messiah was crucified and

resurrected and there was enough time to start the fire that is Christianity. And we have to be like we are now until there is a complete destruction.

Most of the time the second temple stood, the Jews were under foreign rule: Persians, then Greeks, the Romans. Today, Jerusalem is under US rule. The people who are willing to compromise with the nations are the descendants of the Pharisees. The Jews fight today under the restraints of modern political whims. They use our weapons and they go out of their way to not kill civilians and to have measured responses to incursions. They put up with a whole lot of nonsense in order to stay in our good graces. This pattern is strikingly familiar.

Slide 7

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; (Rom 11:25)

'So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek YHVH of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of YHVH.' Thus says YHVH of hosts, 'In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."' (Zec 8:22-23)

We need to understand that these things take a LOT of time to play out. Jewish prophecy sees a 70 year period of strife with an increased tribulation of 7 years at the end. This sounds very familiar to us, right? But how do we get to the fullness of the Gentiles? That's the purpose of this era. That's the reason for the Gospel to go to the nations.

Slide 8 For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come. (Heb 13:14)

Many Christians support Israel because of their theology and their selfishness – believing the third temple made with hands is a sign of the end of days, as it needs to be defiled, and a benchmark for the return of Yeshua. They believe that the temple has to be defiled one more time in order for the Jews to accept Yeshua. Well, if the destruction of Temple number two didn't do that, right after He ascended, I don't think us repeating this is going to get it done. And rooting for a temple to get built for the sake of its defilement and yet one more incredibly brutal genocidal war prior to the return of Yeshua doesn't seem right. It just doesn't seem like YHVH would allow them to return, have yet one more Temple, and fail yet one more time, just so we could end up right where we are already. I could be wrong here, but I don't think rooting for another Temple to be built so another million people can die slowly and painfully is the side of history we should be on. There is an enormous

problem with this view of prophecy from the Biblical perspective as well since there is absolutely no verse in the Tanakh supporting the construction and destruction of a third temple. The only prophecies we have for the destruction of the temples, or Jerusalem, apply to the first and second temples.

As we dig deeper and deeper into Torah and Bible study, over time we forget the big picture. Today's message was to show the big picture of the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, the purpose of the present situation, and that all of this points to the most important truth that a person can know, that Yeshua is the Messiah. The destruction of the second Temple is permanently connected to Yeshua being the Messiah through the prophet Daniel. Only Yeshua prophesied the destruction of the second temple in great detail, proving His Messiah-ship. This even came up at His trial. There is no prophecy concerning the destruction of the third temple and repeating this cycle again. Our faith is strengthened through the scriptures, proving history to be true and showing us that Yahweh has a plan.

Slide 9 References

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