

## 55 JOSEPHUS: "THEY DID NOT REPENT"

**A.** *The rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they wouldn't worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood, which can't see, hear, or walk.*

**They did not repent** of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality, or their thefts. Rev. 9:20-21

**B.** *People were scorched with great heat, and people blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues.*

**They did not repent** and give him glory. Rev 16:9

**C.** *The fifth poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was darkened. They gnawed their tongues because of the pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores. They still did not repent of their works. Rev. 16:10-11*

### 1. The zealots were inflated after a modest victory driving the Romans out of Jerusalem. Due to their delusional state, they believed they were too formidable for the Roman legions and the city would never be taken.

The zealots "were lifted up in their minds, and were elevated upon this their good success, and began to think that the Romans would never venture to come into the city any more; and that if they kept within it themselves, they should not be any more conquered. For God had blinded their minds for the transgressions they had been guilty of, nor could they see how much greater forces the Romans had than those that were now expelled, no more than they could discern how a famine was creeping upon them; for hitherto they had fed themselves out of the public miseries, and drank the blood of the city...although the seditious indeed supposed the destruction of the people to be an easement to themselves; for they desired that none others might be preserved but such as were against a peace with the Romans..." Wars 5.8.2

### 2. The zealot philosophy was based on the determination to have only Yahweh rule over them, but their actions were contrary to faith. The zealots appeared to be in competition to exceed each other in wickedness.

Josephus spoke to the zealots: "Wherefore I cannot but suppose that God is fled out of his sanctuary, and stands on the side of those against whom you fight...and do you persuade yourselves that God will abide with you in your iniquities, who sees all secret things, and hears what is kept most private? Now what crime is there, I pray you, that is so much as kept secret among you, or is concealed by you? nay, what is there that is not open to your very enemies? for you show your transgressions after a pompous manner, and contend one with another which of you shall be more wicked than another; and you make a public demonstration of your injustice, as if it were virtue. However, there is a place left for your preservation, if you be willing to accept of it; and God is easily reconciled to those that confess their faults, and repent of them. O hard-hearted wretches as you are!" Wars 5.9.4

### 3. The zealots were so hardened in evil, they were incapable of repenting and continued to torture, kill and imprison their starving countrymen.

"... when Titus, in going his rounds along those valleys, saw them full of dead bodies, and the thick putrefaction running about them, he gave a groan; and, spreading out his hands to heaven, called God to witness that this was not his doing; and such was the sad case of the city itself....Caesar [Titus] went his rounds through the legions, and hastened on the works, and showed the robbers [zealots] that they were now in his hands. But these men, and these only, were incapable of repenting of the wickednesses they had been guilty of.... For no gentle affection could touch their souls, nor could any pain [war wounds?] affect their bodies, since they could still tear the dead bodies of the people as dogs do, and fill the prisons with those that were sick." Wars 5.12.4

### 4. When the people of Jerusalem resorted to eating cow dung, the Roman soldiers sympathized, but the zealots would not repent and surrender. They were blind to the fact starvation would likely be their fate as well.

"...by reason the city was all walled about, some persons were driven to that terrible distress as to search the common sewers and old dunghills of cattle, and to eat the dung which they got there; and what they of old could not endure so much as to see they now used for food. When the Romans barely heard all this, they commiserated their case; while the seditious, who saw it also, did not repent, but suffered the same distress to come upon themselves; for they were blinded by that fate which was already coming upon the city, and upon themselves also." Wars 5.13.7

### 5. The zealots foolishly took Roman offers of peace, as Roman fear of zealot prowess instead of Titus's desire to save the temple and the hapless citizens starving in the city.

"As Josephus explained these things from the mouth of Caesar [Titus], both the robbers [zealots] and the tyrant [zealot leaders] thought that these exhortations proceeded from Titus's fear, and not from his good-will to them, and grew insolent upon it. But when Titus saw that these men were neither to be moved by commiseration towards themselves, nor had any concern upon them to have the holy house spared, he proceeded unwillingly to go on again with the war against them." Wars 6.2.5

### 6. The zealots were under the delusion one of them would be the anointed ruler of the habitable earth.

“But now, what did the most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, ‘about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth.’ The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination.... it is not possible for men to avoid fate, although they see it beforehand. But these men interpreted some of these signals according to their own pleasure, and some of them they utterly despised, until their madness was demonstrated, both by the taking of their city and their own destruction.” Wars 6.5.4

#### **7. Speaking to the zealots, Titus enumerated the many concessions he willingly made to save their temple.**

“After every victory I persuaded you to peace, as though I had been myself conquered. When I came near your temple, I again departed from the laws of war, and exhorted you to spare your own sanctuary, and to preserve your holy house to yourselves. I allowed you a quiet exit out of it, and security for your preservation; nay, if you had a mind, I gave you leave to fight in another place. Yet have you still despised every one of my proposals, and have set fire to your holy house with your own hands.... Yet do you stand still at this very time in your armor; nor can you bring yourselves so much as to pretend to be supplicants even in this your utmost extremity. O miserable creatures! what is it you depend on? Are not your people dead? is not your holy house gone? is not your city in my power? and are not your own very lives in my hands? And do you still deem it a part of valor to die? However, I will not imitate your madness. If you throw down your arms, and deliver up your bodies to me, I grant you your lives; and I will act like a mild master of a family...” War 6.6.2

#### **8. When told they would not be killed if they surrendered, the zealots brazenly demanded they be free to leave the city. They seemed oblivious to their immense crimes and that they were already captives.**

“To that offer of Titus they made this reply: That they could not accept of it, because they had sworn never to do so; but they desired they might have leave to go through the wall that had been made about them, with their wives and children; for that they would go into the desert, and leave the city to him. At this Titus had great indignation, that when they were in the case of men already taken captives, they should pretend to make their own terms with him, as if they had been conquerors.” Wars 6.6.3

#### **9. The zealots were insolent and indifferent to the havoc they caused. They did not repent.**

“On the next day the Romans drove the robbers [zealots] out of the lower city, and set all on fire as far as Siloam. These soldiers were indeed glad to see the city destroyed. But they missed the plunder, because the seditious had carried off all their effects, and were retired into the upper city; for they did not yet at all repent of the mischiefs they had done, but were insolent, as if they had done well; for, as they saw the city on fire, they appeared cheerful, and put on joyful countenances, in expectation, as they said, of death to end their miseries. Accordingly, as the people were now slain, the holy house was burnt down, and the city was on fire, there was nothing further left for the enemy to do.” Wars 6.7.2

#### **10. Josephus continued to try to reason with the zealots, but they laughed at him and were unrepentant even though already defeated.**

“Yet did not Josephus grow weary, even in this utmost extremity, to beg of them to spare what was left of the city; he spoke largely to them about their barbarity and impiety, and gave them his advice in order to their escape; though he gained nothing thereby more than to be laughed at by them; and as they could not think of surrendering themselves up, because of the oath they had taken, nor were strong enough to fight with the Romans any longer upon the square, as being surrounded on all sides, and a kind of prisoners already.” Wars 6.7.2

#### **11. Regardless of their utter defeat, the zealots continued to hunt and kill their starving countrymen who attempted to flee Jerusalem to the Romans.**

“...yet were they [zealots] so accustomed to kill people, that they could not restrain their right hands from acting accordingly. So they dispersed themselves before the city, and laid themselves in ambush among its ruins, to catch those that attempted to desert to the Romans; accordingly many such deserters were caught by them, and were all slain; for these were too weak, by reason of their want of food, to fly away from them....Nor was there any place in the city that had no dead bodies in it, but what was entirely covered with those that were killed either by the famine or the rebellion; and all was full of the dead bodies of such as had perished, either by that sedition or by that famine.” Wars 6.7.2

#### **Notes:**

- **Rev 16:10-11** tells us the kingdom of the beast was made up of the unrepentant ones, therefore, zealot-led Israel was the beast of Revelation. We render the verses as follows: “The fifth [angel] poured out his bowl [curses of Lev. 26] on the throne [Jerusalem] of the beast [zealots], and his [the beast’s] kingdom was darkened [spiritual blindness, lost the war]. They gnawed their tongues because of the pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores [battle wounds, famine]. They [zealots] still did not repent of their works [rebellion, warring, sin].” Rev. 16:10-11.
- **Suggested reading:** “Wars of the Jews” by Josephus. Read books 5 to 6 for the five month siege of Jerusalem. (These “books” are the length of chapters
- Preterist Papers #1, #2, #49 are foundational. Please see Preterist Paper # 42 “Rome Was Not the Beast”.