



# The Jewish Wars - A Paraphrase: Or a History of the Destruction of Jerusalem

*Titus Josephus, Robert Beasley, William Whiston*

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Jerusalem is a city of ages-old conflict, and few conflicts have been more historically disastrous than when the Roman armies destroyed the holy city and its Jewish Temple in 70 AD. Flavius Josephus, the captured Jewish general, witnessed the massacre. Now, after languishing for many years in antiquated language, Josephus's 1,900-year-old classic, *The Jewish Wars*, comes alive in today's English. In sweeping panoramic style, Josephus tells the gripping story of the Roman subjugation of Judea in the days before Christ. Puppet kings such as Herod the Great conspired with the likes of Caligula, Cleopatra, and Marc Antony. Governors like Pontius Pilate plagued the Jews with religious abominations. The revolt began. Marauding bands of robbers ravaged their Jewish brothers and brought the all-powerful Roman armies upon the nation. Jewish towns and villages fell like dominoes before the ultimate Roman assault on Jerusalem. Jerusalem's final collapse occurred during the annual celebration of the Passover as the ancient city swarmed with over a million worshippers. Rival bands of Jewish Zealots and skulking bandits holed up in the city and refused to allow the celebrants to escape. Food ran short. Massive numbers of innocent people died by famine or execution. Gigantic Roman siege engines devoured Jerusalem's massive walls until, at last, abrupt and cataclysmic fires wreaked total devastation. *The Jewish Wars* is a story of court intrigue, regicide, and ultimate brutality. But far beyond our interest in these things, it is a story of the dramatic collapse of a society an ancient culture of immense historical dimensions. The centuries-old Jewish sacrificial system suddenly stopped dead and has never been restored. Judea's people were enslaved and dispersed to the ends of the earth, only to return 1,900 years later when the state of Israel was created in 1948. During the crucial days of the Roman war, Christianity was in its infancy. Paul and the other apostles began preaching in Judea and the Near East, nurturing what was to become a vibrant phenomenon that would ultimately spread to the ends of the earth. Many believe that Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple less than forty years before it actually took place: When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled... Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened (Luke 21:20-24, 32 NIV). In the early 1900's, most Christian families had the works of Josephus next to their family Bibles. But because of the difficult, antiquated language of William Whiston's 1737 translation from ancient Greek, interest in his works eroded in the 20th century. No longer. Now paraphrased into modern English in its entirety, *The Jewish Wars* is once again prepared to take its place among the most fascinating stories of world history.

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