

As an aid to studying Jesus' Olivet Discourse and the fulfilment of these prophecies, the following is taken from Chapter 15 of ***The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation*** by Philip Mauro (written in 1921, revised in 1944)

## THE SIEGE OF JERUSALEM AS DESCRIBED BY JOSEPHUS

In bringing now to the attention of our readers some of the things recorded by Josephus in his well known history of the last days of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, it will be understood that we do not cite that work as evidence whereby we are to interpret the Scriptures; for we interpret the Word of God by comparing scripture with scripture. In fact we did not consult Josephus, or any other human writer, until after our conclusions as to the meaning of these prophecies (as stated in the foregoing pages) had been reached. We cite his work simply for what it is recognized on all hands to be, a trustworthy recital by an eyewitness of things which he had personal knowledge of, which things show that the word of Christ was fulfilled in the most literal way.

Farquharson quotes the following tribute to Josephus by Bishop Porteus:

"The fidelity, the veracity, and the probity of the writer are universally allowed; and Scaliger in particular declares, that not only in the affairs of the Jews, but even of foreign nations, he deserves more credit than all the Greek and Roman writers put together. "

It is a matter of common knowledge that Jerusalem is, up to the present time, trodden down of the Gentiles, even as the Lord said; and that the Jews are still scattered among all nations. This is enough in itself to assure us that the Lord's prophecy in Luke 21 (and hence every other prophecy concerning the same event) has been, and is being, fulfilled. But surely it is a matter of deep interest to know how, when, and under what circumstances, those prophecies were fulfilled. The history of Josephus fully satisfies this legitimate desire; and we reiterate our belief that his account of those great events has been preserved providentially. Moreover, since Josephus was not a disciple of Christ at the time of writing his history, he cannot be suspected of having written his account of the destruction of Jerusalem with a view to supplying a fulfilment of the Lord's prophecy. His account was published in the year 75, so that it was written while the things he described were fresh in his memory. Their publication at a time when the truth of the matters related by him was known to thousands then living, is a further reason for our having confidence in the narrative.

Josephus describes the troubles which began under Pilate, the Roman governor, especially when he sent by night those images of Caesar which are called ensigns into Jerusalem (Bk. II ch. 9, sec. 2). Those ensigns or images of Caesar were particularly hateful to the Jews; and inasmuch as they were conspicuously carried in the Roman armies, we have here a reason why the latter were termed the abomination of desolation.

In the days when Cumanus was Roman Governor began the troubles, and the Jew's ruin came on (II 12:1). At that time Herod Agrippa II (the Agrippa before whom Paul appeared) was reigning as king over Galilee. He was by far the best of the Herod family; but we have no record that he was ever fully persuaded to accept Christ. At that time various calamities and disturbances began to take place. Bands of robbers infested the country, and in the city there arose an organized company of assassins called Sicarii, who slew men in the daytime, and in the city. This they did chiefly at festivals, when they mingled with the multitudes and, by means of daggers concealed under their garments, they stabbed those who were their enemies. The high priest Jonathan was one of their victims (II 13, 3).

Another class of trouble makers were certain men who, though not thieves or murderers, yet laid waste the happy state of the city no less than did those murderers. These were such men as *deceived and deluded the people under pretence of Divine inspiration*. It is easy to recognize in these men the false prophets whereof the Lord warned His disciples. Continuing, Josephus says 'These prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen and went before them *into the wilderness, pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty* (II 13:4).

There was also an Egyptian false prophet, who got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him. These he led about from the wilderness to the mount which is called the mount of Olives. This, according to Josephus, was in the days when Felix was governor. Consequently it was at the time of Paul's last visit to Jerusalem, which calls to mind that the chief captain before whom Paul was taken after the disturbance in the Temple, supposed that he was that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers (#Ac 21:38). It also brings to mind the definite warning of Christ, Wherefore, if they shall say to you, Behold, He is in the desert, go not forth (#Mt 24:26).

Josephus likens the social conditions at that time to those of a body which is thoroughly diseased, in that when trouble subsided in one place it broke out immediately in another. For, says he, a company of deceivers and robbers got together, and persuaded the Jews to revolt, and exhorted them to assert their liberty (id. 6).

About this time Felix was succeeded by Festus (as is also recorded in (#Ac 24:27), and he by Florus, who was the most wicked of all the Roman governors, and the immediate occasion of the war. This was in the twelfth year of Emperor Nero, A.D. 66. Josephus relates that when Cestius Gallus came to Jerusalem at the passover season the people came about him not fewer in number than three millions (II 14:3). This shows the immense numbers which gathered in Jerusalem at that season.

Josephus relates with much detail the atrocities and barbarities which the people suffered at the hands of the soldiers, and describes their agonies and lamentations. On one occasion the soldiers, after plundering the citizens, crucified many of them, the number of those slain (including women and children) being about 3600 on that single occasion. It appears to have been the deliberate purpose of Florus to goad the Jews into a revolt, so that thereby his own acts of plunder and other crimes might be covered up (II 14, 9).

In ch. 16 (Bk. II) Josephus gives a speech by Herod Agrippa, in which he used every persuasion and argument to restrain the Jews from the madness of revolting against the Romans. He eloquently pictured the vast power and extent of the Roman dominion as stretching from east to west, and from north to south. Indeed, said Agrippa, they have sought for another habitable earth beyond the ocean, and have carried their arms *as far as the British Isles, which were never known before* (II 16, 4). It seems strange to us that one of whom we read in the Bible should have spoken to the Jews in Jerusalem about the British Isles.

King Agrippa, as a final argument, attributed the world wide success of the Roman arms to the providence of God, for which reason he urged the Jews that it was vain for them to contend against them, and he concluded his speech with this strong appeal:

"Have pity therefore, if not upon your children and wives, yet upon this your Metropolis and its sacred walls! Spare the Temple and preserve the Holy House, with its holy furniture! For if the Romans get you under their power they will no longer abstain from (destroying) them, when their former abstinence shall have been so ungratefully requited. I call to witness your Sanctuary, and the holy angels of God, and this country, common to us all, that I have not kept back anything that is for your preservation. Josephus adds that, When Agrippa had spoken thus, both he and his sister (Bernice) wept, and by their tears repressed a great deal of the violence of the people. "

Soon after this, however, the priests were persuaded that they should refuse to receive any gift or sacrifice for any foreigner. And this was the true beginning of our war with the Romans; for they (the temple authorities) rejected the sacrifice of Caesar on this account (II 17, 2).

There were at that time two parties in Jerusalem. One turbulent faction advocated immediate revolt against the Romans. The other party, led by the priests and the chief of the Pharisees, realizing the madness of the proposal, sought to restrain the seditious element; but finding they would not listen to argument or persuasion, they sent to the governor Florus, and also to Agrippa, for troops to quell the revolt. From that time the fighting began; but the Jews killed one another in numbers far greater than those slain by the soldiers. The Roman garrison was about that time besieged in the fortress of Antonia (in the temple area), and was taken and either slain or dispersed (II 17, 7). A little later another Roman garrison, besieged at Mesada, which had been Herod's stronghold, surrendered under promise that their lives would be spared, but they were treacherously slain after they had laid down their arms (II 17, 10). These actions, of course, aroused the Roman authorities, who began to make preparations to subdue the revolt. In the city of Caesarea (built by Herod the Great), above 20,000 Jews were killed in one hour, and all Caesarea was emptied of its Jewish inhabitants; for Florus caught such as ran away, and sent them to the galleys. This enraged the whole Jewish nation, so that they laid waste the villages of Syria and elsewhere, burning some cities to the ground.

"But," says Josephus, the Syrians were even with the Jews in the multitude of the men they slew. The disorders in all Syria were terrible. Every city was divided into two armies, and the preservation of the one party was in the destruction of the other. So the daytime was spent in

shedding of blood, and the night in fear, which was, of the two, the more terrible \* \* \*

It was then common to see cities filled with dead bodies, still lying unburied; those of old men mingled with infants, all scattered about together. Women also lay among them without any covering. You might then see the whole province full of inexpressible calamities. "

In some places the horrors were worse because Jews fought against Jews. In Scythopolis alone above 13,000 were slain at one time (II 18:1 & 2). Josephus relates the case of one prominent man who, because of the terrible things happening all around, and in order to save his family from a worse fate, killed first his father and mother with the sword--they willingly submitting--and afterwards his wife and children, finally taking his own life (II 18:3). This incident will give us at least a faint idea of the awful conditions of those 'days of vengeance, and of wrath upon this people.

Many pages are filled with accounts of the slaughter of the Jews in various places. Reading them we are impressed with the Saviour's saying that except those days should be shortened there should no flesh be saved (#Mt 24:22). The calamities were beyond description. Thus, at Alexandria, where the Jews had enjoyed the greatest privileges for centuries, they were incited to rise in revolt by the seditious element, and were destroyed unmercifully, and this, their destruction, was complete. Houses were first plundered of what was in them, and then set on fire by the Romans. No mercy was shown to the infants, and no regard had to the aged; but they went on with the slaughter of persons of every age, till all the place was overflowed with blood, and fifty thousand of them lay dead in heaps (II 18:8).

## **THE STRANGE RETREAT OF CESTIUS**

The Roman general, Cestius, now led his army from Syria into Judea, destroying widely, and laid siege to Jerusalem. He *made such rapid progress that the city was on the point of being captured*. The seditious element fled in large numbers, and the peaceable inhabitants were about to throw open the gates to the Romans, when a remarkable thing took place, *so unaccountable from any natural standpoint that it can only be attributed to the direct intervention of God, and for the fulfilment of the word of Christ*. Josephus tells how the people were about to admit Cestius as their benefactor, when he suddenly recalled his soldiers and retired from the city without any reason in the world. Had he not withdrawn when he did, the city and the sanctuary would, of course, have been spared; and Josephus says it was, I suppose, *owing to the aversion God already had towards the city and the sanctuary* that he (Cestius) was hindered from putting an end to the war that very day (II 19:6).

But the translator of the history, Wm. Whiston, adds a note at this point, which we quote in full:

"There may be another very important and very providential reason assigned for this strange and foolish retreat of Cestius, which, if Josephus had been at the time of writing his history a Christian, he might probably have taken notice of also; and that is the opportunity afforded the Jewish Christians in the city, of calling to mind *the*

*prediction and caution given them by Christ that 'when they should see the abomination of desolation' (the idolatrous Roman armies, with the images of their idols in their ensigns) ready to lay Jerusalem desolate, 'stand where it ought not,' or 'in the holy place'; or 'when they should see Jerusalem encompassed with armies,' they should then 'flee to the mountains.' By complying with which, those Jewish Christians fled to the mountains of Perea, and escaped this destruction. Nor was there perhaps any one instance of a more unpolitic, but more providential conduct, than this retreat of Cestius visible during this whole siege of Jerusalem, which (siege) was providentially such a 'great tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the world to that time; no, nor ever should be'.*

It was very apparent to this learned translator, and must be apparent, we should think, to all who are acquainted both with the three inspired records of our Lord's Olivet prophecy, and also with the historical facts so wonderfully preserved in this history by Josephus, that the three accounts refer to the same event, that the abomination of desolation was the armies of imperial and pagan Rome, and that the unparalleled sufferings of the Jews during those five years of terror, were the great tribulation foretold by the Lord in Matthew 24:21.

## **THE DAYS OF VENGEANCE**

Josephus devotes nearly two hundred large pages (they would fill upwards of four hundred ordinary size) to the account of the events of 'those 'days of vengeance,' which I (as we have seen) involved not only the Jews in Palestine, but Jews all over the world. We can refer to but a very few of those tragic events; but, inasmuch as not many of our readers have access to the history of Josephus, we believe we are rendering them a service in giving the best idea we can, in small compass, of the happenings of those times.

After the retreat of Cestius, there was a slaughter of about 10,000 Jews at Damascus; and then, it being evident that war with the Romans was inevitable, the Jews began making preparations to defend Jerusalem. At that time Josephus, the writer of this history, was appointed general of the armies in Galilee. He seems to have had great ability and success as a soldier, though he was finally overpowered and captured by the Romans. Concerning one of his military operations his translator says 'I cannot but think this stratagem of Josephus to be one of the finest that ever was invented and executed by any warrior whatsoever.

At this point the emperor Nero appointed Vespasian, a valiant and experienced general, to the task of subduing the Jews; and Vespasian designated his son Titus to assist him. They invaded Judea from the north, marching along the coast, and killing many--18,000 at Askelon alone. Thus Galilee was all over filled with fire and blood; nor was it exempt from any kind of misery or calamity (III 4:1). Josephus opposed the Roman invasion with such forces as he had, but one by one the cities were taken and their inhabitants slain. Finally, Josephus himself was driven to take refuge in Jotapata???, which, after long and desperate resistance, was taken by Vespasian. The incidents of this siege were terrible; and among them were events which forcibly recall the Lord's words, But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give

suck in those days. The Romans were so enraged by the long and fierce resistance of the Jews that they spared none, nor pitied any. Many, moreover, in desperation, killed themselves. The life of Josephus was spared in a manner which seems miraculous (III 8:4-7), and he was taken captive to Vespasian, to whom he prophesied that both he and Titus his son would be Caesar and emperor. .... From that time till the end of the war Josephus was kept a prisoner; but he was with Titus during the subsequent siege of Jerusalem, in which the atrocities and miseries reached a limit impossible to be exceeded on earth. Only the state of the lost in hell could be worse.

After Jotapata fell, Joppa was taken, and then Tiberias and Taricheae on Lake Gennesaret. Thousands were killed, and upwards of 30,000 from the last named place alone were sold into slavery. Having now completely subdued Galilee, Vespasian led his army to Jerusalem.

For a right understanding of Matthew 24:15-21 it is important to know that the Roman armies were, for more than a year, occupied with the devastation of the provinces of Galilee and Judea, before Jerusalem was besieged. It should be noted also that Christ's first warnings to flee were to them which be in Judea (#Mt24:16). This makes it perfectly certain that the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, which was the appointed signal for them which be in Judea to flee into the mountains, was not an idol set up in the inner sanctuary of the Temple. For the desolation of Judea was completed long before Jerusalem and the Temple were taken.

At the time Vespasian led his armies to Jerusalem, that doomed city was in a state of indescribable disorder and confusion insomuch that, during the entire siege, the Jews suffered far more from one another inside the walls than from the enemy outside. Josephus says there were disorders and civil war in every city, and all those that were at quiet from the Romans turned their hands one against another. There was also a bitter contest between those that were for war, and those that were desirous for peace (IV 3:2).

Josephus further tells of the utter disgrace and ruin of the high priesthood, the basest of men being exalted to that office; and also of the profanation of the sanctuary.

The most violent party in the city was the Zealots. These called to their aid a band of blood thirsty Idumeans, who set upon the people who were peaceably inclined, and slaughtered young and old until the outer temple was all of it overflowed with blood, and that day they saw 8500 dead bodies there. Among the slain was Ananias, formerly high priest, a venerable and worthy man, concerning whom Josephus said:

"I should not mistake if I said that the death of Ananias 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; that being the day whereon they saw their high priest, and the procurer of their preservation, slain in the midst of their city. \* \* \* And I cannot but think it was because *God had doomed this city to destruction*, as a polluted city, and was resolved to purge His sanctuary with fire, that He cut off these, their great defenders, while those that a little before had

worn the sacred garments and presided over the public worship, were cast out naked to be the food of dogs and wild beasts. \* \* \*

Now after these were slain the Zealots and the Idumeans fell upon the people as upon a flock of profane animals, and cut their throats."

Josephus also tells of the terrible torments inflicted upon nobles and citizens of the better sort who refused to comply with the demands of the Zealots. Those, after being horribly tortured, were slain, and through fear, none dared bury them. In this way 12,000 of the more eminent inhabitants perished (IV 5:3). We quote further:

"Along all the roads also vast numbers of dead bodies lay in heaps; and many who at first were zealous to desert the city chose rather to perish there; for the hopes of burial made death in their own city appear less terrible to them. But those zealots came at last to that degree of barbarity as not to bestow a burial either on those slain in the city or on those that lay along the roads; as if \* \* \* at the same time that they defiled men with their wicked actions they would pollute the Deity itself also, they left the dead bodies to putrefy under the sun. (IV. 6. 3).

About this time above 15,000 fugitive Jews were killed by the Romans, and the number of those that were forced to leap into the Jordan was prodigious. \* \* \* The whole country through which they fled was filled with slaughter, and Jordan could not be passed over, by reason of the dead bodies that were in it (IV. 8. 5, 6).

## **VESPASIAN RECALLED. TITUS PLACED IN CHARGE**

At this point Vespasian was called to Rome by reason of the death of the emperor Nero, and the operations against the Jews devolved upon Titus. Vespasian himself was soon thereafter made emperor.

Meanwhile another tyrant rose up, whose name was Simon, and of him Josephus says: Now this Simon, who was without the wall, was a greater terror to the people than the Romans themselves; while the Zealots who were within it were more heavy upon them than both the other. Those Zealots were led by a tyrant named John; and the excesses of murder and uncleanness in which they habitually indulged are indescribable (see Bk. IV, ch. 9, sec. 10).

In order to overthrow John, the people finally admitted Simon and his followers. From that time onward the civil warfare within the city became more incessant and deadly. The distracted city was now divided into three factions instead of two. The fighting was carried even into the inner court of the temple; whereupon Josephus laments that even those who came with sacrifices to offer them in the temple were slain, and sprinkled that altar with their own blood, till the dead bodies of strangers were mingled together with those of their own country, and those of profane persons with those of priests, *and the blood of all sort of dead carcasses stood in lakes in the holy courts themselves* (V 1:3).

Surely there never were such conditions as these in any city before or since.

Among the dire calamities which befell the wretched people was the destruction of the granaries and storehouses of food; so that famine was soon added to the other horrors. The warring factions were agreed in nothing but to kill those that were innocent. Says Josephus:

"The noise of those that were fighting was incessant, both by day and by night; but the lamentations of those that mourned exceeded the noise of the fighting. Nor was there ever any occasion for them to leave off their lamentations, because their calamities came perpetually, one upon another. \* \* \* But as for the seditious bands themselves, they fought against each other while trampling upon the dead bodies which lay heaped one upon another, and being filled with a mad rage from those dead bodies under their feet, they became the more fierce. They, moreover, were still inventing pernicious things against each other; and when they had resolved upon anything, they executed it without mercy, and omitted no method of torment or of barbarity" (V. 2. 5).

At the time described in the preceding paragraphs, the Roman armies had not yet reached the city, and inasmuch as the Passover season now came on, and things seemed to quiet down momentarily, the gates were opened for such as wished to observe the great feast. The translator, in a footnote, says:

"Here we see the true occasion of those vast numbers of Jews that were in Jerusalem during this siege by Titus and who perished therein. For the siege began at the feast of Passover, when such prodigious multitudes of the Jews and proselytes were come from all parts of Judea, and from other countries. \* \* \* As to the number that perished during this siege, Josephus assures us, as we shall see hereafter, they were 1,100,000, besides 97,000 captives.

This is notable as *the last Passover*. That joyous feast of remembrance of God's great deliverance of His people out of Egypt ended in an orgy of blood. The tyrant John took advantage of this opportunity to introduce some of his followers, with concealed weapons, among the throngs of worshippers in the temple, who slew many, while others were rolled in heaps together, and trampled upon, and beaten without mercy.

And now, though the Roman armies were at their gates, the warring factions began again to destroy one another and the innocent inhabitants.

"For", says Josephus, they returned to their former madness, and separated one from another, and fought it out; and they did everything that the besiegers could desire them to do. For they never suffered from the Romans anything worse than they made each other suffer; nor was there any misery endured by the city which, after what these men did, could be esteemed new. It was most of all unhappy before it was overthrown; and those that took it did it a kindness. For I venture to say that the sedition destroyed the city, and the Romans destroyed the sedition. This was a much harder thing to do than to destroy the walls.



So that we may justly ascribe our misfortunes to our own people (V. 6. 2).

This is the most astonishing feature of this great tribulation; for surely there never was a besieged city whose inhabitants suffered more from one another than from the common enemy. In this feature of the case we see most clearly that it is one of judgment; and that, as the apostle Paul said, the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

At this point the siege began in earnest. Titus, however, sent Josephus to speak to the Jews, offering them clemency, and exhorting them to yield. Josephus made a most earnest plea to them not to resist the might of Rome, pointing out that *God was no longer with them*. But it was to no purpose. So the siege proceeded outside, and the famine began to rage inside, insomuch that children pulled out of their parents' mouths the morsels they were eating, and even mothers deprived their infants of the last bits of food that might have sustained their lives.

The fighters, of course, kept for their own use what food there was, and it seems that they took a keen delight in seeing others suffer. It was a species of madness. They invented terrible methods of torments, such as it would not be seemly for us to describe. And this was done, says Josephus, to keep their madness in exercise (V 10:3). The most horrible and unbelievable torments were inflicted upon all who were suspected of having any food concealed. The following passage will give an idea of the conditions:

"It is impossible to give every instance of the iniquity of these men. I shall therefore speak my mind here at once briefly:--that neither did any other city suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, from the beginning of the world. (This forcibly brings to mind the Lord's own words.) Finally they brought the Hebrew nation into contempt, that they might themselves appear comparatively less impious with regard to strangers. They confessed, what was true, that they were the scum, and the spurious and abortive offspring of our nation, while they overthrew the city themselves, and forced the Romans, whether they would or no, to gain a melancholy reputation by acting gloriously against them; and did almost draw that fire upon the temple which they seemed to think came too slowly" (V. 10. 5).

Under pressure of the famine many Jews went out at night into the valleys in search of food. These were caught, tortured and crucified in sight of those on the walls of the city. About five hundred every day were thus treated. The number became finally so great that there was not room enough for the crosses, nor crosses enough for the victims. So several were oftentimes nailed to one cross.

A little later the Roman armies encompassed the entire city, so that there was no longer any egress therefrom.

"Then, says Josephus, did the famine widen its progress and devour the people by whole houses and families. The upper rooms were full of women and children dying by famine; and the lanes of the city were full of the dead bodies of the aged. The children also and the young men

wandered about the marketplaces like shadows, all swelled with the famine, and fell down dead, wheresoever their misery seized them (V. 12. 3).

Thus did the miseries of Jerusalem grow worse and worse every day. \*  
\* \* And indeed the multitude of carcases that lay in heaps, one upon another, was a horrible sight, and produced a pestilential stench which was a hindrance to those that would make sallies out of the city and fight the enemy (VI. 1. 1).

The number of those that perished by famine in the city was prodigious, and their miseries were unspeakable. For if so much as the shadow of any kind of food did anywhere appear, a war was commenced presently, and the dearest friends fell a fighting one another about it.

In this connection Josephus relates in detail the case of a woman, eminent for her family and her wealth, who, while suffering the ravages of famine, slew her infant son and roasted him, and having eaten half of him, concealed the other half. When presently the seditious Jews came in to search the premises, and smelt the horrid scent of this food, they threatened her life if she did not show them what food she had prepared. She replied that she had saved for them a choice part, and withal uncovered what was left of the little body, saying, Come, eat of this food; for I have eaten of it myself. Do not you pretend to be more tender than a woman, or more compassionate than a mother. Even those desperate and hardened men were horrified at the sight, and stood aghast at the deed of this mother. They left trembling; and the whole city was full of what the woman had done. It must be remembered that all this time the lives of all in the city would have been spared and the city and temple saved, had they but yielded to the Romans. But how then should the Scripture be fulfilled? (see #De 28:56,57) Soon after this the temple was set on fire and was burned down, though Titus tried to save it. Josephus says:

But as for that house, God had for certain long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages. It was the tenth day of the month Ab, the day upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon (VI. 4. 5).

Further Josephus says:

"While the holy house was on fire everything was plundered that came to hand, and ten thousand of those were slain. Nor was there commiseration of any age, or any reverence of gravity; but children, old men, profane persons, and priests were all slain in the same manner. \*  
\* \* Moreover many, when they saw the fire, exerted their utmost strength, and did break out into groans and outcries. Perea also did return the echo, as well as the mountains round about Jerusalem, and augmented the force of the noise."

Yet was the misery itself more terrible than this disorder. For one would have thought that the hill itself, on which the temple stood, was seething hot, as if full of fire on every part, that the blood was more in quantity than the fire, and that the slain were more in numbers than

they who slew them. For the ground did nowhere appear visible because of the dead bodies that lay upon it (VL 5. 1).

In describing how a number were killed in a certain cloister, which the soldiers set on fire, Josephus says:

"A *false prophet* was the occasion of the destruction of those people, he having made a public proclamation that very day that *God commanded them to get upon the temple and that they should receive miraculous signs of their deliverance*. There was then a large number of false prophets suborned by the tyrants to impose on the people, who announced to them that *they should wait for deliverance from God* (VI. 5. 2).

In this detail also the Lord's Olivet prophecy was most literally fulfilled.

When at last the Romans gained entrance into the city, the soldiers had become so exasperated by the stubborn resistance of the Jews, that they could not be restrained from wreaking vengeance upon the survivors. So they indulged in slaughter until weary of it. The survivors were sold into slavery, but at a very low price, because they were so numerous, and the buyers were few. Thus was fulfilled the word of the Lord by Moses, And there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you (#De 28:68).

Many were put into bonds and sold to slavery in the Egyptian mines, thus fulfilling several prophecies that they should be sold into Egypt again, whence God had delivered them (#Ho 8:13; 9:3).

In concluding this part of his history Josephus gives the number of those who perished (a million one hundred thousand) and of those sold into slavery (ninety seven thousand), and explains, as we have already stated, that they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army. And he adds:

"Now this vast multitude was indeed collected out of remote places, but the entire nation was now shut up by fate as in prison, and the Roman army encompassed the city when it was crowded with inhabitants. Accordingly the multitude of those that perished therein exceeded all the destructions that either men or God ever brought upon the world" (VI. 9. 4).

Thus ended, in the greatest of all calamities of the sort, the national existence of the Jewish people, and all that pertained to that old covenant which was instituted with glory (#2Co 3:7,9,11), but which was to be done away.

Here may be seen an example of the thoroughness of God's judgments, when He arises to do His strange work. Judgment must begin at the house of God; and in view of what is brought to our notice in this history of Josephus, how impressive is the question, And if it begin at us, what shall the end be of them that *obey not the gospel of God?* (#1Pe 4:17).