

Consequences of the Jewish War 66-73 AD

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Introduction

The Jewish war was the uprising of Judea against Rome in 66-73 AD. (Josephus, ca. 75/2008; Berlin & Overman, 2002) The establishment of the direct power of Rome over Judea (6 AD) caused a number of conflicts of a religious, social, and national nature. The power of a pagan state over Israel, whose only ruler was God, was perceived as an insult to the Jewish religion. Therefore, it increased the messianic aspirations and led to political ferment. In the eyes of many Jews, Rome became a symbol of satanic power. The anti-Roman sentiments intensified, especially after Roman Emperor Caligula's attempts to introduce the cult of the Roman emperor in Judea. It was met with fierce resistance and the hate towards Rome also increased due to certain features of the administration introduced by Rome in the provinces.

The War

The immediate cause of the uprising was the robbery of the temple treasury by the procurator, Gessius Florus. As punishment for the ensuing agitation, Florus plundered Jerusalem with his army and crucified many inhabitants of the city. Following this, he demanded that the inhabitants of Jerusalem, in proof of their loyalty, go out to meet two cohorts, who arrived from the provincial capital, Caesarea. However, the soldiers did not respond to the greetings, and when the people began to murmur and shower them with abuse, they attacked the inhabitants and began to press them to the city. As a result of the subsequent bloody clash between the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Roman soldiers, the soldiers chose to leave the city, leaving one of the cohorts there and laying the responsibility for restoring order to the city authorities. Having learned about the unrest, King Agrippa II arrived in Jerusalem and unsuccessfully tried to persuade the people to obey.

At the suggestion of Eliezar, the son of high priest Ananias, the daily sacrifice for the health of the emperor was canceled, a step equivalent to the official declaration of war. Opponents of the insurrection turned to Agrippa and captured the Upper City of Jerusalem with the help of three thousand horsemen sent to them. However, they were soon knocked out of the city by insurgents. A few days later, the insurgents seized the fortress of Anthony.

At the same time, bloody conflicts began in mixed-population cities; where the Hellenistic population prevailed, particularly in Caesarea and Skitopolis, the entire Jewish population was cut out. In cities where Jews dominated numerically, the Hellenistic population was carved out. These events forced the intervention of Syria's deputy, Cestius Gallus, who broke camp about 15 km from Jerusalem. Cestius approached Jerusalem and burned one of its suburbs, but his attempt to capture the Temple

Mount was unsuccessful, so he retreated. On the way back, the Roman army was surrounded by rebels, and with great losses, they narrowly escaped.

This victory caused a burst of enthusiasm for Jews, inspiring hope for a possible escape from Roman power. The rebels, now led by the aristocracy, high priests, and teachers of the law, began to prepare for the inevitable invasion of the country by the Roman Expeditionary Force. In the spring of 67 AD, Vespasian came out with a 60,000-strong army from Acre and invaded Galilee. The attempt by Flavius to stop the advance of the Romans failed, and the Romans took the city.

The loss of Galilee and Jaffa, the naval base of Judea caused chaos among the rebels. Bloody clashes in the winter of 68/69 AD in Jerusalem ended with the destruction of moderate-minded leaders. Power was seized by the leaders of radical sense. The aristocracy of Jerusalem tried to free the city from the dictatorship of the radicals. Encouraged by Hanan bin Hanan, the Jerusalemites besieged the Zealots in the Temple Mount and those who were in the minority called for help from the Edomites on the pretext that the other side was preparing treason. Edomites arrived in Jerusalem and together with the Zealots, committed massacres in the city in which the leaders of the aristocratic party and many citizens died. After the wave of murders and looting slept, the Edomites, convinced that they were deceived by the Zealots, left Jerusalem.

Vespasian, deciding to wait until the rebels' forces were exhausted in the internecine struggle, postponed the siege of Jerusalem for a while. In the spring of 68 AD, he captured Antipatrida, Lod, and Yavne and moved to Edom and Jericho. Meanwhile, the death of Emperor Nero on 9th June, 68 AD led Vespasian to wait for the development of events. However, a new wave of unrest under Simon Bar Giora's leadership made him act. This time Vespasian established control over the whole country. Left in the hands of the rebels was only Jerusalem.

In 70 AD, Titus, Vespasian's son, was proclaimed emperor. He, at the head of four legions, went to the walls of Jerusalem. Romans seized the first city wall, and a few days later the second wall, despite the heroic resistance of the besieged. The insurgency attacks prevented the siege work of the Romans and Titus decided to strengthen the blockade, encircling it with a rampart and completely interrupting any connection between the besieged and the outside world. Famine raged in Jerusalem and undermined the strength of its defenders. The battering ram finally brought down the third wall, but the insurgents managed to erect another one behind it. However, with the second attempt, the Romans managed to seize Antonia and reach the outer wall of Temple Mount. After the battle with varying success in Antonia and unsuccessful attempts by Romans to bring down the wall of Temple Mount, on Titus's orders, the temple gate was set on fire, and the way to the courtyard was opened. However, the rebels resisted, not allowing the Romans to enter the Temple. At the command of Titus, the Temple was set on fire and burnt to the ground along with its defenders.

End of the War

Jerusalem was captured after a five-month siege, the inhabitants were killed, sold into slavery, and the city was razed to the ground. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.) Only three towers of the citadel were left as evidence of the former might of Jerusalem's fortifications. In commemoration of the victory of Vespasian and his son in Rome, a triumph was arranged, on which the sacred utensils of the Jerusalem temple were carried as trophies.

Conclusion

Although the Jews were unsuccessful, the insurrection was not completely crushed after the capture of Jerusalem. There were still several fortified points in the hands of the insurgents, among them Herodium and Masada. Eliezar led the defense of Masada. Several hundred fighters with families were concentrated in the fortress, so the total number of besieged reached about a thousand people. When the defenders of Masada realized that their situation was hopeless, they, on Eliezar's advice, killed their wives and children, and then each other. The fortress passed into the hands of the Romans in Pesach in 73 AD, and this event ended the story of the great anti-Roman uprising.

References

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