

WATCHMAN'S TEACHING LETTER

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ISRAEL COVENANT TWO SEEDLINE RACIAL IDENTITY

AN ANGLO-ISAAC-SON CAUCASIAN CULTURE AWARENESS TEACHING LETTER

A MONTHLY TEACHING LETTER

This is my eightieth monthly teaching letter and continues my seventh year of publication. We are going to continue in this lesson where we left off in the last, that being the defense of the writings of Josephus. Down through history until today, Josephus has had his share of critics in spite of the fact that other historians cover very little of the events in Judaea during that period. Yet there is a greater need today for his witness than ever before in the Israel Identity Message! But instead of getting more teachings which inspire the Israel sheep to a higher understanding, we instead have many purveyors of confusion! Unless we can start establishing a pattern of instruction that is constructive, the Israel sheep will continue to be scattered, aimlessly adrift.

To demonstrate the honesty of Josephus, we will read the footnote to the preface of *Josephus' Wars*, translated by William Whiston, published by Kregel Publications. (I also have *Josephus* on my Libronix Digital Library System by Whiston, published by Hendrickson Publishers, but the footnotes are slightly different):

"I have already observed that this history of the Jewish War was Josephus' first work, and published about A.D. 75, when he was but thirty-eight years of age; and that when he wrote it, he was not thoroughly acquainted with several circumstances of history from the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, with which it begins, till near his own times, contained in the first and former part of the second book, and so committed many involuntary errors therein: that he published his Antiquities eighteen years afterward, in the 13th year of Domitian, A.D. 93, when he was much more completely acquainted with those ancient times, and after he had perused those most [authentic] ancient histories, the first book of Maccabees, and the Chronicles of the Priesthood of John Hyrcanus, &c.: that accordingly he then reviewed those parts of this work, and gave the public a more faithful, complete, and accurate account of the facts therein related; and honestly corrected the errors he had before run into."

As you can see here, Josephus was careful to correct any errors he could find in his previous writings. Evidently, Josephus was not too proud to admit his mistakes. Thus, Josephus displayed his honesty by revising his former writings. How much more should we expect of this man?

I will now quote two articles written on Josephus from *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* and *The Zondervan Pictorial Dictionary of the Bible* respectively. While both of these presentations speak of Josephus' life, each delve into different

areas and give details missed by the other. After comparing one story against the other, a fully developed picture should emerge in one's mind pertaining to his activities.

First from *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, volume E-J, pages 987-988 we read the following (and again, I must warn that the authors of these analyses use the terms "Jew/Jewish", Judean and Israelite indiscriminately, so we need to anticipate the correct designation):

"JOSEPHUS, FLAVIUS. A historian (Hebrew name, Joseph ben Mattathias), and a commanding officer of the Galilean Jewish forces in the war against Rome, A.D. 66-70. He was born A.D. 37/38 and died sometime after 100.

"Despite certain inconsistencies between the account in his *Vita*, written toward the end of his life, and various autobiographical statements scattered through his earlier *History of the Jewish War Against Rome*, the general outline of his life is more or less clear. He was of a priestly family and, on his mother's side, a descendant of the Hasmoneans. He reports that already, by the age of sixteen he began a study of the chief Jewish sects: PHARISEES; SADDUCEES; and ESSENES. He then attached himself as disciple to a hermit, Bannus, with whom he lived in the wilderness for *ca.* three years. At the age of nineteen he joined the Pharisees. His writings later reflect an admiration for the Essenes and their way of life; on the other hand, though he reports on the popularity enjoyed by the Pharisees, his language at times reveals a critical, unfavorable estimate of them.

"In 64 he journeyed to Rome to plead for the liberation of some priests whom the procurator FELIX had sent to be tried by Nero. As it turned out, this visit to the great city was important, not so much because Josephus succeeded in his mission (with the help of Poppea, Nero's wife, whom Josephus met through one of her favorites, a Jewish actor), but because the splendor and might of Rome impressed him profoundly. On his return to Judea, he found his countrymen dominated by those who pressed for revolt against Rome. Unable to restrain the war party, he reluctantly joined it, hoping that in short time the governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, would crush the rebellion. But Cestius failed, and his army was thoroughly routed.

"Josephus contradicts himself on a number of details regarding his commission and conduct at this point; as a result, his motives and his behavior as commander of the Galilean forces are not clear. Apparently, however, he spent the half year between Cestius' defeat and Vespasian's arrival in reorganizing and administration of Galilee, fortifying a number of cities, storing up provisions, and training his army – though it is unknown where he learned military discipline and tactics.

"Before long his enemies began to accuse him of various treacheries, and on several occasions both his commission and his life were in danger. His bitterest enemy was John of Gischala, whom Josephus always speaks of in most abusive terms.

"By the spring of 67 Josephus, deserted by most of his army, was driven to the fortified town of Jotapata. The town fell after a siege of forty-seven days. He hid for some time in a cave with a number of survivors, who vowed that they would take their own lives rather than surrender. Either through trickery or by coincidence, Josephus and one companion were the last to remain after the others had killed themselves. With his companion, Josephus emerged from the cave and gave himself up. He was brought before Vespasian as a prisoner. He now predicted to Vespasian that he, Vespasian,

would shortly become emperor. When this prediction was fulfilled in 69, Vespasian made Josephus a free man.

“ From the time of his surrender to the end of his life Josephus remained a client of the Flavian emperors (hence the adoption of the name Flavius). So long as the Great War lasted, he served the Roman forces as interpreter and mediator. After the war he not only received gifts from Titus ... but also accompanied the Roman commander to Rome, settled there on an imperial pension with the rights of a Roman citizen in a former palace of Vespasian, and devoted himself to a literary career.

“ His domestic life was not a happy one. He was married four times; his second wife deserted him; his third wife he divorced. By his third wife he had three sons and by his last wife, two.

“ Josephus’ words have survived because of the church’s interest in them, most likely because of a debatable passage on the Founder of Christianity in the *Antiquities*. These works are the principal source for the history of the Jews from Hasmonean times to the fall of Masada in 73. They are also an apologia, at times in behalf of Rome, at times in behalf of the Jews and Judaism, always in his own behalf.

“ His earliest work was the *War* – i.e., the history of the Jewish war against Rome – which he wrote shortly after the fall of the Jewish state. It is a revision or new edition in Greek of a work he originally composed in Aramaic. The work is divided into seven books, the first of which is a rapid survey of Jewish <sic. Judean> history in the Hellenistic-Roman period; a primary source for him was the life of Herod written by Nicholas of Damascus. In the remaining books Josephus takes up the story of the revolt against Rome and its aftermath. Here he had not only his own limited experience to draw on, but also the records kept by the Roman commanders which were at his disposal, as well as information from those who fled Jerusalem and took refuge with the Roman forces. The history is written with dramatic effect. Thucydidean speeches in the mouths of leading persons, echoes of the idiom of Sophocles, descriptive passages (of geographical locations, of particular scenes of suffering or heroism, of fighting stratagems), give the work rhetorical vigor. As in the composition of all his subsequent works, Josephus had the assistance of Greek collaborators, since his own knowledge of Greek was probably never more than mediocre, especially when he was preparing his first work. What stands out above all in the *War* is its pro-Roman tone: the work was not only produced under Flavian auspices but was also supposed to impress all readers with the futility of rising against the Empire.

“ There is a Slavonic version of the *War*, but it is doubtful if this version was based directly on the Aramaic original. Most scholars are still of the opinion that the Slavonic is a secondary translation of the Greek.

“ *Ca.* twenty years after the publication of the *War*, *ca.* 93-94, during the reign of Domitian, Josephus put out his second great work, the *Jewish Antiquities*. It is a history of the Jews, in twenty books, modeled after the *Roman Antiquities* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, from patriarchal times up to the outbreak of the war with Rome. The first ten books, which bring the story down to the Babylonian captivity, are essentially a paraphrase of the *LXX* version supplemented by homiletic and haggadic material. The latter ten volumes take up the story from the return to Judea under Cyrus. In these books Josephus drew on biblical and apocryphal sources, haggadic traditions, handbooks of Greek historians, and the writings of Nicholas of Damascus, Strabo, and

other Roman historians. The work was designed to portray to the cultivated Greco-Roman world the high antiquity and splendid achievements of the Jews.

“ It is instructive to compare what Josephus says in the *Antiquities* with what he says in the *War*, where subject matter overlaps. In the *Antiquities* the account is often more ample, the tone less decidedly pro-Roman, and altogether the mood less enthusiastic toward his earlier political attitude and appraisals. Careful analysis of the Greek idiom reveals also where Josephus turned from one of his Greek assistants to another, a slavish imitator of Thucydidean mannerisms. Of special interest also are the documents and edicts incorporated by Josephus in this work.

“ It was to the *Antiquities* that Josephus attached his *Vita* as an appendix. This little work was written as a self-defense against the accusations of a rival historian, Justus of Tiberias, who charged that Josephus was responsible for the outbreak of the war, at least for the revolt of Tiberias against Rome. The autobiography is chiefly an account of Josephus’ life during the six months when he ‘commanded’ the forces in Galilee before the arrival of Vespasian.

“ Finally, he wrote an eloquent apology for Judaism in two books, *Against Apion*. The work is more than a defense of Judaism against the slanders of Apion; it is a defense against all sorts of Egyptian and Greek calumnies of Jewish morality and culture. In making this defense Josephus also takes an aggressive position, criticizing Gentile morality and teachings as he compares them with ‘Mosaic law.’ *Against Apion* remains one of the classic and most vigorous apologies for Judaism.

“ In his writings Josephus refers to other works which he planned: a treatise on Jerusalem and the temple, a work on the Mosaic code and the nature of God; but apparently he never produced these. Several works were at one time ascribed to Josephus by the church fathers, of which he is not the author.

“ *Bibliography*. The principal edition of the Greek text of Josephus’ works is that by B. Niesen (Berlin, 1885-95). Other editions are: N. Bentwich, *Josephus* (1914); H. St. John Thackeray and R. Marcus, eds., *Josephus*, Loeb Classical Library, vols. I-VIII (1926); H. St. John Thackeray, *Josephus, the Man and the Historian* (1929); W. R. Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots, and, Josephus* (1956).

Next, from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, volume H-L, pages 696-697 we find the following:

“ **JOSEPHUS, FLAVIUS** ... (born *Joseph ben Matthias*). Jewish historian.

“ **1. Life.** Josephus was born in Jerusalem, A.D. 37 or 38. His father was a priest, his mother a descendant of the royal house of the Asmoneans. When he grew up he became a Pharisee, which sect he likened to the Stoics among the Greeks. In A.D. 64 at age twenty-six he went to Rome and secured the release of certain priests who were being held there on rather nebulous charges. Upon his return he found the people smarting under the highhanded administration of the procurator Florus and ready for revolt. From this he attempted to dissuade them, having seen at firsthand something of Roman power. Because of his attitude he was sent to Galilee to keep the peace there. The accounts of his activity in this region are conflicting and confused. The *Jewish War* seems to indicate that he was sent up as a general to take command of the situation; while the *Life* says he went up as a priest to pacify the disaffected. At any rate, because he was afraid that his pacification efforts would bring him under suspicion of favoring Rome, he finally pretended to concur with the views of the war party, going

so far as to get them paid as mercenaries, but at the same time trying to persuade them to act on the defensive: not to attack the Romans, but let them make the first move. Thus he played a kind of double game, waiting to see the direction in which events would develop, accused by some of pro-Roman sentiment, by others of aiming at tyranny. Finally the extremists forced him to a decision; either he would lose his post, or take over the active leadership of the war party. At this juncture the Roman general Vespasian arrived on the scene (A.D. 67), and Josephus was captured, after almost being killed by his companions. When Vespasian was summoned to Rome in 69, and his son Titus was left to conduct the siege of Jerusalem, Josephus was used by the Roman commander as a mediator, going around the walls counseling the Jews to submit, hated by the zealots and suspected by the Romans. After the capture of Jerusalem he went to Rome with Titus, and was shown great favor by Vespasian, by now emperor, by Titus, and later by Domitian. He received Roman citizenship and took the name Flavius in deference to his patrons. He was married three times; one wife deserted him, and a second marriage ended in divorce. He died at about the beginning of the second cent.

“**2. Works.** Three major works have come from the pen of Josephus. (a) *The Jewish War*, written between 75 and 79, in seven books. This account of the struggle between the Jews and Romans was written under Roman auspices, Titus having urged Josephus to undertake the work. King Agrippa vouched for its accuracy. It was produced first in an Aramaic version, now lost, and this was followed by the Greek edition. One purpose for the writing of the book was certainly to deter others from revolting against the Romans as the Jews had done. The work is in the main a trustworthy account, for Josephus had firsthand materials: his own experience, and the commentaries of Vespasian and Titus, the commanders involved in the struggle. (b) *Antiquities of the Jews*, written in 93 or 94. This is a long work of twenty books, beginning with creation and extending to the outbreak of the war with the Romans ... The first part of the work, to the end of the exile, follows closely the Biblical narrative; the second part, postexilic, is compiled from miscellaneous sources. To the *Antiquities* is appended a biographical sketch (*Life*) written by Josephus as a defense against the accusations of a rival historian named Justus. (c) *Against Apion*, a defense of the Jewish <sic. Israelitish> religion.

“**3. Importance of Josephus.** He is the principal source for Jewish history between 100 B.C. and A.D. 100, and is invaluable for a knowledge of the geography of Bible lands. Recent archeological discoveries at Qumran and Masada have indicated that the account of Josephus is remarkably accurate and ranks him high as a topographer. The student of the New Testament has in Josephus a wealth of material on agriculture, industry, religion, politics, and the outstanding personalities of Gospel history: Herod, Pilate, the two Agrippas, Felix, and others. As a historian many have distrusted him, mostly because they disapprove of him as a traitor. He is no more affected by human error (of memory, faulty sources, bias, and the like) than others of his time. The passage concerning Jesus (*Antiquities*, XVIII, 63ff.) has been regarded by some as a Christian interpolation; but the bulk of evidence, both external and internal, marks it as genuine. Josephus must have known the main facts about the life and death of Jesus, and his historian's curiosity certainly would lead him to investigate the movement which was gaining adherents even in high circles. Arnold Toynbee rates him

among the five greatest Hellenic historians, along with Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and Polybius.

“Josephus was doubtless an egoist, motivated by self-interest, and a flatterer of the Romans. He was hated by his countrymen as a turncoat. Yet he possessed a high degree of patriotism, for instead of disowning his nation he wrote an elaborate history of it, and composed a brilliant apology for his native religion.”

Was Josephus a Traitor? Or rather did he know that “the city was all over polluted with such abominations, from which it was reasonable to expect such vengeance ...” and really wanted no part with the abominable, being a just man? See *Wars* 2:17:10 & 4:3:10.

EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE FULFILLMENT OF MATTHEW 24:2

The greatest of all of Josephus’ writings has to be his *Jewish Wars*. The reason for this is because the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple fulfilled the prophecy by Messiah Himself at Matthew 24:2. But if we want to be serious Bible students, we must also understand the events leading up to, during, and after that destruction. Actually, that destruction was one of the critical high points in the great struggle between the “seed” of the serpent and the “seed” of the woman of Genesis 3:15. We cannot cover all that in this short space, so we shall start at about 52 A.D., about the time of Antonius Felix. We find at Acts 23:24-24:27 that at Paul’s last visit to Jerusalem, Felix was procurator of Judea. But upon Felix being recalled to Rome by Nero, Paul was turned over to Festus.

The decades leading up to this time saw the rise of “Zealots” in Judea, fanatically opposed to Roman occupation. Josephus alludes to them as “bandits”, and indicates that Felix crucified vast numbers of them in order to rid the country of them (*JW* 2:13:2):

“This Felix took Eleazar the arch robber, and many that were with him, alive, when they had ravaged the country for twenty years together, and sent them to Rome; but as to the number of robbers whom he caused to be crucified, and of whom who were caught among them, and those he brought to punishment, they were a multitude not to be enumerated.”

Similar to the Zealots there arose also the “Sicarii” (nationalists armed with short daggers, *sicae*, and devoted to the eradication of their political adversaries by quiet assassination, frequently at communal functions). Murders of a political nature happened almost daily; Jonathan the high priest, whom Felix was happy to see gone, was one of their first victims. Yet another innocent-cloaked group arose with far greater wicked objectives who stirred the populus to a wild fervor against Rome, and alleged theirs’ a divine mission (*JW* 2:13:4):

“There was also another body of wicked men gotten together, not so impure in their actions, but more wicked in their intentions, who laid waste the happy state of the city no less than did these murderers. These were such men as deceived and deluded the people under pretense of divine inspiration, but were for procuring innovations and changes of the government, and these prevailed with the multitude to act like madmen, and went before them into the wilderness, as pretending that God would there show them the signals of liberty; but Felix thought this procedure was to be the beginning of a

revolt; so he sent some horsemen and footmen, both armed, who destroyed a great number of them.”

During the midst of Felix’s term the Emperor Claudius died (October 13, 54 A.D.), and Nero followed him. Nero then replaced Felix with Festus who showed favor to the Judeans, but the tinderbox condition that had developed under Felix was blazing out of control. No sooner had Festus arrived than a controversy arose between the Judean and Syrian inhabitants of Caesarea and was resolved by an imperial rescript (Roman petition) in favor of the Syrians, which further embittered the Judeans. It was near this time that Festus sent Paul, a Roman citizen, for his right of appeal to Rome (Acts 25:11 ff.). Then following Festus in the procuratorship was Albinus (62-64) whose corruption was rampant, “There was no form of crime that he failed to perform” (*JW* 2:14:1) ... “and at this time were those seeds sown which brought the city [Jerusalem] to destruction.”

This, then, led up to the first revolt of A.D. 66-70. The last of the procurators to rule Judaea was Gessius Florus (A.D. 64-66) who by comparison made his predecessor appear as paragon of virtue (*JW* 2:14:2):

“**2.** And although such was the character of Albinus, yet did Gessius Florus, who succeeded him, demonstrate him to have been a most excellent person, upon the comparison: for the former did the greatest part of his rogueries in private, and with a sort of dissimulation; but Gessius did his unjust actions to the harm of the nation after a pompous manner; and as though he had been sent as an executioner to punish condemned malefactors, he omitted no sort of rapine, or of vexation: where the case was really pitiable, he was most barbarous; and in things of the greatest turpitude, he was most impudent; nor could anyone outdo him in disguising the truth; nor could anyone contrive more subtle ways of deceit than he did. He indeed thought it but a petty offense to get money out of single persons; so he spoiled whole cities, and ruined entire bodies of men at once, and did almost publicly proclaim it all the country over, that they had liberty given them to turn robbers, upon this condition, that he might go shares with them in the spoils. Accordingly, this his greediness of gain was the occasion that entire toparchies were brought to desolation; and a great many of the people left their own country, and fled into foreign provinces.”

We can see from this that Gessius Florus was a much more evil administrator than Albinus before him. Gessius Florus openly plundered the land, robbed individuals, sacked towns, and took bribes from bandits. Those termed “Jews” were greatly humiliated in Caesarea when Nero decided to grant the non-Judeans superior civic rights and the “Hellens” obstructed access to the synagogue by building shops before its entrance. Upon this they strongly appealed to Gessius Florus, but he did nothing to correct the situation. Later Gessius Florus took 17 talents from the Temple treasury whereupon those termed “Jews” could no longer contain themselves. With utmost contempt they sarcastically passed around a basket throughout their community to take up a collection for the “indigent” Florus, (*JW* 2:14:6):

“**6.** Moreover, as to the citizens of Jerusalem, although they took this matter very ill, yet did they restrain their passion; but Florus acted herein as if he had been hired, and blew up the war into a flame, and sent some to take seventeen talents out of the sacred treasure, and pretended that Caesar wanted them. At this the people were in confusion immediately, and ran together to the temple, with prodigious clamors, and

called upon Caesar by name, and besought him to free them from the tyranny of Florus. Some also of the seditious cried out upon Florus, and cast the greatest reproaches upon him, and carried a basket about, and begged some spells of money for him, as for one that was destitute of possessions, and in a miserable condition. Yet was not he made ashamed hereby of his love of money, but was more enraged, and provoked to get still more; and instead of coming to Caesarea, as he ought to have done, and quenching the flame of war, which was beginning thence, and so taking away the occasion of any disturbances, on which account it was that he had received a reward [of eight talents], he marched hastily with an army of horsemen and footmen against Jerusalem, that he might gain his will by the arms of the Romans, and might, by his terror, and by his threatenings, bring the city into subjection.”

Florus then took bloody revenge on them for this insult and turned part of the city over to his soldiers for plunder. Inasmuch as the priests attempted to control those called “Jews” during these incidents by counseling them to patience, those among the people who were meek and did not react against the soldiers were scorned by them. Slaughter then ensued. Those dubbed “Jews” then withdrew to the Temple precincts and closed off the portico passageway between the Temple and the Fortress Antonia. Momentarily, not being strong enough against the rebels, Florus was forced to withdraw to Caesarea. As a result of all this, the revolt against Rome became formal. Josephus records this at 2:14:9:

“9. Florus was more provoked at this, and called out aloud to the soldiers to plunder that which was called the Upper Market Place, and to slay such as they met with. So the soldiers, taking this exhortation of their commander in a sense agreeable to their desire of gain, did not only plunder the place they were sent to, but forcing themselves into every house, they slew its inhabitants; so the citizens fled along the narrow lanes, and the soldiers slew those that they caught, and no method of plunder was omitted; they also caught many of the quiet people, and brought them before Florus, whom he first chastised with stripes, and then crucified. Accordingly, the whole number of those that were destroyed that day, with their wives and children (for they did not spare even the infants themselves), was about three thousand and six hundred; and what made this calamity the heavier, was this new method of Roman barbarity; for Florus ventured then to what no one had done before, that is, to have men of the equestrian order whipped, and nailed to the cross before his tribunal; who, although they were by birth Jews, yet were they of Roman dignity notwithstanding.”

The leader of the so-called “Jews” was Eleazar, who was assisted by Menahem, a son of the Zealot leader, Judas of Galilee. Judaea was organized for battle. The Sanhedrin entrusted Galilee to the priest and Pharisee, Joseph son of Matthias. The priesthood, at this time, had fallen to an all-time low, and a footnote at *Josephus’ Wars* 4:3:6 says this:

“Here we may discover the utter disgrace and ruin of the high priesthood among the Jews, when undeserving, ignoble, and vile persons were advanced to that office by the seditious; which sort of high priests, as Josephus well remarks here, were thereupon obliged to comply with and assist those that advanced them in their impious practices. The names of these high priests, or rather ridiculous and profane persons, were Jesus the son of Damneus, Jesus the son of Gamaliel, Matthias the son of Theophilus, and that prodigious ignoramus Phannias, the son of Samuel; all whom we

shall meet with in Josephus's future history of this war; nor do we meet with any other so much as pretended high priests after Phannias, till Jerusalem was taken and destroyed."

Thus the battle lines had been drawn while Judaea prepared itself. To counteract this action, Nero eventually sent out an experienced commander in the person of Vespasian, who began operations at Antioch in the winter of A.D. 66-67. Within a year the last of the Galilean posts fell with the surrender of Josephus to Vespasian at Jotapata. This placed Northern Palestine once again in the hands of Rome. The Fifth and Fifteenth legions wintered at Caesarea while the Tenth Legion was quartered at Scythopolis (Beth-shan). At that time Judaea sought aid from Idumaea, but once the Idumeans surveyed the dangerous situation and realized it was hopeless, they soon withdrew. It also appears that it was at this same time that the Jerusalem Christians fled to Perea, settling mostly at Pella. (See *Wars* 2:19.) Cestius first besieged, and almost took Jerusalem, but for some unknown reason turned coward and fled, although so very near victory. By this alone was Luke 21:20-21 fulfilled!

It was in the spring of A.D. 68 that Vespasian advanced toward Jerusalem via the Jordan Valley, with his soldiers seizing and burning the headquarters of the rebels en route (Samaria, Jericho, Perea, Machaerus, Qumran, etc.). Delaying his immediate assault on Jerusalem was Nero's death, June 9, A.D. 68. Upon this, Vespasian halted his activities and took account of the developments at Rome. In the meantime civil war broke out in Jerusalem in the spring of A.D. 69. Simon bar Giora had been traveling through the land with his bands, scavenging what the Romans had left behind. Finally Simon turned toward Jerusalem where the people, tired of the tyranny of John of Gischala, welcomed him as their new leader. Entering Jerusalem, John and his party withdrew to the Temple and shut themselves in, and from there, Simon ruled the city itself.

In the same year as the siege began (A.D. 69-70), it was known as the Year of the Four Emperors. In Rome, Galba succeeded Nero but was murdered A.D. January 69; Otho then became emperor, but was replaced soon by Vitellius. After a short reign, Vitellius was then assassinated. Since Vespasian had advanced against Jerusalem A.D. June 69, and his Roman troops hailed him *imperator* A.D. July 1, 69, he quickly returned to Rome leaving his son, Titus, to resume the attack on Jerusalem.

With this lesson, you have just observed the events leading up to the siege of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 A.D. Aware of these facts, you will now be able to read the Book of Acts with an entirely new perspective. Not only will the Book of Acts come to life, but many of the writings of Paul.

These things should now start to show how important it is to study history as well as Scripture, and without Josephus, we would know very little about this period. All this demands that we become more than just surface readers of our Bibles. When we can begin to correlate Scripture with history, we can start to obtain a comprehensive view of the Scripture we are reading! Not only that, when one voices their opinion without knowing these things, they expose their ignorance to no end, especially on Matthew chapter 24. Yet it seems that those making the most noise are those who have investigated these things the least. Pray for understanding!