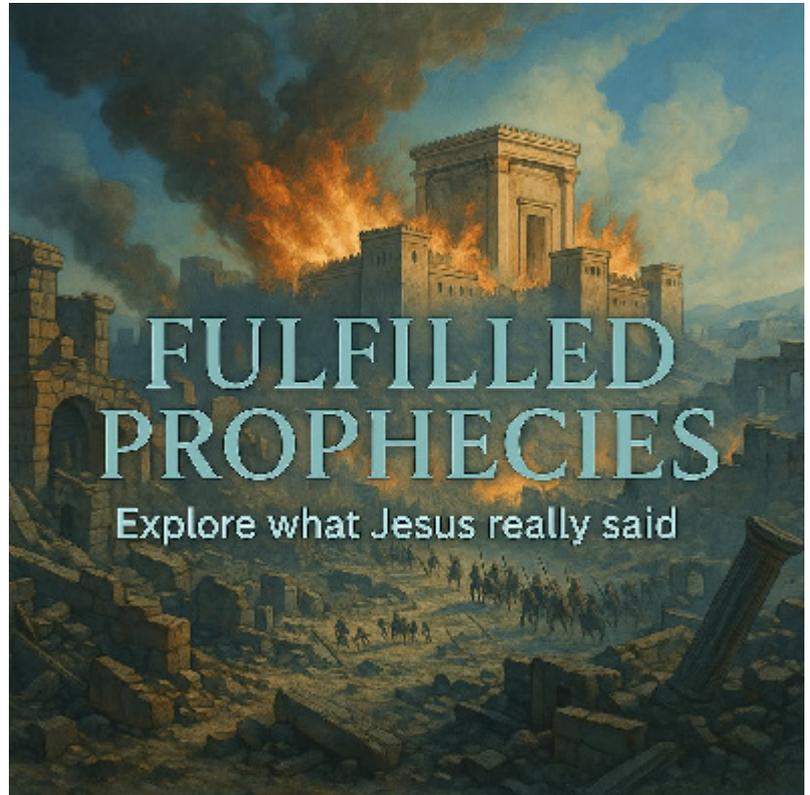


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Historical Writers Josephus and the Temple in 70 AD



By Dan Maines

Josephus and the Temple in 70 AD

In *The Jewish War* (Book 7, Chapter 1), Josephus recounts the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD.

He states that the Temple was set on fire by the Romans under Titus's command, and that the fire spread, consuming the building. Josephus describes how the Temple, which was one of the most magnificent structures in the ancient world, was reduced to ashes. The temple's walls and other significant parts of the structure were destroyed. He also mentions that the Roman soldiers, driven by greed, attempted to get the gold that had melted and seeped into the cracks of the stone, leading them to dismantle the building stone by stone.

According to Josephus, people attempted to swallow gold to hide it from the Roman soldiers during the destruction of Jerusalem. In *The Jewish War* (Book 7, Chapter 8.), Josephus describes how, after the Temple was set on fire and looted, Roman soldiers became desperate to find any gold or valuables that might have been hidden within the Temple.

The intense heat from the fire caused gold to melt, and it seeped into the cracks between the stones. Soldiers then disassembled the stones in search of this gold. In the midst of the chaos, many Jewish people tried to swallow or conceal their gold, hoping to escape the Romans' greed.

Josephus points out a gruesome scene where some individuals swallowed gold to prevent it from being seized by the soldiers, and others were found with gold in their mouths or hidden in their bodies. This attempt to hide wealth ultimately led to tragedy, as the soldiers, in their search for any remaining valuables, would sometimes torture or kill the people in order to retrieve the gold.

This tragic scene describes the dangerous circumstances that people faced during the Roman siege and the destruction of the Temple. It also paints a picture of the brutality of the Roman conquest, as well as the human suffering caused by the desire for wealth.

Josephus reports that, when the Temple was completely destroyed, there was nothing left of it except for the western wall, which was left standing. This is often interpreted as the Western Wall (or Wailing Wall) that remains today.

Josephus does emphasize that the Romans left no stone unturned in their conquest of the sacred building. The statement that "not one stone was left upon another" comes from the New Testament (Matthew 24:2, Mark 13:2, Luke 21:6), and it's often associated with the prophecy of Jesus regarding the Temple's

destruction, which aligns with the catastrophic events described by Josephus.

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