

Study 41: The Song of Moses, Part 4 Deuteronomy 28-32

We are continuing our examination of Deuteronomy 32, the Song of Moses, and looking at how it found its fulfillment in the 1st Century AD, specifically, the generation to whom Jesus delivered His message. Before we go on, though, I want to deal with a question that sometimes arises regarding the use of historical sources *outside* the Bible.

If you've been here in the last few weeks, you know that we've been reading from the writings of the Jewish historian, Josephus. The question is sometimes asked, "Why do we have to look outside the Bible for proof of prophetic fulfillment? If a prophecy has been fulfilled, doesn't the Bible tell us that?"

The answer is: Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Let's look at a couple of examples:

Jeremiah prophesied about the Babylonian captivity. We can read about its fulfillment in such places as 2 Chron 36 and the books of Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

Jesus prophesied about the destruction of Jerusalem, but where do we read of the fulfillment of that prophecy?

Sometimes, sources outside of the Bible are simply "supporting evidence." At other times, though, they are primary sources. In the case of Jesus' prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction, we have no Scripture that says it was fulfilled. This is one piece of evidence that all the books of the New Testament were written *prior* to that event.¹ In spite of there being no biblical reference to this event taking place, we know that Jerusalem *was* destroyed. How do we know this? Because of witnesses external to the Bible, such as the writings of the Roman historian, Tacitus,² and the Jewish historian, Josephus.

We left off at:

**Deut 32 24 I will send wasting famine against them,
consuming pestilence and deadly plague [....]**

Vespasian and his son, Titus, came to Jerusalem with their legions of Roman troops. They surrounded the city again (remember that Cestius had done so previously), but this time the siege began and there was no more retreating of the Roman army. The siege began on **Passover** in AD 67. William Whiston (translator of Josephus' works) writes:

Here we see the true occasion of those vast numbers of Jews that were in Jerusalem during this siege by Titus, and perished therein; that the siege began at the feast of the passover, when such prodigious multitudes of Jews and proselytes...were come from all parts of Judea, and from other countries, in order to celebrate that great festival. As to the number that perished during this siege, Josephus assures us...they were 1,100,000, besides 97,000 captives [footnote *The Wars of the Jews* 5:3:1].

Because of the infighting of 3 factions within the city, the food supply, which Josephus says would've lasted them for many years, was burned up, and that started a famine (*The Wars of the Jews* 5:1:4). He writes:

Thus did the miseries of Jerusalem grow worse and worse every day, and the seditious were still more irritated by the **calamities** they were under, even while the **famine** preyed upon themselves, after it had preyed upon the people. And indeed

¹ See: *Redating the New Testament* by John A. T. Robinson (1976), available for download at <http://richardwaynegarganta.com/redating-testament.pdf>.

² In his *Histories*, Tacitus writes of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, though a section of his account is now missing. In 5:13, he cites some of the heavenly signs that preceded that destruction:

Prodigies had occurred, which this nation, prone to superstition, but hating all religious rites, did not deem it lawful to expiate by offering and sacrifice. There had been seen hosts [armies] joining battle in the skies, the fiery gleam of arms, the temple illuminated by a sudden radiance from the clouds. The doors of the inner shrine were suddenly thrown open, and a voice of more than mortal tone was heard to cry that the Gods were departing. At the same instant there was a mighty stir as of departure. Some few put a fearful meaning on these events, but in most there was a firm persuasion, that in the ancient records of their priests was contained a prediction of how at this very time the East was to grow powerful, and rulers, coming from Judaea, were to acquire universal empire. These mysterious prophecies had pointed to Vespasian and Titus, but the common people, with the usual blindness of ambition, had interpreted these mighty destinies of themselves, and could not be brought even by disasters to believe the truth.

the multitude of carcasses 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... [*The Wars of the Jews* 6:1:1].

Now the number of those that were carried captive during this whole war was collected to be ninety-seven thousand; as was the number of those that perished during the whole siege eleven hundred thousand, the greater part of whom were indeed of the same nation [with the citizens of Jerusalem], but not belonging to the city itself; for they were come up from all the country to the feast of unleavened bread, and were on a sudden shut up by an army, which, at the very first, occasioned so great a straitness among them, that there came a **pestilential** destruction upon them, and soon afterward such a **famine**, as destroyed them more suddenly [*The Wars of the Jews* 6:9:3].

Deut 32 25 In the street the sword will make them childless;
in their homes terror will reign.
The young men and young women will perish,
the infants and those with gray hair.

Josephus says:

It was then common to see cities filled with dead bodies, still lying unburied, and those of old men, mixed with infants all dead and scattered about together; women also lay amongst them, without any covering for their nakedness: you might then see the whole province full of inexplicable calamities, while the dread of still more barbarous practices which were threatened, was everywhere greater than what had been already perpetrated [*The Wars of the Jews* 2:18:2].

Deut 32 26 I said I would **scatter them**
and **erase their name from human memory**,
27 but I dreaded the taunt of the enemy,
lest the adversary misunderstand
and say, 'Our hand has triumphed;
the Lord has not done all this.'"

28 They are a nation without sense,
there is no discernment in them.
29 If only they were wise and would understand this
and discern **what their end will be!**
30 How could one man chase a thousand,
or two put ten thousand to flight,
unless their Rock had sold them,
unless the Lord had given them up?
31 For their rock is not like our Rock,
as even our enemies concede.
32 Their vine comes from the vine of **Sodom**
and from the fields of **Gomorrah**.
Their grapes are filled with poison,
and their clusters with bitterness.

Rev 11:8 says of the 2 witnesses: "Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called **Sodom** and Egypt—**where also their Lord was crucified.**"

Deut 32 33 Their wine is the venom of serpents,
the deadly poison of cobras.