

**The Economic Conditions of Judaea
after the Destruction of the
Second Temple**

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THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF JUDAEA AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE.

I. THE PLACES AND THE POPULATION OF JUDAEA PRESERVED AFTER THE YEAR 70.

JOSEPHUS, the contemporary historian of the Jewish war of the years 66-70, devoted a work of seven books to the events of that short period, and it should not be difficult to describe the condition in which the war left Judaea. Josephus seems rather anxious to register the rapid achievements of Vespasian, Titus, and their generals and officers, the Roman victories and the slaughter of thousands of Jews; an enumeration of all the places conquered or destroyed by the Romans could then reasonably be expected. Actually, however, the information from Josephus is rather fragmentary, though he describes the downfall of Jerusalem and reports the destruction of some parts of the trans-Jordanic country to Jericho in the western district, and in Judaea of the region from Antipatris southwards to beth-Gubrin.

1. From his fullness of material in these accounts the inference seems justified that whenever in a report of a campaign no destruction is mentioned, the towns and villages were spared by the Romans, probably in consequence of the early surrender of the defending Jews. This can be tested in his account of the way in which the Romans dealt with places on the main road from Caesarea, the residence of the governor and the starting-point of all military expeditions against Judaea, to Jerusalem, the centre of the Jewish rebellion. Owing to this geographical position Antipatris, Lydda, Emmaus, and beth-Horon had to

suffer the first blows of the Roman revenge, and Josephus described fully its details. At the beginning of the revolution in the autumn of the year 66, Cestius Gallus on his march from Caesarea against Jerusalem left Antipatris without inflicting any harm (*Wars*, II, 19, 1), but owing to the hostile military preparations of some Jews in a tower near Antipatris he burnt many villages. In Lydda, a Jewish town (*Philo*, *Legatio* 28), he found no man, for all had gone up to Jerusalem for the feast of Tabernacles, but he killed fifty persons and burnt the town. A part of his army marched against Joppé and slaughtered all its inhabitants, 8,400 men, women, and children, plundered the town and burnt it (II, 18, 10).¹ Early in the spring of the year 68 Vespasian marched from Caesarea to Antipatris, where he spent two days to settle the affairs of the town (IV, 8, 1). On the third day he marched on and destroyed by fire and arms all the places round about. Having subdued the whole district of Thamna, he marched on Lydda and Jamnia that very soon fell into his hands, and now received as inhabitants a suitable number of such Jews as had deserted from the rebels to the Romans. Thence he went to Emmaus, where he seized the defiles which led to Jerusalem; then he passed through the district of Bethleptephai, laying it and the neighbouring district waste by fire. These statements of Josephus show that Lydda and Jamnia had been in Roman possession from 66 or 67 and were populated with loyal Jews, and that Emmaus was not destroyed.

Again, Josephus reports (IV, 9, 1) that Vespasian built a fortified camp in Adida, where he placed Romans and

¹ It remained in this condition for two years, and only after the Roman conquest of Galilee some refugees began to rebuild it (III, 9, 2), but the Romans destroyed it utterly a second time (III, 9, 3). They placed there a garrison of foot and horsemen who plundered the neighbourhood of Joppé and destroyed the neighbouring villages and townlets (II, 9, 4) and turned the whole district into a real desert. Lydda must also have been rebuilt by the Jewish general appointed after Cestius's defeat by the revolutionists for Thamna including Lydda, Joppé, and Emmaus (II, 20, 4).

soldiers of his allies. He sent Lucius Annius with a squadron of horsemen and a great number of footmen against Gerasa. The town was taken at the first attack, all young men who had not escaped in time, numbering a thousand, were killed, their families were taken captive, and all property was plundered by the soldiers. After burning the town they turned against the neighbouring villages, where all fled, the weak were destroyed, and the abandoned places burnt. In this way the whole mountainous district and the whole plain were invaded by war. Gerasa cannot mean the Hellenistic city east of the Jordan, for it would not have been hostile to the Romans, but to the Jews. The term Oreiné and the immediate reference to the position of Jerusalem suggest that this Gerasa was in the mountains north or north-west of Jerusalem,¹ and we see the destruction of many places, but at the same time the escape of their inhabitants. In Sivan of the year 69 Vespasian marched from Caesarea to subdue all the districts of Judaea not yet conquered (IV, 9, 9). He went to the mountainous country, seized upon the district of Gofna and Akrobatene, then upon the smaller towns of Bethel and Ephraim, where he placed troops. Not one word suggests that these or other places in the district were destroyed, while the necessity of garrisons indicates the strategical importance of the towns, and also the presence of a Jewish population not quite to be trusted. Cerealis, the legate of the fifth legion stationed in Emmaus (IV, 8, 1), had to subdue Upper Idumaea, the southern part of Judaea. He burnt Kafethra and besieged Kafarabis, the inhabitants of which soon surrendered and were accepted (IV, 9, 9); this means the place was spared. East of the Jordan, Gadara, the important and fortified city and inhabited by many wealthy men, asked for and in time obtained a Roman garrison from Vespasian (IV, 7, 3). One of his officers,

¹ See Reland; Kohout, *Flavius Josephus*, 660, note 487, suggests Gazara, Gezer.