

Josephus

(Source materials for this lesson presented by Doug Sanders include the King James Bible; "The Antiquities of the Jews," book 8, chapter 8; book 18, chapter 5 & book 20; "Josephus," Collins English Dictionary; "Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary," Steve Mason (2000); and "Ancient Jewish History: The Great Revolt," Josephy Telushki; Jewish Virtual Library.)

Introduction

- (1) Titus Flavius Josephus.
- (2) First century Roman-Jewish historian.
- (3) One of Jerusalem's elite families.
- (4) Second-born son.
- (5) Descendant of the High Priest of Israel (Jonathon Appus).
- (6) Married a captured Jewish woman, whom he later divorced.

Josephus in the Nuremberg Chronicle

- (1) Pharisee
- (2) Military governor of Galilee
- (3) Negotiator during the Siege of Jerusalem (70 AD.)

Flavian Dynasty

- (1) Became a Roman slave but was granted his freedom.
- (2) Defected on the side of the Romans
- (3) Assumed the emperor's family name of Flavius.
- (4) Wrote all his known works at this time
- (5) Granted accommodations in Judea, and a pension.

The Jewish War

- (1) Josephus is the author of *The Jewish War*.
- (2) Divided into seven books (summary of Jewish history from 168 BC to the Siege of Masada in 74 AD).

The Antiquities of the Jews

- (1) His most famous work is *The Antiquities of the Jews*.
- (2) Twenty-one volumes (from the creation of Adam and Eve to the birth of Christianity in the first century.)

Testimony of Flavius Josephus

- (1) Books 18 and 20 of the Antiquities of the Jews (Josephus refers to Jesus Christ.)

Festus

- (1) Josephus is writing about Festus who, according to Acts chapter 24, had witnessed the Apostle Paul defending himself before King Agrippa.

"Antiquities," Book 18, Chapter 5

- (1) Imprisonment and death of John the Baptist:

Thomas Lodge's Josephus Translation

- (1) The works of Josephus were largely known in Europe only in an imperfect Latin translation.

Tacitus

- (1) Josephus is not alone.
- (2) Tacitus writes about Nero blaming the Christians following the Fire that consumed Rome.
- (3) The leader of the Christians was named Christus, the Christian title for Jesus.
- (4) Christus was executed under Pontius Pilate.
- (5) Christian movement spread from Judea to Rome itself.

Early Non-Christian Historians

- (1) They provide some of the earliest non-Christian references on the origin of Christianity, the execution of Jesus Christ, and the persecution of Christians in first century Rome.

"Antiquities," Book 8, Chapter 8

- (1) Josephus writes about the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Why Did He Become a Historian of the Jewish people?

- (1) Clearly: as a patrician of the Roman Emperor Titus, he did not have to work for the rest of his life.
- (2) Historian E. Mary Smallwood writes critically of Josephus (Queen's University, Belfast).
- (3) One motive suggested by historians is remorse.

What Is Your Motive?

- (1) Is it wrong to search for physical proof of Bible stories and names?
- (2) No.
- (3) In 2016, there were 34 active excavations under the direction of the Israel Antiquities Authority.
- (4) Since the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, this independent government agency is responsible for regulating excavations, conservations, and research of relics from Israel's long history.
- (5) The Pilate Stone.
- (6) Dead Sea Scrolls

What Is Your Motive?

- (1) Do you want to learn more about the Bible?
- (2) Noah's Ark?
- (3) Ark of the Covenant?
- (4) Shroud of Turin?

Pollina, Sicily

- (1) For centuries, scholars have debated the origins of manna, the food that the OT says God provided for the Israelites during their wanderings in the Wilderness.

Naturalistic Manna

- (1) There are naturalistic forms of manna found in modern day Sicily, where current cultivation is limited to a very small group of farmers.

John 20:29 (KJV)

- (1) By faith, we believe that God sent manna from Heaven to the Children of Israel.
- (2) The Apostle Thomas did not have that kind of faith until he touched the wounded body of the resurrected Jesus Christ.

What Happens When Christ is not the Foundation?

- (1) By faith, we believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the church.
- (2) Look what happens when he is not (Read Off Screen).

Acts 17:22-23

- (1) The Apostle Paul found a city filled with the worship of pagan gods in Athens, Greece.

Study Like the Bereans

- (1) When Paul traveled back and forth through the Roman province of Macedonia, he found the Jews more teachable in Berea than those in Thessalonica.
- (2) These cities were 50 miles apart.
- (3) Yet Paul wanted as much distance as possible because the Jews in Thessalonica wanted to kill him.
- (4) They were jealous because of his success in the Lord's vineyard in Berea.

Berea, Greece

- (1) We need to be like the mindset of those in Berea.
- (2) The NT says they possessed a teachable attitude toward the Bible.
- (3) They were willing to spend the time verifying what was taught by Paul against what was written in the Scriptures.
- (4) (As a result) Jews were baptized, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men in Berea.

Invitation