**Page 391 §246.21** (<GM 384.7-9, 17-19, 385.24-386.13, 24)

Blocking the passages of their privy parts with bitter vetch, and driving sharp stakes up the **{T392}** wretches’ fundaments, they forced them to reveal a concealed handful of barley. They even chewed shreds of grass. Mothers watched babes in their arms wither from the famine, and went out of their minds as they were reduced by starvation and died before their eyes. Every house, full of corpses and stench, cast a painful pestilence. And the famine consumed more than the war. For what remained uneaten?

**The woman who ate her child**

At the time there was a rich noblewoman, Maria by name, who had fled from the countryside into the city. After everything she possessed[[1]](#footnote-1) was stolen by the gangs, she killed the child she had at the breast, cooked it and ate one half; **{B376}** the other half she left and stored. But the gangs smelled the smell of cooked flesh, broke in and threatened to kill her if she did not show them where [it was hidden]. Bringing out the remains of the child, she said, ‘Eat you my own true child, which is now most wretched, because I too have eaten. Do not be more feeling than me who gave it birth. But if you turn away in revulsion, leave the rest of it for me.’ Seeing and hearing this, they slapped their faces and left trembling. Thus the baby that came out blessedly from the belly returned accursedly into the same stomach. This too had been recorded as a sign of God’s fury.[[2]](#footnote-2)

With intense fighting going on around the enclosure, a violent storm came down in between the two sides. It accurately guided the arrows shot by the Romans against them, but it blew sideways those sent by the Jews. Observing that their eyes were blinded by the storm, the Romans climbed up without being detected and set about slaying them savagely.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**The destruction of Jerusalem**

**246:2** After two years **{T393}** Titus captured Jersualem and by fire reduced the entire city to ashes, including the temple that was within. That was when the anointed and judgement were truly destroyed, and total desolation befell her, that is, she reaped the harvest of her unfaithfulness — utter destruction and complete desolation. And what point is there for me to say more? The well-known Josephus, a man dedicated to the truth, a participant in the war and present at the destruction, talks about this. Anyone reading him will learn more clearly. He says that the people [inside the city] numbered three **{B377}** hundred thousand, including women and children, while he wrote that one hundred and ten thousand men perished in the famine and in fighting among themselves and in the underground caverns in which they voluntarily shut themselves and killed each other. And he[[4]](#footnote-4) commanded that those who were tall and particularly good looking be taken to Rome for the triumph and animal fights; of the rest, some of those older than seventeen to be sent in chains to the mines in Egypt, while most to be sent away to the provinces, to be killed by the sword and wild animals in the theatres; and those under seventeen to be taken prisoner and sold — the number of just the latter is reckoned at ninety thousand males.

**Other events around the same time**

**247.1** They say that, at that time, there was such a plague[[5]](#footnote-5) in Rome that over ten thousand died every day for many days.

They say that, at that time, the Rhodians erected a colossal bronze column to Zeus, one hundred and twenty-seven feet high.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**247.2** After the conquest of Jerusalem, Symeon [son] of Kleopas succeeded to the see of Jerusalem.

**Nero**

**247.3** This Nero, filled with insane mania, killed his mother and sister and wife and all his relatives and most of the **{T394}** most noble Romans. Because of his shameful and licentious life a bolt of lightning fell on him while he was at table, and immediately some people in high places attacked him **{B378}** with the aim of killing him. But he begged whose who were with him to kill him. As no one rose to do this, he said. ‘I alone have neither a friend to save me nor an enemy to kill me. My soul wants to die and my hand won’t do my bidding.’ In the end he said, ‘O Zeus, what a skilled lyre player is lost,’ and killed himself. When he died, some people wore caps as if they were being set free. Concerning whom Balbios, one of his servants, when asked by Nero at the time of the attack against him, if he ‘too were against me?’ Balbios said, ‘I have loved you and I have hated you more than anyone else has. I loved you hoping that you would be a good emperor, but I hate you for doing these things. I am not able to serve a charioteer or a hunter or a lyre player.’

**Cincinnatus** (<PsS)

**247.4** During Nero’s reign, Lucius Quintus Ci[n]cinnatus proved to be an excellent consul. The senate sent people to get him to take up the office. At the time he was working the soil in preparation for planting, following the oxen without his toga, wearing a cloth around his waist and a cap on his head. Someone ran ahead and bade him make himself more presentable; he went into the hut and came out dressed properly. They greeted him as consul and robed him in the purple-edged toga. But he stopped for a moment and shed a tear, saying, ‘Will my field be unplanted this year, and will we be in danger of not having anything with which to feed ourselves?’

**Indiction and taxes** (< Lydus)

**248** The name of the yearly cycle in Latin **{B379}** means the ‘announcement’, for the beginning proclaims the period, and this is the ‘indiction’. The Greek language established *epinemesis* as the corresponding term. For in the old days taxes were not assigned to subjects at a fixed and unalterable level, but rather the level of crop production humanely determined the amount to be collected: the burden became lighter when production was meagre, when production was plentiful **{T395}** it did not become heavier, rather the appropriate amount was painlessly apportioned among the tax-payers, and then only when necessity called. When there was no pressing need, tax was not collected at all, rather but the whole of the farmers’ labour became their profit.

**Galba**

**249** Galba reigned nine months and thirteen days. He was of a noble family, and he had Otho co-ruling. Who, seeing Galba adopting Lucius, grew jealous and, attacking with the army, slew him. When Otho had the money demanded of him by the soldiers, which he had promised them, he said, ‘The emperor should not be forced.’

**Otho** (<SLog)

**250** Otho reigned for three months and eight days. He was from an obscure family. While sacrificing one day in the temple, he mixed up the songs of Aphrodite with the sacred songs, and for this reason when Vitelius rebelled against him he slew himself with a dagger, saying, ‘Why do I have to sing and play the long pipes?’

**Vitellius**

**251** Witelius or Vitelius one year. He was of a famous family. It was he who commanded all astrologers and astronomers and magicians to leave Italy by a set date. They cast **{B380}** his horoscope, predicting that he would released from life by a set date. Which, indeed, happened; for he was slain by soldiers.

**Vespasian** **{T396}**

**252** Vespasian the son of Nero reigned for ten years and eight days. He become emperor in Palestine while still laying siege to the cities of the Jews. He made the author Josephus his servant. He went to Rome after he was proclaimed emperor by the army, leaving behind his son Titus to besiege Palestine. In the first year of Vespasian’s reign the temple of the Capitol was burned, and it began to be built by him in his fifth year.

**Titus**

**253.1** After Vespasian Titus, his son, reigned for three years.

**253.2** He besieged Jerusalem and burned both the city and the temple, as Josephus records.

**253.3** He terrified his officials with threats but not wth punishments. While he was emperor not a day went past when he did not give some gift or benefit to one of his subjects. For he used to say that beneficence and responsiveness to petitions were the mark of an emperor. With all who approached him seeking something, he agreed to whatever they wanted. And when one of his close associates asked, ‘Why do you do this when often you do not keep your promises?’, Titus said, ‘Nobody should be sent away from an emperor looking downcast.’

**253.4** (<GM) Titus had travelled all day in high summer, was burnt by the sun and had become very faint, and was bleeding from the nostrils; **{B381}** his brother Domitian put him, still breathing, in a wooden casket full of snow, allegedly in order to cure him, and killed him.

**253.5** For the wonderful Titus was most philosophical and eloquent and soldierly and restrained. Endowed with great benevolence and wisdom and justice and moderation, **{T397}** he made his empathy more evident to all in the conquest of Jerusalem. He intensely mourned the God-hounded Jews at that time, and indeed wept seeing the holy temple on fire. And he entreated God to win pity and forgivenness, as these things did not take place by his choice but on account of their hateful petulance. Which is why, after the conquest, before those who were proclaiming him victor and triumphant he deflected their acclamations, saying that it was not he who accomplished these things but that he had served as an instrument of God’s furious wrath. From then on he became universally honoured and loved for his virtue and humility, and thus he died. At his death such grieving gripped Rome that for a long time those remembering him and recalling his virtues wept openly and in private, as though each and every one of them were suffering from a personal loss.

**Titus deified**

**254** In his second year there was a huge fire in Rome. And after a vote of the senate, Titus was proclaimed a god.

**Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem** (<GM)

This Titus captured Jerusalem in two years and burned **{B382}** and destroyed it, as was said [above],[[7]](#footnote-7) and he burned the temple in accordance with the Lord’s prediction. For when the disciples said of the temple that it was decorated with beautiful stones and offerings, he said,

All these things that you see, there will come days when there will not be left one stone upon another, that is not torn down. [Ml 13:2] When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, know then that her desolation is near. [Lk 21:20] Woe to those who are pregnant and those who are breastfeeding in those days. For there will be great distress and wrath on this people, and they **{T397}** will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive to all the nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are completed. Mk 13:19, Mt 24:21] And there will be tribulation such as has never happened before nor in the future.

**The Jews forever cursed** (<GM)

The Jews, enemies of their own lives, suffered all these things when they were overcome by the Romans, for they had rejected Christ the king of the universe and impiously embraced the kingdom of the Romans, crying out, ‘We have no king, if not Caesar,’ [Jn 19:15] and, ‘The blood of Christ upon us and upon our children.’ [Mt 27:25] Wherefore until the consummation [of the world] their children shall have the diaspora and hardship among the nations, like run-away slaves who deserve a whipping, unable to perform their obligations under the Law. Having them as their subjects, the Romans do not allow them to exercise their rights because they willingly embraced their slavery when they said, ‘We have no king but Caesar,’ and, ‘If we do not kill the Christ, all will believe in him and **{B383}** the Romans will come and take away our land and our nation.’ [Jn 11:48] Indeed, they prophesied unwittingly. For the nations did believe in Him, and they [the Jews] were deprived of their power and their worship by the Romans, and they are prevented from killing whomever they wish and from sacrificing whenever they want. In this way they are accursed, and unable to do what has been commanded to them. For it says,

‘Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all the things written down in the book of the Law, to perform them.’ [Gal 3:10]

For it is impossible for them, scattered among the Gentiles, to perform all that the law prescribes and the worship that is restricted to a single place, as Moses commanded by the word of the Lord. **{T399}**

**Florilegium of Old Testament *testimonia* on the end of Jerusalem** (<GM)

**255.1** So what do you have to say in the face of these things, O Jews? And what is the cause of such great evils like these that have overcome you? Do you realize that the reason you have rightly sufferred these things, and still suffer without mercy, is that you have offended not a fellow slave but God?

For Isaiah, speaking in the name of God, said of you, ‘I gave birth to sons and raised them, but they have put me aside.’ [Is 1:2] ‘And what shall I do for my vineyard, that I have not already done for it? Because I expected it to produce grapes, but it produced thorns.’ [Is 5:4] ‘And I expected justice but it produced lawlessness, and not righteousness but a cry of outrage.’ [Is 5:7] What thorns does he talk about, and what lawlessness and outrage? Or does it mean those with which you crowned him during his passion, lawlessly crying out, ‘Away with him, away with him, crucify **{B384}** him.’ [Jn 19:15] And also through Jeremias, ‘My inheritance has become to me like a lion in the forest. She has roared against me, and and therefore I have come to hate her.’ [Jer 12:8] And Solomon says, ‘Go forth, daughters of Sion, and see with what crown his mother has crowned him on the day of his wedding.’ [Song 3:11] He calls the assembly of the Jews his mother in the flesh: for he says, ‘My flesh is from them.’ [Hos 9:12] ‘The day of his wedding’, is the day that he married the church of the nations. And that foolish assembly, having placed a crown of thorns on His head, mocked him saying, ‘Hail, king of the Jews.’ [Mt 27:29; Mk 15:18; Jn 19:3] Addressing whom Isaiah said more forcefully, ‘Against whom have you jested? And against whom have you loosened your tongue, you offspring of perdition and seed of impiety?’ [Is 57:4] Wherefore the Lord Himself through the prophet Hosea said angrily, ‘Woe to them, for they have broken away from me. They are cowards, because they have sinned against me and devised evil against me.’ [Hos 7:13] ‘And because of this Israel is swallowed up, and come to naught, and is like a **{T400}** useless vessel among the nations.’ [Hos 8:8] And through Jeremiah he again says, ‘Your apostasy will punish you, and your wickedness condemn you, and you will see that your forsaking me is to your bitter sorrow.’ [Jer 2:19]

**David cursed the Jews**

And the holy David, as though incensed at you, even uttered curses to the angry[[8]](#footnote-8) Lord, saying, ‘May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs forever bent. Pour out Your anger upon them, and let the wrath of Your anger **{B385}** overtake them.’ [Ps 69:23-24] And, ‘Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let them not enter into Your righteousness. Let them be erased from the book of the living, and let them not be recorded among the righteous.’ [Ps 69:27-28] And, ‘Scatter them in your power, and bring them down, O Lord my protector … In their pride let them be caught in your consuming wrath and let them not exist. And let them know that the God of Jacob rules even unto the ends of the earth. [Ps 58:12-14]

**Moses criticized the Jews**

Similarly God-seeing Moses pilloried you as loathsome and mindless and ungrateful, saying. ‘Reprehensible children, a crooked and warped generation, is this how you repay the Lord? This people is foolish and not wise. Did he not, your father, create you and make you and form you?’ [Dt 32:5-6] And thereinafter God reasonably says, ‘I said, “I will scatter them, I will erase remembrance of them from mankind.”’ [Dt 32:26] And indeed the noble Jeremias, making it very clear who this is who sufferred these things at your hands, says, ‘The breath before your faces, the anointed Lord, was caught in your corruption, of Whom we said, “We will live[[9]](#footnote-9) in His shadow among the nations”.’ [Lam 4:20][[10]](#footnote-10) Again, Solomon explicitly and openly declared the same sort of thing, speaking in the name of you God-fighters:

Therefore let us lie in wait for the righteous one, because he is beyond our control and opposes our operations and reproaches us for sins against the law and he declares that he has knowledge of God **{T401}** and calls himself the child of the Lord. **{B386}** He has come among us to refute our ideas, and for us it is unbearable just to see him. His style of life is unlike that of others, and his ways are different. We are regarded by him as frauds, and he avoids our ways like the plague. He declares the end of the righteous to be blessed, and boasts that God is his father. Let us see if his words are true and use the end of his life as the test; for if he is righteous and a son of God, He will assist him and protect him from the hands of those who stand against him. Let us test him with verbal and physical abuse so that we may know his meekness and prove his patient endurance. Let us condemn him to a shameful death and we will see if God will come[[11]](#footnote-11) to him as he said. [Wisd. 2:12-20]

And he added, with great scorn for their irrationality and hostility, ᾽This is what they thought, and they were deluded. Their evil has blinded them, and they did not recognize the mysterias of God’ [Wisd. 2:21] And the oracular Isaiah lamented them in similar tones, saying, ‘Woe to their soul, because they have devised an evil plan against themselves saying, “Let us bind the righteous one, for he is beyond our control”.’ [Is 3:9-10] So the cause of your alienation from God and his abandonment of you, and of your continuous and endless suffering, is demonstrated most clearly — should you be willing to listen and learn.

**The Babylonian captivity and rebuilding of the temple**

**255.2** And concerning your captivity in Babylon, the prophets spoke of a specified duration and indeed foretold the return and the building of the city. For you heard Jeremias telling you, ‘Because of the sins **{B387}** that you sinned against God, you will be led as prisoners to Babylon by Nabuchodonosor the king of Babylon. Once you arrive in Babylon, you will be there for 70 years. After this I will lead you away from there in peace, says the Lord.’ [Bar 6:1-2][[12]](#footnote-12) And again, ‘And they will be slaves among the gentiles for 70 years, and when the 70 years have been completed, I will restore Israel to its land, says the Lord.’ [Jer 25:11-13][[13]](#footnote-13)

And of **{T402}** the building of the city Isaiah says, ‘Thus says the Lord to my anointed Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, that nations might be obedient before him [Is 45:1] … he shall build my city and shall reverse the captivity of my people.’ [Is 45:13]

Of the building Haggai too says, ‘In the second year under Darius [Hg 1:1] … the Lord spoke to me, saying, “Speak to Zorobabel and Joshua the priest and to all the remnants of the people, saying, “Who is there among you who saw this house in its former glory? Does it not now seem like nothing to you? But now be strong, Zorobabel and Joshua and all the people, and build the house. [Hg 2:2-4] And I will be glorified in it, and the last glory of this house will be superior to its first’, says the Lord”.’ [Hg 2:9]

**The temple will not be rebuilt**

Just as Solomon was the builder of the first building of the temple, so Zorobabel was the builder of the second and last. For Zacharias says, ‘The hands of Zorobabel laid the foundations of this house, and his hands will complete it.’ [Zec 4:9] Therefore, if it was going to be raised again, the prophet would have said, ‘And the last glory of this house will be superior to what there was earlier.’ In saying, ‘superior to the first’, **{B388}** he indicated that the second was the last and final. For just as there is there is none before the first, so there is none later than the last. So that if he had said, ‘the second [will be] superior to the first’, it would be logical to expect a third building; but if he called the second the last, he obviously intimated that it was the final building of both the city and the temple. And you are deluded in vain, O Jews, in your earnest expectation of their restoration after their demolition by Vespasian and Titus.

But also the holy psalmist David says, before these events, while speaking in the persona of the captivity, ‘By the river of Babylon, there we sat down and wept as we remembered Sion’, [Ps 136:1] and, ‘because those that took us captive asked us about the words of our songs, and those who abducted us about our hymns.’ [Ps 136:3] And concerning the city he adds elsewhere, ‘When the Lord builds Jerusalem he will gather together the dispersed of Israel.’ [Ps 146:2] And again, in the persona of the people he says, ‘When **{T403}** the Lord reverses the captivity of His people, Jacob will rejoice and and Israel will be gladdened.’ [Ps 52:7] Wherefore you are very deluded, knowing neither the Scriptures nor the mystical and divinely inspired prophecy in them.

With respect to this last captivity, God did not specify a duration nor did the prophets declare a restoration, but rather all the prophets foretold the captivity and the termination of your kingdom and the desolation of the city, and in no way the return and the rebuilding of the city but rather its total obliteration and your ruination and **{B389}** continuous punishment and dispersal among all the gentiles. For the archangel says to Daniel, ‘The anointing will be annihilated, and judgement will not exist, and with the leader who is coming he will destroy the city and the sanctuary, and they will be cut off as in a flood,’ and, ‘the sacrifice and libation will be taken away, and on the temple [there will be] the abomination of desolation, an end will be given.’ [Dn 9:26-27] Now, by ‘anointing’ he referred to the priesthood, and by ‘judgement’ he indicated the kingdom and the civil regime, and the taking away of all the other things, while by the ‘flood’ and the ‘cutting off’ and the ‘end’ he meant the utter loss and total destruction. So, O blind Jew, when you hear ‘end’, why do you look forward to another [temple]? If when you read you do not see — just as you also really do not see with respect to your unexpected recall, and because of this you fight against the truth and do not comprehend — hearken unto the voices of the prophets in this excursus and henceforth cease being argumentative and stupid.

The prophet Hosea speaks thus: ‘And I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel’, [Hos 1:4] and, ‘ “I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel but I will array Myself against them’, says the Lord”,’ [Hos 1:6] and, ‘ “I hated them because of the wickedness of their deeds, and I will cast them out of my house. And I will no longer love them,” says the Lord. Ephraim damaged his roots and withered, and will no longer **{T404}** bear fruit’, and, ‘God will reject them because they did not listen to Him, and they shall be wanderers among the nations.’ [Hos 9:15-17] And Malachi also said, ‘I am not **{B390}** pleased with you, says the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept an offering from your hands, because from the rising of the sun unto its setting my name will be glorified among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered in my name and a pure offering. Because My name is great among the nations, says the Lord Almighty. But you profane it’. [Mal 1:10-12] For this reason I will give you reduced to nothingness and cast aside to all the nations, in return for you not observing My commandments. [Mal 2:9] Wherefore Jeremias says, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says. Behold, I have sworn by My great name, My name shall no longer be named in any mouth of Judah’. [Jer 51:26] If he said that he will strip His name from the Jews, it is obvious [that he will also strip] the Law and the offerings.[[14]](#footnote-14)

So the earlier legislation about offerings was not given in accordance with God’s wishes; and after these things he from then on said through the prophets:

* ‘Who sought these things from your hands?’ [Is 1:12] and,
* ‘Do prayers and meat take way your sins?’, [Jer 11:15][[15]](#footnote-15)
* ‘Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings in the desert for forty years?’, [Am 5:25] and
* ‘Why do you bring Me incense from Sheba or cinnamon from a distant land?’ [Jer 6:20]
* For this reason he says, ‘You did not want sacrifice and burnt offering,’ [Ps 39:7] and
* ‘Does God want burnt offerings and sacrifices or obedience to Him, and obedience is better than sacrifice’. [1 Kgs 15:22] And,
* ‘Had you wanted sacrifice, I would have given [it]’, and ‘You will not delight in burnt offerings’. [Ps 50:18]
* And rejecting even the festivals **{B391}** he adds, ‘I hate, I reject your festivals’ [Am 5:21]
* ‘Take away from Me the noise of your songs, and I will not listen even to the music of your harps’ [Am 5:23] and
* ‘I cannot bear the great day, my soul hates [your] fasting and rest from work’ [Is 1:13-14] and
* ‘I have not **{T405}** chosen this fast.’ [Is 58:5] And
* ‘I will give you commands that are not good, in which you shall not live.’ [Ez 20:25]

So therefore it was absolutely according to the hardness of your hearts and not [your] goodness that he gave you those commands, and there will be no change.

**Israel turned from God and its punishment was prophesied**

**255:3** So since Israel long ago became hard of heart and exceedingly ungrateful and, abandoning God who really is and pre-exists, who created it and bestowed upon it benificence of many kinds and in many ways, it distanced itself totally from God its saviour and sacrificed its sons and daughters to the demons; and having worshipped and made obeisance to creation rather than to the creator, saying to stone and wood, ‘You are my god and you gave me birth’, wretched and senseless it did not shrink in horror from denying the living and true God who begat it or from putting out of its mind the God who nurtured it. Wherefore, indeed, God thenceforth became sorely vexed with it as being useless and irremediable and he turned completely away, saying through the great David, ‘And my people did not hear my voice, and Israel was not heeding me, / and I sent them away to make their way according to their hearts’ devisings’ [Ps 81:11-12]. Similarly, through Zachariah he said, ‘And Ι said, I will not shepherd them, but let the dying die, and the perishing perish and, for the rest, let each eat **{B392}** the flesh of the one next to him’ [Zec 11:9]. And having thus shown itself to be detestable and corrupt and totally loathsome through their most wicked devisings, hateful to God, it was in the end naturally and most justly defeated and abandoned, again as the divine Malachi says: ‘Israel has fallen, and shall not rise again. [Am 5:1]

Thus Isaiah too says, ‘Who will have pity on you, Israel,[[16]](#footnote-16) … or who will return you to peace? … says the lord. … you will go backwards and I will reach out my **{T406}** hand and destroy you and scatter you and I will no longer leave you be,’ [Jer 15:5–6] /190/

and, ‘ behold, I take hold of you and smite you and the city, which I gave to you … and I will give you everlasting reproach and everlasting dishonour, which will not be forgotten.’ [Jer 23:39-40]

So with the great Moses, again speaking for God, as well as the inspired Ezekiel and Jeremiah who came after him, forecasting[[17]](#footnote-17) the terrible and awful events of this last and final destruction, these things have been made both very obvious and extremely clear to everyone, even to the most unskilled layman. For Moses says in *Deuteronomy*:

The Lord will bring nations against you from far away, from the end of the earth, like an eagle swooping down … / … and a shameless-looking nation, … // and they will press you in all your cities until your lofty fortified walls in which you placed your trust are brought down … / And you will eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of your sons and daughters … // … because there will have been nothing left for you in your dire straits and suffering, the suffering your enemy will inflict on you in all your cities. / Even the most gentle and sensitive woman among you … / will in secret eat the afterbirth from her thighs and the child she has given birth to **{B393}** because of the lack of everything in those straits and suffering … // And you will become a conundrum and a byword, the object of tales among all the nations where the Lord will lead you away to, until he destroys you. // And you will be left few in number, instead of being you who were like the stars of heaven in your multitude, and you did not hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God. / In the same way as the Lord was gladdened with you, so will he destroy you, and you will be uprooted from that good land … / and the Lord God will scatter you among all nations, from one edge of the earth even to the other edge of the earth. But even among **{T407}** those nations he will not give you repose, nor will there be rest for the soles of your feet. And the Lord God will give you a despondant heart, failing eyes, and a pining heart, / … and you will be in fear day and night and … / because of the dread in your heart, in the morning you will say, ‘If only it were evening!’ and in the evening, ‘If only it were morning!’ [Dt 28:49-50 // 52-53 // 55-57 // 37 // 62-67]

And Ezechiel said:

… the Lord Adonai says this: ‘Lo, I am against you, Jerusalem, and I will inflict punishment on you in the sight of the nations, / and I will do to you what I have never done before and will never do the like again because of all your abominations. / Because of this, in your midst fathers will eat their children, and the children will eat their fathers. I will inflict punishments on you and will scatter all your survivors to every wind, / … because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your outrages, and I will reject you… and I will no longer pity you. / A quarter of you will be consumed by plague, **{B394}** and a quarter of you will perish from hunger in your sight, in your midst, and a quarter will fall by the sword outside your walls, and a quarter of you I will scatter to every wind … // Outside war and the sword, inside famine and plague will destroy … / Some of those who survive will be killed. // And I will spare a few of them from the sword, famine and plague, so that they may tell of all their sins in detail among the gentiles, and they will know that it is I the Lord who smites.’ [Ez 5:8–12 // 7:15 // 12:16]

And indeed for this reason the holy Chrysostom says, ‘He does not slay them all at once, but scatters them.’ Foretelling the same, the divine David said to him, ‘Do not kill them’, that is, all of them, ‘but scatter’, some of them in all directions, ‘in your might.’ [Ps 58:12]

**The prophecies were fulfilled and will continue to be fulfilled**

**255:4**  And about His second coming and manifestation, and of their great and inconsolable suffering, Zachariah said: ‘Then the Lord our God will arrive, and there will be great **{T408}** weeping in Jerusalem’ [Zec 12:11] ‘for they will look upon what they pierced’ [Zec 12:10],

this is, in which nails they fixed; he did not say, ‘whom they pierced’, but ‘upon what they pierced’. What is this ‘upon what’? That upon which they pierced was a cross. For prior to the terrible coming of the Lord, in accordance with common practice, as a royal standard, the so-called *signum*, it precedes the coming of Christ, and it is glorified and joyfully heralded by the angels. And the cross will appear from the earth, hiding the sun and making the moon dim, as the Lord says, ‘then the sign of the son of God will appear in the sky’ [Mt 24:30][[18]](#footnote-18)

And so that the words of Zachariah might be fulfilled, Christ took this saying and turned it into the truth, saying **{B395}** ‘then they will look upon what they pierced’ [Jn 19:37].

And Jeremiah similarly avers:

Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘See, I will bring down evils on this place, such that the ears of everyone who hears of them will both reverberate, / because they deserted me and made this an alien place … // And I will slaughter the plans of Judah and the plans of Israel in this place, and will bring them down by the sword before their enemies … and I will give their corpses as food to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth. / And I will assign this city to extermination and to eternal derision, that all who pass by it will be amazed and frown and shake their heads at the extent of its wound [Jer 19:3-4 // 7-8].

And, ‘Like a sirocco I will scatter them in front of their enemies, and I will show them a day of disaster. // And they will eat the flesh of their sons and daughters, and each of them will eat the flesh of the one close to him in the confinement and in the siege in which **{T409}** their enemies will besiege them [Jer 18:17 // 19:9]. And,‘I will shatter this people and this city like an earthenware jar that cannot be made whole again. / Thus will I do, says the Lord, in this place and to those dwelling in it, so this city is made like that which perishes,[[19]](#footnote-19) // and I will give it over to scattering around all the kingdoms of the earth, and they will be a reproach and a byword and an object of hatred and cursing there in every place to which I shall banish them [Jer 19:11–12 // 24:9].

So what could be more expressive or true than these divine words? See now, you mindless and irrational Jew, whether **{B396}** all of these are fulfilled without exception in accordance with the holy prophecies with respect to you. And indeed also the things that were foretold and threatened by Christ. For of Jerusalem and the temple within it he says, ‘there shall not remain a stone upon a stone’ [Mt 24:2, Mk 13:2. Lk 21:6]. Did any remain? Certainly not. And, ‘behold, your house is left desolate’ [Mt 23:38, Lk 13:35]. Did it not become desolate? Very much so. And, ‘There will be tribulation such as has never happened before’ [Mt 24:21]

Did this not happen? Read Josephus’ history, a man who was a Jew and a lover of the truth, who was not able even to breathe when merely hearing what the wretched Jews suffered at that time because of their madness and rage against Christ. So that none of the Jews might disbelieve, the truth prepared not a foreigner but someone of the same race and a keen follower of the same faith to describe in tragic detail those piteous and indescribable sufferings. They were subject to such a divinely-driven siege that the whole of time has not seen since mankind came to be on the earth. And rightly so: for as long as they sinned against their fellow slaves, they met with forgivenness, but when they sinned against the master of all, they were punished as unpardonable.

And that it was Christ who did these things to them, listen again to Him speaking through a parable: ‘bring here those who did not want **{T410}** me to reign over them and slaughter them’ [Lk 19:27]. For which reason he said to them, ‘the kingdom shall be taken away from you and given to a nation that brings forth its fruits’ [Mt 21:43]. And to Jerusalem he says, ‘For days will come **{B397}** upon you, and your enemies shall surround you with a trench, and encircle you, and confine you on all sides, / and they will dash your children within you to the ground’ [Lk 19:43–44]. And to the recalcitrant Jews he adds, saying: ‘Behold, your house is left desolate’ [Mt 23:38, Lk 13:35]. Which, indeed, the divine Daniel also stated in anticipation: ‘by the leader who is coming he will destroy both the city and the temple’ [Dn 9:26], that is, God the father will overturn all the things of the Jews that are honoured and hold sacred, but also will Christ the son who is looked forward to by them as redeemer and saviour. For he did not say, ‘The city and the temple will be destroyed by the leader’, as some incorrectly think, but ‘The father will destroy the temple and the city’, that is, with the active involvement of the leader maltreated by them, of whom Jacob says to Bethlehem, ‘From you will come a leader’ [Mt 2:6], and so on. And indeed, to the apostles also he spoke thus: ‘when you see the abomination of desolation … standing in a holy place — let the reader understand’ [Mt 24:15]. Which was actually fulfilled, first at the time of the siege and desolation, in both the Roman army, which entered the sanctuary and captured the city during its desolation, as some have understood the word ‘abomination’ — they being repulsive and abominable according to the law were fittingly spoken of in advance as an abomination of desolation — and later in the statue of himself that the Emperor Hadrian set up and he reduced the city to total desolation.

And indeed Theodoret again says in his commentary on Daniel:

‘sacrifice and libation will be taken away in the middle of the hebdomad, and **{T411}** on the temple **{B398}** the abomination of desolation … a consummation will be given to the desolation’ [Dn 9:27] // certain images of Caesar, prohibited by law, brought into the temple […] [by] Pilate […] // and lest the Jews imagine they will will again regain the temple [and the city and the kingdom, the prophet] adds, ‘and not until the consummation of time will a consummation be given to desolation’ [Dn 9:27]. For the consummation of desolation remains until the consummation of the world, he says, undergoing no change. And David said as much: ‘In a fury of consummation, and they shall not survive; and they will know that God rules Jacob and the ends of the earth’ [Ps 58:14].[[20]](#footnote-20)

For concerning this final captivity of the wretched Jews, the Theologian[[21]](#footnote-21) also had this to say:

… with the cross helping to drive them to their final insanity, which they contrived against our God and Saviour, not recognizing the God-in-man, and they brought down upon themselves the *rod of iron* [Ps 2:9] that had long threatened them (I refer to the imperial government that now holds sway, // and their final abduction and migration, and the yoke of slavery that now lies upon them, and their notorious humiliation by the Romans [and their diaspora, which they now have and which they will have for much longer, for I am persuaded by the prophecies about them] […] who of those skilled in composing laments will lament them as they deserve and match words to their sufferings? Which books can accommodate these things? There is one monument to them of their disaster, the whole world, around which they have been scattered, and their worship ceased, and the scarcely recognizable ground of Jerusalem itself …

Josephus, **{B399}** who was present in Jerusalem during the war, wrote that threee million Jews perished.[[22]](#footnote-22) We have given an account of these things in more detail under the reign of Nero.

1. Reading πᾶσα ... ἡ περιουσία. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Leviticus 26.29: ‘Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Reading ἐντόνως for the hapax ἐκτόνως. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. According to Josephus, it was Fronto who made these decisions. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Reading λοιμὸς for λιμὸς, as Synk 417. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Synk 417 p. 494 n.3: confused with a colossus set up in Rome. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ked 376.17. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Perhaps τὸν παροινηθέντα κύριον is a reference to God waking like a powerful man with a hangover: Ps 77(78):65: καὶ ἐξηγέρθη ὡς ὁ ὑπνῶν κύριος ὡς δυνατὸς κεκραιπαληκὼς ἐξ οἴνου. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. T supplies ζησόμεθα. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. For διαφοραῖς reading διαφθοραῖς with Τ, GM 390.23 and LXX. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Literally, a ‘visitation’ [from God]; cf. Lk 19:44. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. For ’70 years’ the LXX has ἔτη πλείονα καὶ χρόνον μακρὸν ἕως γενεῶν ἑπτά. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Jer 25:11-13 ends with Babylon punished rather than Israel restored. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The next twelve biblical quotations occur in the same sequence in Chrysostom’s *Commentary* on Psalm 43 [see ChrysostomMontfaucont5.pdf p. 179] and GM 395.5-396.4, except that in Chrys. the order of the fifth and the last part of the sixth are reversed, and both GM and Chrys. omit the second part of the seventh (‘You will not delight in burnt offerings’). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Jeremiah 11:15: μὴ εὐχαὶ καὶ κρέα ἅγια ἀφελοῦσιν ἀπὸ σοῦ τὰς κακίας σου; but Chrys. has ἀφαιροῦσι τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Bible texts have Jerusalem, not Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. A nominative absolute? [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Mt 24:30 has ‘the son of man’. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. That is, Tophet. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Theodoret *In Dan.* Hill, R. C. (2006). *Theodoret: Commentary on Daniel*. Society of Biblical Literature. Issue 7 (2006) 256–259. PG 81, 1481.29-31 // 1484.35-40 //1485.5-14. The text of Theodoret here is abridged, the gaps marked here by […]. Words not in Theodoret are in square brackets. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Greg. Naz, Oratio 6 §§17-18. PG35, 744.34-40 // 745.22-31. Martha Pollard Vinson (trans), *St Gregory of Nazianzus Select Orations*. The Fathers of the Church Patristic Series 107 (CUA Press, Washington, D.C.2003). The expression ‘for I am persuaded by the prophecies about them’ is not in Oratio 6 but is in Oratio 4: πιστεύω γὰρ ταῖς προῤῥήσεσι PG 35.589.2, though in a quite different context. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Jos *BJ* 6.417 ff, Euseb. *HE* 3.5.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)