

Vicarious Sacrifice: Jesus Casts the Pharisees as Illegitimate Shepherds; the Roman Military Is Depicted as the Prowling Wolf Personified by Titus Whose Siege of Jerusalem Resulted in the Jews Being “Snatched” and “Scattered”, August A.D. 70; Philip Schaff’s Account of the Siege of Jerusalem; John 10:12

14. The hired hand represents the religious hierarchy in Jerusalem: Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes. They are not the shepherd because they do not own the sheep.
15. These religious leaders run the show in Jerusalem and Palestine but they are grudgingly aware of the ever-present specter of Roman authority.
16. The Lord reveals that the theologians are troubled by the threat of Roman domination over Palestine. At the moment, there was a tolerant yet tedious arrangement allowed by Rome, but only because Palestine was not of current interest to it.
17. There was always a Roman military presence in Jerusalem. The units stationed there carried two insignia whenever they were deployed in any way: (1) the Roman Legion’s eagle standard and (2) the standard bearer’s wolf headdress.
18. In this passage, the wolf refers to Rome which had become symbolic of Rome. The religious factions in Jerusalem are said by our Lord to “see the wolf coming.”
19. The verb “to see” is the present active indicative of **θεωπέω (theōréō)**: “a spectator.” This refers to the Pharisees and their ilk and their careful observation of details, i.e., historical trends.
20. The present tense is customary denoting that the action of this verb habitually occurred. The religious authorities kept a constant eye on the trends related to their relationship with Rome.
21. Jesus knows historical trends. He perceives that the entire nation is going to fall under the power of the Roman eagle and the military prowess of the wolf.
22. He knows that the religious crowd hates Rome’s ever-present authority and the potential threat to their dominion. They also hated the Herodian Dynasty, none of whom were Jewish.
23. Currently on the throne was King Herod Agrippa I. His friendly relationship with Rome added to their present unease.
24. They observe the wolf “coming,” the present active participle of the verb **ἐρχομαι (érchomai)**. This is circumstantial, meaning the wolf is in the process of stalking, but has not yet committed to the chase.
25. Their ability to read historical trends allowed them to “leave the sheep and flee.” Two things occur in this Operation Get Out of Dodge:
 - (1) “Leave”: the present active indicative of **ἀφίημι (aphiēmi)**: “to abandon” and
 - (2) “Flee”: the present active indicative of **φεύγω (pheúgō)**: “to run from danger because of fear.”
26. Each of these verbs is a customary present. This was something they kept on doing. Systematically as the trends indicated, the Pharisees rejection of Jesus as Messiah resulted in the people of Palestine being abandoned to false doctrine.

27. The Lord is teaching this parable in A.D. 32. The abandonment would have its ultimate impact by A.D. 70 when Titus and his Roman legions took down Jerusalem in August of that year.
28. The responsibility of the religious leadership in Jerusalem was to prepare the people by teaching them doctrine. This was a duty that the theologians did not perform and were incapable of performing.
29. The continuous rejection of Christ led the Jews to the culmination of the fifth cycle of discipline. Their spiritual leadership had failed and they had collectively continued in unbelief.
30. This is when the wolf “snatched and scattered” them. The Wolf, on the occasion of the fall of Jerusalem, was Titus Flavius Vespasianus \Ves-pā-zhē-ā-nes\.
31. A historical account of the Roman campaign against Jerusalem is provided by Philip Schaff from his *History of the Christian Church*:

Under the last governors, Felix, Festus, Albinus \ al-bī' nus \, and Florus, moral corruption and the dissolution of all social ties, but at the same time the oppressiveness of the Roman yoke, increased every year. After the accession of Felix, assassins, called Sicarians (\se-ca'-re-ans\, from L. *sīca*, a dagger [Gk. σικάριος, *sikários*: assassin]), armed with daggers and ... endangering safety in city and country, roamed over Palestine. (pp. 393-94)

In the month of May, A.D. 66 ... an organized rebellion broke out against the Romans. The ferocious party of the Zealots [Sicarians] had all the fire and energy which religious and patriotic fanaticism could inspire. They gained the ascendancy in the progress of the war, took forcible possession of the city and the temple and introduced a reign of terror. They kept up the Messianic expectations of the people and hailed every step towards destruction as a step towards deliverance. Reports of comets, meteors, and all sorts of fearful omens and prodigies were interpreted as signs of the coming of the Messiah and his reign over the heathen. The Romans recognized the Messiah in Vespasian \ ve-spā' zhē-an \ and Titus.

To defy Rome in that age, without a single ally, was to defy the world in arms; but religious fanaticism, ... blinded the Jews against the inevitable failure of this mad and desperate revolt. (p.394)

The emperor Nero sent his most famous general, Vespasian, with a large force to Palestine. Vespasian opened the campaign in the year 67 from the Syrian port-town, Ptolemais \ tä-le-mā'-us\, and against a stout resistance overran Galilee with an army of sixty thousand men. But events in Rome hindered him from completing the victory. Nero had killed himself. Vespasian, in the year 69, was universally proclaimed emperor, and restored order and prosperity. (pp. 395-96)

His son, Titus, ... then undertook the prosecution of the Jewish war, and became the instrument in the hand of God of destroying the holy city and the temple. He had an army of not less than eighty-thousand soldiers, and planted his camp on Mount Scopus and the adjoining Mount Olivet, in full view of the city and the temple. The valley of the Kedron [sic] divided the besiegers from the besieged. (p. 396)

In April, A.D. 70, immediately after the Passover, when Jerusalem was filled with strangers, the siege began. The zealots rejected, with sneering defiance, the repeated proposals of Titus; and they struck down every one who spoke of surrender. They made sorties down the valley of the Kedron and up the mountain, and inflicted great loss on the Romans. As the difficulties multiplied their courage increased. The crucifixion of hundreds of prisoners (as many as five hundred a day) only enraged them the more. Even the famine which began to rage and sweep away thousands daily, and forced a woman to roast her own child, the cries of mothers and babes, the most pitiable scenes of misery around them, could not move the crazy fanatics. (pp. 396-97)

At last, in July, the castle of Antonia was surprised and taken by night. This prepared the way for the destruction of the Temple in which the tragedy culminated. The last and the bloodiest sacrifice at the altar of burnt offerings was the slaughter of thousands of Jews who had crowded around it. (p. 397)

Titus intended at first to save that magnificent work of architecture, as a trophy of victory. But the destruction was determined by a higher decree. His own soldiers, roused to madness by the stubborn resistance, and greedy of the golden treasures, could not be restrained from the work of destruction. At first the halls around the temple were set on fire. Then the firebrand was hurled through the golden gate. When the flames arose the Jews raised a hideous yell and tried to put out the fire. The legions vied with each other in feeding the flames. Soon the whole structure was in a blaze and illuminated the skies. It was burned on the tenth of August, A.D. 70, the same day of the year on which according to tradition, the first temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. (pp. 397-98)

The Romans planted their eagles on the shapeless ruins, over against the eastern gate, offered their sacrifices to them, and proclaimed Titus *Imperator*.¹ (p. 398)

Jerusalem was razed to the ground; only three towers of the palace of Herod together with a portion of the western wall, were left as monuments of the strength of the conquered city, once the centre of the Jewish theocracy and the cradle of the Christian Church. (pp. 398-99)

The number of the Jews slain during the siege, including all those who had crowded into the city from the country, is stated by Josephus at the enormous and probably exaggerated figure of one million and one hundred thousand.² Eleven thousand perished from starvation shortly after the close of the siege. Ninety-seven thousand were carried captive and sold into slavery, or sent to the mines, or sacrificed in the gladiatorial shows at Caesarea, Berytus \be-ri' tus\, Antioch, and other cities. The strongest and handsomest men were selected for the triumphal procession in Rome. (p. 400)

¹ "Imperator. (2) A title given to a general after a great victory, and added to his name" (D. P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* [Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley Publishing Co., 1968], 289).

² "Milman sums up the scattered statements of Josephus and makes out the total number of killed, from the beginning to the close of the war, to be 1,356,460, and the total number of prisoners 101,700" (Philip Schaff, "Apostolic Christianity," in *History of the Christian Church*. [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1910], 1:400).

Vespasian and Titus celebrated the dearly bought victory together. No expense was spared for the pageant. Crowned with laurel, and clothed in purple garments, the two conquerors rode slowly in separate chariots ... to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, amid the shouts of the people and the aristocracy. They were preceded by the soldiers in festive attire and seven hundred Jewish captives. The images of the gods, and the sacred furniture of the temple—the table of show-bread, the seven-armed candlestick, the trumpets which announced the year of jubilee, the vessel of incense, and the rolls of the Law—were borne along in the procession and deposited in the newly built Temple of Peace,³ except the Law and the purple veils of the holy place, which Vespasian reserved for his palace.⁴ (400–401)

32. The “snatching” of John 10:12 was completed on August 10, A.D. 70 with the fall of Jerusalem; the “scattering,” or Diaspora, began the next day, has continued to the present hour, and will remain so until the Second Advent.

³ “The Temple of Peace was afterwards burned under Commodus, and it is not known what became of the sacred furniture” (Ibid., 1:401n1).

⁴ Ibid., 1:393–401.