**Dating the Destruction of the First Temple: Tradition and Interpretation in Josephus**

One of the least thrilling aspects of the historian’s work is chronologizing—partitioning time within a historical narrative as precisely as possible. Chronology is also a field in which miscalculation, faulty copying, and printing errors are so common that they hardly deserve comment. Nevertheless, one occasionally encounters a real puzzle that makes it truly necessary to determine the chronology of a given event. Josephus, unlike some historians, has no misgivings about chronologizing. On the contrary, in his *Jewish Antiquities,* he occasionally draws up chronological summaries of important events. For example, he numbers the years to the beginning of the construction of the First Temple under Solomon with relation to seven events: Solomon’s reign, the Exodus, Abraham’s arrival in the Land of Canaan, the Flood, the creation of humankind, Hiram’s reign, and the establishment of Tyre (Josephus, *Ant.* 8.62). He counts the destruction of Samaria from three events: The Exodus, the conquest of the Land of Israel, and the partitioning of the Davidic kingdom (Josephus, *Ant.* 9.280). He marks the destruction of the First Temple in the following way:

The sanctuary was burned down 470 years, 6 months and 10 days after it had been constructed. From the Egyptian sojourn of the people it was 1,062 years, 6 months, and 10 days. From the Deluge to the demolition of the sanctuary the whole length of time was 1,957 years, 6 months, and 10 days. From the generation of Adam until what happened to the sanctuary it was 4,513 years, 6 months, and 10 days. This then is the total of these years (Josephus, *Ant.* 10.147–148).[[1]](#footnote-1)

Unlike the aforementioned enumerations, in which Josephus counts only years, here he repeatedly offers the number of months and days.[[2]](#footnote-2) He does this not only here, however. Several sentences earlier, he writes that the Davidic kingdom lasted 514 years, six months, and ten days (Josephus, *Ant.* 10.143). Accordingly, the day of the destruction is also the day that the kingdom met its demise.[[3]](#footnote-3) Later in the book, Josephus counts months and days several more times. After his description of Nebuchadnezzar's war in Egypt, Josephus recapitulates the history of the exiles from the Land, and ends by noting: “Now the entire interval of time from the captivity of the Israelites until the deportation of the two tribes amounted to one hundred and thirty years, six months and ten days” (Josephus, *Ant*. 10.185, Marcus[[4]](#footnote-4)). The same counting of months and days also appears later. When Josephus recounts that at the beginning of the Second Temple period the high priests presided over the people, he reiterates that Jewish leadership lasted until the first destruction. He notes that since the onset of Saul’s reign, the people have been under the rule of kings for “five hundred thirty-two years six months and ten days” (Josephus, *Ant*. 11.112, Marcus). At the end of *Antiquities,* Josephus again produces a chronology of the First and Second Temples, now using the priestly count of years. Referring to the destruction of the First Temple, he writes that the High Priesthood lasted 466 years, six months, and ten days in that edifice (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.232). Josephus’ modern interpreters have often examined and discussed the years of his chronology.[[5]](#footnote-5) The system of months and days that he uses solely in reference to the destruction, however, has not yet been the subject of a substantive debate.@@@

**a. The Biblical background**

Any discussion of the month and day counts should, of course, take place in connection with data on the destruction as reported in the Bible and other traditions. Indeed, the date of the destruction is contested already in Scripture. The last chapter of Kings gives a detailed account of the siege of Jerusalem, the breaching of the city walls, and finally, the burning of the Temple:

8) On the seventh day of the fifth month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the chief of the guards, an officer of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 9) He burned the House of the Lord, the king’s palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem; he burned down the house of every notable person (2 Kgs 25:8–9 [JPS]).

Thus the First Temple was destroyed (according to the anachronistic Babylonian month names) on Av 7. Now, in the last chapter of Jeremiah, which, in a manner of speaking, parallels the concluding chapter of Kings, we read:

12) On the tenth day of the fifth month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan, the chief of the guards, came to represent the king of Babylon in Jerusalem. 13) He burned the House of the Lord, the king’s palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem; he burned down the house of every notable person (Jer 52:12–13 [JPS]).

Although the descriptions are similar if not identical, the date specified by Jeremiah is Av 10.[[6]](#footnote-6) The contradiction is acknowledged and discussed by the Rabbis, traditional Biblical commentators, and, of course, modern research.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**b. The biblical tradition in Josephus’ works**

Josephus dealt with the destruction of the First Temple in his *Jewish Antiquities*, which describes the history of the Jews from the creation until the outbreak of the Great Revolt. However, even in his earlier book, *The Jewish War*, the first destruction, and especially its date, holds an important place. *Jewish War* deals with the final 200 years of the Second Temple, that is, from the founding of the Hasmonaean kingdom to the destruction. When Josephus describes the Second Temple’s destruction, however, he evokes the memory of the first:

God, indeed long before, had sentenced it to the flames. But now in the revolution of the years had arrived the fated day, the tenth of the month of Lous, the day on which of old it had been burnt by the king of Babylon (*J.W.* 6.250 [LCL, Thackeray][[8]](#footnote-8)).

According to Josephus, both temples were demolished on the same date: the tenth day of the month of Av.[[9]](#footnote-9) He obviously resolves the matter as Jeremiah does. He repeats this information with greater emphasis several sentences later: “And who should not be amazed by the exactitude of his cyclicality for, as I said, he indeed waited until the same month and the very same day on which the First Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians” (*J.W*. 6.268 [Thackeray, LCL]).

Josephus’ familiarity with biblical chronology is also clearly evident in *Jewish Antiquities*. The siege of Jerusalem, according to him, began in the ninth year of Zedekiah on the tenth day of the tenth month (*Ant*. 10.116), that is, in the month of Tevet. This figure is in perfect accordance with the biblical report (2 Kgs 25:1; Jer 39:1, 52:4; Ezek 24:2). Immediately afterwards, Josephus writes that the siege lasted eighteen months (*Ant*. 10.116, 134). In other words, the wall of Jerusalem was breached in the month of Tammuz in the eleventh year of Zedekiah. Once again, this date accords with the biblical report: “And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, on the ninth day of the fourth month, the [walls of] the city were breached” (Jer 39:2 [JPS]). In light of Josephus’ familiarity with Biblical chronology, we may naturally expect him to refer to the date of the destruction as it is related in the Bible, but at this point he deviates from the Biblical tradition: “[Nebuzaradan] came to Jerusalem in the eleventh year of king Zedekiah, and pillaged the temple, and carried out the vessels of God [...] and when he had carried these off, he set fire to the temple in the fifth month, the first day of the month, in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah” (*Ant.* 10.146 [Begg and Spilsbury, *Josephus*]). Josephus sets the date of destruction at the beginning of the fifth month, the first of Av. This date differs from that of both the biblical tradition, which assigns it to the 7th or 10th of Av, and to the one proposed by Josephus himself in *Jewish War*, where he sets it on the 10th of Av.

 **c. “I See the Rod of an Almond Tree”: The Destruction on Av 1**

How did Josephus assign the destruction to Av 1, a date not mentioned anywhere in Scripture? Michael Avioz suggests that the date originates in Ezekiel:

And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying “Son of man, because that Tyre hath said against Jerusalem: aha, she is broken that was the gate of the peoples; she is turned unto me; I shall be filled with her that is laid waste” (Ezek 26:1–2 [JPS]).

The title of this chapter gives the year and the day but not the month in which the prophecy was given. Verse 2 provides the historical context of the prophecy: “because that Tyre hath said against Jerusalem ‘aha’.” Tyre takes pleasure in the destruction of Jerusalem, and, by inference, the prophecy was made in connection with the devastation of the city. The omission of the month allows for various possibilities. Avioz claims that Josephus interprets Ezekiel’s remarks as relating to Av 1.[[10]](#footnote-10) Yet even if we assume that Josephus traces the mysterious date back to Ezekiel, we still need to ask why he overlooks the explicit date in Kings and Jeremiah in favor of the obscure one. Two complementary possibilities suggest themselves. The contradiction between 2 Kgs 25, which dates the destruction to Av 7, and Jer 52, which ascribes it to Av 10, is irreconcilable. Consequently, a third verse is needed to resolve the matter. This interpretive approach is well known in rabbinic literature: “Two verses contradict each other until a third verse comes and resolves the contradiction” (Sifra 1:1).[[11]](#footnote-11) This rule is valid for the interpretation of any text and served ancient exegetes from the Graeco-Roman as well as the Jewish world.[[12]](#footnote-12) Thus Josephus, aware of the contradiction between Jeremiah and 2 Kings, nullifies their conflicting testimony on the day of the month in favor of Ezekiel’s report, which sets it to Av 1. Josephus fills in the missing information in Ezekiel—the exact month—from Jeremiah and Kings, which agree that the fifth month is the one in question.[[13]](#footnote-13) Another possibility is that Josephus actually relies on Ezekiel not only due to the contradiction between 2 Kings and Jeremiah, but also, and more importantly, because in Ezekiel, the date of the destruction is reinforced by an ancient tradition.

This tradition, in fact, arises from a discussion in the Palestinian Talmud (PT) concerning the date of the destruction. A Mishnah in tractate Ta’anit lists calamities that occurred on Tammuz 17 and Av 9. Among those that fell on the first date, it states “The city was breached” (m. Taʿan. 4:6). The PT takes issue with this Mishnaic passage: “It is written ‘on the ninth of the month the city was breached’ (Jer 39:2) – and you say this?!” (y. Taʿan. 4:6, 68c [Schottenstein][[14]](#footnote-14)). While the Mishnah dates the breaching of Jerusalem’s wall to Tammuz 17, the Talmud claims that according to the Bible, this happened on the ninth of that month.[[15]](#footnote-15) In response, Rabbi Tanhum b. Hanilai, a second-generation Palestinian Amora, is quoted as saying:

Rabbi Tanhum b. Hanilai said: There is an error in calculations preserved here; this is that which is written “in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying “Son of man, because that Tyre hath said against Jerusalem: aha” (Ezekiel 26.1-2). What is “aha”? If you will say this is the first of Av, [the Temple] had not yet been burned; if you will say this is the first of Elul, could a courier leave Jerusalem and reach Tyre in just a day and a night? Perforce, there is an error in calculations preserved here. (y. Taʿan. 4:6, 68c [Schottenstein])

Rabbi Tanhum b. Hanilai explains that yes, Jerusalem was breached on Tammuz 17, as the Mishnah says, but due to the vicissitudes of the time the date was miscalculated and set to the 9th of the month instead of the seventeenth. Proof that an error found its way into the Bible emerges from a discussion of the verses in Ezekiel. The Talmud realizes that Ezekiel dates the destruction to Av 1 and protests that this cannot be because, after all, the Temple was still intact on the first of the month, and had it fallen on the first of the next month, Elul, much time would have passed from the destruction to the festivities in Tyre, which were unlikely to have dithered for three weeks. Thus the Talmud infers that the date of the destruction as reported by Ezekiel, Av 1, is the result of “miscalculation.”

Rabbi Manna, however, rejects the possibility of such a misdating: “Rabbi Mana asks: Miscalculated retrospectively, very well. But prospectively?” (ibid.). Since Ezekiel prophesied before the Temple fell, future woes could not have influenced the prophecy at the time it was given. In other words, the date of the destruction as specified in Ezekiel, the first of Av, is immutable. By implication, there are two traditions regarding the date of the destruction and, in turn, two different traditions about when the city defenses were breached, as the Talmud concludes:

Rabbi Avunah said: “A staff of an almond tree I see” (Jer 1:11) – Just as this almond tree from when it gives forth its blossom until it completes its fruits is twenty-one days, so too from the day the city was breached until the day the Temple was destroyed was twenty-one days. According to the one who says “on the ninth of the month” [the city was breached], the Temple was destroyed on the first of Av; According to the one who says “on the seventeenth of the month” [the city was breached], the Temple was destroyed on the ninth of Av. (y. Taʿan. 4:6, 68c [Schottenstein])

The PT cites a tradition based on Jeremiah, according to which twenty-one days passed between the breaching of the wall and the destruction of the Temple. Importantly, this is an independent tradition not based on Biblical dates.[[16]](#footnote-16) Continuing this line, the PT proposes two equally plausible possibilities. The first is that the defenses fell on Tammuz 9, meaning that the Temple was destroyed on Av 1; the second sets the respective dates at Tammuz 17 and Av 9.

What may be inferred from the PT’s comments on the date that Josephus proposes? First, it should be noted that the entire discussion in the PT is conducted by the *amoraim* and the Talmud as the “narrator.” The debate *ad loc* makes no reference to the presence of any ancient tradition explicitly stating that the Temple was destroyed on the first of Av. However, the very existence of this possibility and, particularly, the way in which the historiographic debate develops in the PT can teach us a great deal about Josephus’ thought process. The PT opens by confronting the mishnaic tradition that the city was breached on Tammuz 17 with the Biblical dating of this event to Tammuz 9. The point of departure of the debate in the PT is that the chronological “truth” belongs to the tradition whereas the Biblical dating is flawed due to “miscalculation.” At the end of the discussion, however, the PT acknowledges the existence of two equally valid possible dates for the breaching of the city’s defenses and the destruction of the Temple. Accordingly, the PT is not beholden to the Biblical chronology and may instead set tradition above Scripture. Another possible conclusion is that the PT does not flinch from citing obscure verses, such as the one in Ezekiel, to promote a chronological approach. Similar considerations may have prompted Josephus to date the destruction of the First Temple to Av 1. As stated, the Biblical verses that establish this date clash with each other, leaving room for chronological investigation. Once the chronological system in 2 Kings and Jeremiah is dispensed with, more obscure chronological proposals such as the one in Ezekiel may be permissible, if not necessary.

 **d. Six Months and Ten Days: According to Count or Calendar?**

In *Jewish Antiquities,* Josephus cites six separate events by which he dates the first destruction using the formula “X years, six months, and ten days.” The first point in need of elucidation with regard to the counting of months and days is the nature of this count; is it aimed at a specific date in the calendar or is it the literal number of months and days that passed between a certain event and the destruction? The latter possibility is clearly untenable. Josephus invokes the “six months and ten days” with regard to various events that took place in different months and on different days, both of which are well documented. He counts 470 years, six months, and ten days from the construction of the Temple to its destruction. According to the Bible and Josephus, the construction of the Temple began in the month of Iyar (1 Kgs 6:1, *Ant.* 8.61). As previously noted, Josephus also counts “six months and ten days” from the Exodus, which, according to both the Bible and Josephus occurred on Nisan 15, the fifteenth day of the first month (Exod 12:17–18, *Ant.* 2.318). The Flood, by contrast, is dated by the Bible to the seventeenth day of the second month (Gen 6:11). In this case, Josephus explains, the second month is Marheshvan, the month of Dius (*Ant.* 1.80).[[17]](#footnote-17) Thus, it is impossible to state that X years and an additional six months and ten days passed from each event to the destruction of the Temple. The regular count of months and days should be positioned relative to a fixed calendar date, most likely Nisan 1, the day on which the counting of months begins, as Josephus notes (*Ant.* 1.81).[[18]](#footnote-18) Now, if we count six months and ten days from Nisan 1, we arrive at Tishre 10—Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Dating the destruction to Yom Kippur carries powerful theological-historiosophic weight. Before we continue to ponder this and its origins, we need to ask whether Josephus had any such thing in mind. A different possibility for the formation of the “six months and ten days” formula seems to arise from a comparison to Josephus’ remarks about the destruction of the Northern Kingdom:

The ten tribes of the Israelites were transported from Judea 947 years from the time when their ancestors went out from Egypt and occupied the country under their general Joshua. From [the time] when, revolting against Rehoboam the grandson of David, they handed the kingship over to Jeroboam, as I have related earlier, it was 240 years, 7 months, and 7 days (*Ant*. 9.280 [Begg and Spilsbury, *Josephus*]).

The count of the kings of Israel is a perfect fit for the formula discussed here: X years, Y months, and Z days. It is the sum of the reigns of all these kings as presented in *Jewish Antiquities* by Josephus himself*.* Thus, it is not an ancient tradition but a precise chronological calculation—one that squares rather well with the Biblical account. Seven months is the sum of the six-month reign of Zechariah the son of Jereboam (2 Kgs 15:8; *Ant.* 9.228) and the month-long reign of Shallum the son of Jabesh, Zechariah’s assassin (2 Kgs 15:13; *Ant.* 9.228). The expression “seven days” corresponds, of course, to the reign of Zimri (1 Kgs16:15; *Ant.* 8.311). Just as he reports the Israelite kings, Josephus adds up the Judean kings’ terms in office: “Together they reigned 514 years, 6 months, and 10 days” (*Ant.* 10:143 [Begg and Spilsbury, *Josephus*]). What is his source for the count of months and days here? At first glance, he seems to have obtained the figures by adding Jehoahaz’ three months (2 Kgs 23:31; *Ant.* 10.83[[19]](#footnote-19)) to Jeconiah’s three months and ten days on the throne (2 Chr 36:9; *Ant.* 10.8).[[20]](#footnote-20) We need only check this count to refute Josephus’ testimony. According to him, the tally of the Judean kings is 507 years and not 514, as written here (*Ant*. 10.143). Thus the suggestion made by Abraham Schalit, who traces Josephus’ count of the kings’ reign not to the information that he himself presents but to an independent tradition, makes sense.[[21]](#footnote-21) We may still assume, of course, that the tradition Josephus quotes is based on the calculation of Jehoahaz’ and Jehoiachin’s months and days on the throne. On this basis we could hypothesize that when Josephus reckoned the years to the destruction from other events, including the Exodus, the Flood, and so on, he added the months and days that originated in the count of the reigns of the Judean kings to the tradition of counting the years from the various events. Naturally, we cannot rule out the possibility that Josephus tampered with the chronological traditions instead of relaying them accurately. The counting of months and days recurs elsewhere in his book (e.g. *Ant*. 10.185). At the end of *Antiquities,* for example, Josephus specifies the duration of the high priests’ activity in the First Temple: “The term of service [of the priests who served from the time that the Temple was built] is four hundred sixty-six years, six months, and ten days” (*Ant.* 20:232 [LCL, Feldman[[22]](#footnote-22)]). This number refers to the service of priests and not kings. Even so, it does not square with the 470 years in which the Temple stood according to *Ant.* 10.147. Thus, here again, the calculation of the years of the high priesthood appears to be based on an independent tradition.[[23]](#footnote-23)

This counting of the months and days in accordance with different chronological traditions can be explained in two ways. The first possibility is that Josephus obtained the figures by adding up the years of rule of the Judean kings, as mentioned above. In chronological traditions that deal with the timing of various events related to the destruction of the Temple, only years are counted; it would thus have been Josephus who added the months and the days. The second possibility is that Josephus’ chronological traditions included all three chronological indications (year, month, day) *ab initio*. Some support for the latter lies in a tradition that appears in the chronological records at the end of Book 6 of *Jewish War*:

437) But before their days the king of Babylon had subdued it and laid it waste, fourteen hundred and sixty-eight years and six months after its foundation. 438) Its original founder was a Canaanite chief, called in the native tongue “Righteous King”… 439) The Canaanite population was expelled by David, the king of the Jews, who established his own people there; and four hundred and seventy-seven years and six months after his time it was razed to the ground by the Babylonians. 440) The period from King David, its first Jewish sovereign, to its destruction by Titus was one thousand one hundred and seventy-nine years; 441) and from its first foundation until its final overthrow, two thousand one hundred and seventy-seven (*J.W*. 6.437–441 [LCL, Thackeray]).

In this list, the chronologies of the first and second destruction are clearly differentiated. Both events are counted in relation to the two foundational events of Jerusalem, the first being Melchizedek, the second David. In the case of the first destruction, the number of months is given in addition to that of years; in the case of the second, only years are given. Evidently, the two chronological systems are unrelated to each other and spring from different sources.[[24]](#footnote-24) The chronology of the first destruction somewhat resembles the one developed in *Jewish Antiquities.* As we recall, all chronological mentions of the first destruction in *Jewish Antiquities* specify “six months and ten days.” The expression “six months” occurs in the chronology discussed here. There is no ignoring the difference between these traditions. First, in *Jewish Antiquities*, an additional “ten days” are appended to the number of months and years. Second, there is a blatant contradiction in the number of years. The tradition in *Jewish War* counts 477 years from David to the first destruction. This number is not obtained in any way from the tradition in *Antiquities* relatingto the reigns of the Davidic kings (514 years) or the duration of the First Temple era (470 years).[[25]](#footnote-25) It is thus likely that there were several chronological traditions pertaining to the destruction of the First Temple that measured the years from various events to this calamity. These, it seems to me, report an exact chronology, including years, months, and days. The connection between the tradition in *Jewish War* and that in *Jewish Antiquities* emerges, of course, from the identical number of months, that is, the addition of six months. The omission of the number of days evidently points to an erosion and abbreviation of the original tradition, either by Josephus himself (less likely) or by his source. The presence of this tradition in *Jewish War* naturally clashes with Josephus’ own previous report that the Temple fell on Av 10, four months and ten days after the beginning of the calendar year.

As stated, one cannot entirely rule out the possibility that Josephus himself drew the connection between the calculation of the months and days of the reigns of the Judean kings (*Ant.* 10.143) and the other chronological traditions that reckoned the years from various events to the destruction of the First Temple. Nonetheless, if Josephus made this addition in each place that it appears in *Jewish Antiquities*, he was surely trying to say something. The uniqueness of this manner of counting becomes evident if we compare it to the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel. In the case of this event, Josephus neither uses the number of months and days (*Ant*. 9.280), nor sets it in relation to other events. It is especially important to note that Josephus provides the exact date of the beginning of the construction of Solomon’s Temple: the fourth year of Solomon in the second month, which is called the Iyar or Artemius (*Ant*. 8.61). Immediately afterwards, Josephus lists the years that passed between the building of the Temple and the following events: the Exodus, the coming of Abraham to the Land, the Flood, the creation of Adam, and the kingdom of Hiram. With relation to all these, Josephus provides only the years. Hence, when Josephus takes the trouble of mentioning the number of months and days many times and in various places in his book, he surely does so on purpose.

 If this is the case, however, Josephus must have been aware of the far-reaching significance of the linkage that he created. As stated above, since each of the events—the construction of the Temple, the coronation of the Judean kings, the Exodus, the Flood, and the creation of humankind—took place on a different date, the expression “six months and ten days” in the reference to each indicates that it has been reckoned from the beginning of the year, i.e., on Nisan 1. In such case, the destruction occurs on Tishre 10, Yom Kippur. In other words, irrespective of the origin of the tradition of months and days, by adding the count of months and days to each of the events relative to which the destruction of the First Temple is dated, Josephus —whether of his own accord or on the basis of other traditions—indicates that the destruction should be seen as occurring on Yom Kippur.[[26]](#footnote-26)

This conclusion is problematic in two respects. First, the implicit chronological assertion that the day of the destruction is also the holiest day in the Jewish calendar is of such religious significance that it would be very difficult to minimize. But aside from the chronological aspect, there is no indication in Josephus that the day of destruction did indeed fall on Yom Kippur. Does this mean that Josephus ignored or was simply unaware of the possible implications of the chronology he established? Second, is it possible to find other sources that link the first destruction to Yom Kippur? The more we can reply positively to this second question, the harder it will be to dismiss the first question on the grounds that Josephus was totally oblivious to the significance of his chronology. We will therefore begin with the second question, then return to examine Josephus’ words on the destruction.

**e. The Post-Sabbatical Year, the Jubilee, and *Rosh Hashana***

Josephus rarely cites his sources. To identify them, we need to examine additional sources that at first glance may seem unrelated. A thorough and critical study of the rabbinic tradition regarding the date of the first destruction may help us trace the tradition that the event occurred on Tishre 10. A fairly common tradition links the destruction to several chronologies:

Rabbi Yosse used to say: Propitiousness is assigned to a propitious day and a calamity to a calamitous day. As it is found say: When the temple was destroyed, the first time, that day was immediately after the Sabbath, it was immediately after the sabbatical year, it was (during the service of) the priestly division of Jehoiarib, and it was the ninth day of Av; and so the second time. (*Seder Olam* 30 [Milikowsky, *Chronography*, 547])

Rabbi Yosse’s dictum stresses the calendric proximity of the dates of both destructions. In it, he mentions four events: (1) the day of the week (after the Sabbath); (2) the year in the sabbatical cycle—after the sabbatical year, which mean the first year of the sabbatical cycle; (3) the cycle of the priestly watch—that of Jehoiarib; and (4) the date in the month, Av 9. Elsewhere, I have shown that the last-mentioned point does not go back to Rabbi Yosse’s main remarks. This leaves us with three temporal specifications, each of which are distinct: the days of the week, the sabbatical cycle, and liturgical time.[[27]](#footnote-27) As Chaim Milikowsky has pointed out, these three chronologies carry a theological message.[[28]](#footnote-28) The moment of the destruction marks the end of one cycle and the beginning of another. Without detracting from the importance of the theological aspect, however, we must nonetheless examine the chronological argument as well.

Rabbi Yosse is not the only one to link the sabbatical cycle with the priestly watches. Several of the Dead Sea Scrolls describe in detail the course of the priestly watches (Mishmarot). Although the course of the priestly watches is based mainly on the six-year rather than the seven-year cycle of the sabbatical years, one scroll (4Q319) reveals an attempt to coordinate the sabbatical cycle with the priestly one.[[29]](#footnote-29) According to this scroll, in the first year of the jubilee, which is also the first year of the sabbatical cycle, the house of Jehoiarib served in the Temple for the first time (out of two) in the week between the fifth and the eleventh of Tishre. It is said that in this year the house of Jehoiarib served in the Temple on Yom Kippur. This fact is explicitly stated: “[of Joiari]b the Day of Atonement”.[[30]](#footnote-30) In an enclosed article, it should be noted that according to this tablet, the Imer and Hezir watches served in the Temple in the first two weeks of the month of Av. If we accept Rabbi Yosse’s claim that the destruction occurred in the first year of the sabbatical cycle while the house of Jehoiarib was serving in the Temple, then the destruction must have taken place on Yom Kippur.[[31]](#footnote-31) That said, it is not at all clear whether the tradition mentioned by Rabbi Yosse is connected to or based on the list of the priestly watches in Qumran. There does not appear to be any evidence outside of the Qumran texts[[32]](#footnote-32) that suggests that regular weeks were assigned to each of the priestly houses, and even if there were such evidence, there is no reason to assume that the weeks would correspond to those mentioned in those documents.

We must return to the three chronological indications offered by Rabbi Yosse: Saturday night, the first year of the sabbatical cycle, and the Jehoiarib’s watch. The first two are probably correct in relation to the second destruction. As the Roman historian Cassius Dio states, “Thus was Jerusalem destroyed on the very day of Saturn, the day which even now the Jews reverence most” (Cassius Dio, *Hist*. 66.7.1). According to Cassius, the destruction happened on Saturday.[[33]](#footnote-34) The statement that the temple was ruined on the first year of the sabbatical cycle is also correct. New headstones excavated in the cemetery of Zoar (a city located on the Dead Sea coast) since 1930 used a double dating method, which included the number of years since the second destruction and the year according to the sabbatical cycle, for example: משתה קדמיתה דשמטתה שנת תלת מא ושתין ורבע שנין לחרבן בית מקדשה" " [= First year for the *Shmita* (i.e. the sabbatical cycle); Three hundred and sixty-four years for the destruction of the Temple].[[34]](#footnote-35) Dozens of the tombstones indicate that the year of the destruction was indeed the first year of the sabbatical cycle, as stated by Rabbi Yosse. This seems an affirmation of the tradition used by him to determine the day and the year. But what about the name of the priestly watch? Unfortunately, we have no reliable source confirming it.[[35]](#footnote-36)

It may be that the solution to the source on which Rabbi Yosse relied is the Mishmarot list in Qumran or a similar one. Rabbi Yosse claims that the two destructions occurred after the sabbatical year. As noted, in terms of the second destruction, his remark is based on chronological reality. But what about the first? Below I will discuss in detail another Talmudic tradition on this subject. At this point, however, I must note an important fact emphasized by Milikowsky, namely that dating the first destruction to the first year of the sabbatical cycle is inconsistent with the sabbatical chronology that governs the *Midrash Seder Olam*. Hence, Rabbi Yosse’s remark that the first destruction also occurred in the first year of the sabbatical cycle must be based on a different tradition from the chronological one of the Midrash; that alternative tradition was the one was quoted by Rabbi Yosse.[[36]](#footnote-37)

We have no way of tracing this tradition, but it is worth considering that it originated in the same social circles that formed the priestly course of the Qumran. Indeed, the Qumran list designates the house of Jehoiarib on Yom Kippur and in the year after the sabbatical year. Nonetheless, this is a schedule of rituals, not an historical timeline. The list contains no reference to any historical event.[[37]](#footnote-38) In other words, we need to find a connection between the social circle that created the Mishmarot list and the claim that the first destruction did occur on Yom Kippur and on the first year of the sabbatical cycle.

Before proceeding, we must discuss another chronological cycle. Yom Kippur is not simply a Day of Atonement, but, as the Torah states, it is also the New Year (*rosh hashana*) of the Jubilee cycle:

9) Then you shall sound the horn loud; in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month—the Day of Atonement—you shall have the horn sounded throughout your land 10) and you shall hallow the fiftieth year. You shall proclaim release throughout the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: each of you shall return to his holding and each of you shall return to his family. (Lev 25:9-10 [JPS])

The jubilee year is sanctified, i.e., it begins with the blast of the ram’s horn on the tenth day of the seventh month, i.e., Tishre 10.[[38]](#footnote-39)

 **f. The Jubilee Chronology and the Destruction of the Temple**

Apocalyptic literature bestows great importance on the Jubilee tradition, that is, the division of world chronology into jubilees. The use of this system is documented in many apocalyptic texts, and appears to have been of interest to wide circles in Second Temple Judaism, including the Essenes and the Qumran sect.[[39]](#footnote-40) One of the major sources on the Jubilee tradition—albeit not the most important of them—is, of course, the *Book of Jubilees*, which was also a book revered by the Qumran community.[[40]](#footnote-41) *The Book of Jubilees* organizes the chronology of the world from Creation onward in accordance with the jubilee cycle. Most of it describes events from Creation to its own times, which coincided with the Revelation at Sinai. An intriguing reference to the future appears near the end of the book:

 2) And I told thee of the Sabbaths of the land on Mount Sinai, and I told thee of the jubilee years in the sabbaths of years: but the year thereof have I not told thee till ye enter the land which ye are to possess. 3) And the land also will keep its sabbaths while they dwell upon it, and they will know the jubilee year. 4) Wherefore I have ordained for thee the year-weeks and the years and the jubilees: there are forty-nine jubilees 2410 years from the days of Adam until this day, and one week and two years: and there are yet forty years to come (lit. 2450 “distant”) for learning the commandments of the Lord, until they pass over into the land of Canaan, crossing the Jordan to the west. 5) And the jubilees will pass by, until Israel is cleansed from all guilt of fornication, and uncleanness, and pollution, and sin, and error, and dwells with confidence in all the land, and there will be no more a Satan or any evil one, and the land will be clean from that time for evermore (Jub. 50:2-5).[[41]](#footnote-42)

The passage connects both ends of the Israelites’ stay in the Land of Israel: their entry in the Land and their exile after the destruction of the First Temple. In terms of their entry, *Jubilees* concludes with the Revelation at Sinai but creates a chronological and halakhic nexus between that event and their arrival in the Land. The Revelation occurs in the forty-ninth jubilee, that is, in the first sabbatical cycle plus two years, and as *Jubilees* immediately explains, another forty years remain until the next jubilee year. These are the forty years that the Israelites will spend in the desert until they enter Canaan. Thus, the author of *Jubilees* dates the entry in the Land to the first year of the fiftieth jubilee cycle! This chronological statement is surely understandable given the importance of entering Canaan.[[42]](#footnote-43) Although it clashes with the rabbinic view, i.e., that the counting of jubilees began only fourteen years after the Israelites’ arrival in Canaan, it does correspond to a *baraita* in BT, which counts the seventeen jubilees from the time Israel “entered the Land” (see below).

The chronology set forth in *Jubilees* recurs in other works from the Second Temple era. In the *Apocryphon of Joshua* found in Qumran, for example, we read: “Israel crossed on dry land in the first month of the forty-first year of their exodus from Egypt, that is, of the year of the jubilees of the beginning of their entering the land of Canaan” (4Q379). [[43]](#footnote-44) The passage describes the crossing of the River Jordan under Joshua. The next sentence links the jubilees to the Israelites’ arrival in Canaan. This probably indicates that their arrival in the Land took place in relation to the counting of the jubilees, i.e., at the beginning of the jubilee cycle. This chronology is consistent with the method in *Jubilees*.[[44]](#footnote-45) The cryptic statement, “the year of the jubilees to the beginning of their entering the land of Canaan,” may also be of halakhic importance because it begins the enumeration of years by jubilees at the time of the arrival in the Land. This approach does not contradict Jubilees since this book likewise counts the observance of the jubilee commandment only from the time that Israel established its presence in its land.

Another connection between the Jubilees chronology and the entry in the Land can be found in the Qumranic text *Words of Moses* (1Q22), which describes Moses’ warnings to the people on the eve of their arrival in the Land. The sabbatical laws are then introduced. The next lines are very fragmentary: “[for ] they [we]re wandering [in the desert,] your [fathe]rs, until the [te]nth day of the month [on the t]enth [day] of the month [all work shall be] forbidden and on the t[enth of the] month shall be atoned.”[[45]](#footnote-46) At this point we find a description of the worship of Yom Kippur in the temple. It seems that the section links Yom Kippur to some event that occurred on this date, the tenth of the month, during wanderings in the desert. The Hebrew word for “wandering in the wilderness” is “שטים,” and is related to the gathering of the manna by the Israelites: “7) Now the manna was like coriander seed, and in color it was like bdellium. 8) The people would go about and gather it [שטו העם], grind it between millstones or pound it in a mortar, boil it in a pot, and make it into cakes. It tasted like rich cream” (Num 11:7-8). The people of Israel gathered the manna until the tenth of the month, which is Yom Kippur, and on this day their wanderings in the desert also ceased. The end of the manna is the reason for the Day of Atonement.[[46]](#footnote-47) This reconstruction, of course, does not sum up with the biblical chronology, according to which the Israelites crossed the Jordan at Nissan, and began to eat from the grain of the Land on Nissan15.[[47]](#footnote-48) The source of the 1Q22 concept that the Israelites entered the Land in Tishre must lie in the belief that the entry into the Land took place at the beginning of the jubilee.

When the text states that the Israelites entered the Land in a jubilee year, does this mean that the Temple was destroyed in a jubilee year as well? Given the perceptible effort by *Jubilees* and other works to present the jubilee framework as both chronological and theological, there is reason to expect that the first destruction was connected to the jubilee chronology. Indeed, though the *Book of Jubilees* does not relate to the chronology of the events after the Israelites entered Canaan, it does sketch a clear time frame: “The jubilees will pass by until Israel is cleansed […]” (Jub. 50:5). The chronological use of the jubilee system persists in the description of the post-conquest era. This, of course, is not meant to imply that the Temple will be destroyed in a jubilee year and none other, but since *Jubilees* explicitly establishes the jubilee as the year in which Israel entered Canaan, it only stands to reason that other meaningful events would take place in association with the jubilee cycle.

The nexus that the *Book of Jubilees* creates between chronology and halakhah may allude to future chronology. Verse 3, which deals with the obligation to observe the sabbatical year in accordance with the jubilee calendar, interrupts the chronological reading that dates the Revelation at Sinai and the onset of the Israelite conquest. *Jubilees* emphasizes the necessity that the land, and not individuals, rest during the sabbatical year. Thus it is strongly reminiscent of the account in Leviticus: “Then shall the land make up for its sabbath years throughout the time that it is desolate and you are in the land of your enemies; then shall the land rest and make up for its sabbath years” (Lev 26:34). This verse bundles chronology and halakhah much as the *Book of Jubilees* does. The years of destruction and desolation will be determined by the number of sabbatical years that Israel will have failed to observe. This belief, of course, underlies the chronological account of the period of desolation and devastation at the end of Chronicles: “in fulfillment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, until the land paid back its sabbaths; as long as it lay desolate it kept sabbath, till seventy years were completed” (2 Chr 36:21 JOS). Chronicles, written after the return to Zion, links the sabbatical law and the exile in Leviticus to Jeremiah’s prophecy of redemption at the end of seventy years (Jer 25:11–12, 29:10). If seventy years of exile do indeed represent seventy years of unobserved sabbaticals, then 490 years, exactly ten jubilees, had passed since Israel entered Canaan.[[48]](#footnote-49)

The chronological link between the counting of jubilees and the destruction of the First Temple recurs in several additional works. In the so-called *Apocryphon of Jeremiah* (4Q385a–389), for example, the time frame is composed of jubilees.[[49]](#footnote-50) The *Apocryphon* acknowledges the return to Zion after the destruction of the First Temple, but anticipates further destruction and exile: “but I shall not respond to their inquiry, because of the trespass which they have trespassed against me, until the completion of ten jubilees of years” (4Q384).[[50]](#footnote-51) As Cana Werman notes, the work draws a parallel between the sins committed by the nation during the First Temple and Second Temple era.[[51]](#footnote-52) In view of this, one may surmise a recurrence of the chronological framework since the *Apocryphon* counts 490 years (ten jubilees) to the destruction of the Temple and the Land the second time around; presumably this is its chronology for the destruction of the First Temple as well.[[52]](#footnote-53) The jubilee framework is again invoked in the *Testament of Levi*. Here the status of the priesthood in each and every jubilee is examined: “In each jubilee there shall be a priesthood” (T. Levi 17:2). In relation to the seventh jubilee, the *Testament* states: “In the seventh there shall be pollution such as I am unable to declare in the presence of human beings… Therefore, they shall be in captivity and will be preyed upon; both their land and their possessions shall be stolen” (T. Levi 17:8–10).[[53]](#footnote-54) Hence, the destruction of the First Temple will occur at the end of the seventh jubilee. What matters for our purposes, however, is that here, too, the destruction is dated in relation to the jubilee rather than by some other form of reckoning.

The *Acts of Melchizedek* take another step to bring Josephus’ tradition closer to the Jewish apocalyptic world. As we recall, Josephus’ chronology dates the destruction to Yom Kippur, which, after a complex interpretive move, we identified with the *rosh hashana* of the jubilee year. This is explicitly stated in the reading of Melchizedek’s actions. The extant text begins by quoting and interpreting the laws of the jubilee from Lev 25:13: “And the Day of Atonement is the end of the tenth jubilee in which atonement shall be made for all the sons of light” (11Q13 [Parry and Tov, 1:393]).

This passage relates not to the destruction that occurred but to future redemption. Either way, here too, the framework for the fulfillment of the divine plan for history is the jubilee. As in other apocalyptic works, so here the redemption will take place in the tenth jubilee in accordance with the frame set forth in Daniel: 7\*70=490 (Dan 9:24). The *Testament of Levi*, however, presents the exact date of the redemption and atonement in the jubilee year as being Yom Kippur. Admittedly, neither the *Testament* *of Levi* nor the *Acts of Melchizedek* can be used to prove in which jubilee, and in which year within the jubilee period, the destruction of the First Temple occurred . However, it is likely that the *Acts of Melchizedek* also locates the destruction at the transition point between jubilees, given its resemblance to other apocalyptic works that invoke the jubilee chronology.[[54]](#footnote-55) In light of this, one may presume that according to the *Testament of Levi*, too, the destruction occurred at the end of one jubilee cycle and at the beginning of the next one, on Yom Kippur. Thus, Yom Kippur as the *rosh hashana* of the jubilee year and as an era of historical change is firmly anchored in the apocalyptic literature of the Second Temple era.

**g. The Jubilees tradition in rabbinic literature**

The apocalyptic tradition linking the destruction to the Jubilee cycle was probably familiar to the Rabbis. Rabbi Yosse’s remarks that the first destruction occurred after the sabbatical year spark a long discussion in the Babylonian Talmud, in the course of which, the following *beraita* is presented:

For it was taught [=*tanya*]: Seventeen jubilee [cycles] did Israel count from the time they entered the Land [of Israel] until they left it. And you cannot assume that they counted from the moment they entered, for if you were to say so, it would be found that the [first] Temple was destroyed at the beginning of a jubilee, and you could not find [correct the statement]: “the fourteenth year after the city had fallen” (Ezekiel 40:1). Rather, deduct from them the seven years of the conquest and the seven during which the land was distributed, thus you find [substantiated]: “the fourteenth year after the city had fallen” (b. ʿArak. 12b).

The BT begins its discussion with the word *tanya,* meaning that the editors assume that it is a Tannaitic source that reckons the Israelites’ sojourn in the Land as lasting seventeen jubilees. This would make the year of the destruction a jubilee year! The BT immediately rejects this possibility as it clashes with the date of the destruction in Ezekiel, who sets it at fourteen years before the jubilee. To reconcile this with the *beraita*, according to which the Israelites spent seventeen jubilees in the Land of Israel, the BT explains that, yes, they did remain there for seventeen jubilees—850 years—but the count and sanctification of jubilee years began only after the fourteen years of conquest and apportionment of the Land. However, if we accept the Tannaitic tradition verbatim, the destruction did indeed occur in a jubilee year.

According to this tradition, too, we need not assume that the destruction occurred specifically on *rosh hashana* of the jubilee year, Tishre 10. We can definitely retain the Biblical chronology by dating the destruction to Av of the jubilee year. However, the connection arising between the destruction and the jubilee may well lead to a contrary interpretation, namely, that the Israelites’ sojourn in the Land of Israel was exactly seventeen jubilees long and, by extension, the Temple was destroyed at the very beginning of the seventeenth jubilee, i.e., on *rosh hashana* of the jubilee year, Tishre 10.

 **h. Josephus and the day of Atonement**

Determining Yom Kippur as the day of the destruction is a significant theological statement. How did the holiest day, the day when the high priest entered the sanctuary, become the day of destruction? Josephus does not even hint at these serious religious questions. Some might argue that this is enough to reject the claim that he acknowledged and used a chronological tradition that linked the destruction to Yom Kippur. Before accepting this conclusion, we should note a similar problem with another event documented in *Jewish Antiquities*. Among the serious events in the history of the Second Temple the occupation of the temple by Pompey in 63 BC holds a special place. According to Josephus, Pompey not satisfied by the mere conquest of the temple, entered the sanctuary with his companions and “saw what it was unlawful for many but the high priests to see” (*Ant*. 14.72 [LCL, Marcus and Wikgren][[55]](#footnote-56)). Josephus even notes that Pompey sinned: “and not light was the sin committed against the sanctuary” (*Ant*. 14.71). Several sentences earlier he states that the city was conquered “in the third month on the fast day” (*Ant*. 14.66), an assertion that he repeats at the end of the book as well. Then he talks about the conquest of Jerusalem and the temple by Herod, which also took place that same day. Indeed, after describing the city's occupation, Josephus concludes: “This calamity befell the city of Jerusalem during the consulship at Rome of Marcus Agrippa…on the same day of the Fast, as it were a recurrence of the misfortune which came upon the Jews in the time of Pompey, for they were captured by Sossius on the very same day” (*Ant*. 14.487-88).

The simple interpretation of “the Fast day” is, of course, “Yom Kippur,” but many scholars have long rejected this interpretation for various reasons. Nadav Sharon has recently claimed that Josephus undoubtedly meant Yom Kippur, whether or not the event happened on that day. Josephus was well aware of the importance of dates. As we have seen above, he emphasizes in *Jewish War* that the first and second destruction occurred on that day. For him, this periodicity is clear evidence of God’s involvement. Josephus also insists that both the occupation of Pompey and the occupation of Herod occurred on the same day. Yet aside from mentioning this chronological fact, he says nothing about the city being conquered on Yom Kippur. Surely he would have lamented the fact that on the very day when the high priest was allowed to enter the sanctuary, Pompey and his companions entered instead. Josephus also recounts that the priests continued to sacrifice the perpetual sacrifices even though the Romans had broken into the temple. That, Josephus does not even mention Yom Kippur. Sharon suggests that Josephus’ disregard for the date is related to the apologetic character of his work; his pro-Roman sentiments made him obscure the fact that the Romans had struck Jews on their holiest day.[[56]](#footnote-57)

A similar consideration may have caused Josephus to somewhat overlook the significance of the chronological tradition of the first destruction. We must recall that the origin of the tradition linking the destruction to the Day of Atonement lies in the apocalyptic view that first destruction occurred at the end of the jubilee cycle. The jubilee chronology in the apocalyptic literature is rooted in the past, but it looks to the future. This chronology describes the order of the world up until the time of the Last Judgment and salvation. Each apocalypse has different conceptions and descriptions of the nature of salvation, but all share the expectation that the alien kingdom will be eliminated. In Josephus’s time these traditions were interpreted as directed towards Rome. Josephus himself was not only familiar with, but was probably even subtly hinting at these traditions. In his great speech before the Jerusalem Wall, he states that God, who transfers power from kingdom to kingdom, is now ruling Rome (*J.W*. 5.367). The reign of Rome is temporary, and God will pass the mantle of leadership from it in time.[[57]](#footnote-58) Here Josephus may also be refraining from presenting the apocalyptic tradition too explicitly and too prominently as he may have feared that allusions to the apocalyptic tradition would be interpreted as an expectation that Rome, the heir of Babylon, would be destroyed.

**i. Discussion and Conclusion: Josephus—Between Scripture and Tradition**

Josephus’ summation of the events surrounding the destruction of the First Temple in *Jewish Antiquities* contains two salient contradictions about what we know, and what he knew, about the chronology of the destruction. First, he explicitly dates the destruction of the First Temple to Av 1. Second, in proximity to this, he writes that the destruction took place X years plus six months and ten days after other events. His calculation of months and days leads him to Yom Kippur. This date, however, not only clashes with his previous report (Av 1) but also appears nowhere and in no manner in Scripture. In the course of this article, I have shown that both dates are anchored in ancient interpretative approaches and traditions. The dating to Av 1 evidently originated in a verse in the Book of Ezekiel; Yom Kippur, in turn, is linked to the Jubilee-apocalyptic tradition. What needs to be elucidated now is what prompted Josephus to overlook Biblical writings that date the destruction to Av 7 (2 Kings) or Av 10 (Jeremiah).

With regard to the Av 1 chronology, I have noted the near certainty that the matter at hand is not an ancient tradition but biblical interpretation. Since 2 Kings and Jeremiah contradict each other on the day in the month that the Temple fell, the testimony of neither should be accepted. The testimony in Ezekiel, however, can be perceived as the “third verse” that resolves the contradiction between the other two. I have demonstrated here the emergence of similar interpretative considerations in the PT. Yet though the interpretive difficulty and its implications are firmly understood, questions should be asked about tracing the destruction to Tishre 10 and why Josephus favored and adopted a tradition, however ancient, over the biblical chronology—particularly since several years earlier, in *Jewish War ,*Josephus himself presented the biblical date as the one on which both temples were destroyed.

Our understanding of Josephus’ interpretive and historiographic considerations in choosing these dates should consider his perception of his role as a historian and the extent of his commitment to facts. Elsewhere, I have shown that Josephus’ adherence to the Biblical date comes at the expense of precise adherence to the chronological facts. Jewish tradition specifies the ninth of Av as the date of the fast commemorating the destruction of the Temple because it marks the anniversary of the destruction of the Second Temple. This chronological fact, I claim, may be proven on the basis of Josephus’ own remarks in *Jewish War.* He was interested in drawing a line from the destruction of the First Temple to that of the Second in order to liken the misdeeds of the rebels in the latter to the rebels in Israel who had caused the first destruction. To accomplish this, he “bent” the historical date to the Biblical destruction.[[58]](#footnote-59) Such a tendency toward chronological synchronization was not exclusive to Josephus, of course. Rabbi Yosse’s dictum, cited above, reflects this principle well: “Propitiousness is assigned to a propitious day and a calamity to a calamitous day.” This also accounts for the accrual of calamities that befell Israel on Tammuz 17 and Av 9. The tendency toward chronological synchronization is also manifest in the Graeco-Roman world. For example, according to Roman tradition, the Romans sustained defeat at the hands of theEtruscans near the Cremera on the *dies Alliensis*, July 18, 478 BCE, while the Gauls destroyed the Roman army on the same day in 390. For this reason, this day and the days that fell in the middle of each month were known as the *dies atri* (dark days) and were considered unlucky. During them, public rituals in temples were not observed and private individuals avoided new undertakings.[[59]](#footnote-60) In a special composition entitled *Περὶ ἡμερῶν*, Plutarch comments on the dates in the calendar that witnessed various disasters in different years.[[60]](#footnote-61) It is therefore certainly not surprising that Josephus, or any other ancient author, deviated from a “real” chronology to accept an ideological one. Attention should focus instead on the reasons for and the meaning behind Josephus’ interpretive choices.

As noted, with regard to Av 1 chronology, we may justify it as a constraint originating in the interpretation of verses. Nonetheless, it tells us something about Josephus’ self-perception. His willingness to resolve chronological contradictions by interpretive means indicates that he internalized and applied one of the basic tenets of Pharisaic Judaism, namely, that a literal reading of a Biblical text is always subordinate to interpretive methods. One may defend the legitimacy of Josephus’ interpretation by noting the contradiction between the Biblical passages. However, by setting the date of the destruction to Tishre 10, Josephus clearly reveals another aspect of his thought process. His statement here is only tenuously related to the Bible as it is mainly founded on an apocalyptic tradition that thrusts history into the frame of the jubilees. According to this view, meaningful events, such as entering the Land, the destruction of the Temple, and redemption occur at the end and beginning of jubilee cycles. This chronological frame rests largely on Daniel’s interpretation of Jeremiah’s seventy-year prophecy, according to which seventy sabbatical cycles, i.e., 490 years or ten jubilees, set the temporal boundaries of exile and redemption.

The adoption of an interpretation *à la* Daniel is not foreign to Josephus. Evidently he, like the apocalyptic circles that existed in and after the Second Temple period, attributed great importance to this book. He alludes to Daniel’s perception of the four kingdoms already earlier, in *Jewish Wars* (*J.W*. 5.367). He also devotes much of Book 10 of *Jewish Antiquities* to the description of Daniel and his visions (*Ant.* 10.190–281), and, at the end of it, writes that Daniel’s visions are steadily coming to pass and that this is perfect proof of divine providence (ibid., 279–80).[[61]](#footnote-62) By dating the destruction to Tishre 10, the first day of the Jubilee, Josephus is alluding to the importance of the event in association with the apocalyptic tradition. Although he does not link the destruction of the First Temple to the end or the beginning of the jubilee, he connects its date to the anniversary of the most important historical occurrences of all times: the creation of humankind, the Flood, the Israelites entry into the land of Canaan, and, of course, the construction of the Temple itself. This method of dating is obviously indicative of the importance of the event. The calendric appointment of the destruction to Tishre 10 defines the nature of the event as part of the sacred history revealed by the apocalyptic tradition.

Josephus’ chronological determination certainly sheds light on the sources he used, but his very willingness to disregard the Biblical date in favor of another tradition ties into another facet of his persona. In his autobiography, Josephus reports having chosen the Pharisaic way after searching for and studying the various Jewish sects (*Vita* 12). He states this toward the end of his life. There is no telling how strongly this remark reflects the image and doings of the priest Yossef, son of Matityahu, but it certainly befits the aging historian, Flavius Josephus, in Rome. As many have shown, Josephus’ Pharisaic leanings are profusely manifest in *Jewish Antiquities*.[[62]](#footnote-63) What matters for our purposes, of course, is the work’s historiographic manifestation. In it, Josephus clearly labored to integrate ancient traditions of Jewish provenance that the Rabbis, too, put to considerable use.[[63]](#footnote-64)Not all of the Jewish traditions that he uses are Pharisaic, however. Describing the miracle of rainfall as the Temple was being built, for example, Josephus notes, “And this story, which our fathers have handed down to us, is not at all incredible” (*Ant.* 15.425 [LCL, Marcus and Wikgren]). The Rabbis invoke much the same.[[64]](#footnote-65) More important, Josephus’ very willingness to consider ancient Jewish tradition as a preferred source is a hallmark of the Pharisees’ theology, as he himself writes: “the Pharisees had passed on to the people certain regulations handed down by former generations and not recorded in the Laws of Moses, for which reason they are rejected by the Sadducaean group” (*Ant.* 13.297 [LCL, Marcus and Wikgren]). The implicit dating of the destruction of the First Temple to Tishre 10 may thus reflect Josephus’ willingness to rely on an old Jewish tradition, on the one hand, and to forgo the jubilee chronology in order to distance himself from the apocalyptic outlook, which had almost totally disappeared from the Pharisee/rabbinic world, on the other.[[65]](#footnote-66)

1. Translation according to Christopher T. Begg and Paul Spilsbury (trans. and comm.), *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary* (ed. Steve Mason), Volume 5: *Judean Antiquities Books 8-10* (Leiden: Brill, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Josephus uses the same counting method for the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, see below. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Josephus, *Ant*. 11.112, refers to the same event but counts it as 532 years. Ralph Marcus’ suggestion in *Josephus,* vol. VI*: Jewish Antiquities, Books IX-XI* (LCL 326; Cambridge MA. and London: Harvard University Press, 1937), 368, n. b, seems reasonable but does not fully resolve the problem. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Translation according to Marcus, *Jewish Antiquities, Books IX-XI.* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See, Marcus, *Josephus*, 148, n. a, 149, n. c; Abraham Schalit (ed. and trans.), *Yossef ben Matityahu Flavius Josephus, Jewish Antiquities*, vol. II (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, Mosad Bialik, 1963), 159-60, n. 219-29 [Heb.]; Begg and Spilsbury, *Judean Antiquities Books 8-10*, 254, n. 596-598. On the chronology of Josephus, see the rich bibliography in Chaim Milikowsky, *Seder Olam: Critical Edition, Commentary and Introduction*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi Press, 2013), 1:39-40, n. 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. According to the prevailing approach, Jer 52 depends on 2 Kgs 25; see Oded Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 336-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. On the rabbinic discussion on this contradiction, see *Seder Olam Rabbah* 30 (Milikowsky ed.), 324, and Milikowsky’s discussion in *Seder Olam*, 2:435-45, as well as the thorough paper by Michael Avioz, “The Date of the Destruction of the First Temple in Ancient Versions and in Early Biblical Interpretation,” *Textus* 22 (2005): 87-94. On modern critical approaches, see Michael Avioz, “When Was the First Temple Destroyed According to the Bible?” *Biblica* 84 (2003): 562–565; Arthur J. Nevins, “When was Solomon’s Temple Burned Down? Reassessing the Evidence,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31 (2006): 3-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Translation according to H. St. J. Thackeray (trans.), *Josephus, II-III: The Jewish War* (LCL 203, 210; Cambridge MA. and London: Harvard University Press 1927-1928). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The Hebrew/Jewish month of Av is analogous to the Macedonian month of Lous. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Avioz, “Date,” 91-92. Biblical scholars suggest different months, among them the first month and the eleventh month; see Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 22A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 529-530; Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel,* vol. 2of *Chapters 25-48* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 2:33-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. For this rule, see *Mekhilta deRabbi Ishmael*, Pishah 4 (H. S. Horovitz and I. A. Rabin [eds.], Mechilta D’Rabbi Ismael [Frankfurt am Main: Kauffmann, 1931], 13); *Sifre on Numbers* 48 (Menhem I. Kahana [ed.], *Sifre on Numbers: An Annotated Edition*, vol. 1 [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2011], 146). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The exposure of contradictions and solutions to them were a significant part of classical interpretations of Homer. Yakir Paz, *From Scribes to Scholars: Rabbinic Biblical Exegesis in Light of the Homeric Commentaries* (Ph.D dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Jerusalem, 2014), 190-98 [Heb.], argues that Homer’s interpreters did not use the “third verse” method. The Rabbis, too, he notes, tended not to use this method intensively; see esp. Paz, *Scribes*, 199, n. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. It seems that Josephus understood the third verse as a middle ground between the two verses rather than as supporting one verse against the other. This understanding is very close to the school of Rabbi Ishmael; see David Henshke, “The Rabbi’s Approach to Biblical Self-Contradictions,” *Sidra* 10 (1994): 39-59, esp. 44 [Heb.]. See also the bibliography in Paz, *Scribes*, 199, n. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Translation of PT texts are based on the Schottenstein edition of the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, Tractate Taanis, New York 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The reason for the discrepancy in the dates lies in the fact that Tammuz 17 was the date of the cessation of the daily sacrifice (*J.W*. 6.94). The contradiction between the Bible and rabbinic tradition on Tammuz 17 was already discussed and resolved in *Seder Olam*: “’In the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, a breach was made in the city’ (Jer 39:2) – the first time; and the second time the seventeen of it” (*Seder Olam* 30 [trans. Chaim Milikowsky, *Seder Olam: A Rabbinic Chronography* (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University: New Haven ,1981), 548]). Indeed, according to *Seder Olam,* the city wall was breached on Tammuz 17, while according to Josephus, the daily sacrifice ceased on that day. The main issue, however, is that the *Seder Olam* connects Tammuz 17 to Second Temple events, while connecting Tammuz 9, the biblical date, to First Temple events; see Yuval Shahar, “Rabbi Akiba and the Destruction of the Temple: the Establishment of the Fast Days,” *Zion* 68 (2003): 145-65, here 159-60 [Heb.]; Meir Ben Shahar, “Ninth of Av: Chronology and Ideology in Fixing the Dates of the First and the Second Destructions in Rabbinic Literature,” *Zion* 81(2016): 5-30, here 15-17 [Heb.]. See also the harmonistic suggestion of Asher Weiser, *Bible and Linguistics: Collected Studies* (Tel Aviv: Niv, 1965), 76-77 [Heb.]. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. In *Lamentations Rabbah*, Ptihtah 23 (Buber ed., 21-22), there is a parallel tradition attributed to Rabbi Eleazar. Wiser, *Bible*, 75, assumes this to be an independent tradition that is not connected to the dates of the destruction and the breaching of the wall. *Lamentations Rabba* connects this tradition to Tammuz 17 and Av 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. The identity of the “second month” in which the flood occurred is disputed in Jewish tradition: some consider it Iyar and others Marheshvan. According to Josephus, the “second month” is Marheshvan since Nissan became the “first month” only in the time of the Exodus (*Ant*. 1.81). On other Jewish traditions, see Milikowsky, *Seder Olam*, 2:83-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Josephus distinguishes between calculations for religious purposes, which begin in Nissan, and calculation for secular matters, which begins in Tishre. However, all the dates mentioned by Josephus in the *Jewish Antiquities* are based on a count beginning in Nissan. These are the dates of religious occasions as well as of political events (e.g. *Ant*. 4.327, 8.61-62, 10.135 etc.). To conclude, it is important to note that Josephus uses the Nissan’s method of counting and the Babylonian-Hebrew names of the months only in *Jewish Antiquities*. By contrast, in *Jewish War* he uses solely the Macedonian months, despite determining the days of the month according to the Hebrew calendar; see Jonathan J. Price, *Jerusalem under Siege: The Collapse of the Jewish State, 66-70 C.E.* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 210-13; Sacha Stern, *Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar, 2nd Century B.C.E.–10th Century C.E.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 34-38. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Josephus reads “three months and ten days”. Marcus, *Josephus*, 236-237, n. b, accepted this version, while Schalit, *Antiquities*, 159, n. 219, regards this as a slip of the pen from Jeconiah’s account. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. According to 2 Kgs 24:8, Jeconiah ruled for only three months. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Schalit, *Antiquities*, 159, n. 219; *Ant*. 11.112. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Translation according to Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, Books XVIII-XX* (LCL 411; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press,1965). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Feldman, *Josephus,* 511, n. d, suggests that Josephus deducted the first four years of Solomon's kingdom, which preceded the temple’s construction, from the 470 years of the First Temple rather than adding them. The years, after all, do not include the first four years of Solomon’s reign, as is evident from the calculation of the years of the Davidic kings (Schalit, *Antiquities*, 159, n. 219). A more plausible suggestion is that Josephus relies on an independent tradition. Josephus did, after all, consult priestly chronological traditions, as he points out in *Against Apion* 1.36. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. I tend to think that Josephus incorporates two traditions here. The data Josephus provides makes it possible to calculate the years that passed between the first and second destruction. Now, if the calculation is done from the founding of the city by Melchizedek, it amounts to 709 years (2177-1468). By contrast, when the starting point for the calculation is King David, then we find that only 702 years have passed (1179-477). The proposal made by Antti Laato, *Guide to Biblical Chronology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2015), 81, seems forced. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Milikowsky, *Seder Olam*, 1:42, n. 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Josephus, as a historian with chronological sensitivity, was certainly well aware of this meaning. Evidence for this can be found in the way in which he lists the years, months, and days of the second destruction. He lists 1130 years and another seven months and fifteen days from the founding of the First Temple to the destruction of the Second Temple (*J.W.* 6.269), and 639 years and forty-five days from the founding of the Second Temple to the second destruction (*J.W.* 6.270). The difference in the number of months and days is due, of course, to the fact that the founding of the two temples occurred on different dates. Previous scholars have dealt with various aspects of the lists of years; see Michael First, *Jewish History in Conflict: A Study of the Major Discrepancy between Rabbinic and Conventional Chronology* (Northvale, N.J.; Jason Aronson, 1997), 119-20, n. 15; Laato, *Chronology*, 80-81. I must admit I have found no satisfactory explanation for these dates. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ben Shahar, “Ninth of Av,” 19-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Milikowsky, *Seder Olam*, II, 556. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The scrolls of the priestly watches have been published and discussed by Shemaryahu Talmon, Jonathan Ben-Dov, Uwe Glessmer, *Qumran Cave 4.XVI: Calendrical Texts* (DJD XXI; Oxford: Clarendon, 2001). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Talmon, Ben-Dov and Glessmer, *Qumran Cave 4*, p. 225. See also 4Q320, 4Q321. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The Mishmarot list states that Yom Kippur took place on Friday; if so, it is difficult to reconcile it with Rabbi Yosse’s first day of the destruction, which occurred on Saturday night. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Michael Avi-Yona, “The Caesarea Inscription of the 24 Priestly Courses,” *Ertetz Israel* 7 (1964): 25-28, claimed there was a fixed list but did not specify its order. By contrast, Milikowsky, *Seder Olam*, 2:572, argues that there is no evidence of a fixed calendar. Milikowsky points out that Rabbi Yosse took the trouble to note that the two destructions occurred at the time of the Jehoiarib; this means that there was no fixed list, for if there was, it would be obvious that because the two destructions occurred on the same date, they must have also occurred during the same priestly watch. Shmuel Safrai and Zeev Safrai, *Tractates Ta’anit and Megillah with an Introduction and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Liphshitz College, 2009), 176-173, discuss the various possibilities and find that it is impossible to tell whether or not a fixed list existed. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Further testimony to the destruction on Saturday is found in Frontinus, *Stratagems* 2.1.17. On Fontinus and Cassius Dio, see Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974-1984), 1:509-11, 2:377. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. Joseph Naveh, “Aramaic Tombstones from Zoar,” *Tarbiz* 64 (1965): 477-97, here 478. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. This is also Milikowsky’s conclusion (*Seder Olam*, 2:555-56). It is unclear from Milikowsky’s discussion whether he believes that Rabbi Yosse’s remarks are based on real knowledge of the second destruction. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Milikowsky, *Seder Olam*, 2:552-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. The distinction between the Mishmarot list board and the historical events list is discussed at length by Shemaryahu Talmon and Jonathan Ben-Dov, “Mishmarot Lists (4Q322-324c) and ‘Historical Texts’ (4Q322a, 4Q331-333) from Qumran,” in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Chaim Cohen, and Victor Avigdor Hurowitz (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 927-942. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 3 vols. (AB; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 3:2164-65. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. John Bergsma, *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran: A History of Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. Cana Werman, *The Book of Jubilees: Introduction, Translation, and Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi Press), 2015, pp. 48-69 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. Translation according to R.H. Charles (ed.), *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. Werman, *Jubilees*, 553; James M. Scott, *On Earth as in Heaven: The Restoration of Sacred Time and Sacred Space in the Book of Jubilees* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 85-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. Translation according to Carol A. Newsom, “4Q378 and 4Q379: An Apocryphon of Joshua,” in *Qumranstudien*, eds. Heinz-Josef Fabry, Armin Lange and Hermann Lichtenberger (SIJD 4; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 35-85, here 65. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. Bergsma, *Jubilee*, 252-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov, in association with Geraldine I. Clements (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 1:95 [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. On this interpretation, see Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity: The Day of Atonement from Second Temple Judaism to the Fifth Century* (Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 97. Ariel Feldman, “Moses' Farewell Address According to 1QWords of Moses (1Q22),” *JSP* 23 (2014): 201–14, deals with the etiological aspects of 1Q22. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. The exact date of the cessation of the manna is not mentioned in the Bible, and thus offers an opening to various midrashic traditions; see *Seder Olam* 10 and Milikowsky’s commentary in *Seder Olam*, 2:183-84. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. See the thorough discussion in Scott, *On Earth*, 88-102 [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. Devorah Dimant (ed.), “4QApocryphon of Jeremiah,” in *Qumran Cave 4, XXI: Parabiblical Texts, Part 4: Pseudo-Prophetic Texts* (DJD 30; Oxford: Clarendon, 2001),113-15. On the scope and characters of the Jeremiah’s Apocryphon, see Cana Werman, “Epochs and End-Time: The 490 Year Scheme in Second Temple Literature,” *DSD* 13 (2006): 229–55. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. Translation according to Parry and Tov, *Reader*, 2:807 [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. Werman, “Epochs,” 236-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. Scott, *On Earth*, 98-99. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. Translation according to Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. Scott, *On Earth*, 96, and the detailed discussion in James C. VanderKam, “Sabbatical Chronologies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*, ed. Timothy H. Lim, Larry W. Hurtado, A. Graeme Auld, and Alison Jack (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000), 169-76. The texts mentioned here probably also include 4Q463. The text is most likely based on Daniel’s seventy-week vision, which is probably related to the end of the Jubilee. The text is highy fragmentary, and thus it is impossible to determine its chronological framework. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. Ralph Marcus and Allen Wikgren, *Josephus,* vol. VII*: Jewish Antiquities, Books XIV-XV* (LCL 489; Cambridge MA. and London: Harvard University Press, 1943). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. Nadav Sharon, *Judea Under Roman Domination: The First Generation of Statelessness and Its Legacy* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 404. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. Price, *Jerusalem under Siege,* pp. 116-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. Meir Ben Shahar, “When was the Second Temple Destroyed? Chronology and Ideology in Josephus,” *JSJ* 46 (2015): 547-573. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. The tradition of the affinity between the two events was quite widespread and brought up by Tacitus, *History*, 2.91.1; Livy, 6.1.11, Plut. *Camillus*, 19.1. For chronological issues and the religious meaning, see Gary Forsythe, *Time in Roman Religion: One Thousand Years of Religious History*, New York 2012, pp. 24-34. Most important in this respect is David Asheri, “The Art of Synchronization in Greek Historiography: The Case of Timaeus of Tauromenium,” *Scripta Classica Israelica* 11 (1991/2): 52-89. Asheri also mentions Rabbi Yosse’s dictum and Mishnah, Ta’anit 6:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. The composition is now lost but excerpts of it can be found in Plutarch, *Camillus*, 19. See the discussion in Anthony T. Grafton and Noel M. Swerdlow, “Calendar Dates and Ominous Days in Ancient Historiography,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 51 (1988): 17-28. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. On the importance of the Book of Daniel for Josephus see Steve Mason, “Josephus, Daniel and the Flavian House,” in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period: Essays in Memory of Morton Smith*, eds. Fausto Parente and Joseph Sievers (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 161-91. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. Daniel R. Schwartz, *Judeans and Jews: Four Faces of Dichotomy in Ancient Jewish History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 48-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. This conclusion is based on Tal Ilan and Vered Noam in collaboration with Meir Ben Shahar, Daphne Baratz and Yael Fisch, *Josephus and the Rabbis* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi Press, 2017) [Hebrew]. Vered Noam made this conclusion explicitly in her introduction, ibid, pp. 38-40; see also the English version in “Lost Historical Traditions: between Josephus and the Rabbis,” in *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls: John Collins at Seventy*, 2 vols., ed. Joel Baden, Hindy Najman, and Eibert Tigchelaar (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 2:991-1017. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. *Sifra*, Behuqotai 1:1, 110b (Weiss ed.); b. Taʿan. 22b-23a. The story is discussed by Tal Ilan, “The Miracle of the Rainfall in Herod’s Day,” in Ilan and Noam, *Josephus and the Rabbis*, 411-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. The Rabbis and probably the Pharisees also criticized and detached themselves from the apocalyptic tradition; see Anthony J. Saldarini, “Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Literature,” *CBQ* 31 (1975): 348-358; Lawrence H. Schiffman, “Messianism and Apocalypticism in Rabbinic Texts,” in *Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. IV: *The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, ed. Steven D. Katz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1053-72, here 1060-65. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)