



# KATOOMBA

## — BAPTIST CHURCH —

### CHRIST'S CHURCH THROUGH THE AGES

#### LESSON 6: THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM (PART 2)

##### **THE CAMPAIGN OF CESTIUS GALLUS**

- As a result of the revolt, the Emperor Nero commands Cestius Gallus, the Legate (Governor) of Syria, to march the Legio XII *Fulminata* upon Judaea.
- They were combined with select units from the Legio III, IV, and VI (plus auxiliaries and allies) into a total force of 30,000-35,000 troops (infantry + calvary).
- From Syria, the Romans launch their invasion of Judaea to restore order to the neighbouring province.
- Roman forces quickly captured the towns and cities of Galilee (many of which surrendered without a fight).
- Jewish forces that did fight were quickly defeated in those regions.
- Roman forces then marched on Caesarea Maritima and Jaffa, conquering much of the Sharon Plain.
- Roman forces massacred approx. 8,400 civilians between these two cities.
- Having swiftly moved their way further south, the Roman forces actually manage to surround Jerusalem.
- However: despite establishing an investment for a siege, as well as making initial gains, the Romans inexplicably decide to retreat back towards the coast.
- To this day, this decision has baffled historians and military strategists alike, and any explanation for such a move has remained a mystery. (cf. Luke 21:20-24)

## **THE FLIGHT TO PELLA**

- During the Olivet Discourse, wherein Christ prophecies of this great judgment and tribulation that would befall Jerusalem (Luke 21:20-24), he explicitly tells the Christians that when they would see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then the abomination of its' desolation was at hand.
- They were to flee to the mountains - which we know were to the east in Pella, across the Jordan River.

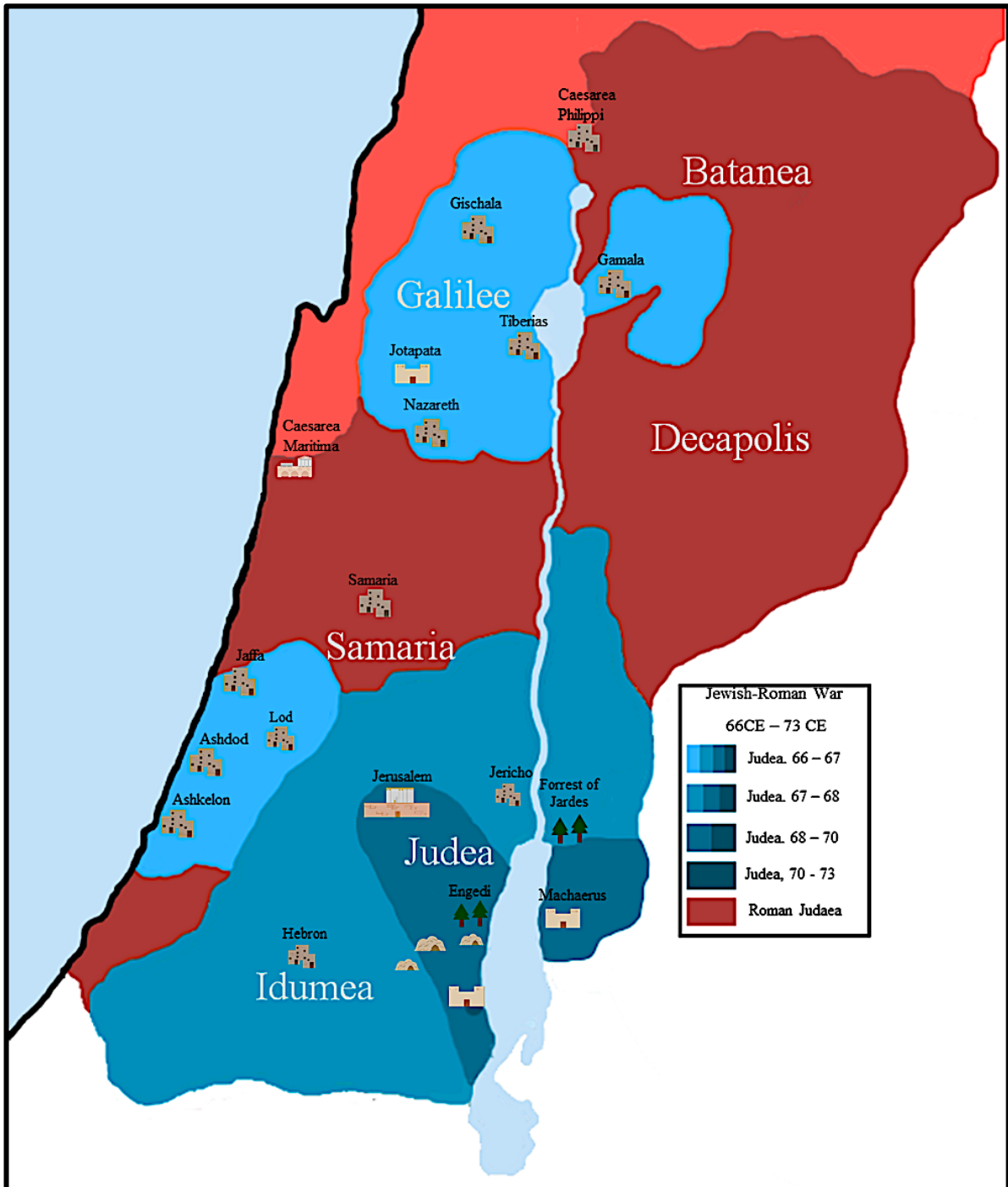
*“The people of the Church in Jerusalem were commanded by an oracle given by revelation before the war to those in the city who were worthy of it, to depart and dwell in one of the cities of Perea, which they called Pella. To it, those who believed on Christ travelled from Jerusalem, so that when holy men had altogether deserted the royal capital of the Jews and the whole land of Judaea...”*

— Eusebius, *Church History* (c. 4<sup>th</sup> Century)

## **THE CAMPAIGN OF CESTIUS GALLUS**

- As the Roman forces withdraw, they are ambushed by the Judean forces at the Battle of Beth Horon (AD 66).
- Trapped in the pass and overwhelmed by the enemy, the Romans completely lost unit cohesion and were routed, as troops fled the battlefield.
- In the disarray, the Roman *aquila* of the Legio XII was captured, and more than an entire legion worth of Roman troops (6,000) were killed in the battle.
- Gallus barely escaped the slaughter, and abandoned his army by fleeing back into the province of Syria, sacrificing a significant number of his troops.
- Following their victory, the Jewish rebels established the Judean Provincial Government, under the leadership of the Pharisees and Saducees.
- This government lasted from A.D. 66-68
- The shock of this defeat reverberated around the entire Roman Empire, with the Battle of Beth Horon considered to be one of the most disastrous defeats in Roman history.
- It was the first time since the infamous Battle of Teutoburg Forest (A.D. 9) that a Roman legion had lost its' *aquila* (battle-standard of the Roman infantry).

- Enraged at the humiliating defeat, the Emperor Nero realised that total war was the only viable option for crushing the Jewish rebellion, reclaiming the glory of Rome, and restoring confidence across the Empire.
- Emperor Nero and the Senate then appointed (the future Emperor) Vespasian to take command, where he was given full authority to bring the wrath of the Roman Empire down upon Judaea.



**FIGURE 1: TERRITORIAL MAP OF JEWISH-ROMAN WAR (A.D. 66-73)**