

Let Us Go (notes)

Supplement for the Article: *More on "Let Us Remove Hence"*

Fulfilled Magazine (Spring 2013 Vol. 8 Issue 1)

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Midrash Lamentations

Midrash Rabba Lamentations 2:11 (Prologue 49-50) [Preface to Echa Rabthi folio 56.1]

[siman כז]

Another interpretation of 'And in that day did the Lord, the God of hosts, call to weeping and to lamentation': at {Lam. 40} the time when the Holy One, Blessed be He, sought to destroy the Temple, He said, 'So long as I am in its midst, the nations of the world will not touch it; but I will close My eyes so as not to see it, and swear that I will not attach Myself to it until **the time of the end** arrives.' Then came the enemy and destroyed it. Forthwith the Holy One, Blessed be He, swore by His right hand and placed it behind Him. **So it is written, He hath drawn back His right hand from before the enemy (ib. II, 3). At that time the enemy entered the Temple and burnt it. When it was burnt, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said, 'I no longer have a dwelling-place in this land; I will withdraw My Shechinah from it and ascend to My former habitation; so it is written, I will go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their guilt, and seek My face' (Hos. V, 15). At that time the Holy One, Blessed be He, wept and said, 'Woe is Me! What have I done? I caused My Shechinah to dwell below on earth for the sake of Israel; but now that they have sinned, I have returned to My former habitation.** Heaven forbend that I become a laughter to the nations and a byword to human beings! 'At that time Metatron came, fell upon his face, and spake before the Holy One, Blessed be He: 'Sovereign of the Universe, let me weep, but do Thou not weep.' He replied to him, 'If thou lettest Me not weep now, I will repair to a place which thou hast not permission to enter, and will weep there,' as it is said, But if ye will not hear it, My soul shall weep in secret for pride (Jer. 13:17).

[big snip]

[siman כח]

Ten journeys were made by the Shechinah:

From cherub to cherub, from the cherub to the threshold of the house, from the threshold of the house to the cherubim, from the cherubim to the east gate, from the east gate to the court, from the court to the roof, from the roof to the altar, from the altar to the wall, from the wall to the city [of Jerusalem], and **from the city to the Mount Of Olives**. From cherub to cherub; for it is written, and the Glory of the Lord mounted up from the cherub (Ezek. 10:4). From the cherub to the threshold of the house; for it is written, and the Glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon it was, to the threshold of the house (ib. 9:3). From the threshold of the house to the cherubim; for it is written, and the Glory of the Lord went forth from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubim (ib. 10:18). (the text should not have said 'went forth' but 'came'1; **but it says 'went forth', so what means 'went forth'?** **R. Aha said: The Shechinah may be likened to a king who left his palace in anger. After going out,** he came back and embraced and kissed the walls of the palace and its pillars, weeping and exclaiming, 'O the peace of my palace, O the peace of my royal residence, O the peace of my

beloved house! O peace, from now onward let there be peace! ' Similarly when the Shechinah went forth from the temple, it returned and embraced {Lam. 50} and kissed its walls and pillars, and wept and said, 'O the peace of the temple, O the peace of my royal residence, O the peace of my beloved house! O peace, from now onward let there be peace! ')

From the cherubim to the east gate; for it is written, and the cherubim lifted up their wings... And they stood at the door of the east gate (ib. 19). From the east gate to the court; for it is written, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's Glory (ib. 4). From the court to the roof; for it is written, it is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop (Prov. 21:9). From the roof to the altar; for it is written, I saw the Lord standing beside the altar (Amos 9:1). From the altar to the wall; for it is written, behold, the Lord stood beside a wall made by a plumbline (ib. 7:7). (another interpretation is: what means 'anak(' plumbline')? It alludes to the Sanhedrin of seventy-one members. Whence is this derived? From the numerical value of the letters of 'anak. Then said the Lord, behold I will set a plumbline (ib. 8): R. Judah b. R. Simon said, etc.3) **from the wall to the city; for it is written, hark! The Lord crieth unto the city (Micah vi, 9). From the city to the Mount Of Olives; for it is written, and the Glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city (Ezek. 11:23).**

R. Jonathan said: three and a half years the Shechinah abode upon the mount of olives hoping that Israel would repent, but they did not; while a Bath Kol issued announcing, 'Return, O backsliding children (Jer. 52:14), return unto me, and I will return unto you (Mal. Iii, 7).' when they did not repent, it said, 'I will go and return to my place (Hos. V, 15).' Concerning **that time** it is said, 'give glory to the Lord your God, before it grow dark' (Jer. 13:16): before it becomes dark to you for lack of words of Torah, before it becomes dark to you for lack of words of prophecy, 'and before your feet stumble upon the mountains of twilight.' ' and while ye look for light,' in Babylon, 'he turn it into the {Lam. 51} shadow of death,' in Media, 'and make it gross darkness' in Greece. 'But if ye will not hear it' (ib. 17) in Edom, 'my soul shall weep in secret for your pride.' why is it stated 'for your pride'? It alludes to the idols on which they pride themselves, saying, where are their gods, the rock in whom they trusted (**Deut. 32:37**). Another interpretation of 'for your pride': on account of the ministering angels who are proud of themselves and say, 'what is man, that thou art mindful of him, etc.?' (Ps. 8:5).

'And mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock is carried away captive' (**Jer. xiii, 17**). You find that **before Israel was exiled, they were divided** into sections -- the section of the priesthood being separate, the section of the Levites separate, and the section of the lay-Israelites separate. But **when they were exiled**, they were formed into one party. 'Because the Lord's flock is **carried away captive**': ' [flocks] are carried away captive' is not written here, but 'because the Lord's flock is carried away captive'.

[FROM ED] These rabbinical stories above do not match up with Scripture, nor with the historical accounts of the AD 66 Pentecost event that we find described in Josephus, Yosippon, Hegesippus, Tacitus, etc.

- (1) The first problem is the failure to match what the multiple credible priestly witnesses had to say about this event in AD 66. Be sure to read the other two PDF documents that I sent, “Let Us Go” quotes and charts, where all those various historical accounts were translated and explained. Go back and look at all the various accounts and their different translations. Notice that the priests heard and felt this large multitude of persons in the unseen realm going **INTO** the temple (not coming out of it). Secondly, it was a large multitude of voices (not just one or two or three voices). If it had simply been the BAT KOL, the priests would have known what it was, and Josephus would have explained it easily as the Shechinah or the BAT KOL. However, this event had those people in the unseen realm going **INTO** the temple, not coming out of it. This would NOT have been interpreted by the priests or Josephus as being the Shechinah, whom they believed was already in the Temple. Why would the Shechinah need to enter into the Temple, only to leave it again immediately?
- (2) The second problem is that this rabbinical evidence is only at the mouth of ONE questionable rabbi (not two or more reliable eyewitnesses). The explanation about the Shechinah removing from the temple in AD 66 is questionable and suspicious on several grounds. This theory appears to have been dreamed up by the rabbis at Yavneh AFTER the war, the very same rabbis who wrote the 19th benediction (malediction) cursing the heretics (Christians), which they used to excommunicate all MINIM (heretics) from their synagogues. That fact does not recommend this story as credible.
- (3) Moreover, it conflicts with the gospels and the book of Acts where it talks about the veil of the temple torn from top to bottom at the Cross, suggesting that the Shechinah may have left the temple at that point, and not returned until 50 days later at Pentecost, at which time it came to dwell in His new temple (the Church). We really cannot have it both ways. The Shechinah was not in the old temple at the same time it was in His new temple. Ernest L. Martin really misunderstood all this.
- (4) Furthermore, in Matthew 23:38, right after Jesus told the Jews that they would fill up the measure of the guilt of their fathers by killing Him, He says that the Temple would thereafter be left to them DESOLATE (i.e., without the presence of God in it). So, the rabbis may have concocted this story about the Shechinah leaving in AD 66 in order to obfuscate what Jesus had clearly told them. They were in denial mode. They were trying to hide the real truth about the Shechinah leaving in AD 30 at the Cross, and then returning to dwell in the Church at Pentecost and afterwards. We really cannot have it both ways. After the Cross, the Temple was just an empty shell. Who are we going to believe, Jesus or the unbelieving rabbis who are trying to hide the truth?

Eusebius, Proof of the Gospel, Book 6, Chapter 18 (excerpt)

Of the Coming of the Lord, and of the Events of His Passion.

Eusebius' comments on the meaning of **Zech. 14:1-10**

AFTER the first siege of Jerusalem, and its total destruction and desolation by the Babylonians, and after the Return of the Jews from their enemies' land to their own, which came to pass in the time of Cyrus king of Persia, when Jerusalem has just been restored, and the Temple and its Altar renewed by Darius the Persian, the present **prophecy foretells a second siege of Jerusalem** which is to take place afterwards, which it suffered from the Romans, after its inhabitants had carried through their outrage on our Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus the coming of our Saviour and the events connected therewith are very clearly shewn in this passage—I mean what was done at the time of His Passion, and the siege that came on the Hebrew race directly after, the taking of Jerusalem, the call of the Gentiles also, and the knowledge attained by all nations of the one and only God. But the inspired prophet pathetically bewails the woes of the Jews as those of his own people, and begins his prophecy [**Zech. 14:1-10**] with a cry against them. He means by "days of the Lord," here as well as in other places, the time of our Lord's presence among men. And he clearly shews how the Lord Himself, as being the true Light, will become some day the maker of His own days, and will shine on all men in the world, all the nations receiving Him and the rays of His light, when all nations are enlightened, according to the words, "I have set Thee for a light to the Gentiles, for a covenant of my race," and the Jewish nation through their unbelief will fall into great trouble.

For such is the meaning of "Behold the days of the Lord come, and thy spoils shall be divided within thee, and I will gather all the Gentiles to Jerusalem to war. And the city shall be taken, the houses plundered, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go into captivity." ¹²⁷

And after the siege of Jerusalem, and the captivity of the Jews which succeeds it, he next adds a prophecy of good things for all: "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth." And again: "There shall be one Lord, and his name one, encircling all the earth and the wilderness."

But who would not be surprised at the fulfilment of a prophecy [**Zech. 14:1-10**] which revealed that the Jewish people would undergo these sufferings in the days of the Lord? For as soon as Jesus our Lord and Saviour had come and the Jews had outraged Him, everything that had been predicted was fulfilled against them without exception 500 years after the prediction: from the time of Pontius Pilate to the sieges under Nero, Titus and Vespasian they were never free from all kinds of successive calamities, as you may gather from the history of Flavius Josephus. It is probable that half the city at that time perished in the siege, as the prophecy says. And not long after, in the reign of Hadrian, there was another Jewish revolution, and the remaining half of the city was again besieged and driven out, so that from that day to this the whole place has not been trodden by them.

Now if any one supposes that this [**Zech. 14:1-10**] was fulfilled in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, let him inquire if the rest of the prophecy can be referred to the times of Antiochus — I mean the captivity undergone by the people, the standing of the Lord's feet on the Mount of Olives, and whether the Lord became King of all the earth in that day, and whether the name of the Lord encircled the whole earth and the desert during the reign of Antiochus. And how can the fulfilment of the remainder of the prophecy in the days of Antiochus be asserted? But, according to my interpretation, **they are fulfilled both literally and also in another sense**. For after the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ, their city, Jerusalem itself, and the whole system and

institutions of the Mosaic worship were destroyed; and at once they underwent captivity in mind as well as body, in refusing to accept the Saviour and Ransomer of the souls of men, Him Who came to preach release to those enslaved by evil daemons, and giving of sight to those blind in mind. And while they suffered through their unbelief, those of ¹²⁸ them who recognized their Ransomer became His own disciples, apostles and evangelists, and many others of the Jews believed on Him, of whom the apostle says, "So also now there is a remnant according to the election of grace." And "If the Lord of Sabaoth had not left unto us a seed we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorra." **They were preserved safe from the metaphorical siege, and also from the siege literally understood. For the apostles and disciples of our Saviour, and all the Jews that believed on Him, being far from the land of Judaea, and scattered among the other nations, were enabled at that time to escape the ruin of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And the prophecy anticipated and foretold this where it said, "And the remnant of my people shall not be utterly destroyed." To which it adds afterwards, "And the Lord shall go forth, and shall fight for those nations, as a day of his battle in the day of war." For which nations will the Lord fight, but for those that shall besiege Jerusalem?** The passage [Zech. 14:1-10] shews that the Lord Himself will fight for the besiegers, being among them and drawn up with them, like their general and commander warring against Jerusalem. For it does not say that the Lord will fight against the nations. With whom and against whom, then, will He fight? Surely against Jerusalem and her inhabitants, concerning whom it is spoken.

And the words, "And his feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem to the eastward," what else can they mean than that the Lord God, that is to say the Word of God Himself, will stand, and **stand firm, upon His Church, which is here metaphorically called the Mount of Olives?** For as "My Beloved had a vineyard," and "There was a vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth," are used in a figurative sense of "the house of Israel and the plant of Judah His beloved vine," so also we may say in the same sense that **the Church** of the (d) Gentiles has become an olive-garden to the Master, which of old He planted with wild olives, and grafted them on the apostolic roots of the good olive after cutting away the old branches, as the apostle teaches. And the Lord planted it for Himself, saying as much in the prophecy: "The Lord hath called thy name a beautiful and shady olive." For when **the first vineyard** should have brought forth ¹²⁹ grapes it brought forth thorns, and not justice but a cry, **God rightly withdrew from it as unfruitful, its mound and its wall, and gave it to its enemies [586 BC or AD 70?]**, "to rob and to tread down," according to the prophecy of Isaiah, but established another field for Himself, here named "the olive-garden," as that which had obtained God's mercy, and been planted by Christ with ever-flourishing plants, that is with souls that are holy and nourish the light, which can say, "I am like a fruitful olive-tree in the house of God."

And this Mount of Olives [i.e., Christianity] is said to be over against Jerusalem, because it was established by God after the fall of Jerusalem [AD 70], instead of the old earthly Jerusalem and its worship. For as Scripture said above with reference to Jerusalem: "The city shall be taken, and the nations that are her enemies and foes shall be gathered together against her, and her spoils shall be divided" [Zech 14:1-4], it could not say that the feet of the Lord should stand upon Jerusalem. How could that be, once it were destroyed? But it says that they will stand with them that depart from it to the mount opposite the city called the Mount of Olives. And this, too, the prophet Ezekiel [typologically] **anticipates by the Holy Spirit and foretells.** For he says:

"22. And the Cherubim lifted their wings, and the wheels beside them, 23. and the glory of the God of Israel was on them above them, and he stood on the mount which was opposite to the city." [Ezek. 11:22-23]

Which it is possible for us to see literally fulfilled in another way even to-day, since believers in Christ all congregate from all parts of the world, not as of old time because of the glory of Jerusalem, nor that they may worship in the ancient Temple at Jerusalem, but they rest there that they may learn both about the city being taken and devastated as the prophets foretold, and that they may worship at the Mount of Olives opposite to the city, whither the glory of the Lord migrated when it left the former city [i.e. in 586 BC]. There¹³⁰ stood in truth according to the common and received account the feet of our Lord and Saviour, Himself the Word of God, through that tabernacle of humanity He had borne up the Mount of Olives to the cave that is shewn there; there He prayed and delivered to His disciples on the summit of the Mount of Olives the mysteries of His end, and thence He made His Ascension into heaven, as Luke tells us in the Acts of the Apostles, saying that while the apostles were with Him on the Mount of Olives:

"While they beheld he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And as they gazed steadfastly into heaven while he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? This same Jesus that is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." [Acts 1:9-11]

To which he adds: "Then they returned from the mount called the Mount of Olives, which is opposite to Jerusalem" [Acts 1:12]. The Mount of Olives is therefore literally opposite to Jerusalem and to the east of it, but also the Holy Church of God, and the mount upon which it is founded, of which the Saviour teaches: "A city set on a hill cannot be hid," raised up in place of Jerusalem that is fallen never to rise again, and thought worthy of the feet of the Lord, is figuratively not only opposite to Jerusalem, but east of it as well, receiving the rays of the divine light, and become¹³¹ much before Jerusalem, and near to the Sun of Righteousness Himself, of Whom it is said: "And on them that fear me shall the sun of righteousness arise."

More About the Josephus Story (from Ed)

Even if we granted that both Eusebius and the Midrash were teaching a departure of the Shechinah in AD 66, it still would not prove that a departure actually occurred, nor that the Shechinah was even still there until AD 66. This whole story could have been fabricated by the rabbis just to discredit the Christian claim of having the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church from Pentecost onwards.

Even if we were to grant that the *Midrash* is claiming an AD 66 departure of the Shechinah from the temple, we know that claim is mistaken simply because the Shechinah was no longer in the Temple after AD 30. That would mean that the Midrash is nothing more than a fabrication by the rabbis to obscure and deny the fact that the Holy Spirit has dwelt in Christians ever since Pentecost in AD 30. Can we really believe that the rabbis would deliberately rewrite history like this? Listen to the following words from Abraham Cohen (a modern rabbi, professor, and

Talmudic expert) in his book, *Everyman's Talmud* (available on our book list), where he quotes some of the rabbis in the Talmudic era (200 BC – AD 200):

"A Gentile who occupies himself with the study of Torah is deserving of death; as it is said, 'Moses commanded us a Torah, an inheritance for the assembly of Israel' (Deut 33:4) – the inheritance is for us, not for them" (Sanh 59a). "Moses sought that the *Shechinah* should rest upon Israel, and He granted it; as it is said, 'Is it not in that Thou goest with us?' (Exod 33:16). He sought that **the *Shechinah* should not rest upon the other peoples** of the world, and He granted it; as it is said, 'So that we are distinguished, I and Thy people' (ibid)" (Ber 7a). **In all probability such declarations as these were called forth by the rise of the Christian Church whose members also studied the Scriptures and claimed that the Divine Grace rested upon them.** [Abraham Cohen. *Everyman's Talmud*, p. 63. boldface added]

This is a clear admission by Cohen that some of the Talmudic rabbis "in all probability" fabricated some things in order to refute the Christians and exclude them from the Synagogue. Notice the specific claim of the Christians that the rabbis were reacting against: "*that the Divine Grace rested upon them.*" In the previous two sentences, it is clear what the rabbis were saying, i.e., "*that the Shechinah should not rest upon the other peoples.*" Evidently the Christians were claiming that the Shechinah rested upon them, and the rabbis twisted the words of Moses in order to counter this Christian claim. If they would distort the words of Moses, then it is easy to see how they might *rewrite history* as well. Jesus accused them of this very thing, when he said that "you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition" (Matt 15:6). If they were doing that during Jesus' lifetime, it would not be hard to believe they did it to the Christians later. That is, in fact, what I believe we are looking at here. In order to negate the claim of Christians that the Holy Spirit (i.e., the *Shechinah*) rested upon the Church from Pentecost onwards, the rabbis invented the counter-claim that the Shechinah remained in the Temple, and did not leave until AD 66. That would indeed negate the Christian claim, if it were true.

Another problem is that this rabbinical evidence is only at the mouth of ONE questionable rabbi (not two or more reliable eyewitnesses). The explanation about the Shechinah removing from the temple in AD 66 is questionable and suspicious on several grounds. It appears to have been dreamed up by the rabbis at Yavneh AFTER the war, the very same rabbis who wrote the 19th benediction (malediction) cursing the heretics (Christians), which they used to excommunicate all MINIM (heretics) from their synagogues. That fact alone does not recommend this story as credible.

John D. Keyser (a futurist) may have claimed too much for Rabbi Jonathan by repeatedly saying that he was an "eyewitness" of the Shechinah departure from the Temple. Typically only prophets or priests were allowed to witness such things, and with multiple witnesses. Keyser does not give us any citations or references for his claim that R. Jonathan was an eyewitness. I read the whole context in the Midrash Lamentations, and did not find any indication that he was an eyewitness of this event. From what I was able to discover about him, it appears that R. Jonathan was a second century rabbi very loosely connected with the Yavneh school. So, it is not likely that he was even alive at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and if he was, he must have been very young.

The statements in this particular section of the Midrash appear to be nothing more than a litany of Yavneh rabbis after AD 70 using the book of Lamentations as the grid upon which to

build their understanding of what had just happened in AD 70. They do not see AD 70 as the End of Days. They teach instead that it was just another destruction and scattering like the Babylonian captivity, with the future Messianic restoration to the land yet to come. They believe that the Messiah is going to come (soon) and restore the temple (Bar Kochba) and cause the Shechinah to return to the temple, and bring in the golden Messianic Age of Israel.

The Christian interpretations of these stories are coming from futurists who have gulped down the rabbinical stories without question. Do not be fooled by these unfounded legends concocted by the rabbis to contradict our Christian biblical teaching that the Shechinah left the temple at the crucifixion and dwelt in the Church from Pentecost onwards.

Those stories are simply coming from unbelieving Jews who do not believe the Messiah has come yet. So, if R. Jonathan (Midrash) had actually applied this Shechinah departure to AD 66, it would mean that the rabbis invented this story to hide the fact that their non-Christian Jewish people no longer had access to the Shechinah, and that the Church is the repository of God's Presence instead. Who are we going to believe, Jesus or the unbelieving rabbis who are trying to hide the truth?

The unbelieving Jewish rabbis just love it when Christians buy into their myth that the Shechinah was still in the temple until AD 66. It would prove two things against Christianity:

- (1) Jesus was wrong when He said their temple was going to be left to them desolate, and
- (2) the Shechinah could not have been indwelling the Church during the transition period from AD 30-70 if it was still in the Temple. This would make Pentecost a non-event. If the Shechinah remained in the Temple until AD 66, it would prove that the Jews were still God's people and that the Christians were not the people of God after all.

Therefore, we suggest that this story may be nothing more than a deliberate attempt on the part of the Jewish rabbis to hide the fact that the Church had the Shechinah (Holy Spirit) residing in them from Pentecost onwards. The theory of Martin and Keyser simply cannot be true if the Spirit actually dwells in the Church from Pentecost onwards. The Shechinah could not be in the old temple at the same time it is in His new temple.

In Matthew 23:38, right after Jesus told the Jews that they would fill up the measure of the guilt of their fathers by killing Him, He says that the Temple would ultimately be left to them DESOLATE (i.e., deserted, without the presence of God in it). This implies that the rabbis may have concocted this story about the Shechinah leaving in AD 66 in order to cover up what Jesus had clearly told them. They were in denial mode. They were trying to hide the real truth about the Shechinah leaving in AD 30 at the Cross, and then returning to dwell in the Church at Pentecost and afterwards.

When did the Shechinah depart from the Temple?

That the Shechinah was no longer in the Temple at the time of its destruction, is admitted by all. But *when* did it leave, and how do we know?

The Futurists and Zionists try to say that the tearing of the veil at the Crucifixion was a happy sign that we now have open access to the Holy of Holies, and that the veil no longer separates us. While that is certainly true in a fulfilled spiritual sense now after AD 70, it was not what the rending of the veil symbolized in AD 30. It was more likely showing that the Father

was rending His garments at the death of His Son, and leaving the physical temple desolate of His presence, just like Jesus had warned the day before (Matt 23:38).

Furthermore, the book of Acts clearly shows that the physical temple was no longer the place where God's Spirit dwelt from Pentecost onwards. At Pentecost, the Shechinah in the form of the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost to dwell in the Church. Jesus said the temple would be left to them desolate (Matt 23:38). The next day while Jesus was being crucified, the veil was torn from top to bottom, indicating that the Shechinah left at that time, just as Jesus had predicted the day before when He left the temple for His last time while on earth. It is interesting that He went over to the Mount of Olives after leaving the temple.

Scarlet ribbon and lot for the sacrificial goat:

- Another thing that lends credence to the AD 30 departure of the Shechinah besides the rending of the veil, is the fact that the scarlet cloth no longer turned white after the Cross, and the lot for the goat never came up in the right hand after the Cross in AD 30.
- In the Talmudic writings the rabbis have admitted that the scarlet ribbon that was tied to the horns of the scapegoat no longer consistently turned white during the forty years from the Cross to the destruction of Jerusalem. Nor did the lot for the sacrificial goat consistently come up in the right hand of the High Priest like it had before then. [*Bab. Talmud, Yoma 39a and 39b, and Rosh HaShana 31b*] These two very bad omens suggest that the Shechinah was not in residence at the Temple, or if He was, He was not accepting their sacrifices for atonement. The fact that both these bad omens continued unabated throughout the whole forty years implies the Shechinah was not there at all during that time.

Interpretation of the Josephus Story

- *Tacitus* (a pagan Roman historian) thought it was “the gods departing” from the temple. Tacitus says the gods were leaving, implying a huge number of them, not just three. However, *Yosippon* (a Jewish historian) says it was a multitude of men going into the temple and then declaring that they were “leaving this house.”
- If it had been the Shechinah leaving, it would have been following the same pattern that it had previously in 586 BC, and the priests would have easily recognized it for what it was. Yet Josephus, who was a priest, writing ten years after the event, still did not know what it was.
- Even if the Midrash statements were actually teaching an AD 66 departure of the Shechinah, we would still have to reject them as hopelessly out of sync with New Testament teaching.
- As preterists, most of us should recognize the fallacy of this futurist and rabbinical approach right away.
- The clear implication is that this "great multitude of men" were not going back out of the temple the same way they came in, nor were they returning to where they had just come from. They were departing from the temple to go to another place, using the Temple as a **gateway or bridge** to somewhere else.
- Hegesippus -- "we cross over from here" (**gateway, or bridge, or Jacob's ladder idea**). They crossed over from one part of the unseen realm (Hades) to another part (Paradise or heaven).
- The first century Jews had the idea that Jerusalem and the Temple were the place on earth where the **Gates of Hades** were located, where the souls could come out and go into heaven from there. That is one of the reasons the resurrection mentioned in Matt. 27:52-53 is so

significant, because it happened right there in Jerusalem where the gates of Hades were supposedly located. That is why I suspect that this resurrection of souls out of Hades that happened in connection with Jesus' resurrection was probably the "first resurrection" that is alluded to in Rev. 20.

- This story in Josephus could not be the Shechinah entering and leaving the temple. Yosippon says it was a great multitude (not the Trinity) that came INTO the temple first, before going to another place.

The theory of Martin and Keyser simply does not match up with New Testament scripture, nor with the parallel accounts of the AD 66 Pentecost event that we find described in *Josephus*, *Eusebius*, and *Yosippon*. By looking at those other accounts, we get a clearer picture of what actually happened, which easily shows that it was not the Shechinah leaving the temple. Here are the various parallel descriptions of the event:

Josephus (Whiston translation)

...they heard a sound as of a **great multitude**, saying, "Let us remove hence." [Josephus *Wars* 6.5.3 (6.299-300)]

Eusebius (McGiffert translation)

... a voice as of a **great multitude**, saying, 'Let us go hence.' [Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History*. Book 3 Chapter 8 Section 6. Translated by Arthur Cushman McGiffert. From *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, Vol. 1. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1890.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. Found here: <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/250103.htm> >.]

Yosippon (Bowman translation)

...**the sound of men going and the sound of men marching in a multitude going into the Temple**, and a terrible and mighty voice was heard speaking: "**Let's go and leave this House.**" [*Sepher Yosippon: A Mediaeval History of Ancient Israel*. Translated from the Hebrew critical text of David Flusser by Steven B. Bowman. Excerpt from Chapter 87 "Burning of the Temple"]

Hegesippus (Blocker translation)

...**heard shouted in a sudden voice: "We cross over from here."** [*Pseudo-Hegesippus*, online text, public domain, translated from the Latin into English by Wade Blocker, made available online by Roger Pearse in 2005. This excerpt taken from Chapter 44, corresponding to pages 391-394 in the Latin critical text edited by Vincente Ussani entitled, *Hegesippi qui dicitur historiae libri V*, found in the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* series, volume 66, Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky (1932).]

Tacitus (Wellesley)

...**voice of more than mortal tone was heard to cry that the gods were departing. At the same instant there was a mighty stir as of departure.** [Tacitus. *The Histories: A New Translation by Kenneth Wellesley*. London: Cox & Wyman Ltd, and Penguin Books Ltd, 1972. Book 5, Section 13.]

What we learn from the above parallel accounts of the Josephus story:

- The voice which the priests heard was not the voice of the *Bat Kol* (per Martin and Keyser) or "the gods" (per Tacitus). It was instead the voice of a "great multitude" of "men" according to Josephus, Eusebius, and Yosippon.
- That great multitude of men in the unseen realm **went into the temple** first, before they left to go somewhere else. This would not make sense for the Shechinah to go into the temple first before leaving it again.

Commentaries on Ezekiel

- After checking about a dozen futurist commentaries on Ezekiel 10:18f and 11:22f, not a single one of them connected this departure of the Shechinah with AD 66.
- Freeman and others noted the time of this vision of Ezekiel to have been in the range of 593-588 BC. This would certainly fit the time frame mentioned in the Midrash of three and a half years before the Temple was destroyed. (Freeman, Hobart E. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophets*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1972. p. 300)
- Blackwood showed no awareness that this Midrash was ever applied to AD 70 by the rabbis. He noted in reference to the 586 BC destruction foretold here in Ezekiel 11:23 that: "The rabbis had a tradition that the glory rested upon the Mount of Olives for three and one-half years [before the 586 BC destruction], hoping in vain that Israel would repent (Midrash *Rabbah to Lamentations*, Proem 25)." [Blackwood, Andrew W. Jr. *Ezekiel: Prophecy of Hope*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965. p. 89].

My Original Interpretation of the Josephus Story Still Stands

Even a Roman Catholic partial-preterist (B. J. Parker) saw the typological connection between the departure of the Shechinah in Ezekiel's day, and the ascension of Christ from the Mount of Olives, with the Holy Spirit coming one week later at Pentecost to dwell in the Church, the New Tabernacle:

"During Judah's apostasy during the 6th century BC, the prophet Ezekiel saw the Glory Cloud depart from the Temple and travel east, to the Mount of Olives (Ezek. 10:18-19; 11:22-23); later, in his vision of the New Jerusalem, he saw the Glory-Cloud returning to dwell in the new Temple, the Church (Ezek. 43:1-5). This vision was fulfilled when Christ, the incarnate Glory of God, ascended to His Father in the Cloud from the Mount of Olives (Luke 24:50-51) and sent His Spirit to fill the Church during the Feast of Pentecost--around AD 30." [Found here: <http://www.preteristvision.org/commentaries/jewishcommentary.html>]

This temple-dwelling language is used in reference to the incarnation of Jesus: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt [Gk. *skenoo*] among us..." (John 1:14). He referred to His body as "this temple" (John 2:19-20). See also Hebrews 8, 9, and Rev. 7:15; 12:12; 13:6; 15:5; 21:3. The Israelites dwelt in tents in the wilderness for forty years with the *Tabernacle* of God among them, and the transition period saints had the Spirit dwelling among them while their permanent dwelling places were being prepared in heaven. They did not receive those permanent dwelling places until the Parousia, resurrection, and rapture (Rev. 7:15; 12:12; 13:6; 21:3).

Recently I discovered an article by E. T. Tennyson who likewise suggests that this story in Josephus might be talking about the resurrection/rapture event in AD 66:

Our Creator's Amazing Plan for Mankind (article)

By E. T. Tennyson

Excerpt (from pages 4-5 in the article)

Actual Historical Notices of Rapture

While the second coming of Jesus to steal away his Ecclesia or Church was said to be like a thief in the night, surely such a strange event of rapturing 144,000 men and women could hardly have been done in total secrecy. For many years we searched the pages of history for some reference to it, and strange as it sounds, we finally found it! Flavius Josephus was not a Christian, but was a Jewish historian who lived through the great war and tribulation between the Romans and Israel between the years of A.D. 69 and A.D. 73. He not only writes of "many signs that were evident of the future desolation" of Israel, but **mark carefully his detailed description of the actual rapture of the Church of 144,000 Israelites when they were "removed hence":**

Besides these, a few days after that feast, on the twenty-first day of the month Artemisius [Jyar], a certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon appeared; I suppose the account of it would seem to be a fable, were it not related by those that saw it, and were not the events that followed it of so considerable a nature as to deserve such signals; for, before sunsetting, chariots and troops of soldiers in their armor were seen running about among the clouds, and surrounding of cities. Moreover at that feast which we call Pentecost, as the priests were going by night into the inner temple, as their custom was, to perform their sacred ministrations, they said that, in the first place, they felt a quaking, and heard a great noise, and after that they heard a sound as of a great multitude, saying, "**Let us remove hence.**" *The Jewish War*, Book 6, Chapter 5, Section 3. Whiston edition. [Thackeray edition, *Wars* 6.296-300]

Source for the article: Tennyson, E. T. "Our Creator's Amazing Plan for Mankind" Article found in the periodical: *Harvest News Letter*, Report Number 228 (Special Edition). No Date on the publication. Published sometime between 1983 and 2012. Published by Harvest Publishers, P.O. Box 33, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

For More Information:

Since there was not enough space in the Fulfilled Magazine article to use all the quotes and give their full documentation, I have put all that information in a couple of PDF documents. If you would like to have them, simply email me (preterist1@preterist.org) requesting the two PDFs by name (“Let Us Go Quotes” and “Let Us Go Chart”). For more information about the rapture that occurred in connection with the resurrection event, here are a few resources that you can obtain from the IPA website (<http://preterist.org>):

- Ian D. Harding. *Taken to Heaven in A.D. 70: Blessings Expected at the Parousia*. Bradford, Pennsylvania USA: International Preterist Association, 2005. Available from the IPA website: <http://preterist.org>
- J. Stuart Russell. *The Parousia: The New Testament Doctrine of Christ's Second Coming*. Bradford, Pennsylvania USA: International Preterist Association, 2003. Available from the IPA website: <http://preterist.org>
- Edward E. Stevens. *2011 Garrettsville Seminar DVD* album, which contains presentations on the Resurrection of the Dead, Change of the Living, and the catching up of those saints to meet Christ. Available from the IPA website: <http://preterist.org>
- Edward E. Stevens. *Expectations Demand a First Century Rapture*. Bradford, Pennsylvania USA: International Preterist Association, 2005. Available from the IPA website: <http://preterist.org>.
- Edward E. Stevens. *First Century Events in Chronological Order: From the Birth of Christ to the Destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70*. Bradford, Pennsylvania USA: International Preterist Association, 2009. Prepublication Manuscript. Available from the IPA website: <http://preterist.org>

Some of the Sources Consulted:

- Abraham P. Bloch. *The Biblical and Historical Background of the Jewish Holy Days*. New York City USA: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1978.
- Abraham Cohen. *Everyman's Talmud*. New York City USA: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., Reprint of the 1949 edition.
- Hayim Halevy Donin. *To Be a Jew: A Guide to Jewish Observance in Contemporary Life*. New York City USA: Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, 1972.
- Alfred Edersheim. *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services as they were at the Time of Jesus Christ*. Grand Rapids Michigan USA: Kregel Publications, 1997. New enhanced and illustrated edition using the text from the original 1874 edition.
- Hyman E. Goldin. *A Treasury of Jewish Holidays: History, Legends, Traditions*. New York City USA: Twayne Publishers, 1952.
- Ian D. Harding. *Taken to Heaven in A.D. 70: Blessings Expected at the Parousia*. Bradford, Pennsylvania USA: International Preterist Association, 2005. Available from the IPA website: <http://preterist.org>
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- Hayyim Schauss. *The Jewish Festivals: From Their Beginnings to Our Own Day*. Cincinnati Ohio USA: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1938 (Fourth Printing).
- Edward E. Stevens. *2011 Garrettsville Seminar DVD* album, which contains presentations on the Resurrection of the Dead, Change of the Living, and the catching up of those saints to meet Christ. Available from the IPA website: <http://preterist.org>
- Edward E. Stevens. *Expectations Demand a First Century Rapture*. Bradford, Pennsylvania USA: International Preterist Association, 2003. Available from the IPA website: <http://preterist.org>
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- H. St. J. Thackeray, Translator. *Josephus in Nine Volumes: The Jewish War*. The Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts USA: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Kenneth Wellesley, Translator. *Tacitus: The Histories*. Baltimore, Maryland USA: Penguin Books Inc. First Published in 1964, Reprinted in 1968, and Reissued with Bibliography in 1972.
- William Whiston, Translator. *Josephus: Complete Works*. Grand Rapids Michigan USA: Kregel Publications, 1960 edition (ninth printing 1971).