

Seutonium on Jesus

In *Claudius* 25 Suetonius refers to the expulsion of Jews by Claudius and states (in Edwards' translation):

“Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome.”

In Acts of the Apostles (18:2) the writer makes the following parallel commentary

“And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them”

And about Nero's laws.

Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition.

Brief Summary of Apocrypha

Tobit

Carried away captive to Nineveh. Had a political post with Shalmanesar. Tobit mentions his own righteousness, his givings to the poor, and particularly his burying of Jewish corpses left out. This annoyed the king. He says that those who give to the poor are blessed. He has a son called Tobias. One day Tobit is sleeping outside and bird droppings go into his eyes giving him cataracts and leaving him blind. His son goes on a journey with a young man who is really the Angel Raphael (calls himself Azariah son of Hananiah) in disguise to get money Tobit left with Gabael at Rages. He marries Sarah. She lived in Ecbatana. She had a demon that followed here and that killed seven of her husbands on their wedding nights. Gabriel tells Tobias how to scare the demon away with a fish – and prayer. They return and heal Tobit with the Fish.

Judith

A town in Israel called Bethulia is besieged by the Assyrian army. They take control of the water supply. After 34 days the people want to surrender. Judith is a beautiful intelligent widow. She goes down with her maid – dressed up beautifully with fine clothes and jewellery. She pretends to be a deserter. The commander, Holofernes, fancies her and wants to seduce her. At a party after a few days she gets the commander drunk and then cuts off his head. She returns to Bethulia with his head. Israel's men go out armed – the Assyrians seek out their commander and find him dead. Then their army is in disarray and is defeated by Israel. Judith was honoured in Israel – many want to marry her but she never marries again.

Wisdom of Solomon

Wisdom at creation of world (Chapter 9). Female. Barren women that are wise are well off. A list of deeds that the patriarchs did by wisdom is given similar to Hebrews 11 (Chapter 10). The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God (Chapter 3).

Sirach

Sirach is a long wisdom book that was very influential with Jews and later Christians. There is an introduction that introduces the author. A particular section of interest is Chapters 44-50 which summarise a large portion of Biblical history and refer to nearly every Biblical book except Esther, It mentions Enoch, Elijah, Abraham, Noah, Moses – loved by God, Aaron adorned with beautiful things, Joshua, Caleb – given a long life, Ezekiel – who had the great vision, David and the prophet Nathan, Solomon had peace and was able to build the temple. Solomon led astray by women and idolatry. Rehoboam was foolish and split Israel. Hezekiah was good. Isaiah made the shadow go back and the king live longer. In that time God smote the Assyrians. Josiah is like sweet perfume. David, Hezekiah and Josiah were the good kings, the rest were bad. It also mentions that three groups are not a people – the Samaritans, those among the Philistines and those in Shechem.

Of interest to studies of Galatians, it mentions the zeal of Phineas.

Brief Notes on 1 and 2 Maccabees

1 Maccabees

Alexander the Great son of Philip of Macedonia wins against Darius of the Medes and Persians. Kills many kings. When he dies he splits his empire up among 4 generals who grew up with him.

A bit further on Antiochus Epiphanes defeats Egypt. Then wants all his lands to give up their religions and sacrifice the Greek way, and follow Greek customs to break the law and profane the sabbath.

A gymnasium is built in Jerusalem. Some rebel and are killed. Some are attacked on the sabbath and refuse to fight back and are slaughtered.

Mattathias was a priest who rebelled against the decree to sacrifice. In medion. He was filled with zeal and killed a Jew who was sacrificing on a Greek alter. **He is compared with Phineas** who killed an Israelite sleeping with a Moabite. Matthias wins some victories. Then he dies and Judas his son takes over as commander; Simeon also his son is said by him to be wise and will be a father to them.

Judas beats Appolonius, defeats and kills him and uses his sword always after that. Also beats Seron and Georgias, and Lysias. Then they go and cleanse the temple and the sanctuary and strengthen the walls and towers. They then celebrated the feast of dedication for 8 days.

A Seleucid King comes from Rome and takes over. It seems as if Jerusalem is taken over during this period.

There is a long section concerning the rise of Rome and their treaties. Judas sends an envoy to Rome to make an alliance.

There is a big battle and Judas is killed. The lament is similar to that for Saul and Jonathon. Simon and Jonathan take over. Their brother John is killed and they take revenge during a wedding.

They make peace with Bacchidus and the land has peace.

The Maccabees family become priests rather than kings.

They have good relations with Rome and the Spartans. They send a golden shield to Rome.

The political climate is complicated. The descendants of Antiochus Epiphanes and also Demetrius are still around.

Ptolemy King of Egypt gets involved. He gives his daughter to Alexander son of Ant. Epi. Eventually he attacks Palestine and is too powerful for Alexander.

There is a lot of deceit which often leads to a Maccabee being killed.

Jonathon is killed late on and Simon takes over. Right near the end Simon and two of his sons are killed and another son John is the new high priest.

There is quite a lot of emphasis on being the friend of many kings

2 Maccabees

Quite long introduction. Writer says Jonathon has written five books about the events. He will abbreviate.

No Mattathias. Story starts off in Jerusalem. Judas is alive the whole time.

There is a greater emphasis on Martyrdom. The mother and seven sons in chapter 7 are tortured and killed. They rebuke their torturers, say that they are suffering for "our sins" and look forward to the resurrection.

Seven sons seen as a great blessing and losing seven sons as an absolute disaster.

Also in Chapter 14 a man is being pursued and commits suicide looking forward to his body being remade by God.

Judas wins victory against nicanor.

There is more emphasis on being oppressed than in 1 Maccabees, where there is more emphasis on wining battles.

A lot of the time in both books – people who are discontent go to the King or oppressor and report the Jews for doing this or that, hoping to get a position in a new order.

Strange story about raising money for a sub offering for the dead in chapter 12.