

The Attackers: Review: Luke 21:20–24, Prophecy of Jerusalem’s Fall & 4 Categories of Positive & Negative Volition; Exodus Generation Did Not Benefit from Moses’ Teaching; Dating the Book of Hebrews; Vespasian’s Judean Campaign; the Exodus & First-Century Jews Were Saved but Had No Historical Impact

**Hebrews 4:2** - For we also have been taught and received the gospel, just as the Exodus generation, but the doctrine taught and heard did not benefit them ...

- (1) The next phrase indicates the reason for their failure to advance: “because it (the word they heard) was not united with faith.”
- (2) The word “united” is the perfect passive participle of the verb **συνκεκερασμένους (sunkekerasménous)**. The idea is to mix two or more things together, or to blend.

**Perfect:** Iterative, a process that occurs in recurrent intervals rather than a continuous progress and emphasizes repeated action. It is preceded by the negative conjunction **μή (mē)** which means this process was not undertaken or completed. The Israelites did *not* blend the doctrine they heard taught, day by day, by means of faith.

**Passive:** The spiritual life of Israel was faith-rest. If these believers did not have confidence in the veracity of the doctrine communicated then they were obviously negative to the doctrine taught.

**Participle:** Antecedent time. The word communicated did not benefit them because they had not previously blended it with faith-rest.

- (3) These believers heard but did not believe the message therefore they could not benefit from it. Although all were saved, they all died in the Jornada because of failure to inculcate and apply what was taught.
- (4) The writer of Hebrews uses the Exodus generation as an illustration of why his current first-century generation is vulnerable to the same fate.

- (5) The date of writing of the Book of Hebrews is not clear but external references compared with internal observations of the book's contents suggest the mid to late 60s. Here's why:

Various dates have been suggested for the writing of Hebrews, from the 60s to the 90s. However, its use in the book of 1 Clement, which was written in A.D. 95, requires a date some time before that. The lack in the book of any reference to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem as the divine proof that the Old Testament sacrificial system was finished argues strongly for a date before A.D. 70. In addition, the mention of Timothy's recent release (13:23), if it was in connection with his ministry to Paul in Rome, requires a date in the late 60s.<sup>1</sup>

- (6) Rome's conflict with Judaea in A.D. 66 was initiated by Jewish rebellion and in February of A.D. 67 Vespasian was appointed by Nero to quell the uprising:

Vespasian conducted two successful campaigns in 67 and 68, winning almost all Judaea except Jerusalem. But on Nero's death in June 68 he stopped fighting.

This pause was surprising, and ..., with his son Titus as intermediary, Vespasian settled certain differences he had had with the neighboring governor of Syria, Gaius Licinius Mucianus. The matters discussed between the two commanders are unknown, but ... Vespasian seems to have claimed that further operations against the Jews required a directive from the new emperor Galba. Such a claim may have had underlying political considerations.

The news of Galba's murder (January 15, 69) reached Titus on his way to Corinth, and he returned to participate in more pregnant discussions between Vespasian and Mucianus. The chronology of Vespasian's actions cannot be precisely determined; what is certain is that ... on April 16, he began to collect support. On July 1, probably as a result of a contrived plot, the two Egyptian legions proclaimed him emperor, followed a few days later by the legions of Syria and Judaea.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, "Hebrews: Introduction: Date," in *Ryrie Study Bible* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1995), 1943.

On December 2, Vespasian's position was officially confirmed by the Senate. His first task was to restore discipline to the armies after the events of 68–69. Important changes were made in the East, where Vespasian replaced the single army in Syria with three armies, with a total of six legions, in Cappadocia, Syria, and Judaea. Titus effectively ended the Jewish war with the capture of Jerusalem in August 70.

Although Titus was not allowed an independent triumph, he became virtually a partner in Vespasian's rule, not only accumulating consulates and imperatorial salutations with his father but also being given command of the Praetorian Guard.<sup>2</sup>

- (7) This information enables us to draw some narrow conclusions. Based on Ryrie's comments, the book was obviously written before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in August of 70.
- (8) Vespasian's Judean campaign began in 67 but he began a hiatus in June of 68. The attack on Jerusalem did not commence until early in the year 70 so the siege on the city lasted around six months.
- (9) Hebrews is filled with references to subjects associated with the Temple worship while our passage issues a warning to the Jews of Jerusalem that a similar fate could very well await them.
- (10) We may draw a conclusion that the book was written before Vespasian began his Judean campaign or shortly thereafter.
- (11) By refusing to hear doctrine taught by Paul, these Jewish believers continued to carry out the rituals of Judaism at the Temple.
- (12) It is clear the Exodus generation heard the teaching from the final prepositional phrase "in them that heard it." The verb "to hear" is the dative plural aorist active participle of ἀκούω (*akouō*).

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<sup>2</sup> Guy Edward Farquhar Chilver, "Vespasian," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1979), 19:95–96.

- (13) The action of an aorist active participle precedes the action of the main verb which is *ōphelēō*: to benefit. The problem faced by both generations of Jews is that they had ears to hear but because of negative volition they did not benefit from its instruction.

**Hebrews 4:2** - For we also have been taught and received the gospel, just as the Exodus generation, but the doctrine taught and heard did not benefit them because of it not having been blended with faith-rest by the one's having heard.

- (1) Both the Exodus and the first-century generations of Jews failed to advance. Both were saved so the issue had to do with spiritual growth not salvation.
- (2) The Exodus generation was restricted to the Jornada for forty years. Although they gave Moses a hearing, they refused to apply what they heard through faith-rest.
- (3) The first-century generation at Jerusalem was given forty years to respond to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles' writings, but they refused to give them a hearing.
- (4) Only consistent advance in the spiritual life could have delivered the Jews of Jerusalem. They had the opportunity and the obligation to make the advance but did not do so.
- (5) Therefore, although the people of Jerusalem were believers their duty was to go beyond that and acquire Pivot power.