

II Kings 25: 1-11

In the ninth year of his [King Zedekiah] reign of, on the tenth day of the tenth month [asarah beTevet], Nebuchadnezzar moved against Jerusalem with his whole army. He besieged it; and they built towers against it all around. The city continued in a state of siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. By the ninth [of the fourth month] the famine had become acute in the city; there was no food left for the common people. Then [the wall of] the city was breached. All the soldiers [left the city] by night through the gate between the double walls... They captured the king and brought him before the king of Babylon at Riblah...

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. 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. The entire Chaldean force that was with the chief of the guard tore down the walls of Jerusalem on every side. The remnant of the people that was left in the city...and the remnant of the population ...were taken into exile by Nebuzaradan.

Josephus: *The Jewish War*—Book 6: Chapter 4

⁽²²⁰⁾And now two of the legions had completed their banks on the eighth day of the month of Lous [Av]. Whereupon Titus gave orders that the battering-rams should be brought and set over against the western edifice of the inner temple...⁽²³²⁾ and now the soldiers had already put fire to the gates, and the silver that was over them quickly carried the flames to the wood that was within it, whence it spread itself all on the sudden, and caught hold of the cloisters...⁽²³⁵⁾ the fires prevailed during that day and the next also, for the soldiers were not able to burn all the cloisters that were round about together at one time...

⁽²⁴⁹⁾So Titus retired into the tower of Antonia and resolved to storm the temple the next day, early in the morning, with his whole army...⁽²⁵⁰⁾ but, as for that house, God had for certain long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous [Av] upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon...

⁽²⁶⁷⁾Now although anyone would justly lament the destruction of such a work as this was, since it was the most admirable of all the works that we have seen or heard of, both for its curious structure and its magnitude, and also for the vast wealth bestowed upon it, as well as for the glorious reputation it had for its holiness... ⁽²⁶⁸⁻²⁷⁰⁾ However, one cannot but wonder at the accuracy of this period thereto relating; for the same month and day were now observed,

as I said before, wherein the holy house was burnt formerly by the Babylonians. Now the number of years that passed from its first foundation, which was laid by king Solomon, till this its destruction, which happened in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, are collected to be one thousand one hundred and thirty, besides seven months and fifteen days; and from the second building of it, which was done by Haggai, in the second year of Cyrus the king, till its destruction under Vespasian, there were 639 years and 465 days.

Mishnah Ta'anit 4:6

Five things befell our fathers on the 17th of Tammuz and five on the 9th of Av. On the 17th of Tammuz the tables [of the ten commandments] were broken, and the daily whole-offering ceased, and the city [Jerusalem] was breached, and Apostomus [unknown Syrian general] burned the [scrolls of the] law, and an idol was set up in the sanctuary. On the 9th of Av it was decreed against our fathers that they should not enter into the land [of Israel], and the Temple was destroyed the first and the second time, and Beth-Tor was captured and the city was ploughed up. When Av comes in, gladness must be diminished.

B. Ta'anit 29a-b

#1: And it is further written, *And all the congregation lifted up their voices, and cried; and the people wept that night.* [referring to Numbers 14:1 when the camp began to wail upon hearing the report from the spies.] **Rabbah said in the name of R Johanan: That night was the ninth of Av.** The Holy One, blessed by He, said to them, 'You wept without cause; I will therefore make this an eternal day of mourning for you.' It was then decreed that on the ninth of Av the Temple would be destroyed and the children of Israel would go into exile.

B. Ta'anit 29a-b

#2: And the Temple was destroyed the second time. Whence do we know this? For it has been taught: Good things come to pass on an auspicious day, and bad things on an unlucky day. It is reported that the day on which the first temple was destroyed was the eve of the ninth of Av, a Sunday...

#3. Our rabbis have taught: When the first Temple was about to be destroyed bands upon bands of young priests with the key of the temple in their hands assembled and mounted the roof of the temple and exclaimed, 'Master of the Universe, as we did not have the merit to be faithful treasurer these keys are handed back into thy keeping'. They then threw the keys up towards heaven. And there emerged the figure of a hand and received the keys from them.

Expulsion Decree for the Jews of England, 1290 CE

“To the same end [in reference to a tax levy in the previous sentence which is not included here] in the year, all Jews, with their goods, children and wives, around the holiday of All Saints [All Saints’ Day is November 1st], are banished from the land of England and of Aquitania [the southwest part of what is now France between the Loire River and Pyrenees Mountains], King Edward having conceded.”

Expulsion Decree from Spain, 1492 (abridged)

King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, by the grace of God...with the counsel and advice of prelates, great noblemen of our kingdoms, and other persons of learning and wisdom of our Council, having taken deliberation about this matter, resolve to order the said Jews and Jewesses of our kingdoms to depart and never to return or come back to them or to any of them. And concerning this we command this our charter to be given, by which we order all Jews and Jewesses of whatever age they may be, who live, reside, and exist in our said kingdoms and lordships, as much those who are natives as those who are not, who by whatever manner or whatever cause have come to live and reside therein, that by the end of the month of July next of the present year, they depart from all of these our said realms and lordships, along with their sons and daughters, menservants and maidservants, Jewish familiars, those who are great as well as the lesser folk, of whatever age they may be, and they shall not dare to return to those places, nor to reside in them, nor to live in any part of them, neither temporarily on the way to somewhere else nor in any other manner, under pain that if they do not perform and comply with this command and should be found in our said kingdom and lordships and should in any manner live in them, they incur the penalty of death and the confiscation of all their possessions by our Chamber of Finance, incurring these penalties by the act itself, without further trial, sentence, or declaration.

Given in our city of Granada, the XXXI day of the month of March, the year of the birth of our lord Jesus Christ one thousand four hundred and ninety-two years. I, the King, I, the Queen, I, Juan de Coloma, secretary of the king and queen our lords, have caused this to be written at their command

A Jewish Account of the Expulsion from Spain (abridged)

And in the year 5252 [1492], in the days of King Ferdinand, the Lord visited the remnant of his people a second time [the first was in 1391], and exiled them. After the King had captured the city of Granada from the Moors... he ordered the expulsion of all the Jews from his kingdom...

The King gave them three months’ time in which to leave. It was announced in public in

every city on the first of May, which happened to be the 19th day of the *Omer*, and the term ended on the day before the 9th of Av...The Jews were to leave during in May, June, and July and be out of the country by August 1, the 8th of Av.]

[Estimates of number of Jews expelled ...] They had houses, fields, vineyards, and cattle, and most of them were artisans. At that time there existed many [Talmudic] academies in Spain... and a great expert in mathematics,... Abraham Zacuto. [famous astronomer]... [They attempted to negotiate terms by which they could remain which was preempted by the queen]. ...Then the Queen gave an answer to the representatives of the Jews, similar to the saying of King Solomon [Proverbs 2 1: 1]: “*The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water. God turneth it withersoever He will.*” She said furthermore: “Do you believe that this comes upon you from us? The Lord hath put this thing into the heart of the king.”

But the time had become short, and they had to hasten their exodus from Spain. They sold their houses, their landed estates, and their cattle for very small prices, to save themselves. The King did not allow them to carry silver and gold out of his country, so that they were compelled to exchange their silver and gold for merchandise of cloths and skins and other things...[Many Spanish Jews went to Portugal, paying per capita settlement fees, only to be expelled after six months.] Many of the exiled Spaniards went to Mohammedan countries... A part of those who went to Northern Africa, as they found no rest and no place that would receive them, returned to Spain, and became converts... [Recounting of the countries that received them.]

He who said unto His world, Enough, may He also say Enough unto our sufferings, and may He look down upon our impotence. May He turn again, and have compassion upon us, and hasten out salvation. Thus may it be Thy will!

Chaim Kaplan’s *Scroll of Agony*, November 18, 1941

Warsaw is depressed and wrapped in deep mourning. But it is no ceremonial mourning with only the outward trappings, lacking heartfelt grief. On the contrary, if we could, we would weep bitterly, and our cry would rise to the high heavens. Were it not for fear of the evil kingdom, our wailing would burst forth in the dark alleys, and we would cry and weep and wail dreadfully for our calamity, as vast as the sea. But because of the sword, drawn and waiting for our plaint to lop off our heads—our grief does not break out. Our hearts—are our graves.