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Witherington's "A week in the fall of Jerusalem" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Witherington, B. (2017). *A week in the fall of Jerusalem*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic. 192 pp. \$16.00. ISBN 9780830851737

Joanna was awakened by the sound of a shofar in Jerusalem. Romans had just breached the city walls. Soon, fires were raging, people were being slaughtered and screams of pain could be heard in the streets. How could Joanna possibly escape – the Romans had the city surrounded. And what about Mary and Martha who lived only a few miles from Jerusalem? Were they caught up in the mayhem too?

In *A Week in the Fall of Jerusalem* we meet such biblical characters as Joanna, Mary and Martha, Miryam of Migdal (Mary Magdalene) and Levi the tax collector (Matthew) as they struggle to survive in the aftermath of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The historical background is accurate but the story itself contains an imaginary account of how the Gospel of Matthew may have been written, interwoven by the life-threatening dangers Matthew and other Christians would have faced during and after the Roman invasion.

The book is filled with pictures, maps and numerous informative text-boxes which provide historical background on such topics as the shofar, first century houses, ancient laundries and other topics. These text-boxes are a strength in that they provide helpful information for better understanding the first century background for the book. They are a weakness in that they tend to distract from the story line. In fact, it may be more enjoyable to read all the text-boxes first before going back to read the story without distraction.

The author is well qualified to write this book. He is a world class scholar, professor of New Testament doctoral studies at Asbury Theological Seminary, and author of over 40 books on biblical studies. This book is an entertaining way to learn more of the history and culture of Israel in New Testament times.

Reviewer

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