

Florus & Cestius

- **Gessius Florus** -

7th Roman Procurator of Judea Province, 64-66AD. Jewish War [Book 2, Ch 14-17](#)

Florus, the country over, basically **gave liberty to turn robbers**, upon this condition, that he might go **shares with them in the spoils they got**. Accordingly, this his **greediness of gain** was the occasion that entire toparchies were brought to desolation, & a great many of the **people** left their own country, and **fled into foreign provinces**.

Florus expected that if the peace continued, he should have the Jews for his accusers before Caesar; but that **if he could procure them to make a revolt, he should divert their laying lesser crimes to his charge**, by a misery that was so much greater; he therefore did every day augment their calamities, in order **to induce them to a rebellion**.

When Jews were crowding rapidly to their synagogue, a certain man of Caesarea, of a rebellious temper, got an earthen vessel, & set it with the bottom upward, at the entrance of that synagogue, and **sacrificed birds**. This thing **provoked the Jews** to an incurable degree, because their laws were affronted, and the place was polluted.

Florus took 17 talents out of sacred treasure, and pretended Caesar wanted them.

People were in confusion immediately, & ran together to the temple, with great clamors, & called upon Caesar by name, & begged him to free them from the tyranny of Florus. Florus, his horsemen, footmen went to Jerusalem, with terror, to bring city to subjection.

Florus plundered Upper Market, killed, crucified 3,600, didn't spare infants.

Florus did what no one had done before, **had men of equestrian order whipped & nailed to the cross** before his tribunal; who, although **by birth Jews, yet of Roman dignity**. **Bernice in fasting, prayer, shaved hair, bare feet, begged Florus to spare the Jews**. She barely escaped soldiers of Florus. She & **Agrippa II wept & cried to people to divert rebellion with Rome**. Jews burnt Agrippa II & Bernice's palace & continued war.

Gaius Cestius Gallus

Roman Proconsul of Syria, General, senator 63 or 65AD. Died 67AD.

Cestius marched into Judea in Sept 66AD to restore order. His army comprised of the XII Roman Legion, also supported by troops of Agrippa II & other client rulers.

Cestius couldn't take the Temple Mount. He withdrew from Jerusalem toward the coast. Cestius was pursued by Jewish rebels. At pass of Beth Horon Cestius was ambushed. Romans couldn't get into formation in narrow confines. Over 6,000 Roman soldiers were killed in these various battles & XII Roman Legion lost its Aquila. Cestius ordered survivors back to Syria. Survivors of XII Legion fought well with Titus against Jewish rebels of Jerusalem later. They were sent to guard Euphrates border after war.

[Book 2, Ch 19, sec 7, 8](#)...all parts around him(Cestius) full of Jews, he understood that his delay was to his own detriment, & that if he stayed any longer there, he could have still more enemies upon him. [8](#)..he(Cestius) gave order to cast away what might hinder his army's march; they killed the mules & other creatures, excepting those that carried their darts & machines, which they retained for their use, and this mainly because they were afraid lest the Jews should seize upon them. He then made his army march on as far as Beth Horon...through the narrow passage...near the neck of the passage, Jews covered the Roman army with their darts. In which...the footmen knew not how to defend themselves, so the danger pressed the horsemen still more, for they were so pelted, they could not march along the road in their ranks, & the ascents were so high the cavalry were not able to march against the enemy...Jews had almost taken Cestius's entire army prisoners, had not the night come on, when Romans fled to Beth Horon, & the Jews seized upon all the places around them, & watched for their coming out. Cestius selected 400 most courageous soldiers, placed them at strongest fortifications, gave order in morning...to erect their ensigns, that Jews might be made to believe the entire army was there still, while he himself took the rest of his forces with him & marched without notice...Jews perceived, in the morning that the camp was empty, ran upon those 400..., killed them & pursued after Cestius. War instruments were taken by Jews.