



The Life of Flavius Josephus

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Josephus was born Jerusalem of a priestly and royal family. He excelled in his studies of Jewish law, studied with the Sadducees, Pharisees, and the Essenes, eventually aligning himself with the Pharisees. He went to Rome to free some imprisoned priests. After accomplishing this mission through the intercession of Nero's wife, Poppaea, he returned to Jerusalem to find the country in revolt against Rome. Josephus wrote a history of the Jewish War, wrote *Antiquities of the Jews*, *Against Apion* and his autobiography *The Life of Josephus*. Josephus was an eyewitness to history, and his writings are considered authoritative.

The Life of Flavius Josephus Details

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Nick says

As a Biblical scholar and historian you have to read the primary sources. I have always wanted to engage Josephus for myself but felt daunted by the task. Don't be daunted--it's not that hard. However, it was difficult to keep my momentum going when the little sections started blurring together. First I led some soldiers to Sepphoris and then we went to Tiberius and then Justus was treacherous so I fought him. The men of Galilee love me...then they listened to Jonathan and rebelled against me. I have a man crush on Vespasian.

It was interesting to see Jewish idioms outside of the Bible and villages in the Galilee that never appear in the Bible at all. The title itself may mislead modern readers because this is mainly an account of Josephus' military campaigns and peace keeping ventures. As he mentions at one point, he is trying to counter what another historian has written about these events and about Josephus' actions.

Important for a scholar but not the most enjoyable read.

John S Darden says

History

The Life of Flavius Josephus is a very interesting book. It is full of history from a historians personal perspective.

Alexander Rolfe says

This is nice and short, but it fails to elaborate on any of his actions covered in The Jewish War.

Hannah says

Written by the famous Josephus during the Jewish war against the Roman rule, Josephus gives the reader a nice insight into his life and how he tried to manage the rebellious Jews. I highly recommend it!

Steve says

Josephus clearly lived a dangerous and interesting life during the Roman occupation on Palestine. His autobiography is short and he mentions one Jonathan of Tiberias and others who planned to "bringing [sic] vehement accusations against me" in order to discredit an honest man. Maybe I feel a bit of a kinship with him.

Richard says

Actually reading on-line at Project Gutenberg, not the Kindle version...

Noah says

An interesting autobiography of Flavius Josephus, told with much detail. The footnotes especially are very informative and help to give background knowledge to the events that are related. However, more than any kind of autobiography, this book seems more to be a defense made by Josephus against his detractors, mainly Justus, for his actions during the Jewish War.

Scot León Pfuntner says

This is a quote from Josephus, from his historical first-century writings entitled, "Antiquities Of The Jews," Book #18, Chapter 2, section 3.

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ. And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, (footnote here says: A.D. 33, April 3). those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; (footnote here says: April 5). as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.

D Des Roches says

Informative, With Other Books

This book is not a self-contained biography, as the title seems to suggest. You must also read the other historical books written by Josephus to get his whole biography. This just fills in the gaps in the other books.

Yann says

Les autobiographies sont dans l'antiquité aussi rares que les biographies communes. Celle-ci est l'œuvre d'un des principaux protagonistes du drame de la guerre ayant opposés juifs et romains au premier siècle de notre ère, dont il fit le récit détaillé dans la poignante et instructive guerre des juifs. C'est pour Flavius Josèphe l'occasion de dissiper les ombres qui assombrissent le rôle qu'il eut en tant que responsable de la défense de la Galilée, puisqu'il passa finalement dans le camp romain et devint un familier du général de l'armée ennemie, le futur empereur Vespasien, fait que ne manquèrent pas de lui reprocher certains de ses compatriotes moins chanceux. L'accent est mis sur la rivalité qui l'opposa au brûlant de jalouse Jean de

Guischala, à la tête d'une ville où le sentiment anti-romain était des plus puissant, nourrissant l'illusion d'une possible victoire contre le formidable oppresseur. Mais la rivalité avec Rome n'était pas sans nuances dans cette région vallonnée, les riches habitants de Sepphoris préférant ainsi la sûreté d'une alliance garantissant la jouissance de leurs biens aux hasard d'une révolution dangereuse pouvant renverser l'ordre social, tandis que d'autres places comme Tibériade étaient divisées par des factions irréconciliables, où il ne fallait pas moins de courage que d'intelligence pour manœuvrer dans des circonstances aussi extraordinaires que périlleuses.

Rick Ludwig says

Aside from the early portion and the final portion of this ancient autobiography, the author presented a confusing, self-serving, and overly detailed depiction of a very short portion of his life--his involvement in the Jewish Wars. This is especially surprising as he focused a much longer work on the actual events of the Jewish War that was substantially more readable. Here, he seemed obsessed with defending every action he made during this time. His defense is poorly structured and suggests to the reader that Josephus was clumsy, self-motivated, and apt to change alliances at the drop of a hat. He describes himself as a great general, basing this on his ability to avoid fighting as much as possible. He characterizes his enemies as notorious liars, but doesn't really provide evidence to support this view. He skates over the fact that he was the only one of his officer corps to survive a suicide pact in the chief battle he actually fought, and lost, against the Romans. A battle he came out of smelling like a rose, when he switched sides and flattered the commander with a prophecy that he would one day be emperor, which through a series of disjointed events -- he actually did.

Why you must be thinking, would I give this as high a rating as three stars? A reasonable question. I have to say watching a shady but crafty character try, unsuccessfully, to obscure his obvious deficiencies almost 2000 years ago, is quite engaging. This isn't history; it's unintentional farce. I couldn't put it down. It is fascinating to discover that modern politicians have invented nothing new in the past 2000 years. Their feckless efforts at self rehabilitation through reimagining history are no more successful than Josephus's
