



**Parallel Lives, Parallel Nations Volume Two: A  
narrative history of Rome & the Jews, their  
relations and their worlds (161 BC-135 AD)  
(Volume 2)**

*John Gilbert*

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Parallel Lives, Parallel Nations, is a narrative history of Rome & the Jews, their relations and their worlds from 161 BC to 135 AD. The time frame effectively covers the rise and fall of Roman-Jewish relations, beginning with the first Jewish delegation sent to Rome by the Maccabees, and culminating with the bloody Bar-Kochba Revolt some three hundred years later during the reign of Hadrian. The book covers in depth Rome's fall as a republic and rise as an empire alongside the parallel rise, fall, and eventual destruction of the Jewish national state. Largely set in the first centuries BC and AD, the work addresses two extremely personality-driven centuries in which the most familiar figures of antiquity---Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, Herod, Jesus---all appeared upon the historical scene. A political era driven by very individualistic and even operatic events, this history, while wholly factual, reads like a non-fiction novel, with each chapter ending in a suspenseful fashion. Volume Two finds Rome set on its steady course as an empire under the aegis of Augustus while little Judea struggles under Herod's weak-willed successor. In order to quell unrest, and by appeal from many of its own people, Judea is eventually annexed and made a province. Augustus meanwhile wrestles with the dilemma of succession, which turns out badly. The peculiar personalities and behavior of the next four emperors, from the dour Tiberius to the bizarre Nero, bring Rome's foreign policy regarding Judea to an all time low. Wracked by religious schisms, chronic banditry, and a steady line of either inept, corrupt, or indifferent governors, forces within Judea eventually decide to revolt and break away from the Empire. Standing alone and without any allies, Judea takes on the full weight and angry onslaught of Rome, leading to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. Even then the fires of rebellion continue to smolder, and the conflict between the Romans and the Jews doesn't flare up and finally burn out for another 60 years.

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