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FAST OF TAMMUZ

The **Seventeenth of Tammuz** ([Hebrew](#): שבעה עשר בתמוז *Shivah Asar b'Tammuz*) is a [Jewish fast day](#) commemorating the breach of the walls of [Jerusalem](#) before the destruction of the [Second Temple](#).^{[2][3]} It falls on the 17th day of the 4th [Hebrew month](#) of [Tammuz](#) and marks

the beginning of the [three-week](#) mourning period leading up to [Tisha B'Av](#).^[4]

The day also traditionally commemorates the destruction of the two tablets of the [Ten Commandments](#) and other historical calamities that befell the Jewish people on the same date

HISTORY

The fast of Tammuz, according to [Rabbi Akiva's](#) interpretation, is the fast mentioned in the [Book of Zechariah](#) as "the fast of the fourth [month]" ([Zechariah 8:19](#)). This refers to Tammuz, which is the fourth month of the [Hebrew calendar](#).

According to the [Mishnah](#),^[2] five calamities befell the Jewish people on this day:

1. Moses broke the two tablets of stone on Mount Sinai;^[5]
2. The daily [tamid offering](#) ceased to be brought;
3. During the [Roman siege of Jerusalem](#), the city walls were breached, leading to the destruction

of the [Second Temple](#) on [Tisha B'Av](#);

4. Prior to [Bar Kokhba's revolt](#), Roman military leader [Apostomus](#) burned a [Torah](#) scroll;
5. An idol was erected in the Temple.

The Babylonian Talmud places the second and fifth tragedies in the [First Temple](#) period.^[6]

The [Book of Jeremiah](#) (39.2, 52.6–7) states that the walls of Jerusalem during the First Temple were breached on the 9th of Tammuz. Accordingly, the [Babylonian Talmud](#) dates the third tragedy (breach of Jerusalem's walls) to the Second Temple period.^[6] However, the [Jerusalem Talmud](#) ([Ta'anit](#) IV, 5) states that in both eras the walls were breached on 17th Tammuz, and that the text in Jeremiah 39 is explained by

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stating that the Biblical record was "distorted", apparently due to the troubled times.^[7]

The Seventeenth of Tammuz occurs forty days after the [Jewish holiday](#) of [Shavuot](#). [Moses](#) ascended [Mount Sinai](#) on Shavuot and remained there for forty days. The Children of Israel made the [Golden Calf](#) on the afternoon of the sixteenth of Tammuz when it seemed that Moses was not coming down when promised. Moses descended the next day (forty days by his count), saw that the [Israelites](#) were violating many of the laws he had received from God, and smashed the tablets

