What happened on Tiṡh’a be-Ab?

Tish’a be-Ab is the Jewish National Day of Mourning. On Tish’a be-Ab every Jew must feel as if he or she is in mourning for his or her loved one. Besides bringing ourselves to a mood of mourning, we must also reflect on our collective accountability for the tragic events which took place on Tish’a Be-Ab and the ways to amend our personal behavior (*teshuba*) to atone for our sins and the sins of our ancestors.

On this day, five tragedies occurred to Am Israel

1. HET HAMERAGELIM (1312 BCE): The Jews in the desert accepted the slanderous report of the ten explorers. They cried for a whole night complaining to God for having taking them out of Egypt and hinting that the Almighty won’t be able to bring them the Land of Israel. The generation who left Egypt was condemned to die in the desert. The night on which they cried, was Tish’a be-Ab.
2. HURBAN HABAYIT HARISHON (586 BCE): The First Temple was destroyed and burned on the ninth of Ab by the Babylonians, led by Nebuchadnezzar. Thousands of Jews were slaughtered, enslaved or exiled to the Babylonian empire. The story of the destruction of Jerusalem and its desolation is narrated in Megilat Ekha.
3. HURBAN HABAYIT HASHENI (68 CE): The Second Temple was also destroyed on Tisha be-Ab. The Romans led by Titus destroyed the city. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were killed, sold into slavery or exiled.
4. NILKEDA BETAR (135 CE): The Bar Kokhba revolt was crushed by Roman Emperor Hadrian. The city of Betar (Sephardim call it “Bee-ter”), which was the Jews’ last stand against the Romans, was captured by the enemy on Tish’a be-Ab. Over 100,000 Jews were slaughtered and their bodies left unburied.
5. NEHERASH HAHEKHAL: Around the same period, also on a ninth of Ab, the Temple’s holiest area and its surroundings was plowed by the Roman general Turnus Rufus. Jerusalem was turned into a pagan city, and renamed Aelia Capitolina. Access to Jerusalem was forbidden for Jews.

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“Kamtza and Bar Kamtza” the events that led to the destruction of the Second Temple.