

S.D.G.

Book Three

THE KING CROWNED

Chapter Five

Arrest - Trial - Execution - Burial

By Stephen H. Funck, June 28, 2017

It seemed Yeshua was waiting for them. He was the closest one to the road, all his followers were behind him. Three contubernium¹ of soldiers went beyond the cave entrance toward the Mount. Another sealed the entrance so no one could come out. The Temple guard surrounded him. They were so shocked when he admitted who he was, they fell down. He said, "I am", sounding like he was claiming to be God.² One of his men had a sword and attacked Malchus. That was taken care of. They were gone as quickly as they came.

Great wailing filled the olive press as the soldiers took Yeshua away. A number ran up to Bethany to tell the people there what had happened. Some sleeping pilgrims on the Mount were awakened by the news. Yeshua's mother Mary's eyes were filled with grief. She sat motionless. The rest exploded with wailing all around her. No one slept, many went down to the olive press to learn what had happened. Up to the top and back down people went all night. Utter distress. Absolute confusion.

The soldiers and extra guards in the arresting party returned to their barracks. They were cautioned to be alert for trouble in the morning. Only a small group brought Yeshua to Annas's mansion, while the council assembled at the chief priest's palace. The great hall was filled, the Sanhedrin were seated against the walls, Joseph ben Caiaphas was seated on the chair with the the high officials beside him. After all were assembled and the proper preparations finished, the officer of the guard brought the accused in shackles and chains, flanked by four men of the watch. The trial officials stood in front of him. It was the middle of the night, they were grumpy from being awakened. They had been angry at Yeshua before. All week they were getting more angry because of his words and actions in the Temple. They were very upset that so many people seemed to be enthralled by him, as if he were the representative of God, Almighty Creator of all, instead of themselves, God's appointed leadership.

So many were trying to talk at the same time, violating established procedures that the chief priest had to admonish them to remember they were the Sanhedrin, the court of Israel. He was not so good at controlling his own tongue either. Procedure required each witness to testify separately, out of hearing of the other witnesses. They had to testify to the same thing, same event, same words. None agreed with another. Each accusation was evil on its own, but that was not adequate.

One of Yeshua's followers, Joseph Barsabbas³ knew the chief priest and other leaders. He told the

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contubernium> Squad in modern terminology.

² The word in English is spelled Yahweh YHWH. Exodus 3:14. People did not say "I am." They did not say the sacred name. They used the word "Lord" instead or just said the word god.

³ See The Wedding at Cana in Book Two

disciples he was going to try and find out what was going on. Simon said he would go with him. Joseph asked the watch at the palace gate to inquire if they could be admitted, assuring him he was known to the chief priest. After a while they were admitted. Joseph went to stand near the door to the council hall to hear what he could. Simon stayed in the courtyard.

Grumpy, angry tired men, in a foul mood about everything, their Passover was being ruined. They wanted to kill him for blasphemy, insulting God Himself. They knew he was guilty, worthless legal fine points. Finally as dawn was breaking the chief priest, put the question to Yeshua. Did he claim to be God? He said, "I am!"⁴ The hall exploded with shouts of horror, anger, fury. Guilty! Guilty! Guilty! He thinks he is God! Kill him!

The death penalty was one of the situations where Rome had authority. The prefect had to sign off. No problem, he would. There was much more important business to attend to. This was Passover morning. There was the great celebration in the Temple. They were late. The accused was sent off to the prefect and those assigned to the Temple went to officiate there. Another matter, the prefect held the official ceremonial garments of the chief priest. The accused would go along with the delegation to receive the robes. The prefect would be expecting them. He would have them ready.

There was a great procession of the rest of the Sanhedrin from the chief priest's palace to the HulDAH Temple Gate⁵. Many people had waited all night at the gates to enter at dawn. Usually the high officials entered before them. This morning, it was after dawn, the gates were already open. The Temple watch had to make a way for them to get through the crowds covering the great steps. The priests and Levites on duty for the Passover sacrifices filled the inner courts and overflowed into the outer court. Many of the people waiting at the gates would not be able to get in. The courts held less than two hundred thousand. They would need all that space for the whole day to slaughter all the lambs.⁶

The delegation returned with the ceremonial robes. Properly attired, with the gold plate on the front of his turban,⁷ accompanied with the great retinue of assisting officiants, Joseph ben Caiaphas stepped onto the Temple Porch before the open doors. More than two hundred trumpets sounded, the entire orchestra of musicians played the call to worship. Thousands in the Inner Court, ten thousand in the Middle Court, more than one hundred eighty thousand in the outer courts cried out, "Hallelujah". Every rooftop in the upper city was crowded with people. The Mount of Olives, every place people could see the Temple, was filled. For many pilgrims even if one could not see, it was enough to be near and join their voices in the acclamation.

⁴ Their law was different from ours on witness testimony. The accused could be put under oath to testify against himself. Jesus could either say the truth or sin, give false testimony. Trials had to be held in day light. To insult God was a crime meriting the death penalty. It was a common law in many countries, many religions.

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huldah_Gates

⁶ A normal day had 300 priests plus watch on duty. Night had 50 with over 200 night watch. https://philologos.org/_eb-ttms/temple07.htm "The Temple: Its Ministry and Services" Alfred Edersheim Chapter 7 At Night in the Temple. Fifty thousand priests were on the Temple rolls. More would have been scattered around the nation. Priests, Levites were not like clergy today. They occupied every kind of position in society, even in the military. They controlled and managed the national and local finances. They were the bureaucrats of the nation. They did manual labor on matters that affected the Temple such as caring for the olive oil.

⁷ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Priest_\(Judaism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Priest_(Judaism)) <http://thetorah.com/garments-of-the-high-priest-anthropomorphism-in-the-worship-of-god/> <http://www.messianic-torah-truth-seeker.org/Torah/Kohen/kohengadol.html>

At dawn the three Marys had departed from Lazarus' home and headed for the palace. At the base of the temple wall, a crowd of worshippers were joining in with the loud celebration from the courts above. It was a sad walk down Kidron. To avoid the lines of men carrying lambs to temple, they took the long way around to the Joppa Gate. They looked up at Essene Gate, remembering the evening before. It seemed so long ago. They followed around past the great pool by the prefect's palace. At the chief priest's palace they were told the accused had been taken to the prefect for sentencing. They turned around retracing their steps, beyond weeping. They were admitted into the great palace courtyard and stood far in back of the crowd.

It was the most joyous of all days at the temple. The hearts, souls, of Joseph, all the leaders of the nation were lifted high. Glorious, thunderous glory, the pinnacle of human experience. Report came, the prefect was being uncooperative. He wanted to review the charges to make sure there was justification for execution. The sacrifices were being done by teams from the priestly houses. Joseph ordered some of the houses to send over some of the teams that were scheduled for later in the day. He sent Malchus to direct the delegation. Force the prefect, there was no reason for him to be difficult.

Reports came back the prefect sent the accused to Herod and later that Herod sent him back. Malchus requested that as many as possible be sent over to increase the pressure on the prefect. They were sent over and told to bring along as many family members and friends as possible. Nearly fifteen thousand were added to the earlier contingent. Since they could not go into the prefect's judgment hall for religious reasons, he was holding court from the podium in the central plaza. The prefect was very aware that his cohort was far outnumbered.

Horror of horrors, two men had been caught attempting to carry away the treasure, to be contributed, from the great synagog of Ctesiphon.⁸ The gold was heavy. They fell and alerted those in the house. They were rescued from being beaten to death and dragged off to the Temple for immediate execution. With a great parade of very angry people, they were sent to the prefect's palace.

Pilate asked the leaders with them, if they could not be put in prison and executed after the Holy Day. Impossible! They were stealing God's gold, the Lord God of Heaven and Earth. Outrage! Pilate made no objection. Yeshua. Nothing more could be done. He gave in, stubborn Roman. The order was given for three.

Rome had the exclusive power to execute. Whenever it was to comply with a sentence from the Judean authorities, Rome insisted that the Judeans be fully involved. The procession was led by Judean forces. Then a Roman Centurion and executioner, followed by the condemned between Judeans. Bringing up the rear, two more Romans and finally Judeans. Sixteen men in all, plus three condemned. The Judean escort prevented the Romans from being pelted with stones. The three were hung. The words "Temple gold" were added to the reused sign "thief". The prefect sent a special sign for Yeshua. in three languages. Long, each language took a whole signboard. Yeshua's mother Mary and a few other followers followed, watched everything, grieved, prayed. Across the city of Jerusalem, the official Passover lamb was sacrificed and placed on the altar, marking the beginning of the Passover celebration.⁹

The place of execution was beside the Joppa Gate opposite the prefect's palace on the main road west. It was heavily trafficked. All around the city pilgrims were camped. There were tents crowded at the foot of the

⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ctesiphon>

⁹ [Edersheim Alfred The Temple Ch 7](#)

rock of execution. It was called the Place of the Skull.¹⁰ A quarry there had played out and the area filled with dirt and planted. Tombs were being cut into the quarry walls. Right by the road, close to the gate, it was a highly prized location for tombs of the prominent. It was not a good place to camp with criminals dying slowly overhead, spoiling celebration, ruining the banquet.

In the temple the slaughter was going on. Over the years the number of worshippers kept growing. The increases were gradual and the arrangements kept pace. Two hundred thousand lambs in eight hours was about twenty five thousand an hour, one thousand priests with two assistants. Eight lines stretched from side to side in the outer courts, each enough for one hundred twenty five at a time. All the pumps were manned, the fountains flowed, the gates of the pools opened, abundant water for cleaning. The fire on the altar was leaping high, brilliant, burning tens of thousand pounds of fat an hour.

The lines of worshippers with lambs extended far out each gate. They moved steadily. There were many men directing them, keeping a ready supply for each team. Lambs are docile. There were many teams of priests and Levites working together. The priests skilled. Death quick. Sharp knives cut clean. Severed arteries to the brain stop brain function. Hardly a twitch from the lamb. Catch the blood. Skin the lamb. Remove the offal. Pull the fat. Carry them away.¹¹ Joyful celebrants took the Passover lamb for family dinner.

Claudia had heard the crowds yelling at her husband. She knew what pressure he was under and grieved for him. He had an impossible job. She wished they were somewhere else. She wanted a bath and told her girl to have it prepared. It takes a long time to get the fires going and the tank of water heated. In the meantime she selected her wardrobe. She picked her loveliest silk outfit. She had worn it to the last banquet in Italy. She remembered something. Was that in Cicero? She wanted to reread it and looked for it in her library.

All around the city the markets were crowded. The Passover dinner was the greatest feast of the year. People bought the best they could and it was all for sale someplace. There were every kind of fine foods, olives from Rhodes, pickles from Hespania, wine from Gaul, live sparrows, pigeons live and smoked, wood for the fire, flour for the matzah, fish from Galilee, from the great sea and from Egypt. Yeshua's followers brought fish, grain, olives, figs, fodder and more to sell. Jose brought his large mill. Many paid him to grind their grain for bread, There were a number of ovens to rent for baking. Joseph Barsabbas brought some fine stone pots to sell.

Sol and Lev were getting desperate. They had bought too much oil and had been trying to sell high. They knew they were facing a loss. Sol had a brilliant idea. They would tell people they had sacred oil from the temple and get four times as much for it. The priests that took care of the olive trees would be too busy with the lambs in the temple to notice. Not all were, Lazarus kept some on patrol through the pilgrim camp. The word reached their ears. Caught. They took the captives up the Mount to Lazarus. Since nothing could be done this holy day, he told them to deliver their catch to the temple watch to be kept for trial after the Sabbath.

¹⁰ Golgotha <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvary> It was not called a "hill" until 300 years later.

¹¹ I expect the Priests and Levites worked in teams and were periodically relieved by others. So there were large numbers waiting on the side. The lamb was returned to the worshipper. The Temple teams kept the lambskins. They would have been a major source of income. The fat would have been burned on the altar. Lambs are not big. A pound of fat each would be 200,000 pounds of fat to burn. Many think burning fat smells good, a sweet savor for the Lord.

All around the city, inside and out, in the camps happy people were preparing for the celebration. Inside the temple the lines of lambs moved steadily to the sacrifice and back out with fresh lamb to be cooked. At the olive press and in Bethany a group of stunned, devastated people could not comprehend the joy around them or the evil that assaulted them. Their beloved master, son of man, rabbi, so full of life, overflowing with the power and spirit of God, was being crucified. Some just sat, some walked, some talked. What did this all mean? They thought he was going to reveal himself as the Messiah, the Savior sent by God. Some had said there were to be two messiahs, son of Joseph and son of David.¹² One suffering, one victorious, was he the messiah son of Joseph? Was John that messiah? He seemed to know this was to happen. Why? What was God doing? Was it God's doing or Satan's?

All around the city, inside and out, people were talking about the sudden turn of affairs. Many had been expecting Yeshua to do something radical. Many had been looking forward to it, if it would really turn out for the good. There had been others before who had claimed to be the Messiah¹³ and attracted followings. They had all turned out badly and followers had been killed. Many were not surprised. It was obvious he was making the leaders very upset, challenging their position and power. He invited their attack and now he was hanging on a cross. It was to be expected. The religion scholars, the people, knew the scripture. "If a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt surely bury him the same day; for he that is hanged is a reproach unto God"¹⁴ Blasphemy merited death. Being hung on the cross proved he was cursed by God. He could not have been the messiah. Understood! Completely clear! The Sanhedrin, all those in power were comforted, assured they had been correct. They had faithfully carried out their responsibilities from God Almighty to rule His people and represent Him on the earth.

Some went to look at him hang. It was a satisfying sight. There were a few of his followers that came to grieve and weep. Poor fools. Most were unable to stay for long, except his mother. Crucifixion takes a long time.¹⁵ It is quicker in Judea. Their rules force them to be dead and taken down before night. Elsewhere in the empire, it can take three days and the bodies may be left to rot on the crosses. The executioners preferred the Judean form. It was a shorter wait. They could not leave until the victim was dead. The two thieves made a lot of moaning and groaning. The other was silent. He seemed at peace, strange. His body was in agony but he was not. They had never seen anyone die like this. He looked weighed down. They did not like looking at him. Sometimes he was looking back at them. His eyes spoke to them. He had asked his father to forgive them.

After the bath and massage, wonderful massage, Claudia's servant girl did her hair and cosmetics. She dressed. The girl thought Claudia was ravishing and wondered if she was upset about the evening's banquet entertainers. Claudia told the girl to bring her lunch to her on the tower balcony as usual. She liked to recline

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Messiah_son_of_Joseph

¹³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Messiah_claimants

¹⁴ [Deuteronomy 21:22-23](#)

¹⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion>

there and read, looking over the city, the Temple, and far beyond the great valley to the mountains beyond the salt sea. Sounds from the Temple carried on the wind. A column of smoke was rising from the great altar. She didn't look to the north. The place of execution was well in sight.

Pontius found her there reading. He complained her book buying was making him poor. His normal complaint. He did think she looked more than normally beautiful. He was very fortunate to have such a woman as wife. He reclined and the girl brought another goblet of wine. He asked Claudia what she was reading? She told him, she was reading Cicero, rereading actually.

"Why him? Now?"

"I thought I remembered something he said. I wanted to make sure he actually said what I remembered."

Pilate knew Claudia had reasons for what she said and did. "So what did he write?"

"It is in 'On Moral Duties'. The scroll was open to the section, 'But there are many occasions when actions that appear eminently worthy of the just man or the good man as we commonly say, change their complexion When these principles are modified by circumstances, our duty likewise changes and is not fixed and invariable.'"¹⁶

"So what is he talking about?"

"'Principles are modified by circumstances'. Doing the right thing, is not a fixed action. What is right at one time can be the wrong action at another time. You always do the best."

"As best I can."

"The high priests and council are evil. Forcing you to condemn that prophet."

"I had no choice. I am not so sure they had any real choice either. He was claiming to be god. How could they allow that?"

"Do you think he was?"

"Can you kill a god? He is dead now."

It was growing dark. They looked up. The sun was getting dim, but far in the distance, across the great valley, the distant mountains were in bright sunlight. There must be some very high clouds or something.

In the dim light Barabbas and his chief disciple watched the crosses from across the garden on the top of the quarry wall. Barabbas was telling how he had the right way to overthrow the council and prefect. The fellow dying over there was going to do it with kindness, fool. Force has to be met by greater force. The council chose him, Barabbas. They gave him their approval. He was going to make everyone know, he was the one selected to lead the way. He was going to be the victorious messiah.

At the olive press and up in Bethany, Yeshua's followers did not know what to do. All around people were preparing for the celebration this evening. They had theirs the night before. Most did not even feel like taking their items to sell in the markets. They did not want to hear what the crowds were saying. Some of the

¹⁶ Cicero "On Moral Duties" section 10 <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/542>

people from the synagog of Capernaum were at the olive press. During the week, the anger of the authorities about Yeshua grew. Jairus and many of the leaders backed away. They did not want to be caught in the middle. The son of the centurion talked with the sons of Peter and Andrew. He was unhappy with his father and the others for pulling away from Yeshua. Now that Yeshua was being crucified, maybe they were right. They had never known such gloom, darkness with no hope of light.

The thieves were getting tired of the struggle and pain. The cross kills by slow suffocation.¹⁷ Hanging from the arms expands the chest, lungs to the maximum. In order to breathe, they must pull down on the arms, push up with the legs, expel the air. Repeat. The urge to breathe cannot be ignored, pain and exhaustion can not prevent struggling for another breath. They felt at the end of their strength. The executioners knew they could go on for days. Yeshua's body struggled. His face showed a different kind of pain. He looked as if he was abandoned, more alone than anyone they had seen. His mother was there, watching, in the dim torchlight. A few were with her.

In the temple, the darkness forced them to light all the torches and lamps.¹⁸ The lamps were enough for the inner courts and the porches, but the slaughter of the lambs was being done in the great outer courts. The temple guard were given torches to stand among the lines. It was enough. There was murmuring, questioning what was happening? What this meant? No matter, the lambs had to be done or there would not be dinner tonight. In the camp grounds and buildings lamps were lit and people wondered, while they continued the preparations. It was a bigger problem in the markets. They had to close.

Yeshua's followers at the olive press and at Lazarus' home in Bethany were so depressed they hardly noticed the darkness. There had been very little talk of anything. The twelve were no help at all. People get hungry, the women were trying to get something to eat. Lazarus' servants had their work to do. No banquet tonight, that was last night. Some of the followers had gone to be with Mother Mary, but it was too hard to watch for long with her. They had to come back. She watched, watched in silence, feeling, wondering.

Those camped in front of the place of execution were relieved by the darkness. The crosses were out of sight. Only the sound of the struggle to breathe marked the location. To the south were the three great towers.¹⁹ Pilate and Claudia looked over the city in the dim light. The fire from the great altar lit the cloud of smoke rising above it. They could see the lines of torches in the outer courts where they were slaughtering the lambs. All the rooftops, in the windows and on all the surrounding hills lamps flickered more than the stars in the sky at night. It was a beautiful sight. It was very pleasant for them to be on the high balcony. Pilate thought of how desirable Claudia was. The banquet with his lead staff and the planned entertainers caused him to pass on the present opportunity. His staff was coming. He had to meet them at the bath.

Mid afternoon it was over. The light returned as it had gone. Everything was good. The last of the lambs

¹⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crucifixion> <http://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/4782-crucifixion>

¹⁸ <http://www.feastsofthelord.net/id28.html> "In the Court of the Women stood four giant candelabras, each rising over 70 feet tall. Atop each candelabra were 4 bowls for lamps, a total of 16 giant bowls, each to be filled with olive oil. Once these giant lamp stands were lit, there was no courtyard in Jerusalem that was not illuminated from the light." I have only found reference to these in Christian sites concerning Sukkot, They are not something easy to invent in later years. The poor attestation does not "prove" they did not exist.

¹⁹ http://www.bible-history.com/jerusalem/firstcenturyjerusalem_herod_s_three_towers.html

were being done. There would not even be much clean up to do in the temple courts. The fountains had run full for the washing of pavements and everything else all day. The priests and Levites were tired but not exhausted. The teams had been taking turns. Adding to the satisfaction was knowing the great wealth of lambskins they had obtained. The priestly houses would be well off for the coming year. The inflow of gold and offerings had been very good as well.

Three officials of the Sanhedrin were relieved the light returned. They were walking with men carrying torches. Tomorrow was the ceremony of the cutting of the barley for the Feast of First Fruits. Today they had to go out to the fields toward Bethlehem. They were to examine the fields for the finest, ripest barley. Then they were to select, bind up the bundles to be cut. Now they would be able to do that in the light.²⁰

All over the city and surrounding hills the lamps were extinguished. They would be needed for the Seder that evening. Some of the vendors in the markets reopened but business was poor. The Roman executioners took the bodies from the crosses. Nicodemus²¹ and another man, Joseph, came for Yeshua. Mary and the few with her were surprised and very grateful. They had no idea what to do. Maybe they could have taken him to Bethany to Lazarus' tomb? The two were members of the Sanhedrin. They were taking a tremendous risk. They did not care what the council thought. Joseph had a new tomb on the other side of the garden, close at hand. They took him there and pushed the stone in to close.²²

The two men apologized to Mary and the others that they could not prevent the council from condemning Yeshua. The council felt threatened, that Yeshua would take away their positions and power, if they didn't stop him. They were unable to think about what God wanted and was doing. After all, they knew, it was God Himself who placed them in power to rule for Him on earth. Some were concerned, they knew Yeshua said he would return in three days. Mary thanked the two, it meant so much that they had come. The men said they could not go back to the council. From now on they were Yeshua's followers. They asked them if she had any idea why God would have allowed this to happen?

They expected Yeshua to reveal himself as the Messiah, not to allow himself to be executed. Mary replied. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways²³" I was told, 'A sword will pierce through my soul'²⁴. All of the promises of the Almighty, creator, ruler of all are true. The messenger said, 'The Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David'²⁵." They asked Mary what she thought would happen and when? She said, "If I had not believed to look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living!-Wait

²⁰ Page 23 Torah Club Messianic Commentaries on the Passover Holiday Readings Selected Excerpts from First Fruits of Zion's Torah Club, Daniel Lancaster, First Fruits of Zion, 800.775.4807, www.ffoz.org.

²¹ The Babylonian Talmud, Ta'anit 19b-20a http://www.archpark.org.il/article.asp?period_id=1&id=79 records a great miracle with very prominent member of the Council named Nakdimon ben Guryon who lived at this time https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicodemus_ben_Gurion <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicodemus>

²² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_the_Holy_Sepulchre This is an excellent introduction to the site of Jesus crucifixion and resurrection. The location of Jesus' crucifixion and burial have always been known. The sites are well researched with many books, articles, papers. The door stone was probably a block. "Did a Rolling Stone Close Jesus' Tomb?" By Amos Kloner BAR 25:05, Sep/Oct 1999 <http://members.bib-arch.org/publication.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=25&Issue=5&ArticleID=1> Stone blocks are moved on rollers until the final positioning. <http://appuntisugerusalemmite.it/Dati/Did%20a%20Rolling%20Stone%20Close%20Jesus%20Tomb.htm>

²³ Isaiah 55:8

²⁴ Luke 2:35

²⁵ Luke 1:32

on the LORD; be strong, and let thy heart take courage; yea, wait thou for the LORD.”²⁶ Nicodemus responded, “There is nothing too hard for Thee. Behold, Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and by Thy outstretched arm.”²⁷

It was a long walk back to Lazarus’ home. They stopped for a while at the olive press. Grieving, confused, frightened people. No great banquet tonight, leftovers from last evening. Everywhere they were surrounded by happy celebrants making final preparations for the seder tonight.

Lazarus and his sisters welcomed them, Lazarus, the one who was dead and brought back to life a few months ago. Lazarus was surprised to see Joseph from the council. He remembered they had been full of questions, not hostile like the rest, after Jesus had brought him back to life. They both assured the group, no matter what would come, they would be followers of Yeshua. They were not returning to the council.

Questions:

How was the slaughter of nearly two hundred thousand lambs organized?

Who were in the crowd calling for crucifixion?

Why were the two thieves executed when it was avoided at the Festival?

“Who killed Jesus? Was it the Jews? the Romans? All Christian theology is agreed, the cause of the crucifixion was us, all human beings, collectively and individually. You killed Jesus. I killed Jesus. It was not evil or bad people who killed him. Roman and Jewish legal practice and standards are the best of all time. Better than our own. He was tried and convicted by the best people doing their best to carry out their earthly responsibilities, acting like normal people. The reality of evil is that everything, even our best is fatally flawed. It is impossible for us not to be imperfect. No one may think if he was in their place he would have done better.

For the full account of these hours see the Gospels. This story fills in what was going on around that. The Gospels do not include the background information everyone knew at the time they were written. This is one of a series of stories that includes that background faithful to what is known about the history and culture. I hope this provokes-in a good way-the reader to think deeply about the Scriptural account. Go to my web site for more. <http://thesignofconcord.com> . These are in the section titled “King of Kings”. There is also a section titled “King of Kings Supplements” with additional information.

If you do not think this reflects the culture and historic situation, how would you tell the story?

Many thanks to my patient wife Lynne for repeatedly proofreading.

This is meant for non technical readers. The footnotes are links to the documentation.

Scriptures are from Jewish Publication Society of America 1917 Version. The New Testament quotes are ESV.

²⁶ [Psalm 27:13-14](#)

²⁷ [Jeremiah 32:17](#)