

Book Three
THE KING CROWNED
Chapter One
THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

STIRRINGS

James was looking for Mother Mary. He had not seen her for some months and wanted to see how she was doing. He had heard Yeshua's group was coming to Jerusalem for the Passover, but so had enormous crowds. What he knew for sure was that Yeshua and his group had been hiding. For the three years people had been talking about him and people gathered around him. He had become famous for his miracles, healing many. He preached about the Kingdom of God. There were other wandering preachers and occasionally people talked of miracles but none of the others were anything like Yeshua.

James remembered when his father brought Yeshua and Mother Mary home from Egypt, a strange story with confusion. His father said this was all God's doing. Under the circumstances his father should not have married Mary and her parents should have put her away. James, his brothers and sisters, the village people became used to the marriage. It was easy to do, since Mother Mary was so kind and loving to everyone, always had been. Yeshua was a good boy. He didn't try to get even when the boys in town called him names. There was always something different about him as if he was waiting for something. When he was baptized by John, he started.

A lot of the high and mighty were opposed to him. He said critical things about them and he was right. All over were religious people, groups, teachers, priests constantly talking about God, what God was doing, what God was going to do, about the Messiah and what he would be like, about what God's people should do, and who was included and not included as God's people. There was a lot of arguing, quoting scripture, quoting great teachers now and of days gone by.

James was pious¹. He had followed the way of the Pharisees for a long time until that no longer satisfied. Too much striving to be known as the greatest scholar. He was not a priest so he could not be a Sadducee. They controlled everything, the Temple, the nation, officials, clerks, judges. Everything they did got more money and power into their hands. Some priests had turned their back on the establishment and temple². They lived holy lives, dedicated everything to God, waiting for the Messiah. He followed them. Since he was not a priest he could only be a lay brother. He did not mind the role of a humble servant of God. They surrendered all their personal belongings and lived in communities of prayer and study. They did not even marry. Mother Mary's

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_the_Just

² There is no indication that James was a believer until after the resurrection. Essenes were lead by priests in opposition to the established Temple. James was not a priest but if he was held in the highest regard inside and beyond that fellowship, that could explain how a large group of priests joined the disciples, Acts 6:7. That also could explain how he became the first Bishop of the Church in Jerusalem, instead of one of the Twelve. Essenes <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essene> They are not criticized in the New Testament or early Church, unlike all the other major religious parties. B. Pixner "Jesus and His Community: Between Essenes and Pharisees" in Hillel and Jesus, Charlesworth and Johns ed., Augsburg Fortress 1997. Essenes as such disappear from history, but much of their beliefs continue in Ebionite, Nazarene and Islam. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ebionite>, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_\(sect\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazarene_(sect))

nephew John had not either. He had lived totally for God, praying in the wilderness. Yeshua and James had not married. They were dedicated to God. James had become well known, not just among his own group, but among the people of Judea for his piety and devotion. They called him James the Righteous.

The Scriptures are full of commandments, statutes and ordinances, the will of God. His group did not want to come even near the edge of those rules, so they added others, a hedge around life so they would not inadvertently cross some line. The Pharisees had done the same, but they did to have so many rules. They were not as dedicated to being devout. Keeping rules made life seem righteous. James was aware that his dedication had attracted attention, inside the group and even among those outside. The outside of a man is not the same as the inside. He still was not at peace. So he tried to seek God in the midst of all the confusion.

Sometimes he thought Yeshua was doing the same. He was proclaiming a new way, maybe the oldest way, to seek, to find the Spirit of God, instead of more regulations on how to be right. Yeshua was more about the person and God. No matter, now he was a wanted man. The Sanhedrin had announced throughout the land, he was wanted for blasphemy - a death sentence. Mother Mary was with him. James had gotten an invitation to meet them in Bethany³, the house of the master of the oil for the Temple.

James walked by the oil press at the base of the Mount of Olives⁴. Everywhere the hillside was packed. More people were moving in, people everywhere, cooking, talking, praying. You couldn't find space in the city, every corner, every roof top space was sold. The prime place to be was on the Mount of Olives. It looked right at the Temple. It was as if you were in the Temple courts. Passing Bethphage⁵ near the top of the hill, he met some of his brother's followers and asked about Yeshua and Mother Mary.

"The master and mother Mary are just behind. The master sent us to get a donkey from Bethphage. The master is going to the Temple. He wants to ride the donkey to the city."

"How could he dare? He is wanted for blasphemy."⁶

"We do not understand. He wants a donkey colt. One that has never been ridden."

"That can't be done. The donkey has to be broken for a rider. It will buck him off."

James went with them to get the donkey. There was objection when they untied it but when they said, "The master needs it," the owner let them take it.

THE MASTER COMES

They no sooner had the young donkey when the Master came with a crowd behind him. He had never seen Yeshua so happy, his face glowed with excitement. When he saw James, he ran to him and wrapped his arms around him, two strong men, brothers, delighted to see each other. Mother Mary was close behind, with a face of joy. It was so good to see her and embrace. They heard shouting behind them. "Miracle. Miracle. Praise God. Hallelujah. Messiah has come." Others added, "Prophet Yeshua from Nazareth who raised Lazarus from the dead." They turned to see what all the shouting was about.

³ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethany_\(biblical_village\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethany_(biblical_village))

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_of_Olives

⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethphage>

⁶ [John 11:54](#)

Yeshua had mounted the donkey and was riding off. He was waving to everyone, with both hands. The donkey walked straight and tall, like on parade. The owner of the donkey started all the shouting and the people of Bethphage joined in with the crowd from Bethany. The whole parade was singing and shouting praises to God. Yeshua was waving to everyone as they passed down the Mount of Olives. There were tens of thousands camped on the hill as they passed among them. The children were the first to see the parade start and ran to spread the news. There wasn't anything else going on, so many just came for the entertainment.

The men on the Temple walls saw the parade coming down and sent a warning to the officials. They found the High Priest Joseph⁷ with his steward Malchus⁸ inspecting the mosaics being installed in the Chamber of Hewn Stones⁹. Most of the construction work was suspended for the feast days but this was inside a side building of the inner court.

"Welcome, Your Holiness, welcome. This will be the most glorious chamber in the whole world."

"It should be. We serve the King of Heaven. The Lord of all the Earth. The Sanhedrin belong in such a place. It reflects the high privilege, the awesome responsibility, it is most serious, most glorious. May the Lord of all creation bless your work. May your skill and your endeavors bring praise and glory to the King of heaven. May the Messiah see the beauty you are creating and be pleased and honor you." He turned to the door and saw anxious faces.

The High Priest joined the commander of the Temple guard, chief priests, many of the leadership looking out toward the Mount of Olives. They watched in shock and amazement at the enormous horde coming to them. As Yeshua passed the olive press¹⁰, the rest of his followers joined in. Many of them had been fearful waiting there, worried about what would happen to Yeshua and themselves. They knew he was wanted. They had been hiding with him for weeks. He was leading them back to the lion's den, where they knew he would be caught.

Yeshua headed for the Eastern Gate¹¹ which led straight into the Temple courts¹². It never crossed the minds of the guards at the gate to try to stop them. They saw a grown man clothed in a pure white robe¹³, riding a little donkey surrounded by children. It was too strange to be frightened by. The hordes kept pouring up the

⁷ Caiaphas in the Gospels but his proper name was Joseph son of Caiaphas. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caiaphas> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nasi>

⁸ Steward is the ranking assistant, not a lowly position. Secretary in our day can have a similar double meaning such as in Secretary of State.

⁹ Chamber of Hewn Stones <http://www.diggingwithdarren.com/blog/2011/02/23/temple-update-sanhedrin-chamber-of-hewn-stone-blueprints-revealed/>

¹⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gethsemane> <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06540a.htm> The best I have seen is at <http://www.bib-arch.org/online-exclusives/easter-03.asp> "A Welcome Refuge: Inside the Cave of Gethsemane"

¹¹ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Gate_\(Jerusalem\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Gate_(Jerusalem)) http://www.bible-history.com/jewishtemple/JEWISH_TEMPLEThe_Golden_Gate.htm

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Temple http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_Mount http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_in_Jerusalem

¹³ http://www.chabad.org/holidays/JewishNewYear/template_cdo/aid/4829/jewish/Wearing-White.htm <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kittel>

stairs from the gate. The High Priest and those with him climbed up to the roofs around the Women's Court¹⁴ to avoid the crush. It did not take very long to learn the identity of the leader. Yeshua! Yeshua of Nazareth was here! Here with an enormous horde of cheering supporters. The Sanhedrin had posted weeks before throughout the land that he was wanted for the charge of blasphemy.¹⁵ He was to be executed. It was terrifying. He had boldly walked into the midst of the Temple surrounded by cheering throngs. What if he led that horde to come after them?

All they could do was watch as Yeshua led the cheering throngs straight through the Middle Court at their feet. He saw them on the roof and waved at them. No one waved back. The horde surged behind him like ocean waves filling the court with many more following behind. There were many times more than ten thousand. All the time he was waving to them. He was like a long awaited redeemer, not like a conqueror. The High Priest and the Sanhedrin¹⁶, everyone with them, were terrified. Would He continue through the Nicanor Gate¹⁷ straight into the Temple¹⁸ itself. How far would he go? Would he enter the Holy of Holies? They watched as he mounted the great staircase to the Nicanor Gate and entered the Court of the Israelites. The Priests and Levites saw him coming and made a line at the top of the steps on each side of the Duchan¹⁹ as if they would have been able to stop the hoard. Yeshua stopped in front of the Duchan and prostrated²⁰ before the Temple Doorway. All those behind him stopped also. This spread gradually though the horde. It seemed forever. When he finally rose, the cheers began afresh.

He did not go forward into the Temple. He turned and went out the Singers Gate. The horde surged after him. It was like a royal inspection tour. The High Priest and those with him moved from roof top to roof top to keep Yeshua in sight. As he came around the corner of the Middle Court, he met the crowd still coming in the Eastern Gate. They joined in with the head of the crowd. He lead the hordes throughout the outer courts, around all the construction equipment and temporary structures. The southern end and western side had a great more to do, years of work. The area was just being cleared for the extension. He came to the place where animals were sold for sacrifices and the tables of the money changers. They watched him stop. It was far away and hard to see clearly. It looked like he was addressing them. He was waving his arms, the animals broke loose, began running all over, the tables were overturned and the merchants fled²¹. His followers cheered.

¹⁴ http://www.bible-history.com/court-of-women/the_temple_treasury.html

¹⁵ [John 11:50-57](#)

¹⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanhedrin>

¹⁷ <http://www.ritmeyer.com/2010/12/14/the-beautiful-gate-of-the-temple/>

¹⁸ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/4837608/Farmer-builds-model-of-Biblical-temple.html>

¹⁹ [Duchan, the central podium between the Nicanor Gate and the Door of the Temple page 140 Secrets of the Temple Mount / Updated and enlarged edition Leen & Kathleen Ritmeyer 2006 Biblical Archeology Society Washington DC.](#)

²⁰ [Edersheim from the Mishna has "distinction was made between bending the knees, bending the head, and falling prostrate on the ground. The latter was not deemed 'fit for every man, but only for such as knew themselves righteous men, like Joshua." The Temple: Its Ministry and Services Alfred Edersheim, Chapter 8 The Morning and the Evening Sacrifice http://philologos.org/_eb-ttms/temple08.htm](#)

²¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cleansing_of_the_Temple

More and more of the leadership gathered around Joseph on the rooftops. The commander of the Judean Army, the commander of the Temple Guard, many of the chief priests and master levites were all there. The great teachers were not able to continue teaching in the courts of the Temple, joined in. The Roman cohort in the Tower of Antonia²² sent a message to ask what was going on. It said the cohort at the Prefect's Palace²³ had also been put on notice. The High Priest Joseph talked with the military leaders. A Judean legion was available, the Temple Gate Keepers, Levites, counted as two auxiliary legions. There were two cohorts of Romans²⁴ plus those that came with Herod Antipas²⁵, Philip the Tetrarch²⁶ and Lysanias²⁷. They decided it would not be wise to try to use them now. The soldiers stationed on the frontiers and throughout the nation were already on alert because of the danger of raiders. They had already pulled in as many as possible for the Passover. Wait and see.

As they were discussing how to handle the disturbance, Yeshua and his horde left the Temple and disbursed. They wondered what would happen next. While they were talking some came up. They said they met Yeshua when he came in the Eastern, Golden, Gate and challenged him about all the cheers. He said if the people weren't cheering the very stones would shout instead. Others said they challenged him on the way out, his mob acted like children. He challenged them back, saying, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou founded strength."²⁸ They were stunned. He was acting like he thought he was the Messiah and the people were acting like they thought he was also. This was very dangerous. Every day more and more people were arriving to celebrate the Passover. He had to be stopped before he set himself up as the King, Lord, of all.

BACK IN BETHANY

²² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tower_of_Antonia

²³ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod%27s_Palace_\(Jerusalem\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod%27s_Palace_(Jerusalem)) Israel National Museum has a video of a CG model at <http://www.youtube.com/embed/npH3IA1binc>

²⁴ The records say Pilate had six cohorts, 3600, for the nation of near two million. They were on the edge of the Roman empire with warlike Parthian Empire to the east and raiding Arabian tribesmen. Herod Anitpas and Philip the Tetrarch would have each brought at least a ceremonial guard, perhaps a century. The Sanhedrin to control over a million volatile people could need at least if not more than a 6000 man legion and 12,000 man guard. When the Jews revolted in 70 AD, they were a serious challenge to three experienced Roman legions. Julius Wellhausen in "The Pharisees and the Sadducees". Macon: Mercer University Press. ISBN 9780865547292 reports that the Sadducees among other responsibilities in the Sanhedrin "Equipped and led the army" page 43. There is no documentation about the number and composition of that army. Paul L. Maier in "Pontius Pilate" ISBN-13: 9780825432965 reports page 56 "Jews throughout the Empire were exempt from military service". Page 57 Caesar granted that "no soldier could be raised or quartered in Judea". That infers that they had their own military under their own control.

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_Antipas

²⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_Philip_II

²⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lysanias>

²⁸ Psalm 8:2 JPS They knew the rest of the Psalm. He was claiming to be the Lord and they were his enemies.

James was exhausted, excited, confused. He talked with Joseph BarSabas²⁹. What was going on? Why was Yeshua wanted for blasphemy? Joseph wasn't one of the twelve disciples. He was in the next group, close supporters. He and Mattias³⁰ had been with Yeshua from the first miracle at the wedding at Cana. It had taken him quite a while to decide he wanted to be a follower. Yeshua had been patient and let him take his own time. There had been a number of followers, some became disillusioned and left, others came in. Many local Galileans would go back to plant or harvest, so they could afford to be with him. As they traveled around, people would give them gifts, money, food. That was all shared. At times there was not enough. There were some wealthy, prominent supporters but there were limits to what they could do.

About three hundred were with them now. Most camped by the oil press, it was just about the best place to be, if you weren't in a house. Mother Mary, the unescorted women, and some others were staying at Lazarus's home in Bethany. The master had raised Lazarus from the tomb. He had been dead for four days. He was well known to all in power, rich, well liked, and pious. He and his sisters Mary and Martha had been friends of Yeshua for a long time. He arranged for the oil press to be reserved for Yeshua.

James had heard most of that, "But why is he wanted for blasphemy? They want to execute him? What did he do?"

"It does not make sense. We are not sure. What we know is that after Lazarus was raised from the dead³¹, which created enormous stir, the Sanhedrin announced he was wanted. It felt to us as if they were so upset he raised Lazarus, they had to kill him."

"But Lazarus was one of them."

"Maybe that made it worse. He raised some from the dead in Galilee, but they were far away and unimportant. They could be overlooked as wild stories. They knew Lazarus. They knew he was terribly sick. They had been to his burial. They could not, not see."

"Unbelievable. You would think they would have wanted to come close to him. They claim to be servants of God, when they meet someone with the power of God, they want to eliminate him. What is going to happen now?"

"We don't know. He is very hard to understand at times. It is why it took me a long time to accept him. He speaks in parables. Simple on the surface but containing deep truths. He is like a parable himself, simple on the outside but concealing great depths within."

"I watched my little brother grow up. He has always been like that. I'm not sure even Mother Mary understands him. I have many questions."

PLANS ARE MADE

On the roof tops the High Priest, almost all of the Sanhedrin and many others had watched and despaired. They were relieved when Yeshua left. There had been no trouble. That did not mean there would be no trouble later. They had to find a way to seize him when the crowds were not around. The military did not think they

²⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_of_Barsabas

³⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Matthias

³¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lazarus_of_Bethany

could get to him in Bethany before he was warned to flee or to bring him back through the crowd camped on the Mount. Nearly every man there had a knife and there would be a number of swords as well.

They deputized men, scribes, pharisees, as many different groups, Chief Priests, priests, Levites, as they could find, to listen to what he was teaching, to try to catch him in falsehoods. They posted all the guards they could to surround his listeners to discourage and warn people away. Others were charged to identify and talk with his followers, his supporters. They wanted to know who they were.

The treasurer reported on the financial loss from when the animal sellers and money changers were driven out. They did not want to return until Yeshua was gone. They had set up for business below, outside the Temple gates where it was already overcrowded. The priests in charge of pre-inspecting animals for purity had not been able to come up with a good alternative. They would not be able to charge for the space or for the pre-inspection. It meant the loss of a good amount of income for those priests and they wanted to be compensated. The merchants wanted to be compensated as well.

PILGRIMS

Pilgrims were coming from all over the diaspora. For some from far away, Margiana³², Cochin³³, Ethiopia³⁴ it was a once in a life time event. The whole trip could take two years. Contingents came from Hispania and Gaul. Areas closer to Jerusalem had shorter trips and greater numbers. Alexandria, Antioch and even Parthia³⁵ provided even more . Most Gallileans and Judeans came for all three required festivals³⁶ every year. They would bring not only their own supplies but also fish, oil, grain, fuel, fodder and much more to sell. All around the city was a great market fair.

Inside the city every room, rooftop and alcove was rented. The great Priestly houses only had room for the highest ranking visitors. All over the city were guest houses owned by distant cities and synagogos for their own people³⁷. Each day more caravans arrived from every direction. The surrounding countryside for a long distance was covered with camps. The winter rains were over, so many only had curtains around to provide privacy for

³² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margu> The Islamic Hajj was much smaller until recently. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hajj> The great Hindu festival is much larger with peak days of 20 million http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumbh_Mela There is an excellent article describing the conditions and organization in Smithsonian, September 2013 The Ephemeral City by Tom Downey.

³³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cochin>

³⁴ <http://www.jewishfederations.org/page.aspx?id=791> http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beta_Israel Acts 8:26-40 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Kush http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aksumite_Empire

³⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ctesiphon> http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parthian_Empire

³⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Pilgrimage_Festivals Three Pilgrimage Festivals refers to Passover, Shavuot - Pentecost and Sukkot.

³⁷ Guest house dedication <http://www.jerusalemerspective.com/2396/> There were four hundred and eighty synagogues in Jerusalem.

the women. The cisterns and pools were full, their gates open. There was water enough for all.³⁸ The aqueducts, brooks and sewers ran full to carry waste away.

The next Pilgrim festival, Shavuot, was in seven weeks, just after spring harvest. Most of the people, nearby went home and then returned. Many of the visitors from afar remained, some even stayed until early fall for Sukkot. Only the palace of the Roman Procurator, Herod's great double palace, was near empty. The Procurator needed only a small part of the northern palace and permitted Herod Anitpas and Philip the Tetrarch to share the southern palace. They were not allowed to use the great gate and central plaza, just the small side gate. It reminded them who was in control while they lived in Herodian luxury.

THE WORK MUST GO ON

While the High Priest and his party were on the roof top, the Chief Priest working with the builders came with his assistants. They wanted to make sure the High Priest was satisfied with the readiness of the buildings and courts for the Passover and discuss future plans. They had stopped all the construction and moved everything they could out of the way. The goal was to expand the area for more people but the work reduced the space. Before they began there was room for over 100,000. They would have space for 250,000 at the end. Now they were close to 175,000 but that was cut up by the temporary buildings and construction equipment. There were less than 1000 men working inside buildings. That meant 17,000 of the work force³⁹ were available to help during Passover. The High Priest asked if they had all been assigned to the various Houses of the Priests and divisions of Levites. All were except for about 500 who lived far away and were still working at the most distant quarries.

They wanted to inform the High Priest of a future possibility. It took longer to do the fill than to build the walls. It had not been very many years since they finished the fill and paved behind the northern wall. If on the southern side, they put in vaults⁴⁰ instead of fill, it would save time. The huge void could be useful, a cistern or storage space. Part of the Hasmonean⁴¹ Wall on the south could be pulled down, the fill reused. The High Priest asked if they had acquired all the property needed for the southern wall and entry plaza? He was told they still were talking with the House of Ishmael. They insisted on far more than the property was worth. They wanted enough to build the grandest house of all and to be closest to the Triple Gate. Their servants had attacked the men who offered them too little.

The High Priest said, "When the retaining wall has cut off their house and the fill begins to crowd in, they will be more willing to take what they can." He added, "You talked about building vaults under the southern

³⁸ <http://www.romanaqueducts.info/aquasite/index.html> Private homes had their own cisterns. There is not a great need for public water. Gihon and aqueducts supply enough water for base population of 200,000 without using the pools and cisterns on the Temple mount.

³⁹ Josephus Antiquities of the Jews - Book XX Chapter 9, 7. And now it was that the temple was finished. So when the people saw that the workmen were unemployed, who were above eighteen thousand <http://www.ccel.org/j/josephus/works/ant-20.htm>

⁴⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon%27s_Stables

⁴¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean> The best illustration of the retaining walls is by Ritmeyer <http://store.ritmeyer.com/node/161> .Or at ritmeyer.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/devtm.jpg Unfortunately it is not free and I do not know anything else similar.

end. Could you use vaults to extend the northern court over the Pool of Israel? Someday we will need that space too.”

They joked, “When Messiah comes how will there be room for the whole world?”

The High Priest asked if they could move most of the temporary work spaces to the northern wall. They were in the way. They said they would love to. There were constant serious arguments with the Priests and Levites, fighting even. They asked Joseph to give the command. He refused. “No, better for me and for you, if the order comes from the builders. I can deflect the complaint in the Sanhedrin better if they are against you than if they are against me.”

The Passover celebration drew the greatest crowds of the three pilgrimage festivals, even though they were all required. Tremendous preparation and work was needed to accommodate all the people and provide for all their needs. The High Priest had to manage the competitive contentious groups involved.

“Your Holiness, Excellency, may you rejoice in the bountiful blessings of God.”

“Greetings. How is the House of Boethus⁴²? Are all your people prepared for the great festival?”

“Of course, everyone and everything is well in hand. We will do our part perfectly.”

“As I expected. The House of Boethus always is impressive. What brings you to me at this time? Is there something more you need from me?”

“Your Holiness, what we need is to be treated properly, fairly, according to the will of the righteous God.”

“Certainly, it is our desire to always give proper consideration for all your labors for the Almighty One.”

“Each year more pilgrims come to celebrate, bringing offerings to the Temple and their lambs.”

“Continue, what does that mean for your house? You have more lambskins to prepare and sell. Each year you have more revenue.”

“Each year we have more work. It means more of us need to be supported.”

“What is the solution that you have in mind?”

“We merit an increase of the amount distributed from the offerings to the Temple.”

“When there is an increase available it is apportioned to each house. You receive as the other houses receive.”

“We are expecting an extra two thousand shekels over that to meet our expenses.”

“And from which house am I to take this from? The House of Boethus has opposed me at every turn. What reason is there for me to agree? Are you going to become regular supporters of the High Priest?”

“Your Holiness, you know we have only sought what is best for the Temple. We have never been opposed to the House of Annas personally.”

“So. From which house am I to take this two thousand shekels? Or from all of them? I will not injure the houses that support the plans for the Temple.”

“The House of Ishmael has been outspoken, leading opposition, to the proposals of the House of Annas.”

“True, it may be possible to transfer one thousand shekels from their account to the House of Boethus.”

⁴² Great Houses of the Priesthood http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abba_Saul_ben_Batnit

“That is the smallest amount we could manage. It will be a great disappointment to my house. I hope it will not lead to further unhappiness for my family.”

“Agreed! It would be wise to make sure your house will rejoice at the generosity it has been shown. Oh, and very important, you are to tell the House of Ishmael that it was your suggestion that the one thousand shekels were taken out of their account.” Joseph turned to the deputy of the treasurer and gave him the order for the adjustment to be made.

Shortly after, Malchus asked him why he agreed to this. It would only lead to more trouble. The High Priest said trouble was always coming from those houses. He expected the House of Ismael would be told it was his idea and they would come back to him with anger. He turned to those standing nearby and asked if they heard clearly who suggested the monies be taken from the House of Ishmael. All five affirmed they had heard. Privately, quietly, he continued to Malchus, if the House of Ishmael attacked him, he would take back the thousand shekels from Boethus and an extra two thousand for lying about him.

Malchus said, they will all hate you and oppose you. Joseph answered, “They do now. So it will not be worse. Those who support me will be rewarded. Boethus and Ishmael boast they are against me. They cannot admit, they are wrong. They will reduce the support for their marginal members. The leaders will not suffer. Those who look on will see and consider, it is best to support the House of Annas.”

A PAUSE

The High Priest was working, discussing more details of the coming celebration when his father in law Annas⁴³ came in. A servant followed him with food and wine. After they greeted one another, Annas asked the men to be excused for a while so they could talk.

“Joseph, I have been concerned about you. You are working too hard. From early in the morning till late at night. I have watched you. At the prayers, you can barely listen and join in. You are whispering to men coming and going by you. Take a rest. I have brought something for you to eat. Relax for a little while.”

“There is so much to do. My head is spinning. Everyone comes to me with questions, matters I have to decide.”

“There are heads of houses, leaders of divisions. They have the authority to decide, to act. Tell them to meet their responsibilities. They give you what they do not want to be criticized for. They know no matter what there will be complaints. Let the complaints fall on their heads not your own.”

“In the middle of all of this we have this Yeshua of Nazareth to deal with.”

“He is insulting us. He called us hypocrites. He will destroy us.”

“Some say he will bring destruction on the whole nation. The crowds around him may riot.”

“Crowds are sheep. They look to leaders. When Yeshua is cut down, who will they have to follow? We are the leadership God Almighty had established. There is no one else they will follow. They will not follow the Zealots or the Essenes. The crowds will know they went too far about Yeshua and we had to act to save them from themselves.”

“We need to be very careful, very wise.”

⁴³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annas> His five sons and son-in-law all served turns as High Priest.

“It has to be done, finished, before they can get stirred up. It has to be done before the beginning of the Passover.”

“I am amazed by his nerve. He is bold. He knows the Council sent notice for him to be arrested for blasphemy. He walks into the Temple in front of our faces.”

Annas assured him. “The King of Heaven has placed us in the position of power and authority to lead and protect His people. This Yeshua is destroying everything. God will condemn us if we do not stop him.”

Questions. These are questions that were in my mind that I attempted to answer as I was writing.

Why was Yeshua able to move freely about the Temple when all knew he was a wanted man?

What did the Temple leadership think? What would have they talked about when they saw Yeshua?

How big a crowd came with Yeshua into the Temple?

How would Yeshua have behaved on his entry? Did he orchestrate the people’s response?

How many might have been considered followers of his?

Why were his followers able to use the oil press? It was one of the best places to stay.

How many soldiers were available?

What did the Temple and Temple Mount look like at the time?

What was going on in the Temple courts while Yeshua was there?

How could such a great number of pilgrims been handled?

James becomes the first Bishop of Jerusalem, not one of the disciples. What kind of a man was he?

By Stephen H. Funck, March 29, 2020

The Gospels record the events of Jesus life. They 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.