

Book Two

THE KING ARRIVES

Chapter Six

WANTED FOR BLASPHEMY AND THE JUDGE

By Stephen H. Funck, March 30, 2020

Grown men, scholars, officials do not run. These ran, raced, down the Mount of Olives, astounding news! They had to tell the High Priest, the Council, everyone! The watch at the eastern gate saw them coming, panting, out of breath. They recognized them, stood out of their way, watched them struggle up the great stairs to the Temple platform and out of sight.

Through the Middle court, up the Nicanor steps. They stopped at the Dulcan, looked up at the great doors into the Temple of the Most High, surrounded by the golden vine. They gathered their wits, where is the Chief Priest? The officiating priests saw them, recognized them, standing there exhausted. “What is wrong? Can we help you?”

“Lazarus is alive! We saw him! Yeshua of Nazareth raised him from the dead! We have to tell, where is the Chief Priest? We have to tell him!”

“He is at his palace. It can’t be. We were at his burial four days ago.”

Many of the priests and Levites went with them. Supporting them as they tried to walk. Some went ahead to tell the chief priest what was coming. Others went off in other directions to spread the news. Astounding good news, the touch of the hand of God, awesome, it is a fearful thing to see God. Wonderful that Lazarus is alive. We rejoice with him, wonderful. Everyone will be so happy and rejoice. Praise to God, who raises the dead from the grave. “You resurrect the dead; You are powerful to save. . . . resurrecting the dead in abundant mercies. . . . Blessed are You Lord, who revives the dead.”<sup>1</sup>.

The news spread like wildfire. Lazarus was well known, Master of the Oil for the Temple. He was not a member of the Council. He was the next rank lower. He worked with all the leaders of the worship, all the priestly and Levitical houses. There had been great sorrow when he was suddenly stricken and quickly died. He had everything well organized. His son, too young, but well prepared, would be able to continue the work with the assistance of the stewards. Shock! This is not a time for trying to understand. This is a time for rejoicing and praise.

The news was still spreading at the Palace of the Chief Priest, Joseph ben Caiaphas, when the delegation arrived. He was on his way to meet them in the hall. Exclamations of joy! Praises to God! Hallelujahs! “Tell us what did you see? How did this happen? Where were you standing? What did you hear?” They were not there as Lazarus came out of the tomb. They did see him, surrounded by family, friends. Yeshua of Nazareth was there with his followers. Everyone was rejoicing. They were told Yeshua had just come. He went to the tomb and commanded Lazarus to come out. Someone moved the stone and he came out, wrapped in the grave cloths.

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1 This phrase is in the First Petition of the Amidah, prayed three times a day. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Amidah](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Amidah)

“So you did not see it with your own eyes? Still it is wonderful news. We must have Lazarus come here. We can send a litter for him. Tell the Council to come. They all must hear and see.”

“Your Excellency, should we give him a time to, to adjust, to?”

“Malchus, go! Tell Lazarus, we praise God. Rejoice. Blessed are You Lord, who revives the dead. Who would have thought we would see this day, with our own eyes? Ask him how soon we can see him? We want to have the whole Council here for him. Take a litter. He doesn't have to walk.”

It was the next day that Lazarus came to the Council Chamber. The Sanhedrin surrounded him with praises to God. They rejoiced to see him alive, raised from the dead. Lazarus was seated in the place of honor at the right-hand of the Chief Priest. A service of praise had been prepared. The invocation and opening prayers were by the Chief Priest, then the singers and musicians led the praises. When worship was over, servants brought wine and the finest of dainties. Everyone was asking questions, praising God, telling Lazarus he was looking so good, healthier than ever. Lazarus was quite overwhelmed.

“Had he seen, heard anything in the tomb? How did he feel? Tell us again what happened?” They did not know that he knew Yeshua of Nazareth. “Tell us how did you meet him, what is he like, do you think he is the messiah?” There were a lot of questions about Yeshua. Some of the questions, most, made him feel uncomfortable. He was well aware how the Council felt about Yeshua. He had kept quiet in the past concerning Yeshua so not to antagonize them. “Did he believe it was by the power of God that Yeshua of Nazareth had called him out of the tomb? Could it have been a coincidence?” They knew it was a miracle, by the power of God, he was alive. He was living proof of the power of God over death. They had been uncomfortable with Yeshua of Nazareth for a long time. This seemed to make them more uncomfortable. Finally long after he was tired out from all the questions, they let him go back home.

Everyone back home in Bethany was filled with questions about his appearance with the Council. He did not want to talk much. All Lazarus's workmen and their families and many from the city, priests, Levites, many others all wanted to see him. He sat by the gate, listening to their praises, nodding his head, holding his hand out to be touched. Telling them to thank and praise God. His stewards took charge of the crowd, keeping them organized, moving along. When they saw he could take no more, they shut the gate and escorted Lazarus inside. This was going to continue for many days. Yeshua and His followers filled the great house and overflowed to the olive press at the bottom of the Mount of Olives.

The whole city, all Judea, everywhere was thrilled with the news. Many of the people had heard a little about Yeshua of Nazareth. They became very interested. Many were touched with fear. They believed a person's spirit stayed close by three days after death, sometimes returned. Some who had been thought dead revived. Lazarus had been dead four days! What was God doing? How were their lives going to be changed? Was this the Messiah at last? Many were eager for the Romans to be driven out. Many looked forward to the fulfillment of the prophecies that God was going to raise His people, themselves, up to be the masters of the world. Many who were considered leaders of the faith were troubled. Yeshua was an outsider, unknown. How could he be Messiah? Satan had caused great damage before with false messiahs.

The attention on Lazarus also surrounded Yeshua. His followers rejoiced in the attention. Yeshua said they needed to leave Jerusalem and headed the group back north toward Galilee. The constant questions and speculation affected everyone. The Council members were constantly bombarded with questions, statements. A few days later there was another meeting of the Council. All they wanted to talk about, all they didn't want to hear any more about, was Yeshua of Nazareth and the raising of Lazarus from the grave. It was a very agitated group that gathered.

There was constant talking as the council assembled. Joseph, the Chief Priest, had been stopped by so many on the way in that he was one of the last to enter. He took his throne and waited for them to quiet down. As soon as the opening formalities and prayers had been said, everyone tried to talk at once. “The whole city is troubled. Everyone is asking questions, wherever I go. What does the Council say about Lazarus? Is this the Messiah? What do we know about this Yeshua? The scholars cannot teach without interruption. How could the Messiah be the illegitimate Son of Mary? Has the Almighty Ruler of heaven and earth informed us that he is Messiah? He talks as if he is God, Himself, outrageous! What do the scriptures have to say? He is uneducated. He never was a student of any great teacher. He is common laborer, Galilean, Sabbath-breaker, village magician, in league with evil spirits. Is this the time the Romans are to be cast out? Is this the beginning of the end times, the fulfillment of the prophecies? Is Yeshua going to take the throne of God and rule? What will happen to the council now? We have to do something! The Council must issue a ruling! Some people think we should rule that Yeshua is the Messiah!” Over and over the charges, the complaints, were repeated.

The Chief Priest could hardly keep some semblance of order. They scarcely noticed him when he spoke. After a long time, it was a long time, they began to slow down. They were getting talked out. Joseph waited and waited some more. They were angry, worried, confused. Everyone in the city and beyond was also angry, worried, confused. Everyone was looking to the great council for guidance. What was the will of God? They were His representatives. His authority was on them. They spoke and acted for God on earth. Joseph heard what they had been saying. He felt the same way himself. Those were his own questions. They were the Council, the Sanhedrin. They had to act for God, the Almighty King, now! The current situation, the confusion of the people, was dangerous. A spark and the people would attack the Romans, revolt, drive them out.

Joseph ben Caiaphas rose from his throne, looked around the council hall. “Gentlemen, what you have been saying is true. We are in perilous times. Disaster could quickly come. This Yeshua of Nazareth, will only become more powerful, more dangerous. No one knows what direction he will take, how he will make use of his power, if, when, he seizes control. If he replaces us and the Romans, it will be the end for us all. We must defend our nation, the heritage of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, King of Heaven. God is our righteous Judge, ruler of heaven and earth, to whom all the nations of the earth pay homage.”

“This man is disturbing, desecrating our nation, by his claims and actions. We must protect, guide, rule for the people. This man must be declared blasphemer, for his outrageous claims and actions, pretending he is God, from God. He must be seized, brought for trial before this great assembly. He must be executed to save us all.” The council erupted in cheers, hallelujahs, cry of joy!

The formal accusation was composed and sent to all Judea. Notices were also sent to Herod Antipas<sup>2</sup> and Philip the Tetrarch<sup>3</sup> for them to inform their lands, separate notices were sent to the cities of the Decapolis, Antioch, Damascus and Alexandria. Anyone who found Yeshua of Nazareth was to seize him and bring him to Jerusalem for trial by the Sanhedrim on the charge of blasphemy<sup>4</sup>. A copy was sent to the Palace in Caesarea to the Roman Pilate as a matter of courtesy.

Yeshua and his followers left Jerusalem surrounded by cheers and praises for the resurrection of Lazarus. Crowds had been pressing in. They left to get some room and to spread the news. From Jericho north all they

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2 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod\\_Antipas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_Antipas)

3 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip\\_the\\_Tetrarch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_the_Tetrarch)

4 Blasphemy was a death sentence. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blasphemy>

had been hearing were praises. A number of people had joined in with them, over three hundred. Those in the back had been talking about their expectations about what was to come. Surely Yeshua would gather a much greater following from those who had known him in Galilee and return in triumph to Jerusalem.

They were near Scythopolis, on the way to Galilee. Some had gone ahead to prepare for Yeshua's arrival when they heard the news. They were horrified! They immediately returned to Yeshua and told him and all who were there. "Anyone who found Yeshua of Nazareth was to seize him on the charge of blasphemy." Everyone was beside himself with grief. They were wailing like mourning. Yeshua was calm. His face was full of sorrow. Many had to return to Galilee. They had land and animals to care for, fish to catch. Yeshua told them when they returned to Jerusalem for Passover to go to Lazarus' home in Bethany for further instructions.

Yeshua lead them into the wadi<sup>5</sup> that lead to Pella. There were branches off to the sides. They settled in, out of sight of the travelers using the wadi. Steep dry walls of the ravine towered over them, closing in around them. It was very tight on the wadi floor.

The crowds stopped coming to see Lazarus. He felt a chill settle in around him, even between him and his workers. He was greeted from a distance when he went to Temple for daily worship. He had official business to conduct with the worship leaders. A few of the Council did make a point of walking with him, not that they said much. Lazarus noticed the pain, confusion, in the faces of the people he talked with. The Council was pleased at the turn of affairs with the population. They were confident, sure of themselves. The whole nation knew they were appointed by The Lord God, creator, ruler of heaven and earth, to guide and protect His chosen people, the children of Abraham. They were the scholars who knew the sacred writings and taught the truth of God. When the people learned of their judgment that Yeshua of Nazareth was an impostor, the people obeyed. People are sheep. They need and follow their leaders. The Council's influence was strongest in Judea where they controlled both the Temple and Judean government. Galilee and Perea and further beyond were less obedient.

How long would it be before Yeshua was found? The Council was not concerned. They were no longer hearing all the questions and complaints. They had something much greater to consider, Passover. There was so much to plan and organize. Nearly every one in Judea and Galilee and Perea would come. The total would be over two million, including pilgrims from all over the world. There would be great delegations from Alexandria, Antioch, Babylon. All would be bringing offerings. The worship would be glorious. The offering astounding. Years of experience would be the foundation for glory and praise.

Yeshua told his followers to pack up and head back closer to Jerusalem. He led them into Samaria and they made camp near the village of Ephraim<sup>6</sup>. The land there began to slope down into the great valley. There were wadis with caves in the hillsides. They settled in, camped out of sight of travelers. The hillsides were green from the winter rains. Shepherds pastured their flocks around them. They kept quiet. They great ones did not think well of shepherds and the shepherds would not be quick to report. The Samaritans were antagonistic to the

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5 [A "Jesus Hideout" in Jordan Biblical Scholar James Tabor Looks From the Gospels to Wadi el-yaris https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taybeh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taybeh) A Wadi named Cherith, and just to the north the Decapolis town of Pella. Cherith, of course, was the ravine where Elijah hid and was fed by the ravens when he fled from King Ahab and Queen Jezebel when his life was in danger (1 Kings 18:1-7). Pella was the traditional location where the followers of Jesus fled around 68 CE when Jerusalem was put under siege by the Romans prior to its destruction.

6 [John 11:54 . https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaria) <https://ferrelljenkins.blog/2013/05/30/jesus-withdrew-to-ephraim/> <https://www.travelujah.com/guide/samaria/taybeh>

people in Judea and the leadership. If they had heard of the Council's ruling, they would not care. They would not report Yeshua. He was no longer able to travel from town to town announcing the good news and healing. That meant people would not be giving gifts, food and welcoming guests in homes, as official followers of Yeshua. Now they had to buy food and necessities. They had to buy cooking pots and ovens.

Travelers on long trips buy what they need. Most pilgrims for the three festivals had a short trip to Jerusalem. They carried just what they needed to use or to sell. Pilgrims stayed with their usual group in the usual place. Cooking pots and ovens were too heavy to carry back and forth so they were left with the steward in control of the land. It did not rain at the times of the three festivals so tents were not needed. When necessary, they held up a screen so women could change their clothes.

Judas was the treasurer. He was cheerful when the bag was heavy. Now, his demeanor was changed, miserly and complaining. Women in that society wore gold earrings, bangles, necklaces of coins. They were the public display of their husbands' wealth. Judas began to ask them to donate to the common cause. The wives noticed, complained among themselves, that Judas' wife had not parted with much of her gold. She had more gold than the other wives. Mother Mary set the example by donating all she had. The mood of the whole group had changed. Yeshua was spending even more time than usual by himself in prayer.

They kept up the daily worship. He taught them, answered their questions. He did not explain what was happening or what he, they, would do in the future. They missed the attention of the people, basking in the reflected admiration of Yeshua. Gloom seemed to settle. Finally Yeshua told them to pack up, they were going to Jerusalem for the Passover. They would go to Lazarus. He would have place for them to stay. They no longer needed the ovens, pots, so they sold them back to the merchants. They needed the money. Their bag was empty.

It was the day before the Sabbath before Passover. No one traveled on the Sabbath. The roads were crowded with pilgrims. The final rush would come after Sabbath. Along the way, all over the Mount of Olives, large numbers of people were making camp. It was mid afternoon when they reached Bethany. Lazarus was very happy, excited, to see them, especially to see Yeshua. Yeshua's followers from Galilee had been coming to him, saying Yeshua had told them to meet him there. Lazarus ordered his household staff to prepare a fitting Sabbath dinner for them all. They totaled several hundred and more could come after Sabbath. His steward sent to the foremen in Bethphage for the rest that was needed. That evening they stayed at Lazarus' great home and at the Olive Press<sup>7</sup>.

It was late the day before Passover when people realized Yeshua and his followers had arrived. Report did get to the Sanhedrin, but it was too late to do anything. Nothing could be done on Sabbath. Action would have to wait until the next week. The leaders were both happy they could catch Yeshua and concerned because of the vast number of pilgrims. They did not want them all stirred up into violence.

#### THE PREFECT ARRIVES

At the same time Yeshua and his followers were traveling to Bethany, the Roman Prefect was approaching Jerusalem with the cohort from Caesarea. Three times a year Jerusalem would be packed tight. For Passover, Pentecost and Sukkot the surrounding area filled for long distances with throngs of pilgrims. Vast crowds two million and more, with many troublemakers taking advantage of the confusion meant security and control had to increase as well. The Sanhedrin called in as many of their forces as they could spare. Herod

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<sup>7</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gethsemane>

Antipas<sup>8</sup>, Philip the Tetrarch<sup>9</sup> and Lysanias<sup>10</sup> each were allowed to bring a century as palace guards. Their cavalry forces and the Judean ones guarding the frontier had to remain on duty. The Arab tribesmen always tried to carry off what they could. The cities of the Decapolis had no legal rights in Jerusalem and needed all they had for protection from the Arabs. The Romans kept one of their six cohorts in Jerusalem. For the great festivals they added a second, doubling the force. The Prefect<sup>11</sup> also was present to watch over the Sanhedrin and Chief Priest. There were cases awaiting since the Prefect alone had the authority to execute.

This time the Prefect ordered half the cohort at Joppa<sup>12</sup> to take over at his capitol Caesarea. He brought the cohort and cavalry at Caesarea with him to Jerusalem. They were being rotated. After the festival the cohort in Jerusalem would go to Joppa and the three centuries there would join the rest in Caesarea. It was a three day trip up and three days back, three times a year. The roads were packed tight with pilgrims. The vanguard was the Prime Century. It was twice the size of other centuries<sup>13</sup>. One hundred sixty foot equipped for battle, lead by their centurion with two buglers and signifers to announce their arrival. They were followed by forty contubrium and mules for baggage.

Next was the Prefect's chariot, the Tribune and Provincial staff in chariots, on horse or walking. lead by buglers and signifers with bare poles. Everywhere else the signifers would have been bearing the symbols of Rome. Major conflicts with the whole population about images forced the Romans to not display them anywhere in Jewish lands. That religion forbade images. The leadership was closely followed by ten pack mules bearing gold<sup>14</sup> and the 30 horses of the Alae. Their contubium followed with the second century.

The second century of eighty followed with twenty contubrium with mules and baggage. They led the Prefect's wife, Portcia<sup>15</sup>. She was carried in a litter, the proper conveyance of a Roman lady, then household retainers. They were followed by civilian staff, camp followers<sup>16</sup>, victualers, cooks, laundresses and their children. Then came the rest of the centuries. However the baggage for the sixth century was in front of them since they were the rear guard.

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8 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod\\_Antipas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod_Antipas)

9 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip\\_the\\_Tetrarch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_the_Tetrarch)

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

11 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontius\\_Pilate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontius_Pilate) Archeology finds show Pilate was a Prefect <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prefect> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Procurator\\_\(Roman\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Procurator_(Roman)) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judea\\_\(Roman\\_province\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judea_(Roman_province))

12 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cohort\\_\(military\\_unit\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cohort_(military_unit)) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signifer> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornicen>

13 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centuria#Military> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contubernium>

14 The estimated cost of two cohorts, palace and provincial staff for half a year is 4 million sesterces. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sestertius> or 1000 pounds gold and much of the value would have been silver. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial\\_Roman\\_army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_Roman_army) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auxilia>

15 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontius\\_Pilate%27s\\_wife](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontius_Pilate%27s_wife)

16 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp\\_follower](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_follower) <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22530044.800-romes-military-women-have-been-hiding-in-plain-sight.html?cmpid=RSS%7CNSNS%7C2012-GLOBAL%7Conline-news#.Vse2vMegpKi>

They totaled five hundred sixty foot, thirty horse, chariots, one hundred sixty contubrium, mules, plus a collection of women and children. Twenty Provincial staff and fifteen household staff came up from Caesarea. It was nearly one thousand in all, walking for three days. They were tired. Some of the staff for the Province of Judea stayed in the Palace in Caesarea. Pilate had six cohorts under his command. Rome had a legion in Egypt and two on the frontier with Parthia in Syria. A full legion was 10 cohorts. The real military power were the legions and cavalry under the Sanhedrin in Judea, Herod Antipas in Galilee and Phillip in Perea<sup>17</sup>. The Romans, Pilate, were far outnumbered.

Riding in the chariot with the Prefect was a son of a senator, Titus Flavius Sabinus, He had just arrived from Rome to be the new Quaestor<sup>18</sup>. The Prefect of Judea was an Equestrian<sup>19</sup>. He was outranked by Senators. Sons of Senators were ambitious. The easiest way to move ahead was to show up the Prefect, so he was a grave threat. Pilate was given a new Quaestor every year.

“Pontius, I have heard so much about this country and am eager to serve you here.”

“May you find all you were looking for here.” The Prefect commented, “I have been hearing rumors of changes in Rome since Livia died. What is happening?”

“Sejanus<sup>20</sup> has been making changes. He made accusations against several powerful equestrians. They were condemned and chose suicide over the disgrace of execution.”

“That is what I have heard. Are there others?”

“The city is filled with confusion. Some Senators have also been accused.”

“Senators? That is not the some as equestrians.”

“The Senators are being quiet. Watching.”

The Prefect said, “We are a long way from Rome. What happens there affects us here.”

“Everyone has friends. Everyone has enemies.”

“The enemy of your friend is your enemy too.”

“What is it like here?”

“Not much different. Be very cautious. The way things appear is usually quite different in reality. We are, Rome is, always to everyone the ultimate enemy.”

“It seems like the Chief Priest is the ruler of the nation.”

“Yes. It is best to think of it that way. Religion, worship, is more for show. He struts around, impressing everyone. It is cover, support for what is done. Well, for what his father in law, the family does.”

“What do you mean?”

“Annas, his family, is the real power. The Chief Priest, Joseph ben Caiaphas, is his son in law. Like Rome, there are friends and enemies. The Sanhedrin, like the Senate, has and doesn’t have power. There are alliances and treachery. The high priestly families have their own portions of the government.”

“It sounds like conflict.”

“Each family looks out for itself first without consideration for the nation.”

“Couldn’t the troublemakers be eliminated? That is how Rome does it.”

“It was done. That is why the Roman Prefect, I, ended up with exclusive power to execute.”

“So they keep you on the good side.”

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<sup>17</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auxilia>

<sup>18</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quaestor> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cursus\\_honorum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cursus_honorum)

<sup>19</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equites>

<sup>20</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sejanus> Jesus crucifixion is in either 30 or 33 AD. This discussion reflects the situation in 30 AD. The Year of the Consulship of Vinicius and Longinus or 783 Ab urbe condita).

“Not at all. They wanted a steady supply of water for the Temple. We added to the aqueduct with Temple funds. They made public accusation that I had stolen Temple funds. People died.”

“It was their idea!”

“It runs by the Palace. I tapped into it. Did you hear of the affair of the golden shields?”

“No. What do you mean?”

“I did not want Rome to hear of problems here without knowing I was supporting the Emperor so I had Golden Shields with the emperor’s profile made and hung them in my private audience hall. None of the Jews would see it there, only palace staff. The Council heard, they appealed to Tiberius. He ordered me to remove them, his own portraits! I am astounded and deeply troubled.”<sup>21</sup>

“Oh. That’s what happened. I wonder? Everything to and from the Emperor goes through Sejanus. Sometimes people in Rome question what Tiberius actually is told.”

“I do not know why Sejanus would order them removed. It made no sense that Tiberius would.”

The first sight of Jerusalem were the tops of the three towers on the great palace.<sup>22</sup> As they moved closer, Pontius pointed out off to the left the high mound of Herod’s mausoleum<sup>23</sup>. He had copied it from Augustus’ mausoleum. Herod’s family was there but Herod’s tomb was at Herodium<sup>24</sup>. Rather than go through the city, they took the road around to the Jaffa Gate close to the Palace. For a long time they had been passing people camping for the festival. The palace wall towered over them on the right, with three high towers. Titus had never see such high walls and towers in his life.

The gate was manned by Judean soldiers and there was a formal greeting by officials of the Sanhedrin. “Greetings in the name of the most high King of Kings. Of course you know we expect all of those with you to respect our traditions and refrain from doing anything that would offend our people. We pray everything will be pleasant and do not want the Romans to create a disturbance during these holy days.”

The Perfect responded, “Greetings in the name of the Senate and People of Rome. Those under my command have been instructed and admonished to conduct themselves properly. We hope all those in Jerusalem will conduct themselves in peace and respect all that the gods have placed in authority over them.”

The trumpets sounded the entry and the cohort paraded through and turned to the right along the wall of the Palace. There was a deep moat along the wall. They passed a small postern gate and proceeded to the main gate flanked by towers. On each side of the great gate were small gates for people. The gate was double, a large roofed room, with matching gates on the opposite side. Above on every side was a balcony for soldiers to rain down missiles.

Titus hardly noticed the two centuries arrayed to welcome them. There was a great garden, trees, fountains, statues, pools. Beyond, a grand building and matching Basilicas to the right and left. The trumpets

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/harvard-theological-review/article/episode-of-the-golden-roman-shields-at-jerusalem/8BA1CE883909282C693AC4972CF7E74F>

<sup>22</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod%27s\\_Palace\\_\(Jerusalem\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herod%27s_Palace_(Jerusalem)) Most of the area has not been excavated since it is under the Arminian Cemetery. Most map and model makers have not had the courage to comply with the account in Josephus. His description is far too large and glorious. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holyland\\_Model\\_of\\_Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holyland_Model_of_Jerusalem) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem\\_during\\_the\\_Second\\_Temple\\_Period](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem_during_the_Second_Temple_Period)

<sup>23</sup> <https://members.bib-arch.org/biblical-archaeology-review/9/3/2>

<sup>24</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herodium>

sounded welcome and reply. The other centuries were arrayed on the walls. The Tribune had a welcoming speech. Everyone knew where they were going and quickly dispersed. As soon as their fifth century took station on the walls and gates, the centuries that had been in the Palace paraded to the Antonia.

“Would you like a quick tour of some of this Palace?” The Prefect asked. “It is the greatest palace in the Empire, the most powerful fortress. Actually it is two palaces. Herod had one built for himself and one built for Augustus. Herod hoped Augustus would come, but he never did.”

“In Rome they talk about all the gold at the Temple, not much about the palace.”

“You have been at the palace in Caesarea. What do you think of it?”

“It is very impressive.”

“Understand when Herod built that, he built the entire city. He was also building palaces in Jericho, Macharius, Masada and Herodium. At the same time he was building the Temple here. Well, it is still under construction. He was building much more.”

“He was very rich and powerful.”

“Augustus, his hero, was humble. Herod was not.” Pontius was walking toward the building in front where many of the men were going. He explained that was the stables and barracks. A legion and their cavalry were comfortable housed, several times more if needed. When there was only one cohort in the city, the Prime and three centuries were here and two at Antonia, a bare minimum to hold such large fortresses. On the front of the barracks was a high platform looking over the plaza.

The Prefect continued explaining he allowed the Tetrarchs, Antipas, Philip and Lysanias, to use the southern Palace. They were allowed a personal escort of a century each. He did not allow them to use the plaza, the southern basilica or the main gate. He led toward the northern palace. It was Herod's palace. With the towers behind and walls it was much better defended. Beneath were great magazines that held enough food to last for years and cisterns to carry through the dry times. The water tank in the tower supplied the fountains and water installations. Titus comment the statues were all clothed, no nudes. The Prefect reminded him that there were no images on their signifiers. They were not allowed. The images of the Emperor were forbidden. However Herod did have some private delights.

“But there are statues here.”

“Herod was well known for executing anyone who complained about anything. He thought it was enough that they were clothed.”

#### Questions:

What was it like while Jesus and His followers were hiding? We never think of this.

How did the change happen from great rejoicing at the resurrection of Lazarus to a death sentence?

What did Pilate control and what was his position?

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.