

S.D.G.

Chapter Three

PREPARING FOR VICTORY!

Book Three

THE KING CROWNED

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BEFORE DAWN

The Chief Priest Joseph bar Caiaphas arose, purified himself in his palace mikveh, dressed in his robes and prayed Shacharit¹ with his retinue. He prayed that this day would be peaceful, that the mad prophet would not cause more trouble. Yeshua spent the night with the group at Lazarus' home. He led them in Shacharit prayer. Yeshua spent the night at Bethany and walked down the Mount to the olive press. After morning sacrifices were finished, Yeshua prepared to speak between the Huldah Gates. The delegations sent to watch him were in place. Some were in front near him and others mingled with the crowds to observe their reactions. Some tried to speak privately with his disciples to learn his intentions. The crowds were as large as the day before but did not have as revolutionary an edge. They were much more wait and see.

Joseph and the other leaders were pleased there was success in learning about Yeshua and his followers. Most of them were at the oil press, the rest were staying at Lazarus' home in Bethany. Yeshua was going back and forth. The leaders were angry with Lazarus, he was supposed to be on their side. They suspected a few of the Sanhedrin were his supporters also. Traitors!

They reported much useful information. Yeshua was intending to establish the Kingdom of God. A constant refrain in his preaching was that the Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven, was at hand. He had to be stopped. He was going to try to establish his kingdom and replace them, the leadership, that the Sovereign Lord God had placed in charge. They were to be overthrown! He was opposing the will of God. He had to be stopped! They might be able to catch him at the oil press. Rome would never permit him to establish his kingdom.

Usually it was not possible to talk with one of his followers alone without another close by. There was one who seemed so eager to defend his master that he would seek out those that had been sent and continue to challenge them. "Maybe he protests too much. Pay extra attention to him. Who is he?" "He is the only one not from Galilee, a Judean, named Judas. He is the treasurer of the group."

Some took him on as a special project. It was a competition, two at a time, pharisees or scribes would be detailed to seek him out, befriend him. When they came back they would compare what they learned and plot new ways to turn him. He liked the attention. Some were detailed to be hostile and challenge him, others made him think he was converting them to become followers also. They looked for openings. He, like the others, did not know what Yeshua was intending. He did think Yeshua was too gentle, always had been. He needed to be

¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shacharit>.

more forceful, if he was to stir up the crowd to overthrow evil and establish the Kingdom of God. They flattered the fellow, that he was really was the one who knew what was needed.

Judas was going through the crowd when two men asked him, "Tell us about your teacher. Many like him and many are disturbed by what he does and says."

"Yes, he is hard to figure out. I have seen him work astounding miracles."

"We've heard he makes the blind see, the lame walk, healed those of troubled spirits. We have heard him called a fraud, doing fake miracles by the power of the evil one."

"No. They are all true, feeding five thousand men with a few loaves can not be faked."

"We heard many people quit following him after that."

"Yes. He said some things they found hard to accept."

"Have you heard him say anything that puzzled you?"

"I understand everything that Yeshua says. He speaks the truth of God."

Other men would come back to Judas with concerns for him personally. "You are too fine a man to be mixed up with a group like that. His other followers are unable to understand, to appreciate the finer points of the Torah. Your teacher speaks in parables. He sounds so close to God but he does not really know God's teachings. Why did you get involved with Him?"

"Yeshua is proclaiming the Kingdom of Heaven."

"How is he going to do that? Do you see him raising an army to make it happen?"

"The Kingdom of Heaven begins with Yeshua himself."

"Does he claim to be the Messiah?"

"Not exactly, some feel he came to this Passover to reveal his true nature and purpose."

"You are too wise, too intelligent, to be caught up in foolishness."

One of the Sanhedrin said to the Chief Priest: "We have to get Yeshua when there isn't a crowd around, bring him to the council. He has to be executed." "That means we have to get Pilate to agree," Joseph replied.

"Pilate does not dare go against us again. Tiberius just overturned his orders.² He won't dare cross us over one who is leading insurrection."

"But if he hears the crowds are for Yeshua and not for us, he might hesitate."

Another one of the Sanhedrin said: "We have to make sure the crowds he hears are with us. How many are really for him?" Others added: "He has twelve disciples, a few hundred Galileans, fishermen, tax collectors, prostitutes. Well, there are some higher, Lazarus of Bethany, There are even rumors of members of the Sanhedrin. Wives of a few prominent people." "No scholars, none of the teachers of the Torah."

Annas, the father in law, power ,behind the Chief Priest concluded, "He must not overthrow God's will. It must be done immediately." The Chief Priest cautiously added: "What if he is the Messiah? I heard he was baptized by John the son of Zachariah."

"Joseph, how dare you say that?" Annas retorted.

Another commented: "If he really is, then we will not succeed in stopping him. God will protect Him."

Annas sharply questioned his son in law: "Joseph, do you think he might be the Messiah?"

² Philo On The Embassy of Gaius Book XXXVIII 299-305- <http://www.earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book40.html>

“No, father. We are the leaders of the true faith. He is a self appointed rabbi, son of Mary - illegitimate, works with his hands, attracts the simple, all he does is attack the real leaders God selected.”

The Chief Priest looked at the men gathered around them, raised his voice so those in the back would hear. “We must warn the people about this impostor, this threat to the House of God and our nation. What do you think we should do? How do we get the message to the people about Yeshua, son of Mary?” There was an explosion of ideas and suggestions, with many insulting comments.

The Chief Priest held up his hand for silence. “Good. You have heard many ideas. Each one of you, go to the men in your house, who are under your supervision. Pass the word along. Detail your men to mingle among the crowds, everywhere, not just those near the false prophet. Bastard, uneducated, laborer, village Galilean, breaker of law, revolutionary disrespectful of leaders, insulting the House of God, blasphemer. Remind them of the false prophets who came before him and the troubles they brought. Make sure many of the guard are in the crowd and around watching. Make sure they feel they are being watched.”

There was another issue of importance. Bar Abbas³ had finally been captured. What did the Chief Priest want done? It was very good news. Joseph thought, he asked, what the others would recommend since Bar Abbas was popular with some. It was decided to keep him in prison until after the crowds left and bring him to the Prefect just before he would leave for Caesarea. They did not want to deal with him and that Yeshua at the same time. It was a shame, they had to let him live an extra moment. Still all was going well, Bar Abbas caught, Yeshua would be soon also. It was looking like a fine Passover celebration.

On the other side of the City, the Prefect was holding the final court for the week. There were only three left to condemn. The local people did not ever like seeing men crucified. They were adamant that no one be on the crosses for the Holy Days. They even had to be dead before nightfall. Usually it took three days to die by crucifixion. Pilate was pleased he would be free the coming days. Sitting on Herod’s throne, in the most glorious basilica in the Empire, made him feel important and powerful. It certainly impressed all who came before him. He always ordered all his retinue and a full century of soldiers to be in attendance when he held court.

Some were saying, they can’t take Yeshua’s words. He does not make sense. They walk away, prefer the other rabbis with their talk about being descendants of Abraham and keeping the laws. Yeshua is confusing. They want to know how they can be sure?

Now and then someone would come to Yeshua and ask for healing. The crowd cheered each time. They noticed, he never said the same words the same way. There was no “magic formula”.

In the crowds men were saying “The great ones are very angry at that Yeshua from Nazareth. He is challenging their position and authority.”

“They don’t want to answer his questions because they know he will show them up.”

“Do you remember when he told the parable about Lazarus and the rich man with five brothers? He said the five would not believe even if one came from the dead. Was that a prophecy?”

“Well, he raised Lazarus from the dead and the High Priest and the five brothers, sons of Annas won’t believe.”

³ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barabbas>

The disciples were talking with each other "Sometimes I wonder about Judas. He goes off by himself at times. He has the purse. He acts like it is his personal money. Sometimes I wonder, should we tell Jesus? He isn't like us."

The priests, Pharisees, the leaders were happy to see Jesus losing popularity. They were confident it was because of their questions. The people could see they were unified in opposition. Since the numbers of Yeshua's followers was going down, it might be possible to arrest Jesus. Still as long as he was at Lazarus' in Bethany it was too risky. They would have to get him through all the people camped on Mt Olives. They need to catch him with fewer people around.

Some men were talking about Yeshua as they walked from one group to another. "That Gamaliel sure knows his torah." "Yeshua sure has a lot of people stirred up." "If we go again maybe we will get to see him perform one of his miracles." "Yeshua constantly changes how he says things. Other rabbis always say the same things the same way." With Yeshua you have to listen carefully to what he is saying." "Every time he tells a parable he modifies it." "His prayers, healings have no set pattern." "Is he doing it this way on purpose?" "Why?" "Well it makes me cautious. It seems those who are sure they have it right have missed something. Some think it is a sign he is not right, but others who know him, can't see him as incompetent."

DOWN BELOW

Under the temple courts are many cisterns⁴ that supply the water for the fountains above. Inside, forgotten men, in the gloom, pump the water. The drains that let the rain water in from the pavement above are all the light and air they have. Down below they talked about what they heard about this Yeshua of Nazareth, prophet. They knew the powerful hated him and heard he was concerned for those cast down. Was there anyone lower than they? They sent one above to see and report back.

He tried to get near Yeshua but an officer stopped him. He was wearing clothes from the cistern and looked out of place. As the officer was beating him, some of Yeshua's followers interceded. As long as they would stay in the back of the crowd, the officer let them talk. The followers had not realized men were working beneath their feet. "It is always like that. Nobody thinks where water comes from on top of the mount." It was not just needed for the huge number of people, it took a lot of water to clean all the animals sacrificed.

⁴ <http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-jerusalem-temple-mount-charles-wilson-charles-warren-drawing-1864ad.jpg> The numbered items are cisterns The following is my favorite <http://www.ritmeyer.com/2007/04/04/digging-the-temple-mount-an-introduction/> The Temple courts would catch the winter rains and fill the cisterns for later use. There had to be sufficient water for cleaning up the vast number of sacrifices. The cisterns are far too large to be emptied by buckets on ropes. Water wheels Archimedes' Screws https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archimedes%27_screw. and piston pumps would have been used, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1892-0517-2. A listing of the water supplies of city and temple is at http://www.romanaqueducts.info/aquasite/jerusalem_pools/index.html A description of the Temple Mount water works 200 years prior is in The Letter of Aristeas 83 - 91. <https://www.ellopos.com/blog/4508/letter-of-aristeas-full-text-in-greek-and-english/34/> Islam requires washing before entering a mosque. The Dome of the Rock's ablution fountain, al-Kas ("the Cup"), was first built in 709, supplied with water from Solomon's Pools, near Bethlehem.

They told him Yeshua was a working man, nearly all of his disciples were also. The major part of his message was what always was proclaimed, God's concern for the downtrodden, the poor, the slave. Yeshua proclaimed the last would be first and the first, last. The men below were encouraged to think Yeshua might care about them. The authorities certainly did not.

A plan was formed. They would tell Judas the chief priest would like a private conversation with Yeshua. He did not want the other leaders know. It would attract too much attention to go through the pilgrims to Bethany. Could Judas let them know when Yeshua would be at the olive press? They did not want Yeshua know in advance that the Chief Priest wanted to meet. He might tell others and they would want to get involved. Judas said Yeshua had been spending some nights in Bethany and some at the olive press. They asked Judas to let them know when he would be at the olive press. Victory was in sight.

Some of the priests reminded them about Theudas and Athronges⁵. They took advantage of the peoples' eagerness for the messiah. It gave opportunity for evil men to try to make themselves someone great. Some even wanted to make that John baptizing by the Jordan the Messiah. He got himself killed by trying to be a prophet.

Some other priests sent a delegate to the Prefect asking permission to use the lower palace at Herodium⁶. Pilate agreed to meet him in the Small Throne Room. He invited the Quaestor Lucas and the new servant, Titus, to attend. He asked the servant if he could write. Titus assured him the servant was fully trained in all useful arts. Pilate made an impressive appearance, seated on the throne, flanked by Titus and servant and four soldiers. The request was for five days and 300 guests. The Prefect reminded him the palace had great costs. The price would be 1500 drachmas. They had to provide all the food for themselves and for the staff and the Century in the upper palace. The priest agreed. Pilate ordered the servant to write the order, delivering it when the money was received. It was the normal rate and agreement.

Titus asked why the priests wanted to use that palace? Pilate said they did things there that they could not do in the city. He would show it to Titus when they toured the province. "The sights here rivaled the greatest in Rome." Titus commented he did not think they could equal the palaces along the Bay of Naples. Pilate replied, "None there is greater than what is here." Titus asked why a Century was there? "Rome controls all the fortresses. We have to station men in them. I only have a cohort to cover from here to Elath⁷. I can only put a Century or two in any one place."

"That is not enough for war."

"The real army here is Judean. We represent Rome. Still a Century could hold Herodium or Masada. A Cohort could hold the palace here or the Antonia until Rome could send legions."

Yeshua told parable after parable, the kingdom of heaven. They were to love God and love all people. They felt he was talking about them as the people in that Kingdom and about himself as the Messiah. He returned to the olive press and led the group there to join the rest in Bethany. for the Maariv prayers⁸ at the close

5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Jewish_messiah_claimants Judas the Galilean Acts 5:37

6 <http://herodium.org/home/> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herodium>

7 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elath> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aqaba>

8 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maariv>.

of day.⁹ Simon the Leper had invited them to dinner.¹⁰ Lazarus became a follower of Yeshua after he saw Yeshua had healed Simon. It was a great banquet for Yeshua and all his followers with wonderful food and music. One of the guests, a woman anointed Yeshua. The glorious odor filled the room and beyond. Astounding! Again! Yeshua was anointed a few days before at Lazarus'. It smelled very expensive. Yeshua said it was a fitting gift, preparation for his burial. Jesus was being prepared for his victory.

AT DAWN

Yeshua spent the night with the group at Lazarus' home. He led them in the morning Shacharit prayer. Those at the olive press held their own prayer. He had been reminding them the words and forms were traditions of men. As such they were to be taken seriously. There would come a time when the Holy Spirit would lead them into new and different prayers and observances.

The Chief Priest Joseph bar Caiaphas arose and prayed Shacharit with his retinue. He prayed that this day would be peaceful. Yeshua came after the morning sacrifices and took his place between the Huldah Gates. Each day as he was teaching, he healed those who came.¹¹ Yeshua's teaching was more of what he had said before. That was a disappointment to those who wanted him to proclaim himself the messiah. His constant call for repentance and the announcement that the Last Judgement, the Kingdom was at hand did not calm the fears of the authorities. He seemed to imply that he was to be the Judge, the King of the Kingdom. The day went very much like the prior days.

On the way back to Bethany, Yeshua paused with his followers at the top of the Mount of Olives. They were looking the glorious Temple and surrounding courts. It was in reality the most impressive sight in the world, gleaming with the purest white stone and gleaming gold¹². It thrilled everyone's heart. Yeshua's words shocked and disturbed them. He said it would soon be destroyed. Not one stone would be left standing on another. He warned them when they saw the armies come, they were to flee.¹³ After Maariv prayer with those at Lazarus", he went down to spend the night at the olive press.

AT DAWN

Yeshua lead the morning Shacharit prayer with those gathered at the oil press. After eating their morning meal the waited for the rest to come and join them before going to the Temple.

The Chief Priest Joseph bar Caiaphas arose and prayed Shacharit with his retinue. He prayed that this day would bring victory over the problems before them. After the morning sacrifices Yeshua took his place. The crowd before him was smaller and felt more distant. The delegated observers were pleased, he seemed to be

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_the_Leper https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anointing_of_Jesus

¹¹ [Matthew 21:14](#)

¹² <https://www.ritmeyer.com/2018/07/22/3d-model-solomons-temple-explained/> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHs07DVRzOs> <https://www.realmofhistory.com/2019/04/08/herods-temple-history-reconstruction/>

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olivet_Discourse

losing popularity. His disciples were frustrated. In their hearts they hoped, knew, he was the Messiah, They were wondering how this would be revealed. Judas' friends pressured him to let them know when the Chief Priest could meet Yeshua at the olive press.

After midday, when the sun began to go down, the Essenes began to slaughter their lambs. Yeshua announced that he was finished speaking. The crowd wanted Him to continue. Yeshua told them to watch and pray, the Kingdom of God was among them. He led his followers out of the Temple. He went to Lazarus and asked to use his mikveh to prepare himself.

QUESTIONS

- 1 The Gospels have a narrow focus. How can the reader see the wide picture that the people there had?
- 2 How was Judas tempted?
- 3 There are enormous cisterns under the Temple Courts. How were they emptied?

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.

I have a principle that God does not want us to know some things too well. He obscures them by having multiple accounts. For example two versions of the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, four of the words of institution. Not to mention the four Gospels diverge at the arrest of Jesus. We would think there should be one clear affirmation.

God knows best. That does not mean we should not search out the hidden things for God's meaning. His hiding is an invitation to search, to find. Some Scholars endeavor to prove the Scriptures are in error to demonstrate their own superior mastery. Which is not the same as turning rocks over to discover what may be beneath. A pet complaint I have is when scholars today seek to prove that the people of the scriptures did not know the meaning of what they said. Example. If the scriptures call Jesus' Last Supper a passover meal and we do not think it fits our definition today. We must adjust our opinion to their assertion. At least accept that they are reinterpreting the meaning of passover meal to be something new by the force of God's inspiration.

Many thanks to my patient wife Lynne for repeatedly proofreading.

Following are a few of the Internet sites that are laying a foundation for change. Wikipedia and Google are good places to start. Computer Graphics enable the visualization of what was. The Lord of the Rings and other modern films have demonstrated what can be accomplished in CG, creating huge sets and large numbers of characters.

Go though and view bookmarks

<http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/>

<http://www.ritmeyer.com/>

FFOZ <http://www.ffoz.org/>

In the footsteps of Rabbi Jesus Jews for Jesus etc etc. <http://ourrabbijesus.com/>

Notes: Story text settings Character 0 line 1.2 before Pp 0 after Pp 6 pts