

Each spring, followers of Messiah Yeshua begin to rehearse the cycle of events that help us to understand how YHVH – the God of all the Judeo-Christian people – intends to bring mankind to repentance and to the ‘Promised Land’. The spring and summer festivals of Passover and Shavuot speak of things that have already happened, but because there is ‘no new thing under the sun’¹, some of those events repeat themselves multiple times. For instance - Passover. We understand that the Passover of Exodus 12 is a picture of the redemption received through the blood of Messiah Yeshua², an event that happened roughly 1400 years after the Exodus. But prophecies show that there will be yet another exodus, one larger and greater than the original³. Though pictured in part by the exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt, this one will be the exodus of all God’s people out of all the lands to which they were scattered. So we see two themes that come out of the same festival, redemption and leaving Egypt.

In this study, I want to bring out another theme that can be drawn from the exodus story, and that theme is “courage”. When we think of the enslaved Hebrews, we oftentimes picture them as mild and timid. But hidden in the story is the realization that it took a lot of courage to kill a lamb in broad daylight and paint its blood on the doorpost of their homes⁴. The same would be true for the disciples of Yeshua who found the courage to stay in Jerusalem after the death and resurrection of the Messiah, who (according to Pilate) was the “King of the Jews”.

In order to see the disciples’ courage, we will see that:

- though Yeshua died to fulfill numerous prophecies, He was killed because he claimed to be the King of the Jews
- the disciples endangered their own lives in order to follow the king
- this experience made them stronger and enabled them to do their job later on
- There are things we can learn from their examples of courage.

Before we get started, I also want to state that this message is filled with speculation. Though it is impossible to know the thoughts and intents of the individual characters in the following stories, when you consider each story’s context of as well as the basic theme of the Bible, it is possible to come close. So let’s start by seeing that Yeshua was born to be a king. Luke’s gospel makes it pretty clear –

NKJ **Luke 1:31-33** ³¹ "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. ³² "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

This passage is often read during the winter months as part of the Christian celebration of Christmas. Though it does not directly say that He would be a ‘king’, it does make it clear that Yeshua will inherit the throne of David, will reign over Hebrew people, and that His kingdom will have no end. This pretty much makes Him a king.

Never-the-less, neither Yeshua nor His disciples ever reference Him as the “king”⁵ until days before He is put to death. Instead, there are some, though relatively few times when Yeshua or His disciples

¹ Ecc. 1:9-10

² Jesus Christ. Yeshua is His Hebrew name. ‘Yeshua’ comes from the Hebrew word “yasha” (יָשָׁא - 3467) which means “to save, to deliver”.

³ Jeremiah 16:14-15

⁴ see the article “Doorposts” - <http://www.amiyisrael.org/articles/Doorposts.htm>

⁵ Though Nathanael as the ‘king of Israel’ (John 1:49), he was not a disciple



reference him as “Christ”⁶. Being that He knew He was “the Christ”, it would seem that He would have taken strides to see that everyone knew He was the Christ, but instead, it appears that He took great pains to keep it a secret. Why is that? In order to find out, we will need to find out what the Greek word “Christ” really means.

Is “Christ” simply Yeshua’s last name? Is it like saying “Bob SMITH” or “Betty JONES”? No! In the Hebrew culture, a name meant something. For instance “David” means “beloved”. He was the king of Israel and he was highly esteemed within the Hebraic community of his day. Did David have a last name? If not, how would you distinguish one David from another David? You would do it by his father’s name. For instance, King David would have been called “David – the son of Jesse”. In like manner, Yeshua would have been called “Yeshua – the son of Joseph” since Joseph was His legal father.

The term “Christ” is not a proper name, but a title. It comes from the Greek word ‘christos’ (Χριστός – 5547) which means “anointed one”. “Christos is derived from the root word ‘chrio’ (Χρίω – 5548) which means “to anoint”. So Jesus CHRIST means “Jesus – the anointed one”, or if we use His Hebrew name – “Yeshua – the anointed one”.

Why then, do we see “Jesus Christ” appear in our texts as if it is a proper name? When we look at the Greek texts, we oftentimes see the phrase “Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ” which is translated “Jesus Christ”, but that should be understood to mean “Jesus – the Christ” just as in the Greek Septuagint⁷ the phrase “Βασιλεὺς Δαυὶδ” (King David) should be understood to mean “David – the king” since even though David was the king, his name was simply “David”, or better yet – “David, the son of Jesse”

In the Septuagint, the Greek word “christos” translates the Hebrew word “mashiyach” (מָשִׁיחַ – 4899) which means “anointed”. The first place we see it is in the instructions for the sin offering –

^{NKJ} **Leviticus 4:5** 'Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting.

In this case, the priest is the one who is anointed. He is the first “christ” or “anointed one”. But there are others. Saul, David, and Solomon were also “mashiyach”, and after David was anointed to be king, he spent years trying to avoid being killed by the other “mashiyach” – King Saul.

Isaiah prophecies of a ‘christ’ that who would not even be a Hebrew –

^{NKJ} **Isaiah 45:1** "Thus says the LORD to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held -- To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut:

The “Cyrus” that is spoken of in this passage would be the King of Persia who would overthrow the Babylonians and subsequently allow the Jews to return to the land of Israel.

“Mashiyach is translated “Messiah” in Daniel’s prophecy of the coming ‘prince’⁸. Because of this prophecy, many of the 1st century Jewish people believed that the Messiah would indeed return and establish His kingdom in their day.

In many respects, the word “mashiyach” (‘christos’ in Greek) is equivalent to saying “the king” since the kings of Israel were anointed.

We see that when David has the opportunity to kill King Saul –

⁶ at Ceserea Phillipi (Matt. 16:16); Andrew’s disclosure to Peter (John 1:40-41); His teaching about the true bread of life, though most texts indicate that it should read “Holy One of God” (John 6:69);

⁷ The Septuagint (abbreviated ‘LXX’) is a Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures.

⁸ Daniel 9:25



^{NKJ} **1 Samuel 26:9** And David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed (mashiyach), and be guiltless?"

David nails this down in his song of praise after defeating his enemies –

^{NKJ} **2 Samuel 22:49-51** He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me; You have delivered me from the violent man. ⁵⁰ Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, And sing praises to Your name. ⁵¹ *He is the tower of salvation to His king,* And shows mercy to His anointed (mayshiyach), To David and his descendants forevermore."

That "Christos" is equivalent to saying "the king" is substantiated in the New Testament by the story of the wise men that came to Judea to pay homage to the King of the Jews –

^{NKJ} **Matthew 2:1-4** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ² saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him." ³ When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

Though the narrative shows that the wise men were looking for a king, Herod refers to that 'king' as the 'christos' or in English – the 'christ'.

So being called "Christ" is equivalent to being called "the king". With that, let's move on to Yeshua's messages.

the Message of the Kingdom

Though the message of the Kingdom is God is proclaimed throughout the Tnakh, but is summarized in two verses in the prophecy of Isaiah –

^{ESV} **Isaiah 9:6-7** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon ¹ his shoulder, and his name shall be called ² Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

This is the defining work of the God of Israel. If it does not come to pass, then YHVH is not God.

So YHVH sent His Son to proclaim this message and to put into the place the means by which God's will plan would be carried out. While teaching the kingdom in the area of the Galilee, Yeshua made a statement to a crowd of people who hoped He would settle down in their community. Note what he said about His purpose –

^{NKJ} **Luke 4:42-43** Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; ⁴³ but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."

But the deceiver – haSatan would do anything to keep it from coming to pass. Knowing the scriptures and God's 'kingdom' plan, he attempted to thwart the plan by buying off the messenger⁹. That attempt failed when Yeshua said to him –

^{NKJ} **Matthew 4:10** ... "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.' "

⁹ Matt. 4:1-11



Not willing to give up without a fight, haSatan turned to his alternative plan – he would kill the Messenger, and scatter His followers.

With the encounter with haSatan behind Him, Yeshua's set out to proclaim the message of the "good news of the Kingdom of God".

^{NKJ} **Matthew 4:23** And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Knowing that His time on the earth would be rather short, He gathered disciples who themselves had a zeal for the message -

^{NKJ} **Luke 9:1** Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. ² He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

To Yeshua and His disciples, the kingdom was so important that it is mentioned 54 times in the book of Matthew alone. Though much of the message was understandable to the masses, the "secrets" of the kingdom were only intended for His disciples. After explaining the 'Parable of the Sower' to them, Yeshua told His disciples –

^{NKJ} **Mark 4:11** " ... To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables,

Yeshua wanted the disciples to know everything about the kingdom – even the secret things, but if He let the masses know, it might inhibit it's fulfillment as He indicated by quoting Isaiah 6:9 –

^{NKJ} **Mark 4:12** "so that 'Seeing they may see and not perceive, And hearing they may hear and not understand; Lest they should turn, And *their* sins be forgiven them.' "

So now the disciples understand that they have knowledge about the kingdom that they would have to keep secret. Though we don't know for sure how the disciples took what He had just said, certainly the stories painted a picture in their mind that the restored Kingdom of Israel would sprout up quickly then grow and grow until it encompassed the earth. Armed with this "secret knowledge" their zeal for the kingdom surely increased. As they witnessed the growing crowds who came to hear their Master teach, and the throngs who would follow them from city to city, they probably thought that it would not be long until Yeshua – their leader – would begin the process of driving the Romans out of the land. They were just waiting for Him to declare Himself "the King of the Jews" so that it could all begin. But for some reason, He would not.

the Messiah, the King

As Yeshua began to call his disciples, He encountered Andrew, who at the time was a disciple of John the Baptist¹⁰. After following Yeshua to His home and conversing with Him all afternoon, Andrew went to his brother Peter and said –

^{NKJ} **John 1:41** ... "We have found the Messiah" ¹¹ ...

Because they believed they had found the Messiah, the future King of Israel, they dropped everything and followed Him. The next day, Yeshua called Phillip – apparently a friend of Andrew and Peter. Phillip then went and told his friend Nathaniel about Yeshua, the person Andrew had claimed to be "the Messiah". Nathaniel reluctantly agreed to visit with Yeshua, and as Nathaniel approached, Yeshua said to him –

¹⁰ John 1:35-40

¹¹ When writing his account of Yeshua's life, John transliterated the Hebrew word "mashiyach" then made a notation for his Greek-speaking audience that the word means "Christos".



^{NKJ} **John 1:47** ... "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

Though we ponder as to the meaning of Yeshua's statement, Nathaniel took Yeshua's words as a statement of fact, then asked how Yeshua knew that about him. Yeshua's answer was -

^{NKJ} **John 1:48** ... "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

Apparently, Yeshua had been keeping an eye on Nathaniel for some time, and it is quite possible that Nathaniel was aware of Yeshua and his message of the Kingdom of God, but because he thought Yeshua was from Nazareth instead of from Bethlehem, he discounted Him from being the Messiah – that is until Yeshua's statement about him "being under the fig tree". That statement made an impact on him, so he announced to Yeshua –

^{NKJ} **John 1:49** ... "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Nathaniel – whose name means "gift of God" – was the first person to make the statement that Yeshua was the King. What made him see that? Could it be Yeshua's reference to "the fig tree"; and if so – why?

The phrase "fig tree" comes from the Greek word "suke" (συκη – 4808). It is pronounced "soo-kay", which is very similar in pronunciation to the Hebrew word "sukkah". Since John had just a few verses earlier transliterated the word "mashiyach" (messiah), it is quite possible he did the same for "sukkah". After all, we know Yeshua began His ministry at about the time of the fall festival season. What's more, Yeshua's latter comment about being sort of a ladder to heaven is a reference to Jacob's dream, which when read in its entirety, is a reference to the scattering of Israel throughout the nations, and re-gathering of Israel back to the land¹². As a mini-fulfillment of that prophecy, Jacob did return to the land, and on the way built sukkahs for his livestock¹³.

If that was the meaning behind Yeshua's 'fig tree' statement, Yeshua's message to Nathaniel could have been -

"except for the Nazareth question – you have put the puzzle together. I (Yeshua) am indeed the perfect candidate to fulfill the prophecies, and here we are during the festival of Sukkot, and you would love for Me to start the restoration of the kingdom now. I know you have no personal ambitions or motives for wanting Me to start it now; you just want me to start it."

Nathaniel's willingness to openly call Yeshua "the King of Israel" and his desire for Yeshua to immediately begin the kingdom is probably why Nathaniel was not chosen to be one of Yeshua's disciples¹⁴. He simply knew too much. Yeshua was just beginning His ministry, and if word got out too soon that He was destined to be the King of Israel, it could thwart God's plan. Never-the-less, Nathaniel was indeed a "gift of God" in that his statement of belief was certainly an encouragement to Yeshua and the disciples who had already been chosen.

Yeshua needed to keep His messianic identity quiet. This is why on at least two occasions; Yeshua told demons to not make it known that He was 'christos' - king –

^{NKJ} **Luke 4:41** And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!" And He, rebuking *them*, did not allow them to speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.

Mark 1:23-25 Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out,²⁴ saying, "Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to

¹² Gen. 28:10-15

¹³ Gen. 33:17

¹⁴ some believe that Nathaniel was actually Bartholomew, but there is no evidence of that.



destroy us? I know who You are -- the Holy One of God!" ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!"

But with the many miracles, it was becoming obvious. One day, after feeding well over 5000 people with five loaves of barley and two fish and being convinced that He was the promised messiah, His followers attempted to make Him king –

^{NKJ} **John 6:14-15** Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

Why was keeping His identity hidden so important? Because he was living in a time when many claimed to be the messiah, but were summarily killed by the Romans. These "false messiahs" were considered insurrectionists - a threat to the Roman occupation - and had to be put down. In addition, Yeshua knew that haSatan was out to kill Him, and though that was a part of God's plan, it could not take place until He had prepared His disciples and according to prophecy, He had to die a certain way.

Never-the-less, there came a time when Yeshua had to remove all doubt and make it clear to the twelve who He truly was.

In the third year of Yeshua's ministry, He brought his disciples to the area called Caesarea Philippi – about 37 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. In Yeshua's day, this was the home of the Roman governor Herod Philip. Located in the southern foothills of Mount Herman, it was also the home of the Temple of Pan, the half-man, half-goat Grecian god of the wild. Because of its association with this pagan god, it became known as 'Panias', but the name was later changed to 'Banias'. It was known locally as 'the Gates of Hell' due to a large spring that flowed out of a large cave in the side of the mountain.

It was there that Yeshua asked His disciples –

^{NKJ} **Matthew 16:13** ... "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

Though the question seems simple enough, it was quite revealing. Based on the disciple's answer, it was apparent that Yeshua and His disciples had been successful in spreading the message of the kingdom to the multitudes. But Yeshua wanted to more know more. He wanted to know what they – His disciples thought. So He asked –

^{NKJ} **Matthew 16:15** ... "But who do you say that I am?"

Apparently without hesitation, Peter answered saying –

^{NKJ} **Matthew 16:16** ... "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Yeshua's response was one of satisfaction. The message was sinking in to the disciples – at least to Peter. With the evidence provided by Yeshua's words and signs coupled with the spirit of YHVH, he had come to see that what his brother had told him 2 years earlier was indeed true – Yeshua was the Christ, the King.

But this posed a problem. Since Yeshua did not deny Peter's claim, the word was out, and all twelve disciples heard it. Yeshua had claimed to be the messiah – the anointed King of Israel. It was still nearly a year before He knew He would be sacrificing His life, so His messiahship had to continue to be a secret. So as the text says -

^{ESV} **Matthew 16:20** "... he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

In Luke's account of the same event, Yeshua's charge was even stricter -

^{NKJ} **Luke 9:21** And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one,



By this time in His ministry, Yeshua had hundreds, if not thousands of followers, and up to this point he had only preached about a future kingdom, a time when Israel would rise above all the other nations – even the Roman empire. To the Roman soldiers who were no-doubt instructed to keep an eye on large gatherings, they would see no problem as long as He was like all the previous ‘fanatic prophets’ who came preaching of a new age; but if that ‘fanatic’ prophet also claimed to be the Messiah, the KING ... then that’s another matter. That kingdom message is no longer about a future event. It is now!

By claiming to be King, not only would Yeshua be in peril, so would His close followers (i.e. – the disciples) be in peril. Both He and His disciples would be looked upon by the Romans as insurrectionists, committing treason by planning a coup to overthrow the Romans. With so many followers, any hint of an insurrection would have to be dealt with quickly. Within hours Yeshua and His disciples could find themselves arrested, thrown in prison, or even crucified.

So Yeshua told His disciples to keep this revealed knowledge to themselves. Do not spread it around – not even to Yeshua’s other followers. Even though He knew that He would soon die, He wanted it to be on His schedule, not theirs¹⁵.

With every passing day, it was becoming more obvious - Yeshua of Nazareth must be the promised messiah. His signs – the evidence of his messiahship - were becoming more and more amazing - walking on water and giving sight to a man born blind – things that had never happened before. His message of the Kingdom kept His followers energized. They were sick of the Roman occupation. They were disgusted with the way many of their own Jewish leaders ‘cozied’ up to the Romans in order to line their own pockets and gain power over the people. They wanted the Kingdom of Israel restored; they wanted a righteous king; and they wanted in their day. And as the crowds grew bigger, the Jewish leadership felt more threatened, so they began to formulate plans by which they could get rid of him.

That winter Yeshua visited Jerusalem to observe the 8-day Hanukkah tradition. While visiting the Temple, He encountered a large group of the Jewish leadership who quickly surrounded Him and questioned Him saying –

^{NKJ} **John 10:24** ... "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Remembering that the Greek word “christos” implies kingship, what they were really asking was “do you claim to be the King? If they could get Him to openly make that claim in the presence of so many witnesses, they could drag Him to the Romans who would surely put Him to death. But it was still not time, so Yeshua redirected their thoughts with a question and slipped away.

Judas Betrays Yeshua’s Identity

So we come to Yeshua’s last Passover season. He had spent the past three and a half years training and preparing His disciples for the job they were called to do, and now it was time for Him to die as a sacrifice for His people. It would have been quite easy for Him to die at the hands of His own people ... all he needed to do is get them riled up, and that was quite easy for Him to do. But Yeshua could not die by stoning; His death was prophesied to be much more intense –

^{NKJ} **Psalms 22:16-18** For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷ I may tell all my bones: they look *and* stare upon me.

¹⁸ They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

This prophecy could only be fulfilled at the hands of the Romans, therefore Yeshua had to work it out so that they would put Him to death. Trouble was, the Romans had no reason to do so. To them, He was just another Jewish rabbi. Though He garnered larger followings than others, He was no threat to them. On the other hand, the Jewish leaders hated Him. He was a threat to them. Their prestige and fortunes

¹⁵ Luke 9:22



were threatened by the fact that the people were beginning to see a way out from under the heavy burdens placed on them by the Pharisees and the corrupt priesthood. As Yeshua's followers increased, Jewish control over the people decreased. Yeshua presented a yoke that was much lighter and easier to bear – simply return to the Torah as it was written.

After the resurrection of Lazarus, the Jewish leadership had had enough of Yeshua and the crowds that encircled Him. They began to fear that if this continued to grow, the Romans might impose martial law and take away their position and power so as to avoid an insurrection.¹⁶ So they decided to do something about it, and as the text shows –

^{NKJ} **John 11:53** ... from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

As Passover approached, and knowing that Yeshua would certainly be there, the Jewish leader plotted how to kill Him. They knew that they could not simply hold a mock trial and convict Him to death, so they had to come up with a plot to where the Romans would do it. When Yeshua came into Jerusalem to keep the Passover, they figured it out.

Five days before the Passover, Yeshua rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. For the crowds that had long suspected that He was the promised messiah – the King of Israel – riding into Jerusalem on a donkey was what sealed their belief, for that was the way King David had his son Solomon come into Jerusalem when he was anointed king in his father's place. So just as it was with Solomon¹⁷, the people laid down palm leaves and their garments as a carpet before Him..

^{NKJ} **John 12:12-13** The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,¹³ took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!"

"Hosanna" is a Hebrew word that can mean "save us now", but it can also mean "Yeshua – NOW!"¹⁸ as in "restore the kingdom NOW! To Yeshua's followers, even though it was Passover, it might as well be Sukkot – the festival that pictures the restoration of the Kingdom of God! Though He had never proclaimed it to be, they now knew He was the King.

But Yeshua, though He knew He was the anointed King of Israel, also knew that He must die and be resurrected to show that He was not just another in the line of Judean kings. He, unlike King David who died and whose kingdom was ultimately divided and conquered, would be king forever and His kingdom would be eternal¹⁹.

So how would this take place? Since the Jews could not condemn a man to capital punishment, it would have to be at the hand of the Romans, and the only way to get the Romans to condemn Him to death would be to be caught in the act of claiming to be the King. And at this point, he had done so at least twice - his proclamation to His disciples at Caesarea Philippi, and before the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem by riding into town on a donkey. The Jewish leaders witnessed the donkey encounter, but they had not actually heard Him proclaim to be the King. They needed a witness who had actually heard Him claim to be the King of Israel, and they found that witness – Judas Iscariot.

Judas was with the other disciples when Peter stated that Yeshua was the Messiah – the King of the Jews, and up to this time he had kept the secret just as Yeshua had commanded. Never-the-less, Judas

¹⁶ John 11:47-48

¹⁷ John 12:1;12-15, 1 Kings 1:33-34

¹⁸ a contraction of the words "yasha" (יָשָׁא – 3467) and "na" (נָא – 4994)

¹⁹ Acts 2:29-31



– like the other disciples²⁰ - wanted to see Yeshua take up arms against the Romans and begin to drive them out of the Land. But when Yeshua rode in on a donkey (signifying that He was a man of peace), and as He continued to speak of dying, Judas began to question Yeshua's intentions. So he decided to take matters into his own hands. He would agree to be the witness the Jews needed, and by so doing, he would force Yeshua to take up arm and fight, or die.

So While Yeshua was preparing His disciples for what He knew was about to happen, haSatan – who had previously failed in his attempt to buy Yeshua's loyalty – moved to have Him killed²¹.

^{NKJ} **Luke 22:3** Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. ⁴ So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. ⁵ And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. ⁶ So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.

The plot was laid. Judas revealed to the chief priests what Yeshua had said at Caesarea Philippi. Knowing that Yeshua would go to Gethsemane after dinner, Judas instructed them and their soldiers to meet him there, and that he would confirm what he had said with a kiss. He knew that the multitudes would not be there and thus they would never know that Yeshua's own disciple had betrayed Him.

So later that night, Judas did betray Him. His instruction to the soldiers was simply -

^{NKJ} **Matthew 26:48** " . . . Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him."

Though Yeshua had warned them earlier that evening that Judas was going to betray Him, it probably did not sink in too well. "Why would Judas betray Him?" they probably thought. What did Judas know that would have been of interest to anyone? But when they saw the officers of the chief priest surrounding Yeshua and Judas planting a kiss on Yeshua's cheek, it became clear. Judas had revealed the secret²² and had confirmed it with a kiss²³. Though Judas may have thought that by doing so, he was furthering the work of God - the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel, what his disciples realized was that they were all in trouble ... if Judas had revealed the secret, he had probably implicated them as well. Would they be called up to testify against their Master? Would they be charged as well?

At this point, most of the disciples fled just as it was prophesied to be²⁴. Peter and John followed at a distance to see what was happening.

In His mock trial before the High Priest, many charges were laid against Him, but they all failed to 'stick', so becoming enraged, the high priest asked Him -

^{NKJ} **Mark 14:61** . . . "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

What He was really asking was "are you the king?" If He denied it, they would bring Judas to testify²⁵ against Him, and if they could not find Judas, they would find another of Yeshua's disciples – after all, they had all heard Him admit that He indeed was the king. On the other hand, if he admitted it, they could immediately take him to the Romans who would certainly charge him with leading an insurrection.

²⁰ Acts 1:6

²¹ John 13:2; Matt. 26:14; Mark 14:10; HaSatan destined to lose His kingdom when Yeshua accepts His fate (John 12:31)

²² that Yeshua had admitted to being the King of the Jews. See Mark 14:10-11

²³ Psalm 2 is about YHVH setting His Son up as king in Jerusalem. It ends with "kiss the son" which implies "putting together" or as Judas probably thought "joining together with the king"

²⁴ Zechariah 13:7

²⁵ Judas was still alive at this point and could testify against Him (Matt. 27:3)



His answer was “Yes”²⁶, and by giving that admission, He put both His life and the lives of His disciples in jeopardy.

So they took Him to Pilate, whose first question was -

^{NKJ} **John 18:33** ... "Are You the King of the Jews?"

Yeshua's answer was simply – “it is as you said”. Pilate continued to question him about being this supposed “king”. Though He never denied it, Yeshua stated that His kingdom would not be established at this time. He said -

^{NKJ} **John 18:36** ... "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

Pilate probably looked at Yeshua's testimony as if He were backing away from His previous statement. He knew the charges against Him were as a result of envy and that He was not attempting to overthrow the Romans²⁷. “This man is no king” he might have thought, “He's just another messiah wanna-be”.

But Pilate was trapped. On one hand, he did not want a riot, nor did he want it to get back to Rome that he had release a potential insurrectionist. On the other hand, he did not want to execute an innocent man. Never-the-less, he submitted to the desire of the crowds. He sentenced Him to death and turned Him over to the Roman soldiers to carry out the execution.

Since the death sentence was predicated on the charge of insurrection, i.e. claiming to be King, the soldiers mocked him. They place a purple robe on Him (signifying royalty), placed a “crown” on His head, put a scepter of reeds in His hand, then mockingly bowed down before him while crying out “Hail – King of the Jews”. Then after beating him to a pulp, they lead Him out to be crucified, and as per Pilate's instructions, they nailed to the stake a plaque stating His “crime”. In a slam against Yeshua's Jewish accusers, it simply read “THE KING OF THE JEWS”.

The Disciples Afterwards

So what happened to the disciples after Yeshua was crucified? They apparently scattered, but remained near Jerusalem²⁸. Days later they joined back together, huddled together behind closed doors out of fear of being found by the Jews²⁹. They wondered what had happened, and when they encountered a ‘stranger’ on the road they said to Him -

^{NKJ} **Luke 24:21** ... we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

What they had yet to realize was that even though Yeshua had died, He was subsequently resurrected and was now alive! Later that evening, He came to where they were gathered and showed them that He was indeed their Rabbi, the one who had been crucified and had died. Now that He had been resurrected, He would be their King ... a king not like previous kings who had died and remained dead, but rather The King – one that would live forever!

Yeshua remained with them 40 days. Even after seeing and hearing Him, they still had doubts -

^{NKJ} **Acts 1:3** ... He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

²⁶ Mark 14:61-62

²⁷ Matt. 27:18

²⁸ Luke 24:33-35

²⁹ John 20:19



The pivotal encounter came when, after returning to Galilee, some of the disciples, along with Peter's friend Nathaniel, met with Yeshua on the shore. It was there that Yeshua directed His words to Peter – the one who had become the defacto leader of the disciples. He said to him in three different ways – “feed My sheep”³⁰. From that point forward, he realized that his future was going to be wrapped up in teaching the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel about the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel.

Yeshua met with His disciples a few more times before He ascended to His Father, the final time being after they returned to Jerusalem³¹. As they walked with Him toward Bethany, they asked this question -

^{NKJ} **Acts 1:6** ... "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

Yeshua wisely answered their question by refusing to give a date. Instead, He reassured them that they would have the help they would need to proclaim His message to the ends of the earth. And so it says that –

^{NKJ} **Luke 24:52-53** ... they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.

These “fugitives”, “co-conspirators of an insurrection” boldly returned to Jerusalem. Because of what they had heard, observed, and endured for the past 3-1/2 years, they gained strength and confidence. Their fear vanished and they no longer felt the need to hide. They were now ready to do the job they were called to do – proclaim the Kingdom of God and that Yeshua was the King, and just days later at the Feast of Pentecost, Peter boldly proclaimed that Yeshua was the Christ, the Messiah – King of the Jews! Before over 3000 people he said -

^{NKJ} **Acts 2:36** "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Conclusion

As we have seen, Yeshua died because He rightly claimed to be the King of the Jews, a message that endangered His, as well as His disciple's lives. Yet their experiences combined with the help from the Holy Spirit strengthened them so they could do the job for which they had been called.

As believers in Messiah Yeshua, we are called to be disciples as well. We believe in Him because His disciples first believed³², and we can find encouragement and strength by seeing what they experienced, appreciating their courage, and by drinking from the same well from which they drank.

Shalom Alecheim

³⁰ John 21:15-17

³¹ Luke 24:50; Acts 1:6 (which is not the same time as Acts 1:4-5)

³² John 17:20-21, 20:29;