

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Let's Get On With It

Time came for Yeshua to begin his last journey to his beloved city, Jerusalem. He was not ignorant of the fateful horrors that awaited him there. In spite of the pain he would experience, he was anxious to get on with it to further the plan.

The disciples had spent time with their families, set their businesses in order and began the dreaded trip with him. They were anxious, but somewhat fearful, not knowing what to expect upon their arrival in Jerusalem. They all agreed that whatever happened, it would result in Yeshua finally making the move to establish a new government.

As usual, as they passed each town, the crowds grew, many following, hoping to see or receive a miracle. Yeshua, true to his custom, healed as he went. He made quite an impression when he healed a blind man near Jerico. Many people began praising Yahweh for the miracle. Word that The Healer was coming spread throughout the city.

Zacchaeus, a rich, but honest publican, made his living as head tax collector. His position at the important road center of Jerico made him unpopular, and often despised. He and his family had learned to ignore the painful insults of prejudiced, jealous people. He had heard many wonderful things about the man called Yeshua. When he heard Yeshua and his men were on their way, would pass his station, he longed to see him. Because Zacchaeus was very short, he found himself swallowed up by the jostling crowd about him. He quickly solved his problem by running ahead of the crowd, scurrying up a large sycamore tree.

While patiently waiting for Yeshua to approach, the small, hopeful man began thinking. "If I can but see The Son of Yahweh," he thought, "I will be truly blessed. I will not impose myself upon him. Just to be in his presence will be a great blessing. I have thrilled to the words reported from those who have listened to the teachings of this holy man. Yet...I wonder, is it really possible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Yahweh? I have harmed no one intentionally. I treat everyone honorably, never take more than the government requires of them; I exact only what I am allowed for my own wages. Many poor of Jerico have benefited from my job...I take great pleasure in sharing with the aged, the afflicted, the widows, and orphans. I admit...yes, I am a sinful man...but is not Yahweh forgiving, even to a publican? Was not one of this man's followers, the one called Matthew, once a publican, as myself? I have heard reports...he is a friend of sinners and publicans, showing mercy and compassion even to rejected Samaritan outcasts."

Zacchaeus trembled with excitement as he viewed the thick, jostling crowd beneath his perch. Suddenly a strong, vibrant voice called from below. "Zacchaeus!"

"Did I hear my name called?" Zacchaeus thought. "The tree's leaves are thick, hiding my form. No one knows I am here. Surely the call was not meant for me...perhaps someone with the same name." He held his breath, listening. "No...there it is again. The voice comes from a man below...the one looking upward. He is making his way toward the tree."

"Zacchaeus, come down. I have chosen to visit with you and your family today," the voice proclaimed loudly. Zacchaeus swung to the ground, dropping clumsily before his hero.

Zacchaeus instantly knew the voice belonged to the one he had longed to see. His widened eyes filled with happy tears; his round face beamed with surprise and joyous expectation. He bowed his head, kneeling in worship; he clasped Yeshua's sturdy legs with trembling arms. "What great honor has come to me today...that my Lord should visit my home," he exclaimed.

Many important Jews were among those who had followed Yeshua to Zacchaeus' beautiful estate. Zacchaeus was saddened to overhear some criticizing Yeshua's decision to visit in his home. He had long ago given up trying to justify himself to others, but he felt an urgent desire to defend this wonderful, new-found friend. He surveyed the crowd. Many poor, whom he had given generous gifts, were among them. In an attempt to be heard, he boldly addressed the issue. "They call me a sinner...that is true, my Lord. I have never abused my position as tax collector.

From the wealth I have earned I have divided with the poor. If I have defrauded anyone, I will repay to him four times the amount." There was a quiet lull among those who complained; their negative comments lowered to angry whispers.

Yeshua picked up on the mood; his words silenced the complainers. "Salvation has come to this home today. For Zacchaeus, also, is a son of Abraham. I have come seeking those who are lost, and to save them. What need is there to save the righteous? Are they not already safe?"

Afterwards, as they moved closer to Jerusalem, apprehension grew among the disciples. Sometimes their conversations became heated. One demanded, "Are you so dull as to believe The Father will just hand over a government, already in the strong grasps of Roman powers? Will we not have to fight? Has not the Master revealed this to be the time of fulfillment."

Someone answered, "Of course, we are willing to fight...if need be. Even with Yeshua's powers, we will still need to call upon all the organized groups in the land to band together. The people are ready for a stand. Once we let it be known, the support will emerge from all parts of the country!"

Yeshua, knowing they all expected a new government to materialize almost instantly, began thinking of the awesome events soon to develop. "Their thoughts are so far from my thoughts," he marveled. "If only they were able to understand this great responsibility...this step in the plan, but they are children, dwelling in the immediate framework of life, unable to comprehend the depth of spiritual realities. I will tell them a parable...even though they will not understand it now. In time, others will

understand that it pictures a great and wonderful plan. It will tell of the father sending me to the earth to organize and begin a new kingdom. These precious called ones will be given special talents to build and nurture the development of the new kingdom. Many citizens of this age will reject me as their ruler. They will join with my spiritual enemy, Satan, plotting against me.

“Soon, after my death, I will leave, and return to The Father, to the glorious spirit world. I will give to each precious gifts, distributed by the power of my holy spirit. When developed, these gifts will enable them to handle more and more responsibilities in the new age. At the appointed time, The Father will empower me; as King of Kings to return and establish my kingdom. Then my devoted servants will reap rewards according to their faithfulness. Each of them shall sit on thrones, sharing rulership, as spirit beings, with me in the glorious new kingdom. And for every effort, every sacrifice endured for my name’s sake, they will receive compensation many times over.

Those who allow their gifts to stagnate, will forfeit their rewards. They will be stripped of their positions in the kingdom. Those of my enemies, who reject me as their ruler, will be disposed of in the second death, never to live again.”

With these thoughts he interrupted their surmising. “Let me tell you a story, children.” He began, “A wealthy ruler took ten of his business managers and traveled to a distant land to start a new kingdom. Before he left, he entrusted each of them with money. They were expected to increase its value. While he was gone the citizens of the kingdom turned against the ruler, sending messages to his superior, saying, ‘We will not have this man as our ruler.’ When he returned he questioned his managers concerning the use of his money. The first reported, ‘I have increased ten times the amount you gave me to work with.’

“The ruler was pleased. ‘You have done an excellent job, my friend. Because you have shown what your ability is, I will assign you over ten cities.’

“The second manager reported, ‘I have increased the amount you gave me to work with five times.’

“Again the ruler was pleased. ‘You have done well. You may manage five cities.’

“The next manager showed up with nothing but the original amount. He began making excuses, ‘I knew you were a harsh ruler, demanding above what you start with. I was afraid to take a chance, so I just preserved what you gave me.’

“The ruler responded in anger, ‘If you knew that I would expect more than I entrusted to you, why then did you not at least invest the money in a bank? I would have at the least earned interest from it. You are no longer worthy to handle money for me.’ He stripped him of his position, demanding what he had be given to the first manager.

“The lesson to this story is this: everyone whom I call, who develops what he has been given to work with, will be given more. And to those who are called and fail to develop their given abilities will forfeit what they were given. Concerning my enemies who refused to accept me as their ruler, they will be brought before me and executed.”

The disciples were more confused than ever. Judas, who had been walking in front, dropped back between Matthew and Mark. "The Master is talking in mysteries again. He has talked about receiving a kingdom from heaven...about his becoming a king. He has even promised us rulership positions, each of us ruling over one of the twelve tribes of Israel. He has instructed us in how we are to rule, as well. The main theme of his message concerns how to enter into the kingdom of Yahweh. Now he talks about responsibilities and how his enemies will be dealt with. Is it not clear? We must be on the threshold of something really big," he surmised aloud.

The other Judas joined in, "Remember he has also talked of being rejected and having to suffer many things. He is expecting something really bad to happen before he establishes this new government. These are the things that worry me: What will be happening to us during the bad time...when is it to happen?" he asked no one in particular.

Andrew had been listening to the conversation. He joined in. "Do you not remember the words concerning the resurrection? He says he is the resurrection and he is life. Regardless of what happens...will he not resist death and live? He as good as told us, even if he dies, he will not stay dead. We have seen him restore life to the dead. Can he not do as much for himself? Of course he can...and he will! Have we reason to doubt his abilities...have we not witnessed his power to perform miracles beyond our imaginations? Cannot one who brings the dead back to life, if he so desires, call fire down from heaven to accomplish his purpose? I agree his speech is not always clear to us, but the one thing he has convinced me of is: he is going to establish a new government. I believe, with the help of The Father's power, he can accomplish whatever he sets his mind to. We just have to determine to be there to back him up when he chooses the time."

Judas spoke again. "I think he is capable of many things...but I've been thinking...he waits, and talks, and waits.

Every time we go into Jerusalem, we expect him to demonstrate his powers against the rulers of Rome. Instead, he occupies himself with the people. It seems he intends to avoid any confrontation, never bringing about any serious changes. How much longer must we endure insults and persecutions, even running and hiding from our own people? Why doesn't he use some of his powers for our protection?" he complained.

Matthew responded to Judas with a disapproving frown. "We are in no danger. It is the Master whose life is in danger. Our own religious leaders, the scribes and Pharisees, are those he should fear, not the Romans. They have tried, at every chance, to stone him, to trap him, or condemn him in any way they can.

Expecting his arrival for the Passover, they, no doubt, are plotting against him at this very moment. Would you not think the man must deal with one enemy, one problem at a time? We need but to wait for his decision concerning these matters. After all, he is the Master."

Thomas, in his usual quiet, skeptical way listened intently. He took advantage of a lull in conversation. "We have a week before the festivities. Things have gone smoothly enough so far, but as soon as we

near Bethnage or Bethany, every enemy in the country will know we are on our way to Jerusalem. The chief priest and all his cohorts are determined to jail the lot of us.

Not only are they after us, but, since The Master brought Lazarus back to life, Lazarus' safety also has been jeopardized. Already two attempts to arrest him have barely failed. I say, if the Master doesn't make quick business, we may not even make it to Jerusalem. No doubt our enemies already lie in wait."

Judas responded, "True...but what can be done to make him see this? It is as if the Master is totally oblivious to reality. We know he has the powers to gather the people to arms and take over the government. Why must he keep us in suspense? And you...all of you," in an impatient gesture, he swung his arms in their direction, "not one of you is willing to back me up in this. If the twelve of us would agree, we could press upon him, insist that we make definite plans...and carry them out! If we are going to do this—and we know it is going to happen—let's get on with it!" he hissed. He looked from face to face, each pondering his own thoughts. Not receiving support from the others, he shook his head in frustrated disgust.

As they reached the outskirts of Bethnage, Yeshua instructed two of the disciples, "Go into the village; when you see an ass tied, with her colt, unloose them and bring them to me. If you are questioned just explain, 'The Lord needs them,' and you will have no problem."

When they returned with the animals, someone saddled the ass with clothing, and set Yeshua on it. This was done to fulfill the prophecy, 'Tell the daughter of Sion, your king comes to you, meekly sitting upon an ass, with its foal'.

When the crowd saw him they began spreading their garments and palm branches in his path. Exclamations of adoration echoed across the valleys, "Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord."

When they reached the descent of the Mount of Olives, the disciples led the procession in praises to Yahweh, saying, "Blessed is the king of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven, glory in the highest!"

When the multitude, who had traveled to Jerusalem to keep the feast, heard Yeshua was on his way to Jerusalem, they went out to meet him. Many in the procession were those who had witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. Others were those who had been told of the miracle. Some were Pharisees. In their jealousy, they hoped to find a way to incite the crowds against him. They angrily dashed through the worshippers. Striding along beside Yeshua they questioned, "Why do you permit your followers to make such a fuss over you? Is this not beneath the dignity of a man of Yahweh? Should you not rebuke them?"

"If they were quieted, these stones would immediately take up their cry," he answered sternly. Looking at the magnificence of the city ahead, he ignored their questions and ridicule. Then, strangely, he began to weep. His tears streamed down across his bearded face, and dripped to his garment. In his deep sorrow he spoke to his beloved city, "If only you had wanted to understand and had accepted.

Until now, you had the greatest of opportunities to accept the wonderful, priceless peace offered you. You continually spurned your chance; your day has passed. Now it is too late. From this time forward your eyes shall be closed. The days will come when your enemies will dig a trench about you, and surround you on every side. You shall be flattened to the ground and your children within you. They shall not leave one stone upon another because you refused the time of your visitation.”

When Yeshua reached the Temple, all about him were greedy moneychangers, busy swindling the innocent and poor of their money. His face heated with exasperation. For the second time, he swiftly leapt into action. People watched in astonishment as he upset the tables of money, and overturned the dove keepers seat. Then, without hesitation, he drove out all the animals.

When he finished he faced the traders. His eyes flashed as he reminded them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called the house of prayer’, but you have made it a den of thieves!” With a powerful, authoritative voice he announced to everyone, “I forbid any man to carry his vessels into the Temple!”

With these words he went into the Temple and took his place before the people. The blind, the lame, the deaf, and all manner of afflicted came and he healed them all. Happy, musical voices of children rang through the great halls, “Hosanna to the son of David!”

In time, a group of hostile priests and scribes appeared before him to complain. Yeshua answered, “Yes, I hear them.

Have you never read from the scriptures, ‘Out of the mouths of children and babies you have perfected praise?’”

Regardless of what the Pharisees and elders thought up against Yeshua, nothing worked out for them. “It seems we are helpless to prevail against this man. He has the world on his side,” they fumed.

At the end of the day, he left Jerusalem and went to the home of his longtime friends, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary.

Mary, emersed in devotional love, sat in open adoration at the feet of her beloved Yeshua, basking in his presence. Martha moved about the large guest dining room, directing the servants as they cleared away remains of an elaborate meal. Yeshua, the guest of honor, reclined comfortably on the spacious, plush, wool-covered, master lounge. Lazarus was on one side, young John on the other. The remaining disciples reclined around a large, polished, stone dining table conversing among themselves.

Judas, hardly aware of the conversations about him, toyed aimlessly with his delicately engraved wine goblet. Restless, greedy thoughts flashed in and out of his disturbed mind. “I am an intelligent man, not without friends in important offices,” he reminded himself. “As acting treasurer, I have control of the funds...we have amassed quite a lot...only I know how much.” A knowing smile played beneath his neatly trimmed mustache. “There must be some way I can use my influence and abilities to get things moving. If it is left to him and these ‘babies’ in men’s form, we will all die of old age before any positive action is taken. I see no reason to continue procrastinating. Anyone with half a mind can see the time is ripe. All is needed is for something to be arranged to force Yeshua’s hand. Then he would

have no choice but to assert himself, to exercise his power. Just one word from him and the people from all parts of the world would rise to his support.”

Yeshua’s voice was calm. He spoke, “Soon I shall fulfill my mission. Remember the words I have spoken concerning the suffering and death of the son of man. A child is not born without pain. The time has come; I must suffer at the hands of my enemies. You, too, will share my agony. Soon thereafter you will be consoled. I will not forsake you, nor leave you comfortless. For the present, I will avail myself of your kind generosity, residing here for a time.

“After that I must go away. Remember...when the son of man comes in his glory, with all the holy angels, he shall sit upon his throne. All nations will be gathered before him. He shall separate the righteous from the wicked, as a shepherd separates his sheep from the goats. One on the right, the other to the left. Then the king will declare, ‘Come, you blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was in need and you cared for me, in prison, sick and you visited me.’ They will respond, ‘When did we do these things for you?’ And the king will answer, ‘When you did it for the least of my followers, you did it for to me.’

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me; you are cursed to die in everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. I was hungry and you did not feed me, sick and you did not visit me. I was in need, but you made no effort to comfort me.’ Then they will question, ‘When did we not do these things?’ The king will reply, ‘When you did not do it for the least of these.’ These shall go into eternal punishment of never living again. But the righteous into eternal life.”

Mary remembered all the things Yeshua had previously explained. She knew the time was getting shorter. She struggled bravely, but unsuccessfully, to control her raging emotions. “He is telling us, the time for his death draws nigh. His words are meant to comfort us. He should be receiving comfort from us...but how? Words will not change what he came into this world to perform. In his infinite wisdom, and limitless perception, he knows the depth of my love,” she reasoned. “There is a way; perhaps the last opportunity I shall ever have to demonstrate my undying love and trusting devotion,” she thought. She hid her tearful face as she excused herself and disappeared into her private quarters.

Judas, surprised by an unusually pleasant fragrance, sniffed the air with his narrow, fine-chiseled nose. Looking about the spacious room, he soon discovered the source. Everyone watched in wide-eyed surprise as Mary, after having washed Yeshua’s feet, took precious oiled cones of an extremely expensive perfume from a jeweled alabaster jar and was massaging his feet. Judas’ pleasure turned to instant disgust, “All that wealth, just wasted!” he fumed silently. “It’s no secret, Mary’s senses are clouded with her emotional attachment to Yeshua, but this is the epitome of misuse.” He watched Mary loose the band from her long, silky, dark hair, using the thick strands to wipe Yeshua’s feet. “There is still time to prevent her wasting the whole pound of spikenard,” he thought, “the money from it would swell my account.”

Judas spoke up boldly. "This display of devotion is very touching, little one," he said gently. "Would it not have served a better purpose had you donated it to our fund? It could have been sold for three hundred pence. We can distribute the money from its sale to contribute to the needs of the poor."

Yeshua knew Judas' true intentions. Instantly, he came to Mary's defense. "Let her alone. She is doing this against the day of my burial. You will always have the poor to comfort, but you will not always have me." Stung by the rebuke, Judas cringed in defeat, yielding to angry resentment as it replaced his embarrassment.

Soon Bethany was flooded by curious Passover keepers who had traveled from all over the land to Jerusalem. It soon leaked out that the man who had raised Lazarus from the dead was visiting in Lazarus' home. Simon, the leper, whom Yeshua had healed, also lived in Bethany. He sent a message to Yeshua. "I have knowledge that many of the travelers have been instructed by the chief priest and Pharisees to report back to them should they learn your whereabouts. They plan to arrest you. They will not look for you here. I beg of you—come honor my home with your presence. Bring your friends," he requested. "A banquet has been prepared for you all."

Yeshua accepted Simon's invitation. While at the banquet, a woman, carrying a jeweled box, entered the private garden where the affair was being hosted. The disciples recognized the woman as the harlot who had once washed Yeshua's feet with tears, drying them with her hair. She made her way to where Yeshua sat; she opened the box and poured the contents over his hair. The air was laden with the fragrance of precious ointment.

"Not again," Judas thought. He refrained from making the same mistake he had made earlier. Later, he approached several disciples apart from the others. "Did you see how Yeshua allowed himself to be made a spectacle of again?" he growled. "Can you understand this kind of selfishness? It is totally out of character—has he not always taught...set an example of unselfish concern for the needs of others? All of a sudden he allows two women to waste hundreds of pence in frivolous display. This much money could have served a whole village of poor."

One of the disciples agreed. "Perhaps we should talk to her," someone suggested. Later, the woman found herself surrounded by several indignant disciples. "Do you realize how much good could have been accomplished with money from the sale of that perfume? Whatever possessed you to waste it in such a fashion?" The bewildered woman made a helpless effort to avoid her accusers.

A stern voice interrupted the startled men. "Why are you bothering this lady?" Yeshua demanded. "Let the woman alone. She has performed a wonderful act of compassion, anointing me with her precious ointment. She did it in preparation of my burial. Do you not understand yet...you will always have the poor with you. My time is near ended." Yeshua looked directly into the guilty eyes of Judas, "Let me assure you of this:

Wherever this gospel is preached throughout the whole world, what this woman has done will be told as a memorial to her."

Judas stood by, secretly seething, waves of anger flooding his emotions. "Someone has got to take a lead and force Yeshua's hand. If I go to the leaders and tell them where he is, he will have to take a stand. I wish I knew what he really intends to do. I can't believe he is going to allow himself to actually die. If he is so determined to act out this play, I may as well benefit financially, and at the same time speed things up. There are those who are willing to pay handsomely for information leading to his arrest." he thought.

The following day Judas excused himself, and went into Jerusalem where he communed with the chief priests and captains. "I am Judas Iscariot, from Kerioth of Judea. Recently I visited kinsmen in Bethany. While there I chanced to see the one called Yeshua, the one whom you seek. Perhaps I can be of some help to you...but I fear it may be dangerous. He has many followers who are willing to sacrifice their lives to protect him." Judas bargained.

The high priest, Caiaphas, elders and scribes nodded agreement, "Yes, we understand, my good fellow. Indeed we are willing to pay for your services, should your information assist us in the arrest of this madman. He poses a serious threat to the freedom of our country; we will make it worth your while," they promised. "Let us discuss your plan...what is your price?" They listened carefully to Judas' plan, and willingly paid his price of thirty pieces of silver. "We are very encouraged by your plan; we will await your signal. Your plan must be carried out during the night, otherwise the people will riot and defend him." Judas departed, very pleased with his transaction.

When Judas returned, he found Yeshua surrounded by questioning people. Word of the arrival of The Son of Yahweh had traveled into all the cities and suburbs surrounding Jerusalem.

Judas resumed his place among the disciples as though he had never left.

The next day the disciples followed Yeshua back into Jerusalem. They had left early, before eating. Seeing a fig tree, Yeshua stopped to gather its figs but found none. Taking advantage of an opportune situation to demonstrate an important spiritual point, he spoke to the tree before the disciples. "No one shall ever eat of your fruit from this time forward," he pronounced.

Later, as they passed by the same tree, they were surprised that it had withered so soon, even to the roots. "Master," Peter remarked, "The tree which you cursed. It died so quickly. Is that not amazing?"

Yeshua had expected this reaction. "Let this serve as a lesson of faith in Yahweh. If you will believe, without doubting, whatever you ask shall be given to you. Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you will receive it, and you will, even to casting mountains into the sea.

In spite of the plots against him by his enemies, Yeshua fearlessly appeared in Jerusalem. In the Temple people gathered around him in great clusters to be taught and healed. And as usual, among them were also hostile elders of the Jewish religion, questioning, "Who gives you the authority to present yourself in such a manner, to do these things?"

"If you answer my question, then I will answer yours," Yeshua answered.

“Was Johanan’s ministry from heaven, or was it from men?”

The question took the devious men by surprise. “If we say ‘from heaven’, he will ask why we did not believe him. If we say ‘of men’, we will start a riot against ourselves; all the people believed him to be a prophet,” they reasoned among themselves.

“We do not know,” they agreed.

“Since you have not answered my question, I shall not answer yours,” Yeshua replied. “I will give you something to think about,” he continued. “A certain man assigned jobs for his two sons. One refused, saying, ‘I do not want to do that’. He later changed his mind and performed the assignment. The other gladly consented, but never did the work. Now, tell me, which of the two obeyed The Father?”

The wary men were getting uncomfortable. “The first one, of course,” they answered flatly.

“Yes, and this illustrates my point. Publicans and harlots will go into the kingdom of Yahweh before you. Johanan presented you with a plan of righteousness which you did not accept.

Publicans and harlots did accept. And you still do not accept him as Yahweh’s prophet!” Yeshua’s eyes blazed accusingly. “Let me continue,” he said. “A certain property developer planted a vineyard. He went to great lengths to cultivate it. He hedged it, built a winepress in it, and a tower. He then hired caretakers, and went on a long journey. When harvest time arrived, he sent servants to collect the fruit. The caretakers attempted to murder each servant. Later, other servants were sent, with the same results. Last of all the owner sent his very own beloved son, thinking, ‘Surely they will show my son respect.’ But not so; when they saw the son, they plotted among themselves, ‘This is the heir. If we kill him, we will have what is his’. So they threw him off his land and murdered him. My question is: when the landowner comes, what do you suppose he will do with the caretakers?”

The scribes and priests remained silent. Others answered, “He will repay them with their own treatment. Then he will hire loyal servants to take their place.”

“True. Have you read what the scriptures say, ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the head cornerstone?’” Yeshua asked. “This is the doing of the Lord. Isn’t it marvelous?”

The scribes continued asking tricky questions; each time his answers put them in an embarrassingly bad light. When he put questions to them, they had no answers that would not condemn themselves. Each parable concerning the kingdom of Yahweh angered the scribes and Pharisees even more. They knew he spoke of their self-righteousness and hypocrisy. They became so enraged, they would have stoned him, had they not been afraid of the people.

Yeshua turned to the disciples and the common people. “The scribes and Pharisees have the position of teaching the laws of Mosheh. Do as they instruct you, but do not follow their examples. They teach one thing and do something else. They have added so many of their own rules, they render the law extremely difficult to observe. They expect you to follow what they themselves will not even attempt to do. Everything they do is done for personal honor. They glory in official, spiritual titles,

expecting to be called 'Master' and 'Father'. This is not for you. You have only one master and one father. I am your master; your spiritual father is in heaven. No man shall come between you and myself. You, my faithful followers, are all brethren. You are to neither call anyone—nor be called—Master or Father, by anyone. You are to humbly serve each other, not exalting yourself one above the other. If you wish to be great, be the better servant, practicing humility.”

In a swift change of voice, he addressed the scribes and Pharisees. “Woe to you, Pharisees, you hypocrites! You close the door to the kingdom of heaven. You refuse to enter, and you block the way for others. You rob the poor widows, you make long pretentious prayers. You would travel across land and sea to convert one proselyte, then make him twice the child of hell as yourself! You are blind guides...telling the people it's alright to swear by the Temple, but...if they swear by the gold in the Temple, they are obligated to pay. You are sadly ignorant. Which is more important...the gold or the Temple that sanctifies the gold? Again, you say swearing by the altar doesn't matter, but be careful not to swear by the offering upon it. How ignorant! If you swear by the altar, that includes both altar and gifts. If you swear by the Temple, you swear as well by the one dwelling in the Temple. If you swear by heaven, you swear by both Yahweh and his throne.

“Woe unto you, you ignorant, blind leaders. You hypocrites! You are careful to count every leaf when paying tithes on your mint and spices. You omit the more important matters of the law showing mercy, faith, and righteous judgment. You should support the Temple and the Priests, as commanded by the scriptures, but you should also do the more important deeds. You try so hard to appear righteous before men, but you are full of deceit and iniquity.” He winched at their piercing glares; he felt their fierce anger and seething hatred. “Soon they will find a way...” he thought. “Already, Satan has entered into Judas to consort with them to betray me. The time for caution is past. Let their hatred boil; let their plans against me flourish. They can do only what is in the plan.”

He returned their glare, “You serpents! You generation of vipers! How can you escape the damnation of hell?” he demanded angrily. I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes. Some of them you will crucify, others you will persecute from city to city, beating and murdering them. You shall be responsible for all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias, whom you slew between the Temple and the altar.” He groaned aloud, spread his arms wide, and cried out as if in agony, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem. You kill the prophets, stone those who are sent to you. Now you are left to suffer devastation. Looking beyond to future ages, he groaned, “No peace will you know until I return, until the day you proclaim joyously, ‘Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.”

Leaving the Temple, the disciples, hoping to strike a more cheerful note, pointed out the beauty of the elaborately designed buildings of the Temple. Yeshua could not shake the despairing mood, “Look about you at all these great buildings. Let me tell you what is soon to happen. All of these great buildings shall be leveled to the ground, not leaving one stone upon another.”

That evening Yeshua chose to spend the night atop quiet, peaceful Mount Olivet. Here he would find privacy, time to communicate with The Father, drawing upon his strength for the ordeal ahead. He had discouraged the crowds from following, accompanied only by the disciples. Here trees were shady,

breezes were cool, wild flowers decorated the green carpeted hillside. Small animals scurried about in their search for food.

An occasional melodious call could be heard from a distant bird, calling to its mate. The sinking sun cast long, eerie shadows across huge, jutting rocks. Here nature painted a picture of solitude in a garden-like setting.

The men were still curious about The Master's disturbing comments made earlier. "Master, tell us more about the sign of your coming. When are these things you spoke of going to take place?" they asked.

"Come, gather about." Yeshua waited until he had their full attention. "Be careful that you do not allow anyone to deceive you. Before my return, many deceivers will come in my name, teaching that I am Christ. They will deceive many into thinking they are my messengers. You will be arrested, imprisoned, beaten, tortured and killed. Every nation will hate you because you believe me. Many will become entrapped with sin, hating and betraying each other. Because violation of the law shall abound, many will lose the ability to love. If you endure to the end, you shall be saved. The end shall not come until this gospel is published in all the world for a witness to all nations. Israel shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be taken into captivity, scattered abroad into many nations. Jerusalem will be overrun by Gentiles, until their time is fulfilled.

"War after war will occur across the entire world. The land shall be devastated by awesome earthquakes, famines, horrible diseases, fearful sights and frightful signs from heaven. This is no indication of the end. These things are just the beginnings of sorrows. When you see the prophesy by Daniel being fulfilled, the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, then flee from Judea into the mountains. You can know the desolation is near when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies. Do not take time to gather personal belongings. What a terrible time it will be for those who have nursing babies. Pray that this will not happen during the winter or on a Sabbath day. This will be known as the greatest time of tribulation in the history of mankind. Satan will unleash his wrath upon a dying age.

"Following this period of horrible tribulation, there shall be signs in the sun, moon, and stars. The heavenly lights will darken...powers in the heavens shaken...blazing meteorites will shower the earth...great tidal waves will beat against the coasts. People will suffer agonizing fright; many will have heart attacks worrying about what will happen next. When these things begin to happen, be encouraged; your bondage to the flesh is near the end.

Do not think the world will discontinue its personal activities because of these things. No, the common people, just as they were during the time of Noe, will still be getting married...having parties...struggling with life's problems, working. Before the flood, they totally ignored the warnings of Noe, intent on their own fleshly lusts. They suspected nothing until the flood descended upon them, drowning them all. It will be the same at my coming."

Yeshua surveyed his attentive audience, and thought, "Their minds are so clouded. They appear as though they believe what I say, but in their hearts they doubt. They understand only what their eyes can see, their hands can touch. After the Holy Spirit is given, their minds will be opened to grasp the

truth.” He continued talking. “Then my sign shall appear in the heavens. Every tribe on earth will mourn when they see the son of man coming with power and great glory. I will send my angels, with the sound of a great trumpet, to gather my elect from the four directions of the earth. You know how to read the signs of nature, when the trees begin to bud, its leaves shooting forth, you know summer is near. Likewise, when you see these things taking place, you can know the end is near. This generation will continue on, populating the earth, until all has been fulfilled. So be prepared. You have no way of knowing the exact time this will happen. The knowledge of this day has been reserved for The Father; he alone knows. So...watch yourself, that you not be found sleeping on the job. Continue to pray, so that you will be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and be accepted by the son of man.”

Yeshua thought, “I dare not tell them every detail, that time will extend through many dual prophecies. This age will be near total destruction before the first resurrection of the saints. Then will begin the thousand years of cleansing and restructuring the earth. As in the days of Noah, a new civilization will sprout, but this time without the influence of Satan. Gentile families will gradually develop again into nations. Under the guidance of spiritual leaders, they will prepare the world for the next age, when the next great resurrection of the whole house of Israel will once again fill the earth, and become wealthy and prosperous. But Satan, being released, will again lead Gentile (Gog and her allies) nations to war against them. Finally, after I rescue them again, and rebuild my Temple and educate them again, they will turn to Yehwah and accept me as their Savior.

“All of this is too much for my followers to grasp now. Until they receive the Holy Spirit, which will strengthen them, can they understand. So much suffering will they endure for my name sake, before their deaths. Only young John will survive to record my final message to my churchs, before the end of this age. He will confirm the prophecies of Ezekiel, and other prophets, when I open the seals of the book, and reveal the events to occur throughout the future ages. Only the wise shall understand. Much time will be extended through the love and patience of my Father, so that all who will, may repent and enter into the glorious kingdom that will be established in the latter years when all of Israel will rejoice in the holy one of Israel.”

The following morning Yeshua went to the Temple early. People were already anticipating his appearance. Two days before the Passover, Judas was seriously engaged in working out his plans to betray Yeshua. Yeshua continued teaching. “The hour is come that the son of man should be glorified. Unless a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it never amounts to more, but if it dies, it becomes a whole new plant, bearing many grains.

If one’s love for his physical life is all important, then he will lose it. If he sacrifices it for my sake, he will live forever. If any serve me, let him follow me; where I am he may also be. Become my servant and my father will honor you. As the time draws near, I am dreadfully troubled. What should I say...’Father, please spare me from going through with the plan. I came into the world for this very purpose.” He gave a heavy sigh and cried aloud, “Father glorify your name.”

A rumbling voice echoed across the darkened sky, "I have already glorified it and will do so again." The startled group searched in every direction hoping to see a supernatural sign.

Some thought it thundered, others thought an angel had spoken.

"This voice was not for my sake, but yours," Yeshua told them. "Now this world shall be judged, its prince will be cast out of heaven. After I am lifted above the earth and experience death, I will draw all men unto myself."

Some answered him, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ lives forever. You keep talking about a 'son of man'. Who is he? And why do you keep talking about being lifted up?" they questioned him.

"The light will be here for a little while longer; walk in it while it is here, for when it leaves, you will stumble in darkness. Believe in the light while it is shining," he urged.

"In this way you may be the children of light."

Even though Yeshua performed many miracles, there still were those who thought his power came from Satan. A few of the chief rulers believed him. They would have admitted their belief except for fear of being thrown out of the synagogue; they loved praises from men. Yeshua spoke in a sad, soft voice, "Lord, who has believed our report; to whom has your truth been revealed?

He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts. Their time of acceptance has passed; they had their chance and rejected me."

Then he raised his voice so everyone could hear. "I am a light in a world of darkness. Whoever believes me will come out of that darkness. Those who do not believe my words, I do not judge. They, however, will be judged by the words that I have spoken, in the last day. I have not spoken my own words, but the words of my father who sent me. He commanded me to speak these words. His commandments are life everlasting." Infuriated, the Pharisees slowly banded together and moved menacingly toward him.

"It is not time for them to take me yet...it will come soon enough," he thought. Before they could do him any harm, he slipped through the crowd, and concealed himself.

end of ch. 14 edited 6/29/13