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“In his humiliation justice was denied him”

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IN THE TIME OF YESHUA HANOTZRI

Jerusalem in 30 AD.

We are all familiar with the method of reckoning dates as either BC or AD. This system was first devised about 1400 years ago. The system previously in use dated events from the year in which the city of Rome was founded. The year now known as 1 AD was originally called 753 AUC (“ab urbe condita” – from the foundation of the city).

There is little which distinguishes the Roman years 780-783 AUC from other years of the Roman calendar. Joseph Caiaphas was Jewish high priest in Jerusalem. The Roman procurator of Judaea was Pontius Pilate. Tiberias Caesar, successor to Augustus, ruled in Rome.

About this time, 783 AUC, an itinerant preacher appeared in the Temple area of Jerusalem. He was about 33 years of age and came from the country. He was called Yeshua Hanotzri. Each day this man addressed the people where they gathered in the precincts of the Temple. There was unlimited freedom of speech in the Jerusalem of the Roman period.

Attitudes towards Yeshua Hanotzri polarised rapidly. His reputation had preceded him. Among the common people many heard him gladly. His supporters saw him as the ideal Israelite, the man destined to save the nation, a man projecting the values of God into the society of men. To the opposition who held power in the community these very claims were blasphemy. Nor were the scholars of the community able to discover in certain of the ancient writings the particular significance that the supporters of Yeshua Hanotzri were claiming for them. These leaders saw Yeshua Hanotzri not as an ideal Israelite but as rubbish, a troublemaker who drew support from the uneducated lower classes, a man bent on overturning accepted values, a blasphemous law-breaker and companion of undesirables.

The Establishment view, in short, was quite simple: Yeshua Hanotzri was human filth, to be put out of the way and covered over.

The opposition to Yeshua Hanotzri:

Three main groups were discernible:

First – The Establishment: Composed of the priests, “the righteous ones”, together with lawyers and scribes. These held a monopoly on education and controlled the channels of information through the orthodoxy of the synagogues. This political-priestly junta was thus able to cement itself in power and

to manipulate the people. It became established in the 200-year period since the revolt against Syria and the subsequent Maccabean Wars.

Second – The Respectable Citizens: These people held the tokens of respectability of more account than personal commitment to moral issues. Decisions were best left to “the authorities”. Though the lie itself might be embedded in the structure of society, the respectable citizens thought it better to let sleeping dogs lie, rather than that the community should be disturbed. In the moment of decision they embraced respectability and rejected right. Respectability, not right, was their supreme criterion.

Third – The Mob: To the mob, might is right. And Truth (to the mob) is what the mob believes. And what does the mob believe? It believes what it has been told to believe. The three essential characteristics of the mob are an uncritical acceptance of information fed to it, inability to reason, and violent imposition of its own standards upon others. It can direct its activities “downwards” towards non-conformists in society, or “upwards” against the established authority. When supported by the power of the state, the mob has supreme power. Its attitude to Yeshua Hanotzri reflected the three essential mob characteristics.

The Tactics Used Against Him

Between the respectable citizens, with their status-consciousness, and the mob, stood that large group of citizenry which is untroubled by social pretensions and status. The common people lacked any investment in the hierarchical structure of society, and without such a vested interest to preserve and protect, could face change in the established order and in the values of society, with a certain measure of equanimity. From the common people of Israel, Yeshua Hanotzri drew much of his support. The conflict of values developed. The issues were dramatised in the Temple area of Jerusalem. Yeshua Hanotzri declined to accept as absolute the standards of the Establishment, the respectable citizens and the mob. A divided community seemed likely to develop: this was dangerous in the time of the Romans in Jerusalem. If trouble developed they would come in force.

The Establishment might have taken no action against Yeshua Hanotzri had he not persisted in his activities. It was therefore his life, whatever it was worth, against the life of the community. Informers were planted in his audience. Agents tried to trap him with loaded questions. A whispering campaign started. These methods failing, one of his supporters was induced to accept a bribe. Now the authorities knew where they could find Yeshua Hanotzri after sunset. They arrested him in the middle of the night. The common people slept. Within hours he was in the hands of the Romans. He was sentenced to death. A last minute attempt to save him was frustrated by the mob. Four Roman soldiers carried out the execution. Two convicted criminals died beside him. A small hand-full of his close associates, mainly women, watched as he was crucified.

ACCUSATIONS AGAINST YESHUA HANOTZRI

The Establishment and its supporters accused Yeshua Hanotzri of many things. Here are some of the allegations:

A malcontent and troublemaker: When the high priest and councillors took Yeshua Hanotzri before Pilate, Pilate intended, at first, to release the prisoner. But the accusers insisted that the prisoner was a troublemaker who stirred up the people in Galilee, Judaea and Jerusalem. (Luke 23:1-5)

A blasphemer: The high priest examined the prisoner when the witnesses failed to sheet hone the charges against him. He asked Yeshua if he claimed to be “the anointed” (ie christ). When he received a reply he disapproved of he accused the prisoner of blasphemy. (Matt 26:65, also Mark 14:6, Luke 5:21, John :10:33).

Insane: When religious people received replies they disapproved of they accused Yeshua Hanotzri of being insane (John 10:20), and of being an insane Samaritan (John 8:48).

Making treasonable utterances: The accusers placed Pilate on a dilemma for they said that Yeshua Hanotzri had claimed to be a king: by this action he set himself against the rightful ruler, Tiberias. If Pilate released the prisoner it could be interpreted as approval for this treasonable utterance (John 19:12).

A companion of undesirables: The lawyers and their scribes observed Yeshua dining with men who collect the Roman taxes and with other common people. The lawyers made known their disapproval of this sort of conduct. (Luke 5:30, Mark 2:16).

A toper: The critics said that John the Baptist was insane because he ate no bread and drank no wine. The same critics said Yeshua Hanotzri was a gluttonous man and winebibber because he did eat bread and drink wine. (Luke 7:34).

A law-breaker: Yeshua Hanotzri and his disciples were accused on a number of occasions of breaking the strict law concerning the keeping of the Sabbath. (Mark 2:24, Luke 6:2, John 9:16).

A con man: None of the scholars or leaders took any notice of the teachings of Yeshua Hanotzri. It was only the ignorant common people who were taken in by him. (John 7:48).

Uncouth and common: An occasion was observed when Yeshua did not wash before a meal. His supporters frequently ate their bread with unwashed hands. This attitude showed scant regard for the traditions of the elders. (Luke 11:38, Mark 7:2, Matthew 15:3).

YESHUA HANOTZRI and JESUS CHRIST

The disciples stated that Yeshua Hanotzri son of Heli and Mary (although supposedly the son of Joseph and Mary) was the man chosen from among the people and appointed by God to rule the world. He had asserted his claim and would return at a later date to take up the appointment. They said that he had represented the true values of God and that his opponents had judged him by their own false standards. They claimed he had fulfilled ancient writings of the prophets: these writings had predicted that he would be killed.

The opponents were unable to find the significance in the ancient writings, which were claimed by the disciples. On the contrary, there were particular and exact statements in the prophets, which showed that when God’s anointed appeared, the fortunes of Israel, and then at their lowest ebb, would be restored. But here was indicated the basic fallacy: The opponents of Yeshua were relying upon words and events, not values. Yeshua’s supporters relied first upon fundamental values, and then cited texts in their support. Furthermore the words of the prophets did not say that God’s anointed would appear on only one occasion. It was useless for anyone to hope to be guided to the “anointed” by external national events. The teachings about “Jesus Christ” by the so-called Christian churches are an irrelevancy. The name “Jesus” is a Latin version of a Greek rendering of the name “Yeshua”. The term “Christ” is a Greek word, which means simply “anointed”. There are many “christs” in the Bible; the word is left untranslated only where it refers

to Yeshua Hanotzri. The priests, who proclaim Jesus Christ, are the spiritual descendants of those who crucified Yeshua Hanotzri.

The Hebrew word “messiah” means, “anointed”. Its equivalent in Greek is “christ”. The proposition of the New Testament is that Yeshua Hanotzri, a man dead and buried as far as the general population was concerned, had been “anointed” with the full power of God as God’s delegate among men to establish the kingdom of God on earth.

The New Testament does not, in fact, propose that Yeshua Hanotzri was God, a God-Man, born of a virgin, born without original sin, second person of the Blessed Trinity, etc. etc. These church teachings lack any support whatever in the New Testament and are derived from ancient pagan Greek and Roman religions.