Teachers of the law

I was born a Levite, part of that ancient and noble family line of Levi and from almost the first day of my life I had been set aside by my parents to worship in the temple. That was our job as Levites, that’s what God had appointed us to do way back in the time of Moses. So that’s what I did, I maintained reverent and ordered worship in the temple, just as my father had done and his father before him for centuries.

After many years of perfecting my craft, learning all the instruction of the law of Moses I was eventually appointed to the Sanhedrin – the Jewish court in Jerusalem. What a privilege to serve on that council – where I along with 70 others who had been chosen for the task were given the responsibility of maintaining a high standard of morals and ethics in the province.

We met daily in the temple apart from the sabbath and feast days and over the years we’ve had so many knotty problems and difficult cases I’ve lost count but none of them have produced anything like the attention and mass hysteria we saw yesterday in the trial of some country boy with a saviour complex called Jesus.

On that day we were assembled as usual, under the leadership of Caiaphas our current high priest when a large crowd armed with swords and clubs burst in. At first we didn’t know what was going on, but then we saw they had with them a prisoner and with delight I saw it was Jesus.

We were so fed up of this guy, planting ideas in people’s heads – saying outrageous things like “I have come to fulfil the law” – “you’ve heard is said…such and such…but I say to you” who did he think he was? The law of Moses was called the law for a reason – because people had to obey it. This man spreading all this nonsense could undermine our whole society, he could undermine the Sanhedrin and then what would become of me.

So I can tell you, me and the others on the council were determined to take our chance – but try as we might we could not find any hard evidence to pin on him – between you and me we even brought in some false witnesses but still nothing would stick. Our case wasn’t helped by the fact that Jesus hardly said a word – He mostly remained silent – so we kept pushing and pushing, I know we were all thinking that we couldn’t let this opportunity to squash insurrection pass.

Then Caiaphas spoke, using his high priestly authority and said “I charge you under oath by the living God” – which I thought was very clever of him – “Tell us if you are the anointed one, the Son of God” – and joy of joys Jesus said – “Yes, it is as you say” – it was at that moment that we knew we had him. That was blasphemy clear as day. Caiaphas was so disgusted at it that he tore his clothes, the crowd who were already fired up, grew incensed at his affrontery and spat in his face and struck him with their firsts – and rightly so.

After we had made our decision as religious leaders we passed Jesus on hoping that the government leaders would agree with us and they did. Pilate so we hear had the same problems as us – trying to pin anything on Jesus was hard – but eventually the decision was given – Jesus was sentenced to death. A proper sense of good jewish morality would soon be restored.

I was there yesterday to see the fruit of our labours – as in front of a huge crowd this false messiah was crucified. And if prove was needed that we had made the right decision, prove was given at the cross. I stood at the foot of the cross with a colleague and said to him just loud enough that the poor wretch on the cross could hear us – “he saved others, but he can’t save himself!” – surprise surprise Jesus didn’t bite. So I carried on taunting him – “Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him.” – I’m not sure if I really meant that one, would I believe in him if he really did come down from the cross? Either way it didn’t matter, I knew it wouldn’t happen. I went on “He trusts in God, Let God rescue him now”.

I’m not sure if I should admit this, but I remember taking great delight in mocking that man. I’m not sure why that was, maybe it was power gone to my head, maybe it was the satisfaction of being proved right – this man wasn’t the promised messiah, he was just a trouble maker, maybe it was knowing that once he was gone his followers would stop with their nonsense and return to the law.

And now he’s gone. Today is the sabbath and things are back to normal. Some crazy people have been saying that he is somehow not dead and that we’re going to see him walking around these streets again soon. But I went to the tomb today to check and I can assure you that stone is not moving and the body of the insurrectionist is going to be laid there until a true messiah arises.

I’m sure in this city talk of Jesus will continue for a while, it has been big news, but I’m sure my name will last longer in the memory than his. And I’ll tell you something for nothing – what has definitely been proved is that we the Sanhedrin have ultimate power and authority here.

Why were many of the Jewish leaders so emphatically opposed to Jesus?

How do you think everyone felt on Easter Saturday? He disciples, the romans, the jewish religious leaders?

Why do so many people still hate the claims of Christianity and what can we do to change their minds?