

In chapter 7 of the *Shadow of the Galilean*, the story follows Andreas and Metilius discussing the future of Palestine with regard to John the Baptist's death, his followers' current mindsets, and the population's sentiments regarding Antipas and the Roman Empire. Theissen's utilization of dialogue in this chapter reflects the variety of different factions in first century Palestine.

Specifically, Metilius represents the original intent of the Roman Empire unpolluted by human actions (i.e. wishing for peace and harmony of all religions in the populace). However, he refuses to acknowledge that the Romans are oppressing the Jews (a prime example being how Metilius mentioned how Roman soldiers burnt all neighboring villages to a terrorist attack, but Metilius still was unable to really to admit that these actions were unjust and extreme). In contrast, Andreas is a Jewish person who has business dealings with Romans. Thus, Andreas is able to be partly impartial: despite being aware of Rome as an oppressor, he still has the ability to listen to Metilius' defense of the empire without immediately shutting it down. It could be argued that Andreas has no choice but to listen to Metilius since he is being blackmailed, but regardless, Andreas is shown to be truly considering Metilius' words. This is shown by Andreas saying "On one point I believed [Metilius] completely. He wanted to maintain law and order in the land with as little oppression and bloodshed as possible" (Theissen, 65). Therefore, by making an empathetic Roman soldier who had interest in the Jewish religion converse with a Jewish person who had business with the Roman empire, Theissen subtly encourages the reader to not demonize or idolize either side, but to approach the history of first-century Palestine with reason and unbiased.

Theissen mentions how first-century Jews revered the temple in Jerusalem, honing in on the point by having Andreas state "whenever I see Jerusalem I seem to be coming home" (Theissen, 57). The temple is described to be incredibly holy. Jewish sentiments towards the Roman Empire at the time are demonstrated by Andreas uttering a prayer in regards to the Romans: "O Babylon, oppressor...happy is the one who seizes your children and shatters them on rocks" (page 58). It's important to learn about how Rome violently reacted to any Jewish rebellion in order to understand what situations encouraged Jesus to preach. Reading Jesus' thoughts on issues such as divorce without knowing the context in which he said those words can be disastrous, since it would give you a partial understanding of his teachings. Thus, it is incredibly important to know contexts of Jesus' life to understand what he meant and possibly implied through his sermons. An example of such implication is when Andreas uttered the aforementioned prayer concerning Babylon, but used it to convey his thoughts about Rome. Without knowing the context of Andreas' feelings of oppressment, the uttered prayer would not mean as much to the reader.

Andreas says that "Our religion is closely bound up with our whole way of life" on page 64. This is because compared to the Roman and Greek religions, Judaism was far more strict and many followers saw obeying God's commandments as a foremost obligation (Harris 46). Further, Judaism asserts that there is only one way to please God. Andreas does this to explain to Metilius why Judaism could be seen as exclusive or "inhospitable".

I found it interesting that Metilius and Andreas were able to have such a reasonable and calm conversation about such a controversial topic such as Roman Empire vs Antipas, and the Jewish people/ Judaism as a religion. I also thought it was interesting that Metilius brought up the gifted idol in Andreas' house again. He did this to demonstrate that even Andreas doesn't follow the commandments completely, so the Roman empire should similarly get a pass. Metilius continues to ask Andreas about contradictions apparent through John the Baptist and the temple's ideology. I found it similarly interesting that Andreas admitted there was a contradiction present and Metilius was right.

I am curious to know **why Theissen placed the detail about Metilius bringing up a valid contradiction about John the Baptist undermining the temple but still being called holy. Was this to demonstrate different sects of Judaism that believed in different things, such as the Essenes and Zealots?** I am also curious to know if the man who saved Andreas from the monster in his dream is actually Jesus or not.