

Chapter 9 of the *Shadow of the Galilean* serves as an introduction to the Zealots, since this is the first time in the book Andreas actually comes in contact with this group. Theissen makes this first meeting dramatic, perhaps to help the reader immediately visualize how violent the Zealots were in the pursuit of their cause of freeing Palestine from Rome. Zealots are referred to as bandits by Thalameous of Galilee in the previous chapter, and in chapter 9 it is mentioned that “robbers and zealots regularly took tolls from merchants”.

Considering the reputation of Zealots of a vigilante group who opposed the law, Andreas’ comparison of Pilate to the Zealots becomes shocking. Pilate’s actions of extortion and exploitation resembled bandit behavior. Perhaps Theissen chose to include the detail of Andreas being kidnapped and held at the caves of Arbela not just because it was known as a rebel base, but also to draw a further parallel between how Andreas was held in Pilate’s jail and in the Zealot cave. Ironically, it seems that the Zealots were more humane than Pilate; Andreas was held for around 3 weeks in the Roman prison, while the Zealots let him go within a day, even feeding him and giving him a place to stay at night. This was mainly since Andreas gave evidence of being anti-Roman, but even then the juxtaposition is stark.

The beginning of the chapter includes Andreas reflecting on Jesus’ preachings. Andreas says he is not eager to get to know Jesus, since they would “probably not get on with each other” (Theissen 73 or 75). As the letter at the end of the chapter states, Andreas is more detached from Jesus’s experiences because Andreas is a richer businessman who has dealings with Rome. Since Andreas can’t resonate too well with Jesus’ criticism of socioeconomics, he seems to be hesitant to support Jesus’ ideology. Jesus’ sayings such as “you cannot serve God and your possessions at the same time” very likely made Andreas uncomfortable. Theissen utilizes Andreas’ first-person narration to show this hesitance by having him describe Jesus as “one of those who exploited the needs of simple people to cause unrest”. Andreas’ response is reasonable since, as Harris notes, Jesus defied many social norms at the time, such as eating with sinners and asserting that wealth was not a divine gift, a belief that many sects of Judaism perpetuated.

Theissen narrates this story through the point-of-view of a more privileged Jewish businessman because Andreas, like us, is not as oppressed as Jesus was. He represents the modern day reader who attempts to find the historical Jesus by sifting through historical accounts to get as close to validity as possible. Andreas views Jesus as an idealistic preacher. When faced with the beliefs of the unwatered-down historical Jesus, it is likely that many modern readers would feel as uncomfortable as Andreas, especially in the case of preaching against wealth and possessions. Due to the difference of circumstances, it could become more difficult to understand Jesus’ preachings. This is why it is important to understand the contexts and forces behind Jesus’ words.

I found it interesting in this chapter that Andreas literally got kidnapped. Since this book is supposed to be a narrative version of the quest for Jesus, I didn't expect there to be many exciting parts. It was super fun to read! Also, I like how knowledgeable Theissen is. If you look at any of the footnotes, there are always references not only to the Bible but Josephus and all these different historical accounts. Also, his writing style is super vivid so it feels like reading an actual novel.

I wonder why Barabbas did not acknowledge that he knew Andreas- what was he afraid of? Was he doing so for a particular reason or just to have a general upper hand? I am also excited, but kind of sad, to hear about what happens in the future. Harris mentioned how the Zealots led a rebellion led by Judas the Galilean but the Romans crushed them in 6 CE. Then, Josephus blamed the destruction of the temple by Rome on them and eventually they get wiped out. They honestly seems like such a cool and mysterious group so their fate is sad