

Thoughts leaked from his mind like water from a broken bucket, splashing on the earthen floor as he wondered what to do next. They were like little bombs exploding at his feet.

Where was he? What had happened? How had he got there?

It was dark and he couldn't see much. But man, he felt good. A bit stiff but, rested, replenished, God, peaceful even. How long had that been? Another thing he couldn't remember.

He was lying on something, it felt like a blanket but underneath it was hard. He couldn't hear anything, no movement or sounds or talking. There was a little light coming from the gap in the shutter above his head and as he lay for a moment his eyes got used to the grey scale of the room.

He couldn't get over how good he felt. He moved his arms and shoulders, then his legs and feet, everything was working, stiff but working ... but he felt amazing. Physically, but also in himself, he couldn't understand it. He felt free somehow. What on earth has happened? he thought.

As he looked about, he was in a small room, the shuttered window above his head letting not only a little light but also a frail breeze which helped keep the room's stuffy warmth at bay. He was lying on some blankets or rugs on the floor, he realised. He wasn't restricted or impeded in any way, so at least he hadn't been kidnapped, and at that thought looked for the door.

There was one, a few feet off to his right. It was closed but he had no idea if it was barred. Time for that in a minute he thought, first I need to concentrate and think about what's happened.

As strange as it felt, he wasn't frightened, not even really worried. For some reason this peacefulness just allowed him to lie there and be, at least for a moment.

He didn't know where he was, had no idea ... so what could he remember?

It was the sabbath, at least that's the last day he remembered, who knows when it is now. He had gone to temple as he did every sabbath, as a trainee scribe, where else would he have been? He was following in the family line, his father and his father's father, all the way back to the days of Moses had been scribes, his father still was one.

As he lay thinking about his father, he realised something else about the day, someone new had come in to the meeting. A man, a youngish man, he had gotten up to speak and how he had spoken. He was fumbling for clarify now, and things here were clumsy. What he caught and let go of again and again, was a sense of power in this man, in his speaking, and as these thoughts tumbled in and out of his grasp, he sat too, something had happened.

There was a voice, a loud voice that cried out, no, screamed out, at the man. Calling his name, despising his birthplace and then asking in a voice like a fearful child, if he had come to destroy the temple and all it stood for. Then, in another loud declaration he was called, "the Holy one of God."

Why had thoughts of his father made him remember that? What had that to do with anything?

Had the man come to destroy the temple? Was he the Holy one of God? He wished he could remember what had happened and what had been said.

With these thoughts still fumbling in his mind, he heard a scratching from outside the door, and the light slap, slap, slap of sandals on a dirt packed floor. Still no sense of fear or dread ... just a restful peace, no worry or concern at all.

The door opened and into the slightly diminishing gloom walked a man. There was no sliding of a bar or pushing of a bolt, just the door swinging quietly and loosely open. He wasn't locked in, and there was no hostility in the man's bearing or sense. In fact, he walked gently as if trying not to wake a sleeper.

There was a pause as the man felt for his breathing and on not hearing any sounds of slumber, whispered, "my brother, are you awake?" "Yes," he replied, "Where am I?" "In the home of a friend," came the answer.

"What happened?" he asked.

"I'm not really sure," the man replied, as he moved to sit on the floor beside the blankets. "We came to the synagogue on the sabbath and our master spoke, then you jumped up and called out very loudly".

"That was me," he said, "are you sure?" "Yes," the man replied, "Very sure."

"But then our master spoke to you, and your body burst, twisting and turning, bending and buckling, I felt sure you were going to explode. Every bone in your body break. It all happened so quickly, then you screamed again, and dropped like a stone, we thought you were dead."

"After the all the shouting and yelling, when everyone was gone, we saw you were breathing, picked you up and brought you here. That was two days ago. You have slept soundly ever since. How are you feeling now," the man asked?

"He spoke to me and that happened? I don't understand, if that was me and what you've said was true, why do I feel better than I ever have," he said. "In fact, I feel almost like new. Unshackled, free somehow. It's amazing. Who was that man?"

"He is our master and he will want to meet you when he gets back." The man assured him.

He paused and then asked, "Has anyone come looking for me? My parents?"

"No one has come yet," the man said, "it's the talk of the town, everyone knows what happened, so your family will hear soon enough, our master can't move for people crowding and following him around. No one has ever seen anything like it, including us. It felt like the temple was blowing apart there was such a lot of power there. It shocked us all."

My father, he thought, the shame will be killing him, he will be worried about his colleagues and what this means for his position at the temple. He knew his father wouldn't be coming anytime soon, if ever.

"By the way my name is John, you must be hungry?" the man added. "Come and I will introduce you to the others who are here. I'm pleased you are feeling ok. We were worried about you."

"Yes," he said, "Thank you, I am, very hungry ... and my name is John too, but everybody calls me Mark."

Amen.