

that it was by their means that he had incurred the displeasure of the nation, whom indeed he had injured. (403) 'Do thou therefore,' said he, 'when thou art come to Jerusalem send for the leading men among them, and show them my body, and with great appearance of sincerity, give them leave to use it as they themselves please, whether they will dishonor the dead body by refusing it burial, as having severely suffered by my means, or whether in their anger they will offer any other injury to that body. Promise them also, that thou wilt do nothing without them in the affairs of the kingdom. (404) If thou dost but say this to them, I shall have the honor of a more glorious funeral from them than thou couldst have made for me: and when it is in their power to abuse my dead body, they will do it no injury at all, and thou wilt rule in safety.'^d So when he had given his wife this advice, he died, — after he had reigned twenty-seven years, and lived fifty years, within one.

CHAPTER 16

HOW ALEXANDRA, BY GAINING THE GOOD WILL OF THE PHARISEES, RETAINED THE KINGDOM NINE YEARS, AND THEN, HAVING DONE MANY GLORIOUS ACTIONS, DIED

1. (405) So Alexandra, when she had taken the fortress, acted as her husband had suggested to her, and spake to the Pharisees, and put all things

^d It seems, by this dying advice of Alexander Janneus to his wife, that he had himself pursued the measures of his father Hyrcanus, and taken part with the Sadducees, who kept close to the written law against the Pharisees, who had introduced their own traditions, 16.2; and that he now saw a political necessity of submitting to the Pharisees, and their traditions hereafter, if his widow and family minded to retain their monarchical government or tyranny over the Jewish nation: which sect yet, thus supported, were at last in a great measure the ruin of the religion, government, and nation of the Jews, and brought them into so wicked a state, that the vengeance of God came upon them to their utter excision. Just thus did Caiaphas politically advise the Jewish sanhedrin, John 11:50, "that it was expedient for them that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not;" and this in consequence of their own political supposal, v. 48, that, "If they let Jesus alone," with his miracles, "all men would believe on him; and the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation." Which political crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth brought down the vengeance of God upon them, and occasioned those very Romans, of whom they seemed so much afraid, that to prevent it they put him to death, actually to "come and take away both their place and nation," within thirty-eight years afterwards." I heartily wish the politicians of Christendom would consider those and the like examples, and no longer sacrifice all virtue and religion to their pernicious schemes of government to the bringing down the judgments of God upon themselves, and the several nations intrusted to their care. But this is a digression: I wish it were an unseasonable one also. Josephus himself several times makes such digressions; and I here venture to follow him. See one of them at the conclusion of the very next chapter.

into their power, both as to the dead body and as to the affairs of the kingdom, and thereby pacified their anger against Alexander, and made them bear good will and friendship to him; (406) who then came among the multitude, and made speeches to them, and laid before them the actions of Alexander, and told them that they had lost a righteous king; and by the commendation they gave him, they brought them to grieve, and to be in heaviness for him, so that he had a funeral more splendid than had any of the kings before him. (407) Alexander left behind him two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, but committed the kingdom to Alexandra. Now, as to these two sons, Hyrcanus was indeed unable to manage public affairs, and delighted rather in a quiet life; but the younger, Aristobulus, was an active and a bold man; and for this woman herself, Alexandra, she was loved of the multitude, because she seemed to forget the offenses her husband had been guilty of.

2. (408) So she made Hyrcanus high priest because he was the elder, but much more because he cared not to meddle with politics, and permitted the Pharisees to do everything; to whom also she ordered the multitude to be obedient. She also restored again those practices which the Pharisees had introduced, according to the traditions of their forefathers, and which her father-in-law, Hyrcanus, had abrogated. (409) So she had indeed the name of the Regent; but the Pharisees had the authority; for it was they who restored such as had been banished, and set such as were prisoners at liberty, and, to say all at once, they differed in nothing from lords. However, the queen also took care of the affairs of the kingdom, and got together a great body of mercenary soldiers, and increased her own army to such a degree, that she became terrible to the neighboring tyrants, and took hostages of them: (410) and the country was entirely at peace, excepting the Pharisees; for they disturbed the queen, and desired that she would kill those who persuaded Alexander to slay the eight hundred men; after which they cut the throat of one of them, Diogenes; and after him they did the same to several, one after another, (411) till the men that were the most potent came into the palace, and Aristobulus with them, for he seemed to be displeased at what was done; and it appeared openly that, if he had an opportunity, he would not permit his mother to go on so. These put the queen in mind what great dangers they had gone through, and great things they had done, whereby then had demonstrated the firmness of their fidelity to their master, insomuch that they had received the greatest marks of favor from him: (412) and they begged of her, that she would not utterly blast their hopes, as it now happened, that when they had escaped the hazards that arose from their [open] enemies, they were to be cut off at home, by their [private] enemies, like brute