

WHERE JESUS WALKED

ROBERT H. BRUMBACK

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By

ROBERT H. BRUMBACK

Author of

"GOSPEL MESSAGES FOR THIS DAY AND HOUR"

"HISTORY OF THE CHURCH THROUGH THE AGES"

MISSION MESSENGER

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WHERE JESUS WALKED

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by

ROBERT H. BRUMBACK

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DEDICATION

To Mary Louise, my daughter, whose patience and courage in her affliction have been an inspiration to all who know her, this volume is affectionately dedicated.

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. The Miraculous Birth.....	1
II. The Hidden Years.....	11
III. Jesus The Messiah.....	23
IV. Return To Capernaum.....	41
V. Journey To Tyre and Sidon.....	55
VI. Jesus Revisits Capernaum.....	68
VII. To Bethany Beyond Jordan.....	85
VIII. Discourses in Jerusalem.....	98
IX. A Plot Against Jesus.....	111
X. Before Caiaphas and Pilate.....	119
XI. Resurrection and Ascension.....	139
XII. The Church Established.....	150

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1 Picture of Bethlehem
- 2 Nazareth
- 3 Virgin's Fountain
- 4 Jordan River
- 5 Mount of Temptation
- 6 Cana
- 7 Mount of Olives
- 8 Mount Ebal
- 9 Mount Gerizim
- 10 Capernaum Synagogue
- 11 Sea of Galilee
- 12 Jerusalem
- 13 Bethany
- 14 Site of Feeding the Five Thousand
- 15 Mount Hermon
- 16 Ruins of Samaria
- 17 Ruins of Jericho
- 18 Walls of Jerusalem
- 19 Kidron Valley
- 20 Jerusalem from Mount of Olives
- 21 Garden of Gethsemane
- 22 The Damascus Gate
- 23 Place of the Skull
- 24 Garden Tomb

PREFACE

The author, Robert H. Brumback, was privileged to be born in a home where the Bible was read and studied. His father, John W. Brumback, was a preacher of the pure gospel of Christ. His mother was a devout student of God's word. The humble home of his parents knew little of the luxuries of life, but within the home there was an abiding love for the word of God which the parents endeavored to implant in the minds of their children.

While yet in his teens Robert began to assist his father in evangelistic services by reading the opening lesson. He later began to make short talks upon subjects of interest to him, then assumed a part in the proclamation of the word. This he has continued as opportunity afforded and conditions permitted. He was united in marriage to his wife Louise, daughter of Parker and Sara Dunham of Jerseyville, Illinois, in 1923, and to this union one daughter was born, Mary Louise Richason, who now resides at Phoenix, Arizona. Upon his wife and daughter have fallen the burden of the sacrifices necessary to enable Robert to preach the gospel. These they have borne without complaint. Brother Brumback has gone wherever he was invited by brethren for evangelistic services, Bible studies, or the lectures on the "History of the Church." His sincere desire is to be able to strengthen the faith of both young and old, and to point out to the sinner his duty to God, that all might find a home in the Haven of Rest.

His great love for his Lord and his travels in the Holy Land brings a warmth to you in this book that I am sure you will enjoy. In his journey he visited Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Cyprus, Greece and Italy. The informal research on the religions and the culture of the nations he visited, by his discus-

sions with the people upon the streets, with leaders in business, education, and religion, gave him an insight that is revealed in the following pages of "Where Jesus Walked."

It is our earnest prayer that you will have the same feeling I had when I finished reading his manuscript. I could not help but feel like the two disciples who walked with Jesus on the way to Emmaus after His resurrection. My heart did burn within me. My understanding was opened on a few more scriptures. You will want to read this and then turn to the scriptures for a further perusal of His life and purpose.

JOHN L. FLEENER.

INTRODUCTION

From early childhood I dreamed of the time when I would be able to visit the Holy Land. The fulfillment of those plans, which were before denied because of lack of time and finances, became a reality in 1954 through the generosity of some of my brethren.

The necessary preparations for such a trip were indeed amazing. The securing of a passport, the necessary inoculations, world health certificate, visas to enter certain countries, photographs for passport and visas, life and health insurance, instructions about what to take and what not to take, what toilet articles to include in one's baggage, the kind of clothing to wear, and various other matters incident to the actual departure—these things and other affairs required several months' preparation.

From the time our group embarked at New York City to the time I emplaned for the flight to the United States, each day was filled with places and events of interest.

To visit the land "where Jesus walked," to step upon the same ground, to see the same lakes and rivers, to travel over the same paths and roads, to look upon the same hills and mountains, was indeed a blessed privilege.

To live for a while in the country where He lived, to learn something new of the meaning of His life, to see where it was spent, to walk about the towns and cities where He taught and worked His mighty miracles was truly inspiring.

In this simple narrative I have tried to share with the reader the pleasure of visiting the Holy Land, of seeing Jesus as He walked and talked with men, of learning His word and what He did for humanity in the brief period of three and a half years.

If you, after reading this small volume, have a clearer realization of what Jesus has done for us and what He would have us do and be in this life, my purpose will have been achieved.

ROBERT H. BRUMBACK

WHERE JESUS WALKED

CHAPTER I

THE MIRACULOUS BIRTH

"Behold a virgin shall conceive and shall bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."¹

Such is the prophetic statement of Isaiah concerning the birth of the Savior of the world. The life of our Lord did not begin when He was born. In conversation with the Jewish people at the temple on one occasion, Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."²

Thus He announced His pre-existence with God. In His great intercessory prayer as recorded in the gospel of John He prayed for the Father to glorify Him with the glory which He had with Him before the world was.

The apostle Paul proclaimed the same truth when he addressed the Colossian brethren, saying, "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him."³

The miraculous birth described by Isaiah was to be brought about in a miraculous way.

The inspired writer tells us, "The birth of Jesus was on this wise; When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she

1. Isaiah 7:14.

2. John 8:58.

3. Colossians 1:16.

was found to be with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."⁴

We can imagine the perplexity of the Jewish maiden. She knew the origin of this divine conception, but could she prove it?

Joseph, a just man, was not willing to make her a public example to be dealt with according to the law. This he might have done; for if a betrothed virgin played the harlot, she was to be stoned to death. Joseph resolved that if she had been guilty of sin it would not be known from him.

While his mind was thus troubled the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, "Fear not to take unto thee thy wife, Mary, for that which she hath conceived is by the power of the Holy Ghost."

Joseph immediately complied with the command of the Lord and claimed Mary as his bride.

The prophet Micah had prophesied that the ruler of Israel was to be born in Bethlehem. How could this be when the home of Joseph and Mary was at Nazareth?

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."⁵

How was this prophecy to be fulfilled?

Just at the time that Jesus was to be born, God caused Caesar Augustus to send forth a decree that all citizens of the Roman Empire should be enrolled for taxation. By the order of the Emperor all citizens

4. Matthew 1:18-20.

5. Micah 5:2.

of the Roman Empire were to be registered. Each person, as the head of a family, was to register the value of his estate, specify the names of his parents, his own age, the names of his wives and children. Because Joseph was of the lineage of David, it was necessary for him to go to Bethlehem, the city of David, for enrolling.

"And Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room in the inn."⁶

Bethlehem, the house of bread, is five miles south of Jerusalem, situated in a region which was, and is yet, one of the most fertile in Judea, although it is unsupplied with springs of water. This small city is set upon a hill; the streets are narrow, and the homes are flat-roofed, the type usually found in that part of Jordan.

Because of the hostilities between Israel and Jordan, Bethlehem is now reached by a new winding road through the mountains which is twice as long as the old road from Jerusalem.

Bethlehem was the home of Jesse, the father of David, and is often called the city of David in the Scriptures. When David expressed a desire for a drink of water from the well by the city gate, three men broke through the lines of the Philistines to secure the water which David poured out as an offering to the Lord. Near Bethlehem is the field of Boaz

6. Luke 2:4-7.

where Ruth gleaned, and also the tomb of Rachel who died after the birth of Benjamin.

The people of Bethlehem are friendly and speak very good English. Bethlehem is the center of the pearl industry. Here skilled workmen carve out the Stars of Bethlehem, which may be purchased for a very nominal sum.

Joseph must make the journey to Bethlehem, David's city, a three days' journey from Nazareth. There seems to have been no necessity for Mary to make the arduous journey except for two facts. First, under the circumstances Joseph was unwilling to leave her among those who might wrongfully accuse her. Secondly, it had been determined by God that His Divine Son was to be born in Bethlehem, that the prophecy of Micah might be fulfilled that Jesus was to be born in the city of David.

When Joseph and Mary arrived at Bethlehem, the city was already crowded with strangers who had come to be enrolled for taxation. They found there was no room for them in the inn.

"And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."⁷

The homes in that period of time were much like some of the homes in the same country today. The greater part of the home, which was raised above the level of the other part, was occupied by the family. This room was provided with the necessities of life. Here was the family table, the benches upon which they sat, the bread oven, the chests for food, and the cabinets for clothing.

Adjacent to this room, though partly separated from it, were the sleeping compartments.

The lower level of the house was given over to the livestock of the family. Here was the place where

7. Luke 2:7.

the donkey, the goats, the sheep, a few chickens, and the family dog were quartered.

When Joseph and Mary arrived, the home may have already been partly filled with relatives who had come to be enrolled. Whoever the host was, it seems that sleeping arrangements were provided for Joseph and Mary near the lower part of the home; and when the Holy Child Jesus was born, since one of the stalls was not being occupied, its manger offered a safe place to lay the newborn babe. Because the manger is mentioned as the place where the babe was placed, it has been supposed that He was born in a stable.

"And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold and frankincense and myrrh."⁸

In Bethlehem the tradition exists that the Redeemer was born in a crypt beneath the Church of the Nativity, a great stone structure which must be entered by a low door. Inside one sees the immense marble pillars which support the roof of this ancient structure, and at various places are the remnants of mosaics said to have been made by the Crusaders.

Winding stairs lead down into a rock-hewn chamber several feet below the ground which is called "the Grotto of the Nativity." This room is lighted by many hanging lamps, decorated with embroidered draperies, and a silver star marks the spot where Christ is supposed to have been born. Many who visit the place kneel and kiss the star, while others are content to know that somewhere in the vicinity the Savior of the world was born.

The evidence recorded in the Scriptures does not indicate that Jesus was born on the twenty-fifth of

8. Matthew 2:10, 11.

December, the day celebrated as the birthday of Christ, or that He was even born in that month. The spring season would be more in keeping with the fact that the shepherds were watching their flocks in the fields by night. During the winter season the hills surrounding Bethlehem were frequently covered with snow.

December, the twenty-fifth, came to be accepted as the birthday of Christ because many of the pagans who came into the church had been accustomed to celebrate the Roman Saturnalia, a feast that marked the passing of the shortest day of the year, the lengthening of the days, and the return of the sun. When they came into the church they still continued to celebrate the day, but set it apart as the day upon which Christ was born. The early church did not set any value on the day of Christ's birth, but placed it rather in the background. Several hundred years after the death of Christ the first effort was made to fix the time of His birth. Some contended for the twentieth day of May, others for the twenty-first of April, while the Greek Christians held that He was born on the sixth of January. Julian, a bishop of Rome, taught that the twenty-fifth day of December was the day of Christ's birth. The harder the world has tried to justify the twenty-fifth day of December as the birthday of Christ, the more hopelessly they have become lost in the misty haze of ancient history.

There is no information in God's word as to the day upon which Christ was born. If the Lord had intended for us to honor that day, He no doubt would have revealed the right day.

The contentions of the Latins, the Greeks, and the Armenians over the hanging of a picture or the sweeping of the floor in the Church of the Nativity, have resulted in quarrels and battles among those who profess to be the servants of the Prince of Peace.

Outside of the village on that eventful night the shepherds were watching their flocks, just as David

had watched his father's flocks hundreds of years before.

Suddenly the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were afraid until the voice of the angel of the Lord spoke unto them saying, "Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."⁹

The angels vanished, but their words were not forgotten by the shepherds, who believed the divine announcement. The shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, and there they found the babe lying in a manger. When they departed they told all of the things which they had seen and heard.

Some time later Mary and Joseph took the Holy Child from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to make an offering for Mary's purification and to pay the ransom price for her first born son.

Simeon, a devout servant of the Lord, was in the temple court when Joseph and Mary entered to offer the sacrifice for her cleansing. It had been revealed unto him that he should not depart this life until he had seen the Lord's Christ. He recognized Jesus as the Anointed of the Lord, and taking Him in his arms, he said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel."¹⁰

9. Luke 2:10-14.

10. Luke 2:29-32.

While Simeon was speaking, an aged widow, a prophetess, gave thanks unto the Lord and spoke of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Israel, the people of God, were oppressed under Roman rule at this time. They believed God had heard their cry for deliverance. Surely in this, their hour of need, the promised Redeemer would come.

Even in regions beyond the land of the Jews the people were looking for some great event to occur. The astrologers, who people believed could read the destiny of men from the stars, had seen in the east a brilliant star that was to them an omen of an unusual event.

Appointing some of their number to find out its meaning, they were led into Judea where they learned of the great expectation which existed among the people of that country. "Where," they asked, "is the newborn king that we may worship him?"

Herod, too, had heard the rumors of the birth of a ruler who he feared would remove him from his throne. He inquired of the chief priests where Christ was to be born, and was told that Bethlehem was to be the place of His birth; for so it was stated by the prophets.

Calling the wise men unto him, he instructed them to go to Bethlehem and to search diligently and when they had found the Child, to bring him word that he might go and worship Him.

They were led by the star to the place where Christ was; and when they entered into His presence, they found a babe before whom they bowed in humble adoration. From their saddlebags they brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Being warned of God in a dream, they returned to their own country by another way.

Herod was one of the most wicked rulers ever to sit upon a throne. He was not a Jew, but an Idumean who bowed in mock obeisance to Rome. His treachery

is revealed in the murder of his own wife, her mother, and his sons. This wicked king, being outwitted by the Magi, sent his soldiers into Bethlehem to put to death all male children two years of age and under.

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."¹¹

Ramah was a village on the border of Benjamin on the highway between Bethel and Bethlehem.

No one will ever know how many babes were put to death by the order of Herod. This was one of the last acts of his wicked life.

Those who died at Herod's hands offered their blood for Christ, who in turn was to offer His blood for all men. He came into the world to die for others—here were others who died for Him.

A short time after this, Herod died of a loathsome disease in which his body began to putrefy while he was yet living.

Warned of God, Joseph took the young Child and His mother and departed by night for Egypt, and there they found safety. They remained in Egypt until the death of Herod, when they returned to their long-forsaken home in Nazareth.

"But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother; and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel . . . and he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth."¹²

The fact that the greater part of the life of Jesus was lived here lends interest to this place. Here one

11. Matthew 2:17-18.

12. Matthew 2:19-21, 23.

may see the traditional home of Joseph and Mary, the carpenter shop of Joseph, and the synagogue where Jesus preached. When the visitor inquires for evidence to confirm the information, he finds there is nothing to support such theories. The hills surrounding the town are the same, the Virgin's Fountain is the same to which the maidens of the town came for their daily supply of water and to hear the latest gossip.

Some of the daughters of Nazareth still come to this spring with their empty water jars balanced upon their heads; and after they have filled them, they again place them upon their heads and walk sedately away. There is nothing about the town of Nazareth to attract the visitor except the history that is connected with the place. There is nothing attractive about the homes, for they are built all alike of square blocks of stone. They are constructed with flat roofs upon which the people sleep at night. The people are friendly, and the beggars are plentiful. The only claim to greatness the town of Nazareth can make is the fact that here Jesus passed His childhood, here He grew to manhood, and from here has gone forth One whose teaching has gone into all the world and has exerted an influence upon the hearts and lives of all mankind.

From the hills of Nazareth one obtains an excellent view of the Plain of Esdraelon and Mount Carmel. In the time of Jesus, Nazareth was held in contempt though no reason is given for it in the Scriptures. Nazareth appears to have undergone but little change from the time of Christ. As the tourist is conducted through the narrow streets and about the hillsides he can be sure that somewhere near is the place where Jesus walked.

CHAPTER II

THE HIDDEN YEARS

The country of Galilee, to which Joseph and Mary came, is one of the best sections of the land of Israel. It is indeed a lovely land, for here one may see green hills and fertile valleys in which are found many fountains whose streams form small rivulets.

Josephus described Galilee as "rich in pasture and planted with all manner of trees, so that by its geniality it allured even the least zealous in husbandry. Therefore, it was all worked by the inhabitants, and no part of it was idle. Yet were there also frequent cities, and the multitude of villages had in every case, by reason of the fertility, a large population."

This is evident by the great crowds that gathered on short notice to hear Jesus as He proclaimed the truths of the coming kingdom.

The city of Nazareth is situated among the mountains of Galilee, near the Plain of Esdraelon. It was a lovely spot, rich in the history of the Scriptures. From the top of the hills surrounding the city one obtained a wonderful view.

To the north could be seen the Lebanon Range and the peak of Mount Hermon; to the east was the valley of the Jordan and the mountains of Gilead; to the south was the great plain; and to the west lay Mount Carmel, bordering the Mediterranean. Mount Tabor, too, may be seen from Nazareth. Here it was that Barak and Deborah, under the guidance of God, defeated the forces of Sisera. From Mount Tabor, too, one may see Mount Gilboa and the fields where Gideon defeated the Midianites, the place where Saul and his sons died in battle. Not far away is the village of

Endor where Saul went to consult with the witch who called up the spirit of Samuel, who informed Saul of his approaching death.

Within the limits of the city is the Virgin's Fountain, which, being the only one within the city, may be safely associated with the life of Christ. The visitor to Nazareth will want to see the Virgin's Fountain. There is no doubt but what this is the fountain that supplied the households of Nazareth in ancient times. Today one may see women walking to this spring with their water jars to obtain a supply of the clear cool water for the noonday or evening meal. From the crest of the hill above the city one can see the waters of the Sea of Galilee and also the roads which lead to the various cities of Israel.

Nazareth, although in the territory of Israel, is an Arab city. Through an agreement with the Jewish guides, Arab guides take over the task of conducting the tourists to the places of interest about the city. One does not walk far until he is almost surrounded by begging children who ask for cigarettes, chewing gum, and "baksheesh."

After the arrival of the holy family in the city of Nazareth a curtain of silence shuts out all information concerning the life of Jesus until He reaches the age of thirty years. This curtain is lifted but once, when at the age of twelve, Jesus accompanied His parents to the city of Jerusalem to keep the Feast of the Passover.

Jerusalem will never again be visited by the thousands who came to the city on an occasion like the Feast of the Passover, but she will always occupy a warm spot in the hearts of Jews, Moslems, and Christians. To this city, to which Jesus came many times in His life, come thousands of pilgrims each year. These pilgrims visit many of the sacred points of interest about the city, such as Bethlehem, Nablus, Bethany, Jericho, the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. As these visitors walk about the streets of the city

their attention is directed to the traditional place of the crucifixion, to the wailing wall built of stones from the Jewish temple, to the garden tomb, to the Via Dolorosa, and from various points they gaze upon the cross, the crescent, and the star, representing the various types of religion which predominate here. Some of the great stone walls of this city are tear-stained, others are blood-stained and scarred with the evidence of battles that were fought long ago. Through the gates of Jerusalem have passed some with their swords and staves, while others have carried only branches of palms, singing "Hosanna to the King."

At the age of twelve a Jewish boy became a son of the Law and assumed all the responsibility of obedience to the commands of the Decalogue and its sundry ordinances. So it was that the child Jesus, in company with Joseph and Mary, joined with a great company of pilgrims who were traveling toward Jerusalem to keep the sacred Feast of the Passover which was celebrated in the month of Abib. Jesus must certainly have heard from Joseph and Mary about the beauty and glory of the Holy City. Possibly He had dreamed of the time when He, too, should be privileged to look upon it with His own eyes; and now His desires were to be fulfilled.

The journey possibly required three or four days. It has been a wonderful event in the life of the youthful Jesus. Many scenes of beauty unfold before the eyes of the youthful Christ as they pass along the highway.

On the summit of Mount Moriah is the temple, the center of attraction in the city of David. Thousands of pilgrims have pitched their tents on the hill-sides outside of the walls of the city. There will be days of impressive ceremonies at the homes and in the temple before the crowds begin to disperse.

The days pass quickly, and the feast and the festival come to an end. The pilgrims make preparation

to return to their own homes. There is much confusion as the people seek out their own group in preparation for their departure.

The highways are crowded with the happy people; but as they approach the by-roads, small groups of the pilgrims separate from the main caravan to return to their own homes. As the shadows of the evening begin to lengthen, the weary pilgrims turn aside to camp for the night. Joseph and Mary soon discover that Jesus is not with them.

They hurriedly search among the children of each group, but they do not find him.

In fear and trembling they retrace their steps toward the city of Jerusalem, not knowing where they should begin their search. After searching the city for three days, they remember that the temple was a center of attraction for Him, so they hasten toward that holy place. And there they find Him, sitting in the midst of the Rabbis, hearing and asking them questions.

Mary rushes toward Him, saying, "Child, do you not know that your father and I have sought thee in great anxiety?"

"And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?"¹

The record tells us that He returned to Nazareth with His parents and was subject unto them, growing in favor with God and man. Then the curtain of

1. Luke 2:46-49.

silence shuts out all record of His life and activities for eighteen years.

Without doubt the earthly education of Jesus began in the home. His parents were His teachers. Aside from Joseph and Mary, He must have learned from those who labored the great spiritual truths He fashioned into His parables.

"Behold a sower went forth to sow and as he sowed some seed fell by the wayside and the fowls of the air came and devoured them up . . ."

"There was a certain householder who planted a vineyard and hedged it about . . ."

"For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it."

Jesus looked upon the beauties of nature, and these He wove into His sermons.

"Behold the lilies of the field, they toil not neither do they spin, yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

"The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field."

Joseph must have obtained a copy of the Scriptures or some portion thereof; for in addition to these illustrations drawn from nature, Jesus continually referred to the Divine Text during His personal ministry.

In preparation for the work which He was to do, Jesus worked with His own hands.

Though He was the King of an unending kingdom, He was born in a humble home. He was not cradled in the lap of luxury, but upon the shavings of a carpenter shop. Though He was to teach the truths of a spiritual kingdom, He first learned to work with material things.

"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda and Simon?"²

2. Matthew 13:55.

Jesus, the carpenter, lived in the midst of the things which He made. He fashioned the tables about which His neighbors sat and ate their simple meals, the doors which protected their homes against the intruder, the ox yokes for the farmer, and the chests for the housewife. While He labored as a carpenter, He must have thought of the prophecies which foretold His coming and the work which He was to do.

Doubtless He knew of the words of the prophet who led Israel out of the servitude of Egypt and to the borders of the Promised Land, who had foretold the coming of the long awaited Messiah.

"The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."³

Jesus knew He was the one of whom Isaiah spoke when he said, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."⁴

He knew that He was to be the stone of stumbling and the rock of offence to Israel and a gin and a snare to the people of Jerusalem.

He knew that He would be despised of men, that he would have many sorrows and that He would be acquainted with grief.

He knew that He would be rejected by those by whom He should have been received, that they would speak against Him with a lying tongue, that they would offer Him gall to drink, and that they would pierce His hands and feet.

But before these things came to pass He must be proclaimed as the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world.

3. Deuteronomy 18:15.

4. Isaiah 9:7.

One would come in the spirit and power of Elijah who would prophesy of Him, who would turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.

In preparation for all of this, "There was a man who was sent from God whose name was John. He came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."⁵

When John, the son of Elizabeth and Zacharias, reached the age of thirty years the word of God came unto him as the word came unto other prophets before him. His birth, like that of Jesus, was attended by a miracle.

Zacharias, a priest of the course of Abia, had prayed earnestly that a child might be born to them; but the years had slipped away, and now he was old and his wife was well stricken in years.

As he ministered in the temple of the Lord, Gabriel, the angel of God, informed him that his desires were to be fulfilled, saying, "Fear not, Zacharias; for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.—And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that standeth in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And behold thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things be performed."⁶

5. John 1:6, 7.

6. Luke 1:13-20.

When the child was born, the father, Zacharias, signified that the name of his newborn son was to be John. His tongue was then loosed, and he prophesied that the child would be called the prophet of the highest; for he would go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their transgressions.

In preparation for the important role he was to play, John went into the wilderness beyond Jordan. The record tells us nothing of his preparation to announce the nearness of the kingdom of God.

We are told only that he was clothed with a garment of camel's hair with a leather girdle about his loins.

At the appointed time the word of God came unto him in the wilderness near the Jordan, and he began to proclaim the approach of the kingdom of heaven.

"The word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; as it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."⁷

When he was asked if he was the Anointed one of God who should come into the world, he said, "I am not he; I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Then went out all Judea and Jerusalem unto him and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

The exact place where John was baptizing is not definitely known, but it is supposed to be directly east from Jericho.

7. Luke 3:2-6.

The Pharisees and the scribes heard of the teaching of the prophet of the wilderness, and they, too, came out to see him and to hear what he would say.

In the workshop amid the hills of far away Galilee Jesus heard the call of God for Him to begin His work, and He knew that His time drew near.

One day He completed His task, laid aside His saw, hung up His hammer, discarded His apron, and closed the door of the shop as He left, never to return.

Jesus had heard of the prophet who washed the people in the waters of the Jordan as they renounced their former lives to live in closer relationship with God.

The Jordan is the chief stream of the Holy Land. From its source near Mount Hermon it flows into Lake Hule, and from there into the Sea of Galilee. From the Sea of Galilee to its terminus in the Dead Sea, the Jordan offers nothing to the human family but instability and trouble. It is a stream that is capable of rising very quickly and overflowing its banks.

The Jordan flows through what is known as the Jordan valley, a long depression believed to have been formed by an earthquake ages ago. This valley is from six hundred to twelve hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean and from three to fourteen miles wide. The river bed itself is a very crooked ditch extending southward from the Sea of Galilee like a crawling snake through what was Galilee, Samaria, and Jordan. The river bed is now within the territory of the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan. The Jordan has no pleasant pools where the fisherman may test his skill, no gently sloping plains where one would like to build a home overlooking the stream.

Near the Sea of Galilee the Jordan is a very clear and beautiful stream; but as it continues its course, it picks up the silt and soil of the country through which it passes and thus becomes a very dirty stream. This is possibly the reason that Naaman, the Syrian,

hesitated to wash in the Jordan, preferring the rivers of Damascus, which were crystal clear.

The farther south toward the Dead Sea one travels, the more barren the land of the Jordan valley becomes. All vegetation disappears, and the land adjoining the river takes on a desolate appearance. It was not because of the beauty of the stream that John chose it as a place for his ceremonial ablutions, but because it offered an abundance of the element necessary for the baptism of repentance which brought all of Jerusalem and Judea unto him.

John's preaching called for the people to "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The Messiah soon is to come. John not only preached purity of life, but he called upon all to submit to the rite of baptism, thus gaining the title of the Baptist.

The people believed that Christ would restore the kingdom of David and Solomon, dealing harshly with the heathen, but tenderly with Israel. But Jesus knew that such was not His purpose, that He was not to be an earthly king, but a heavenly, that He could not offer them grandeur and glory, but privation and persecution. He knew that He would not be crowned with a diadem of jewels, but with a crown of thorns, that He would not be arrayed in a linen robe of royalty, but in a purple robe of mockery, that He would not sway the hearts of His people from the dignity of a throne but from the ignominy of a cross.

When John saw Jesus coming to be baptized of him in the Jordan, he said to the multitude that stood by, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."⁸

John said, "I have need to be baptized of thee and comest thou to me?" Jesus said, "Suffer it to be so now to fulfill all righteousness." Then he suffered him.

"And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens

8. John 1:29.

were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."⁹

After Jesus was baptized He went away into the desert where He fasted forty days and nights, after which He was hungry.

Then Satan came to Him, tempting Him, saying, "If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God."

Again Satan tempted Him as He stood upon the pinnacle of the temple, saying, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Satan did not accept his defeat, but from the top of a mountain showed Him the kingdoms of the earth, saying, "I will give thee power and honor if thou will bow and worship me."

Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Then Satan left Him, and the angels of the Lord came and ministered unto him.

One of the peaks of the mountain range west of Jericho, called the Quarantana, is pointed out as the place of the temptation of Christ. From this mountain range to the north one could see the peak of Mount Hermon, the cities of Pella, Scythopolis, Jericho, with its imperial palaces and baths, and the various provinces or kingdoms into which the land had been divided in the time of Christ, all of which were promised to the Lord by Satan.

9. Matthew 3:16, 17.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

Some people are inclined to say, "The reason Jesus did not sin was because He was divine, the Son of God." While it is true that He was the Son of God, yet at the same time He was the Son of Man also, and as such He was subject to the temptations of the flesh just as we are subject to them today.

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."¹⁰

Jesus has shown that it is possible for man to overcome the temptations that Satan places before him, and the divine Guidebook gives assurance of this fact.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."¹¹

From this incident in the life of our Savior we learn that no person endeavoring to do the will of the Father can live without temptation, that the surest way to overcome temptation is to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and that when we have overcome the temptation the Divine assurance that we have done the will of the Father will strengthen us for further trials.

10. Hebrews 2:16-18.

11. I Corinthians 10:13.

CHAPTER III

JESUS REVEALED AS THE MESSIAH

After the baptism and the temptation of Jesus we are told that He departed into Galilee. There Andrew and John, disciples of the Baptizer, convinced that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, became His followers. With the information that they had found the Lord's Anointed, Peter was invited to leave his nets and become a fisher of men. Philip also became a disciple and finding Nathanael sought to convince him of the divinity of Jesus.

"Philip findeth Nathanael and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and in the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

"Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."¹

Very soon after this there was a marriage feast at Cana, and Jesus and His disciples were invited to attend.

The customs concerning marriage have changed but little in the past centuries among the people of the Holy Land. As indicated in the Scriptures, when the day for the wedding arrived, the bride bathed, arrayed

1. John 1:45-49.

herself in a white linen robe, and put on her jewels and her bridal girdle about her waist. With a band of gold coins about her head and a veil covering her face, she awaited the coming of the groom.

The bridegroom, dressed in his best garments, set out from his home for the house of the bride's parents, attended by his friends, musicians, and singers. If the procession moved by night, some of those who accompanied him carried torches or lamps to light the way.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom."²

Having received his veiled bride from her parents with their blessings and the good wishes of his friends, he conducted the whole party back to his own home with the singers and musicians, maidens, and friends of both the contracting parties. When they arrived at the home the groom had prepared for his bride, a feast was served to all of the guests.

The groom now associated with the bride for the first time. The bride was accompanied to the nuptial chamber by her parents and the groom, by his friends. On the following day the festivities were resumed and were continued for a period of several days. The visitor to the Holy Land will likely see such a marriage procession if he is in that country for a period of time.

Cana of Galilee was a small city four or five miles north and east of Nazareth. It was the scene of the first miracle of Jesus. Today it is called Kefr Kenna and is accepted by most Bible students as the original Cana, though some are inclined to believe that the ruins of a small village four miles north of Kefr Kenna is the place where the marriage took place.

The former place was accepted by the Crusaders as the true Cana since it possessed ample springs of

2. Matthew 25:1.

water and abounded in fig trees. Today the tourists who visit this little city are met by friendly people who offer them souvenir post cards and trinkets of various kinds for a very nominal sum. The marriage which took place in this little village will forever live in the memory of mankind though the names of the contracting parties are not given. The feast, after the custom of the age, was held at the home of the groom. Evidently it was an humble home for there were no slaves, but only those who assisted in serving.

During the feast, at which Mary, the mother of Jesus, may have been assisting, she came to Jesus and informed Him that the supply of wine was exhausted.

Jesus said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee. My hour is not yet come." Mary did not continue the conversation but instructed the servants to comply with any request that He might make.

Jesus instructed the servants to fill the water jars that were used for holding the water for purification purposes. When they were filled the servants began serving the guests again, and one affirmed that the groom had saved the best wine till the last.

When the feast was finished Jesus went down to Capernaum accompanied by His mother, His brethren and his disciples. Capernaum was a city of Galilee where Peter and Andrew resided. There seems to be no doubt that it was a city of several thousand inhabitants in the days of Jesus. It had the office of a tax collector, a military unit, and a synagogue in which our Lord frequently taught. Capernaum became the residence of Jesus and the scene of many of His miracles. Here He healed the centurion's servant, Peter's wife's mother, the man afflicted with an unclean spirit and many others. Because of the unbelief of the people in rejecting Jesus, He foretold the doom of the city, saying that Capernaum would be brought down to hell. Today nothing remains of the city except the ruins of the synagogue and the broken columns of the

public buildings which mark the streets of this once prosperous city.

Jesus did not remain at Capernaum many days for the Jewish Passover was drawing near; and He must go to Jerusalem for the observance of the great feast.

As one approaches the city of Jerusalem, Mount Moriah comes into view. This is a spot that is rich in Biblical history, for here upon this mount Abraham was about to offer up his son Isaac when God called to him to stay his hand. Here Araunah threshed his grain until David purchased the plot of ground for fifty shekels of silver. "Here Solomon built the temple, which was later destroyed by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, and dedicated it to the Lord."

At the end of the Babylonian captivity, Zerubabel built a second temple which, after standing for five hundred years, was repaired and restored by Herod. This was the temple which was destroyed by Titus and his Roman legions. When one walks about the courtyard on Mount Moriah, he is indeed walking where Jesus walked.

Today Mount Moriah is occupied by the Moslem mosque which is called the Dome of the Rock, built in 688 by Abd-el-Melik. This building is octagonal in shape, constructed of marble and blue and green tiles, which are decorated with Arabic adages taken from the Koran.

Nearby is the Haran-esh-Sherif, another sanctuary of the Moslems, with its flowing fountain where the faithful wash their eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and hands before entering these places of worship. From this spacious courtyard one obtains a wonderful view of much of the city, the Kidron valley, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Mount of Olives which lies directly east.

From the time that Jesus became twelve years of age, He had accompanied the train of pilgrims to the Holy City to keep this feast. But on this occasion He

would not go up alone for the celebration of the feast. He would go up also to begin His public ministry in the city of David.

Arriving in the city He went first to the temple, and in the outer court His eyes fell upon the stalls of those who were making a place of merchandise of this sacred place.

It was true that victims would be required for the Passover sacrifices and for the rites of purification. The priests, seeing in this an opportunity to enrich themselves, had established a market place in the sacred court. To facilitate the purchase of the animals for the sacrifices and offerings, the priests had allowed money changers to establish themselves in the same court. Here the money of the Jews from other countries could be converted into the coin of the realm for a fee. All adult Jews, old or young, rich or poor, had to pay a half shekel temple tax.

When Jesus looked upon the scene and heard the bleating of the sheep, the lowing of the oxen, and the babble of the voices of the buyers and the sellers, His indignation was aroused within Him. Here was a place devoted to the worship of God; but instead of its being a place of dignity and quiet, it had been transformed into a trader's mart. There is little wonder that the Lord became incensed at this desecration.

Gathering together the discarded halter ropes of the sacrificial animals, Jesus fashioned them into a scourge and began to strike those who had thus profaned the sacred precincts of the temple. Driving the sheep and the oxen before Him, He said, "Make not my Father's house a place of merchandise."

The tables of the money changers were overthrown and the sellers of doves for the poor were told to take away their merchandise. The guilty conscience of the offenders prevented them from offering any resistance.

In the days that followed, many believed on Jesus because of the miracles He performed. These were a

source of astonishment to the members of the Sanhedrin. They would admit that He was a teacher sent from God, but they wanted more information. Was He the long awaited Messiah?

To obtain the answer to this question, one of their number, knowing that the days were filled with discussions, sought out Jesus by night. Just where this meeting took place is not revealed. It is known that as the days drew to a close Jesus would leave the city and follow one of the paths that led down to the valley of Jehoshaphat, cross over the brook Kidron, climb the opposite slope, and spend the night under the starry dome of heaven. Sometimes He would cross over the Mount of Olives to the little town of Bethany and there they spent the night in the home of Lazarus. Where He may have been when Nicodemus came to Him by night is not revealed. He came by night that he might be able to talk freely with Jesus.

He addressed Jesus as Rabbi, meaning "teacher," saying, "Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him."³

Jesus ignored the implied compliment and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

The Jews indeed were waiting for the kingdom of heaven, but they were expecting it to come with power and glory, at which time the Messiah would reveal himself as the King of Israel. They failed to understand that the kingdom of God was to be a spiritual kingdom. The words of Jesus therefore puzzled Nicodemus. He asked, "How can a man be born when he is old?"

Though he was a member of the Sanhedrin and educated in all matters of the law of Moses, yet he could not comprehend spiritual truths. Jesus endeavored to open the door of his understanding by re-

3. John 3:2.

stating the principles of regeneration, saying, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Jesus referred to the fact that one is begotten by the word of truth and born of the water by which he becomes a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. When Nicodemus was told that he must be born again, he could think only of a fleshly birth. So confused was Nicodemus by these words that he professed to be unable to understand the thing to which the Savior referred. Jesus said, "As a teacher in Israel these things should be readily understood by you. If I have told you of earthly things and you do not comprehend them, how will you understand if I tell you of heavenly things?"

How much farther the conversation continued is not disclosed. From this point Jesus seemed to address His remarks chiefly to the disciples.

When the Passover feast ended, Jesus and His disciples returned to the place of His baptism in the Jordan. His miracles at Jerusalem had amazed the people, and great crowds followed out to the Jordan River. He continued His teaching there for some time, and a great many people were baptized by His disciples.

Somewhere east of Jericho or thereabouts Jesus tarried with His disciples and taught the multitudes which had followed Him from Jerusalem. Here in the Jordan with its one gift of unfailing water, John and Jesus found the necessary element for administering the baptism of repentance. When one travels over the old road from Jericho to Jordan, he is passing over the ground where Jesus walked.

John the Baptist had departed from this place and was now baptizing in Aenon near Salim because there was much water there. Certain ones came to John and said, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond

Jordan to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come unto him."⁴

When Jesus knew that the word that He was preaching on the banks of the Jordan would reach the Pharisees at Jerusalem and that they would begin their opposition to Him, He departed from Judea into Galilee.

There was another reason for His hasty departure. Jesus learned that John the Baptist had been arrested by Herod. "For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Phillip's wife: for he had married her. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things and heard him gladly."⁵

In the course of John's teaching he had said it was not lawful for Herod to have his brother's wife. Herod had heard of John's teaching that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife, and so cast him into prison.

The action of Herod was possibly induced by the vindictiveness of Herodias, Philip's wife, who had deserted him for Herod.

When Jesus learned of this, He departed for Galilee, going by way of Samaria.

The people of Galilee passed through Samaria when they came in great groups to the feasts at Jerusalem, but it was unusual for a small group to travel through this territory because of the hostility of the people. The Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans as a half-caste people. About 721 B.C. Shalmaneser, the Assyrian king, invaded the northern Kingdom of Israel, killed or deported all the Jewish males, and brought men from Assyria who married the Jewish

4. John 3:26.

5. Mark 6:17-20.

maidens; and from them descended the Samaritan people.

These people established a false system of religion and worshiped God at Mount Gerizim. The Samaritans accepted only the five books of Moses, kept the Sabbath, practiced circumcision, and celebrated the yearly festivals.

Jesus and His disciples approached the town of Sychar which is near the base of Mount Ebal. Wearied with the day's travel, Jesus seated Himself at Jacob's well to await the return of His disciples who had gone into the city to buy bread. This well was highly regarded by the people of Sychar because of its water, which was pure and cold.

While Jesus waited at the well, a Samaritan woman approached with her empty pitcher, and He asked her for a drink.

With a tone of haughtiness in her voice, she asked, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, doth ask a drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?"

Jesus pointed out to her that He was the source of living water, which, if drunk, would be a well of water springing up unto eternal life, a spiritual truth which the Samaritan woman did not understand.

"Jesus saith unto her, Go call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou has had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman said unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: We know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit

and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."⁶

The disciples arrived just at this time, and they marveled that Jesus would enter into a conversation with a Samaritan woman. As the conversation ended, the woman hastened into the city and there said to the people, "Come see a man that told me all things I ever did. Is not this the Messiah?"

As the people came out of the city, Jesus looked upon them and said, "Look unto the fields, for they are white already to harvest." At the request of the people He abode there two days, and many believed on Him because of His words.

Jacob's well, which is one of the few definitely identified places in the Bible lands, is about seventy-five feet deep at the present time. It is at the base of Mount Gerizim. This mount, called the Mount of Blessing, is about two thousand, eight hundred feet high. Mount Ebal, which is separated from it by a narrow valley and rises to a height of about three thousand feet, was called the Mount of Cursing, because the children of Israel came into Canaan through the pass between these mountains. On Mount Gerizim they shouted the blessings that God would give to them if they were obedient to His laws; and from Mount Ebal, the curses or punishment that God would send upon them if they were disobedient to God's law. About seventeen hundred years before the time of Christ, Jacob had bought the ground where his well is situated for a hundred pieces of money. The location of the well in this valley may be accounted for by the fact that the only water available was from nearby streams which possibly dried up during the summer months. These would be guarded by the owners and denied to the stranger. To supply his flocks and herds Jacob dug this well, which is about three feet in di-

6. John 4:16-24.

ameter at its opening but is of greater diameter fifty feet down.

The city of Shechem, now called Nabulus, lies to the west; and the village of Sychar, from which the Samaritan woman came, is to the south and east at the base of Mount Ebal. The Greek church owns the adjoining ground and has the care of the well.

As one looks upon the mountains towering above this narrow valley, he is looking upon the same mountains upon which Jesus looked. Standing by the well, one cannot but meditate upon the promise of the Savior that whosoever would drink of the water that He would give should never thirst.

After two days Jesus and His disciples continued their journey into Galilee.

It is not possible to state with certainty the exact order of events in the life of Jesus; but it appears that after leaving Samaria He returned to Nazareth, His home city, and as His custom was He entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and signified His desire to read a portion of God's word. They gave unto Him the scroll of the prophet Esaias, and He unrolled it to the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."⁷

Jesus showed that this prophecy referred to Him and to the work that He would do. As they heard His words they were filled with wrath because He professed to be a prophet of God. They arose in anger, thrust Him out of the synagogue, and led Him to the brow of the hill upon which Nazareth is built, intending to cast Him headlong from its height.

7. Luke 4:18, 19.

As they approached the place where they proposed to put Him to death, Jesus passed through their midst and escaped out of their hands.

Extending along the hill upon which the city is built is a rocky cliff which is about fifty feet high, and it is supposed that this place is where His own people intended to cast Him headlong.

Knowing that a prophet was not without honor save in his own country, that His own people were inclined to reject Him, He left the city of His childhood and turned toward Capernaum where He purposed to make His home. Leaving Nazareth for Capernaum it is necessary for one to pass through Cana, which lies north and east of Nazareth.

Soon after Jesus arrived in Cana, an official of the city of Capernaum, having heard that Jesus had left Judea for Galilee, came into this village seeking Him. This man was troubled in mind by the illness of his only son. As the fame of Jesus had reached Galilee, this anxious parent had left the bedside of the ailing child to beg Jesus to come quickly to Capernaum to heal his son.

Jesus answered the request by saying, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth; and himself believed and his whole house."⁸

From this time forward Jesus made His home at Capernaum.

8. John 4:48-53.

"And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the seacoast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, The people which sat in darkness saw a great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."⁹

Capernaum was a city of importance located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is a large inland lake about fifteen miles in length and about eight miles in width. It is six hundred eighty feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea and is surrounded by hills except at the points where the Jordan River enters and leaves the sea. The hills or mountains on the eastern shore rise to a height of a thousand feet; those on the west shore rise to a height of eight hundred feet, but toward the southern end they are much lower and less steep. Violent storms sometimes sweep down upon the surface of the sea from the surrounding hills. The Sea of Galilee abounds in fish, which are taken in nets both from the fisher boats and from the shores of the lake.

Many wonderful events transpired in the vicinity of Capernaum. Here Jesus healed the mother of Peter's wife, here the man who was possessed with an unclean spirit was healed and somewhere in this city Jesus taught His disciples a lesson in meekness by setting a little child before them and said, "whosoever shall receive one of such children in My name receiveth Me, and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me but Him that sent Me".

In New Testament times on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, there were many small cities with from ten to fifteen thousand inhabitants.

9. Matthew 4:13-16.

Today there is only one town of any size, and that is the city of Tiberias with a population of five thousand people. From the veranda of the Kinnereth Hotel, headquarters for the tourist, one has an excellent view of the blue Galilee.

Across the water on the east of the sea one can see the mountains which are in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Somewhere on this range of mountains is the place where the herd of swine ran violently down the hill and perished in the sea after Jesus had cast the unclean spirits out of a man and allowed them to take possession of the swine, after which Jesus was urged to depart from among them. As the sun sinks behind the hills on the western side of the lake, the waters change to red and gold and then gradually fade into darkness. When the moon rises above the mountains on the eastern side of the lake the waters turn to silver. Extending across the dark sea there is first a silver pathway of light which gradually spreads until the whole sea is transformed into a shimmering surface presenting a very beautiful sight which calls to memory the words of the old song, "Beside the Sea, the Silver Sea."

Though Capernaum came to be called "His own city," the people of this community were slow to accept Jesus as the Messiah though many of His greatest miracles took place in this city. Situated as it was on the highway between Damascus and the Mediterranean seaports, as well as on the highway that led down to Egypt, it became a center of influence and industry. Here the Jews and the Arabs, the Greeks and the Romans, the trader and the merchant, the fisherman and the olive grower rubbed shoulders with each other. Today Capernaum is deserted except for the guides who point out the places of interest among the ruins of that ancient city.

When Jesus came to Capernaum He found that word of His miracles and of His opposition to the

money changers and the sellers of sheep and oxen at the temple in Jerusalem during the Passover had already reached the city. It is possible that on the return from Jerusalem His disciples who had been with Him at Jerusalem and at the Jordan turned toward their old home while He continued His journey to Nazareth. When Jesus came to Capernaum, they had returned to their former occupation.

On these men and others whom He would choose, Jesus purposed to place the responsibility of continuing the work He was about to begin. It would be necessary to call them from their labor as fishermen to become fishers of men.

Preparatory to this Jesus stood on the shore watching them as they returned from a night of fruitless labor. Some of the people of the city were assembled there also. As the fishermen stepped from their boats, Jesus entered that of Simon Peter and asked that it be put out a little from the shore. From the boat Jesus began to speak to the people concerning the coming of the kingdom of God. When the discourse was finished, He turned to Simon Peter and said, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."¹⁰

Jesus said to Peter, "Fear not, from henceforth thou shall catch men." Coming to James and to John,

10. Luke 5:4-8.

He urged them, too, to follow Him, and they left their nets and boats and followed Him.

One thing is evident in the selection of those who became His disciples. They did not choose Jesus, but He chose them. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."¹¹

When a scribe offered to follow Jesus, thinking that when the kingdom was established he would be rewarded with a position of prominence, Jesus said, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."¹²

On a Sabbath day soon after Jesus came to Capernaum, He entered the synagogue and was given opportunity to speak to those assembled there.

In the assembly on this occasion there was a man with an unclean spirit. This demon cried out, saying, "Let us alone: what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about."¹³

Jesus left the synagogue at the end of the service and entered into the home of Simon Peter. Here he learned of the illness of the mother of Peter's wife. She was afflicted with a great fever and the family, knowing of the healing of the man possessed with an unclean spirit, besought Jesus that he would heal her of the fever. Jesus stood over her and rebuked the

11. John 15:16.

12. Matthew 8:20.

13. Luke 4:33-37.

fever, and she arose and ministered to the needs of those present. As the day drew to a close, the people of the community came with their sick and impotent folk; and Jesus laid His hands upon them and healed them.

Jesus seems to have remained at the home of Peter for the night; but early the next morning before the household was astir, He slipped away into the hills that form the background for Capernaum that He might spend an uninterrupted period in prayer to God.

When the family awoke they missed Jesus and immediately began to search for Him. When they found Jesus they informed Him that all the people were seeking Him.

Leaving them to meditate upon the words He had spoken and the miracles He had performed, Jesus departed with His disciples to other cities of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and healing the diseased. It seems that of all whom Jesus healed on his journey through Galilee the gospel writers recorded only the healing of the leper who came to Jesus begging to be healed.

The person afflicted with leprosy was a social outcast. He had to separate himself from all people, and as he walked along the way he had to cry out, "Unclean, unclean."

"And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy; who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And he put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But so much the more went there a fame

abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities"¹⁴

The appeal of this man did not fall upon unheeding ears. Jesus stretched forth His hand and said, "I will, be thou clean," and at once his flesh became sound and whole.

By this act Jesus became ceremonially unclean. He had also infringed upon the prerogative of the priests, who alone had the power to pronounce the leper clean. Jesus therefore instructed him to say nothing to any man, but to go show himself to the priests and to offer the gift required by the law.

But this man, overjoyed at his healing, immediately began to tell the story of his cleansing. As the news of the healing spread, great crowds assembled to witness the miracles of Jesus.

Just what villages and towns were visited by Jesus in this part of His ministry is not definitely known, but of this we may be sure: that as one walks about the villages and towns that have come down to the present day and travels over the ancient roadways leading to them, he is covering the same ground where Jesus walked. Here is ground made sacred by the Son of God. Without a doubt one passes over the very paths once trodden by the blessed feet of our Lord.

14. Luke 5:12-15.

CHAPTER IV

THE RETURN TO CAPERNAUM

The travels of Jesus over Galilee may have covered a period of several months. As the news of the healing of the leper spread and the crowds that followed Him increased, the scribes and the Pharisees in Jerusalem became alarmed at the increased popularity of Jesus. Hitherto, the people had looked to them as leaders; now they looked to Jesus.

When He returned to Capernaum, the doctors of the law and the Pharisees had assembled there to learn just what the wonder-worker was teaching and doing.

When the news of the return of the Prophet of Nazareth spread through the city, the people came to the place where He was to hear His words. The place where he taught was crowded. Many stood without, unable to gain entrance.

While Jesus was yet speaking, four men approached, bearing a litter upon which a paralyzed man lay. His friends had heard of the wonderful works of Jesus, and they were bringing him to Jesus for healing.

When they arrived where Jesus was, they could not enter for the great crowd of people who were gathered about the building; but they were not to be denied. Many of the buildings of the Holy Land had flights of steps leading to the roofs, where people would gather in the cool of the evening. The friends of the stricken man conceived a bold idea.

Ascending to the roof they began to remove the tile covering. When the opening was large enough to admit the couch, the friends of the afflicted man lowered it to the uplifted hands of those who stood before

Jesus. Jesus looked upon the prostrate form before Him; and knowing that his paralysis was the result of unrestrained sin, He said, "Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven."

Immediately the scribes and Pharisees began to murmur against Jesus. To one another they accused Him of blasphemy, saying, "Who but God can forgive sins?" Their whispering was known to Jesus, and He asked which was the easiest to say, "Thy sins are forgiven, or rise and walk"?

"And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee and Judea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him, And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the house top and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God."¹

This incident marked the beginning of the conflict which the scribes and the Pharisees waged against

1. Luke 5:17-25.

Jesus. From this time forward they watched every act and weighed every word of Jesus, hoping to trap Him in His speech.

One thing that offended them above all was His association with the common people, the publicans and sinners.

No group of people was more despised than the publicans, the tax gatherers, who assessed and collected the tax for the Roman government. The privilege of collecting the taxes for a given district was sold to the publicans for a certain price. They in turn assessed the taxes, compelling the people to pay to the limit of their ability. Because their assessments were often unjust, they were hated by the people.

To show their contempt for the publicans the Jews excluded them from religious services, rejected their testimony as witnesses, and refused to associate with them.

Because of the prominence of Capernaum as a commercial center, it had a customs house. Jesus passed this way one day; and seeing a man named Levi there, He spoke to him, saying, "Follow me," and the man rose up and followed Jesus.

At his home, Levi the publican, now made for Jesus a great feast to which he invited a great company of publicans. When the Pharisees saw it, they asked the disciples why they ate and drank with sinners.

Jesus entered the controversy at this point, saying, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."²

A year had elapsed since Jesus began his ministry, and the Feast of the Passover was again near at hand. Jesus and his disciples made the journey to the Holy City to keep the feast; and while He was there, those of who had heard of His activities in Galilee

2. Luke 5:31.

watched him closely that they might have a reason to condemn Him.

It had been said that He was guilty of blasphemy because He claimed to have the power to forgive sin; He openly kept company with the publicans and sinners; He neglected to fast and failed to keep holy the Sabbath day.

Each day the scribes and the Pharisees watched Him that they might accuse Him. Near one of the gates of the city there was a pool called Bethesda, which had several porches in which a great many afflicted people gathered each day. At a certain time of the year the waters were troubled or moved, and whosoever was able to step into the pool at this time was cured of whatever disease he had.

Jesus passed by this pool on the Sabbath day; and seeing this man who had been afflicted for almost forty years, asked if he would like to be made whole again.

The afflicted man explained that he had no one to assist him in entering the pool at the right moment and that always some other person was able to step into the pool before him. Jesus said unto him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk," and immediately he received strength and took up his bed, or pallet, and started for his home.

To carry any burden on the Sabbath was considered servile work and was prohibited by law. The Jews who saw this man with his burden informed him it was not lawful for him to carry his bed on the Sabbath. He answered that the One who made him whole also told him to take up his bed.

When Jesus saw that a tumult was being raised, He conveyed Himself away from that place. Later Jesus saw the healed man in the temple and admonished him to "sin no more lest a worse thing befall thee." The man then told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him, and a search was instituted for Him that they might put Him to death as a Sabbath breaker.

One may see in Jerusalem at the present the ruins of a rock-walled pool which is near the temple area that is supposed to be the pool of Bethesda, the scene of the healing of the lame man.

Very shortly after this Jesus entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and a multitude of people followed. The scribes and the Pharisees gathered together to watch Him that they might find some reason for an accusation against Him. In the assembly on this occasion was a man with a withered hand. He had evidently come, hoping to see Jesus that he might be cured.

Jesus, knowing the thoughts of the scribes and the Pharisees, asked the man to stand forth. Then, addressing the whole assembly, He asked, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do evil? To save life or to destroy it?" The doctors of the law and the Pharisees refused to answer. Jesus was grieved at the hardness of their hearts and called for the man to stretch forth his hand, and it was restored whole. The scribes and the Pharisees were filled with indignation.

"And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea and from Jerusalem and from Idumaea and from beyond Jordan."²

The enemies of Jesus now set about to accomplish His death. Their purpose was known to Jesus, and He foresaw the time when they would seek to murder Him. That the work of the kingdom of heaven might not be brought to naught, He selected from among His followers twelve men, whom He called apostles, to continue His work when He was no longer here.

2. Mark 3:6-8.

"And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sickness, and to cast out devils: And Simon he surnamed Peter; and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, the sons of thunder: And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him."³

No one knows whether Jesus ever visited Tiberias or not, but to the traveler to that section of Israel it is one of the most beautiful spots along the lake.

From the porch of the Kinnereth Hotel one has a wonderful view of the lake. In the evening one can hear the wind as it rustles through the leaves of the trees and the splashing of the water against the rocky shore. One feels very near to Jesus as he walks along the shores of Galilee, for here the Son of Man looked upon the same hills and mountains that the tourist sees there today.

West and north of the city of Tiberias there is a double-peaked hill that rises above the surrounding plain. These twin peaks are called the Horns of Hattin, taking their name from the village by that name which is near the base. It is also sometimes called the Hill of the Beatitudes, for it is supposed that it was here that Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount. It is a lovely spot, the slopes of the hillside stretching away to the plain below.

To the north one may see the snow-capped peak of Mount Hermon and to the south, the heights of Mount Tabor. This place seems to be the only eminence that could be called a mountain, and doubtless is the place where Jesus spoke the wonderful truths

3. Mark 3:13-19.

which will continue to touch and influence the hearts of men as long as the world stands. Each statement of Jesus sets forth a sublime truth. He presents no arguments to prove what He has said, for truth is self-evident. These words made a deep impression upon the minds of those who heard, for He taught as one who was vested with authority.

"And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."⁵

There is no pretense in His words. His thoughts are not expressed in philosophical phrases, difficult to be understood. His words are words of comfort, words of consolation, words of truth.

How different are His thoughts from the thoughts of men. Men follow a philosophy which glorifies ma-

5. Matthew 5:2-11.

terial success. He said "Lay not up for yourselves treasures here upon the earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, for where your treasures are, there will your heart be also." He abrogated the law of revenge—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, for "I say unto you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."⁶ Little wonder that the common people heard Him gladly.

Following the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus seems to have returned to Capernaum. A great assembly of people followed Him, hoping to be healed of their diseases.

There was residing in Capernaum a centurion, the captain of a hundred Roman soldiers. This man had a household servant who was very ill. He appealed to the elders of Israel to send Jesus that his servant might be healed. Jesus started for the home of the centurion; but before He reached the home, the centurion sent word that he was not worthy to receive Jesus into his home, requesting that He speak only the word and the servant would be healed.

"Then Jesus went with them, and when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed, for I am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning

6. Matthew 5:44.

to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick."⁷

The day following, Jesus with His disciples went to the little city of Nain, a small city southeast of Nazareth some five or six miles. The present day village, which is still called Nein is a settlement of mud houses, squalid and dirty, situated near the base of Little Hermon. The ruins which surround the hamlet indicate that at one time it was much larger. As Jesus approached the city He met a funeral cortege. Friends and neighbors were bearing to its final resting place the only son of a widow.

Jesus called to the mother, saying, "Weep not," and approaching the bier He spoke to the inanimate body, "I say unto thee, Arise."⁸ The young man sat up and Jesus presented him alive to his mother. The sympathetic nature of Jesus is revealed to us in this incident. Through Luke's gospel story we can see how Jesus worked then and can better understand how He works today to relieve our suffering and our sorrow. Here we see Jesus at work to bring relief to the sorrowing mother. He turned her grief into happiness and her sorrow into joy. Those who accompanied the widow acknowledged that God had indeed visited his people and had raised up a great prophet among them.

As one travels over the road leading into this small village he has a feeling of nearness to Jesus for he stands on ground made sacred by the Savior of men, for somewhere near is the place where Jesus walked.

The news of these wonderful deeds reached the ears of John the Baptizer through his disciples. John was still in the prison where he had been cast by Herod.

7. Luke 7:6-10.

8. Luke 7:14.

Alone, save for the companionship of his disciples who came to him, John no doubt became discouraged and dejected. He began to wonder if he could have been mistaken in affirming that Jesus was the Lamb of God who was to take away the sins of the world. He decided to send two messengers to Jesus with this question, "Art thou He that was to come, or do we look for another?"

At this time the Lord was ministering to the needs of those who had come to Him for healing. He offered no reply to the emissaries of John but continued to minister to the afflicted in their presence. When He had finished His work of healing the infirmities and plagues of those who were present, He addressed the disciples of John.

"Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."⁹

That his disciples might not think that John was vacillating, He assured them that The Baptizer was not like a reed that is moved by the wind, which bends one way and then another; but that he was a great prophet; that of those born of woman there was none greater than he.

As Jesus continued to speak, He voiced His condemnation against that generation, calling attention to those things which were spoken against John. He came neither eating nor drinking, and they said he had a devil; while Jesus came and mingled with the publicans, eating and drinking with them, and they called Him a glutton and the friend of publicans and sinners.

The appeal of John to Jesus was one of the last acts of John's life.

9. Luke 7:22-23.

Prior to this time Jesus had accepted the hospitality of publicans and sinners; now a prominent Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him, and He accepted the invitation. Simon, the Pharisee, doubting whether or not Jesus was really a prophet, received Him as a very ordinary person. He gave Jesus no welcoming kiss; he did not call for a servant to loose His sandals and bathe His tired and dusty feet. These were acts of common courtesy by which a guest was welcomed into a home, but they were denied to Jesus by this doubting Pharisee.

During the meal a woman of the city, a harlot well known for her sinful life, hearing that Jesus sat at meat in the home of the Pharisee, came there and slipped in without being noticed.

She had obtained an alabaster box of precious ointment, and this she poured upon His feet, washing them with the fragrant substance and her tears of repentance and wiping them with the hair of her head. The host, surprised that Jesus did not rebuke her and send her away, reasoned in his own mind that Jesus could not be a prophet or He would have known the woman for what she was. Jesus knowing his thoughts, proved Himself a prophet and more than a prophet.

Addressing His host, He said, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this

woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also. And he said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace."¹⁰

Very shortly after this Herod invited a great number of nobles and officers to a feast in honor of his birthday. During the banquet the daughter of Herodias, Salome, danced before the assembly; and her dancing pleased Herod. Calling the maiden before him, he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she might ask, even if she called for half of his kingdom.

She hastened to her mother to consult with her before making a request. Here was the opportunity for which this wicked woman had waited. She had before departed from her husband to become the adulterous companion of Herod. John had condemned Herod for his wicked conduct, saying, "It is not lawful for thee to have her." For his words of reproof Herod had imprisoned him.

Herodias now had the means by which she could avenge herself against John. She instructed the daughter to say, "Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger."

"And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came,

10. Luke 7:40-50.

and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus."¹¹

When his disciples returned from their mission they told Jesus all things they had done and what they had taught.

Jesus, grieved at hearing of the death of John, wanted quiet and solitude and so said to the disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."¹²

So to have an opportunity for meditation and communion with the Father, He and His disciples entered into a ship and came to a place on the north-east shore of the Sea of Galilee. Here Jesus trusted that He would find the rest He sought. But the people who had assembled at Capernaum saw Him depart by ship so they traveled by foot around the head of the lake to join Him on the other side.

Very shortly after Jesus arrived a multitude of people approached the place where He sought to be alone with His disciples. These people brought with them many who were infirm and afflicted. Touched with compassion for them, Jesus began to teach and to heal the diseased.

As the day drew to a close, His disciples asked Jesus to send the multitude away that they might go into a city and buy bread, for they had nothing to eat.

Jesus answered that they should give the people something to eat.

"And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him,

11. Matthew 14:9-12.

12. Mark 6:31.

Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven and blessed, and brake the loaves and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. And they did all eat and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments and of the fishes, and they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men."¹³

A few years ago a man began excavating for the foundation of a home on the northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. As he followed the lines he had marked out for the walls of his new home, his spade uncovered some hewed stones some distance below the surface of the ground. As he followed the direction in which they ran, he discovered that they formed the frame of a piece of mosaic with a white background, composed of very small stones.

He began clearing away the earth that hid the remainder of the mosaic and discovered that at either end there was a fish formed of small brown stones, and between the two there was a basket containing five small loaves of bread. Archeologists who have examined it ascribe it to the New Testament age and believe it marks the location of the miracle of feeding the five thousand. Its situation on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee where there is a broad expanse of ground that slopes gently toward the sea fits the description of Mark's account of this miracle.

Here on the shore of Galilee Jesus walked with His disciples and ministered to the needs of the multitude.

13. Mark 6:35-44.

CHAPTER V

JESUS VISITS THE REGION OF TYRE AND SIDON

After having supplied the needs of the multitude, Jesus requested His disciples to enter into a ship and return to the other side of the lake while He sent the people to their homes. After the multitude departed, Jesus went up into the slopes of the mountain alone to pray. As the darkness of the night settled upon the lake, a violent storm arose; and the little ship which contained the disciples was tossed about by the waves.

Such storms are not unusual for the Sea of Galilee. Lying as it does in a depression, the warm air will often rush down the slope, causing a storm of great violence.

Jesus, knowing of their fear of such storms, came to them in the fourth watch of the night, walking upon the water. He would have passed by them, but when they saw Him they cried out in fear, supposing it to be a spirit. Jesus called unto them, saying, "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid."

"Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come, and when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? And when they were come unto the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that

were in the ship came and worshipped him saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."¹

When they had crossed over the lake they came into the land of Gennesaret. This is a level plain lying near the ruins of the city of Magdala. It is said to have been a very fertile section of the country in the time of Christ, producing figs, walnuts, olives and grapes.

As the news spread among the inhabitants that the Prophet was there, they sent out into all the country round about and brought to Jesus all who were afflicted with diseases that they might be made whole.

Very shortly after this the scribes and the Pharisees which were at Jerusalem came unto Jesus, accusing His disciples with transgressing the tradition of the elders by neglecting to wash before they ate.

No tradition of the elders was more strict than that of washing the hands before and after a meal. When the disciples of Jesus failed to perform this ceremonial act, the enemies of Jesus came unto Him for an explanation, accusing them of a violation of the tradition that had been established by the elders. Jesus did not deny the charge, but called their attention to the fact that this custom was only a tradition, saying, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."²

That He might spend the greater part of His time with His disciples, Jesus left the vicinity of Capernaum, seeking for a place of seclusion.

1. Matthew 14:28-33.

2. Matthew 15:7-11.

West of the sea of Galilee was the land of the Phoenicians, the ancestors of the Canaanites. Here at Tyre Jesus sought the privacy that would give Him the opportunity to instruct His disciples in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Tyre was the best known city of the Phoenicians, located on the east coast of the Mediterranean not far from the country of Israel, about twenty miles south of Sidon. Nebuchadnezzar had laid siege to this city for thirteen years; and though he had captured that part of the city on the mainland, he was unable to capture the island fortress a quarter of a mile from the shore. Two hundred years later Alexander captured the part of the city that had been rebuilt on the mainland, then turned his attention to the island fortress. He built a roadway two hundred feet wide up to the walls of the fort and over it he brought up his battering rams, with which he destroyed the protecting walls, capturing the wealth of Tyre and putting ten thousand of the people to death and selling thirty thousand into slavery. Here on the beach one may see some of the stones placed there by Alexander to serve as a foundation for the roadway over which he marched to victory.

Shortly after Jesus arrived in this section, it was noised abroad by those of Tyre and Sidon who had witnessed His miracles in Galilee that the Prophet was in their midst.

He was soon approached by a Syro-Phoenician woman who pleaded for Jesus to cast out the demon that afflicted her daughter.

"And, behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and wor-

shipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.

"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."³

The hesitancy of Jesus to heal the afflicted daughter was a trial of this woman's faith. Though a stranger to Jesus, yet He gave to her the blessing which before had been given only to His own people. Jesus foresaw the result of granting this favor. The news of the healing would spread abroad, and soon He would be surrounded, and all opportunity for teaching the twelve would be ended, compelling Him to seek another place where He could teach the disciples undisturbed.

Mark alone tells of the departure of Jesus from the region of Tyre and Sidon after the healing of the afflicted daughter.

"And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coast of Decapolis."⁴

The ten cities of the Decapolis were connected by roads between Damascus and the plain of Esdraelon. Jesus evidently crossed over the upper Jordan, passed through the cities of Decapolis, and approached the Sea of Galilee from the east.

Other than this one incident the gospel writers tell nothing of His experiences near Tyre and Sidon, but Matthew indicates that they had a more receptive mind than those of Galilee, who had witnessed many of His wonderful miracles; for he records these words of the Master:

3. Matthew 15:22-28.

4. Mark 7:31.

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."⁵

Many wonderful events must have transpired at Tyre during the ministry of Jesus there. These people seem to have been impressed by his work among them, for later some of them crossed over the mountains to the Sea of Galilee to see Jesus and to hear His wonderful words.

When the traveler walks about the ruins of Tyre he is reminded that here Jesus walked and that here Paul sojourned for several days, so the teachings of Jesus must have exerted an influence upon the hearts of these people. The glory of ancient Tyre has departed and no vestige of Christianity is to be found there.

From the mission in Phoenicia Jesus came again to the Sea of Galilee, seeking some quiet place where, free from the multitude, He would have opportunity to continue His instruction to His disciples.

Somewhere near the lake the multitude which had followed Him gathered about Him, bringing those in need of healing. Among them was one who was deaf and who was unable to speak clearly.

Jesus took him aside and placed His fingers in his ears and touched his tongue with saliva and said, "Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."⁶

5. Matthew 11:21.

6. Mark 7:34-37.

Those who had followed Jesus had been with Him for several days. What food they had brought had been consumed, and they were now hungry. The compassion of Jesus prompted Him to tell His disciples that He could not send them away without supplying their hunger. His disciples answered that it would be impossible to supply the needs of so great a multitude in the wilderness.

"And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets."⁷

As soon as the multitude had been fed Jesus departed by boat and came to the region of Dalmanutha, a place which cannot now be definitely identified. Here the Pharisees came questioning Him, seeking to trap Him in His speech. When they requested a sign from heaven, Jesus said that no sign would be given them, and He entered into a ship and came to the other side.

His disciples had forgotten to supply themselves with bread before they embarked, and when Jesus said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," they supposed that Jesus was chiding them because they had brought no bread and that He warned them to beware of buying bread which had passed through the hands of the Pharisees. Their reasoning was known to Jesus, and He called to their attention the multitudes who had been fed with a very small amount of food.

"And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have brought no bread. And when

7. Mark 8:5-9.

Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?"⁸

This episode revealed how much the disciples needed teaching. When they reached the upper end of the lake they landed near the town of Bethsaida. This was a town situated on both sides of the upper Jordan, just where it enters the Sea of Galilee. It was the native place of Andrew, Peter and Philip. Originally it was a very small village, but the part lying on the eastern side of the river had been enlarged by Herod Philip and named Bethsaida Julias in honor of Julia, the daughter of Emperor Augustus.

As Jesus passed through Bethsaida, a blind man was brought before him. Jesus took him by the hand and led him out of the town; and when He had healed him, He instructed him not to return to the city, neither to tell anyone in the town of his healing.

Beyond the borders of Galilee, near the base of Mount Hermon, was situated the town of Paneas. Herod Philip enlarged the city, gave it the name Caesarea in honor of Caesar Augustus, and added the name Philippi in honor of himself and to distinguish it from Caesarea on the sea coast.

A lonely road leads to the site of what was at one time a great city, of which nothing now remains but the ruins of the great temple and the great amphitheater built by Herod the Great. After the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, he brought to this place a great

8. Mark 8:16-21.

number of Jewish captives who were thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheater or compelled to fight with each other. Near the base of this mountain is a great cliff which is more than one hundred fifty feet high from which issues a great stream of crystal clear water, produced by the melting snows of Mount Hermon, which is the beginning of the most famous river in the world, the turbulent Jordan.

Here at this place the Greeks worshipped their god Pan which later gave rise to the name Paneas, which has now been altered to Banias by the Arabs because they have no letter P in their alphabet.

Here Jesus found the privacy for which He had been seeking. He immediately began to teach the disciples some of the truths concerning the establishment of the coming kingdom.

He began by questioning the twelve. He asked, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?" The disciples answered that some thought that He was John the Baptist; some, Elijah; others, Jeremias; or one of the prophets. Without doubt Jesus knew what men thought of Him so His questions were not for the purpose of gaining information. He wanted a definite expression from His disciples based upon their conviction.

What did His words of wisdom reveal to them? What did His mighty miracles prove? "Whom say ye that I am?"

Quickly Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." At the beginning of His public ministry, they had thought Him to be the Christ, though he had called Himself only the Son of Man.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and

upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."⁹

It is sufficient to say that the interpretation that Peter was the rock is sanctioned by none of the great commentators; rather do they insist that it was the great confession that Jesus was the Christ.

Even the words that "whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" did not set forth a power that was to be vested in Peter alone, for they were addressed to the others also.

"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."¹⁰

Jesus had foretold His death prior to this time, but their expectation of an earthly kingdom kept them from realizing the import of His words. Now it was time for them to know that He came to die as a ransom for the sins of all men and to be raised from the dead on the third day.

The news was so depressing to Peter that he took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."¹¹

About one week after Jesus foretold His death at Jerusalem He took Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain and was there transfigured before them.

The exact location of this wonderful event is not definitely known. Some students of the Scriptures have thought that Mount Tabor was the scene of the transfiguration. This would have required a journey

9. Matthew 16:17-18.

10. Matthew 18:18.

11. Matthew 16:22-23.

of fifty or sixty miles from Caesarea Philippi where Jesus had been. Others are convinced that the transfiguration was at Mount Hermon, not on the peak of the mountain, which is ten thousand feet high, but in one of the valleys at the side of this majestic peak.

To view this great mountain is one of the most inspiring sights for the visitor to this sacred land. Here is the mount upon which the children of Israel looked when they came into Canaan. It was called Sirion by the people of Sidon and Shenir by the Amorites, both terms meaning "the white mountain."

As one travels across the countryside from the Sea of Galilee to the Mediterranean, the snow-capped peak of Hermon is always in view. As the sun sinks in the west, the peak assumes a reddish tint which changes into purple as the darkness increases. As the light of the sun fades, the peak of this great mountain is clearly outlined against the sky. Somewhere upon the slopes of this ancient mount Jesus paused to pray. Here He was transfigured before His disciples; here appeared Moses and Elias to talk to Jesus about His glorification, which was soon to be accomplished at Jerusalem.

"And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem."¹²

How long the conversation continued, we know not; but when the conversation ended, the two prophets vanished.

There was a striking contrast between the death of Moses and that of Christ. The death of Moses was accomplished quickly and without pain in his old age,

12. Luke 9:28-31.

while his eyes were not dimmed nor his physical strength lessened.

Jesus was to die in altogether a different manner, in pain and shame, while in young manhood.

The departure of Elijah also presented a striking contrast with the end of the earthly life of Jesus. Elijah was translated to heaven without tasting death. His entrance into glory was accompanied by a chariot of fire. The entrance of Jesus into glory was by the Via Dolorosa and the bitterness of the cross.

The scene on the mountain top suggested to Peter a way for Jesus to escape His impending death. Why should Jesus return to the valley to endure the hatred and scoffing of the scribes and the Pharisees? Why return to Jerusalem and submit to death at the hands of the chief priests and Romans? Why not remain here in the mount and enjoy sweet fellowship with one another?

With these thoughts in mind, Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here, let us build here three tabernacles, one for Thee, one for Moses and one for Elias."

While Peter was yet speaking, a cloud overshadowed them and a voice spoke from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."¹³

Peter used this admonition to confirm what he preached. "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."¹⁴

13. Matthew 17:5.

14. II Peter 1:16-17.

The disciples prostrated themselves before Jesus until He spoke unto them, saying, "Arise and be not afraid." When they arose, Moses and Elijah were gone; and Jesus stood there alone.

When they were come down from the mountain *Jesus charged them to tell the vision to no man until He was risen from the dead.*

As they approached the other disciples, they saw they were being questioned by the scribes while surrounded by a multitude. Jesus asked the scribes the cause of the commotion, saying, "Why question ye with them?"

"And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

"When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

"But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."¹⁵

Here again was a demonstration of the power of the Son of God.

15. Mark 9:17-29.

CHAPTER VI

JESUS REVISITS CAPERNAUM

As soon as Jesus and His disciples reached Capernaum, the matter of an unpaid tax was called to the attention of Peter. The tax collector asked whether the Master paid the half shekel tax unto the Lord as imposed in the law of Moses. Every man above the age of twenty years was to pay the tax as an atonement for his soul and to meet the necessary expenses connected with the temple service.

Jesus had evidently paid the tax prior to this time, but His absence from Capernaum had made it impossible for Him to take care of His obligation when it was due.

The collector did not question Jesus, but inquired of Peter if his Master paid the tax. Peter affirmed that He did, knowing that it had been paid in former years. Then he hurried home to inform Jesus of the inquiry.

Jesus, knowing what was on the mind of Peter, said, "What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom doth the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children or of strangers? Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee."¹

Somewhere near the site of the city of Capernaum Peter walked down to the shore of the blue Galilee, cast in his line and drew out the fish just as the Lord had said.

1. Matthew 1:25-27.

When they entered into the home in Capernaum, Jesus asked His disciples what they had disputed about along the way. They hesitated to tell Him for they had debated among themselves who was going to have the highest honor in the kingdom of Jesus when it was established. Jesus, knowing their hearts, informed them that the one who was the servant of all would indeed be the greatest in His kingdom. Taking a little child, He placed it in the midst of them and said, "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."²

The words of Jesus reminded John of an incident which happened while the disciples were away from the Master. He told Jesus of meeting a man who was casting out demons in His name. Because he followed not with them, they tried to stop him. Jesus said, "Forbid him not, for he that is not against Me is for Me."³

Jesus now purposed to return again to Samaria and so sent messengers before Him to make ready for Him, but the people of the village to which they were sent would not receive Him.

When James and John learned of the lack of hospitality upon the part of these people, they wanted permission from Jesus to invoke God to send fire down from heaven to consume these people. Jesus rebuked them, informing them that He came not to destroy but to save mankind, and so turned to another village.

How altogether different this was from the attitude of the few Samaritans who dwell there today. Though ancient Samaria was given over to idolatry,

2. Matthew 18:3-4.

3. Luke 9:50.

the Samaritans who occupy this section of Jordan today offer their worship to the one God.

The Samaritans of today, though very poor, are hospitable and friendly. The Assyrians who conquered this part of the country killed all of the males and claimed all of the women for their brides. From the Assyrians and the Jewish women descended the Samaritans, whose faces today reveal some of the characteristics of the Assyrians. Only a small group of Samaritans remains in the province that once extended from near the Mediterranean to the Jordan River.

All evidence of ancient Samaria was destroyed by Hyrcannus after he captured the city, so there are no ancient buildings in Samaria today.

To make known the coming of the kingdom Jesus appointed seventy disciples to go two by two into every city where He Himself would later come. Jesus was sending them forth into a harvest that was truly great, with but few laborers. As they prepared to enter upon the work of announcing the coming kingdom, Jesus said unto them, "Go your ways: behold I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God

is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city."⁴

The stay of Jesus in Capernaum was of short duration. Though His teaching had been confirmed with many miracles, the response from those in His audiences was very limited. Even the people of Capernaum seemed to care but little for His words. Before turning toward Jerusalem, Jesus pronounced His judgment upon the cities wherein His greatest works were done.

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."⁵

Jesus compared Chorazin and Bethsaida with Tyre and Sidon, which would have repented of their wrongs in sackcloth and ashes if the miracles of the Savior had been done in their midst.

The location of Chorazin and Bethsaida cannot be determined with certainty. Capernaum, the home of Jesus, had truly been "exalted unto heaven," blessed by the many lessons presented there and the many miracles performed in that vicinity. Capernaum is identified by a broad expanse of ruins, with a partially destroyed synagogue nearby. The prophetic words of Jesus were literally fulfilled, for no one lives in Capernaum today. Desolation and ruin abound in every di-

4. Luke 10:3-12.

5. Matthew 11:21-24.

rection. The exact order of events following the rejection of Jesus by the Samaritans is not known, but it appears that He returned to Capernaum. Here His brethren came to Him as they prepared to go up to Jerusalem to the feast of the Tabernacles. They urged Jesus to go with them, to declare Himself openly, to do the miracles that had been done in Capernaum, that all might believe. They themselves seemed to doubt that Jesus was all that people claimed for Him. Jesus informed His brethren that He was not yet ready to go up to the feast.

This feast was the festival at which every Jew was to appear before the Lord. It took its name from the custom of the people to dwell in booths made of the boughs of the trees.

"And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be statute forever in your generations. Ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days. All that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths."⁶

These booths were erected in the open places of the city, on the roofs, in the courts of the homes, and in the open spaces outside the city walls. This festival occurred after the day of Atonement, so the people cleansed from their sins could keep this feast with joy.

After His brethren departed for the feast, Jesus went up also, but in secret. The exact order of events following His departure for the feast cannot be determined. He seems to have crossed over the Jordan, passing through Peraea, and to have entered Judea from the eastern side of the Jordan.

Somewhere in the course of this journey He met the seventy disciples whom He had sent out. They

6. Leviticus 23:40-42.

were anxious to tell Jesus of their success. They boasted that even the demons were subject unto them. Their rejoicing revealed the pride that filled their hearts. Jesus admonished them not to rejoice in this power but to rejoice that their names were written in heaven.

As Jesus continued His journey toward Jerusalem, they entered a town of Judea. Here a man sought to question Him concerning the things required to obtain eternal life. This man was a lawyer, one who understood the law and whose duty it was to interpret the law for the people. His question was not for the purpose of gaining information, but to entangle Jesus in His speech.

In reply to his question, Jesus said, "What is written in the Law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: This do and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?"⁷

How would Jesus define a neighbor? He is the friend of outcasts and publicans. Would He classify a sinner as a neighbor? Where should the line be drawn?

Jesus defined a neighbor in a story which through the years has revealed a neighbor as the one to whom we can look for help.

Jesus told of a man making the journey from Jerusalem down to Jericho who was set upon by thieves who took his money and clothes after they had beaten him and left him half dead. Jerusalem is some two thousand feet above sea level, and Jericho is one thousand feet below sea level; so, correctly speaking, the traveler went down from Jerusalem to Jericho.

7. Luke 10:26-29.

Twenty-odd miles separate the two cities, the ancient road winding through the mountains, which offers ambush for the robbers who were known to infest this road. As the bruised and beaten man lay there, a priest came down that way. He saw the man stretched out by the side of the road; but he did not stop, passing by on the other side of the way.

A little later a Levite came that way; but he, too, passed by on the other side. Now a Samaritan came that way. He saw the victim of the thieves and made haste to aid him. He poured oil and wine upon his wounds, bound them up, put the stranger upon his beast, and took him to an inn where he cared for him. The day following he gave the innkeeper two coins and asked him to care for the wounded man, telling him that whatever more was spent in his care would be repaid when he returned. Jesus ended the story, then asked, "Which of the three was neighbor to him that fell among thieves?"

The lawyer was unwilling to say, "The Samaritan," so replied, "He that showed mercy on him."

And so ended the lawyer's efforts to engage Jesus in useless controversy. Just where this incident transpired is not definitely known.

As Jesus continued His journey through Judea, He reached Bethany, a small village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. Here was the home of Martha, Mary, and their brother Lazarus. The home of Martha and Mary and the traditional burial place of Lazarus are pointed out to the visitors to Bethany today, but these are not regarded as genuine. The guides usually tell the visitors to this historic village what they think the traveler would like to hear.

It is sufficient to know that somewhere in this vicinity there was once a home which was visited by the Savior and that this village is a place with which He was familiar. The feast of the Tabernacles was a season of feasting and hospitality. And it was on this

joyful occasion that Jesus came to the home of these friends.

Martha, as the mistress of the home, was anxious that everything necessary for the comfort of the Savior and His disciples be supplied. As she hastened from one task to another, she glanced frequently at Mary, who was doing nothing at all.

When Jesus entered the home, Mary seated herself at his feet to listen to His words of wisdom. Here she heard only the voice of Jesus. Martha may have called, but she did not answer. Here she saw only the face of the Master—Martha may have passed near, but Mary did not notice.

As Martha labored to prepare the meal, her reverence for Jesus prevented her from reproving Mary for not assisting. Eventually she could contain herself no longer, so she interrupted the conversation with these words, "Master can you not see that Mary has left me alone to serve? Bid her to give me some assistance."

Jesus answered, "Martha, you are concerned with providing many things—while we need only a few."

Mary had chosen the good part, to feed her soul on the bread of life, and this was not to be taken from her.

From Bethany Jesus crossed over the Mount of Olives, made His way to the temple, and began to teach in the outer court. The manner of His teaching astonished the rulers. They marvelled that one who had never received instruction from the rabbis could utter such words.

Jesus informed them that the things that He taught were not His own, but that they came from God. The rulers, perceiving the affection of the people for Jesus, were highly displeased with Him and began to plot how they might put Him to death.

The common people, who heard Him gladly, reasoned that Jesus must be the Messiah; for the

Messiah could do no more miracles than Jesus had done.

As Jesus taught in the temple, the multitudes came together to marvel at His words of wisdom. Jesus informed them that the words He spoke were not His words, but those of the Father who sent Him.

The Pharisees and the chief priests, jealous of the following Jesus had gained, sent officers to take Him, but they returned to the chief priests and Pharisees empty handed. When they were asked why they did not take Him, they said, "Never man spake as this man."

The Pharisees accused them of also being deceived, but Nicodemus called attention to the truth that the law did not judge any man until he had been heard.

The rulers of the people became angry at his words and said, "Search and see, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

The day following, Jesus returned from the Mount of Olives where He and His disciples had evidently spent the night.

This mount lies about a mile to the east of Jerusalem, separated from it by the Kidron Valley. One cannot but think of the many incidents connected with the life of our Lord that transpired there as He traversed its slopes.

At the foot of the Mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed before His betrayal. Jesus often crossed over the mount to spend some time in Bethany in the home of Martha and Mary. On more than one occasion He seems to have spent the night on the Mount of Olives with His disciples. Here it was that He wept over the city, and from the summit of the mount, which is about two thousand feet above sea level, He ascended into heaven. As one walks about this sacred hill, he is truly walking where Jesus walked.

As Jesus entered into the temple courtyard, the people gathered about Him to hear His words. As Jesus continued to speak to the little group of His friends and disciples, He became aware of a disturbance near the entrance of the courtyard. A crowd of scribes and Pharisees were coming toward Him, pushing a woman before them, a woman whose clothing was disarranged, a woman who covered her face with her hands and hair, who was fearful of what was about to happen.

When they had brought her near, they said, "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Moses in the law commanded that she should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"⁷

They supposed that He would reject the law of Moses, and thus they would have the opportunity to accuse Him before the High Priest. Jesus showed his respect for that law. He could not abrogate the law, but He knew that they had no right to bring before Him the woman while they let the man go.

"And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery, with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."⁸

Jesus stooped down and wrote upon the ground. No one will ever know what He wrote, kneeling there before the woman, trembling in her shame and fear. Jesus knew if the woman was apprehended in the very act, then her companion in sin must be known to her accusers.

They continued to ask Him for an answer. Looking steadfastly at them, He said, "He that is without sin shall cast the first stone at her." Silence followed these words.

Again Jesus stooped to write upon the ground. No one cast a stone at the accused woman. The words

7. John 8:3,4

8. Leviticus 20:10.

of Jesus troubled them. Their secret sins appeared before them. Convicted by conscience, they began to leave. The woman heard the sound of departing feet. No longer did men clamor for her death.

Addressing the woman, Jesus said, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" And she said, "No man, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee. Go, but don't you sin any more."

How different was Jesus from all other men. He who could have cast a stone, He who hated sin, forgave her who was actually guilty of sin.

After the last day of the feast of the Tabernacles Jesus remained in Jerusalem that He might have an opportunity to speak to the people again. As He taught near the temple, He said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."⁹

The Pharisees, who waited for an opportunity to criticize, said, "You are bearing record of yourself, and your record is not true." Jesus replied that though He bore record of Himself, yet the record was true; for He knew from whence He came, while they could not tell from whence He came or whither He would go.

As the discussion continued, Jesus said, "If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how, sayest thou, ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever com-miteth sin is the servant of sin."¹⁰

As the discussion continued, the Pharisees took up stones to cast at Him; but Jesus departed from

9. John 8:12.

10. John 8:31-34.

them, and passing through their midst, escaped out of their hands.

As Jesus passed by the temple gate on another occasion, He saw a young man sitting there, a young man who was completely blind. The disciples assumed that this man's blindness was the result of sin, and so questioned Jesus whether this man had sinned, or his parents, that he was blind. Jesus answered that neither had this man sinned, nor his parents, that he was blind, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. Without further delay Jesus spat upon the ground, and making clay of the spittle, placed some of it on the eyes of the blind man and instructed him to go wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man obeyed the command of Jesus; and when he had washed the clay from his eyes, he thus received his sight.

When he arrived at his home, the neighbors looked upon him and wondered if he was indeed the sightless beggar. Some of them said, "That is the blind man who sat by the gate of the temple begging;" but others said, "He only looks like the beggar." But when the healed man heard their speculation, he said, "I am he."

They then questioned him concerning the means by which he received his sight. Without hesitating he told how a man called Jesus made clay and placed it upon his eyes and then sent him to the Pool of Siloam to wash, by which he received his sight.

When he was questioned concerning the whereabouts of Jesus, he said "I know not where He is."

Thinking that the Pharisees would like to know about Jesus healing on the Sabbath, the neighbors brought the man to them for questioning.

The one who had been blind patiently explained again how he had received his sight. His answers brought a division among the Pharisees. Some said Jesus could not be of God, because He did not keep the Sabbath. Others said that a man who was a sin-

ner could not perform such miracles. When the healed man was asked what he thought of Jesus, he said, "He is a prophet."

His parents were questioned also. The Pharisees said, "Is this your son? Is it true he was born blind? How is it then that he is now able to see?"

And the parents affirmed that the healed man was their son, that he had truly been born blind, but that they could not explain how he could now see. They suggested that the healed man be questioned—that he be permitted to speak for himself.

"Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is. The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."¹¹

Because he reasoned that Jesus was from God, they cast him out of the synagogue; for it had before been agreed that if any did confess Him they should be put out of the synagogue.

When Jesus heard that he had been cast out of the synagogue, He sought him and when He had found him, He said, "Do you believe on the Son of Man?" The healed man said, "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" Jesus answered, "Thou has seen Him, and it is He that talketh to thee."

11. John 9:26-33.

To console the man, Jesus spoke a parable about a sheep fold, in which He represented Himself as the Good Shepherd who is able to lead His sheep, who goes before them and who calls them by name, and who guards them in the one fold of which He is the one Shepherd. When the Jews heard Him say that He had power to lay down His life and power to take it up again, some of them said, "He hath a devil;" but others said, "A devil cannot open the eyes of the blind."

The Feast of the Dedication brought Jesus again to Jerusalem, and as at other times He went to the Temple to teach the people the great truths concerning the coming kingdom of God. As Jesus walked in Solomon's porch, the Jews, who never let an opportunity pass to question Him, gathered about Him and said, "How long do you intend to keep us in doubt? If thou art the Anointed of God, tell us plainly." Jesus knew their purpose was only that they might be able to find some basis for an accusation against Him.

Answering their query, Jesus said "I told you, and you believed not. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of Me. They prove my claim as God's Son. But you will not believe Me because ye are not my sheep; for they hear my voice, and I give unto them eternal life, and no one shall pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them to Me will not permit them to be taken from Him. I and my Father are one."

This so provoked the Jews that they took up stones to stone Him to death.

Jesus, with calm dignity, called attention to the many good works which he had done in their midst and asked, "For which of those works do ye stone Me?" The Jews answered him saying, "For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

"Jesus said, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I am in him. Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand."¹²

Jesus left Jerusalem, crossing over the valley and ascending the slopes of the Mount of Olives, and continuing His journey to Bethany beyond Jordan. Near here John had preached; near here Jesus was baptized; and near here He had gained his first disciples.

Now that the greatest trial of His life was approaching, He returned to this place that He might be strengthened by communing with the Father for the tragic events that awaited Him at Jerusalem.

Ten centuries before the time of Christ the city of Jerusalem was captured from the Jebusites by the Hebrews. Since that time the city has been captured by the Babylonians, the Persians, the Romans, the Moslems, the Crusaders, the Turks, and the English. The descendants of some of these people may be found among the inhabitants of Jerusalem today. The city of Jerusalem, because of its natural surroundings, must have been a difficult city to capture. Within the walls of the city was much tillable ground, and an abundance of water was supplied by the spring Gihon. The water of this spring was conducted into the city by a tunnel which was one thousand, seven hundred feet long, which was built by Hezekiah. The entrance to the spring was successfully hidden so Jerusalem had plenty of water, but the invaders had none. The remains of this conduit may be seen there today.

12. John 10:33-39

As one walks around Jerusalem, he can see that the city is located upon mountains or large hills. Beyond the walls of Jerusalem and to the east of the city is the Mount of Olives and to the south of it lies the Hill of Evil Counsel.

The two most prominent valleys of Jerusalem are the Kidron valley which lies between Mount Moriah and the Mount of Olives, and the valley of Hinnon to the south and south-east of Jerusalem. Between these two is the Tyropoeon valley which runs from the northwest to the southeast joining with the valley of Hinnon and the valley of Kidron.

It was in the valley of Hinnon that Solomon built the altars to the god Moloch and offered sacrifices to the god of the Ammonites. This valley became a place where the refuse of the city was burned which gave rise to the name Gehenna, from which the word 'hell' is derived. Mount Zion is called the city of David in the Scriptures and the term is often used to identify all of Jerusalem. The small hill of Ophel lies just to the south of Moriah on which the temple was built. While it is true that some of the streets of ancient Jerusalem lie far below the present streets, yet the valleys of Hinnon and Kidron remain practically unchanged and the many paths that cross each other may be the very ones where Jesus walked as he travelled in and out of the city.

The Jerusalem of today presents a striking contrast with the city of that far-off age. As one enters that part of the city given over to business, he finds himself in the midst of souvenir shops and bazaars of various kinds. The streets are narrow and dark since they are partly covered over with awnings stretched from one side of the street to the other to shut out the heat of the noonday sun. The Arab shopkeepers vie with each other in trying to sell those who pass by some kind of souvenir—a carved olive wood camel, a string of amber beads, a package of picture postcards, or a prayer rug. Pinched-faced children, poorly

clothed, follow the stranger about, asking for "bak-sheesh." Veiled women, their faces hidden except for their brown eyes, cast sly glances toward the strangers, and beggars with outstretched hands cry, "Please, please."

Here and there one encounters children almost or altogether destitute of clothes. The guide walks ahead of the visitors and is quick to call to the unclothed to get off the streets.

One encounters those also who are victims of some loathsome disease, some who are blind from birth, others who are disfigured and crippled by some malady.

Jesus Himself must have looked upon such scenes—the poor, the afflicted, and the crippled—and being moved with pity for them, He healed their infirmities and gave them new life and a new hope.

CHAPTER VII

JESUS VISITS BETHANY BEYOND JORDAN

Those who knew Jesus had gone to Bethany followed Him there and believed on Him. When Jesus was seen no more in Jerusalem, the scribes and Pharisees supposed that He had returned to Galilee and that they would no longer be troubled by His teaching.

They soon learned that He had only passed over the Jordan and had established a residence in Bethany beyond Jordan. The Pharisees planned to trap Jesus in His speech and very soon appeared before Him with a question about divorce, saying "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?"

The Jewish men believed God had granted to them the privilege of divorce. Should Jesus call it in question, the public would turn against Him.

Some of the Jewish rabbis taught that divorce was lawful, that a wife could be put away for any cause, while others were convinced that a wife could be put away only when she became unfaithful. How would Jesus answer the question?

He appealed to the Scriptures, saying, "What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more

twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."¹

While Jesus was at Bethany beyond Jordan, a young man came to Him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Jesus rebuked him mildly, saying, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but God." He then informed him that he knew the commandments of Moses given by God. To which the young man replied, "All of these I have observed from my youth up." Jesus then placed before him a sacrifice of which he had never thought. Jesus said, "One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross and follow me, and he was sad at that saying and went away grieved: for he had great possessions."²

Jesus showed that it is possible for the earth's treasures to separate one from the kingdom of God.

The disciples had looked for rich rewards with the establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah. Surely the Master would confer great honors upon them. Each would occupy a chief place in the court of the King. Was the hope of an earthly reign in which Jesus would abundantly bless them with lands and houses only a dream? Were the sacrifices they had made to go unrewarded? Were they to receive nothing at all? With these thoughts filling his mind, Peter was prompted to ask, "What shall we receive, we who left all to follow Thee?" What had they left? Not great possessions, but only a life of hard labor and privation, a fisherman's net, and a smelly boat.

Jesus did not ridicule their sacrifice, but said unto them, "Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit

1. Mark 10:3-9.

2. Mark 10:20-22.

upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."³

While Jesus tarried at Bethany beyond Jordan, news was brought to Him from the Bethany on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, had become ill. His sisters sent a brief message to Jesus, saying, "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick."⁴ Jesus did not at once set out for Bethany, but calmly told the disciples, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." After remaining in the place where He was for two days, Jesus then said, "Let us go into Judea again." His disciples, supposing that He intended to go again to Jerusalem, said, "Master, the Jews tried to stone thee and dost thou go there again?"⁵

Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awaken him out of sleep." Then the disciples said, "Lord, if he sleep he shall do well."⁶ They supposed that Lazarus was taking rest in sleep and that there was no need for Jesus to risk his life by going into Judea. But Jesus knew that Lazarus was dead.

Thomas, knowing the danger that Jesus would face in going into Judea, said to the other disciples, "Let us go also that we may die with Him."⁷

The home in Bethany was a place of sorrow. The friends of Martha and Mary had come to comfort them in their affliction. While Jesus was ascending the roadway leading into Bethany, Martha was informed of His coming and hastened to meet Him. The first

3. Matthew 19:28-29.

4. John 11:3.

5. John 11:7,8.

6. John 11:11,12.

7. John 11:16.

words she uttered were, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."⁸ It seemed to her that Jesus had failed them in their hour of need. Hardly had she finished the words until she added, "Even now I know all that Thou asketh of God, He will give Thee." She may have hoped that Jesus would restore him to life; but He simply said, "Thy brother shall rise again."

Martha thought of the resurrection at the last day and said, "I know that he shall rise again in the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Martha acknowledged her faith in Jesus by saying, "I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

Martha then left Jesus and hastily returning to the home, whispered to Mary, "The master is come, and calleth for thee."

When the mourners saw Mary preparing to leave, they said, "She is going to the grave to weep," and so they followed her.

When Mary approached Jesus, she fell to her knees and said, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus was touched by her sorrow, and His sympathetic nature caused His own tears to flow freely. When He inquired where Lazarus had been buried, they said, "Come and see."

When Jesus stood before the tomb, He said "Take away the stone." Martha remonstrated, saying "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days." When the stone was removed, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "I thank Thee, Father, that Thou hast always heard Me." Then he called into the tomb, "Lazarus, come forth," and when He had cried with a loud voice, Lazarus came stumbling

8. John 11:21.

forth, bound about with grave clothes. Jesus said, "Loose him, and let him go."

Bethany is a small wretched village which today is called El-Azariyeh, from the name of Lazarus. This village is only about a mile from Jerusalem. As one leaves Jerusalem and drops down into the Kidron valley by one of the numerous paths and then ascends the opposite slope, passing by the Garden of Gethsemane and crossing over the top of the Mount of Olives, he comes to Bethany. The traditional homes of Simon the Leper and that of Mary and Martha are pointed out to the visitor. The credulous visitor to this village will also be shown the tomb of Lazarus—and be assured by the elderly Arab in charge that this is indeed the place where our Lord cried out, "Lazarus, come forth." Neither of these places can be considered authentic.

What happened after this we do not know. There is no information as to how he was released from his grave clothes, what words of thanksgiving were spoken by the sisters, or what Lazarus said about his experience.

Some who had witnessed this wonderful event believed on Jesus. Others hastened to Jerusalem to tell the rulers of the Jews the things which Jesus did.

They knew that such a miracle would increase the popularity of Jesus among the common people. They reasoned that the people would acclaim Him the King of the Jews and that the hatred of the Romans would be directed against them, the land would be laid under a scourge, and the temple destroyed. What should be done about the matter?

Caiaphas, the High Priest, speaks. "Ye know nothing at all. This man must die, that the whole nation perish not."

From that day forward, the Jews plotted the death of Jesus, knowing not that when they decreed the death of Jesus they sealed the doom of their own nation.

Word of the plans of the Jews possibly reached the ears of Jesus.

"Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand, and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him."⁹

We do not know just how long Jesus remained in Ephraim with His disciples; neither do we have a record of what He said or did while in this place, the location of which is not definitely known, though it is supposed to have been northeast of Bethel, near the border of Samaria.

Here Jesus awaited the approach of the passover. As the days drew near, Jesus set out for Jerusalem with His disciples.

They did not travel by a direct route, but crossed over the Jordan and then journeyed south and approached Jericho from the east.

Taking His disciples aside, Jesus told them again of His impending death, how that He should be taken, mocked, spit upon, and put to death, and that He would rise again the third day. His disciples understood none of these sayings.

"And he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For he shall be de-

9. John 11:53-57.

livered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."¹⁰

As Jesus and His disciples continued their journey, they drew near to Jericho.

This ancient city is often mentioned in the Scriptures. It is situated about five miles west of the Jordan River and north of the Dead Sea. Lying eight hundred feet below the Mediterranean Sea, Jericho has a tropical climate. Palm trees flourish here, which accounts for the name by which it is called in the Scriptures, "The City of Palms."

Jericho is about twenty-five miles from Jerusalem and about twenty-five hundred feet below the city of David. The road between the two cities passes through a desolate and barren land where there is little vegetation. The heat of the valley in which Jericho lies is utilized in ripening the bananas, figs, oranges, dates, and lemons that grow in every garden along the highway.

Nothing remains of old Jericho except the ruins of her walls and the pools which Herod had his servants build to irrigate the gardens surrounding his palace.

Here near the site of ancient Jericho is Elisha's fountain, the very one into which the prophet cast a handful of salt which miraculously healed or sweetened the water. It is to this fountain that the displaced persons who are encamped near the city come for their daily supply of water. This bountiful spring in the midst of the arid plain of the Jordan valley has for centuries attracted travelers to its side.

When the Israelites came into Canaan, Jericho was one of the first cities they had to capture. Comply-

10. Luke 18:31-34.

ing with the command of God to march about the walls for six days but on the seventh day to march around the walls seven times and then to blow their trumpets and to shout and the walls would collapse, they were able to capture the city.

All of the inhabitants except Rahab and her family, who had befriended the spies, were put to death. The wealth of the city was put into the treasury of the Lord. Joshua pronounced a curse upon anyone who would attempt to rebuild Jericho, and for five hundred years no one attempted to rebuild the city.

Then Hiel, the Bethelite, rebuilt the city and lost his two sons just as Joshua had foretold.

The Romans plundered Jericho when they came into this section of Palestine, but Herod later rebuilt the city and beautified it. Here he constructed his royal palace, a citadel, and a great amphitheater. Today one may see the ruins of the walls of ancient Jericho which are being excavated by the archeologists.

These ruins are a mile and a half from the present city called Jericho.

As Jesus drew near the city, a blind beggar who sat by the wayside begging, called unto Him, saying, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me." Some of the people near him rebuked him, urging him to keep quiet, but he called out again; and Jesus halted and asked him, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" The beggar answered, "Lord, that I may receive my sight," and Jesus said, "Receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee."¹¹

When his sight was restored, he followed after Jesus, glorifying God with the company of those who had witnessed the miracle also.

It was a custom among the Jews that when a group of pilgrims passed through their city, the people of the community would gather in the streets to wel-

11. John 18:41, 42.

come the travelers. A great crowd seems to have gathered to see the Prophet from Nazareth as He and His fellow travelers passed by.

Among these who desired to see Jesus was a Jewish tax collector. Because he was short of stature, he could not see over the heads of those who were in front of him; neither could he push his way through the crowd because of the great number who thronged the street.

His great desire to see Jesus prompted him to climb one of the sycamore trees adjoining the street. As Jesus passed under the overhanging branches, He looked up and saw this publican and called out for him to "make haste and come down, for today I must abide in thy house."

"And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost."¹²

After the visit with Zacchaeus was ended, Jesus and His disciples continued their journey toward

12: Luke 19:2-10.

Jerusalem, but turned aside to Bethany, where they were welcomed in the home of Simon, the Leper. The rulers of Jerusalem had agreed that Jesus should be put to death and had ordered that if any man knew where He was, he should show it that they might take Him.

In defiance of the rulers of Jerusalem, Jesus was received with love and respect by the people of Bethany. Simon the Leper had prepared for Jesus a feast at which Martha assisted in serving. Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead, was present, and Mary also. While the dinner was in progress, she approached Jesus with an alabaster box of ointment and anointed Jesus. Those who were present were surprised that Jesus had allowed such to take place. Judas spoke out, saying that the ointment might have been sold and the money given to the poor. To him who carried the bag, this act of Mary's was wanton waste; but Jesus accepted it as an anointing for his burial, adding that wheresoever the gospel was preached her unselfish act would become a memorial to her.

The news of the resurrection of Lazarus had been carried far. The pilgrims who had heard of the miracle in their home communities wanted to see Lazarus and the Prophet from Nazareth. A question arose in their minds whether or not Jesus would come to the feast, knowing of the enmity of the scribes, Pharisees, and the chief priests. Their minds were set at ease when the news came that He was even then at Bethany and would soon arrive at Jerusalem for the feast. This information renewed the hatred of the rulers against Jesus and brought them together to plot His death. They seemed to have plotted to kill Lazarus also because that by reason of him many of the Jews believed on Jesus.

As Jesus climbed the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, He came within sight of the village of Bethphage, not far from the road between Jerusalem and Bethany.

Jesus instructed two of His disciples to go into the village, and there they would find a colt tied which they were to loose and bring to Jesus. If any asked why they were taking the colt, they were to say, "The Lord hath need of it."

"And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him and bring him. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met: and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way. And they that went before and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed is the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."¹³

A multitude of people accompanied Jesus into the city shouting their praises to the Lord. When the Pharisees heard the shouting, they were filled with enmity and called upon Jesus to rebuke His disciples; but Jesus said, "I tell you that should these be silent, the stones would cry out."

As He came near Jerusalem, Jesus wept over the city, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy

13. Mark 11:1-10.

peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."¹⁴

These words were probably uttered as Jesus descended the slopes of the Mount of Olives and looked across the Kidron valley toward the walls of the city.

This valley separates the city from the Mount of Olives and must be crossed by those going from Bethany to Jerusalem. Part of this valley was early used as a common burying ground and is so used at the present. When godly kings cleansed the temple of idolatrous symbols, the valley of the Kidron became the dumping place for the ashes of these abominations.

Jesus crossed over the dry brook of the Kidron, and accompanied by the shouting throng made His way to the temple. The day of battle was at hand. Jesus came not to worship at the house of God, but to cleanse the house of God of those who had corrupted and profaned this sacred place. Inside the structure which should have been devoted to the adoration of God were the money changers, their bowls overflowing with copper and silver coins; the herdsmen with their sheep and oxen; the sellers of pigeons and doves.

The house of God had been transformed into a place of merchandise.

Jesus did not restrain His hatred against such sacrilege. He gathered some of the discarded halter ropes; and knotting them together, He opened a path through the astonished crowd. The tables of the money changers were overthrown and their coins

14. Luke 19:42-44.

scattered. The sellers of sheep and oxen were driven toward the doors, the vendors of pigeons and doves took up their cages and rushed toward the exits to escape the lashes of the indignant Prophet as He cried out, "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."¹⁵

Some were shocked by His conduct, but others approved what He had done. Jesus had broken up the den of thieves, but He had antagonized the merchants of Jerusalem. They demanded that He be punished. They paid a goodly tithe to the families of the priests for the privilege of selling beasts and birds for the sacrifices of the pilgrims.

Jesus had wounded the pride of the priests who permitted these things. If they allowed Him to go unpunished, He would ruin them all.

As the day drew to a close, Jesus and the twelve recrossed the valley of Kidron, ascended the slope of Olivet, and passed over to Bethany to rest.

But there was no rest for the temple merchants, the scribes, and the priests. Jesus had invaded their sacred territory. Now they came together to consider what must be done. It was agreed that He must die. They began their search for someone to betray Jesus into their hands.

15. Matthew 21:13.

CHAPTER VIII

JESUS DISCOURSES IN JERUSALEM

The next day after the cleansing of the temple Jesus returned from the village of Bethany to Jerusalem.

As He crossed over the summit of the Mount, He saw a fig tree a short distance away. Because the tree was in full foliage, He approached it with the expectation of finding fruit upon it. The fig tree, unlike other fruit trees, forms its fruit before the leaves appear. It was therefore reasonable for Jesus to expect to find fruit upon this tree, but when He had searched its branches He found nothing but leaves. The fig tree was like Israel which gave promise of producing the fruit of good works—but yielded nothing.

“He spoke also this parable, A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. And he said unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”¹

Jesus again spoke of unfruitful Israel when He said, “Therefore the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given unto a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”²

1. Luke 13:6-9.

2. Matthew 21:43.

Jesus pronounced a curse upon the unfruitful tree, saying, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever."

The next day as they returned to Jerusalem, they passed by the fruitless fig tree; and Peter called to Jesus, saying, "Master, the fig tree which bore no fruit is withered away."

Jesus continued His journey to the temple and began to teach the people in the court.

In the eyes of the scribes and the chief priests, Jesus could only be an impostor. He ate with the publicans and sinners. He had so little respect for the Sabbath that He healed on that day, claiming that the Sabbath was made for man. He had invaded the precincts of the temple as if it belonged to Him. He must be discredited in the eyes of the people, or the rulers, the Pharisees and the scribes, would lose face before the multitudes who had witnessed the action of Jesus against the temple merchants.

Soon after Jesus began His teaching, the rulers of the Jews came upon the scene, asking Him by what authority He did the things He did and who gave Him the authority. Their purpose was to trap Him in His speech by forcing Him to say that He was the Messiah.

Without hesitating, Jesus said, "I will also ask you a question. Answer me and I will tell you by what authority I do these things."

Jesus then asked, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."³

3. Matthew 21:23-27.

When Jesus had silenced His adversaries, He continued His teaching but addressed His words to the rulers, saying that a certain man had two sons, and He came to one and requested that he go to the vineyard and labor that day. He refused to comply with the father's request; but after considering the matter, he repented and went.

When he had asked the second son to go work in the vineyard, he readily agreed to go, but he went not.

Jesus asked His hearers which son did the will of the father. They said the first. Jesus said unto His questioners, "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe."⁴

Jesus spoke another parable unto them, telling of a householder who planted a vineyard, set a hedge about it, built a watchtower, fashioned a wine press, and let it out to a husbandman while he went on a journey.

When the time of the harvest drew near, he sent his servants to receive his share of the fruit. One servant was beaten; another, killed; and the other was stoned. Then he sent his son, expecting them to reverence him; but when the tenants saw the son, they said, "Here is the heir, let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours." Jesus asked what the rightful owner would do to the usurpers, and they agreed that he would destroy them and turn the vineyard over to those who would be fair in dealing with him. Jesus ended the parable by saying the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to another nation.

4. Matthew 21:32.

When they perceived that He spoke of them, they wanted to lay hands upon Him; but they feared the people because they accepted Jesus as a prophet.

The Pharisees, resolving to destroy Jesus, sent unto Him their disciples in company with the Herodians in an effort to trap Him in His speech. Pretending to respect Him as a teacher, they came unto him, saying, "Master, we know that Thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth and carest not for any man. Tell us therefore what Thou thinkest. Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar?"

This appeared to be a sincere inquiry, for the Jews were staggering under a heavy burden of taxation imposed by their Roman masters.

His questioners expected Him, no doubt, to denounce the payment of the taxes and thus expose Himself to the vengeance of the Roman authorities. If He should say the tax must be paid, Jesus would incur the hatred of the populace.

Jesus was able to see through their pretended honesty, so addressing Himself to them, He said, "Why do ye tempt Me? Show Me the tribute money." And they brought unto Him a denarius, with Caesar's profile and inscription stamped thereon.

Jesus said, "Whose image and inscription is this?" When they answered, "Caesar's," Jesus said, "Render unto Caesar that which belongs to him and to God that which is His."

His questioners were amazed at His wisdom and now left Him to report to those who had sent them.

On this same day the Sadducees came unto Him with a question concerning marriage, presenting a hypothetical case of seven brothers who in turn had married the same woman one after another.

"Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven, for they all had her? Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage,

but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this they were astonished at his doctrine."⁵

One of the scribes, having heard the reasoning of Jesus, asked Him, "Which is the first commandment of all? Jesus answered, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question."⁶

After Jesus had silenced those who endeavored to trap Him in His speech, He addressed the multitude.

His words were directed against the Scribes and rulers of Jerusalem. He brought against them an indictment such as had not before fallen upon the ears of men. He condemned them for their wickedness and hypocrisy, saying, "The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat as exponents of the law. Whatever they bid

5. Matthew 22:28-33.

6. Mark 12:28-34.

you to do, that obey; but do not follow after their works, for they say and do not.

"They bind heavy burdens that are difficult for men to bear, but they do nothing to relieve their weight.

"Their works are only performed to be seen of men: They love to stand in the market place to be saluted with 'Hail, Rabbi.' "

The Scribes and Pharisees were amazed at His words but offered no defense for their conduct.

Jesus continued, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing: but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift. Whosoever shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it and all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God and by him that sitteth thereon."

"Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have

been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."⁷

Doubtless the Jews had said, "If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have had a part with them in bringing about the death of the prophets." They disavowed the deeds of their fathers in putting the old prophets to death, yet they were plotting the death of Jesus, the Prophet of God.

Jesus called their attention to those things that would happen to the prophets of God in their own generation. "Some of them ye will crucify, some of them ye will scourge in your synagogues and compel them to flee from city to city."

Peter and Andrew were said to have met death by crucifixion, and one needs only to read the book of

7. Matthew 23:2-22, 29-39.

Acts of Apostles to learn of the scourgings that were inflicted upon the apostle Paul, and how he and his companions were compelled to flee from city to city to preserve their own lives.

The mention of the name of Zechariah reminded the scribes and Pharisees of the time when he was slain for accusing the people of Judah of transgressing the commandments of the Lord. They had served the idols of the nations about them and though the prophets of God had reproved them they would not hear. Zechariah told them that they could not prosper because the Lord had forsaken them. When they heard these words, they could stand no more; so they conspired against him and at the commandment of the king stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the Lord."

Jesus informed His audience that God would hold them accountable for all of the righteous blood they had shed upon the earth. His words served only to anger them, and as they departed they consulted together how they might put Him to death.

At the close of day Jesus and His disciples left Jerusalem. Some of them called His attention to the magnificence of the temple. When Herod became king, he adorned the temple with stones of marble. These stones made an imposing edifice of the structure which before had been a very plain building on the outside.

As Jesus and His disciples ascended the slopes of the Mount of Olives, they had an unobstructed view of the temple proper, its porches and courts. The disciples no doubt were impressed with the stateliness of this great building, but Jesus told them that not one of the stones should be left upon the top of another that should not be thrown down. The prediction of Jesus that the temple would be destroyed was so startling to the disciples that when they had reached their appointed place, some of them came to Him for further information, saying, "Tell us when shall these

things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?"

There on the Mount of Olives, with the temple and the city in full view, Jesus began His explanation of the things which were shortly to come to pass.

He opened His explanation with a warning for them not to be deceived by the claims of those who would claim to be the Messiah. "For many," he said, "will come in my name and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass; but the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand:)

"Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day: For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days

should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened."⁸

Like a prophet of old the doom of Jerusalem was plain to Jesus. He pictured the decline and the desolation of the Jewish people and the things which must shortly come to pass.

Jesus could see the impending judgment of Jerusalem. The city was like a dead carcass that would attract the vultures so He said, "wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Jesus knew that the patience of Rome was at an end and that when the smouldering coals of rebellion were fanned into a flame by His fanatical countrymen, the soldiers of Rome would move quickly to end the uprising. Jesus had a deep affection for Jerusalem. Here was the center of the faith of Israel. The temple was the House of His Father and the city of David was also the city of the Great King. Down through the ages of the history of the Jews, Jerusalem was the place where the prophets had labored to keep Israel faithful to Jehovah. Now all of this was to be changed.

The stones of the temple were to be thrown down. As the disciples listened to His description of the calamities that were to come, they were warned that they, too, would suffer affliction as the representatives of the Kingdom of God. They would be despised of men, would be persecuted and would die as martyrs because of their faith in Him. He informed them that the love of many who professed to love Him would grow cold but that those who continued faithful to the end would be saved. Jesus foresaw the conflict between the Jews and the Romans and knew that within a brief period of time that Jerusalem must fall.

The revolt of the Jews against the Roman procurator Gessius Florus in 66, spread over all of Palestine, and the prophecy of Daniel concerning the abomination of desolation was fulfilled when the Roman

8. Matthew 24:5-22.

soldiers invaded the temple precincts and profaned it by setting up a statue of Jove in the Holy Place.

The strength of the Jewish army was so great that Cestius Gallus was compelled to fall back to regroup his soldiers. This gave the Christians within the city the opportunity to leave the city as Jesus had foretold. They fled to Pella beyond the Jordan and thus were fulfilled the words of Jesus that except those days should be shortened no flesh would be saved.

Titus Vespasian landed an army at Ptolemais and marched into Galilee, conquering it. He then turned his attention to Jerusalem. When he arrived there, his father placed him in supreme command while he hurried to Rome to press his claims as emperor. By the middle of the summer Titus was in possession of a part of the city and its surrounding walls.

So great was the famine that Josephus declares that parents ate their children, fulfilling the words of Jesus that nothing ever would approach the horror of those times. When the city fell on September 7, 70 A.D., many who had survived the pestilence and the hunger were crucified outside of the walls of the city; thousands were sold as slaves to work in the mines of Egypt; others were taken to Rome to assist in the construction of the Colosseum.

Jesus prophesied that the generation then living would not pass away until all things were fulfilled. Thirty-seven years after He spoke His words on the Mount of Olives Jerusalem was ruined and the temple destroyed, just as Jesus had foretold.

The answer to their question as to when He would return was not given. He said no one could tell when He would return.

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered

into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."⁹

Since Jesus does not know the day nor the hour when God shall declare that the end of all things is at hand, how foolish it is for anyone to attempt to set the time for His return. Jesus said no one can know the time of His return. He will come when He is unexpected. Therefore, His people must be watching and waiting for Him. The time when this wonderful event is to occur is locked up in the Father's will. He has not revealed this information to the angels of heaven nor to His Beloved Son.

From the study of history we know that the things Jesus foretold came to pass just as He said they would. We know that His words concerning His second coming are also true.

Today no one seems much concerned with the return of Christ, but like the ante-diluvians they are building, planting, eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage and will not think of the return of Jesus until the trumpet sounds to herald His approach. His coming will be the time of judgment. In the parable of the ten virgins given in connection with the prophetic picture of the destruction of the temple and the capture of Jerusalem, Jesus shows that the obligation of those who profess to be His disciples is to be ready for His return.

9. Matthew 24:36-44.

A traveler who walks up the slope of the Mount of Olives passes somewhere near the place where these prophetic words were spoken by Jesus. Certainly, here is where Jesus walked as He conversed with His disciples on the many occasions when He crossed over Olivet to Bethany. From the summit of this Mount which is two thousand six hundred feet above sea level, one obtains a wonderful view of the city of Jerusalem, Mount Moriah, where the temple stood, and of that part of Jerusalem which is now a part of the new nation of Israel.

Jesus gives a prophetic picture of the judgment, showing that it will be a time when all shall receive their reward.

"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left."¹⁰

Jesus will not appear this time clothed in poverty, but in power and great glory. He will then reward every man according to his works, the righteous with life eternal and the disobedient with eternal condemnation.

10. Matthew 25:31-33

CHAPTER IX

PLOT AGAINST JESUS' LIFE

There on the Mount of Olives, only a short distance from the city, Jesus concluded His instructions concerning the things that were to come to pass very shortly. As one walks about the gentle slope of Olivet and views Jerusalem at the close of day, he cannot but wonder just where it was that Jesus was seated when He uttered these words. Perhaps it is best that we do not know the exact location lest we be prompted to remember that place rather than remember Jesus as our Savior and what He accomplished for us in redemption.

As Jesus finished His discourse, He reminded His disciples that after two days the Feast of the Passover was to be observed and that at that time He would be betrayed into the hands of the Jews to be crucified. A council of the Sanhedrin convened in the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest, to plan some way by which they might take Jesus and put Him to death.

The temple was the one place to which the Jews could come to offer their sacrifices. When Jesus drove from the temple enclosure those who bought and sold, He placed the priests in ill repute for allowing such a thing. The priests lived on the flesh of the sacrifices offered by the faithful. The Levites may have been the bankers who charged a fee for changing foreign money into the coin of the realm.

When Jesus condemned the practices of those who should have been the guardians of the house of God and predicted the destruction of the temple itself, their fury was increased against Him.

His teaching was readily received by the pilgrims and the common people. This must be ended, and the

only means by which they could accomplish it would be to put the trouble-maker to death. The order had been given to certain guards to take Jesus prisoner and to deliver Him to the authorities, but they were afraid to lay hands upon Him for they feared the people.

It was agreed by the Sanhedrin that Jesus must be put to death before all the people believed on Him. Caiaphas, as the high priest, informed them that it was expedient that Jesus should die that the whole nation perish not. It was agreed that this should be done, but not on the feast day lest there be an uproar among the people. While they were discussing how Jesus might be taken, a man appeared at the gate of the high priest's palace and requested a conference with Caiaphas. He was Judas Iscariot, and he came for a wicked purpose.

Luke tells us that Satan entered into the heart of Judas, and that he conspired with the chief priests and captains how he might betray Him unto them.

When Judas was admitted to the presence of the high priest, he said, "What will ye give me and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time on he sought opportunity to betray him."¹

As the time for the passover drew near, Jesus called Peter and John to Him saying, "Go and prepare us the passover that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he

1. Matthew 26:15, 16.

had said unto them: and they made ready the passover."²

The task of supplying water for the use of the household was a woman's work; thus a man bearing a pitcher of water would indeed be noticeable, so they had no difficulty in locating the place for the eating of the passover.

The preparation of the passover included the purchase of the lamb, its offering at the altar, the roasting of its flesh, the preparation of the unleavened bread, and the purchase of the fruit of the vine and the crushed fruit moistened with vinegar to remind them of the bitter suffering they had endured in Egypt.

When the preparation of the feast was completed, they returned to Jesus, and the whole group came to the upper room for the last supper they should eat with Jesus before His death.

The upper room in which Jesus and His disciples ate the Passover supper is thought to have been on the summit of Mount Zion. There is a tradition that goes back to the time of Hadrian that when Titus captured Jerusalem, the building where Christ ate his last meal was left standing and that it later served as a meeting place for the disciples.

This place could be reached from the Mount of Olives by following the Kidron valley until it intersected the valley of Hinnon and then turning to the right to the summit of Mount Zion.

When the group was seated and had begun to eat the passover, Jesus said, "Behold the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table."³ One by one they looked at each other in astonishment, and one by one they asked, "Lord is it I?"⁴

2. Luke 22:8-13.

3. Luke 22:21.

4. Mark 14:19.

Judas was the last one to speak. When he said, "Master, is it I?" Jesus answered, "Thou hast said." Jesus at the same moment dipped a morsel of bread into the bowl of bitter herbs and gave it to Judas as an indication of his guilt. Then, speaking to Judas, He said, "What thou doest, do quickly," and Judas went out into the night.

After the passover supper was ended, Jesus instituted that memorial which is to last for all time. "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: This do in remembrance of me. Likewise the cup also after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you."⁵

There at the table was Simon Peter, one who had been close to the Savior on many occasions. Turning to him, Jesus said, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before thou shall thrice deny that thou knowest me."⁶

Peter was always quick to speak, "Lord, bid me come to thee on the water;" "Lord, let us build here there tabernacles;" "How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?" Jesus knew of his worth to the church when it should be established, was anxious to save him for service in the kingdom of God, and so had prayed that he might be steadfast.

The visitor to Mount Zion has his attention called to the Coenaculum, the traditional place where Jesus kept the last passover of His life. It may be assumed that it is somewhere near this spot, but certainly the

5. Luke 22:17-20.

6. Luke 22:31-34.

pillared hall is not the "upper room," for it is in a style of architecture which was unknown in the time of the Lord.

When the supper was ended, they sang a hymn and went out into the silent street and turned toward the Mount of Olives. Leaving the city behind, they followed the roadway that led down into the valley, passing near the Tomb of Absalom and the cemetery of the thousands who have been buried outside the walls of the city.

Crossing over the brook Kidron, Jesus and His disciples approached a main road that passed near the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus and the twelve, to get away from the noise and confusion of the city, had often spent the night there.

Here today one stands among ancient trees that are the descendants of the trees under which Jesus prayed.

Arriving at the garden, Jesus told His disciples, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he to them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest:

behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinful men. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me."⁷

Jesus had predicted His death to His disciples and friends.

"From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."⁸

Jesus was willing to die for the redemption of all men, for His friends and even for His enemies, for Paul tells us that Christ died for the ungodly. Jesus could have saved His life had He so desired, for He knew the chief priests and scribes sought His life.

Even while He was there in the garden He could have escaped from them by crossing over the top of Olivet by the road that led to Bethany, the same road that may be seen there today. He could have followed the road from Bethany to the Jordan and on the other side could have found a refuge among the common people who so gladly heard Him.

What prompted Him to remain where those who hated Him could take His life? His willingness to become a sacrifice for all men can only be explained by His great love for humanity.

When His prayer was finished Jesus returned to His disciples whom He had asked to watch with Him, only to find them asleep. He gently rebuked them, saying, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour;"⁹ then He turned again to the place of prayer where He prostrated Himself on the ground again and poured out His soul to God.

7. Matthew 26:36-46.

8. Matthew 16:21.

9. Matthew 26:40.

When he found them asleep a second time He did not rebuke them but returned to His place of solitary prayer and repeated His words of submission to His Father's will, "If this cup cannot pass away except I drink it, thy will be done."

When He returned to His disciples, He first told them to sleep on and take their rest; then seeing the approach of Judas, and the multitude sent by the chief priests and the scribes, Jesus said, "Rise, let us be going: behold he is at hand that doth betray me. And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith came he to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him."¹⁰

The mob came with swords and staves as if to apprehend a criminal. As Judas approached Jesus, he stepped forward and kissed the Savior. Jesus said, "Friend, wherefore art thou come? Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

As soon as Judas kissed Jesus the multitude pressed forward, and Jesus asked, "Whom seek ye?"

They replied, "Jesus of Nazareth."

"I am He," said Jesus, and the men fell backward to the ground. When they had recovered, Jesus said, "I have told you that I am He: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go."

When the servants of the chief priests started to bind Jesus, Peter could no longer remain inactive. Drawing the sword which he had provided for himself, he fell upon the man who was nearest and cut off his ear. Jesus healed the injured man and called

10. Matthew 26:46-50.

upon Peter to put up his sword, adding that those who take up the sword shall perish with the sword.

Jesus then addressed the scribes and the Pharisees who were in the group, accusing them of coming against Him with swords and cudgels as if He was a malefactor. He also reminded them that He taught daily in the court of the temple, and they made no effort to take Him. Whether or not they made a reply is not known, but at this moment the disciples forsook Jesus and fled.

Having bound Jesus, the multitude led Him away toward the city with Peter following afar off. Jesus was taken back down the slopes of Olivet, across the Kidron, and up the opposite hill to enter the city by the Golden Gate, because it was the nearest at hand.

"And led him away to Annas first: for he was the father in law to Caiaphas, which was high priest that same year."¹¹

The House of Caiaphas, like the house where Jesus and His disciples ate the last supper, was located on the top of Mount Zion.

So after the betrayal of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, He was led back to the vicinity of the place where the Feast of the Passover had been observed.

The Golden Gate, which may be seen from the Garden of Gethsemane, has been closed to the public for many years. It's location in the eastern wall of Jerusalem, near the temple area has led many Bible students to conclude that it is the one near which Peter and John healed the man who was lame from birth. There is evidence that one of the many paths that crossed over the Kidron valley led directly to this gate and it may be assumed that here, too, the visitor to Jerusalem walks over the same ground where Jesus walked.

11. John 18:13.

CHAPTER X

JESUS BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST AND BEFORE PILATE

Annas had been high priest for a number of years but had been deposed by Tiberias Caesar. Though he had been compelled to relinquish his office, he still held some of the prestige and power attached to the position.

While messengers were dispatched to assemble the Sanhedrin, Annas appointed himself as the interrogator of the one whom he believed to be a false prophet.

"The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

"Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?"¹

The blow from the hand of the guard upon the face of Jesus was only the beginning of the indignities which were to be heaped upon Christ.

Jesus was now sent to Caiaphas, the high priest, who was to conduct the trial of the Carpenter of Nazareth.

1. John 18:19-23.

As Jesus stood before the assembly, the false witnesses who had been brought together to testify against Him swore they had heard Him say, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands."²

Two of the disciples of Jesus followed Him to the house of the high priest. One of these disciples was known to the family of Caiaphas and so was readily admitted by the young lady who kept the door. As Peter warmed himself by the fire in the midst of the hall, one of the servant girls of the high priest looked upon him and said, "And thou also was with Jesus of Nazareth." But Peter denied it saying, "Woman, I know him not." A second time he was accused by one of the men, and again by one of the maidens who said, "Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto."

Then Peter "began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said

2. Mark 14:58-65.

unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly."³

The record tells us that Jesus turned and looked upon Peter at the time of his denial. Not a word was spoken; but that look pierced the heart of Peter, it was a look that he would not forget to the day of his death.

Under the weight of that look Peter left the room. As he went out into the darkness of the silent streets, away in the distance he heard the cock crow and the words of Jesus came to his mind, and he wept bitterly.

As the hearing continued, Jesus held his peace against those who brought the accusations against Him.

When he answered nothing the high priest could not endure the silence and cried out, "Answereth thou nothing?" Any answer that Jesus would have given would have been distorted into a misrepresentation of His words. So Jesus did not speak.

Caiaphas, becoming angry, said, "I adjure thee by the living God that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe."

Pretending an anger that he did not really feel, Caiaphas rent his clothes, saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy," to which the council agreed, saying He should be put to death.

The admission of Jesus that He was the Messiah gave them a pretext for condemning him as well as supplying them with a complaint to present to the governor.

The Romans were jealous of their power and dealt harshly with any indication of a rebellion against their authority. The Sanhedrin could say that Jesus was seeking after the Jewish throne and that He was therefore an enemy of Caesar. The council had found Jesus guilty of blasphemy, and according to the Jew-

3. Matthew 26:74-75.

ish law He should have been stoned to death. The Sanhedrin lacked the power to inflict the death penalty.

Now the high priests, the scribes, and the elders left the house of Caiaphas, followed by the guards leading Jesus, and the shouting mob that was growing larger as they moved through the streets.

Judas must have been present in the judgment hall of Caiaphas when the sentence of death was passed against Jesus; for when he saw that Jesus was condemned, he hastened to the chief priests and elders and offered to restore the money he had received for the betrayal.

"Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, it is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."⁴

The priests had filched the price of Christ's betrayal from the temple treasury. They were not troubled by their conscience by this sin; but when the traitor returned the money, they agreed that it could not be restored to the treasury since it was the

4. Matthew 27:3-9.

price of blood. What should be done with the returned coins? They soon came to a decision upon the matter.

Outside the city there was a worked-out clay bed, now useless, since the material suitable for making pottery had been exhausted. The owner was willing to sell it for the thirty pieces of silver, so it was purchased and used as a burial place for strangers who died in the Holy City.

When the Sanhedrin had pronounced judgment against Jesus, a messenger was sent to Pontius Pilate, the Procurator, with the word that they were bringing to him one judged worthy of death, requesting that he meet them before the judgment hall.

"Then led they away Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the pass-over. Pilate then went out unto them and said, What accusation bring ye against this man? They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him unto thee. Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die. Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?"⁵

Pilate, a corrupt politician, was appointed Procurator of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea in 26 A.D. by Tiberius Caesar, a position he held till 37 A.D., when he was removed from that office.

He had on previous occasions incurred the hatred of the Jewish people, which had prompted them to appeal to Tiberius Caesar for relief. Two times Pilate had been forced to accede to their demands to restore peace to the city of Jerusalem. Now, at an early hour, Pilate, only half awake, was waiting to receive the

5. John 18:28-33.

trouble-makers who had deprived him of his early morning sleep.

When the members of the Jewish court appeared before the palace, they refused to enter the judgment hall lest they should be defiled and thus prevented from eating the Passover. Now as Pilate came out of the palace and stood before them, he said, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King."⁶

Their reply that He was a malefactor and that He ought to die caused Pilate again to enter the judgment hall and have Jesus brought before him for examination. His first question to Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" was based on information that had been given to him. Jesus answered, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me: What has Thou done?"

What a travesty in the name of justice! A man condemned, the judge ready to pass on him the sentence of death, but before doing so, he asks, "Of what crime are you accused? What did you do?"

Christ could have answered that question, but He did not. He could have said, "You ask what I have done. One day a man came to Me, saying his daughter was dead. I entered into his home, took her by the hand, lifted her up, restored her to that father, alive! One day near Jericho, two blind men called out to Me, saying, 'Have mercy on us, Thou Son of David.' I gave them sight. They now see. All I have done is to heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, comfort the broken-hearted, and show men that God cares for them, that he sent Me to save them. That is all that I have done."

⁶. Luke 23:2.

Pilate now understood that the accusers of Jesus wished to have Him put to death. The Jews knew that Pilate would not condemn to death the One who stood before him if they told the truth about Him. If they just accused Him as a false Messiah, Pilate would be unimpressed, but if they told him that Jesus was guilty of treason, that He claimed to be a King, that he taught against giving tribute to Caesar, then the governor would have to act.

They therefore affirmed that Jesus was claiming to be a king, that He was stirring up the people, inciting them to revolt. They said, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King. He stirreth up all the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place."

"When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him for a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at naught, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate."⁷

At the Passover it was customary for the governor to release a prisoner to the people. The high priest desired the death of Jesus and the people had been instructed to demand his crucifixion.

"Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas or Jesus which is called Christ? For he knew that for envy they had delivered him."

7. Luke 23:2, 5-11.

Just at this time the wife of Pilate sent a message to Pilate warning him against imposing any penalty upon Jesus because of the dream she had during the night.

"And when he was set down on the judgment seat his wife sent unto him saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus".⁸

It appears certain that the wife of Pilate had been convinced that Jesus was no ordinary person. Her plea to her husband to have nothing to do with this just man increased his desire to release Jesus. He had told the Jews to judge Him by their own law, but this they could not do; for they had no power to condemn one to death, and they had agreed among themselves that Jesus was worthy of death.

When Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, he must have hoped that Herod would decide what should be done with Him; but Herod returned Him uncondemned. Now Pilate, addressing the High Priest and the people in the courtyard, sought to release Jesus by telling His accusers that he would scourge Him and let Him go free.

He said, "You have brought this man unto me, accusing Him of perverting the people. I have examined Him and have found no fault in Him touching the things of which He is accused." Herod's decision was that He has done nothing worthy of death. "I will therefore scourge Him and let Him go."

But the mob cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"

Pilate did not give in to the cries of the multitude who sought the life of Jesus. Thinking that when they saw the severity of the punishment their lust for blood would be appeased, Pilate now ordered Jesus to

8. Matthew 27-17-23.

be scourged. The soldiers who had been silently waiting while the discussion between Pilate and his Jewish subjects took place now perceived that they were to have a hand in the matter. Jesus was led into the courtyard, and His garments were removed to the waist. His hands were now tied to a low post set deep in the ground.

The Roman scourge was made of leather thongs attached to a short handle. The knotted thongs and the pieces of metal which were fastened to them tore the flesh of the one being punished.

When the legionaries had given the required number of strokes, they platted a crown of thorns from the brambles that had been used to build a fire in the brazier. This crown they placed upon His head and pressed it down until the thorns pierced the flesh.

A soldier placed a reed in His hand; and passing before Him, they mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews." Some of His persecutors were not satisfied with this mockery alone, but struck Him upon the head and face.

Pilate, coming in at this moment, ordered them to desist, and bringing Christ forth to the multitude, he said, "Behold your king."⁹

Fearful that Pilate was now about to release Jesus, the mob cried out, "If you let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."¹⁰

Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your king?"¹¹

Believing that they were now about to gain their purpose, they said, "We have no king but Caesar."

He did not want them to accuse him before Tiberias Caesar, knowing that if they did so he would be deposed. Pilate was now forced to act. All of his weak

9. John 19:14.

10. John 19:12.

11. John 19:15.

attempts to save Jesus from those who wanted Him put to death had failed.

To show his innocence in surrendering Jesus to His enemies, he called for a basin of water and washed his hands before them all, saying, "I am free from the blood of this just person: see ye to it."¹²

The Jews, seeing they had accomplished their purpose, said, "His blood be upon us and our children."¹³

"Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man. When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him and crucify him: for I find no fault in him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. And it was

12. Matthew 27:24.

13. Matthew 27:25.

the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour; and he said unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king. but Caesar. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him away."¹⁴

Today as one walks about Jerusalem he walks where Jesus walked. From the garden where he was arrested, to the house of Annas, thence to the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest, to the hearing before Pilate who sent Him to Herod, who returned him to Pilate uncondemned, one crosses and recrosses the territory where Jesus walked.

Pilate delivered Jesus to His enemies to be led away to the agony and death of crucifixion. Along the Via Dolorosa, the way of sorrows, Jesus walked, a way which is pointed out to one today. It is a very narrow roadway—not open to vehicular traffic.

Its walls here and there are marked with scars caused by the boxes carried by the camels as they pressed against the walls to let another pass.

As one passes along this road, he cannot but think of the One who passed along this road that spring morning in the year 33 A.D., followed by a heartless crowd who were ready to enjoy to the very end the death of the One condemned.

The Centurion rode at the head; immediately following him came Jesus and the malefactors who were to be crucified with Him surrounded by the soldiers. Each of the condemned men carried upon his shoulders the cross upon which he was to meet death. Around the neck of each hung the inscription that he was to wear until it was placed above his head at the top of the cross.

14. John 19:4-16.

When the leaders of the Jews saw what Pilate had written, "The King of the Jews," they hastened to him, saying, "Write not The King of the Jews, but that He said, I am the King of the Jews." Pilate refused their request, saying, "What I have written I have written."¹⁵

Over the rough cobblestones of the streets Jesus carried the cross upon his shoulders torn and bleeding from the scourging ordered by Pilate.

Made feeble by the long mock trials, weakened by the buffeting and the brutal scourging, Jesus struggled along as far as the gate of the city; and there His strength failed.

The Centurion saw at once that Jesus would never be able to carry the cross all the way to the place of execution. Looking about for one whom they might impress into service, the soldiers saw a man who was about to enter the city. He was a Jew from Cyrene, a city of North Africa. The soldiers called for him to come near, and the Galilean was relieved of His burden, and it was placed upon the back of Simon. Simon knew that he did not dare to refuse, and so he carried the cross to the appointed place while the suffering Savior of mankind trudged along behind.

Outside of the Damascus Gate, one of the principal gates of the city, there is a hill that was the place of public execution. This hill lies at the northern end of Mount Moriah, which is a long backbone of rock beginning at the place where the Dome of the Rock now stands and extending northward to its highest point without the city. In the bluff of this hill there is a curious likeness of a skeleton face or skull, a natural formation caused by the weathering of the rock through the ages. Here is the place without the gate, it is believed, where our Lord was crucified.

This place was discovered by General Charles Gordon of the British Army, who was stationed in

15. John 19:21,22.

Jerusalem. Of the many tombs around Jerusalem it is the only one which fits all of the information given to us in the Scriptures. The Scriptures inform us that Jesus "suffered without the gate" at the place called Golgotha, the place of the skull. This place is outside of the walls of Jerusalem.

Mark tells us of Simon of Cyrene coming in from the country and being required to bear the cross when the centurion saw that Jesus would not be able to bear it to the place of execution.

The Gospel of John tells us "Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never yet man laid. There laid they Jesus because of the Jews preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand." Matthew's record tells us that Joseph of Arimathea, who was a rich man came to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, which he wrapped in a linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of rock and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre. These stones used to close the entrance of tombs were not great boulders but were round in shape. They fitted into a trough or slot before the entrance of the tomb and when they were rolled into place they closed the entrance completely. The garden in which this tomb was found was covered over with the debris which had washed down from the hill above and when this was removed a wine press was found near the tomb.

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."¹⁶

A group of women following the crowd were lamenting and beating their breasts in defiance of the Roman law that no one should display any grief for any of those who were to be executed.

16. Hebrews 13:12.

Turning to them, Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourself and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck."¹⁷

The multitude continued its way up the hillside to the place of execution.

It was the third hour of the day when they reached the appointed place and began their brutal work. The death warrants were read to the condemned; and they were offered a draught of wine containing powerful drugs, designed to dull their senses, supplied by the wealthy ladies of Jerusalem.

The cup was offered to Jesus; but when He knew what it was, He refused to partake of it.

Four soldiers were assigned to the nailing of each victim to his cross. It is said that it was usual for the victims to beg, to shriek, and to curse, but no imprecations escaped the lips of Jesus. Stripped of His garments, He was laid upon the cross while a soldier held each hand and arm and another His body. The fourth drove the nails through the tender flesh of His hands; and then the feet were placed one above the other and a single spike was driven through the instep of both feet, fulfilling the words of the Psalmist, "They pierced my hands and my feet."

It was indeed bloody work, but the soldiers were accustomed to it and performed the deed without any qualms of conscience.

"And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left."¹⁸

17. Luke 23:28-29.

18. Luke 23:32-33.

The work of nailing the condemned to the cross being finished, it was now lifted and its base dropped into the hole which had been prepared for it; and the soldiers divided the clothing of the condemned among themselves. When they came to the tunic of Jesus, seeing that it was woven in one piece, they cast lots for it; and thus were the words of David fulfilled, "They part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture."¹⁹

Jesus was now hanging in agony upon the cursed tree. The High Priest and the scribes now gathered about the cross, rejoicing in their efforts to bring about the death of Jesus. As they looked upon Him, they taunted Him, saying, "Ah, thou that destroyest the temple and rebuildest it in three days, save thyself and come down from the cross."²⁰ Some who stood by said, "Let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe."

And even one of the malefactors who was crucified with Him joined the people in insulting Jesus, saying, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we received the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. An he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."²¹

Some of the disciples were now at the scene: John, with the mother of Christ; her sister Salome; Mary, the wife of Clopas; and Mary Magdalene.

As they pressed about the cross, Jesus called to Mary, saying, "Behold, thy Son;" and then addressing John, he said, "Behold thy mother;" and from that

19. Psalms 22:18.

20. Mark 15:29, 30.

21. Luke 23:39-43.

time John took Mary into his own home and cared for her.

Crucifixion was one of the most cruel means of ending a man's life that was ever devised. It caused the greatest suffering for the longest period of time. Sometimes the crucified hung upon the cross alive, but slowly dying, for as much as two days. Their suffering increased more and more with each passing moment. Their thirst, their raging fever, their dizziness from the loss of blood, their aching muscles, and the ever-increasing agony usually brought death within ten to twelve hours.

Jesus had now hung suspended upon the cross for three hours. Every movement of His body caused the blood to gush afresh from the wounds in His hands and feet. His breathing became more difficult, and His suffering increased.

As though God in heaven could not look upon such a scene, clouds gathered about the sun and covered the earth with darkness. In that dark hour it seemed to Jesus that He was forsaken by all: by His friends, His disciples, and even by the Father upon whom He had so often called. In His anguish He called out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

"And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying Eloi, Eloi, lama sabach-thani? which is being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come take him down."²²

The Jews who stood by understood the words of Jesus; but the soldiers misunderstood His cry, supposing that He called for Elias. One of them, moved with pity, dipped a sponge into the container of vine-

22. Mark 15:34-36.

gar, and putting it on the end of a reed pressed it to the parched lips of the Savior.

As the hour of death approached, the suffering of Jesus became more intense; fever filled His body; His head was tortured with heat and pain; the blood dripping slowly from His wounds so weakened Him that He knew the end was near. Again he called upon His Father in heaven, saying "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."²³

Very shortly He cried with a loud voice, "It is finished,"²⁴ bowed His head, and His spirit took its flight. His work of redemption was now completed. The eternal salvation of the human family was now assured.

The death of Jesus was accompanied by a great earthquake; the rocks split asunder; the earth shook; and the veil of the temple was rent asunder, signifying that the way into the Holiest of all, even heaven itself, was now made available to all men.

Because of the Passover the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies of the condemned men to remain on the cross, so they hurried to Pilate with a request that their legs might be broken to hasten their death.

"The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith there came out blood and water. . . . For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not

23. Luke 23:46.

24. John 19:30.

be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look upon him whom they have pierced."²⁵

This brutal operation was performed with a heavy club upon the helpless victims, bringing about their death within a brief period of time. When the soldiers came to Jesus they saw that He was dead already; but one of the soldiers, to make sure of His death, took his spear and pierced His side, from which there came forth blood and water.

Among those who knew Jesus was Joseph of Arimathea, a devout Jew, who looked for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus that he might give it a proper burial.

"Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And he brought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, beheld where he was laid."²⁶

Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead and would not surrender the body until the word had been confirmed by the centurion. When the request was granted, Joseph hastened back to Calvary; and there Nicodemus joined him, and they had the body removed from the cross that they might prepare it for burial.

"And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in

25. John 19:31-34, 36, 37.

26. Mark 15:43-47.

linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury."²⁷

Only a short distance from the hill where the crucifixion took place, there was a garden owned by Joseph, where he had instructed his workmen to carve a tomb out of the solid wall of rock for his own final resting place. Because night was fast approaching, they made hasty preparation for the burial of Jesus here.

Nicodemus had brought with him a hundred weight of myrrh and aloes. When they came to the garden, water was brought from the nearby well, and they washed the body of Jesus, which was soiled with sweat and blood. When this task had been completed, the winding sheet was wrapped about the body, which was covered with the spices brought by Nicodemus. The face was then covered with a napkin which was kept in place by a knotted cloth. On the shelf within the tomb they tenderly deposited the body of Jesus. The great slab of stone was fitted into the slot, or trough, in front of the tomb, and rolled into place.

As Joseph and Nicodemus and their helpers departed, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Joses, remained at the tomb.

The day following, the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate to request that a guard be placed at the tomb, saying, "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."²⁸

27. John 19:39-41.

28. Matthew 27:63-66.

It is true that many believe that Jesus was both crucified and buried at the place now confined within the walls of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Others dispute this theory; for they say that He could not have been crucified within the city walls, for the Scriptures plainly state that He suffered without the gate, while the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is in the very heart of the city. Neither was it the custom of the Jews to bury anyone within the city walls, and even today the hills surrounding the city of Jerusalem are covered with thousands upon thousands of Jewish graves. Perhaps people could be more easily convinced that this was the place where He was crucified and buried if all the other places connected with the death of Jesus were not said to be here also. Here, it is asserted, is the place where He was mocked; here is the place where He was scourged; here is where He was nailed to the cross; here is where the soldiers cast lots for His garments; here is where the women anointed His body; here is where He was buried; here is the stone which was rolled against the door and upon which the angels sat; and here is where He appeared to Mary Magdalene. To the Bible student it seems highly improbable that all of these places could be so closely grouped together.

The number of places is definitely too many to be included within the walls of this great structure. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was constructed in the fourth century. For it wars have been waged. The Crusades were undertaken to regain the Holy Sepulchre, which was believed to be within the walls. Because of its great age, it has been necessary to re-enforce the walls with steel and wooden beams to keep them from falling.

CHAPTER XI

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF JESUS

To the disciples, the death of Jesus was a calamity. They had believed that He was indeed the long awaited Messiah who would establish an earthly kingdom over which He would reign. The death of Jesus had shattered their dream of occupying important positions in the governmental affairs of the kingdom. They believed they had been deceived, for they "trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel." When Jesus was arrested, all of the disciples forsook Him and fled; and, fearing for their lives, they secreted themselves in the homes of friends until they should have opportunity to return to their own homes and resume their trades and occupations.

Mary Magdalene had rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. Now, after the Sabbath was past, very early on the first day of the week, in company with the other Mary, they came to the tomb, bringing with them spices that they might anoint the body of Jesus.

"And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men."¹

When they arrived at the sepulchre, they were amazed to find that the great slab of stone by which the tomb had been sealed had been rolled away and

1. Matthew 28:2-4.

that the tomb was empty. They supposed that the body of Jesus had been removed to some other place, so they went to the home where Peter and John were staying and told them of the empty tomb. They ran to the tomb; but John, the younger of the two, arrived first and looked into the burial chamber, but went not into it. When Peter reached the sepulchre, he immediately went inside and saw the burial garments lying at one side; and nearby, wrapped by itself, was the napkin that covered His face. Not comprehending the words that Jesus had spoken that He must rise again from the dead, they returned to their abiding place, wondering.

Mary did not leave the garden, but stood near the entrance of the tomb, weeping. When she looked within, she saw two angels sitting one at the head and the other at the feet of the place where the Lord's body lay.

"And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? . . . She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her."²

2. John 20:13-18.

When the angels of the Lord descended to roll away the stone, the keepers of the tomb became as dead men. When the women went to tell the disciples of the empty tomb, the soldiers who were appointed to guard the sepulchre sent some of their company into the city to report what had happened to the chief priests. The chief priests immediately called the elders together, and as they discussed the matter they decided upon the course they would pursue.

Instead of acknowledging that they had crucified the Son of God, the long promised Messiah, they planned to give the soldiers a large sum of money to say that His disciples came by night and stole the body away while they slept. The soldiers may have hesitated to accept the bribe, knowing that the penalty for going to sleep while on guard was death. So the elders told the soldiers that if the report of their falling asleep came to the governor's ears, they would persuade him and secure them.

"So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."³

One may see today in the garden near Calvary the shelf of stone on the far side of this tomb where, it is believed by many students of the New Testament, our Lord's body lay awaiting the first day of the week when He should rise from the dead.

When Jesus had finished speaking to Mary, He vanished from her sight. Amazed at what she had seen, she went at once to the house where Peter and John were staying. What Peter and John had told the others was confirmed by Mary. The tomb was indeed empty—but there was more yet. She had seen the risen Lord; He had spoken to her; He had told her to tell the brethren that He had risen from the dead and that He would meet with them in Galilee.

3. Matthew 28:15.

That same day two of the disciples departed for Emmaus, a village a short distance from Jerusalem. Disillusioned by the crucifixion of the One whom they believed to be the Messiah, their hearts were heavy as they walked along the way together, their minds filled with questions. Had they been deceived as to the real nature of Jesus? Was it the Messiah who had died on the cursed tree—the means of execution for murderers and thieves—in shame and disgrace? How could the kingdom, of which He taught so much, ever become a reality?

As they reasoned together about these things, they became aware of someone approaching from the rear. As they looked about, they saw a traveller who seemed anxious to join them. Noticing their sad countenances, he asked a reason for it.

“And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days. And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre. And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels which said he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even as the women had said: but him they saw not.”⁴

4. Luke 24:17-24.

Beginning at that point the Stranger expounded unto them the things that were written in the Scriptures. As they walked along, they listened attentively to the words of their Companion as He explained to them the meaning of the words of Moses and the prophets. It became clear to them that the Messiah had to die to redeem mankind from sin.

When they arrived at the edge of the village, the Stranger indicated that He would continue His journey; but the two disciples invited Him to accept their hospitality, reminding Him that the day was far spent and that it was time for the evening meal.

Food was soon prepared for the three of them; and as they sat to eat, the Stranger took bread; and when He had asked a blessing, He gave some to each of them. As He passed it to them, they saw the nail-pierced hands. "Look! It is the Master!"

Before they could say more, He had vanished from their sight.

They had not recognized His face nor His voice; but when His nail-pierced hands had passed the bread to them, they knew it was the Lord.

They must get the word to the other disciples of the Lord. Back to the city of Jerusalem they went. As they walked, they thought of the words Jesus had spoken and confessed to each other that their hearts had burned within them as He had talked with them and opened unto them the Scriptures.

When they arrived in the city, they went at once to the place where the disciples were assembled. Before they could speak a word, they were informed that Jesus was indeed risen from the dead and that Peter had seen Him alive. When at last opportunity was given to Cleopas and his companion to speak, they told how the Lord had appeared to them in the way and how that He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Not all of the disciples were inclined to believe. They seemed to think that the reports were only the

hallucinations of minds that were overwhelmed with grief. What dependence could be placed in the report of a woman who had once been possessed of a demon, or of a man who had denied that he even knew the Master, or of the two who had brought a report of Jesus at Emmaus, sixteen furlongs away?

As the two disciples finished the account of His appearance to them, a silence fell upon the room. The doors were shut. No one was heard to knock, but there in their midst was Jesus.

Looking about the group, He said, "Peace be unto you."⁵

Some of the disciples were terrified, supposing that they had seen a spirit.

Then Jesus spoke again, "Why are you troubled and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I Myself."⁶

Thomas was not present when the Lord appeared to the disciples; and when he rejoined them later, they assured him that they had seen the Lord. He refused to believe their words. "Unless I can see the prints of the nails in His hands and thrust my hand in His side, I will not believe."⁷

On the next first day of the week the disciples were together in the usual place and the doors were shut. This time Thomas was also present. Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst. He called to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not a disbeliever but a believer."⁸

Thomas looked upon the visible evidence and said, "My Lord and my God."⁹ Jesus said, "Because thou hast seen thou hast believed; blessed are those who saw not and yet believed."¹⁰

5. Luke 24:36.

6. Luke 24:38,39.

7. John 20:25.

8. John 20:27.

9. John 20:28.

10. John 20:29.

Jesus promised that He would meet His disciples in Galilee. Several of them returned to Galilee, possibly to the city of Capernaum, the home of Simon Peter. While seven of His disciples were assembled together, Peter said, "I go afishing." The others answered, "We will also go with thee."¹¹

They entered into a ship, put out to sea, and cast their net time after time the whole night through, but they caught nothing.

As they brought the ship to land in the early hours of the morning, they saw by the light of the coming day a man standing on the shore. He called to them, asking, "Children, have ye any meat?" The disciples answered, "No." Again the man upon the shore called to them, "Cast your net on the right side and ye shall find." They made the cast and were not able to pull the net in for the multitude of fish that it contained. John said unto Peter, "It is the Lord."

Peter girt his fisherman's coat about him and cast himself into the sea that he might be the first to reach the Lord.

When they came to land, they found a fire and fish laid thereon and bread also. When they had brought the net to land, Jesus invited the disciples to come and dine. When they had finished eating, Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?"

Peter's mind may have been carried back to the time when he denied that he even knew the Lord. Whatever may have been his thoughts, he quickly answered, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee."

Jesus replied, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus asked him the same question, and again He received the same answer, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." Hardly had the sound of the voice of Jesus died away until the same question was asked again. Peter answered,

11. John 21:3.

"Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

"Verily, verily I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shall stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this he said unto him, Follow me".¹²

Peter looked about; and seeing John standing near, he asked Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus said, "If I will that he shall live until I shall come again, that is nothing to thee; your responsibility is to follow Me." The visitor to Capernaum may walk down the sloping shore to the Sea of Galilee and know that somewhere in the vicinity the meeting of Jesus and His disciples took place.

There one can walk over the same ground where Jesus walked, look upon the same sea, and view the same rugged hills. How very near one feels to the Savior at this place.

The scene changed, and again Jesus was back in Jerusalem with His disciples. He continued with His disciples for forty days from the time of His resurrection, and during this time He taught them many things that pertained to the kingdom of God.

During this time He showed Himself alive unto His disciples by many infallible proofs. He appeared to Peter, to James, to all of the disciples; and the apostle Paul tells us that He was seen of above five hundred brethren at one time.

As Jesus opened the eyes of His disciples to the meaning of the Scriptures, they understood that the things that had happened were foretold by the prophets.

12. John 21:17-19.

"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."¹³

"To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard from me. For John truly baptized with water but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."¹⁴

"And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen."¹⁵

The mercy of God as revealed in the gospel was first to be made available to the very ones who had plotted the death of Jesus: those who had cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him;" who had smitten His face and scourged Him; who had pressed the crown of thorns upon His brow; who had driven the

13. Luke 24:46, 47.

14. Acts 1:3-8.

15. Luke 24:50-53.

nails through the palms of His hands and through His feet; who had ridiculed Him and jeered at Him as He had hung helpless upon the cross.

God's love for sinful men was revealed by the fact that the provisions of the gospel were first extended to those who had no reason to expect mercy.

At the end of the forty days during which Jesus had taught His disciples the things about the kingdom, He led them forth to the Mount of Olives; and as He bestowed His blessings upon His disciples, He was lifted up from the earth; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. As they continued to gaze up into the heavens, two divine messengers stood by them in white apparel and gave promise that He would come again.

"And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into the heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."¹⁶

The ascension of Jesus into heaven proved beyond all doubt that He was indeed the Son of God. The evidence of His divinity had been revealed to His disciples in the many miracles that He performed: raising the dead to life, opening the eyes of the blind, feeding the five thousand, walking upon the waters of the Sea of Galilee; but still they were slow to believe that He was the One who had come down from heaven.

The ascension of Jesus into heaven removed all doubt from their minds. They were now fully convinced that He was the Son of God. Many years after His ascension the aged disciple John, upon the lonely isle of Patmos, saw the heavens opened and Jesus revealed unto him. "And I turned to see the voice that spake unto me. And being turned I saw seven golden

16. Acts 1:10-11.

candlesticks; and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forever more."¹⁷

In that eternal abode He ever lives to make intercession before the throne of God for the saints.

17. Revelation 1:12-18.

CHAPTER XII

THE BEGINNING OF HIS KINGDOM, THE CHURCH

The disciples of the Lord Jesus returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives and patiently waited for the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit which was to guide them into all truth and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had taught them during His ministry. To prevent their words from being doubted, He promised them that the Holy Spirit would convince all men that they were indeed His representatives here on earth.

"But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."¹

Here is the promise of Jesus to His disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth in the things that they would speak.

"And he said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."²

The Holy Spirit was to be a guide to the apostles to direct them in their teaching, a witness to confirm the word the apostles preached by the miracles they

1. John 14:26.

2. Luke 24:46-49.

were able to perform, and a means of revealing the will of God to the world.

"Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he shall show you things to come."³

"God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will?"⁴

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."⁵

The apostles assembled in Jerusalem for the purpose of selecting one to take the place of Judas, who by transgression fell. The one who was to succeed him must have been a witness of the life of the Lord from the time He was baptized by John until the time He ascended into heaven. When they cast their lots, the deciding lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all assembled together. "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."⁶

When the news of this incident spread among the people of Jerusalem, they came together and were amazed when they heard the apostles speaking in the language of the various nations represented in the city. This was not an unintelligible jabber, but their own native language. When the accusation was made that those who spoke were drunk, Peter stood up in

3. John 16:13.

4. Hebrews 2:4.

5. II Peter 1:21.

6. Acts 2:2-4.

the midst and pointed out that it was too early for anyone to be drunk; for it was only the third hour of the day. He then informed the multitude that this was the event foretold by the prophet Joel that God would send His Spirit upon all flesh. The message that followed was the first proclamation of the gospel of redemption. Peter affirmed that Jesus of Nazareth was approved of God by signs and miracles which He did in their midst and that they had crucified Him, but that God had raised Him from the dead and that He was now at the right hand of God.

He ended his dramatic statement with these words: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that this same Jesus whom ye have crucified is both Lord and Christ."

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Then Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And with many other words did he exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation."⁷

Then they that gladly received his words were baptized, and the same day there was added unto them about three thousand souls.

Here is the fulfillment of the words Jesus spoke at Caesarea Philippi when He said, "Upon this rock, (the truth that He was the Christ) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."⁸

From that time forward, the church is in existence. The timidity of the apostles was replaced by a

7. Acts 2:38-40.

8. Matthew 16:18.

religious fervor which amazed the Jewish Nation. On every occasion of public teaching they accused the rulers of being the murderers of Jesus, the Son of God. The wave of opposition which was launched against the followers of Jesus only made them more willing to bear reproach for His name.

Within forty years after Jesus was crucified the church was found in every corner of the then-known world. History presents no parallel to the rapid growth of the church in apostolic times. Cities of commercial importance and centers of political influence heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and accepted it. The religion which He died to establish was devoid of everything that would attract the world; it was uncompromising in its opposition to paganism, demanding of its followers purity of life, consecration to Christ, meeting with bitter persecution, yet moving on and on, until it finally came to influence the thoughts and actions of all men.

Here was the divine institution which was purchased by the blood of Jesus for the redemption of mankind, the one agency through which the light of God's love shines upon the world. Where is that church today? Is it revealed in some stately structure of brick and stone, with lofty spire, which the common people hesitate to enter? They who build such structures have yet to learn that God dwells not in temples made with hands, but is more interested in what takes place in the worship than in the height of a spire or the ornateness of a structure.

Some churches of today have become no more than amusement halls. Preachers are side-stepping the issues that confront them, lulling their listeners into false security, preaching on general principles, sugarcoating the gospel of redemption, and robbing it of its power.

What a travesty in the name of religion! Does the church exist to tell what this or that great man said or wrote? Does it exist to give book reviews, to dis-

cuss current events, and to prepare special programs which appeal to the fleshly nature but leave the spiritual nature of man unsatisfied?

Open God's word before you, read of the church in the New Testament. You will be convinced that the church established by Jesus through the apostles was not characterized by these things. When Jesus sent forth His disciples to preach, He gave them this command, "Teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you." Where in the New Testament do we read that apostles taught the church to do these things?

The church was established for the spiritual welfare of man. This need is first. Let us forget about houses built for display, about dogmas, creeds, rituals, and worldly entertainment in the church and get back to worshipping God in the beauty of holiness.

People want to hear about Jesus and the salvation He came to provide. Teachers and leaders of religious thought cannot say unto them, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled," and yet neglect to give them the spiritual food so necessary for the soul.

The world today needs to get back to God's Book, to the religion of the Master, and to the purity of His church. Picture the simplicity of the church as it was in the days of the apostles. They met on the first day of the week in some private home or some upper room. As they came together, there were no pealing notes of a pipe organ nor sound of stringed instruments, for these things did not come into the church until hundreds of years later. The Christian assemblies sang praises to God with the spirit and with the understanding.

Their prayers were part of their sacrifice. They needed no creed nor church manual, for they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. They were not dependent upon a salaried clergyman; for the elders, the bishops, supplied their spiritual food. As oc-

casion demanded and ability enabled, others had a part in edifying the body.

They observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week. They contributed of their means for the support of the needy and for the spread of the gospel. No one had the right to tell another how much to give.

This constituted the worship of the church in the apostolic age. To many people of this present age this may have seemed like an odd worship, but it was pleasing to the Lord because it came from the heart; and we read that the hand of the Lord was with them. This was the Lord's plan of worship for the church. It was based upon the teaching delivered by the apostles. Why should we not follow the Lord's plan today?

This was the age in which the church covered the earth as the waters cover the sea. In this period the church established by Christ was supreme. It was controlled by His law and at all times presented a united front against the devil.

Today those who profess to believe in Christ divide their forces into groups and parties and thus hinder the triumph of the gospel. This lack of unity among sincere and honest people is more productive of infidelity than any other cause.

We profess to believe in the same God, to accept the same Bible, and to acknowledge the same Saviour; but we are not united in our opposition to Satan. No logical excuse can be given for the strife and the division that separates the followers of the Redeemer of mankind. The early followers of Jesus believed the same doctrine, taught the same truths, worshipped the same God, and belonged to the one body of which we read in God's word. If all religious people would do the same things today, the same unity would exist now that existed then.

What was the basis of that unity? Simply the apostles' doctrine, the teaching of the New Testament.

Jesus prayed that His people might be one. His great prayer of intercession reveals that the Lord never expected His people to be divided into groups, parties, and factions, for which there is no authority in His word.

The need of the world today is to get back to the religion of the New Testament, to the unity, the peace, and harmony of the church of the Lord.

Never in the history of the nation that was planted by the praying Pilgrims has worldliness been so pronounced as at the present time. There is a notable disrespect for things sacred, noble, and good. If this condition is to be ended, if the sanctity of the home is to be restored, if men are to turn from the babble of human philosophies and renounce their allegiance to Satan, it will be the religion of Jesus Christ that will effect the change.

The unity of those who claim to be God's children would do much to bring about this desired change. This question naturally arises, "Is it possible for all religious people to stand together?" Certainly it is possible. The church of the Lord was united in the beginning. There was but one church. The Scriptures portray the unity, the oneness of the Lord's people, and indicate that such a condition is the only one that is pleasing unto Him.

On one occasion Jesus said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also must I bring and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."⁹ He also prayed for the unity of His people, saying, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."¹⁰

9. John 10:16.

10. John 17:20-21.

That all followers of Jesus should be united in one body or church is a truth that is clearly taught in the New Testament.

When people say that the religious division enables everyone to be satisfied religiously, they are stating that which is in direct opposition to the words of the Savior and the teaching of the apostles. A divided church can never convert the world. When people are converted to the dogmas of different religious bodies, they will teach and foster the same infidelity and rejection of God's word which has retarded the work of the Savior of men for hundreds of years.

The only means by which the world can be converted is for all who profess to be His people to lay aside all creeds, all prayer books, all church manuals, all confessions of faith and stand united on the teaching of the apostles' doctrine as revealed in the word of God. If all religious people come back to the word of God, strife and discord will cease; division will end; and the church for which Jesus died could spread the gospel of salvation over all the earth. The spread of the gospel by a united church would then convert the world.

May the Lord hasten the day when all who profess to be God's people may be one.