

THE KOLBRIN

SECOND VOLUME

THE GOSPEL OF THE KAILEDY

**PREVIOUSLY CALLED “THE BOOK OF THE
ILLUMINATORS HAVING THE AUTHORITY OF THE
NASORINES”**

Chapter 19

Taking only the twelve envoys and a few women who were also followers, Jesus set out for Caesarea Philippi, a city renamed by the Tetrarch Philip when seeking Roman patronage.

One eventide, while on the way, Jesus said to the twelve, “Who do the people in the places we pass through think I am?” They were not agreed, some saying the people believed Him to be the Deliverer and some the Enlightener. Others said the people believed Him to be the Chosen One, while some said that many thought He was John of the Wilderness, for sometimes it seemed his spirit had entered Jesus.

Jesus said, “Who do you think I am?” Again, they were not agreed.

And Jesus said, "I am He Whom all men need, whomever they seek. Call a thing by a hundred names and it remains the same. However, each of you keep your own conception in your own heart, and discuss it with no one."

Later, at a house at Balos, they were discussing the people's expectations for the Chosen One. And Judas said to Jesus, "If You are truly He, then the people will believe and follow You, for the prophecies in the Holy Books must be fulfilled. He will surely come, and I believe You are He. I believe the reborn world is at hand, and the day of the people's salvation is near."

John said, "It is foreordained that the Chosen One will suffer death by violence but will rise triumphant above it, to manifest again as proof that death is not the destined end."

Jesus said, "Perhaps I am the Chosen One, for will He not be all things to all men?"

Peter said, "Sire, we are Your friends, and You are our Guiding Light, the hope of our lives. Do not say such things, for we could not bear to lose You."

Jesus answered, "I must bear the cross of life, and on Me it lies more heavily than on others. Each must do whatever he may be called upon to do, and great causes demand great deeds and sacrifices."

Then He said to Peter, “Do not be so blinded by worldliness that you cannot believe the spirit can rise above the claims of the flesh. If you are, then it would be better for you to come no further.”

To the others He said, “Do not view these things as men do, but see them through the eyes of God.”

Coming to a village, Jesus ate while a small crowd gathered. And there He addressed the people, saying, “If any of you intend to become followers of Mine, you must put aside any thoughts of self and carry your own burden of suffering without complaint. If a man worry too much about his own safety and comfort, he gains nothing. But if he sacrifice these for the sake of My cause, he will not lose. What profit can a man make by gaining all that the world has to offer, in exchange for the welfare of his own soul? What can he take from his gains to buy back what has been lost?

“Therefore, take care, for I give fair warning. If anyone in this adulterous and depraved generation choose to ignore My teachings, that person may find himself ignored when seeking entry into the state of glory. I can also tell you that some are here who will realize the nature of Heaven before undergoing the experience of death.”

Someone there said, "Adultery is kept in check by stoning. How can the punishment be increased to prevent it?"

Jesus said, "If a tree is cut down, it will spring up in many places from the root. Evil is overcome by digging out the root of evil. Adultery has many causes. But if a man marry a woman who has fornicated, can he revile her for sorrow he has brought upon his own head? The dowry of a chaste woman is so much higher. But if a man accept what she brings and revile her for what she has not, surely he is mean hearted.

"Before any man cast a stone at an adulteress, let him search his heart and see whether he be guiltless before women. I say to those men who have one rule for their wives and another for the wives of others, set one standard and abide by it, otherwise be branded as hypocrites.

"Men too readily lay blame at the doors of others. For surely if anyone put his hand into a snake hole he can hardly blame the snake for being bitten. If a man enter a house of harlotry, who is to blame if he collect the whore's dowry?"

Jesus was invited into a house to eat and rest, and, having done so, He sat outside in the courtyard amusing the children who played there. He told them stories which were seeds planted in their hearts. Some women were also listening. And when two of the twelve came into the courtyard and told the women to see

the children did not bother Jesus, He overheard them and said, "Let the children come to Me, for from such as these will come the Rule of God."

Jesus and the twelve entered Caesarea on the day before the Sabbath, and on the Sabbath, Jesus was invited to dine at the house of a Perushim, for He had many friends among them. Seated not far from Jesus was a man whose body was swollen by water, and Jesus wished to heal him. But being a guest, He asked whether any there objected to this being done on the Sabbath. As none did, so Jesus laid His hands on the man, who then became excited, going out and ejecting from all parts of the body so it became slackened.

Jesus said to those present, "I am sure if any of you found an ox or ass fallen into a well on the Sabbath, you would have no hesitation in rescuing it." None disputed with Him.

Seeing how those present scrambled for the best seats, Jesus said, "When invited to a feast, do not rush for the best seats, because the host may have special guests in mind to occupy them. So if you have grabbed one of these seats, he will come and request you to vacate it in favor of another, and you will then have to take a seat not wanted by anyone else. When invited as a guest, it is wiser to take one of the less desirable places; then your host will come and escort you to a better seat. Thus the other guests will see that the host holds you in high regard.

It is a rule of life that whoever makes himself out to be more important than he is will be humiliated, while he who is modest will be exalted.”

Jesus said, “Most of you here give formal feasts; and all have more food and the good things of life than they need. Yet because your stomachs have never been empty, you cannot understand the sufferings of the underprivileged. But if misfortune descend upon you, the cry goes up, ‘Woe is me. Can there be a God when I am thus afflicted?’ Do you not understand that misfortune and tribulation must be sent to such as you? For in what other way will you learn compassion?

“When giving a feast, read the intentions of your heart. Are you giving it solely for love of those invited? Or do you seek to gain something from it? Are your motives centered on yourself, or on others? Also, is it not surely true that if you can afford to give a feast or indulge in good food, you can afford to provide for others less fortunate? Who is it that feeds the poor and needy? Is it not the poor themselves? And do not the rich entertain only the rich? I can assure you, it will not be so under the Rule of God.

“Many say, ‘But the poor are poor through no fault of ours.’ But I tell you that if many of you were as good as some of the poor, you would not be wallowing in luxury. How many here can truly say, ‘My goodness has brought me riches’?”

After this, Jesus went and addressed a crowd near a water fountain where several expressed intentions of becoming disciples.

Jesus said, "It is sad that so many desire to become disciples without weighing the cost of discipleship. To follow Me as a disciple means renouncing all home comforts, and this is not something to be lightly undertaken. Many have responsibilities which cannot be cast onto the shoulders of others. So to those who follow Me as disciples, burden is added to burden. Apart from privations and discomforts, disciples are subject to the mockery and scorn of men, and unforeseeable suffering may be in store for them. Those who follow Me, taking up My cause but not as disciples, double the burden of their cross.

"If you wished to erect a house, it would be very shortsighted to commence the building without working out the cost and being sure this could be met. If the cost and money available are not first calculated, the foundations may be laid but it will be found impossible to complete the job. Then you will become the laughingstock of the town, and people will say, 'The fool started something he could not finish.'

"What would be your opinion of a king who, with an army of a thousand men, marched against another with ten thousand,

without carefully weighing his chances? Would he not do better to remain where he was and sue for peace?

“So I say to those who would become disciples, weigh the matter in your hearts; then, if still of the same mind, give up all you hold dear and follow Me. But do not come if in so doing you cast aside responsibilities and obligations. For if you do so in relation to others, you will be no less inclined to do likewise with Me when the road becomes difficult.”

Among the crowd were many self-righteous people and hypocrites - self-deceivers who, interpreting the law to suit their convenience, saw no wrong in themselves; who, setting themselves up as judges, were like blind men trying to sort black pebbles from white, and had no more success. They said to Jesus, “You choose the wrong types. If you chose differently, we would follow; but sand does not mix with honey.”

Jesus said, “Let Me tell you a parable. Two men went into the Temple to pray - one being a self-righteous man and self-deceiver, the other a man aware of his failings and shortcomings. The self-righteous man prayed in this manner: ‘I praise my God for many blessings, giving thanks that I am not like the majority of men - avaricious, deceitful, dishonest, and adulterous. I fast twice weekly, pay all my subscriptions, and attend every Temple gathering.’ The self-righteous man had a specially reserved seat, so the other was standing apart. And he

prayed differently, saying, 'My God, do not desert me. I have many failings and need strengthening so I may overcome them and be a better man.'

Jesus said, "I assure you of this: The man who benefited from his prayer was the second one, not the first. This was because, though the first man had many virtues, he was unable to recognize his failings. The second man was reconciled with God, while the other was not. He who prays must be as one looking into a mirror - not with the expectation of seeing a gratifying reflection, but seeking an image revealing his faults.

"If a man put tinted glass before his eyes to enhance his image, thus putting out things he does not wish to see, he is not only a self-deceiver but a fool unto himself. The charioteer does not overhaul his chariot to seek the strong points, but to discover the flaws; and if he did not put these right, he would risk his life."

When eventide came and Jesus sat with the envoys, one of them said, "Sire, we have given up all we have to follow You, and sometimes we get depressed."

Jesus said, "The blows life delivers are strengthening ones, and without adversity men would become weak in spirit. The reward I can offer is small compared with your rewards in glory, for here you are small but in Heaven you will be great. There, the highest on Earth shall be lowest, and the lowliest here shall be

the exalted there. This, however, does not follow as a natural sequence, but only providing the challenge of life is met as it should be, and surmounted.”

The following day, Jesus took Peter, James and John - three of the envoys - to a cave high up on the mountainside, where they remained in meditation for three days. On the third day, while seated in the cave, the others saw the whole body of Jesus exude a light and become radiant, the colors being blue and white. They were astonished at such an inflow of power, for no other body could have contained it. Though manifesting in them also, it was much weaker. The three with Jesus covered their eyes before the brilliance.

And John said, “Sire, while the Holy Spirit manifests in us as no more than a faint blue glow seen only in total darkness, Your brilliance is like that of the sun compared with the palest star.”

Peter said, “It is good for us to have seen this, for now we know how poorly we compare with You.”

Jesus said, “I do not teach things without purpose. The things I do are not beyond the reach of anyone. But keep these things to yourselves. I shall truly need all my power and strength to carry out the task ahead. What has to be done will be done, not as I want it, but as the Father wants it. For now I know the path I must follow and the ordeal I must undergo.”

Coming down from the mountain, Jesus saw some disciples and two envoys in the midst of a crowd which parted to let Jesus through. He found the envoys trying to heal a man who was deaf and dumb, but they could not, and the crowd was mocking them.

Then Jesus said, "The man's ears are not fast, neither is the tongue without speech, but the spirit within cannot use them."

Thereupon He strengthened the spirit of the afflicted man with His, and the man fell to the ground, foaming at the mouth and tearing at himself. Then the crowd drew back from Jesus in fear, while the man's father abused Him. But soon the man on the ground arose and walked away, and he could both hear and talk.

Later, the disciples asked Jesus why He had succeeded when they had failed. And He said, "These things are done through the power of the Holy Spirit, which is the Hand of God. Men have it according to their capacity to hold it. But before it can come in, evil must be driven out. I do not teach abstinence from evil for some purposeless end, but to bring to men the recognition of their heritage. All men were once sons of God, but they became stepsons of God without heritage. I come to men so they may re-inherit and become true sons of God."

One said, "Sire, while You were away there was another here who healed and did the same things as You. But he was not one of us,

and we argued with him. He is a disciple of Simon, who does many strange things, and the people listen to his words.”

Jesus said, “Separate the words from the deeds, but good is good whoever does it. Therefore, never speak disparagingly of anyone who does good. If he is not yet against us, he may be for us. Therefore, it is unwise to become angry in haste.”

Chapter 20

Jesus departed from where He was and moved over to the water in Juda across the Jordan. And here too crowds gathered about Him to hear His message. Many of the usual questions were asked and similar answers given.

One man put this question to Him: “Great Teacher, is it lawful according to the Great Law for a man to put aside his wife? For there are other laws concerning this.” Jesus said, “What did one of the great lawgivers, speaking with the authority of God, say about this matter?” The man answered, “The law he gave permitted a severance deed to be made, and with this the wife is divorced.”

Jesus said, “Such laws are needful while men are without wisdom. I assure you it will not be so when the Rule of God comes. They are made for those who cannot overcome differences by compassion and understanding. Where there is no feeling, there cannot be love. Divorce is decreed for the failures in love.

“Since the beginning, there have been male and female, each needing the other for fulfillment and spiritual flowering. For this reason, a man leaves his parents and unites with a woman so the two become one in flesh and spirit. The flesh is easily parted, but with the united spirits it is different. Therefore, when two

are joined together in the union of love, let no act of man sever them from each other.

“Fornication occurs in marriage as well as outside it, for marriage is much more than the union of flesh. And whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery in spirit against the one who is his true wife. Should a wife divorce her husband and marry another, she too commits spiritual adultery.

“Marriage has a much greater significance than this depraved generation realizes, for it enters into marriage thoughtlessly and irresponsibly, and then cries, ‘Loose us from our obligations, for we have failed and cannot stand the bonds of the covenant.’”

After this, a disciple came to Jesus and said, “Sire, enlighten me. If there can be fornication in a marriage blessed by tradition and priest, do a man and woman commit greater fornication if unblessed?”

Jesus said, “Marriage is the blending of two spirits; fornication is the joining of flesh. Nothing done or not done changes this. But if a man and woman be married in the sight of God and not before a priest, let this union not be lightly put apart. For I assure you that no future marriage blessed by priest or otherwise will be a marriage in spirit; it will be no more than fornication.”

The following morning, Jesus and five disciples had not gone far along the road when a man came running after them, saying, "Sire, what must I do to know the joys of immortality in glory? I know You teach goodness, but though I do my best, I find it difficult among so many pleasures."

Jesus said, "You have the commandments of Moses; keep these faithfully as interpreted by the fullness of the law. But to these, two more are now added which shall be just as faithfully obeyed: Act towards others as you would have them act towards you, and love your neighbor as yourself."

The man said, "If only I could be as good as You."

Jesus answered, "Do not call Me good, for no man made in the mold of man is wholly good. If I were not made in the same mold as man, I would not be subjected to his tests and trials and, without overcoming these, could not be wholly good either."

When the man had gone, one of the disciples who came from beyond the Western Sea said, "I have heard that three things only make men wholly good. But You have many Holy Books which I cannot read. Tell me of the things which are in them."

Jesus said, "Store these things in your heart, they are sufficient for the day: Never utter curses against God or the Powers about Him, nor speak immodestly to exalt yourself. Do not act

fraudulently, and never exaggerate. Always maintain an even temper, and do not act hastily. Never use violence unnecessarily, nor do anything causing unnecessary sorrow. Avoid anything to do with lewdness and obscenity. Commit no slander, and speak no gossip. Never make mischief so strife is brought into the lives of others. Tell no lies. Be humble without being servile, and be clean in all ways. Whatever you do to earn your bread, do to the best of your ability. Fulfill all your daily obligations, and in the time left to you, serve a cause which is good. Add these to the teachings you have heard and you will live a good life.”

Another disciple said, “A good man soon loses his friends.” Jesus replied, “No; goodness - like adversity - winnows them.”

One of the other disciples said, “It is very difficult to live a life which is wholly good.” Jesus answered, “It is even more difficult to enter into the greater life of the spirit.”

The words surprised those hearing them, but Jesus assured the disciples about Him that it was true, adding, “Nothing worthwhile is ever easily gained.”

Jesus continued, “Let all who can do so empty themselves of evil. The deeds are outside, but the thoughts are within. By striving hard and chastening the flesh, not yielding to the call of its lusts, the soul is strengthened by an inflow of spiritual food.”

Then Jesus asked the disciples with Him if all understood that unless they could pass the tests of the flesh, they could not know Heaven. All replied that they understood.

A disciple asked, "How long must men be subject to death?" Jesus replied, "So long as women bear children."

Another asked, "What is the food of the spirit?"

Jesus said, "The truly hungry man eats bitter things and enjoys them; even so does the hungry spirit thrive on the bitterness of the world. The body is not nourished by bitterness and therefore enjoys food supplied by every healthful plant. If the spirit is to be made healthy, the body must be subdued; for either the body is master or the spirit is."

One of the women, Salome, who had accompanied the disciples, asked Jesus, "Is it within the law for a man to marry and yet not lie with his wife?"

Jesus answered, "It is never right to live falsely or to dishonor a pledge. Always let whatever be done accord with the intention declared."

Salome said, "Sire, when will the Rule of God come?"

Jesus replied, "When women place greater value on the treasures they hold, for men will strive harder for gold than for brass. When man and woman cease to pander to the flesh and become truly one in spirit. For of this I assure you: Unless man and woman exalt the spirit above the flesh, they will not know life in glory."

Another woman asked, "Who then shall know eternal life?"

Jesus said, "All will have eternal life, but not all will know it, while many will be found in a place of sorrow."

She said, "No woman can make a man good." And Jesus replied, "Any woman can make a man better."

When they came to a place of rest, Philip said, "Sire, teach us to understand our Father in Heaven. And if we know His nature, it will suffice."

Jesus answered, "I have been with you some time, but still many of you do not understand. I do not speak of Myself, but as the mouthpiece of the Father. Can the nature of a father be much different from that of his sons?"

"I teach you about God the Father, for you have to carry My words to others, and, spoken thus, they will understand. But He

is not quite like earthly fathers, for His wisdom is infinitely greater. Think of an earthly father and magnify his greatness and goodness, his wisdom and justice, his sense of discipline and compassion a thousand times, and you glimpse God the Father hazily.”

One of the women, not yet a disciple, approached the place where Jesus sat, and said, “I have been harshly treated by the law concerning a daughter’s inheritance. How do You interpret it?”

Jesus said, “I interpret all laws with mercy and compassion, but justice must not be put aside in their favor. It is written that if a man die without fathering a son, his inheritance shall become the daughter’s, but his wife shall not be deprived of her portion. Yet when there are sons, a daughter is not deprived of her portion. Therefore, the inheritance should be divided equally among sons and daughters.

“All women should have a rightful portion at marriage, but it would be unseemly for any woman to contend with her kinsmen for it. No woman should ever seek a husband because of what she may gain from such marriage, for this makes her a deceiver, denying him the joy of love. No woman should ever snare a man into lust or seek a husband so she can leave her father’s house, for this is a wrong against the husband.

“No woman having committed fornication should ever go to a man as wife, for in giving herself cheaply to one and dearly to another, she shames and insults her husband. If she loved him, how could she say, ‘Give much for that which I freely bestowed on another’? Better for her to say, ‘As with him, so with you.’

“A man built a house, taking care with the decorating and its furnishings. Then, going to a friend, he said, ‘Because of my affection for you, I will give this house to you as a gift. I know this is not usual, but I have so much affection for you that I willingly disregard the common custom of men.’ Later, he built another house and, taking the furnishings which were no longer new from the first house, put them into the second. Going to another friend, he said, ‘I have a house which, because of my affection for you, I will sell at the usual price with a yearly rental for the furnishings.’ Now, for which of these friends did he have the greatest affection? Would not the second man justly feel he had been treated badly in relation to the first? Would it not be fairer to have treated both alike?

“The law is to wear the clothes of purity, and to absorb the words of the Holy Books is to be anointed with wisdom. For the Holy Books of Wisdom are weavers preparing the garments of eternal life in glory. They are available to all and may be either accepted or ignored.

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a king giving a wedding feast, who, moving about among his guests, notices a man without a wedding garment. The king says to him, ‘My friend, why did you come here attired like this, when it makes you completely out of place?’ The man can make no answer, so the king calls his servants and says, ‘Turn him out, for he does not fit in here.’

“Let all men be just and merciful towards one another, for all who are will not be overlooked in the life to come. But those who act otherwise shall surely suffer. Those who pander to people in high places, or who distort the laws of God to suit their own ends or twist them to serve unintended purposes, shall not be overlooked at the accounting.

“There are those who interpret the law narrowly, so that, while not taking the clothes from the widow’s back, they will take her house and milk cow and drive the fatherless children from their home. They justify themselves by saying, ‘This is the law. And was not her husband a debtor?’ Many are the devious roads followed by the hypocrites, for this is a wrongful interpretation of the law.

“The Holy Books of the Jews say that an eye shall be taken for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, but the words of the law must be interpreted with justice. For if an eye be taken from he who put out another’s, or a tooth from someone who has knocked out the tooth of another, is the loss made good in this manner? Or if a

one-eyed man cause him with two eyes to lose one, shall he be made blind and so suffer a greater loss? Or if a man with two eyes cause a man with one eye to be made blind, shall he lose both?

“Henceforth, let the loss be made good in silver or through labor, for now the law of revenge shall be overruled by the law of retribution. All laws shall now be administered under the rule of recompense. All these things I give you that they may be established and added to the law, so that henceforth they be used in judgments among the just.

“I come to open the blind eyes of ignorance, to rescue the captives confined in dungeons of delusion, and to free men from the shackles of the flesh. I come to quicken the dead in spirit, to heal the wounds of worldly woes, and to comfort the despairing.”

About this time, some of the Perushim who inclined towards Jesus came to warn Him that certain men of Herod sought to do Him harm, advising Him to leave.

Jesus said, “If anyone intends to report My whereabouts to Herod, let him do so. But I will not leave until the third day, when My work here will be complete.”

He then went with His disciples to Allon, where He rested among the trees for seven days, teaching them the secrets of hidden things.

On the seventh day, men of Kadesk came out of Juda, and Jesus said, "Beware of these, for they betrayed their own fathers and pollute whatever is clean."

Then Jesus and those with Him departed.

Chapter 21

The disciples and followers of Jesus began to assemble in Capernaum to make arrangements for the journey to Jerusalem. When Jesus and some of the twelve who were with Him came to the city, it was the twelfth month. And the collector of taxes came to Peter and said, "Is your Master liable to pay the dues?" Peter replied, "No, for He pays the tax imposed on strangers, but He will not make issue over the matter."

So three of the disciples went down to the waters and caught several large fish, which they sold in the market. Then Peter took the money to the collector of taxes, who tested the pieces and found them good.

Jesus was standing nearby, and, noticing how adulterated money and coins below weight were rejected, He said to His disciples, "Be like the honest coin testers, though testing men instead of money. Weight all things with care, using a fair set of scales. Reject all which is impure or not what it should be, keeping only that which is good.

"As there are counterfeit coins, so are there counterfeit deeds, and they are equally hard to detect. Take people as you find them, but reserve judgment until they have been tested. All men are friends in a boat sailing before a fair wind, but when a squall comes and it sinks, the true are divided from the false."

A man stopped Jesus in the street and said, "They say You know the will of God. What does He require of me?"

Jesus said, "Did not your father Moses say, 'Hear, my people, for this is what your God requires of you: that you honor Him, following His path and loving Him, serving Him with all your heart and soul, and keeping His divine utterances and law'?"

About this time, Ruben, son of Jaros, who had followed Jesus since the healing of his sister, came to Him and said, "Sire, my heart is troubled. For I wish to marry, and if I do this, I cannot remain with You."

Jesus said, "Life is a race where every day the hurdles of decision have to be jumped. You must decide one way or the other, and with finality, having no regrets later. It is well you spoke, for the sun should never set on an indecision. When marriage and duty oppose each other, then a man must choose duty and a woman marriage. But when marriage can be combined with a diminished obligation to duty, this course is not denied to a man.

"However, marriage is not the least of life's crosses, and any who enter it thinking otherwise fall beneath the unexpected burden. If your wife is chosen wisely you will possess a treasure beyond price, but if foolishly you are condemned to a burden of sorrow. Go with My blessing. Have many children, and bring them up in

the Light. Thus you will serve best, and I leave My cause in good hands.”

Jesus said to some disciples later in the day, “In the Holy Books it is written, ‘Bearer of good tidings, go into the mountains and lift up your voice with power, crying through all Juda and Jerusalem: Hail your God and your Deliverer.’”

Jesus and His followers took a boat and came to the outlet of the waters, where the others stayed seven days while Jesus fasted. After He returned, the disciples said, “Sire, we are concerned, for You spend too much time in solitude and fast too long; surely this will harm You.”

Jesus replied, “When fasting is properly undertaken it can do nothing except good. Also, the body is like a pitcher which, containing water, must be emptied before it will hold wine. So it is with the Holy Spirit. Did not Moses fast for forty days, during which time the Holy Spirit flowed into him so his face shone before the people like a great light? Such is the nature of the power, and because of its brightness he had to veil it. Likewise with Elijah, who fasted forty days. Do you think those two suffered harm? Or did they benefit through a strengthening of the spirit?

“This you must always remember: When the corn is ripe for cutting, the harvesters come, and it is gathered in; but though it

die, many ears have ripened on the stalk, and from these will spring other plants. You are the ripening grain; go forth and sow the field in which will grow plants bringing the Rule of God into being. For then men will be ruled with justice and goodwill, the rich serving according to their endowments, and no man will be idle or wasteful.

“Now, the wickedness of men is like a canopy over a garden, shutting out the fertilizing rain so it cannot nourish the plants beneath; therefore they wither away. If the canopy remains, the ground becomes bare and barren, yet it needs only the removal of the canopy to make the ground blossom forth into fruitfulness. Such is the nature of the power of the Holy Spirit.”

One of the disciples said, “We have seen that the power is a miraculous thing, but the effort is beyond many of us.” Jesus said, “That is the hair in the dough; apathy must be overcome and effort expended.”

Peter said, “We go to Jerusalem. What if the people call on You to lead them into battle? Surely You will not ignore their cry.”

Jesus said, “Oh Peter, so long with Me, yet still confusing the ways of God with those of men. Taking up the sword is the easy way, for it is more difficult to peacefully change the hearts of men than to impose a change by violence. Those who have to

resort to violence are lesser men than those who convert through example and teaching.

“Is it not written in the Holy Books, ‘Those who seek wisdom as others seek riches will certainly come to an understanding of the ways of God, and this knowledge delivers them from the darkness of ignorance’?”

During the heat of the day, Jesus was invited into a rich man’s house. And the man of many privileges asked Him, “Why do You prefer to speak in the alleyways and among the poor? Surely it would be better to convert the influential people.”

Jesus said, “I speak to those who listen, and they are found among the poor. The rich are so busy acquiring worldly wealth and chasing fleeting pleasure that they have no time for more important things. They are fattening geese waddling through lush pastures, simply eating and sleeping in content, unconcerned for the coming day when they themselves will be consumed.”

The rich man said, “Where is the Kingdom of Heaven, and how do I get there?”

Jesus said, “The road starts within yourself, but to find it you must abide by the law as written in the Books of Wisdom. For knowledge of the law provides a true and clear picture of

yourself. Just as a mirror reflects back a true image, so does the law when studied diligently. Let this be your guiding light: Take no thought for tomorrow, whether it bring good or bring evil; the cares of the day are sufficient, and the law will sustain you.”

The man said, “Would it not be more profitable if You showed how to extend our days?”

Jesus said, “What benefit would a longer life bestow? For the tyrants, it would mean more time to oppress the weak. For the evildoers, it would mean more time to indulge their wickedness, while the hypocrites would spawn more sorrow. The money seekers would have more time for exploitation, and the indolent more time to rest. A longer life could only add to the misery of the world. Life as it is suffices for those who wish to use it profitably. If men cannot find the road to righteousness during the time they have, then they never will.”

After this, Jesus and the disciples set out for Jerusalem, passing through the borders of Juda and over the Jordan by way of Peria. Jesus led the way with six of the twelve, but as they proceeded, many of those who followed became afraid and held back.

Noticing what was happening, Jesus called all the twelve to Him and said, “We will soon be arriving in Jerusalem, and there I must undergo the ordeal I am taking upon Myself for the sake of mankind. I am the sacrifice to their apathy, but I depend upon

you to play your parts, spreading the message of hope and the coming Rule of God among men. For now I come as promised; surely the people will no longer doubt.”

Then the brothers James and John requested a favor of Jesus, saying, “Permit us to sit one on either side of You when You reach the state of glory.”

Jesus said, “You do not understand what you ask, or the consequences. You cannot drink from My cup of sorrow, or undergo My ordeal. I must carry My cross alone, for there is none with whom I can share the burden of My heart.”

When they insisted that they would be ready for anything, Jesus said to them, “If you remain steadfast in the cause, you will drink from the same cup and undergo much suffering. But whether you share My future state is something over which I have no control. Not all are drawn into the same companionship.”

As Jesus approached the city gate at Jerico, a large crowd gathered, among which was a humble and honest person named Mikah, who worked hard to support a large family. He was anxious to see Jesus, but, being rather short and unable to see over the heads of the people, he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree along the route.

When Jesus came to the tree, He stopped underneath and called to Mikah, “Come down, for today I will be your guest.”

The man climbed hastily down and welcomed Jesus with pleasure. But those standing by expressed disapproval, saying, “We expected this to be a great and good man, yet He associates with men like this who are poor and not notorious for good deeds.”

Jesus said, “The conscientious physician goes among those requiring his care and attention, not among those who have no need of him. If you ordered your lives according to this principle, they would be more beneficial to you in the long run.”

After resting in the city during the heat of the day, Jesus left Jerico with His disciples, followed by many people. Outside the gate of departure, a blind beggar sat in the dust by the roadside. And hearing the name Jesus on the tongues of the people, he cried out as Jesus went by, “Son of David, have pity on me.” Many of the people, hearing this, tried to silence him. But the beggar would not stop and continued shouting and oft repeating the words “Son of David.”

Though He had passed, Jesus stopped and sent a disciple back to bring the beggar to Him. When they came, the disciple leading the beggar, Jesus said to the one who had been shouting out, “What do you expect Me to do for you?” The beggar replied,

“Great Healer, if You would only help me to see again, I would be happy.”

Jesus said, “Unfruitful happiness cannot be made an end in life, but your affliction has served its purpose.” Then Jesus placed His hands over the man’s eyes and told him to sit no more by the roadside, but to walk with the people.

About two miles from Jerusalem they came to a place called Bethena, close to the Mount of Olives, where there were many fig trees. Calling two of His disciples to Him, Jesus said, “Go into the village just ahead, and there, at the first house, you will see a man standing by his doorway with a pitcher beside him. Go and ask him for a drink of water, and say, ‘The Master comes.’ He will then give you a colt which is tethered nearby. And two men will ask you who it is for, and you must answer, ‘It is for Jesus.’”

When the colt was brought to Jesus, some cloaks were laid over its back, and Jesus mounted. Then, some men having gone before, the people strewed the road with flowers and brushwood. And many shouted, “The Chosen One comes. Hail to He Who represents God. Hail to the day that witnesses the One Who will rule in the name of our father David.” Many others cried, “Behold the Deliverer,” while other people shouted, “Come and see the vindicated King.”

Among the crowd were some who said, "This is not a fighting man mounted on a warhorse, but a humble man on a female colt." Many mocked, while some said, "It is only a sorcerer on a mare."

That was the manner in which Jesus came to Jerusalem. But night being close, He sought shelter at a house just outside the city.

The following day, Jesus went to the Great Temple of the Jews and, going around it, came to the part where a fire was always maintained for the burnt offerings, and payment was made for its use. Here was the place where the father of John had been slain. Outside this was a hall where money was changed for those going in, the Perushim not permitting this to be done within the courtyard.

Seeing some men carrying vessels, Jesus said to them, "Surely you know it is written that the Temple shall not be made a thoroughfare."

They turned on Him, saying, "Where have You been, and who are You to rebuke us?" whereupon there was an outbreak of fighting between those with Jesus and others.

Jesus also overturned the tables of the moneychangers, saying, "You are just as bad, for you turn the House of God into a marketplace."

When the Temple guards came to restore order, they said to Jesus, "We should kill You for this."

Jesus replied, "Destroy this Temple and in three days it will rise again."

They, not understanding, answered, "The Temple has stood for long and took forty-six years to build. If You say it could be built in three days, You are a fool." They did not know Jesus referred to a Temple not made by hands.

Going outside to the place of healing where many lay under the trees, Jesus went among them. And because of the great power which was in Him, He excelled all other healers.

Seeing this, some young men shouted, "Praise the Lord God Who has sent us a Son of David." Hearing this, a number of priests came to Jesus and said, "Are You going to cause some disturbance? Put a stop to these things they are saying."

Jesus answered, "Words of wisdom will issue from the mouths of babes. This is written in the Holy Books. Read them and you will learn much more."

He then returned to Bethena.

The priests and lawscribes held a long discussion about Jesus, for they knew the mood of the people and foresaw trouble. There was much dispute as to who He was and what He claimed to be, some saying one thing and some another.

Chapter 22

The next day Jesus returned to Jerusalem with three of the envoys, and while within the precincts of the Great Temple some scribes and counselors of the Temple came up to Him and said, “By whose authority and by what right do You behave as You do?”

Jesus said, “Before answering your question, let Me ask you one. When John baptized in water, was this divinely inspired, or did it originate in the minds of men?”

This was not a question they could answer, for if they replied, “It was divinely inspired,” Jesus could justly say, “Why then did you not listen to him?” If they replied, “It originated with men,” it would arouse the hostility of the people who believed John to be divinely inspired.

When they declined to answer, Jesus said, “Neither need I answer you.”

A priest said to Jesus, “Tell us Who You really are.”

And He answered, “I am a Son of God and the Servant of Man Who, of Himself, can do nothing, but being filled with the power

of Him Who overshadows Me, One to Whom all things are possible.”

The priest said, “The Son of God is not unknown to us, and the Servant of Man will not come as You have done, though we cannot understand this name. Some of the people say You are the Chosen One who will deliver us and reign over us, but He will come with manifest power.”

Jesus said, “This is a night of ignorance, and I come declaring the Way of Light. Whoever believes in Me does not serve Me but serves with Me. He is My brother in the cause of God. He who sees Me sees the reflection of He Who inspires Me. I am the Light of the World. If anyone hears My words but chooses to ignore them, I am not his judge, for I am not come to judge men but to guide them. The Light will not be with you for long, so hasten to it, lest you be left in darkness.”

The priests said among themselves, “Perhaps He is harmless.”

Going into the courtyard where many people were gathered, Jesus stood in a corner and spoke to any who would listen. And it was here He told this parable: “A man planted a vineyard, equipping it with all things necessary for winemaking. Then he leased it and left to live elsewhere. After the vintage season, the owner sent a servant to the tenants to collect the rent. But they laid hands on him and, after beating him up, sent him on his way

empty-handed. The owner sent another, who was treated even worse, while the third man was killed.

“When no one else would go, the owner decided to send his eldest son, reasoning that the tenants would respect his authority. However, when the eldest son came, the tenants decided that if he were dead, no one else would dare to come. So they killed him and threw the body into a pit. Now, do you think the tenants’ reasoning was sound? Of course the owner came with those who meted out justice and, having put the tenants to death, gave the lease of the vineyard to others.”

Jesus also told other parables, and when the self-righteous ones and false Perushim realized that most were directed against them, they considered ways to silence Him. But as He was popular with the people, they decided it would be better to leave Him alone.

Jesus taught that the greatest enemies of man and the greatest opposition to the coming Rule of God were not the obvious evildoers and criminals, but the hypocrites, self-deceivers and self-centered. Those are the true enemies of men - the festering evil in their midst. Yet they cannot see themselves for what they are, and have many ways of justifying themselves.

For Jesus said of those, “They sit before well-filled tables, condemning the crimes of those who are hungry. They sleep on

soft beds and wallow in worldly luxuries, but their hearts are closed and their faces hardened towards those who steal and even murder. Yet I tell you, their own thoughts conceive and engender much greater wrongs. Neither are those who associate with them free from guilt.”

Going to an open space beyond the Great Temple, Jesus addressed those who believed in His cause, saying, “Abiding by the things I have taught you will bring knowledge of Truth, and Truth will set you free.”

Some replied, “We are of the stock of Abraham and have never been enslaved to any man. How can You state we will be made free?”

Jesus said, “Anyone following an evil course is a slave. There are men who are enslaved to their desires, and others enslaved to unnatural cravings. There are those enslaved to their weaknesses, and others to their fears and doubts. That is why I say I come to set you free.

“I know you are from the stock of Abraham, but you do him no credit in seeking to kill those whose teachings disturb you. Why must you listen only to those who tell you pleasing things, when there is greater benefit to be gained from those who tell things which disturb or displease? I have no time to go around praising the good; there is too much badness to be exposed.”

The people said, "We know our fathers and are of their blood, and we know our Father Who reigns in Heaven." Jesus said, "If God were your Father, you would all love Me as a brother. Can you understand the things I say, or are they beyond your grasp?"

Not all the Perushim were opposed to Jesus, only a few allying themselves with the Herodians because of Him. One of the latter came to Jesus trying to trap Him by asking, "Sire, Your sincerity is established and Your impartiality known. Help us, for this is the time of taxing. Shall the Temple tax be paid to God or to Caesar?"

Jesus said, "Show Me the coins you use to pay the tax." And one was given to Him. Jesus held it up and asked, "Whose likeness and inscription appear on the coin?" They said, "It is Caesar's." Jesus said, "Do not give to God the things which are rightly Caesar's, nor to Caesar the things which are rightly God's."

The next question was asked by one who believed in bodily renewal after death. And he said, "Master of the law, Moses handed down laws to govern our lives, and one states that when a man dies, his brother should marry his wife, providing she is without child. Now, if there are seven brothers, the first marries and dies, and so his brother marries the widow, she being childless. The same happens down through all seven, so when the last dies, she is still left childless until she too dies. Now,

when all rise to life at the resurrection, which one can rightfully claim the woman as wife, when she has been legally married to all seven?”

Jesus said, “By believing in bodily renewal, you start with a false premise and have no understanding of the nature of the spirit. Where death is overcome, marriage does not conform to earthly laws, which are made to mitigate the weaknesses of men. Tell Me, with which one did the woman’s spirit blend, and with which was there only a union of flesh?”

Jesus said, “Concerning the awakening of the dead, do not the Holy Books declare there is only a God of the living? This is true, and those who believe otherwise are in error. When all life is supported by the arm of God, how can He be the God of the dead?”

Many people believed in Jesus and had faith in His teachings, for they said among themselves, “Would the Chosen One show us any greater proofs than this Man?”

Because of the things said and done by many concerning Jesus, those who held power, fearing a disturbance, sent guards to seize Him. But He said to the captain, “I am here for a few days, and then I must go, following the path of My obligation. Seek Me then, for I will be in a place beyond your reach. I follow a chosen path, and none may follow. We each have a duty, but you have

discretion whether to take Me or not. My frailties say, 'Go with him,' but My heart calls Me to duty."

The captain of the guard said, "Whom do You serve so dutifully?" Jesus replied, "I serve God."

Then the captain said, "The priests serve God, and You are not a priest. And it is said You call Yourself the Servant of Man, but Who is He?"

Jesus answered, "The service rendered by priests is meaningless unless it also serves man. For service in the cause of God is likewise service in the cause of man. Can your sword arm serve one master and your shield arm another?"

The captain said, "Sire, I can see You are a man dedicated to duty. Whether Your cause be just or unjust, whether You be friend or foe, it is not within my understanding to know. But a man whose heart is ruled by the demands of duty I can understand. I will tell those who sent me that shortly You leave for a distant place where none can follow, and they will leave You alone."

When those who sent to have Jesus taken heard this, they said, "Perhaps He goes to the Greeks or the islands in the sea, therefore we will ignore Him."

Jesus went and rested among the columns of Solomon, and, while there, some people came and asked why He did not declare Himself and reveal He was the Chosen One and God's anointed, the Promised One from the stock of David.

Jesus said, "My works and words declare Me and establish My title. Those who heed My message enter the proper fold, and a good shepherd protects his flock, seeing none goes astray or is taken by wolves. Though these are My first care, I seek to bring all men into the fold best suited for them. And I am prepared to die if thereby I can bring men into the fold leading to the fields of everlasting life.

"The deeds whereby men save their lives on Earth may cost them a life in glory, but whoever lays down his life in the cause of God shall surely know eternal life. I come to sow strife among men, so they may be roused from the sleep of apathy. I come to strengthen the poor, so they may take heart and throw off the yoke imposed by the privileged.

"This is My message for the wealthy: Enjoy your ill-gotten goods, console yourselves with comfort, and buy the fickle goodwill of men. Make merry while you may, close your eyes to the harshness of reality, for the day will surely come when your body weakens, the pleasures pall, and you glimpse the dark doorway ahead. Be certain that the only welcome you will get on

the other side is from spirits of darkness who will escort you to a proper place in their dismal abode.”

Because of His condemnation of the rich who misused their wealth - and nearly all of them did - the priests were angry with Jesus, for they depended on rich patrons. They said, “Who are You to revile Your betters when You are no more than a loud-tongued beggar?”

Jesus said, “Is it not written in the Holy Books, ‘Disregard outward appearances, for these may conceal either treasure or garbage; only God knows what really lies within. The body is only the outer covering shed at death. What matters is the likeness of the spirit it clothes’?”

One of the priests said, “You claim to save through baptism - a cleansing by fire and water - but, while these are both great purifiers, how can they deliver man from sin?”

Jesus said, “Water and fire are purifiers of earthly things, but I tell you that unless men be cleansed in the waters of contrition and tested in the fires of adversity, they cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”

The priests said, “Where, then, is the Kingdom of Heaven?”

Jesus answered, "Beyond Earth lie the dominions of spirit, and therein are the Kingdom of Heaven and the Principality of Evil - places of light and glory, and of darkness and despair."

Another priest said, "Tell us about the spirit." Jesus said, "A vintner asking for wine! Does Mine so much excel yours?"

Then He continued, "Men understand the things wherein they place their hearts - if it be in worldliness, they know worldly things; but if it be in spirituality, they know things of the spirit. He who is ever watchful of the wind never sows, and he who fixes his eyes on the clouds never reaps. The wind blows where it will, and, though recognizing its sound, no man knows from whence it comes or whither it goes.

"For the best advice on worldly matters, I would go to a worldly-wise man; but I am a spiritually-wise Man. Thereof cannot you take notice when I talk of things I know? That I gain nothing from My teachings is obvious, for My clothes and manner of life bear witness to this."

Nearby, a rich man stood listening. And now he said, "Have You never bought a tree for silver and, having worked it, sold the product of Your hands for gold? If a man has seed, should he let it rot? Is it not better to plant the seed so it yields an increase? And is not the sower entitled to this?"

Jesus said, "The laborer is worthy of his hire, and he who sows is entitled to reap the increase. But remember, the sown seed does not grow through human effort alone. It requires rain and sun, and the soil must give up its goodness. These things come from God as gifts to man. Why, then, should man deny God's participation? God says, 'As My share is above My needs, give it to My little ones,' and should not the sower do the same?"

"Therefore I say, he who fails to support the underprivileged in obedience to God's wishes defrauds God of His rightful due for what He has done. For cannot even an earthly partner decree what shall be done with the profit from this participation? I assure you, no man has ever yet made a profit wholly through his own efforts. And fraud perpetrated on the Divine Partner will not be overlooked."

The rich man said, "Your words sound well, but the Holy Books say the ass is loaded according to its strength. The more I give in charity, the more I am harried by beggars. Even if I gave all I have, it would fail to satisfy."

Jesus said, "If your wealth is so burdensome, then sell all you have and give the proceeds to good causes. It is not wholly good to give charity, for this is like cutting the thornweed which quickly springs up again from the root. It is more worthy to dig up the root of poverty."

Then rich man said, “Having my responsibilities and a large household, I am caught between the millstones. For is it not said in the Books of Wisdom, ‘No man should disregard his responsibilities’?”

Jesus said, “The law brings all things to a balance of moderation. Does it not say, ‘It is sufficient to feed and clothe the womenfolk modestly, caring for their needs but ensuring they are not spoilt by idleness’? It suffices to provide your sons with learning and skill, and your daughters with their dowries. There is nothing more you can give them, for above this you harm them with luxury. A poor man cannot spoil his family with overindulgence, but precautions against this are not the least of the rich man’s burden.”

When it was close to eventide, Jesus was in another place. And He said to a few people who were gathered about Him, “I am the Fountain of Life. If any thirst, let him come to Me, and his thirst will be quenched. For is it not written, ‘Streams of living waters will pour out from springs within Him and overwhelm the seats of the deceitful’? The same waters will strengthen the spirit and wash away falsity.” Jesus was referring to the power of the Spirit which filled Him as no other man had been filled.

Some of the people said, “Surely This is the Chosen One,” while others said, “Yes, He is God’s Anointed.” There were many disputes concerning Him.

Jesus said, “You are betrayed by those who preach one thing and practice another. They delight in being seen in prominent places and think the misguided adulations poured on them signify greatness. Foolish people follow their ways and copy their pretensions. These people are not least among the hidden woemakers.

“You are deceived by hypocrites and the self-righteous, and led into error by the self-justified. Those who should watch over you set snares for your feet. And many are those who say, ‘Heed my words but not my deeds.’ Those who set themselves up over the people or who attain positions of authority freely eat the fruits of success but avoid the responsibility of setting an example of goodness. I tell you, cast these people out.

“Instead of standing aside, wringing your hands and crying, ‘Woe, for the world is all wrong,’ bestir yourselves. For I tell you, God will not do things you are too apathetic to do for yourselves. They who desire to be with Me in My Kingdom must stand firm, holding fast to My cause through tribulation and trial.”

Just then, some Perushim came by, and Jesus knew them to be false to their declared beliefs. So He called out, “Hear Me, you hypocrites and deceivers. Are you not among those declaring that any man swearing by the Temple is not bound by his oath, but any swearing by the Temple gold is bound? Fools, which is

the greater - the gold or the Temple containing it? Or you say that those swearing by the altar are not bound by their oath, but those who swear by whatever is upon it are bound. Which is the greater - the offering or the altar consecrating it?

“You concern yourselves with selling incense and the small profits from herbs and perfumed candles, while overlooking more important matters. These petty things can be delegated to others. Or do you find weightier aspects of the law - such as mercy, justice and truth-finding - beyond your abilities? If so, then you deceive the people. Your minds are fixed on little things and cannot grasp greater ones. You strain a fly from the wine bowl but leave the wasp.”

The next day, Jesus spoke outside the Gate of the Gentiles, and, while there, a lawscribe asked Him, “Which is the supreme commandment?”

Jesus answered, “None is supreme for all men. But for you the supreme one is, ‘Listen, O people; the God Whom you worship is the sole God. Love Him with all your heart, all your mind and all your strength.’ The next one is, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

The lawscribe said, “You speak well and speak truthfully in saying there is only one God having no equal. I believe that if a man loves Him wholeheartedly, and his neighbor as himself, it

serves Him better than all the burnt offerings which go up in smoke.”

Jesus said, “If these are not empty words, you will know the glory in the Kingdom of the Spirit.”

One of those there said, “I pray thrice daily, fasting on the second and the fifth days. Does this prove my love of God?”

Jesus said, “Words alone or deeds done which benefit no other or purposeless restrictions do not indicate true love of God. They are sops to weakness. These, being easy, deny such love its true expression. Show your love of God by working in His cause and making the world a better place. Do something requiring action where you may risk unpopularity or scorn.”

Two dignitaries of the Temple stopped to listen, and Jesus, pointing to them, said, “Beware of those who ostentatiously display themselves, seeking the acclaim or homage of others. From whence does their wealth come? They prey on widows and enrich themselves at the expense of others. Misfortune, providing it passes their door, is their friend. Yet these hypocrites put on a great show of righteousness, but one day they will be seen for what they really are inside.”

Entering the Temple, Jesus stood near one of the offering chests, watching as people dropped money into the chest of their

choice. Many rich people contributed large amounts, but most did this so all could see. Then a poor widow came, and she gave only two small brass coins.

Seeing this, Jesus said to one of the disciples beside Him, "Did you see what the poor widow gave? Surely there is a lesson here. I can assure you that the offering of this woman is more acceptable than any of the others, for she gave all she had, while others gave only a fraction of their wealth. Tonight they will eat well, but she will go hungry.

"Giving is meaningless unless it entails some real sacrifice. What the rich gave were only sops to their consciences. When arriving in a town hungry, weary and travel-stained, do we seek food and shelter from the rich or from the poor? Is it not the rich, who have so much to give, who turn us from their doors, while the poor, who have little, provide hospitality?"

Later, one of the envoys said to Jesus, "When will all the evil be purged from the Earth?"

Jesus said, "When it is no longer spawned in the hearts of men. There is nothing wrong with the Earth that men cannot put right. Do not expect help from God, but be men enough to fight your own battles. No easy time lies ahead of you, for wherever you go, your loyalty to My cause will bring the hatred of men upon you. Nevertheless, remain steadfast through all the trials and

tribulations lying ahead, and you will be glorified in immortality.”

The envoys said, “Sire, can such things indeed happen to us?”
Jesus said, “Be sure they will.”

They said, “Surely our tree of suffering will not bear bitter fruit or even prove fruitless.”

Jesus answered, “No; the sapling will grow strongly. From the tree will arise another teaching and, out of this, a confusion of beliefs, each striving for its own advantage. There will be unprofitable doctrines and viciousness, cruelties and intolerance, with many persecutions, all done in My name. They will corrupt and falsify My teachings to serve their own ends. Hypocrisy will rule the hearts of men, and few will follow even the beliefs of their own hearts. These things must be, for they reside in the natures of men. But under the Rule of God, they will be changed.”

Jesus said to those with Him, “I will be slain as were John and his father, for I am feared because I may claim a right to rule from the kings who were before David. The burden of My death lies heavily, but it is undertaken with purpose so men can be saved from evil. And what I do will speed the day of their deliverance.

“I do not ride the windspirit, but have mapped the road ahead. No man can ever enter Heaven unless wearing the clothes of Heaven. The world knows the ways of the world and welcomes worldly things, but the spirit knows the ways of the spirit and welcomes spiritual things. Serve one or the other; no man can serve both.”

Chapter 23

When Jesus spent the days in Jerusalem, the nights were spent on the slopes of Mount Olive. And the disciples built shelters close to a place where there was an oil press.

However, one day at eventide, Jesus went to the house of Simon the Pure, where some women who were followers of His were living. Though the disciples were given food, little was said to them; for, they being strangers, the people in the house were suspicious, and Simon lay on a cushion across from Jesus.

After they had eaten and were talking together, a woman came from a house nearby. She was veiled and carried an alabaster jar. Now, this was Mary of Magdala, whose father had been a merchant, but he disowned her, for she had lived with a centurion serving in the army of Rome. When he returned to his lawful wife, Mary had kept herself by singing in the taverns of Galilee.

The woman unsealed the jar and poured a sweet-scented oil over the head of Jesus, seeing which some of those present were indignant, saying, "What a waste, when this could have been sold for a lot of money which would have benefited the poor."

Jesus said, "Leave her alone. There is little point in being angry with her when all she has done is to honor Me. You can help the poor whenever you like, but I will not be here much longer."

Turning to Mary of Magdala, He said, "Why do you pay Me this honor? For the cost to you must have been great."

Someone said, "The price was easily obtained."

Mary said to Jesus, "Sire, I am she whom You saw in Paneas, for when women reviled me, I came to You and said, 'Forgive my sins.' When You asked wherein I had sinned, I said, 'By loving while unwed.' Thereupon You said, 'That of itself is no wrongdoing and demonstrates greater love than that of many who say, "The price of my love is marriage."' You said I gave the greatest form of love any woman can give, for, being virgin, I went to my love without the security of marriage, seeking in no way to bind the man."

Jesus said, "With this man you did no wrong, and though your love was unblessed in the eyes of men, providing you loved truly, it was pure and sanctified in the sight of God. The man, however, is not without sin in this manner and will surely be called to a proper accounting. And though since leaving him you have done wrong, he bears his portion of the guilt. You chose freely not to be a woman reserved for marriage - a choice you could rightly make. Only should you now seek marriage, saying,

‘Though I love you too, now I have my price,’ would you be doing wrong, this being committed against God, love and your husband.”

Mary said, “Sire, I have been a sinner but have not sinned this last year, nor shall I again. Should I love once more, I will not now claim the rights of marriage which I once repudiated.”

Jesus said, “Love is a blending of spirits, and not a union of flesh. Woe to those whose love compounds discord in the place where love is fulfilled. If these things confound you, read the Books of Wisdom.”

During this time, those in positions of power were taking counsel as to how they might take Jesus by guile and deliver Him to the Romans. For they feared a rising of the people during the Great Festival of the Jews.

Now, Judas Iscaroth, son of Simon, who had followed Joseph the Just before coming to Jesus and becoming one of the twelve envoys, sought for the Chosen One Who would deliver the Jews. This he now believed to be another, not Jesus; and he therefore sought to have Jesus held during the festival. Judas, unlike the other envoys, was a Judean; therefore he was unrestricted.

Judas went to the Council and said, "My Master performs signs and fulfills prophecies which speak to the hearts of the people. Therefore, might they not proclaim Him in the coming days?"

The Council said, "The people are ripe for revolt, and troublemakers are many. We will take this One also. Reveal Him to us, and we will hold Him. And for the service you will be paid in silver."

One who sat in the Council sent a warning to Jesus, saying, "Leave Bethena and go to Ephraim." But Jesus returned a reply which said, "Things are as they should be, and the prophecies will be fulfilled."

On the first day of the Festival, when lambs were being sacrificed, the disciples came to Jesus and asked where the Passover meal should be eaten. Jesus chose two of these and sent them away with this instruction: "Go down and cross the stream flowing eastward from the city, at a place where there is a covered well. There you will see a man seated with a water pitcher beside him. Say to this man, 'We thirst but need more than water.' He will then arise, saying nothing, and you must follow him at a distance. And when you see him enter a house, go in also, giving this message to the owner: 'We come from the Master.' He will then show you a room where you must make preparations."

Now, the house belonged to Obed, who was nigh four score years of age, whose brother was Barnabas the Elder. In an upper room, the disciples prepared the Passover meal. And when it was evening, Jesus came with the twelve envoys and three others, but only thirteen ate with Him.

After He had taken His place at the table and all were seated, Jesus said, "I have very much wanted to keep this Passover with you because it is the last before My ordeal. And I tell you, I will not share another with you until My purpose is fulfilled."

Then He took the cup before Him and drank, saying, "Blood is the life of men, while this is the life of the grape sacrificed for men, so it is a fitting and worthy symbol of He Who offers His life for men. I will not taste wine again until the Rule of God is established."

He then passed the cup to John, and, taking the bread, He gave thanks and broke it, saying, "This represents My body, which will be broken as an example to the sons and daughters of men; for all must freely sacrifice for others. As you eat of the bread which is sacrifice, so shall you eat the Bread of Eternal Life. For without sacrifice, there is no life. Henceforth, call it Remembrance Bread and Remembrance Wine; when meeting afterwards, do this and remember Me. But remember also the sacrifices which must be made for the cause of God."

Jesus said, "The sacrifice is ready. The hand of the betrayer rests upon this table and dips in the bowl. But this is as it should be. Take the cup and drink again; let it seal a new covenant signed with the blood of One Who is dedicated to the cause of men and their salvation from darkness into life eternal."

Those about the table began to speculate among themselves as to who would do such a thing. But Jesus bid them be silent, saying, "There is no evil lacking some seeds of goodness which, if extracted, can be nurtured into great trees. A man, finding his storebag of seed grain is moldy, does not throw it out, but searches to find the good grains; and from these he grows a crop which ripens to goodness."

They then began disputing among themselves as to who was first in precedence among them. And Jesus said, "Those with worldly authority derive satisfaction from declaring themselves benefactors of the people, but the benefit they seek is that accruing to themselves. Let this not be so among you, the ones seeking least for themselves and giving most being those taking precedence."

After a while, Jesus said, "My friends, I shall be with you only a short time now." Peter said, "Sire, where do You go? Are You deserting us? Can we not come with You?"

Jesus said, "You cannot follow Me immediately on this path, and to accompany Me would serve no purpose. But later on you can follow Me. Do not become fainthearted, for if you believe in what I have taught you, believe also that I will be guided and strengthened.

"I shall prepare a place for you in the Kingdom of God and wait there to welcome you. Where I will be, you shall be also; and where you are, there too I will be. You know the way to where I am going and can follow, for the law and the Books of Wisdom are the Way, the Truth and the Light. I have brought you a light to show the way; follow it and you will not go astray.

"Later you will understand that I am united with the Father. And as I am united with Him, so you are united with Me. Though we are many, let us stand as one. And those who serve I will serve.

"To he who believes in My teachings I will manifest. For what I do is done to prove to men My own convictions, that they will come to accept My teachings and follow the road of salvation. The people yearn for the fulfillment of the prophecies and will surely follow One Who fulfills them."

Thomas said, "Are You going to manifest only to us?"

Jesus answered, "If anyone care for Me and My cause, I will speak to him through the power of the Holy Spirit, and it will

come to him also. Those who do not care for Me or My cause will ignore My teachings, but do not fear them. Be on guard against those who pay lip service only. While I am with you, I can speak as men speak; but when I am gone, the Holy Spirit will bear messages in My name, clarifying your minds so you recall all I have taught you.

“In the Kingdom of the Spirit there are many splendid places, and I assure those who remain steadfast that they will be in the best of these. For when men die, each is drawn to the place whereof he is worthy; even to each one is prepared a place for his soul.

“I will go down in the flesh to arise again in the spirit with power to manifest to men. I will demonstrate what man can do; and as I do, so can all men. I am a sacrifice to the misguided beliefs of men, that, in the fulfillment of those beliefs, they might turn to the path of their salvation.

“I am the Vine, and He Who is above Me is the Cultivator; you are the branches, and the sap in Me flows out to you. The sap is My teachings, severed from which you will be like a branch cut from the vine, only suitable for burning. I am the Vine, and you are its fruit; and if the vine is sound, surely its fruit will be sound also.

“This is My last instruction to you: Love one another as I have loved you. For there is but one greater love than that of a man

who would sacrifice his life for his friends, and that is sacrifice of a life for a cause where he serves those unknown to him. I have said, 'Love one another,' for you will be strengthened in the knowledge of that love.

"If the world hates you, it has hated Me first. If you were to remain part of the world, it would accept you as its own and love you. But because I have severed you from the world, setting you apart, it will hate you. For it is in the nature of worldly men to hate those who are different. And not only are you different, you also seek to point out their wickedness.

"If I chose an easier path, your burden would be so much greater, and the fruit of the vine might fall on barren ground. As they have persecuted Me, so they would have persecuted you. As they have spurned My teachings, so they would have spurned yours. And as they rejected Me, so they would have rejected you.

"I have much more to say, but you cannot receive it now. Later, the Spirit of Enlightenment will come when you are ready and guide you truthfully. It will speak to you with a voice of its own, but will convey to you what comes from above. Soon now you will see Me no more in the flesh, but you will behold Me in a new and glorious form."

Those with Jesus did not understand the meaning of what He said, and discussed it among themselves, saying, "What does He

mean by 'soon'?" Others said, "What can He mean when He says, 'Soon you will no longer see Me, but then you will behold Me'?" The others said, "We just cannot tell."

Jesus, knowing what they were saying and what was in their thoughts, said, "You are wondering about the things I have said. I can assure you that while you sorrow, the world will rejoice, for its hopes are fulfilled. A woman becomes afraid just before she gives birth, but once the ordeal is over, she no longer recalls the labor pains but rejoices in her child. So too you will grieve for a while, but I will manifest to you, and then you will rejoice in your hearts.

"The Father's will is that the things I teach should be given to the people, but they will not listen, arguing among themselves as to who I am. Therefore, I must drain the bitter cup of life to its last dregs. Then they will say, 'This is He,' and heed My words. This I do for men, and none can say I have not faced up to the tests of life or I have shirked its supreme trial."

The disciples then drank the reeling cup, and Jesus said to Peter, "I depend upon you to carry the burden among the brethren."

Peter said, "Sire, I am ready to go anywhere, to follow You to prison or even to death."

Jesus said, "Before the cock's crow in the morning, even you, the most loyal of men, will desert Me. Must I undergo the ordeal friendless?"

Then all the others assured Him of their loyalty.

Jesus said, "When I sent you out with few possessions, did you ever go short of anything?" They said, "No."

Jesus then said, "Things are different now. Those who have a purse of money had better take it with them and keep a pack prepared for flight. Whoever is without a sword, let him sell his cloak and buy one. For I can assure you I will fulfill all that the Holy Books say. And is it not written, 'He was classified as an outlaw'? Yes, truly all that is written will be fulfilled in Me, and men will find salvation through this fulfillment."

One of the disciples said, "Look, Sire. We have two swords among us." Jesus said, "That is sufficient."

Peter said, "Sire, are You going to lead us against the kingdom of evil in arms?"

Jesus said, "The battle is for the immortal souls of men. Feast your eyes on Me, for the hour draws near when I shall no longer be with you in body."

Then He said to Judas, "Go, spend whatever money is needful, but make haste." No man there understood the meaning of this saying.

When Judas had gone, Jesus said, "Upon Me has fallen the obligation for fulfilling the hopes of men. Now I give you a last command: Stand by one another. For if you remain loyal to My cause and to each other, all will know you are true men of God. Do not worry overmuch; have faith in the goodness of God and in Me. In the Kingdom of Heaven there are many places, and had it been otherwise, I would have told you. I go first and will prepare a compatible place for all who are with us.

"Do not fear because of the destruction of the body. Remember all I have told you. But be staunch and steadfast, for as they have persecuted Me, so will they persecute you. Remember, I have overcome the fears of the flesh; this is My conquest. I will now reveal the secret of My glory: It is dedication to service. And that glory is the heritage of all men."

When they had finished, Jesus went out with His followers and, passing over the stream of Kedron, went to a place called Gethsemane because of an oil press there. He took eleven, as Markus the Judean, who was a priest, did not go, Peter being jealous of him. This Markus had been a follower of John of the Wilderness and was a friend of Judas.

When Jesus departed with the eleven, Markus did not return to his mother's house in Ophal, but stayed with Lazarus and the others. After Jesus had gone, men came to take Him, and Markus, snatching a cloak, dashed out to warn Jesus.

Though knowing what should be done for the Chosen One, Judas went to the captain of the Temple guard and said, "I am one of those who follow Jesus the Galilean, but I fear what He intends to bring about. Therefore, let Him be held as the Council has decreed."

When Jesus reached the chosen spot in Gethsemane, He turned and said to those with Him, "Pray that you may be spared the test."

He then took Peter, James and John and withdrew with them about a stone's throw away. Jesus was depressed and filled with foreboding. And He said to the three, "I am going apart to pray for strength to do what must be done. You stay here and keep watch. Perhaps the cup of bitterness will pass Me by, for with the Father all things are possible. But I fear there is no other way for me but to abide My destiny."

Jesus went just a short distance and lifted His face to the stars and red-glowing moon above. James heard Him pray, "Father, everything is in Your hand. Let it not be as I would have it, but

according to Your will; I leave it in Your hand. But let not the ordeal be too much for Me. The hour is at hand. Strengthen the Son Whom You have glorified with the power of Your Spirit, that He may bring to fruition the task You have set Him, leading men to the path of eternal life. Is there no other way?"

He then came back to the three, and the sweat stood out redly on His brow. And finding two asleep, for they were heavy with wine, He said to Peter, "Simon, could you not stay awake even at a time such as this? Be vigilant and watch, praying you may be spared a greater test.

"In days to come, men will lift up their eyes to Heaven and say, 'Blessed was He Who came in the name of God, bringing us the light of salvation.' My soul is very sorrowful because of the things I must endure and accomplish, that the aspirations of men shall not be denied a response. Tarry, therefore, a while longer, keeping Me company so I do not weaken. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. It is a dreadful thing I have to do."

Then He went away again, but what He prayed no man knows.

When He returned, all three were asleep, for the wine had befuddled them. Jesus said, "Still sleeping. Now it is enough, for the hour has come, and the Servant of Man is betrayed into the hands of his enemies. Let us wait no longer, for here they come." Jesus was now quite calm and strengthened.

Now, the place where Jesus had gone was known to Judas, who arrived accompanied by the Temple guards carrying torches, staves and cudgels.

Seeing them, Jesus stood up and said, "Whom do you seek?" Judas went up to Him and said, "Sire, I am here."

He kissed Jesus to let Him know he came with friendly intentions, but it also identified Him. For though those who came knew Jesus by sight, the law required that some other identify Him. But He was not taken according to the law, but by the Temple guards.

Jesus said, "So the Chosen One has been selected for sacrifice by a kiss." But Judas said, "No, Sire; there will be no sacrifice."

When the Temple guards seized hold of Jesus, one with Him drew a sword and wounded one of them. Another said, "Shall we smite with our swords?"

But Jesus forbade this, saying to the captain of the guard, "Were My Kingdom of this world, I would order my followers to take up arms. But My Kingdom is not of this world, and evil cannot be vanquished by evil."

He rebuked them with the words, “Did you expect to find a dangerous criminal who had to be overcome with weapons? I have been among you many days, and you left Me alone. Still, what has to be done will be done, so do as you must.”

The captain of the guard said, “If this were left until tomorrow, many would die.”

Chapter 24

Jesus was brought privately before Annas, son of Seth, who, after questioning Jesus, sent Him to the Supreme Council of Jewry, which was assembled. He also sent a message saying, "This man is deluded but nonetheless dangerous, and these are troubled times."

When Jesus was taken away, Simon Peter followed at a distance. And after Jesus was brought from the residence of Annas, he followed and came to the forecourt of the Temple, but could not go beyond because of the disturbance. Servants lit a brazier of charcoal and stood warming themselves - for the night was cold - and Peter stood with them.

While he stood there, a relative of the High Priest - named Joses but called John, a follower of Jesus in secret - came and spoke to the woman at the door and went into the chamber hall. He also spoke to Peter.

Then a maidservant came and spoke with the woman at the door, who came over to Peter and said, "You are one of the Galilean's followers." But Peter said, "I am no friend of His. You must be mistaken."

However, the woman persisted, saying, "Your speech betrays you." Then she cried out to those about the brazier, "Beware, here is one of the Galilean Sorcerer's followers."

Then the men clustered about Peter and said, "Certainly you are a Galilean." And some said, "We have seen him with this rebel." Then they said to Peter, "Did you not cause trouble in the Temple? We have seen you there."

Then the men said, "The woman is right, you are a Galilean. Your speech witnesses against you." Others said, "He is just a Galilean," and laughed.

Peter then became angry and shouted, "Why do you pester me? I do not know the Man. I have heard about Him but not seen Him."

Then the other disciple came out and told the men to leave Peter alone. He took him by the arm and went out through the gateway. As they went, a cock crew, for the fowls were in the city. And Peter wept bitterly, for he had failed the test. The other had compassion on Peter because of the weakness of the flesh. And Peter said, "I will make amends." Then the disciple took Peter to a safe place nearby.

The Supreme Council had assembled that night in the Chamber of Hewn Stone within the Great Temple. Though the Roman law did not permit men to sit in judgment during the night hours,

the Supreme Council was afraid because of the mood of the people.

When Jesus stood before the Council, He was asked, "Are You the Chosen One - God's Anointed Who will deliver us?"

Jesus replied, "I could deliver the people if you would let Me do so."

The High Priest, son-in-law of Annas, sat with the Council. And he said to Jesus, "Are You a Galilean?" When Jesus replied that He was, the High Priest said, "Surely You, being a learned Man, know that no prophet will come from that place." Jesus made no reply.

Then a man named Nakimedan said to Jesus, "The law does not condemn any man without trying to understand his motives. Tell us why You do these things."

Jesus answered, "Is it not written that if the people are to be saved, there must be a Suffering Deliverer Who will also be the Anointed of God?"

Nakimedan then said to the Council, "If this Man is what He claims, He is harmless. For He brings suffering to none except Himself."

Then another councilor said, "I myself have heard Him say He comes, not to suffer, but to bring a sword to free the people."

Jesus stood calm and serene.

One of the elders said to Him, "Is it true You were born of fornication, and, when born, Your father Joseph and Mary, the woman who gave birth to You, had to flee from the anger of the people?" But twelve of those present witnessed for Him that He was not the child of fornication, but of a rightly married mother.

Though many of the elders tried to make out a case against Jesus, they failed. For though there were witnesses who gave false evidence against Him, others spoke in favor of Jesus. Then a lawscribe came forward and testified with the others he had heard Jesus declare that the Temple was only a man-made structure which He would destroy in three days. However, there was no agreement among the witnesses as to what had been said or what it meant. Some held Jesus to be a sorcerer Who spoke of magic, while others held Him to be a madman Whose talk was not rational. Many remained silent and thoughtful.

One of the leading men among the elders stood up and said to Jesus, "Can You not speak for Yourself and answer the accusations?" Jesus said, "Are the charges not being fully argued out?"

The High Priest said, "I ask You, in the name of the Most High God, tell us - for we do not wish to make any mistake - are You the Chosen One Who will deliver us?"

Jesus answered, "You ask this because others, witnessing what I do, say this is so. If I say I am the Deliverer, I do not lie. I am a true Son of God, standing at His right hand, ready to obey His will, and I speak with divine authority. I am One destined to bring down the whole structure, replacing it with a new rule."

Upon hearing this, the High Priest said, "We need no more witnesses, for we have all heard Him blaspheme. The evidence for treason has been given by His own mouth. He is convicted through words from His own lips. What more is required before your verdict?"

But there was no little dispute among the elders, for some said, "It is no crime to say, 'I am the Chosen One Who will deliver.'" Others said, "It is no crime for a man to be misguided and deluded, for will not the Deliverer be disclosed by deeds which this Man has not performed?" It was also said, "Is He not fulfilling the prophecies? Therefore, be wary in judgment."

One of the elders said, "Let us set the good this Man does against the other. And is it not well known that He has a power of

healing not in other men? What wrong has He done? He has not called men to arms against Caesar.”

The High Priest then stood up and said, “If we allow this Man to go free at this time, He will stir up trouble, the people being ripe for revolt. Then Caesar will send his legions against us, and the nation will be destroyed, for the hand of Caesar is heavy. We cannot set the life of one man against the lives of many. And those who would set Him free are no friends of Rome, neither can they be friends of our people.”

Then some said, “His crime is against Rome, and not against us.” But others said, “What? Shall we deliver Him to Roman cruelty?”

The High Priest said, “This can be no concern of ours. We are shepherds of the people. Let those who speak against Caesar stand before Caesar’s judgment seat. Let our judgment be that we found Him guilty against Caesar, and then leave Him to Roman mercy. We have no power to condemn Him.”

Therefore, it then being daylight, they bound Jesus and delivered Him to Pilate with the verdict, “He is guilty against Rome.”

It was now, for many, Passover Eve - not all keeping it at the same time, for this was in dispute. Therefore, many who could have spoken for Jesus, being righteous men, went to make their

preparations for the Festival. Some thought He would be set free when it was over, but most knew in their hearts He would not be released.

When Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, Governor of Juda, who sat upon the judgment seat, the lawscribes testified to the charges, saying, “This Man stirs up the people to revolt against Caesar by taking the title ‘Son of God,’ thus claiming to be King of the Jews. He says He brings swords and will purge the land with fire. He blasphemes against Caesar and seeks to bring a new rule of law into the land. He rides into the city proclaiming Himself the Deliverer fulfilling the prophecies. From whom can we be delivered?”

Pilate said to Jesus, “There are many serious charges against You. Have You any defense against them?” When Jesus remained silent, Pilate said, “Tell me, if ‘Son of God’ is a kingly title, are You the King of the Jews?”

Jesus said, “Do you ask this for yourself, or are you being influenced by the things said about Me?”

Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew, to know these things? Your people have handed You over, for, according to their interpretation, You have made kingly claims. What have You done?”

Jesus said, "Is an earthly king most worthy to be called the Son of God? Surely it is goodness and not kingship that counts. I am a Son of God, and this title I rightly claim, but if I have a Kingdom, it is not of Earth. Had it been otherwise, My followers would not have permitted Me to be taken."

Pilate said, "You are, then, a King of some kind." Jesus replied, "As you say, I am a King, but I do not come to rule, for I was born into the world to testify of the Truth. And all who honor Truth listen to My words."

Pilate said, "Who knows what is Truth or what it means? One man's Truth is another man's deception."

Jesus answered, "No man can know Truth, for it is not of Earth, which is a place of deception. But God knows Truth, and it is with Him alone."

Pilate said, "Does not Caesar know Truth?" To which Jesus replied, "No man knows truth."

Pilate said, "Is the Truth with You or with Caesar?" Jesus said, "Caesar's heart is in fornication, not in Truth. And this you know to be true. Would you condemn Me for speaking Truth?" Pilate said, "Say no more."

Jesus said, "See how those who uphold Truth are judged by those holding authority."

Then a man who was guardian at the Temple testified, "This Man stirs up trouble in the land so the people are ripe for revolt. And His doctrine is not contained in Galilee, but is spreading all over Juda."

Hearing this, Pilate asked whether the Man before him was Galilean, and, being told He was, Pilate said, "This Man should be tried before Herod."

Therefore, Jesus was sent to Herod, who, being in Jerusalem at the time, was residing nearby, for he was under the protection of the Governor. Herod was pleased for the opportunity to see Jesus and questioned Him at length, hoping to see some miracle performed, but he was disappointed in all things. Though many testified against Him before Herod, Jesus remained silent on such matters, for it was His duty and destiny to fulfill the prophecies in the Holy Books.

Herod found Jesus guilty of blasphemy and treason, and returned Him to Pilate, saying, "He has committed treason in Juda. Let Him be tried for that. It has not been fully proven before me, but this I know surely: If He is released, there will be a revolt. For the people are inflamed, and your army is not large."

When Pilate had taken his place on the judgment seat and Jesus was before him, he said, "I am told You are a just Man. Can goodness father crime?"

Jesus answered, "Hypocritical goodness fathers many crimes. The people live in a night of ignorance; I come to lighten the darkness."

Pilate said, "If the light is put out, does that help the people? Is it not better for the light to shine? Even a faint glow is better than none."

Jesus said, "Do with Me as you will. I will light a flame which will consume the world, and darkness will be no more."

Pilate said, "These things I do not understand, for Your people have devious minds and make great issues over things of little importance. What else have You to say?"

Jesus replied, "I came to men to manifest the love God has for them. As one of their brothers, I have undergone the trials and tribulations of men, overcoming the claims of the flesh so the spirit within shines forth with strength. I have pointed the way whereby men may rise to greatness, for such is their destiny."

Pilate then said to the elders and some Levites who witnessed against Jesus, "I am not a Jew, nor am I bound by the laws of the Jews. If this Man has blasphemed against your God, then let Him be tried by your law; but do not mention it to me, for I only listen to the law of Rome."

They said, "Do you say that a man who blasphemes against the divine Caesar is not worthy of death?" Pilate said, "Such a man should die."

They said, "This He has done. Also, in proclaiming Himself King, He speaks against Caesar and Rome. Had He not done wrong to Caesar, we would surely not have delivered Him to you."

Pilate said, "You are a troublesome people and tire me with these things. What would you have me do with your King?"

They answered, "These are His words. We have no king except Caesar." Someone said, "And acknowledge no other God."

Then one of the elders stood up and said, "Many have testified concerning His offenses. We know what should be done, but the power is with you. It is not lawful for us to put this Man to death, therefore deal with Him as seems best in your eyes."

Pilate said, "Why have you been spared the wrath of your God?" Then Pilate said to those in the chamber of judgment, "Who else wishes to testify against this Man?"

One of the elders, a lawscribe of the Council, said, "This Man has claimed before the people that He is heir to the throne of David, but He is an impostor. He blasphemes the Holy One of our people by saying He is His Son. If these things inflame the people so they revolt, then Rome pays the price. He comes forth from among the poor and disinherited, arousing the people so they seek to overthrow the stability of established authority. If His intentions are put into effect, we are all lost.

"He proclaims Himself King and declares He will pull down the Temple. He blasphemes against Caesar and says He will supersede Caesar's rule. He slanders Caesar and calls him a fornicator and liar. Under our laws, which you must also uphold, He deserves to die, and, if you are not against Caesar, also under the laws of Rome."

Pilate said to Jesus, "The balance weighs against You. Have You anything to say?" When Jesus did not reply, Pilate asked Him where He really came from. But Jesus remained silent. Pilate then said, "Have You nothing to say to me, who have the power to condemn or release You? What shall I do with One such as You?"

Jesus then said, “The power of Rome rests in your hands, but it gives you power over nothing except My body. Do with that as you will. It is not you, but those distorting the face of Truth, who are to blame.”

Pilate said, “If I deal with You one way, the people will say the authority of Rome supports Your teachings and is not against the things You declare. They will say Your claim to kingship is upheld and may even say You are preferred to Caesar. If I do this, I will certainly be called to account; for am I not the hand of Caesar whom You blaspheme and decry?”

Jesus said, “I call men to a Kingdom which is not yet of Earth.”

Pilate said to Jesus, “No one is compelled to speak on his own behalf.” Then to the others there he said, “Clearly this man is not guiltless concerning Caesar, but will any here speak for Him?”

Then one of the Perushim stood up and said, “Many could speak for this just Man but have decided their duty lies elsewhere. We are an unbending people, sometimes over-concerned with righteousness; but mercy and justice are not least among the things we uphold.

“What wrong has this Man done to Caesar? He has uttered words, which are no more than a breeze from the lips. And surely one so great as Caesar can withstand even the greatest tempest. If

Caesar be man, then words would hurt him; but we are a people knowing nothing man can do will harm the highest divinities. Therefore, we could be less cautious than others. The greater they are, the more they tend to overlook the many weaknesses and failings of men. You, who know the greatness or smallness of he for whom you are the mouthpiece, can incline towards one less knowledgeable in such matters. If you are a worthy representative of Caesar, you will uphold his greatness and reveal his indulgence to us.

“As to whether this Man be the Chosen One or the Deliverer, such questions can only be meaningless to Rome, for even we in Jewry are not in accord as to who they are or what they will do.”

Pilate said, “You are a perverse race, over-concerned with unworldly things and ensnaring yourselves in your own net of goodness. You cannot even agree on the dates of your own festivals or the nature of your gods. Instead of heroes you have saints, yet your saintliness makes you unsaintly. You all agree to seek the Truth but dispute which path to follow and so get nowhere. You agree to follow your God, but some say, ‘We go this way,’ and others say, ‘We go another.’”

“What you say today about this Man you said yesterday about another. Your laws are a maze which I will not attempt to negotiate. Your thoughts are devious, and your hearts an unreadable scroll. I am unfortunate in my governorship.”

Now, a man named Barabbas had also been brought forth to be judged. And Pilate continued, "I know not one man from the other; who is godly and who is ungodly I cannot tell. You yourselves do not know which of these two men has said and done these things, or which is your king. All I know is that there must be a strife. The rights of Caesar must be upheld, and justice must be done. The rest I leave in your hands.

"No two men can suffer for the same crime unless they be in association; but if no association is proven, only one may suffer. Therefore, decide among yourselves which man is to die. Both claim to be the Sons of God, both are deliverers, both have blasphemed against Caesar and your God, and both have struck against Caesar. One has killed, the Other has not. Clemency is mine to give at this time, but clemency overruling justice is weakness.

"If both these men be killed, then surely the whole of the people will rise in revolt. Already the streets are thronged, and much wine is being drunk. But if one is released, those rejoicing will restrain those who sorrow. It will also divide the people who otherwise might act in accord. If one is truly the Son of God, then the Father will not desert His Son; so it would not be wrong to condemn Him, for thus two will be saved.

"Responsibility for restraining bloodshed now lies with you. And already the people outside are in riotous mood. Therefore,

choose between the two men. Both have the same name, but one is called Barabbas, and the Other Barharet. Choose which shall be condemned for these crimes and which shall be released. Then announce it to the people.”

Pilate said, “I will condemn the one claiming to be King of the Jews, for this is a crime against the peace of Caesar. You tell me which he is.”

So all the elders of Jewry went out and consulted among themselves and sent heralds among the people. Jesus remained calm and unshaken, though He had been three hours in the judgment chamber.

When consulting among themselves, one of the elders said, “One dies and one is saved. Let us be sure we save the one who will deliver us.”

A Perushim said, “It is not for us to choose which of these is the Chosen One of God, for both are equally deluded. Neither should we choose according to their goodness or their teachings, or even by what they have done. This is a time of turmoil.

Therefore, what is the life of one man against the lives of thousands? For surely this number will die if there is a revolt. Which will appease the people by his release, and which will cause less strife if he dies? May the Most High God help us to choose wisely, and may He show compassion on the one who

must die. Whichever dies is the savior of many, and so who are we to condemn him otherwise? Let the other be the bearer of our sins, and we will cast him out from among us.”

Then some Levites went and addressed the people thronging about, and they shouted, “Crucify the king, save the Deliverer.” But all were not in accord, and there were many disputes. Then the elders went back to Pilate and said, “Release Barabbas.”

Now, when Judas saw what had happened, he was exceedingly troubled. For he had hoped neither Jesus nor the other would suffer more than confinement over the Festival period. He was therefore filled with remorse. He sought to return the silver to the Temple treasurers, throwing it before them, saying, “I have betrayed the innocent.” They said, “It means nothing to us. Be it on your head, not ours.”

When they told the High Priest about the matter, he said, “This money is tainted and cannot be put into the Temple coffers.” So they used the money to buy a plot in the clay field used by potters, and it was used for the burial of strangers having no kindred. Then, after putting his house in order, Judas hanged himself from a ledge.

Pilate ordered that Jesus be scourged after the custom of Rome and delivered Him to the army for crucifixion. And it was then about the sixth hour. The soldiers took Him to a small court

where, by custom, men gathered who took pleasure in tormenting the condemned. They danced before Him, spitting and mocking. A victor's crown was plaited from thornbush, and He was beaten with burning weeds. Placing a soldier's scarlet mantle about His shoulders, they bowed before Him in mock homage, saying, "Hail, You Great King of the Jews." Others covered His eyes and struck Him, saying, "Now, Sorcerer, tell us who hit You then." He was pricked with reeds, and the mockers made sport with Him in many ways.

When the cruelty was over, the soldiers stripped off the scarlet mantle and replaced His tunic, taking Him away to the place of execution. Because of the scourging and other sufferings, Jesus was unable to bear the crosspiece He carried. And a man named Simon the Cyrene, a stranger from Africa just come by way of Joppa, was forced by the soldiers to carry it.

A crowd followed, among which were many lamenting and wailing women. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not be sorrowful because of Me, for I approach the door of a greater life. Weep instead for yourselves and your children, for the day comes when you will have much greater cause for sorrow. If these things are done while the tree is green and full of life, what would they not do if it were old and dry?"

Coming to the place of execution, which was where the skull of Adam lay buried, the soldiers fastened Jesus to the crosspiece

and raised it up into its slot. Then His feet were fastened to the rest. After this, they divided His clothes among them; but the mantle, being woven without a seam, was given to one selected by lot. About His neck was hung a plaque, written in Latin, which read, JESUS BARHARETS, KING OF THE JEWS. The Jews protested to Pilate about this, but he said, "This is written by my authority."

Two others were crucified with Jesus, one on His right and one on His left. People passing along the road mocked and abused Him, shouting, "Come down and rule over Your kingdom." Some said, "Where is Your All-Powerful Father now?" and, "If You are What You claim to be, get Yourself out of this." Many laughed, saying, "He came to save us, but cannot save Himself. Savior, save Yourself first." The witnesses who stood about the cross also mocked Him. They said, "O Deliverer, now deliver Yourself."

At the ninth hour, the sky darkened with cloud, and there was thunder and lightning. Thus the prophecy was fulfilled which said, "In the valley of decision, on the day of the Deliverer, the sun and the Earth will be darkened."

Then Jesus began to speak the words of David and later said, "My God, do not let Your power drain away from Me."

Some standing nearby said, "Listen, He is calling on Elijah." Another said, "Let us see if Elijah will come and take Him." A

man came with a sponge soaked in vinegar and duwed and raised it to the lips of Jesus, but He turned His head away. Then some said, "He is ready to give up the spirit."

Jesus opened His eyes and said to those who stood near, "It is nearly over."

Manilaus, the centurion who stood facing Jesus, said, "Truly This is a Man."

Then someone shouted, "It is over," and there was an outbreak of wailing from the women.

Chapter 25

A number of women stood off watching from a distance, among them being Mary of Magdala - also called Mary of Bethena, Marmaryam, and Mary the mother of James the Younger and Joseph - and Salome, who had followed Jesus, administering to His needs in Galilee.

There were also others who had come to Jerusalem with Him, but the only disciple there was James.

When the women wept with pity, he said to them,

“I see now what I was blind to before. Let us not waste tears in futile pity, but strengthen our hearts so His sacrifice is not in vain. He did this to change the hearts of the people. Let us be worthy of Him.”

Then James left, for he received word that the disciples were being sought, it being feared they would set fire to the Great Temple, or arouse the people so there was a revolt. There had been disturbances in the city, but because of Barabbas, only three were killed.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was taken to the house of John, and Markus and Joses also came there. It was in that house that the first words of this gospel were written.

Many of the disciples had deserted Jesus and were in hiding. Others went about not knowing what to do, their hearts full of misery and sorrow. They lacked the influence needed to save Jesus from the common pit of criminals. And Mary, His mother, did not claim the body, though the arrangements made were unknown to her.

Now, one of the elders of the Supreme Council was a man named Josias, called Joseph of Abramatha - son of Yokkim, son of Nathan, son of Elezar, son of Elihu, son of Yakim, son of Zadok - who lived on the Merchant's Road, a day's journey from Jerusalem. He also owned an estate north-west of the city. He had a brother-in-law named Nikodius, and both were secret followers of Jesus. Joseph of Abramatha, the wise Commander, had been present at the Council when it sat in judgment on Jesus, and he supported Him, but many more who could have done so were absent because of the hour.

When evening drew near and Jesus had been four hours on the cross, Joseph of Abramatha, being a man of status and authority, went to Pontius Pilate without fear, for they were friends. He requested the body of Jesus, his kinsman, saying, "It is written in our law that the sun shall not be permitted to set on the body of a murdered man."

The Governor said, "You are an upright man, and I will not deny this to you." But he was surprised to hear Jesus had died so

quickly, and he sent for the centurion in charge of the execution, a man known to Joseph, who assured Pilate that Jesus was undoubtedly dead.

On hearing this, Pilate granted the Commander custody of the body, and though some Jews present objected, wishing Jesus to be buried in the criminals' pit, they had to submit to Roman law. Yet the Jewish law also stated it was the duty of the nearest relative to dispose of the body, irrespective of how death occurred.

Now this being the Sabbath Eve, the bodies could not remain upon their crosses after nightfall. Therefore, the Jews requested of Pilate that the legs of the condemned men be broken, allowing the bodies to hang free so they quickly died. So the soldiers took mallets and broke the legs of the other two, but when they came to Jesus, the centurion said, "He is already dead."

Joseph the Commander took his son Joses, Nikodius and one other and, having already purchased a linen shroud, went to the place of execution and removed Jesus from the cross. Wrapping Him in the sheet, they carried Jesus through the darkness to a tomb already cut out of the rock. It was a two-chambered cavern north-west of the city, having a ledge running around the inside, and the entrance faced eastward towards the place of execution. It was the north end of a garden planted with cabbages, and the gardener was also custodian of the tomb.

When Jesus had been placed inside, a great stone was rolled across the entrance, and two men were left on guard beside it.

Now, things happened on the Sabbath which may not be written, for they are in the secret of the Lord, known only to the elect of the House of God, which is in the Isle of Departure.

Those who guarded the tomb, when questioned regarding these things, said, "The disciples came early and carried Him away for burial in a proper manner at another place. For He was laid here only because of the Sabbath, and it was not His tomb." None questioned them further, for this was proper. And the guards were only placed to protect certain bodies from those who would work evil sorceries on them, those who improperly tampered with bodies being put to death.

After the Sabbath was over, some women came with spices and oils to deal with the body of Jesus. But when they came to the tomb, they found that the great stone had been rolled aside. The guards were gone, but a young man was seated just inside the entrance, and he said to them, "Do not be afraid of me, for I am a friend. Jesus, Whom you seek, is not here. But go and tell Peter that He will be with him as promised." The women were very much afraid and left in haste.

When they had gone, Marmaryam came with another and stood outside the tomb weeping. And as she did so, a voice behind her said, "Why do you weep?" Turning, she saw the gardener and said to him, "They have taken Jesus away, and I have no knowledge of what has happened to Him." Then the gardener told her to go to John, the son of Annas.

Peter and two others were also making their way to the tomb when they met the women coming away. The women told them what they had seen and heard. And Peter, thinking they were talking wildly through sorrow, sent one of his companions to go with them. Then he hastened to the tomb, arriving to find it empty and no one there. So, being perplexed, he sat down outside while the other went in search of the gardener. While seated there, he saw a shining figure in the gloom within the tomb and knew it for a Spirit Messenger. And he heard a voice saying, "Jesus has fulfilled the promises and is truly the Chosen One, God's Anointed."

Then the other returned with the gardener, who told Peter to go and meet John, the son of Annas, at Emeras, about nine miles distant. And they went to that place, which was a village not far from the house of Joseph of Abramatha.

Arriving there, they found John, the son of Annas, and another John, and James and Joses, the sons of Joseph by Anna (his first wife, the fair stranger), his son by Mary, and Mark, his adopted

son. Nikodius was also there with Lazarus, and they were all in the house of Hosius. Later, a number of envoys came.

Then, while they were seated at a table, Jesus came among them and said, "Let us take food together and rejoice, for the prophecies have been fulfilled regarding the Chosen One as it is said in the Holy Books. The Servant of Man is arisen from among those who sleep, for death has not claimed Him. But these things, while fulfilling the promises, will not bring about the Rule of God, for this will not come while men sit waiting for signs. The people have been given that which fulfills their hopes and aspirations. Now surely they will believe in My cause and arise to sweep evil aside. Now the Spirit of Truth dwells among you, though it is still out of place in a world under the rule of man."

Then Jesus told of all the things which had been written in the Holy Books concerning these things, and how the Chosen One, God's Anointed, would be disowned by men, would suffer for their willfulness and arise from among the dead to appear on the third day. Then he said, "Are not all these things fulfilled in Me?"

Then He departed.

Some days later, all the disciples who were the chosen of Jesus met in a secret place. And Jesus joined them and proved Himself to those who still disbelieved. And they said, "Sire, forgive our

disbelief and forgive us for doubting the things You taught concerning Yourself.”

Jesus said, “This is the day of the coming of the Lord, who will rule the Earth. Yet is it not written, ‘This will be a day of darkness, and not of light’?”

Then Jesus spoke these words: “I go to a place far away beyond the world, where you may not follow. For I fulfill the hopes of all men. Now, you go out, carrying the message that the prophecies have been fulfilled and the time is at hand when the Rule of God should be established among men. For, the promises having been fulfilled for the people, surely they will now believe and rally to the cause of Good, sweeping wickedness and evil from the face of the Earth. Say to them, ‘That has been done that had to be done.’

“Now you must take up the burden, for if you would become children of God and reclaim your lost heritage, you must prove yourselves worthy heirs. Let not all the suffering be in vain.”

Then He told them secret things concerning the Rule of God, and how men should be freed from trouble, distress and pain. He explained how each man could be freed of all sickness and see beyond the range of the eye. These and many other things were explained, and also many things concerning the Dominion of the Spirit.

He said, "Follow My teachings, and the power of the Holy Spirit will come to you, enabling you to do many great things causing wonder among others. Yet all these are the rightful possessions of men, if they will but establish their worthiness.

"Think not that God will descend from Heaven to do the work of men. The world is yours, but life is with God; in the end, there is the accounting. Man must be responsible for his own destiny, so seek no divine intervention while men remain apathetic. God comes to the aid only of those who strive, who surmount the difficulties and obstacles of life."

Having said these things, Jesus revealed Himself to them in His form of glory, so they might know Truth had been established in Him. Then they were all bedazzled and astonished at what man could become and the extent of his powers awaiting development. Then they knew Jesus was all He claimed to be and hailed Him as Christ, the Anointed by God. For in Him the Spirit of Christ was manifested as in no other.

After this, Jesus left.

Now, rumors of strange events came to the ears of certain Jews who were Herodians and Sadducees. Then they were exceedingly angry with those in power who had inclined towards Joseph, the wise Commander. He said to those who raised their voices against him, "Why do you seek to stir up trouble? Those in high

places, holding positions of power, did only what they thought best and complied with the law. What else could they do? I received the body of my kinsman because this was my duty, and I dealt with it decently, letting it rest in my private tomb over the Sabbath.”

Despite his authority, there was evidence against Joseph, and he was imprisoned, being kept under constant guard. One Sabbath, during the night hours, the Spirit of Jesus was projected to Joseph so he was comforted. But the guards, seeing it, fainted with fear.

Then Joseph was brought before Pontius Pilate, but the Governor found no fault in him, and he was released.

Later, Annas and his son-in-law, who were then the High Priests of Jewry, came to the house of Joseph, bringing with them the Holy Books written on scrolls within their box. They requested that he swear upon it in the sacred name of Aweh, but he made oath only that he had done no wrong or broken no law.

The wise Commander remained in his house for many days, after which he went about unmolested.

Then, when Pontius Pilate returned to Rome, Joseph departed from his home shores, coming to Setnadoin, from whence he moved to a well at the foot of a hill. He brought with him a clay

cup which had been set in silver by a silversmith, and this was that cup used by Jesus.

Some say Joseph married Holy Mary after the death of his wife, but this is a known heresy put about by those in ignorance of what is written, for his wife was not that Mary.