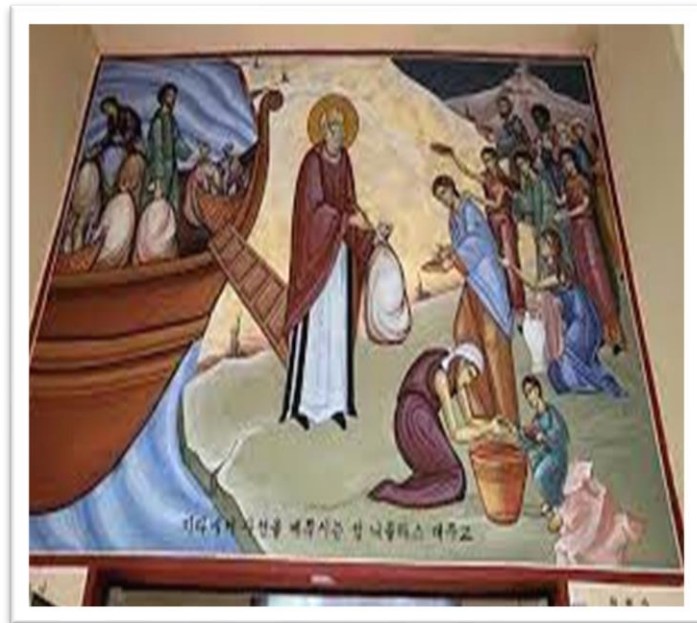


Jesus in Akrabis, Silo, and Korea

Jesus was received in ceremony outside of Akrabis, for the inhabitants were expecting His coming. The tabernacles of green branches were ranged for some distance beyond the city, and into one of the largest and most beautiful they conducted Jesus for the customary washing of feet and offering of refreshments. Akrabis was rather a large place, about two hours from the Jordan. It had five gates, and was traversed by the highway between Samaria and Jericho. Travelers in this direction had to pass through Akrabis, consequently it was well supplied with provisions and other necessities.



Outside the gate at which Jesus arrived were inns for the accommodation of caravans. Tabernacles were erected before each of the five gates, for each quarter of the city had its own gate.

Next day Jesus made the rounds of the city, visited all the tabernacles, and gave instructions here and there. The people observed many customs peculiar to this festival; for instance, they took only a mouthful in the morning, the rest of the repast being reserved for the poor. Their employment during the day was interrupted by canticles and prayers, and instructions were given by the Elders. These instructions were now delivered by Jesus. On His coming and going, He was received and escorted by little boys and girls carrying around Him garlands of flowers. This, too, was one of their customs. The residents of the different quarters sometimes went from their own tabernacles to those of their neighbors, either to listen to the instructions or to assist at an entertainment. On such occasions they went processionally, carrying garlands such as were borne by Jesus' escort.

The women were busied with all sorts of occupations in the tabernacles. Some were sitting embroidering flowers on long strips of stuff, others were making sandals out of the coarse, brown hair of goats and camels. They attached their work to their girdle as we do our knitting. The soles were furnished with a support like a heel both before and behind, also with sharp points, in order to aid in climbing the mountains. The people gave Jesus a very cordial reception, but the Doctors of the Law were not so simple-

hearted as their confreres at Ennon and Socoth. They were indeed courteous in their manner, but somewhat reserved.

From Akrabis Jesus went to Silo, distant only one hour in a direct line toward the southwest; but as the road winds first down into the valley and then over the mountain, it makes the distance a good two hours. The inhabitants of Silo, like those of Akrabis, were assembled in the tabernacles outside the gates of the city. They, too, knew of Jesus' coming and were waiting for Him. They saw Him and His companions from afar, climbing up the winding road that led to their city. When they perceived that He was not directing His steps to the gate nearest to Akrabis, but was going around the city more to the northwest, to that which led from Samaria, they sent messengers to announce the fact to the people of that quarter. These latter received Him into their tabernacles, washed His feet, and presented the customary refreshments, He went immediately to the central height of the city, where once the Ark of the Covenant had rested, and taught in the open air from a teacher's chair very beautifully wrought in stone. Here, too, were tabernacles and houses of entertainment, in which latter everything needed in the former was cooked in common. Men were performing this duty, but they appeared to me to be slaves and not real Jews.

The day following was one of the most solemn of the feast, though I do not know whether what I saw here was a purely local custom or one practiced generally. One of the Doctors of the Law annually on this day delivered from the teacher's chair a castigatory sermon, to which not one of his hearers dared offer the least contradiction. It was principally for the purpose of delivering this sermon that Jesus had come here today. All the Jews, men, women, youths, maidens, and children had assembled to hear Him. They had come processionally from their different tabernacles, carrying festoons and garlands of leaves between the various divisions and classes. The teacher's chair, under an awning decorated with foliage, crowned a terraced eminence. Jesus taught until midday. He spoke of the mercy of God toward His people, of Israel's revolts and turpitude, of the chastisements awaiting Jerusalem, of the destruction of the Temple, of the present time of grace, the last that would be offered them. He said that if the Jews rejected this last grace, never to the end of time should they as a nation receive another, and that a much more frightful chastisement should fall upon Jerusalem than it had ever yet experienced. The whole discourse was calculated to inspire fear. All listened silent and terrified, for Jesus very clearly signified, as He explained the Prophecies, that He Himself was the One who was to bring salvation. The Pharisees of the place, who were not of much account and who, like those of Akrabis, had received Jesus with a show of hypocritical

reverence, kept silence, though filled with wonder and irritation. The people, however, applauded Jesus and sang His praises. Jesus spoke likewise of the Scribes, their misrepresentations of the Holy Scriptures, their false interpretations and additions.

That evening a public entertainment was given in the tabernacles on the eminence. But Jesus was not present at it. He went down to the tabernacles of the poor, where He consoled and instructed. Wherever there were no Pharisees to spy their actions, the people pressed around Jesus, cast themselves at His feet, paid Him homage, confessed their sins, and made known their needs. He consoled them and gave them advice. It was a touching sight to see all this going on in the darkness of night among the tabernacles, from which shone forth a faint and trembling glimmer. No lights were to be seen for, on account of the draught, the lamps had been covered with screens, and the yellow glare they cast lit up the green foliage, the fruits, and the people in a manner quite strange to behold. From the height of Silo, many places around could be distinctly seen, and everywhere shone the glimmering light of the tabernacle-feast, while the sound of singing came from far and near. Jesus did not perform any cures here. The Pharisees kept the sick back, and the people appeared to be afraid. Here as in Akrahis, the song of the Pharisees, when they heard of Jesus' coming, was: "What new doctrine is He now going to bring us? What design has He in coming here?" From Silo Jesus took a southwestwardly direction and went down for one and a half hours to Korea, a place that could be seen from the height of the former city. It had neither walls nor ramparts. The Pharisees of Korea went out some distance beyond the city to meet Jesus, taking with them one of their fellow citizens who had been blind from his birth. They thought to tempt Jesus. The blind man had over his garments, around his shoulder, and over his head a wide scarf like a linen cloth. He was a tall, handsome man. As Jesus drew near, to the astonishment of the bystanders, the blind man turned toward Him and cast himself at His feet. Jesus raised him and questioned him on his religion, the Ten Commandments, the Law, and the Prophecies. The blind man answered more intelligently than any had dared to hope—yes, he even seemed to utter prophecies. He spoke of the persecution awaiting Jesus, saying that He must not yet go to Jerusalem, because there His enemies would put Him to death. All present were struck with fear. The crowd gathered around was great. Jesus asked him whether he desired to see the tabernacles of Israel, the mountains and the Jordan, his own parents and friends, the Temple, the Holy City, and lastly Himself, Jesus, who was then standing before him. The blind man answered that he already saw Him, that he had seen Him as soon as He drew near, and he described

His appearance and dress. "But," he continued, "I do desire to see all other things, and I know that, if Thou wilt, Thou canst give me sight." Then Jesus laid His hand on the man's forehead, prayed, and with His thumb made the Sign of the Cross on his closed eyelids, raising them at the same time.

Thereupon the man cast off the scarf from his head and shoulders, looked gladly and wonderingly around, and exclaimed: "Great are the works of the Almighty!" He fell at Jesus' feet, who blessed him. The Pharisees looked on in silence, the relatives of the blind man gathered around him, the crowd intoned Psalms, while the blind man himself in a prophetic strain spoke and chanted alternately of Jesus and the fulfillment of the Promise. Jesus went on into the city, where He healed many sick and restored sight to others that were blind, whom He found in the space between the houses and the earthen mounds. The usual courtesies of washing the feet and offering refreshments had already been tendered to Him in one of the tabernacles outside the city. The blind man, who accompanied Jesus the whole way, continued to speak under prophetic inspiration of the Jordan, of the Holy Spirit who had descended upon Him, and of the voice from Heaven.

That evening Jesus preached in the synagogue for the Sabbath. He spoke of the family of Noe, of the building of the ark, of the vocation of Abraham, and expounded the passages of Isaias in which mention is made of God's covenant with Noe, and of the rainbow as a sign in the heavens. (54-55). As He spoke I saw all very distinctly: the whole life and all the generations of the Patriarchs, the branches that separated from the parent stock, and the idolatry that arose from them. When I am actually gazing upon such things, all seems clear and natural, but when out of vision, when returned to the routine of daily life, I am saddened by its weary interruptions and can no longer comprehend what I have seen with the eye of the spirit. Jesus spoke likewise of the erroneous interpretation of the Scripture and of false computation of time. He proved by His own reckoning, which was quite simple and clear, that all things in the Scriptures could be made accurately to accord. I cannot understand how such things could have been thrown into confusion, while others had been totally forgotten.

One section of Korea lay upon a terraced mountain; the other, connected with the first by a row of small houses, extended eastward into a deep mountain dale. Some Pharisees and many sick from Silo were here awaiting Jesus. Although Korea lay a little more to the west than Akrabis, yet it was still nearer to the Jordan as the river made a bend in this locality. It was not a large place and the people were not rich. They did cheap basketwork, made beehives and long strips of straw matting, some coarse, some fine. The straw or reeds were bleached and of the best. They made also whole screens like

entire walls of this matting for separating sleeping chambers one from another. There were in the neighborhood many other little places. The mountains of this region are steep and rugged. Across the Jordan from Akrabis was the region traversed by Jesus the preceding year at the Feast of Tabernacles when He went through the valley to Dibon.

Next morning Jesus preached in the synagogue and, while the Jews took their Sabbath promenade, cured many sick who had been brought to a large hall nearby. At the close of the Sabbath, while assisting at the entertainment given in the tabernacles, Jesus had a dispute with the Pharisees. The subject under discussion was the prophecies uttered lately by the man born blind and to whom Jesus had given sight. The Pharisees maintained that the same man had already predicted many things that had never come to pass, to which Jesus replied that the Spirit of God had not then descended upon him. During the conversation, mention was made of Ezechiel as if his early Prophecies relating to Jerusalem had not been fulfilled, to which Jesus responded that the Spirit of God had not come upon him until he was in Babylon near the river Chobar, when something was given him to swallow. Jesus' response reduced the Pharisees to silence.

The man restored to sight went around the city, praising God, singing Psalms, and prophesying. The day before he had been to the synagogue, where he was invested with a broad girdle and was admitted by vow among the Nazarites. A priest performed over him the ceremony of consecration. I think he afterward joined the disciples.

Jesus visited the parents of the man restored to sight, he himself having prayed Him to do so. He conducted Him to their home, which was in a retired part of the city. They were Essenians, of the grade that lived in marriage, distant relatives of Zachary, and connected in some way with the Essenian community of Maspha. They had several sons and daughters, the one restored to sight being the youngest child. There were several other Essenian families, all related to them, living in their neighborhood. They owned beautiful fields on a declivity just outside their quarter of the city, and cultivated wheat and barley. They retained for their own use only a third part of the produce, one being given to the poor, the other to the community at Maspha. These Essenians came out hospitably to meet Jesus and welcome Him in front of their dwellings. The father of the blind man restored to sight presented him to Jesus with the request that He would receive him as the least of the servants and messengers of His disciples, the one to go before Him and prepare the inns for His reception. Jesus accepted him and sent him at once to Bethania with Silas and one of the disciples from Hebron. I think He intended to give Lazarus a joyful surprise by means of the man restored to

sight, for he had known the latter as one born blind. The young man's father was named Cyrus, Sirius, or Syrus, the name of a king who reigned during the Jewish Captivity. The son's name was Manahem. He had always worn a girdle under his garments, but after his cure he put it outside and made a formal vow for a time. He possessed the gift of prophecy. Even when blind he had always been present at John's preaching, and had received baptism. He often gathered many of the youths of Korea around him, instructed them and, inspired by the Spirit, prophesied to them of Jesus. His parents loved him on account of his piety and zeal, and provided him with clothing of the best. When Jesus gave him sight, He said: "I give thee a double gift, sight of soul and of body." The Pharisees of Korea treated Manahem with contempt on account of his prophecies. They called them troubled fancies, foolish reveries, and said that he was vain of his fine clothes. They had brought him out themselves to meet Jesus, being firmly convinced that He could not cure him since no one had ever seen any pupil in his eyes. And now that he was restored to sight, the most wicked among them dared to affirm that he had never been blind, that being an Essenian, he had very likely made a vow to feign blindness.

The Pharisees who spoke with Jesus of Ezechiel had expressed their contempt for the Prophet. He was, they said, only a servant of Jeremias and he had, in the school of the Prophet, very preposterous, very gloomy reveries. Things had fallen out quite differently from his predictions. Manahem also had uttered very profound prophecies of Melchisedech, Malachias, and Jesus.