

Jesus Goes From Dothan to Endor. Cure of a Pagan Boy

After a journey of about five hours, and night having set in, Jesus and the disciples arrived at a lonely inn where only sleeping accommodations were to be found. Nearby was a well that owed its origin to Jacob. The disciples gathered wood and made a fire. On the way Jesus had had a long conversation with them, intended principally for the instruction of Thomas, Simon, Manahem, "Little Cleophas," and the others newly received. He spoke of their following Him, and through the deep conviction of the worthlessness of earthly goods, of their leaving their relatives without regret and without looking back. He promised that what they had left should be restored to them in His Kingdom a thousand fold. But they should reflect maturely whether or not they could break their earthly ties.

To some of the disciples, and especially to Thomas, Judas Iscariot was not particularly pleasing. He did not hesitate to say plainly to Jesus that he did not like Judas Simonis, because he was too ready to say and . Why, he asked, had He admitted that man among His disciples, since He had been so difficult to please in others. Jesus answered evasively that from eternity it was decreed by God for Judas, like all the others, to be of the number of His disciples.

When the disciples had retired to rest, Jesus went alone into the mountains to pray.

Early the next morning some inhabitants of Sunem came to Jesus at the inn earnestly begging Him to go with them, for they had some children seriously sick whom they wished Him to cure. Sunem was a couple of hours to the east of where Jesus then was. The poor people had long been vainly expecting Jesus' coming. But Jesus replied that He could not go then, because others were awaiting Him, but that He would send His disciples to them. They rejoined that they had already had some of them in their town, but the cure of their children had not followed. They insisted upon His coming Himself. Jesus exhorted them to patience, and they left Him.

He now went with His disciples to Endor. On the road from Dothan to Endor were two wells of Jacob, to which his herds used to be led, and for which he



often had to struggle with the Amorrhites.

Lazarus owned a field near Jezrael at some distance from Endor. Joachim and Anne owned another two hours to the northeast of Endor, and it was to it that the latter accompanied Mary on her journey to Bethlehem. It was from this field that the little she-ass, that ran on so gaily before the holy travelers, had been taken to be presented to Joseph. Joachim owned another field on the opposite side of the Jordan on the confines of the desert and forest of Ephraim, and not far from Gaser. Thither had he retired to pray when he returned sad from the Temple, and there, too, had he received the command to go to Jerusalem, where Anne would meet him under the Golden Gate. Jesus paused at a row of houses outside of Endor and taught. At the earnest request of the people, He entered some of them and cured the sick, several of whom had been carried thither from Endor. Among the sufferers were some pagans, but they remained at a distance. One pagan however, a citizen of Endor, approached Jesus. He had with him a boy of seven years possessed of a dumb devil, and he was often so violent that he could not be restrained. As the man drew near Jesus, the boy became quite unmanageable, broke loose from his father, and crept into a hole in the mountain. The father cast himself at Jesus' feet, bewailing his misery. Jesus went to the hole and commanded the boy to come forth before his Master. At these words, the boy came out meekly and fell on his knees before Jesus, who laid His hands upon him and commanded Satan to withdraw. The boy became unconscious for a few moments, while a dark vapor issued from him. Then he arose and ran full of talk to his father, who embraced him, and both went and fell on their knees before Jesus, giving thanks. Jesus addressed some words of admonition to the father, and commanded him to go to Ennon to be baptized. Jesus did not enter Endor. The suburb in which He was, possessed more beautiful edifices than the city itself. There was something about Endor that spoke of death. Part of the city was a waste, its walls in ruins, its streets overgrown with grass. Many of the inhabitants were heathens under the power of the Jews, and were obliged to labor at all kinds of public works. The few rich Jews found in Endor used to peep timidly out of their doors and quickly draw in their heads, as if they feared that someone was stealing their money behind their back.

From here Jesus went two hours to the northeast into a valley that ran from the Plain of Esdrelon to the Jordan, north of Mount Gelboe. In this valley lay on a hill, like an island, the city of Abbez, a place of moderate grandeur surrounded by gardens and groves. A little river flowed before it, and eastward in the valley was a beautiful fountain, called Saul's Fountain because Saul was once wounded there. Jesus did not go into the city, but to a

row of houses on the northern declivity of Mount Gelboe between the gardens and fields, on the latter of which were high heaps of grain. Here He went into an inn in which a crowd of old men and women, His own relatives, were awaiting Him. They washed His feet and showed Him every mark of genuine confidence and reverence. They were in number about fifteen, nine men and six women, who had sent Him word that they would meet Him here. Several of them were accompanied by their servants and children. They were mostly very aged persons, relatives of Anne, Joachim, and Joseph. One was a young half-brother of Joseph, who dwelt in the valley of Zabulon. Another was the father of the bride of Cana. Anne's relatives from the region of Sephoris, where at His last visit to Nazareth, Jesus had restored sight to the blind boy, were among them. All had journeyed hither in a body and on asses in order to see and speak with Jesus. Their desire was that He would fix His abode somewhere and cease wandering about. They wanted Him to seek a place where He could teach in peace and where there were no Pharisees. They set before Him the great danger He ran, since the Pharisees and other sects were so embittered against Him. "We are well aware," they said, "of the miracles and graces that proceed from Thee. But we beg Thee to have some settled home where Thou canst quietly teach, that we may not be in constant anxiety on Thy account." They even began to propose to Him different places which they thought suitable.

These pious, simple-hearted people made this proposal to Jesus out of their great love for Him. The bitter taunts uttered in their hearing against Him by the evil-minded gave them pain. Jesus replied in affectionate, but vigorous terms, very different from those He was accustomed to use when addressing the multitude or the disciples. He spoke in plain words, explained the Promise, and showed them that it was His part to fulfill the will of His Father in Heaven. He told them moreover that He had not come for rest, not for any particular persons, nor for His own relatives, but for all mankind. All indiscriminately were His brethren, all were His relatives. Love rests not. Whoever dreams of succoring misery, must seek out the poor. After the comforts of this life He did not aim, for His Kingdom was not of this world. Jesus took a great deal of trouble with these good old people, who listened with ever increasing astonishment to His words, whose deep significance gradually unfolded to their understanding. Their earnestness and their love for Jesus grew at each moment. He took them separately for a walk on the shady part of the mountain, where He instructed and comforted them, each according to his or her special needs, and after that He spoke to them again all together. And so the day closed, and they took together a simple repast of bread, honey, and dried fruits which they had brought with them.

That evening the disciples presented to Jesus a young man from the environs of Endor, the son of a schoolmaster. He was a student preparing to hold a position similar to that of his father. He begged Jesus to receive him among His disciples. He had been informed, he said, that Jesus might perhaps have some need of him, that He might possibly give him some office. Jesus replied that He had no need of him, that the knowledge He came to bring upon earth was different from that which he had acquired, that he was too attached to material things, and so He sent him away.

About noon on the following day, Jesus' relatives started for Mount Tabor, where they separated and returned to their homes in different directions. Jesus had quite consoled and enlightened the good, old people, had infused new life into them. Although they may not have understood all that He told them, yet they felt a great calm fall upon their soul, and they journeyed home with the firm conviction that He had spoken divine words and that He knew better what to do and how to shape His course than they could tell Him. Still more touching than their meeting was their departure when, with tears and smiles and gracious nods, their demeanor expressive of confidence mingled with respectful reserve, they took their way down through the valley. Some rode on asses, others went on foot leaning on their long staves, and all with their garments girded for travelling. Jesus and the disciples, after helping them to mount their asses and arrange their bundles, accompanied them a part of the way.