

Jesus in Dothain and Sephoris. From a Distance, He Helps the Shipwrecked

After the Feast of Thanksgiving Jesus, with about twelve disciples, travelled in a southeasterly direction from Capharnaum, as if between Cana and Sephoris. Mary and eight of the holy women, among them Mary Cleophas, the three widows, the bride of Cana, and Peter's sister, accompanied Him to a little city where they took a meal together and then parted from Him. In the neighborhood of this place was the pit into which Joseph was cast by his brethren. The place was called Dothain. But there was another and a much larger Dothain in the vale of Esdrelon, about four hours to the north of Samaria. This Dothain was a little place, and the people lived chiefly by providing for the wants of the merchants travelling through their city. It lay at the end of a little valley large enough to afford pasturage for about eighty head of cattle. At the other side stood that great building in which Jesus had once calmed the possessed; this time He did not enter. Dothain is an hour and a half northeast of Sephoris and between four and five hours from Mt. Tabor.

The disciples had gone on before, to prepare the inn. About eight men, some of them priests, came out to meet Jesus and the holy women, and escort them to the public hall of entertainment. No one lived in it, but already everything was prepared for a repast. Before the entrance there was spread in honor of Jesus a carpet upon which He had to walk. They washed His feet. The women ate apart, back of the fireplace. Jesus and the disciples reclined at table and partook of only cold viands, such as little rolls and honey, green salad steeped in sauce, and fruits. Their drink was water mixed with balsam. Little flasks of the same were presented to Jesus and the women to take away with them. The priests from the city remained standing during the repast and served the guests with uncommon love and humility, while Jesus spoke of Joseph, who had here been sold. It was an indescribably touching scene. I could not restrain my tears. It appeared to me so strange that I should behold it so near to me, and yet could not enter as I so longed to do. I wanted to do this and that, but I could not. Immediately after the repast, the holy women departed for Capharnaum.



Jesus took leave of His Mother in private, and then bade goodbye to the others. I have remarked that when alone Jesus always embraced His Mother on His arrival or departure, but before others He merely extended His hand or inclined His head. Mary wept. She was still very youthful looking, tall and delicately built. Her forehead was very high, her nose rather long, her eyes very large and mildly downcast, her lips of a beautiful red, her complexion rather dark, but beautiful, and her cheeks lightly tinged with the color of the rose.

Jesus tarried a while longer teaching in the inn, and the men, who would accept no remuneration for the repast, accompanied Him on His departure as far as Joseph's Well, which was at that time not such as it was when Joseph was let down into it. Then it was only an empty pit, its mouth surrounded by green bushes and vines, but now it was a spacious, four-cornered reservoir, like a little pool, under a roof supported by pillars. It was full of water and in it was kept an abundance of fish. I saw some that lifted their heads up so curiously, not pointed like those we see. But they were not so large as similar ones in the Sea of Galilee. There was no visible supply of water to the well. There was a fence around it, and it was guarded by people living near. Jesus entered the springhouse with His companions. The whole way He had taught of Joseph and his brethren, and He continued the same discourse at the well, which I saw Him blessing as He left. His escort now returned to Dothain, while He and His disciples went on for about a good hour to Sephoris, where He stopped with the sons of Anne's sister.

Sephoris was built on a mountain in the midst of mountains. It was larger than Capharnaum, and there were many separate residences standing around in the environs. Jesus was not very well received by the Doctors of the synagogue, and I heard wicked people, of whom there were many in this city, calumniating Him, saying that He was wandering about instead of staying with His Mother. Jesus performed no cures here, and held Himself very much aloof; still, on the Sabbath He preached in the synagogue and went to an inn nearby for His meals. He visited many private individuals and families, principally Essenians, however, whom He exhorted and consoled, for many of the wicked inhabitants ridiculed and slandered them, on account of their affection for Him. Jesus told several of those that lived in the environs, as also some of His own relatives, not to follow Him just then, but to remain His friends in secret, and to continue their good works until the end of His career. His relatives did much good here and contributed also to the support of the Blessed Virgin, to whom they sent all kinds of necessaries. I saw Jesus conversing with these different families in so affectionate and intimate a way that I have no words to describe it. His deportment, so full of

love, touched me to tears.

That night I saw something else that appeared to me surprising and inexpressibly affecting. There happened on that night a great windstorm in the Holy Land, and I saw Jesus with many others in prayer. He prayed with outstretched hands that danger might be averted. Then I had a glance at the Sea of Galilee, which was lashed by the tempest, the ships of Peter, Andrew, and Zebedee being in distress. The Apostles were, as I saw, asleep in Bethania, their servants alone being on the ships. And lo! As Jesus stood praying, I saw an apparition of Him there upon the ships, now on one, now on the other, and then again upon the raging billows. It was as if He were laboring among them, holding back the vessels, warding off the danger. He was not there in person, for I did not see Him going, but He stood above the sufferers, He hovered on the waves. The sailors did not see Him, for it was His spirit assisting them in prayer. Nobody knew anything about His being there, though He was really helping them. Perhaps the sailors believed in Him and called on Him for help.