

## Jesus in Thanath-Silo and Antipatris

During the feast in Machaerus and the beheading of the Baptist, Jesus was in Thanath-Silo. There He heard from those that had returned from Jerusalem the catastrophe which had just occurred in the Holy City. A crowd of laborers lately engaged on a great building near the mount upon which stood the Temple, along with eighteen master workmen sent thither by Herod, had been buried under the falling walls. Jesus expressed compassion for the innocent sufferers, but said that the sin of the master workmen was not greater than that of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and all those that labored against the Kingdom of God. These latter would likewise be one day buried under their own treacherous structures.



The aqueduct that had cost the lives of so many was probably a quarter of an hour in length. It was intended to conduct the water flowing from the Pool of Bethesda up to the mount on which the Temple stood, thus to wash down from the court to the lower ravine the blood of the slaughtered animals. Higher up on the mountain was the Pool of Bethesda, which discharged the waters received from its source, the Gehon. Three vaulted aqueducts ran far in under the Temple mount, and long arcades extended northward across the valley and up to the mount. Nearby stood a high tower in which, by means of wheelwork machinery, water was raised in great leathern vessels from the reservoir far below. The work had long been in progress. Being now in want of good building stone and master workmen, Pilate, acting on the advice of a member of the Sanhedrin, a Herodian in secret, had sought help from Herod. The master workmen sent by the latter were likewise Herodians. At Herod's instigation, they designedly carried on the building in such a way that the whole structure would necessarily fall at once. By this catastrophe, they intended to embitter the Jews still more against Pilate. The foundation was broad, but hollow, and the structure arose tapering, but heavy. When the disaster happened, the eighteen Herodians were standing upon a terrace opposite the building. They had commanded the wooden scaffolding over which it had been arched to be drawn out, for that now all was solid. The

poor laborers were crowded on all parts of the high arches busily working. Suddenly all split asunder, the huge walls came toppling down, and cries went up on all sides. Crash after crash was heard, and clouds of dust swept over the whole region.

Many little dwellings were crushed by the falling stones, as well as a number of laborers and others at the foot of the mount. The place on which the eighteen traitors were standing, loosened by the shock, slid down with the rest, and they too were buried in the ruins. This took place shortly before the festivities at Machaerus, consequently no Roman officer or civil functionary made his appearance at the feast. Pilate became very much enraged against Herod, and thought only of revenging himself. The building was an immense undertaking, and the loss very great. Enmity arose between Pilate and Herod on account of this affair; but by the death of Jesus, that is, by the demolition of the true Temple, they again became friends. The destruction of the first edifice buried the wily authors of it along with their innocent victims; that of the second brought judgment upon the whole nation.

The outlet of the Pool of Bethesda was now entirely choked up, for the whole ravine was full of debris; in consequence of this, another pool was soon formed by the retarded waters.

When Pilate, greatly exasperated by what had taken place, sent some of his officers to Herod in Machaerus, the latter excused himself as absent from home.

Jesus restored sight to several blind persons in Thanath. After that He went with Peter and John through Sichem to Antipatris. Both of the Apostles inquired more than once on the way whether or not He intended to stop at Aruma and other places on their route. But Jesus answered that the people of those places would not receive Him, and He proceeded in the direction to Antipatris. During their journey, Jesus instructed His Apostles on prayer. He made use of the similitude of a man knocking at his friend's door during the night and begging the loan of three loaves. Toward evening Jesus and His companions reached the woody region outside Antipatris, and there took lodgings at an inn.

Antipatris was situated near a little river. It was a very beautiful city recently built by Herod in honor of his father, Antipater, on the site of a little place named Kaphar-Saba. During the war with the Machabees, General Lysias encamped at Kaphar-Saba, which even at that time was fortified with towers

and walls. Being defeated by Judas Machabeus, he came to terms with him here, warded off from Judea the attacks of other nations, and gave large presents for the restoration of the Temple. Antipatris was six hours from the sea. It was Paul's halting place when being led a prisoner to Caesarea.

The city was surrounded by uncommonly large trees, while throughout its interior were scattered gardens and magnificent walks. The whole city appeared to be clothed in verdure. The architecture was of pagan style; colonnades, under which one could walk, ran the entire length of the streets. When Jesus with Peter and John left the inn and entered the city, He went to the house of the chief magistrate, who was named Ozias. It was principally on account of this man that He had come hither, for his trouble was well known to Jesus. Ozias had sent a messenger out to the inn to invite Jesus to visit him, for his daughter was very sick, and Jesus returned word that He would go that very day. Ozias received Him and the two Apostles very reverently, washed their feet, and wanted to offer refreshments. But Jesus went straight to the invalid, while the two Apostles proceeded through the city

to announce the instruction about to be given in the synagogue. Ozias was a man of about forty years. His daughter was called Michol, and she may have been about fourteen. She lay stretched upon her couch, pale, wasted, and so paralyzed as to be unable to move any of her members. She could not raise or turn her head; her attendants had even to move her hands from one place to another. The mother was present and veiled. She bowed humbly before Jesus as He drew near to the maiden's couch, at one side of which she generally remained seated on a cushion in order to render assistance to her daughter. But when Jesus knelt down by the couch, for it was very low, the mother stood reverently on the opposite side, the father at the foot.

Jesus spoke with the invalid, prayed, breathed into her face, and motioned to the mother to kneel down opposite Him. She obeyed. Then Jesus poured some oil that He carried with Him upon the palm of His hand and, with the first two fingers of His right hand, anointed the sick maiden's forehead and temples, then the joints of both hands, allowing His own hand to rest for one moment upon them. Then He directed the mother to open Michol's long garment over the region of the stomach, which too He anointed with the oil. After that the mother raised the edge of the coverlet from her daughter's feet, and they also received the unction. Then Jesus said: "Michol, give Me thy right hand and thy mother thy left!" At this command, the maiden, for

the first time, raised both hands and stretched them out. Jesus continued: "Stand up, Michol!" and the pale, haggard child arose to a sitting posture and then to her feet, tottering in the unaccustomed position. Jesus and the mother led her into the open arms of the father. The mother also embraced her. They wept for joy, and all three fell at Jesus' feet. And now came in the servant-men and maids of the house, praising the Lord in accents of joy.

Jesus ordered bread and grapes to be brought, and the juice of the latter to be squeezed out. He blessed both, and commanded the maiden to eat and drink a little at a time. When Michol lay upon her couch, she was clothed in a long gown of fine white wool. The piece that covered the breast was fastened upon the shoulders so that it could easily be opened. Her arms were wrapped with broad strips of the same stuff which fastened to the back. Under this gown was a covering on the back and breast like a scapular. As she arose to stand, her mother threw around her a very large, light veil. Michol's steps were at first tottering and uncertain. She was like one who had forgotten how to walk and stand upright, and she soon lay down again even while eating. But when her young friends and playmates came in, full of shy curiosity, to see with their own eyes the cure that was now noised about, Michol arose and, trembling with emotion, tottered to meet them. Her mother led her like a child. The girls were glad and joyous. They embraced Michol and led her around. Ozias asked Jesus whether his child's malady had come upon her on account of some sin of her parents. Jesus replied: "It came through a dispensation of God." Michol's young companions also thanked Jesus, who then proceeded to the forecourt of the house where He found numbers of people waiting for Him with their sick. Here too were Peter and John.

Jesus cured the sick of all kinds of maladies and, followed by a crowd, went to the synagogue where the Pharisees and a great multitude were awaiting His coming. He related the parable of the shepherd. He said that He was seeking the lost sheep, that He had sent His servants also to seek them, and that He would die for His sheep. He told them likewise that He had a flock upon His mountain, that they were more secure than some others, and that if the wolf devoured anyone of them, it would be owing to its own imprudence. Speaking of His mission, He related another parable. He began: "My Father has a vineyard." At these words, the Pharisees smiled derisively and looked at one another. When He had finished the whole parable, in which He described the ill-treatment the servants of His Father had received from the wicked vinedressers, and said that His Father had now sent His Son

whom they would cast out and murder, they laughed in scorn and asked one another: "Who is He? What is He about? Where has His Father that vineyard? He has lost His wits! He is a fool, that's plain to be seen!" And so they went on jeering and laughing. Jesus left the synagogue with Peter and John. The Pharisees continued their insults behind His back, ascribing His miracles to sorcery and the devil.

Jesus returned with Ozias to his house, and again cured many people who were waiting in the forecourt. He took a slight repast, and accepted some bread and balsam for the journey.

Jesus cured in various ways, each one having its own signification. I cannot now, however, repeat them as I saw them. Each had reference to the meaning and the secret cause of the malady, also to the spiritual needs of the invalid. In the anointing with oil, for instance, there was a certain spiritual strength and energy denoted by the signification of the oil itself. No one of these actions was without its own peculiar meaning. With these forms, Jesus instituted all those ceremonies that the saints and priests who exercised their healing power would afterward make use of in His Name. They either received them from tradition, or were used in the Name of Jesus through an inspiration of the Holy Ghost. As the Son of God, in order to become man, chose the body of a most pure creature, thus to correspond to the requirements of man's nature, so did He frequently use in effecting His cures pure and simple creatures that had been blessed by His Spirit, as, for instance, oil. He afterward gave to the cured bread to eat with some juice of the grape. At other times He headed by a mere command uttered at a distance, for He had come upon earth to cure the most varied ills and that in the most varied ways. He had come to satisfy, for all that believed in Him, by His own great Sacrifice upon the Cross, in which Sacrifice were contained all pains and sorrows, all penances and satisfactions. With the various keys of His charity, He first opened the fetters and bonds of temporal misery and chastisement, instructed the ignorant in all things necessary for them to know, healed all kinds of maladies, and aided the needy in every way; then with that chief key of His love, the key of the Cross, He opened Heaven's expiatory door as well as the door of Limbo.

Michol, Ozias' daughter, had been paralyzed from her early years, and it was a special grace that she had for so long a time been unable to move. She had been chained down by sickness during the most perilous years of her childhood, years full of danger to innocence; and in consequence of the

same, her parents had an opportunity for the exercise of charity and patience. Had she been well from infancy, what would perhaps have become of both her and her parents? Had the latter not sighed after Jesus, Michol never would have been so blessed. Had they not believed in Him, their daughter would never have been cured and anointed, which anointing had imparted wonderful strength and energy both to body and soul. Her sickness was a trial, a consequence of inherited sinfulness, but at the same time a loving discipline, a means of spiritual progress for Michol's soul, as well as for her parents. The patience and resignation of the parents resulted from their cooperation with grace. It brought to them the crown, the recompense of the struggle decreed for them by God, namely, the cure through Jesus of soul and body. What a grace! To be bound down by sufferings, and yet to have the spirit free for good until the Lord comes to deliver both body and soul!

Jesus conversed with Ozias, who told Him about the fall of the tower of Silo and of the unfortunate people buried under its ruins. He spoke with horror of Herod, whom some suspected of being at the bottom of the affair. Jesus remarked that greater calamities would overtake the traitors and false architects than that which had fallen upon the poor workmen. "If," He continued, "Jerusalem does not embrace the salvation offered her, the destruction of the Temple will follow that of the tower." Ozias referred also to John's baptism, and expressed the hope that Herod would set him at liberty on the occasion of his birthday festival. Jesus replied that John would be freed when his time came. The Pharisees said to Jesus in the synagogue that He should be on His guard, lest Herod would imprison Him with John if He went on as He was then doing. To this Jesus deigned no reply.

About five o'clock in the afternoon, Jesus left Antipatris with Peter and John and went southward to Ozensara, from four to five hours distant. A Roman garrison was stationed in Antipatris, and there were many large trunks of trees brought hither for transportation to the lake, where ship building was carried on. On their way to Ozensara they encountered many such loads of timber drawn by huge oxen and accompanied by Roman soldiers. The trees of this region also were felled and hewed for the same purpose. Jesus instructed several workmen thus employed. It was late when they reached Ozensara, a town divided into two sections by a little river. Jesus put up here with some people whom He knew. He instructed and admonished a crowd that had collected near the inn. He had been here once before on His way to baptism. He cured and blessed the sick children.

