

## **Jesus Leaves Mageddo. Cure of a Leper**

As the Feast of the New Moon was beginning, Jesus took the return route from Mageddo to Capharnaum. He was accompanied by about twenty-four of His disciples, the four false disciples of John, and some of the publicans of Mageddo who wanted to be baptized in Capharnaum. They journeyed along slowly, sometimes pausing to stand or sit in the charming spots through which they passed, for Jesus taught the whole time. The way led from Mageddo northeastward, and off to the northwest side of Thabor. Jesus' teaching was a preparation for the definitive calling and sending of the Apostles, which was soon to take place. He earnestly exhorted them to lay aside all worldly cares and to abandon their possessions. His words were so touching and affectionate. Once He snapped off a flower that was growing by the wayside, and said: "These have no cares! Look at their beautiful colors, their delicate little stamens! Was Solomon the Wise in all his magnificence more beautifully clothed than they?" Jesus often made use of this similitude.



He continued His instruction in a series of parables so striking that each of the Apostles could recognize the one intended for himself. He spoke also of His Kingdom, telling them that they should not be so eager after high employments therein, should not picture it to themselves as something earthly. Jesus said this because John's four disciples, who were secret partisans of the Herodians, were especially interested in this part of His discourse. He warned the disciples of what people they should for the future beware, and described the Herodians in terms so exact that no one could fail to recognize them. Among other things, He said that they should beware of certain people in sheep's skins and long leathern straps! "Beware," He said, "of the profane in sheepskins and long girdles!" By these words, Jesus signified the lurking Herodian disciples of John who, in imitation of John's true followers, wore a kind of sheepskin stole around the neck and crossed on the breast. They might know them, He said, by this, that they could not look one straight in the face; or again, if they (the disciples of Jesus), their hearts overflowing with joy and ardor, should impart something of their

feelings to one of these false zealots in sheepskins and girdles, they might recognize him for what he was in reality by the agitation of his heart. It would turn this way and that way like a restless animal. Jesus named a beetle which, when confined, runs round and round, seeking some hole by which to escape. Once He bent back a thorn bush, saying: "Look, and see whether you can find any fruit here or not." Some of the disciples had the simplicity to look into the bush. But Jesus said: "Do men seek figs upon thistles and grapes upon thorns?"

Toward evening they arrived at a row of houses, twenty in number, with a school on the northwestern side of the foot of Thabor. The place lay from one and a half to two hours eastward from Nazareth and one-half hour from the city of Thabor. The people here were a good-natured set. They had known Jesus in His early years when He used to wander around Nazareth with His young friends. They were for the most part shepherds. While guarding their flocks, they busied themselves in gathering cotton which, as soon as they spied Jesus coming, they packed up in their sacks and carried to their homes, after which they hurried forth to meet Him. I saw them with their rough fur caps in their hands, but in the school their heads were covered.

They received Jesus at the spring, washed His feet and those of the disciples, and offered them some refreshment. There was no synagogue in the place, only a school with its resident teacher. Jesus went to it, and taught in parables.

This little village belonged to a distinguished man who lived with his wife in a large house at some distance. This man had fallen into sin and was now afflicted with leprosy; consequently, he lived apart from his wife. She occupied the upper stories of the house, while he lodged in one of the side buildings. In order to escape the grievous alternative of entire separation from his fellowmen, he had not made known his malady. His case was not, however, so secret that many were not aware of its existence, but they connived at it. It was well known in the little village, and although the ordinary route ran past his dwelling, the people always managed to take another way. They informed the disciples of the circumstance.

The poor leper had for a long time sincerely bewailed his transgressions and longed for the coming of Jesus. And now he called a little boy of about eight years, his slave, who supplied him with necessaries, and said to him: "Go to Jesus of Nazareth and watch your chance. When you see Him at some distance from His disciples or walking apart from them, cast yourself at His

feet and say: 'Rabbi, my master is sick. He thinks that Thou canst help him by merely passing before our house, a way that all others shun. He humbly beseeches Thee to have compassion on his misery and to walk along the street, for he is certain of being cured.'" The boy went to Jesus and very cleverly executed the commission. Jesus replied: "Tell your master that I shall go to him in the morning," and He took the boy by one hand, laying the other on his head with words of praise. This meeting took place as Jesus was leaving the school to go to the inn. Jesus knew that the boy was coming, and had designedly remained a little behind the disciples. The boy wore a yellow tunic.

Anne's property lay on a height to the west of Nazareth. It was distant about an hour, and was between the valley of Nazareth and that of Zabulon. A narrow vale planted with trees ran from it to Nazareth, and by it Anne could go to Mary's house without traversing the city.

Next morning at early dawn Jesus left the inn with the disciples. When He turned into the street that ran past the leper's dwelling, they told Him that He ought not to go that way. But He went on and commanded them to follow. They did so, but timidly and apprehensively, for they feared being reported at Capharnaum. John's disciples did not go with Him by this way. The boy, who was on the watch, notified his master of Jesus' approach. The sick man came down by a path leading to the street, paused at some distance, and cried out: "Lord, do not come nearer to me! If Thou dost merely will me to be healed, I shall be saved." The disciples remained standing at a distance. Jesus replied: "I will it!" went up to the man, touched him, and spoke to him, as he lay prostrate on his face at His feet. He was clean; his leprosy had fallen off. He related to Jesus all the circumstances of his case, and received for reply that he should return to his wife, and by degrees appear again among the people. Jesus admonished him of his sins,

commanded him to receive the penance of Baptism, and enjoined upon him a certain alms. He then went back to His disciples and spoke to them of the cure just wrought. He told them that whoever had faith and possessed a pure heart might with impunity touch even the leprous.

When the cured man had bathed and dressed, he went to his wife and told her of the miracle just effected in him by Jesus. Some spiteful people of the place sent news of the affair to the priests and Pharisees of the city of Tabor, who immediately saw fit to institute a commission of investigation.

**They surprised the poor man by submitting him to a close examination as to whether he was really cured or not, and sharply called him to account for keeping his malady secret. They now made a great noise over the affair which, though publicly known, they had long tolerated.**

**Jesus journeyed quickly with the disciples all the remainder of the day, pausing only now and again to rest a few moments and take some refreshment. He taught all along the way about the forsaking of temporal goods, and in parables instructed them upon the Kingdom of God. He told them that it was impossible to make all these things clear to them just then, but a time would come when they would comprehend all. He spoke of giving up earthly care of food and raiment. They would soon see a hungry multitude with provisions far from sufficient for their wants. They, the disciples, would say to Him: "Whence shall we get bread?" and a superabundance should be given unto them. They had to build houses and build them securely Jesus said this in such a way as to intimate that it was by sacrifice and personal exertion that these houses, namely, employments and charges in His Kingdom, were to be obtained. The disciples, however, understood Him in a worldly sense.**

**Judas was very much rejoiced. He gave noisy expression to his satisfaction and said aloud in the hearing of all that he would not shirk labor, that he would do his share of the work. On hearing this, Jesus stood still and said: "We are not yet at the end of our mission. It will not always be as it is now. Ye will not always be well received and entertained, ye will not always have things in abundance. The time will come when they will persecute you and thrust you out, when ye will have neither shelter, nor food, nor clothing, nor shoes." And He went on to tell them that they should think seriously of these things and hold themselves in readiness to renounce everything, also that He had something important to propose to them. He spoke likewise of two kingdoms opposed to each other. No one can serve two masters.**

**Whoever desired to serve in His Kingdom must forsake the other. Then passing to the Pharisees and their accomplices, He said something about the masks or disguises that they wore. They taught the dead form of the Law and sought to have it observed; but the best part of it, its purport—the charity, forgiveness, and mercy that it inculcates—they wholly neglected. But He, Jesus, taught just the contrary, namely that the rind without the kernel is dead and barren. First comes the essence of the Law, and then the Law itself;**

the kernel must increase with the growth of the shell. He gave them also some instructions on prayer. They should, He said, pray in secret and not ostentatiously before others. Many similar things He said on this occasion. When journeying with His disciples, Jesus generally instructed them, thus preparing them to understand better what they would hear in His next public discourse and be able to make it clear to the people. He often repeated the same things, though in different words and order. Among the disciples who accompanied Jesus today, James the Greater and Judas Barsabas most frequently put questions to Him, though Peter did so sometimes.

Judas often spoke in a loud voice. Andrew was already well acquainted with the teachings of his Master. Thomas was preoccupied, as if weighing consequences. John took everything simply and lovingly. The best instructed of the disciples were the most silent, partly through modesty, and partly because they were not always willing to show that they did not understand Jesus' words.

Thus journeying through the valleys, they arrived shortly before the beginning of the Sabbath at the valley east of Magdalum. Here they encountered the pagan Cyrinus of Dabereth, and the centurion Achias of Giskala, who were going to Capharnaum for Baptism.

When nearing Capharnaum, Jesus was instructing the disciples as to how they should exercise themselves in obedience as a preparation for their mission, and especially how they should conduct themselves when He should send them to teach the people. He gave them likewise some general rules for their department when in certain company. He did this in a few words before the departure of the four Herodians who had journeyed with His little party, and sufficiently loud for them to hear. He said: "If on your journeys worldly men join you—whom ye may recognize by their smooth speech and sly questions—who will not be shaken off, who always, half agreeing, half good-naturedly contradicting, question and discuss various subjects that agitate the heart, then should ye at any cost break away from them. And why? Because ye are still too weak, too simple-hearted. Ye might easily fall into the snares of such lurkers. I do not shun them, for I know them, and I wish them to hear My teaching."