

Jesus in Hebron, Dothain, and Nazareth

When Jesus arrived at Hebron, He left there His companions, saying that He was desirous of visiting a friend. Zachary and Elizabeth were no more. Jesus then went to the wilderness which lay to the south of Hebron, between it and the Dead Sea, whither Elizabeth had taken the boy John. To reach it, one had to climb a mountain covered with white pebbles, and then cross a lovely valley of palm trees. I saw Jesus entering the wilderness, and going into the cave to which John was first taken by Elizabeth. Then He crossed a little brook over which John also had passed. I saw Him alone and in prayer, as if preparing for His teaching mission. When He left the desert, He went again to Hebron. I saw Him as He journeyed lending a helping hand everywhere along the road. At the Dead Sea, He helped some people who were on a kind of raft formed of beams and covered by an awning. On it were men, cattle, and merchandise. Jesus called to them and shoved a plank out to them from the shore. He helped them to land, and stood by while they repaired their raft. They were at a loss as to who He was; for though there was nothing remarkable in His dress, yet His charming graciousness and dignity of bearing greatly impressed them. At first they thought it must be John the Baptist, who had already made his appearance at the Jordan; but they soon discovered their mistake, for John's complexion was brown, much darker than that of Jesus, and his whole appearance rough. Jesus celebrated the Sabbath in Hebron, and there dismissed His travelling companions.



He visited the sick in their homes, consoling and assisting them in every way. He raised them in His arms, carried them, and made their beds; but I did not see Him curing anyone. To all He appeared to be a benevolent, a wonderful person. He visited the possessed and they grew calm in His presence, though as yet He drove no devil out. Wherever He went, He rendered aid when aid was needed. He raised the fallen, He refreshed the thirsty, He guided the traveler, over bridge and brook—and all looked in astonishment upon the kind-hearted wayfarer. From Hebron He went to the spot where the Jordan flows into the Dead Sea. Here He crossed the river in a boat, and journeyed along its eastern bank to Galilee. I saw Him travelling on between Pella and the country of Gergesa, making short journeys and helping all in need. He went to all the sick, even to the lepers, consoling them, raising them in His arms, making their beds, exhorting them to prayer, and pointing out, to the

admiration of all, what treatment was necessary, what remedies to use in the different cases. At one place, some people knew of the prophecies of Simeon and Anna and they questioned Him as to whether He was the one to whom they referred. It was a common thing for people to follow Him from one place to another out of the love He inspired. The possessed were calm when near him.

He went also to the rapid little stream that flows into the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee (the Hieromax), not far from that steep mountain from which He subsequently cast the swine into the sea. Near the river stood a row of little mud huts like shepherds' huts, which were occupied by the men who were at that moment on the shore laboring at their barks. They could not succeed in their work. I saw Jesus go up to them, make some suggestions in a friendly way, drag a beam to the spot, and put His hand to the work. He pointed out various expedients and, as He worked, exhorted them to patience and charity.

After that I saw Jesus in Dothain, a scattered little place northeast of Sephoris, and in which there was a synagogue. The inhabitants were not bad, though very much neglected. Abraham had once owned fields there for his cattle intended for offerings. Joseph and his brethren used to guard their flocks in this same region, and it was here that the former was sold. Dothain, at the time of Our Lord, was but a sparsely settled place, but its soil was good and its meadows extended down to the Sea of Galilee. It contained a large building like a madhouse, in which many possessed lived. On Jesus' arrival, they became perfectly furious and dashed themselves almost to death. The keepers could not bind them. Jesus entered and spoke to them, and they became quite calm. He addressed to them a few more words, after which they quietly left the house and repaired to their several homes.

The people were amazed at what they saw. They were unwilling for Jesus to depart, and one of them invited Him to a marriage feast. I saw all the wedding ceremonies as at Cana. Jesus was like an honored stranger at the feast. He spoke wisely and graciously, giving the bride and groom good advice. They afterward joined the disciples when Jesus appeared upon Thebez.

When Jesus returned to Nazareth, He went around among His parents' acquaintances, but He was everywhere coldly received. When He sought to enter the synagogue in order to teach, they turned Him away. Then He repaired to the public marketplace and spoke of the Messiah to the crowd, of whom some were Sadducees, others Pharisees. He told them that the Messiah would be different from what each one's ideas pictured. John the Baptist, He called "The voice in the wilderness." Two youths, clothed in long

garments and wearing girdles like priests, had followed Jesus from the country of Hebron; but they went not always with Him. Jesus kept the Sabbath in Nazareth.

After that I saw Jesus and Mary, Mary Cleophas, the parents of Parmenas, in all about twenty persons, leave Nazareth and go to Capharnaum. They had with them asses laden with baggage. The house in Nazareth had been cleaned and adorned. It was so well arranged that, with its rich hangings, it reminded me of a church. It was left unoccupied. The third husband of Mary Cleophas and some of her sons still carried on business in Anne's abode, and they took care of that house of the Holy Family. Mary Cleophas with her youngest sons, Joses Barsabas and Simeon, dwelt at this time quite near to the small house not far from Capharnaum which Levi had fitted up for the Lord, and the parents of Parmenas lived at no great distance.

Jesus journeyed again from place to place, and appeared chiefly where John had been when he left the desert. He entered the synagogue and instructed, He consoled and relieved the sick. When He taught in the synagogue of a certain little town and spoke of John's baptism, of the coming of the Messiah, and of penance, the people murmured. They mocked Him, and I heard some of them say: "Three months ago, His father, the carpenter, was still alive. Then He worked with him. Now He has travelled a little and back He comes to impart to us His wisdom."

Jesus went also to Cana and taught. He had relatives there whom He visited. At this time He was not yet accompanied by any of His future disciples. It looked as if He were studying men, and building up upon the foundation that John had laid. Sometimes a good man accompanied Him from place to place. Once I saw four men, among them some of His future disciples, on the high road between Samaria and Nazareth. They were in a shady place waiting for Jesus who, with one companion, was coming that way. When He arrived in sight, they set forward to meet Him. They told Him that they had been baptized by John, and that he had spoken of the near coming of the Messiah. They told Him also of John's severe language toward the soldiers, only a few of whom he had baptized. Among other things, he had said that it would be better to take the stones out of the Jordan and baptize them rather than such as they. I saw these disciples of John walking on with Jesus. Jesus then went along the Sea of Galilee toward the north. He spoke very plainly of the Messiah. In many places, the possessed cried after Him. Out of one man He drove a devil, and He taught in the schools.

Six men who were coming from the baptism of John met Jesus. Among them were Levi, known later as Matthew, and two sons of the widowed relatives of Elizabeth. They all knew Jesus, some through relationship, others by hearsay; and they strongly suspected, though they had had no assurance of it, that He was the One of whom John had spoken. They spoke of John, of Lazarus and his sisters, especially of Magdalen. They supposed she had a devil, for she was already living apart from her family in the castle of Magdalum. These men accompanied Jesus, and were filled with astonishment at His discourse. The aspirants to baptism going from Galilee to John used to tell him all that they knew and heard of Jesus, while they that came from Aion, where John bap-tized, used to tell Jesus all they knew of John.

Jesus went alone to the sea, passing through a fence into an enclosed fishery where lay five ships. On the shore were several huts for the accommodation of the fishermen. Peter, the owner of this fishery, was in one of the huts with Andrew. John and James, with their father Zebedee and several others, were on the boats. In the middle one was Peter's father-in-law with his three sons. I once knew all their names, but now I have forgotten them. The father was surnamed Zelotes, because he had gained his point in a dispute with the Romans concerning the right of navigation on the lake. There were about thirty men on the boats.

Jesus went along the shore by the fenced-off way between the huts and the boats, speaking with Andrew and the others. I know not whether he spoke to Peter. They did not know Him as yet. He spoke of John and of the near coming of the Messiah. Andrew was already a baptized disciple of John. Jesus told them that He would come to them again.