

“Behold the Lamb of God”

Next morning at daybreak Jesus departed with His disciples, followed by the crowd that had gathered around Him. They wended their way toward the Jordan, distant from this point at least three hours. The Jordan flows through a broad valley that rises on either bank for the distance of about half an hour. The stone in the enclosed space whereon the Ark of the Covenant had rested, and where the recent festival was celebrated, was about an hour’s distance from John’s place of baptism, that is, taking it in a straight line toward Jerusalem. John’s hut near the twelve stones was in direction of Beth-Araba and somewhat more to the south than the stone of the Ark of the Covenant. The twelve stones lay one-half hour from the place of baptism and in the direction of Gilgal. Gilgal was on a gentle slope on the west side of the mountain.

From John’s baptismal pool the view up both the shores, which were very fertile, was most lovely. The most delightful region, however, rich in fruits and teeming with abundance, was around the Sea of Galilee. But here, and also around Bethlehem, there were broader meadowlands, more husbandry, and a greater abundance of durra, garlic, and cucumbers.

Jesus had already passed the memorial stone of the Ark of the Covenant and was about one quarter of an hour beyond John’s tent, before which the latter stood teaching. A gap in the valley disclosed this scene to the distant traveler, and Jesus in passing was for not longer than a couple of minutes visible to the Baptist. John was seized by the Spirit and, pointing to Jesus, he cried out: “Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world!” Jesus passed, preceded and followed by His disciples in groups, the multitude lately gathered around Him in the rear. It was early morning. The people crowded forward at the words of John, but Jesus had already disappeared. They called after Him in acclamations of praise, but He was out of hearing.

When returned from their fruitless attempt to see Jesus, the people complained to John that Jesus had so many followers and that, as they had heard, His disciples had already begun to baptize. What, they asked, would be the outcome of all that. John made answer by repeating that he would



soon resign his place to Jesus, since he was only a servant and precursor. These words were not at all acceptable to John's followers, who were somewhat jealous of Jesus' disciples.

Jesus now directed His steps toward the northwest, leaving Jericho on the right and proceeding to Gilgal about two hours distant from Jericho. He stopped at many places on the way. The children followed Him singing songs of praise, and ran into the houses to bring their parents out.