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When we landed again after this night at sea, we were in the land of Genesseret and once more did multitudes come to us, and even those who were sick on their beds were carried out to me; wherever we entered a village that morning, so were the afflicted laid upon the street. Many besought me, and would declare that if I had not time to cure each person, might some touch the border of my garment? And truth, many who touched me were improved.

By midday, was I weary, by evening, low; my garment was imbued with the entreaties of many. And when I went to the synagogue, so did I find Pharisees there and some from Jerusalem with scribes among them; it was not long before they wished to speak of their concerns.

For in that day after our debarking, had they seen my disciples eat bread with defiled hands. Some of the publicans had not washed. Was this not only a sin against the law, but a revulsion? The publicans, sitting in each

village square, had been collecting tax for the Romans, and handled coins from early morning until they were done whereupon they were gambling at night with such of those coins as had been appropriated to themselves. Filthy were their hands with this money. Whereas the Pharisees, when they come home from the market, will not eat except that they wash. And I, having known much piety in my youth, could see my followers with the eyes of the Pharisees.

Yet did I also understand that one cannot give an honored place to the pious. For, no matter how much is done in the way of observance and custom, still are the pious never satisfied. Even if one would obey the law, one cannot; the laws of observance are always written by those more pious than oneself; each time, then, must one's heart bow down before the woe that the law, if by a tittle, had been broken; one has failed God again. Weary as I might have been on this night, therefore did I stand before the Pharisees in the synagogue and speak to them like a physician, saying: "Hearken unto me, every one of you, and understand: there is nothing from without that can enter into a man and defile him. It is the things which come out of a man that will

defile him. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear."

Much low and unhappy murmur was the response of these Pharisees. Within the synagogue, in the presence of the altar had I spoken of matters that were unclean, yea, even of the uncleanness of man himself who, as he lives, must pollute. So my words proved offensive to the altar.

But I was speaking to my twelve and my followers, and I not cease: "What enters from without does not pass into a man's heart but into his belly, and goeth out again into the drain, purging all meats." And I spoke with such purpose that I knew they heard me whisper as to myself, "That dirt which is on the hands of a man is as nothing." Then I said aloud, "But that which cometh out of the man can defile the man. For from within the heart of a man can issue evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, yea, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, blasphemy, pride, even to the evil eye--" And I had no breath to go on, such was my indignation. "All such evil things issue from within and defile the man."

And I was surprised by my anger which had come upon me in a host of fury sufficient to seize my breath, and my anger

was against those who scolded others for not washing, yet hardly knew how great was the sum of their own evil within. How then could they not be terrified of evil that came to them from without? Of even the dust of the road and the mud of the fields were they afraid, for as they could only see it, by one mote of non-observance could they unbalance the scales within. Whereupon they would have sinned.

I left the synagogue. Before the night was done I had even cured one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and by no more than putting my fingers into his ears, whereupon he spit, and I touched his tongue, casing him to look up to heaven and sigh, and I said to him, "Be opened." And his ears were opened and the string of his tongue was loosed and he spoke. And I smiled. For now the Pharisees would have to say, "He obeyeth not the law of washing, but he maketh the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

And on another occasion when multitudes had followed me to another waste of the desert where I hoped to retire for the day, again was there nothing to eat, yet if I sent these people back to their homes, they would faint in the heat on the way. This time did we have seven loaves, and again I

broke them into little pieces and gave them to my disciples, who passed them on, rank on rank, file on file, and all were satisfied.

But I remembered the hour when the children of Israel wept in the wilderness and said to Moses, "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did have in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks, the onions and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away." And no one had been pleased with the manna that God sent down. The people had gathered it and ground it in mills and beat it in a mortar and baked it in ovens and made cakes of it; but still did it taste of oil and coriander seed. And when dew fell upon the camp in the dawn, so did more manna fall with it. People wept at the taste. Every man was lamenting at the door of his tent, and the anger of the Lord was kindled, but so was Moses also displeased. And he said to the Lord, "Wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight that Thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I begotten them? It is too heavy for me."

And Moses asked the Lord to let him die in his wretchedness.

So the Lord said, "Ye and your people shall eat until this food comes out of your nostrils and is loathesome to you."

And I knew of Moses' exhaustion. For is not such fatigue of the spirit like unto a twisting of the limbs wherein new pain enters into the old; I knew that the Pharisees, on hearing of how I had fed a second multitude, would say only that I consorted with sinners and by that had I denied all else. But then, they were without miracles. And some, sensing the weariness of my spirit, were ready to ask on my return to Capernaum that I show them a sign from heaven. Whereupon I told them that I had given many signs, nor did they see them, for their hearts were hardened. And I set out on the road to another place.

When I entered Bethsaida, a blind man was brought to me; I took him by the hand and lead him out of the town so that no one should witness the cure.

And when I had spit on his eyes, and put my unwashed hands upon him, I asked what he saw.

And he looked up and said, "I see men as trees walking."
To which I replied, "That is because men, like trees,

bear the fruit of good and evil, and are divided by it."

And then I put my hands again upon his eyes and he was restored and he saw every man clearly. And once again I said, when I sent him away to his house, "Neither go into the town nor tell it to any," because my heart was laden with the depletions of myself and what might be, or so was I coming to fear, the fatigue of God in supporting me which thought I did not dare to say aloud.

Yet with it all did I also have the belief on most days that my Father was there and strong. For when I was disconsolate, and knew much wretchedness like Moses and was ready to cease all effort, so would come surcease of despair and balm for my spirit. And I would remember walking on the water.

Yet were there also nights when I would awaken and now know who I was. So that once, passing through the towns of Caesarea Philippi, I asked my disciples: "Whom do others say that I am?"

And some answered that I was seen to be John the Baptist. Others said Elijah. Still others said: "They do not know, but say you are one of the prophets."

And I said, and my heart was beating: "But whom do ye say that I am?"

And Peter answered, looking at me in much modesty; it may be that he too was thinking of the hour upon the water, and he said, "Can one say that thou art the Christ?"

And that was true (even if I was an ordinary man in all ways but one), yet being constituted thus as ordinary, so was I also made more certain by Peter's words. And I loved Peter for the strength that his conviction gave to me; it was as if I knew with more certainty than before that I was indeed the Christ. But then, if I was the Son of God, it was of that part of God who had chosen Man for one of His names: I was the Son of Man, and so perhaps I needed another such man to recognize who I might be.

In that instant would I also learn the deepest truth of exaltation, for now I understood that to receive what is best, one must also share the darkness of spirit that lies close to all that is radiant. So I told my apostles of a dream that was coming to me night upon night, and it was a dream I had not yet imparted to others; still on every night

would I dream that the Son of Man must go to Jerusalem and there be denied by the chief priests and the scribes and be killed; then, in a dream following upon the first, so, after three days, would the Son of Man rise again. As I told them of the first dream and of the second, my disciples began to dissent, saying, "Nay, ye shall live forever, and we with you."

It was then I knew why darkness lies so close to exaltation. For I comprehended that if they loved me, it was for my power to work miracles and not because I might teach them to love others. If they preached like me, it was to increase the power of their own existence; they did not preach in pity for others. And I rebuked then, saying: "You savor not the things that be of God but the things that be of men." Then I said also:

"If I be killed and after three days, rise again"--and I did not know if I spoke the truth or was merely relating what was but the strange flavor of a dream, still I repeated-- "whosoever shall come after me, even if he lose his life for my sake, shall save it. Whereas he who looks to save his life shall lose it. For what shall it profit a man if he

shall gain the whole world but lose his own soul?"

And I looked into each of their eyes, as if to see their soul exposed at just that moment when the miracle of faith is there or is not; in none of their eyes did I see more than that weight upon the spirit which speaks of self-sustenance. I had been ready to force and push them into faith but now I realized that I too was acting from no depth of pity for others; only out of that other force which itself searches for power. And I sighed at the intricacy of the heart. This much can I say: they sighed after me, as if all of us knew how close we had come to what was truth yet how far away did we remain.

And in another day, and soon after, feeling a desire to be close to Peter and to James and to John (being those with whom I had commenced my ministry) I led us up into a high mountain apart from the rest, and we were there by ourselves. Yet, not alone. A cloud followed. So had such a cloud been there in the hour when Moses raised up his tabernacle on the Mount, and a cloud came to cover the altar; in the evening on that tabernacle had been a flame. The tabernacle of Moses on the Mount was now covered by the cloud during the day and

stood forth in the light of the fire at night.

And if the children of Israel had journeyed through the desert for forty years, so at each place where the cloud came to rest, had they pitched their tents, and they had only moved by the commandment of the cloud to move and take up their journey again.

And here were we, at rest beneath another cloud. Even as I pondered on such matters, did Peter come to me and say, "Master, let us make three tabernacles: One for thee, one for Moses, one for Elijah."

And when he had built them and the cloud above us did not move, so was the day dark; still did I notice that my raiment was shining. We had walked in the desert and mounted from rock to rock, and in much dust; yet was my garment exceedingly white, and a small wonder.

In that moment did I see Elijah standing near to me and next to Moses, and it was a vision; still could I say that they were talking to me. But it was in the language of tongues, and I understood not a word. Yet did another voice come out of the cloud, and my Father said, "This is My beloved son; hear him."

And I said to my three apostles, "What have you seen?"

And Peter answered, "I have heard, but I have not seen; he who sees God will surely die."

And at that moment, a flame rose from the first tabernacle, and Peter knew again that I was the Son of Man. And again he said: "Thou art the Christ."

Then did I speak to Peter of how I must go into Jerusalem before all was done. And I told him of how I might suffer and be put unto the point of death, and killed, but would be raised within three days: such did I see in my dreams, I said.

But Peter began to rebuke me. "Put it far from thee, Lord. Let not this be unto me."

He could not accept my dream. Yet was this after I had given such great honor as to confide it to him. I knew a rage as sudden in its coming as lightning by its flash. Did he not understand that I had offered him a share in my death? I said unto Peter, "Thou art an offense unto me. Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Get thee behind me, Satan." For in that moment did I also think that if Satan could disguise himself as an angel

of light, why could he not be with me also as Peter in whom I laid so much trust?

When I saw tears in his eyes, I added, "Take up your cross and follow." I felt most far away from myself as if I were divine, and therefore strange to the feelings of those who might be nearest to me; they were mortal. Yet all of us were still as transfixed from staring into the flame that rose from the tabernacle; even now did it not subside.

It was then I felt a great urge to instruct my disciples and most certainly was Peter the first. Even as the flame rose from the tabernacle did I speak to them.

But it was a sermon that was but the essence of other sermons. For if time was gathering close for me, then must all I would say be much compressed:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," I told them, "for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Even as I meditated upon each saying, so was what I now said apart from all that they knew; of such matters could

they know little even after being so long with me. Yet did I also know the beauty of the soul that He had granted to me. For by such a soul, did I now believe, we could all share in every breath that knew the welcome given by love, and by such love have the power to forgive others in order that God be able to forgive us on the last day. Nor did I concern myself with whether the murderer had the right to forgive his own kind nor the concubine her host. Such was God's domain. Whereas I was in great need to speak to them of all that one knows at once. Yet did I see that because this knowledge had come upon me quickly, so was there much danger of losing it.

Still, I said it, even if I had cause to wonder if the time had come to speak this much. Nonetheless was it my speech and my sword against the Pharisees.

"Blessed in spirit are the poor," I said, "for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." Never did I utter words that were of more truth to me.

"Blessed are the merciful," I said, "for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart. They shall see God."

And even as I said this, so again did the power of God

rise in me, and I saw something of the years to come.

"Rejoice," I said, "and be exceeding glad. For great is your reward in heaven. And so did they also persecute the prophets which were before you." For that moment did I no longer have fear of my dream since it was not only my death but my joy cohering to it, for by my death would we enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Then did I feel such certainty that my apostles might yet be equal to our martyred prophets that I was able to believe that my words would reverberate and not be lost. So I believed. And might it be that the Kingdom was near?

But Jesus said: "Before any man speak of who should be first and who last, let there be one who is able to do what you have done. Yet, when we went out as apostles for you, we did not see those who fell on the ground fawning and we would not cast out their devils."

Jesus was not only speaking truth but I was full with anger that they would seek for themselves rather than be able to serve others.

So to master my rage, I answered with an indignation.

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Yet not for long was I able to believe such condition for us all. Even on the walk down from the mountain did I hear Peter and James and John in much dispute upon a mean matter. And I asked: "Were you naming who should be greatest among you?"

Since they gave assent, I called to all twelve on our return to Capernaum that day and said: "If any man desire to be first, know that he shall be last, and servant of all."

But Judas said: "Before any can speak of who should be first and who last, let there be one who is able to do what you have done. Yet, when we went out as apostles for you, so did we see those who fell on the ground foaming and we could not cast out their devils."

Judas was not only speaking truth but I was full with anger that they would seek for themselves rather than be able to cure others.

So to master my rage, I answered with an invocation,

saying: "Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

This was the least of what I had said to them on many days, but now was it loved by them the most. Would the largest passion I was to find among men be the desire for others to forgive their debt? So was it also clear that what they lacked most was forgiveness of the trespass of others.

And so was I in fury. To give them measure of how harsh were the holy demands of the Lord, I said: "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off. It is better to enter into the other life maimed than to have two hands to take into hell." And when I saw fear in their eyes, I spoke further and with the ferocity of the Lord, "If thy foot offend thee," I said, "cut it off. And if thy eye offend thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God and see no more than half with the eye that is left than have both eyes cast into the flames of hellfire, where the worm that eats at your flesh dieth not."

I could see by their faces how few words were here for them, and this did not ease my heart which was suffering too many hours not far from desperation. I had been hearing a

voice in my sleep each night, and it was my own. And the voice told me that I must leave these lands where people waited to touch my garment, and must go down instead into the countries of the proud, into the south of Judea wherein was Jerusalem, and there I must enter into the halls of the Great Temple.

And if in this time of preparation, I had been hoping to form an army of men who needed no swords because their souls were pure, I had gathered instead but a few constant followers and they argued among themselves over who should sit to the right of me and who to the left, and who was to be first after I was gone. So many miracles, so little gain.

And, indeed, I knew none of my disciples but for the moment when I knew each man well by looking into his eyes. Then did their eyes change, and by the hour, and evil licked like fire at the edges of all that had seemed most loyal and compassionate in these men.

Yet had I summoned them as if we were an army, and had tried to grant them power over unclean spirits; for certain had they accomplished little. And so might it be that the children of Israel would not reach the Kingdom of Heaven but

would be cast into outer darkness. And into the fire.

Now, I wondered if the great wrath and harsh spirit of my Father came from knowing that the enemies of the Jews were teeming with evil and loyal to Satan, yet such enemies grew stronger. Thereby to prepare His people, must my Father prove harsh in spirit so that all Jews be ready?

That night again did I have my dream and God spoke to me and said, "You shall enter Jerusalem. But among your people will there be betrayal, and thou wilt be scourged and crucified and shall die. Yet will I raise thee on the third day, and it is then that the world will know whom they have lost. All shall mourn."

Yet when this dream would return to me and on many a night, so would I also hear one angel saying: "For God so loved the world that he gave His only-begotten Son. And whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but shall have everlasting life. For God did not send His son to condemn the world, but that through him the world might be saved."

If the angel spoke truth and indeed was I like a light sent into the world by God, so could I see that men might love darkness more than light. Then would I awake and know

not whether I would save the world or was already by the world condemned. Yet, each day did I come closer to the belief that when I entered Jerusalem, my days would be more numbered than the fingers on one hand, and I knew that I must find courage to take up my steps in such a direction.

Later, in those days when we were on the road to Jerusalem, would I say to myself often the words of the angel: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten son and whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but will have everlasting life." Over and over did I say this and indeed it would quell my fear against those hours when death weighed upon each step I took.

At such times would tears be near to my eyes. And I wondered if the blood of all the prophets that had been shed since the foundation of the world would be equal to the blood required of my generation. And again I felt that my death was near.

Nor did I care to speak on this again to others, for such speech would give rise to disloyalty in those who wished to be loyal.

And I thought of Herod Antipas and of Herod his father

who had wished to kill me at birth. What a bloody works was man. And again I thought of Jerusalem and said to myself, "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost," and for a moment I knew hope. Might it be that as we approached, the Kingdom of God would appear? So did I dream also of that for I knew I must lead my followers to Jerusalem and suffer all that might await me there, and all that might await my Father. And indeed, could there be a time of year more with peril than now as Passover approached and Jews from all of Judea and Galilee would be walking down many roads and all would lead to Jerusalem? There had been great riots in other years against the Romans for how could we Jews forget? The feast of Passover commemorated those days when we fled Egypt and with Moses wandered out into the wilderness.

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Even as I girded myself for the days in Jerusalem, so did I tarry in Galilee. Our problems were many. My twelve men, some by need of one sort, and some by another, were unable to choose the hour. And, indeed, even on the day when all were ready to leave, did I declare one further delay. For Matthew had disappeared. And many among us knew that he was drunk and consorting in alleys with those he had left behind when first he came to join us. Other apostles were displeased and said: "We remain eleven of twelve; let us depart."

But I said: "If a man have a hundred sheep and one of them be gone astray, does he not leave the ninety and nine and go into the mountains and seek for the one who has gone? And if it be that he find such a sheep, then can he rejoice more than over the ninety and nine which went not astray."

We were full of discord. I could hear the good voice of Peter saying, "Lord, when I was a boy and sent to live in the

land of my uncle, so was I also a shepherd, and it was our practice among such hills and rocks to let the rebellious sheep flee in order that we might guard all others."

"No," said I to him, "the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost." And I can say that in this moment I heard the sigh in God's voice. For could it be a thousand years that the children of Israel had been His? And in such time so much had been lost. So now I waited for Matthew. The sheep that strayed had much of the Devil; to bring back such a creature was to mortify much in Satan.

That day, Matthew returned at evening and was distraught that he had delayed us; yet I knew his fear. A man who drinks too much wine and needs it for each of his days is closer than most to the fears in other men; Matthew could feel how much wrath was waiting for us, and dark in the heart, and unuttered, yea, even unto the Temple of Jerusalem, and there perhaps most.

That night I did much preaching, as if to soothe the unrest in my own heart and continued to speak even as I saw the light go out of the eyes of my apostles. They had heard my words before and had heard it much. Still, if they would

weary of me, so would I speak to others and always there were new ones among us. And I chose to instruct by parables inasmuch as I had come to learn that the creature, man, whom the Lord had created in His image, possessed much of the pride of the Lord, and so learned best when not suffering beneath the yoke of a preacher but instead could ponder a riddle; thereby could one feel virtuous when successful at calculating it out.

"Behold," I said, "the sower went forth to sow and some of his seed fell by the wayside and fowls came and wild birds and devoured them up. And some of his seed fell upon stony places which had not much earth and sprung up forthwith, for there was no depth of soil in which to rest, but since their sprouting was quick, they were scorched. Their roots were shallow and they withered away. And some of the seed fell among thorns and such thorns choked them. Yet others fell into good ground and brought forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some even a hundred. Those who have ears to hear among you, let them now hear."

And when I was alone with my apostles, I said to them: "Live with the parable of the sower, for when any of our

people who listen understand not, then can the Wicked One seize that which was sown."

I knew that if no one else gave ear, the Devil would listen to each of my words, and use them against the Lord. How then could I suppose that the Devil had not gained entrance already to the Great Temple? So could I see Satan's influence swelling in the hearts of high priests who would seek to be holy, and indeed, even as I spoke, so might a dark angel be preparing the ears of the priests in Jerusalem. And might it be that these priests had betrayed our Lord of the Kingdom many times, being full of that corruption of the spirit which is worse even than corruption of the flesh.

And again I did not feel ready to enter into Jerusalem. So I searched for a parable to cheer my own spirit and soon became occupied in explaining to many new followers that the Kingdom of Heaven was like unto a man who sowed good seed in his field; yet while he slept, so did his enemy come and sow weeds among the wheat; these weeds appeared with the fruit. All who listened to me could comprehend a parable such as this and one even spoke out to say: "Should the servants of the householder go then and separate away such weeds?"

And I answered, "Nay. For ye will also root up the wheat. Let weeds and good grain grow side by side until our harvest. In that time ye can gather together the weeds and bind them in bundles to burn them, even as ye bring the wheat into my barn."

So was I obliged to ponder in what great degree good and evil did grow together and knew that my Father's angels would labor to separate good from evil at the end, except now I had less joy in my understanding inasmuch as my journeys had also taught me how cunning were men and more cunning were priests, until I had a vision of a temple at the gate of heaven that was like a customs' house. Through such gates passed many an evil person and was it that a few had even been given the keys after listening to my parables?

"Who has ears to hear, let him hear," I had said, but were not those faithful to me small in number? There was another multitude, larger by far, who would partake of what I said but use it for themselves, not others; I felt suffused in this hour by a meanness of spirit that pervaded throughout.

Over and over was I learning that to my fellow men it

mattered less whether they were tall or short of stature, lean or wide of body, of noble features or ugly of cast, even strong of limbs or weak: All were the same by one regard-- they were prominent in their lack of compassion, and greed was their guide to search out and find their path.

So, in a given hour, when Peter said unto me, "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have in recompense?" it was, despite all disappointments in Peter, a considerable blow. But then Peter had given me less disappointment than others. So I replied by relating one more parable (and it was told for his ears.)

This parable was of a man who hired his laborers for one denari a day and sent them one morning into his vineyard. But as the hours passed, so did he hire in the third hour and more in the sixth and even in the ninth hour of the day, until by the eleventh hour, finding now men and women who were idle, he said, "Why stand ye here?" and they replied, "Because no man hath hired us." And he said unto them, "Go ye also into the vineyard."

And at the end of the day, it was time to reward all who had worked and he told his steward, "Call the laborers and

pay them their hire beginning from the last unto the first," so that each man, those from the first hour and those of the eleventh, all received their one denari. Since the first had supposed that the last would receive less, they whispered against the good man of the house. But he told them, "Didst thou not agree with me for one denari? Take what is thine and go. I will give unto this last man even as unto thee. So will the last be first and the first last, for hark ye, many may be called but few will be chosen." I was uplifted as upon a cloud by the strength of my voice and spoke with such force that the Lord whispered: "Enough! There is no wisdom in your speech but only the seed of much discontent. When you are without Me, the Devil is your near companion." And I felt a point of pain between my eyes as if the Lord held a thorn to my brow, for I no longer knew what I saw nor to whose voice I listened. And I understood that to be the Son of God was not equal to being a Prince of Heaven but was rather my own apprenticeship into how to speak without greed or guilt or anger or the desire to bewilder others with the confidence of my light; it was meet upon me to speak only with wisdom.

Still, was it relief from dark clouds of thought that we were ready at last to set out for Jerusalem, and it was a good morning.

Now, a man knelt before my feet and asked, "Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? I have observed all the commandments from my youth."

And his eyes showed much desire to please, and full measure of concern for others so that I felt love for this young man even in the midst of much turmoil around us at leaving, and I said, "One thing thou lack: Sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor and then will you have treasure in heaven."

But the young man was not made glad by my words and went away grieved; he was with many possessions and loathe to lose them. So I said to my disciples, "How hard it becomes for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of heaven!" And when some of my disciples, by the gleam of displeasure across their eyes did show the darkness in their hearts, I could say and did: "Children, how painful it is for those that trust in riches."

And when they asked why, I said: "It is easier for a

beast to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." They were astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?" And one of them whose face was hidden by others, now muttered, "God enriches those whom He trusts. Why else is there high regard and much respect for riches?" And still others said, "If not the rich, why, who can be saved?"

And I looked upon them and said, "The Egyptians believe such. They honor rich men. But do ye listen to me or are my words like the rain that is dried by the fever of the sun? I tell ye that no man can be saved if he would count his money. So look not for riches." At which point, Peter was ready to remind me: "Lo, we have left all and followed thee."

Then was I obliged to tell myself that my disciples were but men and lived among small passions. Thereby were my disciples no better yet no worse than others. So if I could succeed to uplift their hearts, other men and women might increase in goodness. Whereby, thinking this, I also thought of how good grapes also suffer in the winepress and their cries are unheard. Then came thoughts even darker. For if most men were of mean and ordinary dimension yet still

belonged to God, how could my Father be wholly separated and vastly superior to His creation? Despite all effort not to dwell on such sacrilege, so did I now wonder whether my Father was merely larger than us, and of vastly greater force. And at such moment, in such a depth, did I even despair for Him.

Yes, this was the darkest of my thoughts before we set out. Then came our first steps. We were going to Jerusalem and all of us were afraid. And this fear was also happiness that we were not the slaves of our fear. And our legs knew their own joy.

Then, and only then, did we truly step out. And by such quick march did belief soon germinate that in two days, so soon as we were near to Jerusalem, and could see the city from afar, so would the kingdom of God appear, and the Lord would be among us.

And indeed, some of my brethren were saying already: "Ye will walk in Jerusalem openly, will ye not? So that we may witness the works ye will perform at the Temple?"

Judas was he who spoke of this most. And I could see by his impatience before setting out, that he was ceasing to

believe in me; now he said: "There will be an open feast in the market. Will ye be there with us from the first?" and I replied, "The world does not hate you, but me it is ready to punish because I testify that the works of the world are evil. Go ye, if you wish, unto this feast, but I may choose not to go. My time is not yet come."

Whereupon Judas replied: "Where is the value of a man if he does a thing in secret when he seeks to be known to all?"

And I could hear murmuring as Judas related to others what I had said, and he made much afterward of telling me how some declared of me, "He is a good man," but others said, "Nay, he deceiveth the people." And then I knew as I had never known before that I must go to the feast. And indeed, Judas said: "Many await thee and how ye will show yourself to all." But then was also beginning to understand that in Judas was there great hatred and such can be the equal of love in many fearful matters where bold action is of more value than prayers for the weak.

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Much did this conversation with Judas disturb me, and on the road to Jerusalem I found myself in fever. While I walked, my limbs ached, and at night no rest was without pain. So was it also on the second morning even as our road passed through desert, then by fruit groves, and again I did all possible not to complain. And brooded upon my weakness in giving assent to Judas and promising to attend the feast. But then was I also not free of concern for his good opinion.

On this second evening, however, even as we were still a full day's march from Jerusalem, so did we pass through Jericho where a man named Zacchaeus, who was chief among the publicans of Jericho, and rich, made an effort to see me. Many were in the throng, however, and he was little of stature. Therefore, he climbed up into a sycamore tree.

When I looked up and saw him, I did say: "Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down, for tonight I abide at thy house."

He received me joyfully. Others murmured saying that it

was not fitting that I should be the guest of a man who was not only rich, but a publican. Yet Zacchaeus said to me, "Behold, Lord, now that I know thee, half of my goods will I give to the poor."

I said to him, "Salvation has come this day to your house."

And since we were on the road to Jerusalem, I was gladdened. For if a rich man could surrender half of his fortune for belief in me, then must other walls be ready to fall in that city where God was at war with Mammon. And that night I slept well in the house of Zacchaeus.

Next morning, however, even as we set out, came two sisters of my follower Lazarus to meet us on the road. With Lazarus had I dined on earlier travels, and he was a good man. Now, his two sisters, Mary and Martha, had walked a distance from his house in Bethany to join with us, and they said, "Lord, he whom thou loves is sick, our Lazarus."

And by the way in which it was spoken, so did I know to ask: "Is this a sickness unto death?"

They wept and could not answer. Then, as if I were brother to his sickness, so was I put back again into in my

own fever and my night of rest with Zaccheus was lost. Now did I have to abide two more nights without moving, still a full day's march from Jerusalem. When I awoke on the fifth day of our departure from Galilee, I was well in body but otherwise in woe and I said, "Lazarus is dead."

The apostle Thomas who was simple, and so would say what others only chose to think, now said aloud, "Let us go to Jerusalem so we may die with him." And there was much displeasure with Thomas.

Then we marched for all of that day and into the evening and came to Bethany nigh unto Jerusalem which was where Lazarus lived and indeed not a walk of an hour from the Temple. And I could see many Jews on their way to the house of Lazarus to comfort his sisters. The one who was named Martha came out to meet me, and said in sorrow, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died. But may it be that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, the Lord will give it thee."

There was naught in my mind. Nonetheless, I said, "Thy brother shall rise again."

Then came the other sister named Mary, and she sat at my

feet and also said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." And she was followed by others also weeping who came with her and when they looked at me, I said, "Where have ye laid him?"

They said: "Lord, come and see."

It was close that I did not weep. How could I know whether the Lord would allow me to return him to his sisters? He had been dead these two days.

And many Jews around me, friends of the dead man, seeing me in such anguish, said, "Behold, how he loved Lazarus!"

Once more did I know much guilt at coming to his house so late.

Then, they led me to the grave of Lazarus which was a cave with a stone across the entrance. Whereupon I said, "Take away the stone."

But Martha said: "Lord, he is two days dead, and who can speak for his body?"

Yet at my sign, they removed the rock from the entrance to the tomb and I lifted my eyes and cried out in the loudest voice, and it roared in my throat: "Father, let Lazarus come forth!"

And I was silent. I knew that when the spirit left a man, so all that was unclean in his spirit had also been loosed, and was ready to call upon other ugly spirits. Thereby would the state of the dead man, and particularly his odor, insult the nose. If I would purify Lazarus, so must I live first in my own sins. It was then I recalled how a woman in our company had lifted up her voice as I passed and said, "Blessed is the womb that bore thee and the paps which thou hast sucked," and I replied, "More blessed are those who hear the word of the Lord and keep it." And by such response had I been cruel once more to my mother's name and did not understand why I took pleasure in denying her love when she had loved me from the moment she knew she had received me from God.

And my fears for Lazarus returned and were large. And of myself I asked: "Whereby can I raise a man from the dead when I have partaken of evil when evil is itself the measure of weight that keeps men in their tombs? And I snorted and was like a horse before an ill wind and ready to gallop away.

Then, as if the Lord had heard me in that moment, so before my eyes, now closed, was the face of Lazarus in his

tomb. And I saw Lazarus stir.

Again I cried: "Lazarus, come forth," but now I saw Lazarus deny me and shake his head. And I heard him speak, even if no one else could hear as much, but still was Lazarus in his tomb and I without.

"Oh, Master," said Lazarus, "small creatures pray to me, but they say, 'thou art not our god, Lazarus, only our wiping-cloth.' Thus speak the maggots and scorpions."

Now, in my prayer, did I call upon this pestilence to withdraw and to leave Lazarus in peace; I even called upon the powers of Legion whom I had freed from the swine of Gadarene, and then Lazarus, who had been dead, rose in his tomb and came toward me. Yet could he only move with little steps, being bound head and foot in his winding sheet. And his face was also wound about. I said to his sisters, "Loosen him, but do so without looking upon him." For I knew the face of Lazarus was ravaged.

Then, in the voice of a man who has dwelt among dreams that others would abhor, so did Lazarus say, "Now the maggots have left me, and the scorpions," but his voice was like the cry of a bird distraught. Yet was he alive.

And the Jews who witnessed this, and many were Jews living in Jerusalem, fell back in wonder. Whereby I knew that the priests and the Pharisees and the scribes in the Temple would hear of all this by the first witness to reach their presence, and they would gather in council. For now many had seen Lazarus arise and knew that he stank of the grave, and that he spoke of the maggots and scorpions he had seen; so did I also know that the Pharisees would calumniate me as a demon for having gained the power to raise those who had begun to rot.

And I could hear the Chief Priest in council even as if I were near him: He and his followers would declare: "If we leave this Jesus in peace, soon will all Jews believe on him. Then shall the Romans come and take away our place and our nation inasmuch as all Jews will be seen as in rebellion."

And I knew that the High Priest Caiphas might even say, "One man may even die for our people that the whole perish not."

On that day I did not continue to Jerusalem but slept in the house of Lazarus and with a heavy heart. May it be that I had visions of the dreams of Lazarus concerning maggots and

scorpions. In the morning when I said goodbye, he was weak, and his demeanor was low, yet I asked, "Do you believe?" and Lazarus said, "I am frightened of the things I saw when dead. I am still as one who is frightened. Yet, I try to believe." And in his weakness, he took my arm and said, "Yet am I also not afraid for an angel was with me as I came back and all is not heavy with me."

And I said to Lazarus: "Fear not. The prayers for you were fluent in my mouth, and so you are well-favored by the Lord." And to myself I prayed that I was telling the truth.

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And it may be that my words left me with a need to find antidote against most solemn brooding for we were not long walking upon the road when I sent forth two of my disciples and said, "Go your way into the village of Bethphage which is before us and so soon as ye enter there shall be a colt whom you will recognize for on him no man has ever sat. Loose this wild foal from where he is tied and bring him to me. And if any ask why do you this, tell them that the Lord hath need of the colt."

And they went away and found an ass, young and spirited, by the door in the first street of the village and loosed him and brought him to me. And I sat upon this colt whose back was ignorant of a rider and my hands were gripped into the mane upon his neck, but then, if I could not subdue the colt, wherein could I bring peace to the same spirit of uproar in the hearts of men awaiting me at the Temple?

Thereupon, we walked in procession (and I upon the

colt). I was hungry and knew more desire for food than in a year, as if indeed I were now preparing to eat as if I might not eat again.

Whereupon, seeing a fig tree from afar that was full and with leaves, I trotted toward it, outpacing all who were in the procession in order to take my fill of figs from that tree. Yet upon its branches were no ripe figs.

Now every wind arose from the anger of my enemies; of a certainty was much rage now in my speech for I said to the fig tree, "No man may eat fruit from you hereafter!"

Those disciples who heard it were not concerned if the tree was cursed. But I was left to support the loss and knew the weight that comes upon the heart for cursing the roots of another. "I am the Son of God," I told myself, "yet also a man; by a thread does man live without willful destruction."

So I knew the presence of Satan remained in me. Like a hawk who searches the fields below for one small animal then strikes to steal a life, so had I scourged the fig tree.

Now the multitude before me had taken down branches from those palm trees we passed and strewed them on my path and sang, "Hosannah! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the

Lord. Blessed be the kingdom of our David who cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosannah in the highest." And some cried out, "Blessed is the one, the king, who comes in the name of the Lord."

There were Pharisees in the throng and they cried out that I must rebuke my followers, but I called back, "If they were silent, so would these stones cry out." For I was proud. I was king indeed.

For certain, I soon forgot the fig tree. I was sweet amazed at how the people of Jerusalem (and some had never seen me before) were so full of favor; in the windows we passed did many wave: Some of our good deeds must have ridden in advance of us.

Yet may it be that the fig tree was still upon my heart for I soon thought of the city of Tyre and how it was famous a thousand years ago for its tables of ebony, and its shops with emeralds and purple linens and jewelry of coral and agate, its stalls of honey and balm, its spices and chests of cedar, and many precious cloths for chariots. Yet, in the day of Tyre's ruin, all had been washed away by the seas; would this be said of Jerusalem, as wealthy in this hour as

was once that other city?

And seeing large white buildings with tall columns of such great measure that one knew not whether one gazed upon a temple, the house of a great man, or the seat of Roman government, so did I say to myself, "Victory is of the Lord and a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," but such words were too pious in my mouth (for my heart had also leaped at the sight of these riches) and so I also said to myself, "The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit. And a great city is like unto a strange woman."

Yet I could not hate Jerusalem. To view its beauty was to know that Israel was still magnificent. And I could see the court of King Solomon in my heart. He had made a palanquin of the wood of Lebanon and the pillars thereof had been fashioned of silver and the base of gold. The seat of the palanquin was purple and its claws had been wrought by the daughters of Jerusalem. Wondrous was Jerusalem in the time of Solomon and so was it still.

Yet what had my followers to display? I saw a Roman nobleman stop to look at our procession, and he gazed upon our hundreds who walked by twos and by three and four in the

lane. And if some were well attired, yet the majority of my multitude were in rags and bits of colored apparel.

I looked upon this multitude as if never before had I seen a throng, but then the people of Jerusalem had joined in among us now, and by large numbers; so did I see as many faces as there are aspects of man, and among those who followed were many who could be counted as less than believers, but rather were among the curious, and the tormented, and the cynical, these last accompanying us so that they could jeer against the Pharisees and thereby repay old rebukes.

Also present were some who were solemn and with much hope that I might provide new piety more solemn than their old piety, much folded in their heart from repetition of old prayers. And there were children who looked on all the sights and on myself as well, and laughed at the wonder of God's bounty when it came to the faces of people, and these children were the ones closest to joy and to awe. Then were there also rough men with the fearful dissatisfaction of boredom on their brow.

And then there were the poor. From their eyes came

great need and new hope and much depth of sorrow; they had been disappointed many times. And I spoke to all as if they were one, since great changes for the better can occur at times such as these, and in a bad man more quickly than in a good one. For with the heat and the fever, there can also be sudden recognition of the truth; such truth can rest in the illumination between a word and a throng, and many bad men are quick to know their sins and suffer from the effort to resist remorse.

Now, as the throng deepened, so was the colt as full of demons as the swine of Gadarene yet its wicked spirits were young and without the foul odors of devils more practised. Still, did my beast buck and take no order to stop, and it was in his mind to cast me over his mane onto the stones of the road. Yet I rode him with the knowledge that he was the colt for me.

For now my expectation of reaching the Temple had become mixed with the awe that I was still a simple Jew of a modest trade approaching a great edifice of walls and buildings of much consecration wherein were still other congregations of chapels and courtyards open for speech and meeting and

barter, and this Temple of all temples, being on a mount, so was I well-placed on my own mount. Nor did the colt allow me to contemplate how large was my respect for what was before me.

Yet in my mind, even before seeing it, could I still see how the steps rose from courtyard to courtyard, and on to more august buildings and unto sanctums more sacred, even to one room where none but the High Priest could enter and then but on one day of the year for it was the Holy of Holies: I was the Son of God, but so was I also the child of my mother and was feeling more respect for the Temple than could be equalled by my desire to change all within. And I felt whole disturbance and some weakness. And shivered when the multitude in front of me began to cheer as they mounted over a great rise in the road. For then I knew that my first view of the Temple walls would be on the other side.

But then as I came to the sight, and my colt jumped and kicked up its feet, so did I also know even as I approached this last rise, that the future of all such wonder and magnificence was in peril and enemies would compass it around and besiege it on every side; they would even lay the Temple

low to the ground until it was but the remains of a wall and not one stone left to rest upon another. All this would come to pass should the priests of the Temple not understand that my message was from the Lord and to be honored.

So I wept at the first sight of the Great Temple, and wept openly sitting upon my colt. The Temple was beautiful to my vision yet I knew then that it was not eternal. And indeed I understood that the works of man, even if they be in stone, endure no longer than the feathers of a thistle.

And I thought of the words of Amos who said: "The houses of ivory shall perish."

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And when I came into the Temple itself, and dismounted from my colt and climbed the first great steps at the entrance, so did I discover that there was naught for the eye passing through the first gate but a large court filled with the men of Mammon. Here was a place where all were exchanging money and goods. How much could one admire their beards curled by warm iron, and immaculate, tailored by the scissors and their vain pride. To me, these men of Mammon looked like peacocks: so were the priests who moved among them.

Great was the rage growing in me at the thought of these wealthy men and their tables enriched with every bounty of food while the poor sat in mud and filth in the stinking alleys of the city.

Silence did I then gird about me like the robe of a high priest that others dare not touch, and so did I sit alone on a stone bench by the treasury and beheld how people cast

money into the great box. And many who were rich cast much within. Then, came a poor woman and her shawl was threadbare; she threw in her small coin. Then did the Lord give a sign and my heart leaped.

I called to those disciples who were nearest and said: "This poor woman hath cast in more than all the rich. They leave a tithe of their abundance, while she gave up all she had, even her living for this day. So she has performed a wonder; she has turned Mammon into tribute to God. Whereas the wealthy give to the Lord only to impress each other; thereby do they seek to amass more of Mammon."

And I thought of how money was a great and stinking beast whose offerings were supped upon with slobberings of greed, foul men's bellies full of lust. And all were in such a tumult that they could leave off from such feeding but once a day to pray and give coin to the great box in the treasury.

And I thought of how the rich are choked with the weight of gold. And their gardens bring no fruit to perfection. For there is oppression in the air. How can a rich man's blooms bring happiness to his eye when his neighbor, being wealthier than himself, can display gardens with fruit of

greater beauty? So are the rich always envious, and suffer the curse of envy and are without rest, for they are always in search of more gold.

Yet still did I ponder upon how to speak to these wealthy here in the outer court of the Temple with the moneylenders. And so was I ready to tell them:

"No man can pay allegiance to two masters. Either he will hate the one, and love the other, or he will cling to the one he needs and seek to despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

But I thought again of how all who were wealthy would not hear my words for hating them.

Then the Devil spoke to me, and this I knew at once. For my Father, even in the darkest night of His meditations, would not address me with such a tongue, nor with teeth to bite the inner spirit of my ear: therefore did the Devil now say: "Before it is all over, those who are wealthy will possess you as well. They will put images of you upon their wall."

Then, I knew that my soul had been seized by this threat; but the voice went on: "Your name and alms in your

name, will enrich the treasure of mighty churches; men will worship you even as you come to belong to me as much as to Him; that is just: I am equal to Him." And he laughed before what he would say next:

"Greed is a beast whose defecations are weighed in gold. Yet is not gold the color of the sun out of which all things grow?"

To which God now replied in my other ear: "All he says makes much sense until it fails to do so. He gives this speech to all who catch his eye, and his eye is only for the best, and those most beautiful. Alas, all those whom I have fashioned with great hope. Whereas he scorns all who are modest but remain with Me."

And this was the most that my Father ever said to my ear about Satan and His problems with such a Devil; nonetheless was it a thought to torment the palisades of my faith? I wondered if only for a moment: Did we praise the meek, He and I, because those were the only ones who would have allegiance to us?

These thoughts were of such disturbance that in subduing their mockery, I fell prey to a great wrath.

For I could see in the eyes of the moneylenders how covetousness was as sharp in them as the point of a spear, nay, it was the evil that is in the eye of the fierce-beaked bird who looks for prey. Then the rage of Isaiah came into me, for in his words did I cry out: "These tables are a pool of vomit and in such filthiness there is no place clean!"

And I overturned the table before me with the moneys that were upon it, and felt an exaltation in my ears as the coins gave their small cries on striking the stone of the courtyard, and each possessor ran after his own loss like vermin on the hunt for smaller vermin. But to me did the gold coins look like the flight o the swine of Gadarene into the sea.

Then did I knock over the seats of those who sold doves, and opened the cages. On this uproar of wings did a multitude behind me come forward and some may even have been feeling the exaltation of the Lord that was in me at this defiance of greed and usury.

And I said: "My house shall be known before all nations as a house of prayer. Is that not written? But ye have made

it a den of thieves."

Indeed it was but the truth that men who sought Mammon were thieves even if they had never stolen one cup of wheat. And in my nearness now to my Father, did I gain the joy of a holy rage. Yet was I also much aware that many scribes and priests had heard me from afar, and so it was as if I could hear the Pharisees speaking in all the temples within this Great Temple and in all the courtyards. In overturning the tables I had given offense that would blind all judgment of what I would say next.

For I would not allow the priests and elders of this Great Temple to be loyal to their separate accounts with god and Mammon whereby they could water all the vines of cupidity that grew from one side of their soul to the other.

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Amidst the disorder of the tables so were my next words said; they were: "Destroy this temple and in three days will I raise it up."

Then spoke one of the moneylenders, and he was an old man, and stout, but with clear eyes, "Forty and six years was this Temple building. Thou will rebuild in three days?"

So was I ready to wonder at what I had said. For there were many in the multitude with me ready to tear down what was before them, and that with joy. What did not belong to them could be destroyed. Yet I also knew that even this thought of such destruction spoken once aloud could injure much in days to come. For such words could live in the chill of the dark and never relent and never forgive. That I had spoken of tearing down the Temple could yet bring forth such a ghost. Still had I said it, and despite all. For to me were here many buildings of immaculate beauty. If I had been but a pilgrim wandering among these halls, so would I have

been wondrously impressed by the dedication of skills in the carpenters and stone masons who had built these great buildings.

By such thinking did I grow calm, and know that I was here to teach, not to destroy.

And I would say that the Lord was still with me. For had it not been also His rage? And was He not telling me now to be wise, to be gentle? I said to my followers, "Be now calm and respect this Temple. These moneylenders are not of the Temple but merely the leavings of evil and that can be found anywhere, and is scrubbed quickly from the stone. Therefore, will I teach. Yet not, " I said, "in this unclean place of entrance where moneylenders were congregated. Come with me further into the holy places."

And I led them to a quiet arbor that was above another rising of stairs and between two small chapels; indeed there was even a cedar to give me shade. Then, as I had foreseen, a delegation came to me of priests and scribes and many of the elders of Jerusalem and they said, "We have been awaiting thee but do not understand the manner of your arrival. Who gave thee authority to foment uproar?"

I answered, "I will ask one question, and if you can reply, I will tell by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John," I asked, "was it from heaven, or of men?"

And I knew they would reason as follows: "If we say 'From heaven,' he shall say, 'Why then did ye not believe John?' Yet if we say that John was of men, then he was a prophet, and we should have protected him." For I knew that these priests of Jerusalem depended much on pious Jews, yet did many such Jews distrust their priests and think they were too friendly with the Romans. So neither could these priests say that John was not a prophet, for then they would give assent to the way in which he was killed. Yes, did these priests work with Romans but not admit as much.

So, they answered only, "We cannot tell."

And I said, "Neither do I tell thee by what authority I do these things."

Then came a scribe from the other side of these priests. He came walking forward with such ease that I knew he was a Pharisee from a noble family and most educated. His eyes were blue and his beard was gentle and of a soft brown, and he smiled as if he were full of affection for me and said,

"Master,"--which was a courtesy I looked upon with regard, since in his manner was even a suggestion that he, too, was speaking upon the disruption in the courtyard of the moneylenders; if he could not give approval of such an act yet would he still call me "Master," and so, "Master," he said, "we know that thou desirest to teach the way of truth so I would ask for an answer to this question. It is of much weight to us and gives us much dispute when we do not know how to reply. Concerning the Romans, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or shall we not give?"

And I knew that for all his gentle warmth, the Devil had minions even so fair as this man and his question was as a snare. For if I replied that one should not give tribute to Caesar, which I expect was the reply he awaited, then these Pharisees could give testimony to the Procurator of this city that I was in rebellion against the Romans. But I feared not the snare. My wit, in this hour, was like an arrow eager to leap from my heart to my lips, and I said, "Give me a penny that I may see it," and when they brought it, I asked, "Whose is this image?"

And he replied, "Caesar's."

And I said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." And I was pleased inasmuch as I was also saying that Mammon was the god appropriate to the Romans and not to the Jews.

I heard a murmur in the multitude of the Temple party as if my words were again displeasing to them. Yet I knew that this scribe and these Pharisees were marveling at my means for eluding such traps as they set forth. And I could feel their respect. That was as balm to my agitation. For now must they see that I had the strength to overturn the tables of the moneylenders yet the wisdom to avoid a rash reply. Still, did I also know that my remark had been exceedingly clever; indeed, it reverberated in my ears with that surfeit of wisdom which leaves an echo as hollow as the fall of a stone into an abyss. For so could I also see how many a church would find a path to survive in many an evil land on the strength of such words. And would speak of them as my words. I was not here to build churches, (and all such churches compromised), but must strive rather to bring sinners to salvation and with God's speed. Why, then, had I spoken thus? Had God estimated the size of my harvest and

seen it as small? Had He decided the better path was prudence. and so let there be many churches built in the swamps of pride and Mammon?

And as I was preparing to leave in this courtyard, as could I see that the scribe who had addressed us as Master signed to continue his questioning to us and he asked, "Master, which is the first commandment of these all?"

And I answered, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And so shall thou love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength." This must be the first commandment."

"What is the second commandment?" asked the scribe.

"To love thy neighbor as thyself."

The scribe said to me, "Thou hast spoken well. To love one's neighbor as oneself is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

And I said to him, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

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He was very wise. Mayhap he was the Master of the Book in this Great Temple and so was the man I would seek out on

many matters. Yet, if he had a fine face, still his eyes were as pale as the blue of the sky on a day when there is little of blue and the sky is white; so I did not trust him, albeit his manners were as fine as his beard. That was as well-curled as if he were the noble son of a family whose lands took into their fold many gardens tended by skillful servants. And his speech was as handsome as his appearance. He said, "We are all among the circumcized, and are a people of one faith. And I am of the persuasion of many of us in this Temple that you have not come to this holy place to rend us asunder, but rather to bring us nearer to one another, yea, even though disruption has followed you like the dust before a storm." He paused to great effect and all were listening. "Nowwithstanding, there are many storms that cleanse. So I would ask of you, Master, when comes the Kingdom of God?"

And as he spoke, so could I hear those two voices that live as one in many a Pharisee. Often did their voices come to my ear endowed with good manners and much breeding; yet all the same was there quiet mockery in the utterances of their throat, but as finely sifted into their courtesies as

powder into sand. Still did I listen first to his good voice for it was not without desire to hope that I might be, indeed, the Son of Man; for that, he had great passion to know. And those priests who had sent him were also of such interest. So was I ready to speak to this scribe.

We conversed on many matters and as men who were equal and of much courtesy toward each other. Only by the second hour did he begin to display his knowledge of the scrolls, and thereby began to discourse with me over the working of cures on the Sabbath.

He murmured: "Publish this not in the streets of Askelon . . . lest the daughters of the uncircumcized triumph." And he smiled as if I would not know that such verses came from the second book of Samuel. "Do ye recall the verse," he went on, "that is saying: 'And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day, and they brought him unto Moses and Aaron and unto all the congregation. But the Lord said unto Moses, 'The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him.' And all the congregation brought him without the camp and stoned him with

stones and he died, as the Lord commanded Moses.'" Then the scribe said, "That was in days that are now a thousand years old, and a congregation of this day would not stone such a man. Yet doth not the principle remain? Thou shalt not labor on the Sabbath."

I replied that I had answered this question in many a way. "I say to you again, if you circumcize a babe or a man on the Sabbath, then so may ye lift the scales from the blind and flex the limbs of the halt."

Then did he begin to speak, and he spoke well, but, certainly, did he speak long, nor did I know how long it would be when first he began to speak, yet did he proceed with such skill that I knew not where to interrupt.

And he said, "I have been waiting for all of this year to converse with you. For I have thought of your works, Master, and I would say that which the Prophet Samuel said to King Saul: 'Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.' And if ye come from He whom you will not declare and wish us to assume that ye are from the Lord, you do not say as much. So we must suffer from the brilliance of your deeds. For your cures can appear to us as witchcraft and full of the bright

fire of rebellion. And we in the Temple have fear of that bright light, of such conflagration and such flaming of light, since we have labored for ten hundred years to learn what is in the Book and many have died for the five Books of the Torah. And with what strength we have left, so have we built the walls of our belief in this place and we live by the light within that is provided by the deeds of our martyrs who died for our scrolls. So would I remind you that, as is written in First Maccabees, King Antiochus, a heathen king, was set over us, and he was a despot. So did he declare to his whole kingdom of Jews and gentiles that all should be one people. Jews and gentiles alike. All should obey his laws, and partake of his religion.

"And all of his heathen and gentiles agreed to the commandment of this king. And to our shame, so did many of the Israelites also consent to this religion before idols and such Jews profaned the Sabbath until the only clear measure of a man who would continue to be a good Jew was that ye could kill him but he would not profane the Sabbath.

"Then did King Antiochus command all Jews to leave their children uncircumcized. He even said that whoever did not

give assent to his commandment would die. So were all Israelites who disobeyed him driven to live in secret places, and in return did King Antiochus have abominations set upon the altar such as the flesh of swine for sacrifice. Whosoever was found with the Book was put to death. And for those women who caused their children to be circumcized, so did he have thoss same infants hung, and the doctors who circumcized them also slain.

"All knew then," said the scribe, "that the Book was as naught before evil men, unless there was observance of the Book. And so I say to you that in your sayings we would look for recognition of the ten hundred years of the Book and of the martyrs who observed the law and died for the law. So, too, do I say to you that in your haste to serve God, ye encourage the publicans, the sinners, and even the uncircumcized. Ye rush to destroy that which ye have not learned in patience and in observance of the law on many a Sabbath and in all of your years. Stubbornness is also as iniquity and idolatry."

The scribe had spoken to more and more sound of assent among those who heard: Even among my own people was much

muttering that he was right, and many were weeping at the death of so many Jews.

Therefore was it not simple to reply.

"Think not," did I tell him, and slowly, "that I am here to deny the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For I say that unless the righteousness of our people shall exceed the righteousness of your scribes and Pharisees, then we shall in no case enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

"But I would offer a parable," I told him. "Two men," I said, "went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. And the Pharisee stood and prayed: 'God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all I possess.' And the publican standing afar off would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven but smote himself on his breast and said, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' I tell you this man went down to his house more justified than the other. For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased and he that is humble shall be exalted."

Before he could reply, I was quick to add: "All that you say is just if people observe the Book. But they do not. And this land of Israel hath committed great whoredoms in departing from the Lord, and the Lord looks upon the people of Israel as in whoredom and even searches for a way to save the whore."

Now did the scribe answer me in a tone so light and so full of the wings of confidence that each of his words might have been a creature to dance upon his tongue; in that moment could I hear Satan in the voice of this scribe for he said: "Save the whore? Yes, you will finish by saying to a people who are not your people, 'Thou art my people.' and they will say, 'Thou art my God.'" And the scribe laughed again and all the mockery he had mixed like powder into the soft sand of his courtesy was now separated and washed over me as if he had seen all things evil and wise whereas I had not.

So did I not speak further until I could find passages to utter; then did I turn once more to the prophets, and I spoke in Hebrew so that this scribe could recognize that I knew the Book. "From the words of Ezekiel," I told him: "'My sheep were scattered because there is no shepherd, and they

became meek to all the beasts of the field when they were scattered, and none did search or seek after them. Neither did My shepherds search for My flock, but fed themselves. Behold, I am against the shepherds."

"And these shepherds," he answered, "are kin to me? Can it be that this is what you say?"

Nor was I polite in reply.

"Beware," I said, "of scribes who love to go in long clothing and look for salutations in the marketplace and the chief seats in the synagogues and the uppermost rooms at feasts. They devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. These shall receive greater damnation."

And to myself I was thinking that even a drunken man could lay claim to more knowledge of what was politic than myself. In this Temple I was without guard over the prudence that knows what to say for obtaining the most and offending the least. But then much did I want these Pharisees never to forget what I would declared.

"I would," I told the scribe, "wish to deliver my flock from all places where they have been scattered. So I do not despise those who are uncircumcized and ignorant of the

Book."

"And thereby would you give a light to the gentiles?" he asked.

"Yea," said I, "so would I also give a light to the gentiles. It will be for the salvation of all."

Then the scribe was silent; I think he was weary. He had not thought that I could stand before him in the words of the Book yet speak of such things. And can it be that he wondered how it was that the kings and great prophets had dreamed of the hour of God's salvation brought at last to Israel and it had not come to pass? And now would this Jesus with his crude peasants be nearer to such salvation than all who were heroes and prophets and kings in the glorious and holy past?

So now could I continue to speak when he was silent, "The Lord hath called me from the womb," I said, "from the bowels of my mother, and He made my mouth a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand hath He hid me, and said, 'Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Raise up the tribes of Jacob and the strong reserve of Israel,' but He also said, 'I will give thee a light to the gentiles that

thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.' For my Father has said that I must be His salvation, and I know not the meaning of that."

To which the scribe said, "Is that not blasphemy?"

And I replied, "It is what my Father hath said."

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And by now, as the shadows in the great courtyard grew long upon the ground in the lowering of the sun, so did the echoes return to me of all that was contested between the scribe and myself. And I spoke alone to the multitude and to my disciples. And by now was I ready to say all that I thought for I could see that the cause of my Father would not prevail without readiness to give battle with all of my spirit against the powers of this Temple--which were like unto walls of great thickness and much propriety. So must I speak with the mightiest words I could find. And indeed I finally understood what it was to feel the voice of the Lord not ceasing to come forth from me.

Many Pharisees were among this multitude, and thereby did I commence by saying: "The scribes and the elders sit in Moses' seat and the Great Temple of Jerusalem is their throne. Whatsoever, therefore, that they bid you observe, that observe. But do not do as they do. For they lay heavy

pieties on men's shoulders, grievous to be borne, yet they will not move such burdens with one of their fingers. Broad are their philacteries, for so do they have them made. And so do they love the chief seats in the synagogues."

And immediately some Pharisees stirred. Others began to leave. Yet did a few, as if twice fortified, now remain and they were serving as spies upon me. Therefore did I speak once more of the width of their prayer shawl and how the leather wrappings on their arms had more of substance than their prayer for were they not there to say, "Look upon me, am I not prosperous?" But did they ever grieve over the bent fingers of the old women who embroidered their fringe?

Then was my voice loud: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye neither go in yourselves to the Kingdom of Heaven nor do ye suffer those who would wish to enter. Ye devour widows' houses and make long prayer. Therefore, shall ye receive the greater damnation."

At which the boldest of the Pharisees began to hoot at me; and others, more timid, chose again to leave. But in my words was I seeing those widows who had lost their houses through the sharp practice of some of those before me.

"Wherefore," said I to the Pharisees, "did you not feed the widow's children instead of acquiring the house? Blind guides! Men of Mammon! Whosoever shall swear by the gold of the Temple, will become a debtor before the Lord. Fools and blind! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cumin and omit the weightier matters of the law, and of judgment and of mercy and of faith. These ought you to have done and not to leave the other undone, ye blind guides who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Woe unto you! For ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter. But within are they full of extortion and excess. Blind Pharisees, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter that the inside may be also clean. Woe unto you! For ye are like unto whited sepulchers which appear beautiful without but are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so, ye build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous and ye say, 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the death of the prophets.' Yet ye are the children of them who killed the prophets. Ye are the measure of your fathers, and a generation of vipers!"

And I knew that I spoke this last with the brave voice of John the Baptist and so now was I truly his cousin.

"Behold," I said now: "I will send unto you prophets and wise men. Some ye shall kill and some crucify, and some shall ye scourge, and persecute from city to city. And upon you will fall all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zechariah whom ye slew between the Temple and the altar. All of these things shall come upon this generation."

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You have stoned those who were sent unto thee! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!"

Yet my heart was heavier than a burden of many stones. For I feared that my words were true. If these were my people and this my Temple, then I must mourn for Israel. And it was time to depart from the Temple; by now had the Pharisees summoned many officers of the guard and all of such people were wroth with my words.

Yet, the multitude who surrounded me were like unto a tempest of whirling sands upon the desert, and this multitude was of my followers. And they, being much moved by my words,

were so ready to bring me forth that no man interfered with my leaving although some of the Temple Guard were not without stones in their hands. And many were the Pharisees with stones in their hearts. But they cast not one bone or rock or clod.

If they sought to take me yet no man laid hands on my garments. My hour was not come. They would approach and fall back, and approach and fall back, and there was that in my eye which told them not to touch my cloth.

And in such manner did I depart from the Temple on the first day.

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And once without the walls of the Great Temple did all of my throng, being full of exultation, now climb with me to Mount of Olives.

One after another then did disciples come forward on the Mount and having heard me in the Temple, did say: "When shall great things be? And what shall be the sign? And will we all rise at the end of the world? Will ye be with us?"

And again there was a multitude about me, larger even than had been in the Temple. And I said unto them, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For the sign of my coming and the end of the world will be only when I am no longer among you." And I knew not why I said so much as that unless it was the power of my dream coming to me every night and so powerful was the dream that I could not gainsay it; so I repeated, "I will come when I am no longer among you."

They groaned. Honest was their pain at these words and such feeling brought tears to my eyes. For I could see that,

withal, they loved me. So did I feel a new need to bring them counsel. And with all the strength of the voice of the Lord again forthcoming from me, I said: "Many shall come in my name saying, 'I am Christ' and shall deceive many. Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you be not troubled for all these things must come to pass. Nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes. All these are but the beginning of sorrow. And they shall deliver you up as my followers, and they shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax strong for gold. But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and only then shall the end come." And in that instant, surrounded by my multitude, who swayed and groaned and even growled at such words issuing from my lips, did I hear the Lord speaking to me of the minions of the Devil who would come upon the earth armed with a store of small miracles, each of these minions claiming to be like unto the return of

myself. And I felt as if beneath our feet lay a bottomless pit of deception. And I said:

"If any man shall say unto you, 'Lo, here is Christ,' or say, 'He is here,' believe it not for there shall arise false prophets and they shall show great signs and wonders insomuch, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. Wherefore if they say unto you, 'Behold, he is in the desert,' go not forth. Or, 'Behold, he is in the secret chambers,' believe it not. For if the lightning comes out of the east and shines even unto the west, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. For after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon not give her light and the stars fall from heaven and the power of heaven shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send His angels with the great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together the elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words not. Watch, therefore, for ye do not know the hour your Lord doth come. But know this: if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched and not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready. For in such an hour that you think not, the Son of Man cometh.

"And then shall he say to them, 'Go ye, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me; I was in prison and you came unto me. Yea, verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. And inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did not to me.' And these who did not, shall go away unto everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal."

And they cheered mightily, as if all who were listening were guaranteed to be of the party who would go to life eternal. And in the plaudits of this multitude, so did I

also think that if the hosannas of many were all that one might need to do God's work, then in truth, my tasks were finished, and all of Judea would be given life eternal. To remind us, therefore, of tasks ahead, I said, "In two days will be the feast of the Passover and the Son of Man will be betrayed and crucified." And as I said it, I felt my words travel far into the sky and so did I know also that in the palace of the High Priest, they must be consulting how they might take me by force or by subtlety, and how they should condemn my life. For other answers were not. And so had I spoken with more force in my voice and more anger in my heart than before and ever before. Soon might all of this multitude be without me, and if without me, would they have learned any means to find their way again to the Lord?