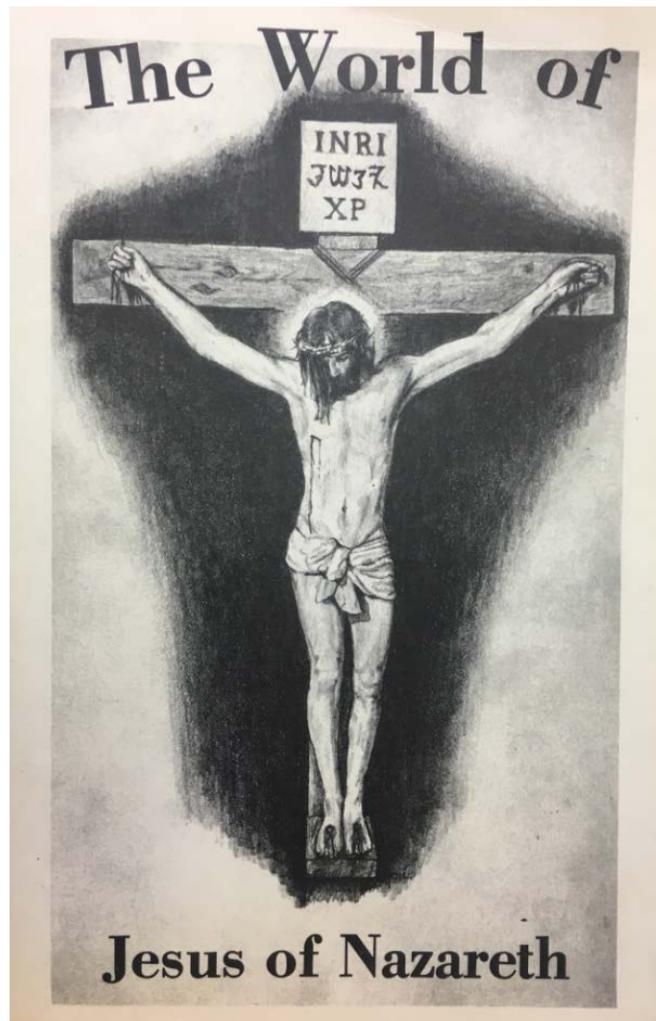


The World of Jesus of Nazareth – Original Cast Manual



The purpose of his manual is to present an historic look into the social, political, religious and geographic world of Jesus, the Man. With a better knowledge of the personalities and appearances of the people who effected His life and mission and by a better understanding of the situations confronting Him, that we, both as individuals, and as a cast, might create a more vivid performance. It is further hoped that the material contained here-in will offer a more personal and intimate feeling for the ordeal of Him whose mission altered the course of the world and effected the lives of billions of people for 20 centuries. That, with this knowledge, we might be worthy as characters to re-enact these sacred events for the glorification of Jesus Christ. It is not intended that any of the statements contained in this manual should conflict with the teachings of any particular denominational doctrine - - but, rather they only reflect the research material of the author the Great Passion Play.

THE LAND OF PALESTINE

Chapter 1

Palestine was a runt country lying in the Mediterranean sand. The distance between Caesarea Philippi to the north and Bersabee to the south was 150 miles; from Joppa on the coast across the country to Ammon was 75 miles. It was so small that Rome made it subordinate to another province, Syria. Still, within its borders, were the remnants of twelve tribes, at least three dialects, a group of provinces such as Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, a great number of cities and towns, and roughly three million citizens.

It was a land of loamy farms under subtropical climate. In the hilly country around Jerusalem and Bethlehem the temperature seldom moved above 85 degrees. But in Jericho, only twenty-five miles away, it often climbed to 120 degrees and remained there for days.

The Herods began to reign as Kings about 35 years before the birth of Jesus. Palestine, a small province in the Roman scheme of things, was placed under the sovereignty of Herod the Great in 40 B.C. Rome made the appointment, and setting Herod on the throne required three years of work by the Roman legions. Herod the Great was cruel and ambitious. He built great buildings, glittering palaces, splendid cities, (all with the burden of the taxes on the poor of the land) and, although he professed to be a Jew and offered lavish sacrifices in the temple, he cheerfully bent his knee to Rome. He murdered his favorite wife, several sons, and other members of his family on whim or suspicion. He ordered to death all of the male babies of Bethlehem from the age of two - - and then expired.

The Jew believed in oneness. He wanted one God, one Temple, one nation, one people, one tribe, and one family. He believed in each of these with fervor, this oneness led to one symbol of his allegiance with God - - The Ark of the Covenant.

Above all, the Jews awaited a Messiah. The Messiah was a sweet national obsession. It was ecstasy beyond happiness; joy beyond comprehension; it was a balm to a weary farmer's bones as he lay with his family waiting for sleep. It was the hope of Judea in chains, the Messiah was always a promise of tomorrow morning. No matter how many were born and grew up and grew old and died, each new generation was sure that it would live to see the coming of the great event. The old prophets had promised that the Great Elect would come from God himself and he would liberate the tribes of Israel, and then, if the people were worthy, the enemies of Palestine would be destroyed.

The pious were perplexed. They looked but did not know where to look, or even when. And to confound matters, false Messiahs entered Jerusalem now and then accompanied by the crowds of the poor and the helpless ones who shouted "Hosanna to the Son of Man!" and

strewn the path of the stranger with flowers and palms. The fakes were of two kinds: charlatans and the insane. The latter were, of course, sincere.

This is a play about the most dramatic week in the history of the world. The week in which Jesus of Nazareth died. As it is today so it was in the turbulent times before Christ, that the menace of pagan tyranny shadowed the hearts of men who would be free., In their quest for truth, their unquenchable thirst and might of Roman blasphemy. Amid this barbaric world seethed conflicts of human drama, of violent passions, which tore asunder the high places, and trembled the foundations of false idolatry.

Into this troubled world came Jesus of Nazareth who feared none, not even death, to bring forth enlightenment and triumph.

THE CHOSEN OF THE MESSIAH

CHAPTER 2

The time is not precisely determined when our Lord separated the Apostles of His disciples and followers to their distinctive office. They were from the lower ranks of life, and it appears that some of them at least had been with Him before they were called Apostles; but after their appointment they remained continuously in His service. They were all on an equality, so far as official rank was concerned, during and after the ministry of Christ on earth.

Most of the men had two names, the second of which was given to each one by Jesus. This caused some confusion among the followers of Jesus because as the original names of another. There were at least two Jameses, two Simons, and two Judases. Like all men of that time in Palestine, they averaged about five feet six in inches in height. All wore full beards (except John because of his youth) and uncut hair, because the Law of God warned against all forms of vanity.

The apostle ANDREW was short and dark and sinewy. He was from Capernaum, His older brother was Peter, and when Jesus appointed Peter as chief of the apostles, Andrew began to call his brother "Father Peter". This man was never known to lead a conversation; indeed, it was a joke among the disciples that Andrew was never known to speak unless it was to ask a question. Among the fishermen in Galilee he was known to be valorous in storms. He had enormous faith, and was a disciple of John the Baptist before he met Jesus. No man knows when Andrew died, but long after this week he would be crucified on an x-shaped cross.

BARTHOLOMEW, tall, slender and handsome, was the most fashionably dressed of the apostles. It was said that even his under-cloak was bordered with regal purple. He looked distinguished, with black hair hanging in heavy ringlets and a yellow beard. He was born in

Cana, and his father called him Nathanael. He had been a vinedresser. He was naive and found it easy to believe a sad story and easy to weep. His best friend was Philip. In the years ahead, he would preach in Persia and the eastern countries and the time would come when the people would flay him alive.

PHILIP was the merry one and probably was among the followers of the Baptist. He was short, dark and to his way of thinking, the long journey through life toward heaven was a most enjoyable experience. He lived in Bethsaida, in Galilee, and there he had a wife and some said three daughters and a sister Marianne. He was, like most of the others, simple and credulous, but he was witty and gregarious as well.

JAMES the SON of ALPHEUS, appears to have been called to the Apostolate in the year 27. Someday he would be called other things, like James the Lesser and James the Just. This man was shy to the point of pain. When he spoke, it was his custom to whisper. He was the shortest of the group. His father was Alpheus, his mother was reputed to be a woman named Mary who, in turn, was said to be a sister to the Mother of Jesus. He was always addressed by Jesus as "my brother". And this James loved him dearly but had difficulty believing that Jesus was the Messiah. He was older than Jesus and had known him from infancy.

He never touched wine or liquor or meat (except where Scripture enjoined him to): he would not anoint his hair or take a bath. He prayed so often on his knees that they became "horny like those of a camel". He had seen his "cousin" perform many works of wonder in the past two years but James, a paragon of intellectual honesty, found himself admitting, on occasion, that this man was indeed the Messiah and then, a few days or a few weeks later, found himself wavering in his belief.

Then Paul came to Jerusalem we find James on a level with Peter deciding the course to be adopted toward Paul. Tradition places him over the Church in Jerusalem, and Hegesippus says that before Vespasian began the siege of the city he was thrown down from the temple by the scribes and Pharisees; he was then stoned, and his brains were dashed out by a fuller's club.

There was another cousin of Jesus in the apostolate and this was JUDE, sometimes called Lebbeus. He was not a prominent figure among the apostles, and little is known of him. He was, it is believed by many, the brother of James of Alphaeus, although others contend that he was the son of James. He was called Jude, Jude-Thaddaeus, and Judas of James - - meaning Judas, son of James. Like James, he was a quiet man, almost introspective, and yet, in the years ahead, Jude would preach the testament of Jesus with a violent passion in Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia and Syria, where in time, he would be murdered.

The blank face among these men belongs to SIMON ZELOTES. Sometimes he is called Simon the Cananaean. There is no record of what he looked like, or even of his place among

the apostles. It is believed that he preached in Persia and Egypt, and it is known that he enjoyed travel. In age, the apostles averaged a few years younger than Jesus, who was about thirty, and if Simon Zealotes was thirty then he had a long life ahead because it is recorded that he was killed while preaching in Egypt in A. D. 107.

THOMAS was a balding worrier. He was certain few things happened for the best. He was the least shocked of the spotless when Jesus announced that his kingdom was not of this earth and that these men should not expect to sit with him in judgement of the twelve tribes of Judea; rather, he would die and leave them to carry on his word as best they could. Thomas could become enthusiastic about death. Once, when Jesus said that he was going to Jerusalem where plotters were waiting for him, Thomas said, happily, "Let us go also, that we may die with him!"

This man was a twin, and had been called by the Greek name for twin, "Didymus". He had worked in Galilee as a carpenter, and, in the early days of apostleship, sat in the evenings with Jesus and discussed the framing of houses and the building of furniture. His devotion to Jesus was beyond superlatives of words to portray properly.

Among these men, there was one of engaging personality and this was MATTHEW. He had been a publican, a tax gatherer, and the people of his race regarded him as a sinner and, because he had worked for Caesar, unclean. Originally, his name had been Levi and he had worked in the customs office on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, outside Capernaum. Here, he collected legal tribute for anything brought ashore, from ironware bought on the far shores to fish netted out of the sea. Passing by, Jesus looked at Levi, and said: "Follow me." The tax agent gave up his career at once, and became an apostle.

The Messiah changed his name to Mattija - - "Gift of Yahway"; The new Matthew, beard neatly trimmed, hair perfumed, impeccable attired, a charming and learned companion who could speak Hebrew and write it, one who had attended the finest rabbinical schools, asked Jesus if, before they left Capernaum he might be host at a dinner party for his new master. Jesus agreed and, at the gathering, sat to sup with many "sinners and publicans". The Pharisees in Galilee used this against him and said that Jesus was not particular with whom he dined.

It was difficult for Matthew to give up the trappings of personal vanity, and to give up the ease to which he had been accustomed. But it was done. He could, on call, quote much of the Scripture verbatim, and he had a passion for genealogy and the tracing of names and dates.

The busiest man of the Apostles was JUDAS ISCARIOT. He was short and dark and his hair fell in dark ringlets. His name was not Iscariot; it was Judas ish Kerioth - - Judas from Kerioth. His father was Dimon ish Kerioth. (Under his outer garment of white, Judas wore a

leather apron with two huge pockets, and in these he maintained the treasure. He was also known to carry a small box under his arm.)

His duties made him harsh and tight-fisted; he expected others to account to him for any moneys donated to them, but he did not feel that he was accountable to anyone for total receipts of expenditures. Even though he came from the hill country of Judea and his family had subscribed to the law, Judas affected a superior manner to the Galileans. The Judean peasant was entrusted with larger sums than he had ever owned, and covetousness, unfaithfulness, and the lust of the world, overpowered Judas; and hence he became infuriated when he perceived that his Master had read his heart and in the madness of his rage he sold "the innocent One for thirty pieces of silver". What he did after the betrayal is not recorded, further than that the sight of his enormity so filled him with remorse that life became intolerable, and he died a hopeless suicide. It would appear that the rope by which he sought to hang himself gave way, and so, falling headlong, his abdomen was lacerated, and thus he died, as it were, a double death, and so went to his own lot.

Among the many women of means who contributed to the ministry of Jesus was Salome of Bethsaida. So firmly did she believe in the Messiah that she gave two of her sons to the apostolate (in the spring or summer of the year 27) JAMES and his younger brother, JOHN - and she often joined Jesus in his pilgrimages on foot. Her husband, Zebedee, was a rich Galilean fisherman with a big house and servants, a man who hired others to work his boats. He was known and respected even in Jerusalem. His best-known attribute was explosive anger, but it was seldom aroused by those who knew him. When Jesus originally called to James and John, they were working in a boat with their father and they dropped the nets and followed Jesus at once. This aroused Zebedee to a pitch of screams and imprecations. Thus did their cousin, Jesus, call them the Sons of Thunder.

Of the two young men, John was the one who was beloved of Jesus. He was treated like a son, (being about 17 years of age) who could almost always bring about a paternal smile of affection; one who could win concessions denied to others. Of all the apostles, these two brothers, together with Peter, were closest to Jesus.

John inherited some of the violence of his father and once when a Samaritan village spurned a visit from Jesus, John was in favor of calling down fire from heaven to consume the people.

James, the elder brother, was another of the quiet ones. He spoke rarely, and then tersely. His outstanding attribute was a finely developed sense of fairness. The leading incidents in the career of James may be briefly stated. He witnessed the miraculous healing of Jairus' daughter. In the spring of 28 he was present at the Transfiguration. Very early in the

year 29 he urged the Lord to call fire down from heaven to consume a Samaritan village and about three months later he and his brother made their ambitious request through their mother Salome. On the night before the crucifixion he was with our Lord in Gethsemane and he witnessed the ascension. Of all the apostles, he was destined to die first, and he would be the only one who would die in the city where the Messiah died - - Jerusalem. From this week, James had twelve years in which to execute the will of Jesus before his death. In the year 44, he was put to death by Herod Agrippa.

PETER, chief of all the apostles, was a big broad fisherman with a deep voice coming from a loving heart. Often he was tactless and, more than once, Jesus impelled him to stop by asking, "What is that to you?" Peter was given to speaking without first thinking, and too often the words came from his heart and not his head. He was impetuous and emotional and of energetic character. Once, when he saw Jesus walking on water, he jumped out of his boat and also walked on water until he began to ask himself by what supernatural right he was doing it. Then he sank, screaming for help.

He had been called Simon, Simon Peter, Cephas and Symeon. He was probably called Cephas in Aramaic by Jesus and this, in Greek, is rendered Peter - - the stone, the rock, originally, he was Simon bar Jona, the son of Jonas. Peter was married and lived in a substantial house in Capernaum with his wife and his mother-in-law, and his brother Andrew (who fished with him and was partners of James and John the sons of Zebedee). He was an affectionate husband, married in early life to a woman named Perpetua who bore him children and later suffered martyrdom. He was a man of ordinary education contrasted with those who were educated in the schools of the rabbis.

When Jesus recruited Peter at the lakeside in Galilee, he promised to make him a "fisher of men". Later Jesus pointed at Peter and said, "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." These words must have come as a shock to the apostles who, until that time were not aware that Jesus would build his own church. The twelve had assumed, all along, that the Messiah was planning to reorient the worship of the Hebrew congregation at the pleasure of God the Father.

Jesus also endowed Peter with enormous powers - - almost unlimited powers - - when he said, I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in the heavens, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in the heavens." In the years ahead, Peter would be arrested three times; he would preach the testament of Jesus far and wide; he would grow old and feeble and, according to some authorities, he would die, crucified, asking that he be turned head down.

His greatest utterance, a marvel of faith and humility, was; “You know all things, Lord. You know that I love you.”

MARY the VIRGIN MOTHER, was of the House of David. It is probable that Mary was between twelve and thirteen years of age when she was betrothed. When she was married she may be been fourteen and it is not likely that she was older than fifteen or sixteen. She gave birth to the Messiah in a cave in Bethlehem (dirty from the dung of animals) and was probably without the aid of a midwife. She would have, by tradition, breast-fed her child for three years and fled with Him to Egypt to save his life. It was she who taught Jesus the precepts of his faith as he sat upon her knee. It was she who enrolled Him in a rabbinic school so that He would learn to read and write and study more of the Law. It was she who marveled at her son’s divine wisdom and followed Him on much of His ministry. And it was she who witnessed his execution and helped prepare Him for the tomb. It was she who understood the purpose of the visit by the angel and yet wept when His tomb was discovered empty.

MARY MAGDALENE from the town of Magdala on the Sea of Galilee just below Capernaum. She was a young “woman of the street” in Jerusalem far from her home. Jesus saved her from death by stoning and said, “Neither do I condemn you, go and from now on, sin no more.” From that moment, she followed the Master almost as a member of the family and was at His mother’s side during the ordeal at the cross. She worshipped the divine Jesus and, perhaps, in the silence of her heart, loved Jesus the man. She first discovered the empty tomb and was the first to see the resurrected Christ.

MARY of ALPHEUS was the mother of the apostle James the Less. She was an older sister of the Mother of the Messiah, that is say the aunt of Jesus. She contributed what funds she could to the ministry of our Lord and followed on the missions when practical. She was at Golgotha and helped prepare the body of Jesus with scented spices and helped to wrap Him in linen strips. She had tried to comfort the weeping mother by reminding her that His death was not defeat. Yet, although darkness had prevailed over the face of the earth for four hours, she did not even notice, as the sepulcher stone rolled into place, that the sun was shining.

THE JEWISH WORLD

CHAPTER 3

Palestine, the land in which Jesus had performed his ministry, was, in fact, the Jewish World. The people of Palestine were men of peace. They were brave, sensitive, and articulate. Most important of all, they worshipped the one God, Yahweh. Wherever he went, the Jew was clean, conscientious, sentimental, had fine family spirit, was easily moved to pity, sensitive to insult, understood and used the skills of the tongue better than any other people, and was

quickly moved to joy at the sight of a child. He would not fight in any army which battled on the Sabbath; but he was unafraid to die and sometimes bared his neck to the sword rather than submit to an order which ran counter to his Law.

The work day began at the first hour and paused at the sixth (6:00 A.M. to noon). At that time, every one rested indoors until the ninth hour (3:00 P.M.) and worked until the twelfth (6:00 P.M.). From noon until 3:00 P.M. only dogs, soldiers and insects plied their trades.

Although it was not a land of timber, there were some trees - - cypress and cedar, olive, mulberry, apricot, plum, pine and dogwood - - but they stood in such small hummocks that wood, as a product, was rare. Homes, walls, and even bridges were built of stone. The most plentiful was limestone, which lay like heavy gray cheese beneath a few feet of topsoil and clay. Outside the house a flight of stone steps usually led up to the roof. Often a man sat up there and plied his trade as tailor, leather worker, weaver or shoemaker. Shepherds cut their homes into the hills, hacking into the soft limestone and fashioning apartments.

Cereals were planted on the lowlands and along the hillside. Fruit seemed to be growing everywhere and it was superlative. The women of Rome were always willing to pay a little more for Palestine grapes, olives, dates, figs and sweet chestnuts.

The domestic animals were donkeys, dogs, sheep goats, and camels. The wild animals, plentiful in the mountains, were bears, lions, hyenas, foxes, jackals and mountain goats. Chickens were new and popular in Palestine; ducks were becoming known and so were geese. The Israelites were accustomed to pigeons and had bred them and cross-bred them for centuries. Doves were sold for sacrifices in the temple. Their coat was low and all but the very poorest could afford them.

Farming practices in Palestine were modern, which is to say that they were as advanced as those of Egypt and Greece. The young Jewish farmer had no writings to guide him; he was taught orally by his farther or by a relative to whom he was apprenticed. Plowing was done by locking a neck yoke on two oxen. Attached to the yoke was a heavy tree branch which dragged between the two animals. The rear of the branch held an upright wooden plow which furrowed the earth and turned it over. He scattered grain by hand from bags slung from his shoulders. He reaped - - and so did his wife and children - - with sickles made of flint or iron. Threshing and winnowing were done on a public floor along the main road. Sometimes winnowing was done on the flat roof of the farmer's house; also, it was used for drying unpressed grapes or ripening of fruits and now and then for sleeping on hot nights.

It is doubtful that the city of Jerusalem ever housed more than 50 – 60,000 people. The circumference of the walls was less than three miles and inside were about 300 acres. The great temple area occupied 1600 feet by 970 feet. The Fortress Antonia bit into the northwest

corner. The west side of the city was dotted with palaces and the big homes of the rich. The bulk of the population concentrated in the southeast corner where the poor lived near the waters of Siloe. On holy days, there may have been as many as 1,000,000 pilgrims in the city present to worship Yahweh in the place where He dwelled.

The city was half a mile in the sky, and this brought with it a certain clearness and coolness or air. The streets were narrow and hilly and full of plodding donkeys laden with commerce of the metropolis. They walked slowly and independently, unafraid of the long reed in the hand of the owner who shuffled a few paces behind.

The people, in their striped cloaks seemed to be always on the move in the narrow alleys - - in two opposite streams, melting and blending and falling away from each other. Now and then the servants of a rich man would call for clearance for his litter, sleds loaded with stone for new buildings or goods stacked high on their backs fresh in from a desert sojourn with the caravans.

Sandal makers stared absent-mindedly from shops, their lips full of small nails; a scribe sat at the base of a wall and wrote letters for those who could not write; a rich woman bought brocade for a coat. It would be placed on a scale and everyone watched as she placed gold coins in the opposite scale and, when it hung in balance, the brocade was hers.

The shops along the streets were narrow across the front and open. Some, like the potters, banded together and mass-produced jars and urns and dishes along factory lines. There were butchers and grocers and wine merchants and exporters and jewelers and doctors and carpenters and vendors and hair dressers and basket weavers and morticians, stone quarries, fishermen, tailors, artisans of bronze and iron, blacksmiths, sailors, locksmiths, cask makers, mid-wives, chemists, shoemakers, painters, millers, tent makers, itinerant laborers, couriers and slaves (who wore large identification tags around their necks).

There were complete markets for ironware, cattle, wool, clothing and bolt goods, wood, bread, vegetables and fruit. The big market days were Mondays and Thursdays; then the courts met and there were readings of the Torah. The prices of all commodities were fixed by the municipal officials of Jerusalem, who were appointed by the high priests with the assent of the Procurator. All prices were constantly being adjusted by the city fathers so that the merchants could realize a set profit on their merchandise - - no more - - no less. The local eating houses did a flourishing business; what they had to offer was a menu of fresh fish or salt fried locusts, hot vegetables, soup, pastry, fruitcake and fruit juices, wine and Egyptian beer. The people ate two regular meals; at noon and after sundown. Some drank a brew of herbs or ate bread at dawn, but in the main, Palestine was a two-meal country. The poorer families sometimes boiled a sheep tail in a pot of vegetables. They ate cucumbers, beans, lentils, onion, leeks

vegetable marrow and garlic - - and, on holy days, pascal lamb. The diet, severe as it was, was augmented by dates, figs, olives, and watermelon.

The olive was the most important commodity of all. The groves seemed to be everywhere. The poorest home had its olive tree out front, small and lacy looking, with a twisted trunk festooned with burls. A good tree would yield ten gallons of oil. Some olives were preserved in jars of salt water.

The sons of the wealthy fell more readily into the importing and exporting trade, or into the insurance of caravans. Palestine exported wheat, olive oil, balsam, honey and dried fruits. The country bought wood, metals, apples from Crete, cheese, fish, wine, Medea and Egyptian beer, dress goods from India, veils, sandals, dinnerware, baskets, jugs and basins.

On the hills around Jerusalem and throughout the country shepherds seldom drove their flocks of sheep. They led them. Each shepherd had his own whistle or sound of voice which sheep could hear from afar and then would move toward him at once. When shepherds met, their flocks intermingled so that even Solomon, in all his wisdom, would not have been able to separate them with justice. When the shepherds parted, one whistled softly; his sheep, all his sheep and no other, extricated themselves from the mass and followed him.

There were no trends or fashions in clothing. The oral law detailed the clothing that a male Jew should wear as well as female clothing. The women wore a kolbur or tunica made of linen and looking like a petticoat hanging to mid-thigh; over this was a baldinajja (a full-length linen dress); then the istomukhvia (a tie on robe); a mid-body scarf referred to as the pirzomata; over the outer dress was a colored girdle striped in the colors of the tribe. The scarf worn on the head was full and protected the modesty of the woman by hiding much of her face. The ends were folded so that they hung down her back like a long pointed veil. All women, except harlots, always covered their heads. Their hair was arranged in elaborate braids. Small caps with gold baubles and sequins were sometimes worn.

The men wore a tight fitting cotton cap or turban rounded on top (sometimes the cap was of leather and pointed). The shepherd people of Judea continued to wear the headcloth bound with a twisted cloth or cord much as desert people wear to this day. The cloak was a tallith, or prayer shawl which had wide stripes of vivid earth colors and long pointed open sleeves. Underneath, they wore a loose tunic, usually without sleeves, and this covered the body from neck to ankles. It was made of one piece and was bought with no hole for the head (to prove that it was not a second-hand garment). After purchase, the Jew cut a V-shaped neck and then girded it with a cord at the waist. The tallith or aba, worn over the tunic by every male Jew as ordered by law, was a reminder of the separateness of the people of Israel.

Palestine was a Theocracy and, in effect the temple was the center of all worship as well as being the royal palace and the supreme court of the land. The people were subject to multitudinous laws, the two primary ones being the rite of circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath.

Being a good Jew, was in itself, difficult. Most of the teachings were oral and this led to disagreements among teachers who, in fairness, would quote a given law and then quote the interpretation of that law as given by the opposing schools of rabbinical thought. The law seemed to thrive on argument. Children from the age of five were taught the rules of the Sabbath before they were taught to add or subtract.

Education in Palestine was compulsory. Every town has a school and each child, at the age of six had to attend. Earlier than this, it was the duty of the mother to instruct the child in religion; in household tasks not beyond his ability to perform; and in good behavior. Most youngsters studied the Scriptures at least until the age of ten.

The market of Annas marred the serene beauty of the temple. Sellers shouted and waved to pilgrims all day long, and haggled over prices. The animals bleated and snorted and filled the courts with the ammonia like fumes of dung. On ordinary days, a poor man could buy two pigeons for sacrifice for the equivalent of a few cents - - but at Passover time, the price was often multiplied by fifty. In bitterness, the poor called this place "The bazaar of the Sons of Annas".

THE GREAT SANHEDRIN

CHAPTER 4

The story of the temple begins with David. He lived ten centuries before Jesus and, at the time, the Jews were still new to the Promised Land. The tribes had been ruled by a series of judges, and there was little unity. The people demanded a king and got Saul. But Saul disobeyed a judicial order and was replaced by David.

David felt that there would not be a nation until the Jews found a seat of government. He liked Jerusalem, but he would have to conquer it first. David reigned forty years. So did his son Solomon who built the first temple.

After the fourth century B. C. the reign of Palestine fell to a succession of high priests, who ruled civically and religiously. Jerusalem, as city, became the toy of any despot strong enough to take it and hold it. It fell to Alexander the Great, to Ptolemy, the Syrians, the kings of Egypt and finally to the Caesars. Each of these had an appreciation of the temper of his subjects and, in the main the Jews were permitted to worship as they pleased. Local authority

remained in the hands of the high priests, who were assisted by a board of elders called the Sanhedrin.

King Herod, the Great, had ruled Palestine as a puppet of the Caesar's from 40 B.C. until his death in 4 B.C. The kingdom was then divided into a tetrarchy by Rome passing one fourth of the kingdom to each of Herod's sons. To the life of Jesus, the most important of these four kings was Herod Antipas, king of Galilee and Perea, who, like his father, became a personal spy for Rome. Another tetrarch, Archelaus, ruled over Judea and Samaria including the city of Jerusalem. He was more like his father and was cruel, inhuman, and offended the High Priests by marrying his brother's wife. The Roman Emperor, to prevent an eminent uprising, replaced him after ten years of bitter reign with a Roman Procurator or Governor. These Governors, who were plagued with the chronic troubles and confrontations with the Sanhedrin and from Herod Antipas, who informed Rome through personal notes on their conduct, passed in rapid succession until Pontius Pilate arrived in Judea in A. D. 26.

The Sanhedrin had come into being a few centuries before the time of Jesus. It was the supreme court of Palestine and the legislative body, too. In the main, it was composed of priests, scribes and elders - - the finest minds in Palestine. It was called by the people the Great Sanhedrin and many Jews worshipped daily in the temple without ever seeing it in deliberation.

The Romans, who had mastered the art of ruling subject peoples, enhanced the prestige of the Sanhedrin and gave it greater power. They permitted the Sanhedrin and gave it greater power. They permitted the Sanhedrin to have supreme authority in religious matters and a fair amount of power in civil affairs.

The priests, Ancients and Scribes who made up the Great Sanhedrin worked under the high priest, who could call a session at any time. If the current high priest was weak, the Sanhedrin became strong; if the high priest was strong, the Sanhedrin became an instrument in his hands. Caiaphas was strong, and had the backing of his father-in-law, Annas; the Sanhedrin of his time followed rather than led him.

Under the Sanhedrin were the seven thousand priests of the great temple, in addition, the temple guards and the rabbis and civil authorities of Judea. In Criminal cases the Sanhedrin was always reminded of an old aphorism: "A Sanhedrin which passes the death sentence more than once every seven years is too hotheaded".

The meetings were irregular, depending upon the amount of business which required the attention of the court. It met in the Chamber of Hewn Stone on the southwest edge of the inner court of the temple, although it could and did meet in the home of Caiaphas at his order.

Many of the rules governing the behavior of the Sanhedrin in session were not put in writing until centuries later, but it is probably fair to say that the court sat in a semicircle, so that the members could look upon one another. They sat in three graduated rows, with the high priest in the center and the Ancients flanking him according to seniority.

Two clerks sat in front, facing the court. One was stationed at the left; one at the right. In criminal cases, when all of the testimony was in, the clerks called the names of the members, starting with the youngest members so that, if they differed with the elders, they would not be embarrassed. One of the clerks collected all the votes for acquittal; the other tallied all those who favored conviction.

Trials seldom extended beyond one day's work. Civil cases were tried by day and settled by night. Criminal cases were tried by day and settled the next day, unless the accused was acquitted, in which case the court freed him on the same day. But if he was convicted he could not be sentenced until the following day, by which time the collective mind of the court had theoretically cooled. For this reason it was against the law to open a criminal procedure on the eve of the Sabbath or on the eve of a holy day, because no one could be sentenced on those days.

The word Sanhedrin comes from the Greek word "synedrion" - - as assembly, council or conference - - and the Jews used the word formally, but in daily conversation the Great Sanhedrin was referred to as a Beth Din (court of judgement). Its chief was called the Nasi (the leader).

Politically the Sanhedrin maintained a balance between the two parties; Sadducees and Pharisees; believers in the written law and believers in the oral law. As the supporters of the oral tradition, the Pharisees were louder and more voluble and their public behavior was more holy than that of the Sadducees. "Judaism was doomed," they shouted, unless the Pharisaical oral interpretations of the law of God became the law of all Judea.

Membership in the Great Sanhedrin was for life. Some, in old age, withdrew to retirements. The rule was for the members to die in office. So far as is known, only two classes of men were excluded from membership: bastards and converts.

Politically, the power of the Sanhedrin was great at the dawn of Christianity. The people were looking to the high priest for leadership against the Herods and the Romans. At this time the high priest was more than the leader of the Sanhedrin; he was, in effect, the chief of state, and the Sanhedrin was bound to look to him for leadership and was inclined to follow his dictates.

The Sanhedrin had its own laws, and the most important of these, so far as Jesus was concerned was: "A tribe, a false prophet and a high priest are not judged save by a court of seventy-one." If the Saviour was to be arrested and tried, it would have to be under this law, as a false prophet. And he could not be judged by any less a tribunal than the Great Sanhedrin.

All sentences in criminal cases were severe. There were no prisons; no asylums. Banishment was a minor sentence. The usual sentence was death in one of four ways: stoning, burning, decapitation or strangulation. Of these, the most common was stoning. This was accomplished by collecting a crowd and pushing the condemned from an eminence. The crowd looked down. If he moved, they threw stones at him until he was dead.

Each sentence of death was passed on, before execution, to the Roman Procurator. He usually affirmed it without question. If he felt so disposed or if someone had pleaded the case with him privately, the Procurator might summon the accused and accusers and hear the case before his own judicial chair. If he reversed the verdict, the condemned was acquitted and the Sanhedrin was powerless. If he confirmed it, the Governor often forced the prisoner to undergo this Roman form of execution; crucifixion.

In addition to the Sadducees and Pharisees, there were political splinter parties in Palestine. The Zealots out-Phariseed the Pharisees. They were also the jingoists of the nation, the super-nationalists of Palestine. They would admit no one's authority except God's and carried out this principle with such rigor that the Zealots often submitted to cruel punishment and death rather than bend the knee to anyone.

The Essenes were a special group who lived in villages throughout Palestine, but were centered on En-Gedi on the near shore of the Dead Sea. They were ascetic religionists numbering perhaps for thousand and they administered their affairs like monks. To be accepted as an Essene, a Jew had first to serve a year's novitiate, and then two years of probation before the solemn vows of membership were permitted. They practiced communism; there was no private ownership of goods or tools or produce or money. Marriage was forbidden to Essenes. They worked on farms, and when they were not working, the Essenes prayed. Other than prayer, silence was enjoined upon them at all times. They were so ultra-strict in their interpretation of the law of Moses that, on Sabbaths, they refrained from all bodily functions whatsoever.

It seemed that false Messiahs came to Jerusalem daily. In each case a small following of "believers" would accept him and the result would be a splinter group breaking away from the temple enrollment. And always, there was the same denouncement, the priests of the temple hooted at the false Messiah and the Pharisees baited him with questions designed to trap him and the people demanded miracles as proof of his divinity. In almost all cases, the man would

soon be exposed, and then Jerusalem would go back to its normal life, determined not to be seduced spiritually again. As the interpreter of the law, Caiaphas had the right to insist that anyone who claimed to be a Messiah be sent to him for examination, uniformly, they strove to prove that there was no Messiah: that anyone who claimed to be was automatically an “Egyptian magician” who deserved death for blasphemy; which left no room for acceptance should the true Messiah come,

Caiaphas was interested in only one proposition: the continuance in office of Caiaphas as high priest, and the maintenance of the temple in its current status - - spiritually and economically. There must be no threat to either of these things.

THE ROMAN WORLD

CHAPTER 5

At this time the Roman Empire was over seven hundred years of age and still growing - - though already it included a great part of the world Jesus had come to save. And certainly it touched his life, his immediate human awareness, in a sense that the other great areas of the earth could not. It hugged the rim of the Mediterranean Sea and it included many people of many colors. The banners of Rome snapped in breezes along the Rhine, the Danube, the Atlas mountains of North Africa; in Portugal, Syria, Belgium, Egypt and over much of civilized world between.

Tiberius was the Emperor. He was seventy, a lean acidulous man who suffered from acne. His greatest happiness came from study. His deepest unhappiness had come from his mother, Livia. She nagged him all the way up the political ladder and, when he finally stepped on the top rung, he never looked at Livia again.

As a monarch, Tiberius was in many ways a just though merciless man. His rule in the provinces was more efficient than at home, and the legate or procurator when Tiberius caught oppressing subject peoples was subject to the unpleasant consequences of his anger! He kept these officials in an almost constant state of dread; as we have seen, Tiberius was chronically suspicious and he used informers. Having appointed Pontius Pilate to the small post of Procurator of Palestine on the endorsement of Pilate’s wife and of Sejanus, a confidant and spy, he would still remove Pilate from office and banish him on the slightest pretext, although he had once said that he liked to keep procurators in office for long periods of time on the theory that, once they had fattened on their stealings from the people, they would leave the people alone.

The attire of the women of Jerusalem was strictly prescribed. But the ladies of Rome were just learning the uses of delicate fabrics as undergarments. Attractive scarves dressed the

shoulders carelessly. Filmy veils hid nothing of the face of a woman except a mediocre complexion (cosmetics were in use then too, to say nothing of wigs, hairdresses and manicures). In the chill of winter the women covered themselves with attractive fur coats. Silks and linens were used by both men and women, but dyes were expensive. It was fashionable to embroider rich materials with gold thread or silver, and dresses, carpets curtains coverlets and head veils were thus decorated.

Palestine was seldom a source of worry to the Legate in Syria. It was small and weak and without a native army. Moreover, it was flanked by Egypt and Syria. At the time of the trouble between Jesus and the high priests, Palestine -- or parts of it-- had been a protectorate and a province of Rome for ninety-three years.

No matter how benevolent Rome was to Palestine, the Jews were unhappy because they cherished freedom above all else. Their greatest annual festival was the celebration of the passing of their people of the bondage of Egypt. Even if the Romans had treated the Jews as equals, the people of Palestine would not have been happy in the partnership. In a world in which confraternity was becoming increasingly important, the little sandy garden on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean wanted to stand alone.

Still, the responsible Jews readily admitted that they had learned much from the Romans in the field of engineering -- how to build better roads, drainage ditches, aqueducts, sewage disposal plants. They had even learned some social graces. On the other hand, the Hebrews detested the sight of the Roman patrols -- the Hebrews detested the sight of the Roman patrols -- four soldiers and a centurion -- on their roads and, even more than that, bridled at the many small taxes imposed on them. There were taxes on deed transfers, hidden taxes on food bought in stores, taxes on slaves (the Jews owned few), taxes on profits, duties on exports, duties on imports, a general sales tax of one per cent, death taxes and an emergency tax to defray the cost of putting down rebellion in any of the other provinces.

Most galling of all was the fact that the Romans did not collect the taxes themselves. In all towns and villages, they leased the right to collect taxes to Jews. This traffic was administered by the Procurator, who knew that, say, 50,000 shekels should come from the town of Cana each year in all types of taxes. He would lease the right to collect this tax to a local citizen, and back the man's authority with soldiers. For this service, Rome might be willing to let the publican keep 10% as his fee. Of course, if the tax collector was voracious he might collect more than 50,000 shekels, in which case he would earn more than 5,000 as his share. The Romans kept close watch on these matters, and seldom permitted the collectors to gouge the people beyond small amounts of graft. They also watched the collectors to prevent double dealing. For example, if a merchant owed an annual tax of 500 shekels, he might bargain with the collector to take 250 shekels officially, and give the collector 150 more secretly. The

publican then made up the deficit by overtaxing the poor and the ignorant, Rome flogged such men.

In the eternal city, all taxes came under the eye of an appointee of the Emperor called the Censor. He had to know how many subjects of Caesar there were in each of the thirty provinces, how much gross business was done by each province, and how much should come to the treasurer in Rome from each province.

In and around Rome people traveled by chariots, drawn by good horses, by sedan chairs, carried by slaves, by wagon, singly or in caravans; and on the backs of donkeys. Travel by sea was slow and often dangerous. The Mediterranean Sea was closed to all but emergency traffic between November 10 and March 10, because in that interval it was considered stormy and unreliable. The swiftest time for a courier between Rome and Jerusalem was forty-six days.

Twenty-one years before the birth of Jesus, the Emperor Augustus split all Roman provinces into two classes. Those which were considered to be secure -- Italy, for example -- were called senatorial provinces and were administered by the Roman Senate. This body appointed proconsuls to manage them. They served one year and were seldom reappointed. The second type of province was usually on the frontiers of the Empire and was administered by the Emperor through his appointment of procurators or legates. The Senate pro-consuls were usually Romans of Senate rank: the Procurators were often businessmen who were owned a political favor. These served until they displaced the Emperor. Palestine was a frontier province.

As a unit, the Roman army lasted longer than any other military institution in the history of man. It was born as a crude instrument of defense; it lived as a gleaming spear ready for fight. It began with citizen soldiers; it ended with long-term professionals. It started with the protection of the City of Rome; its history was climaxed with the conquest of the world.

In Palestine, the Twelfth Legion was divided into two brigades. The first, composed of Roman soldiers, served at Caesarea. The second, mostly Syrians, was quartered along the Arabian frontier and garrisoned at Fortress Antonia. With them were special cohorts of camel corps, archers, engineers, besiegers, medical service, base hospitals, veterinary hospitals, and the questionari or military police.

Although the Jews did not eat meat except on holidays, the Syrian troops stationed in Jerusalem received two pounds of meat and grain per man per day. The shepherds in the hills around Jerusalem and Bethlehem sold a great deal of their lamb and mutton to the Romans.

The Syrian, officered by Romans, were seldom sent elsewhere to battle. They remained on duty in Palestine, and the aloofness of the Jews toward soldiers far from home and lonely,

bred ill will. The people often spat when they saw squads of men marching along the roads, each man with a metal helmet, a coral-colored cape pinched at the neck, a short-sleeved tunic which covered him to the thighs, and hard leather sandals fastened with ropes across the instep. The soldiers were not permitted to reply to hostile actions by citizens. Even in off-duty hours they found no amusement in Jerusalem, and spent the time rolling dice on the big Lithostrodes.

The current Procurator in Palestine was Pontius Pilate, a man of middle years who had none of the marks of greatness except ambition. There is no record of Pilate in Roman statecraft before A. D. 26, when he arrived in Caesarea to be the new Procurator. He may have been a merchant, or a minor official.

He had a regal bearing and he was jealous of the prerogatives of his office, but it is felt that his appointment was due to the ties of his wife, Claudia Procula, to the Roman throne. She is said to have been the granddaughter of Caesar Augustus, but whether this is true or not is of no consequence because her benevolent power came from Sejanus, a counselor to Tiberius Caesar. Sejanus convinced Tiberius that Pilate should be made Governor of the Jews, and not only did he secure the appointment but he also won for Claudia Procula the rare privilege of accompanying her husband to his post.

Claudia was socially ambitious and she entertained often at the Procurator's palaces in Caesarea, Jerusalem and in Samaria. She was also superstitious in matters religious, and although she worshipped the many gods of the Emperor - - including the sacred person of Tiberius himself - - she feared to interfere with the practices of any other cult, including that of the Jews.

This was not true of her husband. Pilate was an atheist who bent the knee to Roman gods only because it was as much a part of Roman life as a toga or a perfumed coiffure. His Emperor had given him the *ius gladii*, the power to pronounce the sentence of death and with the two or three Roman legions who stayed along the eastern borders of Palestine, he needed nothing else.

Pilate despised Jews. He used the *ius gladii* at his whim, and he traveled around his domain accompanied by no less than a cohort of troops - perhaps five hundred men - - who at his wish, beat and killed protesting crowds of Jews. He was intelligent, cantankerous, ulcerous and sometimes brilliant in conversation.

He succeeded Valerius Gratus, who was recalled to Rome because he had chronic trouble with the high priests. Almost as fast as Valerius Gratus appointed them, the chief priests sabotaged his rule. In turn, Annas Ishmel, Eleazar and Simon had been high priests. The

last one appointed before Valerius Gratus left for home was Joseph whom the Jews called Qayapha and the Romans called Caiaphas.

Pilate met him, preened himself in the aura of servile respect with Caiaphas exuded and decided to keep him in office. The Procurator understood that the high priesthood was actually in the hands of old Annas, who had not only served as high priest himself but whose four sons also had served. Caiaphas was the old man's son-in-law and Pontius Pilate knew that in civil and religious matters he was talking to the ears and eyes of Annas when he conferred with Caiaphas, but as long as there was no insurrection the Governor was content.

Two of the things which Rome had told Pilate before he left for his new duties were that the policy of Rome toward the emotional little province was paternal appeasement; and that Pilate would be responsible for his acts to the Legate in Syria, his new superior.

Among the other fundamentals which the new Procurator learned when he got to his castle in Caesarea were; All Jews were exempt from military service in Roman legions, which made Palestine the only province where the subjects of Rome could not be pressed into the protection of Rome; a Jew could not be called to court on the Sabbath; Roman soldiers could not carry images of their Emperor on banners; Roman coins in Palestine were especially minted and bore symbols rather than engravings of the Caesars.

He had not been in the job long when he learned that King Herod Antipas would not try to curry favor with him. As Pilate, at every opportunity showed the King and the people that the Procurator was the real ruler, bit by bit an estrangement came about between these two cruel men. Pilate hoped that Herod Antipas would quietly sue for peace between them in time, but Herod, too, was proud, and he made no move to warm the chill. It added nothing to Pilate's peace of mind to find that the King enjoyed committing to writing the peccadilloes and administrative errors of Roman governors, and forwarding them to Caesar Tiberius.

For a time Pilate seemed to be stubbornly determined on courses of action only when those actions were wrong. For example, the citizens of Jerusalem had been nourished for centuries on the water from the Virgin's Fountain and the Pool of Siloe. These ran thin and weak in the summer months but the people were accustomed to dry spells and were in no mood to pay for additional water.

In A.D. 28, when Pilate had been in Palestine less than two years, he decided that additional water was needed, and without consulting the people or the high priests and the Sanhedrin, he ordered his engineers to build a stone aqueduct between Solomon's Pools, outside of Bethlehem, and the walled city. The Jews protested, and as always they protested with demonstrations in the outer courts of the temple.

To show his contempt, the Procurator took the money for the new aqueduct from the Corban, the temple treasurer. This knowledge raced from tongue to tongue, and at Passover time the Jews prepared for a frenzied demonstration against Pilate and Pilate prepared to cancel their demonstration.

He ordered a group of Roman soldiers to attire themselves as Jews and mingle with the demonstrators in the courts of the temple. This was done, and when the Jews began their opposition by running toward Fortress Antonia and beating their breasts and wailing, the pseudo-Jews brought out clubs and whips from their garments and beat the Jews and left many dead in the Court of the Gentiles.

Too late Pilate learned that the dead Jews were not from Jerusalem, but were pilgrims from King Herod's Galilee. The soldiers had killed the wrong people and the Procurator was too proud to acknowledge the mistake. The chill between Pilate and Herod deepened into animosity.

A greater contrast could not be imagined than the lax, indulgent, highly civilized life of Rome, and the strict life of Palestine where every last detail of daily living was regulated by the law of a stern religion. Yet these two worlds must have figured with equal importance in the mind of Jesus as he spoke parables to teach the people, and these two worlds joined to pronounce the most important death sentence in the history of man.

JESUS THE MAN

CHAPTER 6

Jesus was born about the time of the winter solstice in 6 B.C. The Messiah was born in a cave in Bethlehem - - the only child of Mary. There are two aspects of this birth; The natural and the super-natural. Each is so thoroughly integrated with the other that, like a two-colored garment, it is impossible to pull the thread of one for examination without destroying the raiment.

Mary was of the house of David. So was her husband, a bearded young carpenter named Joseph.

Escaping the wrath of Herod by means of a brief flight into Egypt. Mary and Joseph brought the infant "home" to a normal life. Jesus grew up in Nazareth, where the neighbors thought of him as the son of Joseph. His Mother taught the law to him long before he went to school to learn to read and write. He "advanced in wisdom and age and grace" but not out of proportion to his years. He had neighborhood playmates, and if we can guess the child from

what we know of the man, he was a serious child. He would not be given to pranks, although he was probably imaginative enough to want to play in sand piles and dream.

The Greek city of Sepphoria was a few miles over the hill, and the Jews of this part of Galilee did much of their “big” shopping in the markets there. Joseph went there many times, holding Jesus by the hand and listening to the swift Greek words of the shopkeepers. There was a government arsenal in the town, and soldiers. When his father bought a new cutting tool, a shopkeeper may have offered the child a “sweet” (a sugared spice from a jar); but, if so, the child was taught, as all Jewish children were, not to accept the gift from a Gentile but to bow his deepest and thank his loudest.

Nazareth was, among towns in Palestine, a cipher in the northern hills. A nothing. In Judea, they made jokes about Nazareth. The old scriptures mentioned many places in the land of the Israelites, but Nazareth was not among them. The name comes from the Hebrew; Nazar, a rod. In the old Scriptures, Isaias had said that the Messiah would be a rod of Jesse.

Every year in the month of Nisan, Joseph went up to Jerusalem for the Pasch. He left his wife and his foster son at home until the boy was twelve. From that time Jesus was an adult male Jew, as responsible as his foster father in religious duties. Mary was not obliged to go to Jerusalem, but her piety was as close to her as the next breath, and she accompanied her men. It was she who taught Jesus the precepts of his faith.

Study did not come easily to Jesus simply because of the divine side of his nature. When he assumed the nature of a human, he became, in a sense, vulnerable as a human. If a knife slipped in his fingers he bled like any other boy. If his mother rebuked him, he felt sorrow. If, in Joseph’s shop, he planned a piece of pine to exact thickness and Joseph complimented him, Jesus reddened with pride and tried harder to please.

Most families arrived in the Holy City a day or two before the 14th of Nisan. Some left the day after the Feast of the Pasch; but the pious ones stayed inside or outside Jerusalem for the entire week of the Passover, until the 21st of Nisan. When Jesus was twelve years of age, a youngster perhaps a little taller than the average and more serious than most, Joseph and Mary left the Holy City with their Nazareth caravan for home and discovered after a day’s journey, that their son was nowhere to be found.

They were frantic with worry, and said farewell to their friends and hurried back to the temple. When they got to Jerusalem, they did not find Him. They searched in the place where they had spent the week. He was not there. Their worry was intense beyond words. This child was more than their son. He had a sacred mission, and only they knew about it. He was a special charge from God, and they had lost Him. They hurried through the narrow streets, looking in shops, running to catch up with each tall, slender boy ahead of them only to find that

it was not Jesus; asking authorities if a boy without parents had been found, or reported. Everywhere the answer was the same, no one had seen Him.

On the third day, fatigued beyond tears, they walked into the temple to appeal to His true Father for help. There, on one of the porticoes, they saw their boy seated among rabbis, listening to them propound the intricacies of the law, asking questions and answering questions. The rabbis seemed to be charmed with the intellect and the knowledge of the youth.

Jesus looked up at his Mother. He seemed to be surprised at the anguish he saw in her face and in Joseph's. "Why did you search for me?" He said, softly, placatingly. "I had to answer my Father's call and did you not know it?" No doubt the rabbis around him were mystified by this answer, and there is reason to believe that neither Mary nor Joseph understood. His true Father was God the Father, and His Father lived here.

Still, He was an obedient son. He stood and thanked the rabbis, and He left with his parents for Nazareth. From that time until Jesus was thirty-three years of age, a matter of twenty-one years, He lived in Nazareth, known only to his own family, His kinfolk and His friends.

There He was part of two large families – Joseph's and Mary's. He had many relatives, and the custom of the Orient was to cherish all of them, even the outermost branch of cousins. In fact, cousins of the first and second order were called "ah" (brothers) and "ahoth" (sister) so that Jesus was said to have many brothers and sisters.

None of these thought Jesus was in any way remarkable. A little more thoughtful, perhaps, than the other boys of His age; disinclined to joke or to flirt with the pretty ones among the cousins; more inclined to sit with the older men and listen, or to dip into the outer edge of the conversation.

It is understandable that He was not considered to be holier than the others because piety, to the Jews, was such an all pervading part of daily life that religion invaded their eating, drinking, thinking, talking and even their sleeping habits. The only way in which one good person might seem to be more religious than another would be if he showed signs of being a prophet. Jesus showed none.

He helped His foster father in the shop and, as Jesus grew tall and strong, He assumed more and more of Joseph's work, especially when Joseph's health declined. And when that quiet, faithful man died, there were the thoughts of the son as He stood over all that was left of the man who had given Him "legality" and much more than that - - his love. The first adult

tears of the human Jesus were shed at this time. But, of course, in this grief He was not alone. The boy and His mother were together.

The public life - - the ministry to redeem mankind - - began in the latter part of A.D. 27. Jesus was thirty-three years of age, a mature man whose eyes seemed to reflect a secret sorrow. He spent less time in the shop and more time among the people, teaching and listening. Many in the Galilean country knew Him, and He knew many, but they did not know His mission, nor did He speak of it. He was acquainted with their problems and their pleasures and they knew Him as one of their people, the true Galilean with the soft, slurring, sibilating tongue.

The farmers in the north knew Jesus on sight. He walked the roads alone, and barefooted unless the journey was to be long. He wore a plain white outer garment with no stripes along the hem and he wore no phylacteries. Sometimes the farmers stopped work to cross the fields and talk to Jesus. They sought Him as one seeks a learned, sympathetic man - - a teacher - - and they told Him their problems and were astonished at the shrewd solutions He offered.

He was now almost ready to begin His work of salvation, but He knew that, according to Scripture someone would precede Him. "Look!" Isaiah had said, "I am sending ahead of you a messenger, who is to prepare your road: a herald's voice rings out in the desert: make ready the road of the Lord: make straight his paths." Jesus knew that the one ahead of Him would be the one who had preceded Him in birth; John, son of the aged Elizabeth.

The cousin of Jesus was now in the desert. He had grown to be a fierce ascetic, given to long, rolling phrases of denunciation. When God gave him his apostolate, John came out in to the rich green country on both sides of the River Jordan and he baptized all whom he could convince. He wore a long shirt of camel's hair and a raw leather girdle; he ate locusts and wild honey and his weapon was anger. The people came to him from all over the country, including Jerusalem. He stood shin deep in the Jordan and they confessed their sins and he poured water over them for the remission of sins.

"I baptize with water," John roared; "there is already one in your midst whom you do not know - - the one who is to follow me, the strap of whose sandals I am not fit to untie."

The next day, John was exhorting a crowd on the banks of the Jordan. "Look," said John,

There is to be one called the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said: 'There is a man to follow me who takes precedence over me because He existed before me.' I, too, had not known him; but he had to be made known to Israel, and it is for this purpose that I came to baptize with water." When he saw his tall cousin walking

toward him, John did not recognize Jesus. He had not seen him since childhood. It was 4 p.m. and crowds lined both banks of the River Jordan and listened to the Baptist. He stood knee deep in water, flanked by a disciple, Andrew. The Baptist was shouting and waving his arms, denouncing sin and exhorting the people to repent, when he paused and saw one standing a little apart.

