

Chapter 2

THE BIRTH OF JESUS, THE ONE PROMISED TO ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH

2-1

2/1 On April 17, 10 BC, at five forty-five p.m., in Nazareth, in the Palestinian Galilee, returned to the life of flesh, in this abode also created by God, the spirit who received, according to what had been directed, the name of Jesus. The birth took place in the upper cataluma of his parents' residence.^[63]

2/2 Mary had started feeling the habitual pains of delivery in the early afternoon of April 16. When she gave birth, she asked her mother, who had stayed by her side the entire time, if her baby was like all the other children. Anna, pregnant as well, assured her that he was perfect, and Joseph added that he was more beautiful than the others. Joaquin's youngest immediately thanked God for such a gift, but, suddenly saddened, she lowered her head. Not understanding her behavior, he who generated the baby asked his wife what had happened. She explained to him that she had remembered what the learned prophets of yore had written, that the desired deliverer would save those of his people and then leave; as a consequence, she would lose him. Trying to console her, Jacob's only son asserted that they ignored the Lord's designs concerning the one who had just arrived. Concluding his thought, he remembered the instruction that had been made available to him.

2/3 "I say it was the Lord who showed you how to accept His wish, not me, and that it was the Lord who helped me put this truth in your heart," replied Mary, ratifying her assurance that her son would never belong to her.

2/4 When the conversation was over, Matthew entered the room to

[63] Joseph and Mary's residence, contiguous to that of Matthew's, carved out from a gorge, had a type of main room, whose circumference had a diameter of three meters, and a height of two, where the sheep, donkeys and goats spent the night, also because this would warm the residence during cold nights.

Around the then ample room, out of reach of the animals, there were four holes, called lower catalumas, which served as bedrooms and restrooms. About forty centimeters higher, above the spaces not used by the lower catalumas, which avoided landslides and collapses, there were other four rooms, the **upper cataluma**, as they called it, generally reserved for children and pregnant women. Both catalumas were accessed using irregular staircases.

In case the user of the rough beds, which were about one meter long, sixty-three centimeters tall, and thirty-five centimeters deep, was or became bigger than said beds, he or she easily made them adequate to his or her size.

check if the baby was different, if there was a noticeable sign on him, for he believed that, since the promised one would spread what came from the Lord, he would have wings. He was informed by Joseph that the baby was physically identical to all others.

2/5 As it was customary, when Jesus was three months old, he was taken to the synagogue of Nazareth and introduced to the Lord, an occasion on which a lamb was sacrificed as an offering, in a ritual presided by the rabbi Joste.

2/6 The following night, Eros arrived in the village and gave Joseph a considerable number of Roman coins, telling him that he should use them at the appropriate moment.^[64] Understanding nothing about the episode, he hid them under a stone, and there they would remain until he knew what their use was for.

2/7 On September 13, 10 BC, when Jesus was about to turn five months, Matthew and Anna's child was born. It was also a boy, which caused his father a joy that cannot be described, for Ananias had recently lost his life. The arrival of the newborn was an occasion of jubilation and festivities, and the boy was named after his father.^[65]

2/8 Some time afterwards, Jacob's only protectee, asserting it as true what had happened to him, commented that, in his sleep, he had been with the Lord, who had determined that he move with his family to the next residence, as they used to say, in this case his uncle's, so that Mary's firstborn and his mother-in-law's youngest grew up together, something that was agreed upon by both patriarchs.^[66]

2/9 Weeks went by with no extraordinary event for those who lived through the facts that divided the History of the human beings of this orb into before and after Jesus's birth.

[64] The **Roman coins** had started circulating in the tetrarchy. Whoever possessed them was regarded as powerful, and found no trouble moving around on the roads of that time.

[65] The Hebrew men who already had a son did not name their newborns of the same sex, they let them, when they grew up, choose their own name. This strange custom for us existed so that the father would not be considered unfair, for, if they stipulated their own names, as well as their own protectors' or their grandfathers', to their new heirs, they would show favoritism, something they should not do, especially when they were respectful men, men of strength, as they used to say.

These unnamed children, until they chose a name, were massively called Joseph or Peter. So that they could be told apart, they added the name of their protector to their first name.

However, under special circumstances, when, for example, the father had a boy for the first time, in unions in which only women had been born, afraid that his son would not opt for his name, he named him after himself, but these occasions were rare. Another circumstance was when the father was old and his first son came to this world: he would behave the same way.

[66] Both residences were interconnected through the inside, as usual; however, they had independent external entrances. This made it easier for women to do the housework, for the tasks were assigned according to each one's abilities. This way, one would grind wheat, another would make bread, the other would go fetch water and clean the floor, etc.

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2/10 Joseph, who had become a wood artisan, had fixing plows as his greatest source of income, for the plows, composed of three fitted pieces of wood, needed constant repair. He also shared his relative's worry concerning Herod Antipas's actions, who had not been behaving as usual. They awaited calamitous measures from the oppressor, for there had been an intense visitation of residences to observe whom Judas had guaranteed was the Lord's protectee Himself, visitors who had been coming from minute settlements from around, on top of those who resided in Nazareth. This unusual event would undoubtedly bother the man who called himself king; they nonetheless took no precautions.

2/11 In Bethlehem, Bartholomew, who, because of the certainty impregnated in the oppressed ones of the region, had his words at the time of Mary's trial, a trial which had frustrated him, confirmed, with his usual arrogance, on the occasion of the customary visit that the most influential of the tetrarch's counselors made to the Temple, stated:^[67]

2/12 "I said to all of you that this woman was a blasphemmer. Everyone in this place is saying that she has been elected to bring the one who was promised to the Hebrew prophets, and that the Lord, and not Joseph, the carpenter, is the protector of the one who came from her womb. Everyone in this place believes that the truth is with her!"

2/13 Proud of himself, he concluded:

2/14 "I say it is only a matter of finding Joseph, the carpenter, and Mary, Joaquin's protectee, and this blasphemy will come to an end."

2/15 Zidec proposed with great conviction:

2/16 "Let us put ourselves in front of Herod and, if he wants, we will go look for Joseph and Mary."

2/17 The feared Mammon, having no other option but to persevere in the truculent and unfruitful search that had started since the Morning Star appeared, hearing the vindictive priest's opinion and suggestion, namely, that it was only to Nazareth that the causers of such an uproar could have gone after the child's birth, accepted them with uncommon enthusiasm. The monarch, not willing to accept that the one chosen for the enterprise could fail, and desiring that his orders be followed word by word, obtained from Antipas, who knew the cruelest ones, the name of a savage whom he trusted to head the hunt.

[67] Just like Jerusalem, Bethlehem also had a **Temple**, but a smaller one, regarded as an extension of the one that existed in the ever famous neighboring place. However, the people, like a horde, went to that on the Mount, where the Lord resided.

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2/18 On March 9, BC, Zephir, the one whom Antipas had indicated, and Bartholomew, escorted by twelve armed combatants, headed for Galilee.

2/19 As the first harvest of the promised one approached, one afternoon, Matthew was selling his melons when he was informed of the imminent presence of soldiers who obeyed the usurpers. The ones spreading the news assured him that the head of the group was carrying one of the tyrant's medallions, which gave him power to confiscate anyone's financial resources, and gave him the authority to enter any place. Matthew was listening carefully, but when he heard that the outsiders were after the carpenter of the village, and identifying Bartholomew, the former priest of the settlement, escorted by a stranger, he forgot about the products he was trading and rushed to let the pursued one know. As he was on his way, a man appeared to him from nowhere, which gave him quite a fright to the point of paralysis, as he later reported, who told him that it was essential that Joseph leave Nazareth with his wife and son during the night that approached, and that his own youngest son follow them. After the message was given, the man dissipated as a cloud. It was only when Matthew regained movement in his lower limbs that he restarted running. When he reached his nephew, still gasping for air, he suddenly stated:

2/20 "You have to leave Nazareth. Do not ask me how I know it, I only say that Bartholomew is here with the ones commanded by the Herods. Take the coins Simeon sent you and go. Take Mary, Jesus, and my protectee with you."

2/21 "I say you are sick in the head. How can I flee with two children?"

2/22 "The one who said it to me knows that you will be found if you have only one child and a wife. If you have two children, you will be ignored. Go, and I will go find you with Martha and Judas."

2/23 Asking no further questions, Jacob's heir loaded the animals and he, his wife and the small ones left Nazareth with no certain destination.

2/24 Not understanding why her companion had allowed her latest child to leave, Anna cried, indeed a lot. Matthew reemphasized his explanation about what had happened, reassuring her that the one who had determined it to him was the Lord, which assuaged the suffering of the old woman a little – old, according to the standards of the time.

2/25 Those of the small caravan had been walking aimlessly, when Joseph observed a colorful rock. He promptly remembered the minuscule village where Isabel resided, by virtue of the many similar ones that existed in its surroundings. He spontaneously announced:

2/26 "I say we are going to Veneram, where Zechariah will help me."

2/27 When they arrived there, Joseph explained to Zechariah what had

happened in Nazareth. The latter, aware that warriors of the so-called Mammon had closely inspected Bethlehem and its surroundings, recommended that he go exactly to that region, since it was improbable that they would look for them there again.

2/28 His suggestion was gladly accepted, and the welcoming rabbi gathered a group of travelers, in which children and women were the majority, who headed for the place where the Hebrews believed the one promised to the prophets had come to be. Since they moved slowly, it took them a long period to arrive in Bethlehem, which happened only in October, 9 BC. Joseph immediately sought whom he called his protectee, having, intensely and truthfully, his feelings reciprocated. Simeon Joseph told his stepfather what happened in Bethlehem since the latter had been there for the census; he also said he had been expecting him, and cautiously, as not to draw any attention, especially Rachel's, the woman who, as usual, spread the news of any event or happening, made Joseph his partner, or, as they used to say, the one who had a share of the carpenter's workshop.

2/29 The one generated by Sarah had long been absorbing the guidance of siblings who no longer needed a body of flesh, directions concerning the fact that his protector would need to be shielded, and he secretly saved coins for when that time arrived. Those who worked with him constantly commented on the precarious conditions of his workshop, which would undoubtedly close down due to the lack of financial resources and wood, despite the satisfactory demand of work for the most varied types of services.

2/30 When he made Joseph his business partner, Simeon Joseph spread the news that the latter had gathered money and wood in abundance, a fact which would prevent him from having to give up his craft. To fulfill his share of the enterprise, the former rebel would be in charge of instructing the younger carpenters, in addition to fully practicing the noble craft.

2/31 Joseph and those of his family changed names, a common habit among those who fled the powerful scum who governed their people. He changed his name to Joseph of Clopas; his wife, Mary of Clopas; and they had two heirs, Matthew and Jeremiah, the latter being Jesus's first name during the pursuit started by Herod the Great.

2/32 The last fruit of Anna's womb always received from the Clopases support and affection as if he were their legitimate offspring.

2/33 Rachel, the one who heard and spread all news, was the daughter of a prosperous and famous donkey trader. Her day comprised of gathering news, regardless of its subject. When merchants arrived, she searched for news eagerly, not in a nosy and gossipy manner, but, according to her own understanding, just out of mere curiosity. Whatever she found out, she would spread out, including to those who asked her no questions at all. Fearing

that the unmarried woman would become aware of the true identity of the Clopases, Sarah's firstborn confided nothing to Rebecca concerning this issue, also because she constantly stated that she did not want anything to do with those who accepted a god that could not be seen. He had no trouble keeping them in secret, for his wife under no circumstances would go to his workshop, in order not to mingle with poverty; as a result, the chances of Joseph being recognized were very little.

2/34 In Nazareth, the morning after Joseph's departure, Zephir watched the movement in and out of Matthew's residence and also in the one adjacent to the latter's, which, in his opinion, was that of the one he hunted.^[68] For four days he remained in his watch. Since he noticed no children, nevertheless knowing why numerous people entered the shanty, he went to look for the melon grower with the pretext of at least having a look at the promised one. After asking about him, he proceeded, attributing certain qualities to him:

2/35 "I say this offspring is the one promised to the prophet Isaiah."

2/36 Concluding his thought, he specified that the boy had not been born after a normal gestation, and that his protector was the god of the Hebrews himself.

2/37 "In this residence there is not a single offspring who came from the Lord," the one being addressed stated.

2/38 As a result of such insolence, Matthew had his crop of melons destroyed. Since he did not disclose anything, for he truly ignored the destination of his nephew and of those of his family, he was violently beaten, and saw his companion being savagely murdered. Because of this event, he became indignant, saying that he did what the Lord had told him to do, and then He abandoned him.

2/39 Now many harvests old and very sick, Bartholomew had helped the one sent by Herod the Great to Nazareth with the only intention of showing to his accomplice the causer of such an unbearable torment to the despot. Since he had never been even noticed by Anna, whom he secretly loved, and since he no longer had any hopes of getting her heart given his performance in Mary's trial, nor did he wish to see her again, for he deemed her happy with her new companion, he did not take part in Zephir's actions. The latter, who had been paid and given orders to arrest any individual regardless of the reason, did not depend on the vindictive priest, who would identify the execrated carpenter only after his capture.

[68] The wood that blocked the access to Joseph's residence remained ajar, a sign that it was not used as a single place of living.

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2/40 When Bartholomew found out about his muse's murder, he said nothing to the one appointed by Antipas, nor did he mention that she had recently bore a son, and not a little did he worry about the latter's whereabouts.

2/41 After the brutal murder of Matthew's spouse, her savage killer, along with those under his orders, remained another three days in Nazareth, inspecting residences and questioning those who had known Joseph, inquiring about his whereabouts; however, they found nothing. With the intent to capture a couple with a single heir, they inspected the neighboring areas, brutally questioning whoever crossed their path; the answers were nevertheless invariably the same: no one had any piece of information.

2/42 For five moons, Zephir and his men searched for the missing ones, until a foreigner, when pressed for information, told them that, when he had left Veneram months before, he had observed two strangers; however, he had not noticed any children with them. What had drawn his attention was the fact that the woman was very beautiful, given that, in that village, none of them were. The deplorable priest offered his opinion with conviction that the Hebrew woman, because of the fascination she caused, was undoubtedly Mary. Days later, he who continued looking for the desired redeemer decided to verify the piece of information. Since Bartholomew's health had deteriorated, he now had to be constantly carried, and besides he had bouts of deliriousness, and did not disclose to the cruel adept of the self-proclaimed king of Galilee that Joaquin's youngest had relatives in Veneram.

2/43 When he arrived in the village founded by Zechariah and Zacchaeus, Zephir immediately went to see the rabbi. Not obtaining from the latter what he deemed to be true, he ordered his men, in order to intimidate the community, to burn various shanties at random. He falsely stated that he knew that both Joseph and Mary had stayed with them, and he threatened to kill all the animals and then the children if he was not told what had happened. Fearing for his children, one of the inhabitants, because of the hatred and savagery of the combatants of the powerful Herod the Great, confessed that the hunted ones had been among them and that they had left for Bethlehem some weeks before.

2/44 Eager to hunt his prey, the major officer of the band joyfully did not say another word. He left unaware that Jacob's heir had walked with two children, and not only one, as he believed. On the way, Bartholomew, not bearing the effects of his disease and the many difficulties of the journey, passed away. Without the physical presence of the one who could identify the fugitives, Zephir momentarily gave up the search. However, he astutely did not go straight to Bethlehem, for, if he returned without success, he would lose all the benefits he had been granted for his enterprise.

2-2

2/45 In Bethlehem, Mary kept on living. Jeremiah sucked the maternal milk with comforting calmness, differently from the son of Anna and the former carpenter of Nazareth, considered as an offspring of the Clopases by those who knew them. Matthew even huffed and puffed in satisfaction after being fed.

2/46 For Joaquin's protectee, the crowded and important city had changed. Joseph told her that it was progress arriving, something he did not appreciate. The Egyptians were no longer the only ones to be sold as slaves; now those who did not pay their taxes were too, and in an increasing number, in order to fund the luxury of the governors. Day after day, many Hebrews, even after trading their plots of land and residences to pay the tributes, became material goods of Herod the Great, since they had not been able to pay them off.^[69] When the number of captives became excessive, they were even traded in the public square.^[70]

2/47 Examining all the changes that had taken place, Jacob's heir was eager for Jeremiah to grow up, believing he would put an end to the current situation. Mary and Simeon Joseph begged him to be patient, for he could otherwise put them all in greater danger.

2/48 The living of the Clopases went on in the customary rhythm for those of this faraway time; it was changed, however, when the tetrarch, who had not found the one whom the oppressed people had decided was the one promised by the Lord, ordered the massacre of all the children who were as old as two.

2/49 The heat in Bethlehem was nothing short of unbearable. At dusk on May 14, 8 BC, Simeon Joseph and he whom he considered his father were in front of the workshop when they observed, not very far, coming straight towards them, three men wearing such white clothes that they even shone. When they approached, after the greetings, they told both men to remove the two boys from Bethlehem, for the monarch's soldiers would kill many of the children the following morning. Completely shaken, Joseph asked to which village they should go. The one who seemed to be the oldest guided him:

2/50 "Do you remember where you were when your protector's lands were invaded?"

[69] When they were turned into slaves, they lost even their names. They were addressed to and called out only by the clapping of hands.

[70] Just like not very long ago, the price varied according to the physical attributes of each one, fundamentally the upper and lower limbs, in addition to their teeth.

2/51 Sarah's firstborn said that Jacob's former property was deserted; Joseph, however, understood the extent of what was said by the strangers.

2/52 Even though his recent business partner had a residence next to the primitive workshop, both father and son slept in this coarse environment, since they stored wood in it, a product that was very expensive, and thefts were very frequent. Right after the three visitors left, the two scared men loaded four donkeys with water and victuals and, followed by Mary and the children, left Bethlehem.

2/53 When the walk on the then not very deserty way was over, they arrived at the cave that had allowed Joseph to survive when he was an adolescent. The hiding place was not the work of nature, but had been built by human hands under a huge rock. Now that the others were safe, Simeon Joseph and his father returned incognito, not without providing for the closing, with rocks, of the entrance to the refuge, making the place look like a pile of rocks like any other one.

2/54 The two nowadays classified as carpenters because of their abilities stayed away from Bethlehem for almost seventy-two hours. When they returned, at around noon on May 17, Joseph, noticing the massacre, went into the workshop and remained in there, acting as if he had only left on business. Simeon Joseph, when he saw the magnitude of the episode, became very sad because of the massacre of the children, an act that was not customary of the tyrant, who always spared them.

2/55 When he saw his wife, the first of Sarah's children was informed of what had happened. Rebecca narrated to him that Herod the Great's warriors had entered many residences, murdering entire families and those who showed them any sort of resistance. She reported these facts with exultation, for the murdered ones, despite belonging to her people, were extremely poor, something she despised, and were also children, whom she, for being sterile, could not conceive. When she asked him where he had been, Simeon Joseph answered that he had gone trade quality wood with someone he trusted. Greedy as she was, his wife saw in it the possibility of their profiting financially, and, content with his explanation, asked no further questions. Regarding his business partner Clopas, she had not noticed his absence, since she never went to the workshop in order to avoid, as she felt no shame to trumpet, being greeted by her husband's employees; therefore, no further questions were asked.

2/56 The sacrifice of those born under the Star of Bethlehem, as this monstrous massacre came to be known, considered an act of supreme cruelty towards the much already suffering Hebrews, began at dawn on May 15, 8 BC, and was commanded by Zidec, the royal counselor and executioner of Herod the Great's orders. The carnage was planned as a result of Zephir's

return, on May 6, more than six months after Bartholomew's death, without having captured Joseph and his family, after a long, tiring and unfruitful search, according to his own words.

2-2.1

2/57 Herod the Great, who ruled from Lower Cesarea, was in Bethlehem when the news about the super-king's arrival came to be, in March, 10 BC, and he did not budge an inch from the village, with the intent to supervise the outcome of events. From the moment he became aware of the fact, reassured by the wise ones of his court that it was one of capital importance, for the stars had been aligned, he behaved more irascibly than usual. For the tetrarch, it was possible for no one to be more powerful than him. Since he was not convinced that there was a pregnancy at a late stage that would be that of the unbeatable character, having become aware of the hearsay that gradually gained greater proportions among the inhabitants of the city, he started to look for him, with the clear intent to exterminate him. As days went by, and as the confidence in the advent of the illustrious sovereign became solid in the population, he felt his authority threatened. He feared he would no longer be able to rule the people, who would rebel against his resolutions, refusing to pay taxes. It was this reassurance that he had to destroy.

2/58 The dominated ones of Bethlehem and neighboring region, after the appearance of the fulgurant star, had their belief strengthened that the promised one had arrived at long last. After long periods of hearsay and many doubts, they concluded that he would be with Joseph and Mary, for she had been tried and sentenced to die, but her death did not happen, for the Lord had authorized her to remain alive. They were absolutely certain that Joaquin's youngest had told the truth.

2/59 Herod the Great, in the presence of Zidec, when Zephir reported what had happened during more than a year of investigations, was infuriated. When he heard from his counselor that Joseph the carpenter had a son in Bethlehem, he did not allow him to finish his exposition, ordering him to go to the man's residence and kill him. The counselor, feigning humbleness, expressed his opinion:

2/60 "Simeon Joseph is a man of properties, united to a respected merchant's protectee. It is not a good idea to suspect him."

2/61 The tyrant agreed, for he had more to lose than to gain. Zidec recommended that soldiers be placed, night and day, disguised as beggars, in front of the residence and workshop of Sarah's firstborn, so that no clue pertaining to the ones they were after went unnoticed.

2/62 It was May, 8 BC. Having in mind the imprecise panorama articulated by Zephir about his journey, and looking for a foreigner named Joseph, his wife and child, the beggars remained in their watch for an invaluable, in the hunters' opinion, amount of time; however, they noticed nothing unusual, for Joseph and Mary of Clopas, as well as their two children, had been in the city since October, 9 BC. The discrepancy in the time interval they judged it had taken the undesirable Hebrews to return to Bethlehem resulted from the fact that Zephir, hired for the nefarious hunt, had taken advantage of the power that the medallion he carried emanated, and it took him very long, after his departure from Veneram, to return; he obviously neither informed the ruler of his delightful delay, nor did he tell him that he possessed the information that the trio had gone to Bethlehem.

2/63 Simeon Joseph and the others did not notice the watchers, for it was customary for a rejected one to arrive, stay in the city for a few days, and then abruptly leave. Just like nowadays, they did not pay any attention to the children of God who are in the process of adjusting themselves.

2/64 Even though he did not find whom they were all looking for, Zidec accepted the trio's return to the village as plausible, for, on top of Zephir's report, many of the people commented that the redeemer announced to the prophets was there. The hypothesis that, while they had been searching the neighboring area, they had gone to Nazareth, sounded logical to the monarch; afterwards, when the situation in Bethlehem got better, they returned. However, he was informed that no one devoid of wealth and with an only son had recently arrived in Bethlehem and the neighboring area, for the two Josephs they had tracked down had two or more children. Even the ones who had two heirs, their wives were expecting a third. The despot, pondering all the pieces of information, concluded that it would be insurmountably difficult to find out exactly who the hunted ones were.

2/65 Herod the Great deemed it urgent that he set forth a portentous action, whichever it was, to make the people believe that he had eliminated the inconvenient, for him, child. But how to find out about his whereabouts, as well as his parents'?

2/66 He whom the oppressed ones called Mammon had a list of those named Joseph whose wives were named Mary who had generated children born close to the appearance of the shining Star of Bethlehem, a list obtained from the Temples of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, for in them protectors sacrificed a lamb to the Lord, as the custom dictated. There were forty-nine of them. Among these, twelve had come from faraway cities for the ritual, and eight of them had settled in the neighboring area. It was the tyrant himself who had the idea of obtaining the list; because of his own initiative in the matter, he felt like a god, for the proposal had come from him alone, and not from any of those of his court.

2/67 The tetrarch also discovered that six of the Josephs who had gone through the census had pregnant spouses when they registered, and also that the wife of one of these Josephs could barely walk, for her gestation was approaching an end. The census officer guaranteed to him that, given the Hebrew woman's appearance, she had probably delivered that same day, adding that this Joseph had asked about lodges in the area.

2/68 Herod the Great and his adepts nevertheless had to accept that there were dozens of children whose fathers had not made offerings for them, either because they did not possess an animal or because they could not afford one, and that it was customary among the oppressed people who had no male children to present their daughters to the Lord as if they were boys until they had an honorable heir, even with a different woman.^[71] And finally, they were also aware that many Josephs who were protectors of children who were also two harvests old, though they had not been born in the area, had moved there.

2/69 Each suggestion formulated to achieve their capture stumbled upon a great problem, and they were not convinced they would end up succeeding. Taking a drastic measure, since his supremacy was absolute, Mammon decided to murder all Josephs and their respective families, whether or not they had a wife and heir; the child's age, in case there was a child, did not matter either; anyone who dared to try to stop the execution of his decree would also be killed.

2/70 The sovereign was also aware that, even in case of a greater carnage, he could not be completely sure that the one he sought would die; however, he reasoned that, by annihilating those who had regressed to this orb under the Star of Bethlehem for another sojourn of learning and purgation of their blemishes, small ones whose protectors had taken them to the Temples of Jerusalem and Bethlehem and sacrificed a lamb as an offering to the god they believed in, he would make the Hebrews accept that the promised one they had been talking about was dead. Furthermore, since the oppressed ones believed the young one had remained in the village, when he decreed that not only the children be killed, but the entirety of those who had Joseph as their first name, they would accept that the special child had at last perished.

2/71 It was because of such peculiar logic that the execrated sovereign

[71] Children walked around naked until they were six, for adults understood there was no evil in them. After the age of six, they wore half a tunic, only covering their genitals, and the garment was similar for both boys and girls, which made it possible for many girls to pass as boys.

It was only after ten harvests that their garments became longer, an age which, very rarely to protect the children, but more often than not because it was dishonorable for a genitor not to have a male heir in his family, especially if he had had more than one companion, some of these girls kept on wearing tunics, a garment for males, and not raiments.

demanded that forty-nine bodies of two-year-olds be buried apart from the other ones that had also been murdered. His goal was to make the ignorant population hold as true that the children who had been introduced to the priests lost their lives, as they used to put it, even if this did not mean the whole truth for him.

2/72 Herod the Great's decree was fully carried out. On the day the massacre had been scheduled, his soldiers entered the residences previously marked with the instruction of not leaving anyone alive. The soldiers did not know whom they were killing, nor did they know the reason for the massacre. At Joseph of Clopas's residence, since they found it empty, they just moved on.

2/73 Daniel, one of the soldiers of the hated monarch, was one among those responsible for signaling the residences of the unfortunate ones. He singled them out with a "x" written in charcoal, even if the Joseph residing there was still a boy or had already died. When asked why he was marking the residences, he responded he had not been informed of the reason, stating:

2/74 "Maybe it is to know how long those who are Josephs have been in Bethlehem."

2/75 Since many inhabited the same residence where they had physically arrived on this planet, Daniel, ignorant of the reason, tried to come up with an explanation:

2/76 "It is because Herod did not accept the result of the census and wants to know how many of us there are. He will start counting by those named Joseph. I say I was ordered to go to every residence where there is a Joseph. Another one will probably come by later to confirm what I did."

2/77 The incautious Hebrews commented that the procedure resulted from the fact that many had not showed up for the census. They asserted that Mammon was indeed powerful, for he had a precise notion that a number of his people had not registered.

2/78 Bethlehem, Bethany, Emaus and Jerusalem, the cities to which the massacre was extended, had five thousand three inhabitants, all men, women, the elderly, the paralyzed, the disabled, and children who had come to this world whether or not they had been registered, for many protectors omitted the birth of their children to avoid further taxes. In the afternoon of May 16, 8 BC, a thousand six hundred two of them were murdered. The massacre comprehended mostly the extremely poor, basically the entirety of those who had been usurped, for they were the ones who eagerly expected the arrival of the redeemer announced by the prophets.

2/79 After the carnage, with a piece of wood measuring the height a boy who was about to turn two was presumed to be, which was in fact the height of the son of one of the powerful men, they began, in the Valley of Souls, the

measurement and body-count of the small ones who had been separated from the other bodies according to Zidec's personal choice. The latter, commander of this new enterprise, only chose illiterate people for the task. The bodies were laid down side by side, and Zidec measured them one by one. Then he told his helpers to wrap in sheep leather the bodies of the ones who were the same height as the piece of wood and bury them all in the same grave. When he reached the forty-eighth body, a young man named Jared approached him and said that he possessed information that the child whom they had been hunting and because of whom such horrible situation had been set forth was not among the dead ones. He straightforwardly stated that he would only disclose the information he possessed if two of his sisters who were being educated to serve as slaves to Herod the Great, as well as his mother, a captive at the sovereign's palace, were released. With his mind already made up, he added that they could even kill him there at that time, but he would not say anything, not even under torture, if his wish were not granted.

2/80 The audacious man completely ignored Jeremiah's whereabouts. He went to see Zidec with the information he claimed he possessed with the sole intent to have his family released from the despot's mastery. Jared knew, among many other convictions which had originated from the hearsay that was circulating, that Joseph was a carpenter by trade. When he became aware of the latest certainty among the Hebrews of the area, initiated at the beginning of the carnage, that Joseph, along with Mary and the promised one, had fled Bethlehem in a hurry, leaving his belongings behind, even leaving garments on rocks to dry, at the dawn of the fatal day, he boldly concocted a plan to release his family, and bravely, as well as inconsequently, put it into practice.

2/81 Since he was more than interested in finding the famous king, more than those he helped in their oppression, the counselor agreed to the insignificant informant's wishes; however, he peremptorily warned him that not only he would be killed as a traitor, and that no one would come to know about their agreement, if what he had to reveal were a lie. Interrupting what he was doing, Zidec left and went to see Mammon, but not before taking care of the release of the three women.

2/82 Right after lunch on May 16, Zidec reported to the tetrarch that his orders had been followed, that is, that forty-nine male children of perfect constitution were lying in the Valley of Souls, as the field reserved as a burial site was called, for it was believed that whoever was buried there would not abandon the site; many even affirmed that they could be seen there.

2/83 The astute royal counselor had his entire attention focused on finding the whereabouts of the one the Hebrews affirmed was the redeemer promised by the Lord, not because he wanted to satisfy Herod the Great, but, ambitious as he had always been, he wanted to have him in order to instruct him, as if he were his legitimate genitor. He knew what the oppressed ones

said about the defenseless boy who was being mercilessly hunted, that, when he grew up, he would know about the present and the future, and he would be unmatchably wise. He had become convinced of it also because his wife affirmed that ancient vaticinators, whom the population trusted, had written that the boy would be the protectee of the Lord Himself, and would come with incommensurable power.

2/84 Not satisfied with the influence he already enjoyed, Zidec wished for even greater power. If he had the son of the god of the Hebrews obey him, he would be in possession of information about the acts and intentions of the oppressed people in advance, as well as information about the tyrannical governor and Herod Antipas who, as things went on, would replace his father. Thirsty for greater power, he would use the fear that the subsequent despot had of contracting ulcers in order to make himself indispensable.

2/85 Antipas acted like a neurotic, and not only because of the fear he had. Whoever was in his presence necessarily needed to have bathed and changed their clothes. Anyone who entered the royal chamber was forced to remain far from him, and could not touch him under any circumstances. Those who heard about his alienated behavior qualified him as insane. The counselor had assumed that, if he had the protectee of the god of the dominated ones under his command, he would be able to control the one who had proclaimed himself to be the owner of Galilee, and he would then be the powerful one.

2/86 When he met with Jared again, Zidec was informed that Joseph the carpenter, whose wife was named Mary, worked with Simeon Joseph. Jared put his living, as well as those of his family, at stake simply because he knew that in the workshop owned by Sarah's son there was a Joseph, for in it he had worked for a short period of time, and between Joseph and himself an incipient friendship had sprung.

2/87 With that piece of information in mind, in the first bright hour of May 17, the counselor, escorted by soldiers and the informant, went to the appointed workshop. Not finding Simeon Joseph, he ordered one of the soldiers to stay there and wait for him, and energetically informed him to let him know of his arrival as soon as it happened. He only met with him in the late afternoon, for, after returning from Hiatta and talking to Rebecca, Sarah's firstborn had gone, alongside his employees, help to bury the murdered ones.

2/88 When Zidec finally accomplished his wish of seeing him, he asked him about a wood artisan who had come from Nazareth in a caravan with women and children, a man who had quite a different son: his mother was immaculate, and also the wife of the god of the Hebrews. Simeon Joseph, before such an extravagant assertion, assured him that he knew of no one with such qualities. Not conveying his discontent, the authoritarian royal counselor, who deemed himself as deserving respect and always made this

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very clear, asked his interlocutor about the much commented promised one. Again, Simeon Joseph answered that he was aware that those of his fellow people were talking about him and that it was his understanding that he had been born to save them not from Herod the Great, but from their ignorance of the Lord's truths, not the laws of men, for they were greedy, full of failures and injustices, guaranteeing no future for those of his people. Simeon Joseph, who at the beginning of the conversation was the one being questioned, became an austere arguer:

2/89 "About being, do you know, my lord, where it comes from and where it goes to? What do you know about the One who created the stars, the Sun, water, and everything that is?"

2/90 He repeated his question and emphasized:

2/91 "What do you know?"

2/92 Given Ziden's silence, he went on:

2/93 "If the Lord were Herod, would He want to take the life of innocent ones? Abuse our companions? Leave many children without their protectors? No, the Lord knows we are not animals."

2/94 Boldly, albeit cautiously, Simeon Joseph went on with his exposition to the inexplicably attentive royal counselor:

2/95 "Would the Lord want to cut off our tongues just not to hear our voice? No, the Lord is only kindness, and His power is infinite. This is what I believe in. You, my lord, can search my residence and my workshop, and you will see that I am not hiding a single person, now or at any other moment, who came from a pure woman."

2/96 Concluding his speech, with his student not asking a single question, he inquired:

2/97 "Do you know, my lord, how many small ones you have taken the life of?"

2/98 Zidec, as if reporting to his king, pointing at Jared, explained himself:

2/99 "When this Hebrew man told me that there was a wage earner here and that his name was Joseph, and his wife's, Mary, I stopped counting and came here."

2/100 "I know. I helped those of my people to bury the lifeless, a result of the greed for power that you and Herod have."^[72]

[72] He obtained the number of murdered children with one who, no longer having a body of flesh, was praying for those who had perished in the hecatomb.

2/101 The brother-cousin of the desired savior went on:

2/102 “I ask you, my lord: what else do you want, if you do not know where those you are looking for are? Will you go on taking more lives? I beg you, for divine mercy’s sake: leave those who are my people alone, because the Lord thus wants it.”

2/103 He politely concluded:

2/104 “I call you my lord because you force me to, but for me there is only one Lord: it is the Lord our God, the only Lord of those who are my people. You, my lord, have our fear, but not our respect, as our Lord does.”

2/105 Not wanting any further piece of information from him, but not contesting any of his words, as if agreeing with what he had said, Zidec lowered his head and left Simeon Joseph, escorted by his soldiers and Jared.

2/106 Right after being informed that the number of children he had ordered to be killed had been buried, the so-called Mammon met with the most important Roman delegate, who happened to feel towards the counselor who had brought the news deep hatred and suspicion, for he saw in him an exaggerated ambition. Marzius confided to the tetrarch that the trust he had in the man he himself disliked was excessive, and asked him how he found out if his orders were indeed carried out. He maliciously mentioned the gossip that circulated, that the one who made decisions regarding matters of great importance was Zidec, whom the people feared more than Mammon himself. Finishing his thought, he recommended that he not rely so much on his counselor and find out what the latter did, thus checking if his own orders were being carried out.

2/107 Zidec, concealed where the conversation was taking place, heard it completely. Aware of what was going on in the sovereign’s mind, and now fearing for his living if his sloppiness came to light, that same night he looked for a boy among his slaves whose height corresponded to that of the wood he had used in his measurements. Taking him from his mother, he headed for the primitive cemetery, where, despite realizing that the defenseless boy was still breathing, he wrapped him in a piece of leather and buried him with the other forty-eight ones. Having no other worries in mind, he returned to his palace, as if nothing had happened.

2/108 On May 17, some minutes before lunchtime, the monarch, furious as he was, believing that his counselor had been betraying him, ordered that he be taken, escorted by a great retinue, Marzius and the accused one included, to the Valley of Souls. The skillful Zidec, knowledgeable of the reason of the visit, asked the despot what was going on, but obtained no answer in return.

2/109 When they arrived at the deadly site, Herod the Great demanded that the children be unburied; the tiny bodies were nevertheless not unwrapped.

Alas, what a great surprise for him when he found out that his orders had been fully followed. This event increased the trust he had in his main counselor, a trust that was necessary, for he had been very sick and could barely stand.

2-2.2

2/110 The sacrifice of those born under the Star of Bethlehem was the summit of the suffering of the Hebrews, who had no right to think that the tyrant was wrong, who were prohibited from talking about the Lord, from commenting about the much awaited deliverer. Not being able to protect themselves from the prevailing oppression after two days of insane killing, they shut up, but remained certain that the one promised to the prophets had not perished, that the Lord had protected his messenger, who had come to save them. It was only their conviction that he had survived that gave them energy to go through another day, for a new sowing. As the wheat germinated, their hope for harmonious times increased, far from the Herods, their Laws and their taxes, which many times were paid with their own living.

2/111 The Hebrew people, a synonym for a suffering people. They were people who walked towards death with their best clothes on, as if they were headed for a feast, who saved their most beautiful smile for their last hour, because they wanted the Lord, when He saw them, to know how happy they were to leave.

2/112 Such acts and feelings were not understood by the intimidating Herods, who, when seeing them happy moments before their death, asked themselves how they could leave this life feeling fortunate, and that because of a god they had never seen. They could not understand why they thanked them for delivering them from their physical bodies. For them it was absurd that the oppressed ones were persuaded that the Lord would receive them.

2-2.3

2/113 No one among those who worked with Joseph of Clopas denounced him. When, after the carnage, they saw him, they mentioned to him how lucky he had been for not being in town when it happened. When told of the reason for the murders, Jacob's only son remained silent. The morning after, he returned to Hiatta.

2/114 Since Mary of Clopas's arrival in Bethlehem coming from Veneram, afraid of being recognized, for only two years before she had been sentenced

to stoning, she barely left her residence. If leaving was mandatory, only her eyes were unveiled. Because of this and other actions of hers, the general belief was that she had some sort of disease, and a contagious one, and that was the reason that she covered her face. Just to make the others' suspicion stronger, it was her husband who went to the well to get water, a very unusual habit at the time, for he would only do it either if his wife had just given birth, and for no more than forty-five days, or if she was unhealthy. Since they knew that the recluse one had not given birth recently, she obviously had a disease.

2/115 The Hebrew women of Bethlehem, who helped each other a lot, were not welcoming towards Joaquin's youngest, for the responsibility for a sick wife was her husband's. The fact that there was no fellow woman helping her corroborated the others' assurance that she had a disease. When she finally left, she caused relief in everyone, for they feared that, if they came close to her, they would become sick too.

2/116 Joseph was not recognized by anyone in Bethlehem either, except for Simeon Joseph, who was surprised at his appearance, for, a year after the terrible trial, Joseph's beard had become longer and thicker, and his hair, whiter, a circumstance that neither man understood.

2/117 With Mary and the boys safe, Sarah's firstborn announced that his business partner, who had left alone, had settled in another town. In order to avoid drawing attention to the disappearance of the one they considered sick, he claimed that she had left in a caravan of merchants who were arriving from Egypt, along with the children, some days before the massacre, to visit one of her relatives.

2-2.4

2/118 Hiatta, located south of Bethlehem, after being invaded in 19 BC, saw its population be completely subjugated. With the death of many and the flight of others to settlements that began to exist, such as Hedrom and Enged, it turned into ruins, serving as a refuge for pillagers and fugitive slaves.

2/119 In 10 BC, Elijah and Jarred, his wife, heading for Bethlehem from Galilee, along with six other families, a caravan that amounted to a little more than forty people, took shelter in the ruins of the formerly prosperous Hiatta. From the insignias of Herod the Great on the walls that remained, the rabbi concluded that the city had been a settlement of slaves of the tetrarch, who then lost interest in it. He observed the fertility of the soil: where there were weeds, good seeds would also germinate. In his mind the desire to settle was strong. He believed that, after they had settled, its owner would certainly show up and with him he would negotiate their permanent stay.

2/120 When he suggested his idea to the others, it was accepted unanimously, for they were exhausted from walking through the desert; they also saw in his proposition the possibility of permanently settling down.

2/121 Elijah knew that, when Mammon or his soldiers showed up, it was only a question of paying taxes, and they would be granted permission to stay. Since the monarch was crazy for coins, he assumed they would not stumble upon any problems. It was enough to set limits to what would be charged regarding the remainder of the soil that happened to be unproductive. He determined it to himself:

2/122 “Herod’s body may be sick, but he will be sick in the head if he prohibits us from staying in these lands.”

2-2.5

2/123 When Joseph arrived in Hiatta, he looked for the rabbi, the one in charge of the village and its inhabitants. He was immediately met with obsequious cooperation to build a workshop, and started living in the good-hearted man’s shanty.

2/124 Confined for nearly two weeks, Mary, unaware of how much time had passed and seeing their provisions become scarce, started feeling anxious, also because she did not know what had happened to her companion. On the thirteenth day, what a satisfaction she felt when she saw him and heard from him that he had settled in Hiatta, after the request of Sarah’s firstborn, where he would practice his craft. Jacob’s only son stated that, for the sake of Jeremiah’s protection, the three would still need to stay in the cave, but not for long. He reassured her that he would come at night, but would leave before dawn, so that he could arrive at his primitive workshop without people noticing he had left. He also told her straightforwardly what had happened to Anna; nonetheless, since he had no further information about other matters, he promised her to learn more details, not before calming her down first, reassuring her that nothing had happened to Martha and Judas, otherwise Simeon Joseph would have informed him.

2/125 Mary remained in the cave for about seven moons and got used to the environment, for she had turned it into something like a small palace.

2/126 Only Elijah and his wife, who had no heirs, knew where the Clopases were from, who, like many other Hebrews, were trying to escape the Herods; however, they ignored the reason for a long time. During the time they remained hidden in Hiatta, Elijah and his wife were their support. Jarred helped Mary to take care of Matthew, Jeremiah, and his siblings. Part of Mary’s offspring,

when she was forced to leave the city, remained under Jarred's care. The dedication and friendship were so great and significant among the members of both families that the inhabitants of Hiatta believed that the skillful artisan and his family were legitimately descended from the rabbi.

2-2.6

2/127 Jarred was forty-two harvests old when she met Mary. She neither did nor said anything unless she had her husband's consent, not out of fear, but because she had been brought up rigidly and had suffered excessively under the oppression of those of her own lineage. The rabbi had united himself to her to take her away from her protector and her brothers, who treated her as a slave.

2/128 Feeling joyful and disposed, every two days she walked the miles that separated the cave from Hiatta to talk to and help the hidden woman.

2/129 Since the news was invariably the same, that the taxes had increased etc., and since Herod the Great had died, Elijah and Joseph assumed they were no longer in danger, which allowed Mary to finally leave her small palace. For four moons, Jeremiah and his family resided under the same roof as Jarred, and then they moved to the adjacent residence.

2-3

2/130 The Clopases' second son, John, was born on October 22, 7 BC, which made his protector feel a little uneasy, for fleeing with three children would be even more of an arduous task, if not impracticable. But since nothing out of the ordinary happened, they started settling down, certain that the search for the deliverer who had been announced to the prophets had ended. Jeremiah, on July 30, 5 BC, saw the advent of a sister, Veronica.

2/131 It had been more than four harvests, when she escaped Zephir, that Mary had not seen Judas and Martha, and the longing she felt was painful and prevented her from being completely happy. When she got pregnant again, she asked her husband, who continued his work routine at his carpenter's workshop, how they would manage to escape if they were in search of them again. Joseph allayed her concerns, reassuring her that, if needed, the Lord would be with them. James, the youngest one whose protectors were the same as the desired redeemer's, came to this world when Jeremiah turned seven years and three months old, on July 17, 3 BC.

2/132 Mary's firstborn differed from all the other children, as the inhabitants of Hiatta inferred, for he answered various questions of different nature promptly and assimilated without any difficulties what he was taught. He worried about and cared for the well-being of anyone, something that Elijah noticed. He was the only one who helped the ones in charge of carrying water for the sick, the elderly, and the paralyzed; he was the only one who thanked for the food received when they were all learning at the synagogue, which was also used as a place where the boys started identifying and marking letters.^[73] He always stayed away from contentions, and separated those involved in them, even if they were older and taller than him; he was the first one to arrive to learn about the ancestors of his people, making the rabbi gasp with his questions; he was the only one to help him, after the classes, to clean up.

2/133 When James was born, it had been long since Hiatta distinguished itself from the great majority of Hebrew villages, for, as its inhabitants stated, the Lord was more than kind with them. Wheat abounded, the animals were healthy, and the newborns and their mothers rarely died. This favorable combination of factors drew dwellers from other regions to settle there, with the intention of enjoying its affluence, and thus fleeing the extreme poverty that surrounded them.

2/134 Jeremiah conveyed through his attitude that he was indeed an unrivaled being, for he was kind, he never talked back, and he barely made conversation. His childhood was similar to that of the boys of his time, who sucked the nutritious and warm liquid directly from the tits of the peaceful animals. At times, he was a little mischievous, for instance, when he involuntarily stepped on the bread that was resting, waiting to leaven and then be baked, but did not inform Mary of his action, and she was very surprised when he refused to eat it, for, after melons and dried apricots, bread was his favorite food. Not quite rarely, when he was assigned a task, such as stock wood, he would get distracted and play, forgetting about the task. The other boys of his age, who felt strong and bold, trumpeted that they had authority, something he never did. But he had fun with the others. He would ride on donkeys; one of his favorite pastimes was to see who could stay longer on top of a bovine animal without being sent off in the air, as well as hands-on-the-face, a game that comprised of everyone hiding and only one looking for the others, but this game was not the children's favorite; if one ended up being the searcher, one could not go and hide for a long time.

[73] Elijah, since he was the local rabbi, was in charge of the education of the little boys of Hiatta, teaching them according to the standards of the time. They initially learned to tell the letters of the Aramaic alphabet apart, which were carved on a piece of wood. Once they learned them, they modeled them with a mixture made with wheat straw, sand, earth, and water, which dried up in the heat of the Sun. Finally, they made up words with the them.

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2/135 The one promised by the prophets did not eat the meat of any animal. If at the beginning of his existence it was offered to him, he would announce to his mother:

2/136 “I do not want to eat a being which had its living taken to feed us. Every time I look at a fish or sheep stew, I have them on my mind.”

2/137 Joaquin’s youngest, not understanding such a crystal clear logic, once replied that they indeed needed to ingest them.

2/138 “Can I ask a lamb to share its milk with me?”

2/139 Mary smiled and did not take him seriously, but acquiesced, saying:

2/140 “If you ask the lamb, and if it agrees, and the sheep allows, you can share the milk with it.”

2/141 The boy rapidly returned, saying out loud with enthusiasm:

2/142 “Now I do not need to eat the stew. The sheep agreed that its lamb can share the milk with me.”

2/143 In the morning he asked his mother to give him half of his share of bread, for he would leave the other half for the night, which he would then savor with the milk made available to him by the being that we classify as irrational.^[74]

2/144 Surprised at her child’s doing, the worried mother explained to Joseph what had happened; he replied:

2/145 “I say that, if he does not want fish, give him bread.”

2/146 “Everyone eats fish and sheep meat.”

2/147 “Sometimes you forget that your offspring is different, that we will only take care of him until he is enough harvests old. I say that his life does not belong to us.”

2/148 He incisively concluded:

2/149 “Your offspring is not like the others, something we have known since his arrival.”

2/150 What Jacob’s heir said applied exclusively to Jeremiah, whom he did not consider his legitimate son; had it been with regard to one he deemed legitimate, he would not have acted the same way. Mary, remembering the events concerning the coming of the fruit of her womb, stated:

[74] Jeremiah naively first asked the lamb for milk, which, as it was customary when it was talked to, promptly bleated, something that was understood as an affirmative answer. The sheep, in the requester’s opinion, also agreed, because, when he milked it, he was not kicked.

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2/151 “I am afraid of the harvests that will befall him.”

2/152 Her fear was partly due to the fact that she had innumerable times observed that her boy behaved as if he was before extremely wise teachers – but for those who could only see physical matter, he was always alone. When she gathered the courage to ask him what he was doing and whom he was talking to, his reply was immediate:

2/153 “I tell you that I am learning from those whom God has sent.”

2/154 Day after day, the conferences became longer and longer.

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN HELP FROM OUR FATHER, WE SHOULD ASK HIM FOR IT WHEN WE ARE TALKING TO HIM.

see 2/158

IF WE ARE FEELING UNHOPEFUL, UNGUIDED, IF WE DO NOT KNOW HOW TO PROCEED ...

see 2/160

WE ARE EXTREMELY LOVED BY GOD, WHO ASKS FOR NOTHING IN RETURN.

see 2/173

THERE IS MORE MERIT IN LOVING THOSE WHO PURSUE US THAN IN LOVING THOSE WHO LOVE US.

see 2/175

LOVING THOSE NEXT TO YOU MEANS ...

see 2/179

2/155 Jeremiah always encouraged Matthew, whom he considered a brother also in the life of flesh, to converse with God. When asked why, if he could not see Him, the young man instructed him and us:

2/156 “To talk to God, I tell you that it is not necessary that we see Him.”

2/157 “But if I do not see God, how can I ask for His help when I need it?”

2/158 “I tell you that it is not necessary to see God to ask Him for help. To receive help from Him, it is enough to ask for it. I tell you that if we deserve it, God will send siblings who will help us.”

2/159 “And when is the moment to ask God for help?”

2/160 “When we are desperate, when we do not know which way to follow, I tell you that it is enough to ask God for help, God, who

is the creator of the entire universe, who sent us to this abode. I tell you that we will no longer feel lost, because He will put alongside us a sibling who will listen to us and, without us hearing this sibling, we will feel relieved and we will find the way to follow.”

2/161 He enthusiastically said:

2/162 “I tell you to trust our Father all days of our living.”

2/163 Not understanding what Jeremiah had said, believing that his nephew was referring to his protector, the boy asked:

2/164 “But how can I speak to my protector, if he is in Nazareth?”

2/165 Smiling, the one named Jesus when he arrived on this planet clarified:

2/166 “It is not the protector you have in this abode that I speak of, it is of the One who governs the universe, who created us and everything else.”

2/167 “Are you saying that I have another protector?”

2/168 “I am telling you about the One who created everything that you see and that you do not see: the Sun, the stars, water, fish, donkeys, your father, your mother, other abodes.”

2/169 Anna's last fruit asked in astonishment:

2/170 “Are you saying that I have another protector, who is a Father and who has more authority than Joseph?”

2/171 “The Father I am telling you about loves us all very much, His children, and acts differently from Joseph when we do not act correctly. Joseph orders us to fetch water, or wood for the fire, or to supervise the sheep when we do something that is not right.”

2/172 “And what offering do I have to make for this Father that you are speaking of, who loves me much and does not make me fetch wood for the fire when I do not do what He asks me to?”

2/173 **“I tell you that God, our Father, loves us and asks for nothing in return for his love.”**

2/174 “This one you are calling Father becomes happy even if we like Elijah, the one who beat you?”

2/175 **“I tell you that there is more merit in loving the one who pursues us than loving the one who loves us.”**

2/176 Mary’s uterine brother, still a child, replied:

2/177 “You can like Elijah, but I will hit him if he comes hit me.”

2/178 In the following years, since the one born under the shining Star of Bethlehem invariably told those who listened to him that we should love

those who are like us the way we would like to be loved, his uncle, on another occasion, asked him about the meaning of his words, and his explanation, whenever the opportunity arose, was exhaustively repeated, in parts or in its entirety:

2/179 **“I tell you not to hurt one’s feelings; not to seek revenge; to know how to forgive and to know how to be forgiven; not to lie; not to hate; always to be willing to provide guidance; not to deceive; to have, when possible, the same goals; not to offend, either by gestures, acts, or words, even with silence, which most of the time is used to provoke and criticize; not to feel superior; to know how to share a little of what you have without expecting anything in return; to know how to receive whatever it is, even criticism; not to do evil; not to extort; to provide support at all moments; not to show yourself to be what you are not; not to reveal the imperfections that we know of; to offer freedom and to know how to use the freedom we receive; not to exploit; not to hurt, not to use force under any circumstances, even if we feel attacked, even if we are right; to respect differences, contrary opinions; not to disdain, despise, or vilify; to know how to listen and to know the right moment to speak; not to demand that others have affection for us; to offer help and care, our respect, our protection at all moments of all lives, and under all conditions to love, to love everyone who is next to us. I tell you that we will have love for those next to us when we do not take possession of what belongs to them; when we do not leave them lonely, no matter what the circumstances are; when we defend them at all moments of all lives, even if, for many, they are not in the right; when we do not make use of their fragility or their non-knowledge of matters we master to harm them; when we do not demand them to return the affection we feel for them; when we do not try to change them, even if we announce to ourselves that we love them. In truth, I tell you that to have love, that to love those next to you is everything we do for their welfare, it is everything we do for them to walk towards God.”**

2-3.1

2/180 In November, 3 BC, the one firstly named Jesus warned his father:

2/181 **“A man is starting to look for you and Mary, and you know this man.”**

2/182 When asked who had told him that, he replied:

2/183 “I tell you I saw him myself.”

2/184 Joseph, then, asked where he had seen him, but Jeremiah was unable to precise it, he only reasserted what he had said. Not accepting his son’s statement for he deemed it farfetched, Joseph tried to allay his concerns:

2/185 “Do not worry, you imagined it while you were sleeping.”

2/186 The small boy, with conviction, guaranteed:

2/187 “I tell you that I was not sleeping.”

2/188 Uninterested in the story, Jacob’s heir put an end to the conversation by stating that he would take the necessary measures. Forgetting who the child was, he did nothing.

2/189 Mary’s firstborn continued to entertain himself and perform his daily activities normally, even though some of his actions surprised and even awed many, such as when the little boy Elijah, the one who had hit him, went to a cave not very close to his residence and, burning in fever, was unable to return, which caused great anguish to his parents. Noticing the commotion, Jeremiah calmed them down by telling them that he knew of his whereabouts, and to the site he led Joseph, the rabbi, the boy’s genitor and a small crowd. They found him in the cave, his body covered in ulcers. Because of his fever, he murmured that he was seeing more than the others could attest to. The desired savior approached the sick boy and put one of his hands on the boy’s forehead, whispering to him that he had brought him his protector. Jarred’s husband, carrying the sick one, started returning to the village. Before they all arrived, he realized that the boy’s body temperature had decreased, and that from the ulcers oozed a fluid, a sign that indicated that they had started to heal.

2/190 The event was a great cause of restlessness and fear for Joseph, for the majority of those of Hiatta started paying more attention to Joaquin’s grandson. He feared that, when the news of the event started to be spread, they would all be found. However, for the meek savior, nothing strange had happened.

***WE SHOULD NOT DO TO THOSE WHO ARE LIKE US ANYTHING
WE WOULD NOT LIKE ANYONE TO DO TO US, AND RESENTMENT
WILL NO LONGER EXIST AMONG SIBLINGS.***

see 2/192

IF WE DO NOT LOVE OURSELVES, CAN WE LOVE GOD?

see 2/195

2/191 One day, at the synagogue at dusk, the rabbi gathered all the men, as he usually did, and read one of the Mosaic Laws which, according to his belief, the noble ancestor of the Hebrews had received from the Lord Himself.

Jeremiah, now nine harvests old, was, as usual, paying a lot of attention to what was being said. When he returned to his residence, he questioned his parents:

2/192 “Elijah announced to everyone the eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, what Moses has left written down, but is it not **the right thing to announce that we do not do to others what we do not want them to do to us? If we do not want to be offended, do not offend; if we do not want to be hurt, do not hurt; if we do not want what is ours to be stolen, do not steal from others. When not even one of us offends any longer, hurts any longer, steals from another one of God’s children any longer, every resentment that one sibling has for another will disappear.**”

2/193 “Why do you not say these words to Jacob, who says to everyone that he loves the Lord? I know that Jacob will understand with much happiness these words that you are saying,” suggested Mary.

2/194 Aware that the one Mary had referred to used to mutilate himself so that the ulcers that appeared on his body would cause pity and people would offer him coins, the one who came to the world when the shining Star of Bethlehem appeared revealed:

2/195 “**I tell you that he who does not love himself will not be able to love God, the Father of us all. If we are God’s creation, not to love His creation is not to love Him, because He shows Himself in his creation, and if God shows Himself in me, and I love myself, I love Him.**”

2/196 Mary, who had never doubted that her son was the redeemer foreseen by the prophets, was amazed by such a logical reasoning, but she did not utter a word. Joseph, trying to hide his awe, said to the boy that he was too young not to agree with the rabbi. The small teacher, who diligently listened to his genitor, left to go play with his siblings, and the couple remained talking about what had just happened.

2/197 Jacob’s heir, completely disoriented, suggested to his wife that someone else with superior knowledge instruct the boy. Feeling embarrassed, he confessed that he was sometimes forced to remain silent because he did not understand the meaning of the words pronounced by the young boy.

2/198 “I will deliver Jeremiah to the priests, who know the Laws and the writings and who are very wise,” he concluded.^[75]

[75] Joseph deemed them wise because they were familiar with the Mosaic Laws and those of the Temple, as well as because they marked words not only on leather.

2/199 His interlocutor affirmed she felt unable to offer an opinion on how they should proceed; she nevertheless stated:

2/200 “It goes inside me that the Lord will show us. We should just wait and trust the Lord, who has showed us that He has been protecting us at all moments.”

Chapter 2

2-1 *His* nativity:

- The coming of Anna and Matthew’s son;
- Joseph and Mary are wanted in Nazareth;
- The first flight;
- *As Jeremiah*;
- Anna’s death;

2-2 The murder of the ones born under the Star of Bethlehem and of the ones who were descended from Josephs:

- The second flight of Joseph and Mary;
- 2-2.1 The reason for the murder;
- The royal counselor with Simeon Joseph;
- The assumption of the chief representative of Rome;
- 2-2.2 The miserable Hebrews;
- 2-2.3 The relief after the sudden departure of Mary of Clopas;
- 2-2.4 The resurgence of Hiatta with the help of Elijah;
- 2-2.5 Joseph in Jacob’s lands;
- 2-2.6 Jarred;

2-3 *His* childhood; John, Veronica, and James, his siblings:

- 2-3.1 The warning that the pursuit would restart.

