

**THE
HEART OF MARY.

INTRODUCTION TO THE
DIVINE HISTORY OF JESUS CHRIST**



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When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Behold, your father and I were sorrowing and looking for you. And he said to them, "Why did you seek me? did you not know that I must be about my Father's business? They did not understand what he said to them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, and his mother kept all these things in her heart....

CHAPTER I:

"I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST"

CHAPTER II:

"I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA"

CHAPTER III

"I AM THE BEGINNING AND THE END"

EPILOGUE

FOREWORD TO THE HEART OF MARY

In the days of the Bicentenary of the French Revolution, in Paris, the Son of God inspired me to write His Divine History. I set to work immediately. I left Paris, returned to the South, locked myself among books and set out to begin at the beginning, that is, to discover what was the reason for this documentary vacuum, through which "confusion" found the door to the heart of the problem, and gave birth to that mountain of books that, using the Hero of the Gospels as an excuse, gave life to inky characters without any contact with the True Son of Mary.

Diving into the subject, it did not take me long to discover the root of the problem on the absence of official documents about the existence of Jesus. Absence on whose sake the centuries have raised to the Mystery of the Life of the Founder of Christianity that mountain of books the result of whose reading is as ambiguous as confusing.

Inspired by this fact, the last of the writers of the twentieth century who contributed his grain to that apocryphal mountain that in the century of Christ began its growth, entitled his work "the unknown Jesus". Isn't it curious that after twenty centuries on the lips of the whole world and five centuries of independent research and free from the tutelage of the Church, the twentieth century sighed such a conclusion for posterity: "Jesus, that unknown?"

But the Founder of Christianity, although a perfect stranger to some, is not so unknown to others, nor was he as unknown to those who knew him during his lifetime, as those who did not know him have wanted to present him to us. The problem, however, is there, where it has always been, in the silence of those who knew him in life and took with them to the grave the Biography of the Son of Mary of Nazareth. Now, if we take into account the Faith, the secret of the problem lies in hitting, entering and seeing. For the "one who was" is still "the one who is."

These considerations set by principles of my research, the cause at the bottom of the lack of official documentation on Jesus as a historical personage I found it in the two fires that, in the same year according to some, in different years according to others, destroyed the Archives of the Temple of Jerusalem, on one hand, and those of the Imperial Rome of the Caesar Octavian Augustus, on the other.

Chance? pure chance? part of a Machiavellian plan conceived by powers in the shadows? How can we know, how can we say for sure?

What is beyond doubt is that the violent anti-Christianity of that generation of the first century A.D. set the fuse and ignited the spark that blew up the walls of the Temple of Jerusalem.

In the case of the burning of the Temple of Jerusalem, specifically, it is known that the destruction of the Archives of Israel was provoked by the sons of those who judged Jesus. A brief incursion into the events of the anti-Roman revolt is enough to discover

the identity of the arm that, baton in hand, directed the orchestra of the destruction of the Archives of the Third Kingdom of Israel.

Logically, in this book we are not going to rescue from the sarcophagus of memories, where the last Hebrews threw the true history of the Second Fall, the memory of those events. Just to say, like father, like son; Adam fell, his children fell. With the wonderful difference that this time the sons did not drag the rest of the world to the hell of deserved damnation. In any case, let us focus on the facts.

In spite of the regrets, obviating the opinion of the experts, here it must be recognized that, from a psychohistorical point of view, the reason for setting fire to Jerusalem's Archives, documentarily speaking of incalculable value, at the time of reconstructing the Hasmonean Period for example, had by goal the physical elimination of any proof on which the future could base the historical existence of Christ, and rooted the Foundation of the Church in the summit of the internal processes lived by the spirit of the messianic Israel.

Little doubt is left to the author and less space is left to the reader to insert the personality of the official historian of the Jews, a man named Flavius Josephus, in the most representative genre of his time. Trained in the old Roman imperial school, the most representative in regard to the manipulation of the past, as demonstrated in the *Aeneid* of Virgil, Flavius Josephus applied the same method to the history of his people, giving birth to a history without prophetic light of any kind and less messianic value if possible. From which resulted that pathetic exorcism that is his *Ancient History of the Jewish People*, against which modern historians erased the right to any criticism, and from which was derived the banishment from the conscience of "the chosen people" of that spirit that made the Hebrew special and unique among the other peoples of our world.

Misfortune upon misfortune, if from the falsification of the origins of the Roman people by Virgil, the founders of that Rome born with eternal vocation, came out to be glorified, from the hands of Flavius Josephus was "born again" a people deprived of all glory and honor in the eyes of God and men.

Terrible was the price therefore that in order to see exterminated all the first Christians, without distinction of age and sex, were willing to pay and paid the children of Judah.

Although it is something that is always left in the back room, we must not forget that if Jesus was the son of Adam and Eve, no less by blood were those who judged him and condemned him to death. So what has always been talked about and never discussed is the fratricide committed against the new Abel, of which the old one was his model, partly because there was talk of deicide and partly because the Cain of those days, unlike the old one, never seemed to repent of his crime. But let us leave here the critical examination of the historical value of the literary work of Flavius Josephus. Today it is known that the historian of the Jews managed to impose his version of the Acts at the price of bending his knees, not before the God of his fathers, but before the gods of the Empire. And let us return to the other Burn.

In the case of the destruction of the Archives of the Empire by Nero, that the purpose was to close such an anti-Christian operation is no longer so credible. But at the end of the day it is what came to be closed with the destruction of the Archives of Augustean Rome. The documents on the Universal Census, and any other physical evidence that could shed light on the case, were definitively reduced to ashes.

That is to say, since the Year of Fire the Gospels and only the Canonical Gospels remained as the only documents on which to reconstruct the History of Jesus.

This conclusion was discovered already in their time by the contemporaries of the Apostles. This discovery inspired many of them to write the so-called “apocryphal gospels.”

Some say that the Canonical Gospels came first, and then, working with them, the apocryphal authors assembled their stories. But I would say that the Word came first, and then the Word was put into writing. In fact when one of the evangelists says in his prologue that before him many had attempted to compose an account of the life of Jesus, and by saying “many”, being only four evangelists (two by this date), Luke was undoubtedly referring to the apocryphal authors.

It is not surprising that, scandalized, the Apostles rose up against those tales. And they decided to put in writing what the first Christians already knew by word: that to the Four, and only to the Four Gospels all the Christians of the Orb had to abide.

Those who did so and banished from their eyes the reading of the “apocryphal Gospels”, and closed their ears to the Gnostic stories so fashionable in the first two centuries of Christianity, soon began to be called “Catholics”. For if the first followers of Christ, without distinction between their more or less divergent positions, began to be called “Christians”, all those who adhered to the Text of the Canonical Gospels soon began to be called Catholics. For contrary to the others, who in the case of the Virgin, for example, corrected the Apostles themselves -excusing them for their childish credulity on the Virgin Conception of Christ- the Catholics believed blindly in the Word.

This, without any doubt, was the origin of Catholicism. When St. Paul criticized some of the faithful for defining themselves as being of this or that apostle, he was surely referring to the damage against the Unity of Christianity that the first apocryphal accounts were already doing.

That is to say, the churches born of the Reformation were not the first to deny the Incarnation of the Son of God and his Birth by the work and grace of the Holy Spirit. Before the Reformation, the Gnostics of the first and second century A.D. already denied the existence of the Virgin. Not to mention or bring now to the stand the opinion of the Jews themselves in this regard, it is understood.

But let us return to the investigation. For of course, this is Faith. But History demands facts, documents, pieces with which to compose the puzzle. So how to carry out a recreational investigation of the History of Jesus if the indispensable elements for its articulation are nowhere to be found? That is to say, who can compose a puzzle without the pieces of the puzzle to be composed?

For these reasons as spring fell upon London, I stopped looking in books for what I could not find in them.

When spring broke I went to Jerusalem. I crossed Europe by the light of a bright star and crossed the sea on the waves of a Silver Dove.

Holy Land! At the shores of the Great Sea a Tower shone at dawn like the most powerful lighthouse in the world. It was Haifa.

I went down to Nazareth. I visited the Temple of the Annunciation. After a brief stop in Tel Aviv I continued on my way to the Holy City.

When I reached Jerusalem the City was in a state of alarm. Iraq had just invaded Kuwait. The anti-Zionist discourse of the new hero of Islam, using the universal hatred of the Muslim world against the Jews as a hyperlink to rally all the fundamentalists of the Arab world to his cause, demanded - according to Israeli newspapers - the use of nuclear weapons, especially the neutron bomb.

While Iraq was raising waves of cheers in the Palestinian territories, among the crowds strolling along David Street an advert man dressed as a prophet was walking with a very large sign, which read: The end of the world is near, come and have a beer.

It was a very instructive trip. I climbed back on the wings of the Silver Dove and sailed the waters of the Big Sea back to the Old Continent.

I set course for London. I settled down in Finsbury Park, locked the door, opened my old machine, and sat down determined not to leave the studio until I got the History for which I had been striving for the last few years.

It was a very long autumn, but a very fruitful one. One day in November of that year I reached the finish line. The goal I had been running after all those years was the treasure that the Mother kept in her heart, "the Heart of Mary".

How Mary met Joseph, who Zechariah and Elizabeth were, who the famous brothers and sisters of Jesus really were. Everything, absolutely everything that she knew all about her Son she displayed it before my eyes. She had kept it all in her Heart.

What I, Christ Raul, saw in the Heart of the Mother is what you are about to read.

CHAPTER I: "I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST"

Genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham...son of David...son of Zerubbabel, son of Abiud, of Eliakim, of Azor, of Zadok, of Achim, of Eliud, of Eleazar, of Matthan, of Jacob....

MARY OF NAZARETH

The Virgin was born in Nazareth, in the heart of Galilee. As, thanks to the canonical Gospels, everybody knows very well, the father of the Virgin was called Jacob, and her mother was called Anne. Jacob of Nazareth, Mary's father, died when Mary was very young. One of those days the father's soul of the Virgin went to Heaven, and did not return. This took place during the years of Herod's reign.

The deceased left behind orphans, and a widow. From the point of view of the things of human beings, Jacob, son of Matthan, son of Solomon king, son of David, king and prophet, went to die at a bad time. Death, of course, never comes at a good time. But anyway, Jacob of Nazareth went to die at the best possible moment. Those great droughts that for so many years devastated the provinces of the Middle East had finally left; the famous fat cows that for a moment seemed that they were never going to return, were coming back, each one more plump they had returned and were walking their abundance through the fields of all the provinces of the Ancient Levant, when the Greeks and the Romans.

The luminous horizon longed for, begged for, desired, requested in multitudinous processions Temple below Temple above, had also approached, of course, the hills of Nazareth. Its radiance was already beginning to shine in the eyes of its inhabitants with the gleam of the star of the prayers heard, of the wish granted. Shepherds from the Galilee, fishermen from the Sea of Miracles, farmers from the valleys of the Jordan, artisans from the country who lived in the darkness of despair, all together took to the streets to celebrate the years of the fat cows. At last they had arrived!

The House of the Virgin enjoyed the general joy with the intensity of those who have had a bad time, as bad as others, not as bad as others, not much better than most of the people who had a really bad time during those long years. There were so many of them!

It was not only that drought. It was also those earthquakes that ravaged the Middle East, spreading famine from the mountains of Lebanon to the shores of the Red Sea. And

more. As terrible as those years of tremendous despair were, the fiscal policy of the tyrant Herod played the role of an axe, cutting off every head that managed to stay afloat. Under the reign of Herod the Great, to keep breathing became a crime. The right to speak was forbidden. The sacred quality that makes the difference between man and beast was sanctioned, and its exercise condemned at best to banishment, at worst to capital punishment in others. So many strongholds were built by Herod, so many gallows were counted in Israel. Of all the trades prostitution is the oldest, but the only one that during the days of Herod the Great never went out of fashion was that of the executioner. How funny, while the Day of Judgment arrived or not, the family of the Tyrant built palaces with blocks of marble! And fortresses worthy of an emperor, and barracks and military garrisons against a possible insurrection of those that are able to tear down even the very walls of Hell.

The Pharaoh of Moses was bad, the Herods were worse. And, in the meantime, while the tyrant devoured a son or a brother, the people continued to suffer physical and spiritual calamities of which, when they happen, one does not even want to remember. Who would remember those lean years when two thousand years passed? However, the schizophrenia of the Tyrant, the schizophrenia of the tyrant would be remembered by History: Herod the Great! That murderer lacked only that, Caesar's own permission to violate all the laws of Roman law, license to kill at will. His children, his brothers, his wife, his friends, his enemies, whether they were innocent or not.

Under Herod's reign there came a time when it was enough to move the lips asking for justice to fall under the wheels of his murderous paranoia. The Romans - it must be said - made many mistakes; of all those that Octavian Caesar Augustus allowed himself, to give the Crown of the Jews to a Palestinian was a failure that even the Judge of the Universe himself must find it hard to forgive him.

But let us return to the subject of the Life of the Virgin and her Family. Jacob of Nazareth, Mary's father, had just died.

Precisely because Anne, the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth, and her older daughters Mary and Jane, had already managed to almost forget the kind of battle that that man, so dear to them, had to fight against the elements of that endless summer, it is understandable that his loss, now that the light of hope began to beget in the udders of the cows of the stable the gold of abundance, the loss of that man was infinitely more unbearable and hard for the mother of the Virgin.

Anne and Jacob of Nazareth overcame all the bad times past with courage, and responded to the hard days gone with the good face of those who walks under the peace of God. Like everyone else, also, Jacob of Nazareth and Anne, during all the days of the last years, dreamed of the days of fat cows, and they laughed at the bad times by giving birth to six children.

It happened that instead of allowing the bad times to drive a wedge between the two, Jacob and Anne were drawn together even more tightly, if at all possible, in the embrace of love that had them marveling to be together. Mary was called the firstborn of the deceased; then came Jane. They were followed by twins, then another girl, and the river of life was closed by the child of the house, named Cleophas, a baby in his milk days when his father died.

"Now that the sun is shining again, my daughter, the Lord leaves me alone with my six children. Who will teach me to live without your father, Mary?", the mother of the Virgin poured out her bleeding soul upon her daughter. The girl gathered in her lap the tears of that mother whom she loved so much. Like any little girl who had lost her way in a forest of strangers, the Widow wept her heart out. In Mary's heart, however, her father's presence had simply gone to sleep.

Mary could still see, feel, smell, hear her father all smiles as he answered her and her sister Jeanne's questions about the Lord. Mary could still see him dealing with the harvester, the peasants and the cattle ranchers of the villages around Nazareth with the joy and strength of a man respected, esteemed, considered honest from one end of the county to the other. His father was a man of those who looked face to face, straight in the eyes, without folds. You could read in Jacob of Nazareth's eyes the sincerity that transpired in his words.

When the hard years came, Mary's father was the right man for the job. Since the fields no longer produced enough to pay extra wages, Jacob of Nazareth took upon himself the burden of extracting from his fields even a few sacks of almonds, a few arrobas of oil, a few measures of wheat, a few quintals of the famous wines of the House; whatever it took, to keep his daughters' bones strong and healthy. His two eldest daughters Mary and Jane knew as well as his Widow what kind of barren suns that man had to fight against! Thank God, even though they were small, Mary and Jane were there to help with the olives in winter, with the almonds, figs and wheat in summer, with the beasts in autumn, summer, winter and spring. What the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth would give now to get up at dawn in the morning, and prepare milk, bread and water for the father of her daughters!

Mary knew very well, to see her father standing again at dawn, saying goodbye to his daughters with that smile in his eyes, her mother would give her own life. But there was nothing that could be done to turn back the grindstone of time. Now it was time to live, to choose between the dead husband and the living children.

Of the two girls, Mary and Jane, Jane was the younger, a year younger than Mary. Mary was the older one, the big one in the house. Mysteries of life, it was her, Jane, the younger of the two, who was more interested in farming; perhaps because Jane had inherited from her father the taste for the smell of trees in bloom, and the pleasure of contemplating the colors of the horizon at dawn.

Looking at both sisters, anyone would have said that Mary was the one who should have liked the wind in her hair at dusk; however, it was in Jane, the youngest, whose body was almost or just as small as her mother's, the soul where her father poured his love for the red of the living earth. In Mary the strength of life came from her mother. Her mother bequeathed to her all her art for sewing and dressmaking. What was dear to Mary was the family, the house.

So when the bad times came, and the cows became lean and the money became scarce, and the needs to be covered began to multiply up to six times in just two years, Maria revealed herself a born seamstress. At the age when it is said to be in the springtime of life, the eldest daughter of Jacob of Nazareth could mend a dress and make it as good as new in a jiffy, or weave her sisters a wool coat in a matter of days, without ever ceasing to be her mother's right-hand. And a model daughter for her sister Jeanne. In this one -I have said- she had revealed an innate capacity to learn from her father the

sense of the impacts of the lunar cycles in agriculture, why rabbits eat lettuce, how a real tomato really grows, why olive trees branches are cut down so that they do not become shady and spoil the flavor of the oil. In short, thousands of things.

The fact is that Jane, besides being the right eye of her father, was the other arm of her sister Mary, and one for the father and the other for the mother and the two together in joy, when the sunny winds and the cold drops and the droughts and the winter storms in summer and the summer heat in winter and the rains in a seen and unseen, when the storm tested the men looking to take to Paradise those who put a happy face, at that time the two sisters were more united than ever. Those bad years forced the two sisters to work hard. It was a duty they adopted from silence, written in blood, beating to the same rhythm of their parents' heart. Each one let her soul open to her particular gifts and acted following the course of the mystery of life in each person.

The eyes of the eldest, Mary's sight was made to discover the needle in the haystack; they never failed to insert the thread into the eye of the needle, without even looking. The eyes of her sister Jane needed horizon, field, open sky. Instead of fighting, the sisters thanked the God of their parents for his eternal wisdom and infinite goodness. In the eyes of both their father was a wonderful man.

"Why do we say that the wisdom of the Lord is eternal and his goodness infinite? - Jacob of Nazareth said to his two eldest daughters. Because with his answers he amazes us and with his goodness he lights up our faces", with a smile in his eyes that father answered those two girls, the eyes of his face.

How much they loved the man God had given them for a father! Their father continued: "When we say that the Wisdom of the Lord is eternal, we declare with all our heart and with all our mind our joy in knowing that He does not lie. Daughters, when we adore Him for His infinite goodness our joy is that of the one who found himself in the pit into which the wicked cast the good and when he lifted up his face he saw the Lord laughing at the science of the jinn."

"Daughters, to be good, it costs," Jacob of Nazareth confessed to his daughters as they milked the olive trees. "To the one who is better, don't you give a little present? Are you envious, Jane, of your older sister because she is better than you at sewing? When has my Jane ever made her Mary feel guilty for not having her qualities for the field? When has mother scolded her Jane for not knowing how to sew a dress as well as her Mary? What would I do without my Jane if she did not bring me at noon the food, if she did not force me I would eat it?"

Oh, how they remembered him! Was it true that he had gone away? They still could not believe it. With their father's lifeless body before their eyes Mary and Jane looked at each other in silence. My God, had they really lost him?

Both sisters now embraced their mother.

Shattered, the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth continued to mourn her misfortune:

"Now Mary, now that the fat cows are coming, now that your father could sit in his vineyard to eat clusters as big as those of Polyphemus and sweet as those of Bacchus, God forgive me, just now. Why, Lord, why? Tell me wherein thy servant offended thee."

God, is it possible to explain the connection between the rooks and the unfortunate laborers on whom the Fates drop their mantle of black omen? Is it possible to understand that God is God while the Devil reigns? Who would be able to write the script of his own life and shine like a star at least in the eyes of the paper partners invented for this purpose! The man dreams that his is the destiny, the child dreams of the man who beats in his chest, to discover around the corner that a gust of wind is enough to reduce his dreams to bits condemned to the trash. In the end, human life is that of the reed, if the wind blows it breaks and its remains fall into the well of oblivion. Who has not fallen into the temptation to let himself die and end it all once and for all? Or will we be the strongest until proven otherwise?

For everyone, the moment of truth arrives. Every creature has its own. And in that hour is when the being walks or bursts. This was the hour of truth for the mother of the Virgin.

"What are we, Mary?" cried the mother of the Virgin mourning the loss of her husband. "We fight against the elements with the forces of a creature of clay. We lift up our idols in honor of him who gives us victory. To the Most High we dedicate our glory. But the Almighty does not tire of seeing us reduced to the condition of beasts. The champion advances to collect his crown when Death crosses his path. Does the Almighty rise to save the solitary runner from leaving his soul in the race? Why does he remain seated on his Almighty and Omniscient Throne while the wreckage is swept from the track by the wind? Is that what we are, my daughter, dust that dreams to be rock, rock that dreams to be mountain, mountain that dreams to be eagles' nest? What will become of your eaglets now, my husband? Who will rise up and protect them when the serpent scours the cliff and their mother does not know how to defend your children alone?"

What answer could be given to that woman? What madman would have dared to say to her what those ignorant visitors said to the Job of the Bible?

"Shut up, you old fart," those friends said to her. "If you rot, it will be because you are meaner than all the devils put together. You fooled us all with your alms and your nonsense. Thank God, the Lord has revealed to us your falsehood and hypocrisy. For them punishes you the God whom you tried to deceive as you did with us. Shut up and suffer, you rotten old man".

What friends! They wanted to force poor Job to recognize that misery is born of misery, that he who has retains because he had, that no one is strong on a whim but that the happiness or misfortune of the person accounts for his worth. According to such sages the poor are all perverted sinners, corrupt vicious people who deserve what they suffer; the good are all happy, happy eat partridges, have the gold, have the power, they are the best, the chosen of providence, the race born to be happy, and they are happy because they are good, and when they are better they will be like the gods.

"Eve," said Satan to Adam's wife, "eat of this fruit and learn. There are good and there are bad, there are foolish and there are clever, there are rich and poor, there are slaves and free, strong and weak, angels and demons. There is life and death, truth and falsehood, peace and war; what is all this but the salt of the earth?"

Good God, when did the fate of the prophets not hang on a cloud of more or less on the horizon!

"But with bad weather fair face," swiftly counterattacked holy Job.

"Where is the fool who laughs lost in the storm?" the visitors laughed back.

"Of the Indestructible, of the Invincible is the last laugh," Job answered them again. "What do you laugh at and why do you laugh? What light have you come to bring to my eyes? Do you want to condemn me for what I have done? Ignorant ones, I am being punished for what I have not done."

"Just is what you say, to the good the reward is pleasing, to the wicked it is terrible. So, you have your wages. Now, acknowledge that you are a sinner, a betrayer of providence as you yourself have said in confessing that everyone receives for his work his due. Tell us, sinner, what did you cover up with your alms and your sanctimonious posturing? Is it not for these that God has punished you? This is God's punishment, don't cry, burst", with a false smile 'the friends' answered him.

With four more of "those friends" how long would it have taken for Job's patience to boil over? Instead of weeping over his bad luck, holy Job burst out laughing, got up and threw them out of his house.

His tragedy, Job's tragedy was not in the fall of the walls of his faith at the sound of the trumpets of Hell. This was not Job's problem. His fortress had been built on rock. Bombproof his faith remained intact. The problem that was stabbing Job's soul was not knowing what was going on, what was the reason for this change in the mood of his God. Why had his God abandoned him naked and to his fate before an enemy armed to the teeth?

Does the warrior follow his Hero and King to the battlefield and, at a corner of the crossroads, turn his back on him as if he were sacrificing a pawn on the altar of victory?

Well, just this dilemma, just this mystery was the one that the soul of the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth had gripped by the neck. Fighting against the darkness with the only divine weapon available to humans, the word, the mother of the Virgin was looking for the answer to why Death had taken her husband. And she could not find it.

"Why does our God do nothing, Mary? Why does He let the serpent scour the cliff and why does He make it easier for himself by eliminating the father of his cubs? Does He not see her approaching, daughter? Why did not the God of your father reach for the bow and arrow and with the lightning of his gaze strike down the Beast? Did the arrow miss its target, was it deflected by the wind and, seeking the dragon, did it kill the hero? Tell me, daughter, my soul is bitter and its eyes cannot see the hidden planes of the Omniscient, but what are we, Mary? Why is the understanding of a god demanded of a creature of clay condemned to dust for having eaten an apple? Do not look at me with those eyes, do not reproach me that my heart bleeds words. What will flow from the wound of the Hind of the Dawn when the hunter chases her in the morning at the hour of the first joys? Will not the arrow be cursed that enters the chest of the dove that climbs on the horse of the wind, trots through the skies and returns happily home to her master? Already it arrives, daughter, already it reaches the arm of its master, already the murderous dart also crosses the air, its master has the power to catch it in flight, but he observes, he does nothing, he remains still as if that were the reward for having fulfilled his sacred mission, and already the daughter of Mercury falls in the dust at the feet of the

one who turns his face to her. Don't tell me to shut up, Mary don't you see that if I don't, I'll die.

I only know that I know nothing, although they say that God created man and woman to love each other and never separate, they also say that the Devil swore to make that love impossible. But in this world there are people who are deaf and do not understand, they do not know anything, they laugh at the Devil's horns and challenge death to break what God united with bonds stronger than the words of the Serpent.

Anna, Jacob's widow, and Jacob of Nazareth, father of Mary, future mother of Jesus Christ, lived that challenge. Once they met, if they did not marry they would die, and when they married they could no longer entertain the idea of living without each other. Every year they spent together they worshipped the God who transformed a rib, a simple rib, into something as beautiful as that love.

THE DEATH OF JACOB OF NAZARETH

Genealogy of the Savior: Genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham: Abraham begat... David; David to ... Zerubbabel; Zerubbabel to Abiud, Abiud to Eliakim, Eliakim to Azor, Azor to Zadok, Zadok to Achim, Achim to Eliud, Eliud to Eleazar, Eleazar to Matthan, Matthan to Jacob, and Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, called Christ.

Jacob, son of Matthan of Nazareth, died a few months after the birth of the son of whom he and his wife Anne dreamed so much, and after whom they did not stop running until they had him. We already know that having a couple, giving birth to a male is a cliché. But in those days of fiscal terror and long droughts like the Sahara desert, a man had to dream of having a male child. To pass on to him all his knowledge of farm work, to lean on his young arms when his own could not pull the load because of old age. Man, one always has sons-in-law; but it is not the same. It is not the same to be seen as a burden than to be carried by the son of your entrails. Nor is it the same to leave all that your parents left you to your own son as it is to the son of a stranger. To anyone who thinks that those men were ancient, ignorant of life, who did not know that a female can do what a man can do, or better yet, to these modern people the best that can be offered is silence.

Turning a deaf ear to the intelligence of so many modern people, always facing the sun of the centuries, Jacob of Nazareth and his mistress ran after the male, delighted to enjoy being ancient. And they caught up with him, and they did catch up with him. They called him Cleophas because when they saw him for the first time in his mother's arms, Jacob of Nazareth was reminded of his father-in-law. What can be said about the physique of their little boy, the most handsome boy in the world, of course.

Well, everyone in Mary's house was already in the glory when suddenly his father suddenly fell asleep under that fig tree, so happy were his father and mother! Five girls

like five suns, all healthy, all joyful, all playing with the doll their parents had bought them. Flesh and blood. She cried, she peed for real, she asked for butter, she pooped. A joy. And suddenly, when they were all at home as if in paradise, his father died. A tragedy. What a pity! The devil himself attacking the house from all sides could not have hurt the mother of those six children so much. The Widow's pain was all the deeper because, having no one of her family by her side, in her desperation she was already besieged by an invincible enemy who demanded her immediate surrender or the total destruction of her house. If only she had had her parents or her aunt Isabel by her side, but no one. And who was she in Nazareth? In spite of the years Jacob's wife was still a stranger, the outsider who had taken the golden bachelor of the town from them.

"With how beautiful they were, they would have married an outsider; on top of that, a little girl, who looks like a fool," the Nazarene girls consoled themselves. "Very fine. Very polite. We'll see when she starts to give birth and has to run her father-in-law's house alone what her manners and her little face of princess of the Holy City will be like". Things of the people, they don't want you bad but they don't wish you any good either. Everyone who comes from outside has to be accountable to the neighbors for their intentions. Everything has to conform to community guidelines; tradition rules.

Didn't the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth know them all? Hadn't they been watching her during the lean years as one who waits for the hero to go down, to take the pleasure of seeing those two towers bite the dust like any village steeple? What comfort could the Widow find in those who were already doing the math and calculating how they could divide up the estate of the deceased? How much would they offer her for the vineyards? How much for the olive groves? How much for the dry land?

"Why do we kill the miracle of our daily existence in judgments against our neighbor, my daughter? Who knows how long our days will be in this world? Only the Lord knows; but out of his mouth never comes the number. Can you imagine if he caught you counting by criticizing your neighbor to death, or throwing the stone the first? Wouldn't it be more beautiful if he caught you sharing your bread with the poor?" the mother was saying to her daughter Mary, while they were sewing, alone. And yet now it was the mother who was asking the daughter to be good to her and not to refuse to speak to the pain in her soul.

"Let me die, Mary. Don't worry about my soul going out of me in broken words. The Lord has taken away my husband, leaving me alone with his six children. Why should my eyes be restrained and my heart envy the rock that the Almighty has for his heart? My daughter, it is easy from the snows to look at the valley that burns in the summer. When did the Almighty put himself in the skin of the soldier who falls naked on the battlefield defending his life for the honor of his soul of tender and wet clay? How easy it is to sit on the throne of judgment to sign sentences! The Lord is far from human weakness, our passions do not affect Him. If it is cold He does not tremble; if it is hot He does not sweat; if an arrow is shot it does not reach Him; if He sleeps nothing troubles Him. What does the Indestructible know of the fragility of our existence? Do you not see, daughter, that the valley is fattened with our tears? Why do I repress my pain and bind my tongue to fear? Does not the warrior run to meet death? May God kill me, may He give me back the life of my man, why does he do nothing, why does he stand vigilant on the other side of the precipice? On what grounds, daughter, does the Eternal One base his silence and his impassive behavior? If only he would rise like a sun and speak with the voice of the storm and from his soul the rays of his wisdom would weave in the firmament clouds pregnant with intelligence. But no, daughter, whether the storm rages,

the lands tremble, the mountains fall and bury towns and villages, or the sea gets out of control and sinks islands with their people, the Lord, unreachable, indestructible, does not move an eyebrow. Does He see the disaster and all He offers is a handkerchief of mourning asking forgiveness for not having anticipated the movement of the Serpent? Tell me, daughter, that it was not He who shot the arrow that killed the eagle and left at the mercy of the devil the nest of his eaglets. But do not deny me the right to complain about the fate of my daughters over the corpse of my deceased".

Pierced by her mother's grief Mary consoled her in this way:

"We are all equal in your eyes, mother. Unique we are only in the eyes of our parents. His creatures we look as far as our eyes can see, but He carries the weight of all of us on His people. In due time He will arise, mother. And His feet will shine with the radiance of the hero dressed for war against the one who took His man from our mother Eve. I know I am young, mother, but believe me for all the love I have for Him, the God of my father will not allow my mother's house to sink. That's it, mother, calm your tears. Death takes away the best, thinking that by leaving the bad ones, it leaves the little ones without protection against the tyrants. It ignores that when the good ones leave, they go to Heaven to collect the angels' weapons. Father defended us as a man and took us forward. My father will now defend his daughters and his child with the sword of the cherubim. My mother, enough is enough, look no more at his corpse."

The Widow listened to the words of her eldest daughter as one who receives kisses from afar.

It was Mary and her sister Joan who found their father sitting against the trunk of that fig tree. In truth, it was not exactly harvest time; but Jacob of Nazareth liked to pick the first figs of the season; he said they were the best for making fig bread.

Jacob rigged the beast. He pulled alone for the field with the fresh one. The fig orchard was on the other side of the hills, as seen from the hill of Nazareth, in front. Delighted with life, the good man said goodbye to his mistress. His two eldest daughters would bring him lunch and help him pick up the baskets. Until then, well, that's it, a kiss, goodbye.

Seeing him leave in such a beautiful way, who could have said that the man would return home dead?

At lunchtime, Mary and her sister Jane came to the camp. Mary was a year older than Jane and they were both girls in bloom. Mary and Jane looked for their father and found him sitting in the shade of that fig tree.

"Shall we let him sleep a little longer, Jane? Let's pick up the baskets while we go," said Mary

The two sisters set to work. They finished gathering the baskets, and their father did not wake up. But he did not wake up.

"How much does father sleep today, doesn't he, Mary?" said Jane.

They worked harder and harder. After a while they began to look at each other worriedly.

"Will something happen to dad, Jane?". And there went the older of the two to see what was wrong with her father.

I'm not going to get tender here as the one who wants to win over the reader by bringing a sea of tears to his eyes. Everyone has already gone through the formalities of a funeral and knows how much it hurts to lose what Death should never have taken away. But it was she, Mary, who knelt down to wake him up and discovered the truth in the pallor of her father's face.

The girl did not scream, she was not frightened. She took the head of her dead man in her arms, rocked his body, kissed his forehead, looked at her sister Juana who was approaching in tears. Jane embraced her sister Mary and Mary let herself be embraced until Juana unburdened herself and together they were able to recompose their souls.

"Go home, Jane, and tell Mama what's going on", Mary asked her sister. Jane got on the donkey and, crying with a shrinking heart, ran through the hills. Meanwhile Mary was left alone with her father's body, under that fig tree, caressing the face of the man who for her was the most wonderful man in the world, who had gone without giving his wife and daughters a chance to tell him one last time how much they loved him.

"What will become of your child now, father? In what eyes will he find the divine image of the man your daughters have discovered in you?", speaking to Heaven, whispered young Mary.

That said, a cruel and sadistic enemy razing the house to the ground would not have done the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth as much harm as Death's way of taking her husband from her. If her man had died defending his own in some war, or selling his daughters' lives at the price of his own, what do I know, but to die in that way, without warning, when they had found happiness, after having overcome a decade of years as bad as Herod's heart.

What am I going to tell you about the rivers of tears that the Widow shed all that day and all the night of that afternoon? Hasn't a daughter in bloom, or a sister in the fullness of her beauty ever died? Hasn't Death ever torn the star from your eyes, leaving you in the darkest darkness? You should have been laughing loudly, clapping your hands, your heart open to all hope, and suddenly, overnight, an hour before dawn breaks, the dawn turns to moonless night, the plain becomes a bottomless pit, and as you look down you discover the face of the Serpent welcoming you.

And Jacob and Anne had loved each other from the very day they laid eyes on each other. It was love at first sight. It was to lay eyes on each other and know that the search was over. Jacob and Anna had been born for each other; they were made for each other; they were the two halves of the same fruit. It was natural that he should die as much in love with his wife as on the first day, and that the Widow should lose him more in love with her husband than ever. And if we add to this pain the fact that the house was left without a man to take care of the fields and the beasts: the magic recipe for the origin of the bitter stew that the Widow poured into the heart of her daughter Maria during the two days following her father's burial, you have already read it.

MARY'S VOW

Like Catholics all their lives, those Hebrew women were too tragic to mourn the death of a loved one. I am not saying that it is neither good nor bad, it was just the way it was. The Romans on the contrary used the funeral as an excuse for a banquet, the last banquet, the last supper of the Caesars. Cicero's farewell banquet in the frescoes of the deceased's mansion in Pompeii shows his family and friends drinking to the dead man's health. The orator's wreath on their heads recalls that of laurels but braided with arms of vines. Good God, the Romans were so hard-hearted that not even Death could wring a tear from them. They needed to be touched by the rod of Bacchus to remember that they were men, as flesh and blood as the other barbarians of the orb. Not until they were drunk as a skunk did they shed a tear.

The Hebrews, contrary to the majority of the peoples, preferred to watch over the dead bareback, sticking out their chests. The distance, the distance, the absence needs a time to take off. I suppose that the custom imposes its culture and each culture lives it in its own way. The Hebrews of all possible ways chose the most painful, they did not bury the deceased until the third day after his death.

Tears were served! And if on top of that there was the case at hand, a young man, in the prime of his life, married and as much in love with his widow as the first day, father of six children, a man who was never sick, a man who never seemed to tire, who died with no one to take care of his fields, who left just when the storm was subsiding, well, put all these elements in the same shaker, shake it, and the result will be explosive. You will soon discover the explosion that triggered the death of Jacob of Nazareth; its consequences still linger on.

There was the Widow herself. From a young age the mother of the Virgin was very sweet. The day her father, Cleophas of Jerusalem, forbade her to even think of marrying the man who would be the father of her children, the young bride ran off in search of her aunt Elizabeth, through the streets of Jerusalem leaving a trail of broken tears.

Aunt Elizabeth, wife of Zechariah, future father of the Baptist, already knew her. It was not for nothing that Anne was her niece. Aunt Elizabeth laughed looking into her while she wiped her niece's cheeks.

"But well, little girl, are you going to tell me what's wrong with you? When you tear yourself away like this you forget that I know nothing. Shall we cry together or shall I laugh at you until you laugh with me?". Aunt Elizabeth loved her niece Anne with a divine tenderness.

That woman, Aunt Elizabeth, loved her niece more than the walls of Jerusalem, more than the clouds of the spring sky, more than the morning and evening stars together, she loved her more than her dresses and more than her silver pots, but every time her Annie fell on her like that she did not know whether to join her in pouting or to laugh at her tears. Nor was it that at every change of guard his niece Annie was watering the desert with a salt water rain. The truth was that when she started to cry so much that she couldn't even articulate a word and she had to be given time to calm down, it meant that something very serious had happened to her niece.

The death of the father of your girls, only two of them half-grown-up, the other still little, and a baby boy just born, truth to tell, yes it is a good reason to cry until your bones are dry.

That happened, the Widow, the mother of the Virgin, sank to the depths of an understandable despair. For a while she remained mute. She said nothing, she only wept embracing that infant in her arms who would never know his father. With Cleophas in her arms, the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth wept all day and all night.

Desperate, she saw herself surrounded by dense and fatal darkness; sunken, she already imagined the house of her deceased swallowed up by taxes; broken, undone, she already saw herself selling her children to save them from ruin.

Daughters of David they all were, at a time when being Jewish was not enough, but had to prove it, having a daughter of David as a wife was a passport to the benefits that Caesar had granted the Jews in gratitude for having saved his life against the last of the Pharaohs.

I tell you.

Pursuing Pompey, Julius Caesar got into trouble. Caesar was seen running like a madman after Pompey. And behold, he landed in Egypt. At that time the Pharaoh's brother had just killed Pompey. This same Pharaoh who had just executed Pompey came and got bravado on Caesar. Cleopatra's brother even dared to declare war on the Conqueror of Gaul.

As we know, against all hope, that little Pharaoh was almost on the verge of sending Caesar to the Elysium of the famous Roman generals. It was then that Herod's father managed to gather thousands of horsemen, galloping across the Sinai desert he charged Cleopatra's brother, breaking the siege, and rescuing Caesar from danger. In return Julius Caesar granted the Jews a number of imperial privileges, such as not being subject to military service, freedom of movement for the Temple Tithe, and so on.

The sine qua non condition to benefit from such privileges was to be a citizen of Judea.

Smart as foxes, slippery as eels, the Jews found many ways to forge papers. Of all the imaginable ways to outwit the Empire, the easiest was to buy false documents, which any of the bureaucrats working at the Temple Registry in Jerusalem would serve you for a handful of drachmas.

But there was another, a cheaper way: what better way to belong to the list of the privileged than to declare oneself a descendant of King David? And to better close the circuit "born in Bethlehem of Judah, please". And there was another way even better, a more pleasant formula: to buy a daughter for a wife from King David, of course.

The descendant females of King David for this reason on the rise, if it paid well for a daughter of David, how much would be paid for a genuine daughter of King Solomon? And not just any daughter, a daughter of words, no; we are talking about a genuine and authentic descendant of the mythical wise king.

Something so common then, selling daughters to the highest bidder, to the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth it sounded like comparing women to cattle. By Joshua and the seven

hundred trumpets that demolished the walls of Jericho, to sell her daughters for money? She who had married for love and knew how sweet is marriage for love and only for love? The thought tore her soul.

Yet she did not see how she could save her daughters from being treated like the beasts to be bought and sold in the marketplace of human passions. The more she thought about it, and the corpse of her deceased kept reminding her of it, the more bitter her tears became for the future that awaited her girls. There was also the child.

"And what will become of our Cleophas without your father, Mary? What will become of your father's house, my daughter?", the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth poured her fate into the heart of her elder daughter.

Between mother and daughter, what can I say, the daughter seemed like the mother. Mary embraced her mother and consoled her with words full of tenderness and judgment. And the girl was in bloom. Mary was a creature who had known nothing but joy in this world. She had loved her father with madness and watching her console her sisters and her own mother, anyone would say that she still did not believe what was happening.

"Papa sleeps, Jeanie," is the first thing that came from Mary's soul when they found him dead.

"Papa is in Paradise, there he is waiting for us all, Esther, he is already there, come here Ruth, calm down Naomi", she would say to her little sisters while she drank her tears.

The girl left her sisters with Joanna and went to the Widow:

"That's it, mother; father is in Heaven. His God will not allow his daughters to be sold as slaves," she whispered in her mother's ear, kissing away her tears.

"My daughter", the Widow would try to articulate. But she never finished the sentence, pouting and returning to her darkness, which enveloped her house and painted her family's horizon with the suffering colors of a macabre vision.

The result of the natural despair of the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth was the following.

The gloomy vision that the Widow had made for herself about the future of her daughters corresponded to the reality of every day. The death of the head of the family obliged the widows to give their daughters to the suitor who put the most money on the table, regardless of the age of the buyer. It was the truth, and there was no need to give the matter any more thought. From the rich male's point of view, the more widows there were the better, so there would be more fresh, young cattle to choose from.

The world was made in the image and likeness of the passions of the powerful and anything said to the contrary would get us nowhere. To make matters worse, with the divorce laws that had been given lately, female flesh was bought to use and throw away; it was digested to the consumer's taste and then the remains were thrown away for whoever came after to suck the bones. And woe betide anyone who did not follow suit! In the upper classes having only one wife was an unmistakable sign of conspiracy against Herod.

"Has he married only once, and is he not known to have at least a second or a third wife? Surely that one conspires against your majesty, your highness." For such absurd reasons as this the heads of the Jews rolled in the streets of Jerusalem in those days.

It was not something the Widow was making up. She was from Jerusalem, from the upper class, she knew this reality as well as that her husband was lying dead in front of her daughters.

That that was it, to cry no more, that it was no big deal, that everything would work out, that the Lord would not allow it to happen. Very beautiful words, for which the widow was grateful. She only knew that just a day ago she woke up with the joy of the happiest woman in the world and it hadn't been two, she was "the Widow".

"Let me cry, daughter. Don't you see, if I don't I die," inconsolably the Widow begged her daughter Mary.

Taking advantage of a lull, Joanna and Mary being alone with their mother, Mary, daughter of Jacob of Nazareth, opened her mouth.

Heaven is my witness to what I say hereafter, and may it send me to the dreadful Hell if I invent a single word. On the night of that day, during the wake for the death of her father, the eldest daughter of the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth tied her life to a tree that had the power to hang her if she did not fulfill the Vow she wrote in the heart of her mother and her sister Joanna.

Mary could have kept silent; it was in her power to put her finger to her lips and not submit to the test. But it was not in the character of Jacob's daughter to resist the promptings of her personality. She preferred to accept the consequences with all the consequences of the law.

No one was listening to them, the three of them were alone before God. For this reason I have told you that whoever wants to be sure of what I write, there is the same God who took the word of Jacob's daughter of Nazareth to affirm or deny me. That God presents Himself as Judge is natural, that He comes as Witness is something extraordinary. Of the brave, however, is the glory. And I continue.

There, in front of her sister Joanna, Mary swore to her mother that this - to be her daughters sold as slaves to the highest bidder - would never happen to her sisters, the Devil had to dethrone the Most High to come to happen that, Hell conquer Paradise, or Herod's heart be raised to the altars.

The faith of the daughter of Jacob of Nazareth was so great, her trust in the God of her father was so innocent that it did not fit in her Heart that her Lord would abandon her family to the mercy of the times.

Then, very calmly, with the seriousness of an adult, she, Mary of Solomon, daughter of Jacob of Nazareth, put the God of her father as her witness and before her mother and her sister Joanna swore, invoking the Law of Moses against her head if she broke her vow, that she, Mary of Solomon, would not remove the veil of mourning for the death of her father until she saw all her sisters married, that she would not sign her own marriage contract until she saw her little brother Cleophas married and with children.

Even more: she would not marry until she saw the children of her little brother Cleophas bouncing around, all happy and content in that same room where pain was now triumphant. Until that day she would not remove the veil of mourning for her father.

The Widow raised her head to infinity. Jane looked at her sister with tears of eternity in her eyes. Mary continued saying:

"By the memory of my father I swear to you, mother, that my sisters shall know no master. When they leave my father's house they will go out rejoicing in the arms of that love which their fathers lived and from which their daughters drank their fill. No one will buy the daughters of Jacob. Comfort your soul, my mother. That child you hold in your arms will choose from among the daughters of Eve the most beautiful. So let the Lord do to me if I break my word: for a husband give me the meanest man in the world. Do not break your heart any more, mother; do not offend Heaven by blaming our Lord for our misfortune, lest my father have to bow his head before Abraham because of the offense borne by tears that never end. My father walks among the angels and at the feet of his God asks clemency for his house. You tell him, Jeanne".

LADY ELIZABET IN NAZARETH

The news of the death of Jacob of Nazareth fell on the house of his in-laws and other relatives in Jerusalem with the force of a cyclops without eye, destroying houses and crops blindly. Cleophas and his wife, Mary's grandparents on her mother's side, wanted to rush up to Nazareth.

Prudence advised Zechariah and his Saga to keep their distance, to go up later to Nazareth, to leave it for a better occasion, lest by going all together they should arouse suspicion in the court of King Herod. Any one of the king's spies might find it strange that a whole character of the category of the son of Abijah was interested in the fate of a simple peasant of Galilee. And directing the tyrant's attention to the house of Solomon's Daughter was the last thing Zechariah could afford.

"Thou shalt do what thou wilt, O man of God", with these words Elizabeth closed the discussion with her husband as to whether or not it was advisable to leave Jerusalem at that moment. "You shall do what you will", Elizabeth repeated to him, "but this daughter of Aaron is running out right now to embrace the child of her soul."

Elizabeth, wife of Zechariah, future mother of John the Baptist, older sister of Anne's mother, and therefore maternal aunt of the Widow was by these coincidences of Life: the great-grandmother of the Virgin.

Like Zechariah, her husband, Elizabeth belonged to the Aaronic caste from among whose houses the members of the Sanhedrin were chosen. By this I do not mean anything except that the education of the future mother of the Baptist did not conform to the education that other Hebrew women usually received. And if we add to this the fact that Elizabeth was predestined from her mother's womb to be the wife of the Baptist's father, I believe that from this position of Providence the gates of time are open to whoever dares to cross them.

For so it is, Elizabeth of Jerusalem, the Virgin's great-grandmother, was the elder sister of the mother of the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth.

And so it was done; Elizabeth ran off to Nazareth in the company of Cleophas and his lady, the parents of Anne, Mary's mother.

Cleophas, the Widow's father, was therefore Elizabeth's brother-in-law.

Cleophas married Elizabeth's younger sister and they had Anne, her niece Anne, her morning star, the star of those eyes that wept so much at the impossibility of not being able to have children.

By the time Elizabeth, Cleophas and the lady arrived in Nazareth, the Virgin's father was already in his tomb. The inhabitants of Nazareth had returned to their daily lives.

The arrival of her parents and her aunt Elizabeth reawakened in the eyes of the Widow that river of tears that now lay dormant as if dead, and that exceptionally came to life again when visitors stopped to console her. She did not know, could not, would not live without her husband.

For the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth her aunt Elizabeth was that person that all children miss in their parents. Parents are honored, but to that other person everything is confessed. It was therefore logical that it was to Aunt Elizabeth that the Widow discovered the event.

As always, after a river of tears.

The House of Abiud, son of Zorobabel, son of Salatiel, son of Solomon, king and biblical father of the family of the Virgin, was a farmhouse of the Persian stately times. Except for the barns, the entire building was of hewn stone, even the stables.

Where today stands the bunker of the Annunciation, yesterday a mansion half-farmhouse half-fortress was erected: The Storknest.

The main hall of the house had the walls adorned with the oldest and most impressive weapons. There were those of all periods from the Empire of Nebuchadnezzar II to the Empire of the Greeks. Also against one of the walls of the main hall of the house the masons of the time opened a large fireplace, like a cave. By the fire of that chimney sat Aunt Elizabeth and her niece Anne. Cleophas and his wife had taken their grandchildren to bed.

The Widow then started letting flow from her eyes a river of tears. If the walls could talk, they would say that the Widow made a in a while lake to give half of Africa a bottle.

Aunt Elizabeth always found a way to cut those flood waters. Well, Anne was her little sister's daughter, but as if she were the daughter she never had, Elizabeth loved her niece more than if she had been her own daughter. That's putting it mildly. But that thing, of bursting into tears, falling into an eternal silence, bursting out again, that was not normal.

"What's the matter, Annie?" asked Isabel, worried, "Why did you wait for your parents to leave before bursting into tears like that? We are already alone. Come on, tell me". Elizabeth tried to find out what was wrong with her niece.

The Widow opened her lips. She opened them, yes, but she never managed to string together a complete sentence.

"My Mary...Aunt..."

"What's wrong with your Mary, Anne?"

"Aunt...me...my Mary..."

She never finished. With the temper that woman had, and the infinite patience she had with her niece.

"When you calm down, tell me about it, Anne".

This happened in a very long time.

The stuffed bear that occupied the corner of the main room, had he been alive, he would have despaired by now. Over the fireplace a lion's head native to Assyria yawned expectantly.

Elizabeth was still staring into the fire when the Widow managed to finish the story about her eldest daughter's Vow.

"Repeat that to me, Anne," marveling, asked Elizabeth.

"You see? I knew you wouldn't believe it", and the Widow started up again.

At dawn, the Baptist's mother was aware of the event that would change the course of the History of the Universe.

"That yes, Aunt, my Mary will not remove the veil of mourning for her father until she sees my child of months married and well married. What have I done, Lord? And you know how my Mary is; if she were a man her word would be the last thing she would break."

How well the Widow knew her eldest daughter!

THE HOUSE OF JOSEPH THE CARPENTER

Let us now enter a little into the story of Joseph, the future husband of the Mother of Jesus.

The clan of the carpenters of Bethlehem experienced a very strong economic pull following the birth of Joseph. This is not the place to go into intimate details about the life of Joseph the Carpenter's parents. In due time we will open the door as one who

draws a veil and we will see face to face the truth of that intimacy that for now and until then I will leave in the air. The reason for doing so will be understood later. In order to overcome the trance, let us say that too deep an incursion into the life of the parents of Joseph the Carpenter would break the rhythm of this story. So let's move on.

Heli, Joseph's father, brought into the world many children, females and males. The man was in the fullness of his joy when one day his strength gave out too, and he died.

Heli died as all things die, from exhaustion. Especially in those days the cause of death of men was that, work. They died of exhaustion. There were the taxes, the tithes, the interest. The workers barely reached their forties healthy; at fifty they were half dead. At sixty they were already dead. Only the rich and the tyrants reached their seventies. Those who reached eighty were either saints or monsters. Heli, Joseph's father, was neither one nor the other. Just another laborer selling his children's lives against planks and nails. So when he died, Heaven took to its glory another of the good guys.

As we can see, Death was following in the footsteps of his enemies. Having no one to wield the sword against them, Death itself lashed out directly against the two messianic houses. Invisible, silent, it struck with the only weapon at its service: the scissors of the Fate. Blind, Death wrote in the families of its enemies black pages. But from the light of the one who governs the destiny of the universe, God let the Serpent move at ease.

But let us leave the chronicles of Hell and its defeat. Let us put our feet back on solid ground. To remember ruins and miseries there is always time.

After the death of Heli, son of Mattath of Bethlehem, the Birth-right made Joseph a father to his brothers and sisters. This right did not include the duty to remain unmarried until the last member of his household had formed his own family. In fact, marriage to Solomon's Daughter - Mary was by then his Fiancée - drew nearer with each passing year. Joseph must have been about twenty years old when his father went to the Paradise of the good. Mary must have been a few years younger.

It was around that time that Mary's father died also. And so it was that the two men who had vowed to marry their children, they suddenly disappeared from the scene. All their lives they had dreamed of seeing Joseph and Mary married, and overnight a twist of fate stole the dream from their eyes.

Elizabeth was worried: What was to become of the future of the oath that Jacob of Nazareth and Heli of Bethlehem had sworn before her husband, Zechariah, son of Abijah the priest?

The two men who had pledged to unite Joseph and Mary in marriage when age would dictate it, now gone, dead, Mary and Joseph were free to go ahead and take their parents' oath as their own, or not.

What would they do? How would they force Joseph to remain unmarried until the last of Jacob of Nazareth's children married?

Elizabeth knew who forged the personality of Joseph. The words of her husband found an soul in the heart of Joseph's father, and the echo of the words of Heli, Joseph's father, met a shrine in Joseph's mind. He would stick to it.

"My son, be wise before God and his servants. No reward satisfies the human condition more fully than to adjust our steps to his wisdom. We are nothing, when it comes to weighing the decision between doing our pleasure or doing that of our Lord God, we are none. Put your entire trust in his Omniscience, your faith place it in his almighty arm, which never misses the mark. You know his will; do not turn your back on him. I go away, but He remains and stays with you. He will guide you to the victory of our Houses. His angel will write in his Book: God said, and so it was done", Joseph was brought up with advice of this nature.

AUNT ELIZABETH

After the death of Jacob, Mary's father, the Widow reestablished herself. Supported by Aunt Elizabeth the House of the Virgin of Nazareth overcame the ominous storm that in her grief the Widow painted herself during the burial of her husband.

Lady Elizabeth, a member of the aristocratic class of Jerusalem, expert in the world of business and Jewish laws, took charge of everything, moved heaven and earth, and did not leave Nazareth until everything was so solidly restored that it was as if Jacob had never left. Smart as she was, with sufficient financial means to stop Jacob's brothers from offering to buy the land from the Widow, Aunt Elizabeth kept for Solomon's daughter, her great-niece, every acre.

Thanks to Lady Elizabeth, the Widow did not sell a fig tree. Aunt Elizabeth was there to hire men when the harvests came in, to sign contracts, to pay the men, to collect the money from the sales, and most importantly to take her niece Johanna and teach her from A to Z the alphabet of business.

So it happened that Joanna, Mary's sister, accompanied her big sister in the Vow. But Jane, unlike Maria, an artist with sewing, Jane inherited the whole character of her late father; she did not tire of learning from her Aunt how to handle men nor of making her way in the world of contracts; nor did she tire of working in the fields at the head of the day laborers who worked for her House. Many bet that as soon as the Lady left, the girl would fall apart and sooner or later the Widow would have to sell.

"Daughter, don't pay any attention to them", Aunt Elizabeth advised her granddaughter. "Men look at us as if Wisdom were not our sister. Because they take her for their wife, they think that Wisdom turns her back on us. Don't listen to them. And if the sun should beat down and the harvest should be bad, I will buy it all at the price of a harvest of gold. This is very simple, my daughter. Always keep your word; if you agreed to more for what later turned out to be worth less, you keep your word; you said so much, you pay so much. The same when it is their turn to make a mistake with you. You agreed on so much, you get so much..."

In time the little of the two Virgins of Nazareth learned to talk to the men she hired herself as if she were an old person. Never were the lands of the clan of the sons of David of Nazareth as fruitful as in those years after the great droughts.

Nor were the owners of the Storknest, the big house on the hill of Nazareth, ever better dressed.

Lady Elizabeth, like every daughter of Aaron, was a master in the arts of weaving seamless cloaks. It was the mantle of the members of the Sanhedrin. Mistress of a great one of the Sanhedrin, Elizabeth could assure her grandniece Mary that her sewing shop would be the most profitable in the entire kingdom.

-But Aunt, Mary told her, I cannot leave my mother's house.

-My daughter, don't even mention it - Lady Elizabeth replied.

The fact that, being the Aunt-grandmother, Elizabeth was called Aunt was due to Elizabeth's own genius. It made her feel old to be called "grandmother".

Well, among her nieces Jane and Mary, time went by for Lady Isabel. If the Lady taught her nice Jane all the mysteries of business and in her name hired a foreman to help her in everything, and she put it in her head that from Jerusalem she would follow her movements up to date, and by God she would anticipate heaven before seeing another misfortune fall on her granddaughters; If she put her great-niece Jane at the head of the fields, she put her "niece" Mary at her side, and did not lift her from her side until her grand-niece had learned from the hands of an expert in sacred work the most hidden secrets of cutting and sewing a seamless suit. The Niece, who was herself an artist, because her own mother gave her the schooling, when she said goodbye to "her Aunt" had not only inherited one of the mysteries most jealously guarded by the daughters of Aaron, but also opened her own sewing workshop in Nazareth.

From the sewing workshop of the Virgin of Nazareth came to Jerusalem some of the seamless cloaks that were the pride of the princely caste of the Holy City. Cloaks for which gold was paid. One had only one, and it was for life.

-But Aunt, where will I get the money for the silks and the gold threads - she once asked her.

-Don't put on the pinion for a cloud, daughter, replied Lady Elizabeth. When I give you the order I will send you silks to dress all your sisters, and a sack of threads to make your brother a braid with silver hair. If the Lord has not given me children, it is for a reason. What do men think they are? Everything for Nathan's son. My daughter, they have given an Iberian horse to your Joseph that a Roman general would want for himself. With him, with your Joseph, they lower their guard and already seems your "Promised One" a prince among beggars. Who will forbid me to give me the daughter of Solomon the moon and the stars wrapped in silks and tied with gold threads?

And so it was. Indeed, how the daughters of Jacob of Nazareth came to be clothed was the admiration of all the members of David's clan of Galilee. When the time came to marry them off, one can already guess the dowry that the Widow wanted for Esther and Ruth, the twins.

-The dowry? Who has spoken here of money? Do you love him, daughter? - was the Widow's answer to her daughters' suitors.

They were wrong, they were wrong indeed. To buy the Widow a daughter?

No way.

Best match in the whole county?

None.

The fields of Jacob's Daughter produced one hundred percent. From the workshop of the Virgin of Nazareth came out the most good, beautiful and cheapest clothes in the region. To the child of the house? The Cleophas, the youngest child of the house, only lacked the diadem to put the sons of Herod on a par with the money-grubbers. Therefore, whoever would marry his daughters should not come to the Widow of Jacob talking about money. His heart was what they had to put on the table, wide open, open as a full moon, naked as the sun on the fortieth of May. And then let it be what Heaven would have it be.

LADY MARY

Upon the death of her grandparents, Cleophas and Wife, Mary ben Solomon inherited her mother's house in the Holy City. We speak of the house of the heiress of a Doctor of the Law whose bureaucratic career godfather was the head of the most powerful group of influence in the nascent court of King Herod. We speak of the house of Lady Mary of Nazareth, daughter of Anna and Cleophas, brother-in-law to Zechariah, the son of Abijah -the Abtalion for the official historiography-. We speak then of a legitimate member of the Jewish priestly aristocracy on her mother's side.

(In this first part of the History we are not going to enter the life of the house of Cleophas, father of the mother of the Virgin. In the second part we will do, we will ask permission and we will see with the eyes of the spirit what I mean when I say that Cleophas, father of the Widow, belonged to the Jewish aristocratic group that without being Herodian was the most influential before the Court of King Herod. For now it is enough the confidence at the time of articulating on the rock of our Faith the pillars on which rests the building of this History).

Without going any further we see the Lord Jesus in the prologue of the Last Supper sending his disciple to announce his coming to one of his servants. The man does not refuse; and he does not refuse because he knows the messenger, and he knows who is the "lord" who is urging him to have everything ready for the Last Supper.

The legend of Jesus the Carpenter, let us say it all, had its origin in the mentality of the ancient small towns. The local title of the father passed to the son. The father was a carpenter, the son will be the Carpenter all his life, even if he comes to have more bushels than a marquis; his father was the carpenter and his son will be the carpenter's son until he dies.

It is true, let us go on saying it all, that Joseph came to Nazareth following the route of the nomads. The man planted himself in the village, leased a piece of land from the Widow to plant the tent. He set up the workshop. Joseph ended up liking the atmosphere --that's what he said-- and ended up falling in love with the Widow's heiress. By that time the Virgin was the owner of fig trees, vineyards, olive groves, calm land, cattle, and she was also the owner of a dressmaking and sewing workshop in full boom thanks to the nationalist wave.

Until then the typical costumes had to be ordered in a workshop in Judea. The Jewish women, especially those from Jerusalem, had jealously guarded the secret of making wedding dresses and dresses for national holidays. Then the Virgin of Nazareth went and opened her own dressmaking and sewing workshop.

In the midst of such circumstances the creation of the workshop of the Virgin of Nazareth, the truth, opened its way immediately. Thanks to the blood relations that her family maintained throughout Galilee, the necessary publicity, without her having to give time to it, was spread like wildfire. One only had to look at the way her relatives dressed. Then there was the price; the Virgin of Nazareth was a saint; if you had no money you could pay her when things smiled on you. She adjusted the price to your case and never sent the man in black to demand the money. A true saint. Of course, when her wedding to the Carpenter was announced, everyone's mouth dropped open.

The Virgin is getting married?

The truth is that Joseph and Mary first waited for Cleophas to marry.

THE NOMAD

Of all the children of Nazareth, none liked Joseph as much as Cleophas, Mary's brothers. But from the very day Joseph came to Nazareth. It is no lie that Joseph made his entrance in Nazareth spectacularly. His Iberian horse black as night and his three lion-hunting Assyrian dogs breaking the monotony genially. Then there was the rider; a giant on his Bucephalus, son of Pegasus, the horse of the super angels; his hair neither long nor short, with the very sword of Goliath at his belt.

And the stranger said that he was a nomad adventuring through the provinces of the kingdom.

The Nazarenes looked at him and could not believe it: a nomad like any other, adventuring along those roads of God on the back of a horse of that race, beautiful as the horse of an archangel in full battle, guarded by three wild beasts, beautiful as cherubs and fearsome as dragons?

That giant was pure mystery. His psychological and physical features did not coincide with the popular image of the nomad without a homeland, always drunk, always quarrelsome, rather skinny, with red wine-colored snouts, his brains burned by the sun and the cold. No sir, that nomad was not just another one. Nomads rode donkeys, or at best, old mares, bedbugs, fleas and mongrels for company. No sir, that Josseph was pure mystery.

Secret or no secret, the thing is that Cleophas, the Virgin's little brother, became so fond of that nomad born in Bethlehem that he ended up living more in the Carpenter's tent than in his own house.

But I know that what that boy was dying for the most was to make his dream of getting on Joseph's horse and trotting through the hills raising stardust in the eyes of his blue princess come true. Boys' stuff!

And this is exactly what happened. All of Cleophas' sisters got married. Except for his two older sisters, Mary and Jane, who had remained virgins since the death of their father. It is the truth, all his sisters had already married, had formed a family and had their children. Cleophas was the only one of the children of Jacob of Nazareth who was still living in his mother's house.

From the outside, to outsiders, Cleophas was the lord of the village, the spoiled child of his sisters. While all the boys were busy helping out in the fields, Cleophas lived like a prince without knowing what working life is. He spent the day in Joseph's carpentry shop, it was not because he needed to earn his bread. Not at all. If he decided to serve him as an apprentice, it was not because the Virgin's brother had to learn a trade. What Cleophas really deprived him was to rise in the Carpenter's eyes, to gain his trust and receive his permission to take the boat, climb on top of that Iberian horse and enjoy the pleasure of seeing the world on the back of that magical creature.

And so it was. Cleophas was already traveling the world from party to party on the back of his boss's marvelous horse. The neighbors of the village were annoyed that the Carpenter gave so much rope to the boy. Such a horse did not lend itself, and even less, as it were, to a child.

Joseph's response to the suspicions of his new neighbors was to lend his apprentice, in addition to his horse, two of "his puppies". Whenever he sent his assistant and apprentice carpenter to a neighboring village, Joseph gave him as traveling companions a pair of his puppies, two endangered dogs once given to him by his Babylonian godparents.

Cleophas began by taking an errand to the neighboring village, on horseback of course. And he ended up having his patron's horse as his own when, on the occasion of a local festival, a grape harvest festival, for example, his married sisters demanded his presence. It was thus that Cleophas met Mary of Canaan, the future mother of his sons, the famous brothers of Jesus.

Cleophas and Mary of Canaan, married, settled in the house of Jacob's Daughter, and had their children.

Let's say it all, the Nomad's Carpentry was not a multinational furniture company nor had the vocation of leader in the sector, but for Cleophas that Joseph was the best. In love, and father of his children, his boss's workshop was all he had, and Cleophas was willing to give his all before he saw it go under. In any case, his boss was a strange man. He was never short of money. Whether he sold or not, the house always won. He didn't beat him over the head with his problems either. He never did. In fact, Joseph's only problem was that he had no mistress. Nor was he known to have a suitor. Not for lack of women. No. It was him, Joseph. He had no wife because God had not given her to him yet. And Joseph said it with the mystery of one who has an unspeakable secret.

-God will give, brother, God will give..., Joseph answered the boy.

Shortly after the birth of Joseph, second among the sons of Cleophas, the Virgin closed the mourning for the death of his father.

The Virgin had won. She had made a Vow and she had fulfilled it. Now she was free to marry; and by marrying she would fulfill the oath that her father made to the Lord and could not fulfill because Death crossed his path.

Before sacred witnesses Jacob of Nazareth swore in his day, on the cradle of his firstborn Mary, legitimate heir of King Solomon, on his life Jacob swore that he would only give his daughter as wife to the son of Heli, son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel, son of Nathan, prophet, son of David, king.

Shortly after the birth of the second of Cleophas' sons, Joseph the Carpenter asked the Widow the hand of Mary. The Widow accepted the request, and shortly thereafter the marriage contract documents were signed between Mary, daughter of Jacob, daughter of Matthan, daughter of Abiud, daughter of Zerubbabel, daughter of Solomon, daughter of David, king, and Joseph, son of Heli, son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel, son of Nathan, son of David, prophet.

The news of the marriage of Joseph the Carpenter and Mary the Virgin swept through Nazareth.

-The Virgin marries.

-With the Carpenter? I knew it.

An exceptional match the bride. Owner of the house on the hill, owner of the best land in the county, founder of the Nazareth tailor and seamstress shop that sold the best, most beautiful and cheapest wedding dresses in the region.

Who was the groom? A nobody from Bethlehem, an adventurous nomad who had found what he was looking for. Who would have thought that where so many good matches failed, an outsider without a cause would succeed!

So, if on her Mother's side our Jesus was the heir of Cleophas of Jerusalem, Doctor of the Law, his grandfather, and on Mother's side also all the properties of his grandfather Jacob of Nazareth belonged to him, then we are talking about a rich young man named Jesus of Nazareth. Or do you think that whoever asked the rich young man to leave everything and follow him did not himself make this act of renunciation and abandonment of all his properties?

Son of his parents, during his mandate our Jesus raised the economy of his family to its maximum splendor of comfort and prosperity. During the days that he was at the head of his Mother's House the cellars were filled with excellent wines, the storehouses overflowed with wheat, oil, table olives, figs, pomegranates, milk, meat, and fish that were brought to him from the Sea of Galilee to his house, when our Jesus did not go to fetch him personally. The wines from the vineyards of Jesus of Nazareth were sold all over Galilee; little but excellent, the best. It made you happy and never made you violent, the day after you woke up with a clear head and a joyful heart. It came from Jesus of Nazareth, came from Bacchus, said the Romans of the garrison of Sepphoris, two hours away.

His Mother's great-great-grandparents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, had also bequeathed him property on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

The rightful heir of Zechariah and Elizabeth was John, as everyone knows. Before John the Baptist was born, as they no longer expected to have a son, Elizabeth and Zechariah bequeathed everything they had to Mary's mother. This will was never revoked due to the violent death of Zechariah and the disappearance of Elizabeth and John in the caves of the Dead Sea.

So in the Jerusalem of the money the Young Nazarene was known as a mystery is known. In reality, no one knew who he was. What everyone seemed to agree on was that he was Jesus of Nazareth, the son of the Lady Mary, he was a young man of prudence and wisdom beyond the normal stature of a man of his youth. He handled money, but he was not interested in power. He was accustomed to command and be served, and yet he was still unmarried. He was cultured, he spoke the languages of the empire, do you think they gave him an interpreter to talk to Pilate? He knew how to write, he had a genius for business. His mother was the weak point of the Young Nazarene, but who is not forgiven for this?

WEDDING AND BIRTH OF THE CHILD

Mary and Joseph became engaged. The general rule was that the father of the groom would go and talk to the parents of the bride about his son's desire to marry the bride. They would discuss the dowry and close the deal. In Joseph's case it was Joseph himself who spoke with the bride's mother and asked her for his daughter as his wife. The bride's mother accepted and they signed the wedding contract.

In those days tradition imposed a year of courtship from the signing of the contract until the wedding day. After one year they could get married. During the year of courtship however the bride and groom were bound by the law on adultery. It was the norm, but by no means sacred law. Moses had not given any precept concerning the prohibition to marry immediately after the marriage contract was signed. It had been the Jews themselves who had imposed on themselves that year of waiting. It is not known if blaming God for having been so soft, the thing is that not content with the mountain of laws that he dictated to them, they threw on their backs another mountain of prescriptions, laws, traditions, mandates, canonical norms and who knows how many other obligations. So, since it was not a real law, nobody would be afraid of having to speed up the procedures due to the weakness of the flesh. The child was born seven months premature. But well, it's not to make a fuss either. Doesn't a proper wedding cure sin? Of course it does.

The negative side was that without being a law, the weakness of the flesh could be paid with death if the sin had not been committed by the groom. In this case the full weight of the law on adultery fell on the bride. Judged as an adulteress she paid for her weakness with the penalty of death, usually by stoning.

For many other reasons a marriage contract could be broken. It was not common, but there were cases. Incompatibility of characters, for example. The money was returned and everyone went home.

In the most general case, pregnancy during the year of waiting, the blood did not reach the river. They are young, but the grandchild is welcome! Wedding banquet, celebration, the child was born seven months premature. So what? Blessed be the Lord. What began well, ended well, that's what matters.

The case of the Virgin was of a different nature. "One day", she confessed to the Apostles, "the angel of God appeared to her, and the next day she was already in a state of grace". The Apostles told it to their successors, who told it to their successors, and the Confession of the Virgin continues to be told by word of mouth.

To conceive by the work and grace of the Holy Spirit is said very soon.

"I am in a state by the work and grace of the Holy Spirit", Our Lady had to confess to herself one of those days.

No one will believe that Our Lady ran out of joy shouting the Annunciation History to the whole world. It is not something that happens every day. In fact, in the entire history of mankind, no such phenomenon had ever taken place. The closest case to a supernatural conception of nature that the Gospels tell us about is found in the world of mythology.

Without going any further, Alexander the Great's own mother confessed that she had her son with one of the gods of the classical world to which she belonged. Whether out of respect for his mother or pride her son kept his semi-divine origin. As far as I remember, this is the most similar case to the one that the Virgin put on the table of the centuries.

Well, why not? The God of the Hebrews had performed many extraordinary works from the days of Moses to the present. Their Scriptures spoke of the Conception of a Child born of a Virgin. As an example of fantasy carried to its highest extreme of imagination and genius, that the God who created the Heavens and the Earth could perform a work of that nature was on a par with the conception of his Nature by the children of Adam and Eve. Why should not One of the Attributes granted to the God of Moses - all-power, omnipotence, omniscience - be able to stage an Event so impossible to believe?

Now, Mary, run, and explain it to someone. Run, find your husband and tell him that you are the Virgin who was to conceive a Son "born to carry on his shoulders the mantle of Sovereignty, to be called Wonderful Prince, Mighty God, Everlasting Father".

Holy God, what luck!

And now sit down to wait and trust that your husband will say "Alleluia, Amen, Alleluia", jump for joy, lift you up in his arms and kiss your eyes.

You don't have enough yet? Well then, go and tell your soul sister, your sister Johanna loves you more than the Jordan River, more than the Sea of Miracles, more than the Mountains of Judah. Go on, Mary, go, run and tell her.

I say this because - regardless of everyone's opinion - the weeks went by and what was bound to happen, happened. Our Lady began to have strange dizziness. Was it the heat? No, woman, they were the typical symptoms of pregnant women.

Of any other woman in the world, her neighbors might have expected that a man like a castle, as in the case of Joseph the Carpenter, would have conquered the bride's fortress of virtue before the wedding. Of any other woman, of course, yes, but of the Virgin Mary it would not even fit in the heads of her neighbors.

The fact is that whether it fit or not, they had to surrender to the evidence.

"May the Lord give you a healthy child", with these and other similar words the neighbors congratulated the groom, and Joseph did not know what the hint was about. The truth is that he did not take it. The man thought that he was being blessed ahead of time.

"May it be a boy, and may the Lord give him to you in good health", the neighbors kept on prodding him

In fact, a few weeks after the Annunciation, the bride began to show the classic symptoms of first-time mothers. Dizzy spells, silly hot flashes. Since they were something that could not be controlled, Our Lady could not help but be surprised. However, the last thing she could do was to shut herself away, to hide. She had to go on with her life; going on with her life was the best way to neither affirm nor deny her neighbors a word. At least as long as she did not decide to tell her mother the truth.

The Virgin's mother was also slow to pick up the film. She was, with the exception of Joseph, the last person to learn of the rumor that was beginning to scandalize her neighbors.

In the Widow's eyes her daughter's immaculate chastity remained as inaccessible to human passions as it was before she became engaged. Except for the bridegroom's freer access to the bride's house, and this freedom conditioned on the necessary presence of a relative of the bride between her and the bridegroom, her daughter Mary had continued to lead her life as it was, that life which had earned the Virgin of Nazareth her fame from one end of the Galilee to the other. How could she suspect anything wrong with her daughter then!

"May the Lord give you the most beautiful grandchild in the world", her neighbors prodded the Widow.

"Your Mary deserves everything; may the child go forth to his grandfather Jacob may he be in glory", in case the Widow had not heard they kept prodding her.

The Widow was from Jerusalem, she had grown up in another environment. But she was no fool. Had it not been about her daughter, the Widow would have bet an arm and a leg that the Virgin was so many weeks pregnant. The problem was that the idea of her Mary being pregnant did not enter her mind.

The Widow's faith and trust in her eldest daughter were so great that her eyes were blinded. Thank God the Widow's blindfold fell off before Joseph's did. Finally, the Widow had to admit it even though her daughter neither affirmed nor denied it to her.

"What is the matter, my daughter?" she would ask him.

"Nothing. It's the heat, mother" the daughter would reply.

The Widow's dilemma began when the neighbors started talking about big words, adultery, for example. They didn't say it to her face, but between women and neighbors, you know, words are superfluous. So the Widow began to panic.

"My Mary is in a state of grace, how is it possible?" the Widow ended up confessing.

And her daughter of the soul without affirming or denying it to her. Desperate because of her daughter's silence, she went to her son-in-law to ask him to answer her this simple question: Should the wedding date be accelerated?

And so she did, the Widow went to "her son" Joseph. Bringing Joseph into the issue was going to cost the Widow a lot. Not knowing what scenario she was in or what her role in the story was the Widow told herself that she had to bring Joseph into the issue without uncovering the crux of the problem for him. A very strange thing to do. The problem was to take him without leaving the periphery of the subject. Clever as she was, without telling him, she would tell him in every word what was there, his wife was pregnant, what did he, the groom, have to say?

After a long time of prowling around the subject, the Widow realized that either Joseph was playing the fool, or Joseph simply didn't know anything about anything, and didn't understand what his mother-in-law was talking about.

Joseph looked at her with a naturalness so innocent of any guilt that the Widow began not to know where she was. For a moment she felt as if the earth was opening up under her feet and she didn't know what was better, to fight or to let herself be swallowed. Even his soul was shivering with cold under the effect of the trembling that was getting into his bones as the truth became more and more enormous in weight. Her son-in-law knew nothing about anything and all she knew was that she had to get out of that hell, she had to talk to her daughter and get her to tell her for God's sake what was going on.

What was going on?

Something unbelievable to believe had happened, something impossible to tell. Entire generations and centuries would be divided in two as the flow of a sea that finds in its bed a gigantic cornerstone. And her daughter could not find a way to tell her the Event of the Annunciation.

Mary could not find the moment. Well, a moment, what is called a moment, was offered to her. Her mother and she used to sit together to sew. During that time they talked and talked. They talked about everything. Or they simply remained silent.

In this new silence that had settled between mother and daughter during the last few days, two hearts were about to burst into pieces. The mother wanted to ask her daughter, "Are you pregnant, my daughter" and could not find the way. The daughter wanted to give her a "Yes, my mother", a wonderful, Divine Yes, and she could not find how.

The fact is that the Child was growing in her womb, that the evidence of her condition was growing bigger every day, that if Joseph found out through the mouths of the neighbors... She did not even want to think about it.

He needed to reveal the truth to his mother. His mother was the only person in the world he could trust with such a great Mystery. She had to do it, but since she couldn't figure out how, she never knew when.

So it happened that the mother and daughter sat opposite each other one of those days. The two women knew that the time had come, that this was the moment. The first to speak was the Virgin.

"Mother, do you believe that God can do everything?" she exhaled tenderly.

"Daughter" sighed the Widow, who only wanted to go straight to the question: are you pregnant, my daughter, and it did not come out.

"I know, mother. You will say to me: God is our Lord, how shall we measure the strength of his Arm? And I am, my mother, the first to repeat your words. But I mean, does His Power end where the limits of our imagination begin, or is it precisely on the other side where His Glory begins?"

"What do you want to tell me, Mary, I don't understand you" caught in a different direction from the one she was dying to undertake the mother of the Virgin articulated as best she could.

"I don't know very well either how to get where I want to go or what I want to say. Bear with me, Mother. After here we go to Heaven and from up there the things of Earth do not affect us; so what we have to do is to try to discover the nature of the God who called us to dream of Heaven while we are still here on Earth. Isn't it true that God can turn stones into children of Abraham? But what I wonder is whether by speaking in this way what the prophet meant to imply is that our heads are as hard as a stone. Can a stone know God? Between a man who does not want to know God and a stone, what is the difference?"

"Where do you want to take me, Mary?" the Widow, as best she could, endured her impatience.

"To a wonderful place, mother. But as I don't know the way don't be angry with me if I explore alone like those mountaineers who face the virgin wall for the first time. The only thing that can happen to me is that I may fall at the feet of your skirt pierced by my ignorance."

"Don't say that, Mary. You are not alone, although old I follow you. Yes, Mary, I know that God's glory begins where man's imagination ends. Go on".

The Virgin then broke off in a seemingly even more contrary direction, saying:

"Mother, what did the messenger tell you about my grandfather Zechariah? Why did he not want to tell me yet? Why did he not send me to my grandmother Elizabeth's house? Now that you can, answer me: can our God make old men give birth, or not?"

The Widow and Joseph had not yet wanted to discover to Mary the nature of the message that Zechariah and Elizabeth had recently sent them; in fact, the Widow had decided to send Mary to them. The question of the state of grace in which her daughter had suddenly found herself had blotted everything else out of her mind.

Indeed, the messenger that Zechariah and Elizabeth sent to Nazareth described to the Widow and her son-in-law, detail by detail, what had happened to Zechariah in the Temple. Especially the image of the beautiful angel who punished Zechariah's lack of faith by taking away his speech.

Lord! his daughter Mary was describing that angel to him as if she herself had seen it with her own eyes. How was it possible?

In principle, it was impossible. Elizabeth and Zechariah's messenger did not speak to her while she was in Nazareth. Of course, Joseph could have told her.

Joseph had told her? Joseph gave his word that he would not be the one to break the news to his daughter. Joseph's word, the Widow knew, was pure and clean as gold. He would never break it. No, Joseph hadn't told her anything yet either.

She was wondering how her daughter had found out when her heart went out to the memory of the day her daughter took the Vow of Virginity.

There, in those days, the Widow wondered why the favor of the Lord upon her house had been extinguished, why she had turned her back upon them as one who abandons the spoils to the enemy. In the secret of her heart the Widow was caught in the nets of Job's Dilemma. But unlike the saint she did not find the answer right away. Nor did she find it in the years that had passed from her husband's death to the present day.

The time had come to know the reason why the Lord then took her husband away. Amazed, absorbed, out of this world, floating her being on the same waves that one day became hills under the feet of the Spirit of God, the Widow continued to look at her daughter with her eyes fixed on her words.

Then Our Lady changed the subject again.

"Mothe," she said, "did not God swear that a son of Eve would crush the head of the Serpent?"

"That's right" the Widow answered her, her speech lost somewhere in the infinity in which her gaze had become trapped.

"And do not our sacred books also say that of all the men who have ever existed on the face of the world there was never born one so great as Adam?"

"So my father taught it to me, and so yours taught it to you. I hear you, Mary"

Mary went on:

"When God promised us the Birth of a Son born to bear upon His shoulders the Sovereignty was He not thinking of the Champion who was to raise us up to deliver us from the empire of Darkness?"

"Yes, He did"

"But if the Evil One once defeated the greatest man the world has ever known, was not the holy Job right in presenting to us the murderer of our father Adam before the Throne of the Almighty all at ease while he waited for the next?"

"Yes he was".

"Of course he was. Whoever defeated the greatest man in the world why shouldn't he defeat his son?"

Mary lowered her eyes and breathed as she strung needle and thread. Her mother remained looking at her without saying a word. After a while she returned to the battlefield.

"So, mother, you tell me, did God swear falsely? I mean, who was the Lord thinking of when He swore that blessed oath? David was not yet born; neither was our father Abraham. With his little son dead, our father Adam at his almighty feet bleeding to death, what Champion was our God thinking of when He promised us under an everlasting oath that a son of that Eve would crush the head of the Evil One?"

This time she who glared at her mother. The latter, seeing her daughter's face, knew only one thing, that her daughter was pregnant. The gentleness in her face, the tenderness in her speech, the sparkle in her eyes. She had only to tell her: Mother, I am in a state of grace; and instead of going to the point, without even knowing how her daughter had taken her to the top of a mountain from where the future of the world could be seen according to the woman born to be the Mother of the Messiah, that son of the Promise who was to be born to crush the head of the Evil One.

"Who was God thinking of on the day that on the blood of his son Adam he swore the Birth of the Champion by whose hand he would take Vengeance?" repeated the Widow. "My daughter, I will not be the one to set limits to the glory of my Creator. I only want you to tell me"

"Do you remember, Mother, what the prophet wrote: A Virgin will give birth and her Son will be called God with us"

Mary looked down again. At that she raised her head and looked her mother straight in the eye.

"Mother, that Virgin you have before you. That Child is in my womb" she confessed.

While her daughter revealed to her the episode of the Annunciation, the Widow looked at her daughter with the vision of one who is contemplating the Heart of God on the day of the murder of her son Adam.

At the end, inspired by the great love she had for her daughter, the Widow poured out her blessings:

"Blessed be God, who has chosen my husband's daughter to bring us His salvation to all the families of the earth. His Omnipotence shines like an inaccessible sun, which, however, everyone thinks they can reach with their fingertips. He squeezes, but does not suffocate; he strikes, but does not sink those he loves. Blessed is His Chosen One, whom

He has formed from the wombs of His fathers to give us His Savior to all the peoples of the earth". And immediately he said to his daughter thus: "Blessed shall all the families of the earth be in your innocence, my daughter. But now, Mary, you shall do as I tell you. You shall do this, this and this"

The next problem was Joseph. Joseph would be taken care of by her, the Widow. What the Mother of the Messiah had to do was to leave immediately on a journey and remain in the house of Elizabeth and Zacharias until the Lord so ordered. And so she did.

And so it was done. Once Our Lady was gone the Widow seized her son-in-law and told him point by point the whole truth. She did not tell her son-in-law the Annunciation as one who has to hide something and lowers her head in shame. Not at all. Obviously yes with the humility and certainty of the person who knows that the Event would cause Joseph an anguishing dilemma, over which he would have to triumph, and would triumph, but through whose hell he would irremediably have to pass.

And triumph he did.

Nevertheless, as you can imagine, after the Annunciation, Joseph spent some time quite a bit of time in a daze. What had gone wrong at the last minute? How could a woman of Mary's moral class and fortitude have allowed herself to be deceived by...?

By whom? Without anyone pretending it She was under surveillance all day long. When she was not with her mother she was with her nephews, when she was not in the workshop with her workers she was with the family of her father's brothers. The Lord had erected around her a web of relationships so engrossing that the very idea of adultery was an offense.

Then there was She, Mary. She was in flesh and blood the best defense God had sought for the Mother of His Son.

-She said it and we did not believe it: A Virgin will conceive and give birth to a Child, saying this Joseph saw the light and ran away. He returned to his wife, the wedding took place and everyone forgot about the incident.

A memory, however, did remain. I say this because of that other incident between Jesus and the Pharisees.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were tired of hearing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of David. Since they did not know how to get their hands on him, they looked into his past. They put their finger in the wound and discovered that strange incident of the disappearance of his Mother during the first months of her pregnancy, and how Joseph went in person to look for her... to

-Ahhhh, here is his Achilles' heel.

With this secret weapon hidden up their sleeve the Pharisees led Jesus to the subject of the primogenitures, unigenitures. Then one of them pulled out the manual of low blows and dropped the bombshell.

-Our father is Abraham, who is yours?

Jesus' consuming zeal for his Mother went to his head.

-You are children of the Devil, he replied with the force of a hurricane compressed in his throat.

Only another time, only another time they would not want to remember, would they see the Virgin's son shooting rays from his eyes. And he would never stop, he would never stop until his anger was satiated to the last atom of rage.

THE CHILD JESUS IN ALEXANDRIA OF THE NILE

Soon after these things, Joseph the Carpenter and his brother-in-law Cleophas took their families, took tickets and embarked for Alexandria of the Nile.

On this matter of the Flight there has always hung the mystery. Documentarily speaking, the truth is that there is no evidence anywhere that Alexandria of the Nile was the place chosen by Joseph to save the son of Mary from the persecution against him decreed by Herod. So if I am pressed, the author of this History can be accused of inventing to cover literary needs the destiny of the fugitives. Which seems logical to me to a certain extent. I myself cannot forget that the classical iconography in this regard is quite terse, even prudent I would say; and I would even dare to confess that of a prudence bordering on cowardice.

The choice of Alexandria of the Nile was not fortuitous on the part of Joseph; nor is it fortuitous on the part of the one who recreates in these pages his movements. Fortunately or unfortunately, the only proof I can provide is the testimony of God in this case. Unfortunately is a figure of speech, of course. For those who know God, a single word from him is worth more than all the speeches of all the wise men of the universe put together in endless dissertations. Unfortunately, the word of God is not worth to everyone.

The fact is that the only real proof that history offers us is the testimony of God, that "out of Egypt I called my son".

Before me there have been many who have put their hands in the fire in defense of the affirmative answer that the question deserves. From the apocryphal distances of those who do not believe, however, there are two invincible objections against whose bomb-proof walls our rhetoric splits its head. One is that "from Egypt I called my Son" was written long before any of the events we narrate had yet taken place, so that to stop to believe that centuries and centuries before the Birth the Flight had already been configured to enter into the messianic program, in truth, is too much to believe.

The other objection is that this foresight note was not written "*a futuri*" but *a posteriori*. According to these geniuses it would not be the first time that the Jews falsified their sacred texts. Hadn't they been doing it for centuries? Nineveh fell and they came to write on its ruins that they had already said so. And like Nineveh all the other things. Also the prophet Daniel saw the coming to power of Cyrus the Great. And even the fall of his empire under the hoofs of the horse of Alexander the Great. By God, whom did they want to deceive? Is there a more foolish nation than the one that deceives itself?

Anyway, this posture of creating prophetic texts *a posteriori* gained many followers in its glory days. Passing over its cunning, as is natural to those who have been immunized against the cunning of geniuses, the others, those of us who continue to maintain the divine value of the prophetic texts, continue to maintain that such ways of thinking would be logical in an ancient thinker, because to pretend to adjust the Creator's thinking to that of the creature, which is what is done by denying divine omniscience as the source of the Scriptures, is to deny that which separates the creature from its Creator.

At the level of contest it is true that some men see the future. In the stars, in dice, in coffee grounds, and above all in a bullet with a name written on it. At the level of reality, the confession of human nature is far from granting itself such an attribute.

This on the one hand.

On the other, is it not true that history is written by the victors? Well, if so, something must be wrong with the system when we see it written by a people of losers. They lost to the Egyptians, or does anyone still believe that one can go from freedom to slavery without fighting a terrible battle? They fought the Assyrians and lost the war. They were crushed again by Nebuchadnezzar's Chaldeans. They lost to Rome. Curious, very curious that the historical memory of half the planet is based on the war exploits of the losing people par excellence, the Jews!

I would say that History writes itself as God uses man's hand as a pen. He dips the pen in our blood and writes our future according to his clairvoyance, omniscience, prescience and creative genius. In other words, we do not see the future, but God not only sees it but also writes it. Now, if this divine capacity to create the Future is not admitted, then we will have to accept the nature of the events themselves, or run the risk of closing this History and opening a totally different book.

Thus, the farewell was very brief. The Devil's Wolf had smelled the Child.

Safe in Egypt, Joseph the Carpenter opened his workshop far from the Jewish Quarter, in the Free City. Over the years his came to be called The Jew's Carpenter's Shop.

On this point - the event of the Slaughter of the Innocents - I say the same thing. If the doubt is recreated in the impossibility of the existence of someone capable of committing such a crime, then we can take the doubt and throw it in the trash. If on the contrary it is in the ignorance of the peoples and their people, speaking of the social and political circumstances lived by the kingdom of Israel for the dates, in this case nothing can be added to what is written, perhaps only to say that it is not explained how being happiness in ignorance having so many ignorant in the world can the world continue to be so brilliantly unhappy.

But let's get back to the point.

Was it an easy decision for Joseph to have to repack and emigrate to Egypt?

Perhaps it was not an easy decision, but it was a courageous one.

The story of the Adoration of the Magi opens our minds to the past and depicts the Holy Family fleeing to the second largest city in the world, Alexandria on the Nile, an open and cosmopolitan city where Joseph and his family arrived with their backs covered economically speaking. Gold, frankincense and myrrh were the gifts the Magi gave him.

Why Alexandria of the Nile and not Rome?

Well, Alexandria was a stone's throw from the shores of Israel. The Slaughter of the Innocents perpetrated, the murder of Zacharias, father of the Baptist, consummated, the last thing Joseph could afford was to endanger the life of the Child. In fact, between the time of the Nativity and his presentation in the Temple, the days had passed; it was then or never. Return to Nazareth, pack up, take the boat from Haifa and say goodbye to the homeland.

This decision of Joseph, forced by the bloody circumstances, changed the man in a total way. Among the Holy Innocents the sons of his brothers fell into the trap. The man who from the deck of the ship carrying the Holy Family to Alexandria looked at the horizon, alone, with his back to everyone, carried in his chest hidden that secret, which he would not discover to his people until death. When he landed on the Egyptian coast the Joseph of before the Slaughter and the murder of Zacharias had sunk in the waters of the Mediterranean.

His countrymen?

The farther away from him the better. The reason for this total change was not given to anyone, neither to his wife, nor to his brother-in-law.

And we are already in Alexandria of the Nile.

The environment in which Jesus grew up thanks to the strange behavior of his father with his own was extraordinary. Joseph, his father, refused to settle in the Jewish Quarter; he preferred to look for a place among the Gentiles, in the heart of the Free City. He bought a house and opened his workshop. In time, his shop became known as the Jew's Carpentry Shop.

The Child's aunt and uncle, Cleophas and Mary of Cleophas, continued to bring children into the world.

Clever as he was, as soon as Jesus caught up with his cousin James, even though James was two years older than he was, Jesus took him with him to the Roman port. The Child did not cut anyone short; his thirst for news of the Empire was never consumed. His intelligence to hear news of Rome, of Athens, of Hispania, of Gaul, of India, of deep Africa aroused sympathy in the sea dogs. They looked at the two children from top to bottom, they saw them wearing the clothes of upper class children, and there they told Jesus and his cousin James how the world was going.

Thanks to this natural at the age of twelve the Child spoke perfectly Latin, Greek, Egyptian, Hebrew and Aramaic. I insist: or do you believe that they looked for an interpreter for the audience with Pilate?

That said, Jesus was a child prodigy in every sense of the word. A child prodigy who had the good fortune to have an extraordinary man for a father. However, also the phenomena feel, suffer, have moments of weakness, are saddened, mourn the loneliness that overwhelms them.

THE MUTE DOVE OF THE DISTANT LANDS

Jesus sank. That divine Child who used to turn the children of the whole street upside down, would go away, get lost among the ships in the harbor and come back running to sit on his father's lap among his friends at dusk; that earthquake of a Child sank. Jesus stopped leaving the house. He began to sit in the doorway of the Jew's carpentry shop to watch life go by. The Child hardly ate. Jesus would drop into his mother's lap among her friends, when in the evening the women used to sit in the street, under the Mediterranean sky, to sew, to chat, and he would leave.

It was as if that flame of the Sacred Bush was burning away in Maria's arms. At first she did not notice the loneliness that had opened a black hole in her Child's chest and swallowed him up a little more each day. Little by little the Mother opened her eyes and began to see what was in the Heart of her Child.

She could not suffer the indescribable agony that was taking her Child from her hands. She loved Him more than the world, more than time, more than the waves of the sea, more than the stars, more than love, more than her own life. And he was leaving her. It was night after night and every night a little more. The Child did not speak, he did not laugh, he let himself fall on his Mother's breast, his eyes lost in the sky of that Alexandria of the Nile, and there he sank.

-What is the matter, my son, she asked him.

-Nothing, Mary, he answered.

-I know what's wrong with you, Jesus.

-It's nothing, Mary, really.

-My darling, you miss your Father. Don't cry, my darling. He is here, right now, when I put my lips on your cheeks He kisses you, when I embrace you He squeezes you.

For the Child, that woman who listened to Him with the sweetest smile in the universe on her face while He spoke to him of the Paradise of his Father, of the City of his Father, of his brothers, the super angels Gabriel, Michael and Raphael, that woman...that woman was his Mother. He loved her more than everything in the world. She was the only person he could tell all things to. He loved to feel the beating of her heart when she told him about her Kingdom. And that luminous look that illuminated his face when she told him the whole truth! It never faded from his memory.

-Yes, Mary, said the Child to her, I am Him.

-Tell me again what Heaven is like, my son. She asked him again.

-Heaven, the Child confessed, is like an island that has become a continent, and continues to grow on the other side of its horizons. The Rock on which it has its foundations is the highest Mount that any man can imagine. The Mount of God, Zion, raises its summit to the clouds, but where the clouds should be there are twelve walls, each of a single block, each block of a color, each wall shining as if it had a sun within it. And they are like twelve suns illuminating the same firmament. The twelve walls are one wall surrounding the City they contain. God called this mount Zion. There the gods have their dwelling place, and among the gods my Father has his house. From the walls of the

city of God the confines of Heaven are lost in the horizon that borders the ortho on the other side of the borders of Paradise.

You see, Heaven is like a marvelous mirror reflecting the History of the peoples who inhabit it. For example, this world, the Earth. You collect the memories of your ancestors in your books; but Heaven records it live, because what is reflected on the surface of the Universe materializes on the surface of Heaven. So if you set out to tour the Abode of men in my Father's Paradise you will find that all the Ages of Man are collected in its geography. When you go to Heaven you will see with your eyes that all kinds of animals and birds and trees and plants and mountains and valleys that have once been here Below exist forever there Above.

As my Father has created other Worlds, and will continue to create more, Heaven is a Paradise filled with wonders that never end. To travel the whole of it you would have to spend an eternity walking, and every step of the way would be an adventure. How do I explain it to you? My Father sows life in the stars. The stars of the Universe are like the ocean that surrounds the island, and also this ocean of constellations grows, extending its shores to the rhythm of the borders of Heaven. Life is made into a tree, and my Father and I gather it into our Paradise to live forever. The species of animals and birds have no number. A great river rises on the heights of the Mount of God, and divides in the plain into branches that cover all the Worlds and their territories. Do you see all the stars? Heaven is higher.

-From there have you come, my Son?

-I tell you, Mary.

THE CARPENTER'S SHOP OF THE JEW

The Child told Mary many things. He told her so many things that the poor immigrant woman had no more room left in her head and had to begin to keep them in her heart. If I were to tell you all of them, I would probably sit there until next year, and that's not the plan.

What I can tell you is what you already know. You know that the Holy Family returned to their homeland when they were ten years old or earlier. But you do not know what happened to them so that the good Joseph and his brother-in-law Cleophas took the decision to sell the Carpentry of the Jew, a business but very prosperous, wind in stern and full sail, cut the sea, do not sail, fly, and so on.

The Carpentry of the Jew was in the middle of the City. In those days there was only one real city in the whole orb. It was Alexandria of the Nile. Rome was the largest military headquarters in the world. In Rome lived the imperial senators. But it was in Alexandria of the Nile that all the wise men of the Empire were to be found. We can say that Alexandria was the New York of those days. In Washington there is the power, but in New York there is the money. A relationship of this nature was the one that Alexandria had with Rome.

Why then did they have to return? And just then that the business was going well? To return to what? To survive like the fly in the spider's house? There was food for thought. A business that is less than ten years old is like the kid who is starting to grow a mustache. It is from his eyes that the world gets the least faults. The world may be as bad as you want it to be, but he, the kid, is a champion. Anyway, it was not nonsense. It had cost Joseph and his brother-in-law a lot to get ahead, to make their way, to find a place, and a big place among the Gentiles, because Joseph did not want to know anything or very little of his compatriots. In this chapter Joseph was a very strange Jew. He did not want to know much of his countrymen, nor did he like to have them too close. No one knew why, nor did he talk much. It would be because Joseph spoke Latin and Greek from a very young age and seemed to find himself among the Gentiles like a fish in the water.

It must be said that Joseph's mastery of the two languages of the Empire opened his way in the business world. Unlike his fellow countrymen, racists with everyone, who believed themselves to be a superior, chosen race, and looked down on the rest of the human race, Joseph was an open, intelligent, not very talkative, but his every word was that of a man who would not break his word for anything in the world.

How a provincial carpenter-cabinet maker, escaped from a village lost in the sierras, had managed to master to such an extent the two international languages of the moment, in truth, was another mystery!

Another among the many that made the owner of the Carpentry of the Jew a creature *sui generis*, introverted, indefinable. His compatriots in Alexandria criticized Joseph precisely because of his distance from the company of his own.

Contrary to Joseph, Cleophas, Mary's brother, was very much of his own land and was very much in favor of his own people. This balanced the scales and kept the House's relations with the nationalists in equilibrium. On occasion, between brothers-in-law and partners, Cleophas brought up the subject of their estrangement and the reasons for such an immovable position. But Joseph would always find a way to drag the matter out.

Joseph did not impose anything on his brother-in-law; he was free to educate his children according to his heart; he would not forbid his children to go to the synagogue and participate in the life of the Jewish community fulfilling their duties as a good son of Abraham. Only that the same freedom that Joseph offered him he wanted for himself.

At this way of reasoning Cleophas laughed and dropped the subject. For if she asked her sister Mary about her husband's strange behavior, she would not go any further.

The same enigma that caused Cleophas this way of being of Joseph had Mary surprised since they left the homeland. And Cleophas was not to believe that she was hiding anything from him. Joseph was as good as a loaf of bread, but when it came to opening his heart, not even to his own wife would he say a word.

All in all, Cleophas and his wife had already given birth to a whole troop at the height of this chapter. Joseph and Mary, however, had remained with the first and the last, firstborn and only begotten in one person.

-What is it, brother, Cleophas wanted to know, why are you in such a hurry to sell a ship that is going downwind?

Joseph did not want to tell his brother-in-law the whole truth, or at least the truth as he lived it.

THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

The Child overcame that sadness that almost plunged him into the darkness of infinite sorrow. His Mother put herself between the Child and that unknowable darkness, called her Husband to her aid and between them they drove the devil out of hell. But they had not forgotten the battle when the Child opened a new chapter in their lives. Jesus was already nine or ten years old. It had gotten into the Child's head to leave Egypt and be taken to Israel.

You can understand why Joseph was very angry. His wife was for her child. Logical. For Mary there was no problem. But for Joseph things were not so simple.

Of course Joseph had heard the Divine Story from the lips of Jesus in the arms of his Mother. And precisely for that reason now less than ever he could afford to make a wrong decision. As long as he did not know whom he had at home the problem seemed controlled; but now that he knew the identity of Mary's Son he could now less than ever afford the indecision he had when he laughed a little at the advice of the Magi.

"Go, Joseph, or the Herods will kill him", they begged him.

Return to Israel while Herod the Younger is alive?

Joseph replied to his wife: "Tell your son that the time has not come".

Words gone with the wind.

-Tell your husband that I must be about my Father's business, the Child insisted.

Answer that the wind brought.

-Mary, for God's sake, he is a child. Nobody moves from here. At least until that son of Satan dies.

On and off. Joseph was like that. Very few words, but when he said them, there was no one in the world who could make him give his arm to twist.

And they could have stayed that way all their lives if the Child had not put his plan into action. I will not get lost in the details, but what is certain is that the son of the Carpenter uncorked the bottle of his prodigious intelligence and enjoyed like a child getting lost with the champagne of his glory to the rabbi of his synagogue.

-The list of the kings? The one before the Flood or the one after the Flood, Mr. Rabbi?

A prodigy. He knew it all. The astonished rabbi ended up taking a deep interest in the child.

-And whose son are you, child?

-I am the son of David, Rabbi.

-Is your father the son of David?

-And so is my mother, Rabbi.

-And your mother too? What a curious thing!

-And so is my cousin here, Rabbi.

"You sure are a rabbi" thought the man to himself.

So one fine day the rabbi came into the Jew's carpentry shop and asked Joseph to explain himself. As if he was entitled to something for being a servant of the servants of God.

Joseph looked him up and down and put him in the street. And in front of the Child himself. Because, of course, all this mess was the Child's doing.

You will understand that after the scare he got when the Birth, Joseph was forbidden in his house the least mention of the Davidic origins of his family. And if the case arose, his Davidic origins were to be escaped as one who is not willing to put his hand in the fire. Yes they were; but who knows; their parents told them they were and they were not going to argue with their parents' authority.

The Boy was breaking this Family law. And he was doing it with perfect knowledge. He knew, because he knew Joseph as if he were his brother, his friend, his father, that as soon as Joseph detected the slightest danger that would endanger the life of the Son of Mary, Joseph would close the business and migrate elsewhere.

Joseph had passed the first round. But the second was yet to come.

The Child was back in business. Not only was he the son of David, his mother was the Daughter of Solomon.

-Yes, Mr. Rabbi. The Daughter of Solomon herself.

-And you say that your father can prove this with papers on the table?

-Yes, sir.

The rabbi who had the good fortune or misfortune to have him as a student got stiff antennae. Confused, lost, the astonished rabbi took the subject to the chief rabbi.

-What I'm telling you", he said, "If it were any other child, I would take it as a joke, but I believe everything about the son of the Carpenter. He knows more than all the wise men in Solomon's court put together. Including the wise king", with these words the rabbi of Jesus went to his boss.

And they both showed up one fine day at the Jew's carpentry shop ready to get to the bottom of the matter.

They went to Joseph. They went to demand that he show them the documents the Child had been telling them about. Jesus had told them that his father kept the genealogical documents of the Family, documents dating back to the days of King David himself, reissued by the prophet Daniel during the days of the Babylonian Captivity.

Joseph suddenly found himself facing a masterful checkmate move. The Son of Mary was playing hardball. He wanted to take them all to Jerusalem and nothing and no one was going to stop him.

The discussion Joseph had with the two rabbis was very strong. I will not try to reproduce it so as not to create the impression that I am recalling fantastic events.

-The impression that the Son of Mary made on his preceptors was so huge that they had given faith to the word of a little boy... blablabla. The Carpenter said to them.

If they had known him they would have understood that for Joseph to affirm was to say the last word.

Joseph had it very clear. The Son of Mary could be the Son of God in person, but it was up to him, to Joseph, to whom his Father had given his Custody, and it was up to him, and only him, Joseph, to decide when the Holy Family would return to Israel.

Could it be the Son of God?

Could it only be...?

"What are you thinking, Joseph?"

The rabbis thought they had the Carpenter cornered, and even the Child himself who listened behind the door came to believe it. Words like swords in a duel to the death were being crossed when the Child leaned out of the door with the air of the victor who asks his fallen enemy, Do you still want more?

It was the first time in his life that Joseph saw the Son of Mary with the eyes that his Mother saw Him with. That was the Son of God in person. It was no joke. He just happened to have the body of a child. But the one before him was the Firstborn of God.

And it was Him in person who was speaking to him in thought.

Yes sir, He was speaking to him in thought with the certainty that you are reading this book.

The rabbis were talking to Joseph in his own house and he had his mind somewhere else, somewhere else. They were demanding the genealogical documents of the Child and he was in another place, in another time. The Child was against the halo of the Carpenter's door, standing up, saying to him without opening his mouth: "You still don't believe me, Joseph, don't you see that I have to take care of my Father's things?"

But the trick backfired on the child.

After the moment, the rabbis left, again again and now more than before Joseph was closed in band. They would never return to Israel until his God gave him the order to return. And that was it, he would hear no more.

And so it was that the Child was defeated again. He stopped talking to Joseph. He had played the game and lost it. No one would move from Egypt until God gave Joseph the order to return to Israel, as simple as that, as tragic as that.

Simple to say, yes; to live, but not at all. Father and son stopped talking to each other, stopped even looking at each other. Jesus did not even eat. He let himself fall on the floor against the façade of his house, watching life go by, overwhelmed by the sorrow of the one who can do everything and is ordered to do nothing.

Maria did not know who suffered more. If the Child for not having been able to impose his will, or if her Husband for not being able to suffer the silence and the estrangement of his son. They did not even look at each other. Joseph did not dare, and the Child could not.

Cleophas was the only one who seemed to enjoy living that situation.

-What's the matter, brother, why are you so stubborn, he said to Joseph.

-He is only a child, Cleophas, Joseph answered.

Well, it happened that one of those days Joseph returned home from closing a deal. Jesus had already lost all hope of convincing the good Joseph. Since when had not spoken?

Joseph the Carpenter returned from closing that deal all serious, but with very bright eyes. As soon as Maria saw him walk through the door, her heart skipped a beat, but she didn't want to say a word. She waited for her husband to speak to her.

-Woman, tell your son that we are leaving.

She said no more.

The Mother took the Child and went to distract him at the flea market. She was going to buy him whatever he wanted, to cheer him up and lift his eyes, she said. Jesus followed her as he might have followed a cloud with no destination. Since the incident between Joseph and the rabbis, he did not want to know anything, he had no desire for anything. And there was nothing his own Mother could say to him to lift his heart.

Nothing?

Well, there was something. She had two signs, and it was a single word. Joseph refused and Mary could not give it to him.

Couldn't give it to her?

They would never forget that walk through the Alexandria port market. She kept smiling at him, tickling him, telling him with her gestures: Guess what, what's wrong with me?

Logically, the Child was annoyed for a while, until he finally opened his eyes. He took Maria -he always called her by her name- sat her down on one of the benches of the pier and looking into her eyes he read her heart as easily as you read these lines.

-Mary, yes?, was all the boy asked her.

She shook her head, dead happy. And right there against the background of the Mediterranean horizon they danced mad with joy.

They hurried back home. Joseph was at work when they entered. Mary passed by, but Joseph caught the light shining in his wife's heart. Her pupils lit up and she turned her head. Before he could say a word the Child came running out and threw Himself into his arms. Giant as he was, Mary's husband caught him and lifted him up as all parents do with their children. Now they had both won. The Child had what he wanted and Joseph had received God's order to set out on his journey.

Cleophas didn't refuse. Nor did he say anything. His brother-in-law was the head of the clan, he disposed, he commanded.

Jesus ran off in search of James, his cousin, shouting down the street: To Jerusalem, James, to Jerusalem.

BORN AGAIN

The emigrants returned to Nazareth, as it were, rich. Joseph sold the Jew's carpentry at a very good price.

Farewell Alexandria farewell - whispered the lips of a Joseph who was leaving behind friends, business, happy years, new perspectives, a wise city, the joy of having lived wonderful things and heard other incredible things if he had not heard them from the lips of the Child.

On the other side of the horizon awaited him the return of pain sleeping under the thick sheets of a cruelly wounded subconscious. To return to Nazareth, to settle in Bethlehem, his village, what would he do?

During the absence of the Lord of the Stork of Nazareth, the big house on the hill, Joanna, Mary's sister, had kept her nephew Jesus' inheritance up. Joseph had no problem. Everything that was his wife's was his; so Joseph could devote himself to living off the rents and start living the good life. But no matter how prosperous his wife's inheritance was, this way of thinking did not suit him.

As a father, Joseph concerned about the future of his nephews. The future of Jesus was in the hands of God.

By this time his brother-in-law Cleophas had brought a troop into the world. Had his sister Mary remained unmarried it would have been more than likely that the inheritance of Jacob of Nazareth and his messianic legacy would have passed to the male of the house; in which case the future of Cleophas' children would have been tied to that of Mary's property.

This was not the case. Sooner or later the sons of Cleophas would have to leave the house of Aunt Maria, settle down and found their own families. So, without a second

thought, Joseph made the final decision to begin again, as he had done the first time he arrived in Nazareth, unknown to all who did not know him, with no ground to drop dead on, the sky for a ceiling, the horizons for the walls of his house, the mother earth for a floor on which to lay his body, a pillow stone under the stars, his faithful Assyrian dogs on guard around the fire, the dawn at daybreak, the morning star under the moon, Jerusalem above, on his way to Samaria as one who enters a body and travels to the heart through the unknown arteries of the earth. Why not, did not God endow us with his strength to keep the spirit ever young? The forces must fail, but the desire continues beyond the weariness of the bones.

Of course, reopening the carpentry shop was going to be a serious job, but since those two men lacked neither the strength nor the courage to start over from scratch, well, that was it. Besides, the dark creatures who had ordered the Slaughter of the Innocents had already passed to better glory and, truth be told, although Joseph did not seem too eager to return to his homeland, he was also itching for the family, to see his brothers and sisters again, to see his wife and brother-in-law happy in their mother's arms. In short, human nature was woven with fibers of divine love and needs to bathe in tears of joy to overcome the innate tendency it manifests to resemble the beasts, which neither laugh nor cry.

As for the work, man, Joseph could have dedicated himself to the business of the field, but it was not his stick. The carpenter's trade was in his genes, it pulsed in his blood; it was his thing, he could glue a nail without looking, polish the roughest surface while he talked. The field? The countryside was not for him, nor was he made for the countryside. His sister-in-law Johanna was keeping the property on the rise.

Yes, for country matters there was his sister-in-law Jane. And as for Nazareth's sewing shop, the matter was in the hands of her wife's workers, and Mary, already devoted to her family, the first thing she did was to leave things as they were.

The Child, for his part, as soon as he set foot in Israel, was already dying to see the day of his admission into the community with all the full rights of adults, which usually took place at the age of thirteen or fourteen. In his case things were brought forward to the age of twelve because his head worked better than that of an older person. I am not saying this to impress the reader. What is certain is that during the whole journey from Egypt to Israel the Child was hyperactive; if it had been up to Him, He would have started to fly, or run on the waters and would not have stopped until He reached Jerusalem. He already imagined it all. He would make his way to the Temple Courtyard, ask for the word and let the truth flow from his mouth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

"Here I come Jerusalem" whispered the Child as they left Egypt behind.

The Child's idea of his messianic destiny was the classic popular thought of the times. The Son of David would present himself mounted on his horse of glory before the powers of the Temple, gather around him all the children of Abraham of the world and lead them to conquer the ends of the earth.

With these holy intentions in mind, the ceremony of admission into the community celebrated, at his twelfth birthday, Jesus went to the Temple to put his strategy into practice.

On the first day he would attract attention to himself; on the second day the word would spread; and on the third day he would be revealed to all the Wise Men of Israel in the immensity of his divine reality. On the fourth the Messiah would be on his throne calling to his ranks all the armies of the Lord in the world.

And so it was. At least for the first two days. But on the third something happened that would mark his existence for the rest of his life.

Marveling at the intelligence of that Child who knew more than all the wise men of Israel put together, the Temple authorities eventually gathered to make a decision about what was going on.

Among them took his place around Jesus, surrounded by the Doctors and Princes of the Temple, a certain Simeon. This Simeon was the old man who greeted the newborn Child and told his God that he could now let him go to join his parents because he had already seen the Christ.

God did not seem to agree with Simeon. Instead of taking him to Heaven, he left him still on Earth.

As soon as Simeon saw the Child, he recognized the Son of Mary. He was amazed at what he was seeing and spoke up when everyone was already convinced that he was looking at the Son of David.

-Tell me, son, said this Simeon, breaking the silence.

And he continued to speak words of wisdom unknown to the Child and to all.

-What will happen when you go away? Will we men return to our old days' world, or do you think the Christ will stay with us forever?

“What was the old man talking about?”, the boy asked himself.

That old man was telling him, amidst the protests of all his colleagues, that the Christ should be surrounded by a pack of dogs, bear all the sins of the world, offer Himself as the Lamb of Atonement.

-But if he sits on his throne, how can the Scriptures be fulfilled, said Simeon.

The child froze. “He Was the Servant of Yahweh of Isaiah's prophecies “

It was not that the Child did not know the prophecies. He knew the prophetic books by heart. What was shocking to him was the interpretation that Simeon was giving them. It was a wisdom as new and unknown to him as it was to the others who were listening.

THE SWORD OF DAVID

Legend had it that the great warrior danced the dance of victory around the corpse of the enemy. It also said that those barbarians stole the secret of iron from the heroes of Troy before Aeneas fell under the cunning of the Greeks.

Among those soulless monsters the most horrible was always the chief. The chief was not always the tallest, but always the most cruel, the most terrible, the most ruthless, the most lethal and malignant. On that occasion the tallest and the most cruel and merciless barbarian conceivable had met in the same body. His name was Goliath. His sword was as great as that of that other warrior whom the Spaniards called Rodrigo Diaz de Vivar, the one that cut off five heads of Moors in single file. No one wanted to be less than three meters away from that *Cid Campeador*; those three meters were what his weapon measured from his shoulder to the tip of that Spanish steel sword. Arm and sword were one and the same thing with that Castilian warrior who in stature had little or nothing to envy to that of the bullying and gibbering philistine who made the terrible mistake of taking off his helmet in front of the slinger.

Legend has it that David picked up the giant's huge sword and with it cut off his head with a slash. And it goes on to say that the Hebrew warrior fought with it at the head of his armies. From which we must deduce that if David was beautiful of face, he was by no means short of body nor of delicate and fine arms. He was not a giant, but certainly the least like him was a dwarf.

The sword of Goliath was one of the royal symbol par excellence granted to the one in possession of the throne of Judah. Solomon received it and Solomon gave it to his son. Rehoboam to his son, the latter to the next, and so it passed from hand to hand during the five centuries that ran from the coronation of David to the last king of Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezzar snatched it out of the hands of the last living king of Judah and threw that museum sword among the other treasures his armies had collected around the world. He saw it so big and heavy that he thought it was a decorative object. He forgot about it and it would have remained there forever if, after conquering Babylon, Cyrus the Great had not given it to the prophet Daniel so that he could do with that sacred symbol of the Hebrews what it was in his spirit to do.

By legitimate right the sword of David, the sword of the kings of Judah, belonged by inheritance to Zerubbabel. But the prophet Daniel denied it to him because it was not with the sword that he should reconquer the Lost Homeland. The sword of Goliath would remain in the Great Synagogue of the Magi of the East until the Son of David was born.

We do not know how the sword of Goliath ended up in the hands of the Cid Campeador. What we do know positively is that that sword was the sword that Joseph was carrying the day he entered the Temple looking for the Son of Mary.

The sword of David was a gift from the Magi to the father of the Messiah. It fell to him to guard it until the day of his son's coronation.

The Magi gave Joseph many gifts. Gold, frankincense and myrrh were the last three gifts they gave him; but this was for the Child. Earlier they had given Joseph an Iberian horse that flew like a shooting star and was able to cross Samaria without drinking water or resting. And three dogs from the same cradle, a relic of the dogs that the kings of Nineveh took with them on their lion hunts. One was called Deneb, the other Sirius, and the third Kochab. Joseph never took them out together. They looked so much alike that

anyone who did not know Joseph thought he had only one of that endangered species. They were as gentle as lambs at their owner's feet, but fiercer than the meanest demon in the most horrible hell if they smelled danger. His three dogs, his Iberian horse and Goliath's sword were the three things Joseph took with him from Bethlehem the day Elizabeth said to him:

-Son, all his sisters have married and are happy; the boy is already in bloom and has all his father's grace. Cleophas is strong, he is tall, he is clever, he will soon find someone to love him madly. Very soon the Daughter of Solomon will be free of her vow, is that not what the Son of Nathan has been waiting for all these years?

And a fourth Joseph took with him to Nazareth, which was the most precious of all: The genealogical document of his House. But to get to the point.

Only twice in his life Joseph's fist was shot at the sword of his father David. That his arm was shot off tells us a lot about the stature of the man and the strength of his arm. The first was when Joseph went to fetch Mary from Elizabeth's house. The second, when he went into the Temple to fetch Mary's Son.

What would have happened if instead of saying to his parents what he said to them, the Child had said to Joseph: Son of Nathan, give me the sword of the kings of Judah.

DUST THOU ART, AND UNTO DUST THOU SHALT RETURN

What did that old man discover to the Child? What did that man show him so that the Son of Mary would give up his plans? What did he tell him? Why did that Child shut his mouth and refused to get on the horse of the Son of David, the brave and impetuous prince who, according to the popular interpretation of the Scriptures, at the head of his armies, would bring the peace of God to the whole world? Why did he who entered the Temple ready to unveil himself and claim for himself what belonged to him by human and Divine right suddenly abandon his messianic plans and went after "his fathers" without saying a word?

That that old man --whose identity we will discover in Part Two-- discovered to the Child the wisdom that you all know from the mouth of the Catholic Church since the days of the Apostles, this is certain. But there was more, much, much more, too.

It is clear from the Scriptures that God and his Son, at the end of the Sixth Day of the Creation of Heavens and Earth, they left Adam and Eve for a time. When they returned they found the *fait accompli*. His Father understood all that had happened, judged the case and in the wrath of the Judge of the Universe passed sentence against all the actors. To the Serpent he swore that a son of Adam would rise up and crush his head. Adam and Eve were condemned to die.

Stunned, hallucinated by that rebellion against God, his Son, brother of the dead Adam, felt his blood rush to his head and dreamed of the day of vengeance of the son of Man.

But that Day of Vengeance was not for tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. In fact, no one knew when. The Son of God only knew that, as time went on, the loss of the identity of the Man God created became greater and greater. It became so great, and the hatred that because of him was accumulating against the rebellious angels became so enormous that with all his Being he asked his Father to send him to Earth in person to confront the Devil himself. Once the Devil was defeated, the crown of Adam would be for the Victor; and being the Conqueror and the Son of God the same person, during his reign the Human World would leave the Hell to which it had been thrown and would resume the path for which it was created, and from whose path the Betrayal had taken it away.

The Son of God came to Earth with his blood boiling, ready to wipe away the tears of our world. His sword was in his mouth, it was his Word. To conquer the world he did not need the sword of Goliath, he only needed to open his mouth and command the winds to rise, the armies to lay down their arms. He came to overcomes Death and lead men to Immortality.

Immortality?

Did I say Immortality?

"Yes, son, but are you going to rebel against the sentence of your Father?" said that Simeon to him. "To save us, will you condemn yourself? To save the Present, will you condemn the Future? Certainly your Father has sent you to confront the Evil One and you will crush his head, but if you break down the walls of our prison against the divine judgment, how will you differ from that against which you have come to avenge the death of our father Adam? For the Judgment of God is firm: Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Don't you see, son, that in letting yourself be dragged down by the love you have for us, you drag yourself down to perdition, and doing so you drag down with you all Creation? Who but the Judge of us all can sign our freedom? But if to his Son he has given that Power, then do according to your will."

THE THOUGHT OF CHRIST

When he returned to Nazareth, what really happened to the Child was that he was born again. The Son of God who became man and was dying to grow up and never saw the day when he would sit among adults, finally got into our skin. God is above and we are below, and the whole dilemma of Humanity passes through a bridge over shifting sands. How to know God's thought? How to discover his plan of eternal salvation?

Now it was a man who was asking all the questions that all men were asking and none of them were answering. Now it was Christ who raised his eyes upward and looked God face to face seeking to know his thought. Now it was the son of Man who recognized his ignorance and looked to God for wisdom.

But you are twelve years old. And you have a lifetime ahead of you. And every day you wake up with a Cross. And every year that passes, that Cross weighs more heavily on you. And whether you want it or not, the weight will sink you more than once.

You can do everything and you are forbidding to do anything, you see the world around you living in hell and you can do nothing even though you have the power to do everything. You can save the Present and condemn the Future, or let the Present live its Destiny and save your Freedom for when the prisoner gets out of jail. You will wait for him on the other side of the door to guide him to a New Day of freedom that will never end. Until that Day the world will have to follow its path, and until your Hour arrives you will have to sink many times in deep depressions, and you will have no one to support you, there will be no one by your side with whom to share your destiny, no one will give you a hand, no one will reach out to you because no one will be with you to know what is happening to you and why you are sinking until you drown.

You are Jesus of Nazareth, a young and rich man, you have everything a man desires and you take only what you want. You don't need anything from anyone. Doors open for you wherever you go; you are treated as a lord and your word is worth gold to those who do business with you. No one knows your secret; only a woman. Her husband died when you were about twenty years old, and so did Cleophas. Only they are left, your Mother and her sister Johanna; only they know who you are. But none of them know where you are going, or what your plans are. You are alone. When the storms rage over your mind you will have no one to embrace you and fight the storm together. If you do not go mad it will be only because you are who you are, but even if you are who you are you will have to suffer the storm in the open, without roof or shelter against the water that will fall in torrents under a sky covered with darkness over your mortal body. The sweeter the life you lead, the more bitter is what you will do.

To the starving man hard bread tastes like glory, but if you give that same bread to the bun-eater it will break his teeth. Yours, Jesus, are accustomed to eat the best bread. Your body is accustomed to the finest garments. And you are going to lead an army of men to the same fate. Won't you sink? Won't their ghosts attack you in your dreams? Won't you wake up in the deserts on your knees begging for mercy? Won't the visions of their bodies crushed by the beasts of the Roman circuses torment you while you look to Heaven asking for the end of the sentence against Eve and her children? How long will each year that you live last for you? Won't the twenty years that await you be an eternity for you? They people you will lead to the slaughter house are before your eyes. They are all pure. One by one they are all innocent. Their only crime is to love you above all things. They love you more than time, more than immortality, more than all the treasures of the universe. You are their life. And they are there, hanging from their crosses, actors in a bloody spectacle, ode to a madness, singing in honor of the tears that for them you, Jesus, shed in the desert, when you mysteriously disappeared and returned without telling anyone where you came from or what you had been doing.. Will you not suffer in your flesh the crime of your hundreds of thousands of little brothers, whom you will lead to the cross with no crime for which they will be found guilty? Loving you will be their crime. Will you not implore mercy from your Father? Will you not seek another viable alternative? And yet the Cup is full and you must drink it to the last drop. A Hope sustains you, but to no one can you tell it, with no one can you share the infinite joy in which your whole being rejoices as you look towards the One who sits at the Judgment Seat and as you see Him, contemplate, you look at yourself.

JESUS CHRIST

We do not know at what point in life we cross the boundary between childhood and adolescence; nor at what point we have ceased to be young and become adults. There seems to be no general rule; it is something that each one discovers for himself and lives in his own way.

This being so among us, how much more complex is it to apply our psychology to someone like the Jesus of the Gospels!

Having adopted the position of seeing him as he saw himself, having experienced to the degree that our understanding allows us what was going on in his head, let us move on. There are still many areas closed to the intelligence of past centuries, and which, subjected to the fantasy of those who wished to break into his inmost being, have come down to us deformed like paintings vitiated by the passions of the copyists.

If at some point I have let my own passions run free, the reader, as a free being, owes himself the opportunity to recreate the historical line starting from the characteristics of his own intelligence. The author can only point to the horizon and paint what he sees with his eyes, and although the configuration of the eye is the same for everyone, the way of seeing things acquires a personal and non-transferable form. It is from this platform of personal vision and individual understanding that the author recreates the things he writes; the reader will have to adapt them to his own way of laughing, crying, hating, loving, understanding and even ignoring.

Let us then return with Jesus to his parents' house in Nazareth, and from what he discovered, knowing now what he had just discovered, the Cross of Christ, his Cross, let us try to open the horizon of his memories to the pure reflections of reality as he and his own lived it.

The Child who went down to Jerusalem was in all aspects, seen from the eyes of an outsider, a gentleman. His cousin James for example. James was a couple of years older than his cousin Jesus, and yet while the latter had not yet picked up a hammer and did not know what it was to hammer a nail, James of Cleophas was already an axe, the boy in his role of carpenter's apprentice. As the father of that tall and super-intelligent boy, Joseph had to put up with more than one criticism of his way of educating his only son. He was spoiling him, he was told.

We are not going to talk about envy or bring to the scene passions that we all wish we had never known. What is certain is that the mentality of small towns has always been a hotbed for the most conspicuous and boring ignorance.

Criticism of Joseph for the way he raised his firstborn said nothing to Mary and could not be taken any further than that because the Child was who he was. That Child they criticized was the heir of Jacob's daughter. A large part of all that the Nazarenes saw around them belonged to "little lord Jesus". If his parents did not want him to touch the nails and hammers, who was anyone to reproach them?

What is certain is that upon returning from Jerusalem, that Child broke the script of the "little lord" that was supposed to be his and attached himself to his father with the obedience and diligence of the good and dynamic boy that every father desires for his son.

Mary watched him finish the day. In his life his son had never lifted a board, and suddenly he never stopped asking for work. It was enough that his father opened his mouth to obey him. Even Joseph himself looked at him and said: "What is the matter with you, my son?"

But not only in the carpentry shop. If Aunt Johanna needed a job to be done, her sister's son was there for whatever was needed. If it was necessary to go to the fields to pick almonds or to reap the wheat, her nephew Jesus was there first at dawn. He never complained, never answered, never gave you a "no". But neither to his own people nor to anyone who asked him for a favor. How could he not be loved!

It was as if he didn't want to think, as if he needed to forget something. He needed to give himself up to physical activity. His arms ached and his tendons trembled with fatigue, but he never said no nor gave up. He got up first and went to bed last. He no longer played with the village children. He didn't even speak except when asked. The change was so sudden, so colossal, so surprising that his Mother would sit on the edge of her bed while her Child slept, wondering what was going on in that head. Before, her Child talked to her, told her all her things. Since their return from Jerusalem, her Child was a different person, he was like a stranger to her. For everyone he was what he should have been, an obedient and quiet boy who never took away the word of his elders or answered you when you scolded him for whatever it was. But for Mother Mary, her Boy was becoming a stranger.

"He is becoming a man" they told her. That wasn't enough for Her. She knew that whatever was happening to her Child it could not be explained by human experience. Hadn't she experienced the sinking of her Child in Alexandria? For those who saw him sitting at the door of the Jew's carpentry shop, the Child's sadness could be explained by some whim that his father denied him and forbade him to ask for it again. Just like that? No way! She knew that her Son did not function like other children.

On that occasion, back in Alexandria, Mary found a way to make her way into her Child's heart. But this time it was totally impossible for her. The only thing she could do was to lie down beside her and fall asleep guarding her dreams, because whatever she was going through, this time her Child would never open the door to her mind, nor would she be able to find her way to her heart.

It was not that she was sad or that she carried such great sorrow that the very idea of sharing it seemed impossible to the Child. She knew it was something deeper; so deep that even looking into his eyes her gaze was lost in the field of Jesus' eyes without ever reaching the horizon behind which her Son hid his thought.

"What is the matter with you, my son?" she asked herself, knowing that her Child would never give her the answer.

THE DEATH OF CLEOPHAS

Cleophas, the father of James the Just and his brothers, was blessed. If it is true that before death the human being relives the years lived in this world, the last moments of Mary's brother were happy.

The only sorrow that could have darkened his luminous memories, the death of his father shortly after his birth, even this sorrow could not cloud his last moments. His sister Mary transformed that physical absence into an angelic presence always watching over her child.

Now that he was one step away from crossing the threshold of death, Cleophas could recall with a smile the way his older sister had mitigated the absence of his father by transforming him into her own guardian angel. How could he have doubted his sister Mary's innocence the day his mother told him of the Annunciation?

He was the first man in the world to know the Mystery of the Incarnation, and the first to believe with his eyes closed in the Virgin who would conceive the Messiah King. It was his mother who took him alone and told him in every word. "Son, pass this, this and this, and I want you to do this, this and this"

Cleophas forgot his wife and his two little children, saddled his horse, the mare for his sister, and, without giving more explanation than was necessary to his brother-in-law, led the way to Our Lady through Samaria.

Holy God, how beautiful he looked, cherub on his fiery horse with the eagle's gaze scanning the horizon, sword ready and sharp to trace around his Sister the circle that the unknown Roman soldier traced around the great king of Asia. "If you trespass the line you declare war on Rome, if you turn away, go in peace. If you want war, you shall have it."

His brother-in-law gave him for company two of his dogs, Deneb and Kochab. Those last specimens of his race seemed to have been infected by the tension of the young human brother; Deneb advanced opening the way, Kochab guarding the rear.

The Virgin would have gone down alone to Judea with no other protection than the trust placed in the Lord by her angel Gabriel. But so beautiful was her Cleophas covering her with the mantle of his absolute faith in her innocence.

Some time before the state of grace in which the Carpenter's wife found herself was discovered in Nazareth, a state of grace on the lips of all the neighbors, a young man arrived in Nazareth from Judea, from Jerusalem itself, looking for Joseph. He brought a message from Zechariah. Its contents left Joseph dumbfounded and thoughtful. "Elizabeth was with child."

When his mother-in-law soon decided to send Mary to Elizabeth, to help her in the last months of John's pregnancy, Joseph saw it as natural. But what he no longer saw as logical was that it was Cleophas who went ahead of him and accompanied Mary to the south. Now, on his deathbed, Cleophas fondly remembered the look of surprise on his brother-in-law's face when he heard him speak to him, a boy in his eyes, words of a whole man.

"Say no more. All conversation is at an end. My mother disposes, her daughter obeys, and I, her son, comply. Until your wedding day your betrothed is subject to my mother's authority. There is nothing more to talk about, Joseph. When we return, we will

see each other's faces". Joseph stared at him with the eyes of one who discovers the man in the boy and is delighted that it is so, because that's the way things should be.

Zechariah and Elizabeth had retired to their country home in the mountains of Judah, far from Jerusalem. It had been some time since the son of Abijah had retired from the official position he had held throughout his life in the bureaucratic hierarchy of the Temple. And he had not done so until a few months before from the Temple itself, because as the priesthood was for life and he had no children, his turn obliged him until death or until an illness prevented him from doing so.

Healthy and long-lived at a time when the average life of a man was barely over fifty, Zechariah, although he could have put his father's shift at the disposal of the Temple, preferred to remain in his sacred post until death or illness forced him to retire. And this is just what happened. Because when he became mute he could no longer maintain that position of immovability that created so many enemies.

The administration of the treasury of the Temple corresponded to the priestly families, owners of the twenty-four turns of worship. The president of this board of directors was the high priest, who in turn was chosen from among those twenty-four families. As a rule, the chair passed from father to son. But once in a while what happened to Zechariah happened.

Zechariah had no sons to whom he could give his chair. The natural thing in this case was to put at the disposal of the council of the saints the Turn and to choose a successor from among the families. As it will be understood, there could be no lack of those who would put on the table the money needed to buy this vacant position.

Unnaturally and unnecessarily, Zacharias made many enemies by refusing outright to sell his Turn. No one could force him to make his father's turn available to the Council. And he did not.

No one ever knew what the angel said to Zechariah, but the consequences of that Annunciation were miraculous for his enemies. Mute, the son of Abijah had to place his turn at the disposal of the Council, sign his resignation and retire from the Office.

Zechariah retired to the villa that he and his Wife had in the mountains of Judah. It was a country house, far from the world and its hustle and bustle, to which only Simeon the Younger, the only one of the Saga of the Forerunners who was still alive, had access. Outside of Simeon the Younger, they received no visitors. The reason?

Well, the cause was the miracle that the parents of John the Baptist were living in their flesh.

On his deathbed Cleophas remembered the wonder he experienced the day he met his "grandparents". Zechariah was bouncing off the walls, and if it had not been for Elizabeth's snow-white hair, no one could have sworn that the woman was past sixty. Zachariah didn't speak, but he didn't stop moving. Only one other couple in the history of the world had experienced such a miracle, Abraham and Sarah of course.

From the porch of his grandparents' country house, Cleophas remembered himself looking at the horizon and saying to himself, "What's the matter, Joseph, what's taking you so long?". How can we recreate the joy of that boy when he saw Joseph appear in the valley, trotting at a gallop across the plain! Didn't tears come to his eyes when he saw

that giant kneeling at the feet of his Sister asking her forgiveness for having doubted her innocence?

The day Joseph announced that he was taking Mary and Jesus away from Herod, Cleophas looked him in the eye as if to say to another: "And you thought I was going to stay behind while you take my Sister to nobody knows where".

From the first time he saw him Cleophas liked Joseph. And they were never separated.

Father of a large family that seemed not to end, Cleophas never criticized Joseph behavior. If his son Santiago was breaking his fists against the corners of the planks while his nephew Jesus was going around to walk hills, this was something that Cleophas saw with the eyes of the one who after all was before the Lord. Himself, of all the children of Nazareth, Cleophas was the little prince who neither worked nor needed to help the family. His sister Johanna was enough on her own to manage the fields; his sister Mary ran the most profitable dressmaking shop in the area. From time to time, grandmother Elizabeth came up from Jerusalem laden with gifts. Was she going to forget the child of the house?

What was his mission in this life - to live life!

His nephew Jesus reminded him so much of himself that Cleophas laughed when he saw Joseph struggling so much when he had to defend his Jesus in front of his friends and neighbors.

He, too, was taken by surprise and amazed by the sudden change in his nephew's appearance on his return from Jerusalem. And just like his sister, he could not explain what was going on in his nephew's mind. The only one who seemed to understand the Child was Joseph.

Joseph was the only one who seemed not to be surprised. He was the only one who seemed to know perfectly well what was happening to him, and, like the Child himself, he followed his policy of not saying a word to anyone. With his Mother and with his uncle Cleophas, Jesus felt uncomfortable because he read in their eyes what they were thinking. With Joseph, on the other hand, the Child was at ease. He was the only one who did not look at him with questions in his eyes and the only one who knew how to handle him in such a way that Jesus forgot his problems and became the active, intelligent and hard-working boy that everyone praised his parents for.

Yes, of course, Cleophas lived a wonderful life before he met Joseph. But that giant nomad on the back of his Iberian horse wandering through the provinces of the kingdom, his three Assyrian cherubs taken from a lost fresco of some palace in Nineveh, that nomad gave his life what it was missing, the image of the father, the brother he never had. And now, on his deathbed, he would be for his sons and daughters the father they would be missing.

Yes, if it is true that before dying the mind goes through the years lived, one by one, Cleophas relived unique, wonderful years. The Virgin for a sister, the Messiah king for a nephew, a Cherub for a brother-in-law, a wonderful woman who had given him sons and daughters, all healthy, all strong.

-Joseph..., he began, saying on his dead bed.

-Brother, Joseph stepped forward. Your sons are my sons, your daughters are my daughters. Of us all you are at this moment the blessed one. Our father David awaits his prince Cleophas in the bosom of that light that will be kindled when you close your eyes. There we shall meet, brother. Come and shake my hand when it is my turn to close mine.

And so it was. Cleophas died young, like his father Jacob.

-Just like our father, Joanna, in the prime of life. How we will miss you, brother, cried the Virgin.

They buried him in Nazareth, in the tomb of his father Jacob, next to his grandfather Matthan, over the remains of Abiud, son of Zerubbabel, son of Solomon, son of David.

THE DEATH OF JOSEPH

The life of Joseph the Carpenter extinguished its flame shortly after that of Cleophas was consumed.

If the existence of Cleophas was beautiful and worth living, that of Joseph the Carpenter was that of the warrior always on the edge of the precipice, muscles constantly in tension, nerves sharpened to the last atom, always vigilant, always ready to engage the next twist of fate.

"There is nothing predetermined, who knows what tomorrow will bring? When the book of life turns the page you will see what it contains. And let each day suffice for its eagerness."

"The lot of the children of the Spirit is to respond swiftly to the sound of the trumpet calling to action".

"Death always attacks from behind, but he who turns his face to him removes from his hand that ace called the surprise factor"

Proverbs of this nature were the daily bread of Joseph the Carpenter. Zechariah, the future father of the Baptist, his preceptor, tutor, mentor, teacher, all the good in one, dedicated his talent, his genius, his wisdom, his art, all the best he had to form the mind of young Joseph. Thanks to his patience and dedication the fearless warrior that ran in young Jose's blood learned to look Death in the face, and, with the gleam in his eyes of the hero who knows he is invincible, even to Hell itself.

But what he never articulated his mind for was to be caught in the nets of God himself.

Also their conception of the birth of the son of David was the classic one, dad, mom, they marry, they unite, two different persons and only one thing, the call of the blood, the power of the flesh. To imagine that God was going to get in the middle of the Incarnation of his Son by means of? Well, no, not really; what happened afterwards was never imagined.

Looking back, reliving those days, Joseph the Carpenter laughed heartily.

This time the warrior had reached the other side of the battlefield. Around his deathbed his nephews and his people mourned the farewell of the cherub who had never lowered his vigilance, the death of the hero who never shed his helmet and armor. He was about to give up his soul.

Everyone thought that his strength had reached its twilight, that his breath was fading in the distances between Heaven and Earth, when Joseph the Carpenter came out of his sleep. He was awakened by the memory of his answer to his Master Zechariah on the day Elizabeth communicated to them the news of the Vow of the Virgin.

"God's will be done. A thousand years my people have been waiting for this day, I may as well wait ten", said Joseph.

God, what an unexpected turn you gave to the life of your servant!

Young Joseph grew up dreaming of the day he would see the birth of his wife the Messiah king, the owner of the sword of kings, the legitimate bearer of the two messianic scrolls.

His brothers and sisters did not understand why their Joseph did not marry at the age that everyone was accustomed to. Life was short. Existence, very hard. At this point in history, no one could afford to let the years go by in the style of the Patriarchs, who married from the age of forty onwards. Many were already grandfathers at the age of forty. What was the chief of the clan of the carpenters of Bethlehem waiting for to choose a wife and honor them all with fresh blood?

Joseph the Carpenter was silent. He answered his brothers with the silence of one who seemed, unlike other mortals taken from clay, to have been formed from iron.

Far be it from his breast to harbor a heart of stone, but you left him, holy God, no choice but to adopt that attitude for the good of all, for if the slightest news of the Davidic plot that was being hatched behind his back had reached the ears of Herod's hired assassins, how long would it have taken that serpent to order the death of all the brothers of your servant?

Joseph the Carpenter came out of his sleep reliving that unforgettable day, the day he went to the house of his mother-in-law to ask for explanations about the rumor that had scandalized everyone in Nazareth.

What was going on?

What was reaching her ears?

The neighbors were dropping tremendous hints.

"What will you call the child, Mr. Joseph? Because it will be a boy"

The Carpenter finally felt the pinch, stopped contemplating and went straight to talk to his mother-in-law.

The Widow, who was expecting the visit, went and opened the door.

The Virgin's mother had been preparing for this encounter.

She had feared it. She had longed for it. She dreamed of him, sighed for him, trembled thinking of him.

Would she be up to the task, would the grace of her daughter's innocence have rubbed off on her, his mother?

As a mother she was all ready to gouge out the eyes of anyone who uttered the word adultery. Her son-in-law Joseph was a saint, a most good man, but what male would not be scandalized to hear that his female was in a state of grace by the work of the holy spirit?

With her heart in her fist the Widow opened the door to her son-in-law.

"Sit down, my son" she said to him. "This is a great day for all the families of the earth".

What a way to save the gap!

The Carpenter sat down. He did not open his mouth. Nor would he have needed to. His look said it all.

Man, maybe a thousand images are worth less than a word of God, and an image is worth more than a thousand words of man. In the situation at hand, the mother of the Virgin facing the man who was directly affected by the Incarnation of the Son of God, neither words nor images seemed sufficient to that mother trapped in the nets of a God who asks no one for permission to enter into the lives of the creatures He creates from clay.

Looks were enough. The looks said it all.

The Widow knew what her son-in-law was coming for, and her son-in-law knew that she knew what he had come for. The question was who was going to break the ice.

The Virgin's mother, inspired by the infinite love she had for her daughter, on the one hand, and by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit himself, on the other, broke out:

"My son, do you believe that Yahweh is God?" she blurted out to her son-in-law without giving him time to say this mouth is mine. Such an entrance, she knew, was the last thing her Joseph could have expected.

The Carpenter didn't even flinch. A man of ice would have moved more nerves than the Carpenter at that moment.

Well, he already knew his mother-in-law, he knew what stamp she had put on that woman's soul. Zechariah educated him, Joseph; but his mother-in-law Anna was formed with her own hands by Elizabeth, his Master's wife. So if what the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth was doing was defending her daughter Mary, and she was certainly doing so, the mother of the Virgin was starting well. It was to be seen what would become of all this philosophy.

The Virgin's mother, without losing her cool or feeling disarmed by her son-in-law's stony seriousness, continued:

"Forgive me, man of God, for entering you through this door, but events demand it of me. I mean, do you think anything is impossible for God?". Then she stared at his son-in-law as if at that moment the mystery of God's eyes had been revealed to her and allowed her to read Joseph the Carpenter's thoughts.

Another individual would have felt that look as intimidation. The Carpenter held it without moving a muscle.

Although he had not yet grasped what his mother-in-law was getting at, Joseph remained seated calmly. He had come for a single word, a Yes or a No. And he wasn't going to leave the house without that Yes or that No. Was his wife in a state of grace? That was all he wanted to know.

The mother of the Virgin was playing with an advantage, she knew that her son-in-law Joseph would not move from the chair until she gave him the Yes or No.

The truth, the whole truth and only the truth, was a Yes, a marvelous Yes, a divine Yes, an eternal, infinite Yes, an unmitigated, indescribable, inexplicable Yes.

It was also a No, a total No, a No without concessions, without discussions of any kind, a profound, non-negotiable No, the Life of the Messiah in one hand, the Death of the Son of David in the other hand.

What would you choose, friend, would you choose mockery, would you laugh at God to His face, would you deny God His power to perform this extraordinary, supernatural Work?

Friend, all is nothing when all is little. But if the creature were to refuse the knowledge of his Creator and subject it to his level of natural intelligence, the extraordinary work would be to pull such a donkey out of the well of fools.

The dice --for grace blows with the wind-- are still waiting for the next move. It is the turn of every man and woman to exhale his or her answer. To affirm oneself in the Yes or in the No.

If you had everything good in one hand and everything bad in the other, which one would you choose?

Joseph the Carpenter once held the dice of the fortune of the Son of Mary in his hand. Never in the History of the Universe had any man gone through a similar or similar situation. His decision would change the future of the world. His Yes or No would raise or sink the whole Plan of Universal Salvation of his Creator.

From his lips, however, the mother of the Virgin could only expect words of wisdom. With this strength and courage befitting a daughter of Eve the mother of the Virgin went on with her revelation

"Let us see, man of God. Imagine that the Lord challenges you to put Him to the test. Yes, just as it sounds. Imagine that our Lord offers you the opportunity to be challenged by you to prove to yourself that He is God for real, not just in word and

because He can do a few more tricks than Pharaoh's magicians. Let's say it, it is not enough for you to believe that He is God, you want, you need to see it with your eyes. You want to see His Almighty Power at work, you want to see Him overcoming the most difficult, greatest test you can think of.

"Man of God, I know that your faith is stronger than the rock, that without seeing you are content and enough with the Word that travels from mouth to mouth through the firmament of the centuries to believe in the Truthfulness of our Lord. However, grant yourself this opportunity. Answer me without prejudice. Tell me, by what test would you commit God to employ Himself to the utmost? What test would you put to God that would be worthy of His Almighty Power and would oblige Him to put all His Omniscience on the table? Son, do not hold back, do not leave your tongue stuck to the sky of your heart for fear of finding the words. Dare, challenge your Creator, because you deserve it, for so much suffering, for so much pain and so much cruelty that our fathers have suffered. What were we, son, before the Spirit of God hovered over the waters of our seas? Animals without intelligence. Then one day we were loved by our Creator and He gave us the gift of speech. Now then, do not deny it to yourself, speak, lift up your head to the Almighty, lay your soul at his feet, ask him to do an extraordinary, unique, unrepeatable, marvelous work, the measure of his Great Spirit, to quench your thirst for knowledge and your hunger for wisdom. He is for you. Ask yourself what test you would put to your Creator, one and no more, holy Isaac; but one that will fill your soul with infinite happiness and your being with eternal joy. Come, do not be shy". And the mother of the Virgin fell silent.

Strange as it may seem to you, Joseph the Carpenter continued in amazement. He came looking for the answer to something as simple as the truth about the rumored state of grace in which his wife seemed to be, and his mother-in-law came out with a full-fledged theological discussion.

Joseph stared at her trying to guess what was going on. Was it a Yes or was it a No?

His mother-in-law took advantage of the confusion to take her Revelation a step further.

"Son, answer me" she begged him. "Do not lie to me or be silent for fear of offending the Lord. Tell me the Truth, would you dare to challenge your God, or would you shrink back and not open your mouth for fear of offending your Creator?"

Without granting herself respite the Widow breathed. At once she returned to the battlefield.

"Man of God, I know I am surprising you; but grant me these minutes of your life. Again I ask you, what would you put God to the test? Or let's put it this way: What would be the greatest test for a God that could ever occur to a man? For example, you want Him to prove to you once and for all that He is truly God, that He has not claimed for Himself the glory of being Uncreated Being in vain. Do you want Him to erase all the stars from the sky? Do you want the sun to never set? Do you want donkeys to fly? Do you want whales to walk? I don't know, what do you want? Anybody can become an emperor. Midas have been many and many will be. Don't ask God for things that a man can do. You are going to challenge Him with an extraordinary, superior work, you are going to put before Him a job that not even Hercules in the fullness of his glory would have been able to do. Do I explain myself? ... You see, what worries me is that knowing

the nature of men, are you sure that once the stars are erased from the sky, you will not look for a natural explanation for such a divine phenomenon? Are you sure that men will not turn a frozen sun in the dome of the firmament and find a natural cause that fits in your heads?"

Having sent the ball to another's roof the Widow of Jacob of Nazareth fell silent. Joseph the Carpenter did not enter into the game.

I would say that anyone who saw him sitting in front of his mother-in-law at the time would have sworn that the man of God had ice instead of blood in his veins.

Joseph the Carpenter did not move an eyebrow. With his gaze frozen on his mother-in-law he looked more like a stone statue than a creature of flesh and blood.

The Widow held his gaze. She knew for a fact that her son-in-law was not going to say a word. Inspired by the great love she had for her daughter, the Widow acted as if Joseph's silence was a recognition of the value of the idea on the table.

Joseph, who was beginning to marvel at the direction the conversation was taking, and broke his silence with these first words:

"You tell me, Mother, why should I deny my Creator the glory of His Arm?". And he embraced silence again.

The mother of the Virgin took the definitive step. The moment had come.

"Son, I am not man". She had taken the step forward, yes, but in the direction that had suited her. "I don't know how you men think", she insisted, "I was created from a rib of my man. And I know that what to a man may be the greatest test in the Universe, it may not be so in the eyes of a woman. The only thing I wonder is this: in the eyes of a woman, can God be put to a greater test than conceiving without the intervention of the man? I mean, not in the manner of those sons of God who slept with the daughters of men and had offspring. You know that among the Greeks, the Romans and the barbarians their gods slept with their wives and bore them heroes, the last one being Alexander the Great himself. No, son, I am talking about something else. That a Virgin should give birth to a Child without knowing a man".

Now Joseph the Carpenter really opened his eyes wide. What was his mother-in-law insinuating? Where was she taking him with this metaphysical detour? Was she wrapping the Yes he came for in a kind of theological knot that was impossible to untie? So mind-boggling was the subject that Joseph remained unmoved.

"Son, do you think such a test would exceed the limits of Divine Power?"

The Widow continued attacking without giving his son-in-law time to prepare a counterattack strategy.

Anyway, her son-in-law spoke at last.

"No. Never". He said all serious.

And immediately he returned to his role of son-in-law in a state of hallucination with the twists and turns his mother-in-law was giving to the simple and short answer he came looking for: Yes or No. It seemed to be Yes, but it was No.

It looked like Yes, but as was No, it seemed to be Yes.

Apparently the Yes was being sugar-coated so that the pill of events would not be too bitter to swallow. But the idea with which his mother-in-law was challenging him seemed so fantastic that his body refused to leave without first listening with his ears to the conclusion of the argument that was being fabricated.

“I expected nothing less from you, my son”, interrupted his train of thought that mother who was ready to defend her daughter tooth and nail. “Now let's take another step forward. The Lord takes up your challenge. The Lord is going to give you the proof for which your bones sigh: He is going to make a Virgin conceive a son by the work and grace of His Uncreated, Divine Power. Do you remember, son, the prophecy? I know I do:

-Isaiah the prophet said to King Ahaz, “Ask the LORD your God for a sign in the depths of *Sheol* or on high.

-And Ahaz said to him, “I will not ask him; I do not want to tempt the LORD.”

-Then Isaiah said to him, “Hear now, O house of David, is it a small thing for you to trouble men, that you also trouble my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin with child is with child, and she shall call his name Emmanuel”.

The Widow stopped her speech and looked into Joseph's soul.

The Carpenter still could not believe his ears. Was she telling him that the Sign had taken place? Had the Widow gone mad, or did she want to drive him mad?

As if reading his mind, the Widow reopened the subject.

“Son, you say to yourself: to the point, woman. And I ask you not to be impatient. We are not talking about a trivial matter, the glory of the Eternal God is at stake. Grant yourself patience. If by running too fast the athlete does not see the signs and skips them and reaches the finish line by an unmarked road, although he would have won anyway if he had run on the official track, will the jury give him the crown of laurels? Would they? Look, son, we have the Eternal God on the move, looking for the Woman, the Virgin in whose womb his Sign will take shape. I ask you, on which blessed one will God rest his Arm? On which unique and special woman among all the daughters of David will the Most High spread the mantle of his Glory? To which one will He love as the unique and adored spouse is loved? You will tell me that the Most High Himself will beget her and predestine her from the womb of her parents to be that Mother. Or does He not go ahead of the one who asks by begetting him to make this request? The Omnipotence of the Lord is that which moves every soul that breathes in His presence. Is not His Spirit the source that inspires every word that reaches His ear? Of course it is, son. He opens the mouth of the one who asks: May a Virgin give birth without the intervention of a man! The Lord smiles. He opens his mouth and says: Behold, I am going to hallucinate you all by doing a work that will be remembered forever: The son of Eve will be born of that Virgin”

Mary's Mother fell silent. She looked straight in the eyes of the souls of Joseph, and said:

"The Birth is already on, son. Tell me now, from among all women which woman will the Most High choose to be that blessed Virgin?"

For a moment Joseph the Carpenter thought he had heard all he had come looking for, but the idea his mother-in-law was putting on the table was so mind-boggling that he remained motionless.

What was the Widow telling him, that his Fiancée was in a state of grace by the work and grace of the Holy Spirit?

The Virgin's mother did not give him time to ponder too much.

"Put yourself on the case, son. God announces what will be the Sign in which He will demonstrate the Glory of His Son before all creation. From the womb of His parents He forms the couple who will carry in their arms the Child born of the Virgin. But now a problem must be overcome, a final obstacle must be overcome. Yes, my son, the pride of the male. Will you let the pride of the male blind your intelligence?".

Joseph finally understood his mother-in-law's argument.

"Are you telling me, mother, that it has happened?".

"Don't jump to conclusions, my son. Let me recapitulate the road we have traveled so far. Better, let us contemplate it from another angle. What did the Prophet say later, speaking about the Child born of the Virgin? : To us a Child is born, to us a Son is born, who has on His shoulders the Sovereignty, and He will be called Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father".

"What has been born, do you say, mother?". He interrupted her. For the first time Joseph the Carpenter moved, showing exhaustion of patience. The Virgin's mother resumed her attack before she lost her prey.

"Do not let the pride of the male blind your intelligence, son. For if God does not deceive or lie, and He fulfills all His promises, what shall we say? That the prophets of Israel were all liars and impostors? That in order to glorify themselves they wrote the Holy Scriptures with no other purpose than to recite poetry? You tell me. I await your answer".

Joseph the Carpenter followed the thread. He thought that seen in this light the Widow was absolutely right. Either Abraham's people were a nation of impostors with an infinite capacity to deceive themselves or, certainly, the Child not having been born, there had to be a Nativity. So far so good. What was already sticking in his throat was the conclusion that his wife's mother was putting in front of him. She was telling him that the Virgin was his Mary. She had not yet told him in these words, but it was clear that this whole speech had this final statement at last.

Clever as she was, inspired by faith, her mother-in-law cut off her thought. One would say that she was more than inspired she was divine. She was reading his thoughts faster than he was reading them to himself. Taking advantage of this, the mother of the Virgin came in full force.

“My daughter, your wife, is the Chosen One to conceive in her womb the Child who was to be born of that Virgin of whom the Prophet spoke to us. You, Joseph, are the Man”.

For a fleeting moment Joseph was about to stand up and close that unforgettable conversation with a “that's enough”. But he remained seated. His mother-in-law continued.

“Before you, son, God has opened two doors. These two doors will remain open before the generations that will follow us when you and I will be a memory in the heart of the centuries. One is that of faith, the other is that of unbelief. If you choose the latter, you will act like the one who challenged his God and upon discovering that the Virgin chosen to demonstrate His glory was his own wife, he rebelled against the One whom he himself challenged. But I know that you will not do that. My son, of the immaculate innocence of my daughter I am her witness before all. Her angel will lead you out of the darkness of the doubt that overwhelms you. Son, my heart tells me that you will choose the Door of Faith. And that you will run in search of the Mother of the Messiah for whom our people have been waiting for so many millennia”.

Inexplicably, on his deathbed, Joseph the Carpenter smiled. Is there a more beautiful death than that of God's creature who says goodbye to this world with a smile on his lips?

Well, by now all his nephews and nieces and his people thought that at any moment Joseph would close his eyes forever when Joseph sat up and begged them all to go out and leave him alone with his wife and son. Gone, the three of them alone, Joseph breathed and began to speak.

“Woman, my mouth has remained sealed to this day for reasons which you yourself will understand at the end of the things which nothing now prevents me from bringing to your knowledge and that of your Son.

“Son, what shall I say to my Lord? my soul is before my God. I am going to meet my Judge, before whom I will have to render an account of my life. But there is something you must know before I leave this world.

“Your Mother has already spoken to you of her great-great-grandfathers, Elizabeth and Zechariah, whom you did not know and to whom your Mother and I owe so much. Be patient with me in this last hour and remember my words on your Day.

“Where shall I begin, how shall I open the door for you to the knowledge of the men and women who laid their lives at the feet of their God so that your Light might dawn upon the darkness? If I have never made known to you the facts that I now unveil to you, it was with your good in mind. Do not blame me for having kept you out of the history of those men and women who lived their days on the razor's edge, their heads hanging by a thread all the days of their lives so that your Coming would be fulfilled. You will know, son, what you must do when your Eternal Father pronounces your Day open”.

CHAPTER TWO

“I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA”

“Behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this Book”. And I, John, heard and saw things. When I heard them and saw them, I fell down on my knees to prostrate myself at the feet of the angel who showed them to me.

But he said to me, “Do not do this, for I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book; worship God”. And he said unto me, “Seal not the speeches of the prophecy of this Book, for the time is at hand. Let him that is unjust continue in his unrighteousness, let him that is unjust continue in his unrighteousness, let him that is righteous continue in his righteousness, and let him that is holy sanctify himself more. Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according to his works. I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST, THE BEGINNING AND THE END. Blessed are those who wash their robes to have access to the tree of life and to enter the gates that give access to the City. Away with dogs, sorcerers, fornicators, murderers, idolaters and all those who love and practice lies.

I, Jesus, sent an angel to testify these things to you concerning the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star. And let the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him who hears say, Come; and let him who is thirsty come; and let him who desires take the water of life freely...Amen.”

1

The Saga of the Restorers

In those days (1st century B.C.) God raised up for his people a man to his liking. Of the lineage of Aaron, a priest, that man, Abijah by name, was the only citizen in all Jerusalem capable of standing before the king, cut him off, take away his speech, and throw to his face the forty truths that his actions and his way of governing was deserving.

The Hasmonean - Alexander Jannaeus was his real name - looked at this Abijah with eyes lost in the horizon, his thoughts fixed on one of the pages of the Book from which that man of God seemed to have escaped, possibly from the book of Nehemiah. One of those pages of kings and prophets that the children of Israel loved so much and their parents narrated to them with epic accents in their throats, the voice in the echo of distant drums playing warlike exploits, when the heroes of long ago, Samson and Delilah,

the thirty brave men of King David and his harp of goat's hair strings, Elijah the seer flying on the backs of the four horses of the Apocalypse, one of fire, one of ice, one of earth and the last of water, all four riding together through the wind of the centuries after the Messiah who was to be baptized in the same waters of the Jordan that split in two to make way for a bald prophet. The holocaust of lost nations under ashes of apocalypses written on the wall, the wars of the end of the world of dead poets, the endless stories of the dreams of eternal Rome, visions of druids on a Babylon in full construction of a stairway to heaven, Hercules given birth by a she-wolf with poisonous milk, ruins of cities of nameless and homeless Philistines in search of a paradise lost, the utopia of Egyptian harlots suckling Hebrews older than Methuselah, the hero of Ur the Dark proclaiming his divinity on the altar of the barbarians of the North, the South to the East of Eden, the West to the right of the river of life, when death had a price, at the beginning of time, at the dawn of the centuries. Once upon a time a cupbearer conquered an empire. Once upon a time there was a universal flood, an ark on the waters that covered the world. The passion of being, the fact of being, the ever-present, omnipresent, omniscient actuality of yesterday, more wars at the end of the world, more iron heroes, new masters of the universe, the future is tomorrow, the truth is held by the chosen one, the chosen one is the victor, to me those of Yahweh, I have the corner of your mantle strung on the point of my sword, king, lord. It takes more than a crown to be king, more than three arms to be the strongest, the past was yesterday, today is tomorrow, angels never drink or eat but sometimes they mate with human females and give birth to evil fury, the seed of the devil, when heroes were demigods and demigods were two-headed monsters imposing their law of terror. And it continues to bring names, and times to mind.

Ah, those myths and legends of the people who came out of the sea, scattered through biblical Palestine and revolutionized the history of the world with their earthquake of tribes on a sacred mission!

What child in Jerusalem did not know those stories of the times of who knows when!

“Goliath is coming”, the grandparents used to tell the children when they were bad and wanted to scare them.

The Hasmonean King of Jerusalem mocked those children's stories and laughed to death in the face of those ghosts of the past. He, Alexander, the king, was real; his prophet Abijah was real. What good had the dream of the messianic kingdom been to anyone? Where had the desire to make a messianic kingdom lead them time and again?

“And they still want to try one more time! Madmen”, thought the Hasmonean to himself.

The men of the king of Jerusalem, all dogs of war, all soldiers of fortune from deep, dark Palestine in the service of the Abomination of Desolation, all looked at the last Hebrew prophet with eyes pierced with rage. Even if Hasmoneus was amused by his personal prophet of misfortunes, the truth is that his face changed every time Abijah launched his oracles point-blank at him. However, in his role of king for a prophet the Hasmonean stopped the rage of his men and left his ears be rinsed with those so apocalyptic phrases about his fate.

“Listen to the oracle of Yahweh about your lineage, son of Mattathias”, with that voice so much his own, Abijah announced to him.

“The God whom you profane on the throne and in his Temple will uproot your seed from the face of the earth over which you reign. The LORD has spoken and will not repent; he will not abolish his sentence: your children will be devoured by a foreign beast”.

To the hired assassins of the Hasmonean cursed the grace that the king of Jerusalem found in such announcements of deaths, desolations, ruins, devastations, destructions, hells. But how could he, Alexander Jannaeus, a legitimate descendant of the Maccabees, of pure race, allow himself to be spoken to in such a way by a priest? those dogs of war asked each other.

Alexander looked at them with an astonished face: was it worth wasting his time trying to explain to them why he would let his ears be washed with such lurid sentences, so biblical, so typically testamentary, so clearly sacred? One moment he thought about it, but the next he told himself, no. They would never understand.

Even if he stopped for days on end to explain to them what it was all about, the brains of his mercenaries would never be able to rise higher than the distance his swords were from the ground.

Was the world to waste time waiting for the donkeys to fly in the wake of the chariot of the sun, or for the fish to fly through the snowy mountains in search of the last yeti, or for the birds to swim the waters behind the ship of an unborn Columbus? How could the Hasmonean get it into the heads of his dogs of fortune that Abijah was his prophet!

Abijah was the prophet who gave all the divine meaning to his crown. Without his particular, personal, his own prophet, his crown would never transcend, his dignity of king would never be sublimated in the eyes of the future. Abijah would be the chariot of glory on which his name would transcend the centuries and carry his memory beyond the millennia. It might be that his name would be forgotten, but that of Abijah would live forever in the memory of the people.

“Do you understand, now, does it enter your heads? My name and his name will be associated in eternity. But if I kill him, I will kill my memory. Does this prospect tell you anything about the nature of my relationship with the creator of your most terrible nightmares?” the Hasmonean tried his best to put some intelligence into the stone skulls of his dogs of war.

All for nothing.

But it was the truth. Alexander should congratulate himself because God had been given his own prophet. All the kings of Judah had their jester, their harem, and, of course, their prophet. For better or for worse is another matter; the important thing was to have one.

Otherwise, from the point of view of politics, this Abijah was harmless. Yes, his prophet was as harmless as a dragonfly in the royal pond, as harmless as a spider in the garden of his harem swaying in the dust of the curtains, as helpless as a sparrow abandoned with a broken wing in the open air of a boreal winter. One slip of the tongue, one false step, and in the blink of an eye “the last prophet” would be turned into the trace that the breath of dawn left somewhere on the other side of the horizon. Or did his mercenary dogs believe that he, Alexander Jannaeus, the son of the sons of the

Maccabees, would allow this Abijah to cross the line between announcing misfortunes and provoking them? Were they right in the head?

These were his people. The Hasmonean did not love them, nor did he feel any nationalistic passion for his people, but they were his people, and he knew how their minds worked. If Abijah did not cross the line it was not because he was afraid of death; it was because it was not in his nature to provoke what he announced, he limited himself to give the Oracle of Yahweh. His God said and he spoke. He could keep silent and not expose himself to a sword cutting his neck with a slash, but that would be against his nature.

Moreover, with the same passion that Abijah served his head on a silver platter without fear of any kind that one day the Hasmonean would get tired of the dance, with the same passion his prophet, not the prophet of that king, or of king so and so, his prophet, his own, that Abijah lashed out without cutting a hair of his tongue against Sadducees and Pharisees together for adding fuel to the fire of hatred that consumed them all and dragged them to civil war.

“This Abijah is unique” he said. And the Hasmonean went on his way laughing his head off.

2

The Slaughter of the Six Thousand

Curiously enough, the people thought the same as their king about the sacred mission of the last living prophet who remained to them.

The people rushed to meet the priest Abijah, filled the Temple during his turn. Just as if they were a swarm of children abandoned to their fate in the most violent core of a jungle of passions fed by a hatred that is never satisfied, and suddenly they saw a real man rise among them, the people of Jerusalem ran to meet Abijah in search of understanding, comprehension and hope.

“Weep not, ye children of Jerusalem, for the souls that are driven from their homes by violence. In Abraham's bosom they rest waiting for the day of Judgment. Weep rather for those who remain because their destiny is eternal fire” Abijah said to them.

The man of God and the People were made for each other. It was the truth. And he, the Hasmonean, was made to cut off heads and then hear the sentence of his prophet over his own:

“The Lord, the Oracle of Yahweh, has spoken, and he will not repent. The eagle beholds the serpent from on high, and the vulture glides, waiting for the spoil. Who is he the one who labors for another's house? In due time it will be seen that there is God on this earth when the serpent flees from the eagle”.

And this too was true. A truth as big as the island of Crete, as the Great Sea, as the infinite sky full of stars, as the great pyramid of the Nile. And if not, let them ask the

mountain that the Hasmonean raised with the heads that he tore from their necks that day to forget.

There were not two or three, not one hundred or two hundred. It was “six thousand” heads that the grandson of the Maccabees sacrificed to his passion for absolute power. Six thousand souls in a single day, what horror, what madness, what humiliation!

It happened in Jerusalem the Holy, that Jerusalem to whose walls directed their prayers all the Jews of the world. It did not happen in the city of a barbarian king, nor did it happen in the midst of the battlefield during the finishing of the fallen. Nor were the heads of a strange people who ran downhill Via Dolorosa up to finish at the foot of Golgotha. It was the heads of his neighbors, the heads of the people who greeted him every night, the heads of the people who used to say good morning to him. What a disaster, what a shame, what a tragedy!

It happened during the celebration of a religious feast. One of the many that the Temple calendar had consecrated to the memory of the unforgettable events lived by the children of Israel from Moses to the going day. It happened that the Hasmonean inherited from his fathers the high priesthood. As High Pontiff, he went to celebrate the opening rite that broke the monotony of the year. That detail of believing himself equal to Caesar, general and maximum pontiff in a whole, bothered the nationalists more than anything else in the world. When was a snake ever seen dreaming of being an eagle?

In his role as Pope of the Jews, to the Temple went the Hasmonean to declare open the festivities that used to break the monotony of the year. He sat on his high priestly throne, all involved in his role as His Holiness on Earth. He was about to give his blessing *urbe et orbis* when, suddenly, without warning, moved by an inexplicable change of mood, the People began to throw him in the face rotten tomatoes, fetid worms, potatoes churned in wormy mud, lemons from when the dinosaurs inhabited holy ground. A scandal! His enemies watched the show from the walls. With their eyes they asked themselves everything: What will the Hasmonean do? Will he get inside and let the ball run? Or will he come out, enraged with the anger of a demigod taken out of his seventh dream, the triumphalist?

By the beard of Moses, if the Hasmonean had let them go on, surely the Jerusalemites would have turned the party into a contest, and they would have gambled their souls for being the first to throw the killing stone. No wonder, the Hasmonean drew his sword from under the armpit of the saints and gave the order to his dogs of war: “Kill’ em all. Let not one alive!”

What was seen then had never been seen before in the history of the Jews. Never before had an army of macabre demons been seen leaving the Temple, sword in hand, slaughtering without regard to age or sex.

If the Lord God had his throne in the Temple of Jerusalem, then at whose orders were those murderous monsters cutting down lives without looking at whom?

Was it not rather the Devil who had his throne in the Jerusalem of the Hasmoneans, inconsolable relatives of the dead would later ask themselves as they accompanied their dead to the Jewish Cemetery, Via Dolorosa below.

On that day of feast and joy the dogs of the Hasmonean scattered through the streets and, as they found heads on two legs, they slit their throats, pierced, mutilated, beheaded, cut them to pieces, for fun, for sport, for passion, for devotion to the Devil.

This one, the Devil, seated on his throne, the Devil contemplated that orgy of blood and terror, and seized by the anguish of one who knows that the earthly day has only 24 hours, he lamented how fast two dozen sixty minutes pass. If he had had at his disposal a dozen more, he would surely not have left a single Jew alive. The Devil's will be clear, to kill them all; but his servant's power to execute it did not go that far. So lord and servant had to settle for the figure of six thousand heads. Which was not so bad for a single day. After all, the meanest devil working on a piecework would not have exceeded that figure by much. Six thousand dead in one day is good enough, a god harvest for that matter.

Flavius Josephus, the official historian of the Jews, in his day accused by Christian historians of falsehood, aimed high in giving Six Thousand dead in one day. The question is, did Flavius Josephus reduce the number of victims to its minimum possible expression looking to soften in the eyes of the Romans the extent of the tragedy? Or, on the contrary, did he, moved by his policy of hatred towards the Hasmonean dynasty, exaggerate the number?

As everyone knows, among the Jews the popularity of the Hasmoneans fell very low in later times, to the point of being considered by the generations that succeeded them a cursed period, a black mark in the history of the chosen people. Surely Flavius Josephus was of the latter opinion and especially critical of the Hasmonean dynasts, especially with the government of Alexander I Jannaeus, he inflated the nature of their crimes with the aim of conveying to his countrymen his particular hatred. Or it could have been the opposite and deflated the account thinking of the visceral repulsion towards the Jews that his Roman readers would feel reading the story of that slaughter. Let us return, however, to the facts.

From the point of view of the Hasmonean it would have been nice if there had been no one left to tell the story. But since the dead do not speak, the fame of that day would not have found a place in the national memory, and tomorrow no one would have remembered his glorious deed.

Unfortunately for the wicked, the Devil praises his glory more than his infernal glory deserves; consequently, his servants always end up frustrated and trapped in the webs of a spider that, without being all-powerful, is strong enough to engulf them all in his maneuvers. The natural thing would be for a prince of Hell to sit and contemplate his work from the epicenter of the glory of the one who is beyond good and evil; fortunately, the Devil's horns twist downward, and naturally end up sticking the devil himself in the back. Ignorant of their fate, sooner or later their worshippers screw up, and of course, they stink like that.

In short, even if the will of the Devil was the total extermination of the Jews, man!, I say that some of them had to be left. And as it seems that the next day Jerusalem got tired of crying, I'm not lying when I say that some of them did remain.

Then, thinking it over with more clarity and time, the Hasmonean could not find the way out of the labyrinth in which his anger had gotten him. It all happened so fast, if only he had smelled the stew that was cooking behind him! In any case, he showed no

sign of regret either. On the contrary. "You see, it's a wonder how long it takes a puppy of the human species to grow up and how little time it takes to bleed to death!" he said to himself.

The Hasmonean never tired of marveling. Later, during the mass burial of the unfortunate Jerusalemites who were caught in the nets of his insane madness, the Hasmonean kept shaking his head. Nobody knew if it was out of pity or because he was missing one or another dead person.

I believe that the Hasmonean was doing his killing with the mind of the scientist in the middle of experimenting with a new formula. "If I kill two hundred, what will happen? What if I subtract one and add thirty-something?" A monster! His love for research had no limit. Now he would fry a bunch of children made in Phariseoland, now he would devour a plate of virgins in their sauce. But without being carried away by passion, all very correct, very scrupulously, with the cold and steely objectivity of an Aristotle teaching Metaphysics in the open air.

Who said that men cannot become demons if we know that some became angels!

They called him the Hasmonean - his nickname for posterity - in memory of a namesake from hell, a devil from the court of the prince of darkness. Just like his evil namesake, Alexander Jannaeus felt for the throne a murderous love that devoured his entrails and transformed his blood into fire.

The Hasmonean had fire instead of blood in his veins. The fire in his eyes came out of his criminal thoughts. Whoever dared to look at the Hasmonean saw the Devil behind the balls of his eyes, dominating his brain and from his brain scheming all kinds of evil against Jerusalem, against the Jews, against the Gentiles, against the whole world. And the most tragic thing was that the Hasmonean did not believe in anything.

"If God does exist, how can the Devil live?" the supreme pontiff of the Hebrews confessed to his men. An atheist pope! That Caesar was supreme pontiff and a pagan, atheist and all the other paraphernalia, is admissible. But that the Pontiff of the Jews was more atheistic than Caesar, how do you swallow this ball?

The truth is that on that occasion the Hasmonean was almost on the verge of being massacred. At the end he thought better of it and said to himself "but what a fool I am, a little more and I really believe that I am the Holy Father".

The truth, if the whole truth must be told, the truth is that the popular mood went rising at such a speed from the healthiest joy to the most absolute dementia that nothing could be done to stop it. So how to blame the Hasmonean for having fought for his life and defended himself by taking the sacred right of self-defense to the extreme?

And how to absolve him of having provoked with his crimes such a tremendous situation?

It is not easy to find the guilty party, the scapegoat to blame for that monstrous slaughter. What the Hasmonean was not going to do was to blame himself. He was not fool.

"Let the stones of the Wailing Wall tremble", he said to himself. "That the raging blood sails Jerusalem down to the Garden of Olives, let it sail. That the wind carries in

broken cheeks an elegy for Jerusalem that will tear the soul to Alexandria of the Nile, to Sardis, to Memphis, to Seleucia of the Tigris and even to Rome itself, let it carry it. What worries me is when life will grant me the grace to finish off the cowards who fled like rats. If they loved their loving so much, since they mourn them so much, why did they abandon them to slaughter?", in this way the Hasmonean excused his crime.

The sicarii of the Hasmonean laughed openly. The Jews on the other hand did not know how to restrain their cry for vengeance. If before they could not bear the Hasmonean, who tore away their daughters without giving them money in exchange, and took them and sold them at his will, invoking Solomon traditions, all of them holy; if they could no longer bear him when he killed their children for merely trying to peel back their lips to protest his deaf crimes; after the Slaughter of the Six Thousand in one day hatred gave hand to madness and the declaration of war without quarter against the Hasmonean was heard from one end of the world to the other.

"The Hasmonean must die", demanded Alexandria of the Nile.

"Death to the Hasmonean", repeated Seleucia on the Tigris.

"The Hasmonean shall die", swore Antioch of Syria.

"Amen" answered Jerusalem the Holy.

3

The Magi of the East

The Hatred to the Hasmonean was transmitted from synagogue to synagogue. One synagogue passed the slogan to the other, and in less time than the Hasmonean would have liked, the whole world of the Jews was aware of his exploits.

"Light indeed are the wings of Mercury, your highness", came Alexander's dogs of war with the news, throwing logs to the fire of his worries.

For the comfort of fools, tears of crocodiles, said the proverb.

The fact is that the hatred of the Jerusalemites against the Hasmonean flew with light wings from one corner of the Jewish world to the other. Of course, the news also reached the mother synagogue, the Great Synagogue of the East, the oldest synagogue in the roman world.

Although founded by the prophet Daniel in the Babylon of all times, the Babylon of legends, the classical Babylon of the ancients, with the change of times and the transformations of the world the Great Synagogue of the East changed its location. At the present time the Magi of Nebuchadnezzar had moved to the capital of an emperor who did not know the glory of the Chaldeans nor was he interested in the ghosts of Akkad, Ur, Lagash, Umma and other eternal cities of the Age of Heroes and Gods, when creatures from other worlds found human females beautiful and against divine prohibition crossed

their blood with them, committing against the laws of Creation unforgettable sin, a crime punishable by banishment from the entire cosmos.

Alexander the Great, as you all know, overthrew that Babylon of Legends. His successor on the throne of Asia, Seleucus "the invincible", must have thought it was not worth rebuilding its walls, and in its place an entirely new city was built. Following the fashion of the time he called it "Seleucia"; and "of the Tigris" for being on the banks of the river of the same name.

Forced by the new king of kings the inhabitants of Old Babylon changed their domicile and came to populate the New Babylon. Willingly or by force of decree is the dilemma. But knowing the structure of that world one can afford the luxury of believing that the change of domicile was made without any protests other than those who were denied permission to reside. In building Seleucia on the Tigris its founder removed from his City the Persian elements not purged by Alexander the Great. A measure that, as you will understand, benefited the Jewish families that in the shadow of the Persian aristocracy directed the trade between the Far East and the Empire. Protected by the Achaemenids and experts in all the functions of government, the Jews reached an important social position in the Persian Empire, to the point of arousing the envy of a sector of the aristocracy. The Bible tells us how the plot of this sector against the Jews gave birth to the first final solution, miraculously aborted by the ascension to the throne of Queen Esther. This trance overcome nature took its course. The descendants of the generation of Queen Esther devoted themselves to trade, and eventually became the true intermediaries between East and West.

When Alexander overthrew Babylon, the Jewish families were freed from subjection to the Achaemenid master. Alexander was succeeded in the government of Asia by his general Seleucus the Invincible. With the change of master the situation of the Jews improved. The only thing that Seleucus demanded of the residents of Seleucia on the Tigris was that they should devote themselves to business and not get involved in politics.

With the Persian competition eliminated, alone at the forefront of trade between East and West, at the height of the century in which we find ourselves, First Century before Christ's Birth, the Hebrew families that had survived the transformations of the two centuries gone became enormously wealthy.

Let us not forget that the mines of King Solomon had their source in the control of trade between East and West. Towards this area the Freedmen of Cyrus directed their talents. All the more so since the reconstruction of Jerusalem and the peaceful purchase of the lost land would have cost them mountains of silver. As we all know, the tithe due by every Hebrew to the Temple was a sacred duty. When the Temple disappeared, the tithe ceased to have any meaning. But when it was rebuilt and came into operation once again, the need to bring the Universal Tithe to Jerusalem demanded the birth of a collection branch, the Synagogue.

The Great Synagogue of the East, directed by the Magi of Babylon, was created to be the central bank from where the tithe of all the dependent synagogues of the Persian Empire would be channeled to Jerusalem. The better off all the synagogues were, the more the river of gold, either in metal or in spices - gold, frankincense and myrrh - would flow into the Temple.

Universal peace was of Jewish interest insofar as it guaranteed communications between all parts of the empire. The years of the Greek conquest and the subsequent decades of civil war between Alexander's generals was an obstacle that stopped the influx of gold and spices that every year used to bring the Magi to Jerusalem. However, in what was tragic for the Temple, the closing of that golden supply was rewarded to Jerusalem when Alexandria of the Nile became an imperial city, from its Synagogue a new tributary of sacred capital was born. That is to say, whatever happened the Temple always won; and whatever political changes occurred the Magi from the East always arrived in the Holy City with their cargo of "gold, frankincense and myrrh".

In the Maccabees days, in the Jewish community of Seleucia of the Tigris the news of the war of independence of the Maccabees raised a spontaneous prophetic clamor. From afar, the Great Synagogue of the East had been waiting for centuries for this sign. At last the Day announced by the angel to the prophet Daniel had arrived. Three centuries had been spent waiting for this moment, three centuries had been diluted on the other side of the ortho of time, three long, infinite centuries, waiting for this Hour of National Liberation. Daniel's prophecy had hung over the horizon of the Synagogue of the Magi of the East like a mad sword about to go into battle.

"The vision of evenings and mornings is true" he said, "keep it in your heart for it is for a long time".

"The ram with the two horns which thou sawest is the king of Greece, and the great horn between his eyes is his king: when he is broken, four horns shall come forth in his place. And the four horns shall be four kingdoms, but not as strong as that one".

Was not the prophecy fulfilled when Alexander the Great horned the king of Persia and Media and perfected when at his death his generals divided the empire, resulting from the war of the Diadocus the formation of four kingdoms?

The prophecy of the conquest of the empire of the Persian by the Hellenist fulfilled, the enthusiasm that awoke among the young men of the New Babylon the Maccabean Uprising was as intense in passion as great was in the leaders of their Synagogue the desire to be young again, to take up the sword and follow to the victory the champion that God had raised them.

Also in Alexandria of the Nile, in Sardis, in Miletus, in Athens and in Regio Calabria, wherever a synagogue took root and prospered, wherever the young men enlisted their elders equipped them for glory.

Long live Israel! With this proclamation the brave men responded to the Maccabeess battle cry: "To me those of Yahweh".

The final victory of the Maccabees, however prophetically announced to them from the beginning, did not cease to be celebrated by the Jews as if no one had ever advanced them. The Maccabean brothers fell, as everyone knows, but their deeds were written in the Book of books so that their names would remain forever in the memory of the centuries.

Sadducee Party versus Pharisee Syndicate

The exaltation for the conquered Independence raised the morale of the people. The cry of victory that the War of the Maccabees engendered in the Jewish world raised in the people: Hope.

What happened next was not expected by anyone. The satisfaction of living Freedom still sweetened their souls. It can be said that they were enjoying the intoxication of the sweet wine of freedom when, just around the corner, and starting down the straight line to the Messianic Kingdom the old ghost of Cain's fratricide awoke from its lethargy.

Did it come suddenly, or maybe not? How to affirm it? How to deny it? Did they see it coming, did they not see it coming? What were they thinking when they looked back? Did they never learn? Wouldn't those who propitiated from within the final solution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes break the peace again, sowing in the day of freedom the tares of violent passions for the control of the Temple Treasures?

Was it not the Sadducees, the priestly party, who pushed Antiochus IV Epiphanes to decree the final solution against Judaism? The Bible says yes. It gives names, details. High priests who kill their brothers, fathers who murder their children in the name of the Temple.

Also later, when the criminal hordes of Antiochus the Fourth came around to harvest heads of the jews, the Sadducees were the first to abandon the religion of their fathers. They chose life, deserted the God of their fathers, sacrificed to the Greek gods. Cowards, they surrendered to Death, bent their knees, sold themselves to the world, and what is worse, sold their own people.

It is therefore logical that when the Maccabean War broke out, the Pharisees, the syndicate of the doctors of the Law, and directors of the national and foreign synagogues, took the reins of the National Liberation Movement, surrounded the Maccabee with the glory of the general that the Lord had raised up for them, and launched themselves to victory with the confidence of the one who is proclaimed victor from the first day of his uprising.

C'est la vie! Once the history of the Maccabees was written, the history of envy began to be written. The old ghosts of the struggle between the Sadducee party and the Pharisee syndicate threatened another storm. The wind began to stir. The rain would not be long in coming.

Did the Aaronite clergy ask forgiveness for the sins committed during the Seleucid domination?

The Aaronite clergy did not ask for public forgiveness for their sins. The Sadducees did not bow their heads, they did not accept their faults. The Temple belonged to them by divine right.

Not God, they were the owners of the Treasures of the Temple. On the contrary, wouldn't the Pharisees taking control of the Temple mean a rebellion of the servants against their masters?

Of course, it would. From the point of view of the Sadducean party any movement of the union of the doctors of the Law against their priest masters would be taken as a declaration of civil war.

Amazing thing is the human being! As soon had the Nation broken its chains their leaders began to sharpen their nails. How long would it take for the ultimatum to come?

Truth be told, the ultimatum did not take long to make its fratricidal proclamation heard. "Either power was returned to them", the Sadducees threatened, "or they would crown a king in Jerusalem".

There was hair-pulling, head-scratching, torn robes, showers of ashes, threats giving birth to ghosts, spears that broke on their own, battle-axes that were lost and found as if by chance. Sadducees and Pharisees were about to kill each other in the name of God!

Who would stop them, who would stop their feet?

The threat of civil war hung in the atmosphere of Jerusalem for the duration of John Hyrcanus I's rule. God forbade the Jews to give themselves a king outside the House of David. The Sadducees not only thought of a son of the Maccabees as king but went from thought to deed.

The Pharisees hallucinated. When they discovered the masterful move to check the Law that the Sadducees were thinking of, the Pharisees cried out.

"Are we a nation without brains?" their wise men asked publicly. "Why do we fall again and again into the same trap? What is wrong with us? What is the nature of our condemnation for the sin of our father Adam? Every time the Lord gives us life we run to the fruit of the forbidden tree. Now Cain wants to challenge God to stop him from killing his brother Abel, and we are going to allow the shepherds to throw the flock into the ravine of their passions? If a son of the Maccabees reigns, we betray God. Brethren, we have been put beyond the dilemma. Rather die fighting for the truth than living on our knees worshipping the Prince of Darkness".

Many words were exchanged. It was clear from a full moon night that civil war would break the peace at dawn. As much as Abel loved his brother Cain, Cain's madness in challenging God forced Abel to defend himself.

Times had changed. The first Abel fell without exercising his right to self-defense because he was born naked, he lived naked in front of his parents and his brother. He never raised his hand to anyone. Peace was his problem. All Abel was peace, how could he imagine the existence of a dark heart fed with darkness right in his own brother's chest! Abel's innocence was his tragedy.

And his glory in the eyes of God.

Cain did not think with his head, he thought with his muscles. The man believed that the strength of the intelligence and the strength of the muscles exist subject to some mysterious law of correspondence. He who has the strongest arm is the wisest. The strongest is the king of the jungle. Consequently, the fate of the weak is to serve the strongest or perish.

Like Cain, the Sadducees fell into the trap of their personal ambitions. Civil war for power was bound to break out sooner or later. Perhaps sooner rather than later. It was the same thing. Nor could anyone predict the when, the exact date. The thing is that civil war was brewing in the air. The atmosphere was being charged. It was something you could smell in the air. One day, one day... But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

The people were still celebrating the victory against the Seleucid Empire when suddenly word of the abominable crime committed by the son of John Hyrcanus I spread. Not content with the High Priesthood, which the nation accepted against their own conscience, but kept silent thinking of the circumstances, the son of John Hyrcanus I girded himself with the crown.

With his coronation the Hasmoneans added to a bad crime, against nature, another even worse. At the head of such a violation of the sacred laws were the Sadducees. The Sadducee Party -let us remember its origins- was a spontaneous creation of the priestly caste. It was created to defend their class interests. The interests of the priestly clans had to do with the control of the Temple Treasury. With the passage of time changes in the Hierarchy of the Temple were engendering powerful clans, whose relatives were joining by inertia to the Sanhedrin, a kind of Roman Senate in the style of the most Solomonic traditions. The struggle between these clans for control of the Temple's Treasure was the machine that led the Jews to the situation of final solution adopted by Antiochus IV, final solution that so much innocent blood poured into the chalice of evil ambition of the fathers of these same Sadducees who now crowned against the Law of God the son of Hyrcanus I as king of Jerusalem.

Indirect creators of the final anti-Jewish solution, the Sadducees lost the reins of the Temple all the years that lasted the deeds of the Maccabees. Judas the Maccabee expelled them from the Temple. It is logical that in the eyes of the Sadducees, the Maccabees were dictators!

The Pharisee Syndicate - let us enter a little in the opposition - came from the bases in charge of the collection of the Tithe. The Syndicate was the apparatus used by the Party to keep flowing from all over the world to the Temple coffers that river of gold at the origin of the fratricidal struggle between the different priestly clans. Officials at the service of the Aaronite clergy, the Pharisees lived from the collection of the Tithe and the offerings for the sins committed by individuals.

When the Sadducees began to kill each other for the control of the Hen of the Golden Eggs, the Pharisees assumed the direction of the events and used the offerings of the people to equip the young volunteers who came running from all over the world to fight at the orders of the Maccabees. So by the end of the War of Independence the tables had turned and it was the Pharisee Syndicate that was in command of the situation.

The Sadducee Party, understandably, was not to suffer this change for long. The Sadducee Party's counter-offensive was neither elegant nor brilliant, but it was effective. All that had to be done it was to get into the skin of the Serpent and tempt the Hasmoneans with the forbidden fruit of David's crown.

That internal battle between the Party and the Syndicate for control of the Temple raised in the Hebrew vanguardist world a spontaneous clamor of indignation and anger. It was then when the same resources in their day put to the service of the Independence jumped to the scene ready to dethrone the usurper.

Between Pharisees and Sadducees they were turning the nation into an abominable sight in the eyes of the Lord.

It was urgent to do something, it was urgent to declare war on the private interests of the Party and the Syndicate, to restore the national status according to the model described in the Scriptures.

It was urgent.

So many things were urgent.

And nothing was urgent.

According to the most eminent sages of the most elegant schools of Alexandria of the Nile, of Athens and of the New Babylon - Seleucia of the Tigris, all the Jews of the world had the holy obligation to take the reign of the Hasmoneans as a transitional government between Independence and the Davidic Monarchy.

No sir, to the fragility of the newly conquered Independence it did not suit to catch the flu of civil war. For the sake of strengthening the reconquered Liberty all synagogues had to stand together and support the king of Jerusalem. According to the progress of events, the necessary steps would be taken to move in the direction of the transfer of the crown from one house to the other.

“The wise men, always wise! They think they know everything, and in the end, they know nothing” the new generations began to answer themselves. The indignation of the new generations at the accepted situation took a long time to come to the fore. But it ended up doing so in the wake of the Six Thousand Massacre.

5

Simeon the Righteous

“The Presentation in the Temple”: When the days of purification according to the Law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the Law of the Lord that every firstborn male should be consecrated to the Lord, and to offer in sacrifice, as prescribed in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Now there was in Jerusalem a man named Simeon, a righteous and devout man, who was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was in him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord’s Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he came to the Temple, and when the parents came in with the child Jesus to fulfill what the Law prescribes about Him, Simeon took Him in his arms and, blessing God, said: Now, Lord, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to enlighten the nations and the glory of your people Israel.

Simeon - our next protagonist - was descended from one of those families who survived the sack of Jerusalem and managed to make progress by planting their

vineyards in Babylon. This was a truth that Simeon could prove whenever and wherever he was called upon to do so.

Although it does not sound perfect or good to say so, because it brings to mind laws that invoke sad and nefarious events, Simeon was a full-blooded Hebrew. In front of the most expert and qualified authorities of his people when they wanted him to, and if it was a question of curious gentiles entering the subject in order to embarrass the lovers of pedigree, stale lineages and all that, the same thing; when they wanted him to and on the table that they put him, Simeon the Babylonian was ready to put the genealogical document of his parents, which was like a direct ship to the roots of the tree under whose branches Adam conquered Eve.

His fathers knew the Babylonian captivity, also the fall of the Chaldean empire; they greeted the coming of the Persian empire; they lived through the Greek revolution. Of course, the dominion of the Seleucids. With the passage of time the house of Simeon grew, became a powerful House among the Jews and rich before the Gentiles. Under normal conditions Simeon would inherit his father's business, visit the Holy City sometime in his life, be happy among his own and strive all his life to be a good believer before men and God. Heir to one of the wealthiest bankers of Seleucia on the Tigris, everything was arranged so that when Simeon died he would be mourned by mourners without number. After his death, when the kingdom of Israel would be proclaimed by the son of David, his descendants would dig up his bones and bury them in the Holy Land.

This chronicle should have been the summary of the existence of Simeon the Babylonian. But the usurpation of the sons of the Maccabees erased from the book of his life all that perfect happiness. Such beautiful plans had not been made for him. To sit and wait to see how events would unfold before taking definitive action, in case the Lord was using the reign of the Hasmoneans as a transition period between the Maccabees and the Messianic kingdom, as advised by the leaders of the synagogue of Seleucia on the Tigris, was not for him. Simeon had already been listening to that nonsense for too long. And after the Slaughter of the Six Thousand, he did not even want to hear such words of prudence.

The overthrow of the Hasmonean was no longer something that could be postponed for tomorrow, or for the day after tomorrow, or even for the afternoon of that same day. The Hasmonean had to die, now. Every day Alexander was still alive was an offense. Every night he went to bed, the Nation was one step closer to its destruction! The Hasmonean had broken all the rules.

First: His family had been chosen and received the high priesthood overruling traditions and hereditary rites. A foreigner, not the full council of the saints had given him supreme authority.

The sentence against such usurpation of sacred functions was capital punishment.

Second: Against the traditions which forbade the high priest to wield the sword Hasmoneus had placed himself at the head of the armies.

The penalty against this crime was another capital punishment.

Third: Against the strongest canonical traditions Hasmoneus had not only trampled on the monogamy that regulated the life of the high priest, but also, like Solomon revived, he cultivated his own harem of girls.

The penalty against this crime was more capital punishment.

And Fourth: Against the divine law that forbade access to the throne of Jerusalem to any member not of the House of David, the Hasmonean, by doing so, was dragging the whole nation to suicide.

For all these reasons the Hasmonean had to die, no matter what the cost or the means to be employed.

These arguments of Simeon finally convinced the chiefs of the synagogue of Seleucia on Tigris of the urgent need that the orb had to put an end to the Hasmonean dynasty. With this sacred mission Simeon the Babylonian left the house of his fathers and came to Jerusalem.

Rich and bearer of the Tithe of the Synagogue of the Magi of the East, his policy of friendship with the Hasmonean crown, in need of financial support to expand the military reconquest of the kingdom, this spearhead which would win to Simeon the Babylonian the friendship of his enemy, it would win him at the same time the distrust of those among whom he should rise as the invisible hand pulling the pro-Davidic strings. A double game that would keep him walking on a rope in the abyss from the day of his arrival until the day of victory.

While putting all his power to preserve the balance of his head on his neck, Simeon the Babylonian had to keep his revolution within the strict limits of home affairs. The Egypt of the Ptolemies was lying in wait for the weakening of Jerusalem, and a Jewish civil war would serve as an opportunity to invade and plunder the country.

On the other side of the Tigris River were the Parthians. Always threatening, always eager to break the border and annex the lands west of the Euphrates.

Although agonizing to the north, the Hellenes awaited revenge and did not lose the fight to, taking advantage of a Roman civil war, reconquer the lost Palestine.

In short, the need to cleanse Jerusalem of the desolating abomination could not endanger the freedom conquered by the fathers of the Hasmoneans.

6

History of the Hasmoneans

Aristobulus I “the Mad”

After the death of John Hyrcanus I, son of Simon, the last of the Maccabees, his son Aristobulus I succeeded him in the government of Judea. In this chapter the memory of the Israeli people is lost in the labyrinth of their own phobias and fears of the truth.

According to some the son of John Hyrcanus I did not undertake the assault on the crown. He simply inherited it from his father.

According to the official position, the abomination that sentenced the ruin was committed against the father by a son who had to overcome the bitter opposition of his mother and his own brothers. In short, there is nothing clear, except the need to go to meet reality by running along the trail of facts. Personally I ignore to what extent these facts are basic to determine the guilt of the father in discharge of the son's acquittal.

Whether Aristobulus I crowned himself king against his father's will or whether he merely legitimized a covert monarchical situation, we will never know with absolute certainty, at least until the day of reckoning.

The fact is that Aristobulus I opened the glorious chronicle of his reign by surprising strangers and acquaintances with the imprisonment for life of his brothers. Motives, reasons, causes, excuses? Well, here we enter into the eternal dilemma regarding what the actors of History did and what they would have liked to be written. Shall we enter into discussion or leave it for another day? I mean, what stronger motive is there to achieve Power than the passion for Power? Absolute power, total power! The freedom of the one who is beyond Good and Evil! the glory of the one who rises above the Laws because he is the Law! Life in one fist, Death in the other, on your knees you people! To be like a god. To be a god! The cursed temptation, the pulp of the forbidden fruit, to be like a god, far from the eye of justice, beyond the long arm of the law. Was not the Devil cunning? That passion, to be like a god, had discovered his viral, poisonous nature, when he transformed an angel into that Serpent mother of all demons. "Very well then", Aristobulus answered himself, "I will generously spread my poison throughout the earth, beginning with my house".

Horror, disillusionment, take me away from the Demon's dreams. Awaken me, heavens, beauty, in some corner of Paradise.

What madness is it that drags the mud to believe itself stronger than the deluge? Does the snail dream to be faster than the jaguar? Does the moon challenge the sun to see who shines more? Does the lion despise the crown of the jungle? Does the crocodile complain about the size of its mouth? Does the fierce creature envy the siren her song? Does the eagle envy the elephant of the plains? Does the phosphorescent fish rise from the oceanic abysses to claim moonlight from the sun? Who offers spring petals to the boreal cold? Who seeks the fountain of eternal youth to write on its banks: Foolish is he who drinks?

The non-negotiable fact is that Aristobulus I ascended the throne left vacant by the death of his father. And the first thing he did was to throw his brothers into the coldest dungeon of the gloomiest prison in Jerusalem. Unsatisfied, still not content with such an unnatural crime, Aristobulus "the mad" finished the job by sending his mother to his brothers.

No one ever knew why he let his mother's youngest son go free. The fact is that the same thing that surprised everyone by sentencing his brothers to life imprisonment surprised everyone again by letting one of them go free. It seems that he let the youngest of his siblings live. Not for long, however. Soon madness took over his brain and he overcame himself by strangling him with his bare hands. All these crimes committed, the

mad king dressed himself as high pontiff and went off to worship as if Jerusalem had rejected Yahweh for God and was sworn in obedience to the Devil himself.

Such was the beginning of the reign of the son of John Hyrcanus I.

In the background of such a crime, worthy of the most advanced disciple of Satan, we have to see the terrible dispute between mother and son, between Aristobulus I "the Mad" and his brothers on the subject of the transformation of the Republic into a Kingdom.

Accepting the insanity of Simon Maccabeus' grandson as a last, decisive, even exculpatory diagnosis is no way to close such a serious matter. Especially when the brief year of the reign of the Second of the Hasmoneans - leaving behind the issue of those he killed, whose names were not written nor their memory preserved because they were not his relatives, whose number we can calculate from what he did, or who imprisons his brothers is going to let free those who are not? I was saying that the brief year of the reign of Aristobulus I, if brief, shaped the future of the Jewish people in such a profound and painful way that can be seen at the base of the trauma that two thousand years later the official Jewish historians continue to suffer when recreating the Hasmonean times.

What more critically apocalyptic discussion than the transformation of the Republic into Monarchy could have pushed the grandson of the Heroes of Independence to become a monster?

Official Jewish historians go through this matter looking the other way. In doing so, they commit a terrible crime against themselves by creating in the reader the impression that killing one's mother and siblings was the daily bread of the Jews. I do not know to what extent it is ethical, or just morally acceptable to make the blood of the crime committed by their fathers fall on their children. Or is it true that the Hebrews used to eat their mothers every other day?

It is a crime against the Spirit to hide the truth in order to impose one's own lies. If Aristobulus killed his brothers and his mother such a monstrous crime we must understand it as a final consequence of the struggle between the republican and monarchical sectors, represented the first by the Pharisees and the second by the Sadducees. This struggle was won by Aristobulus I against his brothers and cost his mother her life for conspiracy against the crown.

From our comfortable position we can venture this theory to the case. It seems evident that if the authority of that woman could not impose her judgment it must have been because it clashed against more powerful interests. And what more powerful interest for which to risk one's life could exist in Jerusalem than the control of the Temple?

Let us bear in mind that in all the history of the children of Israel, to find a case of such cruelty, of a son against his mother, was never recorded because it never happened. So the fact that it took place against nature opens the door to the conspiracy against the patriarchal laws that took place between the Aaronite priesthood and Aristobulus I. In this context, the imprisonment of the brothers and the mother is perfectly understandable. In fact, the events we are about to see were all marked by the same iron. Then there is the psychology of the official historian to take advantage of the type of crime and hide in the honey of horror the year of terror that the population of

Jerusalem suffered under the tyranny of the Mad king. By concentrating that year of slaughter on the royal family the historian cast over the struggle at the root of the problem the smoke screen of Pharaoh's magicians. Who imprisoned his brothers for opposing his coronation what would he not do with those who without being his brothers refused to transform the republic into monarchy? The official Jewish historian passed over this subject. In doing so he took us, people of the future, for fools ,and those of his time for lifelong idiots.

Anyway - leaving aside now the discussions - Aristobulus I let free - as I said - one of his brothers. It is said that the boy was a fighting and brave warrior who loved the game of war, and there he wasted no time in opening the fight to the cry of "long live Jerusalem". Worthy relative of Judas Maccabee, with whose stories the boy grew up; the Valiant Prince dragged his soldiers to the victory that never resisted him, the very glory of the heroes in love with his bones.

Let us say that, broken the peaceful Reconquest of the Promised Land by the Maccabean wars, John Hyrcanus I opened a new period by putting to arms all the inhabitants of Southern Israel who did not convert to Judaism. Through this policy he annexed Idumea.

It was up to Aristobulus I, his son, to lead his armies against the North. Jerusalem in full antimonarchic effervescence by the facts already referred - imprisonment of the king's brothers and slaughter of his republican allies - while he was dedicated to control the situation, Aristobulus I passed the military leadership to his younger brother, who conquered the Galilee. It was not all going to be bad news. The conquest of Galilee raised the morale of the Jews who did not know whether to laugh at the victory or cry for the failure of having as king a murderer of the worst kind, a full-fledged madman.

What came next was not expected by anyone. Or they saw it coming and did not put any remedy within their reach. The thing is that the Valiant Prince was just beginning to look elsewhere to find fame and glory when jealousy, and the bad conscience that had him imprisoned by his deeds, dragged his brother Aristobulus to condemn him to death.

Also in this case Aristobulus I acted following the example of the Gentiles, although he applied the system to the mentality of the East. The Roman Senate imposed as a rule in the manual of the Republic to get rid of too victorious generals, retirement or death. The Scipions and Pompey Magnus himself suffered this rule. The last case would be that of Julius Caesar, who came out so well, of course.

Wiser and holier than the imperial senators, the king of the Jews did not pluck the daisy. He simply sent to his younger brother his irrevocable decision hanging from the edge of the executioner's axe.

The news of the murder of the little brother by the big brother caught Alexander Jannaeus down there, between cold dungeons and howling prisons dug into the realm of hell. Naturally the news froze his blood. But the vital fluid would have been able to recover its warmth if the presence of his mother in the dungeons had not doubled the devilish cold. The poor woman, pierced in that way, the poor woman lost her mind and, with the healthy remnant she had left, she let herself die of hunger.

To see one's mother and one's brothers die for the sake of your brother's power one's is not the best school for a king. But this was the school for kings that

Alexander Jannaeus, the object of all the hatred of the Jewish world after the Slaughter of the Six Thousand, forcibly attended.

Overwhelmed to the point of insanity by that tragedy, on the corpses of all the cowards who at that time were burning incense in the Temple, Alexander the Hasmonean swore to take revenge for the death of his mother and his brothers -if he came out of hell alive- to the last man.

Another thing will be - taking up the thread of the refusal in the official Jewish position to accept the fact of the coronation of John Hyrcanus I - that the matricidal and fratricidal madness of Aristobulus I would not have been but the end of the drama to which the coronation of the father led them all. The official Jewish position - headed by the famous Flavius Josephus - was to refuse to admit the fact of the coronation of the son of the last of the Maccabees. His measures, his wars, seem to prove the contrary, they seem to shout out loud that his head wore a crown, and it was during his reign that the virus of the curse found breeding ground in his house. How else to explain that the day after his burial his wife and children collapsed under the weight of that overwhelming opposition to the continuation of his dynasty? In what context could we understand that the new king decided overnight the death of all his brothers, including his mother, for high treason?

Logic does not have to present its evidence in the court of Biohistory. Biohistorical arguments are enough to be understood and do not need witnesses. But if neither the one nor the other is enough to make its way through the labyrinthine jungle in which the Jews lost their memory, nothing can be advised to the one who has pulled the trigger, unless he ends the tragedy soon and stops gathering onlookers before going to hell with his lamentations and his elegies.

There are no facts other than the naked and simple reality. Aristobulus I succeeded his father Hyrcanus I. He immediately ordered the imprisonment to life imprisonment of his brother Alexander. Alexander's brothers and sisters also suffered the same fate. The only one who was saved from the Cainite slaughter was the youngest son of his mother. She lay as if dead in some dark dungeon of the palace of her wicked son when the corpse of her little son was lowered to her by anonymous straps. The poor thing closed her eyes and let herself starve to death. Such were the beginnings of the reign of Aristobulus I the Mad; such the origins of the coming reign of his brother Alexander I.

Alexander Jannaeus

When Alexander Jannaeus emerged from the dungeon, where he should normally have perished, the situation in the kingdom was as follows. The Pharisees had the masses convinced that the nation was living under the crosshairs of divine wrath. The sacred laws forbade the Hebrews to have a king who was not of the House of David. They had him. By having him they were provoking the Lord to destroy the Nation by rebellion

against His Word. "His Word was Law, the Law was God, the Word was God". How could they prevent fate from taking its course?

The problem was that the Lord's servants, the Sadducean priests, not only blessed rebellion against the Lord they served, but also used the king to crush the wise Pharisees.

Even so, the macabre voracity of Aristobulus I made even the Sadducees' insides burn. This did not mean that the Sadducees were willing to join the Pharisees in cleansing Jerusalem of their crime. The last thing the Sadducees still wanted was to share power with the Pharisees.

Then, mysteriously, Alexander Jannaeus is released from his prison and escapes death. Miracle?

If the hatred that gave him strength and kept him alive can be called a miracle, then it was a miracle that Alexander survived his brothers and his mother. Too bad that, apart from the rats, no one came down to his hell to pay him condolences for the death of his mother! Had they done so, they would have discovered that the force that kept him alive and fed his thirst for revenge was hatred, without distinguishing between Pharisees and Sadducees.

In any case, the Hasmonean was wrong to think that the death of Aristobulus, his hated brother, was due to nature. The death of Aristobulus in the end of the year of his reign and immediately after the death of Valiant Prince was not a matter of chance or divine justice. Who is surprised that the crime against his own mother turned the hearts of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and decided, in conspiracy with Queen Alexandra, to put an end to the monster? The fact of the urgent and immediate celebration of the prisoner's wedding with the widow of the deceased, his sister-in-law Alexandra, highlights the political alliance that put an end to the life of Aristobulus I. Politics and Religion allied for the best, the Sadducees removed the Mad king and put in his place the Hasmonean, their sights put in, when being discovered as his savior, it did not occur to him to give a lurch towards the other side and to give them the power to the Pharisees, who, being natural enemies of their saviors by force would have had to be his own. The element of surprise in his favor Alexander accepted the crown swearing not to change the status quo.

This was the explosive situation upon whose boiling *inferno* the Hasmonean set his hatred.

Alexander I, however, would never forgive his liberators for taking so long to make their decision. What were they waiting for, for his mother to die? God, if only they had arrived one day earlier.

The hatred that the new king had hatched against his nation in his year of imprisonment, a long, endless year, no words can describe it. Only his subsequent slaughters would discover its extent and depth. That hatred was like a black hole advancing from the entrails to the head, like a Nothing flooding his veins with a cry: Revenge. Revenge against the Pharisees, revenge against the Sadducees. If their saviors had taken the trouble to think what they were doing before doing it, they would have slit their own veins than to open the door of freedom to the next king of the Jews.

Little, very little time would Jerusalem to find out what kind of monster had for idol the Hasmonean. The hatred that devoured the body, mind and soul of Alexander

would soon get out of hand and ask for corpses by the tens, hundreds, thousands. Six thousand for a Passover banquet?

An appetizer. Just that, a vulgar appetizer for a real demon. Didn't the wise and holy priests of Jerusalem say that they knew the depths of Satan? Yet another lie! He, the Hasmonean, would discover to all Jews the true depths of Satan. He himself would lead them to the very throne of the Devil. Where did Satan have his throne? Crazy, on the grave of his mother, in the Jerusalem that saw his brothers die without lifting a finger to save them from ruin.

The same thing that the father of ancient Jewish history, Flavius Josephus, did, hiding from his people the implosive cause that burst the promised happiness of the house of Hyrcanus I, he did it again by speaking of the miraculous and sudden death of the matricide and fratricide, homicidal of course. He had to do it if he did not want to discover the cause he had just hidden from his people. If he swore in public, before the future, that the very Sadducees who elevated Alexander ordered the death of his brother, by doing so he should have open to the rest of the world the doors to enter and see with their eyes why the internal war to the death between Pharisees and Sadducees.

Enemy of the truth for the sake of the salvation of his people, in the crosshairs of Roman hatred after the famous rebellion that ended with the destruction of Jerusalem, Flavius Josephus had to pass over the corpse of truth in the name of the reconciliation of Jews and Romans. And incidentally keep the children of the killers of the early Christians outside the crime against *divina natura* that started and continued, to the extent of their interests, even at the cost of extirpating the Memory, practiced a lobotomy and go ahead as a cursed people, all condemned, for all held by eaters of their mothers and natural killers of their brothers. And so no Jew should see with strange eyes Aristobulus I killing his mother, his brothers, his uncles, his brothers-in-law, his nephews, his nephews, and even his grandchildren, if he had them. According to Flavius Josephus and his school, this was natural among the Jews. So where is the scandal?

This is the story of Jesus. It is not the history of the Hasmonean chronicles. The importance of the seventy years of that dynasty, however, is so decisive to understand the circumstances that led the Jews to the most fierce and murderous anti-Christianity that, by force, we must recreate them, bringing forth the most important events in relation to this Second Fall. On another occasion, at another time, God willing, we will enter into those chronicles. Suffice it here to glide over the timeline.

The hatred of the Hasmonean against all, Pharisees and Sadducees, ran its course. In just a few years after his crowning it became an avalanche. Rolling on a suicidal slope, one of those days, they all went, Pharisees and Sadducees, to celebrate a kind of banquet of friendship with the king. The doors were opened, the strategists took up their positions, and with the wine they all got in tune. And passing from prolegomena to the first chapter, they ended up heading in a rush to the beaches of the sea of personal matters. In the heat of the moment one of the Pharisees present, fed up with wine, spited out in the face to the king what everyone knew behind walls, that his mother had him with someone other than his father. In other words, the Hasmonean was a bastard.

The situation was not complicated and the Devil came to make it worse. The Devil, as if he were winning the pulse t God Himself, added fuel to the fire at every opportunity. With the fuse burning, the powder keg two steps away, it was logical that the explosion would blow up everything it caught. The Slaughter of the Six Thousand in one day would

not be the only devastating wave. But it could at least have served to calm tempers and make the enemies join forces.

Contrary to the other peoples of the world, the Jewish nation's philosophy of race was never to learn from its mistakes. If before it was the zeal for the Law what dragged them to the Slaughter, from now on it would be the thirst for revenge. This unbridled thirst was the one that rode from synagogue to synagogue throughout the world carrying to all believers that howl that we heard before: "The Hasmonean must die". To which the most daring and zealous of destiny responded by devoting their lives to kill the Hasmonean. Among them was Simeon the Babylonian, a citizen of Seleucia of the Tigris, a Hebrew by birth, a banker by profession. His entry into Hasmonean Jerusalem and his intentions to remain in the kingdom could not disturb the king, always in need of allies and financial means for the war of reconquest of the Promised Land, nor raise his suspicions given the geopolitical circumstances through which the ancient empire of the Seleucids was passing.

The Parthians, in fact, were outgrowing Asia east of Eden, and were suffering unspeakably dreaming of the invasion of the lands west of the Euphrates. It was therefore natural that the children of Abraham should begin to return from captivity on the other side of the Jordan. If on top of that the returnee seemed to have no idea of the local political situation and, to everyone's delight, was a wealthy banker and devout believer, so much the better.

"Simeon, my son, paranoia is to tyrants what wisdom is to the wise. If they abandon their counsel both the one and the other are lost. Therefore he who moves among serpents must be cured of poison and have the wings of a dove to overcome the designs of the wicked with the innocence of one who serves only his master.

"Simeon, my son, turn your back to your enemy as a sign of trust and you will earn your salvation, but wear under your cloak the armor of the wise so that when paranoia drives him mad the dagger of his madness will break against your iron skin.

"If you give your hand to the tyrant, keep in mind that in the other hand he hides the dagger; offer him then what he seeks because God only gave man two hands, and if with one hand he takes yours and with the other he grabs what he wants, the dagger will always be far from your throat.

"When you see him wounded, run to heal his wound, for he is not yet dead; and if he lives, seek his death, but do not only wound him and let him rise up to your ruin. The devil has many ways to achieve his goal, but God is satisfied with only one to make him bite the dust. Be wise, Simeon, do not forget the teachings of your teachers".

Simeon the Babylonian arrived in Jerusalem with the book of the Magi of the East under his arm. The school in which he learned the craft of the Magi traced its origins to the days of the prophet Daniel, that prophet and chief of Magi who with one hand served his master and with the other dug around him his ruin. But enough of words, let the show begin.

Simeon the Babylonian put his teachings into practice. He succeeded in breaking the ice of the Pharisees' distrust of the king's new friend. He managed to deceive the king by participating in the financing of his campaigns of reconquest and consolidation of the conquered frontiers. Behind Hasmonean's back, with the other hand that remained free,

the Babylonian put his signature on all the palace plots against which Hasmonean, like an athlete in the middle of a steeplechase, performed the impossible feat of surviving all his presumed assassins. One after another, all those attempts to tear his head from his neck ended with the death of the would-be assassins. Tired of so many inept, in his opinion his compatriots were not even good for that, King Alexander treated the corpses of his enemies as one treats the corpses of dogs, they are thrown into the river and there they are carried away by the current to the sea of oblivion.

Desperate for the fate of the Hasmonean the Pharisees conceived the plan of plans, to hire a mercenary army, to put themselves in front and to declare open war. It was to plunge the nation into a civil war: so what? The star of the Hasmonean seemed to have risen from the very depths of hell. Whatever they planned against him, no matter how subtle and convoluted the plan to overthrow him, the bug always came out alive. He had more lives than an Egyptian cat.

“On his conscience the blood of the nation”, they said to themselves. They hired the Arabs to put an end to the fate of the most tyrannical, cruel and bloodthirsty king that Jerusalem had ever had in its history. All this in the strictest top secret. The last thing that Simeon the Babylonian and his Pharisees could afford was for the Hasmonean to hear of their plans. He would not hesitate to kill them all, big and small, all in the same pot. As the wise man’s proverb said: We must be innocent as doves, cunning as serpents.

But since in this world you cannot fool everyone at once, there was one person in those days whom Simeon’s magic tricks could not fool. That man was the priest Abijah, the particular prophet of the Hasmonean, about whom we have already seen something in the previous chapters.

Simeon also, of course, attended the turn of Abijah to hear from his lips the Oracle. It was to him, yes to him, to the king’s new friend, his most sworn secret enemy, that Abijah addressed words that broke all his schemes.

“If Heaven fights back Hell with the weapons of the Devil, how will the fire that devours all in its blaze be extinguished?” the man oraculated. “Do you compare God with his enemy? Does the angel who guards the path of life revolt against his destiny by raising the fire of his sword against the tree he guards so as to prevent anyone from approaching him? Does he then give himself up for lost? What will be the judgment of his Lord against his despair? In so doing will he not deny the God who entrusted him with his mission? You do not fight against the devil, you fight against the angel of God, and though he be for you he cannot abandon his post. His command is firm: Let no one come near; why do you think he will lay down his sword? For love of you will he rebel against his Lord? Cease then to play the fool. You are not fighting against a man, you are waging war against the God who placed his angel between you and the life you seek by invoking Death”.

An oracle full of wisdom that, its recipients blinded by hatred, fell again and again on rocky ground. For a moment it seemed that it was going to take root, but as soon as they left the Temple, the smell of blood returned their senses to everyday reality.

How far from the birth of a civil war are the clouds fermenting that will rain the broth of hatred in torrents? How do you erase the traces of a scar slashed between chest and back?

The Pharisees and their leaders made the desperate decision to hire a mercenary army to put an end to the Hasmonean once and for all. They did not hire the army of the Ten Thousand Greeks lost in the return to the homeland, nor did they cross the sea in the direction of Carthage looking for freedom in the descendants of Hannibal. Nor did they invoke the famous Iberian warriors. Nor did they lay hands on barbarian hordes. To kill their brothers the Jews called the Arabs.

How long does the meat of hatred need in the pot to cook? When poison is not enough and secret conspiracies are not enough, is it legitimate to call upon the devil himself to take to hell what was born in the heat of his fire?

As he did with so many other episodes, the official historian of the Jews of those times went over the detonating causes of that rebellion like someone waking over a bridge of eggs. Willing to sell the truth for the thirty silver coins of Caesar's pardon and with the approval of a Jewish generation that, between the cult of the emperor or the fate of Christians, danced in honor of the golden calf before God and men, Flavius Josephus overlooked those causes in the distance of the birth of that civil war, so horrific and perfidious as to obviate the enmity of centuries between Jacob and Esau.

The fact behind the concrete plaque under which the Jews buried the memory of their past is that against the laws of the land Israel hired Edom, Jacob called Esau to defeat the Devil together, ignoring because he did not want to remember that the Devil who defeated Adam, father of both, needed something more than an alliance between brothers to let him cut off his tail.

Be that as it may, the battle between the supporters of the restoration of the Davidic monarchy and those faithful to the Hasmonean dynasty took place. And it was the enemies of Hasmoneus who took the victory to their camp.

It seems that the same Alexander who walked on carpets woven with the skin of the Six Thousand, that demon without conscience who dared to curse the God of the gods by sleeping with his harlots in his own Temple, that invincible son of hell, it is said, fled like a rat.

Not even to die like a man was worth, too late his enemies later lamented.

Unfortunately, when it was time to finish off the victory, the victorious army made the unforgivable mistake of turning back. As I say, they went to collect the laurels of success when remorse seized their brains, and they began to think about what they were doing. They were handing over the kingdom to the Arabs!

Between finishing off the Hasmonean or finding themselves under the yoke of their traditional enemies, the Pharisees decided the unthinkable.

It is certain, the love for the Homeland was more powerful than the memory of so much past suffering. So, before being trapped under the wheels of their own mistakes,

they broke the contract with the victory achieved, a fatal mistake they would not take long to regret, a mistake they would never regret enough.

By one of those classic twists of fate the victorious nationalists joined the losing patriots and together they revolted against the mercenary army that was already preparing to conquer Jerusalem for their king.

Hallucinated by this twist of fate in his favor the Hasmonean transformed himself from a rat on the run into a hungry lion, took the lead of those who once again acclaimed him king and expelled from his kingdom those who had just seen him run away like a dog.

The first to mourn were the Pharisees.

His return from the tomb convinced his enemies to have the Hasmonean for godfather the Devil himself. The calm, the tranquility with which Alexander made his entry into Jerusalem was celebrated by almost everyone. That was the calm that precedes the storm. Shortly after returning to his palace, after sleeping with all his concubines, once he had digested the defeat in the folds of a bad dream, tired of promising what he would never fulfill, the Hasmonean ordered that the leaders of the Pharisees and hundreds of their allies be gathered as the heads of cattle are gathered. The head count rose to so many souls that no one could imagine how the Hasmonean was going to cook so much meat.

What happened belongs to the unholy memories of Israel. But if there is Good and Evil and everything has its opposite, the people who have a Sacred History also have its opposite, an Evil History. To the genre of the heroes of these tenebrous writings belonged, without any doubt, Cain, the Alexander of these chronicles, and the Caiaphas who in the name of his people crucified the Son of David.

The Jewish chronicler would have liked to have buried this chapter of the cursed history of his people. The short distance between his generation and the one that suffered the Nero of the Jews made it impossible for him to erase from the book of the life of his people the dark star event of this chapter.

In revenge for the humiliation they made him live, when he had to be seen fleeing like a rat who until then had been boasting of being the fiercest lion in hell, the Hasmonean raised eight hundred crosses on Golgotha. Not one, not two, not three, not four.

If the Passion of the Lamb has been transmitted to you in the physical as hard, wait until you know what sufferings those eight hundred goats had to undergo.

The Hasmonean announced that he was going to hold a feast. He took and invited acquaintances and strangers, foreigners and patriots alike. The feast was to be Neronian. Since the natural sign of human intelligence is imitation, not having been born Nero, someone had to rise as a model of the future slaughterer of Christians in bulk. Who but him, original even in the flight?

He set the day. He told no one a word about the surprise he had invented. And the banquet began. The Hasmonean brought out meat and wine to feed a regiment, hired foreign prostitutes, charged the nationals to do their trade as they had never done before. Nothing was lacking. Food by the bushel, wine by the barrel, women by the piece.

“Where will you find another king like me?” in the prelude to his madness shouted the Hasmonean, to be heard by the eight hundred damned who had already reserved places on the eight hundred crosses that crowned Golgotha from the foothills to the summit esplanade.

During the last few days everyone had been betting that the Hasmonean would not dare so much. The relatives of those involved in the macabre spectacle prayed to Heaven that he would not dare. How little they knew him! The Jews had not yet learned and still refused to believe that the same mother who gave birth to Abel nourished in her womb her brother’s monster.

“Do only Greek women give birth to beasts?” shouting lung in throat, let the Hasmonean hear from the top of the walls his voice. “There you have proof to the contrary. Here you have eight hundred”.

Nero was not so bad. At least the madman par excellence crucified foreigners. These eight hundred were all countrymen of his executioner, all brothers of his guests.

That was the surprise. Instead of judging them or murdering their enemies without anyone being able to blame him for their deaths the Hasmonean gathered them as cattle are gathered and condemned them to die on the cross. Because yes, because he was the king, and the king was God. And if it wasn’t God, it didn’t matter, it was the Devil. So much for that, so much for that.

Mount Golgotha was crowded with crosses. When the guests took their seats in their armchairs the eight hundred crosses were still empty. The spectacle was ominous but gratifying if all remained a mute threat. With this positive thought in mind, they began to pour the wine.

At the end, eaten, drank what is not written and finally satiated their macho instinct, the Hasmonean gave the order. At his command the eight hundred condemned paraded.

Immediately they began to hang them on the crosses. A cross for each head. If any of those present felt their souls break, no one dared to shed a tear. The wine, the harlots, the pleasure of seeing him die as a bandit those who yesterday had been princes of the people, all together did the rest.

“What do you do with the rats that invade your home? Do you spare their accursed offspring or do you send them to hell?” in the ecstasy of tragedy howled again the Hasmonean from the walls of Jerusalem.

What followed was not expected by anyone. The Hasmonean was a bag of surprises. Possibly neither would you, reader, imagine it if I did not tell you and challenge you to guess. They all believed that with the crucifixion of the eight hundred Pharisees the Hasmonean’s thirst for revenge would be quenched. They were already turning their backs to the victims on their crosses when eight hundred families began to circulate, the eight hundred families of the eight hundred unfortunate ones exposed to the stars of their destiny. Women, children, family by family took their places at the foot of the cross of the head of the family of each house.

Stunned, believing they had been invited to live a hellish nightmare, the eyes of those invited to the banquet of the Jewish Nero opened wide. Paralyzed with horror, they

understood what was about to happen. The latest and freshest incarnation of the Devil was going to slit head and body at the same time. If the man is the head of the family then his family is the body, and who is the madman who kills the head and leaves a hate-filled body alive to exact revenge?

The army of executioners of the Hasmonean drew their swords awaiting the command of the man who turned Jerusalem into the Devil's throne.

Already all the bodies lay at the feet of their heads, their wives with their sons and daughters were trembling with horror and despair, weeping for their father's fate when, believing their fate to be weeping, the bolt of the king's madness drove them from their illusion.

Once again, at the zenith of his insanity, the Hasmonean cried out excitedly, "Jerusalem, remember me". Then he gave the satanic order.

They beheaded them all, women and children, at the foot of the eight hundred crosses and their eight hundred Christs. The sicario executioners of the Hasmonean drew axes and swords, raised their arms and began their infernal and macabre task. No one lifted a finger to prevent the crime.

(Little more was written about this crime by the official historian of the Jews. Claiming in his foreword to be the truth his only interest, after reading his account one wonders what love of truth the devil can have. But let us continue).

Frozen, believing they were living a dream, the guests attended the third part of the infernal spectacle without moving from their seats. Second actors in the great representation, the pay had blinded their brains. The truth is that one did not have to be very clever to guess the rest. The Hasmonean then ordered the crucified to be set on fire. And let the feast continue.

And the feast continued under a deluge of alcohol, meat and harlots.

The next day the whole of Jerusalem ran to the Temple to find comfort in the Oracle of Yahweh.

The man of God said only: "Destruction is decreed that will bring this nation to ruin".

9

After the 800

After that orgy of cruelty and madness, nothing could ever be the same. The ambition of some, the fanaticism of others, everything had led them to such a dead end. A king raises his murderous madness, he lets it fall against strangers, all right, but when in all the history of the kingdom of Judah did any king rise against his own people to commit such a crime?

The fame won for the Jews by the Maccabees found itself the day after the Slaughter of the Eight Hundred crawling into the lowest abysses of decency and respect due to one nation by another. Branded as monsters devouring their children, those who until yesterday were walking among the Gentiles claiming for themselves the status of Chosen People the next day had to hide from the gaze of all as if they were fleeing from Satan himself. But let us return to Jerusalem the Holy.

For a while the cry of pain and sorrow kept calm the unquenchable thirst for revenge of the relatives of the Eight Hundred. But sooner or later the hatred to the death would spill out and would run through the streets sowing death on the sidewalks. Who would be the first to fall? On the corners, in the darkness of the alleys, under any doorway. At any hour, on any occasion. The king's foreign executioners?

No! It would be them, the Sadducees. It would be the sons of Aaron, all priests, all holy, all sacred, all inviolable, who would be the first to know vengeance. Because vengeance could not eat the king, it would be taken on the flesh of his allies. Brothers-in-law, cousins, in-laws, sons-in-law, wives, mothers-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren, all were in the crosshairs of the dagger.

Whether they were leaving the Temple, whether they were going from their homes to their fields, wherever they were found, hatred would be hurled upon them without distinguishing the just from the guilty, the sinner from the innocent. There would be no mercy, no quarter. With his macabre lesson the Hasmonean had deflected the dagger from their backs. Who would now spare them? One by one. When in their homes they closed their eyes... out of the shadows would come two silver coins looking for basins where to pitch tent. When the animal needs... out of the hollows of the ground would come forth claws. No, the Sadducees would not sleep in peace, nor would they live in peace from that day forward. The day would come when it would seem better for them to live in hell than to suffer the hell of being alive.

And so it came to happen. The streets of Jerusalem woke up every day after the Slaughter of the Eight Hundred amidst the bellowing of widows and orphans demanding justice from the king. A king delighted to see how, while they killed each other, they left him in peace.

It is the truth, in his madness the Hasmonean enjoyed seeing his allies living in terror like rats trapped in the house of hungry cats. As far as he was concerned his personal safety had been sealed against all risk. Without distinguishing age or sex he once killed Six Thousand in one day. This time he devoured 800 with their families. Did they want even more? He still had the guts left to double the death toll.

Why 800 crosses? Why not seven hundred? Or three thousand four hundred?

The fact is that the Hasmonean had the memory of beasts. The human being overcomes the traumas of childhood, is distinguished from the beasts by its ability to forget the damage suffered at some point in the past. The beast, on the other hand, never forgets. Years may pass, even if a decade passes, the wounds remain stuck in their memory. With the passage of time the puppy becomes a beast; then one day it meets its childhood enemy, the wound is opened and by inertia it jumps to take its revenge. Such was the memory of the Hasmonean.

Why 800 souls, why not seven hundred or three thousand four hundred?

The people had to know the truth. The whole world had to know its truth. History had to record in its annals the root cause of that hatred of the Hasmonean against the Pharisees. How many brave men followed the Maccabee on the day of the Fall of the Braves? Were there not 800 justly? Were they not the fathers of the 800 crucified Pharisees, did not they give the order to withdraw and handed over the Hero to the enemy? Why did they do so? Why did those cowards left the Hero and his 800 Braves alone in front of the enemies?

“I will tell you”, cried the Hasmonean from the wall. “Because they feared that the Hero would rise as king. Cowards, they sold the Hero and handed him over to silence the fear they harbored. But tell me, when, at what moment, on what secret occasion did it escape the Hero of his 800 Braves to lead them against Jerusalem and proclaim himself king? His soul knew no other ambition than the freedom of his nation. His heart beat was only for the yearning of freedom. Your fathers challenged him to surrender the command, to place himself at their command, ignoring that the Brave One recognized no other king and lord than the God of his father. They put him to the test, they pushed him to the edge of the abyss, believing that the Brave One would turn his back on death. They put the pulse on the Champion of the Almighty. Well then, this is the pay that your King and Lord puts into your purses. Take your wages, you cowards. You touched the Champion whom God raised up to give you freedom at the price of his blood and that of all his household. Do you not want paradise? There I send you to claim your wages from the Almighty. You resented his glory and his fame. You had to flee from the battlefield to show him that the victory was yours, that without you he was nothing. Rejoice, for shortly you will meet him face to face”.

No matter what he said, no matter what kind of reasons he justified his conscience on, the Hasmonean knew that after the Slaughter of the 800 nothing could be the same. After that ode to the depths of hell he could expect nothing but the destruction of his house. Abijah had prophesied it to him and, without wanting or seeking it, he had caused it. Fate, fatality, a wrong step taken without correction, another unforeseen error imposing the law of necessity, pure chance, chaos, the fates, the irresponsibility of the people and their dreams of justice, freedom and peace. How to blame the goddess fortune for giving nefarious kisses? Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. Worse dynasties managed to open the way for their children in the plain of the centuries. But for what? In the end every crown ends up being thrown to the skin, the one who seemed to have the least legs hits the highest boat and the glory of tomorrow is girded on the nobody of yesterday. From a throne the world is a box of crickets; the one who shouts the loudest is the king. Why are the people not satisfied with their lot? Why do they want more justice, more freedom? If you give him a hand he grabs your arm. They always find a reason to spoil the happiness of their rulers. If it weren't for the fact that subjects are necessary, wouldn't they all be better off dead? Or at least deaf and dumb?

The tenebrous reflections of the Hasmonean in his moments of distress were not wasted. More than once he let them flow from his head without even realizing that his praetorian chiefs were present. His devilish smiles answered more eloquently than the longest and most profound speech of the most variegated and conspicuous sage.

Were their children's lives in danger, and would they still be in danger if there was not a Jew left alive?

It was a hairy choice. When depression choked him the Hasmonean would caress it. But no. That would be too much. He had to find a smarter solution. Turning him back on the fact that he'd crossed the line wasn't going to solve his problem. He had to think.

After the Slaughter of the 800 nothing would ever be the same again. He had to find a way out of the labyrinth before hatred consumed his family into hell.

Yes, nothing would ever be the same again.

Not only the Hasmonean understood this. Simeon the Babylonian also understood. Abijah's words rang in his head with all the dimension of their perennial reality.

"Hatred begets hatred, violence begets violence, and both will devour all their servants".

Where indeed had their magical arts led him? The blood of the 800 weighed on his conscience. The weight crushed him. Abijah was always right. He never tired of saying it: "Who takes the pitcher and goes to the burning forest for water? To such an end, such means". But of course, what other advice could be expected from a man of God?

What else?

That they should lay down their arms and, without abandoning the end, put at the service of the restoration of the Davidic monarchy the means that suited that cause.

Convinced by the facts, Simeon the Babylonian laid down its undivine means, he became a disciple and partner of Abijah who for so long preached in the desert of those hearts of stone.

For his part, the Hasmonean's despair grew as the days went by. Abijah's prophecy about the fate of his house began to become so evident to him that, against all odds, he gave in. Not because the weight that his conscience, still strong enough to support a few thousand more corpses could bear, stirred his conscience. The real cause of the mental oppression that encircled his neck, leaving him breathless, lay in the destiny he had carved out for his children. He himself had taken the edge off the axe. Because of him his children had become the object of God's wrath. The executioner who was to cut off their heads had not yet been born, but who could assure him that he would not be born?

In a move worthy of his terrors, he made a treaty of national reconciliation with his enemies. Abijah and Simeon the Babylonian were to be the guarantors of that pact which would assure his offspring life among the other families of Jerusalem. The pact of state was as follows.

At his death the Crown would pass to his widow. Queen Alexandra would restore the Sanhedrin. Thus, would be closed between Pharisees and Sadducees the battle for control of the Temple at the origin of all ultimate evils. His son Hyrcanus II would receive the high priesthood.

Upon the death of Queen Alexandra, whether the crown would pass to her other son Aristobulus II or be crowned the rightful heir of the House of David would depend on the results of the search for the Son of Solomon.

Once Queen Alexandra was dead, the House of Hasmonean could not be blamed for the subsequent events coming out of the Search. This part of the contract would be kept secret between the king, the queen, Hyrcanus II and the two men of his confidence, Abijah and Simeon the Babylonian.

His widow would elevate these two men to the leadership of the Sanhedrin, led by Hyrcanus II. This final part of the pact would remain secret to prevent Prince Aristobulus II from rebelling against his parents' will and claiming the crown.

All for good. Expecting the best, Alexander Jannaeus died in his bed. He was succeeded on the throne by his widow. Who reigned for nine years. Faithful to the signed pact, Queen Alexandra restored the Sanhedrin, handing over its government on equal terms to Pharisees and Sadducees. Her son Hyrcanus II received the high priesthood. Prince Aristobulus II was alienated from the succession and matters of state. The secret part of the pact, the search for the living heir of Solomon, would no longer depend on Queen Alexandra, but on the two men to whom her deceased entrusted the mission. A mission that should conclude during the reign of Alexandra and remain in the secret that gave birth to it. Although young, if it reached the ears of Prince Aristobulus such a plan for the restoration of the Davidic monarchy, no one could claim that in his madness he would not rise in civil war against his brother.

There were nine years of relative peace. The two men charged with finding Solomon's rightful heir enjoyed nine years to scour the upper classes of the kingdom and find his whereabouts. I say relative peace because the relatives of the 800 took advantage of the Power to water the streets of Jerusalem with the blood of the executioners of their own.

Powerless the queen and the Sadducees to stop that thirst for revenge that with impunity claimed its victims daily, each year that passed the eyes of the condemned began to focus more and more on Prince Aristobulus as savior. As Aristobulus slumbered in the hope of reigning after the death of his mother, he had to be taken out of his pleasant condition of crown prince, to proceed now and to give the coup d'état that the very situation of defenselessness of the Sadducees was brewing.

Under these circumstances, how much time did Simeon and Abijah have to find the legitimate heir of Solomon? How long could they weather the civil war that was brewing on the horizon?

God knows that Simeon and Abijah searched, that they scoured the entire kingdom in their quest. They moved heaven and earth in their search. And it was as if the house of Zerubbabel evaporated from the political scene in Judah after his death. Yes, of course there were those who claimed to be descendants of Zerubbabel, but when it came to putting the relevant genealogical documents on the table it was all just words. So time was running against them, the queen mother every day closer to the tomb, the prince Aristobulus II every year getting stronger under the protection of the Sadducees who advocated the coup d'état that would give them the power; and they, Abijah and Simeon, farther and farther away from what they were looking for. Their prayers were not going up to Heaven; the rumors of civil war, on the contrary, seemed to be. In the ninth year of her reign, Queen Alexandra expired. With her died the hope of the restorers to find the rightful heir of Solomon.

The Saga of the Forerunners

After the death of the Hasmonean, after the regency of Queen Alexandra, while Hyrcanus II occupied his position as high priest, after the civil war against his brother Aristobulus II, God raised the spirit of intelligence in Zechariah, son of Abijah.

Called to the priesthood because he was the son of Abijah, Zechariah focused his career in the administration of the Temple in the area of History and Genealogy of the families of Israel. A confidant of his father, with whom Zechariah shared his zeal for the coming of the Messiah, while his father and his partner the Babylonian led the search for the heir to the Crown of Judah, Zechariah conceived in his intelligence to open the Temple archives. When the failure of the search for the legitimate heirs of Zerubbabel was a fait accompli, Zechariah swore to himself that he would not rest until he turned the shelves upside down, and by Yahweh, that he would not stop until he found the clue that would lead him to the house of the living heir of King Solomon.

Jerusalem's Temple fulfilled all the functions of a state. Its officials acted as a bureaucracy parallel to that of the Court itself. Registration of births, salaries of its employees, accounting of its income, School of Doctors of the Law, all this machinery functioned as an autonomous organism.

The positions of power were hereditary. They also depended on the influences of each aspirant. As an aspirant, Zacharias would have in his favor the three classic forces with which anyone could have reached the top.

He had the spiritual leadership of his father. He had the influence and full support of one of the most influential men inside and outside the Sanhedrin, Simeon the Babylonian, the Shemayas of traditional Jewish sources. In these sources Abijah is called Abtalion, a distortion of the original Hebrew, with whose perversion of the Hebrew sources the Jewish historian intended to hide from the eyes of the future the messianic connections between the generations before Jesus' Birth and Christianity itself. And above all and most importantly, Zechariah counted on the spirit of intelligence that his God had given him to bring his enterprise to a successful conclusion.

At the command of God, the saga of the restorers led by Abijah and Simeon the Babylonian, whose names -I have said- were perverted by the later Jewish historians in order to root the origin of Christianity in the mind of a madman, God raised in the son of Simeon the Babylonian the forerunner spirit that He engendered in the son Abijah, his partner.

Having denied victory to the fathers, because the glory of triumph had been reserved for their sons, older than that of Abijah than that of Simeon, God in his Omniscience willed that the son of Simeon, Simeon like his father, should have as his spiritual partner the son of Abijah, closing the friendship that already existed between them with bonds that always endure.

Also, like his father, Simeon the Younger seemed born to enjoy a comfortable and happy existence, far from the spiritual concerns of Abijah's son. A chip off the old block,

Simeon the Younger joined his future to that of Zechariah by placing at his service the fortune he would inherit from his father.

Counting on with these *point d'appui* a man must have been very foolish - speaking of Zechariah - to fail in his attempt to rise to the pyramid of the Templar bureaucracy, and rise to the top as Director of the Historical Archives and Major Genealogist of the Theocratic State into which, after the conquest of Judah by Pompey the Great, the ancient kingdom of the Hasmoneans was converted. Given the unmeasured intelligence by God shone on him, Zechariah reached the top and planted his banner on the highest peak of the Temple structure.

Times were hard anyway. Civil wars ravaged the world. Horror was the norm. Thank God the failure of Simeon and Abijah closed with a compensatory happy ending.

After the death of Queen Alexandra, what had long been foreseen happened. Aristobulus II claimed the crown for himself, fought on the battlefield against his brother Hyrcanus II and won the victory. But if he dreamed of legalizing his coup d'état, he soon saw his mistake.

The world was no longer ready to return to the days of their father. The Sadducees themselves refused to lose the prerogatives that the Sanhedrin had conferred on them. Neither Sadducees nor Pharisees wanted a return to the status quo prior to the inauguration of the Sanhedrin. Obviously to the Pharisees less than to the Sadducees. So it was agreed to bring into the scene the father of the future king Herod, Palestinian by birth, Jewish by force. By order of the Pharisees, Antipater hired the king of the Arabs to expel Aristobulus II from the throne.

The maneuver of putting the burden of the rebellion on the shoulders of Hyrcanus II was a ploy of the Sanhedrin to stay out of the way in case of defeat of the hired forces. The ongoing war the situation was resolved in favor of Hyrcanus thanks to divine foreknowledge, which interposed between the brothers the Roman general of the moment, in triumphal stroll through the lands of Asia. We speak of Pompey the Great.

After conquering Turkey and Syria, the Roman general received an embassy from the Jews begging him to intervene in their kingdom and stop the civil war to which passions had dragged them. We are in the sixties of the first century BC.

Pompey agreed to act as arbitrator between the two brothers. He ordered them to come forward immediately to give him an account of the reasons why they were killing each other. Who was Cain, who was Abel?

Pompey did not enter into discussions of this nature. With the authority of a master of the universe he spoke words of wisdom and made known his Solomonic judgment on the case. From that day and until further notice the kingdom of the Jews became a Roman province. Hyrcanus II was reestablished in his functions as head of state, and Antipater, father of Herod, as chief of his staff. As for Aristobulus, he was to retire to civil life and forget about the crown.

And so it was done. Then Pompey left with the Roman eagles to complete his conquest of the Mediterranean universe, leaving the bells tolling in Jerusalem for the solution adopted, of all the worst the best.

In those days the dragon of madness trotted at ease throughout the confines of the Ancient World. He had been doing so since the dawn of time, but this time, when the Roman civil wars, wiser the Devil for old than for genius, his tongues of fire created more evil men than ever. Unlike the Divine Tongue that made saints, that of the Devil gave birth to monsters who sold their souls to Hell for the sake of the ephemeral power of the glory of war. Like a Superstar signing bloody wedding contracts with the bride and groom of Death, the Prince of Darkness signed autographs, hoping in his manifest madness to obtain from his Creator the applause due to the one who gave God an ultimatum.

The count of the dead in the Roman world wars was never recorded. The future will never know how many souls perished under the insane wheels of the Roman Empire. Reading the chronicles of that empire of darkness on Earth one would dare say that the Devil himself had been hired as an advisor to the Caesars. Once again the Beast roamed the ends of the earth executing his sovereign will.

In the midst of those bloody times, when even a blind man could see the impossibility of opposing the new master of the universe, even worse if the aspirant was no more than a fly on the back of an elephant, against all logic and common sense Aristobulus II went beyond the Solomonic judgment of Pompey the Great and declared himself in armed rebellion against the Empire.

The unlimited ambition for absolute power does not understand races or times. History has seen the hare jump more times than the annals of modern nations can remember. Apparently the gulf between man and beast is less dangerous than man's leap to the status of the sons of God. And yet those who deny man's future what belongs to him by right of creation are the same ones who then defend the idea of evolution with fire and sword. We do not know if with the Doubt about God's intentions in creating Man, Science hides an open rebellion against the final stage programmed in our genes since the origins of the historical ages. In the end, it could be only a question of cranial pride raised to the square of its power. That is to say, it is not a denial that God exists; what exists is a refusal to live a chronicle foretold. Why do we have to be passive objects of a story written before we were born? Is it not better to be active subjects of a tragedy written by Destiny?

The depths of human psychology never cease to amaze. In the darkness of the abyssal pits of the mind, luminescent creatures as beautiful as stars in the night suddenly transform into monstrous dragons. Their fiery arrows devour all peace, violate all justice, deny all truth. And coveting the power of the rebellious gods, they prove right those who do not believe in evolution when they affirm that after man there is something else.

After all, it is not so much a question of believing or not believing, but of choosing between the being of the Beast and that of the Son of God.

In this respect Aristobulus II had a mental structure very typical of his time. Either he had everything or he had nothing. Why share the Power? Between Cain and Abel he had chosen the role of Cain. Why was the Roman now coming to steal the fruit of his victory?

As long as Pompey the Great imposed his will on him at the point of the sword and the myth about the invincibility of the Pirate Killer kept his passion at bay, everything went smoothly for the Savior of the Mediterranean. As soon as Pompey's back was turned, Aristobulus came out and he devoted himself to what he knew best, making war.

The way he understood how to wage war, at least he put it into practice.

Wherever he rode he dedicated himself to leaving his mark. A farm here and a farm there, Judea was to remember his father's son for a long time to come. Fire, ruin, desolation, let history be written and let what is written be written, if not in the annals of history at least on the backs of the people!

The Ancient Serpent must have known that the Day of Yahweh was approaching, a day of vengeance and wrath. The Leviathan in the crosshairs of Hell redoubled the fire within him and from the pinnacle of his cursed glory began to lead the army of darkness to its impossible victory.

Brother against brother, kingdom against kingdom. Even the almighty Roman Senate trembled with fear the day Caesar crossed his particular Red Sea. Because of the Conqueror of Gaul, he who had just been acclaimed lord of Asia, Great Pompey himself, was seen crossing the Great Sea like a cat to end up being killed like a louse on a beach by order of a pharaoh in skirts.

Until Egypt came chasing his former partner who turned a river into a phrase for the legend, and there he would have been buried by the same pharaoh who killed Pompey had not providentially intervened in his favor the provincial armies of Asia, among whose squadrons the cavalry of the Jews excelled in courage and bravery, giving him the victory and, more importantly, saving his life. Salvation that earned the Jews of the Empire the gratitude of Caesar, and regained for the nation of the Jews its lost fame of valiant warriors.

The need that drives the powerful to need each other was the one that threw the Jewish chief of staff in the arms of the new master of the Mediterranean universe, winning the father of Herod for the Jewish people the honors of grace, as I said, and for him and his house the friendship of one who is grateful because he was well born, that of the unique and incomparable Julius Caesar.

This last grace was not felt in the same way in Jerusalem as it did in the circle of the family concerned. But, given the persistence of the son of the Hasmonean to follow in the footsteps of his father, it was respected as a contention wall against a new civil war. In such moments little or nothing the Jews believed that they should fear of the dazzling race to the power of the puppy Herod.

Not even when Herod showed more than enough courage to dismantle the forces of the Galilean bandits and sentence them to death by bypassing the laws of the Senate of the Jews?

Taking advantage of his position as lieutenant of the northern forces, Herod captured the bandits, dismantled their bases and condemned their leaders to death. Nothing unusual if it had been a Jewish leader. The problem was that by taking on the functions of the Sanhedrin - to judge and sentence to death – Herod's personal ambition was exposed and forced the Sanhedrin to clip their wings while there was still time.

The matter of judging the Idumean puppy was complex because of his godfather, Caesar himself. The point was that if his wings were not clipped, no one would be able to stop his dazzling career to the throne.

Simeon the Babylonian and Abijah made this argument before the other members of the court that met to judge Herod. Had they been spared the usurpation of David's throne by a Jew by birth to see how a Palestinian would put his ass on it?

Without fear of the Idumean puppy Simeon the Babylonian laid out his sentence before all: Either they condemned him to death now that they had him at their mercy or they would repent of their cowardice the day the son of Antipater sat on the throne of Jerusalem.

Herod turned to look at that old man who was prophesying to him in the light of day what he had seen so many times in his dreams. Admired to find among those cowards a brave man, he swore there, in the presence of all his judges, that on the day he would wear the crown he would put them all to the sword. All except the one man who had dared to tell him to his face how he felt.

When Herod was king that was the first measure he took. Except for his particular prophet, he beheaded all the members of the Sanhedrin.

11

The Genealogy of Jesus according to Luke

In the midst of those days of bloody horrors Nature defied Hell by flooding the earth with beauty. It was indeed a time of beautiful women. In the service of her Lord, Nature conceived a woman of extraordinary beauty, and gave her a name. She called her Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was the daughter of one of the priestly families of the upper class of Jerusalem. Her parents belonged to one of the twenty-four families, heirs of the twenty-four Temple shifts. Her parents were clients of the house of the Simeons; the extraordinary beauty of that girl opened the doors of the heart of Simeon the Younger, with whom she came to be raised as if she were a sister.

Elizabeth's parents could only look favorably on the relationship between the kids. Thinking of the possibility of a future marriage, her parents granted Elizabeth a freedom generally denied to the daughters of Aaron. Was there anything that could fill the hearts of those parents with more pride that their eldest daughter becoming the mistress of the heir to one of the largest fortunes in Jerusalem?

It was no longer just a question of wealth, there was also the protection Herod had extended over the Simeons. The death of the leading members of the Sanhedrin after his coronation left the Simeons in a privileged position. In fact, that of the Simeons was the only fortune that the king did not confiscate.

If Elizabeth were to impose her beauty on young Simeon, ... more than her parents could ever have dreamed of.

This secret possibility in mind, which every year seemed to become more real by reason of the intelligence with which Wisdom had enriched what Nature had clothed

with so many gifts, Elizabeth's parents let her cross that thin frontier on the other side of which the Hebrew woman was free to choose a husband.

The normal thing in the Jewish castes was to close the marriage contract of the Aaronic females before reaching that dangerous age, reached which by law the woman could not be forced to accept the paternal authority as if it were the will of God. Convinced of the irresistible influence of Elizabeth's beauty on the young Simeon, her parents took the risk of letting her cross that frontier.

She crossed it with delight, and he was her accomplice.

Simeon played along with the soul mate that life had given him. Raised himself to enjoy a privileged freedom, by the time Elizabeth's parents came to realize the truth it would already be too late. Elizabeth would by then have crossed that border and nothing and no one in the world could prevent her from marrying the man she loved more than her life, more than the walls of Jerusalem, more than the stars of the infinite sky, more than the angels themselves.

The day her parents understood who Elizabeth's chosen one was, that day her parents cried out to heaven.

The problem of the man whom Elizabeth loved in such a way that was so superior to the family's interests was simple. Elizabeth had given her heart to the stubbornest young man in all Jerusalem. In reality, no one was betting anything on the life of Abijah's son. It had gotten into Zechariah's head to enter the Temple and drive out all the genealogy peddlers and wholesale birth document dealers. Shocked by what they believed to be a frontal attack on their pockets, many swore to end his career at any price. But neither threats nor curses could scare Zachariah.

In this everyone recognized that the son was his father's replay. Was not his father the only man in the whole kingdom capable of standing before the Hasmonean in his best days, cutting him off and prophesying to his face a volcano of misfortune? What could be expected of his son, being a coward?

In any case, why didn't Zacharias direct his crusade elsewhere? Why had he got it into his head to focus his crusade against the flourishing business of buying and selling genealogical documents and false birth records? What harm was being done to anyone by issuing those documents?

The interested parties came from Italy itself, ready to pay as much as they asked for a simple piece of papyrus signed and sealed by the Temple. Why was the son of Abijah so obsessed? Why didn't he dedicate himself to enjoying life like any other son of a neighbor? Was he having fun cutting everyone's hair?

Well, but before we go any further, let us enter into the mind of Zechariah and the circumstances against which he rose up.

I have said that Zechariah, son of Abijah, and Simeon the Younger, son of Simeon the Babylonian, picked up the baton of the search for the living Heir of king Solomon.

Given all the circumstances established in the previous chapters, it is understandable that secrecy was the sine qua non that was to lead them to the end of the thread. No one was to know what the goal in mind was.

If to the Hasmoneans the very idea of the Davidic restoration made their hair stand on end, at the slightest suspicion of the intentions of the sons of their protégés, the Shemayas and Abtalion of the official Jewish writings, Simeon and Abijah for us, King Herod would on the day carry off all the sons of David.

Then there were the classic pirates who would be happy to denounce their sons, our Simeon and Zechariah. Herod would reward the denunciation for treason to the crown with honors thousands. And in passing they would eliminate from the scene the lone crusader with whom no agreement could be reached.

So, knowing the sea of dangers on whose waves he sailed, Zacharias opened his mind to no one in the world. Not even to Elizabeth herself, the woman he was aware he would marry despite the will of his future in-laws.

It was natural that of all the men of Jerusalem there was no other in need of the strongest protection than the son of Abijah.

Let us now enter into the causes of that widespread corruption into whose arms the Temple officials threw themselves.

In gratitude for their salvation by the Jewish chivalry - as I have said before - Julius Caesar granted to Judea fiscal privileges and liberation for its citizens from the service of arms.

Caesar was unaware of the complex extent of the Jewish world. Shrewd as anyone, the Jews throughout his Empire took advantage of his ignorance to benefit from the privileges granted to the citizens of Judea. But to benefit from such privileges they were obliged to present the relevant documents.

All the Jews had to do was to go to Jerusalem, pay a sum of money and get hold of them.

Was it this little trick enough to get mad? Did Zachariah not love his brothers in Abraham? Why did he object? What was in it for him? The Temple coffers were getting full. Was he, as a priest and a Jew by birth, not interested in the prosperity of his people?

The growing enmity against Zechariah stemmed from the fact of his unstoppable ascent, which, in a short time, if no one were to cut him off, would lead him to the top of the direction of the Historical and Genealogical Archives, on which depended the issuance of the aforementioned documents.

Man, there were reasons for the son of Abijah to turn a blind eye and take advantage of the occasion to get rich, and on the way to share with everyone the prosperity that heaven had given them after so many past evils.

But no, the son of Abijah said that he did not marry corruption. His head was as hard as a rock. To make matters worse, the protection he counted on left his enemies no other way out but to try to stop his career by all means.

So as much as she adored the man of her life, Elizabeth herself wondered what the crusade of her beloved was all about. When she brought up the subject with him, he would give her the runaround, look the other way, change his tune and leave her speechless. Did he not love her?

Simeon the Younger laughed at those two impossible lovers.

Elizabeth laughed; and as she was the daughter of Aaron and had Nature on her side, that her soul friend was going to discover what mystery the two of them were up to.

Simeon the Younger gave her the runaround at first. The last thing he wanted was to endanger Elizabeth's life. In the end he had to open his heart and reveal the truth.

A Jew from any part of the Empire who wished to register as a citizen of Judea to which family would he be related and in which city would he ask to be registered as a native?

The answer was so obvious that Elizabeth understood instantly.

"In Bethlehem of Judah and to King David".

Difficult that it was for the Major Genealogist of the Kingdom to advance among mountains of documents, this avalanche of David's children suddenly coming to the legendary king from all sides...

"Then you are looking for Solomon's heir", Elizabeth replied to Simeon. "How nice!". Simeon laughed heartily at her witticism.

Zechariah didn't find that funny his partner discovering the truth to Elizabeth. Once the damage was done, it was necessary to move forward and trust in her prudence. Trust that Elizabeth never let down.

The same Spirit that stops the advance of the warriors and denies them the passage to the goals reserved by Him for those who will follow them, that same God is the one who orders the times and moves on the stage the actors for whom He reserved the victory that He denied to those who opened the way for them.

Against all the bad omens that their enemies wished them, Zechariah reached the top of the direction of the Archives of the Temple. He also married the mate chosen for him by destiny. When they found that they could not have children, it was said: "God's punishment", because she had rebelled against the will of her parents, but they consoled themselves by loving each other with all the strength of which the human heart is capable.

To the sorrow of finding themselves sterile was added the failure of their search.

12

The Birth of Joseph

Zechariah spent years sifting through the mountains of genealogical documents, sorting scroll by scroll of history in search of the clue that should lead him to the last living heir to Solomon's crown. He did not go mad because his intelligence was stronger than the despair that seized his mind, and, of course, because the Spirit of his God smiled

on him through the lips of his partner Simeon, who never lost hope and was always there to boost his morale.

“Calm down, man, you will see how in the end we will find what we are looking for where we least expect it, and when we least imagine it, you will see. Don’t break your head because your God wants to open your eyes in his own way. I don’t think He’s going to leave you empty-handed. It’s just that we are looking in the wrong direction. The fault is ours. Do you think he has lifted you up to where you are to leave you with your desolation at the top? Rest, enjoy your existence, let Him make us laugh”.

That Simeon was an extraordinary man. But in every sense. When he married the woman of his dreams, he also enjoyed the dream of being the happiest man in the world. With that happiness of his that spilled over to all the clients of his House and made him the banker of the poor, one fine day business matters took him to Bethlehem.

The clientele of the Simeons also extended its branches to the towns around Jerusalem. Among the families that did business with them was the Clan of the carpenters of Bethlehem. By this time the leadership of the clan was in the hands of Mattath, father of Heli. The Clan of the carpenters of Bethlehem had carved its reputation as professional woodworkers since nobody knew when. It was even said that the founder of the Clan put one of the gates of the holy city in the days of Zerubbabel. Simple rumors, of course. The thing was that the arrival of Simeon the Younger in Bethlehem coincided with the birth of Heli’s firstborn. They called the newborn Joseph. Congratulations aside, closed the business that brought him to Bethlehem, the child’s grandfather and our Simeon entered into conversations about the origins of the family. The ongoing topic wanted the conversation itself Mattath to elaborate on the Davidic origin of his house.

In Bethlehem it never occurred to anyone to question the word of the head of the Clan of the carpenters. Everyone was, because it had always been believed in the town, that the Clan belonged to the house of David. Mattath, Joseph’s grandfather, did not go around using the genealogical document of his family as if it were a whip ready to fall on the unbelievers. That would not have been the point. It was simply so, it had always been so and it did not proceed otherwise. His parents had been considered sons of David since nobody remembered when, and he, Mattath, had every right to believe in the word of his ancestors. After all, everyone was free to believe himself to be the son of whomever suited him best.

But of course, Zechariah’s research at a standstill, the search for the son of Solomon at the level of historical archives anchored in a dead end, the fact that a simple family of carpenters jumped into the realm of infallible realities, necessarily our Simeon had to find that absolute certainty of grandfather Mattath, if not funny, at least quite sympathetic. More than anything else, it was the tone of certainty in the breath of Joseph’s grandfather.

When, without intending to offend the head of the clan of the carpenters of Bethlehem, Simeon the Younger questioned the legitimacy of the Davidic origin of his house, Grandfather Mattath looked at the young Simeon with somewhat offended eyebrows. His first reaction was to feel offended, and by his beard that, had the doubt come from another individual, for his honor he would have instantly kicked him out of his house. But in honor of the friendship that bound him to the Simeons, and because in no way did the Young Man intend to offend him, Grandfather Mattath refrained from giving free rein to his temper. Also because with the winds that were blowing, when it

was enough to kick a stone to produce children for David, the boy's doubt was understandable to him.

A very good-natured man, in spite of this way of entering into our story, not wanting any doubt of any kind to float between his house and that of the Simeons from now on, Grandfather Mattath took our Simeon by the arm, and took him aside. With all the confidence in the world in his truth, the man led him to his private room. He went to a chest as old as winter, opened it and took out of its interior a kind of bronze roll wrapped in rancid furs. Before Simeon's eyes Grandfather Mattath placed it on the table. And he unrolled it slowly with the mystery of one who is going to bare his soul.

As soon as he saw the contents wrapped in those rancid furs, Simeon's pupils opened like windows when the first spring rays burst. A mute "Holy God" escaped from his lips, but he concealed his surprise and hid the emotion that was running down his back. And the fact is that rarely in his life, even being the intimate of the Genealogist Major of the Kingdom, and in spite of how accustomed he was to seeing ancient documents, some as old as the walls of Jerusalem, rarely had his eyes seen a jewel as beautiful as it was important.

That genealogical scroll had the antiquity to the surface. The seals on its metal were two stars shining in a leathery firmament as dry as the mountain where Moses received the Tablets. The characters of his writing gave off exotic fragrances born on the battlefield where David raised what would be the sword of the kings of Judah. Grandfather Mattath unfolded the genealogical roll of his House in all its magical extension and let the Young Man read the list of the ancestors of Joseph, his newborn grandson. It read:

"Heli, son of Mattath.

Mattath, son of Levi.

Levi, son of Melki.

Melki, son of Jannai.

Jannai, son of Joseph.

Joseph, son of Mattathias.

Mattathias, son of Amos.

Amos, son of Nahum.

Nahum, son of Esli.

Esli, son of Naggai.

Naggai, son of Maath.

Maath, son of Mattathias.

Mattathias the son of Shemain.

Shemain, son of Josech.

Josech, son of Joddah.

Joddah, son of Johanam.

Johanam, son of Rhesa.

Rhesa the son of Zerubbabel.

While Simeon the Younger did not dare to raise his eyes. A dazzling energy was running fiber by fiber through his marrow. Inside he wanted to jump for joy, his soul felt like that of the Hero after the victory, jumping naked through the streets of Jerusalem. If Zacharias had been there with him, at his side, by God they would have danced the dance of the brave around the fire of victory.

Sure enough, of course Simeon the Younger had seen a document just like that one, varying in names, but of the same antiquity, keeping in its secrets the oldest Hebrew characters, written by the men who lived in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon. He had seen it in his own house. His own father had inherited it from his father and brought it to Jerusalem to deposit a copy in the Temple Archives. Yes, he had seen it in his own house, it was the family jewel of the Simeon family. How many families in all of Israel could put such a document on the table? The answer Simeon had known since he was a child: only the families that returned with Zerubbabel from Babylon could do so, and all those who could do so were in the Sanhedrin.

Holy God, what our Simeon would have given to have had his Zechariah by his side at that moment. The Moon and the stars were not worth in his eyes what that Babylonian bronze scroll embraced to that cowhide parchment of Eden. That document was worth more than a thousand volumes of theology. What he would not have given to have had the opportunity to have heard from the lips of Zechariah the reading of the rest of the List! It said:

“Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel.

Salathiel, son of Neri;

Neri, son of Melchi;

Melchi, son of Addi;

Addi, son of Cosam;

Cosam, son of Elmadam;

Elmadam, son of Er;

Er, son of Jesus;

Jesus, son of Eliezer;

Eliezer, son of Jori;

Jori, son of Matath;

Matath, son of Levi;
Levi, son of Simeon;
Simeon, son of Judah;
Judah, son of Joseph;
Joseph, son of Eliakim;
Eliakim, son of Melea;
Melea, son of Menna;
Menna, son of Mattatha;
Mattatha, son of Nathan.
Nathan... son of David."

13

The Great Synagogue of the East

Perhaps I am somewhat hasty in the succession of events, moved by the emotion of memories. I hope that the reader will not hold it against me to have launched me almost unbridled through the plain of the memories that I am unveiling to him. After having been two thousand years asleep in the silence of the high peaks of History, the author himself cannot control the emotion that seizes him, and his fingers go to the clouds with the ease with which the wings of the snow eagle tend towards the unreachable sun that gives life to its feathers.

The truth that I have passed over is the relative international calm that Julius Caesar's empire brought to the region, a relative peace that played in favor of our heroes, exciting their intelligence, especially that of our Zechariah. Under other geopolitical circumstances, perhaps, the possibility of bringing that Peace into the scheme of their interests would not have crossed their minds.

Roughly speaking, everyone knows what kind of love-hate relationship between Romans and Parthians kept the Near East in check during that century. In any case, textbooks on the history of the Ancient Near East and the Republic of Rome are available to anyone. It is not a topic that predominates in the official recreation, especially in terms of the Asian origin of the Parthians, a detail that, for Western historians, influenced by their Greco-Latin culture, is sufficient excuse to touch in passing the subject of the history of their Empire. This History is not the best place to open the horizon in that direction; let it be noted here the desire to do so at another time. In the end, this History cannot open up to infinity the scenario where it developed. The official manuals are there to open the horizon to anyone who wants to delve a little deeper into the subject.

The fact that comes to mind and belongs to this History centers its epicenter in the influence that Caesar's peace had on the area and the options that it put in the hands of its inhabitants. Let us think that every time one thinks of the days of the conqueror of Gaul, the predominant note remains in the paraphernalia of his wars, his dictatorial instincts, the skein of political conspiracies against his imperium, always passing over the benefits that his peace brought to all the peoples subject to Rome. In relation to our story, Caesar's peace was more important than great.

Zechariah, who did not stop scheming how to bring to completion his search for the rightful heir to the crown of Solomon, one day thought of the words of his partner: "Relax, man, you'll see that in the end we find what we are looking for where we least expect it, and when we least expect it, you'll see", and he said that Simeon had all the truth in the world. They had not yet found what they were looking for because they had been wandering around in a vacuum. Nor would they probably ever find the clue to the sons of Zerubbabel if they kept poking around where there were no traces of their existence. So why not play the Great Synagogue of the East card?

All they had to do was to send a mail asking the Synagogue of New Babylon to search for Zerubbabel's genealogy among their archives. It was that easy, that simple.

Simeon the Babylonian, a native of Seleucia of the Tigris, a perfect connoisseur of the Synagogue in question nodded his head. He laughed and blurted it out as it came from his soul:

"Sure, how have we been so blind all this time? Therein lies the key to the riddle. Don't waste your time. Somewhere in that mountain of files you must find the jewel that has you in your head. The time is ripe. It is now or never. No one can say when the peace will be broken. Let's get to work."

Zechariah and his men chose a trusted courier from among the couriers of the Great Synagogue of the East who used to bring the Tithe to Jerusalem once the roads were open. The message he was to carry on his return to Seleucia, to be read exclusively by the heads of the Synagogue of the Magi of the East, concluded with these words: "Focus the investigation on the sons of Zerubbabel who accompanied him from Babylon to Jerusalem".

The tension between the two empires of the moment, the Roman and the Parthian, a rope in tension that could break at any moment, besides having to reckon with the continuous nationalist insurrections typical of the Near East, the answer could take some time. But they had time.

Since the days of Zerubbabel the Jews on the other side of the Jordan had managed to circumvent the dangers and fulfill the Tithe. During the stability that Western Asia was given by the empire of the Persians the caravan of the Magi from the East arrived year after year. Later, after the conquest of Asia by Alexander the Great, the situation did not change. Things got worse when the Parthians pitched their tents east of Eden and dreamed of the invasion of the West.

Antiochus III the Great struggled to contain the onslaught of the new barbarians. His son Antiochus IV died defending the frontiers. Once converted the lands of the Near East in a no man's land open to looting and pillaging after the death of the Beast of the Jews, the Jews east of the Jordan had to learn to cope alone, but whatever happened the

caravan of the Magi of the East always arrived in Jerusalem with its cargo of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

This adversity being accounted for, Zechariah's mail reached its destination. In due time he returned to Jerusalem with the expected answer.

The answer to the Zechariah question was as follows:

"Two were the sons whom Zerubbabel brought with him from Babylon. The eldest was named Abiud; the youngest was named Rhesa".

And there was more, the courier of the Magi continued to tell them:

"To the eldest of his sons Zerubbabel gave the roll of his father, king of Judah. The son of Abiud was therefore the bearer of the Solomonic scroll. To the younger he gave the genealogical roll of his mother. Consequently, the son of Rhesa was the bearer of the roll of the house of Nathan, son of David. Except in their lists the two rolls were the same. As to where both heirs were, about this they could not give you details".

How strange is the Almighty! coming back from Bethlehem was thinking Simeon the Younger. How strangely the Almighty moves! The river is hidden under the earth, the stone swallows it up, no one knows what path it will carve through the hypogea far from the sight of all the living. Only He, the Omniscient One, knows the exact place where it will break and float.

The Lord laughs at the despair of his people, he lets them dig in the ground looking for where the river that was lost in the heart of the earth just born will go, and when they throw in the towel under the weight of the impossible victory and their hands bleed with the wounds of frustration then the Omniscient is moved by the soul, he gets up, smiles at his people and with a slap on the back goes and tells them: Come on guys, what's wrong with you? Lift up your eyes, what you are looking for is right under your noses.

Simeon the Younger laughed thinking about the face his partner Zacharias was going to make when he told him the news. He already imagined himself telling him the movie of his discovery.

"Sit down Zechariah", he would say.

Zechariah would stare at him. Simeon the Younger would continue to wrap him in the mystery of his joy, predisposed to enjoy that moment second by second.

"What's the matter, brother, have you lost that ability of yours to read my mind?", Simeon the Younger would insist.

Yes sir, he was going to enjoy that moment to the last second.

At that moment there was nothing in the world he wanted more than to live in the open sky the gaze of his partner when he would say to him:

"Mr. Senior Genealogist of the Kingdom, tomorrow I am going to have the infinite pleasure of introducing to you Rhesa, the son of Nathan, son of David, father of Zerubbabel".

The Alpha and the Omega

Against the horizon the ocean raises its mouth, devouring the sky. The winds rustle, the sharks sink their paths in the dark depths fleeing from the brambles of fire that in the form of whips of water lash the strong arms that preferred to die fighting to live dying. What unknown force from the remote altars of the universe sprinkles with its nectar of laughing courage the eyes of men who go barefoot and walk bare-souled on a path of thorns seeking to warm their bones to the fire that is never consumed? What energy hardens the bones of the lark of the distances between the two poles of the magnet traveling the short seasons of its ephemeral life? Why does the suffering, crushed, exhausted and burned earth of its primordial sludge give birth to spirits born to turn their backs on the beach of coconut trees and go solitary into the depths of the black forests? What mystery is hidden in the human soul, which so many seek and so few reach? In what cradle did the firmament of the heavens suckle the breast that shows the arrow the cleft that will serve as a quiver between its ribs?

Are not the pleasures of life waves of cream and chocolate on whose lips fragrant petals deposit their kisses? The king of the jungle sits on the plain to admire the dance of his queen in the valley of the gazelles. The indomitable condor walks his feathered ship over peaks that cut the sky like heroes' swords the ranks of the enemy. The dolphin of the oceans is carried away by the warm currents, dreaming to meet along the paths of the sea, caravels of colonists drunk with dreams. Why was it man's lot to be the one who had the beating of ambitions, the clash of interests, the rustling of passions?

What shall we do with that part of the nature of our Gender? Shall we sing a lullaby before the requiem? Shall we banish from our future the birth of new heroes? Shall we do with the children of the future what others did, give them a tomb for freedom? Or shall we lock them up in a cage so that they may roam sadly like those silly little birds that die if their freedom is stolen from them?

Every man has before him a life of dangers and a life of comfort in forgetfulness of the fate of others. Every age has had its devil's advocates and its prosecutors of Christ. The only thing we know is that once you start down the road there is no turning back.

The courier from New Babylon who brought the answer to the Forerunner Saga was named Hillel. Hillel was a young doctor of the Law in the handwriting of the school of the Magi of the East. As in his day did Simeon the Babylonian, Hillel made his entry into Jerusalem bringing the Tithe in one hand, and in the other a secret wisdom fit only for that class of men whom the earth stops, though their fellow men condemn them.

The earth also weeps, and her children also learn. It has always been said that man knows more about hell because he has lived among its flames since he was expelled from paradise, than the devil himself and his rebellious angels, because their future being our fate, such cursed children have not yet tasted the bitter taste of the fires of the terrible *avernus* that awaits them around the corner.

The Hellenic sages believed themselves superior to the Hebrews because of their ability to penetrate the mystery of all things. It is therefore obligatory to ask, does he who stumbles on the stone of the donkeys know more than he who has never fallen? In other words, we are all condemned to learn by stumbling twice like the donkeys. And therefore we must condemn by system everyone who learned the lesson without the need to bite the dust where the Serpent writhes.

In those days of dragons and beasts, of scorpions, two paths opened before men. If the first way was chosen: to forget to look at the stars and dedicate oneself to one's labors, existence demanded no more speech than "live and let live", let the tyrant crushes and the powerful devour the soul of men, it is his destiny, and that of the weak to be crushed and sunk.

If the second way was chosen all wisdom was little and all caution insufficient. Zechariah and his men had chosen the latter way. So had Hillel, the young doctor of the Law sent to them by the Magi of the East from New Babylon with the answer to their question.

Hillel not only brought them the names of the two sons of Zerubbabel who accompanied him from Old Babylon to the Lost Homeland. Alone with the Saga of the Forerunners he told them what they had never heard, he made known to them a doctrine whose existence they could never have imagined in their wildest dreams.

That Zerubbabel was the heir to the crown of Judah, and in his capacity as prince of his people led the caravan of the return from captivity is a classic of sacred history. Starting from this well-known fact, presupposing Zechariah and his Saga that the eldest son of Zerubbabel had the birthright of the kings of Judah, Zechariah made his way through the genealogical mountain ranges of his nation. Eventually the impossibility of overcoming those mountain ranges of endless archives led him to look across the Jordan. And from what was once the land of earthly paradise came the answer on the lips of the doctor of the Law, the protagonist of the following discourse.

"Here I am with the two sons the Lord gave me", began Hillel the message he brought from the present Chief Magi of the East, a man named Ananel.

"Many times have all of us present read these words of the prophet. There were not two however the sons that David had. He had many. But only two, as his words testify, he included in his messianic inheritance. We speak of Solomon and Nathan. The first was wise, the second was a prophet. David divided his messianic legacy between them.

"In so doing David removed from his heir to the crown the idea of being the son of Man, the Child who would be born to Eve to crush the Serpent's head. In other words, Solomon was not to be swayed by the cry of his Court clamoring for the universal kingdom; for he was not the Messiah-king of his father David's visions.

"Worthy son of his father, the wise king par excellence followed to the letter the Divine Plan. So did his brother Nathan the prophet. This one, from the day after the coronation of his brother withdrew from the Court and merged with the people leaving behind him the trail that is never forgotten nor ever reached".

(Many doubts may arise here as to whether Nathan, son of King David, and Nathan the prophet were one and the same person. I would not want to get lost in digressions

typical of a historian of things past. When the documentary evidence necessary for the reconstruction of the history of a character is lacking, the historian must resort to the elements of an infinitely more exact science, we are talking about the science of the spirit. Just one question I put on the table and leave the subject: to what other prophet would the king of the prophets have opened the door of his palace if not to the one born in his own house, born of his thigh as the Greeks would say? Did not his God astonish him by making him laugh in that way? Of course, the matter remains to be confirmed by way of official documentation. But I insist, when natural evidence is lacking, the investigator must raise his eyes and look for the answer in the one who keeps in his memory the record of all things in the universe. But if faith fails and the testimony of God is reputed for nothing before the court of history then we have no choice but to pass over the subject or to wander endlessly after that unattainable wisdom of the Greeks. Considering here that the wisdom of those present is free from prejudice against the Creator of heaven and earth, this said, we continue).

“The house of Solomon and the house of Nathan were separated. In due time, when in his omniscience God would determine it, these two messianic houses would meet again, they would unite in one house and the fruit of this marriage would be the Alpha. When such an event took place his parents gave him a name; they called him Zerubbabel. This birth took place approximately five centuries after the death of King David.

“Zerubbabel, son of David, heir to the crown of Judah, married and had sons and daughters. From among his sons he chose two of them to repeat the operation performed by his legendary father, and among them he divided his messianic legacy. The names of his two heirs were Abiud and Rhesa.

“Love to their father, fearful of their God, princes Abiud and Rhesa accompanied their father from the Babylon of Cyrus the Great to the Lost Homeland. They took up the sword against those who tried by all means to prevent the reconstruction of Jerusalem, and after the death of their father they separated.

“Each of them inherited from his father Zerubbabel a genealogical scroll written in David’s own handwriting. The Solomonic scroll begins its List from Abraham. The Nathanic scroll opens its List from Adam himself.

“If on the Royal List of Judah no one ignores the succession from David to Zerubbabel, something else happens with the Nathanic List. Its succession is this: Nathan, Mattatha, Menna, Melea, Eliakim, Jonam, Joseph, Judah, Simeon, Levi, Matti, Jorim, Eliezer, Jesus, Er, Elmadam, Cosam, Addi, Melchi, Neri, Salathiel.

“Anyone who claims to be a son of Rhesa must present this List. Otherwise his candidacy for the messianic succession must be rejected”

But let us recapitulate.

Five centuries after the death of David, the two messianic houses met in the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar II. In the Court of the Hanging Gardens came into the world Salathiel, prince of Judah. Salathiel was united to the heiress of the house of Nathan, and they had Zerubbabel.

Already all the Jews were rejoicing because the son of the Scriptures had been born when God raised up the spirit of prophecy in Daniel. With the authority of Nebuchadnezzar's chief magician, Daniel silenced that messianic clamor by announcing to all the Jews the divine will. Namely, God had given the empire to Cyrus, prince of the Persians.

What Daniel did and said is written. I will not be the one to tell wise experts in Sacred History the number of the portents among whose halos Daniel wrapped the throne of the Chaldeans, taking the crown from them to give it to the chosen of his God.

The price that Cyrus paid for the crown speaks with indisputable evidence about the nature of the participation of the prophet Daniel in the events that led to the transfer of the empire from Babylon to Susa. But the concern that brings us together here has to do with the fate of the Alpha.

Indoctrinated by Daniel the young Zerubbabel repeated in his flesh what his father David did with his own. He took the two sons raised up by God and divided his messianic legacy between them. To the elder, Abiud, he gave the genealogical list of Solomon the king. To the younger, Rhesa, he gave that of Nathan the prophet. And then he separated them so that the Alpha would follow his paths and grow until he became the Omega.

“We already have the bearer of the prophetic scroll”, continued Hillel, “the legitimate heir of the prophet Nathan, son of David. His surfacing is a carnal manifestation of how close we are to the hour when the other arm of the Omega will break and come to light. The word of hope that my lips carry from the East is in your hearts: God is with you. The Lord who has led you to the house of Rhesa will pave the way for you to the house of his brother Abiud. In his Omnipotence he has gathered us all together to witness the Birth of the Alpha and the Omega, the son of Eve, the heir of the Scepter of Judah, the Savior in whose name all the families of the Earth shall be blessed”.

The discovery of the doctrine of Alpha and Omega amazed Zechariah and his Saga. Possibly it is also astonishing to all of you who are reading these pages. The two Genealogies of Jesus have been in front of everyone's eyes since the Gospels were written. Many have been the headaches that these two lists have caused to the exegetes and other experts in the interpretation of the sacred scriptures. I do not intend on such a beautiful day to raise my victory over the memory of those who tried to transform these Lists into a kind of heel against which to shoot the arrow that killed Achilles. If God is the one who closes the door, who will open it against His will? Only He knows why He does what He does and no one enters into His reasons but the one whom He engendered in His Heart. Or does anyone believe that against His will anyone can wrest from Him the victory that was denied to so many? Is it not true that Noah had in his Ark mighty eagles capable of beating the winds and casting their gaze over the distant horizons? And hawks swift as shooting stars, born to defy storms. And yet it was the most fragile of all birds that defied Death.

But let us return to our story.

Finding the son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel, son of Nathan, son of David, raised the morale of Zechariah and his men to fantastic heights.

They already had the bearer of the Nathamite scroll. It was a newborn child who had just come into the world in Bethlehem. His parents had named him Joseph.

According to this, the son of Nathan in swaddling clothes, the search for the son of Solomon became the search for the Daughter of Solomon. A woman who could have been born or not yet born. Imagining that they would find her and assuming in the best of cases that they would achieve from her parents the rapprochement of her family to that of her brother Rhesa, and consequently the union of their heirs, Zechariah and Simeon the Younger were before the Birth of the Son of David, son of Abraham, son of Adam. In the fruit of that marriage between the son of Nathan and the Daughter of Solomon the Alpha and the Omega would be incarnated in the Child born to them.

They could only congratulate themselves and get down to work.

But there was still a problem. If, as had been demonstrated with the house of the Son of Nathan, the parents of the Daughter of Solomon belonged to the humble classes of the kingdom, how would they find her? The answer would once again have to be sought in the Archives of New Babylon. Somewhere beneath the mountain of documents in the Great Synagogue of the East was to be found the clue that would lead them to Solomon's Daughter. Of the two needles in the haystack they had already found one, now they had to go for the other.

Zechariah and his men did not take long to send mail to New Babylon with the following question: Where did Abiud, the eldest son of Zerubbabel, settle in the Holy Land?

It was inevitable that among that mountain of parchments in the Great Synagogue of the East there would be a document signed in Abiud's handwriting.

It was to be believed, they were sure that, following the messianic doctrine, the two brothers separated and deposited the future of their encounter at the feet of God.

Constant in those days the communication between those who left Babylon and those who stayed, looking for a letter sealed by Abiud, there had to be some personal document in his handwriting that would reveal to them to which part of Israel the eldest son of Zerubbabel went and where he settled.

Faith moves mountains, sometimes of stone and sometimes of paper. In this case it was paper.

The following year the answer was brought to Jerusalem by the chief of the Magi from the East in person. Ananel came with the Tithe. He presented his credentials before the king and the Sanhedrin. After the protocols were completed he held a secret meeting with Zechariah and his Saga. It was brief.

"Indeed, Abiud and Rhesa separated. Rhesa settled in Bethlehem and his descendants did not move from the site. His brother Abiud, on the other hand, pulled northward, crossed Samaria and reached the heart of Galilee of the Gentiles. Following the policy of peaceful settlement by buying the land from its owners, Abiud bought all the land that he could see with his eyes from a hill they called Nazareth".

Ananel repeated this name, "Nazareth", with the accent of one who knows that his hearers are drinking in his words. "Nazareth!" repeated Zechariah and Simeon.

"Galilee of the Gentiles, a light has risen in your darkness", whispered the two men in unison.

Knowing how things were going Ananel could assure them without any doubt that the House of Abiud was still standing. The question they now had to resolve was how to approach the Daughter of Solomon without arousing suspicion in the tyrant's court.

16

The birth of Solomon's daughter

On the horizon line Jacob of Nazareth wrote the words of a poet: Oh woman, what shall I do if no one has taught me the laws and principles of the science of deceit? Why do you not want me innocent? If my rib hurts and from the wound you sprout like a dream, what do you want me to do?

Jacob had the soul of a poet lost in a galaxy of verses of Sharon, that Lily of the valley sings that sings to an elusive wisdom and hurt by the loves of her king. Matthan, his father, married Mary, they had sons and daughters. Jacob was their eldest son.

In those days of insurrections against the Empire of the West and invasions of the Empire of the East, the Galilee subjected to plunder and pillage, battlefield of all the ambitions of other peoples, Jacob of Nazareth became the right arm of his father. The boy, in spite of not being so young, I would rather say that he was already a man, had not yet married. Not because he had spent his time sacrificing his youth for the prosperity of his brothers and sisters. In the village they used to say that. I wouldn't say so much. Neither would he. How little they knew him! He did not take a wife because he dreamed of that extraordinary and paradisiacal love of the poets. Would he realize his dream in that world of metal and stone?

Maybe yes, maybe no.

The truth is that Jacob of Nazareth had the wood of the Adam who conquered Eve at the price of having a rib ripped out. For Jacob the first poet of the world was Adam. Jacob imagined the First Patriarch naked among the wild beasts of Eden. He could race the panther as well as interpose himself between the tiger and the lion during a dispute for the crown of their friendship. For Jacob, that when Adam went to bathe in the river, the great lizards of Eden came out of the water. And if he saw the birds of Paradise alight on the Forbidden Tree with a stone he would scare them away so that they would live and not die. Then, at nightfall, he would lie on his belly dreaming of Eve. He would see her running beside him with her long hair like a blanket of stars, naked in the sunshine of Eden's perennial spring. When he awoke, Jacob's rib ached with loneliness.

Like that Adam of Eden, Jacob of Nazareth sat against the trunk of one of the trees on the esplanade of the Storknest to dream of her, his Eve. One of those afternoons of

poetic reveries, a doctor of the Law, who called himself Cleophas, appeared on the road to the South.

Meanwhile, on the other side of Herod's kingdom, in Judea, the entrance of the head of the Great Synagogue of the East, a Magician named Ananel, revolutionized the panorama when this Ananel was elected to the high priesthood.

For many the election of Ananel closed the beheading of the Sanhedrin that Herod carried out the day after his coronation. He swore and he did it. He swore to all his judges what it came into his head to do to them the day he was king, and, when against all odds he was king, Herod did not forget his word. Except for the men who announced his future to him, he slew them all. He did not let escape a single one of the cowards who passed up the chance to crush him when they had him under their feet. Then he went and confiscated all their property.

The entry on the scene of the Chief of the Magi from the East, thinking of his reconciliation with the people, simplified Herod's task. Even more so when, as president of the Sanhedrin, Ananel put on the table a plan for the reconstruction of the synagogues of the kingdom, which would not cost the king a euro and his crown would bring him the forgiveness of History.

You know that following the persecution of Antiochus IV Epiphanes the great majority of the synagogues of Israel were razed to the ground. The Maccabean war and the subsequent Hasmonean war exploits prevented the reconstruction of the synagogues since then in ruins.

Now that the Pax Romana had been signed was the opportunity.

It is clear that if the financing of that reconstruction project had depended on Herod the sowing of synagogues throughout the kingdom would never have materialized. It was another thing if the financing was provided by private capital. As it was, the project was carried out by its promoters.

As for the Sadducean clans, the custom of the priestly classes to administer the Templar treasures for the benefit of their pockets would also have prevented the execution of the project of reconstruction of all the synagogues of the kingdom. When Ananel was elected as President of the Sanhedrin and his project had the support of the men of Zechariah, on whom the final decisions of the Jewish Senate depended at that time, the project could go ahead. Neither Herod nor anyone outside the Zechariah circle was able to imagine what secret objective was hidden behind that generous plan of synagogal reconstruction. If Herod had suspected something, another rooster would have sung. The fact is that Herod took the bait.

The Jewish history says that soon after the project was signed Ananel was removed from the high priesthood at the instigation of Queen Mariana in favor of his younger brother. Well, it does not say it with these words because the Jewish historian buried in the swamp of oblivion that project. What he does say is that the queen did her little brother a very poor favor, because as soon as he was elevated to the high priesthood he came to be killed by the same one who elevated him. But well, these details, so typical of the reign of that monster, are not relevant to this story. The fact is that Zechariah and his men received total freedom of movement to materialize that generous project of reconstruction of the synagogues of the kingdom.

Free hands to direct the synagogue reconstruction, the problem that Zechariah had to overcome was to choose the right person. It is clear that they could not send to Nazareth a bungler. If the envoy discovered the purpose behind such an extensive and costly project and went off the deep end, the future of Solomon's Daughter would be doomed. The chosen one had to be an intelligent and ambitious man to whom the choice would mean a kind of banishment. Blinded by what he would consider a punishment, all his energy would be directed to finish his mission and return to Jerusalem as soon as possible. And this is when that doctor of the Law, who claimed to be called Cleophas, comes into the picture.

17

Cleophas of Jerusalem

This Cleophas was the husband that Elizabeth's parents sought for their little daughter. Chastened by the disappointment they suffered when their older daughter married Zechariah, Elizabeth's parents sought a husband for her younger sister, lest she also follow in the footsteps of her older sister. The last thing they wanted for their little daughter was another element of Zechariah's type, so they married her to a young doctor of the Law who promised much, intelligent, of good family, a classic boy, the woman in her house, the perfect son-in-law. To Elizabeth the choice of Cleophas as husband for her younger sister was very upsetting, but she could no longer put her foot in it.

To Cleophas his marriage to Elizabeth's sister, he believed, would open the doors to the most powerful circle of influence in Jerusalem. Cleophas soon discovered how his brother-in-law Zechariah felt about opening the doors to his circle of power. Out of love for her sister, Elizabeth did pave the way, but as far as it depended on Zechariah himself, another rooster crowed. Which was logical considering what was at stake.

Well, Cleophas had a girl from his wife, whom he called Anne. Small of body, very beautiful of face, Elizabeth extended on her niece all the affection that she could not overturn on the daughter that she would never have. This affection grew with the child and became an increasingly powerful influence on Anne's personality.

Cleophas, the interested party in question, could not look favorably on such a powerful influence over his daughter on the part of his sister-in-law. His problem was that he owed so much to Elizabeth that he had to swallow his complaints about the education that "the aunt" was giving to "the niece" of her soul. Not because Elizabeth's love for her niece was depriving her of the education due to a daughter of Aaron; in this chapter, Anne's religious education had nothing to envy to that of the high priest's own daughter. On the contrary, if one speaks of envy, it was his daughter who earned the most envy. Daughter of a doctor of the Law, niece of the most powerful woman in Jerusalem - outside of the queen herself and Herod's wives- Anne grew up among psalms and prophecies, receiving the religious education most befitting a living descendant of the brother of the great Moses.

The romanticism that her sister-in-law was instilling in her daughter was what drove Cleophas crazy. When Anne became a young woman, the girl would not hear about

marriage out of interest. No match that her father sought out for her would enter her mind. No suitor seemed good to her. Anne, like her aunt, would only marry for love with the man the Lord would choose for her. And the girl confessed this to her father with such brazen innocence that it made the man's blood boil.

Anne was already of marriageable age when Zechariah privately called Cleopas and ordered him to prepare to leave for Galilee. He was his chosen one to rebuild the synagogue at Nazareth.

Ignorant of the Doctrine of Alpha and Omega, Cleophas took the choice for a maneuver of his sister-in-law Elizabeth. For him that his choice was a matter for his sister-in-law, who thus got rid of the father of "her child" and prevented him from closing wedding deals.

The protests were of no use to Cleophas. Zechariah's decision was firm. The mission entrusted to him by the Temple had priority. He was to leave Jerusalem as soon as possible and report to Nazareth as soon as possible.

Before sending him to Nazareth, Zechariah made his preliminary investigations. He learned that Nazareth had a certain Matthan as its mayor. This Matthan was the owner of the Big House, which was called the Storknest. His informant told him what he was waiting to hear. This Matthan, it was said in the village, was of Davidic origin. Now, whether by word or deed, no one had sworn to him.

With the fly behind his ear Cleophas set out on the road to Nazareth. The man had never been to Nazareth. He had heard of Nazareth, but could not remember what. Deducing from what he had heard what awaited him, in his imagination Cleophas already saw himself banished from Jerusalem to a village of ignorant and probably ragged bums.

By the way, Cleophas could bet anything that the address to whose owner he had to present credentials would be that of a shack dweller, little or no different from one of the caves of the Dead Sea. The more he thought about it, the more his hair stood on end. He still didn't understand why him.

Why didn't his brother-in-law Zechariah give the mission to any other doctor of the Law? What was his brother-in-law playing at? He had never entrusted him with any mission, and for once he had brought him into his plans, he was sending him to the end of the world. What mistake had he made to deserve such a banishment, the man complained to himself.

Wasn't his sister-in-law Elizabeth really behind this move? He answered himself that she was. Elizabeth's intention was to remove her father from the scene and buy time for her niece Anne. Come on, he could even put his hand in the fire. When she least expected it, Anne would have crossed the line that Isabel herself had crossed in her day and no one would be able to force her to marry the party he wanted her to marry.

Cleophas walked all the way to Nazareth, his head spinning. The truth was that his brother-in-law Zechariah was not a man from whom one would expect the behavior of a wimp. Since Zechariah did not speak more than he should, just and briefly, to discover the reason for his decision to send him to Nazareth to rebuild a synagogue that any doctor could have put up without anyone's help, to understand why, more than difficult, it was impossible for him. Better to believe that everything obeyed the will of Elizabeth.

Caught up in his dramatic visions of the destiny that awaited him, he was when he rounded the last bend in the road. On the other side, there it was, Nazareth, and what a surprise it was when he raised his eyes and found that sort of fortress farmhouse in the heart of the hill!

Phew, he drew a long, relieved breath. The contemplation of the Storknest cheered his heart. At least he was not going to spend the next few years among cavemen.

Relieved, Cleophas directed his steps towards the Storknest, the town's Big House. Grandfather Matthan, the owner of that mansion of unusual architecture for the time, came out to greet him.

Grandfather Matthan was a strong man for his years, a country man, hard-working but still capable of saddling the donkeys and lending a hand to his eldest son. His wife, Mary, had died; she was living with her first-born son, a certain Jacob, at that time in the fields.

Cleophas presented the owner of the Storknest with his credentials. He explained to Matthan in a few words the nature of the mission that brought him to Nazareth.

Matthan smiled at him frankly, blessed the Lord for having heard the prayers of his countrymen, showed the envoy of the Temple the room he would occupy as long as he needed it, and immediately summoned all the neighbors to the house to receive him as Cleophas deserved.

Cleophas, now calmer, was glad to be able to serve the Nazarenes. The quick and happy disposition shown him by the villagers finally banished from his soul those bad omens that had accompanied him Samaria above.

The evening of that day was the first time in his life that he came face to face with Jacob, the son of his host.

18

Jacob of Nazareth

Jacob was a young man. The most characteristic feature of the son of Matthan was his ever-brilliant smile. Sometimes Jacob's cheerful nature confused those who did not know him. From someone who carried his father's property alone, everyone expected him to be serious, bossy, and even curt. Cleophas too, without knowing why or how, thinking of Matthan's son, he too had this idea of what Jacob would be like. When he saw him for the first time, he was pleasantly surprised. The preconceived idea he had had all that day about the heir of the Storknest collapsed into pieces as soon as Jacob laid eyes on him.

The point that was no longer so funny to him - the Doctor of the Law that Cleophas was - was the singlehood of Matthan's son. Any other man at his age would already be a father.

At the comment Jacob laughed heartily. But, anyway, Cleophas had not come to Nazareth to play "the Celestine". If the boy was strange, that was his father's business.

In a good part Jacob reminded him of his daughter Anne. Like her, she either married for love or nothing.

Otherwise, I insist, Cleophas' impression of Jacob was excellent. As to the point of the Davidic ancestry of the owners of the Storknest, if son of David in word or deed what was in it for him anyway? Had he been sent to Nazareth to investigate the falsity or veracity of the Davidic ancestry of Matthan and his son? Of course not.

After all, the reconstruction of the synagogue in Nazareth was well underway. It was not just a matter of rebuilding walls. Once the building was finished and decorated inside and out, the worship had to be put into operation. His mission was to leave the synagogue in working order for the arrival of the doctor of the Law to whom he would hand over the keys of the synagogue at the end of his mandate.

This duty did not deprive him of his due vacation.

Cleophas did not know it, but in Jerusalem there were those who were dying to see him return. Had he known it, perhaps another cock would have crowed and the story that follows would never have been told. Fortunately, wisdom plays with human pride and overcomes it by using the ignorance of the wise to glorify the divine omniscience in the sight of all.

And Easter came. As every year that peace allowed it, Matthan and his son Jacob went down to Jerusalem to make the offerings for the purifications of their sins, to render the tithe to the Temple and to celebrate the greatest of the national festivities.

The Jewish Passover commemorated the night in which while the angel killed all the first-born of the Egyptians, the Hebrews ate a lamb in their homes, a supper that they would repeat in perpetual memory of God's salvation during all the years of their lives.

Grandfather Matthan remembered going to Jerusalem for the date for as long as he could remember. That is, even if Cleopas had not been in Nazareth he and his son would have gone down to Jerusalem. But since both Cleopas and Matthan were going to do it, it was only right that they should do it together.

When Cleopas arrived in Jerusalem, he flatly refused to accept Matthan's idea. The man had got it into his head to spend the feast in a tent, outside Jerusalem, like everyone else. It was the custom. By this time Jerusalem looked like a city under siege, surrounded by tents everywhere.

Cleopas closed himself off. Under no circumstances was he willing to allow his host to spend the feast in the open, since he had a house in the holy city that could accommodate the entire town of Nazareth.

The excuse that Matthan and his son gave him—"if they treated him as they did in Nazareth, it was not out of interest; what they did they did from the heart, without expecting anything in return"—such an innocent excuse was of no use to him. To Cleopas the only word that counted was "yes".

“Are you going to curse my house in the eyes of the Lord because of your pride, Matthan?”, angry with the refusal to accept his invitation Cleophas blurted out. Matthan laughed and gave his arm in agreement.

Cleophas ignored, as I have said before, the nervousness with which they were waiting for Matthan and his son in Jerusalem. And Cleophas was unaware, all the more so because it was God’s doing, that by inviting Jacob to his house he was bringing his daughter Anne the man of her dreams as a Passover gift.

Once Matthan and his son were installed in the house of Cleophas, after the introductions, Zechariah and Matthan entered into private conversations. Knowing our Zechariah, it is not difficult to guess what he was looking for and what kind of detours he took to lead Jacob’s father to the subject that had his Saga’s soul on tenterhooks. In this chapter we are not even going to attempt to reproduce a conversation between anything more than a magician and a country man with no trade in the arts of Logos. Where I am going to focus my attention is on Elizabeth’s feeling when she first laid her eyes on Matthan’s son.

Elizabeth took advantage of the conversation between men to take the young man by the arm and wrap him in her grace. From the first moment that Elizabeth saw Matthan’s son, a supernatural ray of light entered her soul, something that she could not explain in words but that impelled her to do what she was doing as if Wisdom herself had whispered her plans in her ear; and she, delighted to be his confidant, pretended to renounce her body and capitulated her direction in favor of her divine accomplice.

Smile upon smile, that of the young man versus that of the mature beauty, Elizabeth took Jacob by the arm, drew him away from the gaze of men, and presented him with the jewel of her house, her niece Anne.

19

Anne, the niece of Elizabeth and Zechariah

God is witness to my words and directs the pulse of my hands on the lines He traces, whether crooked or straight in His judgment they remain. The fact is that love at first sight exists. And knowing His creatures better than they will ever know each other, He engendered in His Wisdom the fire of eternal love in those two dreamers who from the two sides of the horizon, without knowing each other, sent each other verses on the wings of the firmament.

The first to see the glow of that flame was Elizabeth. And she was the first woman in the world to see the Daughter of Solomon born of that love that would burn without being consumed.

Unable Anne and Jacob to detach themselves and Elizabeth covering under her fairy godmother’s mantle that divine love that had enchanted the boys, Elizabeth managed to keep them alone and together away from the attention of men, always so grumpy, always so pious.

Her husband Zechariah for his part appropriated the company of Matthan and employed the arsenal of the measureless intelligence that his God had given him to draw from Jacob's father the name of the son of Zerubbabel from whom his lineage came.

As he pronounced those five letters, A-B-I-U-D, Zechariah felt his strength betray him.

Simeon the Younger, at her side, read in her eyes the emotion that almost threw him to the ground.

“What do you wonder at, man of God?” replied Elizabeth as she heard him repeat those five letters, A-B-I-U-D, to her. “Hasn’t your God given you sufficient proof that He himself is in charge of your movements? I will tell you something else. I have seen Solomon’s daughter in the womb of your niece Anne”.

The return to Nazareth was hard for Jacob. For the first time in his life Jacob was beginning to discover the mystery of love. Extreme happiness and total agony in the same lot. Is that love? He did not know whether to burst into tears of joy or of sorrow. Was it not for this reason that God made man and woman not to separate, because if they separate they die? If already before the rib of loneliness his pain was disguised as a poet and painted on the blue firmament the face of his princess, now that he had seen her in flesh and blood those verses had metamorphosed, they began to leave their chrysalis and, the truth, it hurt. So much so that he was beginning to wonder if it would not have been better if she had remained among albs and spring dew. Now that he had seen her, that he had tasted from her eyes the perfume of her smiles, sensations that he had never imagined had seeped into his marrow and made his bones vibrate with sorrow and happiness. Oh, Adam’s rib.

As they rode the distances, Matthan looked at his son, surprised by his silence and his sighs. All his life his Jacob had been a born conversationalist, extroverted and easy-going. But ever since they had left Jerusalem, and had already traversed all of Samaria, his son had not transgressed a single one of the rules of monosyllables.

“Is anything the matter with you, Jacob?”

“Nothing, father.”

“It looks like rain, son.”

“Yes.”

“Soon the beans will have to be planted.”

“Sure.”

The Doctor of the Law wasn’t very talkative either. He just let himself go and talked just enough. The return to work when it was an occasion for celebration and joy? So there was no need to make a big deal out of it.

The question was how long it would take Matthan to discover his son’s lovesickness. And how long would it take Cleophas himself?

It didn't take Matthan long to get to the heart of the matter. Jacob tried to give his father the runaround. It had all been so sudden, almost like a hallucination. How long would he still refuse to ask his father to ask Cleophas for his daughter as his wife? The more he thought about it the more he marveled.

In any case, even if Jacob kept quiet, Matthan was already figuring it out. Something had happened in Jerusalem that had changed his son in such a resounding, rapid and transcendent way. What else could it be but Cleophas' daughter?

When after some time Cleophas announced his desire to go down to Jerusalem and his son Jacob spontaneously offered to accompany him, lest some bandit might want to take advantage of this solitary traveler, Jacob's father had no more doubts. His son was madly in love with the daughter of Cleophas.

Cleophas, on the other hand, knew nothing about it. The man gladly accepted Jacob's offer. God knows what would have happened if Cleophas had been aware of the love affair between his daughter and Matthan's son. The man was so classical that the marriage of a daughter of the upper class of Jerusalem with the son of a peasant from the Galilee, no matter how much of a landowner the groom was, did not fit in his head. And so he allowed herself to be accompanied.

In Jerusalem, amid tears of impatience that aunt Elizabeth collected in dead hands of laughter, her daughter Anne waited for the day to see her Prince appear.

Since she knew her brother-in-law as if she had given birth to him, once Cleophas in Jerusalem, Elizabeth took Jacob and brought him home. Thus she killed two birds with one stone. Zechariah would have the Son of Abiud to himself, and on the way the two boys would have all the time in the world to promise each other once again in eternal love. In due time her brother-in-law would find out what was going on. According to Elizabeth it was the Lord's business and woe betide her brother-in-law if he got in the way.

Oblivious to class prejudices and the social interests of adults, Jacob and Anne wrote verses of Saron to each other among lilies of promises as big as pyramids and shining like stars in the light of the eyes of the fairy godmother that God had raised for them. And they said goodbye with the promise that next time he would come accompanied by his father, and in his hands the dowry for the virgins.

When Cleophas and Jacob returned to Nazareth, the boy told his father of his desire. His father restrained his heart, begging him to wait for Cleophas to finish his work. Then he himself would go down to Jerusalem to ask for his daughter as his daughter-in-law.

Jacob agreed to his father's suggestion.

Cleophas, in fact, finished his work, said goodbye to the Nazarenes and returned to his usual life. Shortly after settling in Jerusalem he received a surprise, a visit from Matthan.

"Matthan, man, what is it?."

"You see, Cleopas, fatherly duties bring me to your house."

“You say.”

Jacob’s father told him all about it. His son wanted his daughter for his wife and was coming as a father-in-law with the dowry for the virgins in his hand.

Cleophas listened in silence. When he finished what he had brought Matthan to his house, he remained speechless. It was the typical surprise that takes hold of the one who always finds out about the move the last; it was hallucinating. In these cases, after the surprise comes the classic outburst of anger.

The flame lights up in the brain: “His daughter had sworn her love to Jacob? And when had that happened? And how had she dared to give herself to a man without the will and blessing of her father?...” And it ends up pouring out of the mouth the fire.

Anne, the interested creature, though not polite, listened behind the door with her heart in a fist. Her fingers were dying to make an altar to her father’s “Yes”, in the most beautiful corner of her soul. Her “father-in-law” gave her such a warm look as she passed by that she considered herself already married and felt herself flying on the wings of the most complete happiness towards her nuptials” thalamus.

The child was biting her lips when her father opened his mouth.

“And how can that be, my good Matthan, if my daughter is already betrothed to another man? .”

Cleophas was lying. An innocent lie so as not to pass for the one who stabs the man to whom until yesterday he had professed eternal friendship.

Good God, to avoid stabbing his friend, he would stab his own daughter straight into her heart. The creature let himself fall down the wall with his heart pierced from side to side. Without the strength to run away and throw herself over the walls, Anne held on for the rest: “I’m sorry, but your child’s claim is an impossibility out of the power of my hands”, her father concluded.

Matthan was all silent. In the blink of an eye the light was made in his brain. By his beard Cleopas was lying to him. For him it was Cleophas’ refusal to accept his word about the Davidic origin of his House. Had the engagement to an unknown fiancé been true, Matthan would have accepted the no without feeling how the adrenaline was burning his insides. But no, the holy and immaculate servant of God that he welcomed in his house, rendering him the honors as if he were his Lord, was taking off his mask. Marrying his daughter to a peasant, and from Galilee to make matters worse?

It would have been better for Cleophas to tell her to her face what he thought. The truth was that he had never swallowed the story about Jacob’s supposed Davidic lineage. While he was in Nazareth, as it was neither his business nor his concern, he had limited himself to giving him the runaround. Whether it was or not was none of his business. Now that he was asking for his daughter for his son, he had no reason to continue playing the hypocrite.

“That’s my last word,” Cleophas closed the discussion.

“I'll give you mine,” Jacob's father ripped out. “I would rather marry my son to a pig than to the daughter of an advantaged son of murderers who live on the blood of their brothers at the price of the destruction of their people.”

Lord, if the child was already mortally wounded, the words of Jacob's father finished off her soul.

Anne ran out of her house, and went through the streets of Jerusalem, leaving behind her a river of broken tears. As best she could, she came upon the house of her aunt Elizabeth. She entered and threw herself into her arms, ready to die forever.

While Elizabeth tried to close the keys of that flood, Matthan mounted his horse and galloped up Samaria. When he reached Nazareth his blood was still boiling. His son Jacob was as if dead when he heard his words: “You would rather marry a pig than the daughter of Cleophas”. It was his last word.

20

Birth of Mary

How foolish are men, Lord! They seek You, and when they find You with words sharp as knives they curse themselves because You speak to them. Like one who has found what he was looking for and regrets having found it because he had been waiting for something else, men turn their words into swords and spears, they paint their faces with war paint and hating hell they kill each other believing they are killing the Devil himself. A lever to move the universe, says one, my kingdom for a horse, cries the neighbor believing he is writing on the walls of time words of golden wisdom.

When will they learn to be free with the freedom of the one who has the infinite before him? Man's existence is like that of the butterfly that flies twenty-four hours and at sunset gives up its body to the mud from which it came to life, but unlike the weightless creature, in those twenty-four hours man transforms that precious short day into a hell of monstrosities. Why did you give a mouth to the stone? Why give arms to one whose imagination is only enough to make of his frail fingers weapons of destruction? What moved you to elevate his brains above those of the birds that only ask for a piece of heaven for their wings?

Alas the soul of Jacob. Alas how the son of Matthan wept for his misfortune. Among the same olive groves from which one day Noah's dove snatched from God the promise of eternity without return, at the foot of the trunk where he would die one day not too far away, the son of Matthan poured out his heart overflowing with that joy that did not fit between his chest and his back. All his life dreaming of her and now that his hands had touched the flesh of his dreams, his rib was thrown into the fire.

“Vanity and more vanity, all is vanity” wrote the wise Cohelet on a sacred wall. Needless to believe that when he wrote that, the man must not have been very much in love?

Woe to Anne's heart! Do the eyes weep blood? Do the veins run pure water? What hidden mystery did God forge when he conceived two persons to be one? Why did he not make the human male and female according to the nature of the beasts? Why did the Lord have to bring forth from the mists of instinct the flame of murderous loneliness against which Adam was born unprotected in his paradise? How easy it would have been for the Eternal One to make man in the image and likeness of machines... The bug is programmed, set free in its sidereal zoo, the heavens move in their constellations and at the rhythm set by their coordinates the bug mates and reproduces as a plague. Why replace an infallible program, as we see in the natural world, with a code of freedom? Spring arrives and the creatures mate and multiply quietly but without pause. While the instinct calls for the human being to line up, he plants himself and responds with a single word. Love they call it.

And yet, once the fruit of this code has been tasted, who is it that looks back? Sex the beasts call Love, the beasts call sex by its name. Or when sex dies Love does not live? Or without sex there is no Love? Contrary to the opinion of such experts, the rest of us know that Love exists independently of the reproductive act of the species. And because it exists it hurts those who want it and do not have it. Yesterday as today and always, where there is love there will be pain.

Matthan closed his ears to his son's lamentations. He never wanted to hear Cleophas' name again, not even in his dreams. For him the matter was definitively settled. His heir could now look for a wife among the barbarians; he would not say a word against it, but by God and his prophets he would rather disinherit him than suffer such a great humiliation again.

Contrary to Matthan, once the waters had calmed down, Lady Elizabeth took out the rod of her temper, went after her brother-in-law and let it fall on his back with these words: "Fool, devourer of your daughter, what are you playing at? Do you interpose yourself between God and his plans by invoking your condition of servant? Do you rebel against your Lord by conjuring him to leave your house in peace? I tell you as there is heaven and there is earth that my child will marry the Son of Abiud a year from now".

Phew, if Cleophas thought the storm had passed, it was because he had not yet received Zechariah's visit. His sister-in-law thundered, his brother-in-law would unleash lightning and thunder on him.

But not with words of anger nor with words of wrath. Zechariah understood that part of the blame for what had happened was his own. As it was, he could no longer keep his brother-in-law out of the Doctrine of Alpha and Omega. He sat him down and told him everything.

The Son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel, lived in Bethlehem. He was a boy, and his name was Joseph.

The Son of Abiud, the other son of Zerubbabel, he already knew, was Jacob. The hope that had entered into the souls of all of them was that the Daughter of Solomon would be born of the marriage of Jacob and Anne. So God had arranged it, and though it was only a hope they bet their lives that it would be so. These two children would marry, and from them would be born the Son of David, the son of Eve for whom all the children of Abraham had been sighing for millennia.

As for Jacob's genealogical legitimacy, of which he had no doubt, they would soon have the proof.

For reasons of prudence, Elizabeth imposed her decision to be the one in charge of settling the situation. Matthan would sooner disarm in front of a woman than if it was someone else from Jerusalem who went up to demand that he should change his attitude. Also because the unexpected trip of one of them could arouse suspicion in the Court of King Herod, while if she went no one would miss her.

And so it was done. Elizabeth appeared in Nazareth, she went straight to the Storknest. When Jacob's father saw her, he was speechless.

What did that Lady want now?

Very simple. To pay respects to the Son of Abiud. In the name of her entire household, including her brother-in-law, she had come to ask her son Jacob as a husband for her niece Anne. And on the way she had gone up from Jerusalem to Nazareth to discover to the Son of Abiud the Doctrine of Alpha and Omega.

Grandfather Matthan listened in amazement to the succession of events experienced by Zacharias and his Saga. At the end of the story, Matthan lowered his head, nodded with his eyes and asked him to wait for a few moments.

He returned immediately, carrying in his hand a genealogical scroll wrapped in furs as old as the first morning that spread its dawn over the oceans. Elizabeth felt down her spine the same sensation that Simeon the Younger had once experienced. When she heard about the meeting at the house of Rhesa, Matthan unfolded "the Genealogy of Mathew" on the table.

The same metal, the same seal, the same characters, only the names changed.

"Matthan, son of Eleazar. Eleazar, son of Eliud. Eliud, son of Akim. Akim, son of Zadok. Zadok, son of Eliakim. Eliakim the son of Abiud. Abiud, son of Zerubbabel".

Elizabeth could not stop her breath from catching on the edge of her lips. Even as she tried to remain calm her eyes danced with joy over the line that the sons of Abiud had traced down the centuries.

Then he read the list of the kings of Judah from the last to Solomon.

"And in all this, where is your Jacob?" blurted Elizabeth at the end of the reading.

That woman was pure genius. Jacob jumped for joy at the sight of his fairy godmother. The sparkle in Elizabeth's eyes revealed the change in her father's mood. The rest you can imagine. Matthan and his son accompanied Elizabeth back to Jerusalem, bringing with them the jewel of the House of the sons of Abiud, the dowry for the virgins and the terms of the marriage contract.

Cleophas saw with his eyes what he never asked to see during the time he was staying at the Storknest. Like his brother-in-law, Zechariah, a witness to the encounter, Cleophas marveled at seeing the twin scroll of the other in the possession of Joseph's father. But if those present thought the surprises were over for the day, they were mistaken. The terms of the marriage contract stunned them. They were as follows:

First: The property of the Son of Abiud, in this case, Jacob, was non-transferable. What did this mean? In the event of Jacob's death, his inheritance would pass directly to his firstborn, whether the first fruit of the couple was male or female.

Second: In the case of widowhood, the widow could never sell all or part of the property of Jacob's heir. The said inheritance, the Storknest and all its lands, would be reserved for her heir until he came of age. What did this mean? That the widow's house would have no claim on Jacob's inheritance.

Third: In case Jacob's widow remarried, the children of this new marriage would have no part in the inheritance of the deceased.

Fourth: In case the couple had no descendants, Jacob's inheritance would pass directly to the children of Mattan. Jacob's widow would live in the house of his deceased until his death however.

Fifth: In case Jacob's heir was a female, she would inherit the messianic legacy of her father, who in turn would bequeath it to his heir. If it happened, as it had been happening in previous occasions, that a female succeeded another one, the messianic succession would pass from Jacob to the next male heir that came to the case. Let us say that if Jacob was succeeded by a female, only to her and not to his widow would it correspond to hand over his inheritance to his chosen one. Any transfer of Jacob's inheritance to a house joined to his descendants by marriage ties would not be valid in this case. The inheritance would pass from mother to daughter until a male was placed at the head of the House of Abiud, whose name would be the one that would appear after that of Jacob.

This is how Joseph came to follow Jacob, gathering in his hand the leadership of both Houses, that of his father and that of his deceased father-in-law. Unified inheritance that he would bequeath to his firstborn, the Son of Mary.

The terms of this contract raised among those present a smile of admiration. The absence of generations in the List of the House of Abiud could be explained by such an atypical nature of succession within the Jewish patriarchal traditions. Thanks to this *sui generis* formula, the House of Abiud had maintained the property to its original extent and continued to ensure that it remained so.

Once the contract was signed by the in-laws, a year later the wedding took place, and at the end of the natural times the couple gave birth to a baby girl.

In memory of her mother Jacob named her Mary.

"Did I not tell you, O man of God, that I saw the Daughter of Solomon in the womb of my child?" wrapped in divine happiness Elizabeth said to her husband.

Once the bearers of the Messianic scrolls had been found, after the birth of Mary, Zechariah gathered Heli, Joseph's father, and Jacob, Mary's father, in his house. What the two men had to say to each other was much. The discovery of the Alpha and the Omega had revolutionized their lives and the future of their children in what a way!

Zechariah, moved, let his soul flow.

“How incredible is Wisdom! The strong believe that the weak are strangled under the weight of their insensitive and violent souls, and the little ones abandon themselves to the destiny that the great ones want to write on their backs with the whip of their perverse wickedness. But suddenly Wisdom turns around. She is tired of being pursued, of never being reached. She turns, the daughter of the winds of Eternity, fixes her eyes on the athletes of God, one implores her to be hers, the other promises her his eternal love. She does not open her mouth, Wisdom has chosen her champion, she advances towards him, shakes his hand, lifts him from the dust, winks at him and herself gives him the crown of life. Stunned, maddened, scandalized by her choice, because she set her eyes on the last among them, because she gave her favors to him who was nothing, the scorned of destiny conspire with darkness to destroy her chosen. She, the Wife of the Omnipotent, laughs; her Bridegroom lifted the galaxies with a single movement of his hands; it was enough for him to open his lips, just once, for Hell to tremble. She is the apple of his eye, what can she fear from the plans of the genii?”

There were her two men. The two rivers that she had hidden under the ground, and that everyone thought had disappeared, had surfaced and, mystery to the astonishment and the intonation of new psalms, they had done it through the same mouth of the earth.

Heli and Jacob presented their sons. The Daughter of Solomon and the Son of Nathan were alive. The Virgin in her cradle, Joseph looking upon her, standing among men.

Then Simeon the Younger spoke words of Wisdom: “Ignorance, my friends, has mankind chained to the post of the dog born to guard the door of his master”, he said.

“God created Man to taste the sweetness of the freedom of a Samson immune to the spells of Delilah. The perfidious Devil forgot his divine condition, envied the human one, and having ended up possessing that of the beasts, hallucinating he howls to the stars of Hell, which he worships as its Paradise. Cowardly, with the cowardice of the one who founds his greatness on the corpse of an army of children.

“Fear not, my friends, the Lord is with us. The Sacred Eagle watches from the invisible cliff every movement of the Dragon; already it breathes, already the dark fire comes out of his snouts, the muscles of the Great Spirit tense like bows ready for battle; if it advances a foot, the Warrior jumps from his peaceful sleep in the tent of the Sage and draws his arrow, swift as lightning, strong as thunder. What we are living here is the dawn of a new Day that already spreads its dawn over the immaculate eyes of the innocence of your children.

“Let the enemies of the Kingdom of God plan their plans of destruction in their caves, let the enemies of Man hide in the labyrinths of the undergrounds of Power, we fear nothing, God is with us. If the Devil is greater than our Savior, why did he flee to hide after killing Adam? Does the lion flee from the gazelle? Does the victor kneel before

the throne of the vanquished? If the Devil is hungry, let him eat the stones; if he is thirsty, let him drink all the sand of the desert. Your children are far from his clutches."

It was a thrilling oath. Words were heard never to be forgotten. Heli and Jacob swore to marry their sons when the day came for them to do so. May the Almighty plunge their souls into the abysses where demons have their abodes if they break their word - they swore.

Then they each returned to their daily lives. Heli gave brothers and sisters to his son Joseph. Jacob gave Mary her sisters; then the babyboy for whom they longed.

Joseph was already a man and Mary a young woman, both on the verge of signing the most secret and important marriage contract in the history of the world, when the news of Jacob's death stunned all who lived to see that day. Had Mary not made that Vow of hers, the wedding would have been brought forward. Mary's Vow, as I said, affected Joseph himself the most.

For a moment the edifice of their hopes seemed to collapse, when Joseph wrote in the history of eternity those words of his, which in his day his wife would repeat to the angel of the Annunciation:

"God's will be done;
behold his slave,
a thousand years our fathers have waited,
I may well wait a few."

They were the years that were, they were not more nor were they less. When his time came Joseph arranged things and set out for Nazareth. He rented the Widow a piece of land where he could set up his carpentry shop and waited for Cleophas to get married before he married Mary.

After the birth of the second of Cleophas' sons, Joseph paid the dowry for the virgins. A year later the wedding took place.

And the wedding took place despite the shadow of adultery that weighed on the innocence of the Virgin.

As his mother-in-law told him, the angel of God removed Joseph from his doubt. Once the shadow of adultery was dispelled, Joseph got on his horse and flew to Judea to fetch the Mother of the Child. The event of John's Annunciation had been discovered to him by the messenger that Zechariah had sent him. What Joseph did not expect was to find Zechariah and Elizabeth full of life. But after what had happened to him, nothing surprised him anymore. Or so he thought. For when Zechariah regained his speech, his first words were to unveil to her the thoughts that had been growing in his soul about Mary's Son since the Virgin's arrival.

"My son, God our Lord has astonished us with a prodigy of infinite nature. As we can read in his Book, from ancient times we knew that God is Father. By forming us in his image and likeness he gave us a taste of the sweetness of fatherhood; and by discovering us to be the Father of many sons he opened our eyes to the existence of one

among them, born to be his Firstborn. What he never openly revealed in his Book is that this same Firstborn was his Only Begotten. Or did we not want to see it in his words when his prophet said:

You will mourn as one mourns for the firstborn,
you will mourn as one mourns for the only begotten.

“My son, that is the Son your Bride carries in her womb. In your hands, Joseph, our Lord has placed his Child. His life is in your hands; if his life is already in danger because of who he is: the son of Eve who was to be born to us, what will be the responsibility of the man to whom the Father has given the custody of his only begotten Son? Never let your guard down, Joseph. Defend him with your life; put your arm around his Mother and place your corpse between her and those who would seek to kill her Son. Remember that he is to be born in Bethlehem because it is so written. And precisely because it is written there will be the first place where the Devil will direct his murderous arm.”

Joseph listened to the words of Zechariah, son of a prophet and father of a prophet, unable to believe that God would allow any man, whether his name was Herod or Caesar, to touch even a hair on the head of Mary’s Son.

So Joseph returned to Nazareth, celebrated the wedding with a Mary already in an advanced state of gestation and prepared to go down to Bethlehem when the Edict of Enumeration of the Caesar Octavian Augustus raised in the nation a spontaneous clamor of insurrection.

Only on one occasion did the tribes of Israel submit to a census. In everyone’s mind was the price the people paid for King David’s census. What punishment would he send them if for fear of Caesar they disobeyed the prohibition to let themselves be counted as cattle are counted?

Judas the Galilean and his men preferred to die like brave men fighting against Caesar than to live like cowards before God.

Insurrection broke out in Galilee. Judas cut off the roads, making it impossible for Joseph to go down to Bethlehem so that the Scriptures could be fulfilled.

“How long will this insurrection last? Obviously as long as Herod’s master wants it,” Joseph replied to his brother-in-law Cleophas.

“Don’t you think Herod the Younger will be able to finish off Judas and his men in twinkle of an eye? The Herods must be chewing their nails right now. If it were up to them they would have put an end to this holy war. But I think Caesar doesn’t want it, and Caesar is in charge. The Roman has decreed that the Census should begin in the kingdom of the Jews because he knows that what is happening would happen. The merciless crushing of Judas and his men will serve as propaganda against any other possible insurrection; this is how the Roman prevents the disease.”

Joseph was not wrong. The Herods obeyed the order of the Roman master. They left the Galilean insurrection grow. When the victim was fat for the slaughter they brought out their armies. They killed as many as they could of the band of the Galilean,

and with the bodies of the survivors they strewn with crosses all the roads leading to Jerusalem.

Under that crowd of crosses Joseph and Mary passed in the direction of Bethlehem. Who is surprised that from pain the Virgin gave birth as soon as she arrived at her husband's house?

In this chapter the truth rather than the facts depends on the faith of each part of the court of history. If we give our confidence to the historian Flavius Josephus, traitor to his fatherland, savior of his people by getting the Caesars by his Histories to learn to distinguish between Jews and Christians, even at the price of turning their descendants into a nation at perpetual war against Truth, in this case the insurrection spoken of by the Apostles was born in the imagination of the authors of the New Testament.

The principles of Psychohistory, however, stand against the distortion which Flavius Josephus executed in imposing between Jews and Christians the wall of steel which was to keep them apart for twenty centuries, an execution which required of his person to deny the existence of Christ himself, becoming, in so doing, the Antichrist of the words of St. John.

22

The birth of Jesus

The insurrection crushed, Jerusalem surrounded by an army of crosses, under such a sea passed a Joseph and Mary who were already in a very advanced state of gestation.

When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, surprised, because none of them imagined that Joseph would come down before giving birth to his wife, Joseph's brothers improvised a bed in the manger for Mary to give birth.

Again the elements of Psychohistory ask us to pass. I mean, Herod the Younger would not have ordered the Slaughter of the Holy Innocents if the Romans had been present in Bethlehem. The Romans, on whom his coronation ultimately depended, would never have allowed such a crime. As soon as the Romans left, Herod the Younger set to work. But it was too late; Joseph, Mary and the Child were gone.

This set of psychohistorical elements opens our eyes to the Battle between Heaven and Hell of which St. John speaks in his Apocalypse. Death, since it had been unable to prevent the Scriptures from being fulfilled, had to lay its hand on the Child. But God, confident in His strength, moved on the chessboard of Earth with the assurance of one who knows the strategy and capabilities of his enemy and is always one step ahead. When Herod the Younger went to set his hands on the Child, his parents had already left. Certainly not to Jerusalem. Although they could have taken refuge in the house of Mary's grandmother.

And I say not in Jerusalem because, if they had stayed in Jerusalem, the words of Simeon the Younger when he greeted the Mother and the Child in the Temple would not make sense. But if he saw the Child for the first time, they would.

In this as in the rest, the reader must judge for himself who to give credibility to, whether to a traitor to his country, recycled into a kind of savior of the very ones he sold out, or to men who for love of the truth carried that love to its ultimate consequences. I say this because as a result of this new recreation of the facts, there will be those who say that this way of recomposing the times does not belong to the very succession of the events that took place.

Then, when the Child was born, the Mother already standing, Joseph registered his son. We do not know what Joseph's original intention was. If it was to stay in Bethlehem his plan changed after the secret conversation he had with the Magi.

As you have already deduced the Magi were not kings. The Magi were the Tithe bearers of the Great Synagogue of the East and as such were to have a stop at the Temple.

What the Magi never imagined as they came rejoicing was that the last few miles of the journey would be under a sea of crosses. Thank God the violence of the moment had Herod's son busy and they headed to Bethlehem to put Joseph on guard.

Joseph registered his son and returned to Nazareth. At the days stipulated by the Law he went down to the Temple in the belief that the danger had passed. He entered the Temple accompanying his wife when Simeon the Younger came out to him.

"What are you still doing here, man of God?;" he said to him. "Has no one told you what has happened?"

He took him aside and brought him up to date.

"Zechariah has hidden your track by sprinkling your footprints with his blood. Soon after the Romans left the Herods sent their assassins to your city. Your brothers mourn the death of their infants. But this is not the end of it. The horror of the news reached Zechariah. He took Elizabeth and John and hid them in the caves of the desert, where they will be safe from all danger. Then he came to the Temple. Joseph, they surrounded him like a pack of dogs, threatening to kill him if he did not disclose to them all that he knew. Unable to bear his silence, they beat him to death with their fists and kicks at the very doors of the Temple. Joseph, take the Child and his Mother and go to Egypt. Do not return until these murderers are dead."

Joseph did not say a word to Mary. To prevent her from hearing the news from his own people, he took her away from Jerusalem without giving her any explanation whatsoever.

"How could you have lived all this life carrying this burden alone, my husband?" she cried when on his deathbed he told her the fate of his brother's children.

On his return from Egypt the Child's grandmother was still alive. I believe I said that the emigrants returned what we might call prosperous and happy. The economic situation of Mary's property was equally good. The droughts that once plagued the fields were followed by times of abundant rain. Joan, Mary's sister, managed her sister's lands without envying a man. Those who thought that Jacob's death would cause her house to collapse had to admit that they had been mistaken. That girl, dedicated to her family since her youth, did not lose her fight nor let herself be deceived. Although freed from her vow by the marriage of Cleophas, Joan did not marry.

For Joseph, suddenly starting the carpentry business from scratch again did not seem an easy task. Cleophas was not of this opinion. The situation that Joseph had to overcome the day he made his entry into Nazareth was one and this new one was quite another. Joseph was then a perfect stranger. Now they had to begin to make their way with a family clientele sprinkled throughout Galilee.

Among these connections Jesus would find his future disciples. But let us return to the Son of Mary, his heir, and spiritual head of the clans that as branches of the same trunk were spread around.

Joseph's death implicated Jesus in the oath that the deceased swore to Cleophas. We have already seen that the Child lived in his being the experience of the one who is born again of the Spirit as a result of the episode in the Temple. The Simeon who came to the Son of David in the Temple was the Simeon the Younger who we have seen saying to Joseph: "Go away, man of God, or they will kill him."

During the years following Joseph's death, Jesus left the carpentry shop in the hands of his cousin James and relieved his aunt Joan in the management of his Mother's property. During his mandate the fields yielded one hundred percent; the fame of the wines from Jacob's vineyards spread throughout the region. Clever as he was, Jesus revealed himself as a businessman with whom making deals was a guarantee of success. He bought and sold olive crops without ever losing a drachma.

Supported by family relationships and the capital of the head of the clan, the carpentry shop in Nazareth also experienced a very positive boom.

When the Herods died, Jesus took possession of his father's estate in Judea.

I believe I have said before that in Jerusalem Jesus of Nazareth was known as a mystery is known. His father's brothers took his singlehood invoking the proverb: Like father, like son. Physically Jesus was the image of that tall and strong Joseph, a man of one word, not very talkative, prudent in his judgments, homely, always attentive to the needs of his family.

The fact is that when he married all his cousins and left the business running by itself, that Jesus, adored by his family, surprised them all with "his disappearances."

23

The Mystery of Jesus' Disappearances

No one knew where Jesus was going or what he was doing when he disappeared like that. He simply disappeared. He disappeared without warning, without explanation. His disappearances could last for days, even weeks. If his cousins James and Joseph asked around, to see if anyone had seen Jesus, they all made the face of those who knew nothing about anything.

Where did Jesus go?

Well, this is not easy to say. But wherever he went, he would come back from wherever he had been, as if it were no big deal. Then he'd come back all happy, he'd give some excuse to all those who with that natural concern showed him how much they loved him, "I had to attend to some urgent business", for example, and the subject was closed. To insist more was not worth it; in the end Jesus laughed and they seemed to be the fools.

"What are you worrying about, brother? Are my brothers and sisters lacking something? Are your children sick? You have health, money and love, what more can a man want?". Didn't I say it? It was impossible to be angry with Him. Not only was he absolutely right, He said it with that smile in his eyes, in the end you seemed to be the fool for worrying for no reason.

The only ones who seemed neither surprised nor scandalized by his disappearances were the Women of the House. To the greatest surprise of James and his brothers, the Women did not even want to hear about reproaches. What mystery was His to have them enchanted in that way?

Mystery? Why did he have his Mother, his Aunt Joan and his Aunt Mary enchanted?

Yes, there was a mystery. A very big one.

It turns out that when he left, a miracle took place in the house. The sacks of flour never ran out, even if the flour was shoveled out. The oil jars were never emptied, no matter how many liters of oil were given away, the level of the oil in the jars never dropped. And if any of them fell ill, the three women of the house knew that he was coming back because they immediately got well. And like these things all the others. So how could He not have them delighted? Of course, when it came to answering them or their cousins where he had come from or what he had been doing, Jesus just looked at them and gave them a smile for answer.

Where was he going, where had he come from, what was he doing? I believe it was the thirteenth apostle who said that Jesus was going to beg his God with powerful tears for mercy for all of us.

The origin of those tears should not be a strange river to us knowing the source from which they flowed. It was the Son of God, of the same nature as his Father, who looked face to face the future of the work He was about to accomplish, and seeing the Destiny towards which He was leading his Disciples, His whole heart broke.

How could he not look to his Father for a different alternative scene that would remove the destiny towards which he was dragging the world with his Cross?

And what is more tragic, when His blood was dragging Him into the fragility of human existence, and He wondered how could He be sure that what He was going to do it was the will of God, at that moment the weight of that Destiny crushed Him, and from in His chest a river of tears sprang. How could He be sure that what he was going to do was the right thing? Why the Cross of Christ and not the Crown of David?

The tension, the pressure, human nature in its nakedness pounded his brain and soul with the vision of the hundreds of thousands of Christians He would lead to martyrdom. A Fate that He could spare them by simply accepting the Crown that the people *en masse* would offer Him. What to do? How to know? And by what means to

resist the consolation that His Father was offering Him? For after the Day of Yahweh would come the Day of Christ, a Day of freedom and glory: the King on his Throne of Power leading his Father's armies to victory.

During those days, before beginning his Mission, Jesus was choosing in Galilee those who would be his future Apostles. The connections that bound him to his future Disciples came from the blood knot that the eldest son of Zerubbabel began to tie when he founded Nazareth.

Unlike the atmosphere in which Zerubbabel's men who remained in Judea multiplied, the people of Galilee welcomed Abiud's men peacefully and amicably. The neighbors of Judah were scandalized when they discovered the intentions of Zerubbabel and his men; they rebelled against the idea of rebuilding Jerusalem and tried by all means to force them to abandon the project.

The Bible says that they did not succeed. In exchange for they did obtain a policy of perpetual enmity. A policy that resulted in the isolation of the Jews of the South from the rest of the world. Circumstance that, with the passage of time, would transform the southern Jew in a people hater of the Gentiles, whom they despised and treated in private as if they were talking about pure beasts.

"Rather eat with a pig than eating with a Greek," said a rabbi.

"Rather marry a pork than a Greek," his colleague pointed out.

This hatred towards the Greek and towards the Gentiles in general, that contempt of the people who came to believe themselves to be the Superior Race, was to a certain extent a natural hatred. Towards the Greek after the persecutions of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Towards the Egyptians because one day the Pharaoh... Towards the Syrians because in another time... Towards the Romans because they had them over... The question was to turn hatred into a kind of national identity, to draw from it the strength to continue believing themselves to be the Superior Race, the Chosen Nation, the one called to subdue and be served by the rest of the nations of the world.

The inhabitants of Judea were waiting for the Messiah to become the New World Empire. Their relationship with the non-patriotic laws, imposed by the empire, which regulated life between Jews and Greeks, between Greeks and Romans, between Romans and Iberians, were a path in the jungle full of mortal dangers through which the Jew had to keep awake and always have in the Hatred and Contempt against the other races the vital force that would help him to overcome the circumstances until the Coming of the Messiah.

Contrary to their brothers of the South, those of the North were perfectly integrated in the gentile society. They worked with them, traded with them, dressed like them, learned their language, respected their customs, traditions and gods.

In comparison to their brothers of the South, the Jews of the Galilee had evolved in the opposite direction. While the southerner invoked hatred as a protective wall of their identity, the northerner invoked respect among all men as a guarantor of the preservation of peace.

When therefore Jesus arrived, the mental and moral differences between Galilean Jews and southern Jews were as enormous as those existing at that time between a

barbarian and a civilized man. The Galilean was still waiting for the Coming of the Messiah, the Christ who would unite all the peoples of the world; the Jew of Jerusalem was also waiting for the Birth, but not of a Savior, but of a warlike and invincible conqueror who would bring all the other nations of the world to their feet, on their knees before the children of Jerusalem. It would have been difficult for Jesus to find among these Jews of the South a single man who would follow him to sing to Love and Universal Brotherhood the most wonderful poem ever written, the Gospel.

Given such circumstances, it was not a coincidence that all his Disciples were present at the wedding of Canaan.

When, Abiud, the Son of Zerubbabel and heir to the crown of Solomon settled in Nazareth, his men and his sons united with each other and spread their seed throughout the district. Respectful workers with their neighbors, lovers of the laws of civilization for all, religion a private matter subject to the law of freedom of worship, the men of Abiud and his sons spread throughout the Galilee, keeping the inbred marriage as the basis of their national identity. In other respects the Galilean Jew did not differ in any way from his neighbors. He dressed like them, talked like them.

In such an environment, the success of the Virgin of Nazareth Clothing Workshop business based its fortune on the nationalist current that was awakened in the Galilee as a result of the reconstruction of the synagogues. The art of making the national costume in the hands of the daughters of Aaron, who had turned it into a monopoly based in Jerusalem, the opening of the business by the Virgin, disciple of a master in the best kept secret of the priestly female caste, the making of seamless cloaks its most supreme exponent, was a success that attracted to Nazareth the bride and groom of the region.

Independently of the prosperity that it brought to the house of the Virgin and to Nazareth itself, the success of the Virgin's workshop ploughed the countryside of the region and prepared it to find in it her sisters a land where to grow and multiply. They married in Galilee and had their sons and daughters. To the pre-existing ties at the birth of the Virgin we must add those that her sisters and the sons and daughters of her brother Cleophas created, and the dimensions of the picture in which her Son moved acquire their true dimensions.

Or, in other words, the disciples of Jesus were present at the famous wedding in Canaan simply because they were united to the bride and groom by blood ties. Or do you believe that Peter's mother-in-law was healed without faith?

Throughout the Gospels we see that the only condition Jesus asked for in order to receive the grace of his power was faith. When Peter's mother-in-law was healed, she had not yet seen the only begotten Son of God. That without seeing she had faith opens our eyes to the connection between Peter's mother-in-law and Our Lady, thanks to which that woman's faith in Mary's Son was absolute. And it helps us to open the door of her house and see Peter, through his mother-in-law's daughter, directly related to the Virgin.

After the miracle of the transformation of water into wine the only thing Peter needed to see was the anointing of the son of David by the prophet.

When one reads the Gospel the first surprise jumps out seeing Peter and his colleagues abandoning everything at the voice of: "Follow me". As if they were robots or automatons without will those men left their families and followed him without even

asking where. This is the first impression. Logically simple appearance. Those men knew perfectly well the Son of Mary. They knew the nature of his spiritual headship over all the Davidic clans of Galilee. Peter and his colleagues were not unwilling automatons obeying the order of their creator at the rhythm of the keystrokes of their fingers on a computer keyboard. Not at all. Needless to say that, on more than one occasion, united by blood ties to the House of their Mother, they spoke with her Son about the Kingdom of the Messiah. Also to point out that the First Miracle in public, of which they were witnesses, transformed the conception that they had made about the Nature of the Messianic Mission for which they were ready to leave everything at the moment that Jesus wanted it. Having clarified this, let us continue.

You have already seen who that John the Baptist was and what feeling lived at the root of those prophetic sentences against the Jews. His mother lived to raise him and tell him the whole truth about his father, why he died and who he would precede. When Elizabeth died, John withdrew to the desert and lived his supernatural life awaiting the fulfillment of the mission for which he was born. The baptism of Jesus by John confirmed to the Disciples what they already knew: The Son of Mary was the Messiah.

They went after Him to conquer the universal kingdom. They never imagined that the sword with which Jesus would conquer the throne of David would be in His mouth.

Jesus announced to them many times what his end would be, but how could they imagine that the Son of God would die crucified?

Witnesses of prodigious, supernatural, extraordinary, divine works, how could they imagine that their brothers in Abraham would commit such a crime against the Father of that Son?

What had to happen happened. Incredibly, Jesus closed his mouth as one who puts his sword back in its sheath and inexplicably abandons himself before the enemy who comes to kill him. All he would have had to do was to open his lips. If he had only said, "On your knees", the mob that came out to meet him would have remained pinned to the ground like statues of salt. But no, he did not utter a word. He simply let himself be chained.

To them, the Eleven, he left only the coward's alternative.

For they all ran for cover. All except the one who ran away naked. He was the one who brought the news to the Mother: they had just taken her Son, they were taking him away to judge him.

The Roman had asked the Sanhedrin for the head of that Messiah. Cowed by Pilate's legions, the Sanhedrin had handed him over to him.

This matter of absolute guilt that the future made fall on that Jewish generation, exculpating the Romans of their direct participation in the Passion of Christ, is resolved in the bowels of the words of the high priest to the Court that gave Pilate the Messiah:

"It is expedient that a man should die for the people."

"It is expedient" meant that either they would hand him over to Pilate or he would decree a state of siege and bring out the legions to hunt him down. If Jesus of Nazareth was handed over to him, the people would keep quiet as they would be taken by surprise,

but if Pilate brought out his legions to hunt the very one whom they were now abandoning to his fate, then, for love of country, they would defend him to the death. And where was the madman capable of believing in the victory of a popular rebellion against Caesar?

The fate of Jesus of Nazareth had been cast. It was either him or the nation. That for their cowardice the future would blame them for having betrayed Him, making them bear all the responsibility for His death, well, what else could they do? The clever Pilate would wash his hands of it, so what? Was it not better that one man should die than that the whole people should be massacred by the legions?

The problem of the Disciples was to believe that their people would not play the role of the coward and would take up arms rather than hand over the Messiah to the Romans. For them the thing was clear, how could the Empire defeat an army led by the King of the Universe? Had not hundreds and hundreds of men, women and children lived in their flesh his Glory? Among the masses were not those graceful living testimony of the Divine Mission of Jesus of Nazareth? It is true that many times those crowds had acclaimed Him king and in the same number of occasions He had given them the back. Logical? Does He renounce to the Throne that by inheritance belonged to Him?

Yes and no.

Man, throughout the history of Israel it had been demonstrated that the anointing of the king did not correspond to the people but to the prophets of God. From this experience it was natural for Jesus to refuse a coronation established against historical right.

The Anointing, canonically speaking, corresponded to the Temple. The time was to come, then, when those same crowds would follow him to Jerusalem and ask the Sanhedrin for the divine recognition that Jesus of Nazareth had earned by his works.

Then, pressed by the testimony of so many graced ones and by a crowd without number crying out loudly for the anointing of the Messiah by the High Priest, Jesus would sit on the Throne of David, his historical father, and in the presence of all the children of Israel would gird himself with the crown of kings.

When in the third year of his Mission the word spread: Jesus of Nazareth is going to Jerusalem for the Passover, the messianic expectation dragged crowds without number to Jerusalem.

Pontius Pilate was waiting for him. Aware of the adventures of the Messiah of the Jews, he had long since asked the Sanhedrin for the head of that Nazarene. The political decision he had to make regarding the messianic explosion caused by that Nazarene was complex and clear at the same time. He had to kill him. Killing the Shepherd would disperse the flock. Nor could he take out his legions and launch them in unison against the crowd. Nationalist rebellion would break out in defense of his Messiah and a Spartakian war was the last thing Caesar could wish for. As a politician his mission was to prevent disease before war developed. He could expect the worst and let the prey grow fat. As Augustus and Herod had already done in the days of the Census. At the right time Pilate would bring out his legions and from the slaughter the other nations would learn how Rome punishes rebellion against Caesar.

The fact was that the entire Sanhedrin was against the Nazarene and would not lay a hand on him for fear of the crowd that accompanied him wherever he went. The Sanhedrin had sworn to Pilate that they would deliver him in person, but to wait until the fruit was ripe.

After the first year's triumphant walk to the Mount of Sermon, the second year had been downhill. At the crossroads between the second and the third the refusal of Jesus to be crowned king had been frightening the crowds, who did not understand him at all.

Who among them all who had enjoyed such Divine Power would not have been accompanied by the crowds to Jerusalem to demand from the full Sanhedrin the Crown of his father David?

The bewilderment and ignorance about his Thought had left him alone at the dawn of the third year. Only the Women and his Disciples remained faithful to him.

In what then had that first despair of the Roman politician remained? And what seemed even worse to the Sanhedrin, would Pilate back down now? Were there not among the ranks of his army who, in case of messianic insurrection, would desert the Empire and place himself at the service of the Son of David?

As evidenced by the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, the expectation, stifled in the last year by Jesus himself, awoke from its lethargy. Believing the crowds that the Son of David had made his final decision in favor of his coronation that year, they all rushed to Jerusalem.

As we already know and history shows, for Passover Jerusalem became a city under siege. From all parts of the world Jews came down and went up to the Holy City to celebrate that Supper that served as a prelude to the Deliverance of Moses.

That year 33 of our Era to the usual crowd were added all those who once proclaimed him king.

What was not the surprise of all when Jesus entered the Temple and with a whip he broke forever the pressure against the Sanhedrin and the Caesar that that exalted crowd was ready to exert.

That messianic fever which in his first year awakened Jesus had returned to the scene. It reached Jerusalem before He arrived and made the walls of Jerusalem tremble with the same force that Joshua's trumpets once did. If instead of going straight to the Temple to grab a whip and declare total war on the Sanhedrin, Jesus had done what he did as a child, made his way to the Court of the Doctors of the Law and entered the matter... But no. Not at all. Not at all. Things were in turmoil and He went to plunge them into chaos in the most explosive way imaginable.

The same crowd that a few hours ago had beaten palms and cheers in honor of the Son of David, at nightfall was asking for his head to a Pilate who, by then, did not see why he had to kill the one who had dug his own grave.

To understand the Flight of his Disciples, we must put ourselves in the shoes of those men who in their hearts dreamed of that triumphal entry ... his Coronation. They were the first who were stunned to see their Master take a whip and lash out with almighty wrath against the Temple.

It was at that moment that Judas made his decision to hand him over to the Sanhedrin. The others were as if floating in a total vacuum.

What was going to happen now?

What had Jesus done?

As they ate the Last Supper they felt as confused and empty as that Earth that before the Beginning wandered in the Darkness of the Abyss confused and empty.

Alas, children of the Earth, your mother's inheritance is your lot! Did she not receive on the day of her birth all kinds of promises from her Creator and as soon as her Creator turned away she was caught up in the confusion that accompanies all loneliness? Your mother having experienced at her birth the confusion and emptiness of loneliness how could you not fall into the same stone?

While they dined with him, his Disciples had no idea what he was talking about. They only knew that they were ready to die fighting rather than leave Him alone. Poor Peter, his soul fell to the ground when his Hero and King took the sword out of his hands! All without exception ran away moved by a force that overcame them and moved their legs against the will of their minds.

"What is going to happen now, Mother?" John asked the Mother of Jesus, as if she knew the answer.

What was going to happen? What had been prophesied for a thousand years was going to happen. The firmament would dress in mourning to mourn the death of the Firstborn, the earth would mourn the death of the Only Begotten.

24

Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The events of that night are described in the Gospels. I am not going to reproduce them nor to point them out. I will limit myself to what is not written.

While the Judeo-Roman farce went on, the sky became overcast over the heads of the thousands of drunkards who shouted: Crucify him.

The same confusion that seized the Disciples and threw them into flight, that same force had seized the crowd that had acclaimed him at his triumphal entry, and, now, abandoned to alcohol, they vented their sorrow against the author of the disillusionment that had seized their minds. Alienated, abandoned to the alcohol in which they drowned their sorrow, which ran free and in barrels from the hands of the Temple to their throats, those who just a few hours ago saluted the Messiah now shouted: Crucify him.

As they shouted an ocean of clouds began to surround the horizon, in silence spreading a web of thunder and lightning over Golgotha. As the Condemned dragged his cross along the *Via Dolorosa*, in the heart of the day a night closed in.

Absorbed, amazed by what they were living, while they made the road to Golgotha Mount, the words of the Prophet came to very few people's minds. In fact, only one young man, at the foot of the Cross as he gazed at the sky, was reminded of the Scriptures.

"Already the waves of death surrounded me

and the torrents of Belial terrified me.

The bonds of *Sheol* were binding me,

the nets of death had seized me.

And in my anguish I called upon Yahweh

and cried out to my God.

He heard my voice from his palace,

and my cry reached his ears.

The earth shook and trembled.

The foundations of the mountains trembled,

they trembled before the wrath of the LORD.

Smoke went up out of their nostrils,

and burning fire out of their mouths,

coals of fire set on fire by him.

He lowered the heavens and came down,

a black cloud was under his feet.

He ascended upon the cherubim and flew;

He flew upon the wings of the winds.

He made darkness a veil,

forming around himself his tent;

watery calyx, dense clouds.

At the brightness of his countenance

the clouds melted away;

hail and flashes of fire.

The LORD thundered from heaven,

the Most High made his voice heard.

He hurled his arrows at them,

and discomfited them;

he flashed lightning,

and dismayed them.

And streams of water appeared,

and the foundations of the earth

were laid bare before the rebuking

wrath of the LORD,

before the blast

of the whirlwind of his anger.”

Yes, only one young man had his eyes fixed on the sky, which looked in horror at the crime of the children of the earth.

In the pain of the moment, no one had noticed what was coming upon their heads. The sky was black as the depths of the most impenetrable cave. When Jesus shouted his last breath and they thought the end had already come, as if suddenly awakening from a dream their eyes were opened to reality.

Before they felt the threat of heaven, the firmament split into tears. There was a cracking sound louder than that of the walls of Jericho falling down. It was then that they all raised their heads for the first time and smelled that electric humidity in the atmosphere.

They were about to turn back when suddenly a lightning whip broke through the darkness. It seemed to fall far away. What fools! It was the horseman who once opened the ranks of the enemy to Judas Maccabeus, who now came riding violently on the clouds of prophecy. His glowing eyes illuminated the night and from his almighty throat thunder rolled across the horizon; like a madman, possessed by a pain that blinded his insides, that divine horseman raised his arm and let fall upon the crowd his whip of thunder and lightning.

The hell of the Wrath of the Eternal Father fell in torrents upon children and women, old and young, without distinguishing between the guilty and the innocent. Maddened, as one who awakens startled from a nightmare to open his eyes to find that the real nightmare had just begun, the crowd began to run down Golgotha. The storm overhead threatened hail, lightning and thunder, but not rain. It was a thunderstorm, which the Almighty, pierced by the spear that had been thrust through his Son's chest, with a broken heart had taken in his hands and, maddened by the pain, was striking against the sons of the earth without looking at whom. The frenzy, the terror seized everyone. Terror rode without sparing the old man or the child, male or female. Maddened by what they had done under the influence of alcohol, the crowd began to

move towards the walls of Jerusalem. Mad, as if the pain of God could be stopped by the stone.

And there the crowd began to run down Golgotha looking for salvation within the walls. Then the electric whip of the Almighty began to fall on women and children, young and old, without distinguishing between the guilty and the innocent. His pain, the pain of the Almighty reached them all and tore their flesh without mercy of any kind. In less than the crowing of the rooster's second announcement, the slope of Golgotha began to fill with scorched corpses. Those who were already climbing the slope of the Lions' Gate thought they had escaped the horror when the tombs of the Cemetery of the Jews began to open. The prophets came out of their tombs and from their spectral mouths the Wrath of the Almighty sentenced the living to death.

Horror, desolation, more horror. Those who thought they could find refuge in their homes found their doors closed. One night, fifteen hundred years ago, the angel of death went through the houses of the Egyptians looking for first-born children. That same angel now walked the streets of Jerusalem killing without distinguishing between elder and younger. The same infinite pain that had shattered the heart of his Lord had reached his own, and in his unspeakable pain the Angel thrust his cherubic sword against everyone he met in his path.

Terrified, trapped in a hellish nightmare, terror dragged the fugitives to the Temple. There they huddled within its walls seeking mercy. Mad, with the madness of the one who kills the child and takes refuge in his father's house, there they found their tomb when the whip of God's Pain let fall on the dome its tears, a dome that collapsed on the terrified crowd.

Horror, desolation. The pain of the Father of Christ in full violent outburst. The blood of a God transformed into blocks of stone falling on a terrified multitude, crushing heads, reducing men and women to rubble. Shout again "Crucify Him!" the stones of the dome of the Temple wrote with their crunching as they fell from the ceiling to the ground.

While these things were happening at the foot of the Cross only one young man and three women remained. As if a shield of energy protected him the boy, standing, he contemplated the scene. At the foot of the Mount of the Passion the burned corpses, the dying crushed under the weight of those who fled down the slopes. Against the walls, with no escape possible for the dead from their tombs, the paralyzed victims of horror were piled up in a frenzy. When after a while the dome of the Temple collapsed and the thunder and lightning and the churning of flesh and blood ceased, John picked up the sword of the Roman who confessed. The young man turned his head to the three Women, spoke to them with his eyes, said "Mother", and began to make way for them. The crowd of the wounded and dying, horrified, turned away as if it were seeing an angel of God, walking, coming to finishing off the task begun by his Lord. Such was the fire that the little one of the sons of Thunder gave off through his eyes. As they saw him, unable to resist the gaze of that human cherub, the hallucinated people moved out of his way. John led the three women home and closed the door behind him. There stood the Ten and the other women. As if dead, the Mother laid down on the bed and closed her eyes to a world to which she no longer seemed to want to return.

The survivors vowed to tear apart from their minds the memory of the Night when God broke his Covenant with the children of Abraham. Their historians buried the memory of that Night in the tomb of millenary silences. Many times in the History of

Humanity a people vowed to tear from its memory a certain event, special, capital for the development of its future. Rarely has a people succeeded in burying in such a definitive way such a traumatizing chapter.

The Eleven also believed that such was the fate of those three years of unforgettable glory. In fact, the only thing that kept them that Friday and the following Saturday locked up in that House was to know the fate of that Mother who lay as if dead in bed.

Would not the Mother wake up from her sleep, would she not see on her face, broken by suffering, the pieces in which her heart had been shattered?

Lord, how could they look her in the face when she woke up? What words of comfort would they say to her to justify the shameful flight they had undertaken?

What could they do? abandon her to her fate? keep running until the distance between them and their memories became the Infinite?

Had He not told them that everything they were living through would pass away, and He would rise again on the third day?

The hours became interminable for all those who watched over the Mother's sleep. In spite of the danger they were in, no one would leave without accompanying her to Nazareth.

How long would it take for her to wake up? But of course, why would she want to wake up?

On Saturday at noon Mother began to come out of her state. The Eleven thought they could not bear to look at her. Oh, what fools they were!

They had been staring at that aged face for more hours than they could calculate. They already knew every micron of her lacerated cheeks by heart.

Suddenly on Saturday that face began to take on color. Everyone was watching her every movement. Then the Mother opened her eyes full of life.

At her side her sister Jane was caressing her forehead like someone caressing the head of the most beloved person in the world. Unthinkingly the Mother asked for some water. The other Mary, that of her dead brother Cleophas, stood up. Slowly the Mother sat up in bed and looked at them all. The Eleven were sitting on the floor against the walls of the room. The expression on her face had them marveling as the Mother opened her lips.

"What is the matter with you, my children?" she said to them smiling. "Who are you watching over? You look at me as if you were seeing a ghost".

The Eleven could not get over their surprise. Mary of Cleophas returned with the glass of water and sat down beside them, resting her head on her shoulder.

"That's it, Mary, don't be a little girl, don't cry anymore, or do you want my Son to find you like this when He comes?"

The Eleven looked at each other believing that the pain had made her lose her mind. The Mother read their thoughts and began to speak to them, saying:

“Little children, I am to blame for everything. A long time ago I should have revealed to you who is He whom you call Master and Lord. This had to happen for Him to free me from my silence. Whom do you think you followed from one side to the other?

“I am old, my children, and I am tired. Listen to me well and lift up your souls; tomorrow, when He comes, you will have the proof of all that I am going to tell you today. What would my Son think if He were to come tomorrow and find you like this? How could I look Him in the face? Have patience with me if I am not clear on any point. When He sends you His Spirit, you will remember my words and I myself will be enchanted by the wisdom He will pour into your souls. What I am going to tell you I have heard from Him. I have neither His grace nor His wisdom. I tell you, He Himself will fill you with His Wisdom and then you will no longer need me to tell you anything. He spoke to me of His World, of His Father; I asked Him and He answered me without hiding anything from me. At least nothing that I did not need to know. I was His confidant, the open and innocent heart into which He poured His divine Heart. He spoke to me of His World with His eyes gazing into infinity; I kept it all in my heart; each of His words I sealed in my flesh. I have not known why he sealed my lips until this day. Today He has released me from my Silence and I place in your hearts what He placed in mine and I have carried with me for so many years.”

Opening her Heart to them, the Mother unveiled to the Disciples: the Annunciation, the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the Divine History that She heard from the lips of her Child, in those days when “her Child”, the Son of God, came to refuge Himself in the arms of “his Mother”, the Sadness in the eyes of the Son who misses his most loving Father, a History that, brought to its Fullness, I narrate to you in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER III
I AM THE BEGINNING AND THE END
HISTORY OF GOD, INFINITY AND ETERNITY.
UNCREATION AND CREATION

**In the beginning was the Word
And the Word was in God
And the Word was God**

I

Origin and Infancy of God

Eternity, Infinity and God were born together. There was no Before and After. Nor were the three members of the Uncreated Trilogy born in the way we humans understand being born.

Does Infinity have a father? What mother shall we give to Eternity? What date of birth shall we put in God's family book? What age shall we suppose for a Being who is one with Space, Time and Matter? How shall we speak of the age of the universe without referring it to a fragment of the line of God's existence in Infinity and Eternity? And how high will be the mountain of events created by a Being who lives from eternity?

An uncreated cosmos by homeland, indestructible by nature, intelligent by vocation, born adventurer, irremediable lover of Life and its worlds, his life a perpetual adventure through the incognito seas of the galaxies. With what words could we draw on the canvas of our understanding the image of that Divine Being in constant navigation through the ocean of the galaxies?

What boundaries shall we give to his universe? What properties to his space-time? How many pages would the chronicles of his adventures cover?

There He goes. The stars at his voice turn away, the constellations as they see him go by greet him. The lion of Mercury runs across the plain between fields of planets of all atypical colors, singular, slender, subtle, his Great Spirit reaches him and cries out, "fly, creature, follow me to the ends of the universe". A galaxy like a lake of caramelized light, with the dawn of Jupiter in the nucleus, encloses in its waters dolphins with infrared glasses jumping from sidereal system to sidereal system; suddenly they see the Great Spirit, He, God, approaching running together with the lion of Mercury, and they rush to chase him through the spaces where the Orto dwells.

With what eyes will God see the colors of a field of energy that with its arms embraces ten thousand constellations? With what hair loose to the wind of the galaxies

will He feel the breeze that runs through the infinite spaces? With what hands and feet will His Great Spirit scale the luminous summits of the invisible, parallel, lost, ponent, fugitive universes? How will the time it takes to reach the plain on the other side of the most remote star clusters affect God? In what stellar directions will his heart spread its joys when he finds himself on the other side of the shores of a belt of galaxies? How does his heart react to feel the birth of life in the depths of the sea of submerged constellations?

The pearl of life in its sidereal oyster. A world, another world, a new civilization with its typical singularities, with its own particularities, another challenge of the primordial mud to the creative and destructive fire of all things. He, God, advances through the waves of the cosmic seas discovering new worlds; from star cluster to star cluster he carries the joy of the imperishable adventurer to unknown shores. He opens the wings of his Great Spirit and launches himself at infinite speed across the cosmic plains; he feels the impulse of the wind that travels through the subtle spaces and sometimes he plays with the light to be its rider and it his brilliant steed, sometimes he turns it into a ray that he collects in his quiver from where the luminous arrows shoot out into the snowy sky, embed themselves in the heart of a Nova star and transform it into a Supernova. He has Eternity ahead of him; around him stretches Infinity. That was His world, His universe, His original paradise. It had no beginning, it would have no end. Wherever His Spirit turned the stars and their luminous seas stretched their shores.

How many star systems can be traversed in an eternity? How many pages shall we calculate to the book of His life? How many branches shall we count to the tree of His experience? How many worlds, how many races, how many civilizations did God know before revolutionizing the structure of His world and converting the cosmic reality into His own Creation? What is the volume of His memory? How many memories did His mind store before provoking in that uncreated universe of His the final transformation of which we are the fruit?

II

Indeed, the Uncreation was the Infancy of God. All that He, God, knew and had been, had always been there. The forms changed, but God, He, did not remember that there had been anything else before. And He did not remember because there had not been. That is to say, before Creation there was the Uncreation, but before the Uncreation there was nothing else. Infinity, Eternity, God, were the members of the Cosmic Trilogy. Everything passed, everything flowed, the life and death of worlds, the birth, disappearance and rebirth of galaxies. It had always been like that, the forms disappeared, but the essence remained. Death reduced to dust all that lived, but from the cosmic dust the phoenix of life was always reborn. The leaves fell from the branches of the Tree of Life when the wind of Death blew, they remained bare, fragile in their nakedness, but in the end the fire of life was reborn in the sap of the universes and was clothed again with more beautiful, splendid and generous fruits. God, how He loved His world! Infinity and Eternity held him spellbound with their Wisdom. They were for Him father and mother; and He was for them the reason why everything remained in constant movement.

How then to enter, where to enter to pass and contemplate the memory of Him who was the reason, the cause, the meaning of the existence of all things? And if we were to compare each universe with the cell of a tree, how to calculate on paper the number of the Tree of Life? Or how to guess the names by which the One was known who remained

forever when all things passed away? And how to feel the divine experience of the One who wandered from universe to universe carrying with him the joy of existence to all the worlds where he went?

Where to go, where not to go? What a question! Wherever the wind blows, wherever the light of the dawn of a new universe announces its birth, to the confines on the other side of the Orto, wherever the adventure goes, wherever it has never been before. Because the most beautiful is always to come, because the most beautiful is always what has not yet been seen, go ahead, let the suns celebrate the feast and dance the dance of the magic bees! God flies on the wings of the eagle of the stars, He comes riding on the horse of the distant universes, at a trot He approaches, He alights on the banks of the river of Life, He gives His steed to drink, He looks at the horizon and smiles because on the high peaks of the distant cumulus He has discovered the gleam of a snow star. Nothing stops him. His pulse never loses control. He knows no fear. Nor knows anything but the joy of adventure. He knows neither envy nor evil. He has never been in any war. He did not need to know the truth, because he did not know lies.

Truth was He, God; truth was Infinity, truth was Eternity. Truth was the colors of the rainbow shining under a fierce summer sun. Truth was a flowering field in springtime. Truth was a nascent world under a sun of polished diamonds, three moons orbiting around the mother planet, a swarm of ships departing for a stroll through the galaxy of origin, and then the silence of souls returning to the primordial mud of Life. How not to marvel, how not to laugh, how not to pass by and refuse Life's invitation to participate in its adventure! He who was uncreated became a character, he allowed himself to be inscribed in the register of the dreamed history and there he let himself be marveled by the creative genius of Wisdom.

This is how He spent His childhood. Such was the childhood of God.

III

But one day a desire awoke in Him, God, a desire. On that day God had a desire. And that desire bore in its core the whole imprint of the heart in whose breast it was born.

Let us see. Wisdom was His sister; She moved all things through Him, through Him She converted energy into matter and launched it into space illuminating distances with those fireworks at the origin of new universes; then She sowed the seed of life in the new stellar fields and the universes were filled with creatures. At the end of time Life gave way to the waves of Death. And all creatures disappeared from the universe like castles on a beach washed away by the tide. Yes! All without exception disappeared between the fingers of time like water, like desert dust. Such was the fate of all creatures during the Uncreation. It had always been so. Life and Death were part of the uncreated cosmological system. Only by God and for God did the cosmic clay take form; Wisdom breathed the breath of life into the clay of the worlds and became animate beings. But only for a time. In due time Life gave way to Death and its waves dried up that primordial mud from which all creatures had been formed. Dust returned to dust. Ashes to ashes. Only He, God, was indestructible. Then He, God, said to Himself:

Would it not be wonderful if all the creatures of His universe were born to enjoy Immortality? Would it not be great if, returning from His voyages over those remote and

uncharted seas, laden His heart with fabulous adventures He should again meet, as one returning home, His beloved friends?

Yes, Immortality for all the creatures of the Universe! This was His dream. Such was His wish. A beautiful desire.

And He had it with such intensity that with awakened eyes God already saw His universe transformed into a paradise inhabited by worlds without number. Peoples of distant galaxies and planets sharing on the table of that Civilization of civilizations the same bread, the achievements and advances of their original societies. A universe full of life and color. Like swarms of little birds roaming the forests in the open sky, like crowds of creatures riding the plains. And He was running, flying with them, opening horizons for them, tracing new routes for them through the stars.

In the dream that inspired His desire, God already saw Himself plunging into the depths of the cosmic ocean in search of new pearls. And Wisdom, His sister, His friend of adventures, leaving Him clues among the stars, marveling Him with a new victory over the divine capacity to be surprised. She would make His dream come true. The daughter of Infinity and Eternity would clothe all the living with immortality.

This was the desire that grew in the heart of God. The question is: could that dream be realized?

Well, as far as He was concerned, He had no doubt about it. His Faith in the Power of Creative Wisdom to overcome the challenge placed on the table, creation of immortal life, His Faith knew no Doubt. However, the question was there, and its implication was no less vast and profound, for what consequences would such a transformation of state provoke in the Cosmic Uncreated System?

Naturally God was beyond the implications and their consequences. His Faith in Creative Wisdom was so blind that at no time did it occur to Him to doubt His Power to effect such a transformation of state. He set to work. Now, where to begin to make his dream come true: through the Immortality of the species as the first stage towards the Immortality of the Individual, for example? Of course he did. Perfect!

IV

What God lived from then on, what God did from that day on, can we imagine it, understand it, recreate it? An extraordinary Being arises in the stars; His purpose is to unite all the worlds that appear and disappear in space and time and to create a Civilization of civilizations that will overcome all the problems that the challenge of Immortality suggested to them. United in a Universal Empire the worlds would extend throughout the galaxies its Civilization. God would be the head of that Cosmic Empire. He would lead the first worlds to meet the last, unite them all, teach them to be free, to enjoy the wonders of the universe. And there would always be more.

God's experience of encountering worlds of all kinds was put at the service of His dream: "Immortality for all". He set to work. He opened routes among the stars and doors among the constellations, discovered new worlds and extended over their civilizations His Scepter, He gave to the kingdoms that were being formed Magna Charters. He directed their technological evolutions towards the meeting in the third phase, integrated all the kingdoms thus formed into an Empire and united to His Person

the Crown. He in person was integrated into that World of worlds as the King of kings and Lord of lords in whose Word all peoples had their guarantee of growth and peaceful and free coexistence. His Word was the Word, and the Word was God.

V

And so it was. In time that Universal Empire grew and extended its frontiers to the most remote stars of the uncreated heavens.

How to draw on the canvas of our imagination the properties and nature of that Civilization of civilizations that spread its glory over a sea of infinite stars? What Library on the Origins and History of the Empire into which God had transformed the Uncreation came to be formed in time? With how many Particular Histories was its Universal History composed? What was the number of sciences that the sages of that Empire mastered, recorded, cultivated?

Wisdom, invisible and beautiful, loving and joyful, from her luminous and transparent throne over all her creatures extended her protection and intelligence; and in all things her marvelous soul manifested itself, moving everything with a single purpose: to discover to God the laws that govern the Universe.

This, His universe, was filled with joyful and adventurous worlds with only one concern in life, to enjoy the time of existence that each individual had been given. For, although life was beautiful, magnificent, breathtaking, and the will to live was never ending, the fact was that time was limited and the passage of creatures through the world, ephemeral. Like the spring clouds that cry their last days on their May tomb before the cradle of summer, like the flow of the river that crosses the earth from East to West but approaches the ocean of unquenchable thirst, so was the life of all the beings of that Empire that God had raised with his hands and loved so much. The pain of the last embrace, the loss of the friend who disappeared while you were on a journey, the tear you did not collect from that nightingale that died with the sorrow of not having expired in your arms, oh Lord, the tender murmur of a prince whom you loved with the feeling of a brother and vanished in the mists of his innocence, giving you kisses, blessings and loves for the days you gave him, for having given him the opportunity to know you, for having made his life a story worth living even though his breath was subjected to the law of final silence. Ah, the rustle of the rose when its petals die between the fingers of the storm. The announcement of the end of perfect happiness written in blood on a future without defenses against the arrow that seeks its chest with certainty. It wounds her core, tears her thought, the spear reaches her heart.

VI

One day Death awoke from his lethargy and claimed for himself crown and scepter. I mean, if you are told that the One who claims to be God cannot make His wish come true, then what is your answer?

If you are wise or simply aspire to wisdom you will answer that that divine desire, Immortality for all creatures, this desire implied a structural revolution whose consequences would have to reach God Himself. If you are one of those who always opt for the easy things and choose the option of the ignorant, you will answer that this Being cannot really be God, because for a True God nothing is impossible.

Well, that is what happened. In time God overcame the first phase of His Desire and transformed His universe into an Empire of Worlds with origins in the most diverse stars of the most remote solar systems. He was moving toward the last phase of His project - Immortality for the Individual - when the Doubt was made. I mean, the Worlds had reached Immortality and counted their years by millions that never end, but the individual remained mortal. And this is where the problem was born. As long as the individual was born to die, and Immortality did not enter into the formal structure of his logic, life did not suffer Death. But when the individual knew that the possibility of Immortality existed and discovered that the origin of that possibility was in the King of kings and Lord of lords of that Empire of the stars, the idea of living immortally and having to die irremediably provoked in the mental structure of a part of the living a violent shock.

“For if He is True God, and to a True God nothing can be denied because for Him everything is possible, how is it that by wishing us Immortality we are subject to Death?”, asked the ignorant, for violent ignorant.

This question, so elementally logical, so rationally simple, was the breeding ground where Doubt developed. And Doubt led to the Denial of the existence of God. And in the flesh of that Denial : Death incubated the virus of War.

Not being the King of kings and Lord of lords of the Empire of the stars God in all the theological and existential extension of the word, surely there would be some way to destroy him. The only thing to do was to find the weapon to destroy him.

VII

That Universal War took place before the creation of our Cosmos. That Apocalyptic War had its origin in Doubt, and Doubt led all to Destruction. It was a war that divided all worlds and pitted them against each other to the death. The violent part, the part that denied the existence of God and considered the King of kings dead as soon as they discovered the ultimate weapon, this part chose the fate of the ignorant, loved the madness of the foolish and undertook an evolution on crooked lines in the direction of the transformation of the being into a new species of infernal creature, addicted to Power, in love with War, its will for law, its law beyond good and evil. They discovered the Science of good and evil and took it to its ultimate consequences.

The part that the wise men chose, Faith, the love of Truth, though they could not comprehend it, this part loved God and refused to accept the argument of the materialistic atheism of the violent. They agreed that the argument of the ignorant opened a breach in the Universal Faith in the origin of the Empire of the Worlds, for certainly it could not be understood that Death would not bend his knees before God. And yet who were they? Exactly who were they to understand how this conflict between Life and Death which God had brought about by His desire was affecting the structure of Universal Reality? Of course not, the wise, peaceful for wise, never accepted the legality

of the argument on the basis of the scientific atheism of the violent ones. What was hidden behind that irrational denial of the Existence of God but an uncontrollable passion for Power? What the apostles of atheism wanted to lead them to was a universal war, from which, against all wisdom, they hoped to emerge as victors in order to impose a demonic status quo on all. And there was to be no more talk. This was the truth and no matter how much science in twisting arguments the Fathers of Doubt invented, this was the light of truth that shone at the bottom of their systems of thought. What was the difference between Doubt and Madness? Ignorance to understand the nature of the cosmic conflict that in its innocence God had provoked: the Fathers of Doubt by Method dressed it up as science, then made science a new religion, Scientific Atheism, and then declared war on Faith. The latter, because it knew God, and although in its heart it could not understand the nature of the conflict that His desire had provoked in the Uncreation, it knew that that war would be the beginning of the end of all things. This argument of the wise, peaceful for wise, was of no avail to the Warlords.

Doubt was the truth,
Doubt was in them,
they were the Truth.

With such a logical structure, corrupting Logic to the point of twisting it and transforming it into an irrationality typical of demonic beasts, the bad guys answered the good guys.

VIII

When God discovered what was happening, His eyes were frozen in their sockets. And they were frozen in their sockets because He did not and could not understand what was going on.

What was War, what was its origin and what was its goal, what were the enemies of His Empire seeking, and what mysterious force dwelt in their rebellious and incorrigible hearts?

Power. The exercise of Power had become the madness of Power. Power drove the wielder mad. Ah, the madness of Power. How was it possible that a creature born to be a wind passing by could dare to raise his voice to God? Was this madness for Power one of the effects of the Science of good and evil?

IX

At first it was like a fire that is born, you put it out and you think the problem is solved. But you turn around and see another fire growing and devouring some other part of your world. You run, you arrive, you put this one out too and again you think it will never happen again, because everyone sees that the end to which everyone who falls into the nets of the Science of good and evil leads is to return to the dust from which it was taken. There is no mercy, no destiny. No tears are enough to extinguish this fire.

The violence in the opposition between Good and Evil grows in the same geometric progression as the fires it creates around it. No sooner do you extinguish one than twice as many are born. You extinguish these and the geometric progression continues. Two fires are born again further on. You run over there, put them out and they come out twice as many in the distance. When you come to realize it, the geometric progression itself has encircled you and you find yourself in Hell. Its flames are devouring everything you have raised with your hands. You oppose, you resist, you declare the final war on your enemies, because you are the enemy, the target that Hell seeks. The worlds are only pawns in a game that escapes you but is as real as the massive destruction of the worlds that were once the pride of your eyes. What have those worlds become? Into dust wandering like aimless nebulae that carry in their entrails all that was left of what you loved one day.

So it was. That Empire of Worlds that had the God of Infinity and Eternity for Founder and King of kings perished in the war of its own apocalypse.

X

The swiftness with which I have passed through the memory of the forging and destruction of that Empire must not blind the intelligence at the hour of calculation at whose feet I have laid the limits of my thought. What was cannot be changed, only what will be has been placed in our hands, and if it is already difficult to direct the course of what is towards what will be, how dare we dare to penetrate into things that were before the birth of the first galaxy that fills our Cosmos!

The fact was that, with the taste in his mouth of someone who ate a sweet and the cake burst in his stomach, God found himself alone on the ashes of that cemetery that the Science of good and evil had left in its wake.

The tree of the Science of Good and Evil offered God its fruit, and He did not take it. He did not stretch out his hand. He was tempted by Death, and He did not allow himself to be deceived. For nothing in the world was He willing to become a God of gods, all outside the law, all immune to the arm of justice. He would rather be destroyed than see his empire become the Kingdom of Hell.

XI

Wisdom and the Science of Creation

In those ashes, indeed, was buried the Childhood of God. But the one who had emerged from the flames of the destruction of his Empire was now a warrior who had won his First Battle and along the way had discovered the Science of Creation. Searching for the ultimate weapon to destroy him, his enemies had discovered to God the secrets of matter, space and time, and when he opened that door he found Wisdom.

XII

He loved her from the first day. And she did not refuse Him, she did not turn her back on Him, Wisdom did not flee from her Lord. God was for Her, from the beginningless Beginning of Uncreation, the metaphysical cause of her existence, the reason why She, the daughter of Infinity and Eternity, did everything. He was for Her, from the beginningless Beginning of Uncreation, the God who demanded more and more, continually challenged her with his joy and his will to live. God was for Her, from the Beginning without beginning of the Uncreation, her source of inspiration. It was in His heart that She, the daughter of Infinity and Eternity, looked to see the myriad reflections of the Future. His desire was her muse, His capacity to dream was for Her a workshop of projects. When He broke into the structure of Reality by laying His Desire on the table, She knew that from then on nothing would or could ever be the same. Before He saw the first flame, She had already seen Hell; before He smelled the first scorch, She had already seen the cemetery over which her indestructible warrior would walk barefoot. Inevitable the end of His sleep She articulated the throat of the wise to speak to God words of Science. By the day He would walk on the ashes of His dream, by that Day, She would have already delivered to Him all the secrets of the Science of Creation. She was going to teach him how to create a galaxy. She was going to teach him how to create a swarm of stars, how to articulate them into molecular networks, how to cover whole regions of gravitational seas floating between galaxies, mountain ranges from whose summits rivers of stars run down the gorges of the sidereal abysses and flow into the shores of the constellations. She was going to teach him to cultivate the tree of species. She was going to give him her Power, she was going to give him her being.

XIII

And so it was that the Warrior gave way to the Wise.

Infinity and Eternity transformed the universe into a laboratory of learning for God, and gave Him for a Teacher His daughter, Wisdom. She guided His thought through the atoms, directed His arm to the nucleus of the stars. She taught Him how to catch a beam of cosmic rays; She discovered Him the laws governing their motion in a field of energy; She taught Him how to manipulate that field of creative energy for the effects sought. She showed him the series of general and particular laws that govern the relationship between matter and energy. By her hands, God discovered the origin of the supernovae, the causes by which the galaxies attract, reject, unite, divide, transform but never destroy themselves. God ran against the light and defeated the cosmic ray in intergalactic flight. God accelerated the pulse of the stars to the limit of their revolutions to see what would happen if he doubled the density of their gravitational field. God plunged into the microcosm and on a silver trail followed the leap of energy from one dimension to another.

The more he learned about the forces that move the universe and its laws, the more God enjoyed growing in intelligence. His intelligence knew no limits, he always wanted more, and no problem escaped him. He only had to focus his eyes for his thought to find the answer. Wisdom merely placed the object before him and directed his thought to the right solution. She stimulated his knowledge and introduced him from science to science up to the limit that only God could reach, the knowledge of all sciences, the Creative Omniscience.

Then Wisdom opened to her Lord the door to the subject of the creation of life.

What systematic conditions must be created to obtain this species or the other. What are the processes of natural selection to be followed so that the vital force directs its steps in a definite direction and not in another.

From her God learned all the secrets of the creation and cultivation of the Tree of Life. Under Her guidance God created worlds by the method of experimentation. And when his mastery of all the laws and forces of the universe made him what he was, the Lord, he went to take the step towards the unconquerable frontier: the creation of life in his own image and likeness.

XIV

But during the period of the formation of his Creative Intelligence, a particular idea gradually found its way into the mind of God. As long as He was engaged in the mastery of the Science of Creation it was only a sporadic thought that crossed His mind, which He put away from Himself without giving it any further importance.

The Idea that crept into his being is the following:

Was He the Only Member of his Family? I mean, how could He know that somewhere on the other side of the Ortho where the Infinite dwells there was not Someone like Himself, a Being of His Uncreated Nature who at that very moment might even be passing through where He had passed?

This was the thought that came to Him, and, time after time, He pushed it away. Notwithstanding his constant turning away, as the Lord was born in him, the question gained the upper hand.

It was true that God had not met His Equal, for all He knew He was the Only Member of His Family. If He called anyone Father it was Infinity; if He could call anyone Mother it was Eternity; if He felt as Wife anyone, it was Wisdom.

Did this spare him the truth of never having been on the other side of the final horizon of the Cosmos? And if he had never been there how could He claim that this thought that had crept into his head was not the call of that Equal?

There was only one way to know. To launch himself into the infinite spaces.

That God was in Him, because He was God, was already clear. But was He the only living God?

XV

Without further thought, God left everything. There, at that moment, He ended His apprenticeship in the mastery of the Science of Creation. And He set out on the adventure, in search of the answer to the question that had settled in His chest and refused to be consigned to the recycle garbage can of His Memory.

Was HE the only member of his family? Was HE the only God known to Eternity and Infinity?

XVI

To what extent can experience enable the intelligence to comprehend the story that God lived in breaking the boundaries of a Cosmos whose space integrated Infinity? What kind of understanding must we possess to get an idea of the feelings of this Living God traversing plains of a space that was unknown to him in search of that other Being of his own uncreated and eternal nature? What kind of mathematics of time should we handle to calculate the millions of millennia that that adventure lasted? What literary structure should be embodied in the hands of a historian of all beautiful things, so that from his fingers flow rivers of legends and visions of landscapes beyond the fantasy of a hundred thousand universes united in the heart of a pearl? How shall we say God lived this or God lived that? How shall the imagination of the poet of joyful things dare to raise an ode to the conquest of horizons that cannot be seen, but that sound in the ears of their conqueror like arpeggios of magic blues shaking sadness? Can we say to the dawn: Become a woman and kiss me? Have we ever said to the morning star: Come and embrace me? What emotions will live the soul that enjoys the love of the Moon and on its wings sails through dreams of liquid crystal in search of the shores of perfect happiness? How can we enter the mind of a Being that moves at the speed of its thought and whose heart is strong as a sun?

XVII

Fearless, indestructible by nature, self-knowledge forged in a battle that wounded his soul with deep, tearing wounds, the Warrior awoke from his rest in the tent of Wisdom, bade Her farewell with a kiss of shining joy, and received from Her this farewell: "Thou-God, the one you seek, my Beloved, is in you".

Strong again, stronger than ever, healed of his wounds with the balm of pure love, the Warrior needed to discover the answer for himself, and so he climbed the mountain ranges of Time, and from the frontiers of his universe he finally saw the lands where the Infinite dwells. Smiling, with the wind of Eternity in his hair, his muscles firm, his legs strong as columns, his eyes shining with emotion and once again marveling at the beauty that opened at his feet, he who was God, indestructible warrior, adventurer in love with existence, the protégé of Eternity and the Infinite, there he launched himself on the wings of the eternal winds to conquer those virgin horizons.

XVIII

How long did that adventure last? Is an eternity a mathematical measure that fits in our physics textbooks? Will we dare to draw the humblest of the adventures lived by that indestructible warrior on the canvas of our most futuristic visions?

After an eternity had passed, God discovered that the world on the other side, where the Infinite dwells, was resolved into a line in the form of a great mountain, from whose summit he could contemplate with his almighty eyes the truth he was looking for: He was the Only God that Eternity and Infinite had known and held as Lord since the Beginning without beginning of the Uncreation.

But in this truth which may sound to you as a thing known, in this formal declaration there beat a regret.

For as more and more the Immensity of His World was discovered to God, as the definition of His Being and those of Infinity and Eternity were fused into one, becoming one indivisible, inseparable, indestructible reality, as His Nature was discovered in all its supernatural, uncreated and eternal immensity, in that same measure that desire to know if there existed on the other side of the unknown horizon His Equal, His Brother, His Friend, in that same measure that knowledge of His own uncreated and eternal supernature grew in the Wise, in that same measure grew in His breast that little hidden light that at the beginning did beat with the pulse of a very small desire; to find His Equal: "You-GOD".

And so, at the hour when the One Living God found Himself on the summit of the Mount of Infinity and Eternity, that original desire had been transformed into a stronger and stronger will to meet Him and embrace Him, to look Him in the face and say to Him: "At last, how long I have been looking for you, my Equal, my Brother, my Friend".

XIX

He who found himself standing on the summit of the Mount of Infinity and Eternity, where he found Wisdom waiting to greet him with the same words that he had said Good-bye, that Warrior, God, the only member of his House and Family, found that that little light was now beating in his breast with the strength of a sun that continued to grow. What he would not have given at that moment to have found His Equal, that person with whom he could laugh "from Me to You" and together launch into the adventure of Life on the plains unfolded at the feet of the Mountain on which he stood!

But no, God was alone, He was the only member of His Family. He would never have that Someone to whom he could say: "Brother, come on, let's run". He would never enjoy the pleasure of being treated as "You". But that was enough, was He not God? Why then was He crushing His heart? He would give life to that Brother, to that Friend born to look at Him face to face, to laugh with Him as brothers laugh and talk to each other as friends talk to each other, with freedom, with affection, with independence of judgment. Was He not the Lord? Had He not forgotten how to create a universe, how to cultivate the Tree of Life? Was not Wisdom at His side whispering in His ear?

"Thou-God is in thee. My beloved, the one you seek is in yourself".

XX

The Divine Warrior smiled again; he put on the Cloak of the Wise and, believing he knew what the words of the Daughter of Infinity and Eternity meant, he said to himself: "Then, let us get down to work".

At once God transformed the plains around the Mountain of Infinity and Eternity into a land growing to the frontiers that are never reached at the speed of its Creator's gaze. As if it were a continent growing from its center, and its center was a Mountain growing in height at the speed of the land around it, marveling whoever sees it because, no matter where you are, its summit can be seen from all the confines, God called that Mountain born to be the center of his Universal Creation: "Zion". And to that continent endowed with his supernature, as if the Infinite and Eternity were born again from the Mountain of God, he called that Continent in the heart of the Cosmos "Heaven". He gave Wisdom this world for kingdom, so that in Heaven she might take root and give from her womb the Brother, the Friend for whom his Heart yearned.

XXI

The Origin of the Gods

This is the origin of the gods of Heaven. They were born at the feet of the Mountain of God.

He gave them their names and He made known to them His own. Their name was Yahweh, He was God and they were His Brothers. They were the Brothers of Yahweh, the Firstborn of the gods. Born Immortal and Indestructible, Yahweh God lived with his Brothers a wonderful time. His heart was sated with the company of his equals. His soul enjoyed his victory with the intensity of the warrior who dances the dance of heroes after the defeat of the enemy. His enemy was his Loneliness; they were His living victory over the hell He would one day see advancing from that loneliness embedded in His heart. God danced with his brothers in the fire of joy like David through the streets of Jerusalem the day after the defeat of Goliath. For his brothers Yahweh God built a city on the top of his mountain. He surrounded it with walls, each one of a whole block, each block of a color, each color of the color of a precious stone. As if they had a life of their own, or a star within them that pulsed its lights to the frontiers that never end, from those walls suns burst forth, coloring Heaven and turning it into the Paradise of Wonders. Within those divine walls He built for Himself and His Brothers a City, and called it Jerusalem. They, the Brothers of Yahweh God, were the gods of Zion, those who live in the City of Yahweh, the Eternal Jerusalem within whose indestructible walls Yahweh God, the Firstborn of the gods, has his Home.

XXII

From its walls the Brothers of God saw the explosion of life that never stops, and dresses the Paradise of God with enchanted forests over mountain ranges as high as Himalayas filled with giant eagles with bones of metallic ice, weightless as feathers, solid as steel.

The overflowing divine fantasy that for so long slept in the heart of the Warrior awoke sublime, and calling to Wisdom, went with Her to paint on the celestial canvas landscapes beyond the fantasy of our most illustrious geniuses. The inspiration of the Creator rising from the pressure of the happiness He was experiencing, God conceived in His mind a New Creation. He took the gods and led them to the other side of Heaven, beyond the ever-expanding borders of Paradise. As one who invites to take a seat and sit down to contemplate a marvelous show, God opened the Creation of the New Cosmos.

XXIII

Here is the Principle of the Creation of the Field of the galaxies surrounding the Universe of the Heavens, the Local Region, whose Heart is Heaven, a World born to harbor in its earth the Tree of Life, and around whose World the Heavens of the Local Region extend the ocean of its continents of stars.

Willing to proceed to the Creation of the New Cosmos, from the Divine Creative Arm rivers of energy were born, which, spreading through the outer regions of the Universe of the Heavens of the heavens transformed Space into a fireworks display where each explosion marked the end of a galaxy.

Night was followed by Day; dawn was a new explosion of fireworks in the full light of the dawn of the New Age that had opened; and each explosion marked the Beginning of a New Galaxy.

Such is the Origin of the New Cosmos. God transformed all the uncreated matter that surrounded His World into energy; then He transformed all this energy into New Matter. Such is the origin of the Galaxies that presently exist and surround the Local Region.

God created the Cosmos so that it would continue to grow eternally. This growth is comparable to a wave which, expanding through Eternity, without losing its original energy, doubles its radius by the square of the speed of light radiating into Infinity.

This river of cosmic energy flows into the field of space-time that surrounds the entire Creation; creative field in which entering the energy produced by the field of galaxies begins its journey towards the stars. Such is the origin of the stars.

When the stars are born, the beam and the ocean through which the energy sails from the microcosm to the macrocosm being invisible, the stars announce their birth with an explosion of light.

Since the birth of the stars occurs in swarms, we speak of a Big Bang; but it would be more correct to speak of the switching on and off of a light bulb, there is no destruction but creation. And more than explosion, implosion.

An even greater error is to concentrate the creation of Matter in a single moment in Time and Space. There was not one Big Bang; there were many; and there will never be lacking, since the process of transformation of cosmic energy into astrophysical matter is constant, autonomous, and extends to Infinity for Eternity, having always in God the Source from which the Ocean of space-time is fed at the origin of the Creation of the New Cosmos.

XXIV

But at the end of this Principle of the Creation of the New Cosmos this movement was about to perish and be destroyed forever.

When God the Creator, Lord of Matter, Space and Time, finished setting in motion this process of creation of galaxies, happy with the joy of the artist, of the genius conscious of having astonished his audience, and mad with joy to say to his Brothers:

“Come, let us track a ray of light to the frontiers of our universe; accompany me, let us track the eagle of Andromeda through the mountain ranges of Orion”, when already his heart was beating with perfect happiness, the Day of the Origin of all things took a turn and was transformed into the hardest day of His existence.

What was found in response to His invitation on the lips of the gods, His Brothers?

On the lips of the gods hung heavy as a slab the truth they had just discovered:

“You are Yahweh God, the One and Only True, Living God”

They were his Brothers because in his need of His Equal, Yahweh God had so devoted himself to overcome the Loneliness that one day surrounded him with his Hell, that by overcoming the last frontier, the creation of life in His image and likeness, Immortal Life, he believed He had found the Final Victory that had been denied Him.

XXV

He treated them as true Brothers and true gods; he adopted them as Brothers with the sincerity and devotion of the one who gives everything, and forgets all the bad moments, and plunges into the good ones to come without any fear of being hit again by the storms that unloaded on their loneliness their thunders and lightnings. But now that they had discovered in Yahweh God, the One True Living God: how could they deceive themselves into believing what they had never been?

They were Creatures. Just that, Creatures.

They were Creatures like those galaxies He was creating; like the very Heaven that gave birth to them, like the Universe that had just been born.

How could they ever look at Him again with the eyes of the ones who believe themselves Equal to God, members of His Uncreated Family? How could they prevent their knees from bending and worshipping their Lord and Creator?

Did they not know that as soon as Yahweh God would set eyes on them, His soul would break as He would see in their eyes the failure of the Warrior who sought in them the Brother He never had and never would have?

How could they follow the One True Living God through the cosmic spaces whose immensity they did not understand and whose forces could only be enjoyed by the One who had been born among them?

The Origin of the gods, their origin, the origin of the Brothers Of Yahweh, was this, and now they knew it. Their origin was the necessity for Him, the Uncreated God, to

overcome the Loneliness that had overtaken the Almighty Lord they had just seen in action. They had been His victory; and now they were His failure. How could they raise their heads and dare to open their mouths? What could they say to Him: "We are sorry, our Lord and Creator, we understand?"

XXVI

And so it was. When Yahweh God, the Firstborn of the gods, opened the Creation of the galaxies and turned His face towards His Brothers, when He went to open His mouth to invite them to navigate the Cosmos, He found His Brothers on their knees, not daring to look Him in the eyes, and already suffering what they knew was going to happen. And they knew it because they knew Him so well, they loved Him so much that they knew He would react as He was going to react, as He reacted, as He was reacting. "Yahweh God, Lord and Only True God!" was the declaration that flowed from His lips. In these four words was contained the whole mystery of his past, of his life, of his present, of his future: LORD YAHWEH, Only True and Living God.

XXVII

Yahweh God looked into the inner being of his Brothers and saw into their minds as you and I see through the glass. HE said nothing. HE left no emotion show through. The broken illusion of the genius who finishes his work and waits for the joyful acclaim of his unconditional and devoted audience, became the sadness of the one who discovers absolute silence in the hall.

Not knowing how to react, but only to turn around and disappear from the stage without leaving a trace of his existence, Yahweh God was lost in the distances on the other side of the newly created Cosmos. And as He withdrew from the stage of His Creation, that eternal and infinite solitude of His, against which He had raised all this marvelous New Universe, began to grow in His Being like a star sown in His soul by Hell itself.

The more the fire of His Eternal Loneliness burned in Him, the faster Yahweh God moved away from all that He loved. The faster He ran fleeing from His destiny, the more that star of the abysses burned in His Being. The more his failure burned him, the more rage, anger, impotence and frustration took possession of his Mind. The more these uncontrollable emotions grew in him, the more his Great Spirit accelerated its race beyond the infinite spaces.

XXVIII

And as he sailed unchecked in flight from his own destiny the storm raged in his heart. Eternity, Infinity, Wisdom, why had they let him come to this situation? Why didn't they kill his Dream, "Immortality for all", in the womb? What sin had He committed to have been cast out of his uncreated paradise into the hell of a creation that

was a prison to him? Who or what had condemned him to this life sentence? What or who had signed against Him a sentence to eternal solitude? What was His crime? On the day he dreamed of immortality for all creatures, why was the thought not torn from His mind? Which was His crime? What was the use of having discovered the Creator in His Being if with the discovery he had been given this sentence? Had all His victory been reduced to an illusion? What was the use of being who He was if He had no one to enjoy His Being with, and never would have? With whom would He laugh when His heart burst with joy? With whom would He sail through the galaxies on the adventure of discovering new frontiers? To whom would He speak if even the gods knelt mute, incapable of addressing Him just as a friend?

Such a devastating and mortal anguish took hold of His Being that Yahweh God thought He had gone mad with grief.

XXIX

Desperate, He gave free rein to His tragedy, and from His almighty and omnipotent Arm shells of destructive energy spread through the spaces, reducing to rubble all matter they found in their path.

“Prison? No, graveyard,” cried Yahweh God to Eternity and Infinity as the explosion of their pain became uncontrollable.

“Do you not want my death? I will dig you my grave, and your grave.”

Mad with pain, feeling defeated and sunk, unable to triumph over His Loneliness, from that same Arm that just a short while ago had come out fields of energy transforming the ancient universe into New Heavens full of colors and sounds, like the one that transforms with its magic the desert into a paradisiacal orchard full of exotic birds and all kinds of fantastic creatures, from that same magical Arm came forth in that terrible Hour rays of destructive antimatter energy that seized the light and twisted it until it shattered under the weight of its infinite speed.

The Warrior and the Sage, as if possessed by the insufferable pain of defeat, were devoted to destroying the indestructible, God Himself, and on the way ready to bury with themselves Infinite and Eternity, a cemetery worthy of a God, a tomb worth the One and Only True Living God.

XXX

How can we understand that Hour of liberating catharsis that God lived through? How can we dare to imagine the nature of the fields of antimatter energy that in His infinite anger God spread throughout the ultra-cosmic spaces?

How can we describe that in His unimaginable pain the memory of the great love that His Brothers had inspired in Him triumphed over His torture, and the rays of His despair did not reach the World that He had built only for them?

With what numbers and with what kind of measures shall we calculate the time and the intensity of that Hour of liberating catharsis? How many pounds of destructive

energy could God generate before falling down, as if dead, at the feet of the daughter of Infinity and Eternity?

... As dead, without the will to breathe, without the strength to open his eyes, without the desire to reawaken....

How much matter would have to be burned and reduced to Darkness hovering the Abyss around the New Cosmos before exhaustion reached His Arm, and His fell dead on the cemetery that He had raised around Him?

How high would the pit reach, within whose dark walls a God would be buried?

What weight shall we give to the slab for the grave of a God?

How long kept Yahweh God digging for Himself His tomb?

When, at what moment did all His pain turn into darkness floating in the ultra-cosmic spaces, and He fell as if dead, without strength, as if dead, but... released?

XXXI

Indeed, God, that marvelous Firstborn of the gods, that warrior and king of an empire that integrated in his day worlds without number, that sage who enjoyed discovering all the secrets of the Science of Creation, that adventurer navigating the earth on the other side of the Infinite Uncreated Space, that God of Eternity racing the creatures of the paradise of Uncreation, that Wonderful Being laid as dead at the feet of his Beloved Wife, Wisdom the Daughter of Infinity and Eternity.

She would be the first thing he would see when He opened his eyes.

XXXII

How long did He, who was in His Innocence more beloved than a hundred thousand universes, remained as dead? How shall we say: He laid as dead this long?

God had no strength to go on living, nor did he wish to rise! What awaited him, eternal solitude?

But at last He opened his eyes. His gaze hovered over the horizon, His thoughts wandered aimlessly. Then He found Her there.

God opened His eyes and found Her there, the daughter of Infinity and Eternity, beside Him, whispering in his ear Her words of love: "Thou art, My Beloved, True God; Thou God, our Son, is in Thee."

Then from the divine lips came these words of life: "My SON, JESUS, True God of True God, UNCREATED FROM THE UNCREATAD nature of Your Father..."

XXXIII

The Book of Life

Have you ever seen the white butterfly leaping merrily from flower to flower, singing jocularly every second of its twenty-four hours of existence?

Have you never loved the song of the singing bird between the bars of its cage, wondering what you would do in its place?

Have you ever stopped to count the stars that fit in a corner of the harbor, when the sun sprinkles golden arrows on the waters of noon, capable of enamoring the hard stone that some of us have for a heart?

How beautiful it is to see happy again the one who found himself lost in the deserts of his unbearable solitude!

Why does a man have to measure the immensity of the heavens with the meter of the height of his body?

How many light years around covers the soul that smiles blissfully among singing birds and butterflies flying from galaxy to galaxy without fear of eternity and infinity?

It is He, He returns, the stars rise on their columns, the galaxies clap their hands, the gods sing the dance of victory at the fire where the Phoenix Bird was reborn from its ashes to never again be the pasture of its flames.

God said to his Brothers only these words:

“This is Jesus, my Beloved Son.”

And in these five words was contained the whole mystery of the Future of the entire Creation. The gods knelt down and lived the happiness of God the Father with the same intensity as they lived the tragedy of the departed Brother. It was enough for them to see His Happiness to know that He was their Equal, YOU-GOD, the Companion that He God sought in them and could not find.

XXXIV

Then after this time of happiness had passed, from the heart of the Victory of God the Father, the Spirit of the Creator awoke in Him. God took His Son, Jesus, left His World in the hands of His Brothers the gods, and transforming the Cosmos into a field of raw material created the Ocean of the Heavens. In this Ocean of stars the Creator Spirit sowed the seed of the Tree of Life. And somewhere in that Universe a world was born, with its Kingdom, the first of the Peoples who were to dwell forever in the Paradise that God created for His Son.

God cultivated the Civilization of the world of that First Day of the First Week of Creation, gave it for its social system a monarchical constitution, and engendered in its king a brother for his Son. Then he took the Kingdom of the First Day of the First Week of Creation and led it to its Abode in the Paradise of God.

When this First Kingdom arrived in Paradise, its People found that Heaven is a mirror reflecting all the stages of the evolution of life, from the first stages of Prehistory to the dawn of History.

The Land of Wonders was then called by the gods.

And so it was, up to five times this Event took place. Five times the Creator sowed the seed of Life in the Universe of the Heavens. Five worlds were born among the stars of the Universe, each world with its Civilization, each People with its personal ontological characteristics, each a kingdom with its own social constitution, with its king at its head.

At the end of the Fifth Day of the First Week of Creation, the Paradise of God had been transformed into an Empire. God sat in the Dome of Power as his Supreme Universal Judge, and at his right hand the King of kings and Lord of lords of his Empire, his Firstborn Son, Jesus, His *Unigenitus*.

During those Five Days of the First Week of Creation the government of his Empire was left by Yahweh God in the hands of his Brothers and Sons. The History of this Empire is written in the Book dealing with the Origins and History of Heaven. On the Day when of our turn to ascend to the World from which Jesus descended, we will have the opportunity to know all things about the creation of the Five Worlds that formed the Paradise before the Creation of our World; the Sixth in order of Time. Names, evolutionary lines, astronomical constitution, social constitution, and so on. All these things are written in the books dealing with the Chronicles of the Empire of God.

XXXV

It came to pass then that on the Fourth Day of the First Week of Creation one of those Princes of the Empire of God discovered a seed.

It was the seed of the tree of the Science of good and evil.

Its first manifestation was Doubt. Its final consequence, its fruit, War, a fruit that very soon all the kingdoms of the Empire would have time to taste.

That Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, was God the only begotten Son, this all the citizens of the Empire of God knew.

To believe it or not to believe it was another matter. But whether or not to Doubt was something that no son of God ever thought to even consider.

The fact was that God and his Son went back and forth from the Empire to the Universe and from the Universe to the Empire, and millions of years passed between going and returning. On that Fourth Day of the First Week of Creation one of the Princes saw in the Doubt about the veracity of the Unigeniture of Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the door into which to reconfigure the structure of the Empire of Heaven according to his thinking. Why could not he, Satan, son of God, receive the regency of the Empire during the Creation Periods?

This was a thought that had never even occurred to anyone. And which, curiously enough, found ears to grow. And it did grow. So that, surprised by the Rebellion of that son of God and his allies, Paradise became a hell.

Conjured by the Rebels in what was called the Axis of the Dragon, the armies of the Dragon set out to conquer the Throne of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

It was the first World War of Heaven.

Satan at the head of the Dragon Axis his armies ravaged the borders of the neighboring kingdoms and advanced towards Zion to conquer the Throne of the King of kings.

Stunned, amazed by what they were seeing, unable to react to the surprise, the Brothers and the sons of God who refused to accept even the possibility of such a reconfiguration, from the walls of the City of God the Princes of the House of Yahweh and Zion contemplated the advance of the forces of the Dragon, and the stampede of the Peoples of the Empire towards the Jerusalem of the gods.

Indeed, nothing that the Brothers and the sons of God told them to lay down their arms entered Satan's head. Thus, overcoming the first surprise the counterattack prevailed.

The gods opened the Seal of their origins and the Princes fed on their forces. The Princes Gabriel, Michael and Raphael put on the invincibility of the gods, ravaged the enemy, drove them back to their kingdoms, besieged them in their fortresses, captured them and locked them in their palaces until the Judge of Creation returned and passed sentence.

It happened then that when the Father and the Son returned from the Heavens of Creation bringing by the hand a new Kingdom to Paradise, the sons of God met them, but Satan was not among them.

One look was enough for God to discover why. But wanting to leave everything in the lesson learned and not wanting under any circumstances his Son to discover the existence of the Science of good and evil, he ordered all his sons to present themselves before him for the celebration of the Welcoming Feast of the Kingdom on the Fourth Day of the First Week of Creation.

And that was that.

As was natural, the Empire dressed up for the Welcoming Feast. The Kingdom of the Fourth Day of the First Week of Creation took up its abode in the Empire of the Son of God; its King was presented to the house of the sons of God.

Joy in peace.

The memory of the Dragon igniting with his breath the War became the memory of a nightmare that was gone and would never return.

Joy in forgiveness.

And the Fifth Day of the First Week of Creation dawned. Again God and His Son left the Regency of His Empire in the hands of the Members of the House "of Yahweh and Zion".

And after thousands of years the unbelievable happened again.

Like a mule that never learns his lesson, Satan moved again in the shadows. He found allies and they conspired to awaken the Dragon.

The decision was made, the plan to conquer the Empire on the table, the new war, the Second World War of Heaven, was made.

Again the gods and princes of Heaven were taken by surprise.

Good God, how to explain that this new rebellion had blown up in their faces! Even if they won, and about the Victory they had no doubt, the inability of the House of God to keep the peace would already be demonstrated forever.

Reflection was forced upon them.

What was going on?

How was it possible that simple creatures of clay dared to question the Truthfulness of the *Unigenitus* Son of God?

Or simply dare to dream of forcing God to do their will and give green light to the transformation of the Empire into an Olympus of gods: free from the subjection to the Law of the Kingdom?

XXXVI

And so it was, the Second World War of Heaven ended in the same way. The Dragon was neutralized, chained and guarded until the return of the Judge of the Empire.

But that was a bitter victory. A victory that did not taste like a triumph to the victors. They had failed for the second time the One who, during His absence, had given them the universal regency. What would happen on His return? How could they explain what they themselves could not understand?

At last God and His Son returned from the Ocean of Stars. By their Hand they brought a new Kingdom, as always with their Prince at its head.

With that joy of the Father who has just given birth to a new son, of the Son who greets the birth of a little brother, the Father and the Son returned home.

Here the same thing happened again. For an instant the Son discovered in the tone of his Father giving the order to present all his son before Him something... something mysterious. But it did not go beyond that.

And again God forgave the Rebels.

However, He knew that there was an urgent need for revolutionary action. He could not allow a Third World War to break out during His absence from Heaven.

Either he would reconfigure the structure of his Empire or sooner or later his Creation would become an Olympus of gods playing war with the responsibility of one who has total and absolute immunity from the laws.

He could not allow that to happen. So He had to look for the answer that the facts demanded.

And so it was done.

God found the answer.

Events demanded that He open his Creation to all his sons. So the next time the Spirit of the Creator spread his wings over the Universe all his sons would accompany him.

From the Sixth Day onwards Creation would be transformed into a Show open to all worlds. And what is more, all his sons would participate in the process of formation of the New Worlds.

This was the first step in closing the way by which, as time went by, God's Paradise became a prison for his creatures. Wonderful and whatever you want, but a prison.

As to why the Peoples of his Creation did not just conceive their existence as a Tree of which they were its Branches, God conceived the Creation of a New People, formed by all his sons, and in which the fusion of all his Civilizations into a New and Unique One, once their entrance into Paradise was accomplished, this New People would serve as the mortar necessary for the bricks to stick together and form a compact, solid and indestructible building.

The projection of the Five Civilizations of the existing Kingdoms on Human Life would operate, in their fusion, the Birth of this New Civilization which, spreading out through Paradise, would unite them all in the soul of this New Civilization in which each and every one of the existing ones were reflected and lived. Created not for Power but to be the body of the spirit of Wisdom in its Creation, the Human People would realize the Fusion without which Doubt, the mother of War, had been possible.

As for the Doubt as to whether the King of kings and Lord of lords of the Empire of Heaven was God the Only Begotten Son, with their eyes they were to see it.

So at the birth of the Sixth Day of the First Week of the Creation God took all his sons and led them to the place of Origin, the Universe.

God created the Heavens and created the Earth.

He created the Earth beyond the borders of the galaxies.

And he created it there for his children to see what lay beyond the Cosmos, the Abyss covered by that Darkness to which the One True God reduced the Uncreated Cosmos in that Hour which preceded the Birth of the Father and the Son.

At the same time he cleared the mystery of what lies beyond the borders of the field of galaxies. With this gesture God was telling his sons what would happen to anyone who dared to dig up the hatchet again. The penalty against the Rebel would be the penalty of banishment to the Darkness, from whence he would never return, and where for eternity there would be gnashing of bones and chattering of teeth.

Then, once the stage was built, all the spectators sat down. God looked at his Son, He advanced, and opening his mouth said:

“Let there be light.”

AND THE LIGHT BECAME MAN...

SO THAT EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO LIVE

MAY LIVE FOREVER

EPILOGUE

But I would not like to close this *Divine History* leaving in the air any possible suspicion about the possibility of having been known this *Divine History* by the Catholic Church. The tragic circumstances surrounding the Birth and Infancy of the *Catholic Church*, and precisely because She were in a constant situation of death, clears any possibility of She having hidden the knowledge of this *Divine History* from the people of Christ.

Regarding the Silence of God, which obliged all His House, its continuity beyond the Resurrection was sealed in the New Testament on the day when the Apostle Paul, with the confirmation of all the Living Apostles, wrote that: "... the whole creation is anxiously awaiting the day of the glory of the freedom of the children of God...". Let us remember those Origins.

In the 30's of the century of Christ the first antichristian persecution began. After the Death of Jesus the obstinacy of his Disciples - on the subject of the Resurrection - pushed the Jews to sign a Final Solution of extermination of all Christians.

At first their judges remained convinced that by killing the dog they had stopped the sickness. It was to be expected that their sectarians would never come out of hiding, would return to Galilee and there the episode of the appearance of such an atypical problem would remain. But when, forty days after the Resurrection, the Twelve came out of hiding and began to preach the Gospel, the problem came back.

Confused for not having been able to disperse the flock once the shepherd was dead, hallucinated by the speed at which the news of the Resurrection was spreading throughout Judea, Samaria and Galilee, in the heat of that hatred for airing his crime in the eyes of the entire Empire, the Jews perfected their natural ability for espionage. And they took advantage of the mobility of the Apostles, without arousing among the faithful suspicion of any kind, to place their men among the early Christians.

Knowing the extent of the Movement, those spies surpassed in capacity for intrigue their own chiefs, or perhaps following the order of their princes, they began to spread the word, a terrible anti-Christian hoax, saying that the Apostles were preparing an open rebellion against Caesar. The consequence of that revolution would arouse against Jerusalem the wrath of Rome, final effect on which the Apostles would base the prophetic veracity of their Chief, especially speaking of his prophecy about the fate of Jerusalem, destined to be razed to the ground.

The people were stirred up; public opinion motivated by such exterminating lies, the people stooped down to pick up the first stone. So, after the brief period of tolerance

in honor of the Memory of Jesus, once overcome the trauma of having passively resisted the Crucifixion of that young Prophet of Nazareth, the people, frightened by how far his Disciples wanted to take revenge against the Temple, approved the killings of Christians.

Thus, like exterminating angels going through the secret tunnels where that uprising against the Empire was supposedly planned, the Temple blessed the killing of all his disciples, small and big.

The impossibility of convincing those early Christians of the folly of believing in the Resurrection of a man, in the existence of Paradise, in the Incarnation of the Son of God, points in which the Early Christians believed blindly, claiming the existence of Heaven and Hell; because of such a simple faith: "God the only begotten Son became incarnate, became man, and crucified him. On the third day he rose again", anyone who confessed to the Catholic doctrine *par excellence* have to be killed

The first historian of the History of Christianity, Mark, of Hebrew origin, and because he was Hebrew, did not want to portray with his pen the gravity of the first exterminating wave. The First Christians would overcome the ordeal.

From the point of view of Roman law, no imperial decree having been signed against religious freedom in general and against Christianity in particular, the public death of the young *Saint Stephen* could only embarrass the governor of the Jewish state before Caesar.

In the Gospels we see that Jesus had sympathizers within the Roman military. It is to be believed that this sympathy was still alive towards his Disciples. From where it must be implied that the change of Procurator for the Jewish question were influenced by the denunciations of those Roman citizens against the policy of transgression of the religious laws of the Empire by the elected of the Senate. Can it be believed that, counting on the Jewish complicity, Pilate was exposed to be judged and condemned by the Senate on the basis of having broken the law referred? From the facts of Pilate written by his biographers it can be said that this was so. Pilate was tried by the Senate and banished from Rome. Such a serious sentence could only be justified in the transgression of the accused against the laws of the Empire, especially concerning the matter of religious freedom.

This regarding the first wave of extermination of the Church founded by Jesus when he gave Peter the leadership of the Apostles.

And we continue.

Julius Caesar was succeeded in the Empire by his son Octavian Augustus. Augustus was succeeded by Tiberius. Under this Tiberius the imperial anti-Christian persecutions began; the death of the young Stephen took place in his days.

Tiberius, then, was succeeded by Caligula. In the days of this Caligula occurred the Conversion of Paul.

Caligula was succeeded by Claudius. During his reign was murdered James, the eldest of the sons of Thunder; the scandal of this new anti-Christian persecution reached the Senate, which responded to the Jewish fratricidal madness by decreeing the

banishment of all Jews from the Imperial City. Foreseeing the events that would follow, the Apostles met in Universal Council, in Jerusalem, in the year 49.

Anyway, the ascent to the throne of the Claudians did not change things much in the matter of the Jewish war against the Christians. Moreover, taking advantage of the madness of the Claudians the Jews conceived to legalize the secret anti-Christian final solution that they were applying under Pontius Pilate. The first bloody wave apparently did not give them the desired result. Apparently while they were killing one, somewhere else ten others were being born. So they sent a certain Saul of Tarsus to buy the permission of the governor of Syria. The idea was to hunt down all the Christians and kill them as they were caught. Until not a single one was left.

Fortunately the courier never returned to his barracks. The death of James in the years immediately following the conversion of St. Paul tells us that, with or without the permission of the Romans, the Jews went ahead with their extermination plans.

The death of James reveals what we could call the second known anti-Christian persecution. Whose echoes by force had to reach Rome and possibly was in the background of the decision that, horrified by such fratricidal behavior, the Senate took: the immediate expulsion of all the Jews from Rome.

That senatorial decision can hardly, on pain of ridicule, be interpreted as a kind of understanding of the Christian theme on the part of the Romans. Indeed, the feeling of the apostles spoke to the contrary. So, gathered by Peter in Jerusalem to discuss in Council the issue of the future of Christianity, in the year 49, in the face of the danger that the future persecutions of the empire represented for the growth of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, the Apostles decided to organize and build a Universal Church in front of whose walls the waves of imperial anti-Christianity that was already breaking the horizon would crash.

From that year on, the apostles became the first bishops of the universal church; they would elect their successors, and their successors their successors, and so on. Peter's headship would pass to his successor.

By the time Nero ascended the throne the apostolic and universal church was already born. Its growth over the centuries would depend exclusively on God. Its original architecture, however, would remain firm.

When, therefore, in the 60's, Nero decreed the first imperial anti-Christian persecution, what would later be called the Catholic Church had been built on Rock, and was perfectly prepared to resist the downpours, the storms, the earthquakes. Aware, by prophets, of the imperial persecution that, obviously, would sweep through the Christian milieus of the imperial city, Peter and Paul did not move. They already knew the way. Now it was up to them to teach their own how to make that way.

Around that time the Jews rebelled against the empire. But not in response to the anti-Christian persecutions that, at last, the empire ordered. Taking advantage of the madness of the Claudians, a symptom of the coming and immediate fall of Rome, a certain Flavius Josephus, associated with other young independent rebels, launched themselves into the adventure in the belief that they were interpreting Maccabees Part Three.

They were in their suicidal madness when, mysteriously, they set fire to the Temple, disappearing in its flames, miraculously, all the official archives in which any researcher could have opened the records of the trial against Jesus, and found the birth records of all his relatives.

Historians never wanted to dwell on the mystery of that miracle by which Jesus, at the level of official documentation, was banished to the world of fables. They preferred to speak of bad luck, of chance, of chaos, of anything so long as they did not stir the waters. We, in view of the final solution of extermination that the Jews applied three times against the first Christians, cannot remain on the sidelines of the events.

The third exterminating persecution had taken place a few years earlier. The first bishop of Jerusalem, chosen by the apostles personally, none other than James, son of Cleophas, the brother of the Mother of Jesus, with whom the Child was raised; that same James, cousin of Jesus, chosen for the bishopric of Jerusalem, came to fall into the nets of that third criminal wave.

The reason why Flavius Josephus and his independence associates attacked so high we will discover possibly in their failure to unite to their Maccabean war the Christians of Hebrew origin. The obstacle that the brother of the Lord - as the first bishop of Jerusalem was called - meant to the hope of the Judeo-Christian current - to unite Christians and Jews against the Empire - marked the beginning of the third wave, and explains why it aimed so high.

A few years earlier, St. Paul was arrested and sent to Rome because he was a Roman citizen. While there he was caught in the famous fire at the origin of the first imperial persecution.

Never have those first three Jewish anti-Christian waves been described with the force and impact they had. Either because the apostles limited themselves to preach the Gospel, or because during those following centuries the history was written by their enemies, and after some time no one wanted to dive into those tragic memories; for one thing or the other, or both, the truth is that the horror and the Crime against Humanity that the Jews, first, and then the Romans, committed has never been put on the table. The first killed them with stones, the second threw them to the lions as one who throws a piece of meat to the dogs. When and at what time in world history did a Church have such an origin? And if there was any other that had it, which of them passed the test of being the center of hatred of the whole world?

How many innocent creatures did Jews and Romans murder in the name of the eternity of their peoples? How many hundreds of thousands of innocents did the parents of the Jews who still mourn their dead under Nazi Germany murder?

Discussions aside, the loss of the imperial archives under the flames of the Neronian fire, coincidences of life, came to lend arguments to those who would later say that this Christ never existed, except in the imagination of its inventors. At least nowhere in the world, outside of the Gospels, could documents be found that spoke of the existence of this Jesus.

Flavius Josephus, who was one of the leaders of the independence rebellion, traitor to his own, a coward who withdrew from the war that began when he saw that his end was the destruction of his army; this Flavius Josephus took advantage of the

circumstances of the legal vacuum left to rewrite the history of the Jewish people, from which, "for the love of truth", erased from his facts any reference to the persecution of extermination that his people executed.

The man believed that the Church that Jesus Christ had raised would not resist the imperial anti-Christian impact. The man believed that the Church built by his disciples at the Council of Jerusalem would not withstand the shock and would collapse under the weight of the madness of the Caesars. Little did the man know that long before Nero ascended the throne the impact of his madness against the walls of the Catholic Church had already been calculated.

The image of the death of so many thousands of innocents sacrificed to Nero's madness ended up scandalizing his generals. The struggle between them determined the end of the first anti-Christian attack, to the general joy of all survivors; and reopened a painful chapter for all when Domitian, who had succeeded Titus, successor of Vespasian, in revenge against the Jewish rebels, and believing that the House of David was to blame for the rebellion, threw hand of the relatives of Jesus and preyed on the house of Judas, another of the sons of Cleophas, the brother of the Mother of Christ. In whose death by betrayal is not difficult to discover the hand of the traitor, Flavius Josephus, perfectly aware of who was that Judas, successor in the bishopric of Jerusalem of Simon, the brother of the other James and murdered in his day the parents of this Flavius Josephus. The fact is that this Domitian reopened the anti-Christian persecutions, dying under his rule even members of his own family. Catholicism had already reached such an extreme of growth.

As a result of this second persecution, St. John was exiled. After the death of the last of the apostles the destiny of the Church born in Jerusalem, in 49, was left in the hands of God.

During all the II century the Christians were in the eye of the judges of the empire. Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus persecuted them with no other excuse than the fact that they called themselves Christians. How many innocent people were killed under the patronage of Roman law?

But what did characterize with more property this second century, was the appearance of enlightened people who, taking advantage of the vacuum left by the disappearance of the Apostles, tried to fill a certain Marcion, a certain Cerdon, a certain Valentinus, a certain Montano and a certain Tacian the Syrian, among others. With these characters the attack against the Universal Church Building arose from within, being the doctrinal Unity itself the one that would be threatened by the fanaticism and lust for power of the aforementioned.

Marcion took his insolence to the point of rejecting the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John and all the epistles other than those of Paul.

Cerdon brought his schizophrenia to the point of denouncing in God two totally different persons, one of the Old Testament and the other of the New.

Valentinus surpassed the two previous ones by writing his own gospel and subjecting Christian doctrine to the school of the magi, it is said, in reproach for not having been accepted as successor of Peter.

However, Montano will surpass Valentinus by identifying himself with the Holy Spirit.

Tacian the Syrian, not to be less than his associates, rejected Paul and his Acts and forbade marriage.

Curiously, and in spite of the obvious pathology, which from the Christian point of view their doctrines represented, there were people who follow them.

So after the disappearance of the Twelve, the Universal Church built by them, but founded by Jesus, had to deal with a pack of madmen threatening to break the Unity so necessary to resist the downpours, storms and earthquakes.

Against such enlightened ones God awakened his spirit of intelligence in brilliant minds of the time. A Narcissus, a Theophilus, an Apollinaris, a Meliton, a Dionysius of Corinth, and, among them shining with his fabulous light, an Irenaeus of Lyons.

The third century saw the rise to power of the dynasty of the Severi. Its members maintained the anti-Christian persecutions. In those times was born the man who was to bring about the definitive fusion between classical philosophy and Christian thought. We speak of Origen.

The anarchy that resulted from the assassination of the last of the Severi seems to have somewhat relaxed the situation of Christianity. But in 250 the emperor Decius reopened the chapter. That he maintained during one year. He died in combat and his successor reopened it again. Until he was defeated by another Roman general, who in turn was defeated by Valerian, the following in the list of the emperors exterminators of Christians.

Curiously the son of the same Valerian, Gallienus, was the one who signed the peace with the Catholic Church on behalf of all Christians. Peace that his successors Claudio II and Aurelian would respect.

The ascension to the throne of Diocletian, the *bête noire* of the time, provoked the bloodiest massacre in written memory after that of Nero himself. A slaughter that, beyond forecasts and calculations, would become the prelude to the rise to the throne of Constantine the Great.

Given the immensity and fragility of the empire, Diocletian associated to power his colleague Maximian, in the first instance, and later Constantius Chlorus, father of the future Constantine.

At the beginning of the fourth century, then, such was the situation of the empire and of the Christians within its structure. In 305 Diocletian abdicated. The following year, when his father died, Constantine was pronounced Caesar. So was Galerius as successor of Diocletian, and Maximinus Daia after Galerius. These last two intensified the persecutions in a terrible way. Moved by zeal for his mother, the no less famous St. Helena, Constantine leapt to the defense of Christianity. First he confronted Maxentius and defeated him in the famous legendary battle where the Sign of the Cross appeared to him on October 12, 312. Then he confronted his associates until he finished them off and rose as sole Caesar.

With him came the victory of the Church founded by Jesus Christ and exposed to the winds, the storms, the earthquakes of politics and the movements of nations.

In that year and forever the indestructibility of the Universal, or Catholic, Church was demonstrated.

This is a brief summary of the facts against which the Mother Church was confronted in her first days of life. It was her Divine Husband who announced that She would pass through those trials so that His Wisdom might be exposed to the eyes of all who from the future would see the birth and growth of His House.

The Seal with which the Covenant was signed between the Lord Jesus and His Church was not carved in stone, but in the hearts, and it was not written with ink, but with blood. Not because He was leaving Her, but He was leaving Her so that the Law might be fulfilled: "Thou shalt ardently seek thy husband, who shall rule over thee".

About the time only the Eternal Father knew when, but whatever time passed She was born to give offspring to her Lord, according to the Law: "He will be called everlasting Father".

THE END