

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

An excerpt of the book 'The Childhood of Jesus',
the re-given Gospel according to James

The Childhood of Jesus is the biographical gospel of the Lord from the time

Joseph took Mary as his wife.

Through the inner revelation received by Jakob Lorber.

According to the 11th edition 1996.

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Introduction to the Christmas Story excerpt

This is the story of the most famous birthday on earth, when Jesus of Nazareth, or Jesus Christ, was born.

The story covers the first 34 chapters of the book called "**Childhood of Jesus**".

The book itself is a newly revealed edition of the Gospel of James. This gospel was originally written by James, one of the sons of Joseph's first marriage. The original was almost totally lost and the rest so fragmented that it could not be accepted into the New Testament.

The term 'Newly revealed edition' is used because it's part of the texts called "New Revelation" which were dictated by Jesus Christ to Jakob Lorber in Austria between 1840 and 1864 via the 'Inner Word'.

During these years Jakob Lorber received these texts almost daily and wrote about 25 volumes of roughly 500 pages each. The volumes cover dozens of subjects dealing with mankind, the earth, where we come from, where we are going, the universe, the spirit world, to name just a few.

Our story covers the period from the moment when the temple in Jerusalem had to find a foster family for Mary, until the escape of the Holy Family to Egypt to be safe from King Herod.

First, however, you will hear the preface of the Lord from the book 'The Childhood of Jesus'. Here the Lord gives us essential points for understanding why God decided to come down to our planet in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and the significance of His death and resurrection for mankind.

We figured these lines are essential, as this Christmas story is not meant for children only.

Enjoy it.

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Introduction to the Book by the Editors

The Gospel of James is foremost among the apocryphal gospels on Jesus' childhood. "Among the apocryphal infancy gospels, it is not only the oldest, but also the most famous" (de Strycker). In the early Christian era, the Greek text (which was partially preserved in numerous Greek writings from the 9th through the 16th century) as well as the numerous translations (into Latin, Syrian, Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, Arabic and Ethiopian), have been regarded as a respected and highly popular work by the Lord's (Step-)Brother James.

Whether Justin († around 165) has read the work remains uncertain. Clement of Alexandria (around 215) derived details on the youth of Jesus therefrom. Origenes († around 253/4) mentions 'the book of James' in his commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew (P.G. 13, 876-877).

Today, the dating of the infancy gospel is mainly based on Clement, and is therefore determined to be the 2nd century (more recent authors assume it to be the latter half of the 2nd century) with Egypt being considered as a possible place of writing.

From the complete text of the original infancy gospel by Jakob Lorber, which was newly revealed in the 19th century, we now know for certain that this gospel of Jesus' childhood was recorded by James, the Lord's brother and the youngest son of Joseph, and is rightly named the Gospel of James. According to Postel († 1581), a French humanist, who brought it from the Orient, it is today named the Protevangelium (= first or oldest gospel) of James.

The Protevangelium of James exists only in fragments and has three parts in its present form: it narrates the life of Mary up to the birth of Jesus (chap. 1-16), the story of Jesus' birth with its miraculous events (chap. 17-21), gives an account of the infanticide in Bethlehem and the martyrdom of Zachariah (chap. 22-24) and finally concludes with an epilogue by James. (Apocryphal Infancy Gospels, Herder 1995)

In the Orient, James was not only considered the author of the infancy gospel but also the youngest son of Joseph from his first marriage. In the first few centuries AD, it was generally known that Joseph was a widower and had five sons. "Even great theologians, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origenes, Epiphane, Ephrem et al. believed this. These sons of Joseph were regarded as the 'brothers of Jesus'. Only Jerome defended the viewpoint that these 'brothers of Jesus' were merely his 'cousins'. From 383 AD, he presented this new concept to contradict the mistaken view that the so-called brothers of Jesus were his real brothers." (R. Ernst)

Although the Gospel of James was not officially recognized by the church, it was however read out to the people during the religious festivals of the Virgin Mary in the Oriental church. The Gospel of James must have enjoyed great popularity in the Slavic region as well. Even during the establishment of the canonical writings in the 4th century, i.e. those used by the church, by the theology schools and the patriarchs of Alexandria and Rome, the Gospel of James, which was already very distorted at that time and surrounded by legends, was not included in the Holy Scriptures. For several centuries, a similar fate even befell the Secret Revelation of John, the letter of James and different other parts of the New Testament. Since von Tischendorf's (1815-1874) numerous discoveries and editions of biblical writings (Editio oetava critica maior; 2 volumes), an increasing number of theological works now engage source texts from ancient times and the Middle Ages, recently, among others, the bilingual apocryphal infancy gospels (EVANGELIA INFANTIAE APOCRYPHA - APOCRYPHAL INFANCY GOSPELS) published in 1995 by Herder.

That it was ultimately the Lord's Will that the Gospel of James, already very distorted by then, was not to be included in the biblical canon can be inferred from the introductory words by Jakob Lorber in 1843/44 in the newly-revealed text of the original Gospel of James:

"James, a son of Joseph, has recorded all this; however, with time, it has become so distorted that it cannot be allowed to be included in the scriptures as authentic. I, however, will give you the genuine Gospel of James, but only from the above-mentioned period onwards ('from the time Joseph took Mary'); for James had included the biography of Mary since her birth, as well as that of Joseph."

In his commentary *The Apocrypha of the New Testament* and the work of Lorber -"The Gospel of James-" and "The Childhood of Jesus" the Catholic theologian Robert Ernst writes: "The text of the apocryphal Gospel of James and the amendments and revisions that the Lord dictated to Jakob Lorber merge in such a way as to create a coherent whole. The childhood of Jesus is narrated in such detail to give a well-rounded report, so that many puzzles that could not be solved even by the best exegetes appear to us in the clearest light."

This gospel narrates not only the miraculous events such as Mary's immaculate conception, the virgin birth, the worshipping by the shepherds and the three Magi, the flight from Herod to Egypt and the return to Nazareth after Herod's death, but the entire childhood of Jesus from the first day of His life until His twelfth year and can be earmarked as the most heartfelt and delightful of all the gospels.

An irresistible charm emanates from this Child, a power that radiates love, wisdom and healing, which made everyone around, whether Jew or Gentile, aware of the fact that here the most Divine entity had Himself become a human being, as had been promised to mankind since time immemorial. The Infant already talks and raises His hand in blessing while in the manger. Generally speaking, it might be difficult in the unilaterally rational times of today to accept this as a truthful account by James. Hence there is a preceding explanation here, which was given by an angel in response to the Roman governor's query on the reasons for the infant's "ability to speak" (chapter 129):

"See, this is a purely heavenly matter; even though we reveal it to you, you will fail to understand it! For normal people can never grasp what is purely heavenly, as their spirit is not yet free, but imprisoned by worldly matter. ... See, the Infant, as He is in His human nature, can by no means talk to you extensively as a natural human being! That He will be somewhat capable of in about a year's time. But His heart is full of the eternal almighty deity. Now if this Child speaks to you in a distinct and wise manner, it is not the Child visible to you that is speaking but the deity speaking out of the Child to your spirit that is awakened for this purpose. And you then hear the words as if the Infant visible to you is speaking. However, this is not the case; it is only the Deity, who is invisible to you, who is speaking to you! And what you believe you hear outwardly, you hear only within yourself; and this is the case with everyone who hears the Infant speak!"

The Berlenburg Bible (Apocrypha) from the year 1739 contains some fragments of the old writings that show great, partly literal, conformity with the original text dictated to Jakob Lorber. A facsimile of the text contained in the Berlenburg Bible has therefore been enclosed - for the first time, with this new edition - as an offprint in the present volume. In order to prevent the wholeness of the text from being destroyed, the facsimile also contains chapter 7 (on the birth of Mary, her acceptance and life in the temple until she was placed, by means of a heavenly sign, under Joseph's guardianship in her fourteenth year), which is not included in the present volume "The Childhood and Youth of Jesus". The Gospel of James

dictated by Jakob Lorber does not, however, guarantee the correctness of the first seven chapters that are taken from the apocryphal volume of the Berlenburg Bible.

Thanks to friends of the publishing house, the text for this new edition could be compared with a copy of the original work, which is today in private ownership in Austria. The editions that were released since then succeeded the first edition that appeared in 1852 by the publishing house Schweizerbarth in Stuttgart at the instigation of the Graz group of friends, as well as the poet-doctor Dr. Justinus Kerner from Weinsberg through Dr. Ch.F. Zimpel, the founder of the spagyric healing method. In addition to the copy of the first edition, the Lorber-Verlag has a transcript of the Gospel of James written by Zimpel, and it is presumed that, during his stay of several months in Graz, he wrote this transcript on the basis of the original work of Lorber.

An oversight in Zimpel's very first edition led to a shift of the chapter numbers. The Gospel of James comprises 300 chapters and not, as numbered in the earlier editions, 299 chapters. The omission of the chapter 192 text leads to this vexatious shift from chapter 193 onwards. Once the oversight was realized, the missing text was added to "The Childhood of Jesus" as a supplement. After rectification according to the original text, the existing new edition now comprises 300 chapters. (This modification is incorporated in the new editions of our reference books.)

The infancy gospel, which, by the Grace of God, we have preserved in its purity, will tell us not only about what has happened. From that time until the present day, it speaks to us: Become like this Child, take It into your heart! As Mary said to Cyrenius, when the Roman counted her very fortunate, speaking of "the heaven and earth resting in her arms":

"Fortunate am I, yes most fortunate, to carry this Child in my arms. But in the future, greater and more fortunate still will those be, who carry Him alone in their hearts! Carry Him indestructibly in your heart also!"

Bietigheim, summer 1996

The Lorber-Editors

Preface

As revealed by the Lord Himself as introduction for the story of His childhood between July 22, 1843 and May 9, 1851, through the same spokesperson whom He selected as the instrument for this work.

[000,01] 1. (Jesus speaking:) “Throughout the period up to my thirtieth year I lived like any other properly raised boy, then a teenager and then a man. In the course of my life, I first had to awaken the Deity within me according to the Law of Moses, just as every man must awaken Me in himself.

[000,02] As any other respectable man, I had to begin with awakening My faith in God, which I then had to realize with all conceivable self-denial and with ever greater love, so that I could gradually subject myself completely to Divinity.

[000,03] Thus I, the Lord Himself, was a living example for every man, and therefore any human being can now draw Me to himself - just as I, within a physical body of this earth, drew the Divinity within me - and of his own free will can become completely one with Me through love and faith, since as a divine man I am completely one with the Divinity in all Its infinite fullness.

[000,04] 2. On the question, as to how the Child-wonder Jesus and His divinely spiritual activity as a Child can be linked to His isolated human existence during the years of His youth and manhood, and to His miracles performed during that time if He is to be perceived only as a human being, – a look at a tree from spring to autumn will provide an answer.

[000,05] In spring, the tree blossoms wonderfully and is alive with activity. After the fall of the blossoms, the tree seems to become inactive again. However, towards autumn the tree again appears highly alive: the fruits, certainly wondrous, are flavoured and coloured, more beautifully than the blossoms earlier, and thus ripened, and the blessing bestowed on them is freed of its bonds and falls into the lap of the hungry infant.

[000,06] Man is capable of grasping this parable with the eye of the heart, but never with the eye of worldly reason. The doubtful passages can be explained quite easily - when Jesus' Divinity is not denied but rather upheld by the faith of the heart, for that is a light of love to God - for as soon as one becomes pure in heart, it will be understood that the complete union of God's fullness with Jesus the man did not occur at once, as if suddenly, but - like everything else under God's guidance - only gradually, similar to the successive awakening of the divine spirit in the heart of man, and was completed only upon His death on the cross; although the Divinity in all its fullness already dwelt in the Child Jesus, It manifested itself through miracles only in times of need.

[000,07] 3. The physical death of Jesus is the most profound condescension of God in the tribunal of all matter and thereby establishes an entirely new relationship between the Creator and the created.

[000,08] Only through Jesus' death does God Himself become fully human, and out of this highest divine grace, the created man can become a new child of God, that is, a God, and stand face to face with his creator as his perfect equal and see in Him his God, his Creator

and Father, and can talk to Him, recognize Him, and love Him beyond measure, and only thus acquire the perfect everlasting, indestructible life in God, from God and beside God. And thereby, the power (or better: will) of Satan is broken to the extent that he can no longer prevent the complete approach of God to mankind and inversely, of mankind to God.

[000,09] In short: Through Jesus' death, man can now completely fraternize with God, and Satan cannot interfere any longer; which is why the women who visited the grave were told: "Go forth and tell My brothers!" – Satan's reign in the outward form may be still evident, but he can no more put up the once-torn curtain between God and mankind and thus re-establish the old insurmountable gulf between God and man.

[000,10] And from this brief argument on the subject, every man, who can think and perceive inwardly, can now easily understand the infinite benefit of Jesus' physical death. Amen."

The Gospel of James about the Childhood of Jesus.

Biographical gospel of the Lord from the time Joseph took Mary as his wife.

22 July 1843

[43.07.22] James, a son of Joseph, has recorded all this; however, with time, it has become so distorted that it cannot be allowed to be included in the scriptures as authentic. I however want to give you the genuine Gospel of James but will begin only from the period mentioned above; for James had also included the biography of Mary since her birth as well that of Joseph. – So then write as the first chapter:

Chapter 1. – Joseph the carpenter. The casting of lots for Mary in the temple. God's testimonial of Joseph. Joseph's prayer. Mary in the house of Joseph.

[001,01] Joseph was busy with the construction of a house in the region between Nazareth and Jerusalem.

[001,02] A nobleman was having this house built there to serve as a hostel, as the Nazarenes had no other shelter on their way to Jerusalem.

[001,03] And Mary, who had been brought up in the temple, had come into womanhood, and according to Mosaic Law, she had to be given from the temple.

[001,04] Messengers were sent out throughout Judea so that fathers could come forward and one among them could be found worthy to take the young maid into his house.

[001,05] As such a notice also came to Joseph's ears, he immediately laid his tools aside and hastened to Jerusalem, to the place determined for the meeting.

[001,06] After three days, the candidates met in the same place again, and after each candidate for Mary offered the priest a fresh lily stalk, the priest went into the interior of the temple with the stalks and prayed.

[001,07] After his prayer, he came out with the stalks and returned them to each man.

[001,08] All the stalks immediately became blemished, only the one last handed to Joseph remained fresh and spotless.

[001,09] Some of the candidates objected to this test, declaring it biased and thus invalid, and demanded another test which would allow no room for any mischief.

[001,10] The priest, annoyed at this, commanded that Mary be fetched, gave her a dove and asked her to step in among the candidates, while at the same time letting go of the dove,

[001,11] but just before the release of the dove said to the candidates: "Behold, you who misinterpret the sign of Jehovah! – This dove is a pure and innocent animal and unable to hear our discussion,

[001,12] but lives only in the Lord's will and understands only the almighty language of God!

[001,13] Hold high your stalks! – The stalk of the candidate, on which the dove released by the young maid perches, and the head of the person on which it sits, will be the one who shall take Mary!"

[001,14] The candidates were satisfied with this and said: "Yes, this will be an unmistakable sign!"

[001,15] As Mary released the dove at the behest of the priest, it immediately flew towards Joseph, perched on top of his stalk and then flew from there to sit on Joseph's head.

[001,16] And the priest spoke: "This is the will of God! Upon you, worthy craftsman, the lot for the virgin of the Lord has unmistakably fallen! So take her in the name of the Lord in your pure house for further care, Amen."

24 July 1843

[001,17] But when Joseph heard this, he answered the priest and spoke: "See, anointed servant of the Lord according to the Law of Moses, the trustworthy subject of the Lord God Sabaoth, I am already an old man with grown-up sons at home and have been a widower since a long time; I will become an object of ridicule and scorn to the sons of Israel, by taking this young maid into my house!

[001,18] So let the process be changed once again and let me stay outside so that I am not counted among the candidates!"

[001,19] The priest however held up his hand and spoke to Joseph: "Joseph! Fear the Lord! Do you not know what He did to Dathan, Korah and Abiram?"

[001,20] Behold, the earth was split and they were engulfed because of their rebelliousness! – Do you think He would not do the same to you?"

[001,21] I tell you: you have seen and perceived the unmistakable sign of Jehovah, so obey the Lord, who is almighty and just and always punishes those who are stubborn and unfaithful to His will!

[001,22] Otherwise there will be immense fear in your house, whether the Lord will not also bring upon your house, what he did to Dathan, Korah and Abiram!"

[001,23] Then Joseph became afraid and he spoke to the priest in great fear: "Therefore pray for me, so that God may be again merciful towards me, and then give me the virgin of the Lord according to His will!"

[001,24] The priest now went inside and prayed for Joseph in front of the inner sanctum, - and the Lord spoke to the priest:

[001,25] "Do not cause the man, whom I have selected, to be sad; then there is no other more righteous man in Israel, and no man in the whole world, and no one in front of my eternal throne in all the heavens!

[001,26] Go outside and give the virgin that I have brought up Myself to the most righteous man on earth!"

[001,27] Here the priest beat his breast and spoke: "O Lord, almighty one and only God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, be merciful to me, a sinner, for now I realize that You will judge Your people!"

[001,28] Thereupon the priest arose, went out with a blessing in the name of the Lord, gave the maid to the fearful Joseph

[001,29] and spoke to him: "Joseph, you are righteous before the Lord, that is why He has chosen you from among many thousands of men! And so you may go in peace, Amen."

[001,30] And Joseph took Mary and spoke: "May only the holy will of God, my Lord, always be done! Whatever You give, o Lord, is always good; thus I gladly and willingly take this offering from Your hand!! So bless her for me and me for her, so that I am worthy of her before You now, as always; Thy will be done, Amen."

26 July 1843

[001,31] As Joseph spoke thus before the Lord, he felt invigorated in his heart. Thereupon he left the temple with Mary and led her to the region of Nazareth and thereat into his humble dwelling.

[001,32] However, work awaited Joseph, so he did not tarry in his house this time and spoke to Mary accordingly:

[001,33] "Mary, behold, I have taken you from the temple of the Lord, my God, according to his will; however I cannot stay with you now and protect you but must leave you behind, for I must go to take care of the construction of the house that I showed you on the way here.

[001,34] But this does not mean that you will be at home alone and uncared for. I have a closely related resident who is a devout and righteous woman; she will be with you and my youngest son; and the grace of God and His blessing will not leave you.

[001,35] I will soon return home to you, together with my four sons, and I will be a guide to you in the Lord's ways. The Lord God will now watch over you and my house, Amen."

Chapter 2. – The new curtain in the temple. Mary's work on the curtain.

[002,01] At the time, a new temple curtain was deemed necessary to cover the old curtain, which was worn and torn.

[002,02] The priests had gone into deliberation, and they spoke: "Let us make a curtain in the temple of the Lord, so that the damaged curtain can be covered.

[002,03] Because today or tomorrow, the Lord may appear, as it is written, – how could we stand before him, if He finds us having neglected the temple?"

[002,04] But the high priest said: "Do not judge so blindly; as if the Lord, whose sanctum is in the temple, would not know about the state of the temple!

[002,05] Then call for me seven immaculate virgins from the tribe of David, and we will come to a solution for dividing the work!"

[002,06] Now the attendants went out to search for the virgins from the tribe of David, but could barely find six, whom they showed to the high priest.

[002,07] But the high priest remembered that Mary, who had been entrusted in the care of Joseph only a few weeks ago, was also from the tribe of David, and told the servants about this.

[002,08] And the attendants went out and told Joseph, who went and brought Mary back to the temple, guided by the temple's attendants.

27 July 1843

[002,09] As soon as the virgins were assembled in the temple's atrium, the high priest came and led them into the temple of the Lord.

[002,10] And when they were assembled in the temple of the Lord, the high priest spoke:

[002,11] "Hear, o virgins from the tribe of David, who has decreed by the Lord's will that the fine work on the curtain that separates the temple's Holy of Holies must always be done by the virgins from his tribe;

[002,12] and according to his testament, the various tasks must be distributed through the drawing of lots, and may every virgin do the work allotted to her according to her skill!

[002,13] Look, there in front of you is the damaged curtain, and here on the golden table are the various raw materials already prepared for the work!

[002,14] You can see that this work is necessary, therefore let us immediately draw lots, so that we can know who among you will spin the threads of gold, asbestos ¹, cotton,

[002,15] silk, as well as the hyacinth-coloured, the scarlet, and the genuine purple!"

[002,16] And the virgins meekly drew lots according to the prescribed order as the High Priest prayed over them; and it was established how the work would be distributed.

[002,17] And the scarlet and the genuine purple fell to the lot of the virgin Mary, the daughter of Anna and Joachim.

[002,18] The virgin gave thanks to God for such a gracious award and the allotment of such honourable work for His glory, took the work and returned with it to her house, with Joseph leading the way.

[002,19] Upon arrival at home, Mary immediately started the work in joyful spirits; Joseph advised her to work with all possible diligence, blessed her and immediately returned to his construction work.

[002,20] It was at the same time this took place that Zachariah, while taking care of the smoke offering in the temple, lost his power of speech because of a lack of faith. Therefore a replacement was chosen for him, under whom the drawing of lots for this work had taken place.

[002,21] Mary was related to both Zachariah as well as his replacement, so that she increased her diligence twofold in order to complete the work in a short time, and if possible, be the first one to do so.

[002,22] However she increased her diligence twofold not out of a desire for fame, but in her determination to give great joy to the Lord God by completing her work as soon and as best as she could.

[002,23] At first, she worked on the scarlet that had to be spun with great attention, to prevent the thread being thinner or thicker here or there.

[002,24] The scarlet thread was spun by Mary with great mastery, so that all who came to Joseph's house were amazed at her extraordinary skill.

[002,25] In a span of just three days, Mary had completed the scarlet and immediately began with the purple. As she had to constantly moisten it, she often needed to take the jug and go out with it to fetch water during the work.

Chapter 3. - The annunciation of the Lord's birth by an angel. Mary's humble devotion.

28 July 1843

[003,01] One Friday morning, Mary took the water jug once again and went outside to fill it with water, and oh! – a voice spoke to her:

[003,02] "Greetings to you Mary, full of the Lords' grace! The Lord is with you, oh blessed among women!"



Annunciation to Mary, Caravaggio, ca. 1610

[003,03] She trembled when she heard these words and was quite afraid, as she could not see from where the voice came, and keenly looked to the right and to the left; but she could not discern anyone who could have spoken.

[003,04] Hence she was full of great fear, and hastily took the filled water jug and hurried home.

[003,05] As she arrived trembling, she put aside the water jug, took up the purple, sat down in her chair and diligently continued to spin the purple.

[003,06] But she had hardly regained her composure at work when the angel of the Lord stood before the diligent virgin and spoke to her:

[003,07] "Do not be afraid, Mary, God is greatly pleased with you; and you will conceive by the word of God!"

[003,08] As Mary heard this, she began to ponder on these words, and could not comprehend their meaning; so she spoke to the angel:

[003,09] "How can this happen, I am not married and I have never been with

a man, who might then take me as his wife, so that I might become pregnant and bear a child, just as other women do?"

[003,10] The angel however spoke to Mary: "Chosen virgin of the Lord! It will not happen as you think, but God's power will come over you.

[003,11] Therefore the Holy One who will be born of you will be called the Son of the Almighty!

[003,12] When He is born, you shall name Him Jesus; for He will redeem His people from all sins, judgments and eternal death."

[003,13] Mary kneeled before the angel and spoke: "I am only the Lord's maidservant! Let it happen as you have said." And the angel left her, and Mary continued her work.

Chapter 4. – Mary's childlike-innocent conversation with God and the response from above.

1 August 1843

[004,01] Soon after the angel disappeared, Mary praised and glorified the Lord God in her heart:

[004,02] "O who am I, o Lord, that You grant me such grace? –

[004,03] I am to become pregnant without ever having known a man; because I do not even know what differentiates a man from me.

[004,04] Would I then really know what it is: to be pregnant? O Lord! I know nothing of this!

[004,05] Do I even know what it is, when one says: 'Look, a woman gives birth'? – O Lord! Be merciful to me; I am a maidservant of just fourteen years and have only heard of all this - but actually know nothing about it!

[004,06] Oh, what will happen to me, a poor maiden, when I am pregnant - and do not know, what this condition is!

[004,07] What will the father, Joseph, say when I tell him, or when he notices, that I am pregnant?!

[004,08] However there cannot be anything bad in being pregnant, especially when a maidservant such as Sarah was once chosen for it by the Lord Himself?

[004,09] Then I have often heard in the temple how delighted the women are when they are pregnant!

[004,10] So there must be something really good and blissful about being pregnant, and I will surely also rejoice, when it is given to me from the Lord that I will be pregnant!

[004,11] But when, when will this happen, and how? – Or has it already happened? Am I already pregnant, or will it happen later?

[004,12] O Lord! O eternal Saint of Israel, give me, your poor maidservant, a sign, as to when this will happen so that I may exalt and glorify You for it!"

[004,13] At these words, a luminous whiff of air wafted towards Mary and a soft voice spoke to her:

[004,14] "Mary! Do not trouble yourself in vain; you have conceived, and the Lord is with you! – Do your work, and complete it, for no more work of such quality will be done for the temple!"

[004,15] Here Mary knelt, prayed to God and praised Him for such grace. – After she had praised the Lord, she arose and took up her work.

Chapter 5. – The handing over of Mary's completed temple work. Mary and the High Priest. Mary visits her relative Elizabeth.

2 August 1843

[005,01] In a few days, Mary had also completed the purple, arranged it, then took the scarlet and laid it to the purple.

[005,02] Then she thanked God for the grace that enabled her to complete the work so well, bound the spun yarn in pure linen and set out with it to Jerusalem.

[005,03] She went alone to the building site at which Joseph was working; however, from there onwards, Joseph again accompanied her to Jerusalem and thereat to the temple.

[005,04] Upon arrival, she immediately handed over the work to the High Priest.

[005,05] He visually examined the scarlet and purple, found the work exceptionally good and praised and greeted Mary with the following words:

[005,06] "Mary, such proficiency does not lie naturally within you; however the Lord has worked through your hand!

[005,07] Therefore God has made you great; you will be blessed by the Lord God from among all women on earth, for you are the first to deliver her work to the temple."

[005,08] Mary however spoke to the High Priest in great humility and gladness of heart:

[005,09] "Honourable servant of the Lord in His holy shrine! O do not praise me too highly, and do not elevate me above the others; for the credit of this work cannot be given to me, but to the Lord alone, who guided my hand!

[005,10] Therefore let all praise, all honour, all glory and all my love and worship be to Him alone!"

[005,11] And the High Priest spoke: "Amen, Mary! Immaculate virgin of the Lord, you have spoken well before the Lord! – So leave again in peace; the Lord be with you!"

[005,12] Thereupon Mary arose and went with Joseph to the building site, where she partook of some refreshment consisting of bread, milk and water.

[005,13] A half day's journey away from the building site, across a small mountain range, lived an aunt of Mary, named Elizabeth. Mary wanted to visit her and requested Joseph for permission.

[005,14] Joseph promptly agreed and sent his eldest son along as a guide, who was to accompany her until Elizabeth's house was within view.

Chapter 6. – The wonderful reception of Mary by Elizabeth. Humility and wisdom of Mary. Mary returning home to Joseph.

3 August 1843

[006,01] On arrival at Elizabeth's house, being in a rather timid frame of mind, she knocked on the door, in accordance with Jewish custom.

[006,02] As Elizabeth heard the timid knocking, she wondered: "Who knocks so very softly?"

[006,03] It must be a neighbour's child; for it cannot be my husband, who is still mute in the temple and awaiting his redemption!

[006,04] My work however is important; shall I put it aside on account of a mischievous child of neighbour?

[006,05] No, I will not do so, for I have work to do for the temple, which is of greater importance than a child's naughtiness, who probably just wants to tease and make fun of me again.

[006,06] Therefore I will continue to work and let the child knock for a good bit of time."

[006,07] Mary knocked once more, and the baby in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy, and the mother heard a soft voice coming from the region of her leaping baby, and the voice said:

[006,08] "Mother, go, go quickly; for it is the mother of my and your Lord, of my and your God, who is knocking at the door and comes to you in peace!"

[006,09] Elizabeth, as soon as she heard this, threw down everything she was holding, ran to open the door for Mary,

[006,10] gave her blessings according to custom, embraced her with open arms and said to her:

[006,11] "O Mary, blessed are you among women! Blessed are you among all women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

[006,12] O Mary, purest virgin of God! – Why do I deserve such grace, that the mother of my Lord and my God should come to me?!"

[006,13] Mary, however, who did not grasp the meaning behind these words, spoke to Elizabeth:

[006,14] "O dear aunt! – I have just come to pay you a friendly visit; how is it that you speak of things about me that I do not understand? – Am I then really pregnant, that you call me a mother?!"

[006,15] Elizabeth however replied to Mary: "As you knocked at the door for the second time, the baby in my womb leaped for joy and spoke to me and greeted you in advance!"

[006,16] Then Mary looked up to the heavens and thought about what the archangel Gabriel had said to her, although she still did not understand any of these things, and spoke:

[006,17] "O great God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, what have You done to me? Who am I that all people of the earth bless me?

[006,18] Elizabeth however spoke: "O Mary, chosen by God, come into my house and fortify yourself; let us talk and jointly praise and glorify God with all our might!"

4 August 1843

[006,19] And Mary soon followed Elizabeth into her house and ate and drank and refreshed herself, and was happy in spirit.

[006,20] Elizabeth asked Mary many things about her life in the temple as a ward of the Lord, and how all things had happened.

[006,21] Mary however said: "Dearest aunt, blessed by the Lord! – I think that these things are too lofty for us to comprehend, and it would be unwise for us women to discuss things that the Lord has put upon the sons of Aaron.

[006,22] That is why I believe that we women should leave divine matters to God and to those He has given responsibility for these matters, and not ponder over them.

[006,23] If we love God above all and obey His commandments, we will be living according to our status; whatever is beyond it, should be left to men who are called and chosen by the Lord.

[006,24] Dear relative, I believe that is right, so release me from gossip from the temple; for the temple will not become any better or worse for it. When the Lord deems it proper, He will castigate the temple and reform it at the right time."

[006,25] Elizabeth recognized Mary's great humility and modesty and said to her:

[006,26] "Yes, virgin of God, full of grace! With such convictions you must surely find great mercy before God!

[006,27] Only a highly innocent person can speak as you do; - and whoever lives thus, surely lives righteously before God and the entire world."

[006,28] Mary however spoke: "Righteous living is not for us, but the Lord's, and is a grace!

[006,29] Whoever believes that he lives righteously, he surely lives least righteously before God; however he who constantly confesses his fault before God, he is the one who lives righteously before God.

[006,30] I do not know how I live, my life is a pure grace of the Lord, which is why I can do nothing but love, praise and glorify Him with all my might! – If your life is like mine, then do the same me, and the Lord will be more pleased than if we carry on talking about the conditions in the temple."

[006,31] Elizabeth recognized that Mary was a divine spirit, and therefore stopped her questions about the temple and devoted herself to praising and glorifying God in His will. –

5 August 1843

[006,32] Thus Mary spent three full months with Elizabeth and helped her with the housework just like a maidservant.

[006,33] In the meantime, Joseph had completed his construction and was back at home with his sons, working on his small, merely leased, property.

[006,34] One evening, he spoke to his eldest son: "Joel, make my pack animal ready for tomorrow morning. I must go and fetch Mary!

[006,35] The maiden has already been away from my house for three months, and I do not know how she is faring.

[006,36] Although she is with the wife of the mute High Priest, one cannot know whether their house is free from all the temptations of he who enticed Eve!

[006,37] So I will go there tomorrow and bring the maiden back, so that in time there can be gossip about me by the sons of Israel, and the Lord will not punish for my lack of care for the maiden."

[006,38] And Joel went and did as Joseph had requested; but Joel had barely completed the task, when Mary already stood at the forecourt, greeted Joseph and requested his permission to enter his house.

[006,39] Joseph, completely taken by surprise at Mary's appearance, immediately asked her: "Is that really you, o unfaithful one of my house?"

[006,40] And Mary spoke: "Yes, it is I, but not unfaithful to your house; and I would have returned much earlier but did not dare walk alone in the wooded mountains, - and you also did not send any messenger for me! Thus I had to stay away this long!

[006,41] However, three Levites visited Zachariah's wife, and when they returned home to Jerusalem, they took me along with them, brought me to the border of your property, blessed me and your house and then continued on their way, and I hastened back to you, my dear father Joseph!"

[006,42] Although Joseph would have willingly rebuked her for her long absence, he could not bring himself to do so, as firstly, Mary's voice had deeply touched his noble heart, and secondly, he recognized his own culpability, as he had not fetched Mary through a messenger for such a long time.

[006,43] He thus allowed the maiden to come to him, so that he could bless her, and the maiden sprang to him and cuddled him, just as the most innocent children tend to cuddle their parents or other benefactors.

[006,44] Joseph was deeply touched and was full of great joy and spoke: "I am a poor man and already quite old, but your childlike love makes me forget my poverty and my age! The Lord has given you to me for great happiness, so I will go and work with joy to provide you, my little child, with a decent livelihood!"

[006,45] At these words tears dropped from his eyes. Mary nimbly dried his wet cheeks and thanked God for giving her such a good foster father.

[006,46] During this time, it seemed to Joseph that psalms were being sung in front of his house. --

Chapter 7. - Joseph's premonitions and prophecies. Mary's consolation. The blessed supper. The visibility of Mary's pregnancy.

7 August 1843

[007,01] Joseph was filled with lofty premonitions and spoke to Mary: "Child of the Lord! You have brought great joy into my house, and my soul is filled with lofty premonitions!

[007,02] But I also know, that the Lord always painfully afflicts those whom He loves, so let us always beg Him to be ever-merciful and compassionate towards us!

[007,03] It is even possible that the Lord wants to renew the decayed Ark of the Covenant through you and me?!

[007,04] If something like this lies ahead, then woe betide me and you; it will be a very difficult task! – But let us not talk of it anymore!

[007,05] Whatever has to come, will surely come, and we cannot prevent it; but when it comes, it will seize us with omnipotent hands, and we will tremble before the will of Him, who has set the foundations of the earth!"

[007,06] Mary did not understand any of this and therefore comforted the distressed-looking Joseph with the words:

[007,07] "Dear father Joseph! Do not be distressed about the Lord's will; because we know that He only wants the best for His children! – If the Lord is with us, as He was with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and as he always was with those who love Him, how can suffering and harm afflict us?"

[007,08] Joseph was satisfied with this consolation and thanked the Lord in his heart with all his might, for giving him such a comforting angel in Mary, and said thereupon:

[007,09] "Children, it is already late evening; so let us chant the hymn of praise, eat our supper and then retire for the night!"

[007,10] And so they did. And Mary hastened and brought the bread, and Joseph distributed it; however all wondered as to how good the bread tasted this time.

[007,11] Joseph said: "The Lord be praised! Whatever he blesses always tastes good and has the best flavour!"

[007,12] And Mary remarked most affectionately to Joseph: "See, dear father, you should thus not fear the afflictions of the Lord; for they are also the most precious blessings!"

[007,13] And Joseph spoke: "Yes, yes, you immaculate daughter of the Lord, you are right! I will most patiently bear whatever the Lord burdens me with; for He will not make the burden too heavy and too difficult for me, because He is after all a father full of goodness and mercy - even in His zeal! And may His holy will always be done!"

[007,14] Thereupon the devout family retired for the night and worked at home during the following days. –

[007,15] Mary's body, however, grew bigger every day; as she noticed this, she tried to hide her pregnancy from Joseph and his sons as much as she could.

[007,16] After some time, however, it was not possible to hide it anymore, and Joseph began to be suspicious and secretly consulted with his friends in Nazareth about Mary's strange condition.

Chapter 8. – The doctor's view. Joseph interrogates Mary. Mary's explanation.

9 August 1843

[008,01] Joseph's friend was a knowledgeable person; for he was a doctor, who knew about herbs and often aided the midwives during difficult childbirths.

[008,02] He went with Joseph and secretly looked at Mary, - and after observing her, he spoke to Joseph:

[008,03] "Listen to me, brother from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a great misfortune has befallen your house, - for look, the maidservant is highly pregnant!"

[008,04] However you are also to blame; for look, it is now the sixth moon since you were away at your construction site! – Tell me, who was there to keep an eye on the maidservant?"

[008,05] But Joseph replied: "At the time, Mary was confined to the house for nearly three weeks, and that only in the beginning when she arrived; afterwards she spent three full months with her relative Elizabeth!"

[008,06] Now already two moons have past since she is under my constant supervision, and I have never seen anyone who visited her openly or secretly!

[008,07] And in the time of my absence she was, in any case, in very good hands; my son, who accompanied her to Elizabeth's house, gave me his solemn promise that he, except in an emergency, would not even touch her garment during the whole journey!

[008,08] So I know with great certainty that Mary went undefiled from my house; whether the same can be said of Zachariah's house is quite another matter!

[008,09] Could something have happened between her and an attendant of the temple? – May the Lord protect me from having such a thought; for the Lord would have made such a thing known long ago through the High Priest's unfailing wisdom!

[008,10] But I know now what I will do to get at the truth in this matter. – You, friend, may leave in peace, and I will conduct a thorough investigation in my house!"

[008,11] Joseph's friend soon left the house; Joseph, however, immediately turned to Mary and spoke to her:

[008,12] "Child! With what face shall I look up to my God? What shall I now say about you?"

[008,13] Have I not received you as a pure virgin from the temple, and have I not faithfully guarded you with my daily prayer and through the trustworthy people in my house?"

[008,14] I implore you therefore to tell me who it is who dared to betray me and bring such a terrible shame on me, a son of David, and to you, who are also descended from the same house!

[008,15] Who has seduced and defiled you, a virgin of the Lord?! – Who could have spoilt your purest mind? – And who was it that turned you into a second Eve?!"

[008,16] For the story of Adam is repeated on me in real life, as the serpent has apparently beguiled you, just as it did Eve.

[008,17] Now answer my question! Go and take hold of yourself; for you will not succeed in deceiving me!" – In grief, Joseph threw himself down on his face upon a sack full of ashes and wept.

[008,18] Mary trembled with great fear, began to weep and sob and was unable to speak, so great was her fear and sadness.

[008,19] Joseph then arose from the sack and spoke to Mary in a somewhat subdued voice:

[008,20] "Mary, child of God, who He protected Himself, why have you done this to me? – Why have so profoundly degraded your soul and forgotten your God?!"

[008,21] How could you do such a thing, you who were brought up in the Holy of Holies and who received her food from the hand of the angels and have always had the radiant servants of God as companions?! – O speak, and do not be silent before me!"

[008,22] Here Mary gathered courage and spoke: "Father Joseph, you justly hard man! I tell you: As God lives, I am pure and innocent and till this hour have never known a man!"

[008,23] Joseph asked: "Then how did it happen that you became pregnant?"

[008,24] And Mary replied: "I am still merely a child and do not comprehend God's mysteries! Just listen to me, and I will tell you what happened to me! As a just God lives over us, what I say is true!"

Chapter 9. – Mary's narration of the mysterious holy occurrences. Joseph's distress and worry and his decision to secretly remove Mary. An angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream. Mary remains in the house of Joseph.

10 August 1843

[009,01] And Mary told Joseph everything that occurred to her; what she encountered as she was still working on the purple, and then ended her story with this solemn declaration:

[009,02] "That is why I say to you, father, once again: As God lives, the Lord of the heavens and earth lives, I am pure and do not know a man and I also know as little of God's mystery that I must carry under my heart, to my great anguish!" –

[009,03] Here Joseph suddenly became silent and was extremely frightened; for Mary's words deeply pierced his troubled soul, and trembling, he got confirmation of his secret premonition!

[009,04] He began to ponder to and fro as to what he should do, and spoke to himself:

[009,05] "If I conceal her irrefutable transgression from the world, as it is now, even when I do not recognize it as a transgression, I will be considered an evildoer against the law of the Lord and will not escape a certain punishment!

[009,06] If, on the other hand, I expose her as a consummate sinner before the sons of Israel, with what she is carrying under her heart, being - according to her unambiguous declaration - originating from an angel,

[009,07] I will be considered by God as one who delivers innocent blood to the tribunal of death?!

[009,08] What shall I do with her then? – Should I leave her secretly, i.e., should I secretly send her away from me and conceal her in the mountains near the Greek border? – Or shall I wait for the day of the Lord so that he will then tell me what I should do?

[009,09] But if tomorrow or the day after tomorrow someone comes to me from Jerusalem and recognizes Mary, what then? – Yes, it would be best if I secretly send her away and take care of her secretly without anyone besides my children having any knowledge of this!

[009,10] In time, the Lord will surely reveal her innocence, and then all would be salvaged and won; and may this happen in the name of the Lord!"

[009,11] Thereupon Joseph told this in private to Mary, who acquiesced to Joseph's honourable intentions and prepared herself, and then proceeded to retire for the night, as it was already late evening.

[009,12] Joseph sank under his multifarious thoughts in slumber; and behold, an angel appeared to him in a dream and spoke to him:

[009,13] "Joseph, do not be anxious about Mary, the purest virgin of the Lord! – For that which she carries under her heart has been created by God's Holy Spirit, and when He is born, you shall name him Jesus!" –

[009,14] At this point Joseph awoke from slumber and praised the Lord God that He had shown him such mercy.

[009,15] However, as it was already morning, Mary came to Joseph ready for the intended journey and indicated to him it might be time to leave.

[009,16] Joseph put his arms around the maiden, pressed her to his heart and spoke to her: "Mary, pure one, you will remain with me; for the Lord today gave me a powerful testimonial of you, for He who will be born shall be named Jesus!"

[009,17] By this Mary immediately realized that the Lord had spoken to Joseph, for she heard the same name that the angel had given to her, although she had made no mention of this earlier to Joseph!

[009,18] And Joseph carefully watched over the maiden and provided her with everything she needed in her condition. – –

Chapter 10. – The Roman census. Joseph's non-participation in the council in Jerusalem. The traitor Annas.

11 August 1843

[010,01] Two weeks after this event a great council was held in Jerusalem, since it had been heard from some Romans residing there, that the Emperor was going to count and register all the Jewish people.

[010,02] This news was a great shock to the Jews, for whom counting people was forbidden.

[010,03] Therefore the high priest called a large assembly, at which all the elders and the craftsmen, such as Joseph, were to attend.

[010,04] Joseph however, had undertaken a trip into the hills to collect timber and was away for several days.

[010,05] Since the messenger from Jerusalem who had come to see Joseph in order to deliver the invitation to the great assembly was not able to meet him, he informed his eldest son to notify Joseph immediately upon his return.

[010,06] Joseph already returned home the next day. His son, Joses, informed him immediately about the news from Jerusalem.

[010,07] But Joseph said: "Since I have been climbing around in the hills for five days and I am very tired, my legs will not carry me any further if I do not rest for a few days. So this time I am not compelled to follow Jerusalem's summons.

[010,08] Besides, this assembly is worthless, since the mighty Roman Emperor, who now wields his power even over the lands of the Scythians, will take little notice of our advice and will do whatever he pleases! That's why I will stay put at home!"

[010,09] But after three days a certain Annas came from Jerusalem, who was an important scribe there, and said to Joseph:

[010,10] "Joseph, you who are skilled in the crafts and the scriptures and who are from the tribe of David! – I must to ask you, why you did not come to the assembly?"

[010,11] Joseph turned to Annas and said: "See, I was in the hills for five days and did not know that I had been called.

[010,12] When I came home and received the news from my son Joses, I was too tired and weak to be able to travel to Jerusalem at once! – Besides, I anyhow recognized at first glance that this whole assembly would be of very little use, if at all."

[010,13] While Joseph was telling this, Annas looked around and unfortunately discovered the highly pregnant virgin.

[010,14] At this, he left Joseph without a word, and hurried as fast as he could to Jerusalem.

[010,15] Arriving completely out of breath, he hurried to the high priest and told him:

[010,16] "Listen to me, and do not ask me why David's son did not come to the assembly; for I discovered scandalous horrors in his house!

[010,17] See, Joseph, to whom both God and you bore witness by entrusting him with the care of the virgin, has failed in front of both God and you so profoundly and coarsely that it is beyond words!"

[010,18] The high priest was appalled by Annas' message and asked shortly: "Why, how come? – Tell me the whole truth or you will die this very day!"

[010,19] Annas said: "See, the virgin Mary, who as God bore witness left the temple of our Lord to be placed in his care, has been most thoroughly dishonoured by him. Her advanced pregnancy is a living proof of it!"

[010,20] But the high priest said: "No, Joseph would never do such a thing! – Can God fail in bearing witness?!"

[010,21] But Annas said: "So send your most trusted servants there and you will be convinced of the virgin's state of advanced pregnancy. However, if she is not, you can have me stoned to death right here!"

Chapter 11. – The high priest's doubt concerning Mary's condition. The interrogation of Mary and Joseph in the temple. Joseph's lament and quarrel with God. The death sentence of Joseph and Mary and their defence through a decree of God. Mary becomes Joseph's wife.

16 August 1843

[011,01] However, the high priest reflected for a while and then said to himself: "What shall I do? Since the choice was made for the virgin, Annas has become very jealous and one should never listen to the advice of a jealous man.

[011,02] If however Mary's condition is confirmed and I would have acted indifferently in this situation, what would the sons of Israel say and in what way would they hold me accountable?

[011,03] I want to send the servants to Joseph secretly, so that if this horrible situation should be confirmed, they shall immediately bring the virgin here together with Joseph!"

[011,04] Thus it was decided and settled. The high priest secretly called trusted servants and informed them of what had taken place in Joseph's house, and then sent them to Joseph with instructions about what they were to do if the situation should be confirmed.

[011,05] In a great hurry, the servants went to Joseph and discovered the situation just as the high priest had told them.

[011,06] The oldest of them said to Joseph: "Look, we were sent here from the temple, to ascertain to for ourselves the condition of the virgin, since malicious rumours about her have come to the ears of the high priest.

[011,07] Unfortunately we have found these sad speculations confirmed; therefore do not let this turn violent, and follow us, together with Mary, to the temple, where you shall hear the just decision from the mouth of the high priest!"

[011,08] And, without any argument, Joseph followed the servants with Mary to the court in the temple.

[011,09] As he appeared before the high priest, the astonished high priest asked Mary in a serious tone:

[011,10] "Mary! Why did you do this to us and why did you degrade your own soul so profoundly ?

[011,11] You have forgotten the Lord, your God, – you, who were brought up in the sanctum and who received your daily bread out of the hand of angels,

[011,12] and who has constantly heard his songs of praise, and who has amused yourself, and has played and danced in front of God's face! – Speak, why did you do this to us?"

[011,13] But Mary had to weep bitterly and, beneath bitter sobbing and weeping, spoke: "As truly as God, the Lord of Israel, exists, as truly am I pure and have never known a man! – Ask Joseph, the one chosen by God!"

[011,14] And then the high priest turned to Joseph and asked him: "Joseph, I beseech you in the name of the eternal living God, tell me openly, how did this happen? Did you do such a thing?"

[011,15] And Joseph said: "I tell you by all that is for you and I holy, as truly as the Lord, my God, lives, as truly I am untainted in front of this virgin, as in front of you and in front of God!"

[011,16] And the high priest replied: "Do not bear false witness, but speak the truth in front of God! – And I tell you: You took your wedding into your own hands, you did not inform the temple and you did not first bow your head beneath the hand of the everlasting Almighty, so He might have blessed your seed! – Therefore, tell us the truth!"

18 August 1843

[011,17] Joseph fell silent upon hearing such words from the high priest and was unwilling to reply at all; for he was so bitterly and unjustly accused by the high priest.

[011,18] Since Joseph stood in deep silence before the high priest, not wanting to utter a word, the high priest opened his mouth again and said:

[011,19] "Return the virgin to us again, as you have received her from the temple of the Lord, when she was as pure as a rising sun on a bright morning!"

[011,20] Dissolving into tears Joseph stood there and said after an enormous sigh:

[011,21] "Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, what did I a poor old man do so badly in your eyes, that you now punish me so strongly?!"

[011,22] Take me from the world; as it is too hard to suffer such a disgrace as a just man in front of You and the whole world!

[011,23] You punished my father David, when he had sinned at Urias.

[011,24] I however, have never sinned against anyone and have laid hands neither on a human being nor an animal, and I have always respected the law impeccably. O Lord, why do you punish me now?

[011,25] O show me that I have sinned in your eyes and I will happily suffer punishment by fire! – But if I have sinned in your eyes, then the day and the hour in which I was born shall be cursed!"

[011,26] The high priest became embittered about Joseph's speech and spoke his mind in great agitation:

[011,27] "Fine then, since you dispute your great sin in front of God, I will let you both drink of the accursed water of God the Lord; then your sin will be revealed before your eyes and the eyes of all people!" –

[011,28] Immediately, the high priest took the accursed water, and let Joseph drink of it, and then sent him, according to the law, into the mountains near Jerusalem.

[011,29] Likewise, he also gave such water to the virgin and sent her into the mountains as well.

[011,30] However after three days they both returned absolutely unharmed, and all the people were surprised that no sin was revealed upon them.

[011,31] The high priest, exceedingly astonished, then said to them; "Well, since the Lord our God did not want to reveal your sin, I also do not want to judge you, but instead declare you as innocent and unmarried.

[011,32] However as the virgin is already pregnant, she shall become your wife as a penance, since she became pregnant unbeknownst to me, and she should never be given another husband, even when she would become a young widow! So be it! – And now leave in peace from here."

[011,33] Now, Joseph took Mary and went with her to his home and was full of joy and praised his Lord. His joy was even greater now that Mary had become his rightful wife.

Chapter 12. – Augustus' commandment for the assessment and census of all inhabitants. New sorrow and consolation.

19 August 1843

[012,01] Joseph then spent two months very contentedly in his house with Mary, who was now his wife, and he worked to support Mary.

[012,02] However, after this time passed and Mary's delivery drew closer, a new blow occurred which caused Joseph great concern.

[012,03] The Roman Emperor Augustus gave orders throughout his lands, whereby all people of his empire should be assessed and counted, in order to be classified for tax and recruitment purposes.

[012,04] And as the Nazarenes were not excluded from this commandment, Joseph was forced to go to Bethlehem, David's city, where the Roman registration commission was set up.

[012,05] Upon learning of this order, for which he had already been called to an assembly in Jerusalem, he said to himself:

[012,06] "My God and my Lord, this is a hard blow for me at this time as Mary's delivery is so close!

[012,07] What shall I do now? – I have to register my sons in any case, as they are unfortunately eligible for military service for the Emperor. But what, in heaven's name, O Lord, shall I do with Mary?!

[012,08] I cannot leave her at home; for what would she do when her time would come?

[012,09] If I take her with me, who can say that her time will not come on the way, and what would I then do with her, as she herself is more a child than a strong woman?

[012,10] And even if I finally manage to present her to the Roman officials, how shall I have her registered?

[012,11] As my wife, even when, until now, no one except myself and the high priest know anything?

[012,12] Indeed, I am almost embarrassed in front of the sons of Israel, for they know that I am an old man over seventy years old! – What will they say if I register her as my rightful wife, a barely fifteen-year-old child who also happens to be highly pregnant?!

[012,13] Or should I register her as my daughter? – But the sons of Israel know where Mary comes from, and that she could never be my daughter!

[012,14] If I register her as a virgin of the Lord who was entrusted to me, what would some there say to me, not knowing that I have defended myself in the temple, upon seeing Mary highly pregnant?

[012,15] Yes, I know what I will do now: I will wait for the day of the Lord! On this day, the Lord, my God will do what He thinks best and that will be for the best. And so be it then!"

Chapter 13. – An old friend fortifies and blesses Joseph. Joseph's travel arrangements for his five sons. The consoling testament from above. The happy departure.

21 August 1843

[013,01] Still on the same day an old wise friend from Nazareth came to Joseph and said to him:

[013,02] "Brother! See, the Lord leads his people through many deserts and steppes! – Those who willingly follow where he leads, will reach the right place!

[013,03] We were disgraced in Egypt and cried under Babylon's chains but the Lord freed us again!

[013,04] Now the Romans sent their eagles over us; it is the Lord's will! – So we will do what He wants; for He surely knows why He wants it like this!"

[013,05] Joseph well understood what his friend had told him and, as the friend blessed him and left, Joseph spoke to his sons:

[013,06] "Listen to me! The Lord wants, that all of us go to Bethlehem; and so we have to accept His will and do what He wants.

[013,07] You, Joel, saddle the she-ass for Mary and take the saddle with the backrest; and you Josés, bridle the ox and harness it to the cart, in which we will carry our food!

[013,08] You three, Samuel, Simeon and James load the cart with stable fruits, bread, honey and cheese, and take enough to cover our needs for fourteen days; for we do not know when we will be called, and when we will be free, and what could happen to Mary on the way! So put fresh linen and napkins on the cart as well!"

[013,09] The sons went and ordered everything as Joseph had requested.

[013,10] After they had prepared everything as Joseph had told them, they came back and showed it to Joseph.

[013,11] Joseph then knelt down with his entire house, prayed, and delivered himself and his family into the hands of the Lord.

[013,12] As he came to the end of these prayers and praises, he heard a voice seemingly from outside the house, which spoke to him:

[013,13] "Joseph, faithful son of David, who was a man after God's heart!

[013,14] When David left to fight the giant, the hand of the angel, placed at his side by the Lord, was with him, and see, your father was a mighty victor!

[013,15] But with you now is He Himself, who has been eternally, who created heaven and earth, who in Noah's time let it rain for forty days and nights, and who let drown all men hostile to Him,

[013,16] who then gave Isaac to Abraham, who led your people out of Egypt and spoke terribly with Moses in the Sinai!

[013,17] See, He is now truly in your house and will also go with you to Bethlehem; therefore do not be afraid, because He will not allow a hair on your head to be touched!"

[013,18] Joseph, upon hearing such words, became joyful, and he thanked the Lord for this grace and immediately prepared everything for the journey.

[013,19] He took Mary, and placed her as softly and comfortably as possible on the pack animal, and then took the reins in his hand and led the she-ass.

[013,20] The sons took charge of the loaded cart and followed the trotting she-ass.

[013,21] After some time Joseph gave the reins to his oldest son; and he walked at Mary's side, since she sometimes became weak and could not hold herself properly in the saddle.

Chapter 14.- Mary's vision of the two peoples. The first signs of labour. Shelter in a nearby cave.

23 August 1843

[014,01] Thus, the devout group of travellers came within six hours of Bethlehem and rested there in the open.

[014,02] Joseph looked at Mary and found that she seemed full of pain, and mortified he thought to himself:

[014,03] "What can it be? Mary's face is full of pain, and her eyes are filled with tears! – Maybe her time is nearing?"

[014,04] Then Joseph again looked closer at Mary, and, to his great surprise, saw her laughing!

[014,05] He then asked her: "Mary, tell me, what is happening to you? – For in one moment I see your face full of pain, but then in the next moment you are laughing and radiating with joy!"

[014,06] And Mary said to Joseph: "See, I just saw two peoples in front of me; the first one cried and then I was forced to cry with them.

[014,07] But the other moved in front of me laughing and was full of happiness and joy; and I had to laugh with them and join in their joy! – This is all that appeared as pain and joy on my face."

[014,08] As Joseph heard this he felt calm again, since he knew that Mary often had visions, and he let them break camp to continue their journey and they proceeded towards Bethlehem. –

[014,09] But as they came closer to Bethlehem, Mary suddenly spoke to Joseph:

[014,10] "Listen to me, Joseph! – That which is inside me starts to press strongly; therefore let us rest!"

[014,11] Joseph was startled by Mary's sudden outcry, for he now saw that the moment he had most feared had arrived.

[014,12] So he let them stop immediately. Then Mary spoke again to Joseph:

[014,13] "Take me down from the she-ass; for That which is in me presses strongly and wants to come out! And I do can not resist Its pressure any longer!"

[014,14] But Joseph said: "But for the Lord's sake! You can see that there is no shelter here – where shall I bring you?"

[014,15] However, Mary said: "Look, over there in the hill is a cave; it can be hardly a hundred steps away! Take me there; it is impossible for me to go any further!"

[014,16] Thereupon Joseph steered his cart there and in this cave, which the shepherds used as a stable in time of need, to his great joy he found some hay and straw, which he promptly used to prepare a provisional bed for Mary.

Chapter 15. – Mary in the cave. Joseph searching for a midwife in Bethlehem. Joseph's wonderful experiences. Nature's testimonial. Joseph's meeting with the midwife.

24 August 1843

[015,01] As soon as the bed was prepared, Joseph brought Mary into the cave, and she lay on the bed and found some relief in this position.

[015,02] As Mary was thus lying relieved on the bed, Joseph said to his sons:

[015,03] "You two eldest take care of Mary and care for her properly in case she needs it, especially you Joel, who have gained some knowledge in this regard from my friends in Nazareth!"

[015,04] He ordered the other three to take care of the ass and the ox and to keep the cart in the cave which was quite large.

[015,05] After Joseph had organised everything properly, he said to Mary: "Now I will go up on the hill to look for a midwife in my father's town as quickly as I can, and then I will bring her here to help you!"

[015,06] After these words Joseph immediately left the cave, since it was already quite late in the evening and one could already pick out the stars in the sky.

[015,07] And here we will tell about his extraordinary experiences after leaving the cave, in the same words he used to his sons upon his return to the cave with the midwife, and Mary had already given birth.

[015,08] And Joseph's words were: "Children! we are on the threshold of great events! – Now I start to understand what the voice was telling me the night before our departure; indeed, if the Lord was not with us – albeit invisibly – such marvels as I have seen could not possibly have happened!

[015,09] Listen to me! – As I stepped out and went on my way, it seemed to me as if I went and yet did not move; – and I saw the rising full moon and the stars both rising and setting, and see, everything stood still, and the moon did not leave the horizon and the stars did not want to set at all!

[015,10] Then I saw flocks upon flocks of little birds sitting on the branches of trees; their heads were all facing in this direction, and they were shivering as when large earthquakes are approaching, and they could not be chased away from their perches neither by shouting nor by throwing stones.

[015,11] And I looked around again on the ground and, not far from me, saw a group of workmen who were sitting around a bowl filled with food. Some of them kept their hands motionless in the bowl, and were unable to take the food out of it.

[015,12] And those who had already lifted a morsel from the bowl, kept it near their mouth and were not able to open their mouth to eat it; and all faces were turned upwards as if they saw great things in the sky!

[015,13] Then I saw sheep being driven by the shepherds; but the sheep just stood there motionless, and the shepherd's hand, which he lifted to hit the tarrying sheep, remained frozen in the air and he could not move it.

[015,14] Again I saw a whole herd of bucks who held their snouts over the water but could not drink, for they were as if completely paralyzed.

[015,15] I also saw a stream which had a steep drop down the hill, and look, the water stood still and did not flow down into the valley! – And everything on the ground was like this, as though it had no life and no motion.

[015,16] Thus, as I stood there or walked, and did not know whether I was standing or walking, see, I finally saw life once again!

[015,17] For a woman came down the hill towards me, and when she reached me, she asked: "Man, where are you going so late?"

[015,18] And I spoke to her: "I am looking for a midwife; since over there in the cave is someone who needs to give birth!"

[015,19] The woman replied and said: "Is she from Israel?" – And I replied to her: "Yes, my lady, she and I are from Israel; David is our father!"

[015,20] But the woman went on and asked: "Who is she who wants to give birth in the cave? Is she your wife or a relative or a maidservant?"

[015,21] And I replied to her: "Since a short time – only before God and the high priest - my wife. However, she was not yet my wife when she became pregnant, but had been given from the temple by the witness of God, into the care of my house, since she had earlier been raised in the Holy of Holies!"

[015,22] But do not be surprised about her pregnancy; for That which is inside her has been conceived by the holy spirit of God!" – The woman was astonished and said to me: "Man, tell me the truth!" – But I said: "Come, look, and be convinced with your own eyes!" – – –

Chapter 16. – The visions near the cave. The midwife's dream and her prophetic words. The midwife with Mary and the Child. Salome, her sister, doubts Mary's virginity.

25 August 1843

[016,01] The woman agreed and followed Joseph to the cave; and when they arrived there, the cave suddenly became enveloped in a thick white cloud, so that they could not find the entrance.

[016,02] The midwife was greatly surprised at this phenomenon and said to Joseph:

[016,03] "This day, my soul experienced something extraordinary! – I had a most wonderful vision this morning, where everything formed itself just as I now have seen it in reality, as I still see it and as I will see more of it!

[016,04] You are the same man, who came towards me in my vision; and I also saw the whole world standing still in the middle of its activities, and I saw the cave, how a cloud covered it; and I spoke with you as I have just now spoken.



Mosaic detail, Ta' Pinu Church, Gozo, Malta

[016,05] And I even saw something more marvellous in the cave, as my sister Salome arrived, who was the only one to whom I confided my vision this morning!

[016,06] Therefore, I say now also in front of you and God, my Lord: Israel has experienced a great salvation! A saviour came, sent from above, in the time of our greatest need!"

[016,07] After these words of the midwife, the cloud quickly drifted out of the cave and light of such power flowed out of the cave towards the midwife and Joseph that their eyes were unable to bear it, and the midwife said: "So everything is true, which I saw in the vision! – Oh man! you fortunate one, here is more than Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Elijah!" –

[016,08] After these words were spoken, the light became more and more bearable and the Infant became visible just as it took to the mother's breast for the first time.

[016,09] The midwife now entered the cave with Joseph and looked at the Infant and its mother, and when she found everything so perfectly resolved, she said:

[016,10] "Truly, truly, this is the saviour celebrated by all the prophets, he who will be free of bonds even in the womb, to signify that he will lift all the restrictions of the law!

[016,11] But since when did anyone see a newly born child reach already for its mother's breast!?

[016,12] This evidently shows, that this Child, when becoming a man, will judge the world by love and not by the law!

[016,13] Listen, you fortunate husband of this virgin, everything is in the best of order; therefore, let me leave the cave, for I it now starts to weigh heavily on my breast since I feel I am not pure enough to bear the holy proximity of my and your God and Lord!"

[016,14] Joseph was completely taken aback upon hearing these words of the midwife. – And she hurried out of the cave into the open.

[016,15] As she stepped out of the cave, she met her sister Salome outside, who knew about her vision and had followed her, and immediately said to her:

[016,16] "Salome, Salome! come and see my morning vision confirmed in reality! – In the fullest truth the virgin has given birth to what human wisdom and nature may never understand!"

[016,17] Salome said: "As truly as God exists, I cannot believe that a virgin gave birth until I will have examined her with my own hands!"

Chapter 17. – The doubting Salome's request to Mary. Salome's testimonial of Mary's untouched virginity. God's Judgment. The angel's instructions to Salome. Salome's recovery.

26 August 1843

[017,01] After Salome had said this, she entered the cave and said:

[017,02] "Mary, my soul is preoccupied with a big conflict; therefore I ask you to prepare yourself, that I examine you with my experienced hands, and that we shall see how your virginity appears!"



*Mosaic detail, Ta' Pinu Church,
Gozo, Malta*

[017,03] Mary willingly agreed to the demands of the unbelieving Salome, got ready and allowed herself to be examined.

[017,04] However, when Salome touched Mary's abdomen with her searching hand, she raised an enormous howl and she shouted very loudly:

[017,05] "Woe, woe for my Godlessness and my great disbelief, that I wanted to test the everlasting God! – for look, look here! – my hand burns in the fire of the Divine wrath over woeful me!!!"

[017,06] After these words she threw herself on her knees in front of the Infant and said:

[017,07] "O God of my fathers ! You almighty Lord of all magnificence! Remember me, that I also am a seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!

[017,08] Do not make a fool out of me in front of the sons of Israel, but give me back my healthy limbs!"

[017,09] And look, thereupon an angel of the Lord stood next to Salome and said to her: "God the Lord has heard your entreaty; go to the Infant and carry It, and through this you will experience a great salvation!"

[017,10] As Salome heard this, she kneeled in front of Mary and asked her for the Infant.

[017,11] Mary willingly gave her the Infant and said to her: "May it serve your salvation according to the saying of the angel of the Lord; may the Lord have mercy upon you!"

[017,12] Salome took the small Child in her arms and held it as she kneeled, and as soon as she had the Child in her arms, she said:

[017,13] "O God! You almighty Lord of Israel, who rules and reigns from eternity! – In all the fullness of truth, a king of kings is born here in Israel, who will be mightier than David was, the man after God's heart! I shall laud and praise You forever!"

[017,14] After these words Salome was soon fully healed again, and she returned the Child to Mary with the most heartfelt contrition and left the cave vindicated.

[017,15] As soon as she was outside, she wanted to scream out aloud about the greatest miracle of all miracles and had already begun to tell her sister about what had happened to her.

[017,16] But suddenly a voice came from above and said to Salome: "Salome, Salome! Do not tell anyone what extraordinary events have happened to you; for the time will come, when the Lord will show Himself through words and acts!"

[017,17] At this point Salome fell silent and, according to Mary's wish, Joseph stepped out to ask the two sisters to come back into the cave so that nobody should notice what marvel had happened there. – And both humbly returned into the cave.

Chapter 18. – The Holy Family's night's sleep in the cave. The angel's songs of praise in the morning. The adoration of the shepherds. The angel's words of explanation to Joseph.

28 August 1843

[018,01] When all had gathered in the cave, Joseph's sons asked their father (viz Joseph):

[018,02] "Father, what shall we do now? Everything is taken care of! Our bodies are tired from travelling; can we not lay down and rest?"

[018,03] And Joseph spoke: "Children! you see what an infinite grace came to all of us from above; and to this end you shall stay awake and praise God with me!

[018,04] For you also saw, what Salome experienced in the cave since she was disbelieving; henceforth, we shall not be sleepy when the Lord visits us!

[018,05] Go to Mary and touch the Infant; who knows if your eyelids may not become strengthened as if you would have had a long and refreshing sleep!"

[018,06] Joseph's sons went and touched the little Child; and the Child smiled at them and stretched Its little hands out to them, as if It recognized them as brothers.

[018,07] Thereupon everybody was greatly astonished and they said: "Indeed, this is no ordinary child! For who has ever experienced, that someone was greeted so ecstatically by a new-born child?

[018,08] Besides, we now also feel strengthened in all our limbs, as if we had never made a journey, and were at home on a morning with our bodies totally rested!"

[018,09] Thereupon, Joseph replied: "See, so my advice was good. However, now I notice that it is starting to get quite cool; therefore bring the ass and the ox here! The animals will lay around us and will give us some warmth through their breath and perspiration; and we shall also lay close to Mary!"

[018,10] And the sons did as he said. And as they brought the animals close to Mary, they immediately laid down on the main part of Mary's bed and breathed diligently over Mary and the Infant and it warmed them quite well.

[018,11] The midwife said: "Indeed, this can not be insignificant in front of God, even the animals serve, as if they had reason and sense!"

[018,12] Salome said: "O sister! The animals here seem to see more than us! – While we hardly dare to think, the animals already worship the One who created them!

[018,13] Believe me, sister, as truly as God exists, as truly as the promised Messiah is here in front of us; for we know, that never during the birth of even the greatest prophets have such marvels occurred!"

[018,14] But Mary spoke to Salome: "God the Lord showed great mercy in that you behold That before which my soul trembles!

[018,15] Keep silent just like the angel of the Lord advised you; for otherwise you could be the cause of our bitter end!"

[018,16] Salome solemnly promised to keep her silence forever and the midwife followed her sister's example.

[018,17] And now everything in the cave became quiet. In the first hour before sunrise, mighty songs of praise were heard outside of the cave.

[018,18] Immediately, Joseph sent his eldest son to see what it was and who was singing outside so powerfully in praise of the Lord.

[018,19] Joel went out and saw that every space in the skies was filled from top to bottom with uncountable myriads of shining angels. Astonished, he hurried back to the cave to tell everyone what he had seen.

29 August 1843

[018,20] All were greatly astonished at Joel's report and went out to convince themselves of its truth.

[018,21] After having witnessed such glory of the Lord, they returned to the cave and bore witness to Mary as well. And Joseph said to Mary:

[018,22] "Listen you purest virgin of the Lord, the fruit of your loins is indeed conceived of the holy spirit of God, as all heaven now proves!

[018,23] But what will happen to us, now that all the world will now surely come to know of what happened here? For not only we, but all other men now see the evidence shining for us through all the heavens – for I have just seen many shepherds, and how they turned their faces heavenward!

[018,24] And they sang with the same voices along with the mighty choirs of angels, which now – visible to everybody – fill all the heavens from top to bottom all the way down to the earth!

[018,25] And their song sounded like that of the angels: "Descend, o heavens, upon the righteous! May peace be with all people on earth who are of good will!" – And: "God in heaven shall be honoured in Him, who comes in the name of the Lord!"

[018,26] Look, oh Mary, the world will see and hear such things; therefore they will come here and they will follow us, and we will have to flee over hill and dale!

[018,27] So I think that we should move from here as soon as possible and, as soon as I have been registered – which should already happen this morning –, we should return to Nazareth and from there over to the Greeks, some of whom I know quite well. – Don't you agree with me?"

[018,28] Mary said to Joseph: "But you can see that I cannot leave this shelter today; therefore let us trust in the Lord! He has led us and protected us so far; so He will surely continue to lead and truly protect us ever so faithfully!

[018,29] If He wants to reveal us to the world, tell me: where shall we flee, where His heaven would not be able to discover us?!

[018,30] Therefore His will shall be! – Whatever He wants will be right. Look, here on my breast rests the One, whom all this concerns!

[018,31] And this One will stay with us, so the great glory of God will also not leave us, wherever we would want to flee!"

[018,32] Mary had hardly finished speaking, when behold, two angels were already standing in front of the cave as leaders of a group of shepherds, and they made it known to the shepherds that the One, for whom their songs of praise were meant, was born here.

[018,33] And the shepherds entered the cave, and kneeled in front of the Infant and worshiped It; and the angels came also in bands and worshiped the Infant.

[018,34] But Joseph, together with his sons, looked astonished towards Mary and the small Child and said: O God, what is this? – Did You Yourself assumed flesh in this Child?

[018,35] For how could it be possible then, that He is even worshipped by Your holy angels? If you are present, O Lord, then what is with the temple now – and with the Holy of Holies?!"

[018,36] And an angel stepped towards Joseph and said to him: "Do not ask and do not worry yourself; for the Lord has chosen the earth as the scene of His mercy, and has now visited His people, as He has foretold through the mouths of His children, His servants and prophets!

[018,37] What now takes place in front of your eyes, is according to His will, as He is holy, most holy!"

[018,38] At this point the angel left Joseph, and went back to worshiped the little Child, who smiled with open hands at all the worshippers.

[018,39] As the sun rose, the angels disappeared; but the shepherds stayed and inquired with Joseph, about how all these events could possibly have happened.

[018,40] But Joseph said: "Listen, as miraculously as the grass grows out of the ground, so also did this miracle occur! Now who knows, how the grass grows? – Just as little am I able to tell you about this wonder, too! God wanted it this way; this is all, that I can tell you!"

Chapter 19. – Joseph's concerns about the registration. The midwife's report to the Roman captain Cornelius. The captain's visit to the cave. Joseph and Cornelius. Cornelius' peace and joy being near the Child Jesus.

30 August 1843

[019,01] The shepherds were satisfied with this answer and did not ask Joseph any further, and they left them and then brought various refreshments as offering to Mary.

[019,02] When the sun had already been shining on the earth for an hour, Joseph asked the midwife:

[019,03] "Listen to me, my friend and sister from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob! – See, the registration greatly worries me and I wish nothing else than to get it over with!

[019,04] But I do not know where in the town it is taking place, so leave Salome here with Mary, but lead me and my sons to the Roman captain who conducts the registration!

[019,05] Maybe we will be received immediately, for we will surely be the first to arrive there?"

[019,06] And the midwife said to Joseph: "Gracious man, listen to me! – The captain, Cornelius from Rome, lives in my house, which is one of the first in the town.

[019,07] And he has his office there as well. Although he is a pagan, he is otherwise a good and righteous man; I will go and tell him everything, except for the miracle, and I believe that everything will be solved!"

[019,08] Joseph was pleased by this proposal, as he anyhow felt a great timidity towards the Romans, and especially regarding the registration; therefore he asked the midwife to do as proposed.

[019,09] So the midwife went and found Cornelius, who was still young and liked to sleep late in the morning, still in his bed, and she informed him of all that was necessary.

[019,10] Cornelius got up immediately, threw his toga on and said to the landlady: "Woman, I believe everything you say; but I still want to go there with you, as I feel a strong urge to do so!

[019,11] According to your story it is not far from here, and I will be back in time at my workplace! So lead me there now!"

[019,12] And the midwife was pleased about this, and brought the honest, young captain with whom she was well acquainted, to the cave, where he stood in front and said to her: "O woman, how easy it is to visit my Emperor in Rome, and yet how hard it is to step into this cave!

[019,13] That has to be something exceptional! – Tell me, if you know any reason; for I know that you are an upright Jewess!"

[019,14] The midwife said: "Good captain of the great Emperor! Just wait for one moment out here in front of the cave; I will go inside and bring you the answer!"

[019,15] And she went and told Joseph, that the good captain himself was waiting in front of the cave, and that he would like to enter, but for some inexplicable reason he did not dare to do so.

[019,16] As Joseph heard this, he was moved and said: "O God, how good are You, that you even turn into joy that of which I was most afraid! – Therefore all praise and all honour shall be yours alone!"

[019,17] After these words, he hurried out of the cave and threw himself at Cornelius' feet, saying: "Upholder of the great Emperor, have mercy on this old man! See, my young wife, who was given to me by lot in the temple, gave birth here last night, and I just arrived here yesterday, therefore, I was not able to report myself to you immediately!"

[019,18] And Cornelius said, while lifting up Joseph: "O man! do not worry, everything is well! But let me step inside and see how you are settled!"

[019,19] And Joseph led Cornelius into the cave. When he looked upon the Infant, and saw how It smiled at him, he was astonished at such behaviour and said: "By Zeus, that is rare! I feel like a newborn, and never have I felt such peace and joy inside me! – Indeed, today I shall have a holiday, and remain your guest."

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Chapter 20. – Cornelius' questions about the Messiah. Joseph's embarrassment. The captain's questions to Mary, Salome and the midwife. The angels' warning of the betrayal of the Divine Secret. Cornelius' premonition of the Divinity of the Child Jesus.

31 August 1843

[020,01] But Joseph, who was very happy about this, spoke to the captain: "Upholder of the great Emperor's power, what can I, a poor man, offer you for your great friendship? – What can I serve you in this humid cave?"

[020,02] How can I treat you in accordance with your high position? – Look, here in my cart are all my belongings, partly brought from Nazareth, but partly a present from the local shepherds!

[020,03] If you're able to take some of it, may each bite fed to your mouth be a thousand times blessed!"

[020,04] But Cornelius said: "Good fellow, worry not about me; see, here is my landlady, who will take care of the kitchen and we shall all have enough for only one small coin adorned by the emperor's head!"

[020,05] And the captain gave a gold coin to the midwife and told her to arrange for a good lunch and dinner and for better housing, as soon as the woman in childbed would be able to move.

[020,06] But then Joseph said to Cornelius: "Oh splendid friend! Please, do not go to any trouble or expense for us; because for the few days we shall spend here, we are – praise the Lord, God of Israel! - Well taken care of!"

[020,07] The captain then said: "Good is good, but better is better! Therefore just let it happen and let me make a happy sacrifice to God as well; see, I honour the gods of all peoples!"

[020,08] I also want to honour your God, because ever since I saw His temple at Jerusalem I am pleased by Him. He must be a God of great wisdom, that you have learned such great skill from him?"

[020,09] But Joseph spoke: "Oh friend! If it would be possible for me to convince you of the one and only nature of our God, how much I would like to do it for your eternal well being!"

[020,10] But I am weak and ignorant and am not able to do so. But just look into some of our books and read them, you know our language well, and you will find things which will amaze you!"

[020,11] And Cornelius said: "Good fellow, I have already done what you have now kindly advised me to do, and I have found truly astonishing things therein!"

[020,12] Among other things I discovered a prediction, in which the Jews are promised a new eternal king. Tell me, do you know, after interpreting such prediction, when this king will come - and from where?"

[020,13] After some moments of embarrassment, Joseph said: "He will come from the heavens as the son of the everlasting God! And his Kingdom will not be of this world, but of the world of the spirit and truth!"

[020,14] And Cornelius spoke: "Well, I understand you, but I have also read that this king shall be born to a virgin in a stable, near this town! – How can this be understood?"

[020,15] But Joseph spoke: "Oh good man, you have a keen perception! - I cannot tell you anything else than this: Go and see the maid with the new born Child; there you will find what you want to find."

1 September 1843

[020,16] And Cornelius went and looked with sharp eyes at the virgin and the Infant, in order to discover, from her and the Child, the future king of the Jews.

[020,17] He also asked Mary how she had become pregnant at such an early age.

[020,18] And Mary replied: "Honest man, as truly as God exists have I never known a man!

[020,19] But it so happened nine months ago, that a messenger of the Lord came to me and taught me in a few words that I would become pregnant from the spirit of God.

[020,20] And it happened so: I became pregnant without ever having known a man; and look, before you is the fruit of the Divine promise! As God is my witness, this has happened so!" –

[020,21] Now Cornelius turned to both of the sisters and said: "What do you say to this story? Is this a fine deception of this old man, a good pretext for blind, superstitious people to escape legal punishment under such circumstances?

[020,22] For I know that Jews have set the death penalty for such cases! – But should there be anything more serious to it - which would be worse than in the first case, because then the emperor's law has to be applied severely, to make short work of any agitator?! Oh speak truth, so that I know what to think of this extraordinary family!"

[020,23] But Salome spoke: " Listen to me, oh Cornelius, I plead to you by all your great imperial authority! There will be no need for you to take any serious steps with regard to this poor, yet infinitely rich, family!

[020,24] You can believe me, for I stand for the truth with my life: all the powers of the heavens are at the disposal of this family, like your arm to you, of this I am truly convinced."

[020,25] Now Cornelius was taken aback even more and asked Salome: "Even the powers of Rome's holy Gods, Rome's heroes, weapons and invincible power? – Oh Salome! what are you talking about?!"

[020,26] But Salome said: "As you have said, so it is! – This is my conviction; in case you may not believe it, you might go outside and look at the sun! It is already shining for four hours today, and look, it is standing still in the east and does not dare to move on!"

[020,27] And Cornelius went outside, looked at the sun, came back and said in astonishment: "Indeed, you are right, if this is in connection with this family, then even the god Apollo obeys them!

[020,28] Zeus must be here as well, the mightiest of all gods and the time of Deucalion and of Pyrrha seems to come again; but if that is the case, then I have to report such an incident to Rome immediately!"

[020,29] When these words were spoken, two mighty angels appeared; their faces were radiant like the sun and their clothes like a flash of lightning. And they spoke: "Cornelius! – Be silent about all you have seen, even to yourself – otherwise you and Rome will perish this day!"

[020,30] Cornelius was then overcome by great fear. The two angels disappeared; but he went to Joseph and spoke: "Oh man! – Here is infinitely more than a future king of the Jews! Here is the One, whom all heaven and hell obeys! Therefore let me go from here; for I am not worthy of being so close to the presence to God!" – –

Chapter 21. – Joseph's words on the free will of man and his advice to Cornelius. The captain's care of the Holy Family.

2 September 1843

[021,01] And Joseph, himself quite astonished by Cornelius' remarks, said to him: "This wonder is so great that I do not even know how to tell you!

[021,02] But you can believe me when I tell you that great and mighty things are behind it; for all the powers of God's eternal heaven are not to be set in motion for insignificant matters!

[021,03] With regard to this wonder, no man is inhibited in his free will and can do whatever he wants; for that is what I have understood from the commandments given to you by the two angels of the Lord!

[021,04] For behold, the Lord through his omnipotence could bind our will in this instance, just as He binds the will of the animals, and we would then have to act according to His will!

[021,05] He does not do that, however. He only gives us free commandment from which we can learn that we can want and act on our own, that is His holy will.

[021,06] So you too are not bound in the slightest, not even with one fibre of your body, and can therefore do whatever you want! If you wish to be my guest today, then stay; however, if you do not wish or dare to do this, you are likewise completely free to decide.

[021,07] If you would ask for my advice, I would definitely give it and say to you: O friend, stay! – For you will not be in better hands anywhere else in the whole world than here under the visible protection of all the heavenly powers!"

[021,08] And Cornelius said: "Yes, just man before the Gods and before your God, and before all men, your advice is good, and I will follow it and stay with you until tomorrow!

[021,09] I will now leave with my landlady for a short while, to make arrangements so that all of you can be provided - despite this cave - with better shelter."

[021,10] And Joseph said: "Good man, do as you wish! The Lord God will reward you some day!"

[021,11] Hereupon the captain went to town with the midwife and first had it announced that the day was an official holiday, then took thirty warriors, gave them bedding, tents and firewood and told them to carry it all to the cave.

[021,12] The midwife took an appropriate amount of food and drink with her and had some more brought after her.

[021,13] On arrival at the cave, the captain immediately had three tents set up: a spacious one for Mary, one for himself, Joseph and his sons and one for the midwife and her sister.

[021,14] And in Mary's tent he had a new and rather soft bed set up and provided the tent with other necessary facilities. He also suitably equipped the other tents, got his men to

quickly build a stove, laid some wood on it himself and made a fire to warm the cave, which was quite cold at this time of year.

Chapter 22. – Cornelius with the Holy Family in the cave. The shepherds and the captain. The new eternal spiritual sun. Cornelius' farewell. Joseph's word of thanks on the goodness of the heathen captain.

4 September 1843

[022,01] Thus Cornelius looked after the devout family and stayed the whole day and the whole night with them

[022,02] In the afternoon, the shepherds came again to worship the Infant, and brought various offerings.

[022,03] However, as they saw tents and the Roman captain in the hut², they wanted to flee from him in great fear;

[022,04] for there were many fugitives from the Roman registration among them, who were in great fear of the penalty that could be imposed on such fugitives.

[022,05] The captain went to them and spoke: "Do not fear me, for I will abate your punishment; but bear in mind that the will of the Emperor must be fulfilled, and therefore come tomorrow, and I will register you as gently and mildly as possible!"

[022,06] As the shepherds now learnt that Cornelius was such a mild person, they overcame their shyness and let themselves be registered on the following day.

[022,07] After his talk with the shepherds, the captain asked Joseph, whether the sun would never leave the morning this time.

[022,08] And Joseph replied: "This sun, which rose on the earth today, never! But the natural sun will set in a few hours after running its normal course according to the Lord's will."

[022,09] Such was Joseph's prophetic speech that he himself hardly knew and understood anything of what he had said!

[022,10] But the captain asked Joseph: "What are you saying? – Look, I have not understood the meaning of your words; so speak to me in a more comprehensible way!"

[022,11] And Joseph spoke: "A time will come in which you will warm yourself in the holy rays of this sun and will bathe in the stream of its Spirit!"

[022,12] I do not know what else to tell you and hardly understand myself what I have just said; in time, when I am no more, the magnificence of the eternal truth will be revealed to you."

[022,13] And the captain did not ask Joseph anything more and kept these profound words in his soul.

[022,14] On the following day, the captain greeted the entire family and assured them that he would take care of them as long as they stayed there, and keep them in his heart all his life.

[022,15] Subsequently, he went about his business and gave the midwife another coin to provide for the family.

[022,16] And when the captain had left, Joseph spoke to his sons: "Children, how is it that a heathen is better than many a Jew? – Is it possible that here the words of Isaiah are fitting, when he said:

[022,17] 'Behold, my servants shall rejoice in good spirits; you, however, shall scream in anguish and howl in sorrow!'" – And the sons of Joseph replied: "Yes, father, this passage is explained and understood in its entirety here."

Chapter 23. – Cornelius' affectionate care. The angel's instructions to Joseph regarding the departure to Jerusalem and the presentation in the temple. Mary's dream. The sentry in front of the cave.

5 September 1843

[023,01] So Joseph spent six days in the cave and was visited daily by Cornelius, who diligently saw to it that the family would not lack anything.

[023,02] During the early morning of the sixth day, an angel appeared to Joseph and spoke: "Obtain a pair of turtledoves, and depart for Jerusalem on the eighth day!

[023,03] Mary shall sacrifice the turtledoves according to the law, and the Child must be circumcised and bear the name that has been indicated to you and Mary!

[023,04] Return to this place after the circumcision, and stay here until I tell you when and where you shall go from here!

[023,05] You, Joseph, will prepare to leave earlier; but I must tell you: you will not be able to leave this place one heartbeat earlier than it is the will of Him, who is with you in the cave!"

[023,06] After these words the angel disappeared, and Joseph went to Mary and notified her of the angel's words.

[023,07] And Mary said to Joseph: "I am a maidservant of the Lord at all times, so may His will be done unto me!

[023,08] And I had a dream today, and in this dream all happened as you disclosed now; so just get me the pair of turtledoves, and I will confidently leave here on the eighth day to go to the city of the Lord."

[023,09] Soon after the angel's appearance, the captain came once again for a morning visit, and Joseph notified him as to why he would have to go to Jerusalem on the eighth day.

[023,10] And the captain instantly offered Joseph all his facilities and wanted to give him a guide to lead him to Jerusalem.

[023,11] But Joseph thanked him for his magnificent good will and spoke: "See, it is the will of my Lord God that I go into Jerusalem, just as I came to this place!

[023,12] And so I will make the short journey in the same way, so that the Lord does not punish me for disobedience of His will.

[023,13] However, as you wish to do something for me on this occasion, please provide me with two turtledoves, which have to be offered to the temple, and take care of this dwelling place for me!

[023,14] For I will come back to this place on the ninth day and remain here as long as the Lord demands!"

[023,15] And Cornelius promised Joseph to offer all that was requested, and thereupon departed, and himself brought Joseph a cage full of turtledoves, from which Joseph could select the most beautiful ones.

[023,16] Subsequently, the captain returned to his duties and, in the meantime, left the cage of turtledoves in the cave until evening, till the time he himself went to fetch it back.

[023,17] On the eighth day, after Joseph had departed for Jerusalem, Cornelius placed a guard in front of the cave, who prevented all from entering or leaving it, with the exception of the two eldest sons of Joseph who were left behind and Salome, who provided them with food and drink; for the midwife had also travelled to Jerusalem.

Chapter 24. – The circumcision and naming of the Infant and Mary's purification. The presentation of the Child in the temple by the mother. The devout Simeon and the Child Jesus.

6 September 1843

[024,01] On the afternoon of the eighth day - according to present calculation, at around the third hour - the Infant was circumcised in the temple and received the name Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was even conceived in the womb.

[024,02] And since in the extreme case of Mary's proven virginity the time for her purification could be considered as fulfilled, Mary was immediately purified in the temple.

[024,03] Therefore Mary took the Infant on her arm soon after the circumcision and carried Him into the temple, so that she, together with Joseph, could present Him to the Lord according to the Law of Moses.

[024,04] For it is written in God's law: "Every kind of firstborn must be consecrated to the Lord."

[024,05] And hence a pair of turtledoves or a pair of young pigeons should be sacrificed!"

[024,06] And Mary offered a pair of turtledoves and laid them on the offering table; and the priest took the offering and blessed Mary.

[024,07] There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, who was most devout and god-fearing and waited for the consolation of Israel; for the Holy Spirit was upon him.

[024,08] And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen Jesus, the one anointed by God, the Messiah of the world."

[024,09] And, prompted by an inner urge, he came into the temple, where Joseph and Mary were still present with the Child Jesus and doing all that the law required.

[024,10] As he saw the Infant, he immediately went to the parents and entreated them to let him take the Infant into his arms for a short while.

[024,11] The most devout parents gladly agreed to this old, most devout man whom they knew well.

[024,12] And Simeon took the Infant into his arms, most fervently praised God and then spoke:

[024,13] "Lord! Now allow Your servant to go in peace, according to Your word;

[024,14] for my eyes have now seen the Saviour, whom you promised to the fathers and the prophets.

[024,15] This is the One, whom You prepared in the presence of all peoples!

[024,16] A light of revelation to the pagans, and the glory of Your people Israel."

[024,17] Joseph and Mary were surprised themselves about Simeon's words; for they still did not understand the things he had said about the Child.

[024,18] Simeon returned the Infant to Mary, blessed both of them and said to Mary:

[024,19] "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rise of many in Israel; and for a sign that will be opposed!

[024,20] A sword will pierce even your own soul, so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed!"

[024,21] And although Mary did not understand Simeon's words, she kept them deep in her heart.

[024,22] And Joseph also did the same and mightily praised God for it in his heart. --

Chapter 25. - The prophetess Hannah in the temple and her testimonial of the Child Jesus. Hannah's warning to Mary. The provisional accommodation of the Holy Family with a rich Israelite.

7 September 1843

[025,01] At this time, there was also a prophetess in the temple, called Hannah; she was a daughter of Phanuel, from the tribe of Asher.

[025,02] She was already quite old and was so devout, that during her youth she had retained her virginity for seven years after her marriage because of her love of God.

[025,03] In her eightieth year she became a widow, and immediately went to the temple and never left it.

[025,04] There, at her own will, she served only the Lord God, with prayers and fasting almost throughout the day and night.

[025,05] At that particular time, she was already four years in the temple and she now came over, praised the Lord God, and the Holy Spirit spoke through her to all those who awaited the Saviour of Jerusalem.

[025,06] When she ended her prophetic words, she requested to hold the Infant, cuddled him and honoured and praised God.

[025,07] Afterwards she returned the Infant to Mary and spoke to her: "Fortunate are you, o virgin, to be the mother of my Lord.

[025,08] However, do not desire praise because of it; for only He, who suckles at your breast, is worthy to be honoured, praised and worshipped by us all!"

[025,09] After these words the prophetess turned back, and Joseph and Mary, after spending close to three hours in the temple, went out and searched for accommodation with a relative.

[025,10] As they came there, however, they found the house locked; for at this time, the relative was in Bethlehem for the registration.

[025,11] Joseph did not know what he should do; for firstly, it was the dead of night, as it was wont in the season of short daytime, and besides, there were almost no houses open at this time, as it was the day before the Sabbath³.

[025,12] It was too cold to stay overnight in the open, as there was hoarfrost on the fields and, moreover, there was a cold wind blowing.

[025,13] As Joseph thought to and fro and appealed to the Lord for help in this difficulty,

[025,14] behold, a young, distinguished Israelite walked up to Joseph and asked him: "What are you doing this late with your luggage in the lane? Are you not also an Israelite - and do not know the custom?"

[025,15] Joseph said: "I am from the tribe of David! I was in the temple and offered a sacrifice to the Lord; but the early night came upon us very suddenly, and now I cannot find accommodation and have greatly concerned about my wife and her Child!"

[025,16] And the young Israelite said to Joseph: "So come with me; I will rent you a room in an inn for a penny or its equivalent!"

[025,17] And Joseph, together with Mary, who was on the pack animal, and with his three sons, followed the Israelite to a magnificent house and were lodged in a small, low room.

Chapter 26. – The rebuke of the inn proprietor Nicodemus. Joseph's justification speech. The testimonial of the midwife. A sign of clemency for Nicodemus, who recognizes the Lord.

9 September 1843

[026,01] In the morning, as Joseph was getting ready for departure to Bethlehem, the young Israelite came and demanded the rent money.

[026,02] But as he entered the small room, he was overcome by such great fear, that his lips could not utter a sound.

[026,03] Joseph went up to him and said: "Friend! Look, what do you see on me that has the value of a penny? – Take that, as I do not possess any money!"

[026,04] The Israelite now recovered somewhat and said with a trembling voice: "Man from Nazareth, only now do I recognize you! – You are Joseph, the carpenter, and you are the same one to whom Mary, the virgin of the Lord, was given by lot from the temple nine moons ago!

[026,05] Here is the same virgin! – How have you cared for her, that she is now a mother in her fifteenth year? – What has happened?

[026,06] Truly, you are not the father! For men of your age and your godliness, recognized throughout Israel, would never do such things.

[026,07] However, you have grown-up sons; can you vouch for their innocence? Have you always kept an eye on them and observed all their thoughts, actions, everything they did?"

[026,08] Joseph, however, retorted to the young man: "Now I have recognized you; you are Nicodemus, a son of Benjamin from the tribe of Levi! How is it that you propose to examine me, while it is not your role to do so? – The Lord has examined me on this matter in the holy shrine and on the mountain of damnation and vindicated me before the highest court; what blame do you still want to put on me and my sons?"

[026,09] Go to the temple and investigate in the highest court, and you will get a proper testimonial of my whole house!"

[026,10] These words deeply pierced the heart of the young, rich man, and he said: "But for the Lord's sake, if it is so, tell me, how it happened that this virgin has given birth! – Is it a miracle, or is it natural?"

[026,11] Here the midwife who was present went to Nicodemus and spoke: "Good man! Here is the rent for the inadequate lodging! But do not hold us up here any longer; for we must reach Bethlehem today itself!"

[026,12] Only consider what it was that was given shelter in your house for a penny! – Truly, truly! Your most splendid rooms, adorned with gold and precious stones, would have been inadequate for the Glory of God, who stayed in this small room, which is, at best, suitable for convicts!

[026,13] Go there and touch the Infant, so that the thick veil in front of your eyes is lifted and you can see who has visited you! – As the midwife I have the ancient right to permit you to touch the Infant."

[026,14] At this, Nicodemus went there and touched the Infant; and as he had touched Him, he got a glimpse of his inner vision, so that he saw the glory of God.

[026,15] He immediately fell down before the Child, worshipped Him and spoke: "What mercy, what love and what compassion must be in You, o Lord, that You visit your people!"

[026,16] What should I do to my house and what to myself, now that I have not recognized the glory of God?!"

[026,17] To this the midwife said: "Remain in all this, as you are; but keep an innermost silence on what you have seen, otherwise you will be subject to the tribunal of God!" – Thereupon Nicodemus returned the penny, went out weeping and hereafter adorned the small room with gold and precious stones. – And Joseph immediately went on his journey.

Chapter 27. - The return of the Holy Family to Bethlehem. The warm reception in the cave by those who had stayed behind. A manger as the Infant's cot. A good rest in the frosty night.

11 September 1843

[027,01] The eminent travellers once again arrived in Bethlehem in the evening, one hour before sunset, and settled in the familiar cave.

[027,02] The two sons who had stayed behind, Salome and the captain came to meet them with open arms and asked those who had returned how the journey had been.

[027,03] And Joseph narrated everything they had encountered, declaring in the end, that he, together with all the fellow travellers, had not eaten anything during that day; for the extremely limited supplies were barely sufficient for the weak Mary.

[027,04] As the captain heard this, he immediately went to the back of the cave and came back with various food stuffs that were permitted to the Jews and spoke to Joseph:

[027,05] "May your God bless this for you, and may you bless this according to your custom, and may all of you be strengthened and restored on this!"

[027,06] And Joseph thanked God and blessed the food and then, in good spirits, ate together with Mary, his sons and the midwife.

[027,07] However, carrying the Infant the whole day had become difficult for Mary, so she said to Joseph:

[027,08] "Joseph, see, if only I had a small place beside me on which to lay down the Infant, so as to give my arms a little rest, then I would be well taken care of, and the Infant could grow in strength with a restful sleep!"

[027,09] Before the captain was scarcely even aware of Mary's wish, he immediately leapt into the back of the cave and hurriedly brought forth a manger that was meant for the sheep (and which looked like a present-day feeding trough in front of the inns in the countryside).

[027,10] Salome immediately took the best straw and fresh hay, placed it inside the little crib, then covered it with a clean cloth and thus made a soft bed for the Infant.

[027,11] Mary wrapped the Infant in fresh linen, pressed Him to her heart, kissed Him and then gave the Infant to Joseph, so that he could kiss him and then also to all the others. She then laid the Infant in the rather inadequate little bed for the Lord of the heaven and the earth!

[027,12] The Infant slept quite peacefully, and Mary could now eat in peace and fortify herself from the meal that the most kind-hearted captain had prepared.

[027,13] After the meal, Mary spoke again to Joseph: "Joseph, let my bed be made ready, for I am extremely tired from the journey and would like to rest!"

[027,14] Salome said: "O mother of my Lord, look, this has already been taken care of; come and see!"

[027,15] And Mary arose, took the Infant and had the crib carried into her tent and went to rest; and this was Mary's first whole night's sleep since giving birth.

[027,16] And the captain made sure that the stove was lit diligently and white stones were warmed and put around Mary's tent, so that the Infant would not suffer from cold; for it was a cold night, in which the water in the open air had turned into solid ice.

Chapter 28. - Joseph wants to leave for Nazareth. The captain's advice to wait. The news about the Persian caravan and of Herod's search for the Child. Mary's fearlessness and trust in God.

12 September 1843

[028,01] The next morning, Joseph said: "Why should we stay here any longer? Mary feels strong again, so we want to leave for Nazareth, where we have good accommodation!"

[028,02] However, as Joseph prepared to leave, the captain, who had had some work in the city before daybreak, returned once again and spoke to Joseph:

[028,03] "God-worthy man! – You want to leave for the journey home; but I would like to dissuade you from it today and tomorrow!"

[028,04] See, I have just got information from my men, who arrived early today from Jerusalem, that three enormous Persian caravans have entered into Jerusalem!

[028,05] Three main leaders, who are Magi, have made specific inquiries with Herod about the newborn King of the Jews!

[028,06] Herod, as a Roman tenant sovereign from Greece who knows nothing of this, turned to the high priests, so that they could reveal the birthplace of the newly Anointed to him.

[028,07] They announced to him that such an event would occur in Judea, and particularly in Bethlehem, for it was written in the Scriptures!

[028,08] Herod then dismissed the priests and, together with all his servants, went to the three leaders and revealed to them what he had learnt from the high priests,

[028,09] and then suggested to the three to conduct a diligent search for the newly Anointed of the Jews, and if they should find the Child, to return to him immediately, so that he too could go there and pay homage to the Child.

[028,10] But do you know, my dearest friend Joseph, that I do not trust the Persians, and least of all do I trust the most tyrannical Herod?!

[028,11] These Persians are believed to be Magi and are said to have found out about the birth through a strange star. This I will not dispute in the least; for such great miracles have taken place during the birth of this Infant, that similar events could have occurred in Persia as well.

[028,12] However, in this matter it is also the most unfortunate circumstance; for evidently it involves this Child. If the Persians find Him, then Herod will also find Him!

[028,13] And we will need to put up a big fight to elude this cunning old fox!

[028,14] So, as I said before, you must stay at least three more days at this remote place. Within this period I will certainly be able to get the king-seekers to change their direction; because you see, I have command over twelve legions of soldiers here! – For your peace of mind, I will not say anymore. You now know the essentials; therefore stay! I will now go away again and return to you around noon!"

13 September 1843

[028,15] Joseph, who, together with his family, was intimidated by this news, stayed and waited in all humility in the Lord's Will, to see what this strange providence would lead to.

[028,16] And he went to Mary and told her what he had just learnt from the captain.

[028,17] Mary spoke: "The Lord's will be done! What bitter events have we already encountered - and the Lord has transformed them all into honey!"

[028,18] The Persians will certainly not harm us, if they are really supposed to come to us; and if they are hired to use any force upon us, well, through God's grace we have the protection of the captain!"

[028,19] And Joseph said: "Mary, all this is right! I do not fear the Persians so greatly; but the grey-bearded Herod, this rapacious animal in human form, - it is him I fear, and even the captain dreads him!

[028,20] For if it is ascertained, perhaps by the Persians, that our Infant Son is the newly-anointed King, then our only recourse would be a despicable flight!

[028,21] For then even our captain, out of Roman political considerations would, for his own well-being, have to become an enemy. He will have to pursue us instead of helping us, if he does not want to be regarded as a traitor to his emperor!

[028,22] And he has surely also realized this for himself, as he expressed his significant doubts about Herod to me.

[028,23] That is why, I assume, he is making us wait here for three more days! If all goes well, he will certainly remain our friend;

[028,24] if not, he has us at hand to deliver us to Herod's cruelty, and moreover, will receive a great honour from his emperor for so cleverly removing the Jewish King, who could have one day endangered the state, from this world!"

[028,25] Hereupon Mary said: "Joseph! Do not needlessly frighten yourself and me! – Look, we drank the accursed water, and nothing happened to us! Why then should we be afraid, since we have, on account of this Child, seen and confirmed so much of the glory of God?!

[028,26] Let it happen as it should, I tell you: The Lord is mightier than the Persians, Herod, the Roman emperor and the captain together with his twelve legions! Thus be calm, as you see that I am calm!

[028,27] Incidentally, I am confident, that the captain will do his utmost before he is forced to become our enemy!"

[028,28] Thereupon the good, devout Joseph again felt reassured and went forth and awaited the captain. He let his sons heat the cave and boil some fruits for Mary, for himself and the sons.

Chapter 29. – The frightened Joseph's petition to the Lord. The Persian caravan in front of the cave. The astonished captain. The testimonial of the Child by the three wise men: a King of Kings, a Lord of Lords, the Everlasting Lord! Their warning against Herod.

14 September 1843

[029,01] Noon had approached, but the captain was late this time, and Joseph counted the seconds in fearful anticipation; but the captain did not appear.

[029,02] Hence Joseph turned to the Lord and spoke: "My God and my Lord, I beg you not to let me feel so greatly frightened; for look, I am old and quite weak in all my limbs!

[029,03] Therefore give me strength by telling me what to do, so that I do not disgrace myself before all the sons of Israel!"

[029,04] As Joseph prayed thus, behold, the captain arrived almost breathless and spoke to Joseph:

[029,05] "My most highly respected man! – Just at this moment, I have returned from a march with an entire legion to a place that is one-third the distance towards Jerusalem, so that I could espy something of the Persians,

[029,06] and have posted spies everywhere, but have not discovered anything until now! However, rest assured, for when they come, they will have to encounter the sentries I have posted!

[029,07] It shall not be too easy for them to break through anywhere and reach this place, before I have interrogated them and judged their plans! – So I will immediately go back and reinforce the sentries; in the evening I will be with you!"

[029,08] Now the captain hurried off and Joseph praised God and spoke to his sons: "Now set the food on the table, and you, Salome, ask Mary, whether she would like to eat with us at the table, or wants us to bring it to her tent?"

[029,09] Mary, however, came out of the tent with the Infant in very happy spirits and spoke: "As I am strong enough, I will eat with you at the table; only fetch the little crib for the Baby!"

[029,10] Joseph was overjoyed to hear this and placed the best food in front of her; and she praised the Lord God and ate and drank.

[029,11] She had hardly finished eating, however, when a loud noise came from the entrance of the cave. Joseph sent Joel to check what was happening.

[029,12] As Joel looked out of the door (for the cave was timbered at the exit), he saw a whole caravan of Persians with laden camels and spoke anxiously:

[029,13] "Father Joseph! For the Lord's sake, we are lost! – For look, the notorious Persians are here with many camels and numerous attendants!

[029,14] They are pitching tents and setting up camp in a wide circle, completely encircling our cave, and three leaders adorned with gold, silver and precious stones, are unpacking golden sacks and seem to prepare themselves to approach the cave!"

[029,15] This news made our good Joseph almost speechless; with great effort he brought out the words: "Lord, be merciful to a poor sinner like me! – Yes, now we are lost!" – Mary took the Child and hurried into her tent and said: "Only when I am dead, will you be able to take Him from me!"

[029,16] Joseph then went to the door, accompanied by his sons, and furtively looked out to see what the Persians were doing.

[029,17] When he saw the big caravan and the pitched tents, he was doubly alarmed, and in his great distress, began to beseech the Lord most fervently for assistance just this once.

[029,18] As he implored thus, behold, the captain arrived in full armour, led by a thousand soldiers, and lined up the soldiers on both sides of the cave.

[029,19] He went forth and interrogated the three Magi, as to the motive for their arrival and the manner in which they - completely undetected by him - had reached this place.

[029,20] And the three spoke with one voice: "Do not consider us enemies, for you can see that we do not carry arms, either openly or concealed!"

[029,21] We are astronomers from Persia, and we have an old prophecy in which it is written, that during this time a King of Kings will be born to the Jews, and His birth will be indicated by a star.

[029,22] And whoever saw the star should make a journey and follow the mighty star; for they will find the Saviour of the world at the place where the star comes to a stop!

][029,23] And look, the star has halted above this stable, surely visible to everyone even in broad daylight! – This led us to this place; it is here, however, above this stable, that it remains standing, and without hesitation we have reached the spot in which the living Wonder of Wonders can be found, a newly-born Child, a King of Kings, a Lord of Lords from eternity!

[029,24] We must see, worship and pay the greatest homage to Him! – Therefore, do not want to get in our way; for surely no evil star has led us here!"

[029,25] At this, the captain looked for the star and was highly astonished by it; for firstly, it stood quite low in the sky, and secondly, it was almost as bright as the natural light of the sun.

[029,26] As the captain had ascertained all this, he spoke to the three men: "Good, I am convinced from your words and from the star, that you have come here for an honest purpose; however, I do not understand why you went first to Herod in Jerusalem! – Did the star also show you that path?"

[029,27] Why did your miracle guide not lead you here straightaway, as obviously this place was the intended one? – I demand an answer on this from you, otherwise you will not enter the cave!"

[029,28] The three men said: "The great God will know the reason! It must have surely been His plan; for none of us ever thought of going even close to Jerusalem!"

[029,29] And you may entirely believe us when we say that we did not at all like the people of Jerusalem, and least of all, the sovereign Herod! However, as we were already there and the attention of the whole city was on us, we had no option but to indicate our intention!

[029,30] The priests informed us through the sovereign, who requested us to bring him news about the discovered King, so that he too could come and pay homage to the new King."

[029,31] The captain said: "You will never do this; for I know the intention of this sovereign! You might rather remain here as captives! – I will now go inside and confer with the father of the Child about you."

Chapter 30. – The star of the three wise men and the old prophecy of the Persian astronomers. The adoration of the Lord, the Creator of infinity and eternity, in the Child by the three wise men. Their names: Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar. The accompanying spirits: Adam, Cain and Abraham. They pay homage to the Lord and offer him gifts.

16 September 1843

[030,01] As the good Joseph heard all this, his troubled heart was relieved; and as he heard that the captain would come to him, he made himself ready to receive him.

[030,02] And the captain entered, greeted Joseph and spoke to him: "My most highly respected man!

[030,03] See, the people from the East, now waiting outside, have arrived here through miraculous providence. – I have strictly examined them and have found no malice in them!

[030,04] They wish to pay homage to the Child according to the promise of their God, and so I am of the opinion that you can allow them to enter without the least fear, whenever it is convenient for you."

[030,05] And Joseph spoke: "If it this so, then I will praise and glorify my God; for He has once again taken a heavy stone from my heart!

[030,06] However, Mary was somewhat afraid earlier, when the Persians began to camp around the cave; so I must first check how she feels about this, so that an unprepared entry of these guests does not frighten her even more than she already is."

[030,07] The captain approved of Joseph's circumspection and Joseph went to Mary and informed her of everything he had heard from the captain.

[030,08] And Mary spoke in very happy spirits: "Peace be unto all men on earth, who are faithful and good in heart, and who allow their will to be guided by God!

[030,09] They should come when it is indicated to them by the Lord's spirit, and shall reap the blessings of their devotion! – For I do not have the slightest fear of them!

[030,10] However, when they enter, you must stay close to me; for it is not proper that I receive them all alone!"

[030,11] Joseph said: "Mary, when you have the strength, then get up with the Child, take the crib and lay Him in it, and then the guests can enter and honour the Child!"

[030,12] And Mary immediately carried out Joseph's wishes, and Joseph then spoke to the captain:

[030,13] "Well, we are ready; so if the three men wish to enter, you can tell them that we have made all preparations to receive them in our indigence!"

[030,14] And the captain went out and announced this to the three men. – The three men immediately fell down upon the ground, praised God for this permission, then took the golden sacks and proceeded reverently to the cave.

18 September 1843

[030,15] The captain opened the door, and the three men entered into the cave with great reverence; for at the moment of their entry, a powerful light emanated from the Child.

[030,16] As the three wise men were a few steps away from the crib in which the Infant lay, they immediately fell down upon their faces and worshipped Him.

[030,17] They remained in this bent position for one hour before the Child, gripped by the deepest reverence; then they slowly arose and knelt, while lifting their tear-filled faces to see the Lord, the Creator of infinity and eternity.

[030,18] The names of the three men were: Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar.

[030,19] And the first, accompanied by the spirit of Adam, spoke: "Give God the honour, the praise, the glory! Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna God, the Trinity, in all eternity!"

[030,20] Here he took the gold-adorned bag, which had thirty-three pounds of the finest frankincense, and handed it over with great deference to Mary with the words:

[030,21] "Take without shyness, o mother, this humble testimonial of That, which will always fill my entire being! – Take this poor external tribute, for every thinking creature is eternally indebted to his almighty Creator from the bottom of his heart!"

[030,22] Mary took the heavy bag and gave it to Joseph, and the donor got up, went and stood at the door, knelt again and worshipped the Lord in the Child.

[030,23] And immediately the second man, a Moor, who was accompanied by the spirit of Cain, raised a somewhat smaller bag, albeit of the same weight, that was filled with the purest gold, and handed it to Mary with the words:

[030,24] "I offer that what is worthy of the King of the spirits and the men on earth, the smallest sacrifice for you, o Lord of everlasting glory! – Take it, o mother, who has given birth to Him, who all the angels' tongues will never be able to express!"

[030,25] Here Mary accepted the second bag and handed it over to Joseph. – And the wise man who made the offering went to the first wise man and did as he did.

[030,26] Then the third man got up, took his bag, which was filled with the finest gold myrrh, one of the most valuable spices of that time, and handed it over to Mary with the words:

[030,27] "The spirit of Abraham is accompanying me and is now seeing the day of the Lord, to which he had looked forward with such great joy!"

[030,28] I, Balthazar, make a small offering that is worthy of the Child of all the children! – Take it, o mother of all mercy! – However, I hold a better offering in my heart; it is my love, – this shall eternally be my truest offering to this Child!"

[030,29] Here Mary took the heavy bag, also weighing thirty-three pounds, and handed it over to Joseph. – The wise man then got up and went to the first two, worshipped the Infant and after completing his prayer, went out with the other two men to where their tents were pitched.

Chapter 31. – Mary indicates God's guidance of mercy. Joseph's honesty and loyalty. The three blessed gifts of God: His holy will, His mercy and His love. Mary's, the captain's and the Infant's finest testimonial for Joseph.

19 September 1843

[031,01] As the three wise men had left and had returned to their tents for rest, Mary said to Joseph:

[031,02] "Look, look now, you fearful, anxious man, how marvellous and good the Lord, our God, is, how fatherly He cares for us!"

[031,03] Who could have imagined such a thing even in a dream! Out of our dread He has brought about such a blessing and has transformed all our great fear and worry into such great joy!

[031,04] Precisely from those whom we feared were after the life of the Child, did we find out that they offered Him only glory, in the way we are only and always indebted to God, the Lord!

[031,05] In addition, they have given us such bounteous presents, that we can buy a most respectable place in the country from its sale, where we can provide the godly Child with the best possible upbringing according to the Lord's will!

[031,06] O Joseph! – Today I will first thank, praise and glorify the most loving Lord all night long; for He has forestalled our poverty to the extent that we can now manage very well! – What do you say to that, dear father Joseph?"

[031,07] And Joseph spoke: "Yes, Mary, our God is infinitely good to those, who love Him above all else and direct all their hopes to Him alone; – however, I believe that these gifts are meant for the Child, and not us, and so we do not have the right to make use of them as we like.

[031,08] The Child is called Jesus and is the Son of God Most High; so we must first ask the all-possessing father what should be done with these treasures!

[031,09] And we will do whatever He orders us to do with them; I will not touch them all my life without His will and I would rather earn your and my blessed livelihood in the most arduous manner!

[031,10] I have until now supported you and my sons with the manual work that is blessed by the Lord; so I hope to continue doing that with the help of the Lord!

[031,11] That is why I am not looking at these gifts, but only at the will of the Lord and His mercy and love.

[031,12] These are the three greatest, at all times mightily blessed gifts of God to us; His holy will is the most exquisite frankincense, His mercy is the purest and heaviest gold, and His love is the most fragrant myrrh!

[031,13] We may use these three treasures extravagantly without fear at all times; however, we should not touch this frankincense, gold and myrrh in the golden sacks without the first three principal treasures, that have paid us the most abundant dividends until now.

[031,14] So, dear Mary, this is what we should do, and I know, that the Lord will look upon us with great pleasure; his pleasure is our greatest treasure!

[031,15] What do you think, fairest Mary, am I right or not? Is this not the right decision with regard to these treasures?"

[031,16] Here Mary was touched to tears and praised Joseph's wisdom. And the captain fell on Joseph's neck and spoke: "Yes, you are a true man according to the will of your God!" – The Infant smiled at Joseph, raised a tiny hand as if He blessed the foster father, the most devout Joseph.

Chapter 32. – The angel as adviser of the three wise men. The departure of the wise men to the Orient. Joseph's impatience. Cornelius' soothing words to Joseph. Joseph's hints on the power and goodness of God.

20 September 1843

[032,01] The three wise men now gathered in one tent and discussed what they should do next.

[032,02] Should they keep their word to Herod, or should they break their word for the first time?

[032,03] And in the event that they would have to return to their country by another route, the question was which route would bring them safely back.

[032,04] And one of them asked the others: "Will the miraculous star that led us to this place, also lead us back home by a new route?"

[032,05] As they conferred with each other, behold, an angel appeared among them and spoke to them: "Do not fear uselessly, for the way has already been paved!"

[032,06] As straight as the sun's rays fall upon the earth at noon, just that straight you will be led to your country tomorrow, and this route will not pass through Jerusalem!"

[032,07] Thereupon the angel disappeared and the three wise men retired for the night. Early in the morning, they left the place and soon arrived in their country via the shortest route, and they announced the great glory of God to all and awakened the true faith in the united God in them.

[032,08] In the same morning, Joseph asked the captain how much longer he still had to stay in this cave.

[032,09] The captain said to Joseph in the friendliest possible manner: "My most highly respected man! Do you then suppose that I am keeping you here as a prisoner?"

[032,10] What an idea! – How can I, a worm in the dust before the power of your God, ever hold you prisoner!? – What my love for you does, see, is not captivity!

[032,11] As far as my power is concerned you are free at any hour and can go wherever you want! – However, you are not as free of my heart; for it wants to keep you here for all time, because it loves you and your little Son with indescribable strength!

[032,12] Be patient for a few more days; I will immediately send scouts into Jerusalem and find out what the cunning old devil plans to do, now that the Persians have not kept their word!

[032,13] I will then know what to do and will protect you against any persecution from this ruthless tyrant.

[032,14] For you can believe me when I say that Herod is the greatest enemy of my heart, and I will strike him, wherever and whenever I can!

[032,15] I am, of course, only a captain and am myself a subordinate to a higher-ranked general, who resides in Sidon and Smyrna and commands twelve legions in Asia.

[032,16] However, I am not a common centurion, but a patrician, and according to my title, also have command over the twelve legions in Asia! So if I want to deploy any of the legions, I do not need to first make a request in Smyrna, but as a patrician I only need to command and the legion would have to obey me! Therefore you can count on me if Herod should appear!"

22 September 1843

[032,17] Joseph thanked the captain for this most kindly care, sat down and then spoke:

[032,18] "Listen to me, honourable friend! – See, you had previously made the most careful plans to deal with the Persians; but of what use were they in the end?!"

[032,19] The Persians arrived unseen by all your thousand eyes and had already set up camp, before you even discovered them!

[032,20] See, if my Lord, my God, had not guarded me, where would I be now, even with your help? The Persians could have strangulated me, together with my entire family, long before you appeared!

[032,21] Therefore I say to you as a friend with the utmost gratitude: human help is worthless; for men are nothing before God!

[032,22] If, however, the Lord God wishes to help us, and God alone can help, we need not take too much trouble; for in spite of many efforts on our part, everything will happen only according to the Lord's wishes, and never according to ours.

[032,23] Therefore refrain from laborious and dangerous reconnaissance in Jerusalem, through which firstly, only little relevant information can be obtained, and secondly, a harsh fate could be the consequence for you, on my account!

[032,24] This night, the Lord will surely indicate to me what Herod will do, and what I must do; therefore, along with me, you should not worry at all and let the Lord prevail over me and you, and all will be right."

[032,25] As the captain heard Joseph's speech, his emotions were greatly roused, and it caused him pain that Joseph had refused his help.

[032,26] Joseph spoke: "Good, dearest friend! It pains you because I have dissuaded you of taking care of my future welfare.

[032,27] But if you look at the matter in a clear light, you will necessarily agree with me!

[032,28] See, which one of us has ever carried the sun and the moon and all the stars across the skies? Which one of us has ever commanded the winds, storms and strikes of lightning?

[032,29] Who has dug a bed for the mighty sea, and which one of us has marked out the paths of the great rivers?

[032,30] Which bird have we taught the swift flight and when have we arranged their plumage? When have we made their throats with which they can make such melodious sounds?

[032,31] Where is the grass which grows from the living seeds created by us?

[032,32] See, the Lord does all this every day! – As His mighty and wonderful reign reminds you at every moment of His infinitely loving care, how can you wonder when I most amicably point out to you that before God all human help sinks back in the dust of insignificance?"

[032,33] These words put the captain again in a positive mood; but, nevertheless, he secretly sent scouts to Jerusalem to find out what was happening there.

Chapter 33. – The preparation for the flight to Egypt. The provisions of the Lord. Joseph discusses with Cornelius.

23 September 1843

[033,01] During this night, an angel appeared in a dream to Joseph as well as to Mary, and spoke:

[033,02] "Joseph! Sell the treasure and buy yourself some pack animals; for you and your family must flee to Egypt!

[033,03] See, Herod has erupted in fury because he was deceived by the wise men and has resolved to kill all the children from one to twelve years of age!

[033,04] The wise men were to inform him where the new King had been born, so that he could have sent his thugs to kill the Child, who is the new King.

[033,05] We angels of heaven were instructed by the Lord, before He came on earth, to keep a most attentive watch over you and guard your safety!

[033,06] Hence I have now come to you to tell you what Herod will do, since he cannot be certain that he can seize the One.

[033,07] The captain himself must pay his dues to Herod, if he does not want to be betrayed by him to the emperor; therefore you shall start your journey tomorrow itself!

[033,08] You can also inform the captain about this, and he will help you with your prompt departure! – So let this be done in the name of Him, who lives and suckles on Mary's breast!"

[033,09] Here Joseph awoke, as also did Mary, who immediately called Joseph in a frightened voice and then narrated her dream to him.



Rest during the flight to Egypt, Caravaggio ca. 1595

[033,10] At that moment, Joseph saw the angel's face in Mary's narration and said: "Mary, do not worry, before noon we will be on our way over the mountains - and in seven days in Egypt!

[033,11] As dawn is already coming now, I will go out at once and make preparations for a quick departure."

[033,12] Joseph went with the three eldest sons, took the treasure and carried it to a money-changer, who bought up everything for a fair price.

[033,13] Afterwards, led by a servant of the money-changer, Joseph went to a trader in pack animals, and immediately bought six mules and returned well-equipped to the cave.

[033,14] There, the captain already awaited him and immediately related to him the most atrocious and despicable news that he had received from Jerusalem.

25 September 1843

[033,15] Joseph, however, did not wonder at the Captain's narration, but spoke in a tone which revealed his faith in God:

[033,16] "Honoured friend! What you tell me now, all that and many more details of Herod's decision, has been revealed to me last night by the Lord, just as I had foretold you yesterday!

[033,17] See, you yourself have to pay tribute to him; for he wants all the children from a few weeks up to twelve years, in and around Bethlehem and in the city, be strangulated, so that he can also get my child!

[033,18] Therefore I must flee from here today itself, and go wherever the Lord leads me to escape Herod's atrocity.

[033,19] So I request you to show me a safe route to Sidon; for I must leave in one hour!"

[033,20] As the captain heard this, he became most angry about Herod and swore indefatigable vengeance against him, saying:

[033,21] "Joseph, I swear by the daybreak and the sun in the horizon, I swear by your God that is living, I swear as a noble patrician from Rome that I would rather be crucified, than allow this ruthless tyrant to commit such atrocity with impunity!

[033,22] I will lead you over the mountains myself under adequate cover; and when I know you are in safety, I will hastily return and quickly send a messenger to Rome, who will inform the emperor of all that Herod is planning to do.

[033,23] I will do everything I can think of to thwart the plan of that monster."

[033,24] And Joseph replied: "Good and honourable friend! If you can do something, then at least protect the children between three and twelve years! This will be within your power!

[033,25] But you will not have the power to protect the infants from the time of birth until their second year!

[033,26] You will be able to offer protection to the older children not by force, but only by wisdom!

[033,27] The Lord will guide you in this wisdom! Therefore do not think too much about what you will do; for the Lord will guide you in secret!"

[033,28] The captain spoke: "No, no, the blood of children will not flow; I would rather use military force!"

[033,29] Joseph spoke: "See, what can you do, now that Herod leaves Jerusalem with an entire Roman legion – will you enter into battle against your own forces? – Hence act according to the Lord's guidance, so that you can, in an amicable way, save the three-to twelve-year-old children!" – Thereupon the captain gave in to Joseph.

Chapter 34. – The departure for the flight. Joseph's request to Salome. The farewell from the captain. The departure. The letter of safe-conduct given by Cornelius to Cyrenius. Joseph's itinerary. The adventure with the robbers. Joseph's arrival in Tyre at Cyrenius' residence. Cyrenius' words of consolation and his help.

26 September 1843

[034,01] After this discussion with the captain, Joseph spoke to his sons: "Rush out and get the animals ready!"

[034,02] Saddle the six newly-bought mules and the old, tried one for Mary! Take along as much food as you can; we will, however, leave the ox with the cart to the midwife as a keepsake and as payment for her attentiveness towards us!"

[034,03] So the midwife took possession of the ox with the cart and was not required for further work.

[034,04] Salome, however, asked Joseph whether she might go along with him.

[034,05] And Joseph spoke: "That is up to you; you know that I am poor and cannot pay you if you work for me as a maidservant!"

[034,06] However, if you have the means and can take care of your food and clothing along with me, you may follow me!"

[034,07] Salome spoke: "Listen, son of the great King David! My means will suffice not only for me, but also for your entire family for a hundred years!"

[034,08] For I am richer in worldly goods than you can imagine! Wait for only one hour and I will be ready to travel, laden with treasure!"

[034,09] Joseph spoke: "Salome, see, you are a young widow; you must also bring along your two sons!"

[034,10] This entails a lot of work for you, and I do not have one minute to lose; for Herod will reach this region in three hours, and his forerunners and runners will already be here in one hour!

[034,11] Hence you can see, that it is impossible for me to wait for your preparations!

[034,12] I think it would be better if you stayed, so that I am not delayed because of you; if, however, the Lord's will makes me return to this place, I will again settle in Nazareth.

[034,13] Since you wish to be of service to me, please go to Nazareth occasionally and lease out my property for another three to seven years, so that it does not fall into the hands of strangers!"

[034,14] And Salome relinquished her demand and contented herself with this assignment.

[034,15] Afterward Joseph embraced the captain and blessed him - and then called out to Mary to sit on her animal, together with the Infant.

[034,16] As everything was now ready for their departure, the captain spoke to Joseph: "My most highly respected man! – Will I ever see you again! – And this Child with the mother?!"

[034,17] And Joseph spoke: "It will be barely three years before I, and the Child with His mother, will greet you once again! Rest assured on this; – now let us depart, Amen." –

[034,18] Here Joseph mounted his animal, and his sons followed his example; and Joseph seized the reins of Mary's animal and led it out of the cave, all the while praising the Lord.

[034,19] As all were outside, Joseph saw a crowd of people from the city hastening to see the newborn Child, for they had heard about the departure of the Child from the midwife who had returned to her home, and through the money-changer.

[034,20] But this crowd of onlookers was most inconvenient to Joseph; he thus requested the Lord to take him away from this contemptible gawking crowd as soon as possible.

[034,21] And behold, a dense fog descended over the entire city at that moment, and it was not possible for anyone to see more than five paces.

[034,22] This annoyed the crowd and it returned to the city, and Joseph, led by the captain and Salome, was able to reach the next mountain range unseen.

[034,23] As he reached the border between Judea and Syria, the captain gave Joseph a letter of safe-conduct addressed to the regional governor Cyrenius, who was appointed over Syria.

[034,24] Joseph accepted it gratefully, and the captain spoke: "Cyrenius is a brother to me; I need say no more, so travel safely and return in the same manner!" Thereupon the captain turned back, together with Salome, and Joseph continued on his way in the name of the Lord.

[034,25] At around noon, Joseph had reached the summit of the mountain, at a distance of twelve hours from Bethlehem. The summit lay wholly within Syria, and was also called Coelesyria by the Romans in those days.

[034,26] Joseph had to make this rather long detour, as no safe way led from Palestine to Egypt.

[034,27] His itinerary was as follows: on the first day, he came near the small town of Bostra. He stayed there overnight, praising the Lord. That is where the robbers came to steal from him.

[034,28] However, when they saw the Infant, they fell on their faces, prayed to Him, and then fled into the mountains in great fear.

[034,29] The next day, Joseph again crossed a big mountain range and arrived in the region of Panea, a small border town between Palestine and northern Syria.

[034,30] From Panea, he arrived in the province of Phoenicia on the third day and came to the region of Tyre, where he handed over the letter of safe-conduct to Cyrenius, who had some duties in Tyre during that time.

[034,31] Cyrenius received Joseph in a most friendly manner and asked him what he could do for him.

[034,32] Joseph spoke: "That I might reach Egypt safely!" – And Cyrenius said: "Good man, you have taken a long detour; for Palestine is much closer to Egypt than Phoenicia! Now you will still need to wander through Palestine – and must go from here to Samaria, then to Joppe, from there to Ascalon, from there to Gaza, from there to Gerasa, and only from there can you go to Elusa in Arabia!"

[034,33] Joseph was sad when he realized how far he had gone astray. However, Cyrenius took pity on Joseph and spoke: "Good man, your distress pains me. You may be a Jew and an enemy of the Romans; but since my brother, my all, has so much love for you, I too will do something in friendship.

[034,34] See, a small but safe ship will leave from here to Ostracine tomorrow! This ship will take you there in three days; and once you are in Ostracine, you will be already in Egypt! – I will give you a letter of safe-conduct, which will allow you stay and buy some supplies in

Ostracine without hindrance. For today, however, you are my guest; please have your luggage brought in!"

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Here the Christmas Story ends.

The book on the Childhood of Jesus, of course, continues for more than 266 chapters.

It tells the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt with the help of Cyrenius, the mighty governor of all Palestine, Syria and the Roman provinces of North Africa. Cyrenius was also a brother of emperor Augustus and an elder brother of Cornelius who, as you heard, assisted the Holy Family in Bethlehem.

The rest of the book will tell you everything the Holy Family experienced in exile in Ostracine, a town which existed south west of today's Gaza strip. Finally the return three years later to Nazareth and hints of Jesus' life until His famous three days in the Temple at age 12.

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