

JUDAS ISCARIOT
HIS FATE IN THE BEYOND

Received and Penned by Max Seltmann

Translated by Charlotte Jones

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JUDAS ISCARIOT

JUDAS, HIS FATE IN THE BEYOND

Judas in the Halls of the Temple

It was the peak hour in the temple halls. Everyone was excited and delighted: The much hated Nazarene was done away with, after all! In addition everything went so smoothly and didn't cost a thing! Caiaphas, the High Priest, said: "This is how all the followers of this cursed Nazarene must be dealt with, and we have to discriminately destroy all his followers! It must be possible to come up with enough reasons [for doing so]. Ha, this big talker! Yes, as long as he had friends, it was difficult to get a hold of him; however, this was a lucky moment for us, as Jesus was alone with his weak disciples."

Another priest answered: "Don't be so overly happy! Yes, we were able to kill Jesus, but his teachings-never! For the temple will never have looked more wretched than how we shall shortly experience it. The movement of the Nazarene will, by virtue of the crucifixion on Golgotha, only now find its true ordination. I will be the first to leave the temple after this injustice done unto Jesus. You know that I was a witness to His crucifixion. If He had complained, bawled, I would have been alright. But His calm, His enduring, and His mighty words, show me my, and your, obstinacy. Jesus was innocent, surely that is true, and now I am going to wait and see what the temple will do about it. I felt bad for Judas when he threw the money we had given him at us, and when, in desperation, he demanded Jesus' release. Can you not fathom that Judas desired something other than the death of his Master? I wonder what has become of Judas."

The high priest answered with agitation: "So you too are a traitor of the temple; you just may fare as did Judas! For he hanged himself on a willow and could not have done anything better. One less accuser!"

For Judas, whose desperate soul had been looking for peace and protection in the temple, these words seemed like blows from a club.

"I... hanged? But I am alive! Yes, I wanted to end my life, since for me everything was shattered and Jesus didn't make the slightest move to establish, with His wonderful power, a kingdom and to break the Roman's might. Yes, now I am getting it: My intentions were wrong, but it is the temple's fault!"

A murderous rage overcame him, but he was powerless and condemned to inaction. "You devils, you thousand-fold condemned devils!" he screamed at the priest. However, empty, contemptuous laughter from the mouth of many lost souls—of which the Templers were unaware--was the only response. Full of rage, Judas went to the Holy of Holies, screaming as loudly as he possibly could; yet no one heard him.

As his despair grew and grew, someone suddenly took him by the arm, and he heard, "Come on, Judas, your Master wants me to bring you to Him."

But Judas only screamed louder, "Let me go!" as he tore himself loose. "I never want to see him again, for it was because of Him I came to know adversity. If I hadn't come to Him, things would look different for me, and I would not have such a miserable life!"

Then the "other one" said, "Come on, Judas, you are an unhappy [man]. Look at me, I was condemned. My hands were full of blood as well, but Jesus, the Saviour, forgave me my sin, stipulating that I atone for what I did. Do you think that you cannot receive help as well? Come with me so that I can help you, and you can partake of the grace of Jesus. You have already received help, seeing that the Saviour is asking for you. Here in the temple you will not find salvation because these people don't want you. And for those who make the temple their home, you are of no benefit. Therefore, you have little choice but to come with me to Jesus."

Now Judas recognized the speaker. It was Dismas, who was well-known to him, for he was a zealous follower of Barabbas, while the latter stirred up the masses against the Romans everywhere in the land. He (Barabbas) was an important leader of the Jewish freedom movement. When Judas would meet with Barabbas to talk about the situation, he would often encounter Dismas. Judas also was a fervent Nationalist. He hated the Romans for the sake of his people. Judas was no friend of violence and timidly avoided any bloodshed. He was trying to win the mighty Master Jesus over for his own cause. With His power he wanted to shake off the alien yoke from his people and call into being a mighty Jewish National State.

Judas still remembered that he had called his Master out on His own word, and that he had asked him: "Did you not say that we should give to Cesar what is Cesar's, and to God what is God's?"

To this the Master had answered: "Say Judas, is it not written: 'Everything is God's!?' Give to everyone in accordance with your recognition. However, I am God's and My kingdom is not of this world."

Judas closed his eyes and let everything replay in his mind's eye. [He saw] Barabbas' imprisonment as well as that of his subordinate commanders Dismas and Gesmas.

Yes, they were wild brawlers, those two last ones, and could not be beaten, when it came to blood shedding. It was high time; Judas saw no other way but to force the Master to take over the political leadership. He simply turned Jesus over to the temple. Jesus remained silent. Pain over the Master and pain over his people dug into Judas' soul. Mortal fear tormented him! The howling mob, however-for whom one prisoner was always set free at Easter-shouted: "Barabbas, Barabbas!" Then the end came for Judas. Dismas and Gesmas were crucified next to Jesus. This same Dismas now stood before Judas. And Dismas spoke about grace and about the Saviour. "Where is Jesus?" he said with a coarse voice. "Where!" he wanted to shout it out loudly, but his voice left him.

"Jesus is awaiting us on Golgotha," Dismas answered him.

“Golgotha? Oh God, of all things, Golgotha... “That is exactly what separates me from Him. Is there no other way?”

“Yes, of all things,” Dismas answered, “to Golgotha is where the Lord called us. I don’t see what should detain you. Does it matter where you meet Jesus? Golgotha, or any other place? For me, the location doesn’t matter, since I have recognized that Jesus is more than a human being. Golgotha should frighten me especially; however, it has become my salvation. So come, I will not leave without you; nor will I leave you, unless Jesus separates me from you. Come, Jesus is waiting for us!”

Now Judas followed, leaving the temple with Dismas. They took the same streets Jesus too had had to go. Dismas saw that many a question rose in Judas’ mind, as they reflected in Judas’ face. It caused Dismas to tell Judas the entire course of events until Jesus’ crucifixion. He also shared about his own suffering.

“When darkness fell, and raging pain convulsed my body, a hand came to rest upon my head, and I saw Jesus! He didn’t say a word, but His eyes spoke to me: ‘I shall help you!’ Right then, a soothing oblivion held me captive. When I awoke I saw a thousand people gathered about Jesus. I heard His invitation to come to Him and to partake of His great redeemer-love. That is when--before all of them—I confessed my guilt. But Jesus said to me to forgive all my enemies, in order to receive grace and forgiveness from Him. This was hard for me at first. But when I did what He said, I felt good. This is why I am asking you too now, Judas: Forgive those who deceived you, so that Jesus can forgive you as well!”

Judas remained silent.

Judas before Jesus

Now they arrived at Golgotha. As if drawn by a magic power they came to Jesus, the Master! The whole mount was filled with hungry souls. They listened to Jesus’ words as He once more witnessed of His work and of the eternal love.

Judas fell at his Master’s feet and received forgiveness, because he had acted in all too blind passion. It was suddenly clear to him with how much great love he had always been treated. With tears in his eyes he sought the gaze of his Master. As if from far away he perceived Jesus, the Master speaking: “Judas, you poor one! When we were still human beings, I could not help you because you were still ignorant. But here, in the kingdom of life, there is only free will. Since now you are a knowing one, you can find the way to Me by your own free will, which must still bow down until the very last of that which separated us is gone. Oh see, within you lives still hatred, rage and self love! Still, I forgave you because you acted blindly and forgot that My kingdom is not of this world. – And so, take My words to heart!”

The Lord’s words fell deeply into his heart sounding to him like rolling thunder. Still he could not bring himself to say: “Oh Lord, let me come with you!” He remained silent, and was left alone.

Judas

It was night in and about him. "Now I am alone. The Master took them all with Him. What will become of me? Where did this terrible darkness suddenly come from, this night? That the Master has forgiven me has a calming effect on me!" Thus began Judas' conversation with himself, "But what good is my forgiveness, when I cannot forgive myself?! Forgive and get rid of all the hatred in me? Yes, if it were only that easy! When I saw the Master and felt His love, a feeling of repentance was in my heart. But since I am alone once more, my hatred against the people is increasing, even the hatred toward myself. Oh if only I could destroy myself!"

Judas tried to put his hands around his neck, but they passed right through [his soul body], which caused him even more despair.

"Oh Jesus, if only you had stayed, I would have somehow found my way!" It did not occur to him that he could have stayed with Jesus. So he got up and walked around in this deep darkness. He bumped into the cross on which the Master had hung, clung to it with tears of pain, and said to himself:

"Yes, this is where you must end; it was by your own doing. Here is where I must suffer for my foolishness. Oh, I thought I acted in the right way, but woe to me. Woe, I think it will do me in! Oh, Lord Jesus, is that your forgiving love, that I will find your cross to which I nailed you unwittingly? Oh who will give me consolation in this dark state of mine, consolation as well as light? [I am] alone in this darkness with the cross as my accuser. Oh what will become of me? Is there no one to help me?"

Judas and Dismas

"You are not alone. I Dismas am standing beside you. The love of the Lord gave me this hint, that is, to stand by you in your need. Even though for you it is still dark, for me there is daylight because the love for the Lord became my light. This is why I can see you in your nakedness. But listen, as long as you want to stay here and wait for help, you'll be waiting a spell and be bored because the Lord walks with His own. And you have separated yourself from Him. You can't expect that He now comes to you. Do you wish to continue to linger here and go on accusing yourself? Oh see, even that is but self-love, and you are demanding to be helped! My poor Judas, I can tell you this: I am a thousand times poorer than you. I don't ask for anything, nothing. I simply want to be able to stay with you and serve you. And this is more as a blessing to me, for it helps me to bear my burden. Although the Lord has forgiven me, being conscious of my burden renders me shackled. Yes, the Saviour has accepted me, but my first priority is to be worthy of the great grace, the merciful Saviour- and Jesus-love. That is why I serve you."

“So I ask you, Judas, you poor thing, in bondage as you are, what should I do for you so that you too can become free, so that you become light and begin to become a whole new man?”

“Listen,” Judas answered, “I probably will not become changed any more, for I have asked the Lord several times to change me, but His words still resound in me like thunder claps: ‘Repentance behind the grave is worth little.’ That is the reason I have little hope for the grace as you received it, for you forget that I took my own life, only to find out the bitter truth that there is no end [to life]! How should I receive help? The Master is gone from me, and I would only find the way to Him through my mind, which still has to be humbled. This is a new puzzle to me.

“How often did the Master speak in riddles and now again? This is little help to me. And yet, I do not want to remain in this darkness. What was it you said, light is about you and about me darkness? How can that be? This is unthinkable; one could lose one’s mind in this blackness of night! If I didn’t hear your words, I would have to believe that I am dreaming. But tell me, is there no way at all out of this darkness? Most of all away from here, away from this hill Golgotha? It is crushing me! What shall we do?”

Dismas replied, “Judas, you old friend, my guilt burdens me as much yours burdens you, but to have met someone Who says: ‘You are forgiven when you can forgive those who killed you’...Those words release in me, in my heart, a hope, and so I trust in Jesus the Saviour! From His words resound love and hope in a better existence. I think I now understand His meaning, when he said to you, ‘repentance is worth little when we have died.’ For to only want to foster penance for one’s past sins would be too easy, and it would make me cheerful, too, but of what use is that for the one I have hurt? One must begin with oneself, with the walk of a new path. And so I don’t feel from you the despair that saddens you, a disciple of Jesus. Jesus must be right, you are one who knows, so imagine what you could be for me if only you ceased your complaining and accepted your situation which you have brought upon yourself. Surely, I Dismas am a murderer, and my death was horrible too, but what I did was still murder. I would probably be known as a murderer for all of eternity. But in this life there is a different outcome because those whose lives I took when I robbed them still live now just as you and I still live. You delivered Jesus to the cross to die, and He still lives. I was killed and still I live. You killed yourself and still you live.

“Say Judas, doesn’t it make you think? As soon as I come upon one whose life I took, I will ask for forgiveness until he forgives me. And see, you have received forgiveness from the Saviour Jesus, and still you curse over things you caused yourself. Are you not a greater fool than you ever were? Jesus offers you His saving hand in your low state. Or do you expect that an angel should come and lead you into heaven triumphantly? Oh, what glorious justice! Everyone will find that which he has sown. Therefore, I ask you in the name of the Lord and Saviour Jesus that you take heart and recognise in your dark night the love which seeks you, so you can be of service after this grace was bestowed upon you in your although still sad life!”

Retorted Judas: "Dismas, you talk like a saint. Too bad you were not a disciple. But one thing I have to say to you, you haven't made things easier with your speech. Have you forgotten everything that was important in life? Instead, why don't you get rid of this cross so at least I don't have to be reminded...I would like to follow you, but the cross is a mighty reminder. I admit, I can't change what has happened, but I cannot yet leave this desolate darkness. It is as though I should have to constantly embrace the cross!"

Dismas: "Now then, my Judas, take it up on your back, and let us go where the Lord has already gone."

Judas: "I...carry the cross? Are you serious? You couldn't ask something more foolish of me than that, could you? I would be happy if I didn't have to feel it anymore, and now I'm supposed to lug it everywhere I go? Where should that lead? You are not truly serious, are you? For by all the love for the Lord, I still cannot comprehend why, yes, why He allowed Himself to be crucified in the first place! Oh if only I hadn't - in my stupidity - left the Lord! I will not make this stupid mistake a second time, should I ever get to the Lord again! But how should I get to Him? Come, friend and brother, Dismas, lead me to the Lord, but don't talk to me again about the cross. Come, give me your hand so that I can walk safely and so that I will not be even more frightened in this darkness."

Said Dismas: "Dear brother Judas, I shall gladly lead you to the Saviour Jesus, but you will have to carry His cross. For it is actually your cross on which He finished His suffering because it was through you He was handed over. I do not see why you refuse to carry this cross. Consider that He suffered on the cross for you, and, at the cross He received me, who am privileged to be your helper and advisor. And on the cross He forgave everyone! Now you want to see the cross as if it is the greatest injustice for you! I beg of you, brother Judas, do not continue to refuse. Come, I want to help place it on your shoulders."

Judas: "Never in a million years will I carry this cross. Maybe you would revel in having me carry the proof of my betrayal through the town and set it up in the temple! All the world would say: 'See Judas, the traitor; this is how he repaid the love of His Master. Not enough that he judged himself, all the world should judge him!' If you will not lead me to the Master without this cross, I will have to find a way without you.

"There has to be a way, an opportunity to meet Jesus without you. And who knows if He is still in the temple, for He never spent much time in the temple!"

At this moment an angel whom Judas could not perceive appeared to Dismas, and said: "Dear friend, leave Judas to his own free will; never force him to do anything. Do not leave him, but hide from him so that he may find himself. Incidentally, hold fast in your heart to the One Who helped you as well and Who will continue to help you, the One Whose message comes to you from me. Invisibly, I will remain with you in order to help you, for hell is trying to ruin you."

Dismas approached Judas one more time to, saying: "Brother Judas, the Lord and Master alone can help you! You will never get help as long as you do not seek Him, and you can never come to Him without the cross, for you would still owe Him proof that you are truly repentant. Going by what I feel in my heart, only by the greatest effort can you be

saved. Oh see, I was instructed to leave you to yourself if you do not want to make this small sacrifice. The Lord made the greatest Sacrifice without having sinned at all. But your sin is enormous. The wish for redemption mustn't be too great in you, otherwise you would – without hesitation – carry this cross until you are back with the Lord. I beg of you, for your blissfulness' sake: Act in accordance with the Lord's will, and you will not regret it!"

"Never can I carry the cross; it would make my shame even worse."

At this, Dismas slowly left but not without calling out to Judas: "So for now go your way alone according with your own will. Do not burden yourself even further, for you will test the Lord anew. Once you have changed your mind, I will be able to serve you again!"

Judas Alone

Judas was alone again. Although Dismas under the care of the angel was able to see and hear everything, for Judas, he was no longer there. Feeling that he was alone, Judas talked to himself: "So now he left me too, and why? Because I did not do his will. He has some nerve! I should carry the cross all the way to the Master Jesus! It would have been quite the spectacle if the traitor Judas would carry the cross behind Jesus. Away with this thought; away with the cross so that I am no longer reminded of it. If only I had an axe, I would cut the cross to smithereens. Oh you miserable cross beam, that you bring me such shame. It was a stupid thing of the Master to let Himself be crucified. Understand this who will; I cannot!"

At this point Judas tried to leave the hill and placed his foot forward with great care, because the darkness did not even allow him to see the ground. After a few slow steps he had to stop once more with a start. He had bumped into another cross; it was the one on which Dismas had been slain.

Judas: "Oh you cursed misery, yet another cross! Is there nothing else growing on this hill but crosses? [Let me] get away from here; it seems spooky, such a cross."

Wanting to get to Jerusalem, Judas edged forward slowly, probing with his feet; he fell into a hole and stayed there, as if dead. Only after some time did he get up, his limbs aching. He felt miserable, as if he had been beaten.

"Strange..." he said to himself. "There I took my own life to get out of my misery and now I am more miserable than before. If I could at least see something – or should I no longer have my eyes? Dismas could see, but I could not. It is hard to believe what a sad existence it is to have passed on and yet not to be dead! Oh, if only somebody came to help me. Now how to get out of this hole. Thank God it isn't as deep as I thought." He struggled to get out of his predicament, but then he was once again on level ground.

"What direction should I take? Where is that darned path? Oh, you miserable darkness! If only I had a light, I would be able to help myself. Yes, Judas, you were stupid. You could still have been with the others, and the Master in the middle. It was a nice time when the Master still lived. We wanted for nothing. We suffered no need. We had

everything of the fullness. If only I now had some of those morsels, I would be glad... But now onward, so I can get away from this cursed hill.”

He walked a few more steps. But to his dismay he once more stood before a cross. He sank to the ground holding the beam with both hands.

“Oh, what now, another cross! There were three of them set up, which one is it now? I have to make sure; this fright trammels my chest. Now, Judas, away with your fright! I must know what will become of me. I don’t feel like letting a cross cause me to feel such great fear.” His hands slid upward the beam, searching, testing. Then he slowly got up, leaning on the cross. His hands came to rest on the nail holes, where they had hammered the Lord’s feet to the wood. It was the middle cross. Now he walked a few steps to the right searching with his hands in the air until he finally came to the cross of Dismas.

“And now back to the Master’s cross.” After a few steps he found it. “And now, a little bit to the right, but carefully so that I don’t fall into that cursed hole again.” And then he found the third cross.

Judas and Gesmas

As Judas now touched the cross with his hands, he suddenly felt a human body. He yelled and recoiled. However, since nothing moved, he slowly touched the body with both hands, trying to set upright the seemingly lifeless human being. With some effort he succeeded, and when he had this body almost straight, life came suddenly into it!

“Who are you and what do you want from me!” the form [on the cross] screamed full of rage. Startled, Judas let go of the body, but the man grabbed Judas and held him by the arm. “You must be [our] friend Dismas, huh? Very nice of you to look in on me. It doesn’t look as though the Nazarene kept His word to you.”

“I am not Dismas but Judas who found you here. Now tell me, who are you? For it is pitch black night here, and I cannot recognise you.”

“I? I am Gesmas. Just like Dismas, I was slain with this Jesus, and I am simply waiting for the [right] moment to take revenge upon those who did this to me.”

“You, take revenge? How do you propose to do that? Can you leave here?”

Gesmas: “Just you wait, I will get away. I already was [free], after I—under the greatest pain—breathed my last breath...when I realised that they weren’t able to slay me after all. For when I lay on the ground and heard voices all around me, I knew that I no longer had my [former] body. Although they had broken my legs with a club, I could still stand up, but it was night about me. Then I got a hold of a human being to cling to and went to the temple with him. When we arrived I heard a lot of buzz about the death of the Nazarene. But because nobody said anything about us, I became so enraged that I could have beaten everything around me to the ground. But no one [even] saw me. I clung to the high priest because in my rage I could recognise some of them, but everything was dipped in that red hue from the fire. And when nobody wanted to see me, a senseless rage gripped me and I cursed and fumed. Suddenly I was seized from behind, lifted up and hurled to the ground. I

must have lain there for a long time, for when I awoke, I lay here before the cross and the darkness round about me was even worse than before. And so I tried to get away from here but could not. And when I came upon the cross to which the Nazarene had been nailed I once again became so enraged that I climbed the cross and shook the top of it until I was hit. And the rest you know. You should have left me there, it would have been better for me, and for you, because my hands are stained with blood. You should have left me lying there. With me you will experience little fun. You should have looked for Dismas instead; he is far better than I. I wonder where he keeps himself now?"

Judas: "A short while ago he was still here. But he left me. I was supposed to carry the cross, on which the Master died, to the temple. Can you imagine that? But I declined decidedly."

Gemas: "You, carry the cross? Whatever for? There had to be reasons! May I know them?"

Judas: "Now listen! I am Judas, one of the Disciples of Jesus. His death is on my conscience, for it is I who disclosed to the Templers that night His whereabouts for a lousy 30 silver coins. I never would have thought that the Master would have taken such a fatal end. Rather I thought He would now prove His Might and establish Himself as the King of the Jews, would free us from the Roman yoke in order to establish a Jewish kingdom. At least that is how I heard it coming from His mouth, and it seemed to me that it was how He wanted it. And since no one stopped me I went to the temple and divulged His night-time whereabouts. When I saw the disaster I had caused, I lost all my sanity and immediately went to the temple. There, I threw the money I had received at their feet and demanded He be set free. And here I came to know the hatred that was leveled against Jesus in its entirety, and in my despair I hanged myself. – Truth to be told, I was able to see and speak to Jesus in the spheres of the spirits since then. By the way, it was Dismas who lead me to Him, for before that I too was in the temple. But now I am alone! –

"Jesus said to me: I should look for him and I would find him, but I would have to sacrifice my love first. But Dismas demanded that in order to find the Lord I should carry the cross into the Holy of Holies of the temple. There we would find Him! Maybe now you will recognise that this is not helping me in the least. What happens now?"

Gemas: "So you are Judas Iscariot--that sissy! Yes, yes I still know you. You apparently were too cowardly to follow Barabbas, and you didn't know what to do with that Jesus, that Nazarene! I knew it all along. And now you want to know what comes next? Silly question! I shall stay here and wait and see. Would you rather I break my neck in this pitch-black night? Let us await the morning, then we shall see. Yes, this is a good one – you a disciple of the Nazarene who committed suicide, and I a crucified one! We shall have a lot of fun together! One thing is for sure, as soon as I get my hands on a Templer or a Roman, he will not fare well. So, let us wait and see."

The two got quiet. The angel that kept watch on everything with Dismas made a motion with his right hand, and there was a mighty thunder clap!

Fearfully Judas took a hold of Gesmas and said: "That must have been some kind of thunder, did it frighten me! But it was funny, I did not see any flash. Did you notice something?"

Gesmas: "I? No, I only heard the thunder. What is there to be afraid of? When they broke my bones it sounded like thunder also. Well, it doesn't matter what comes. If only it were already morning!"

Judas: "Gesmas, you are waiting for morning to come? Listen to what Dismas said to me: 'For me it is daytime and for you it is night.' For this reason I do not believe in a morning, even if we should have to wait until doomsday! So let us at least get away from here because I do not want to be reminded of the cross again. Let's go! Let us try to get away from here. There has to be somebody somewhere to meet. Mostly I would like to look in on the Master!"

Gesmas: "Haha, you old goat! Haven't you had enough yet? Would you like to betray your Lord once more? Or would you rather not be reminded again of your great disgrace? Oh, Judas, I would have suspected you were smarter than this. The only thing missing now is that you would start crying like an old woman! How is it that these crosses make you so angry? They don't anger me at all. Why don't you just smash them if they bother you so much? Why not use them for firewood? Then we shall have some light and we'll be warmer too, for it has gotten notably cooler. This is my suggestion. So let us look for an axe, for these war slaves left all their weapons and stuff lying all around here. At least I have seen them since I was still alive. You look over on the right, I will go left. But we will call each other so we don't lose each other!" Then they crept around on the ground and felt for the tools. The angel placed an axe in front of Judas which he promptly picked up.

Judas: "Hello friend, I have found an axe. Quit searching. Let's get to that hated cross!" They found each other, and now they headed for the middle cross. As well as was possible Judas hacked away at the main beam. Occasionally they checked for the notches, and the beam was almost cut through. The cross began to teeter frightfully. A few more hits and the beam was in pieces. The falling cross buried both of them under its weight. Dumbly, they both lay there. It took some time before they awoke from their fright, realizing that the heavy cross now lay on top of them.

After more time passed, they began to move their arms and legs, and with the greatest of effort Judas was able to free himself. After he had stretched his arms and legs thoroughly he helped Gesmas out of his predicament. Finally he too was freed again, and Judas said: "This could have easily gone wrong; for this reason I will not touch the axe again nor try to make fire wood out of the cross. Now you lie there, you miserable piece of wood; I almost perished under your weight. It could drive you insane. You know what, my friend, let us leave this place now, and if you don't come along, I will go alone. Tell me, what could we possibly do here now. We cannot reach any goal in this place!"

Said Gesmas: "You, Judas, go ahead! I shall remain here and, should I have to, sit here for an eternity. I have to cool off my vengefulness, and of this I am quite certain: These animals are sure to come back here!"

Judas: "I wish you lots of good luck with that. I am leaving this place of horror. Perhaps I'll find some help from somewhere. Don't get bored waiting."

With that, Judas turned about and slowly made his way, probing with his feet in the direction of Jerusalem. Then he began talking to himself again: "Now I am alone again, away from this brute, but maybe it was not right to have left him? But I had to do it. Anyway, his stupid speech about taking vengeance! I would be glad if my condition would improve. I don't want to think about revenge any longer. I would rather meet Dismas or some other good person. Yes, dear Master, You were right when You taught us: Whatsoever a man sows, so shall he reap! I had it coming to me. I could still be with my brothers and with the Master. We suffered no want. But, well, it happened. Perhaps I will find a good person who will help me!"

Slowly, step by step, he walked down the hill. He did not dare step sideways in fear of losing his direction.

"Is there no one who comes by here?" he said to himself. "I wouldn't care who it is. The main thing is that I do not want to stay alone again. Yes Judas, here you are, the loser, while the others who stayed with the Master have the advantage. Oh, Master Jesus, if only I could expiate my sin. If I could begin again, oh how I would believe in You – and only in You. Jesus, you good Master, if You have forgiven me, help me to go on, so that I don't grow more miserable than I am already!" As he spoke thus, the horizon slowly grew a bit brighter. When his foot hit a large rock, he sat down upon it to rest. Feeling glad that he could once again see a little bit, he looked in the direction of Jerusalem. He also looked back toward Golgatha and thought about the two people, Dismas and Gesmas.

"Maybe it was wrong to leave Gesmas," he said. "Even though he could not be expected to be of much help, at least I was not alone. O well, what's done is done! But where is the [sudden] brightness coming from? Yes, I wonder what is happening in Jerusalem. It seems like a big fire because there is a red glow visible on the sky in that direction [of Jerusalem]. Well, Judas, you are in luck, for where there is a fire, most likely there are people as well. So let us go on."

He continued walking in the direction of the fiery glow. But it didn't burn brightly, and the hope for more light did not fulfil itself. After hours of wandering about he came to a garden. The gate to it was open, so he entered. As his feet now walked on grass, he felt better, for he hoped to find a house and people. It did not occur to him that people, if there were any, would not be able to perceive him. He still felt like a human being, but alone and lonely!

Judas with His Corpse

Judas kept on walking. He came to a brook. He bent down and put his hands in the water. However, he felt too nauseated to drink. He followed the brook for a while. Many trees stood there, but wait...over there! What was that? There was a body hanging on a tree! And

he recognized that it was his own corpse! "Judas!" a helpless cry of his own name broke forth from his tortured breast. Disgust for himself overtook him and, lifelessly, he sank to the ground.

The angel and Dismas saw Judas lying there motionless. "This is the first act in his life," said the angel. "Further development depends on his awakening."

"Yes," Dismas said, "but can we not help him? My chest is burning because in all things Judas was a thousand times better than I. Yet my existence is content, secure, for your being here with me is for me an unimaginable grace!"

"Never mind, Dismas," the angel said. "The Lord hopes that you will fulfil your duty and that you will do everything you can to save Judas. You say, your existence is secure! Do you even know what being secure means? Listen, to help others, to offer them a home, to serve them... All these things mean security, and it means to remain in the Lord! This is the reason the Lord called you into this mission, to serve Judas and to help him with all of your strength! However, always consider this: Never use force! Never coerce anything. Never! Do you hear me? For we are in the kingdom of the spirit! Using force would be a step backwards in the development of the spiritual man!"

"It is better to allow someone into hell, than to clip his wings of freedom. However, if you do the latter, one will probably stay where you wish, but he will feel powerless to come to his own conclusion. He will be like a bird with clipped wings. However, he who falls into the depth while in full possession of his freedom can manage to come out once again when he has found there the needed maturity. Now pay attention. I will touch Judas to wake him up. Then let us, in the name of the Lord, fulfil our new task!"

Now the angel touched the seemingly lifeless form of Judas on his forehead and chest, and with a deep draught of breath, Judas awoke from his sleep. He put his hand on both places where the angel had touched him and said:

"Well, I am still living this cursed life. I wish I were dead! Now I have even more reason to be unhappy... because I have seen my own dead body. It is unbelievable: There hangs Judas dead, yet the real Judas lives! Oh if only I hadn't betrayed Him! It is really true what the good Master always said that one stupid slipup leads to another. Oh if only I hadn't been so stupid, the other thing wouldn't have happened! So, what now? The fire in Jerusalem seems to get bigger. It is as if it is getting a bit brighter, indeed. I can see the outlines of the Temple in the light of the fire. But what is that? The temple itself is burning and collapsing. Oh no, the temple is collapsing! Oh, Jehovah, Your house is in ruins! I will try to get there, maybe I shall find somebody there. Did Dismas not say that the Master was going to the temple? Oh, the cursed Templers have lit the sanctum themselves ...And the Master may still be in the temple! I am hurrying quickly! Maybe I can help somehow."

Judas rushed in the direction of the fire. Both Dismas and the angel followed Judas unnoticed. His was a difficult path, for it was purposely made laborious for him by the eternally caring Love so as to strengthen his intended will. And since Judas relentlessly kept his eye on his goal, help was given him in the form of the increasing light round about him. Finally he reached the gruesome site where the temple once stood. Meanwhile the fire

has burnt out but smoldered everywhere. Judas walked all around the ruined site looking for a human being but found no one. Just as he was about to leave, he heard some words-curse words-addressed to Jesus of Nazareth. Over heaps of rubble and charred beams, through stinking smoke he made his way to the place where previously the altar may have stood. There crouched a human being! Rags hung from his dilapidated, burnt body. Full of pity, Judas straightened him up but, startled, he let go of him again when he realised that it was the chief high priest!

“So, you already have your wages, you monster,” Judas said slowly with a trembling voice. “You deserve what happened to you. Why did you destroy me and the Master!”

The high priest tried to get up and answered: “What did you say? I destroyed you and your Master? Who are you anyway that you dare to blame me for something or other?”

Said Judas, “I? I am Judas, one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, and now you pretend not to know me? Did you not honour me at your table with a succulent meal and good wine, and as wages for my unfortunate deed? And did you not pay me 30 pieces of silver? And today you do not want to know anything about it? Do you know what I would like to do to you? I would like to strangle you with my two hands! You yourself said to me. When I was still in your proud temple, when I was still in my body of flesh...Did you not say, you wished that it would fare with all of Jesus’ followers as it did with me, the traitor? Oh, Caiaphas, God’s judgment will come upon you!”

“What did you say, I am Caiaphas? I am Eljasib, the high priest, and I will remain the same in spite of Caiaphas and you! So you are a disciple of the Nazarene, this totally base servant of the devil who destroyed my temple, which I have governed rightly and justly for hundreds of years. If your Nazarene is truly who he says he is, then may he come and raise up my temple once again, returning to me my integrity and distinction. Only then will I recognise him as Lord, forget what he has done to me, and acknowledge you as my priest. Otherwise I hate the entire Nazarene lot, and you most of all, you base traitor! Know that if you had betrayed me, I would keep you in the deepest, darkest dungeon, in company with snakes and otters, and every day I would enjoy seeing you suffer. I would order two priests who would, with every bite of bread, call out to you: ‘Traitor!’ Even though the Nazarene demolished My house, leading all [those entrusted to me] my foster children away from me, I still have my own will, and with it I shall be defiant as long as I can!”

Judas was startled by this eruption of anger, and he stammered: “Oh, forgive me, I misspoke to you because I thought you to be Caiaphas. But since my harsh words were meant for someone else entirely, why not just let it go? By the way, I would not have expected such threats and verbal abuse, least of all from you, you, who profess to be an anointed anointed man God. Now to mock Jesus the way you do and to call Him ‘servant of the devil,’ oh this will be hard to undo for you. It is true, I acted badly. Still, in spite of my great meanness, the Master Jesus stands high above all that is evil. Take note of this: None other than Jesus of Nazareth can help you. I, Judas, a lonely and lost one, am telling you to whom you must turn. Only Jesus helps! You have received some help already, by Him

taking your temple away from you. Everything you may ever want, you will have to ask of Him, and you have to deeply regret your guilt. I wish I could be with Him.”

“Oh stop, you whining woman! You are [hardly] the right one [to tell me what to do],” Eljasib screamed at Judas now. “First you betray your lord and deliver Him to the cross, and then you want to preach to me that Jesus is the only one who can help me! If you don’t soon get away from me, I shall preach to you about your lord. Don’t even mention his name to me, for I am lord here and will stay lord as well. Sure, the temple no longer stands, but I am still who I was: A high priest by God’s grace!”

Judas wanted to answer him, when Eljasib took a piece of charred wood and tried to hit Judas with it, but Judas jumped quickly aside. This enraged the high priest even more and with his piece of wood he pressed in on Judas. That was when Judas leaped over the ruins and left the loudly cursing high priest standing where he was.

“Oh God, oh God” Judas said to himself, “that could have ended dangerously. I am glad to be away from there, but unfortunately I have one [more] hope [of meeting with the Lord] dashed. Where might the Master have gone? Yes, yes, that’s what I get. I only wanted to help, and beatings are my wages. I am better off to stay alone. But now what? Where am I to go? At least it is a bit brighter out, and the entire area seems familiar to me. Unfortunately I am alone! It enrages me to be depicted as a traitor, but the Master has forgiven me. How am I going to have this shame washed off me? What should I do? I am now setting out to meet my wife and my children, for I had forgotten all about them. I wonder what they will say. Do they already know of my death to the world? So let’s go, Judas, let’s get to work! Let us visit our earthly home. Now, time or hours in the day don’t hinder me, for I am no longer a human and not stuck on earthly laws!”

Now Judas was looking for a walking stick, which he soon found because the angel had put it there for him. He walked toward evening [the darkening sky] and searched straining to find another human being. Alas, the entire vicinity was as if dead, although the angel and Dismas kept him company unnoticed.

An Angel’s Revelations about Judas

Meanwhile the angel spoke to Dismas: “You see, as long as Judas didn’t have the least bit of love of neighbour, thought only of himself, enjoying a free meal wherever he could, and always had enough money in his pocket that he could have helped others in need, he stood lonely and alone. Even though he forfeited God’s favour by ending his earthly life, God is still favourably disposed toward him, for Judas is the instrument of whom it was written for hundreds of years now. And if Judas had only found the way to the Lord in his need and misery, he never would have had to suffer because Lucifer would not have had any reason for reproach toward God for anything. See, it is like this with Judas: He always ‘wants to,’ but that is where it stays! Had he not left Gesmas and had he calmly endured being ridiculed with patience, things would have been better for him now. The same is true for the high priest. If he had suffered all the mockery, even beatings, we could have helped

him. As it is, he is fleeing the very thing that could have given his weakness and self-love the greatest punch. However, the Lord is patient. Let us be patient as well, for Judas is a soul that can be saved. Thanks be to God for enabling us to stand protectively by this poor soul's side!"

Meanwhile Judas continued to walk incessantly towards evening. He wasn't even surprised that there was no road. His path went over dreary steppes and sandy desert. Finally he felt tired and lay down to rest. His thoughts, however, were with his wife and children, and worrying about them made his heart heavy. "Yes," he said, "I hardly cared at all about them and was occupied only with myself. Now I am sorry that I brought this shame upon them."

Restless, however, Judas continued on and on. Finally he saw the village Karivthomit, the place of his earthly home. In front of his house was a crowd of people. Curious, he rushed over and angrily charged at them with his walking stick, but no one saw him nor heard his screams. He entered his house and heard one of the Templers tell, with malicious pleasure, of Judas' having hung himself.

Repulsed by the news, his family complained and grumbled about their father. Only his youngest daughter Judith stood her ground against the Templer and answered him composed: "For what our father has done, he has to answer to Jehovah. It is not our place to judge and condemn. And you, who are supposedly Jehovah's representatives, should be ashamed of yourselves deep in your hearts because mother and we all need consolation and help in this trying test time, and not derision and mockery. The fact that our father betrayed Jesus for the sake of the mammon, father will have to settle up with Jesus of Nazareth as well. They are, after all, now both in the kingdom of death. I know Jesus of Nazareth much better than you, and I tell you as well as all who want to hear it: My father has already been forgiven, even before he did it, for he did it for the wrong motives or goals. What is sad for us is that the law forbids us to bury our father. And to have to know that his body should be committed to wild animals as their food is for me most awful!"

Judas heard his daughter's speech with open eyes and ears, and he felt the deepest heart-felt shame. He put his walking stick aside and placed both his hands on his daughter Judith's head. Mumbling inaudible words, the Templer left. After sending the neighbours away, Judith tried to console her mother. However, her mother wanted none of it; her pain and shame were just too great to bear.

Judith did not give up and, with the passion only a child can muster, she finally said: "I am going to look for Father's body, and I will bury him so that the impression of his death can be less stark in me. No matter what my father may have chosen to be, I loved him and love him to this day!"

For Judas, this was the greatest miracle. He knelt down and asked Jehovah to protect his daughter's work. Tears of remorse rolled down his cheeks, and his lips said: "Lord and God Tsebaoth, have mercy on my daughter and on me, the poor one." For the first time strengthened by prayer, he got up and sat down in front of his house in order to wait for his daughter Judith. Finally she arrived holding a basket with groceries in her hand and set out

to leave the village. Judas stayed right with her. Judith did not pay attention to the calls of her neighbours nor to their stares. Her heart bled because her mother would not consent to Judith's way; she would gladly have accepted the help of a brother. But now she hastened towards Jerusalem.

"If only I could run into one of Jesus' disciples or friends," she thought. "Maybe I would get some help!" Then the angel and Dismas put into her heart the thought to go first to Bethany and then to Jerusalem.

Judas would have liked to find things out from his daughter Judith, but he was unable to because he was too occupied with himself and his situation. So Dismas asked the angel who answered him thus: "See, my friend, in the kingdom of life and spirits, everyone lives in his own world, and his thoughts are what fashion the base of his world, in which he now lives and moves. As a human being in the flesh things are different because everyone is bound to wherever his feet happen to be, while mentally he can be somewhere else entirely. For us angels, who know only one will, the will of the almighty God, it does not matter where we stay because nothing binds here except the divine will. And so I am now here and could be thousands of miles away in the very next moment, for as quickly as thoughts change I can hurry to another place. And I could be busy doing something and in the next moment bring you proof of my activity. You see, it is different with our Judas. Since he thinks only of himself and expects to find help from outside, he is unable to separate himself from his nightly solid ground, which his lack of light, his miserliness and ambition, has caused him. The reason he belongs to the poorest you can imagine is because, without an inner goal, he is deeply insecure. Judas lets the fear in his inner soul drive him. But as soon as someone tells him something, gives him advice, or shows him a mirror, he becomes vicious. For this reason he cannot yet see into the sphere of his daughter, who in her love for her father is willing to sin against the local laws. He feels the stream of pure love of a child (for her father), which is why he is drawn to be next to his Judith. Had he received the same measure of love from his wife at home, he would have stayed there; for spirits of this sort no longer have the faintest idea of their primordial home. Thereby they are outcasts by their own making. If only anybody is found who surrounds them mercifully and lovingly, it is for them like for a desert wanderer who finds an oasis in which someone greets him, shouting his welcome. The merciful child-love of Judith, who wishes to help her father at any price so that he may find peace, thus becomes Judas' lifesaver. Remember this one thing, friend Dismas: In the kingdom of the spirit only he who helps others, regardless of all differences, will be helped as well. Here it is not about wishing to do something but only that we are willing it earnestly and with strong resolve and at the same time do it as well! With us angels, the will and the deed are one. With you maturing children of God, however, much must first be purified and strengthened. The Lord has never lost his patience. Let us therefore practice patience as well so that it may benefit Judas!"

Judas was still walking side by side with Judith, but his heart was empty again. All his wishes seemed blown away. Even his love for Jesus was burnt out like a heap of straw. Meanwhile the girl decided to go to Bethany. Her thoughts hastened ahead to where the

friends of Jesus were, and her mind was preoccupied with the Saviour. It made her way easy and her steps light. It was as if heavenly powers were helping her, and her heart was full of hope! Slowly the day ended. It was evening, and their destination was still two hours away.

Then she prayed: "Oh, dear Master Jesus, let me come upon some friends today, so my unrest can be stilled and I can follow my love!"

Right then she saw a troop of Romans coming down the street. The leader was mounted. He caught up to the girl and said, "Where are you going? It is almost dark and there is no inn anywhere near."

"Bethany is my destination," Judith answered, "for the lord of the particular place is Lazarus, who was in good terms with my father. I need help because my father has died!"

Hearing this, the Roman spoke some words of condolence and then said, "Listen girl, one does not go at night to such a distant place to get help. Don't you have any friends in Jerusalem who could help you? Why don't you go to your priests to aid you?"

"It is not about money," Judith answered. "I am looking for someone to help me bury my father, for in a moment of weakness, he made an end to his life. This [burial] has to happen in secret, however, because it is against our law to commit him to the earth. You see, I am only a weak girl, but I love my father. Therefore, I beg you, let me be on my way, and do not detain me any longer!"

"Who was your father," the astonished Roman asked, "and where did he take his own life?"

Judith answered, "He belonged with the small band of disciples who followed the savior and physician Jesus. Due to an unfortunate chain of events, my father delivered his Master to the temple, and Jesus had to die on the cross at Golgotha. But when my father saw that Jesus did not free himself in a miraculous way, as he had hoped, he made the unfortunate decision to take his own life. A priest came and brought us the news of his death in such an ugly way that we were gripped with horror. Finally, I overcame all my apprehensions, and now I wish to search for my father's body in order to bury him. I can tell you this because you are not a Jew, and I don't think you will betray me for what I intend to do."

The Roman answered, "No, my daughter, I shall never stop you from doing your work of love. On the contrary, I will help you. But tell me once more, what was your father's name?"

Judith answered, "Judas, Lord. He was a potter by trade. Ever since Jesus walked the land, my father was a part of them. Sometimes we were in need and lived very frugally, but Jehovah took care that we could always live on what He gave us."

Said the Roman, "Listen, girly, I knew your father; he was a bad human being. He was greedy, quarrelsome, and disliked having to submit to order!"

Judith answered, "Lord, he was my father!"

The Roman replied: "Yes, my daughter, it is nice to think of one's father in child-like love and thus preserve good memories. But your father does not deserve this love; therefore, leave him there and go home."

"No, Lord, he is my father and will remain so through all of eternity. Jehovah commands us to honour our father and mother. It is not written about good fathers and mothers, just father and mother. That is why I try as much as I can to help my father, so he may find peace!"

The Roman responded, "Listen girly, your kind of love reminds me of that of the divine Master... Say, are you a follower of the Nazarene?"

"Yes and no!" Judith answered. "Yes, because I love Him, and no, because up until now I remained faithful to the temple...until it provided us with its final proof of its wrongness. Now it is impossible for me to be true to it any longer. I want to move to Bethany for good. My mother can follow me later. My brothers have our dead father's wanderlust in their veins. They will go their own way anyway!"

The Roman said, "Well then you are doing the right thing. By the way, Lazarus is my friend. I will bring you to him. We want to go to Jerusalem, so I can help you out. Surely you are tired and hungry."

Judith: "Lord, I walked all day long. God gave me strength until now, and He will continue to help me!"

The Roman: "Now then, you are coming up on my steed! You needn't be afraid. You won't fall off; I will hold you tightly. This way you will get to Bethany sooner!" The Roman gave a few instructions to his soldiers, gave over the command to someone else, and gave the order to take the troops to Jerusalem. He then rode at a trot with the girl to Bethany.

When they arrived people were amazed to see a Roman soldier on a horse storming the place with a young girl in his arm. Lazarus now recognized him as an old acquaintance and good friend. He greeted the Roman with enthusiasm and joy and welcomed both of them. He told the Roman that he had many guests already, many of whom they both knew--among them, Pontius Pilate, as well as almost all of the Nazarene's disciples and the mother Mary. The Roman was relieved when he heard it because he knew that the girl would be safe. He introduced the girl to Lazarus, and she shared truthfully all that had gone on. Lazarus too was moved by the childlike love the girl had for her father. Right away he led her into a bedroom so that she could get her rest. Meanwhile the Roman, who had only little time to spare, mingled with the big society, reported to Pilate, and conversed a long time with the disciple John. Late at night he continued dutifully onward to Jerusalem, without having spoken to Judith again, as she was fast asleep.

Early the next morning all were up when Judith came into the large room where everyone ate his morning meal. Lazarus brought Judith to Mary who gave the girl a hug and kissed away the tears on her face in motherly fashion. She spoke to Judith in loving words such as Judith had never heard in her life. Trustingly she looked up to Mary when she heard: "See, Jesus my son, our good Saviour and Master, is alive! Be convinced that Judas,

your father, lives as well, albeit his condition is not yet a good life. But he will get help when he takes the hand of the Eternal Saviour-love and holds on to it!"

Judas heard and saw everything. He was able to experience every event. The love and yearning caused his inner being the greatest turmoil! No accusations. No cursing! It was heavenly music for his wounded soul!

John then told Judith that Lazarus would have the burial done, and that Judas would be buried in Bethany. "You don't have to experience the upsetting events," John said to her. "Tonight we shall fetch your father's body, and tomorrow at about this time you can say your good-byes to your father at the grave."

At that moment John envisioned Judas and said to him, "My brother Judas, oh it is a hard, hard test for you, you who always knew everything as we did, always believing you can mix spiritually-divine things with material ones. You see your condition is the effect of your actions. I am not accusing you, only myself, because I did not stay with you in your hour of weakness. Yet, you will be helped. Remain in our love for a day with Dismas, whom you cannot see and who is serving you and you will have a new way. However, humbly bow your mind in obeisance to the Lord. Jesus [be] with you!"

"Jesus [be] with you?" The girl asked, astounded. "Say, dear friend, with whom did you speak just now?"

John: "With Judas, your father, whom you brought with you. Due to your active and strong child-love, he was lifted out of his night and is holding ONTOon to you as though you were his god. Of course, you do not see him and can therefore not speak with him either. But it is good that way, for you would not be able to bear it since his looks match his [soul] condition. However, rejoice! He is moving toward his life's goal. Your father has suffered unimaginably up until now. But once the spirit of life has taken a hold of someone, he is as good as saved already and will consider a small favour like the greatest bliss!"

After that John said good bye to Mary and the girl so they could go with some brothers and a servant to get Judas' body. A cart equipped with an oblong box and some large pieces of linen was at the ready, and thus they set out to Jerusalem, with Judas [his soul] at their sides. Judas felt as if a magnet drew him to John. Being near John made him feel light and his surroundings brighter. This time he was able to clearly recognize the brothers who had made themselves comfortable in the cart and what was in their vicinity. Only John knew that Judas was with them, which is why he withheld himself from any conversation as he did not want to lose any inner power. In this calm and stillness, rays of warming life flooded from John into Judas.

The angel and Dismas followed as well, and it was good that the brothers had this protection because the enemy knew about this mission and tried to disrupt it. [The enemy's plan was] that a caravan of merchants would detain them. That is when the angel caused a thunderstorm which made the brothers hurry with their trip to the Inn of Lazarus, near Jerusalem, before the rain could become bothersome. The lessee was astonished to see them coming with that cart. But when he found out the reason, he immediately was helpful, and he sent a servant to the place where Judas had killed himself. His fears were legitimate,

for the Templers did position a guard in order to prevent the body from being moved. And so the brothers were quite concerned when they heard the report.

John, however, was confident, for he believed in the power of love. "We don't want to cause offense, but after sundown we are taking him home to Bethany," he said. "We could go to the Roman commander to warrant our safety, but why should we bother with worldly help when spiritual help is given to us! Oh see, angels are at our side in great numbers. It is, after all, about the wish of a child being fulfilled! Therefore, do not worry, for Jesus, our faithful God and Father has already seen to it!"

Judas suffered the agony of torment at this time because he could now make comparisons between himself and his brothers. He deeply regretted his actions but remained empty inside because he still could not find the way to truly ask [forgiveness] and to be thankful. But John spoke to him again about the right concept of: "My brother, see, we cannot change the past. What we can do is to avert the effects of our wrong actions. All brothers are trying to help carry [your burden] and assist you, so that you can begin to create new and future things by yourself; for the one who excuses his actions and likes to blame others is the one who clings to the past. However, the future is a self-reliant, free life for the love of Jesus, our Lord, which is to grow in our hearts. This confronts us with tasks that sometimes we are seemingly not ready for, but with faith in Jesus' love we find the power we need and a wonderful helper. You will not get ahead if you remain in your philosophy of life. Say good bye to all of your former views and principles, just as you have said goodbye to your former body, and you will feel better and free in your heart. Therefore, become calm and free!"

These words felt good to Judas, but his pain and woe remained, for he still did not yet understand everything.

When the day came to a close, the brothers set out. The sky clouded and in a short time a thunder storm developed. Flash followed flash, and the threatening thunder drove the Templers back into the temple. In this weather they did not dare come out. Meanwhile the brothers stayed dry and once again experienced the glory of the Master, who granted them light and safety. When they arrived at the place where the body was, they loosened its ropes, enveloped it in several linen sheets, and left as quietly as they had come. Only when they had left Jerusalem behind them, did the storm abate. Gradually the stars came out, and under a beautiful night sky they arrived in Bethany. Judas cowered on top of his casket, which, a few days before, had been an abhorrence to him. Today Judas was becoming more conscious of the imminent separation, and to him these hours were like a gift from His Lord!

They arrived in Bethany in the middle of the night. Lazarus had had the grave dug out previously, and the most intimate friends had awaited their arrival with Judith, so the burial began immediately. Quietly and without words the body was given over to the earth. After the ropes were removed, Lazarus said the blessing followed by the brothers and finally Judith, his daughter. No tears but heavenly joy streamed through Judith's heart, so she prayed:

“Oh, you good Saviour Jesus, You helper in need...You liberator from fear and apprehension, to You I will dedicate myself from now on in all eternity. Rather, let **me** go ‘down’, but help my father. Give him rest and consolation, and let me recognize Your holy love-will. Bless [us], for without Your blessing I cannot remain! Amen!”

All were moved. Judas, however, collapsed under the love of his daughter! By the light of torches, servants filled the grave with earth. The friends and Judith had gone back into the house. However, Judas stayed at his grave. Everything in him was as if dead, and indifferently he sat there staring [at nothing]. He remained in that condition until his daughter Judith came to the grave early the next morning, where she knelt down and prayed:

“Oh You great, holy God, You Creator of all creatures, You Lord over all things, see here I lie before you in the dust of baseness in order to beg of you, Who are the All-Merciful-One, for grace and mercy! Here lies my progenitor and provider, who has abused his own will in order to destroy his life, and who has left us behind with shame and disgrace. Oh Lord, You know all things. You alone know the reasons for his deed, and this is why I am begging you: Let mercy rule! Do not measure with the measure my father used to measure, but exercise with him Your well-known mildness. Should you, for your justice’s sake, have to pour out the measure of your punishment, oh, then let me bear the lot. Let me bear this deep, deep guilt–put me at the righteous affliction–so that I can atone! Give the heart of my father the longed-for rest, and let me be the one to wander about restlessly until Your mildness lets me recognise that the guilt, the great guilt, has been expiated. Oh Jehovah, Oh Lord and God Tsebaoth, for the sake of Your great love, let me bear this sacrifice and bestow upon me power and will! Amen! Lord Jesus, You helper and saviour, to you too I call out of my child-like heart, and I beg of you: Do not remember my father’s transgression, but grant him Your favour and mercy for the sake of Your great love! Amen!”

And strengthened from within the girl returned to the house.

Judas heard every word and saw the conduct (gestures) of his daughter. And while he heard the words, it seemed to him as though a hand was pulling a many-meters-long, red band out of his heart. He cringed, becoming smaller and smaller. Suddenly the entire sky glowed, and it sparkled like a rain of gold round about him. A protective wall of light measuring about 7 meters in diameter was raised and then grew higher and higher around him and his grave.

Dismas asked the angel about the meaning of this mighty appearance and received the following answer: “See, dear friend, what you are seeing here is the great, merciful redeemer--and God--love, which was visible to Judas as well. It was triggered by the prayer of pure child-love, who, in order to make her father happy, wanted to take all transgression upon herself. What we were able to experience here is the birth of a true fruit from the tree of life. After the vow [of Judith] was spoken and reached the heart of the All-merciful One, this love was sent back here as a symbolic wall and as a deterrent to adverse influences. What we are experiencing here is of such rarity, it is an almost singular event!

“Therefore, shall this monument of child-love shine in all infinity and become an altar. We angels and servants of God, however, are bowing our heads, bowing our knees, and adoring!

“Now Judas is saved! Whatsoever he could not accomplish out of himself will now be made easy due to the free, child-like [pure] divine life of his daughter. And the glorious redeemer-love is, with newly-made-ready means of grace, already extending him both hands! Therefore, pay close attention to everything, for Judas’ growth is also ours.”

Judas straightened up and saw far away the light, the glorious, golden light! Then he said to himself: “Oh how good your words felt in my heart, you good, dear child, and how badly I seem to myself now. Oh Judith, you want to bear punishment and shame for me. Oh God, can there be such human beings? Can there not be some other possibility to find some other way out? Oh, if only I could find Jesus, the Master! On my knees I want to beg Him until I am certain that my child would be rewarded for this love and not have to bear the burden of my great transgression! Now I want to go into the house and look for Judith, so that I can thank her even if she does not notice [me].”

And he went into the house, and his pillar of light came with him. There he found Judith, and he leaned on her, gave her a loving heartfelt kiss, and prayed: “Oh Jesus, You dear, good master! Keep this child in your heart and let me find You in my need, so that I may have help!”

Then he went back to the grave. There he met a gang of dark, bold fellows, ardently digging up the earth. Full of curiosity he watched their action. By the way they spoke, he recognized that they expected to find gold or treasures in the freshly filled grave, and how they were avidly trying to get to the bottom of the grave. When they finally reached the bottom, instead of gold and treasures they naturally found Judas’ body and were very disappointed.

One of them saw Judas and called out: “There, comrades! See, over there stands the owner of this body! He lets us dig and work ourselves. Hey, come nearer! Who are you anyway? Come on over here and don’t be a coward, for you are the potter, Judas, the cheater and thief, and, as we heard, a traitor as well! Come on, comrades! May he do penance for his curiosity, to have watched us like this!”

And so they surrounded him with dark demeanor. “Well, don’t you want to say anything, you traitor and rogue, you rascal, let’s hear it!”

Judas said: “What did I do to you that you have to humiliate and threaten me? Yes, I am Judas and have betrayed My Lord, but I’ve been punished enough for this already. Today I could be with my Master, and I could enjoy blissfulness. But as it is, I am lonely and alone and not even conscious of how long I have been in the kingdom of the Spirits!”

One of the comrades said: “Oh, stop, you traitor! Don’t tell us long stories! We don’t care where you were but that you let us work, knowing that there would be nothing to gain. That has to be punished. So get going, quickly close your grave; otherwise you’ll be sorry. We, however, will go on and find ourselves a source for gold and silver!”

Judas stayed silent, took the shovel and filled the hole. When he was finished, he put the shovel aside and spoke to them: "Yeah, where do you want to go? We are after all spirit beings and don't need silver and gold anymore. What we need is a place we can call home, where we can stay!"

They broke out in loud laughter directed at Judas! They said: "We, spirits? And we don't need any more gold? You must have lost your mind! Have you noticed if our world has changed at all from the material one? Would it have to be a different one for a traitor? Our world is still the same!"

"Dear men," said Judas, "listen to me: I was a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth. Since I have spent only a few miserable hours here, I've had an epiphany about my former life. Deeply, I regret my wrong doings, which sprang forth from my wrong attitude. I too strove for money, possessions, and honour. How often did I have to hear from the Lord's mouth that all the gold and treasures of the earth are good for nothing, and that we have to leave it all behind when we discard our body. I had to find out only now that I was, and still am, the poorest of the poor. Surely, you have to admit that you are just as poor as I, and that everything you call money and wealth lives only in your mind. Just as it is with this world in which we now live, it is only an illusory world. I can prove to you that this, your present world, is transient. Come with me to Jerusalem. There lies the temple in ruins for one hundred years, ruled and occupied by Eljasib with his adherents. And because the Master wanted to help the occupants of this temple of illusion, He let this sham temple collapse. While all who believed in His word let Him guide them on a new life's path, the high priest remained stiff-necked, and he lives there in the ruins! Come, convince yourselves that I'm telling the truth. If I have lied, you can do to me what you like, and I will patiently bear everything. But if I have told the truth, then you can also believe me when I say that your sham life is a lost one!"

Again, there was loud laughter, but the ringleader of the group said: "Listen, we should consider it; we are not missing a thing. And should Judas be right, that the temple lies in ruins, we can expect a large booty because the temple contains many riches!"

The plan was acceptable; then the ringleader continued: "If you have lied to us you can look forward to us cutting you to pieces!" With a lot of bawling, screaming, and swearing, they went on their way keeping Judas in the middle.

Longingly, Judas turned and looked toward Bethany, and in his heart he sent blessing after blessing and plea after plea to his daughter Judith. He had to listen to many a derision, but when he wanted to say something, he was told to stay quiet. After a long, arduous trek they spied Jerusalem up ahead. But there were no shining temple towers to see. Instead, everywhere they looked they saw hovering clouds of smoke. They discussed among themselves if Judas could have been right. Soon they reached the ruins and began to walk all around them. The comrades had no mind for Judas now. Instead they began to search for treasures by and under the ruins, inasmuch as the smoke and heat allowed.

Meanwhile Judas looked for the high priest, wondering if he was still there. When he climbed upon the ruins, the high priest and a number of priests appeared from a hole in the

cellar and attacked Judas, beating him until he fell to the ground, unconscious. Just before he fell, he had had time to call out: "Jesus, help me!" The comrades had heard it, and when they saw what had happened, they hurried to aid Judas. One of them by the name of Josef demanded full of rage, "Why did you beat Judas? What did he do to you?"

Embittered, the high priest screamed: "Pretty soon you will share the same fate as this traitor over there! First he betrays his Master, then me, and now he even brings a mob of criminals here in order to take revenge because I threatened to destroy him!"

"You miserable hypocrite," countered Josef "off with your hypocrite garment! We will teach you how to practice vengeance...calling us criminals! Remember, Judas did not want to harm you with a single word. He merely brought us here to prove that we live in the beyond! And now we see that Judas is right. He did not lie to us; that is why he is under our protection. You, on the other hand, are all done with your glory in your world of lies. Come brothers, lend a hand. Let us get him [the priest] to Golgotha, on the cross, where the scoundrel belongs and where he cannot harm anybody anymore."

At that moment Judas woke up. Josef went to him to support him and said: "Did he get the better of you? He will pay for it! Come, get up, you'll feel better."

Now Judas was back on his feet and saw that they had undressed the high priest and that his legs were tied up. Judas asked: "Why are you doing this? He didn't harm you after all."

Josef answered, "Not us, but you, and that makes us angry! If he were a highwayman like we, we could understand it, but he is God's servant. Therefore, he will pay. He will be crucified on Golgotha. Come on, lend a hand. We are starting, and you, brother Judas, will speak the funeral oration while we crucify him!"

Judas: "Hold it, not like that. We don't want to pile an even greater guilt upon ourselves. We want to forget that for us he had planned bad things. Come on, let him go! I'm sure it won't do you any harm. He didn't do anything to you, and as for me, I am glad to finally have the opportunity to act in accordance with the Master's will. He said: 'Do not judge so that you will not be judged!' Therefore, help me to loosen his ropes. If he stays in his obstinacy and rage, you do what you want. If he is willing to change, he should go free; for, brothers, as he is in our custody, we do not have to be afraid of him!"

Having said that, Judas turned to Eljasib and said: "Now, dear friend, that you have heard everything, how are you going to handle yourself? Do you want to continue your ranting and raving, or will you, like we, be calm and keep the peace? You have heard what is waiting for you; don't think too long before asking the brothers for forgiveness!" At that, without argument, the men loosened the ropes from the ankles of the high priest. Now he was free, and Judas, moved to pity for the naked Eljasib, took off his own coat and put it around the freezing man.

At that moment, Dismas came and, at the prompting of the angel, put a new coat around Judas. That is when Judas recognized Dismas. Full of joy, he embraced him and said: "Oh, it is so good to have you back! Now I will not leave your side again, for I have experienced bitter times!"

Dismas answered: "It's all right, brother Judas, I know about everything, I was always with you and felt your sorrow and pain. If I hadn't had the promise that you would be helped, I would have died from pain. But now, brother of my heart, let us not occupy ourselves so much with ourselves, for our task is to help! And inasmuch as you help others, you will receive help as well!"

Said Judas, "It is good that you remind me. I'm still the old Judas!" He took Dismas' hand, led him to his companions and said, "See here my friend Dismas, who was the first one to help me in this world. I had lost him, but, thank God, I have just found him again. And now we will stay together. And I mean all of us, agreed? We stay together!!"

The high priest stood at a distance and didn't utter a word. But Joseph, the eldest one of the comrades approached Dismas, saying, "Yes, friend, don't we know each other? Where do you come from? We lost track of you since our fight where the Romans beat us so badly. They had gotten a hold of you that day! We lost our lives in that fight. The battle was, after all, too uneven, and now we meet again!"

Dismas recognized his former comrade and said, "Yes, dear Joseph, times change quickly. I was condemned and killed with Gesmas on the cross. And with us, the great Nazarene was also crucified. There in my death throes I was able, with my one plea that came from deep within my heart, to take hold of a helping hand, that is, the saving hand of Jesus of Nazareth. Him alone I owe my life and was privileged to experience many, many proofs of the redeeming grace of the love of Jesus the Saviour. My heart knows only thankfulness, thankfulness for such boundless love, and thankfulness for being deemed worthy to help! Say, brothers, do you not despise your present condition? Wouldn't you like to live a life full of happiness and contentment? In this you can share with all those who no longer look out for themselves. For here in the kingdom of the spirits, one judges with different measures than in the material being. Go ahead and ask this poor human, the high priest, how long he has been in the so-called beyond, and how far he has come until now. If the merciful love of Jesus had not taken away his pseudo-temple, he would still be there in one-thousand years, the pseudo-priest. It is for the love of Jesus alone that he now is wearing Judas' coat."

"Oh Dismas," Joseph interrupted his former war comrade and ringleader, "what are you telling us?! We had no longing to live differently and change ourselves. Sure, I believe you two, and the question now is this: What are you proposing to do with us? As I see it, you are the same poor devils as we are. I understand that gold and silver no longer do us any good. But where are we to go? Blood is stuck to our hands; robbery and arson were our life. And now suddenly all this should be forgiven and forgotten? That is hard to believe! Now that it is revealed to us that everything we learned as a youth--for instance, that there is a life after death, and, therefore the coming judgment must also be true--that we shall all be lost! You were cast in the same mold as we. To whom and what do you want to refer when the judgment comes?"

"You are talking about this Nazarene, as is Judas. But does he have the power and the right to forgive sins? Does he simply have disposal over these people who constantly did

things in opposition to what he taught? Look at Judas: His hands are not blood-spattered, nor is he guilty of robbery. He was with the Nazarene for a long time, wandered about the land, and was his friend, as it were! Here, however, Judas is just as bad off as we. His Jesus has left him pretty much holding the bag. We could have cut him to pieces when he happened into our hands, and the high priest beat him unconscious as well. And no Jesus came to help him. No, Dismas. If you want us to see things your way, you will have to fill us in plainly and prove that you are right!"

At this, Dismas hesitated, and when he didn't have an answer he took a few steps backwards to where his angel guide was standing. He asked him to please help him out.

The angel nodded and said: "Yes, my friend, since you are asking me I am allowed to help you, and I am happy to do so. But why do you not seek help from Jesus the Lord in your heart? Do you even know if your friends will acknowledge me and listen to me? Ask them first, if they are agreeable!"

Dismas went back to his friends and said to Josef: "Listen, there is somebody else in this vicinity. It is someone who has been a dweller of the spirit kingdom. He can enlighten us about all questions, and he can also show us the right light through Jesus. Do you want to listen to him instead of me?"

"He may come," Josef answered. "The main thing is to give us clarity if he can. We are willing to listen to him."

The angel now entered the group and said: "Greetings, dear friends. You are asking me to inform you about Jesus. Oh see, I am a primordial inhabitant of the spirit world and know its order very well. I am a servant of My Lord and God, and my only reason for being here is solely to fulfil His will, which is to bring help to whoever asks for help...to bring the truth whoever asks for the truth! Now let me ask you, are you going to believe me, or do you think I speak out of a sense of a know-all?"

Josef answered the angel: "We do not know you; nevertheless, you call us 'dear friends'. Do you know who we are? It is dangerous to hang out with us, for we are robbers and multiple murderers. Although we were once soldiers, the shed blood has made us more and more greedy. That is why it is not good to associate with us; for when things are bad for us, we cannot guarantee that things don't go badly for you as well. We have already had many experiences and do not totally believe our leader Dismas. Since you call us 'dear friends' we have to send you away for your own good; for, as I said, to be with us is not a good thing!"

The angel smiled at Josef and said: "Friends, do not worry yourselves about me, for I am a servant of God and do not need to fear anything. I am here only because Jesus, your Lord, is concerned for your redemption (Here, the angel speaks to them as a group). I know that you don't have much good to say about Him, and you have doubts because Judas is still far from Him. However, I say unto you: True, Judas is still far from Jesus, as you are still far from Him. Jesus on the other hand is so very near to you at all times. It is entirely up to you to turn to Him and hold on to Him with all your love! Here, in the kingdom of the spirit, the entire development transpires at a slower pace than in the earthly life, because every one

of you lives in his own world, and he only meets with those of a similar mindset. No one usually comes to him; there is no one to bring light into his situation. Instead, everything has to be borne from within. Everything has to come from your own heart, and this is a lengthy path! But you saw Judas in his need and poverty and you were able to meet with him. You see, that is what Jesus wanted to accomplish, that you all meet with each other since you are of one spirit. Because of the fact that Dismas had asked for a guide and is now speedily developing toward the light, you all are connected if you want to, and are willing to, remain in unity with him. Dismas takes watchful care of Judas, and Judas takes care of you. As soon as you can extend your hands to each other in love and harmony, you will be able to rise to a level higher on the path to perfection! So first, ask Judas and Dismas for forgiveness, since you have hurt their feelings with your derisions toward Jesus of Nazareth. The Master has already forgiven you because you did it out of ignorance!”

Josef answered the angel, of whom he had already grown very fond: “Yes, listen to me you servant of God. You now speak of things we did not suspect. We expected of you to prove that we had lived and acted wrongly and are still doing so. However, you are not saying any of that but want us to ask Judas and Dismas for forgiveness. Up until now we knew only violence and do not wish to let go of it just like that. If we had not used violence to save Judas from the hand of the high priest, would it even have been possible? Does this mean we will have to ask the high priest for forgiveness?”

“My dear friends,” said the angel, “you need not ask the high priest for forgiveness because you were trying to come to the aid of Judas when you got a bit carried away. He, on the other hand, will have to ask you for forgiveness from his heart (this time) because until now he only did so with his mouth!”

Now the high priest came forward wearing Judas’ coat, asking, “What? I’m supposed to ask for forgiveness again? First my garments, which are, after all, the sign of my high-priestly dignity were not respected. Then they were ripped off my body, and then I was insulted right up unto death! And you, who want to be a servant of God, call this development? If I could just do what I want to, I would prove it to you!”

“Elijasib, be silent for now,” the angel called out to him. “You keep insisting on your point of view and on your imagined dignity. But I say unto you: If you had followed Jesus when He invited you and believed in His words, you would now be full of joy and bliss, and your temple would still stand for the sake of blessing the poor and lost. I say to all of you once again that we must come to one mindset before there are new paths on which to continue [growth]. There must be harmony between us, and that is only possible on a basis of forgiveness. Or do you wish to continue as before? Oh see, Judas proved to you that you no longer live on earth. It is the reason you came with him. And since you now know with certainty that you live as spirits, you must logically come to the conclusion that it is high time to consciously live a spiritual life. For Jesus did say that whosoever follows His teaching will live! You must admit that you live, but it is a life full of misery and fear. But if you act according to Jesus’ words, peace, joy, and fulfilment will be yours! So I ask you,

when did you last eat and drink in this world, and when have you last met with other human beings?"

At this, Josef looked at his companions and said: "Yes, surely we haven't thought of it yet! We have had neither anything to eat nor to drink but have not felt any hunger or thirst. And we met no one, except for you, with whom we are now here together!"

"Well, you have already admitted much," the angel said. "And thus you once more have further proof that Judas spoke the truth. Also, you have heard of Jesus, the Saviour. Why is it that you don't feel like getting to know Him? I shall tell you: In your heart you have fathomed that you would have had to give up your handiwork, for Jesus is Love and Justice. You are afraid of the latter and because of this you fear meeting with Him. You know exactly that this is the truth, but I say unto you: As long as you are still afraid of Him and avoid Him by living like you have been doing, you cannot be helped either! Listen here: Jesus lives! His life is Majesty! Might! And Perfection! He knows everything! He also knows that we are now talking about Him! He knows all your difficulties and has sent me to stand by you and help you! My home is light...and an existence full of active life!

"Earth is only a valley of testing, is merely a school! While there, the human being can walk upon stony or thorny paths and can thus struggle to reach the heights of his heart and build himself a lasting, free, and autonomous life, and an eternally-lasting world. And he can transform himself from a creature to a divine being becoming newborn!! You are still deeply stuck in the spheres of your earthly worlds. Until you are born again you will remain in this miserable condition. We servants of God have the task of assisting those who need our help and who call upon the Heavenly Father Who is our God and King in all eternity. You can tell that my words come from a holy earnestness. However, I have all might over you and could scatter you, so that you would once again be alone--every man for himself! However, as love of God doesn't want this, all of you can, if you follow out of your own free will, go towards a better being!!"

Josef turned to his comrades and said: "You have all heard what the stranger has told us. I'm sure he came with good intentions, and I have acquired in my heart great trust in him. My aim is this: Let us follow him and get away from here, the sooner, the better! Don't you all think that this would be best?"

All six agreed with him, but some of them whispered among themselves and asked themselves if they could end up in criminal court! The angel joined them, though, and said, "Dear friends,

However, the angel joined them and said: "Dear friends, I heard your worries even though you whispered! Nothing about you is hidden from me. But I understand and assure you that the time of punishment is forever over and done if you follow me. However, you have to atone for what you have done. Your transgressions no longer require punishment, only penitence, remorse and a self-sacrificial spirit, that is, a new, loving spirit that is willing to serve. If you desire, you can now exchange your present life for a life of joy!"

Josef answered the angel: "Hear, dear friend, your speech sounds lovely. So appealing are your words that I cannot say anything against them. Come, brothers, let us leave our old life here. We shall gladly follow you; now tell us what there is to do."

Now the angel turned around as everyone spotted a cute little house standing by a hill in the distance. "Follow me there and we will strengthen ourselves and so that you can taste the love of Jesus, which prepares this delight for you!" [he said.]

The angel walked ahead and the six followed him. Judas halted, so Dismas waited for him, asking, "Brother, don't you want to come along?"

"Yes, I do," Judas answered. "But you see, I am not invited, and besides, there stands Eljasib. Am I supposed to leave the poor man again?" So Dismas asked Eljasib whether he wanted to come along, which he affirmed. As Judas was content, all three now hastened after the others.

When they arrived at the house, a venerable old man with kind eyes opened the door and welcomed them. He then led them into the room where the angel and the seven already were. A large, long table with benches stood in the big, beautiful and hospitable room.

"I am bringing you three latecomers," he said. "Now take a seat and make yourselves comfortable while I bring bread, salt, and wine!"

The angel greeted Judas and said to him: "Listen, friend, there is a reason why I didn't invite you. It is that you are a knowing one who already knows how to freely conduct himself. You have done right in coming, especially in bringing Eljasib along. Therefore, you shall experience the joy of having loved!"

The friendly old host came and set the table with bread, salt, and wine and encouraged them to dig in heartily. And for the first time they consumed food and drink in the kingdom of the spirit. After they were quite satisfied and felt strengthened, Judas began to share and said, "Dear brothers, this meal was once more like then, when I was still staying with Jesus on earth and sat at His table. Even though it seemed there may have been only a small amount of food on the table, we were all always filled and satisfied, no matter how many of us there were. Oh, how beautiful it would be if the Master were once again in our midst! Where may He be? Couldn't we go to Him and stay with Him?"

But the angel answered, "My dear Judas, as a human being you could very well say, 'Let us go where the Master is staying.' But now we are in the kingdom of the spirit, and Jesus is in truth everywhere. You have to give birth to Him in your own world first. This [process] takes place only through an inner, greater love for Him that expresses itself by serving ever more!! These are the necessary conditions for finding Him and the ways that lead to Him! Oh see, you have to make up for your omission, for one who is lost is waiting for you: Gesmas at Golgotha! A passable way leading to the Lord is your sensing that there is someone looking for help, and who is asking for you. Gesmas would be so glad to have you for company, for the boredom he is experiencing is a terrible punishment. He has already regretted having mocked you; therefore, I advise you to hasten to Golgotha. Bring Gesmas here, so that everyone may come together once more!"

The others begged to come along, but the angel said, "No, dear friends. Judas is going alone, for he has to fulfil this mission...unless *he* asks someone to accompany him."

Then Dismas asked Judas to come along because he did not want to again be separated from him. So the two men set out to the place of judgment--Golgotha. This time Judas was able to see everything, as it was still early evening, and full of joy he spoke with Dismas. They spoke about everything that they had gone through together, and Judas was in astonishment over Dismas' wisdom. It didn't anger him at all; instead he grew even fonder of him. They arrived soon after, and Dismas said, "This is not about Gesmas alone! It is also about us and many, many others with an attitude like ours was. For people with arrogance and greed live not only on the earth, but in the kingdom of spirits as well. Take the high priest Eljasib! The Templers want to rule without any restriction and do not tolerate anyone at their side. They do not know God at all--only His written word, and that only inanely. They proclaim it in such a way that it brings success and advantage to them alone. That is why they hated Jesus...because He showed them a way that leads to God without a middleman. He was in the way of their hunger to dominate, and that is the reason they had Him crucified. See, you too were their handy pawn. But when they did not reach their goal they pushed you aside. Now, however, we want to be a tool in the hand of Jesus. But this means, as the angel has taught me, we mustn't fight the greedy and the arrogant, but must see, in the greed and haughtiness, wounds and illnesses which we want to heal with humility, devotion, and by joyfully serving [them]. Only what we can expiate is wealth that we can win back! Only what we balance out with others will be balanced in us." Judas agreed with all of that with an open heart.

Now both men became still and walked along in silence. After some time they saw the hill of Golgotha up ahead, and finally they reached Gesmas. He cowered on the wooden beam, which had been almost disastrous for Judas and himself. He mumbled, "It is just as I have told myself a hundred times: Not one soul shows up, so I could settle accounts. The worst part is this darkness, is a night that lasts for an eternity. I could wait all I want to, and if someone did come by, I wouldn't even see him. Oh woe to me. It is cruel misery, here in the spirit world. Countless people have died already, and I have not encountered one of them! If only I had gone with Judas, I would have him at least. Yes, it is as I have often said: As a man, one is driven like an animal; ad as a human in the kingdom of the spirit, abandoned and forgotten. If that happens to all of them, I pity the Nazarene. Oh you poor, dumb, good human being, they drove you too all the way to the cross, and now you are [most likely] forgotten and languish in [a state of] night!"

As he thus spoke, for the first time without rage, and even compassionately thinking of the Nazarene, it seemed to him as if someone pulled a curtain from his eyes. He could see again, although it was not yet very bright, and he recognised that the two men stood in front of him.

Judas approached him and said, "My friend Gesmas, I Judas have come back in order to help you. I have experienced God's grace, and I have brought along another friend. If you wish, you can come with us; for we don't want to stay here on the hill of Golgotha, do we?"

Gemas shouted for joy! "You, Judas, and you, Dismas, do share where you come from and where you are going! Yes, take me with you, but quickly, before you regret having asked me! Couldn't you have come sooner? Here, years turn into eternities! You were smarter, Judas. You left and now found Dismas again, while I, since that time, sat here waiting for people. But no one came--no one--perhaps because the world has gotten better or maybe because no one was crucified after us. But Dismas, pray tell, how was it with you and the Nazarene in paradise? Why did you leave Him? Where...? Oh, I am totally confused, perhaps because of my long waiting and my joy at this moment!"

Dismas answered him, "Dear brother, don't talk so much, and be patient. We shall help you gladly, but in exchange we need to be sure that you will leave your thoughts of hatred and revenge right here, for only with a child-like heart can you follow us. Here, only love, mercy, and a sense of serving [others] count. Therefore, you will need a good and steadfast will. So, do you want to come with us?"

Gemas: "Yes, my friends, of course I want to. I'll follow you wherever it is nicer than here. In order to be honest, however, I shall tell right away that I cannot discard my rage and feeling of vengeance just like that. You act as though I should be able to take off my vengeance like a jacket or coat in order to just leave it behind. No, it doesn't work that fast. You will have to be a bit patient with me. But I shall go with you, if I may. You are not going to leave me again, are you, Judas?"

Judas: "My Gemas, you are coming with us, but it is only possible under the one condition, as you have heard from Dismas."

Now Dismas continued, "If you truly want to fundamentally change, we shall be glad to help you and walk beside you. If you come with us, you will have to bring yourself to serve those who killed you. And you will have to bow to those whom you have hurt so that you can be forgiven. I tell you quite earnestly that you are in more trouble than you think!

"Where would I be if Jesus had withheld his grace from me? And where would you be, if Jesus, the all-merciful One, had not had pity on me? Know that there, where the temple lies in ruins, many a haughtiness and hatred is buried. And so you too would be lying under the ruins of your own world, and it would take eternities for you to find yourself again. Therefore, be of good will and be glad to follow, for it is not too late!"

Then Gemas touched Dismas' hand and said, "Friend and brother, your words are like a sword but also like balm. I want to do as you say, as much as I can, but brothers, help me, for I have no help other than you! Oh only if I hadn't insulted the Nazarene, when He hung between us and suffered! That is my new grief. I shall ask Him for forgiveness, should I meet Him again."

Again it became lighter about Gemas, and then Dismas said, "My brother, the Saviour has already forgiven you because you asked Him to with all of your heart. If you now follow His instruction through us faithfully, you will soon experience the glory of His goodness and mercy. Come, let us go! Many are waiting for us! You, oh merciful God, continue to give us your grace and favour so that we can walk your ways! Amen."

After that they walked down the hill and back the same way they had come. Suddenly Judas halted and said, "Dear brothers, wait here for a moment, as I have forgotten something."

But Gesmas asked, "You forgot something? You have nothing that you could forget. But if it is alright with Dismas, I shall come and help you search!"

However, Dismas held him back and said, "Stay here with me until Judas comes back. If he does not need us, we can wait here, and I believe he wants to be alone."

Judas, however, hurried back to the cross on which Jesus had hung and which now lay on the ground and with much effort, lifted it up and laid it upon his shoulders. Dreadfully heavy, the burden weighed upon him. With a great deal of effort and panting, he arrived at the place where his brothers were waiting.

Gesmas did not know what to say, so astonished was he. Moved to tears, Dismas praised and thanked God aloud for the wonderful grace he witnessed Judas being able to experience. Now they wanted to help Judas carry the cross, but he refused all help, saying, "I can always rest when it gets too heavy. It seems to be getting lighter with every step."

Dismas agreed with him and said, "Yes, Brother Judas, the fear of the cross causes torturous pain that is heavier to carry than the cross itself. But he who carries God's cross, given him in love and faith and in the power and mercy, will truly feel the power that helps him carry it. But he who voluntarily carries a cross with the right spirit of true humility, in order to serve and help someone, will have at his disposal unfathomable strength, and the shameful cross will become a sign of glorification and transfiguration. Judas, Judas, now you have grasped the life. Oh, unfathomed bliss and glory! Carrying the sign of your guilt openly for all to see will have the following result: The one who shames you will have the weight of the cross upon his back instead on yours! But he who wears the sign of his transgression openly, like you, will enjoy the presence of God Himself, and the fullness of His angels will help carry the cross!!"

When they finally arrived at the small inn they attempted to enter, but Judas noticed that the cross could not fit through the door. He wanted to stay outside, for he did not want to let go of it before bringing it to its destination. However, the elder host brought out a bench and said, "So take a rest here until your brothers come back," and disappeared into the house. Then all the brothers came, every one carrying something for Judas. They gave him a refreshing drink and some bread. Judas took it gladly, and he thanked them from his heart.

When he was satisfied he turned to Dismas and said, "Dear brother, I need your advice, for I would like to carry the cross to where it was supposed be in the first place. But the temple lies in ruins, and now I am here and don't want to quit half way. Please, see to it that you give me the right advice, for this worry is diminishing my joy. Otherwise, find your angel friend. Maybe he can advise me!"

At that very moment the elder host and the angel came out of the house.

Judas bowed before the angel and said, "Oh, you faithful servant of the Lord, can you not tell me what the will of the Lord is, where I should carry the cross? I want to finish my task but I am afraid because the temple no longer stands."

The angel answered him saying, "Judas, you are completely free, for if I would say, 'The Lord wants you to do this or that,' you would be a slave and would have to do what the Lord demands. But since you turned around on your own and went to get the cross by your own impetus, even refused your brothers' help, I advise you, as your brother in God, go within, search your heart, and act on it. In this way you will become free of all worry. But don't overdo anything, and don't downgrade this, your time of grace, to a mere worldly action. Perfect your work so that God can perfect His (work) in you! Peace be with you! Amen!"

So Judas said goodbye to the others, took the cross upon his back, and left alone. "May God be with you until we see each other again," they called out to him. He, however, hurried with his heavy load to Jerusalem as quickly as possible. He now recognized many figures, which turned to watch him in amazement.

Like a wildfire the news travelled ahead of him: "Judas the traitor is bringing the cross of his Master." He heard them but was not bothered by it. The number of those gaping at him grew; quite a few followed him. Most of them did so out of curiosity, but some had pity on him and helped him. Yet others mocked him, but these mockers were silenced by those of understanding.

Judas, however, was unafraid. It was to him as though the soft voice of his Master strengthened him, and the cross seemed to exude a power that stuffed the mouths of those who were yelling and invoked respect in their hearts. Although Judas had to put the cross down occasionally, the further he walked, the lighter his burden became. Finally he arrived where the temple once stood.

Meanwhile, his followers had grown in number; perhaps over a thousand men and women had followed him. Where once the altar had stood, there were a rise and large stone blocks, which made it possible for him to set up the cross.

His heart was calm and peaceful. He moved some of the nearby ruins so that the cross could easily be seen. Then he wiped the perspiration from his forehead, came to stand next to the cross, which he had put upright, and spoke with a loud voice to those present:

"Dear friends and brothers, you have admired my strength and endurance, and you would probably like to know why I Judas have raised up this cross right here. I have retrieved it from Jerusalem. It is the cross on which Jesus of Nazareth, my, and now your, Master has died because of my great wrongdoing. Those among you who railed at me, calling me traitor, were right. Know, however, Jesus Himself has forgiven me! It is the reason I carried to this spot the cross, as a sign of my shame, which the Master has raised up, as a sign of His love and mercy. Not by my own power did I accomplish it, but—unseen—He Himself has helped me carry it. Here, where the altar of the old temple once stood, it shall speak to us about love and mercy. I shall turn this site of horror into a site of peace and an inner-resting place as much as I am able to. Do not say it is impossible.

“The Lord’s will for me is: ‘Perfect your work!’ and I know it will be a success if I seriously want it to be. Behold this cross. When I am tired and discouraged, one glance upon it will suffice to strengthen me. The cross reminds me of my, and now also *your*, Lord’s suffering. He suffered for my sake, so I want to go to work with enthusiasm in order to expiate my guilt.” When he spoke these words, the cross began to shine in a soft light, and Judas called out: “See for yourselves! The Lord is affirming my words!” Then Judas knelt down and prayed aloud for power and strength. When the others saw this, they felt so moved that they fell upon their knees. And Judas called out in a loud voice, “Oh Lord Jesus, Saviour and merciful One, I am at the end of my strength. Your grace and love cause my heart to burst. Oh come and help us all out of our misery. Come Yourself, strengthen us, and help all those poor souls, as well as me. We need You! Yes, I showed them your cross, but what else can I give them? [I have] only a small spark, but they need You, only You. May Your will be done. Amen.”

Now Judas saw the same pillar of light above himself, just like the time Judith had prayed for him. He saw how the beam of light fused with the cross, causing it to shine more and more brightly. When he looked around, he found himself in a new land, and high in the sky was the sun. Judas was in a large garden. In the background he spotted a small temple. Standing next to the cross with both arms outstretched toward him, a figure beckoned Judas saying, “Judas, my brother, come unto My heart; I want to refresh you.” Judas hastened to his Master’s breast, and for a long while there was a holy stillness.

Then Jesus continued, “Look, everything that has arisen here about you is the world built from your humility, your own world. All those who followed you are poor, homeless souls, just as you were formerly homeless. Judas, I say unto you, you were lost by your own doing, but the great love of your daughter Judith has prepared for you this way of grace. She has taken all of your debt upon herself so that you can be blessed. So I set out Myself in My own personal being and took her burden off of her. But now, do not let the past burden you any longer! Instead rejoice in the present, and leave the future to me!”

Judas was overjoyed, and when he looked up he saw countless hosts of angels and heard a mighty hymn of praise. “Oh Jesus, you infinite good Master,” he called out, “Never, never leave me! Remain with us and finish the work so that I never destroy something again!”

Jesus answered, “Never shall I leave you if you do not leave Me. But for the sake of your development I cannot always visibly remain with you. But for a while I shall accompany you to your new world and appoint you to your tasks as host. Don’t yet let on to the others who I am. Come, let us go into your house which you thought to be a temple!”

Judas turned to the others and said, “Friends, and now also brothers, God is merciful to us and has made a righteous foundation out of the ruins of buildings of lies and deception, as you can now recognize in this beautiful garden. Back there you see a house like a temple. Yet it was not built by human manner but by heavenly ways! This good, dear friend, at the same time, the owner of this gloriousness, gave me the mission to invite all of you to stay here with him! Your doubt, that there is not enough room in this small temple

will soon be shattered. I fathom that we will not be enough [people] by far to fill it. Everyone can turn back the other way if he does not like it. Most importantly, everyone should come voluntarily. So come and do what you think [is best].” At that, Jesus walked hand in hand with Judas to the house. When they arrived one more surprise was awaiting them, for the Father had gone to get one more person. And so there was great joy when Dismas opened the door and gave Judas a heartfelt welcome into his new home.

Jesus now took both their hands, and thus they moved into the halls of peace. As they entered, everything expanded as if by itself! They found themselves in a magnificent hall of mirrors such as they had not seen before; it was huge. In two rows, there were large tables with easy chairs, and against the walls stood comfortable benches. It all looked very inviting to sit down. After a while they had all taken their seats, yet there was room for many more.

Meanwhile, Jesus spoke with Judas: “Now behold your world, which I have opened up to you anew. It will become totally your own in all its fullness when you have brought everything home into the halls of eternal peace. Manage your brothers as you see fit; they will learn to be at your side in a serving manner. Now let us eat and drink and strengthen the needy. After that we will go outside once more so that you may become familiarised there as well.”

Amid the others, the Lord sat down with Judas. By now Dismas and the other brothers had filled the tables with various food, fruit, bread, and wine that they had found in abundance in the storage pantry. Just then Judas also noticed Joseph with the other brothers, and then Eljasib, at their table and greeted them all heartily. Then Judas asked the Master, “Oh Lord, be not only our guest here, but also be Father to us all! Bless our meal, and invite us to begin eating.”

Now Jesus rose to His feet and said, “My dear friends who have followed Judas and me here voluntarily, you have, with love and willingness, followed the dictates of your hearts. This is a house in which love dwells, a house where every sorrow and pain shall find soothing, and a house that nobody has to leave if he likes it there. But it is also a house of greatest order, a house of God, and if one or the other does not remain in this order, he will find himself back in the previous area. Now strengthen yourselves and enjoy this meal.”

From all sides, one could hear sounds of admiration and thankfulness. When the Lord sat down, all began to eat. But then one of the many got up, went to where Jesus and Judas were sitting, and expressed his heartfelt gratitude with the following words: “Oh, how long it has been since I have received such good food, and how long since I have had such good wine... And to top it off we are offered a lasting place to live! How may we thank you? How are we to give something in return? We souls have nothing but the bare life. So I have no other choice but to express our thanks with mere words!”

The thankful soul bowed and wanted to go back to his seat when Jesus motioned to Judas.

Judas got up, extended his hand to the speaker, and said to him, “Since your heart moved you to give thanks, I would like to tell you that we are gladdened by your words. For

us here, neither the outer forms, nor your thanks with your lips, are important. We see the heart! Your joy is already our best thank you. Let your heart beat full of love and humility toward your neighbour. Then you reciprocate in the right manner. There was a man who taught this to us on earth in such a wonderful way; it was Jesus of Nazareth, a son of the Most High! He was driven only by the love for us human beings! And this Jesus is among us! It is He who has welcomed you into this house—His house. Now then, since we all live in His house, let us not forget about our poor brothers who do not yet know the way home. Our thanks should be to go out into the night in order to search for the lost, and to offer them our heart full of love, our heart that no longer belongs to us but to the One Who died for us on the cross out of His immensely great love for us. For this reason I carried the cross to this place and set it up in front of the house, so it may become a sign on the road, as well as an admonisher, and an eternal memorial of the immortal love of God!

“Well now you know the status of things. He who wants to remain may stay but for our mutual work and joy! He who wants to leave, however, may he go in peace. We ask You, Jesus, for strength, endurance, and blessing. Amen!”

“We remain, brother and friend,” they called out from the other tables, “and we gladly adapt. There is prosperity and peace here, and being allowed to serve alone benefits us greatly.”

Then another one got up and came over to Jesus’ table, saying, “Listen good friend and owner of this property, and you as well, Judas, and all you dear friends: When I think back to my former earthly life, my heart becomes disquiet and anxious, for I was a servant of the temple and had set out with many others equipped with chains and rope in order to catch You, Jesus. Mind You, our mission ended pitifully because we all perished in a storm at sea. Until now I have regretted my involvement in the enterprise, not for Your sake, but only for my losses and for the bad luck I suffered. And many of those who were with us then are here at this table. Now that I know You, I deeply regret the intention I had then, and I ask forgiveness for me and all of my comrades. If You wish to forgive us and keep us here, we want to serve You in all things.”

Jesus rose and answered, “Come to Me all who labour and are heavily burdened! With Me you will find understanding for your sorrow. And whosoever comes to Me with an open and honest heart shall have peace and salvation. And even if the burden of the sins has risen to enormous volumes, nevertheless, hear My call: Come to Me!! And to those of you who do not dare come because your conscience is impure, burdened, and heavily laden, I say: Come!! And to those who still believe I repay with like coin, I say as well: Come and experience the power of My love.

“For whatever your indiscretion—one of you more, one less—it is extinguished as soon as you come to Me with a humble heart and a desire to remain in My love. I want you all to be, like Me, happy and delivered from the yoke of sin and guilt. Therefore, I extend My hand and help to you in a fatherly favour and way. And you who have recognized Me and have asked Me to forgive you your sins, come and drink from this same cup with Me. And then proclaim to all of your brothers how My love and kindness taste.”

With a pounding heart and eyes fastened on the Master, he took the cup that was offered to him and took a sip. Then he called out, "Oh my friends, never have I felt such bliss as right now. Oh, dearest Lord, thank You! And allow me to pass on the cup so that more can drink from it."

Jesus allowed it, and the cup went from man to man without the wine diminishing. No one was astonished by this anymore; the astonishment of all was only about how delicious the wine was. It flowed into their hearts like balm, while an awesome stillness fell in the entire hall. Everyone felt the agreeable feeling of safety. Finally, the speaker was granted another sip, and Jesus invited him to stay at His and Judas' table. Then Jesus turned to the others and told them that He would go into the garden with Judas for a while. The Lord gave a friendly greeting to them all, and He and Judas left the room.

At the cross they paused, and Jesus began to speak. "My Judas, at last, at last you are convinced of the love and kindness of your God and Father! In fatherly fashion, I have drawn you here, and a mighty segment of your life comes to an end now. You have carried the cross this far, in essence, to carry it for Me. Oh see, it will shine brightly far and wide! And for all who pass by at night and in the darkness it will remain a signpost [of reflection] at your house! For now I shall not remain with you visibly, so that I shall not hinder you and your brothers from any further development. You know exactly what it takes to acquire life's highest possession which is to become one with Me. You also know what hinders you and still wants to be redeemed. This is why I am going to, apparently, leave you (all) now, and I shall return when you have borne me in your hearts and have become My equals. You too, as well as the others, still need to be strengthened in this, for only that, which has come forth from your holiest fight for your [true, inner] life remains your possession eternally. You will have earned it and it is, therefore, borne within. You are inhabitants of My eternal riches but also inhabitants of a world of your own.

"Oh, Judas, continue to walk in My fashion; continue the work and build homes for your brothers and sisters who are still on earth! Then you will again see Me with you before you know it, and I shall personally give you My advice and assistance. But when you need calm and don't know what to do, Judas, My beloved son, come here to the cross and lean on it; let your inner being be wafted by the Spirit, Who is the will of My heart, and Who has sacrificed Himself for you all. Here, at the cross you will find holy calm and safety, and strengthened you will be able to return to your house, into your world! Let the love shine for you as your highest goal. Constantly be ready in humility to give even the least [of them] all that your Holy Father has prepared for you in such fullness.

"Now it is time to go to work! For until now the chambers were filled through My love. Now the love of all of you will fill them! When I am away, you will be the lord of this house and its grounds. Be a good lord. Dismas is at your side as your closest brother. For the time being the angel who has guided you until now will lead you further and advise and help you. Have houses built for the many workers on your property and maintain My order well. Receive My blessing now. May My mercy become your life and your strength. Grow and mature for your salvation and the blessing of the entire creation! Amen, Amen, Amen!!"

And gone was the Lord! Judas was alone, but round about the cross, sparkling diamonds glistened in glorious, fiery splendour. Deeply moved, Judas leaned against the cross and wept aloud with happiness, sobbing, "Oh Jesus, Oh Jesus! What You have prepared for those who love You. Only now have I recognised You...Who You are in actuality!! Yes, I shall love You with the ardour of all life. I shall love You with the purity that never more allows any darkness whatsoever!

"Jesus Christ! You, our loving Father! You, eternal Love! You, Creator of infinity! Glorified by this cross, let me remain Yours eternally.

Amen!"

Max Seltsmann and his series: “Delectable Scenes”

About him personally: Max Seltsmann was a professional railroader. His mediumistic gift was in the family, already represented by the mother. For him, the gift of inner vision became evident only in his later years, after he had gone through many previous soul struggles. When he suffered much contention and challenges due to his gift, he withdrew into his inner life more and more, into his very heart [center].

How he came to receive the “Delectable Scenes,” he shared with me as follows:

“There were remembrances that came alive in me, pictures of amazing sharpness and reality, happenings played like a film in front of my spiritual eyes, which I could have recalled for hours and hours. I cared little about occurrences at first, but they happened again and again, so then I began to write the experiences down in detail, and after having done that, the former [pictures] ceased. New events appeared before my spiritual eyes, and so one scene after another occurred. Always, one scene was repeated until it was recorded (penned), then the next one followed.”

Once, when he was asked how these revelations were received, he answered:

“What I write down are events and experiences in my own inner world and are alive in me. I don’t know whether I have seen, dreamt, or read it. It is as if I had experienced it for years, weeks, or days, and I just remembered but in such a lively way that it is tangibly natural. I may say that it makes me indescribably happy and has induced a deep peace in me.”

The first writings were published by a circle of friends in Berlin. After the second world war, the Lorber Publishing House in Bietigheim took on the second edition of the “Delectable Scenes”. The originals are not in possession of the Lorber Publishing House; where they are is unknown. After the second world war, Max had to leave his homeland and moved west. Just before his 91st birthday, in Neckarwestheim/Wuerttemberg, he was able to return to his spiritual home.

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