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Healing In His Wings

THE  
SON  
OF  
GOD

Series: Book 4



TATE PUBLISHING  
AND ENTERPRISES, LLC

To Benji and Don Greenwalt,  
They have been lifetime friends through good and  
bad times. They are sensitive to the Holy Spirit,  
opening their hearts and their home for the Kingdom  
of God. Benji has graciously read and reread my  
manuscripts. Her suggestions have been invaluable.

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# Introduction

*But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will  
rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap  
like calves released  
from the stall.*

—Malachi 4:2

One of the last Old Testament prophets compares the promised Deliverer to the sun, a ball of fire that rises on a dark world. It sends out golden rays that kiss each man, woman, and child, bringing them into the fullness of a new and joyous day.

In my mind, I see the fulfillment of this prophecy. It is Jesus resting on a rugged hilltop just before dawn. All night, he has been praying. Then suddenly, the sun bursts over the horizon, quickly climbing to burn behind the rock-strewn crest.

Jesus stands, silhouetted in heaven's brilliant glory. Even though it is early, he sees people coming from every direction. Immediately, Jesus tangles the fringes of his prayer shawl in his fingers and raises his arms. The white linen cloth catches the morning breeze, and for a moment, it seems that Jesus is about to take flight. With outstretched arms, he beckons to the crowd that is now pushing up the mountain to meet him. In a loud voice, he calls, "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*"<sup>1</sup> Then, as they come, one-by-one, brushing their fingers across the fabric of his outstretched prayer shawl, healing power is released. For a moment, each person looks deeply into the eyes of their Creator-in-human-form. It is a transformational experience.

*Healing in His Wings* is about the ministry years in the life of Jesus when his compassionate response was to touch and heal.

This fourth volume in the *Son of God Series* contains the stories of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John set in the time and culture that was first century Judea. The stories have been expanded to include imagined names, relationships, and motivations only for the purpose of allowing the reader to identify more fully with Jesus and the life that he lived while on Earth. Each character is listed in the index of characters at the end of the book so you can easily know whether it is an addition to the Bible stories or a person who lived and interacted with Yeshua-Jesus.

Now, live those years with Jesus as you read *Healing in His Wings*.

# Prologue

## INCIDENT AT SHECHEM

*Now Dinah, the daughter Leah had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the women of the land. When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, the ruler of that area, saw her, he took her and violated her. His heart was drawn to Dinah daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her. And Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Get me this girl as my wife."*

—Genesis 34:1–4

Shechem, son of Hamor, placed his hand protectively over his groin area as he carefully shifted his weight and changed his position on the bed. It had been three days since he had handed a clean flint knife to a trusted servant and ordered that his own foreskin be cut off. Now, the pain of that event seemed insignificant compared to the pain from the swelling and inflammation that seemed to be part of the healing process.

Settling into the most comfortable position possible, Shechem listened to the sounds of his father's household. He could hear light footsteps outside the curtain over his doorway. He knew it had to be one of the women in the family because every man in the city of Shechem was lying in the same painful condition as he.

The curtain over his door moved a little. “May I come in?”

He knew that voice. It was beautiful, gracious Dinah. Shechem sighed. The daughter of Jacob— he remembered the evening when he had first seen her. She was standing with the young women of the town, watching the spring fertility rituals. He knew now she had been unprepared for the climax of the festivities. Innocently, she had believed it was all about the new crops. She had not expected the young men of the town to suddenly rush upon the maidens, forcing them into dark corners where fertility rites became a human experience. Maybe he should have listened to her protests, but the wine and the way she made his body throb with passion had clouded his judgment. “Forget the past,” Shechem spoke to himself. Dinah had forgiven him, and soon, she would be his wife. Her father, Jacob, had agreed to their union.

“Shechem?” Dinah called again through the curtain. “I brought you water from my father’s well. It is the best water in the valley. A cool drink will make you feel better.”

“Come in, Dinah,” Shechem responded as he made sure the lower half of his body was discreetly covered.

Coming through the curtain, a little alarmed cry escaped Dinah’s lips. “You are red with fever! Sweat is soaking your bed!” She hurriedly filled a cup from the earthenware vessel she had carried from her father’s well. Then she quickly moved to the bedside of her future husband. “Your father and your brothers are also suffering,” Dinah commented.

“The whole city is groaning, Dinah.” Shechem looked deeply into the dark eyes of the girl he had roughly taken and then tenderly loved. He drank from the cup she offered him. “This water is still cool—amazing.” Shechem gave the cup back to Dinah. “If my father had known that water this cool and delicious was on the land he sold to your father, he would never have sold it.”

Dinah laughed lightly as she responded, “You don’t understand. God speaks to Jacob, my father. He tells him things other men do not know. God told my father what land to purchase. He told him

where to dig for water. My brothers and the servants complained because they had to dig far deeper than most men dig for water, but my father insisted. He knows God is never wrong.”

“So, instead of calling it Jacob’s Well, we should call it the Well of the God of Jacob?” Shechem sank back into the cushions on his bed. “And this pain, is it also a mandate from your God?”

“It is the sign that is placed on every male descendant of Abraham. It is the symbol that we live in covenant with God, the Creator of the Universe,” Dinah answered. “My parents have taught me God will send a Deliverer who will bring us back into the perfect home we once shared with God. This Deliverer will come through the reproductive process. This cutting is God’s way of reminding us to respect that process and to expect our Deliverer.”

Shechem shook his head. He did not understand such nonsense. “My people have their own fables and superstitions.”

Dinah cautioned, “Your traditions are not the same. They come from the imaginations of men. Ours come from the mouth of the only real God.”

Shechem raised a silencing finger. “I am in no condition to engage in a vigorous discussion.”

Dinah responded, “Your discomfort will soon pass. Remember, without this cutting on your body and on the body of each of our male children, our offspring can never inherit from the line of Jacob.”

“I hope you realize this is the highest bride price that has ever been paid. Every man in the city has allowed himself to be exposed and cut.”

“Every man in the city does not love me like you do,” Dinah responded.

“I know. They love your father’s wealth. They want to marry his daughters and granddaughters. They want to merge the wealth of Jacob with the wealth of this city,” Shechem answered.

“Men will make great sacrifices for wealth,” Dinah commented.

“And even greater sacrifices for love.” Shechem reached out to touch Dinah’s face.

A scream from somewhere in the house froze his hand in midair. The curtain covering the doorway was suddenly ripped away.

“Levi! Simeon!” Dinah gasped the names of her brothers. They stood shoulder-to-shoulder between the doorposts. Blood dripped from the swords in their hands. “What are you doing? What have you done?” Dinah screamed.

Neither brother responded to her frantic questions.

Levi raged, “So this is where we find you—in the bedchamber of your Canaanite lover!”

“We are going to be married,” Dinah verbally defended herself.

“But you have not been given to this man in marriage,” Levi shouted. “He is not a descendant of Shem. He does not carry the blessing or the seed of the Name too holy to be spoken.”

Simeon disgustedly added, “The promises God gave to Abraham belong to the pure seed. We will not allow you to pollute the seed of our inheritance.”

Dinah stood to face her brothers. Simeon roughly brushed her aside.

“The curse of Ham and his son Canaan is on this man.” Levi stepped toward the bed, his sword poised to kill.

“Wait!” Shechem pleaded as he painfully pulled himself up into a sitting position. “Your father set the bride price. It has been paid.”

“You did not spill enough blood to pay for our sister,” Levi answered as he brought the edge of his sword swiftly across Shechem’s throat.

Screaming hysterically, Dinah threw herself across her lover’s bleeding body.

“Stay here,” Simeon ordered. “We will come back for you.”

“What are you going to do?” Dinah demanded through her sobs.

“We’re going to kill every man in this city,” Levi answered. “There will be no one left to avenge the killing of Hamor and his son Shechem.”

“No!” Dinah then collapsed into more sobbing.

Neither brother responded; both turned to continue on their bloody mission. In the doorway, Simeon paused. He turned back to his sister. “Do not leave this room!”



It was well past noon when Levi and Simeon returned to the room where Dinah had sobbed herself into dry gasps of horror. Throughout the day, she had followed the deadly progress of her brothers as the wails and screams of the town’s women had risen from each section of town. They were the terrified cries of her friends, the young women she had come to visit. Again and again, Dinah’s heart broke. All she had wanted was a social life that reached beyond her large, male-dominated family encampment. In the city of Shechem, she had experienced life and love.

How could she live with this knowledge—she had brought such carnage upon a whole population? If it had only been just her own life destroyed, not the lives of all her friends.

Dinah looked up. Her two brothers stood in the gaping doorway. Grim, splattered with dried blood, they were men who had completed the task they had begun.

“Let’s go.” Simeon grabbed his sister by the arm and pulled her to her feet.

Levi picked up her mantel and threw it at her feet.

Dinah understood her face must be covered. Numb with grief, she picked up the fabric and wrapped it around her head leaving the smallest slit, just enough so she could see to follow her brothers.

The trio walked in silence until they came to Jacob’s Well. There, Levi drew jar after jar of water. He poured it over himself. He poured it over his brother, and then he thrust a full jar into

Dinah's hands. "Wash yourself, woman. Remove the filth of that Canaanite dog from your body."

Simeon warned, "Do not ever speak the name of Shechem again."

"And pray to God you do not carry his offspring because we cannot allow it to live," Levi added.

Both men turned their backs and guarded the entrance to the covered well so their sister could wash in privacy. Only the spirit of Shame slipped past their post. It attached itself to the grieving girl. It sucked up all the joys of her past. Then it threw her hopes and her dreams into the dark depths of the well. Within her heart, Dinah heard them hit the water and sink to a place where they could never be retrieved.

Brokenhearted and modestly veiled, Dinah stepped out of the well's enclosure. Her tearful gaze was on the ground. Without speaking, she followed her brothers back to Jacob's encampment. They left her at her mother's tent.

# Chapter 1

## WATER FROM JACOB'S WELL

*Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.*

—John 4:6

Jesus briskly led the way along the dusty road from Jerusalem to Galilee. His companions trailed behind in conversational groups of twos and threes. As the men entered the valley between the rolling slopes of Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, Jesus paused. With his eyes, he scanned the rock-strewn land along both sides of the road. Then he stepped decisively off the road, walking directly toward a small grove of oaks. His friends also paused, and then they followed him.

“Are you tired?” Peter asked as he caught up with the long-legged stride of his teacher. “Do you want to rest under these trees?”

“This is not the place to rest,” Jesus answered. “It is the place to remember.”

The men who had followed him from the springs east of the Jordan gathered around their teacher.

They watched as Jesus nudged several stones with his foot. Then he bent to examine a few more stones before he chose a specific rock. He held it up, level with his own face. “The rocks in this place speak to me. They repeat the words Joshua spoke to the twelve tribes as they stood on these mountain slopes, *‘Long ago your ancestor...lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped*

*other gods. But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants.”<sup>1</sup>*

Jesus looked directly at the men who had been with John the Baptist near the Jordan and who had left John to immerse themselves in his life and his instruction. “It is good to know where you have come from,” Jesus emphatically stated.

“We come from Abraham,” Peter quickly proclaimed their heritage.

“Yes,” Jesus replied. “When our father Abraham first entered the land, there was one large oak where these oaks now grow. He pitched his tent here, and he built an altar.”

Nathanael spoke up, “At that altar, the Lord spoke to Abram, promising him this land and an heir.”

Simon called the Zealot gruffly asserted, “So, why is this land occupied by Samaritans and ruled by Romans?”

Jesus responded, “When our father Abraham came to this land, it was occupied by Canaanites. This road ran directly through the Canaanite city of Shechem.”

“I know the history,” Nathanael spoke up again. “Abraham did not remain near the city of Shechem. He moved on to Bethel, but later, his grandson Jacob made his home in this valley within sight of Shechem.”

“Yes.” Jesus turned. He slowly walked back to the road. The Holy Spirit was making available to him his own heavenly memory as Yeshua the Creator. And Jesus shared what he was seeing as he walked. “Once, this valley was full of flocks tended by the sons and servants of Jacob. Over there”—Jesus pointed to a dusty patch of ground—“Jacob pitched his tent. Each wife, Leah, Rachel, Zilpah, and Bilhah, had her own tent. There was an altar. Jesus looked around before pointing to an indistinct pile of rubble. “Jacob named the altar. He called it the God of Israel because he had wrestled with God and received his name,

Israel. At that place, the God of his grandfather and his father reaffirmed the promises.”

“Joseph’s tomb is nearby,” Nathanael mentioned.

“Yes, this is the land Joseph inherited from his father. When Joseph’s bones were brought out of Egypt, they were placed here so it would be remembered forever that this land is the inheritance of the descendants of Jacob,” Jesus added.

“Jacob’s Well is just ahead!” James informed.

“And the town of Sychar is nearby,” Peter added. “We can stop there and get some food.”

“If you want to eat Samaritan food,” Simon objected.

“I just want to eat food,” Peter hotly responded.

“We do not think twice about selling them our fish,” James pointed out. “Why shouldn’t we buy their food?”

Philip then asked Jesus, “Isn’t the correct procedure to purchase food in their city but not to eat that food in the city?”

“Yes,” Nathanael concurred. “The food will not make us impure, but associating with the people will certainly require several days of purification.”

Conversation stopped as the men looked to Jesus to affirm or clarify the point that was being made, but it appeared Jesus was not listening.

Approaching the well, Jesus broke his silence. “I will wait here under the thatched roof that covers this well. You can go into the town to make your purchases and then return to me.”

With shrugging shoulders and nods all around, the men hurried down the road. Jesus watched them go. So far, seven men had attached themselves to him. James and John were his cousins. Their father was Zebedee who was married to Aunt Salome. Peter and Andrew were brothers. Their family had a fishing partnership with Zebedee. Simon called the Zealot was a childhood friend who now had a blacksmith shop in the town of Cana. His father had also been a Zealot, a man who had died on a Roman cross. Jesus had become acquainted with Philip and

Nathanael at the oasis beyond the Jordan where John the Baptist preached repentance and immersed those who believed. His eyes left the men, and he glanced upward, “Father, they are working men. They have good hearts, but their minds are confused by years of tradition and mixed up teaching. Can they change?”

“Their transformation will be gradual,” God answered. “At first, they will see dimly, but as they stay with you, the light you shine on each activity, and event will sharpen their vision and their understanding.”

Jesus replied, “You have told me one day, these men will go to the farthest corners of the world to call men and women into your kingdom. But today, a small excursion into a Samaritan city seems like a huge task.”

“They will learn,” God assured.



Photina threw a plain coarse mantel over her head. Quickly, she wrapped it around her face so it covered her thick dark hair as well as the fine features of her face. Only her black eyes could be seen. Casually, she glanced at the man who was sleeping on the couch. This was his house, and he expected certain services in exchange for providing her this home—water from the well, meals, and the comfort a wife usually offers. Photina sighed as she lifted the large earthenware water jar and balanced it on her shoulder. She did not mind cooking, and the touch of this man was not unpleasant, but going to Jacob’s well—she could do without the sneering stares of the respectable women in this town.

Determined to do this task quickly before the other women came for their evening water, Photina stepped out into the hot afternoon sun. Looking both ways, it seemed the street was deserted. Yet Shame was lurking in the shadows, waiting to join her simply for the pleasure of presenting his own twisted truths.

Without hesitation, the condemning spirit matched his step to Photina’s. Immediately, he pointed to a young man returning from

the fields that surrounded the town. “Turn your head, Photina. Don’t look that man in the eye. He knows his brother took you by force, and you did not scream or resist. For that incident, you bear the responsibility. You were not properly veiled. You were walking alone across his property. That man knows you looked at his brother with seducing eyes.”

Photina quickly looked up and away. She made her eyes follow the smoothly sloping outline of Mount Ebal. Her gaze stopped at the ancient pile of stones where legend had it that Joshua had built an altar and set up a monument with the law of the Lord written on plaster-covered stones. Those old broken stones seemed to shout at her, “*This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses.*”<sup>2</sup>

Quickly, Photina moved her eyes to Mount Gerizim on the other side of the valley. That was the mountain of blessing, the place where her people made their sacrifices to the God of the Jews.

Shame would not let her hope in the blessings. Instead, the evil spirit began to quote the words of Moses that Joshua had spoken at this mountain, “*See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse- the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God.*”<sup>3</sup> There is no blessing for the sexually impure. You can be certain God does not forgive a woman who finds herself with child and then tricks another man into marrying her.”

In her youth before her first marriage, Photina had memorized Joshua’s words. Now, they taunted her. Stinging from the reprimand, Photina lowered her gaze so she only saw the little clouds of dust made by her sandaled feet.

Approaching the well, Photina paused to shift her water jar to her other arm. At that moment, she looked up, and to her dismay, she saw a man sitting in the shade of the covered well. He was alone, just gazing out toward Joseph’s tomb. For a long

moment, she studied the man. When she had determined he was a stranger, most likely a Jewish traveler who would ignore her, she approached the well.

The man did not seem disturbed by her approach; he did not even turn his head.

Just as well, Photina thought as she tied her water jar to the long rope attached to an overhead pulley system. This Jew does not wish to speak to me, and I do not wish to speak to him! That is the way of those people. They think they are better than us Samaritans. They think— Her thought was suddenly interrupted.

*“Woman?”*

Photina’s hands froze on the ropes, and she snapped her head around to see the man looking directly at her.

*“Will you give me a drink?”<sup>4</sup>*

Defensively, she replied, *“You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?”<sup>5</sup>*

*Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked me for a drink and I would have given you living water.”<sup>6</sup>*

Momentarily, Photina was speechless. Then she found her tongue. *“You speak like a crazy man. Are you going to give me water? Sir,” Photina said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?”<sup>7</sup>*

Jesus did not comment. He just smiled at Photina’s logic and waited.

Photina suddenly exploded, *“Why are you looking at me like that? Who do you think you are—a man who has better water than the water in this well? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?”*

*Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”<sup>8</sup>*

“I do not want to ever come to this well again,” Photina replied.

“I know,” Jesus answered.

There was an unusual certainty in his tone. It made Photina pause while a little shiver ran the length of her spine. Then, regaining her composure, Photina challenged, “So, if you are able, *Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.*”<sup>9</sup>

Jesus returned her look with confidence. “I know why you want this living water.”

“You do?” Photina started to back away.

“Go, call your husband and come back.”<sup>10</sup> Jesus directed. “Then I will tell you everything you need to know about this living water.”

Photina dropped her gaze to the ground. “*I have no husband.*”

Jesus said to her, “*You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband.*”<sup>11</sup>

Photina gasped. “*What you have just said is quite true.*” She fidgeted, wondering what else this man might know. Then, cleverly she moved the conversation away from herself, “*Sir...I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain.*” She pointed across the road to Mount Gerizim. “*But you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.*”<sup>12</sup>

“You have brought up an unimportant issue. Arrogant religious leaders debate it, but it has no bearing on eternity.” Looking directly into Photina’s dark eyes, Jesus declared, “*Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem...A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.*”<sup>13</sup> The Father is not interested in a place of worship. He is seeking the hearts of all men in all locations.”

For a few moments, Photina struggled to turn the conversation to a safe topic. Then she said, “*I know that the Messiah...is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.*”

*Then Jesus declared, "I...am he."<sup>14</sup>*

Photina's eyes widened. She released her grip on the rope, and her water jar quickly dropped to the water that flowed far below the ground.

"I will take care of your water jar," Jesus offered. "Go get the man you live with. He is sleeping on the cushions beneath the window."

*Just then, Jesus's disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman.* The men exchanged questioning glances. With their eyes, they asked each other, Who is this woman? Why would Jesus speak to one so obviously beneath him?

The men challenged Photina by looking sharply at her. *But, no one asked, "What do you want?"*

James, the eldest son of Zebedee, looked directly at Jesus. His eyes spoke for all of the men, *"Why are you talking with her?"<sup>15</sup>*

Photina did not respond to the men who were obviously somehow associated with the stranger with whom she had been talking. Instead, she turned, walking swiftly and then breaking into a run as she headed home to find her partner.

When she reached the city gate, she began speaking to individuals, and when she had gathered a crowd, she boldly announced, "There is a man at the well. He knows everything about my life! He speaks like a prophet—possibly the Messiah!"

Quickly, Photina's news spread from mouth-to-mouth. Curious, the people of the town emerged from their homes and their shops. They came out of their houses and their shops. Filled with curiosity, they hurried to hear the stranger who sat under the thatched roof of Jacob's Well.

Meanwhile Jesus's disciples returned to the well. Simon offered him a piece of flat bread wrapped around a pile of mashed chick peas, but Jesus brushed it aside with a casual wave of his hand.

Jesus seemed to be looking beyond the seven men who had attached themselves to him and his teaching. He was watching the road that passed through the city gate of Sychar. Jesus spoke

to his friends, *“I have food to eat that you know nothing about. And more food, a great banquet, is on its way!”*

His disciples looked at each other quizzically. *Then they said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?”*<sup>16</sup>

Jesus could now see the people hurrying out of the city gate, running toward the well. Photina was leading them, turning back again and again shouting encouragement. He could not hear her, but he knew what she was saying. “Come meet a man, a prophet who knows the secrets of each person. He told me that he is the Messiah, the one we have been waiting for!”

As Jesus watched, he saw the spirit of Shame remove itself from Photina’s side. It lifted and fled in the direction of the wilderness.

Jesus returned his attention to his disciples. They were eating the food they had purchased in the town. Their backs were to the crowd, and they did not know what was about to happen. *“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”* Jesus pointed beyond the men to the road that was filled with people and to the fields that surrounded the town, Jesus said, *“Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”*<sup>17</sup>

Curiously, the men turned.

Alarmed, John exclaimed, “Jesus, we did not do anything in this city to disturb these people!”

Peter choked on his bread and sputtered crumbs as he shouted, “Master, we have to leave this place at once. A mob is upon us!”

“No,” Jesus responded. “You see the harvest. It is coming to us, and we will spend several days gathering it in.”

Andrew, forever logical, looked beyond the people. “The harvest? Those are wheat fields. They will not be ready for the reapers until after the summer.”

James muttered to Peter, “Why is Andrew concerned with crops? We are about to be overrun by Samaritans!”

“I have my sword.” Peter reached under the folds of his long robe and grasped the hilt of his weapon.

"I'm sure our friend the Zealot has one also," James commented.

The men and women from Sychar were nearly upon them. Jesus stood to welcome Photina and the elders of the city. In a voice that only those disciples who stood beside him could hear, he said, "*Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.*"<sup>18</sup>

Photina approached and bowed respectfully before introducing the elders of Sychar.

Stepping back and observing, the disciples were amazed. "I have never seen a Samaritan bow to a Jew," Philip whispered to Nathanael as they watched each elder kneel before their teacher.

"Be seated. Be seated," Jesus invited everyone to be comfortable.

The people of the city brushed the small rocks aside and found places to sit. The men who were with Jesus remained standing. They were not comfortable with so many Samaritans.

Jesus began by saying, "About seven hundred years ago, the northern tribes of Israel were attacked, defeated, and deported from this land. A few individuals managed to escape and remain. Then foreigners from other nations were brought to this land, and it was given to them. They inhabited the towns of Samaria, replacing the Israelites. These foreigners did not worship the God of Israel.

"Tragedy befell them. Many were killed by the lions that roamed this region. Soon, it was reported to the king of Assyria, "The God of the Israelites is sending lions to devour the people you have settled in that region.

"Then the king responded by sending a priest of the Most High God to teach the people how to live. He set up a house of worship. He taught your ancestors the Law of Moses. He told them the story of Adam and Eve, and he promised that God would send a Deliverer not just for the Jews but for all of mankind."

"Not just for the Jews?" Philip repeated in shocked amazement.

Jesus heard him and turned from speaking to the crowd. Looking directly at Philip, he said, “*Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true.*’ Over the next few days, as you hear these people repent and as you immerse them in water, you will see *I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.*”<sup>19</sup>

“Tell us more about our heritage,” someone shouted.

Jesus responded, “This land is the inheritance of Joseph. Close to this well, Jacob set out his pots of dye. With water from this well, he colored the yarn he would use to make a special coat for his favorite son, Joseph—blue for the rivers his grandfather Abraham had crossed to reach this land, red for the blood of the lambs that connected their family with the God of heaven, green for the land God was giving them, and many shades of gray and brown for the numerous descendants God had promised.

“It was a beautiful coat. When it was presented to Joseph, it brought out all the ugliness living in the hearts of the other sons of Israel.

“A day came when Jacob said to Joseph, ‘Go to your brothers who are grazing the flocks near Shechem. See how they are doing and bring a report back to me.’ ‘I will,’ Joseph replied.

“When Joseph arrived at Shechem, he was wearing his beautiful coat. That beautiful coat was the tangible representation of his heritage and his future. The entire story of mankind was woven together by those many colored threads.”

The people nodded as they listened. This man was speaking about their Jewish ancestor. He was treating them with the same respect that would be given to a group of Jews.

Jesus continued, “Joseph sat in the shade of this well and drank the water. Then he went off to find his brothers. They had moved on to another town, to another well. They were no longer satisfying their thirst with the water of their heritage.”

“Our heritage is in that well,” an elder emphatically stated.

Photina asserted, "This man told me he could give us living water, and we would not thirst again."

Jesus responded, "The living water is in your heritage and in your future. It is in the stories of this well and the deeper meaning attached to the stories."

"Stop interrupting!" another shouted.

Jesus just smiled and returned to the story. "When the sons of Israel saw their younger brother and when they saw he was wearing the favor of their father, they ripped the coat from his back. They sold him into slavery. It will be the same for the Messiah. He will come to his people, the sons of Israel. He will come wearing the favor of Father God. Evil men will rip the favor from him. They will sell him for some pieces of silver.

"Joseph's brothers took that beautiful coat, the coat that told the story of Israel and everyone who is attached to Israel. They covered it with blood. Then they presented that blood-covered garment to their father. I tell you today, the blood of the Messiah will cover all Israel and everyone else who believes. The blood of the Messiah will be presented to Father God not for the destruction of mankind but so all men will have an opportunity to believe and be saved.

"For centuries, the Jews have told you the way to God is only through the Temple services in Jerusalem. I am here to tell you the way to God is through repentance from sin and belief in the One God has sent. He comes wearing the favor of Father God like a beautiful coat. He comes to fall into the hands of evil men. He comes to triumph over evil.

"Do you believe? Do you want to show your belief by being immersed in water?"

"Yes!" The people came to their feet as one body.

"The purification pools are in the city," someone shouted.

"My disciples will baptize you there," Jesus replied as he stood to lead the crowd back into the city.

As they began walking, Jesus glanced at the seven men who were with him. He knew their thoughts. How could it be? Yesterday, we were baptizing Jews in the springs near the Jordan, and today we will be baptizing Samaritans!