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Prepare The Way

THE  
SON  
OF  
GOD

Series: Book 3



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To my son,  
Donnie and his beautiful wife, Angela  
They are the joy of my life.  
They have great patience with me  
and all my projects.

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# Introduction

*Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.*

—Isaiah 46:9–11

**B**efore creation, God the Father, Yeshua-Jesus, and the Holy Spirit had formulated a plan for dealing with sin. In the third book of the *Son of God Series*, that plan is now in full implementation. Yeshua has left heaven. He is the product of human and divine conception. He has experienced birth into a Jewish family. On the eighth day he was circumcised and named Jesus. He has grown *in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men*.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus has grown up in a typical Jewish family in the town of Nazareth. He deals with the same web of relationships that all people deal with—family, friends, neighbors, and officials. He also has a web of heavenly relationships with his Eternal Father, the Holy Spirit, angels, Moses and Elijah. He is more than aware that he has enemies in the spiritual realm—Satan, fallen angels, and demons.

During his years of maturation when the Bible seems to be silent, Jesus learned about his divinity and made the choice to live on Earth within the limited ability of humanity. Now, every communication that heaven has ever had with humans is available

to him. Every bit of authority that God had ever given to Adam belongs to Jesus. The power to do the miraculous is God working through him. For miracles, Jesus is dependant on Father God and the Holy Spirit.

Like all Jewish men, Jesus has learned a trade. He is a carpenter. Since childhood the books of Moses, the writings of the prophets as well as other scrolls of Jewish history and tradition have been available to him. Jesus has memorized large portions of the written word. He understands that the scriptures are about him. In regards to the laws of Judaism, Jesus is reverently observant. The opinions of men do not concern him. He lives totally directed by his Father God.

*The Son of God: Prepare the Way* is about heaven setting the stage for Jesus to move from the obscurity of Nazareth into the center of Jewish politics. Like pieces of a puzzle, God moves men into their appointed places. The young fishermen of Capernaum have become acquainted with Jesus. John the Baptist begins calling the people to repentance.

As John preaches and baptizes, there is a greater sense of expectation in the nation—the Messiah is coming. The Jews are looking for their Messiah, but they are expecting a military leader who will lead armies into battle and defeat Rome.

God brings a man from Rome, Pontius Pilate. Pilate engages Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, in a power struggle that will last for years.

In the Temple, Caiaphas and Annas hold the power of the high priesthood. Men of the Sanhedrin: Nicodemus, Gamaliel, and Joseph of Arimathea make decisions for the land.

Satan is always the evil opportunist, working through family and neighbors while he waits for his chance to have a one-on-one confrontation with Jesus.

*The Son of God: Prepare the Way* is a fresh look at how all these characters touch each other and prepare for their parts in the most significant event in the history of the Earth.

# Prologue

## THE DEATH OF ADAM

*And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, and after his image; and called his name Seth: And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters.*

—Genesis 5:3–4

From the throne room of the Eternal Rulers, Yeshua gazed into the limestone cave that had been the home of Adam and Eve since they had been expelled from their perfect garden home. Adam, his once beautiful creation, lay on a sheepskin-covered pallet.

“My son, I made you in my own image and I love you,” Yeshua whispered.

The Eternal Father quietly commented, “It has been more than nine hundred Earth years since Adam ate from the Tree of Life. Now his body can no longer sustain the life we placed in him. It is time—”

“Look!” Yeshua was the first to speak what the Triune Rulers simultaneously knew. “Our enemy has entered the cave. He is hovering over Adam!”

The ever-burning Spirit of God flared. “Satan can only be there for one reason!”

“He is trying to steal my son!” Yeshua exclaimed.

“Such treachery cannot be allowed!” God thundered.

“I will go.” The Spirit of God immediately poured his holy fire into the dimly lit stone chamber where Adam was sleeping.

Within the cave the Holy Spirit, like a glowing sword, sliced through the spiritual darkness. He separated Satan from the evil angels who supported him. Every fallen angel fled, and Satan, who refused to give ground, was forced back into the black recesses of the underground labyrinth.



“The Holy Spirit is here,” Eve spoke to her son Seth. “I can feel his warmth.”

“God is with us,” Seth affirmed his mother’s spiritual sense.

With a lamp in her hand, Eve moved close to her beloved husband. She held the little flame next to his face. “Seth, is your father still breathing?” she anxiously asked.

Seth, nearly the exact image of his father, leaned over his mother’s shoulder and looked hard before responding. “Mother, the life the Creator breathed into my father is still with him, but I sense the Holy One who gave life to my father, Adam, will soon take that life back to himself.”



“Adam’s life belongs to me!” Satan angrily shouted past the wall of Holy Fire that held him in the dark recesses of the cave. “In the paradise that was his garden home, he chose to obey me!”

In the throne room of the Eternal Rulers, Satan’s challenge rose like an accusing spirit. “The law of your universe states that all your created beings are free to give their allegiance. Adam gave his allegiance to me!”

“Adam repented of that choice,” the Creator countered.

“And many, many times he restated that his allegiance was to the kingdom of the Omnipotent,” Father God added.

“Too late!” Satan argued. “*The wages of sin is death!*”

“*But the gift of God is eternal life,*”<sup>1</sup> Yeshua countered.

“You cannot just give eternal life without first meeting the requirements of your own law!” Satan confidently argued. Then he added, “Death is mine. I have a spirit named Death. He holds the keys to the chamber where Abel and several sons of Cain wait in timeless oblivion. Soon, Adam will join them.”

“I will meet the requirement of the law!” Yeshua declared with such finality the entire heavenly kingdom shook. Then Yeshua stood. With one finger he pointed toward Earth and with one word, “Sheol!” he created the Place of the Dead.

The earth beneath Satan’s feet suddenly split into a deep gorge. Water rushed into the gorge. A dry rocky plain formed on one side of the river, while on the other side, beautiful vegetation covered the landscape. The entire river valley was then surrounded by impassable mountains and a double gate was set at the entrance.

“This is now the Place of the Dead,” Yeshua announced. “It is temporary! It is a place of rest until I have met the requirements of my law. On the barren side, there are many underground passages. There, you may hold those whose allegiance to evil is unquestioned. But on the verdant side of the river gorge, all those who have whispered even one word of hope in the Holy Rulers of the Universe will wait in pleasant chambers and peaceful repose.”

“Just what are they waiting for?” Satan sneered. “Every man and woman has turned their back on the laws of your kingdom. On both sides of the gorge, the sons and daughters of Adam belong to me.”

Yeshua answered, “You may guard the gate, but my children wait for the sound of the shofar and the promised Deliverer.”



In the cave, Adam stirred. Eve breathed a little sigh of relief and stepped back, moving the flame of the lamp away from his face. Seth remained standing near his father’s bed. His eyes steadfastly studied the face of the man who had been formed by God himself. What was happening to his father? Never in the eight hundred

years since he was born had he seen a human life just slip away. He knew about his brother Abel, who had been killed before his birth. He had seen animals killed for sacrifices, for clothing, but he had never seen a person die.

Adam stirred again. This time, he opened his eyes. First, he looked at Eve, and then he turned his eyes to look into the eyes of his son. "In the day the Lord put us out of our garden home he said to me, '*By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.*'<sup>2</sup> I know my life is ready to depart from my body. Soon, only dust will remain. Call my children together so I may bless each one."

Kneeling at the foot of his bed, Eve began to sob quietly. In her heart, she cried, "It is my fault."

Her sob reached the Creator's ear, and immediately, he directed Gabriel and Michael to leave their guardian posts and fly to Eve with comfort and reassurance.



Solemnly, Seth led the eldest son of each generation into the cave. The rest of the extended family of Adam gathered and waited, sitting on the packed dirt immediately outside the cave and extending to the distant hills.

In the cave, Adam was sitting up, propped with pillows, Eve at his side. The angels from the throne room stood on either side of the couple, providing additional support. Gently, the Spirit of God offered his comforting embrace to each person who entered the room. Most humans remained unaware of the presence of heavenly beings, but Adam and Eve and their descendants who carried the promise of the seed, experienced the spiritual realm like a sixth sense. Each man bowed respectfully, first to Adam and Eve, and then to each angel. It was a reverent acknowledgement of God-given authority. As each man found a place on the cold cave floor, he pressed both hands to his lips before lifting them

to the Spirit, giving devotion to the Eternal God even in the sadness of the moment.

Eve spoke first, “In the name of the Eternal Rulers, I welcome you into our home.”

Then in a slow and weary voice, Adam said, “The Creator has spoken to me. My days on earth are about to end. I cannot argue this. He has been gracious to allow my life to continue until now. *To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding. To him belong strength and insight; both the deceived and the deceiver are his.<sup>3</sup> My eyes have seen all this; my ears have heard and understood it.<sup>4</sup>*

“Seth.” Adam called his son forward.

Seth knelt in front of his parents and each parent placed a hand on his head. “Your name means appointed. You were appointed by God to replace your brother Abel. You carry the seed of the promised Deliverer. That precious legacy has been passed to your eldest son, Enosh.”

Seth motioned for Enosh to come forward and take his place.

Eve placed her hand on Enosh first and she said, “Your name means mortal. Because I was deceived by the serpent, you, like all of our descendants, were born to die. Because of this, *my face is red with weeping, deep shadows ring my eyes.<sup>5</sup> Even now my witness is in heaven; my advocate is on high. My intercessor is my friend as my eyes pour out tears to God; on behalf of all men he pleads with God as a man pleads for his friend.<sup>6</sup> My spirit is broken, my days are also cut short, the grave awaits me.<sup>7</sup>* Eve laid her head on Adam’s shoulder, and tears streamed down her face.

Weakly, Adam reached with his free hand and brushed the tears from his wife’s cheek. Still caressing Eve’s face with one hand and keeping his other hand on the head of his grandson, Adam continued, “*Mortals, born of woman, are of few days and full of trouble.<sup>8</sup> You, my grandson, are like a tree. Its roots may grow old in the ground and its stump die in the soil, yet at the scent of water it will bud and put forth shoots like a plant.<sup>9</sup>*” From the throne of

God, living water will flow, and from your offspring, there will grow a branch that will break the power of the Evil One.

“Kenan,” Adam called his great grandson to kneel before him.

“Your name means sorrow. Just before you were born, your father, Enosh, visited the city Cane has built. He saw the sons and daughters of Cain. He witnessed their total disregard for the Creator. When Enosh offered them an opportunity to repent and return to the family, they threw stones at him. He returned to us, very sad. Your name commemorates that event.”

Eve sat up and composed herself. For a moment, her mind slipped back to her firstborn son, Cain. Since their last contact with Cain, many generations had been born. Briefly, she wondered about those grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great... Then Eve put them out of her mind. Cain had given his allegiance to the Evil One. He had given his generations to the enemy of God. “Praise God,” she declared, “The righteous will multiply and grow stronger!” Her declaration shook the newly placed gates of Sheol.

Eve looked directly at Mahalalel. Her eyes beckoned him.

He came forward to kneel before his great-great-grandparents. For a long moment, she looked into his face, then she closed her eyes, remembering. “When you were born, there was such a struggle to bring you into the world. I feared your mother would lose her life before you could be born. Finally, after days of labor, I saw the top of your head pushing into the world, and at that moment, I shouted, ‘Blessed is the Lord!’” Eve opened her eyes and looked directly at Mahalalel. “From that time, your name has been Blessed is the Lord.”

Adam then spoke, “God has heard your praises. He has seen your life and he is pleased.

“Jared,” Adam beckoned Mahalalel’s son.

Jared knelt beside his father. “You are a young man.” Adam moved his slightly trembling hand from Mahalalel’s head to Jared’s head as he mused, “You’re not even five hundred years

old. I remember when I was young and strong like you. On the night of your birth, your father came to visit me. He wanted to give you a name that spoke of hope and future. Your name means to descend.

“The Holy One, the one who made my body from the elements in the dirt and breathed life into me, spoke to us that night. He repeated the promise he has made to me in many different ways. He said he would descend from the heavens to stand in my place and defeat Satan. That night, we named you Descend. Every time I see you, I remember God’s promise.”

Adam’s eyes got a sad faraway look. “I remember when I first awoke into life. I had eternal life, and I was in the arms of Yeshua the Creator. I lost it”—Adam sighed—“I lost the right to see Yeshua’s face.” A tear ran down Adam’s weathered face. “I long to feel the Creator’s arms again.”

Eve slipped her hand under Jared’s chin and lifted his face. “Look, Adam! Look at Jared and remember God’s promise. Hope and smile,” she admonished.

At that moment, the Holy Spirit beckoned Enoch, Jared’s eldest son.

Enoch stood in his place and began to speak. *“See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed.”*<sup>10</sup>

Once more, Eve’s mind wandered to Cain and his descendants. They lived beyond the river on a large flat plain. She had heard stories of Godless living and violence—it made her shudder. Once more, she turned her attention to the Spirit-initiated words Enoch was speaking.

“I hear the sound of a horn and a white horse stands in the sky. The horse has a rider who comes with judgment and vengeance. The rider carries a banner that bears his name, Faithful and True. His eyes are like fire and on his head are many crowns.”

“Yeshua the Creator—that is the way he will come!” Adam exclaimed.

Alone in the bowels of the cave, Satan trembled.

Boldly, Enoch continued, “I see a large white throne. And from that throne, I hear a voice. *‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’*”<sup>11</sup>

Enoch placed a hand on his son Methuselah.

Methuselah bowed his head, anticipating his father’s anointed words. “You, my son, will live a long life. During your lifetime, you will see the evil that dwells with the descendants of Cain move into residence with the sons of Adam. As long as you live, God will allow both the children of Seth and the children of Cain to live unchallenged by heaven. But when life leaves your body and you join all these in this room who have gone before you into the unknown world of death, then your prophetic name, His Death Shall Bring, will see its fulfillment—God’s judgment, a great deluge. Water will pour from the heavens and explode from the depths of the earth. God will wash the world and begin again, with the pure seed of Adam.”

“Lamech,” Adam called the son of Methuselah to his side. He patted the cushion next to him, so the young man would take a seat. “How many years have you lived?” Adam asked.

“Fifty-six,” Lamech replied.

“There are many years in your future,” Adam sadly responded. “Your name means despairing. During your lifetime, you will see great iniquity, and you will despair of finding any righteousness on the Earth.”

Enoch then interjected, “The Creator says that you, Lamech, will have a son, a type of the Deliverer. He will be a comfort to you. He will make a way for man to escape the judgment of God. His name shall be Comfort. You will call him Noah.”

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“I am weary.” Adam’s voice suddenly became so weak that it was just a trembling whisper. “Return to your homes. I am going to the place the Creator has prepared for me.”

# Chapter 1

## THE DEATH OF JOSEPH

*Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

—Hebrews 2:14–15

“**A**dam, Adam, my son.” Yeshua wept as the gates of Sheol opened. He watched as his angels carried Adam, the man who had been made in the image of God, to his resting place. “I will not leave you. I will not leave any of my children in this place.” Yeshua vowed through his tears. “I am coming to take you back to my dwelling place. We will share our lives with each other eternally!”

Jesus suddenly woke up. His pillow was wet with tears. Briefly, he remembered the dream, an experience from his heavenly life, relived.

“Yeshua?”

It was the familiar voice of the Eternal One, his Father.

“Yes, Father,” Jesus responded as he sat up on the bed that had once belonged to his grandfather, Heli. He opened his eyes, but there was no moonlight. The interior of what had been his grandfather’s house was dark. Jesus strained his eyes, but he could not see the outlines of the room’s simple furnishings. The house

contained a darkness so deep that Jesus could not even see his own body parts.

Jesus spoke to his Father, "If I could not feel my hand, I would not know I had a hand."

"Does the darkness disturb you?" Father God asked.

*"Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God,"*<sup>1</sup> Jesus answered.

"You are about to walk through a darkness you will not understand," God informed. "It is a darkness I have declared. To you and to all who know me, it will seem inconsistent with my character, but you must trust me."

Immediately, Jesus heard hurried footsteps and then there was pounding on his door. Disregarding the darkness, Jesus quickly felt his way to the door and pulled on the latch. His younger brother Jose stood in the doorway holding a small lamp.

"Mother says to come, quick! Father has stopped breathing!"

Jesus was throwing his cloak over his shoulders and hurrying after his brother as Jose continued, "Mother woke up, and father was lying beside her, dead. She said to get you quickly and not to speak to anyone else."

"Father God?" Jesus silently petitioned heaven.

There seemed to be no response.

"Father?" Jesus cried audibly and more urgently. He sensed the presence of God's Spirit, but neither the Eternal One nor his Holy Spirit was speaking.

The little flame on Jose's lamp suddenly flickered and went out. Darkness enveloped both men. They immediately stopped in their tracks. Hurried travel was now impossible. Still, they continued. Walking slowly and cautiously, the sons of Mary made their way, trusting that their feet knew the well-trodden path.

"Why? Father God, you have directed me to bring others back from death." From the bottom of his heart, Jesus bombarded the throne room of the Eternal One. "Father, I have restricted myself to live as a man; therefore, I am as helpless as any other man

except for your directive. What is your directive?" Tears were streaming down the face of Jesus.

God had not spoken, but the scriptures Jesus had memorized since boyhood answered, "*The righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; and they find rest as they lie in death.*"<sup>2</sup>

"There is a light!" Jose was the first to spot the lamp that was burning in the window of their family home. Both men began to move more confidently, hurrying to meet the crisis.

Mary met them at the gate. "Stay here," she tersely directed Jose as she grabbed Jesus by the hand and forcefully pulled him into the room where his father lay. Mary pulled Jesus all the way to the bed. Then she stopped and looked up at her eldest son expectantly.

"Mother," Jesus cried as he wrapped his strong arms around her. "I can do nothing unless I am directed by my Father, God."

"Ask him," Mary demanded through her tears. "Ask him. Surely, he will hear. Surely, he cares."

"He cares," Jesus assured her. "*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants.*"<sup>3</sup> He weeps with us. He feels our pain." Jesus's tears fell on Mary's uncovered head, and Mary's tears soaked his rough cloak. "Do not fear, Mother. Do not fear for Joseph. *Know that the LORD has set apart the Godly for himself.*"<sup>4</sup> I have seen the place where the righteous dead repose. It is a paradise. The righteous dead are placed within the gates by the angels of God. You must trust the Eternal One. There will be a day when you will share your life with Joseph again."

"I know about the resurrection—" Mary choked on her words. "The Messiah will come. The gates of Sheol will open, and the dead will come up from their graves." She looked questioningly at Jesus. "I thought—but when?" Her voice sounded hollow and hopeless.

"Father God has set a time. He has not revealed that time to me, but I am certain of the event," Jesus answered as he

comforted his mother. “And for yourself, do not fear.” Jesus pulled back a little to look his mother in the face. “I will care for you. Your other sons will also see that you never want. Now call the mourners. James and I will prepare the bier. We will lay my father in the burial cave just before sunset.”



Slowly, Jesus opened the door to his father’s carpentry shop. His eyes scanned the room. Each tool was placed exactly as his father had left it. An unfinished job—an inlaid table for the estate of Salmon, the olive grower, waited in the middle of the shop. Jesus took a deep breath. Without the presence of his father Joseph, the shop seemed to possess an unnatural emptiness.

James stepped up behind him. “I can’t believe father has passed on.” James moved over to the corner where long timbers leaned against the wall. “Our father was not even completely gray-haired.”

“We worked together, all day yesterday,” Jesus responded as he took the smooth flat timbers James had selected. “Father seemed completely healthy. He had no complaints. He even worked a little longer than I did.”

“Why would God allow such a thing to happen?” James turned to Jesus as he spoke. The question hung in the air between the two brothers. With his eyes, James seemed to shout, “You are the one who studies the scriptures. You are the one who converses with God. So give me an answer.”

For a moment, Jesus dropped his head. He was waiting to hear the response of Father God, but he heard nothing. Sadly, he returned his gaze to meet his brother’s eyes. “I have asked the same question, but I have received no answer.”

“So now the judgment of God is on our family?” James bitterly rejoined. “For what? What have we done?”

“What have you done to displease the Almighty?” Satan joined the conversation and flung his accusation through the mouth of James.

Jesus did not reply immediately. Instead, he picked up the flat timbers and began to lay them side by side, all the while waiting for the familiar voice of the Holy Spirit to bring enlightenment.

Instead, all he heard were sneering accusations from Satan. “You have chosen to live as a man, and man cannot please God. God is not satisfied with you, and he is no longer speaking to you. Listen to me! Your father, Joseph, an ordinary man with ordinary flaws, has paid the price for you. God took him to teach you.”

Satan then repeated his accusation, “The great and loving God has taken your father away from his family to the Place of the Dead so he can teach you something. And Joseph’s last thought was extreme annoyance at you because you left the shop early to go study the scriptures. With anger in his heart, he passed into my arms, and I carried him into the barren regions beyond the gates of Sheol.”

Jesus stopped lining up the timbers that were to be used for the bier. He caught his brother’s eye and calmly said, “*Bear with me a little longer and I will show you that there is more to be said in God’s behalf.<sup>5</sup> God is mighty, but he despises no one.<sup>6</sup> He does not take his eyes off the righteous; he enthrones them with kings and exalts them forever.<sup>7</sup>* I have not sinned. Neither has any misdeed of Joseph, our father, brought this grief to our family. God is righteous. He informs men if they have arrogantly sinned. He brings correction and opportunity for repentance into their lives.

“How can you be so certain?” James asked. “In the synagogue, the rabbi teaches that we suffer afflictions and death because of our sins.”

“I have spoken to you the words of the Eternal One. He does not lie. Yes, there are consequences for wrong choices, and God does bring punishment on those who refuse to repent. But God’s heart is always for repentance, so he gives many opportunities

before he brings destruction. The righteous, and our father was a righteous man, can trust in God.”



The path that led to the burial caves just south of the town wound up and around the rock-strewn hills that bordered Nazareth. The shrill wails of the town’s mourners sent wildlife scurrying further into the uncultivated hill country. With sad and somber steps, Jesus, James, Jose, Simon, and Jude carried the bier, each son of Mary shouldering the weight of the flat wooden platform that held Joseph’s shrouded body.

For Jesus, each step was a prayer, a plea for his Father in heaven to respond. “Father, why? There was so much life in my father, Joseph. He was not infirmed. God, why did you take him? Look at my mother; see how she grieves. Her heart is broken. She does not understand, and I do not have answers to comfort or satisfy her.”

The procession of mourners arrived at the cave where the people of Nazareth laid their dead. Jesus and his brothers kept the wooden platform level as they lowered it to the ground. Ahaz and Harim, the sons of Moshe, hurried forward to put their shoulders to the large stone that covered the entrance. Slowly, the stone moved, and the black gaping entrance to the cave became visible.

Moshe stepped forward. He placed a hand on Jesus’s shoulder. “I am so sad.” His tears fell onto the hard-packed earth at Jesus’s feet.

“You were a good friend to my father.” Jesus reached out and embraced one of his father’s lifelong friends.

“Last year, I laid my wife in this cave.” Moshe sobbed on Jesus’s shoulder as he spoke. “Her bones are to the right as you enter the cave. After the Feast of Weeks, I will come back and place them in a burial box. I don’t want you to have to stumble around in there. So, let me tell you, I remember there is a place to the left as you enter the cave. You can leave your father’s body

there. It will not be disturbed until you and your brothers return to place his bones in a box.”

Jesus nodded. He kept the weeping man firmly in his embrace as he assured, “We will not disturb the resting place of your wife.”

Behind him, Jesus sensed that Ahaz and Harim held lit torches. With one more quick embrace, Jesus turned away from Moshe. Jose stepped forward, offering Jesus a piece of linen to wrap around his face. “The smell of death escaped when the cave was opened. I am sure the odor will be overpowering inside,” Jose commented. “All the spices and ointments in the world cannot mask the smell of decaying flesh. Let’s place father quickly.”

Mary stepped up beside her sons. She was wrapping a piece of linen around her head, covering her nose and mouth.

“No, Mother.” Jesus removed the cloth from her face. “You do not need to go in there. We will place your husband and our father. Say farewell out here.”

With his arm around his mother’s shoulders, Jesus gently propelled her to the head of the bier. Fresh mourning broke out as Mary knelt beside Joseph. Jesus also dropped to his knees beside his mother, supporting her with his own muscular body.

Carefully, Mary picked up the small cloth that covered her husband’s face for one last look, a final good-bye. “You were a good man, Joseph. You were the gift of God to me.” She choked on her words. “I can’t believe you were with me yesterday, and now—you are gone.” Mary’s shoulders shook and her tears fell on the lifeless face of her husband. Tenderly, Mary touched her husband’s face. Then she spoke to him again, “You gave me four strong sons and beautiful daughters. I have many special memories.” Mary paused, and she turned her tear-filled eyes away from Joseph. She looked up into the eyes of her eldest son. “Has your Father—”

Jesus understood the unfinished question. Sadly, he shook his head as he replied, “On this matter, God is remaining silent. Only his scriptures speak to me. *“Man born of woman is of few days and*

*full of trouble. He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure.*<sup>8</sup> Man's days are determined; God has announced a decree, the number of months and years. It cannot be changed. The only word I have from God is trust! That word is for you too."

Mary responded with a resigned nod of her head. Jesus helped her to her feet, then he turned to his brothers. "It is time." He quickly tied the linen cloth over his mouth and nose. Then he bent with his brothers to lift Joseph's body.

At the mouth of the cave, Ahaz and Harim held the torches with one hand and covered their mouths and noses with their other hand. The sons of Mary quickly entered and laid their father's body, still on the bier, on the cold packed-earth of the cave. Jose, James, Simon, and Jude quickly turned and exited the cave. As the young men left the cave, Ahaz and Harim took their torches and moved away from the odor that drifted out of the darkness. But Jesus remained. In the spiritual, he saw Death gloating over the life that had passed from the land of the living into the realms of the dead.

"Speak to that spirit!" the Holy Spirit commanded.

Forcefully, Jesus ripped the linen cloth away from his mouth. His words penetrated the limestone walls and traveled all the way to the Gates of Sheol. "By the authority of the Eternal One, I declare the prophetic words of the Eternal Rulers of the Universe as they are recorded in the writings of the prophet Isaiah to be true and eternally binding. God *will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces, he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. In that day they will say, 'Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us.'*" This *weeping may remain for a night, but the Mighty God, whose servant I am, has promised rejoicing comes in the morning.*<sup>10</sup>

Torchlight flickered on the cave walls. James called from the entrance, "Jesus, come out of there!"

Looking directly at the mute and now somber spirit of Death, Jesus prophetically added, "The wrath of the Creator is eternally upon you because you have taken his sons and daughters. Your power will soon be destroyed." A wave of weeping overtook Jesus as he abruptly turned and exited the cave.



Jesus sat with his family while their neighbors came to grieve, to share their meals and their memories of Joseph, the good carpenter of Nazareth. After seven days the traditional time of mourning and remembering came to an end. Jesus stepped out of his family home and entered the carpentry shop to complete the job he and his father had been working on.

In the shop, there was an aching emptiness that begged to be filled. Jesus picked up several of the small pieces of wood he had previously cut and began to fit them into the design he and Joseph had agreed upon. It seemed so natural to speak to his father Joseph to ask, "The lighter or the darker piece of wood?" Then with the question on the tip of his tongue, Jesus had to stop and remind himself that his father Joseph no longer had any part in the world of the living.

"I miss him," Jesus spoke to his Father God. "Part of my heart went to the grave with Joseph, my father."

God answered, "Every man and woman who has ever lived has suffered the loss of someone they love."

At that moment, the Holy Spirit joined the conversation. With one sweep of his fiery hand, the wall of the shop seemed to disappear and in its place scene after scene. Noah was buried in a cave. His three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth wept over his body. A multitude of mourners followed the body of Shem. Generation after generation, Jesus saw the dead bodies and the weeping families of his ancestors. The procession of Death

seemed endless, and in the memory of Yeshua the Creator, Jesus knew every face and every name.

Overcome with grief, Jesus sank to the floor of his father's shop. "A part of my heart has gone to the grave with every person who has ever died," Jesus cried. "Oh, the price, oh, the price all men have paid because of Adam's disobedience," he moaned. The emotional pain seemed overwhelming. "*Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men.*"<sup>11</sup>

"This death is just temporary," God spoke into the mourning heart of his son. "You are going to wrestle with Death and strip his power away. Just as one man who disobeyed my law brought death to all mankind, one man who refuses to disobey my law will break the power of Death and bring eternal life to all who will accept his gift. You have come to Earth to redeem all that Adam lost. Our enemy Satan is constantly petitioning me like he petitioned me for the life of faithful Job. He insists as my hedge of protection is removed from the things and the people you love, you, like most people, will question me and doubt my perfect plan for you."

At that moment, the fiery hand of the Holy Spirit pulled back another curtain, and Jesus saw a mighty angel standing in the counsel of heavenly beings. He was tall, possessing a magnificent wing-span, yet his body did not glow with the holiness of the other heavenly beings. Then, Jesus saw himself as Yeshua the Creator rise and challenge the approaching angel, "*Where have you come from?*"<sup>12</sup>

"My enemy is an ancient foe," Jesus commented.

"He is the one who is testing you," God responded. "Your experiences with him will not be unlike those of my servant, Job."

Jesus watched as the supernatural drama unfolded.

With a cocky sneer, the angel replied to the Creator, "I have come *from roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.*"

*Then, Yeshua said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."*

*"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has?<sup>13</sup> But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."*

*Then the LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."<sup>14</sup>*

The scene faded away and only the instruction of the Holy Spirit remained. "As you approach the season of presenting yourself as the Deliverer your people have been looking for, Satan will be given greater and greater access to you. I have warned you, just as I warned Adam and Eve in the garden. 'Beware, he is a deceiver!'"