

CHAPTER ONE

YESHUA'S AWAKENING DREAMS

The All Knowing, First Authority and ruler of the Elohim, (multiple—God kingdom) daily observed with loving pride, every thought, every word, and every deed of the young prince. The greater Eloha (singular God) patiently waited, taking extreme pleasure in the tranquil development, the humble composure, and the quite submissive spirit of this young human who had once been a powerful and active member of the invincible, ethereal Elohim.

Aeons of ages past, before time was counted—before the greater and lesser planets suffered devastation, rendering them devoid of life—before planet earth succumbed to destruction, the Elohim agreed upon an amazing master plan. One, called “The Word” consented to shed his glorious and powerful position to live and move about on the rigorous planet Earth, dwelling inside a lowly body of flesh. Within this form, of man, would dwell the spirit of man, overpowered by the powerfully dominate spirit, (attitude), and purpose of Eloa, making it possible for Him to communicate with humans, and at the same time birth a first born son. (Nothing is impossible for the Eternal!)

The Ancient Aloha, fully aware the young ambassador had limited memory of his former state, proceeded on according to the plan. As the innocent sojourner developed sufficient maturity his true identity and purpose would gradually be revealed to him by Aloha. He would be given sufficient wisdom, power, and strength to perform the awesome role agreed upon. Eloha would communicate to humans, and perform many wonderful miracles, through him.

Sitting in the shade of an ancient twisted olive tree, protected from the summer’s blistering sun, sat a young lad on a tree stump, surrounded by a large group of smaller children. Their heads turned upward, intently gazing into his twinkling, dark blue eyes. His childish voice, already changing to deeper tones, spoke softly. Exposed lean, brown arms and legs extended from a strong muscular body. His busy, expressive hands revealed an active imagination.

He was not a handsome boy. His prominent nose rose sharply between deeply set eyes, shaded by thick, unruly brows.

His thick, course hair, the color of rich dark earth, was worn short. Large, even, white teeth glistened as he flashed sudden quick smiles, lighting up his square, homely, sun-tanned face. His colorful stories and

magnetic personality held his youthful audience captive. "I'm glad you liked the story, little ones", he said, attempting to rise to his feet, "I really must go now."

But the children pulled at his legs. "Please...Oh, Please...", they pleaded, "tell us just one more story...Please?"

He took a small child on his lap, and smiled patiently. "Very well," he consented, "but just one and no more. "Then I must be about my chores."

He settled back against the tree stump and began, "Once upon a time, over five hundred years ago, there was a very rich Babylonian king who lived in unimaginable luxury. He had many wives, each living in their own lavish and luxurious houses. He had lots and lots of children by his many wives. He had everything anyone could wish for. He didn't appreciate what he had, so he became very bored with everything. He had no regard for life; he was a very selfish and greedy man. He sent his great armies against many nations of people, conquering and destroying, taking many helpless people into captivity. Some of your forefathers were among those who were deported out of their own homelands.

"This cruel and powerful king took it upon himself to tell the people how they should worship their gods. He had his goldsmiths fashion a huge gold image, and decreed that all people bow down and worship it. Unknown to the king, there were certain young men who worked in the king's palace who worshipped only the true God of heaven, and they had no intention of worshipping a gold idol. Now this presented a very serious problem to the young men because they knew this king could be very harsh and severe. He had the power, and often had anyone killed who disobeyed him. He plainly had no love for their God, whom he knew nothing of. They had been told if they refused to obey the king's commands, they would surely be thrown into an extremely hot furnace of great belching flames...."

As the story unfolded, excitement grew among the squirming children as he took them step by step through the frightful dilemma of three brave, young Hebrews. Hushed silence settled over the children as they breathlessly anticipated the vengeful wrath of the angry king. He most assuredly would plunge the young men into the blasting flames of the furnace.

As the story culminated in the miraculous rescue of the unrelenting young heroes, the quiet gave way to excited squeals of delight. The lively audience bounced up and down, clapping their small hands in unison.

This was not a new story; he had told it to them many times before. But they never grew tired of being in this gentle and loving young boy's presence. They clamored to listen to his many realistic, colorful portrayals, which came alive as he orally painted pictures of courage, faith, and deep emotional feeling.

His vivid detailed descriptions took them back into an unknown, strange, and exciting world. He was hardly more than a child himself. But the children thought of him as being much older. He spoke with such ease and confidence, as though he had lived during the times he told about. His eloquence commanded their undivided attention, leading their imaginations into unexplored time. They followed

his every word, experiencing the fear, the danger, and the joy with the characters he so eloquently brought to life.

He ended the narration, promising to return again to tell them a different story at a later time.

Taking his two younger brothers by the hand, he excused himself amid the usual protests.

“Come along, little brothers,” he said. “I must be about my chores.”

Entering the house, he addressed a young woman. “I’m sorry, Mother. I know I am late. It is difficult to refuse the little ones when they are so insistent. They kept begging for another story,” he apologized.

“It’s alright, son; I understand. I could see the children hanging onto you when you tried to leave,” she said. As she left the room, she unconsciously mumbled in thought, “I never in my whole life saw a boy so well loved by so many little ones. I know he is unusually patient, and he surely does have a loving way with them. All the same...it is strange.

“Yes,” she thought, “so many things are strange. My first-born son is almost twelve now, soon to become a man. Without doubt, he definitely is very different from other children. But I have always known this. Why is it so hard for me to accept the changes? Have I not often spoken to him, reminding him over and over throughout his life how different he is? I have tried, in my limited way, to prepare him for his extremely unusual role in life. Yowceph and I have been especially careful in helping him develop his mind, and his emotions, as well as his body. He has rewarded us with outstanding abilities, good manners, humility, and compassion. We have taught him to respect his elders, to be gentle with little children. He has learned to appreciate the simple things, and to enjoy hard work. He actually enjoys sharing in the responsibilities of our growing family.

“He has indeed responded to our instructions exceptionally well, bringing us unexpected joy and pride. We are amazed at his unusual talents. They have developed into extraordinary accomplishments. It is a wonder and rare privilege, watching this marvelous child grow and mature.

“Yet, I feel an unexplained fear and sadness. I should feel only excitement and joy. I should be elated, knowing that in a few years, he will assume one of the most important positions a mother could ever hope for her son.” She smiled as she watched her older son perform a task that required the strength of a man.

“He definitely is not a sissy or a mamma’s boy. Yet, he is unusually gentle and kind, especially to small children, animals, old people, and to the weak. He is not always liked by his peers, yet there is no question, he has their respect. He certainly is a natural born leader, always organized and confident. Like any other lad his age he loves rough and challenging sports, wrestling and playing active games. But the child in him is slowly fading. In its place I see the man emerging...much more quickly than in other boys his age.”

She felt a swell of motherly pride as she thought about her son’s virtues. “He never shows signs of vanity or pride, in spite of his superior abilities, which are evident to everyone.” She knew he had the

capability to win at any contest. Many times she had seen him chose to allow the younger and weaker contestants to have the advantage. "He always takes his turn last, and is quick to comfort and encourage others whenever he can.

"It is no surprise to me he's doing so well in his studies, too," she thought. "Just the other day, Master Ben Aram made a most complimentary statement to this effect. He was amazed at the speed with which my son learns, and at his unusually mature questions and answers. Of course we have experienced his astonishingly mature vocabulary and behavior from the time he was but a toddler, learning and speaking several languages. His teachers have found him to be abnormally fascinated and dedicated to learning about and discussing everything pertaining to the ancient writings. He seems never able to quench his thirst for more knowledge of the history of our people."

Yeshua went about doing his chores, humming a song he had learned at the Temple. He usually helped Yowceph with his carpentry work after school, but today he was needed to help care for his younger siblings while Maria sewed clothing for a blind neighbor lady. He enjoyed being at home with his family and helping with the younger children. As he worked he thought about what had been happening to him. "I am beginning to understand some very unusual things—things I am afraid to discuss with anyone. Would anyone believe that I am not of this world...that I am not an ordinary human being...that I am from another place in the universe? Would they understand if I explained I am only visiting planet earth for a short time? I sense that even Mother's understanding is limited. She remembers only her involvement in my entry into this world. She would find it very difficult to accept my thoughts concerning a previous existence. It's even disturbing to me.

"My feelings are very strange. At times I feel a very great load of responsibility, a great sadness. I am not sure why. I am very strong and healthy. I have an alert and active mind. The scribes and teachers say I possess unusual intelligence...I wonder what they would think if I told them what I think about almost constantly? I know I have lived much longer than any other human being. I am beginning to understand things no normal person comprehends. If I told them the dreams I have had, they would think me mad. I am not even sure that what I see are dreams. Perhaps they are visions. In any case, I am learning some very interesting things from them. How would people react should I tell them of seeing myself in ancient times? Would they believe me if I described the glorious city of the Ancient One? If I told them of seeing a powerful being who controls the universe with matchless energy, who dwells in a far distant realm, would they think me mad? Yes, I am convinced they would. I feel that I once dwelled billions of light years beyond the stars. In my dreams I traveled to a heavenly city...a city of purest majestic splendor. It was like a precious jewel, where the streets are of purest gold, surrounded by a sea of shimmering crystal. Its brilliant lights bathed the universe with indescribable beauty.

"And what would they say if I told them I did not belong here, but there, with the Elohim, angels, elders, and the Ancient One? In that other world, I no longer depended on or needed food and drink, or air to sustain my life. I literally was life! There was no need to speak; thoughts took the place of words. I was all powerful; my form radiated the brilliance of the sun. I was freed from the prison of flesh, able to travel through the universe at the speed of thought.

My mind contained unlimited scientific knowledge and all wisdom.

“In this dream I had the ability to create many forms of life, to design and plan the placement of many great planets, with their glorious individual, and unique lights. All about me was activity, excitement, gladness, and joy. A peaceful contentment bathed my consciousness with the wonder of complete oneness. I experienced the depth of the strongest of all emotion...pure love. I had a driving desire to give of myself in whatever way necessary to fulfill the one great compelling force in my life, to fulfill the Elohim plan.”

Reliving the vision brought a powerful shudder to his body. He took a deep breath. “No...,” he thought. “I could never expect anyone to believe these things...not yet. They may never understand, in this age,” he muttered softly.

As his spiritual comprehension emerged he became aware of new things each new day. His mind kept turning to another dimension of life and time. “It is clear I have existed much longer than the limited physical mind can grasp. I am now but a physical human being, experiencing the physical things of man. But inside this fleshly body there is an unlimited power flowing through me from the Great Eloha, the one who has begotten me. Once I existed in a wonderful spiritual state, free from the confines of flesh coexisting with the Great One. Without doubt, it would be sheer folly for me to reveal these things to friends and relatives.”

As wisdom grew, he no longer entertained the idea of sharing such knowledge with anyone. He realized they would be outraged if he claimed to actually be an exalted member of the Elohim. He had been aware of being different ever since he could remember, of being able to draw upon an unexplainable power. This was a power which he could activate at will by a strong passion of outgoing love and concern for those about him.

Many times he had wanted to heal the blindness of the widowed lady, Diana. He felt deep compassion for a younger crippled cousin, Benjamin, and longed to heal him. But each time the urge threatened to overpower him, he was warned by some inner voice, “This is not the time. You must not reveal your powers to the world until you have developed discretion and wisdom.

Be cautious; there is much danger around you. You have numerous enemies of great power.

Guard against giving your enemies an advantage.”

This new awareness was both exciting and frightening.

Awakening within his most inner being was a strong insatiable thirst to drink deeply of this exuberant, unfathomable power. He yearned to share his knowledge and power with those about him, but he must wait until Eloha gave his approval. He often had to draw on the power just to control his strong emotional urges.

The hot, dry summer turned to fall, and the young prince turned twelve. The fall festivals, the Feast of Tabernacles passed and the winter months began. It was a slow season for carpenter work. Yowceph didn't need quite as much help as he had in the busier summer months. Yeshua found extra time, after his studies, to meditate, and to discuss his innermost thoughts with the Great Power that had sent him

on this unique mission. The Elohim plan occupied his mind almost constantly now. With each passing week, new realization came, constantly impressing upon his subconscious mind the need to prepare himself for this challenging, and awesome responsibility.

Normally, as a child, he was exceptionally happy, cheerful, and playful. But this winter found him much quieter and often preoccupied. He found himself struggling with powerfully conflicting pulls between his human nature and the power that surged within him. He felt the changes that were taking place in his flesh, and the emotions and needs this change was affecting. He was here to learn, to feel, and to experience the power of the flesh. Yet, he was compelled to use the power flowing directly from Eloha to control many desires. He found many thoughts and impulses contrary to the laws implanted into his stronger, spiritual mind.

Maria, his mother, watched him with concerned, questioning glances, observing her son's serious side emerging. She hoped he would confide in her. She had heard him praying, his solemn, young voice crying out in the late night hours. It seemed to her he had matured overnight. But she never suspected that he was wrestling with an unknown enemy. "He is still a child; he still does his chores. He still contributes to family conversation, still plays with the younger children. Yet, I wonder how much longer he will need my instruction, my guidance. His every thought is far beyond mine," she admitted.

One cold afternoon, he surprised her by coming home earlier than usual from school, before the younger children arrived.

Putting his heavy cloak and shoes away, he joined her in the warm, steamy kitchen where she busied herself preparing food for the evening meal. The younger members of the family were occupied in some game outside, conveniently absent from distraction. The usually noisy house was strangely quiet. Taking a warm piece of fresh baked bread and a hot cup of apple juice, young Yeshua asked in a polite voice. "Mama, I have been wanting to talk to you...is this a good time?" He waited for her consent before continuing.

"I feel you have been concerned about me, and I want to assure you I am alright. There is no need for you to worry about me. It is true; I have had a lot on my mind lately. I am confused about certain things. Perhaps you can help me. I would like very much for you to tell me again about how I was born, how you were first informed of my birth. What can you tell me about my purpose for being? Am I really to become a powerful ruler over many great nations? If this is true I am trying to understand when and where I must begin to assume this awesome role.

"I have listened closely to everything you have told me about my purpose for being born, about how I am different than other children. You have reminded me that I must prepare myself for the responsibilities of ruler ship. It is not that I doubt you in any way. But I want to understand everything more clearly. You have taught me many things about my ancestry. I have learned the history of our people, our religious customs and beliefs. And I have been taught many things by the scribes and teachers at school in the synagogue. Together we have discovered many truths from the Holy Scriptures during our family Sabbath studies. I have been trying desperately to fit all the pieces together. I am anxious to learn all there is for me to know."

His mother joined him at the table. She gave him another piece of freshly baked bread. He smiled appreciation, and spread a thin layer of honey across its surface. He settled back, waiting for her to begin. "You know, my son, this is my favorite story. You know how I love to tell it. Have I not told you hundreds of times while holding you in my lap, rocking you to sleep? I remember so clearly these past years, and especially when you were but a wee babe. How I long to bring back those tender moments. But, alas, you have grown up now, out of my arms. You have become a strong, serious young man." She smiled, gave his arm an affectionate squeeze, and continued. "Yes, my son, an angel, by the name of Gabriel, came to me while I was but a young girl, before I was married to your abba. The angel appeared in my bedroom, in the form of a man. I was very frightened, to say the least. I could tell he was not an ordinary man. His voice was like nothing I had ever heard; it was deep and vibrant. His brilliance lighted my dark bedroom.

He was very kind, though. He told me there was nothing to be afraid of, and that I had been chosen for a very special purpose by the Most High. He said, 'Maria, you have found favor with the Supreme Eloha. You shall be over shadowed by his great power that you may conceive, and give birth to his son.' He even told me what your name was to be and that someday you would be a powerful king. He said you would rule with righteousness over all nations of the Earth."

Yeshua listened intently, occasionally interrupting to ask a question, as Maria filled in the smallest details of his birth.

When she had finished, she sat quietly studying his face. He lifted his bowed head, and gave his mother a weak smile. With a deep sigh he said, "For the first time, Mother, I am beginning to relate to and embrace your story. Yes, it is truly more than a fantasy. I know it is factual. It really did happen just as you have related it. I am sure now...I am here for a very important reason.

"I know now that the great Aloa is my My Father. He is the great and powerful being I am seeing in my dreams. He will give me understanding and guide me in preparation for the work He has assigned me. I have but a few short years to prepare. Soon I must be about my Father's business." He sat silently, in deep contemplation. Then he excused himself and exited into his bedroom.

Maria had grown accustomed to the low mumble of her son's reciting the ancient prophets writings. "I shall restore the fortunes of my people, and they shall rebuild their ruined cities.

They shall live in peace, planting vineyards and drinking their wine. They shall plant gardens and eat their fruit. I shall plant them on their land and they shall never again be plucked up,"

The mountain snows melted, the heavy winter rains ceased, and the chill of winter gave way to warmth. Birds sang happy tunes of new life; the earth responded to the warm sunshiny days. Awakening trees putting forth tiny buds of green life. Sleepy flowers peaked shy heads through the moist soil, and the brown grass seemed just a bit greener. It was an exciting time of the year. Maria hummed a favorite tune as she worked, packing personal possessions for the long trip to Jerusalem. Soon the Passover season would arrive and the yearly celebrations would began. Many families would travel to Jerusalem for the occasion. Friends and families would meet and visit for the first time in months. Many young couples would proudly show off a new baby.

No one was more excited than Yeshua. Before, when he had gone to Jerusalem, he had gone because it was what every little Jewish boy did with his family. He went he listened; he obediently learned and performed what he was expected to do. He enjoyed the traveling and the family togetherness. But he had never experienced this compelling obsession, this deep burning desire to learn everything about his beginning and his purpose. This year, he felt, would be very different. He felt the stir of new awakenings pushing him into manhood.

As time drew near for the trip to Jerusalem, Yeshua could think of nothing else. As he contemplated the meaning of the holy day season, a new awareness prompted questions he had no answers for. "I have gone with my family every year to keep these special celebrations, yet...no one seems to understand their spiritual meaning, or what they represent. These holy days, which my heavenly father has instituted to be kept forever are for a much more profound reason than any have ever told me. There are so many things for me to learn before I am ready to proceed with the plan." he thought. "I can hardly wait to get to Jerusalem. Perhaps I can find many answers there."

The long awaited day arrived for the trip. Yeshua was up early with his parents, helping with the last minute details. He busied himself with helping organize his younger brother's and sister's articles they would need for the long sixty five mile trip. He let them help as they loaded clothes, food, toys, and supplies. The pack animals were heavily loaded with food and clothing. Space was left in the wagon for Maria and the small children to ride, along with the heavier tents and fat skins of water.

Yeshua tried to jog the children's memory. "Remember the beautiful Temple, the palaces and the shops with sparkling decorations of gold about their doors. You remember the soldiers on their proud steeds, don't you, James?" he asked. "Now, we are going to go back and see all the grand sights. Remember the fun we had as we traveled...over the hills...through the valleys, and across the streams? Remember the last holy day season, last fall, the Feast of Tabernacles, when we visited in the home of cousin Nathan and his family? We shall get to see them all again. Won't that be fun, Jose? You and our little cousin Benal became really good friends, didn't you?" he asked his younger brother. "And you, my little sisters, wasn't it fun riding the pony at their farm? And I will enjoy seeing my dear friends, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha again. They will be at the Feast, also.

"Well, my little ones, once again we are going up to the ancient city. We will go through its huge gates, and see its tall walls, and its splendid pools and reservoirs. For over a week we will marvel at the richness of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem is famous for many reasons. Many important and renown men and women have lived and died in and around Jerusalem. These are people who will live on in the writings and in stories and histories, to be told from generation to generation. We are going to an exciting place, my little brothers and sisters. We are told in school that when we pray on the holy hill of Jerusalem, we pray in the very presence of Jehovah God!" Talking of Jehovah made Yeshua even more eager to get to the holy city.

When time to leave finally arrived, they left at daybreak, traveled several hours before stopping for rest and lunch. Many families had joined the long trek. One could see a long, slow caravan visible from both directions for several miles. Its tail end disappeared behind winding roads and grassy hills. Each

family cautioned their children to stay close to their own group so no one would become lost. Many families had stopped along the road sides, spreading table napkins on the ground; the women prepared picnic type meals. Some were handing out nuts and fruit to the children, in hopes of appeasing their restlessness until the meal was prepared. The aroma of fresh-baked unleavened bread, cheeses and wine drifted from one group to another. Amid the sounds of animals and children's playful voices, the hot winds carried the sounds of talking and laughing men. Amid chattering women, cries of small nursing babies could be heard demanding their share of attention.

The main route to Jerusalem, traveled heavily by traders, soldiers, and business caravans, became crowded with Jewish families from distant towns. As the sun began to sink behind the horizon, Yowceph stopped for the night. With the help of Yeshua and the other children, he pitched camp. Maria was busy preparing food and comforting the smallest child who was tired, hungry, and cross. Many families made it to small towns and spent the night with friends or relatives. Some rented overnight lodging in homes or inns. Larger families usually carried tents which they set up under the protection of large clusters of trees.

It was not unusual to see hardy farmers and hill country people sleeping around open camp fires, rolled up in sleeping gear, their animals tied securely nearby. Yeshua and his family finished their evening meal, washed, and was bedded down for the night. The only sounds were of bleating sheep, the shuffling feet of the animals, and an occasional distant bark of a stray dog. Yeshua lay listening to the night sounds, unable to sleep. He had chosen to sleep outside, a good distance from the family tent. He was warmly rolled up in a thick, wool sheep skin, too excited to sleep, spending the last hour meditating and communicating with his heavenly father. He loved to meditate on the wonderful revelations his father had given him. Lying beneath the stars, drinking in the beauty of the heavens, he knew he was not alone. His father, who dwelled in that vast realm of the other dimension, was ever near, watching over him wherever he went, His spirit, growing stronger than his own, within him, guiding him.

Three days later, they arrived in the ancient city, Jerusalem. The streets were filled with weary travelers, leading their animals, carrying their sleeping children, looking for lodging. The sun was just beginning to hide behind a distant mountain; street market vendors were moving their wares inside small shops, but some markets were still open. Beggars with outstretched hands crouched along the white-washed walls and in doorways. Blind men picked their way along the cobblestones, tapping their sticks rhythmically for direction. Stray dogs wandered the streets, sniffing in and around each shop, searching for food. Yeshua had been here several times before with his family. Still, he had not noticed the suffering, the diseased, the blind, and the lame as they thronged the bustling, smelly streets. Nor had he taken note of the brutality of man against man. He winced as a legion of Roman soldiers descended upon them, cursing and laughing, rudely invading walking spaces of weary travelers. They sped through the narrow streets on their handsome steeds. With each move their gleaming sharp swords, buckled to their sides, reflected shimmering sparks of light.

They forced their animals through the helpless, frightened crowd. They snapped long leather whips at any who dared get in their way, unmindful and uncaring of the pain below them.

The smell of animals, man, garbage and food filled the air. Yeshua looked about with mixed feelings of anger and compassion. Seeing the pain and suffering of so many helpless people, tears filled his eyes and his heart overflowed with a longing to change the despicable cruelties of man. He longed to share with mankind the joys of love that was awakening within his own spirit.

He was amazed at the severe contrast of the chaotic streets and shops of Jerusalem compared with the splendor of the Temple standing out against the western sky. It outshined all other buildings with its magnificence. Its marble facade stood one hundred and fifty feet high, decorated with purest gold.

Pillared colonnades hemmed in spacious courts and vestibules. Its great towering wall reached two hundred and fifty feet above the valley. The wonderfully adorned Tabernacle, sparkling like a snow-capped mountain, was centered inside of the Temple, and was its shining glory. King Herod's richly impressive castle, standing at the highest point in the city, surmounted by three huge towers eighty to one hundred and thirty feet high, jutted from behind a huge thick wall; it divided the heart of the city into two sections. There was an indomitable air about the city, with its numerous stately towers, fortifications, and walls.

Yeshua was seized with an unexplainable sadness, a strange premonition of terrible devastation. He felt a cloud of despair and impending doom for this unsuspecting, thronging mass of Jewish people. Their love and devotion centered almost totally around the splendor of grand buildings and traditions. He sensed their rejection of the greatest of all beings, the Great One who owns and gives to man all the wealth of the earth, and rules the vast universe. Yeshua, after witnessing the scenes of the city, finally managed to shake off the sorrowful sensation of impending disaster. Heaviness still remained, weighting his once light spirit.

Yowceph led his family to the temporary rented lodging where he had made previous arrangements for their stay during the festival. Yeshua and the other children helped with unloading the wagons and animals. Yowceph took James and Jose with him to help feed and water their animals. Then Yeshua turned his attention to helping Maria with the younger children while she unpacked and organized their belongings. They would be here for several days.

Questions had been whirring through his mind all day. He had observed holy days with his family for as long as he could remember. He had been taught every Jewish tradition. Now he yearned to know why. "The scriptures teach us how to keep the holy days," he thought. "The laws we live by are written for all of mankind, for our happiness and well-being. This I understand.

But only my people, the Jews keep these holy days. Why are we special? Are not the holy days given for all nations? There is a mystery shrouding the real meaning of each holy day.

No one has ever explained their depth to me. And their true meanings are not revealed in the prophet's writings. The writings refer to many things pertaining to the Passover but none that explains what the Passover means to one individually. Why are the Days of Unleavened Bread observed for seven days? And why do the holy days also number seven?" And he began to name them in order. "The first and last days of the seven Days of Unleavened Bread, are observed in the spring. These two days are the

first annual Sabbaths. The Feast of Pentecost, observed in the early summer, is the third. The Feast of Trumpets, observed in late summer, is the fourth. The Day of Atonement, kept by fasting, in the autumn, is the fifth. The first day of the Feast of Tabernacle, observed in the fall, again for seven days, is the sixth. And the Last Great Day, following the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles, is the seventh.

Is there some kind of plan that these days picture? Does the number seven have a special meaning? Is it coincidental the number seven shows up so often? There are seven days during the Days of Unleavened Bread. There are seven days during the Feast of Tabernacles. There are seven holy convocations, holy days. The Sabbath is on the seventh day. There is much left unrevealed. Why have the scribes added so many rules and regulations never commanded or recorded by the prophets? Somewhere I must find answers." The whirlwind of questions brewed a mental storm, turning, and spinning, urging him on to find the answers.

Tired families, from far and near, were settling in all over Jerusalem for the night. Tomorrow would be a full and busy day. The Passover lamb would be killed; a special evening meal of roasted lamb and unleavened bread would be prepared and eaten. For seven days they would eat no leavening in their bread. Many Jewish families were gathered in the holy city to celebrate one of the most important seasons of the year, the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread.

End of chapter one...edited 6-2013