

CHAPTER TEN

Why Speak In Parables?

The following day, an impressive group of well-dressed Jewish leaders came seeking audience with Yeshua. They slowly gained entry through the thronging crowd, and politely greeted Yeshua, “We are Jewish elders from the city of Philoteria. We have come to you at the request of a most honorable and worthy Roman general, known as Archaeus, who has shown our nation great kindness. He has shown our city much love. He even built us a beautiful, large synagogue. He is a kind and gentle master who cares greatly for his household. A dear servant of his has been stricken with a deadly disease; the servant is near death. Our good friend has sent us to implore you to come and heal his servant.”

Immediately, Yeshua and his apostles left with them. They traveled the fifteen miles in haste so as not to be delayed by the crowds. By late afternoon they reached Philoteria. A short distance from the home of the general they were met by Archaeus’ messengers. “We bring word from the most noble Archaeus. He wishes you to know that he, being a Gentile, does not deem himself worthy to have such a one—of your greatness—under his roof. Nor did he consider himself worthy to come before your presence. He wishes you to speak the word and his servant will be healed. He says he understands authority. Just as you are a man in authority, so is he. He tells his servants to come and to go and they obey. He knows that you have the authority to command the sickness leave his servant and it will be as you say.”

Yeshua was greatly impressed with the man’s faith. He turned around to the people with him and exclaimed, “I have not yet seen faith this great in all of my travels throughout Israel!”

The messengers replied, “General Archaeus has arranged for you and your men, overnight accommodations, in the best inn. He will be greatly disappointed if you do not allow him the honor of attending to your needs while in our city.”

Later that evening Yeshua received a message informing him that the ill servant had made a complete recovery.

The following day, Yeshua led his men south toward the small city of Nain. When they reached the outskirts of the city they were met by sad, wailing songs of a funeral procession. A large group of people followed slowly behind an aged, grieving woman; she wept softly as she followed the elevated bier. A strong, younger woman steadied her frail body; she staggered under her load of grief.

A local man explained, “The woman has lost her only surviving son. Two years ago she lost her husband and recently her only daughter died from a crippling disease. Her son was her only living

relative. She is a kind and giving person, loved by many in our town. She has eased the suffering of many, but there is none to comfort her of her losses. She has endured much.”

As the woman passed before Yeshua, his eyes filled with compassionate tears. He approached her. “Please, do not cry,” he said.

Startled, she stopped, struggled to control her sobbing, and responded to the gentle, kind stranger. “How can I go on...my son...my only son...he is so young...his life was just beginning. Now, he is gone.” She leaned heavily against her companion and slumped back into her grief, “My son...my son...oh, my only child...”

Those in the procession watched curiously. When the procession reached its destination, Yeshua walked confidently toward the dead body. He touched the bier with its still, cold form. With a soft, but firm voice he commanded, “Young man...I say to you, get up.”

The wailing songs stopped; the crowd was suspended in silence, wondering what this strange man was doing. Suddenly a loud gasp cut through the silence...another gasp and another. Someone screamed, “He moved...I saw his hand move...there...see...he moves his arms. He’s alive!” The crowd rushed forward as the revived young man slowly raised himself up and looked curiously about. Not yet totally awake, he mumbled to himself, “What is this? Am I having some kind of dream? Where am I? Why are there so many people surrounding me?” Then he noticed he was being carried by men in mourning garb. “I must be a part of some kind of strange make-believe parade...I seem to be enacting someone’s death. And my mother, she also is a part of the play,” he muttered. Confused, he shook his head vigorously. Feeling a bit dizzy, he slowly raised to a sitting position. Then he swung both legs down over the side of the bier and motioned the attendants to lower him. The stunned faces before him clearly were frightened. Instantly, he was drawn to the friendly, smiling face of the man with an extended hand. “Sir, this is most puzzling...I am very perplexed....Why am I here? What is taking place? What are all these people doing...why does my Mother weep?”

Yeshua placed his arm about the young man’s shoulders and guided him through the wide-eyed crowd, toward his mother. “I am sure your mother will be overjoyed to explain everything to you. Obviously you were severely injured, but now you are completely whole. Tend to the needs of your mother. She loves you very much.”

They worked their way through the opened path that led to the red-eyed woman. With a glint of anticipation shining in his moist eyes, Yeshua presented the shocked woman’s son to her alive. Instantly she slumped into a faint, only to be revived by those attending her.

When she regained her composure, she rushed toward the boy and clasped him in her arms, “My son...my son...you are alive. You are alive...you are alive,” she repeated over and over. The unquestioning mother, overjoyed, began weeping anew, even louder than before.

A husky voice came from the nervous spectators, “Women...what strange creatures they are...they weep when they are sad...they weep when they are happy. Ofttimes they weep for no reason at all.”

Yeshua smiled and quietly slipped through the crowd, followed by his students.

The inquisitive crowd rushed forward, anxious to determine what had actually happened. "Is he really alive? Perhaps he was never dead to begin with."

"Oh, he was dead, alright! His skull was crushed. I was there when it happened," a man stated. "No one could have survived such a crushing impact."

A reverent hush fell upon the people as they realized a stranger had just performed an unbelievable miracle. The hush changed to a buzzing of incredulous awe and excitement. "Surely this is the great prophet we have been hearing about...sent from God to visit his people," they agreed. Many of them turned and followed Yeshua into their quiet, unsuspecting city.

The cool days of spring passed and the heat of summer found Yeshua and his disciples traveling from city to city. They were always pursued by scores of sick and needy people hoping to receive something from them. Each crowd seemed more desperate than the last. The day was just beginning, but already Yeshua had healed three blind people, two lame men, a deaf woman and several lepers. The day had been especially hot...the warm winds carried dusty clouds that settled a gritty film over Yeshua and the clamoring crowds. To escape the searing heat of Chorazin, Yeshua led the way toward the outskirts of the city where several clusters of massive trees afforded canopies of luxurious shade.

Here, the hot, humid winds cooled as they mixed with refreshing breezes from the distant lake. Pointing to the edge of the crowd, Peter informed him, "Teacher, there are two men who have been trying all day to get through the crowd to speak with you. They asked that I relate their business. They have traveled all the way from Jerusalem with a message from Johanan."

When they finally pushed their way through to Yeshua they explained, "We are disciples of Johanan the Baptizer. He is still being held in the dungeons with no sign of freedom. In his distress he grasps for hope. He sent us to you that we may confirm his confidence. He is anxious to hear...are you the prophet to come or is there another yet to fulfill the scriptures...to establish the new government?"

Yeshua spread his open hands toward the distressed multitude, "When you return to your teacher, tell him what you see here. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the deaf hear, lepers are cleansed and even the dead are brought back to life. And the poor have the gospel preached to them. Those who are not offended at my words or the decisions I make are blessed indeed. The father's will must be carried out even to the end. The strong in faith trust not in the flesh which, like the grass of the fields, springs up for a few days, then withers and dies. Their faith is in the words of the Eternal God."

Johanan's messengers remained with the group for several days, witnessing the many miracles of healing Yeshua performed everywhere he went. When news spread that Johanan's disciples had come to inquire of Yeshua, curiosity brought many to see Yeshua's reaction to the dilemma of the once famous, but now imprisoned prophet. The disciples, disappointed that Yeshua made no promises or effort toward Johanan's rescue, whispered among themselves, "Surely we shall soon make plans to go

to Johanan. It is only natural Johanan wonders about what is going on. Many people here, who were baptized by Johanan, expect Yeshua go to the authorities and demand his release.”

After a time, Yeshua and the disciples bade Johanan’s men fare-well as they departed. Certain well-dressed, religious leaders began to rumor, “If this is Messiah, then Johanan the baptizer must have sinned greatly. Perhaps he is being punished, else why would he be left in prison?”

Another said doubtfully, “Many here had great confidence in him and were baptized by him. He certainly convinced and influenced a multitude of people. Of course, at the time, he seemed to be a man of God. Now...it surely doesn’t appear that he has the favor of Jehovah. If he is a prophet, and he came to prepare the way for this Yeshua, would not this man intervene in his behalf? Why should we believe one who himself claims to be the power of God but does not raise a hand toward his fellow prophet’s freedom?”

Another insistent, angry voice questioned, “If this fellow is a prophet, and Johanan is a prophet, why then is Johanan being deserted? Why doesn’t this Yeshua speak the word and open the dungeon walls? Is this not a small thing for one who has performed many mighty works? Perhaps this is all a farce!”

The doubts and insinuations spread rapidly. Yeshua spread his hands toward the murmurers. And in a loud, stern voice he demanded, “When you went out into the wilderness to hear Johanan, what did you expect to find...an indecisive, soft, well-dressed man such as you find in palaces? Or did you seek a prophet? Yes, you expected a prophet! And, indeed, you found one...and more! For this truly is the man of whom it is written ‘Behold I send my messenger before you, which shall prepare the way before you.’ There has never been a greater man born than Johanan the Baptist. Even so, the least one in the kingdom from heaven will be greater than he is. Ever since Johanan came preaching repentance and speaking of me, the kingdom has suffered violence. The violent are eager to forcefully seize it and assume its control. It can only be taken by the strength of Godly character and hardship. Its enemies slander and ridicule my mission and the good news I bring. Listen...all the prophets and the law of Mosheh spoke about the kingdom up until the time of Johanan. If you are willing to believe their message, believe this: Johanan is the Elijah who was predicted to come!”

Those who had followed Johanan and his baptism were comforted by his words. The common and humble people did not question Yeshua’s words, and rejoiced. The religiously self-righteous Sadducees and Pharisees stubbornly continued to stir up dissension. Yeshua, knowing what the troublemakers were trying to do, addressed them, “You doubters and accusers...you remind me of two groups of children sitting in the market place. One says, ‘We are playing wedding music for you...why don’t you dance?’ The other says, ‘We sang funeral songs...why didn’t you cry?’ You demand and expect everyone to abide by your rules, to dance to your tune. You have appointed yourselves as rulers and judges; you find fault with any who differ with you. Johanan came eating very little, often fasting, refusing to drink wine. For this you accused him of being demon- possessed. I came eating, as is customary, and drinking wine, and you accuse me of being a glutton and an alcoholic...a friend of tax collectors and outcasts! None-the-less, the results is the proof of wisdom. Time will reveal your evil thoughts and impure motives.”

In the following weeks many jealous, conniving hostile, religious leaders from Chorazin and Bethsaida began congregating among the people, secretly planting doubts and confusion among the unsuspecting. Gradually the people began to fall prey to their cunning suggestions, causing them to question what they had witnessed. Yeshua found he was unable to perform certain miracles because of their skepticism.

On a Sabbath, in the great synagogue of Capernanum, Yeshua stood before a huge congregation, gathered from the surrounding cities. Seeing their lack of faith and hardness of heart, he sadly admonished, "I fear for you, you people from Chorazin and Bethsaida who refuse to repent! If the mighty works that have been done among you had been performed for the people in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Tyre and Sidon will be less guilty, treated with more tolerance than you, on their day of resurrection and judgment.

"And you Capernanum, because you are a choice, prosperous, growing city, you think your greatness will ascend to heaven. Instead, you shall be brought down to the grave, just as it was done unto Sodom. Had the mighty works that have been done here were done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. It shall also be more tolerable for Sodom than for you on the Day of Judgment."

Scattered among the hostile congregation a few humble believers nodded their heads in agreement. Yeshua uttered a thankful prayer to the father, "Oh, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I thank you for revealing these things to the babes, and for hiding them from the arrogantly wise and self-righteous. For you are all-wise and have put all things in my charge. No one can know me without knowing you, nor can anyone know you without knowing me. I alone know you and only they to whom I reveal you can know you." Yet, some murmured quietly, disbelief and anger hidden behind scowling faces.

Then he said, "Come unto me, all you that toil and are overburdened. I will give you rest. Replace your yokes with mine; you shall find peace unto your souls. My yoke is easy, my burden is light, for I am meek and lowly in heart."

After Sabbath services, Simon, a prominent Pharisee, invited Yeshua to attend a ceremonial dinner party in his richly ornamented garden surrounding his luxurious home. "Perhaps some of my more clever guests will be able to catch this self-proclaimed prophet in some discrepancy. At the least, we can observe his mannerisms first hand; perhaps discover some weakness in him," he reasoned. When Yeshua was shown to his seat, it was plain to everyone that he was not treated with the customary respect usually shown to an honored guest.

A short distance away a well-known, ex-harlot became aware that Yeshua was attending the elaborate dinner. She hurriedly reached the open garden, easily accessible from a nearby, tree-lined street. She moved silently through the surprised guests, clutching a small jeweled box. When she saw Yeshua reclining on the guest lounge, she quietly positioned herself behind him, and knelt at his extended feet. Remembrance of his recent demonstration of merciful kindness brought streams of tears flowing from her loving face that splashed onto his feet. Startled, Yeshua turned to see what was taking place. He recognized her as the woman who, though shunned, scorned, and ashamed, had accepted his word, and had repented sorrowfully of her sinful profession. He gave her a tender smile of

approval. She lowered her head in reverence, squatted down and kissed his feet as she gently wiped them with her long, thick, red hair. Then she opened the box and applied an expensive fragrance.

Simon, the Pharisee, could not hide his look of seething displeasure as he thought, "And this despicable man calls himself a prophet! A true prophet would know that this is an unclean, sinful harlot. He would have nothing to do with her, nor engage in such an embarrassing, shameful display."

Yeshua turned to Simon's scornful stare. "Simon, I have a question to ask you." Startled, Simon responded, "Of course, ask, Master."

"There was a very wealthy man who had two creditors. One owed five hundred pence, the other only fifty. Neither of them could pay their debt, and he forgave them both. Which of the two do you think will appreciate and love him more?"

"I suppose the one who owed the most."

"That is true." He motioned to the woman and said, "Do you see this woman, Simon? When, as a guest, I was invited into your house you did not give me water to refresh my dusty feet. Nor did you extend to me a kiss of welcome, or refresh my forehead with oil. But this woman...she has washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with her hair. Now she kisses my feet and anoints them with her cherished ointment. Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, because she loves deeply. Those who have been forgiven much will love much; those who have been forgiven little will love less." He spoke to the woman, "Your sins have been forgiven. Your faith has saved you...go in peace."

Many of the guests, sitting around the table, thought to themselves, "Who does this man think he is—to go so far as to forgive people's sins?"

Yeshua was unaffected by this type of snobbish, judgmental attitude. He continued spreading the good news of the kingdom of God throughout every village and city. Many women, which had been healed of demon possession, joined themselves to the apostles and followed along with them. Moved by the kindness Yeshua demonstrated toward women, many women, of the wealthy classes, began supporting his mission by donating money and clothing to him and his apostles.

When Yeshua returned to his house he often found himself so pressed upon he had no time even to eat when hungry. The Pharisees, when they heard about the latest miracle, accused, "This fellow casts out demons by the power of Satan."

Yeshua knew what they were thinking and said, "Every kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. If Satan cast out Satan...he's dividing himself. If I am casting out Satan by Satan, by whom do your students cast out demons? Let them be Your judges. Let me tell you this: all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blaspheming against the spirit of God will not be forgiven. You can speak all kinds of evil against me; that can be forgiven. To speak against God's Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, not in this life nor in the world to come. You generation of poisonous vipers, how can you evildoers speak righteously? The mouth speaks about the things that are hidden in the heart. You will

be condemned or justified by your words. On the day of judgment you shall have to give account for every idle word that you speak.”

“We would like to see a sign that proves to us you are the power of God,” a scribe suggested.

“An evil and adulterous generation seeks for signs. There shall be given only this one sign, the sign of the prophet Jonah. Just as he was in the great fish three days and three nights, so shall I be in the grave, three days and three nights. The people of Nineveh shall rise in the second resurrection, at judgment with this generation, and condemn it. They repented when Jonah preached. I am greater than Jonah...yet you demand to see a sign.”

Again he warned them of their dangerous spiritual condition. “When a demon leaves a person, he wanders restlessly about. When he finds no rest he returns to his former abode. When he finds it clean and empty, he invites seven more demons to join him. The last state of the person is worse than at first. This is how it will be with this generation!”

An important looking Pharisee yelled angrily, “We expect you to prove these strong statements and claims to being one so great...yes...but that does not make us evil nor adulterous! We are not Gentiles who are ignorant of the laws of God. We, alone, have been entrusted with the books of the law, handed down to us from the prophets and the fathers. Is it so difficult for you to accept our positions as leaders of God’s chosen people?”

“Israel was called to walk in those laws, with an humble spirit and a clean heart. She has lost her way; she has rejected righteousness, murdering the prophets, and has embraced self- righteousness and vain, man-made laws. When a demon leaves a person, he wanders restlessly about; finding no rest, he returns to his former abode. When he finds it clean and empty, he invites seven more demons to join him. The last state of the person is worse than at first. This is how it will be with this generation!”
Yeshua replied.

One day, while preaching to an overflowing throng from Peter’s house, he was interrupted, “Your mother and brothers are urgently trying to get through the crowd. They insist they must talk to you.”

Yeshua would have been pleased to welcome his family at any time, had he not known their intentions. He was saddened at their contentious attitudes. He knew they had been persuaded that he was demonic by irate religious leaders of their community. They were here to entice him to abandon his mission. He stood up before the multitude and asked, “You want to know who my mother and brothers really are?”

He pointed to his devoted followers. “These are my mother, my brothers, and my sisters. Any who hear the word, accepts my gospel, repents and obeys shall be accepted into my father’s family. This is the true family, that which is not only born of flesh, but of the spirit. One must have greater love for the father and his son than for his own flesh. Tell them to return to their business...their ways are not my ways, nor my ways theirs.”

He then turned and exited from the house through the back way, ignoring his family's demands. Crowds of needy people followed him to the lake. Later he escaped to his ship and spoke to them in obscure parables. He put forth a parable of the sower which no one understood. Later in the evening when he was alone with his chosen followers they requested, "Explain to us the meaning of the parable."

He replied, "How can you grasp my other parables if you do not understand this simple one? It has been permitted that you understand the mystery of the kingdom of God. Those whom the father has not called, it is not for them to know. This is why I speak to them in parables. If I taught them plainly the secrets I share with you, and they began to understand they might comprehend and take my words to heart, and become converted, and their sins be forgiven. My mission is not to educate, nor save the world at this time, but to proclaim the good news of the future kingdom that will be established under the father's direction and my rulership."

Seeing the confused look on their frowning faces he thought, "In their carnality, this simple truth is too much for them to grasp. They are still dull of hearing and cannot understand that this is not the only time the father has set for the salvation of mankind. Only those whom the father draws, by the power of his holy spirit, will have the windows of their minds opened. Only these, and a few humble, dedicated, future ones, who are called to be first fruits—at the first resurrection—will fully grasp the wonderful truth of the plan.

"Soon, after my death and my resurrection, after they have been empowered with the Holy Spirit, they will remember my words, and began to understand that the majority of mankind will not fully understand nor accept the plan until after they are revived—in the second resurrection to flesh and blood. Then, after the great resurrection, all peoples from ancient to future times, will be given the knowledge of the plan. All who come up out of their graves. Some will be gathered from the oceans, and some from outerspace. They will be educated and mercifully given their chance to choose repentance. They, too, will live forever as spirit beings in the family of God. Even now, these dear ones whom the father has given me cannot understand nor accept so wonderful a plan without the spirit of truth saturating their sleeping minds. Nevertheless, these words must be spoken and preserved, not only for these, but also for those future ones who will yield to the father's calling."

He shook his head sadly. Then he explained, "The parable is this: The sower sows the word. Those who fall by the wayside are those who hear, but allow Satan to immediately take the word out of their hearts. The same applies to the stony ground. They accept the word gladly. They have not rooted themselves. There is no strong commitment. When temptation or persecution comes they weaken. Gradually they stop doing what is right. They become offended by the truth. Some become entangled in the deceitfulness of riches, and lusts for material possessions. These things become like thorns and thistles, choking the word, preventing it from bearing fruit in their lives. The good ground represents those who have good and honest hearts. They hear the word, accept it, and act upon it. They begin to produce thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold. If you want to understand pay very close attention to each analogy!"

Later when the multitudes pressed about him, he again taught in obscure parables. “The kingdom of heaven is like good seed which a man sows in his field. While the man sleeps, his enemy steals in and sows seeds from pesky spreading weeds—closely resembling the good grain. When the crop began to grow, the worthless tares were discovered. His workers asked, ‘Shall we pull the poisonous vetch from among the good?’ The owner answered, ‘No, for in so doing you may uproot the wheat with them. Let them grow together until harvest. Then, separate the good from the poison plant and burn them. The good grain is to be gathered into my barn.’”

In private, when he was alone with his disciples, he explained the meaning of the parables. “The kingdom, which I am sent to establish, is begun by the word of the Living God. It will be sowed in the hearts of the honest, and humble. Satan, the enemy, will follow behind sowing his counterfeit gospel. The angels will ask, ‘Must we destroy the wicked from among the righteous?’ And the answer will be, No that would cause too much pain to those whose lives are entwined with them. Let the righteous and the wicked inhabit the earth together. In the last day...the Day of Judgment, they shall be separated. The incorrigibly wicked will be burned up...there will be much anguish and pain. The dedicated and submissive will be accepted into the family of God. In the kingdom of their father, their appearance will shine as brilliant as the sun. There shall be no end to his glorious kingdom.”

Another parable he explained, “The kingdom is worth more than the greatest treasures of the earth. A wise person will exercise great efforts to avail himself of its riches. The kingdom of heaven is like a huge net cast into the sea of mankind. When the net is drawn in, the angels will separate the clean from the unclean...the wicked from the just. Every student of the kingdom of heaven is like a wealthy furniture dealer, who has in his store both precious antiques and valuable items. To be successful he must stock a full store of both. Likewise, gather wisdom and life from both the old and the new.”

Then he explained the parable of the mustard seed. “The kingdom of heaven begins as the smallest of all seeds. When it is full grown, it is the greatest of all herbs, shooting out enormous branches. It gives both food and protection for the birds of the air. So, likewise, is the kingdom...when it is full grown it will expand, spreading throughout the universe, providing for all of the father’s creation.”

And again he said, “For the kingdom of heaven is like a pinch of leavening. When it is added to a store of meal, all of it eventually becomes leavened. Just as all of the meal becomes leavened, so shall all of the just become a part of the kingdom. This then will be the eventual force of the kingdom. It will begin as the smallest movement, but grow to the greatest power and influence of all history. Now, the father is drawing you to accept me. Later, he will draw others—together you will be the first fruits of God’s future great harvest. Then, during my rule, all the earth will be taught to accept the son, and to live righteously.”

He asked his students, “Do you understand what I am saying?”

They answered, “Yes. Now you are speaking plainly.”

The disciples still had some questions. “If the people do not understand these parables, why then do you speak to them in such a manner?”

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, ‘I will speak things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.’ The words that I speak will not be lost, but preserved for all of mankind. From among the many a few will hear the parables, embrace them in their hearts, and meditate upon them and begin to live righteous lives as their spiritual understanding is opened. The father has given me others that you do not know. They, too, shall hear these words and understand.”

At the close of the day, Yeshua entered their large boat and commanded his crewmen to cast off. Some of his disciples entered into the ship with him, others followed in smaller boats. The day had been long and Yeshua was tired and sleepy. He retired to his small cabin in the back of the ship. He had no more than settled his head onto the pillow than he fell fast asleep. The next thing he became aware of was strong arms shaking him vigorously and loud, anxious voices of frightened men yelling, “Master...Master...wake up! We are about to sink. We have been caught in a fearful storm. The winds have sent the waves over the boats and even this ship is filling with water. What shall we do?”

Yeshua, still in a daze from sleep, was slow to respond. When he turned his face toward the wall, Peter gave him one more jostle, “Master, don’t you care that we may all drown?” Slowly he arose and went on deck where the men were scurrying around trying to secure equipment. He raised his arms toward the raging winds and in a loud voice called, “I command you, cease and be still!” Within minutes the winds became calm and the ship settled into a smooth sail.

“Where is your faith?” he asked. Then he went back into the cabin to finish his rest.

The men were left standing dumb-founded, their mouths hanging open. They wondering among themselves, “What kind of man is he? Even the wind and water obey his command.”

The following morning, they reached the other side of the sea and sailed into the country of Gergesenes. They anchored their boats and found themselves near a catacomb when they stepped ashore. Suddenly they glimpsed two animal-like figures darting from tomb to tomb. Yeshua motioned to his men to stand still. “We have landed near the dwelling of the man who calls himself Legion.” James explained. “Word of his fierce behavior has spread to many cities. He has often been chained, but no one is able to control his strength. They say he never sleeps, but his screams can be heard night and day. He is a fearless, wild man, possessed with the inhuman power of multitudes of self-destructive demons. He has terrified the people in this area for many years, screaming and threatening anyone who ventures near this place.”

Unexpected, from the top of a huge rock about twenty feet away, a twisted, naked figure appeared. The wind from the sea blew his long, matted, dark hair wildly about. A greasy, ragged cloth clung to his thick, hunched shoulders, disappearing beneath a long, stringy, untrimmed beard. High above his audience, he stood menacingly still, his dark, deranged eyes surveying the cautious men before him. The startled disciples shrank back in dread as the fierce figure abruptly leapt expertly from the steep rocky pinnacle, heading straight toward them. Yeshua stood patiently waiting, with no show of fear.

Within minutes the screaming, flailing figure lay face down before Yeshua, his hands outstretched in worship. Yeshua looked sadly on the pathetic figure. “I command you...come out of him, immediately!”

A piercing voice of one in excruciating pain pleaded, "I beg of you, by the Living God, don't torture me. What do you have against me, Yeshua, son of the Most High God?"

"What is your name?" Yeshua asked calmly.

"My name is Legion; there are many of us living in this one body. Please...we beg of you...do not send us out of the country into the depth of darkness. Yonder, in the mountain, is a herd of pigs; we beseech you, allow us to enter into them."

"It is permitted. Go!" he replied.

Instantly, the demons departed and entered into thousands of pigs. The simple minds of the animals became extremely confused and fearful, causing them to stampede. In their frenzied effort to free themselves of their tormentors, they ran violently over a steep incline into the sea and to their death.

The limp form hunched, shame-faced at the feet of Yeshua. He glanced about at the curious faces looking down on him and suddenly he realized he was naked. Yeshua motioned to a disciple, "Bring this man a cloth and some soap." He extended a firm clasp, and assisted the unsteady fellow to his feet. John cautiously handed the man a well-worn towel and a small piece of sand soap, along with a clean loin cloth. Yeshua assisted the shaky man down into the water, while the disciples sat watching from a distance.

Judas was the first to speak. "No doubt this crude man has been miraculously transformed. And, of course he will require an outfit of clothing. Perhaps we can each contribute something, else we may be required to buy from our funds." He gave a small, skin bag, strapped to his waist, a friendly pat. "It's not our responsibility, but I know the Master will want us to express our hospitality. I will donate the first article," he offered as he pulled a worn leather belt from his pack. When they had collected several items of clothing they presented them to Yeshua to give to the man.

The hired swine-herders were in fearful awe when they realized what had happened. They ran through the country to the nearest town, relaying their remarkable news as they went. The disbelieving owners of the drowned herd refused to accept the swinesmen's excuse for their great loss. They hurried to witness the incredible spectacle for themselves. News of the incident spread fast. The excited men, along with the doubting owners of the herds, returned to the scene. By then a large number of local business people, neighboring swine owners, and outlying herdsmen had joined them.

They found Yeshua, the disciples, and the once deranged man in friendly conversation. The madman had bathed and cut his wild, unruly hair and trimmed his long beard. He was decently clothed and in his right mind. At first they were not convinced he was the man whom they sought. A wealthy, fat landowner glared intensely at the man, "How do we know you are the man from the tombs? You don't look like the same fellow; what proof have you?" he demanded.

The healed man spoke with confidence, "Truly, Marcus, it would be to your advantage not to recognize me. And of course, with age and all the scars that Satan has inflicted upon me, I no doubt do not appear as the young soldier I once was. But my memory of you has not dimmed. Together you and

I were quite a pair. In the name of our country we plundered and robbed. We terrorized the helpless and the poor and celebrated our merciless victories of crime with drunken revelry. You were my trusted friend, my comrade in crime, until the night you decided you wanted both your share of the booty and mine. Remember the poisoned wine you gave me? And when the poison left me sick and weakened, you beat me and left me for dead. However, I didn't die, Marcus."

The man was so absorbed in his memories he failed to see the fearful, red-faced landowner quickly disappear into the crowd. He continued, "The shock from the blows affected my mind and destroyed my will. My family was poor and frightened...they didn't know what to do with me. I wandered about for months, unable to function, begging for food and shelter. In my damaged mental condition, I could no longer fend for myself, so I tried often to commit suicide. Even that seemed too much for me to accomplish. Slowly I felt myself being taken over by other powers. I began to hear voices. They told me what to do...where to go. Eventually I fell totally under their powers, unable to resist."

He pointed at several people in the crowd, saying, "You, Doril, Paulis, and Merodos...I know you all by name."

Convinced of the man's claim the large crowd of swine herders became stricken with fear. Addressing Yeshua and his disciples they pleaded, "Sirs, we are but poor swine herders. We depend on this kind of business for our livelihood. Our families would go hungry were we deprived of our herds. We mean you no disrespect...but we fear what will happen to our herds if you continue healing in this fashion. Please, we pray you take this sick man with you and leave our country in peace."

The healed man fell at Yeshua's feet and broke into repentant sobs. "Master, I am a vile and wicked man guilty of many heinous sins. You have cleansed and healed me...I am indebted to you with my very life for this. How can I repay you this great debt? Let me travel with you and be your servant for the rest of my life," he pleaded.

"You can better serve me by returning to your own family and setting the example of love. Tell them how merciful and good God has been to you. Let your light shine so that all that behold your change can see and rejoice," Yeshua said, and sent him on his way. He did no more great works there because the people had rejected his presence.

When they reached another port on the other side of the sea, many people gathered to receive them. As soon as Yeshua met the throng, Jairus, a synagogue ruler, fell at his feet. "My baby daughter is at the point of death, Sir, I beg of you...come lay hands on her and she will live." As they proceeded to Jairus' house, many people followed them. Abruptly Yeshua stopped. Looking about he asked, "Who touched me?"

"How can we tell who, from among this great crowd, touched you, Master? Are there not many jostling against you?" Judas replied.

"True, but this was one with a special need and much faith, for I felt a surge of power flow from my body."

A small, trembling figure emerged from the crowd and crumpled at his feet. Her soft voice quavered, "It was I, Sir. For twelve years I have not ceased bleeding from the time of my monthly uncleanness... her voice trailed off. Then she continued, "I have paid all my money to doctors, and suffered much pain from their experimental efforts to cure me. None have helped...I hemorrhage daily...worse than at the first. I knew that you could heal me, if only I could touch your robe. The instant I touched your garment, I felt strong and well. There are no words to express my gratitude and love."

Yeshua gently lifted her to her feet, "You are healed by the power of your strong faith, daughter. Go in peace and be whole of your plague." She continued following Yeshua along with the crowd, tears of joy streaming down her joyous face.

Among the crowd was a very impressive looking young man. The people made way for him as he struggled to reach the Healer. Just as he reached Yeshua he was stopped by one of his servants.

"I just came from your house, Sir," a voice said, "No need to bring the Master now...your child is dead."

When Jairus heard this, he began sobbing. Yeshua put his arm around the young ruler's shoulder, "Do not lose faith, only believe and your daughter shall be made well. Let us go at once."

In the garden court, outside the regal, white stone house, wailing mourners congregated. Turning to the saddened crowd Yeshua said, "Everyone, except Peter, James, and John, wait outside, I shall be but a moment." He proceeded to follow Jairus through the spacious rooms to the young girl's bedroom. The house was filled with loudly moaning servants. He asked them, "Why all this commotion? The child is not dead, she is just asleep."

Curiously, they quieted. "Sir, you must be jesting. There is no pulse and no breath from the girl," one said.

"We have been here all day; we know the signs of death," said another.

"Go in and see for yourself...we are not that witless." And they began to laugh scornfully.

A snickering servant whispered, "The man is about to make a fool of himself."

Yeshua motioned them all out, and with the parents, went in to the girl's room. He took her by the hand and quietly said, "Young lady I say, get up."

The twelve-year-old opened her eyes in surprise, and sat up.

She shyly addressed her stunned mother, "Mummy, I am hungry."

The joyful parents bounded to their startled child and held her in a tearful embrace. Yeshua nodded his consent, "By all means, feed the hungry maid. She is again a normal, healthy young lady. I must ask you both, please, keep this as quiet as possible...for as long as you can. I know it will be most difficult, but it is best for all concerned. Tell no one what has taken place here. I prefer to leave by another

door," he stated. He turned to Peter, "Peter, go to the others and instruct them to meet with us outside the city."

He followed as Jairus led them to a back exit. From there Yeshua went through many cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues. As he traveled he healed everyone who had sicknesses and diseases. Multitudes of people followed after him from each place they passed. When food became scarce many fainted from weakness. Others became weary and were forced to return to their homes. There were too many people, scattered from city to city, for Yeshua to reach them all. Seeing their suffering, his heart ached for them. "See all these people? They are like sheep without a shepherd," he said to his disciples. "The harvest is plentiful, but there are few laborers. Pray that the Lord of harvest will send laborers into his harvest."

Shortly after that, he privately called the twelve disciples together for special instructions and ordination. After laying hands upon them and praying, he gave them power and authority over demons and to cure diseases. "Go in pairs into cities of the lost tribes of the House of Israel. And as you go, preach the same gospel of the kingdom of God that you have heard from me. Do not go into Samaritan or any other Gentile cities. You are not to take extra supplies of money, clothing, or food. The workman deserves his keep; let those to whom you minister supply your needs. When you enter a city inquire until you find a suitable home; stay there for the duration of your discourse. If they refuse to hear you, shake the dust of their soil from your sandals as a witness against them, and move on to the next city. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city."

"At first you will take my message of the kingdom into cities and villages of Judea. Then later you will travel to the diaspora. Eventually, some of you will travel across the ocean to cities afar where many of the lost tribes of Israel have settled. First, I would have you understand the seriousness of your calling."

Yeshua looked about him at the eager, excited faces, and he thought, "These are but the first to answer my call to duty. For those who will be inducted at a future time, my words of warning must include them also. Only the father knows how long it will be before my return. This I do know...the world will undergo many phenomenal changes. And very shortly, soon after my return to the father, there will be incredible persecution and suffering. The greatest time of severe tribulation to Israel, and to my called out ones, will occur just prior to my return. I must also address this period of time, for their benefit, and for a record and witness to the world."

Yeshua continued, "You will be as sheep among wolves. Yet, you must be as harmless as doves, but wise as serpents. Beware of men. In their places of worship, they will beat you, and take you to court. You will witness before governors and kings. This shall be for a testimony to them and to Gentiles. When this happens, don't fret over what to say. The father's spirit within you will give you the words to speak. Be cautious; dangerous times are ahead. Family members will betray each other, the father his child, children their parents, causing their death.

"All men shall hate you because you are my followers. But...if you remain loyal to the end, you shall be saved. When they persecute you, flee from that city to another one. You will not have reached every

city in Israel before I return. Know this: the student is not above his teacher, nor the servant above his owner. It is enough that you be treated equally with me. If they have called me Beelzebub, what shall they call you? Proclaim from the housetops the secrets I have revealed to you. You are not to fear men, for they can only destroy your fleshly body, not your spirit of mind. Instead, fear him that has the power to destroy both your body and your spirit.

“Everything one does shall be revealed in its proper time. The father cares even for the tiny sparrow; you are much more important than they. Even your very hairs are numbered. If you confess me before men, I shall confess you before the father. But if you deny me, I shall deny you.”

Peter spoke up, “But Master, do not the scriptures speak of the kingdom in connection with peace and prosperity?”

“Yes, but before universal peace many things must first be fulfilled. This is not the time for peace. Instead, my doctrine will cause many who are close to disagree violently. Enemies shall be found in your own families. If you let your love of parents or children stand before me, you are not worthy to be mine. If you value your own physical desires and comforts above me, you will never gain eternal life. If you give all of these things up, even your life, for my sake, you will gain eternal, spiritual life in the family of Elohim. If you are not willing to suffer, following my example, you are not my disciple. When people receive you, they receive me. When one receives you as my disciple, just to offer you a cup of cold water, he will receive a reward.”

After their instructions, the disciples left in pairs and began preaching repentance to the cities they entered. Following Yeshua’s instructions they cast out demons, anointed the sick with oil, and healed many.

end of chpt 10