

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A Great New Age

Before the death of Yeshua a wealthy believer had donated a great room for him, and his follower's use. They used the room for special meetings, and holy days. In a few weeks another holy day, the Feast of Pentecost, would be observed, but today they met for the Sabbath. Yeshua had instructed his followers to meet in Jerusalem a few weeks early, so they met here while waiting.

The room was filled with people who loved Yeshua. They met together for prayer and fellowship, sharing their excitement and hope. They all hoped Yeshua would honor them with his appearance; they never knew exactly when he would appear. Food and drink had been brought in the day before for the evening meal. Women were sitting at well set tables. Some of the men were moving about the room. Others were huddled together in casual conversation.

Peter was sharing some of his personal feelings with a few interested men. "I find myself thinking often of the Master's questioning my love," Peter was saying. "Three times he asked the question. I am reminded of the three times he predicted I would deny him. That was a terrible time of fear and shame for us all. I am humiliated to admit he was correct. I deserved the reprimand. Just the same, it hurt deeply when he doubted my love. I understand now; he wanted me to confirm my loyalty to him. He clearly entrusts to us a solemn responsibility. Regardless of its nature, I will meet the challenge with all my strength, even unto death. Then he will see how strong is my love!" he asserted.

"We all have much proving to do, to The Master, and to ourselves. We are all so vulnerable to the wiles of the wicked one. Who would have ever suspected that Judas would have betrayed The Master?" Thomas asked. "Only a few days ago he was alive. Today he lies beneath the clay, disgraced forever." Then he went on to add, "But neither would I have suspected I was so weak in my own faith."

"Is it any wonder the prophet said that the human heart is desperately wicked?" John offered. "We must struggle not only against wicked spirits, but also against the pulls of our own inward, carnal nature. The world about us is under Satan's rule.

Through it he devises many schemes to entice us to sin."

"When I think how The Master suffered raw agony for us... How could we not be willing to endure anything for him?" Peter continued.

Phillip responded, "No doubt we all still have many unpleasant surprises in store. The Master hinted at that when he predicated certain things would happen to you in later years. We all are going to be like lambs among wolves. Without the Master's protection and guidance we have no hope. Yet, he is the shepherd and we are the sheep. We have no other course; we must follow wherever he leads. Often enough he has reminded us, proof of our love for him is our keeping his commandments."

Judas, the son of James, tilted his head toward young John across the room. "Not all are as favored as this one. Was it not said he would live to see the return of the Master? None other of us were given such hope. Perhaps he will outlive us all, he being the youngest. Or perchance it is that we all are destined to die in our prime. Could it be the years may extend longer than we expect before the return of the Master?"

James joined the conversation. "Has any been told who the Master entrusts leadership to while he is gone? Does any know? if he plans to restore the kingdom back to Israel before he leaves?"

"None that I know of. However, he has promised we will receive power after the Holy Spirit is given to us. I understand that is to take place very soon," Peter answered. "Perhaps then the Master will wrest the kingdom away from Rome. Should this be his plan that would explain the weight of our responsibilities."

"Yes...especially if he should leave shortly afterward. We will need all the power we can get," Thomas rolled his dark eyes. "We best be praying we have enough."

Maria, Yeshua's mother, placed a snow white napkin beside the guest-of-honor setting. Thinking Yeshua would appear today excited her. She had been visited recently by him, but all too briefly. He had materialized to her soon after his resurrection, just long enough to comfort and strengthen her. Anticipation and excitement filled the air. She smiled at Martha and Mary as the younger women scampered around, placing small finger bowls about the long, narrow tables. It warmed her heart to see her sons, James and Jose, here with Yeshua's followers. They were across the room, engaged in conversation with other young men. She had enjoyed a new surge of youthful energy since knowing Yeshua was alive. At one time she had had her doubts about her son. But now, she was fully convinced he was Elohim, in human form, as he had claimed. This knowledge led her to consider many things.

"Though I was used by The Father to birth a babe of flesh, was he ever mine? He is, and always has been, the son of the living Eloha. He appeared within a human form but inside he was Elohim. As he grew, the spirit of Eloha became dominant. The man that I gave birth to is no longer human. He existed as Elohim before ever I conceived. Indeed, it was he who gave me life, not the other way around.

"The child has become the parent, and the parent is the child. It is marvelous how differently I feel toward him," she thought. "My love for him, once maternal, now overwhelms me with reverence and awe. My fears and grief's he has turned to joy and contentment. I have been blessed above all women, to have had such a special part in the plan of Jehovah. I shall never cease praising and worshipping Him. I must devote the remaining years of my life serving Him, showing my appreciation for His mercy toward us. When I think of how the family doubted Him, how it increased his pain, I am deeply ashamed. His goals are so different from ours. His plan reaches far into the distant future, encompassing all eternity."

Young Mary had her private thoughts, too. She kept glancing at the door, hoping her beloved friend would soon appear. "I don't know why I keep watching the door," she thought. "The last time the Master showed himself, one moment he wasn't there; then suddenly he stood before us. I feel a deep, aching hunger to see him again. I can feel his presence all about this room. There is so much yet to

learn from him. Yet, he told us that he must return to The Father. He has suffered such horrible pain. Only Jehovah could endure what he has experienced and not feel compelled to utterly destroy his enemies. How patient and tolerant he is. He loves even those who cause him pain..." Her thoughts were interrupted by a familiar voice.

Yeshua moved slowly among the crowded room as he greeted them. "Peace to you all, my friends." Mary gasped with delight, holding her breath that she may hear his every word.

There was a hush of surprise, then everyone began talking at once. Someone guided him to his place at the table. When the group settled around the tables, he thanked The Father for his goodness and generosity, then brake the bread. During the meal questions were cautiously asked. After the meal, Mary sat at the Master's feet, her big, adoring eyes never leaving his somber face.

"It is so good to spend time with you again, Master," young John exclaimed. "How long will you be with us?" he asked. "We are still overwhelmed with astonishment that you are alive. True, you told us that it would be so. It was a shock when we saw you for the first time. We know, without doubt, you are the son of Jehovah. None but Jehovah could resurrect to life after such a cruel death."

The disciples had gathered around their Master, sitting on couches draped with soft skins. Heads nodded in agreement with John's comment. After the meal Yeshua, once again, found himself answering multiple questions. "Tell us again about the end of this age", someone requested.

"Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection; the second death has no power over them. They shall be priests of Yahweh and of the Christ, and shall reign with me a thousand years. The earth will be in ruin and devoid of activities. Cities, highways, forests, waters, and all life will be laid waste from the disasters of this age. My elect, the saints who had suffered and died cruel deaths for my name sake, will arise and meet me in the clouds. They will rule side by side with me, starting a new civilization, and a new age.

"This is the first resurrection," he repeated. "The rest stay dead until the thousand years are finished. However, after the thousand years, in the next age, a wonderful event occurs.

"The prophet Ezekiel wrote of his vision concerning this event. 'The spirit of the Lord set him down in the midst of a vast, open valley. For miles around, he saw heaping mounds of very old, brittle bones. He was asked, 'Can these bones live?'

Then he was told, 'Prophesy over these bones, and say, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews upon you, and I will restore flesh upon you. I will cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live.' The prophet heard the loud shaking, and rattling of bones as they came together, each in their order.

"Ezekiel watched in astonishment as sinews, flesh, and skin covered myriads of human skeletons. There was no breath in them. 'Prophecy unto the wind,' he was told, 'say to the wind, The Lord Jehovah says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' When Ezekiel pronounced the words breath came into them, and they lived. An exceeding great army stood before him. He was told, 'son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.' Until I paid the

penalty of death in their stead, their bones truly were dried, their hope lost. They were cut off for all eternity, doomed to eternal death. Now they have hope. They, too, have a part in the plan of eternity. This is their appointed time.

The captivated group listened breathlessly. They sensed that their Master was with them in body only, his thoughts projected away off somewhere into the future. His voice rose with expectation. "O my people, I will open your graves. I will bring you into the land Promised to your fathers. I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live. I will rescue your children from among the heathen, where they have been scattered. I will gather them from every side. Then you shall know that I am the Lord. But, once again in their age Israelite descendants and Gentile nations will forget my instructions and follow my enemy, Satan, who will be loosed from his prison for a short time, to test them. For a short time he will once again be ruler of the world. There cannot be two Kings over the same world. Israel will provoke my anger when they my name. No longer will I tolerate their adulterous ways. For a while I will turn my face away from them. After being in captivity again, many years later, they will repent and I will forgive them for my name's sake. A new age will begin when I make you into one nation. You shall never be divided as the House of Israel and the House of Judah again. Nor shall you defile yourselves any more. Wherever you have lived, I will cleanse you. You shall be my people, and I will be your Father.

"And David, my servant, shall be your king. You will have only one Shepherd. You shall walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. You, and your children, and their children, shall inherit the land of your fathers. I will make a covenant of peace with you. It shall be an everlasting covenant.

I will place you, and multiply you. I will set my sanctuary, and my tabernacle, in the midst of you for evermore. All nations shall know that I am the Lord that sanctifies Israel. I will put my laws into your mind and in your innermost being. My spirit will be within you and my thoughts will be your thoughts."

Yeshua lowered his head and became silent. After a few minutes a voice spoke. "What a wonderful future for Israel, Master," Matthew ventured, "What will be the future of the many nations of peoples who remain in their graves at the present time?"

"All of mankind are my children. I desire that none should perish. After this age, comes the next, and after that age comes the resurrection of the lost Gentiles.

"There is a first resurrection, then the second of the whole house of Israel, following the age of the law and reconciliation, when all things shall be restored. Then the age of judgment, and many great resurrections, when all the dead will be brought up out of their graves, and rewarded according to their deeds. They will have the same choices Israel was given.

They must choose life or death. They must decide to accept me, as their Redeemer. Only then can they be in the Elohim family. This will not be easy, nor will it happen right away. From this resurrection will be peoples from every generation. They will be from different times and different cultures. To help them make righteous decisions they will have before them the family of Israel, living in peace. Because

they are living my way, in perfect harmony, Israel will enjoy vibrant health, and prosperity in all that they do.”

Matthew was still full of questions. “Master, should they have another chance, if they have rejected your commandments in their first life?”

“Would you not wish for everyone to be called by The Father? Should not every child be given an opportunity to make a right decision? Many have died without ever having heard the words of life. Many have heard, but because they were never drawn by the spirit of The Father, were unable to know right from wrong. They were never called to repentance. Would you have them lost forever? Do you not remember my telling you, ‘no one can come unto me except The Father draws him’? The Father is full of pity and patience. He is anxiously awaiting the great harvest of all souls to be joined into the Elohim. It will be an exciting and rewarding time. Millions will respond for the first time.

“My elect will serve as teachers to those in the great resurrection. All nations will know my laws and my commandments. They will be educated and placed, every generation according to their boundaries. Those of the resurrected hoards who choose the way of life will become children of Elohim. Those who choose death will ultimately be permanently destroyed. This is the second death, from which there is no resurrection. Everyone will be given a normal life span to learn. Most will accept the way of life.

“But before all this, at the appointed time, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. When my people, the whole house of Israel is brought back to physical life, and has settled in their land, dwelling unarmed and peaceful, Satan, with his demons, will go forth to deceive the nations. He will stir up Gog and Magog, and their allies, peoples of ancient Gentile nations, to battle against unsuspecting Israel. Their intention is to plunder and ravage the defenseless, peaceful people of Israel.”

Yeshua paused, pain and anger flashed in his eyes. He took a deep breath and clenched his fingers tightly. No one spoke for several seconds. “Will Israel fight against them?” someone asked.

“No, it is preordained to happen thusly, because Israel becomes wealthy and complacent; again they turn to strange gods. I will turn my face from them; only one third will survive the attack. Once again these, as captives, will be scattered among the nations.

“My power will be shown, and Israel and the nations of the earth will know that I am Elohim when I pour out my fierce wrath upon them their enemies. I will call fire down from heaven, and devour them. My old enemy, that they followed, shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. In this place of restraint Satan shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Never again will he have control over life, or death. Nor will he ever again influence the nations to accept lies, and sin against me.”

Yeshua closed his eyes as he continued speaking. “And I behold a great white throne, and him that sits on it. The earth and the first heaven flee from his face. And I see the dead, small and great, standing before the All Powerful Eloha. The books are opened; one is the book of life. The dead are judged according to those things which are written in the books, according to their deeds. Death, and

its graves, is cast into the lake of fire. Whoever is not found written in the book of life is also cast into the lake of fire. This is the fire which cleanses the earth of all evil. It is the second death.”

James moved closer to his brother, “What then happens to the earth? Is it made into another place of habitation? Where will the righteous dwell? Will they ascend into the heavens?” he asked.

With his eyes still closed Yeshua answered, “There will be a new heaven and a new earth. The old heaven and the old earth will no longer exist. All of its inhabitants will have been born into the family of spirit beings, children of Elohim. The incorrigible wicked have perished in the cleansing fire. And the sea is no more. The holy city, new Jerusalem, is coming down from Eloha out of heaven. It is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. The light of the city is like a precious jasper stone, clear as crystal. The great wall is two hundred and sixteen feet high. On the wall, made of jasper, are twelve gates, each of a single pearl. An angel stands before each gate.

On each gate is written a name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. There are three gates to the east, three to the north. On the south are three gates, and on the west three gates. The wall of the city has twelve foundations. Some of you in this room will have your name written on one of the foundations.

“The great city is perfectly square. In size it stands fifteen hundred miles high. Within the city are three hundred, thirty-seven million, five hundred thousand cubic miles. The city is of a pure, clear gold. The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation is jasper, the second, sapphire, the third, a chalcedony, the fourth, an emerald. The fifth foundation is sardonyx, the sixth, sardius, the seventh, chrysolite, the eighth, beryl, the ninth foundation is a topaz, the tenth, a chrysoprasus, the eleventh, a jacinth, and the twelfth foundation an amethyst.”

The men were bursting with questions. They were too excited to know where to start. Knowing their thoughts, Yeshua answered many of their questions before they asked.

“The Almighty Eloha and the Lamb are the Temple of it. The city has no need of the sun, nor of the moon for light. The glory of Eloha, and the Lamb, brightens it. And the nations of them which have chosen the way of life walk in the light of it.

The kings of the new earth, and the nations come to worship and honor them that dwell there. Its gates are open continually. No night is known there, only daylight. No uncleanness is admitted into the city, only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

A smile played on the sun-baked face of the Master. He opened his eyes and looked at the awed faces before him. He waited for the next question.

Jude responded, “Master, tell us, why are some being drawn to you by The Father...yet others are not. Why are some blinded to the truth? Why are not all men drawn by The Father during each life? Why must the major portion of mankind be in the second resurrection?”

“It is the will of The Father. Only The Father knows whom he will call. Each one is called to fulfill a purpose. Those who are being drawn now are to witness to all nations. They are to warn the world of the terror to come. The world will not heed.

Just as the prophet wrote, they will hear, but will reject the truth. They will see, but turn away. Their hearts will become calloused, their ears dull, their eyes closed. Because of their stubborn attitude, they are left to their fables. Many will be given the invitation but few will be chosen.

“Those in the first resurrection, who have proved by unconditional, submissive attitudes, their undying loyalty to me, shall instruct the multitudes. Only a chosen number are needed for leadership. For a thousand years, directly under my guidance, my elect will undergo extensive training and experience. They, then, will prepare to educate the hordes in the following ages. They will fill the enormous need for teachers of righteousness. Without knowledge, without guidance there is no hope; most of mankind would surely perish in the second death. Many will be called, but few heed the call. Without the gift of the holy spirit, none have been empowered with life. Satan travels the earth seeking those whom he can deceive, convincing them they are a law unto themselves.

“Many think they are prepared for eternal life. Because they chose to be deceived, they will miss being in the first resurrection. There is a time for all of mankind to fit into the plan of Elohim. The deceived, and their children, must be educated to know me, see their sins, and repent. Then will they enter into the new covenant with me. I will give them my holy spirit also. In that age wickedness will not be tolerated. Only the righteous will dwell together in the new earth.

“And they shall be my people, and I shall dwell among them, and be their Yahweh. And I shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying.

Neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are gone. Everything will be made new. And I will give of the water of life freely. He that overcomes shall inherit the universe, and share my power and my glory. I will be his Yahweh, and he shall be my son.

“The river of the water of life, runs pure, and is clear as crystal. It flows perpetually out of the throne of Eloha and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street, on either side of the river, grows the tree of life, which bears twelve different fruits. It yields fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. There shall be no more curse. The throne of The Father and The Lamb shall be there. And his servants shall serve him. And they shall see his face. His name shall be in their foreheads. There shall be no night there. They need no candle nor light of the sun. The Lord Almighty gives them light. And they shall reign for ever and ever.

“Blessed are they that do my commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the beautiful city of gold. Within it dwells the new family of Elohim. The plan is now at its ultimate stage. Eloha The Father, the bridegroom, and his bride, the elect, shall eternally enlarge the Elohim family. Then shall human beings fulfill their highest potential. They will be perfected in the image of their Creators. There shall be no end to the family of Elohim. It will spread throughout the infiniteness of the universe.”

Yeshua continued teaching the disciples things pertaining to the plan of Elohim. “All power has been given to me, both in heaven and in earth. I send you into all nations; you are to teach them everything I have taught you. Teach them if they believe my words and are baptized they shall be saved. Those who believe not will be destroyed.

“After the Holy Spirit is given, you will receive power to witness in Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria, and eventually all around the earth. The spirit searches the deep things of Yahweh.

No one can know the thoughts of Yahweh without the Holy Spirit. Without the spirit of Yahweh one cannot accept the things of Yahweh; they will seem extremely foolish. The things of Yahweh are discerned only by the spiritual person. The wisdom of this world is as foolishness to Yahweh. The beginning of wisdom is earnestly desiring to please Yahweh, consistently endeavoring to keep his commandments.

“The holy spirit will bring to your memory things I have taught you. It will endow you with special gifts for spiritual profit and edification. Some will have the gift of wisdom, or prophecy. Some will be given the gift of knowledge, others faith. Some will perform miracles. Others may become unusually perceptive. Some may have the gift of diverse languages and interpretations. Not all will have the same gifts. Some may have more, some less. The effect of the Holy Spirit is concern for others above your own interests. It will lead to delight in the ways of Yahweh. It will foster harmony, tolerance, and compassion. It leads in morality, faith, submissiveness, and moderation.

“The spirit of love is the most beneficial and rewarding of all gifts. Seek after love, love of Yahweh first, and love of mankind. One who loves does not exalt himself. He is not arrogant, greedy, or ill-tempered. He is quick to think the best of others, not easily annoyed. He has no pleasure in the calamity of any, not even his enemy.”

Yeshua’s brothers, James and Jude, had not before listened carefully or taken seriously things he had spoken. His words concerning the kingdom and himself had been obscured by their jealousy. They had not concerned themselves about his problems with the religious authorities. Indeed, they had agreed he brought undue persecution on himself by insisting he was so important. And perhaps by not asserting himself, nor demonstrating the fullness of power he claimed to have he had provoked doubts in many minds. Having witnessed many unexplained acts of mercy performed by him they grudgingly admitted he had special powers from some source. They, however, had questioned his claim to be the Son of Yahweh.

The afternoon the earthquake had jarred Jerusalem James and Jude had been engrossed with their own interests. They had been among those who had dashed wildly from the Temple. Soon after things calmed down they heard about the crucifixions that were taking place outside the city. They were horrified that Yeshua was among those to be crucified. When they uncovered all the facts, they were saddened and concerned. They agreed, “We must find Mother. She needs our support in this terrible time. She must be near death with sorrow,” they agreed.

They had found Maria and the followers of Yeshua where they had gathered after the ordeal of the crucifixions. They were stunned to hear the macabre details of their brother’s death.

They had been outraged, angry, and remorseful. In spite of their differences, they had loved Yeshua as a family member, and brother. “Why did he allow himself to suffer such agony?” they wondered aloud.

“Why had he not used his power to defend himself?”

The two brothers had gone their own way that evening after seeing Maria was well cared for. They kept in touch with the group for the next two days. On the third day, approximately the same time as the other, a second earthquake had occurred. Again they returned after the quake to check on their mother. The following day they visited with the group. They were still with the group when word was brought about Yeshua's resurrection. It had seemed to them like the ranting of emotionally, deranged women. At first they doubted, "Who can believe such a thing, even concerning one as gifted as Yeshua?" They proceeded to the tomb to see for themselves. When they arrived they found it just as they had been told.

Now, after having seen him, and after listening for hours and days to his words, they were completely convinced of his claims. Ashamed and repentant, they both had admitted to themselves how terribly wrong their attitudes had been toward him.

Yeshua called his mother, his brothers and sisters, and their families, around him. He sat before them speaking, "Soon I will return to my father in heaven. My life in the flesh has been richly rewarding, in spite of the suffering. I have learned many things that I would not have known had I not visited Earth.

Having been a part of you," he looked each one directly in the eyes, "has shown me what human families have to deal with. I learned to feel as you feel, to desire as you desire. I rejoiced when you rejoiced, sorrowed when you sorrowed. I felt your fears, your anxieties, and your frustrations. And, indeed, you have suffered much because of me. And some of you will suffer yet even more.

"Remember, no amount of suffering in this life is too much to bear for the wonders of eternal life. If you stand fast, your reward will be beyond anything your human mind can conceive.

There is not sufficient words to describe the wondrous future The Father has planned for those who love and obey me. This physical life is very short. As a blade of grass shoots up from the earth and withers away, so does the soul of flesh; its memory soon fades. Even pain and sorrow brings happiness and rejoicing, if it has been planned and approved by The Father. All things work toward that goal for those who are loyal to me."

Forty days after Yeshua's resurrection he invited his followers to accompany him to the Mount of Olives. On the way up to the top of the mountain he confided in them. "I must return to The Father. But, have no fear, I will return to earth as King of kings. The kingdom of Yahweh will be established. There shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I will then remove the names of idols out of the land till they are forgotten. I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to leave the land. And if any one ventures to prophesy lies, then his own parents will be his executioners. Every false prophet shall be ashamed of his deceptive preaching. Religious apparel will no longer be worn.

Instead, men will choose to be farmers. If any man has scars inflicted from religious persecution, he will deny it. He will claim the scars resulted from childhood accidents. The shepherd has been smitten, and the sheep shall scatter. Two thirds shall be cut off and die; but a third shall be left alive. I will bring the third part through the fire of testing. They will be refined as silver is refined, and as gold is tried. They

shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will accept them as my people. And they shall say, 'The Lord is my Yahweh'.

"When the day of vengeance arrives your wealth will be seized and divided by enemy nations. They will gather against Jerusalem, take the city, loot the houses, and violate the women. Half the people of the city will be taken as prisoners of war. Those who are left will be run out of the city. Then I shall declare war against those nations, and defeat them. My power shall descend upon this very spot, the mount of Olives. And it will split apart from the east, and the west, creating a very immense valley. Half of the mountain will plunge toward the north, and half toward the south."

Yeshua raised his voice so that all could hear. "Remember the history of how you fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Again you shall flee through the valley all the way to Azal. Then I will appear with all the saints with me. That day's light will extend into the night, different from any other. Living waters will flow out of Jerusalem summer and winter. Half will course toward the eastern sea, and half toward the western sea. And I will rule over all the earth; no other gods will be condoned. All the land shall be leveled from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be lifted up, and made secure from Benjamin's gate to the first gate, to the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepress. Those who dwell there shall never need fear again. Jerusalem will be a place of safety.

"And upon all the people who fought against Jerusalem a grievous plague will fall. Their flesh will decompose while they stand upright. Their eyes shall consume away in their cavities, their tongues rot in their mouths. And the same plague will afflict their animals. I will also send a spirit of confusion among them. It will cause them to turn against each other, friend against friend. And the Jews who reside in Jerusalem shall join in the battle against the enemy. The wealth of all the heathen nations shall be gathered together, gold, silver, and apparel, in great abundance.

In that day my people will repent of their idolatry, and each family in his own house will mourn and grieve because of their cruelty of me. Families of Israel will gather their forces and using the blue print of builders, that I have laid out and given through my servant Ezekiel, my Temple will be constructed, the laws and priests will be reestablished. My people will know that I am their Redeemer.

"The survivors of all the nations which came against Jerusalem will be commanded to go up every year to worship me, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. If any family of the earth keep not my Sabbath, and holy days no rain will fall upon their land. They will learn to worship me according to my instructions, not as every man decides for himself. They will know that I am the Lord that gives them every good thing."

His father's words come to mind, "I am Alpha and Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty!" he exclaimed in a sudden surge of rapture. "My little children, when I return everyone will see me coming in the clouds. I was dead, but now I live. I hold the keys of death and the grave."

It was a warm, mid-afternoon. Once they had reached their destination, the crowd of over one hundred sat on the grassy slopes huddled in groups beneath an overcast sky. A large cluster of women sat toward the front. Mary and her sister, Martha, sat with Maria, and young John. Their eyes were

glued to the speaker, their ears strained to grasp every word. So much had happened in the last few weeks. Mary was thinking, "It all seems like a dream". She was delighted at how much easier she could understand the meaning of Yeshua's words. She could hardly wait for the good things to happen. On the other hand, it was dreadfully frightening when considering the unpleasant things that would happen first.

It helped to remember Yeshua's promise that he would always be near.

She didn't really understand exactly how that would be. She trusted if he said it, it would be so. She felt saddened for those who would not be so favored. "Of course it is their own choice, to turn away from the truth, or accept it," she consoled herself. "If only everyone held the depth of love for this wonderful being that I hold, there would be nothing to worry about. To suffer for him is an honor and a privilege. I only hope I can somehow prove how profound my love is. I do so wish he would not go back to heaven until after we have the heavenly gifts he says will be ours. We need all the comfort and help we can get to become perfect like him."

Yeshua spoke to the solemn crowd. "Stay in Jerusalem; wait for the promise of The Father, which I have explained will be given to you. It is true, John baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the holy spirit in a few days from now."

One of the men, still curious about the kingdom to come, asked, "Lord, when will you establish the kingdom?"

Yeshua answered, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which The Father hath put in his own power. You shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And after that you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The Holy Spirit will help you remember everything I have taught you; these words you shall proclaim.

"You, my dear, special friends, will be empowered for the greatest commission man has ever been entrusted with. Your reward will be beyond your comprehension. You must be strong, of good courage, and steadfast. You will soon begin to understand the secrets of the ages, the mysteries of Elohim. Though you will suffer, yet you will know determination and joy beyond your deepest passion. I will not allow anything to deter you from your course. I will give you strength to endure whatever you must deal with. You shall not fear persecution or death. I leave with you my serenity, my ecstasy, and my passion."

While the crowd stood drinking in Yeshua's words a remarkable phenomenon was occurring above them. Faint rays of light appeared as though the sun was clearing away the hovering clouds. Then the light grew brighter and brighter. The people slowly became aware of something unusual happening. Everyone began to look toward the sky, until the light became too powerful for their eyes. Then the rays became softer. "Look," someone exclaimed, "there beyond the clouds...a great host of luminous beings. They look like angels." Every head turned upward, their hands shielding their eyes against the brightness. The clouds parted and the heavens opened; displayed before them were scenes of indescribable magnificence.

Music, more beautiful than any had ever heard, wafted across the heavens. Dancing, laughter, and praises accompanied the heavenly choir. Strange, many-faced, winged creatures streaked about the sky as flashing lightning. While the crowd of onlookers gazed upward, a figure from among them rose to meet the heavenly entourage. Gasps of surprise akin to fear swelled up from the band of gazers. The man arising before them took on an amazing transfiguration. His long, flowing, brilliantly white robe waved gently in a balmy breeze above burnished bronze feet. A wide vest of iridescence gold shimmered in rays of rare colors. His hair became white as purest snow.

He ascended a throne of sapphire stone, surrounded by a rainbow of colors. His eyes became the color of blazing fire. As he ascended up past the highest clouds his face shone so brightly it could still be seen by those below.

As mysteriously as the magnificent spectacle had appeared, it gradually ascended into the heavens, out of human sight. The Prince of Life had fulfilled his earthly mission. He was returning to his glory, to his former position as a member of The Elohim. He had proved worthy to receive rule over the whole universe. When he returned to planet earth he would take over Satan's throne, and establish his own righteous government. Until his return, he would watch over, and nurture the Elohim seed he had planted. Just as a small seed can grow into a great plant, so would this family grow and multiply. This was just another step in the endless journey of the massive Elohim plan, to reproduce, to beget a family, a family without end. The small beginnings of his family would spread throughout the earth, the seas, and the heavens. It would inhabit planets unknown to man, and beyond into eternity.

The small family, left behind on planet earth, could be seen on its knees in humble adoration. Every face was wet with tears. Their voices united in praises, mixed with happiness, wonderment, love and awe.

After a long time, one by one, each one got slowly to their feet, straining their eyes upward, hoping to see something more. Gradually the crowd dispersed, walked away, talking quietly, reverently. The men who had been closest to Yeshua lingered after everyone else had left. They struggled with strange, emotional turmoil. They could no longer see anything of the spectacle in the sky. Yet, they felt drawn to the vacant gap above them. Along with their happiness a heavy cloud of sadness, suspense, and anticipation hovered about them. Their necks became painfully stiff from looking upward. They yearned to go with their beloved Master, and found themselves glued to the spot. Engulfed in their own emotions they were slow to notice the two men in white apparel who had materialized before them.

"Why do you men of Galilee stand so long gazing up into the heavens? Do you not know that he which was taken up from you into heaven will also return in the same manner? Remember his words, 'I shall return and all shall see me'?"

The men were mildly surprised, numbed by the extraordinary. They shook their heads to clear their minds. By the time they gathered their thoughts the strangers were no longer visible. They slowly turned and walked silently down the mountain, each man deep in his own thoughts.

Thomas broke the silence. "Never again will I doubt the power of our Lord. We have witnessed what few people on earth will ever see. We have heard the words of Jehovah and seen him with our

very own eyes. We have been in his glorious presence for these past years. Yet, in our ignorance, we knew not how honored we were. Truly we are among the most blessed of all peoples of the earth!"

"Did you see that...never before have I witnessed such wonder, not even in my most wildest dreams!" Simon exclaimed. "Even the ancients never described such splendor. Will we be like that when we are born into the family of Elohim?" he wondered aloud. "None, but those who have seen these things, will believe us. Indeed, who has words to describe what we have witnessed? Did you see the spectacular colors? And what bizarre creatures with faces of men and animals, even great birds...and who can describe the unidentified shapes and lights that flashed and traveled with such unbelievable speed..."

"We truly have glimpsed into the kingdom the Master spoke of," Jude exclaimed. He said he will prepare for us places in his kingdom. Perhaps these places will be of similar majesty.

He promised some of us would see him in his kingdom. All of us who gathered here were blessed to glimpse into a part of it. This should be more than enough to inspire us onward. No matter what happens, I will always remember this sight. And when things get hard to bear, this vision will ever be before my eyes!"

They all nodded in agreement. "How can we go back to our normal way of life after what we have been taught and seen?" Peter spoke confidently. "He has trained us to carry his gospel around the world. He has a wonderful plan for all who will listen. We have been especially blessed to be allowed to have such an important part in it. We know more about the new kingdom than any among us. Yet, there's so much more to learn. He said the Holy Spirit will teach us what we need to know. How thrilling...how exciting is this time. I can hardly wait to receive this special power. Won't it be great? People will no longer look upon us as illiterate Gallileans, uneducated in religious matters. If those hypocritical Pharisees even suggest that we are inferior to them...won't they be in for a surprise?

When they see the power we have they will be forced to eat their words."

Phillip caught Peter's enthusiasm. "We will be able to heal the sick, just as The Master did. And we can command the demons and they will obey. We will perform even greater things than the Master did. Did he not say that we would? What a future is in store for us. The Master truly has left us some marvelous promises.

John interrupted, "Yes, but the greatest thing he has left us is his great example of eternal love. No other man has ever loved with such passion, such depth. If we can only grasp, and give love as he has...nothing can stop us from reaching the goals set before us. What mortal man can hold and express such love?"

"Can we do more than follow his last command? We must stay in Jerusalem until we receive the power to fulfill the responsibilities of our offices. We have much studying, meditation, and praying to do to equip ourselves spiritually."

"We may also be in for some very difficult experiences,"

Matthew reminded them. "There is much preparation before we embark on such an important task."

"Yes," Luke responded, "regardless of our greatest expectations, there will never be a more laudable calling than this. We have been entrusted with an awesome role in the plan of Jehovah. We will need all the power we can get from his spirit to accomplish what we must do."

They returned to the large upper room where the women, Yeshua's mother, and his brothers awaited them. In a few days, during the Feast of Pentecost, they would experience a new awakening, a new life. Until then they would engage in spiritual preparation, anxiously awaiting the promise, the power of the Holy Spirit. During the allotted time of patience, the small seeds of Elohim would take root...and grow...and grow...and grow. In Yahweh's own time its growth would reach beyond the boundaries of the heavens, populating the vast planets with Elohim beings.

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