



...but these have been written  
so that you may believe that  
Jesus is the Christ, the Son of  
God; and that believing you  
may have life in His name.

John 20:31

Part Ten  
in a  
Series

DANIEL, ANGEL I-R (1<sup>ST</sup> RUNG), DESCENDED EFFORTLESSLY from the euphoric wisps of heaven's upper reaches. Harry peered intently overhead, into the diaphanous strata that comprised both the atmosphere and terra firma of his home and place of creation. As Harry watched, his superior glided smoothly to a stop just in front of him. He had never before spoken directly to an angel of such high rank, but ever since he had become an intimate acquaintance with the Son Himself, Harry had lost some of his unease around those of more exalted title.

Some, but not all.

"Are you ready, Harry?" Daniel asked without preamble.

"Y—yessir," Harry answered quickly, "but where are we going?"

"The Father has told me of your relationship with the Son," Daniel said, ignoring the question, "so it seemed appropriate for you to accompany me on this mission."

"Mission, sir?"

Daniel drew himself more erect, towering even higher over his inferior. "I am to be the messenger of the Resurrection."

Harry's face brightened immediately. "Resurrection? Then it's true!" Ever since the recent crucifixion and burial of Jesus, Harry had been inconsolable. How could this be right? How could *this* be part of God's plan? Ever since that most horrible and depressing series of events that ended with Jesus buried inside a stone tomb, Harry had mourned the death of his friend. He had occupied the long hours recalling his times with the Son—examining the odd and claustrophobic structure He had created to sample the dwellings that would be His on earth, walking the muddy village street with Him, and then discovering the newborn Jesus. And Harry had thought back to his later sojourn on earth, during which he had found Jesus at the carpentry shop, how Jesus had

explained to him why He was there—and what it would mean for humanity.

Harry had accepted that the Son, as Jesus, would be sacrificed for the sins of mankind, but, in retrospect, he realized that he had never believed that the death would be, well, so *real*—that Jesus would actually *die*. It simply was too much for Harry to comprehend. Jesus was still the Son, and the Son could not die. He was eternal. He was God.

“What have you heard?” Daniel sniffed imperiously, interrupting Harry’s thoughts.

“Well, sir, there’s been talk.”

“Talk?”

Harry dipped his head in subjection. “Yes sir. We didn’t know for sure. I mean, the rest of us are never given all the details—”

“Need to know, Harry,” his superior reminded him. “Need to know.”

“Yes, of course. Still, we are curious, and it seemed to me there had to be a way out.”

“A ‘way out’?”

“The Father would never permit the Son to actually die.”

“But He has, Harry.”

Harry dared to look up into the eyes of his superior. There he saw that Daniel was sternly serious. “And n—now,” he continued nervously, “the Father has given Him a way out. There will be a resurrection.”

“There is a reason angels of your rank are not always given full information,” Daniel sniffed dismissively. “You do so poorly with what little you know.”

Harry hung his head, embarrassed.

## The Tomb

It was almost dawn. As the two angels approached the tomb, they found it just as it had been prepared by the Roman guards. The large, wheel-like stone still covered the entrance, and still bore Pilate’s wax seal. On one side of the tomb entrance squatted two soldiers, warming themselves against the morning chill around a small fire. As they rubbed their hands together, they grumbled to each other about their lousy duty, and complained about their officers—who were still tucked warmly in their cots back at the barracks. On the other side of the great stone that sealed the tomb, Jesus sat quietly, his eyes closed, a slight smile on His face.

Drawing closer to Jesus, the angels knelt before Him. “Lord.” Daniel spoke with quiet reverence for the two of them. Harry desperately wanted to rise and embrace Jesus, but was very much aware not only of his place, but the enormity of the moment. He understood that his being there at all was a rare privilege, and he dare not do or say anything out of turn. He remained with his head down, staring at the dirt and sand that paved the burial ground.

“Harry!” Jesus broke the silence. “I’m so glad to see you.”

“G—God,” Harry gasped, shocked that the just-risen Lord would address him in such a familiar fashion. Daniel, too, seemed a bit stunned that the Son would bypass customary protocol—and *him*—to address an angel of inferior rank first. But Jesus quickly repaired Daniel’s bruised feelings.

“Daniel, your presence is comforting. This will be an important task, and I knew you were the one for it.”

“Thank you for your confidence in me, Lord.” Daniel bowed again.

“I will be leaving in a moment. You will know what to do to get the attention of the soldiers and the women.”

“Yes, Lord.”

Jesus rose from the broad stone on which He had been resting. “Come, Harry,” He said. “Walk with me.”

## The Way Out

As the two left the immediate area of the tomb, Harry felt a deep rumbling pass beneath his feet, and a cracking, gravelly sound signaled that Daniel had just rolled back the stone covering the tomb entrance.

“This must be a relief,” Harry offered.

“Relief?”

“Yes, Jesus, that the Father gave you a way out—a way out of death.”

“You make ‘a way out’ sound like ‘escape’—as if plans were changed at the last minute,” Jesus said seriously.

“They weren’t? You said You had to die—and You did. Wasn’t that enough?”

“The way out was set long ago—and it is just as important as the death. Don’t you remember what I told you years ago when I was a boy? This is all part of it.”

“Yes, I had to die. I had to bear that weight.” Jesus sighed, and His shoulders

slumped. “That horrible weight,” He whispered, and a shudder passed through Him. “But it couldn’t end with that. Harry, I wasn’t *given* a ‘way out’—I *am* the way out. Because I left the grave, others will too.

“You keep forgetting the people, Harry. It’s for them. It’s all for them.”

And it had happened again. Harry felt that empty twisting in his belly, that unpleasant sensation of indigestion that meant He had once again completely missed the point.

“I guess I’m caught, Jesus,” Harry muttered sadly. “Caught somewhere between God and man—never quite understanding either.”

Jesus smiled and put His arm around the dejected angel. “You don’t have to, Harry. You are who you are—and I love you for it. We created you, but you are not Us. You are higher than man, but you will never understand his longings, his fears, his sinful flesh, his aspirations. You are *meant* to be in between. That, too, is part of grace.”

The Son stopped. They were poised at the top of a rough crag that overlooked the awakening Jerusalem. As they watched the narrow streets begin to fill with early risers beginning another day, Jesus drew the diminutive angel closer, reassuringly.

“Look, Harry. There they are. It’s all for them. And We ask only one thing from them.”

“What’s that?” Harry said.

Jesus turned and looked into the angel’s innocent eyes. “Do you remember long ago, before this all began, when I asked you to do me a favor and help me get used to my new name?”

“Je-sus,” Harry said carefully, sounding out each syllable as if the word were an object of great worth cradled in his hands.

“Yes, you helped me become accustomed to my new role by using the name. Now I want you to do me another favor. Just as you helped me with my new role, I want you to help the people with theirs. We ask only one thing from them—one thing only.”

Harry said nothing, but stared longingly up into the gentle eyes of the Son.

“I want you to believe, Harry,” Jesus said. “With all your questions, with everything you do not yet understand, I want you to believe. Just believe.” dsj

*(to be continued...)*