



The Epistles of Mary– [*a Story of the Christ*]

My dearest Yohanan. My Son.

When you sent for word of me, I knew I must reply in my own hand. Yes, my love, these old fingers can still hold a stylus. Though the sweep of my hand is not all that it was. Please forgive my halting scratches. There is still much joy in every stroke.

Before anything else, hear your mother now, and obey: You must continue your travels among the Faithful here in Asia Minor. I hear amazing things as our new Brothers and Sisters welcome into their hearts Our Yeshua. I imagine they have the same spark I saw in you when He chose YOU. And the fire we all burned with on Pentecost!

The men you sent even sang for me the new, majestic melody to that old song of mine. I know, I know, you always tell me it's my 'masterpiece'. You so often asked me to recite it before the feast of God's Lamb. And, I must admit, now that it has been set to music it IS, in fact, a glorious thing. My words have never soared like that, certainly. It was so... how do I put it? Angelic? Regal? Worthy of a King? You MUST thank the Choir at Antioch for putting my words so beautifully to music.

Dearest son, I think will now tell you a secret - "My Soul Magnifies the Lord" was ALWAYS more than a poem. It was a song I sang to Yeshua many a night before bed. And yes, as you suspect, it was ones of King David's melodies. Sung to ME all my life by MY mother. No not the tune "Lilies" that we all still sing today. And not "The Victor" - that loud crashing dance the younger ones like so much. No, the song was always a hushed tune - the lullaby of Ruth. The bedtime song Ruth sang to Obed, Jesse, and before she passed, to David himself. And now all these generations later, sung to me by my mother.

No, I've never told anyone that before. How could I? So many would have demanded it of me again. And I just cannot. You know how I was. The day Yeshua left us and the music died in all of us. But I will admit, the song never fully died in me. I was my single solace to let my tears sing for me until I could breathe it again. Eventually that lullaby was more than a whisper. But it has remained my private pain and joy all these years since. And an offering, still. Hopefully soon it will be my joy to sing it in the ear of my son once again.

Yes, my dear one, it is time for me to return to those who call for me now. The women of those momentous years are almost all gone and the Church in Jerusalem has no one left from our days to tell the story. Perhaps I shall sing your NEW melody to them this time.

OH, son, I know what you are thinking. That you promised Yeshua you would NEVER forsake me or abandon me. You are probably already rushing to pack your bags and return to Ephesus immediately. Hear your mother now: BE STILL. You have honored me in every way a good son should. In every way a son possibly COULD. You have served me and your Lord beautifully. But now, I release you. I must go, and you must continue. I know that Lystra and Lydia and Smyrna all call for you and you MUST go to them. Our Living Hope is coming alive in them and you must shepherd them now. By the time you return to Ephesus I will be long gone, so don't rush past the things the Father has for you in those cities. And, bring them all my sincerest greetings. As they welcome you and your message, they welcome Our Lord Himself, and his loving mother, too.

I promise I will write you again along the journey home.

Go in Peace! Serve the Lord! Thanks be to God...

Miriam

Yohanan, my Dear Son!

I arrived safe in Rhodes, and what a joy to see your team from Iconium to greet me on arrival! Such joy! I'm embarrassed to admit it, but I almost could not believe the stories of revival and resurrection I was hearing. I did not keep them long. They were in great haste already to push on and catch up with Apollos at Miletus. They hoped to catch a ship for the crossing to Corinth before the weather changed. I understand you sent them to stand with Apollos and put to rest some great argument there. Something about a rumored division between Apollos and Paul. I could tell they were concerned for my welfare and didn't want to worry me. Perhaps they were under strict orders from you to avoid upsetting me. I didn't press the issue and sent them on their way with my blessings for this important work.

From what I heard, their testimony would disarm the most jaded critic of our Gospel. So many miracles and transformations. Even as an old woman it seems to me the beginning of something very new and important. And with Paul's determination to reach Rome I sense a great shift is about to happen. Perhaps you have sensed it too. You are always the first to perceive how the Spirit is moving. I would love to hear all about it when you have the opportunity to pen another epistle just for me!

And, my son, I must say the gift you sent for the widows in Jerusalem overwhelmed me. I have been praying this whole journey about how I could console these dear sisters. I've carried this great weight for them this whole journey. Not unlike the long walk from Nazareth up to Bethlehem. I was so young. And still I had no idea if I could make it. We had to walk most of the way, you know. The Father lifted my burden then with that stray donkey Joseph found. Such a little miracle, but so important.

And now? Your gift has completely lifted my burden yet again! I love you so much. And your dear flock as well. Please let them know I bear their gifts of money, cloth and the prayer scrolls as the treasures they are. I cannot tell you how much it will lift their sorrowful hearts just to know they were remembered. And the fabrics they sent are so beautiful. I know they will use most of it to sew clothes for the poor and orphans from the holocaust they've so recently endured. I'm steeling my heart to see the rubble of the temple with my own eyes.

We have a great and sure hope, however, don't we? THE temple has been revived, ascended, and now lives in our very hearts!

Remember, when things get the most desperate, The Light comes to us, even if we are afraid to open our eyes to see it. I learned that many times when I looked up to see that star standing over Bethlehem as we approached, so exhausted. The Father brought us through the camps of refugees and the dens of robbers. He watered us with hidden streams and fed us with gleanings completely overlooked by others. He will continue to do all this, and so much more for us, I am sure of that.

Please know you are lifted up to the Father daily with every step I take toward Jerusalem. With all a mother's love,

Miriam

Oh, my dear boy Yohanan,

I bear you Good Tidings! Alas, we've made it back to the Promised Land. I miss you, so. I'm sure by now your team has reached Corinth and you are probably in your sojourn at Smyrna. Or perhaps Sardis or Thyatira? I trust the Faithful One to deliver these words of love to you wherever you are.

We set off for Caesarea from Rhodes attempting to beat the squalls. We were not successful. Don't worry, though. We weathered one storm at Paphos and pushed on from Cyprus as soon as the weather broke. We made it halfway and the weather turned against us once again. We were driven farther north and made it to Tyre without loss of life. But much cargo was lost.

Please be relieved to know that your gifts for the widows in Jerusalem are secure and nothing was ruined. You remember all those years I wouldn't put out on any boat at ALL for fear of losing my breakfast? Well... you might be astonished to discover what sea legs I have now! Though we all felt like Jonah's shipmates for many days, and even joked that a great fish might be a better ride, no one had to sacrifice themselves to calm the seas. Much prayer eventually took care of THAT. While all about is tossing and turning and no horizon stays steady for very long, prayer is your anchor and faith your steady hand at the tiller. I even managed to sleep a good spell at the stern bench one night, like you told me Yeshua did once. You remember: Before the miracle that so astonished you boys. What was that? 35 years ago or more? I'm sorry to say there was no rebuke of the waves when I woke up. But I did manage to hold what was in my stomach. That - in itself - is a minor miracle. I will celebrate such things as they happen. There is always something for which to be thankful.

There are no ships heading down the Coast that are not already full, so believe it or not we will head overland the long way, instead. I made the decision myself when I met someone you know from the early years. That dear woman you nicknamed 'Photini.' YES – the woman from Jacob's well in Sychar.

As the Father is my witness I am telling you the truth! As I stepped down the ramp to the pier, there she was! We locked eyes and both burst into laughter. From the sparkle in her eye I swear she hasn't aged a day, and she must be what, 90 by now? I can still see her dancing with Joy that she was the first in Samaria to recognize the Messiah.

Yohanan, did you know she's started more than half a dozen fellowships throughout Samaria? She travels almost as much as you these days. She just HAPPENED to be at the Port of Tyre to welcome home one of her Messengers to Crete. Many of her friends are now taking the Gospel to the Samaritan communities in the Islands. Oh, what a joyous reunion it was. Photini, that glowing one, said to send many warm kisses to her favorite nephew from Galilee. After I told her all about **your** recent mission she threatened to adopt you away from me. Perhaps she will be able to write you herself soon. But take this good news to heart in the meantime - The fellow Followers of the Way in Samaria have rehabilitated all the remaining synagogues in their cities and restored all the scrolls they could find. Worship is happening again in the forgotten places and the name of Yeshua is lifted up each Sabbath! It is another miracle of Grace, my son.

Now comes another journey I was not expecting. In some ways it is as much a mystery as was the long journey to Bethlehem. Yet I know it will be filled with friends and fellowship. So different and such a welcome change. Though it will be much more than these old feet can handle, the Father has seen fit to allow me to walk in the steps of my son one last time. I know He will sustain me.

Photini has sent ahead for help and hospitality in all the towns where you all witnessed The Outpouring. NOW there is a great **Indwelling** happening and I will get to see it with my own eyes. I'm sure I'll recall your young smiling face in all these towns. I'll hear echoes of all the jokes you and Yeshua would tell to pass the time as you traveled there. Who would have thought it? In the places unclean to the Pharisees you never had to dust off your sandals. For everywhere you went in Samaria you received welcome when our own turned their backs. Next time I write you I should be in Jerusalem.

Take care my dear son.

Miriam

Dearest son,

At last I've come to the end of my journey. I know your prayers have been with me all along. The time spent with the Disciples in Samaria was more than I could have hoped.

But Yohanan, I was not prepared for the descent into Jerusalem. Have you heard how horrific the holocaust truly was? Son, there is not one stone left upon another. The Temple Mount is GONE...

Why did this shake me so? I knew it had been destroyed. I knew the vengeance of Rome is not something administered half-way. But this? NOTHING is recognizable. From Zion I saw the destruction and I fell on my face weeping.

WHY? I asked over and over again. It seems to tear at every wound my heart has ever known. All our friends and companions who have left us. And so many of them at the strike of Rome's vicious arm. I was suddenly very, very angry. I cannot explain it.

And then: A still small voice within me spoke like the tide of the ocean: "Woman, why are you weeping?"

Yohanan, that moment sucked the breath right out of my lungs. I suddenly understood 'why'...

Every memory I had of Yeshua's great laughter; His powerful yet tender voice; the amazing word pictures; the tongue-twisters about the twisted tongues of the Sadducees; the surgical rebukes of the Theologians...

All my biggest memories of my bursting pride for my Son? So many of them happened here. This twisted, overturned mound of rubble is all that is left of the place where the Glory of Israel was revealed. I felt as shattered as those blocks.

And then the voice came again. "Mama - I'm making all things new!" And there was the face of Yeshua staring at me from beneath that crown of thorns, with the beam on his back and his eyes gleaming at me... with JOY. I have had nightmares of that moment for 30 years, and then the burden was lifted in a moment. I understood, deeper than ever:

On the way to the cross, Yeshua could see the destruction of this place and the living stones of a new temple at the same time. The Father had chosen me for such moments. I still don't know why but I will never be ungrateful.

Do you remember holding me up when Yeshua called out from the Cross? Of course you do. YHWH held you so you could hold ME.

For 3 decades now, we have held on to each other to make it another day.

And I realized something anew: When you held me up we suffered together, you and I. The Loss we shared then, was a gift of grief and freedom to grieve. On Mount Zion I was freed from my guilt of the burden I felt was placed on **you** to care for **me**. Yeshua knew we needed each other. And, truth be told, I see Him in you every time you smile. I see in your wisened face what Yeshua would have looked like had he lived another lifetime among us, instead of **within** us. In fact, I have seen him borne in you each and every day.

After all we have both lost, we have both gained everything. And now you are building not just a temple but a Kingdom of Living Stones. WE were both Born Again when Yeshua gave us to each other.

Yohanan, I don't know how long I lay there in my grief and relief, but that is where the widows found me. They have received your gifts with grateful hearts and are turning them into fitting gifts for all those in **need**. We ALL thank you.

My son, my journey here is about done and I am at peace. But I will not be satisfied till I sing gently in Yeshua's ear. Then my soul will truly Magnify the Lord till He's all I see. And I will be there when you finally see it for yourself.

Until then, I am your most honored mother and grateful Co-Heir of the Messiah,

Miriam

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